

Flowercraft Garden Center

San Francisco's #1 Nursery

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HOME GARDENER'S NEWSLETTER

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Jan/Feb Success Tips

1. Shrub & Tree Roses have just arrived, plus Summer-blooming bulbs! Choose now from a wide selection.

2. Plant some of our tasty seed potatoes, onion sets, and garlic—these are fun to harvest, and delicious!



3. Valentine's Day is coming up February 14. We will have plants in bloom that last much longer than cut flowers.

4. Apply a dormant spray now—ask us for details.

5. Tend to your houseplants.

Wash dirt and dust off the leaves, and flush the soil out by running one or two quarts of water through the soil. This will get rid of any salts that have accumulated and can burn the leaves. Continue fertilizing them—ask us what to use. Repot houseplants if they have been more than two years in the same pot. Use a slightly larger pot to allow their roots to grow, and add potting soil to the sides and below the root ball.



Create Cool-Weather Containers



If the container gardens in your entryway and patio are looking dull because of cold weather, take this opportunity to make them look beautiful even in cold weather. In fact, when things outdoors look bleak, a few pots of color can be very exciting this time of year.

There are lots of plants that thrive and look great in cooler weather. In the middle or back of a container, plant something with pretty foliage color, like *Japanese barberry*, *golden juniper*, *variegated pieris* or a dwarf *heavenly bamboo (Nandina)*. Wander through the nursery and you'll find others. Blooming *hellebores* and *heather* also are great this time of year. Use *mondo grass* or an interesting *ivy* variety to spill over the sides of the container. Then in the remaining area plant something bright and blooming, like *primroses*, *cyclamen*, or *pansies*.

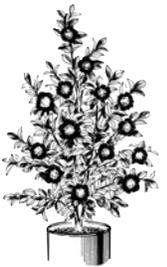
We also have mixed succulents you can use to create gorgeous and long-lasting container gardens!

Using plants like these, you will be amazed and surprised at the rich colors and beautiful container plantings you can create this time of year!

Early-Blooming Shrubs

Take a stroll through the nursery. You will be able to pick up shrubs that are either blooming now, or have flower buds on them and bloom very early, before most plants start blooming in spring. Early-bloomers include certain *magnolias*, *camellias*, *azaleas*, *flowering quince*, *forsythia*, *lilac*, *viburnum*, *daphne*, *spirea*, *rhapiolepis*, *ceanothus*, and *redbud*.

Also plant some early-blooming trees like *dogwood*, *flowering cherry* and similar trees, and early-blooming vines like *wisteria*, *hardenbergia*, *Carolina jessamine*, and some of the *jasmynes*.



Having some flowering plants at a time when not much is blooming not only beautifies a landscape, thus lifting our spirits, but also can provide vital nectar for pollinating bees and other pollinators when food is scarce.

Prune Smart



There was a time when it was believed that you should never leave a stub when pruning, but research has shown that to be wrong. Now it is recommended that you leave a very small stub. You want to cut just outside the *branch collar* (that slightly swollen area where a branch meets the trunk), without cutting into the collar. A cut heals quicker if you leave the collar intact.

FREE!

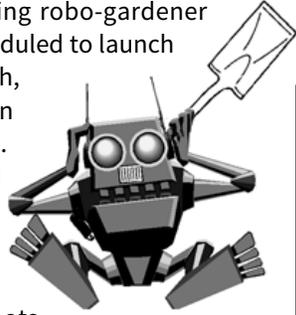
Rose Pruning & Care Seminars

January 14th & February 4th, 11am - 1pm

Sign up in store or by phone

Roomba Robot to Cut Weeds

The inventor of the popular **Roomba** robot vacuum cleaner is developing a roving robo-gardener that cuts weeds. *The Tertill*, scheduled to launch the summer of 2017 for \$250 each, automatically cuts any vegetation that is shorter than 1 inch. Sensors help the robot avoid obstacles and know when to activate its weed blades.



Other companies are starting to build more expensive robots to weed agricultural fields. These will probably eliminate weeds by cutting, pulling, burning, or a combination of methods.

Timing Garden Chores



You can use phenology to time your gardening chores. *Phenology* is the study of periodic biological phenomena, such as flowering, germination, or bird migration, as they relate to climatic conditions. So rather than testing soil temperature regularly, all you need to do is observe certain clues to know it is the right time to act.

For instance, we know that when *forsythia* are blooming, it is the right time to apply a pre-emergent herbicide to your lawn. Why? **Crabgrass** germinates once the soil reaches a certain temperature, which happens about the same time these plants are finished blooming. If you don't have *forsythia* nearby, apply the pre-emergent when *lilac* or *dogwood* are blooming. Or, when you start seeing *dandelion* puffballs.

If you enjoy observing nature, consider helping the USA National Phenology Network to collect data through its Nature's Notebook program. Go to usanpn.org to learn more.

Bug Burger, Anyone?



A Switzerland giant in that, beginning this spring, it will start stocking burgers and meatballs made of **insects**. Insects like *mealworms*, *crickets* and *grasshoppers* are rich in high-quality protein, amino acids and vitamins, and once people get past the "ick" factor, many food inventors feel the bug foods could become popular.

Holland and Belgium already are selling bug-enriched foods. Cricket flour is now sold in California in some grocery stores.

2017 is the Year of the Pansy

Most people considered pansies as weeds until the 19th century. In the late 1830's the classic pansy "face" was discovered in a chance sport that produced a broad dark blotch on the petals.



Today there are hundreds of pansy varieties available. These popular cool-season flowers include beautiful same-colored flowers, multi-colored flowers, and patterned flowers with a characteristic "face". Some flowers are very large, and others are smaller, like violas and Johnny jump-ups.

Berry Cheesecake Parfait

Plant a variety of berries now and you'll have plenty of them later to make this so-o-o delicious dessert! Fool your guests—this elegant dessert is very easy to make.



- 8 oz. whipped cream cheese
- 4 Tbsp. sugar, to taste
- ½ cup vanilla yogurt
- 2 cups fresh strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, or other fresh berries.
- 4 chocolate graham crackers, crushed.

Mix cream cheese and sugar in a small bowl, and stir in yogurt. In four wine glasses, layer ingredients in this order: berries, cream cheese mixture, crumbs, cream cheese mixture, and berries. Decorate with a tip of fresh spearmint if you are lucky to be growing it in your yard. Enjoy at once, or you can make this up to a day ahead and keep in your refrigerator.

Oak Tree Inherits Land



Trees do a lot for us—clean the air, provide shade, increase property values, and much more. W.H. Jackson loved a special oak tree so much that **he gave it the property it grew on!**

Jackson, a professor at the University of Georgia, bequeathed a plot of land to the tree in 1890 with this statement in his will: "For and in consideration of the great love I bear this tree and the great desire I have for its protection for all time, I convey the entire possession of itself and all land within eight feet of the tree on all sides."

The original white oak he loved fell in 1942, but a new tree was started from one of its acorns. The tree is surrounded by a series of granite posts connected by chains. The epitaph was inscribed on granite and is displayed within the property boundaries.