



Into the Garden

The Gardeners' Club
Santa Cruz County,
California
JANUARY 2026
Writer/Editor: Lise Bixler
lisetula@gmail.com

GARDENING AT THE GRANGE!

Most of our members know about the Live Oak Grange monthly Plant Exchange, because people rave about it at every one of our club meetings. But there is so much more happening there! Did you know there is a Live Oak Grange Community Garden that includes over 2,000 square feet of organically grown seasonal fruits and vegetables and a member-operated chicken coop? Did you know you can join the Grange and rent garden space there? There is so much more happening there, and so much more to learn, that we have invited Michael Johnson, the President of the Live Oak Grange to speak at our next meeting. His biography follows.



California Horticulture Services helping local farmers, landscapers, water agencies, and property owners manage irrigation water resources efficiently. Since 2012, Mr. Johnson has taught multiple courses in the Horticulture Department at Cabrillo College, including Irrigation and Edible Landscaping. Central Coast California is a gardener's paradise and Michael says it's a joy to share knowledge and bountiful harvests with other enthusiastic gardeners.



Michael Johnson is a life-long gardener and has been an active member of the Santa Cruz Live Oak Grange (SCLOG) since 2008, including serving as President in 2010 - 2011 and 2023 - 2025. Members of SCLOG maintain a one-acre property on 17th Avenue in Live Oak that includes 15 individual garden beds, an orchard with over two dozen trees, a lively chicken coop, and a CA native garden with rainwater harvesting system. Mr. Johnson owns and operates



More about Live Oak Grange programs on the following page!

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 8TH
7:00 PM, APTOS GRANGE
2555 MAR VISTA DR.**



More About the Grange

The SCLO Grange is part of a state organization founded in 1873 whose

mission was to support small family farmers and promote sustainable agriculture. As part of this program, the SCLO Grange focuses on organic farming, as well as, all aspects of sustainability. They have programs of interest to all persons who care about the quality, safety, and security of their food and water, and the environment at large.

Included in that mission is to cultivate an organic garden and orchard that provides a foundation for community food security and sustainable living in the Live Oak Community. The Live Oak Grange Community Garden includes over 2,000 square feet of organically grown seasonal fruits and vegetables and a member-operated chicken coop. There are two pathways to garden at the Live Oak Grange

1. RENT A SPACE IN THE LIVE OAK GRANGE GARDEN

Apply to rent a row (\$100/year) or half row (\$50/year). Available garden rows are approximately 100 square feet. Applications are accepted throughout the year and rows are assigned first-come, first-served. Priority is given to Grange members who are residents of Live Oak and don't have space to garden at home. Food grown in rented rows belongs to the gardener or household renting that row.

Another option is

2. JOIN THE LIVE OAK GRANGE SITE COMMITTEE

The Live Oak Grange property is managed collectively by members of the site committee. Landscaping and orchard work days are scheduled throughout the year. Vegetables, fruits and herbs grown in non-rented community spaces of the

property are available to Grange members that participate in work days and are also intended for use at Grange potlucks and Grange-sponsored community events. To become a member of the site committee, one only needs to become a Grange member.

For Grange and garden applications, or for information on the Grange chicken tending program, go to <https://sites.google.com/site/liveoakgrange/grangegarden>.

welcome to bring anything from their gardens. Attendees are expected to take home any items they bring that are not given away. The in-person exchanges occur twice a month: on the second Wednesday from 5 to 6 p.m. and on the fourth Saturday from 8 to 9 a.m.,

In addition to the scheduled events, members can also participate in private trades and other information through the Santa Cruz Garden Exchange Facebook group. For information, visit the group's

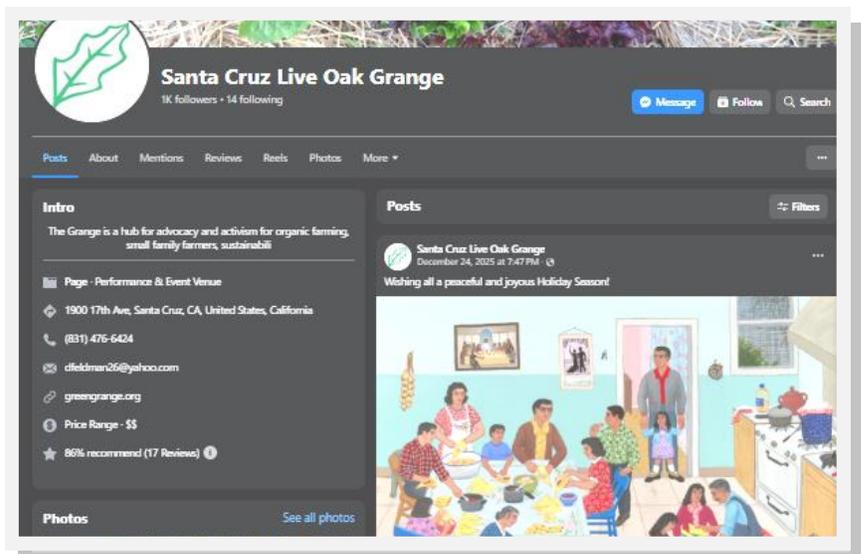


The Santa Cruz Garden Exchange is a favorite happening at the Grange, a place to go plant crazy. Items go fast, they say, so best plan to arrive at the start. The Santa Cruz Garden Exchange is a free event where local residents bring extra plants, seeds, cuttings, tools, compost and other garden-related items to give away. No money is exchanged, and participants are not required to bring anything in order to take part. Gardeners are

Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/Greengrange/>

or email

santacruzgardenexchange@gmail.com.



QUICK & SIMPLE IDEAS TO LIFT YOUR LANDSCAPE AESTHETICS

January 17, 2026

9:30am to 11:30am

Cabrillo College Horticulture Center, 6500 Soquel Dr., Aptos



Join UC Master Gardeners and the Cabrillo College Horticulture Department to explore quick, easy ways to enhance your landscape aesthetics and take your landscape design to the next level at our next Home Gardener Days event! Instructor and Horticulture expert Nicky Hughes will provide a free 45 minute presentation followed by hands-on gardening activities at Cabrillo College! Register at <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/quick-and-simple-ideas-to-lift-your-landscape-aesthetics>.

INTRO TO FRUIT TREES



**Saturday, January 17, 2026;
10:00AM - 12:30PM
Hay Barn and Farm,
UC Santa Cruz, 1156 High St.
SLIDING SCALE**

This workshop will focus on fruit tree care and management, especially for those who are looking to establish and/or care for their fruit trees using organic methods. Although we will be demonstrating on a home garden scale, the techniques and methods are applicable at multiple scales—the basics are the same. This hands-on workshop will cover:

- The run up to planting (site, sun, soil)
- Assessing and improving your soil
- Sourcing quality trees for your area
- Planting bare root trees
- Post plant care

A Q&A session

This workshop is led by Terence Welch from Orchardscapes. An ISA certified arborist and orchardist, Terence brings 30+ years of organic fruit tree growing experience to the classes he teaches. He consults with home gardeners and organic farms throughout the San Francisco Bay Area.

Pre-registration is required for this workshop. Register at <https://center-for-agroecology.company.site/products/Backyard-Series-Intro-to-Fruit-Trees-p798627275>

This workshop is part of the Backyard Series for home gardeners. Presented by the Friends of the UCSC Farm & Garden.

WINTER FRUIT TREE PRUNING



**January 24, 2026, 9:45am to 12:00pm
Sydalyn Hill, 401 Toll House Gulch Road, Felton**

Do you have fruit trees in need of pruning? Do you want help sorting out the difference between a thinning cut and a heading cut? Bring your gloves and clippers for a hands-on fruit tree pruning demonstration at Sydalyn Hill in Felton! After a brief demonstration and orientation, you'll join Master Gardener, Diane Mahan in the orchard for an opportunity to analyze established fruit trees and practice your new-found pruning skills.

This class will be conducted outside. Gloves, pruners, hat, sunscreen, layered clothing, sturdy walking shoes, and a water bottle are recommended.

This workshop will focus on fruit tree care and management, especially for those who are looking to establish and/or care for their fruit trees using organic methods. Although we will be demonstrating on a home garden scale, the techniques and methods are applicable at multiple scales—the basics are the same.

In the event of rain, the class will be rescheduled to January 31st, 2026.

Register at <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/winter-fruit-tree-pruning>

PLAN YOUR GARDEN PROJECTS ON PINTEREST

PINTEREST YOUR GARDEN

by Claire Splan. Excerpted from **Month-to-Month Gardening CALIFORNIA**

Are you a Pinner? If you're an active member of the Pinterest community, you may already know what a great site Pinterest is for discovering ideas, finding instructions, and making plans for garden projects. If you're not on Pinterest yet, this may be the reason to finally join.

Pinterest is a social media website where you can collect images, articles, videos, and other online content and organize them on subject boards that you create for your



Garden Reading Nook

18 Pins · 10y

own interests. Whatever your hobby or passion is, it's likely that you'll find content of interest to you as well as fellow Pinner for you to

follow on Pinterest.

You can join Pinterest using your Facebook or Twitter account or just your email address. Once you've joined you'll be asked to indicate what topics you're interested in. Gardening happens to be one of the very active topics on the site and you'll find more garden-related items that other users have already pinned than you'll know what to do with. You can repin items that other users have already pinned, or you can add a Pin It button to your browser's toolbar and use it to pin items you find anywhere on the Internet (unless a website's owner has blocked their site or image from being printed). Create a few boards for yourself that will help you organize your garden pins. Some of my boards include "Garden Scenes I Love," "Fairy Gardens," "DIY Gardening Techniques," "Garden Wildlife," and "Garden Organization." I use these boards to pin ideas and instructions for projects I might like to try in the future. For me, Pinterest has replaced the manila

folders stuffed with pages I used to tear from magazines. It was always a challenge trying to keep my idea folders organized and usable, but Pinterest makes it a breeze. Not only can I get inspired by other gardeners' pins, I also create boards for any projects I'm planning and pin ideas, tips, instructions, or cautions for those projects, whether it's for building a new garden shed, decorating a deck, designing a water feature, or planting a butterfly garden.

If you're ready to join the Pinterest community, you can start by following me and my boards. You'll find me at [pinterest.com/alamedagardener/](https://www.pinterest.com/alamedagardener/). Come join the fun and get inspired to plan your best garden yet.



Mexican-Style Gardens

52 Pins · 6y



California Fruit and Vegetable Gardening

22 Pins · 4y



Grow your own Vegetables

231 Pins · 5y



Claire Splan
ClaireSplanWriter

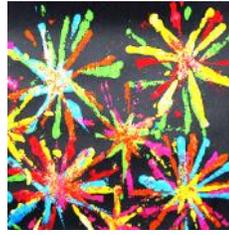
724 followers · 231 following · 476 monthly views

Writer, editor, gardener, news junkie. Author of California Month-by-Month Gardening and California Fruit and Vegetable Gardening.

alamedagarden.blogspot.com



It is membership renewal time! Annual dues, which include all benefits, are only \$20.00, due by January 1st. The membership year lasts through the end of December, 2026. Dues entitle members to all club educational programs, our special events, plant trades and our awesome monthly newsletter. The "green" option is to receive an electronic PDF FULL-COLOR version of the newsletter by checking the newsletter e-mail option below. And...with gift-giving season almost here, consider sharing your passion for gardening, and supporting our club, by giving your favorite gardening enthusiast an opportunity to connect, share and learn with us. A gift



membership is a gift nobody will want to return!

Ours is a club celebrating the joys of gardening, friendship, community, learning, nature and growth. We have a history of giving to the community, and have focused this giving in the last few years on scholarships for Cabrillo College students who are working towards careers in horticulture. Because our dues are so low and we'd like to be able to continue to give scholarships as needed, we are giving you the option of making an additional gift with your membership. Thank you!

Your Membership

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address _____ Email: _____

How would you like your newsletter? E-mail (FULL COLOR!!!) THE GREEN OPTION...SAVE TREES!

OR

Paper (Black & white; postal service)



Gift Membership

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address _____ Email: _____

Gift Membership Newsletter — Check ONE:

E-mail (FULL COLOR!!!) (the green option...save trees)

OR

Paper (Black & white; via Snail Mail)



Enclose check for \$20 per member, plus any additional contribution to our scholarship fund, made out to The Gardeners' Club. Mail to:

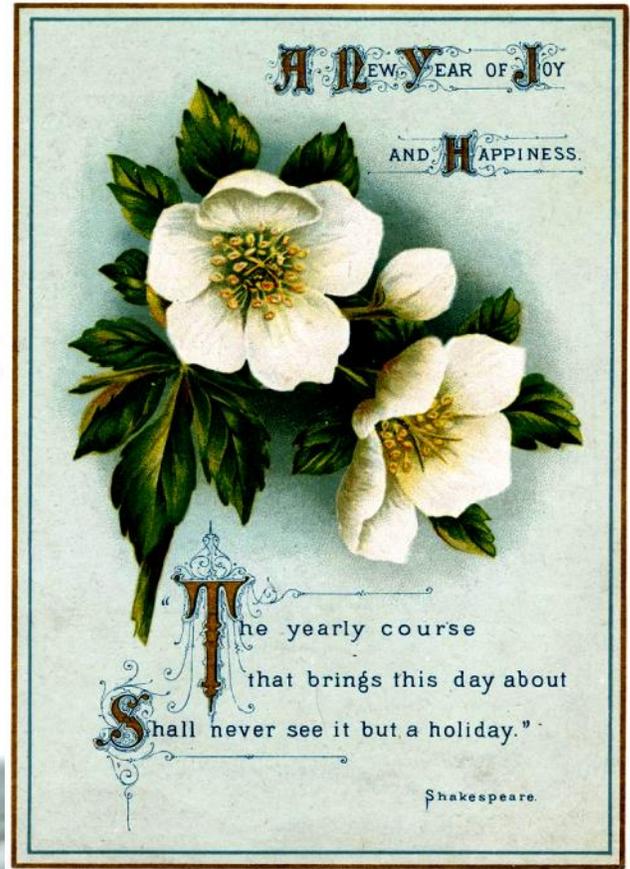
The Gardeners' Club c/o Suzanne Caron
P.O Box 3025
Ben Lomond, CA 95005

Membership amount	\$ _____
I would like to make an additional gift	\$ _____
Total	\$ _____

To the New Year

BY W.S. MERWIN

With what stillness at last
 you appear in the valley
 your first sunlight reaching down
 to touch the tips of a few
 high leaves that do not stir
 as though they had not noticed
 and did not know you at all
 then the voice of a dove calls
 from far away in itself
 to the hush of the morning
 so this is the sound of you
 here and now whether or not
 anyone hears it this is
 where we have come with our age
 our knowledge such as it is
 and our hopes such as they are
 invisible before us



W. S. Merwin, "To the New Year" from *Present Company* (Port Townsend, Washington: Copper Canyon Press, 2005).

The Gardeners' Club

P.O. Box 3025, Ben Lomond CA 95005

President

Cherry Thompson, 475-0991

cherrytea@comcast.net

Vice President & Publicity

Vacant

Secretary

April Barclay, 688-7656

ABarclay@aol.com

Treasurer

VACANT

Membership

Suzanne Caron 609-6230

Suzanne.bottomline@gmail.com

Hospitality

Joanna Hall

628821

ihavlock@sbcglobal.net

Newsletter Writer/Editor

Lise Bixler, 457-2089

lisbixler@sbcglobal.net

www.thegardenersclub.org

Webmaster

pmcveigh@baymoon.com

Member-at-Large

Pat McVeigh

566-4553

Refreshments

zhovreboff@aol.com

Marge Gregory

684-1529

marginergo-

ry41@gmail.com

George & Evelyn Zhovreboff

aneymark@hotmail.com

(916) 303-3673

lupea@ucsc.edu

Lupe Allen, 247-2705

Plant Table

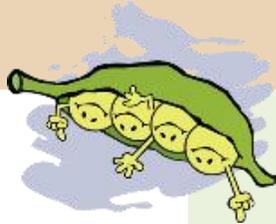
poppy-54@live.com

Debbie Kindle

Members-at-Large

It's easy-peasy to join our club!

Dues are \$20 per calendar year. Make check to "The Gardeners' Club" and mail to P.O. Box 3025, Ben Lomond, CA 95005. Meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. on the 2nd Thursday of each month at the Aptos Grange, 2555 Mar Vista Dr., Aptos



Our front page logo is graciously shared with us by artist Lisa Zador. Order a print or see more of her work at her Etsy shop www.etsy.com/shop/curiousprintpattern.