

Sacramento Garden Notes

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Written & Published

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Plant Notes:

7/9 – one of the potted Azaleas is coming into full bloom again.. I've had some of them bloom in fall but never mid summer.

7/23 – first of the naked ladies in the city strip is blooming, some of my potted ones are showing buds.

More Ipheions are coming up, though one variety still dormant.

Back and forth weather, cool then hot.. overcast and showers, than clear.. no wonder things are a bit confused. The few 100 plus days with low humidity have been hard on some things during them, but most plants are doing better than normal for this time of year due to the unusually cool spells and unusually high humidity.



Above, a Japanese Iris that bloomed in the yard that I didn't know was there. My hand holding it shows the size.

Court Results – We won both cases.. Kyle won his against Cynthia and she owes him.

In her case against us, she lost and we owe her nothing.

August Garden Notes –

If you didn't get it done last month, there is still time to trim foliage on, divide and reset overgrown Iris. They will establish and grow a bit this fall and be ready to explode into growth and bloom next spring.

Going through the yard, I've noticed flower buds forming on Camelias and deciduous Magnolias, so a REMINDER NOT to trim plants such Rhododendron, Camellia, deciduous Magnolias and Dogwood. These plants have already started setting next years flower buds.

While many think of August as mid summer and not for planting and it is true things planted now take extra attention to watering, this is actually the beginning of what is often called our "Second growing Season".

As the days shorten and the nights get longer, many plants begin a second round of growth, that lasts through fall. For this reason, early August is a good time to deadhead spent blooms, do some trimming back on overgrown perennials and then give everything a good feeding to encourage new growth.

Normally, we have a "cool spell" about mid month that helps encourage new growth, which coupled with the fact that the days are already shortening towards fall, allows plants to recover from the heat stress of midday and causes a renewed growth spurt.

Confusing for new people to gardening or to our area, our "Fall Planting Season" actually begins in mid August, especially for such things

as biennials (Foxglove and Canterbury bells as examples). Planting starters of these in mid to late August gives them plenty of time to become large plants by fall, and spectacular large plants for NEXT spring and summer. The same is true of many perennials, though many find it easier to wait and plant those in September and October when it has cooled off (and the nights longer) than this month. (which is why so many plant groups / arboretums and gardens have FALL plant sales).

Many of the California natives and winter growing annuals can be started in mid to late month for larger plants to bloom earlier in the spring than they would if allowed to follow our “natural” cycle based on rainfall.

Many beginning gardeners, especially those not from California, don't realize that we have a second full growing season that runs from Fall through Spring and that it includes almost all of the CA natives (CA poppy etc) , many plants from South Africa and Australia (Chasmanthe, some Calla Lilies, many unusual bulbs, Watsonia, as examples) and numerous cool season plants that grow and flower during our winter rainy season, such as poppies, pansy, calendula, snapdragon, violias, and cyclamen.

Also, they often have trouble grasping that Fall is actually a **BETTER TIME** to plant hardy perennials, shrubs and trees than spring for several reasons:

- 1) Our weather rarely gets cold enough to stop root growth underground meaning the plant will develop a much larger root system to promote better growth than a spring planted one.
- 2) The cooler weather and longer nights of fall allows us an easier time keeping plants watered and cared for.
- 3) The start of the rainy season helps establish the plants with far less work on the gardeners part.

Unfortunately many “nurseries”, especially the mass marketers don't want to educate the public, and are too caught up in “The Holidays” to do much fall planting promotion except for a few weeks in Sept. and maybe early Oct. after which “The Holidays” take over their mindset and the space normally used for plants.



A new Variegated Foliage Alstromeria I found at a nursery in Fort Bragg on my recent trip. Below shows the gorgeous foliage even without blooms.



I am getting rid of thousands of plastic pots in assorted sizes. If you can use any, contact Me.



Above is a variegated Alocasia I also found (At \$50 a pot) that I couldn't resist. Due to the cost of the plant, the first thing I did was divide it to make sure I wasn't limited to one plant just in case something happened.

An example of why I'm always skeptical about packaged bulbs in stores:

I bought a package of what were supposed to be *red* spider flowered Dahlias. What I got is shown at the end of this article.

The plant produced ONE pure red flower on that 106 degree day and the other two dozen its had so far were all as below.

Admittedly its a gorgeous flower, and very unique. It also has been a great bloomer so far, with little "heat stall" in our hot spells. However it obviously isn't what was purchased as, even though I've found it a nice surprise..

I have had this problem, of packaged material not being as shown on the package more and more frequently as time goes on.

I don't know if it is from carelessness from the packing staff, or deliberate indifference by the companies.. just wanting to sell product, but is is very

frustrating most times, though occasionally, like in this case, a pleasant surprise.



Tulip clausiana 'Cynthia' (above) is one of the species type tulips that are hardy perennials here and return year after year. All the clausiana group are true perennials in our area. Below is T. clausiana 'Lady Jane', a clump of which has been in the Old City Cemetery Hamilton Square perennial plantings for years.



Help the kids at Sunburst and get a great bulb selection!!

One mail order source of a HUGE selection of bulbs I'd recommend is Brent and Becky's Bulbs. For those of you who want a mail order catalog, the address is:

Brent and Becky's Bulbs
7900 Daffodil Lane
Gloucester, VA 23061
Toll-free: (877) 661-2852

For those of you who want to visit online, you can not only get a great selection but can also help the kids at Sunburst Projects by going to:

www.bloominbucks.com

Choose Sunburst Projects from the list of charities and it will then take you to the regular Brent and Becky's Bulbs catalog to place your order. Sunburst will get a percentage (25%) of your order at no additional cost to you!

Free Plants:

I have several hundred leftover plants I need to get rid of so I don't have to water them.

I am clearing out leftover plants by offering anyone who gets Garden Notes a chance to get a few free plants. If you'd like to make a donation to Sunburst Projects for them you can, but it is NOT required. To give the most people a chance to get free plants, I am restricting it to 4 free plants for now.

This offer does not include personal plants or special projects plants, only leftover plants from the plant sales.

You can make an appointment to come by by calling me at (916) 617-7516.

Sorry, no one NOT receiving Garden Notes is invited This is NOT a public offer.

I am hoping to get rid of some leftovers and raise a few dollars for the kids of Sunburst through donations.

Mendocino Headlands State Park- the part most miss...



For those visiting Mendocino, who enjoy a walk along a wild river (dogs allowed), Mendocino Headlands State Park also includes a wonderful beach and road trail up the river that most people miss. The entry to this other part of the park is off of Route 1, on the other side of the highway from the town side of the park most are used to. The reason most miss it, is that the entry is a simple a one lane road near the bridge over the river that says simply "Coastal Access".

