



SAN MATEO ARBORETUM SOCIETY

101 NINTH AVENUE, SAN MATEO, CALIFORNIA

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www.SanMateoArboretum.org

MEMBER NEWSLETTER

July - September 2022

All the Presidents' Messages

From Carol ...

On July 1, the Arboretum Society will begin our new fiscal year. I am stepping down as president effective June 30 and leaving SMAS in the capable hands of Kevin Wilkinson. Kevin has not only been our vice president, he's been in charge maintenance and technology too. He's been an essential part of our success these past few years.

I'd like to take this opportunity to let you know we are planning our annual member party for September 10. Please save the date on your calendar. We will send more details out later.

From Kevin ...

First off, on behalf of the entire organization, I want to thank Carol for her outstanding leadership of SMAS these past three years. She graciously took over as president when Carrie Ewing resigned and left the area. Carol took over with a goal of completing the pumphouse renovation, something she had been working on for many years. She got it done and the result is spectacular. And, when the pandemic came, Carol led us through two difficult years. After a brief shutdown, she ensured we reopened with safety protocols in place to protect nursery volunteers and customers. We did not just survive the pandemic, we actually grew.

In a larger sense, Carol transformed our organization in two ways. First, she changed our business model. We are no longer dependent on a biennial garden tour to fund our mission. Under Carol, we have greatly increased revenue from nursery sales and pumphouse rentals and that more than exceeds what we earned from the garden tour. The garden tour was much loved by the public but required many volunteer hours to manage. Those volunteer hours can now be redirected to other projects.

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Second, Carol reestablished the relationship between SMAS and the Parks Department of the City of San Mateo. In particular, we helped fund the renovation of the Central Park entrance at 9th and Palm Ave. and made a second donation for the Laurel Ave. entrance. And, we made a large donation to the Central Park general fund. We are currently working with the Parks department to add directional signs and plant signs which are sorely lacking in Central Park. To increase our visibility, Carol held an open house at the pumphouse for Parks management and City Council and made a presentation to City Council about SMAS.

Finally, Carol strove to make volunteers feel appreciated and recognize their contributions. Some say that running an all-volunteer organization is like herding cats. Carol is an excellent cat herder. She did a superb job at improving communication, keeping us organized and efficient and avoiding frustration. I am very grateful she has agreed to stay on the SMAS Board because I will need her wise advice.

Looking forward to the coming year, I have some specific goals and some general goals. It would be great to see the Rose Garden trellises built. Also, the Victorian garden in the Arboretum needs a refresh. And the greenhouses and potting shed need repairs.

More generally, in the next year I hope we can broaden our community outreach, for example through events or publicity, so that more people are aware of SMAS. Also, I would like to engage new volunteers who have day jobs. For example, some SMAS “back-office” tasks can be done at home. And we might expand work hours at the nursery, in the evening or before or after weekend sale hours.

Once again, thank you Carol for your excellent stewardship of SMAS. And I look forward to working with you all in the coming year.

Kevin Wilkinson, President

Shuffling the Board

We want to welcome Irv Agard and Rose Gomes to the SMAS Board of Directors. Irv is a Rose Garden Volunteer and Rose is a nursery volunteer. Of course, these are tentative appointments that will be formally voted on at the September’s meeting. And Judy Paton has resigned from the Board. We thank her for her years of service.

NEWS from the NURSERY: by Julie Thoman:

The nursery is delighted to welcome back Brenda, our houseplant maven, who returned in June after a nine month absence. During the pandemic houseplant sales soared as people beautified their home offices. Every Monday we'd hear the cry - hooray for houseplants - as they were a big chunk of the sales total. Busy Brenda kept our inventory of houseplants full. Now she is back and sales are up again. Welcome home!



Let's not forget Judy. She and Brenda have both been with us for over 20 years and are a wonderful source of knowledge. Judy is now our chief propagator and has been overseeing great changes. Now she teaches new volunteers to forage for cuttings to keep the tables full. Before, we just propagated whatever was donated. It takes four months for cuttings to reach our sales tables. Judy keeps them moving along her railroad. Yes she has a railroad!! Think of her as the engineer!!!

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It is not just old timers that make the changes. Some of our newest volunteers are making a difference. Cathleen and Cherie offered to take over the succulent /cactus tables - a big job! Suddenly (all donations are sudden) they found they had a collection of very rare cactus on their hands. They have been learning daily and managing to become cactus enthusiasts. Keep it up!



Carmen and her Tuesday creative crew are working with air plants including flowering ones. Look for them in the house plant greenhouse. They seem to float in the air. Carmen also got a surprise donation - a collection of bonsais. She and Joe will be working on getting them ready for display. Never a dull day! .

That brings up the subject of donors. We have always depended on our customers and membership for cuttings and plants. Over the last few years we have acquired incredible commercial donors. One of them - Gene Fleet gave a large donation of very special hostas. We have a really wide selection.

Come see!

More on our amazing volunteers in the next newsletter.



Better Together: The New Science of “Companion Planting”

By UC Master Gardeners, Cynthia Nations and Maggie Mah

Reprinted with permission from the Master Gardener July 2022 Monthly Newsletter

<https://smsf-mastergardeners.ucanr.edu/>



Like many things in life, the best results are achieved by working together. This is especially true with plants!

Although you may have heard about plants that are thought to aid in insect control, disease prevention or the benefits of pairing particular plants in certain areas, the latest research on “companion planting” goes far beyond random recommendations or traditional lore. The latest research reveals the need to look at our gardens in a more holistic way: as ecosystems where plants interact with each other to create a healthy, bio-diverse place. Key to understanding this concept is that plants actively affect each other. They do this through fungal associations, chemical messaging and allelopathy, which is the ability of one plant's chemistry to affect the growth and development of another. They also share resources, attract pest predators, and improve each other's nutrient availability and absorption.

When we plant one type of plant in an area, whether it's tomatoes or other vegetables, we create what is known as a “monoculture.” Although it makes large scale farming possible, monoculture leads to increased reliance on pesticides and chemical fertilizers. However, when we choose different plants to grow together, we create a “polyculture,” which leads to biodiversity. Why is this important? Biodiversity means a more stable environment for veggies and other plants to thrive by enhancing nutrient cycling, water conservation, fewer pests and ultimately, more carbon sequestration.

What is modern research-based companion planting? Scientists prefer terms like inter-cropping or inter-planting to describe creating a polyculture to achieve desired benefits in the garden. Using a scientific approach helps us to understand the why and how of successful planting combinations.

Jessica Walliser, author of “Plant Partners: Science-Based Companion Planting Strategies for the Vegetable Garden,” provides plant partnerships that have undergone scientific scrutiny and shares plant pairings that help to reduce pests, minimize disease, support pollination and improve soil fertility. Walliser's findings are the basis of this article.

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Soil Preparation and Conditioning

Plant companions improve soil via cover cropping, nitrogen transfer, and breaking up heavy soils. Plants used as cover crops to condition the soil include oats, buckwheat, winter rye, crimson clover, winter wheat, and cowpeas. Plant partners that improve nitrogen transfer include: garden beans + potatoes; fava beans + sweet corn; cowpeas + peppers; peas + lettuce; and edamame + fall greens. Plants that help break up heavy soils include: buckwheat, forage radish, and turnips.

Weed Management

Suppressing weeds without herbicides is also possible with companion planting. Intercropping of plants can make “living mulch,” which crowds out unwanted plants and blocks light to keep new seeds from sprouting. In allelopathy, some plants can help gardeners combat weeds by their growth inhibiting compounds. Plant companions for living mulches include: crimson clover + cole crops (broccoli, cauliflower, brussels sprouts, and kale); medium red clover + winter squash; white clover + strawberries or blueberries; white clover + tomatoes, peppers, eggplants; and cowpeas + peppers.

Pest Management

Plant companions can also help manage unwanted insects. There are several methods which include the following: “trap cropping,” where one type of plant is used to lure pests away from another, more desirable one (examples: tomatoes + cowpeas, bell peppers + hot cherry pepper, and cabbage + collard greens); “masking strategies,” ways to “hide” or deflect a pest's attention from a particular plant (example: tomatoes + basil); and creating physical barriers such as hedgerows or low growing plants to impede movement and limit access to insects that lay eggs, pupate, or live in the ground.

Disease Management

Plant partnerships and interplanting can also help to suppress soilborne diseases like stem or crown rot, wilt disease, root rot, and bacterial diseases. Examples include: potatoes + oats or winter rye for verticillium wilt and cauliflower and lettuce + brassicas for verticillium wilt and sclerotin stem rot.

Biological Control

Using companion partners can be effective in keeping pest populations in check by creating a habitat for pest-eating, beneficial insects and spiders. Combine pest-prone plants with other types that provide nectar and pollen and ensure there is enough variety to keep insects interested year-round. Examples include: lettuce and other greens + dill and fennel and cole crops + black-eyed susans and cosmos for aphid control.

Pollinators

We can attract many species of native bees by providing nesting habitats, eliminating pesticides, and companion planting. Improving pollination examples include: Tomatoes, peppers, and eggplants + large or hooded flowers and blueberries + crimson clover to attract bumblebees.

Using science as your guide, gardening with companion plants will help you learn about your own unique corner of the world. Have fun as you experiment with plant combinations and create a bio-diverse habitat outside your door. You'll look at your garden in a whole new way as you observe the changes in color and texture--all the while appreciating the overall health in your garden.

San Mateo Arboretum Society

Seminars, Nursery, Plant Clinic and More!

All Sunday Garden seminars and workshops are web-based using Zoom and will be recorded and viewable by all those registered even if you miss the live presentation.

Questions: education@sanmateoarboretum.org or call 650-579-0536 x3.

MID-YEAR ROSE CARE. FREE!

Sunday, July 10, 1 - 2:30pm

Location: Via ZOOM and Small In-Person Group

Reservations required: [Visit the website](#) or call 650-579-0536 x3.

Stu Dalton, Master Rosarian and Master Gardener, will help you manage your roses in the warm, dry summer. He will cover deadheading, summer pruning the center for air and light, watering deeply and infrequently, mulching and followed by a rose garden walk.

GARDEN TREASURE HUNT. Children's Program. FREE!

Sundays, July 17 and 24 and Saturday, July 23. Come anytime between 11:30 - 1:30.

Children ages 4 - 12. NO registration required.

Location: Enter the Arboretum's north gate.

Learn about plants while exploring the Arboretum on a plant treasure hunt. There will be a small prize for all who complete the hunt. Have fun in the sun.

CREATING SACRED SPACE IN THE GARDEN via Zoom FREE!

Sunday, August 7, 1 - 2:30pm

Reservations required: [Visit the website](#) or call 650-579-0536 x3.

Arete Nicholas, Master Gardener, will discuss how to locate the ideal spot(s) in your garden to create a quiet, peaceful place for contemplation, reflection, writing or meditation and then how to enhance that special area by adding plantings and other elements that will appeal to all the senses.

HOUSEPLANT BASICS by UC Master Gardeners via Zoom FREE!

Sunday, September 11, 1 - 2:30pm

Reservations required: [Visit the website](#) or call 650-579-0536 x3.

Topics will include: benefits of houseplants; planning ahead; shopping - what do you look for; bringing your plants home; fertilizing and providing nutrients; pests, diseases, and more!

MASTER GARDENER PLANT CLINICS. FREE!

Sunday July 10, August 7, September 11, anytime between 11am - 2pm

Come to the Arboretum for this walk-in plant clinic. [The Master Gardeners](#) will be available to answer your questions from general information to advice about specific problems. Bring samples of your problem plants or insects for better diagnosis. Use a Ziploc or similar bag to carry your sample.

<https://ucanr.edu/sites/MGsSMSF/>

NAME OUR GIRAFFES. For Children ages 4 to 12.

Yes, the Arboretum has our own giraffe statues. Pick up and fill out an entry form at the Arboretum

11am to 2 PM, Saturdays & Sundays, July 31 to August 14.

Winners will be announced after August 14.

NURSERY PLANT SALES:

OPEN weekends 11am to 2 PM. Visit our demonstration gardens and to purchase a wide variety of outdoor, including some natives, indoor, orchids and more! Payment is by credit, debit card & Apple Pay. No cash is accepted.

THE ZOETIC TAPESTRY PROJECT

Open: 10am - 3pm, Saturday & Sunday. Closing August 12.

John Sutti is back at the Arboretum with the College of San Mateo Digital Media Art Exhibit. Your support encourages these artists to continue creating beauty and supports the local community.

**Location: San Mateo Central Park, Kohl Pumphouse,
101 Ninth Ave, San Mateo. Enter at Ninth Ave. & Palm Ave.
www.SanMateoArboretum.org; (650) 579-0536**



SAN MATEO ARBORETUM SOCIETY
101 Ninth Avenue
San Mateo, CA 94401

FIRST CLASS



SAVE THE DATE
for
our annual meeting and member party
Saturday, September 10, 2 - 5 p.m

Come grow with us...