

VOL. 15



Laguna Beach Garden Club Weeder's Digest



JANUARY 2021

Education in the Garden

"We can complain because rose bushes have thorns, or rejoice because thorn bushes have roses."

-Abraham Lincoln

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR • DALYNN MALEK

I spent the last two days packing up Christmas 2020 and for those who came to my house for the 2019 Member Holiday Tour, you know that includes a lot of nutcrackers. While I enjoy the treasured memories the decorations bring, I am happy to carefully wrap them up to rest until next November when they will make another appearance right after Thanksgiving. Yesterday afternoon I replaced that decor items that had been waiting in storage since my fall decorations came out of hiding in

September, and once again it seemed as if my house was "back to normal". Much to my dismay, this morning I spied one lone Christmas item that escaped my clean-up. It was almost as if this wreath was saying, "2020 may be gone, but it won't be soon forgotten." I packed that wreath up with glee and toasted 2021!



COME JOIN IN
THE FUN

Events This Month

General Meeting Jan.8

Anna Maria Desipris
Pollinators-Honey & Native Bees
(see page 3)

9:30 am-
make your
own cup of
coffee in
your
kitchen

10:00 am-
Zoom in to
the meeting



Green Thumb & Crafts Trips & Tours

Covid-19 Claims LBGC Activities

Due to the current situation with Covid-19 the Green Thumb and Trips and Tours activities are cancelled during the month of January. Hopefully we will be able to resume both of these activities in March and April.

A New Year and Growing Possibilities

Happy New Year Dear
Garden Club
Members,

At last, 2020 is behind us and we start 2021 with fresh outlooks, hopes and dreams. Much of Southern California had its first big rainfall Monday (12/28). Tuesday morning when my little dog Tripp and I took our morning walk, everything was washed clean; the tree leaves sparkled from rain drops, the air smelled clean and fresh and the sky was bright and beautiful blue. My garden was beyond thrilled with plants standing tall and reaching for the sky.



Copper Spoons Plant with Poinsettia

Our holidays were quiet and peaceful. Phone calls with all of our children and grandchildren as far away as Barrow Alaska and Aruba were delightful. It was

exciting to hear all their plans for the year ahead. I hope each of you enjoyed the holidays in whatever way you were able to celebrate.

News of multiple vaccines for COVID 19 becoming available in the next several months make all of us very happy. Lives will be saved; our economy can begin to rebuild and many other essential services can start to get back on track.



Clear skies and snow on Saddleback

While many of us have been missing Laguna Beach Garden Club activities and in-person meetings, we don't quite reach the level to be considered essential services. Still, I'm pleased to tell you we are anticipating an in-person Gate & Garden Tour. And, while I don't know exactly when, I do believe we will be meeting in person again in 6 to 9 months. When that happens, *Trips and*

Tours, Green Thumb Crafts and other activities won't be far behind.

Remember we have a great group of speakers booked for the rest of this club year (through May 2021). Enjoy our Zoom meetings and wonderful guest speakers. They have wonderful information to share and they are great speakers.

One last note, our membership price is \$30 for now through May 2021 (\$35 if you pay by credit card).

The Zoom link for our January general meeting (January 8, 2021 at 10:00am) will be emailed to you the Tuesday before the meeting. If you don't receive it, contact me okeenan04@gmail.com. See you soon!!

-Mariann Keenan



Mariann and husband Bob at Virginia Robinson Gardens in February 2020



The Buzz About January's Speaker

Pollinators: Honey Bees and Native Bees

Ann Maria Desipris will showcase our favorite pollinators, honey bees and native bees at her presentation on January 8. We will learn about the life cycles of these amazing creatures, their role in ecology and we how can encourage their population growth.



She wears many hats: beekeeper, herbalist, Permaculture educator/practitioner, farmer, college professor, and a new mother.

When she is not teaching, she can be found outside with her 16-month old son, tending to the homestead's crops, goats, chickens and bees, or inside crafting medicinal herbs for clients and community.

Anna Maria has a mission to let people know that the bees have much to teach us about a how to sustain a healthy Earth. She and her husband Lucian began working together in 2014 to support the health of our shared

ecosystem and communities through education, regenerative practices, and Permaculture, which is a blueprint for the way we live our lives. The word was originally made up from two words 'permanent' and 'agriculture' and now refers to creating a culture that can endure and thrive for generations to come, using with three simple tenets or ethics: 1) Care for the planet, 2) Care for people, and 3) Use your Fair Share and return the surplus, ie. Recycle.

Anna Maria earned her BA degree in International Affairs and Pre-Med. While working at the River School Farm in Reno, NV, her mentor shared the magic of bees with her and she's been hooked ever since. She moved to California and landed a position at The Ecology Center in San Juan Capistrano, which was a destination of one of our Trips & Tours, where she worked directly with chefs, farmers purveyors & artisans to create farm to table events. She believes, "Southern California has an incredible abundance of sustainable heritage options for everything you could need to survive, from fiber to grain, dairy, meat and of course produce."

She now rescues hundreds of bee hives from extermination, establishes urban bee sanctuary hives, and creates apprenticeship training program for beekeeping. She believes that bees and plants are what bring the magic to her life. Their 40-acre farm, known as **Desert Bloom – Permaculture Research & Education Farm** (located inland from Temecula and Palm Desert), has been instrumental in teaching others about bees and giving scholarships to those who want to engage in sustainability.



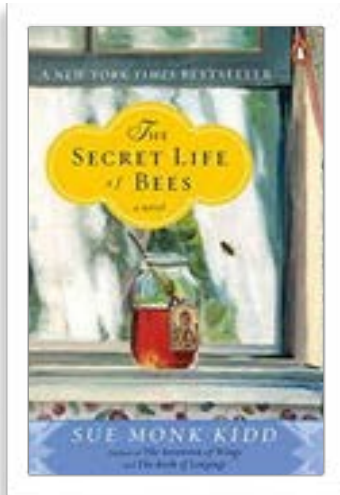
You can join their educational programming in person and online for the 2021 year. Registration for classes in Permaculture, homesteading, beekeeping and herbalism can be found at aboutandforsustainability.com



The Secret Life of Bees



Since the topic of our January speaker, Anna Marie Desipris, is garden pollinators, both native and honey bees, I thought to recommend the novel, *The Secret Life of Bees* by Sue Monk Kidd, as a book definitely worth reading. To quote a review I found, “Beeautiful. It has nothing to do with bees and everything.”

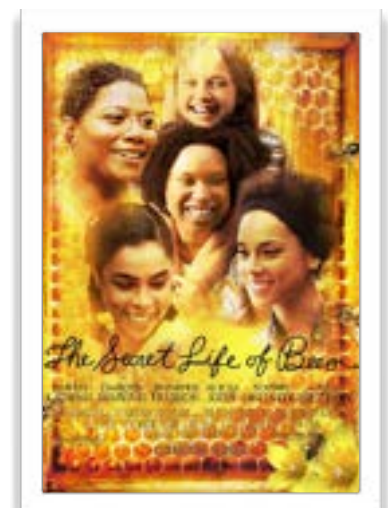


My book club read the novel, written in 2001, and everyone really enjoyed it. Definitely not a light read as it has its share of tragedy, but what great novel doesn't. It's well-written with beautiful language. Set in South Carolina in 1964, Lily, a 14-year old teenager, who blames herself for her mother's death when she was very young, and must deal with a difficult life. She lives on a peach farm with her abusive father, and Rosaleen, a Black tobacco-spitting woman, who raises her and is the nearest thing she has to a mother. Because the Civil Rights voting Act was just signed by President Johnson, Rosaleen walks into a small nearby town to register to vote, and on the way argues with the three of the town's worst racists about her right to vote. Naturally her response is to spit on their shoes which results in Rosaleen being jailed. Lily decides that this is the moment she would break Rosaleen out of jail and run away.

Thus, the journey of coming of age, self-discovery, and learning about love and self-forgiveness begins. The “Calendar Sisters,” August, May, and June Boatwright (three African-American beekeeping sisters) offer them refuge as fugitives in the town of Tiburon, where Lily finds comfort in their magical way of life and their belief in the Black Madonna, a photo of which dons the label of the sisters' famous honey. There is a definite connection to Lily's mother's past in this town.

Enjoy this read. One of my favorite parts was learning about beekeeping with Lily, as August explains the process. Another reviewer said, “I will never look at a bee again without feeling the magic of their world and the lovely novel that introduced me to their wonder.”

Of course, a movie followed in 2008 with an all-star cast with mixed reviews. Queen Latifah is cast in the role as August, Dakota Fanning stars as Lily, Jennifer Hudson garners the role of Rosaleen, Sophie Okonedo is May, and Alicia Keys portrays the sad life of June. I usually take a movie critic's opinion with a grain of salt because often times I don't agree. I am willing to give a film a try on my own and form my own opinion, although most times I find that the novel is almost always much better than the film. I looked online and the film is available on several platforms: Netflix, Amazon Prime and Hulu for sure.



2021 GATE & GARDEN TOUR

A decision has been made to go forward with the Gate & Garden Tour now that COVID-19 vaccines are available and being administered. This year's Tour is slated for **Saturday, May 1, 2021**. As we had planned for 2020, the reception location will be in the beautiful gardens of the Laguna Beach County Water District located at 306 3rd Street, Laguna Beach. Originally built in 1927, the building's "Mediterranean Revival" style was designed by architect Aubrey St. Clair, the son of the first artist to make his home in the Laguna Beach Art Colony. The garden is designed to show visitors that landscaping can be water efficient, fire safe and beautiful as well!

More details about the Tour and ticket availability will be announced in the next few weeks. In the meantime, volunteers are needed to assist with planning the tour activities, setting up the venue and the gardens, and assisting with the various events the day of the tour. Any and all help will be celebrated and appreciated!

Please consider lending a hand to make this event enjoyable for all those that come out to support our Club and scholarships. Give me a call or send an email and I will find an opportunity just right for you.

Susan Denton

Email: cnnpinca@yahoo.com

Mobile (call or text): (949) 315-5028



One of the gardens from a previous tour



Laguna Beach Water District gardens-
the starting point for the 2021 tour

Patty Gaffney Shares Her New Passion

YOUTUBE AND GARDENING

With all that's happening at large and at home, I have found that my attention is less focused with a much shorter span. Much as I love to read books and watch movies, it's been harder for me to let go and enter the world of the story.

Instead, I have discovered a couple of *YouTube* channels where I'm learning some gardening or plant-care tips and spending a short segment of time with a positive and upbeat personality. While they live in a completely different planting zone than mine, I still learn new things and am inspired by their projects and their vision.

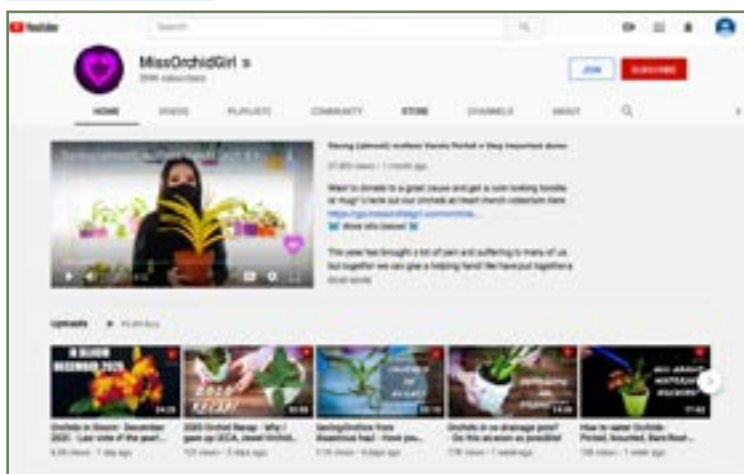
And maybe I'm late to the viewing party of these two particular YouTubers and you already know about them. We would love to know about your favorite garden or plant related *YouTube* channels-please share them with us for the newsletter.

Here are my two current favorite *YouTube* channels; click on the title to link to their channel page.

[Garden Answer](#)



[Miss Orchid Girl](#)



MILD CLIMATE WINTER GARDEN TO-DO LIST

TIPS TO KEEP YOUR GARDEN LOOKING GOOD

By Linda Hagen-Garden Design Magazine

While Northern gardeners have pretty much closed up shop, Southern gardeners might be left wondering what this winter fuss is all about. Those who are lucky enough to live in climates where you can garden most (or all) of the year don't have to worry about protecting plants from snow or blowing water out of sprinkler lines in October. However, there are things that you can do in mild climates to make sure that your yard stays looking its best through the "winter" (wink, wink).

Protect plants: You might be thinking—but wait, you just said Southern gardeners don't have to worry about protecting their plants. Even with mild winters, one unexpected overnight frost can cause damage and even be fatal to your frost-tender garden plants. Cold winds dry plants out quickly, as leaves will lose more moisture than in calm conditions. Plan ahead and keep a few [shrub covers](#) or burlap wraps on hand to protect tender plants from frosty nights when the mercury dips close to or below freezing or for cold, windy times. It's likely you'll need to order covers online, because your local garden center or box store might not carry them, or may not have many in stock if they do.



Bring them in: Cold-sensitive container plants, like tropicals, might need to be [brought inside for the season](#), or at least on extra chilly days and nights. Check the hardiness of individual plants, some can only handle lows to 50 degrees before experiencing damage.

Pre-order plants for spring: Spring planting time will be here soon, see [what's new from Proven Winners](#). Pre-ordering your plants for home delivery is the perfect opportunity to try something new or find that favorite hydrangea that reminds you of your grandmother, but isn't carried at your local garden center. So plan ahead, discover new plants or find old favorites, and be ready to drop them in the ground when they arrive at your doorstep.

Maintain outdoor furniture: While you might still be spending some time outside, chances are it's not as often. Now is the time to make needed repairs to outdoor upholstery or give furniture a fresh coat of paint. Protecting your furniture from the elements with [furniture covers](#) is often more important in warmer climates where furniture may already be damaged from hot summer sun.



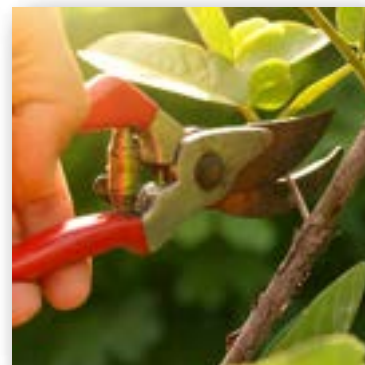
Take care of garden tools: When you're able to garden year-round, garden tools never get a break. Take a little extra time in winter to make sure they're in good working order. Store tools properly to keep them dry in winter rains. Treat wood handles and protect metal surfaces with [boiled linseed oil](#). Take inventory and replace any tools that are beyond repair,

MILD CLIMATE WINTER GARDEN TO-DO LIST- continued

making note of new tools you might want for the coming spring and summer. See [Tool Care & Maintenance](#) for more.

Add mulch: It's a good time to top off the mulch around plants. Mulches that were applied last spring will need replenishing after surviving hot summer days and early winter rains. A good layer of mulch will help to insulate roots on colder nights and maintain moisture in the soil when dry winter winds blow.

Prune trees and shrubs: Deciduous fruit trees and non-spring-flowering trees and shrubs can be pruned in early to mid-winter. Prune any winter bloomers just after flowering. Keep an eye on the weather and don't prune when wet weather is expected. Moisture encourages the growth of mold and bacteria that can invade the freshly cut branches. For more on pruning, see [Pruning Garden Shrubs and Perennials](#).



Adjust water: Many trees and plants will go dormant over winter and won't require nearly as much water as during hot summer months. The sun's rays aren't as intense and moisture won't evaporate as quickly. Winter rains may also supplement the water supplied to plants, so adjust your watering schedule accordingly. Timers with moisture sensors or those that you can access remotely to shut water off at a moment's notice can be handy when unexpected showers hit.

Check for broken branches: Although trees and shrubs in the South aren't usually subjected to snow loads, some pretty fierce winter winds can blow through. Keep an eye out for branches that are weak, rubbing together, or those that have been broken. Support or remove them to prevent further damage.

Add color with hardy winter annuals: Brighten flower beds with cold-tolerant annuals such as pansies, petunias, snapdragons, dianthus, calendula and cyclamen.



Establish new camellias, azaleas and rhododendrons: Not all plants are best established in winter, but it's a great time to plant [camellias](#), [azaleas](#) and [rhododendrons](#).

Plant bare root trees and shrubs: Now's the time to get those bare root roses, shrubs, vines, citrus and fruit trees in the ground. The season can be short and they need to be planted while they are still dormant to avoid shock.

Put in spring-flowering bulbs: Bulbs that were stored in the refrigerator in October are ready to plant in January or February. Get them in the ground now and you'll have beautiful spring flowers. Learn more about [planting bulbs](#).

Click on any of the underlined subjects to get a link for more information.

MILD CLIMATE WINTER GARDEN TO-DO LIST- continued

Grow some veggies: Winter vegetable gardening can be quite productive in zones 8-11. The weather is still warm enough through most of the winter, although you may need to provide some protection in January or February. The sun's rays are mellow and won't burn seedlings or dry out the soil as fast as in summer. There are fewer insects and pests to deal with, and most diseases aren't a problem this time of year either. There are also fewer weeds to contend with and the garden becomes virtually care free. Vegetables that grow well in early spring in northern gardens, such as lettuce, peas, spinach, carrots, broccoli and kale, generally do well over winter in milder regions. For more suggestions of what to plant, see [this list of cool weather veggies](#).



Shop for seeds: Start planning your spring and summer vegetable and flower gardens now. Many seeds can be started in zones 8 and 9 in January and February. Some of our favorite seeds can be found at: [Proven Winners](#), [Botanical Interests](#), and [Burpee](#).

Review and revise: Make note of what worked in your garden, as well as what didn't, over the last year. Alter this coming year's plans to try something new or fix what went wrong. If you're having trouble remembering the successes or mistakes from last spring, then now's the time to get a [garden journal](#) and start making notes, so next year you've got the information handy.



Educate yourself: Take some time for yourself and learn something new. Sign up for an [online class](#) or workshop through a local botanical garden. Treat yourself to a new [gardening book](#) and make plans for that vegetable or cut-flower garden you've always wanted to grow.

Show us your New Year Garden Projects

Send in photos of your 2021 garden project, newly planted pots, fun fairy gardens, or any other bits of your yard that brings you joy, and we will share them with the rest of the members.

Send your pictures and a brief description to: Dalynn Malek at dalynnmalek@gmail.com



Take a Walk with Lynn Jax Through Laguna Beach

Christmas Décor of 2020 in the Gardens

In an effort to add some uphill cardio to my routine, walk off some Christmas pounds, and get a jump start on New Year's resolutions, my route took me to the tree streets of North Laguna, which has served as a location of several Gate & Garden Tours. What I saw inspired a theme "The Last Gasp of Christmas Decorations of 2020" in gardens, and I thought I would share visually my walk on December 30 with you. For those of you who track your numbers, I logged 2 miles in 4511 steps in 2 miles and 4 flights of stairs. Not awesome numbers, but they are mine and I own them. Ha Ha!

On the first uphill I found Santa surrounded by 3 palm trees and in the yard an outdoor balance rings and exercise area for the kids who live there (I didn't venture in to try it out, besides it would be trespassing).



Next my eyes were greeted by three towering cactuses donned with Santa hats and to the right were several agaves adorned with red & white striped ornaments. To quote Nancy Englund, "Feliz Agavedad".



Then a quaint wooden cottage with icicle lights and



Santas on the porch. Two houses used some whimsical Santas with their Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer as their choice of Christmas décor. A wooden cut-out duet behind the white picket fence offset the sign that gives thanks for the Healthcare Workers, First Responders, and Essential Workers, a nice touch



in this terrible COVID season. The others are an inflated duo accented by candy canes and the red tea plants.



A Walk with Lynn Jax Through Laguna Continues

And to combine several holidays into one tableau, we see a fancy, silver reindeer and two simple pumpkins on the porch.



This neighborhood is filled with many cottages for which Laguna is famous. This one balances the white Christmas angel on right with the immensely tall pine tree on the left.



An old-fashioned perfect wreath, complete with pine cones and gold ribbon, dresses up the old wooden gate.



To enhance my walk, I chanced past Monica Thompson's historic house, built in 1921, with its white picket fence festooned with red ribbons and



The white house with a red door wreathed in garland spoke to me; there was even a miniature Santa on the tree trunk.

garland. Her front yard is filled with raised vegetable beds.



To add a modern take, three 15-foot aluminum Christmas trees with inflated gifts ended my walk.



If any of you want to accompany me on one of my forays into Laguna neighborhoods, I'd be happy for the company after we all receive our vaccinations. Here's to a better year in 2021.

Happy Trails, Lynn Jax

Susan Denton has a recipe for Brussels sprouts that is super quick and delicious

So, What's Cooking?

Brussels Sprouts: Brassica oleracea gemmifera

Brussels sprouts originated in the Mediterranean and are a hardy member of the cabbage family. The sprouts grow from a tall, heavy main stem surrounded by large green leaves, producing miniature cabbage-like heads 1 to 2 inches in diameter.

If you'd like to try growing your own stalk, visit Harvest to Table for detailed instructions https://harvesttotable.com/how_to_grow_brussels_sprouts/. Whether you buy Brussels Sprouts at your market, Farmers Market or grow your own, in 10 minutes you can make the best Brussels Sprouts you have ever tasted. This simple recipe is a delicious fall or winter side dish.



1 pound Brussels sprouts, trimmed and halved
5 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1/4 teaspoon table salt
1/4 cup shredded Pecorino Romano cheese

1. Arrange Brussels sprouts in a single layer cut sides down in a COLD 12-inch nonstick skillet drizzle oil evenly over them. Cover the skillet with a tight fitting lid, place over medium-high heat and cook until sprouts are bright green and cut sides have started to brown, about 5 minutes. Cooking with the lid creates a steamy environment that cooks the sprouts through without adding any extra moisture.
2. Uncover and continue to cook until cut sides are deeply and evenly browned and a paring knife meets no resistance, 2-3 minutes, adjusting the heat and moving the sprouts as needed to prevent over browning. While the sprouts cook, combine the lemon juice and salt in a small bowl.
3. Off the heat, add the lemon juice and salt mixture to the skillet and stir to evenly coat the Brussels sprouts. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Transfer to a platter or serving bowl and sprinkle with the cheese. Serve.

Recipe from America's Test Kitchen *The Side Dish Bible*

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