

San Juan Capistrano Garden Club

President's Message

February 2026

As we head into the last full month of winter, I keep watching the plants in my yard show signs of waking up. Those that are not yet alive with new growth are still good targets for pruning. February has typically been one of the rainiest months in SoCal; no telling if that will be true this year. Fortunately, we've had some rain every month since October and we're no longer in a drought. Even so, I might do some irrigating if the weather is warm and rain is not in the forecast. This is the month I typically start deciding what seeds I will need for this summer. The cool air and cold soil temperatures this month are not conducive to seed germination outdoors for the summer edibles. The end of the month is the perfect time to start seeds indoors or in a greenhouse in order to have plants ready to put in the yard by the end of March or early April.

We opted to have a meeting with a speaker this month instead of a field trip. Our presentation this month on soil is apropos as February is also a good time to start soil prep during dry periods. Next month we'll have another speaker and then a field trip in April. We always welcome guests and prospective members at our meetings, so please encourage others to come join us.

Valentine's Day is a great time to enjoy all the beautiful floral displays in stores. While I personally don't need a dozen roses that cost a lot and don't really last very long; fresh flowers of any kind in the house do bring joy. The best for me is the sentiment of loving and appreciating the family and friends around us, with or without flowers and candy.

Shelly Trainor

Upcoming Events

February 16 – 10 am

Meeting and Speaker: Gary Matsuoka, Laguna Hills Nursery

Soil & Planting Prep

Seed Sale—Lynn Rollison

March 16 – 10 am

Meeting and Speaker: Issac Novella, OCWR Landfill Site

Administrative Manager

Recyclables & Organics

April 20—TBA

Field Trip: Moulton Museum, Laguna Hills

Lunch Nearby

Laguna Hills Nursery



Check out their:

OC Planting Schedule

Free Classes

Planting Guide

Lots of other great information

<http://www.lagunahillsnursery.com/>

At our February Meeting

\$5/pkg Please bring small bills or checks

SEED SALE

Narrow Leaf Milkweed



Locally sourced

*Proceeds go to SJC Garden Club to
support educational programs*

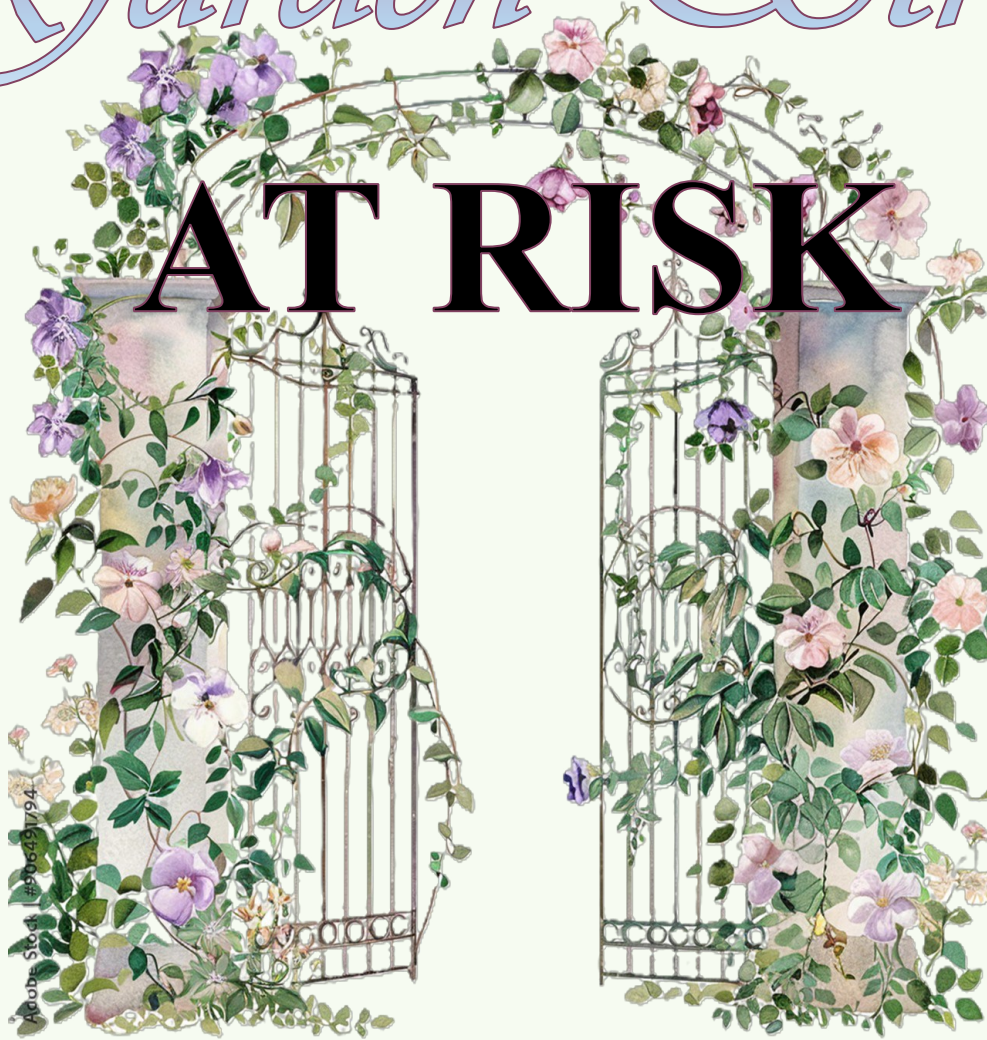


Sweet Peas

California Poppies



Garden Stroll



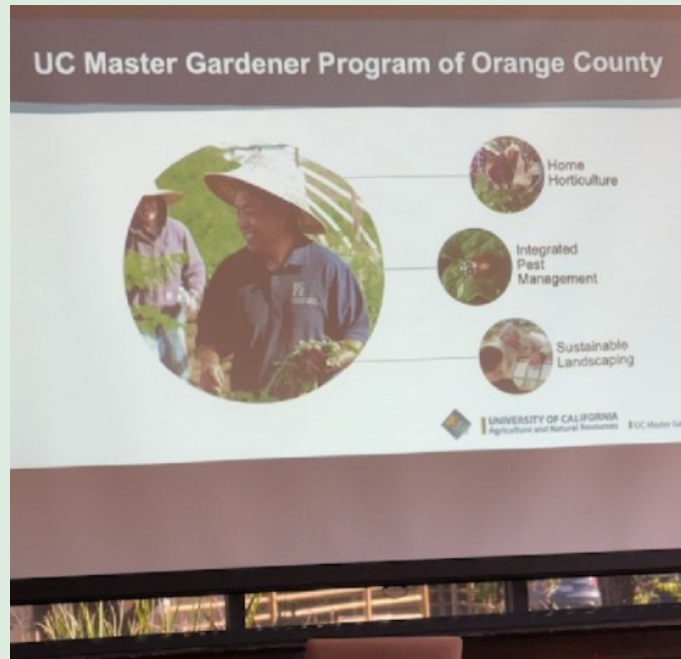
We are sad to let you know that we don't have enough gardens yet for a Garden Stroll this May. While including a non-member garden or two is possible, we believe that the stroll should have a majority of member gardens. With one potential member garden and one potential non-member garden already identified, we now need at least 2 member gardens.

Without commitments for at least 4 gardens within a week after our meeting this month (by February 23), the Stroll for 2026 will be cancelled.

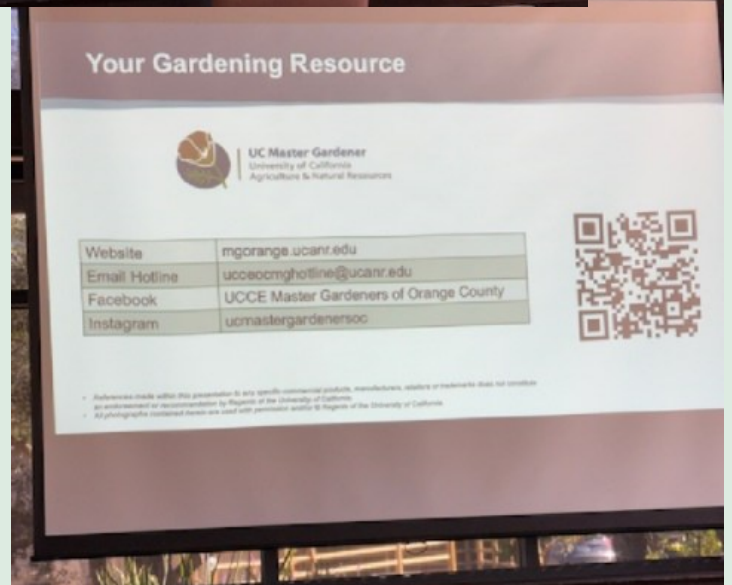
Your garden doesn't have to be perfect or large. You don't have to spend money on new plants or landscaping work. We are happy to visit gardens in their "natural" state.

Please consider volunteering your yard or urging a member you know who has a yard that would be good for our stroll to volunteer their yard.

January Speaker



Thanks to Kathy Rowley for all these great pics



BIG THANKS!



Thanks from SCMFO for your support!

Saturday, January 31 was a wonderful blue-sky day. And, as you can see in the pictures below, there were lots of smiling faces.

Many local organizations donated car seats, pack-n-plays, and other large items.

Hoag Memorial Hospital donated a truck-full of diapers and formula.

SCMFO set up appointments for 46 moms.

Teams of volunteers packed layettes, set-up pop-ups for shade, unloaded trucks and greeted the families.

Several of the expectant moms were active-duty as well as their spouses.

It was a beautiful day.



Thanks to Karen Rottmann
for all these great pics



Grow Sage Once — Let It Work for Your Garden All Year



Low-Maintenance Herb

Plant once, enjoy sage for years with hardly any fuss.



Pollinator Magnet

Purple blooms invite bees and butterflies to your whole garden.



Full Sun, Dry Feet

Give sage lots of sun and well-drained soil—skip the daily watering.



Tomato's Best Friend

Plant near tomatoes to help repel hornworms and boost flavor.



Happy in Pots or Beds

Grow in raised beds, borders, or a sunny pot on your porch or sill.



Kitchen Workhorse

Snip fresh leaves for roasts, beans, herb butter, and more.



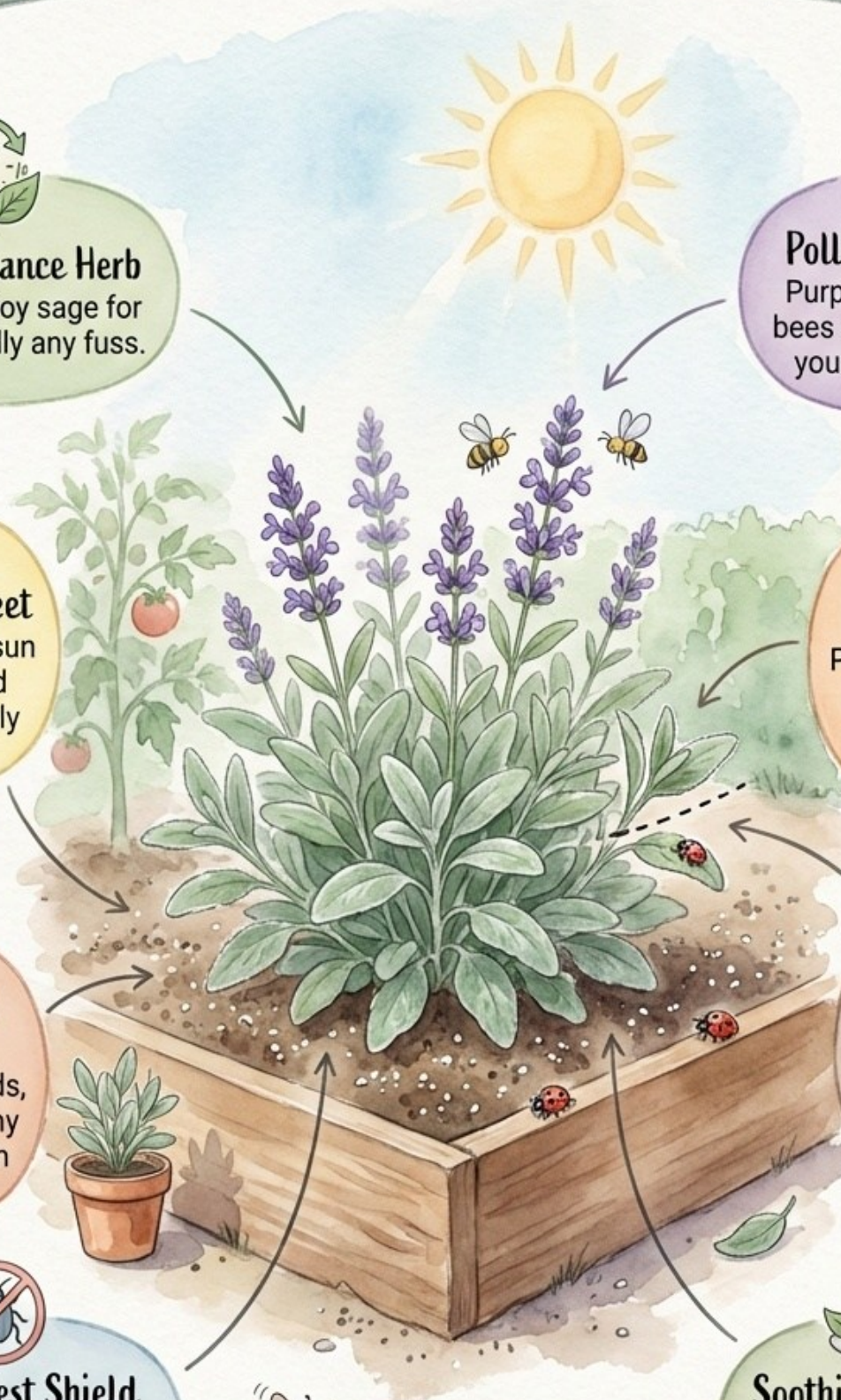
Natural Pest Shield

Scented leaves help deter cabbage moths, carrot flies, and mosquitoes.



Soothing Sage Tea

Steep a few leaves for a gentle, throat-kind, digestive tea.



Potpourri From Your Garden

Scent is a powerful memory inducer, and nothing conjures up visions of holidays past better than the fragrance of pine, bay and cinnamon. Potpourri is a blend of aromatic and colorful flowers and leaves, displayed in an open container so the scents can permeate the room. Your garden plants can provide ingredients for this easy-to-make and personalized gift for the holidays. And all those wonderful aromas wafting about as you mix the ingredients will give you some much-needed stress relief during this hectic time of year!

In addition to dried flowers and leaves, potpourri can contain spices and peels, fixatives that absorb and hold the scent, and essential oils that intensify the scent.

Fixatives and Oils

Spices and peels include whole cloves, cinnamon sticks, star anise and orange peel. Orris root (a whitish powder) is a common fixative. There are dozens of essential oils. Consider adding a rose geranium oil to dried rose petals, citrus essential oil to dried orange peels, or pine oil to miniature pinecones. Use essential oil sparingly, adding it one drop at a time so its fragrance doesn't overpower the mixture. Orris root, bulk spices and essential oils can be found at health food stores.

Flowers and Foliage

Scented flowers include roses (especially the old-fashioned varieties), lavender, orange blossoms and stocks. Blossoms for color include borage, calendula, bachelor's buttons, blanket flowers and zinnias. Fragrant foliage includes herbs such as basil, bay, lemon balm, lemon verbena, sage, rosemary, thyme, mint and scented geraniums. Also consider intensely fragrant landscape plants, such as Chaparral sage (*Salvia clevelandii*) and Mt. Lemmon marigold (*Tagetes palmeri*).

Drying Plants

Harvest plants when they are completely dry. Pick in the morning when essential oils in the plants are most intense. Choose flowers that have just barely opened as they will have stronger scents. Cut stalks as long as possible, and tie a few stems together tightly or use rubber bands. Hang upside down in a dry, dark area with good ventilation. The desert's low humidity speeds the drying process.

Sample Recipe

The following recipe contains ingredients currently available in gardens, but don't be afraid to personalize a blend with your favorite plants, colors and aromas. It's helpful to dry flowers and foliage throughout the year so there will be a variety of ingredients ready when you start mixing.

2-1/2 cups dried rose petals
3/4 cup dried mint leaves
3/4 cup dried scented geranium leaves
6 tablespoons dried orange, lemon or lime peel
1 tablespoon orris root
3-6 drops rose geranium essential oil

Gently mix together dried ingredients. Add essential oil 1 drop at a time and remix. Put it all in an oversized, closed container in a cool, dark place for three to six weeks. Shake the container 2 or 3 times a week to mix the scent.



Gardening Happenings

OC District Garden Club Meeting
Monday, March 30, 2026
Sherman Gardens

Master Gardener's Expo
April 11, 2026
Murray Senior Center, Mission Viejo

San Clemente Garden Club
Garden Fest—Plant Sale and More
April 11, 2026
San Clemente Community Center

Lake Forest Garden Club
Plant Sale & Boutique
Saturday before Mother's Day

Southern California Spring
South Coast Plaza Garden Show
The OC District for CGCI will be participating
in the Crate & Barrel/Macy's Home Store Wing
Thursday-Sunday, April 23- 26, 2026.

San Clemente Garden Club
Garden Tour
May 16, 2026

If you are aware of neighboring Garden Club events that may be of interest to our membership, please send print-ready copy to: chateaulussier@msn.com

More Gardening Happenings

Come join us!

Valentine's Extravaganza

Friday, February 13th - 9:30 to 11:30
Tankersley Hall, Laguna Presbyterian Church

- **Silent Auction**
Handcrafted potted plants creations
- **Plant Sale**
Succulents & Unusual perennials
- **Fabulous Finds Sale**
One-of-a Kind Boutique items
- **Raffle**
Win great prizes
- **Garden Tool Sharpening**
While-you-wait or Drop-off service



Laguna Beach Garden Club
Visit us at: lagunabeachgardenclub.org



February in the Garden

- Plant bulbs such as amaryllis, lilies & gladiolus
- Plant cool season vegetables, bare root trees, and berries
- Tackle early aphids with a strong spray of water from garden hose
- Mulch 2-4 inches thick, keeping away from tree and plant trunks
- Keep on top of weeds, which are easily pulled after the rain
- Clean up empty garden pots, with a diluted solution of 1 part bleach to 9 parts water

UC Master Gardeners of Orange County



Photo: UC Regents

Restoring Butterfly Garden/Monarch Waystation



Have you visited the butterfly gardens lately? Please reach out to Lynn Rollison to join this dedicated group.

We are still meeting the 2nd & 4th Mondays at 9am. The garden had a bountiful spring and summer. It's about time to do some cutting back. And we are starting to think about what we can add to give us fall and winter color. Two of our members have donated beautiful benches and a table, and another donated a sun dial. Come out and join us.

Lynn Rollison



Ever notice how uncanny animal camouflage is, these animals disappear into their environments like a Ninja!



Oak-killing Beetle



A man uses limewash on an oak tree to try to kill the tiny invaders in Orange County in 2024.

As we know from our relationship with Earthroots, this caption is incorrect.

They are experimenting with limewash as a PREVENTATIVE measure.

Oak-killing beetle significantly expands its range in Southland L.A. Times January 15, 2026

This is the farthest north the goldspotted oak borer has been found in the state. Given the less-than-one-half-inch insect's track record of devastating oaks since being first detected in San Diego County in 2008, scientists and land stewards are alarmed and working to contain the outbreak.

"We keep seeing these oak groves getting infested and declining, and a lot of oak mortality," said Beatriz Nobua-Behrmann, an ecologist with UC Agriculture and Natural Resources. "And as we go north, we have tons of oak woodlands that are very important ecosystems over there. It can even get into the Sierras if we don't stop it. So it is scary." For the full story:

https://www.magzter.com/stories/newspaper/Los-Angeles-Times/OAKKILLING-BEETLE-SIGNIFICANTLY-EXPANDS-ITS-RANGE-IN-SOUTHLAND?srltid=AfmBOooZ27cBYOn6_G7WGxoIEuSwXzFELf9jwkuuIyHYooKlzmVOR_AL

WHAT ON EARTH IS Gravitropism?????

Have you ever wondered how a seed planted upside-down still manages to send its roots down and its shoot up? Plants have tiny gravity sensors inside their cells - microscopic starch granules that settle to the bottom like ball bearings in a tilted bowl. When these granules pile up on one side, they trigger the plant to pump more growth hormone (auxin) to that side.

And the design is even more amazing: auxin has opposite effects on roots versus shoots. In roots, it slows growth, so the bottom side grows slower and the root curves downward. In stems, it speeds up growth, so the bottom side grows faster and pushes the stem upward. The same signal causes two different responses, making roots dig deep while shoots reach up.

SUPER COOL VIDEO ON TREES

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pHJlhxEoxg>



Garden Radio Show

"In The Garden" *Radio Show*

Presented by

**UC Master Gardeners
of Orange County**

Every Thursday Morning
8:30 - 9:30am

Airs on KUCI (88.9 FM)

**It takes 30 years to grow a tree.
Two minutes to cut it down.
And a lifetime to feel the loss.**



Spirit Science
@SpiritScienceOfficial

SMALL BITE, BIG THREAT



**YOU CAN HELP
PREVENT MOSQUITO BREEDING!**



UC Master Gardeners of Orange County's Post

Help prevent Mosquito Breeding in your own garden! 

Did you know that female mosquitos need your blood to develop their eggs? And in return they leave you with an annoying itchy red bump. Or worse!

There have been cases of West Nile Virus here in Orange County recently. This is a serious illness for children, elderly and those with immune issues.

So, what can you do? For one, avoid overwatering. We can do frequent checks around our yards, patios and balconies for any standing water – even a small puddle of water can be a breeding area for the mosquito to lay her eggs. Especially after a rainstorm, areas to be checked could be:

- Empty containers
 - Rain gutters
 - Pet dishes
 - Bird baths
 - Neglected pools
 - Ponds
 - Uncovered trashcans
- Low areas in the pavement

Knowledge is power. You can help prevent mosquito breeding in your own backyard!



<https://harmonyinthegarden.com/2026/01/designing-an-hoa-garden-you-love/>

Designing an HOA Garden You Love

[Designing an HOA Garden you Love \(despite restrictive rules!\)](#)



**NATIONAL
WILDLIFE
FEDERATION**

https://www.nwf.org/Native-Plant-Habitats/Create-and-Certify?utm_source=article-newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=wildlife-habitat-1-15-26

Create a wildlife-friendly landscape or garden space and the National Wildlife Federation will recognize it as a Certified Wildlife Habitat®.

BEFORE

AFTER

@Permaresilience

one grows bills, the other grows food.

Need The “411” on Garden Club Events????



Check out our website—open 24/7
<https://www.sanjuancapistranogardenclub.com/>
Click on “Newsletters”

Board of Directors

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Maureen Gebelein—Treasurer

Kathy Dixon—Secretary

Sharon Dunn—Advisory Member

Janet Sperber—Advisory Member

Newsletter

Members are welcome to submit print-ready items for publication that would be of general interest to our membership. Submissions are subject to editorial review.

Send to: chateaulussier@msn.com

Gardening Resources

Harmony in the Garden

<https://harmonyinthegarden.com/>

Blogs, tips, photos—Check out the issue:

Garden Ideas from Garden Tours: Takeaways, Tips, and Inspiration

Garden Design

<https://Gardendesign.com>

English, Japanese, Mediterranean, Tropical, Eco-friendly

LEARN ABOUT BUTTERFLY GARDENING

<https://naba.org/butterfly-gardens/>

Laguna Hills Nursery

Free gardening classes

<http://www.lagunahillsnursery.com/Classes.html>

Perhaps the most important lesson I learned when I began gardening in California and wanted success with certain perennials, trees, shrubs, and annuals, was the information on soil from Gary Matsuoka. Fortunately he is still teaching the concepts below. It is worth a trip to his Saturday classes at his nursery! The Soil Class is held several times a year.

Mozelle

Check out their extensive YouTube Content including:

Compost is NOT Good Soil:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/GarysBestGardening>

Paper Garden Workshop

<https://www.papergardenworkshop.com/>

Garden Design and Landscape Graphics in a FUN way



And More Gardening Resources



Did you know OCCNPS has an online archive? Search for "Fall Color" and find helpful resources from past newsletters like "[Fall Blooming Plants](https://chapters.cnps.org/oc/2018/10/29/summer-and-fall-blooming-favorites/)" and "[Plants for Fall Color](https://chapters.cnps.org/oc/2018/10/28/plants-for-fall-color/)." Use the search feature to find exactly what you are looking for!

<https://chapters.cnps.org/oc/2018/10/29/summer-and-fall-blooming-favorites/>
<https://chapters.cnps.org/oc/2018/10/28/plants-for-fall-color/>

"Visit SJC" SJC Chamber of Commerce

Sign up for their newsletter for events/happening in and around SJC

<https://www.sanjuanchamber.com/>

SJC Garden Club is a proud member of the SJC Chamber of Commerce

Orange County Bird of Prey Center

<https://www.ocbpc.org/>

Sponsor a bird for release—how cool is that!

Knowable Magazine

A nonprofit publisher dedicated to synthesizing and integrating knowledge for the progress of science and the benefit of society

<https://knowablemagazine.org/>

Voice of OC

A nonprofit, reader-funded newsroom

<https://voiceofoc.org/about/>

California Native Horticulture Foundation.

calnativehort.org

O C Library—Seed Library Program

Availability: At specific branches, including Brea, Costa Mesa, El Toro, San Juan Capistrano, San Clemente, and Westminster.

How it Works: Adult patrons can obtain a limited number of seed varieties per month.

Purpose: To promote sustainable living, community gardening, and reduce reliance on industrial agriculture.

And Even More Gardening Resources



City Farmer's Nursery

<https://www.cityfarmersnursery.com/>

A Little Bit of the Country in the Heart of the City

Online database of bluebird trails in
OC & surrounding areas

<http://tiny.cc/SCBC-database>



Southern California
Bluebird Club

plant depot

NURSERY & GIFT

plantdepot.com

Sign up for their monthly newsletter
Seasonal plant ideas, garden/soil/fertilizer guides

Santa Margarita Water District

<https://www.smwd.com/>

Lots of free classes , events and tours—gardening, landscape design,
water saving, irrigation, trips to local water storage & water treatment

UC Agriculture and Natural Resources (UCANR)

<https://ucanr.edu/>

Loads of articles on all aspects of gardening

California Native Plant Society

<https://www.cnps.org/>

All about CA native plants

Calscape

<https://calscape.org/>

Spectacular resource for finding, identifying and caring for native plants
from CA Native Plant Society

Monarch Watch

<https://monarchwatch.org/>

All things about Monarch Butterflies

