

February 2010

Sacramento Garden Notes

*Written and Published by
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Volume 15 Number 2

This issue is out early because:

I am scheduled for hip replacement surgery on January 28th so wanted to get it done and out beforehand.

I should be returning home about Feb 1st, but it will be several weeks before I am up and around again. However, I do expect that, barring complications, I will be at the Feb 27th / 28th Plant Sale sitting answering questions.



Helleborus 'Winter Moonbeam' is an inter-species Hellebore cross with the dark, silver veined leaves with red stems and backing of its *H. lividicus* parent.



Above is the species tulip T'Lady Jane' which will be available in pots at the Feb Sale, and below is Heuchera 'Peach Flambe'



Garden Notes:

February is a month when gardening chores pick up as more and more comes into growth and needs attention

- a) There is still time to plant Bareroot and Dormant plant material but you should make sure the material is not dried out or sprouting into excessive, spindly weak growth that will frost or burn when put out.. a major problem with packaged material that has been stored in too warm a place like inside a store.
- b) Note that snails and slugs get out early, and will often eat the new shoots breaking ground before you even see them. This is specially true for perennials emerging from the ground such as Lobelia, Hardy Hibiscus,

some Lilies, Hosta, young shoots on Brugsmansia (Angels Trumpets) that have frosted back and others with tender, juicy shoots. Be sure to start baiting for snails early to prevent this.

I often get people coming in who think that these items aren't returning, when it is the snails and slugs eating the shoots before they are noticable that is the problem.

- c) February is a month for planting potatoes.
- d) Established Epimediums can be sheared back early in the month to show off the early flowers and bright new foliage

Below is Daylily 'Chum', a double flowered pink Daylily (Hemerocallis) which will be available as bareroot plants at the sale.



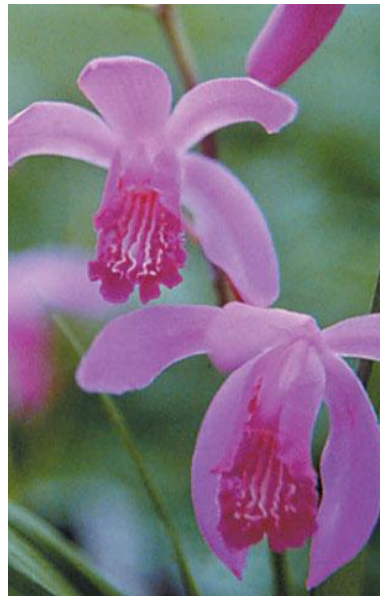
Above photo courtesy of DeGroot Nurseries Inc

Attention Backyard Growers:

I know some of you have backyard "nurseries" and would like to invite you to contact me if you'd be interested in selling your material at some of the Benefit Plant Sales.

This would give a better selection to customers since my space is limited.

I'd especially like to find someone that grows shrubs..or CA natives.



Bletilla stricta is a hardy ground orchid from Japan and China that does very well here in part shade to sun. It blooms in spring and grows up to a foot tall. I will also have the rarer Yellow Bletilla

Notes on Upcoming Classes

Classes are 4 hours (10:00AM to 2:20 PM with a 30 minute break for lunch included in fee) on either of the days given and are held at the house, address below. Cost per person, per class is \$40 or both classes for \$70.

Reservations should be sent, with payment, to: Robert Hamm, 1689 Vallarta Cicle, Sacramento CA 95834

First come first served, as all classes have limited availability. For more info email me or call. (see page 1 of newsletter)

Gardening in Sacramento – A class for new to Sacramento Gardening people – Tues. March 16th or Sat March 20th.

It doesn't matter if your new to gardening, or just new to Sacramento, this is a class for you, concerning our climate, our growing seasons, our soils and how things grow and work HERE around Sacramento.

Soil types, effects of watering, why some 'hardy' plants fail here, our multiple growing seasons are all topics covered.

It also covers things like why so many things that DON'T do well here are sold in local nurseries, when to plant what, and translating labels& directions printed for National use into something for Sacramento.

Plant Propagation for Home Gardeners: Tues. March 30th or Sat April 3rd

This covers how to propagate plants from seed, cutting and division for the home gardener without fancy equipment, greenhouse etc. Not only does it cover techniques, but all the little things most classes miss that make major differences in your success. There will also be practical experience with you bringing the cuttings etc home!



Helleborus 'Candy Love' is one of the new H. niger hybrids from Holland with upright facing flowers held above the foliage. Flowers and leaves can be used in floral arrangements.

PLANT SALES AT THE GIFTED GARDENER FOR SPRING 2010.

February 27th /28th

March 13th & 14th

March 27th & 28th

April 10th & 11th

April 24th & 25th

May 8th & 9th

May 22nd & 23rd

June 5th & 6th

June 19th & 20th

All of the above sales will be in the **COVERED** parking area on 18th St, behind the store at 18th & J Streets.

RAIN OR SHINE!!

Hours will be 10 AM to 4 PM (NEW HOURS!!)

I will also be selling plants at The Old City Cemetary Open Garden Tour on April 17th from 9 am to 2 pm. This tour will include the Perennial Plantings in Hamilton Square as well as the nationally recognized Historic Rose Garden. Details in a future newsletter.



Geranium 'Patricia' has bright magenta flowers against dark green leaves. This plant like sun or light shade and regular watering.



Treteilia 'Rudy' is a new variety of the California native wildflower (Bulb, flowers in late spring) formerly known as Brodeia. Easy to grow in a sunny spot, is very drought tolerant, and will seed and naturalize.

Below: The rarely seen variegated form of *Geranium macrorhizum* "Variegatum". This geranium is generally evergreen in our area, growing to maybe 5 - 6 inches tall in sun or part shade.

It makes a good groundcover and has lavender purple flowers held above the foliage from early spring (budding in my yard on Jan 15th) through late spring. Once established is somewhat drought resistant.



Notes & Reminders:

- 1) Trim old foliage off epimediums to show off blooms and new foliage which will sprout shortly.
- 2) This is a good time to divide overgrown perennials before much top growth begins. Root growth for many has already started.
- 3) Snails get out early! Be sure to snail bait such items as echinacea, dahlias, frozen back Angels Trumpets, lilies, and others with tender new tips to prevent the snails eating and destroying the new growth buds as they emerge. DO NOT wait till growth is visible, as they will eat the buds before you ever see them.
- 4) Early cold hardy veggies such as cabbage, peas, lettuce, potatoes etc can be planted in February.
- 5) DO NOT even think of planting warmth lovers (even if they show up in nurseries) such as tomatoes, peppers and eggplant. You can however start seed of these

indoors late in the month, for planting out in late April or May.

- 6) If you buy *Caladium* bulbs in the stores, remember they need WARMTH to grow, so either start indoors or wait till weather is warm and settled to plant.
- 7) Bareroot roses, shrubs, berries and trees are available at area nurseries, NOW is the time to plant them!



Gladiolus communis subspecies byzantinus

(Byzantine Glad) - This stunning plant has deep magenta flowers with narrow cream colored midrib on the lower 3 petals. These flowers dance atop 2- 3 foot unbranched stems beginning in mid April.

It is native to the Mediterranean from Spain, Italy, North Africa, Corsica and Malta and was first introduced into cultivation in 1629 and has been grown in the southern US since colonial days; sometimes called "Cornflags" it marks many old home sites and cemetery plots in Texas and southern states where it increases year after year.

Plant in full sun in most any soil - tolerates even heavy clay soils. Irrigate until foliage dries in late spring. Small cormels can be left in place to expand the clump or be removed and planted elsewhere where they will bloom after about 3 years. New foliage emerges in early winter but is frost hardy enough to be planted in USDA Zone 6. (0 degrees F.)



Stylophorum or “Wood Poppy” is a rarely seen deciduous perennial for part to full shade (woodland grower) and regular water.

Thoughts and Observations:

The recent trend of fewer and fewer bulbs being offered for sale at the big box stores, seems to be continuing with this springs selection narrower than ever and concentrated on “bulk” packs. How many gardeners really need 25 or 50 of an item and only in mixed colors?

This would seem to be self defeating, as will only lead to lower sales and then that used as a justification of less carried.

Also, the number of packaged bareroot roses, trees and shrubs seems to be declining also.

Don't people realize that bareroot is cheaper than buying potted material later in the season? Apparently not, as the sale of potted “finished or in bloom” material seems to be taking over the industry.

I wonder how much is driven by the consumer, and how much by the big box stores demand for “easier and quicker” sales in place of good horticultural practice?

As a side note, I will have gladiolias in larger sized bulbs and seven individual colors available starting at the February sale.

Even though it is only January 20th as I write this, there are lots of signs of waking up on the plants.

Lots of new root growth on many of the potted plants, along with swelling growth buds and the beginning of actual growth on some things.

Hellebores are blooming, daffodils and other bulbs are breaking ground and in some cases even showing flower buds. While not all plants are waking up yet, it is at times surprising even to me, the amount of activity that is going on below ground as root growth resumes and shoots come up to just below the soil surface.



Peony Rubra plena is a shorter growing (listed at 2 ft.), early blooming herbaceous peony that comes in both dark red and rose pink. Very limited supply of both colors will be available as larger 3-5 eye roots @ \$12.00 each. I suggest you let me know in advance of the Feb sale if you want this. Peonies do best with at least half a days sun and in colder spots. They can also be grown in large pots.

Volunteers? I had my pre-op appt with the surgeon yesterday and was told I probably wouldn't be bending to get down on the ground for several months. Since many of the plants grown for the sales are grown on the ground, I'm going to need help just getting them up to label, clean and price. So.. if you have some free time over the next couple of months and want to help.. I'll definitely NEED it!