



WALTER ANDERSEN  
NURSERY™

# Garden Talk

SAN DIEGO'S GARDEN RESOURCE

San Diego's Independent Nursery Since 1928™

MARCH 2019

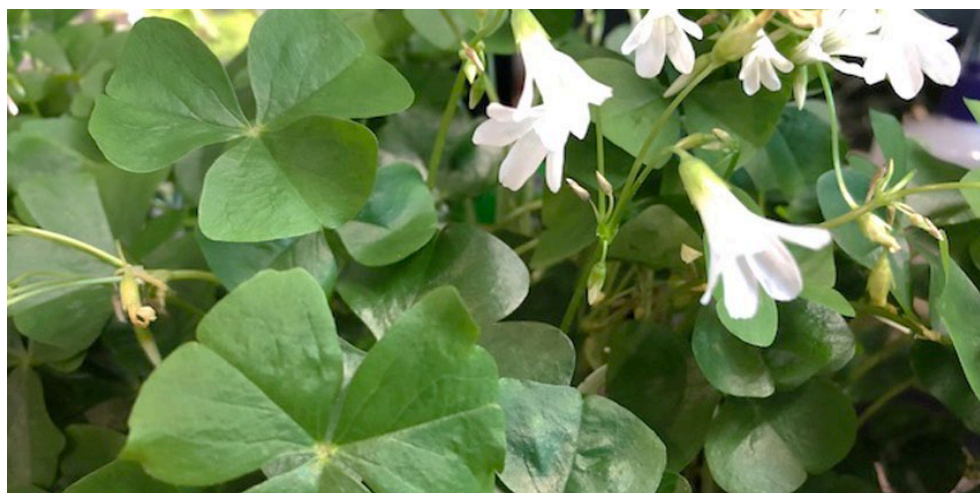


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## Shamrock Facts

By Flower Delivery Sherman Oaks



*Oxalis regnellii*

**Shamrock, Oxalis, Clover,** whatever you call them, March is their time in the spotlight and St. Patrick's Day is when they take center stage. Of course, both stores have a selection of these plants. Oxalis flowers have five petals and usually bloom pink or yellow and are bell-shaped. The potted shamrock plant (***Oxalis regnellii***) is a small specimen, often reaching no more than six inches. Leaves are in a

range of shades and delicate flowers bloom off and on during fall, winter and spring.

Here are some lesser known and interesting facts about shamrocks.

### You Can Grow Them Indoors

All they need is direct sunlight. Unlike other plants, shamrock needs barely moist soil and cool temperatures.

[continued p2](#)

## Native Alternatives To Your Favorites

By Moosa Creek



California Flannelbush

Native plants offer the best possible habitat and food for wildlife, are not fussy if planted in the right situation, and require little to no maintenance. Here are some ideas to help you determine what will look fabulous!

Instead of Hibiscus, try the lush yellow flowered Palmer's Indian Mallow,

[continued p2](#)

## Meet The Dragon Fruit

By George Allmon



'Maki Supa' dragon fruit

**We invite you to plant and enjoy this unusual and tasty fruit. Both stores will have these specialty varieties: American Beauty, Condor, Cosmic Charlie, Dark Star, Physical Graphitti, Makisupa, and Natural Mystic.**

**Dragon fruit** or **Pitahaya/Pitaya (*Hylocereus* spp)** is a vining cactus native to Central and South America. It was introduced to Asia via Vietnam by the French in the early 1800s. Dragon fruit is commercially grown in Southeast Asia, Australia, Israel, South Africa, Mexico, South America and now in the United States where it is primarily

[continued p3](#)

## Shamrock Facts continued from p1



*Purple Oxalis triangularis*

### Four Leaf Clover Is A Variation Of Three Clover Leaf

Scientists predicted that four leaf clover is a wee variation of three leaf clover but they are unsure as to the reason for this variation.

### Four Leaf Clover Are Considered Lucky If Found On A Three Leaf Clover Plant

It is very rare to find a four leaf clover on a three leaf clover, but if you do, enjoy some luck!

### Lucky Four Leaf Clover Symbolizes Four Things

Love, faith, hope and luck. If you see a four leaf clover on a shamrock, then you will be blessed with these four things.

### St. Patrick Is The Person Who Made Shamrocks Famous

St. Patrick used the three clover leaf plant for teaching Christianity while he was traveling Ireland. He believed that the leaves represented the Holy Spirit, Holy Trinity and Son of God.

### Irish People Used To Give Shamrocks As A Wedding Present

It is given as a gift in the form of a bouquet to the bride and groom as a symbol of good luck.

### A Shamrock Plant Is Not Restricted To Having Three Or Four Leaves

A Japanese farmer name Shigeo Obara found a 56-leaf clover on a shamrock.

To make sure, he counted it twice.

### It Was Fun For Children To Find A Four Leaf Clover

Children had a myth that finding a four leaf clover would make them see fairies. They used to go out in the fields to find this rare leaf. Once they found it, they waited for fairies to come and meet them.

### Finding A Four Leaf Clover Won't Bring You Luck

Four leaf clover is known to be lucky. However, it is lucky only if you find them accidentally. Roaming around and struggling to find it won't bring you luck!

### Animals Like The Taste Of Clover

Cows, horses and other animals like the taste of shamrocks. They have protein, calcium and phosphorus making them nutritious as well a tasty.

### It Was Once A Symbol Of Ireland

It was considered a symbol of Ireland in the 18th century. They used three leaf clover to represent heart, hands and head. For showing support and nationalism, Irish people started wearing green and shamrock print t-shirts.

### It Became Illegal To Wear Shamrock Prints

After shamrocks became a symbol of Ireland, people started wearing green and shamrock prints. British authorities banned this practice and any person who dared to wear it was tortured and punished.

### Shamrocks Are Edible

All parts are edible. The bulb is succulent and sweet and the leaves are tart. They can be used in stews, salads, and smoothies.

Hope you enjoyed those fun facts, and now we leave you with an Irish blessing.

*May your blessings out number  
The shamrocks that grow  
And may trouble avoid you  
Wherever you go. •*

## Native Alternatives

continued from p1



*Prostrate Gumplant*



*Tecate Cypress*

California Flannelbush, and the stunning white-flowered Bush Anemone. For a flowering groundcover, instead of Gazania, African daisy, and Myoporum, the delicate lavender blooms of the California Aster will feed native butterflies and pollinators. Also look to prostrate varieties, such as the lovely blue spikes of Creeping Sage, the bright yellow flowers and blue fruit of Creeping Mahonia, the yellow daisy-like flowers of Prostrate Gumplant, and the blue blooms of Centennial Wild Lilac.

There are far more choices for native trees than most people suspect. For areas that receive a lot of water, replace maple or liquidambar with the graceful White Alder, or the statu-esque Western Sycamore. The non-native pines that are succumbing to drought can be replaced with the iconic Torrey Pine, which will grow straight when away from windy sea bluffs, and the larger Coulter Pine. The showy flowers of Bauhinia, Tabebuia, Flowering Pear and Cherry can be replaced with Western Redbud, Desert Willow, or the white dangly blooms of the Silk Tassel Tree. A great substitution for the ubiquitous conical Italian Cypress is Tecate Cypress, which is fast-growing, has gray-green foliage, and requires little to no water once established. •

## Dragon Fruit continued from p3

grown in Southern California, Florida, and Hawaii. It performs well in areas where avocados are successfully grown. The plant adapts very well to our Southern California climate and is drought-tolerant.

Dragon fruit makes for a unique edible landscape plant with interesting structure, bloom, and fruit.

The blooms of this cactus are among some of the largest flowers in the world and only open for one night. They have a fruity tropical fragrance that will invite you to spend your evenings with them in the garden. In their native jungle environment, these flowers are pollinated by nocturnal bats and moths. Most growers will have some success without hand pollination; however, for better production hand pollination can be helpful.

Fruit flesh can be white or varying degrees of red, pink, or magenta depending upon the variety, and is filled with tiny black seeds much like kiwi fruit. White fruit tends to be the mildest (almost bland) while darker varieties are usually juicier and sweeter (my favorite to date is "Maki Supa"). The fruit is ripe about 40 days after pollination and is ready when the wings start to wither and the fruit easily detaches from the vine with a twist or two.

Dragon fruit is a nutrient dense fruit as well. Rich in vitamins, including vitamin B1, B2 and B3 and C, it also has calcium, iron, magnesium and phosphorus. They are also a good source of fiber, protein and omega essential fatty acids.

Dragon fruit will grow in most soils providing they are well draining, but remember that these are a tropical cactus that will perform better in rich, well-draining, organic soil. To grow and produce fruit, fertilize monthly during the active growing season. Stop feeding during the colder winter months.

In its native home, the plant will often grow in and upon trees and will benefit from some type of post or trellis for support. They should be trained to



'San Ignacio' dragon fruit

encourage upright growth during their first year. Prune to remove dead and diseased stems and thin to improve air circulation and exposure to sunlight.

There is ongoing research on dragon fruit to identify the best growing practices in order to improve yields both commercially and in the home garden. ●



Dragon fruit cuttings



Dragon fruit flower



## Old Ben:

### All About Bluebirds

By Old Ben



#### Western Bluebird

Can you imagine eating bugs and berries and living inside a tree? Western bluebirds do just that. They are members of the thrush family, meaning that they are related to robins. Bluebirds eat mostly insects. Grasshoppers, earthworms, snails and beetles are among their favorite foods. They sit on perches and drop quickly to the ground to catch their food or they can catch insects in the air. Bluebirds also eat fruit and berries, especially during the winter when there are fewer insects.

#### Why Bluebirds Need Our Help

Populations of western bluebirds have declined over the past 50 years. The main reason for their decline is competition for nest holes from European starlings and English house sparrows. Starlings and house sparrows are exotic species, meaning they came from somewhere else and don't occur naturally in North America. These birds were brought here and have multiplied very quickly. They out compete many of our native birds for nesting habitat.

#### Creating Habitat

Bluebirds need places to nest. Old trees often have many woodpecker holes that they can use. Don't remove all of the dead trees in your landscape if possible as they are important for wildlife.

Nest boxes have greatly helped increase populations of bluebirds in many areas. Bluebirds will nest in boxes if they are well made and placed in a good location. Building bluebird trails is popular throughout the country. A bluebird trail is a series of bluebird nest boxes along a path planted with berry plants. The path should be near an open area where bluebirds can forage for insects. Small shrubs and trees with berries supplement bluebirds' winter diet. Elderberry, juniper, red cedar, cherry and sumac have berries that bluebirds like. Western bluebirds are mainly insectivorous and can be attracted to feeders if you offer mealworms. Bluebirds need places to perch while they look for insects. Tree limbs and brush piles near open areas make great perches. Don't forget a birdbath. Bluebirds like shallow birdbaths lined with flat rocks. Place the birdbath in an open area with a perch nearby so bluebirds feel safe.

#### Bluebird Facts

- Nesting occurs from March through August. Only the female incubates the four to six eggs, which she maintains at a temperature of 98 - 100 degrees F.
- Both sexes defend territories; the males tend to defend territory edges while females primarily defend the nest.

[continued p5](#)



## Old Ben's Feeders & Nesting Boxes

*Old Ben's hand built feeders and nest boxes are back in stock and better than ever! To celebrate, we are taking **10% OFF** the regular price.*

*Come in and see the **GREAT** selection!*

**Savings from \$2 to \$10.50**

## Old Ben's Specials

Valid March 1-31, 2019

### Old Ben's Nyger Seed

The staple food for goldfinches and many other small birds.

25lb. bag

**Sale \$49.99** Reg. \$59.99

### Old Ben's No Mess Wild Bird Seed

The No Mess Advantage. Seed is hulled and chopped, will not sprout. Birds can eat all the seeds which attracts fewer feeder pests.

20lb. bag

**Sale \$34.99** Reg. \$39.99

### Old Ben's Classic Wild Bird Seed

Classic mix that attracts a wide variety of wild birds. No fillers in this mix.

20lb. bag

**Sale \$24.99** Reg. \$29.99

### Ask Old Ben!

Old Ben doesn't always think about birds. Sometimes he thinks about his business and that's when he had a grand idea. How cool would it be if you could reach out and ask him all kinds of questions about birds, or show him your (feathered) bird photos, or share your birding experiences? Well, now you can by using this email.

[askoldben@aol.com](mailto:askoldben@aol.com)



*All specials limited to stock on hand. No special orders. Cannot be combined with any other discount or offer.*

## Ready To Bloom & Add To Your Landscape

By Craig Childs



For a breathtaking spring show, **Buddleia alternifolia**, 'Fountain Butterfly Bush' will produce cascading wands of powerfully fragrant lavender blooms in early spring. It is a vigorous, deciduous and hardy (0 degrees F - Sunset Zones 2b-24) perennial shrub from China which blooms for 3-4 weeks on last year's growth. It can tolerate many soils thriving in poor, dry gravels and requires little irrigation after it is established. Prune after bloom during the summer growth phase, training it to grow up and trail over espaliers, arbors or as a small tree. It can also be used as a large hedge up to 12 feet tall. The nectar laden flower clusters on arching willowy branches are irresistible to hummingbirds, bees and butterflies! ●

## Special Class: Dean Karras & His Prickly Friends!



Join local grower **Dean Karras** of **Gnosis Nursery** for a presentation on April 6 at 9:30am at the Poway store on **cactus and succulent care** followed by a curated sale of rare and uncommon xerophytic plants. The presentation will include a discussion of proper sun exposure, soil, fertilization, watering, and pest control as it relates to both xeriscape design and succulent container culture. Dean may look familiar to many as he is a former Walter Andersen Nursery customer service representative. ●



### TO DO LIST: March



#### PRUNE

Camellias and Azaleas after blooming to shape.

Cut back frost damaged plants and feed with Gro-Power to encourage new growth and regeneration.

#### FERTILIZE

Roses and Shrubs with Gro-Power or Gro-Power for Roses.

Feed Citrus, Avocado, and Fruits with Gro-Power or Gro-Power Citrus & Avocado Food.

#### PLANT

Citrus, Avocados, and tropical and sub-tropical fruit.

Start to replace cool season bedding plants with warm season plants. Plant warm season vegetables like tomatoes, peppers, and squash.

Be sure to amend the soil with good organic compost. Big Harvest Bale is great for edibles and ornamentals.

#### LOOK FOR

Azaleas, Spirea, Tuberous Begonias, Caladiums, Calla Lilies and Roses. ●

### Old Ben continued from p4

- A bluebird can spot caterpillars and insects in tall grass at a distance of more than 50 yards.
- Bluebirds can fly at speeds up to 45 miles per hour if necessary.
- Bluebirds have no blue pigments in their feathers. Instead, each feather barb has a thin layer of cells that absorb all wavelengths of color except blue. Only the blue wavelength is reflected and scattered, resulting in their blue appearance. ●

## Garden Classes

## MARCH

Saturday classes are **FREE** and last about an hour. Complimentary coffee is served. During inclement weather, classes are held indoors in San Diego and on the covered, heated patio in Poway. Topics are subject to change. See the full schedule at [www.walterandersen.com/calendar/](http://www.walterandersen.com/calendar/).

**SAN DIEGO | 9:00AM**

3/2

Lady Bug Release Party!  
Bring the kids and come watch  
the ladybugs make their way  
through the garden

3/9

Spring Tomato Class

3/16

Spotlight on Succulents  
with David Miller

3/23

Kitchen Herbs:  
A Culinary Herb Class

3/30

The Chili Pepper Class

**POWAY | 9:30AM**

3/2

Organic Insect Control

3/9

Chuck McClung: How Orchids  
Rebloom & Book Signing

3/16

Veggie Garden Prep  
with Richard Wright

3/23

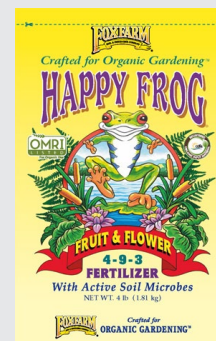
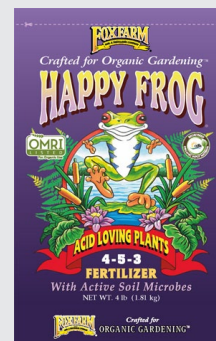
Jumpstart Your Veggie Garden  
with Brijette from San Diego  
Seed Company

3/30

Spring Garden Controls  
with John Ford from Bonide

## Happy Frog Fertilizers OMRI Listed For Organic Use!

Happy Frog dry fertilizers have been reformulated and are now OMRI listed & OIM registered. Look for the certification logo on each bag. •



## March Specials *Valid March 1-31, 2019*



## Fruit Tree & Plant Guard Buy 1, Get 1 FREE!

*These goof proof water-based combinations are economical, versatile and have a very broad spectrum.*

### Concentrate

Only 2oz./gal. treats not only a comprehensive listing of fruit, but also nuts, flowers, shrubs and ornamentals.

**or**

### Ready To Spray

Lambda-cyhalothrin, boscalid and pyraclostrobin.

*Limited to stock on hand. No special orders. Cannot be combined with other offers or discounts. While supplies last. Hedge Fund\$ may be redeemed.*



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