

# THE WEEEDER

MARCH 2022

Volume 34 Issue 3

## 2022 CALENDAR

We meet on the fourth Monday of each month, 7:30 pm at the Brentwood Community Methodist Church, 809 Second Street in Brentwood. Board Meetings are held on the first Tuesday (after the 1st Monday) of each month, 7:00 pm in the Fireside Room. Delta Informal Gardeners encourages gardening through education and beautification of the community.

## 2022 General Meetings

- January 24 - Auction - Canceled
- February 28
- March 28
- April 25
- May 23
- June 27 - Members Potluck
- July 25
- August 22
- September 26 - Auction
- October 24
- November 28
- December 12 - Holiday Potluck

## 2022 Board Meetings

- |            |             |
|------------|-------------|
| January 4  | July 5      |
| February 8 | August 2    |
| March 8    | September 6 |
| April 5    | October 4   |
| May 3      | November 8  |
| June 7     | November 29 |

**2022 Plant Sale: MAY 7**

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Our ANNUAL PLANT SALE on May 7th is slowly creeping up on us and will be here before we know it. Thank you to the many DIGgers who have been coming out on Saturdays to help get our plants ready. We will be working every Saturday from 10am to noon preparing our plants for the sale and we can always use more hands. So if you can, please come and help. There's plenty of work to be done and we always have fun. You'll be amazed to see the number of plants we are accumulating for the sale.

I will also have a sign-up sheet on Saturdays for workers at the sale. This is when we'll really need everyone's participation. There are jobs for all abilities from cashiers to counters, to watching customers' plants in the holding area while they shop for more plants. It's a very gratifying and fun day. We have many returning customers who look forward to our sale every year and have been missing us for the last 2 years. I expect we'll have a great turn out. And of course the best prices in town. I hope you'll join us.



Bill & Fred checking out the plants we've potted up.

*Connie Miller*, President 🌸

THE ANONYMOUS GARDENER

On Gardens:

"A place where the mind goes to seed."

## Board Minutes

DIG's March 8, 2022 Board Meeting was called to order by Connie at 7:07 PM. Present for the Board Meeting were Connie, Robin, Ginger, Chris, Steve, Sue, Bob C. and CiCi. ☼ Connie welcomed CiCi, DIG's new Hospitality Chair to the meeting. ☼ Ginger gave the Treasurer's report. She added that DIG's Federal and State income tax forms had been filed. ☼ Chris said that DIG's Membership stands at 81. ☼ Sue asked that the Minutes as printed in the Weeder be approved by the Board. The Minutes were approved unanimously. ☼ Robin filled in for Juli and reported on the 2 field trips scheduled. March 17th to Granada Native Garden in Livermore and April 7th to the SF Flower and Garden show in Pleasanton. ☼ Steve, the Plant Manager, brought up the Plant Sale on May 7th. Many discussions followed regarding the Plant Sale – types of plants and pricing, the adjustment of pricing, advertising, plant pictures and signs for the Sale, printing of flyers, the Plant Sale banners (which need a city permit), the Port-a-Potty rental, sign up list for workers for the Plant Sale available at Saturday work days. Steve added that we need dividable plants from our yards for Saturday propagation. ☼ Robin followed with General Meeting speakers -The March Speaker could not be confirmed and it was decided that we will have a panel discussion if another Speaker was unavailable. ☼ The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Sue Castle*, Secretary 

## Growing Your Own Perennial Culinary Herb Garden at Home

By Jonathon Engels

<https://www.onegreenplanet.org/lifestyle/growing-your-own-perennial-culinary-herb-garden-at-home/>

Growing food at home can save us all a lot of money whilst likely providing healthier food than we'd normally get. One of the best avenues into home gardening is the culinary herb garden, and perhaps the best way into culinary herb growing is starting with perennial plants. Perennial plants, of course, are those which grow year and years without needing to be replanted. Most supermarket vegetables, like tomatoes and cucumbers and lettuce and potatoes, are planted anew each year. This requires a lot of work and energy. With perennial plants, a single plant can produce and live for years. Unlike vegetables, many of our favorite and most common culinary herbs come from perennial plants. That means creating an herb garden can pay off for years to come. Culinary herbs, whether dried or fresh, are extremely expensive to buy, yet they are extremely easy to grow.

Plus, it's a lot of fun. The culinary herb garden smells fantastic. It attracts butterflies, bees, and hummingbirds. It doesn't take up much space, and in general, culinary herbs grow so prolifically that one or two plants of something provide enough for all the fresh and dried herbs a home needs.

**Bay laurel**, which provides bay leaves, can be grown as a 60-foot-tall tree or kept pruned as a four-foot shrub. Though it isn't particularly cold-hardy (USDA Zone 8 or higher), it can easily be grown in a pot and brought inside during the winter. Bay leaves are the secret ingredient to a good pot of beans, tasty soups, and sauces. **Chives** are a low-growing, bunching herb that makes great border plants. They put out pretty purple blooms, also edible, in late spring, and they expand their growing circumference a little each year. They are one of the first herbs available each year. In the kitchen, fresh chives are the way to go, and they play nicely atop potatoes, tofu scrambles, beans, salads, pastas, stews, and whatever other savory dishes are on the menu.



**Lavender** is less used as a culinary herb than as an aromatherapy ingredient, renowned for its calming effect. In the garden, it's a shrub that can easily get a couple of feet tall and taller, and it puts out lovely flower displays in the summertime. It can make a curious addition to savory dishes, but it is more often found in desserts. Lavender also makes a great tea.

Part of the gigantic mint family, **lemon balm** is more a clumping herb than mint is. It'll grow up to three feet tall, spreading out about as wide. It can be pruned back significantly several times during the growing season to provide numerous harvests of its leaves. Fresh lemon balm works well when a zip of lemon might be welcomed, such as in salads, vegetable sautés, and desserts. The leaves can also be dried to use in tea blends later.

There are a ton of **Mints** out there to choose from: peppermint, spearmint, chocolate mint, apple mint, pineapple mint, etc. Once planted, mint will usually grow out of control, so many people prefer to confine it in a pot rather than in the ground where it can spread. Mint is tasty in desserts, with cucumbers, as tea, in jelly, in spring rolls, and various other ways. It's an herb we probably underutilize.

A classic Mediterranean herb that also shows up in Mexican cuisine a lot, too. **Oregano** is easy to grow, tolerates colder climates, and can spread aggressively if allowed to do so. It's a fairly short plant that works as a ground cover is monitored (pruned) well. An oregano plant will provide enough to have some fresh in the season and dry plenty for the winter.

**Rosemary** shrubs are super aromatic, evergreen, and grow quite large (up to a few feet) if allowed. They are another Mediterranean herb and can tolerate a mild temperate climate, and they are also drought-tolerant. Rosemary is good fresh, but probably equally as good dried. Because it's evergreen, it can be harvested as needed.

**Sage** has lovely, fuzzy leaves and attractive purple flowers. It grows into a nice shrub that can tolerate cold and dry climates, such as deserts. Sage can be a little finicky with too much water, but it is generally a very agreeable plant to grow. Sage is the queen of stuffing, and it plays nicely with potatoes, scrambles, gravy, and beans (particularly white beans) as well.

**Tarragon** is a somewhat dainty plant that likes sun and a bit of shelter from the wind. That said, it can survive in very cold climates (USDA Zone 2) where temperatures get into the negatives of Fahrenheit. As a culinary herb, it has a sweet licorice flavor that makes for good salad dressings, and it is classically used in béarnaise sauce.

Often growing wild, **thyme** is a fantastic groundcover planted, staying quite low and spreading in a rather non-threatening way. It has little purple or white flowers that attract bees, and there are several varieties out there to enjoy. Thyme is a traditional component in the Italian seasoning mixes where are accustomed to in the spice aisle. It is a mild-flavored, pleasant herb for savory cooking.

That's 10 perennial herbs to get started with! For some more fun, it's worth leaving some empty spaces for annual (Italian basil) and biennial (dill, cilantro, parsley) when the growing season is in full swing. A well-used herb garden makes for a well-appreciated kitchen because fresh herbs make food so flavorful.

## FIELD TRIPS

The dependable geraniums are blooming in my yard along with the cherry, peach, and pluot trees. All hints of the calendar arrival of spring just around the corner! Our local California native plants have been putting on a show as well. With that in mind, our next field trip takes us to the Granada Native Garden in Livermore on Thursday, March 17<sup>th</sup>. (Let's all wear green for St. Patrick's Day.) It's a lovely place to view native plants and stroll along the paths. Lunch and a nursery afterwards. We'll meet at 9am at the BART Park and Ride lot on Walnut Blvd. [www.gradanativegarden.org](http://www.gradanativegarden.org)



Save the date and plan to wear comfortable shoes for our field trip on **April 7th** to the **San Francisco-Northern California Flower and Garden Show** in Pleasanton. This will be an all-day outing. "Stroll through gorgeous designer gardens, with artfully arranged plants, trees, and flowers in full bloom. See the designs and watch the demonstrations by world-class floral designers. Discover how to create your own remarkable garden with hands-on demonstrations and inspiring seminars. Meet professional gardeners and nursery owners who can answer all your questions ... and help solve those nagging problems. Browse a wide selection of specialty shops featuring unique flowers, plants, gifts, tools, and more." **Tickets** may be purchase online (\$18-20) and at the gate (\$25) [Sfgardenshow.com](http://Sfgardenshow.com)



Sign up at our Saturday propagation workdays, at the next general meeting, or call: Juli

Redford 925-323-5854

*Juli Redford* 

Terry Eldridge has a FREE composter. It's 2' square by 32" tall and already disassembled for easy transport to its new home. Call her at 925-890-8800 if you are interested.



## 🌸 MARCH 28th SPEAKER 🌸



**Lori Caldwell, the Compost Gal**, has graciously agreed to speak at our March 28th\* meeting on **Healthy Soil**. Lori is an Alameda County Master Composter, a self-taught edible gardener and a residential sheet mulch maven. Her mission: "To connect people to the soil and all that it provides." She has been happily teaching sustainable gardening classes and transforming yards in the San Francisco Bay Area since 2017.



\* We were going to have Lori speak later in the year, but our March speaker fell through, so we asked her last minute to come in March. She said she'd be happy to! She spoke to us in 2018 and got rave reviews.

*Robin Choate* 

### FUTURE SPEAKERS


April 25: Bonnie Dwyer,  
Demystifying Peppers

May 23: Pamela Anderson,  
Edible Flowers



Anne & Don won  
the drawing

### THE BEST FRESH LEMONADE

1 Cup Fresh Squeezed  Lemon Juice

5 Cups Water

1 Cup Sugar (a little less, a little more, depending on your preference.)

Stir together until sugar devolves and pour over ice.



If you have a lot of lemons all at once, juice them then freeze the juice in 1 cup portions in ziplock bags. The frozen juice works just as well as the fresh. Just defrost and use as noted above.

## DIG Membership

P.O. Box 66

Brentwood, CA 94513

Please complete the membership form and return it with your dues to the address above or bring to the next general meeting.

Individual Membership.....\$20

Family Membership .....\$25

Make checks payable to DIG

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email address(es) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_(\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  HOME  MOBILE

\_\_\_\_\_ New Member \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal

**Pay your 2022 Dues now!**

POTTING UP PARTY

Every Saturday

10 AM to Noon




P.O. Box 66

Brentwood, CA 94513