

President	Paula Elias
Vice President	Bertie Baumgartner
Treasurer	Ellen Paradiso
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President's Message

by Paula Elias



Dear Manteca Garden Club Members,

Holiday time is upon us and the board and I wish you a wonderful season; Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah and more!

I recently received the December CGCI e-newsletter (California Garden Club) through my email. You may sign up to get it automatically too by going to the CGCI website. It's a great resource if you have more interest in learning about activities and contacts for our club. The issue shares the history on the Blue Star Memorial. Make sure to check ours out at the library, Center Street side. As you read, if you have questions, please let me know. We love to have all members know more about our club and how it relates to the statewide club.

We are looking forward to seeing you at our club luncheon, December 18, at Chez Shari. If you have questions, please call Berti our Vice President.

Happy New Year to you and yours! We have lots of fun things going on in 2018 and hope you all will join the fun!

Ho, ho, ho!

Paula

Key Dates

Monday, December 18	Holiday Luncheon at Chez Shari, Manteca Golf Course, 305 Union Road, 12:00 noon
Monday, January 15	Manteca Garden Club Meeting , McFall Room, Manteca Library, 320 W. Center St.; Refreshments 12:30 p.m., Meeting 1:00 p.m. Speaker: Jim Brugger, Topic: Sculpted Nature
Monday, March 19	Manteca Garden Club Meeting , Chez Shari, Manteca Golf Course, 305 Union Road, 12:30 refreshments, 12:55 Meeting starts

Note: Change in Location

Gardener's Corner for December

by Cate White, Master Gardener

Citrus trees are popular in our area, rewarding us with tasty wintertime fruit. Many kinds grow well here, chiefly oranges, lemons, mandarins, grapefruit and some limes. Check the Sunset Western Garden book to see if a variety does well in our climate zone, (Sunset zone 14), and how large it will grow.

Citrus trees need adequate water. Younger trees require more than established ones. Water needs are highest during the active growing season, starting in late winter to early spring, and under hot, windy conditions. Tree roots are in the top two feet of soil, extending out beyond the drip line, so as the tree grows watering should be done farther out from the trunk. In our area, trees may need water every few days June through September. Fertilize with nitrogen starting in late winter, again in May and if necessary again in June. Avoid fertilizing late in the growing season, which can adversely affect fruit quality. Iron, zinc and manganese are other elements that may be needed, as indicated by yellowing leaves. A foliar spray of liquid micronutrients may be helpful, or apply in sulfated form to the soil. Be aware that this condition is most common in winter, since it is harder for the tree to access nutrients in cold damp soil, so it may correct itself in the spring. A good layer of organic mulch on top of the soil is also helpful.

In December, freezing temperatures arrive. Citrus damage occurs at several degrees below freezing. The length of freezing is also important, with longer exposure being more harmful. Young trees are more susceptible than those that are established. To protect your plants, cover them with breathable material (not clear plastic) that does not touch the foliage, making sure they still receive sun during the day. Another option is to water well before a freeze, since damp soil stays warmer. Stringing plants with small Christmas lights (not the LED kind) is also a way to keep your tree warmer. If your tree does suffer frost damage, wait to cut it back until spring, since it is hard to be sure the wood is dead until then.

Citrus fruits begin coloring up in December, although they may not be fully ripe yet since color is not a reliable way to determine ripeness. Test a few fruits to see how they taste. Fruit holds well on the trees, so it doesn't need to be harvested all at once. When picked, fruit can be stored 4 to 6 weeks in the refrigerator. Valencia oranges won't ripen until late spring or early summer. Since we are under quarantine due the threat of citrus greening disease, you must wash the fruit and make sure it is free of all twigs and leaves before taking it outside our area. (continued on Page 3)

December Garden Checklist

- Plant pre-chilled tulip and hyacinth bulbs
- Reduce irrigation according to temperature and rain, being sure to water plants under eaves that don't get rainfall
- Continue controlling for ants and snails
- Clean up leaves and garden debris
- Spray fungicide on peach and nectarine trees to prevent peach leaf curl
- Protect frost sensitive plants (see methods in article above)
- Look for cyclamen plants for winter color in pots or flower beds

Remember plants can make great Christmas gifts!



Gardener's Corner for December (continued from Page 2)



Cyclamen

Plant(s) of the Month for December

By Eric Teberg

Parahebe linifolia, *Hebe*

Moisture: Moderate
Flowers: White
Blooms: June-October
Exposure: Full sun
Height: 3.5'
Width: 3.5'



Rehmannia, *Chinexe Foxglove*

Exposure: Sun to partial shade
Moisture: Moderate
Height: 2" – 3"
Flowers: Rose-purple



Gaultheria procumbens, *wintergreen*

Exposure: Part to full shade
Moisture: Medium
Blooms: June-July
Flowers: White
Height: 3-6"
Width: 6-12"



Plectranthus, *Swedish ivy*

Exposure: Part to full shade
Moisture: Moderate
Blooms: Spring-Summer
Height: 6-12"
Width: 6-20"



School Gardens by Tom Powell

Lincoln School Garden Additions

My attention turned to Lincoln School over the past several weeks. As mentioned in my prior article I assisted the GECAC site manager and after school students in preparing the beds and sowing the seeds for a fall/winter crop in the six raised beds.

More recently we prepared a new in ground bed and planted perennial shrubs that will attract animals to pollinate the garden area. MGC donated a shovel, spade fork, and rake to provide the garden with basic tools needed to maintain the garden. We also donated some gloves for the students.



MGC donated the funds to upgrade the irrigation timer, the supply lines, and several of the plants, including some herbs. The MUSD School Farm donated several other shrubs including 14 Milkweed plants that hopefully will attract butterflies and other beneficial creatures.



Lastly, MGC donated an outdoor sink and counter. This will make it more convenient for the garden participants to clean up.



This has been a very rewarding project in that the GECAC site manager was at a point where her motivation to use and improve the garden were strong, but her time was very limited. We were able to provide her and a few members of her staff the opportunity, once again, to turn the garden into a positive experience for them and their students.

Cheap Gardening by Beverly Ensley

October tips:

- Use bleach to clean tools
- Epsom salt contains magnesium which is critical for seed germination. Use 1 tbl to 1 gallon of water and sprinkle plants.
- Sugar mixed with cinnamon and chili powder sprinkled around plants help keep bugs at bay.
- Bug Spray: Mix ½ tsp dishwashing soap with 3 tbl cooking oil with 1 quart of water and spray directly on plants.
- Ants: use cornmeal gluten to kill ants. Just pour it wherever ants are present.
- Jim's Weed-be-gone recipe (Will kill anything you spray it on. Just mix and spray and mix in the morning after the dew has evaporated. By dinner, the weeds are wilting.
½ cup Epsom salt
1 tbl Dawn dish soap
1 qt vinegar
- Nana Gail's Window and Mirror cleaner:
½ cup rubbing alcohol
2 tbl white ammonia
¼ tsp Dawn dish soap
Fill sprayer with water and mix.



November tips:

Things to put in the bottom of a pot:

Instead of buying plastic plant saucers, use plates, or pie dishes from your kitchen or a thrift store. To help with drainage, try one of these at the bottom of your pot:

- Things to put in the bottom of a pot: large coffee filters, landscaping fabric, scrubbers, packing peanuts, Scotch-Brite pads from 3M, cut up pool noodles, rocks or broken pots, old sponge, window screen mesh, filter media for heat or air system, large pot – pinecones, soda cans.
- To hold water in your pot you can use diapers which are super absorbent.
- The new "super soil" cuts watering amounts and times in half and can grow seeds up to 10 days without any extra water.

December Birthdays

5	Josie Padua
8	Patti Dowling
8	Gail Hannon
27	Sandra Sarras

