



Walter Andersen Nursery™

SAN DIEGO'S GARDEN RESOURCE

# Garden Talk

INDEPENDENT & FAMILY-OWNED SINCE 1928!

STORE HOURS: San Diego 8am-5pm | Poway 9am-5pm | 7 Days-A-Week

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## Welcome To The Poison Garden

By Melanie Potter



## Pumpkin Season Is Here, But Will Be Gone

By Melanie Potter



Photo: Matthew Naras

Last year, I saw a helpful article that shared what people do with their no-longer-needed pumpkins.

Last year at the nursery, we sprayed painted them in Christmas colors and tied them up with ribbon to resemble ornaments. Genius! Of course, after they were painted, we were unable to further repurpose them.



[continued p2](#)

In the far north of England, in Northumberland, there is a botanical garden with deadly offerings. At home in the Alnwick Garden, lies The Poison Garden, with more than 100 toxic, intoxicating and narcotic plants.

Visitors are strictly prohibited from touching, smelling or ingesting the

plants. Signs warning of the dangers faced by tasting, touching or even smelling the flora are numerous, although still not enough to combat natural human curiosity, it seems—in the summer of 2014, seven visitors fainted after inhaling toxic fumes. Are you curious as to what's in the garden? Here's a sampling:

[continued p2](#)

## Meet The Winter Squash Line Up

By Food Gardening Network

You can buy them or grow them but whatever choice you make, don't miss them! Luckily, many varieties of winter squash are available year round.

### Acorn Squash

- Small, round squash with a dull green rind and yellow-orange flesh
- Stores whole for about a month
- Bake, roast, steam, or microwave
- Good for halving and stuffing



Acorn squash

[continued p3](#)



**Pumpkin Season**  
continued from p1



However, clever folks (mostly from back east) had some helpful suggestions.

> After Thanksgiving, a Pennsylvania couple put them in the woods behind their house as a tasty snack for wildlife.

> From New York comes a tip from this thoughtful person who collects them from neighbors, cuts them up and puts them out for the deer.

> In Massachusetts, Marjorie cuts them in half so animals don't get their heads stuck in them and then takes them to her local Audubon Society where they are fed to animals.

It seems that squirrels, deer and birds enjoy pumpkin. At our Poway store, Matthew cut some into jack-o-lanterns and deposited them in the chicken coop as an enrichment event for our chickens, who enjoyed pecking and eating them. •



**Poison Garden** continued from p1



Laburnum, Atropa Belladonna, Helleborus Odorus, Monkshood, Ricinus communis, Giant Hogweed, Opium Poppy and Gympie-Gympie.

The story of Alnwick Gardens begins in 1995, when Lord and Lady Percy became the 12th Duke and Duchess of Northumberland, making them the new owners of Alnwick Castle and its adjacent 12-acre walled garden. Although it had been a majestic and grand space in its past, the garden had fallen into disrepair during the 20th Century—it had been turned over for crop-growing as part of the 'Dig for Victory' campaign during the Second World War, and subsequently suffered during post-war austerity, closing as a public garden in 1950.

The Poison Garden was opened as part of a series of new developments in 2005. It was entirely the creation of the Duchess, who was inspired on a visit to an apothecary garden in Italy, explaining, 'I wondered why so many gardens around the world focused on the healing power of plants rather than their ability to kill. I felt that most children I knew would be more interested in hearing how a plant killed, how long it would take you to die if you ate it and how gruesome and painful the death might be'.

The Duchess sounds like quite a character albeit a dining companion whose conversation may put you off sitting next to her at a state dinner.



*Ricinus communis*



*Belladonna*

She has an apparent fascination with death (that manifested itself in an enormous taxidermy collection) and has also used her Poison Garden as a means of education on drug use, growing plants like tobacco, cocaine (derived from the coca plant), the opium poppy *Papaver somniferum*, cannabis and magic mushrooms, with a license from the UK Home Office.

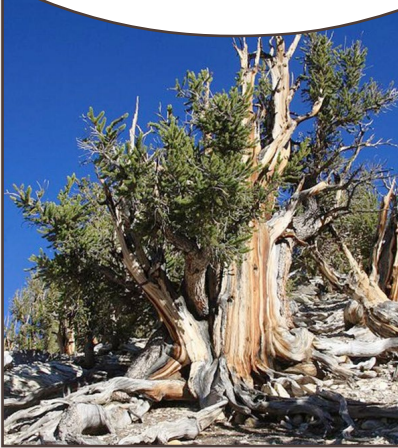
It's not just the medicinal or deadly properties of her poison plants in which the Duchess has an interest, having spoken openly about her fascination with their aphrodisiac properties. Speaking to Smithsonian magazine about her favorite plant, the South American *Brugmansia*, she described how, 'It's an amazing aphrodisiac before it kills you. It's an amazing way to die because it's quite pain-free. A great killer is usually an incredible aphrodisiac'.

We'll take her word for it!! •



## An Homage To Trees

By Amanda MacArthur  
Food Gardening Network



*Methuselah, the ancient bristlecone pine, nearly 5,000 years old*

Trees are honestly a force of nature. Sometimes it's hard to fathom how these giant beings can sprout from a tiny seed. But here they are, making our world a much more beautiful place to live in! The average life cycle of a tree lasts 300-400 years, which is incredible, but some live thousands of years. That means that the apple tree you plant today could be feeding the generation after you, and the one after that.

One of the oldest trees in the world is located in the White Mountains of California, an almost 5,000-year-old Great Basin bristlecone pine tree known as Methuselah. Just think about it: it's been through all of our World Wars and has survived even the most explosive events in history. While they do have a much longer lifespan than humans, sadly, our beloved trees will eventually die.

There are many reasons why trees meet their demise. One of these is due to their environment, another from harmful diseases and pests. Other reasons come from catastrophic events, wildfires, and age-related causes. •

## Winter Squash continued from p1

### Buttercup Squash

- Dark green with round ridges at the bottom
- Stores whole up to three months
- Bright orange flesh that's mild and sweet

### Delicata Squash

- Also called Bohemian, Sweet Potato Squash
- Cylindrical with yellow skin and green stripes
- Stores up to three months
- Tastes like sweet potato when cooked
- Stuff, roast, steam, or microwave
- Skin is edible

### Hubbard Squash

- Big and bumpy, with very hard orange, green, or gray-blue skin
- Sweet orange flesh
- Stores whole up to six months
- Peel before cooking
- Mash or puree and make into pie
- Also good steamed, boiled, or roasted



*Hubbard squash*

### Kabocha Squash

- Small, squat, with dark green skin
- Sweet orange flesh that tastes like pumpkin and sweet potato
- Store whole for up to a month
- Popular in Japan for making tempura
- Works well as a soup thickener

### Spaghetti Squash

- Pale to bright yellow skin—the brighter the skin, the riper the squash
- Stores whole for several weeks
- Bake or steam
- Great low-calorie alternative to pasta •

## Gardening As An Artform

By Food Gardening Network



Show me your garden and I shall tell you what you are.  
—Alfred Austin

A world without tomatoes is like a string quartet without violins.  
—Laurie Colwin

The garden is the poor man's apothecary.  
—German proverb

All gardening is landscape painting.  
—William Kent

In the night the cabbages catch at the moon, the leaves drip silver, the rows of cabbages are a series of little silver waterfalls in the moon.

—Carl Sandburg •





*Watch Me  
Grow*  
By WAN Staff



In August 2023, I was a big deal at Walter Andersen Nursery in Poway. For the first time in our company's history, I, an **Amorphophallus titanium**, bloomed and it was glorious.

It can take 7 to 10 years for us to bloom and when we do, folks come from all over to see and smell the spectacle. My flower gives off an odor reminiscent of (some say) smelly socks or rotting meat.

Well, now I'm back and growing fast. About one inch a day. As of August 18, I am about 23 inches tall. Don't miss our November newsletter where we shall see how much taller I am!! •



*It's me dressed as a witch last Halloween!*

# Gloomy Goth Garden

By Garden Center Magazine



Sometimes you just don't want Halloween to end and while we don't suggest you leave your spooky décor up all year; you can incorporate some goth features into your landscape.

A goth or gothic garden traditionally incorporated themes of death and decay but now draws inspiration from dark, brooding, Victorian-era literature and occult and fantasy themes.

## Here are tips to create a gothic look:

**Layout-** Draw inspiration from classic gothic books and movies to tell a story. Avoid straight lines and think about how to create shadows, dark corners, pocket gardens, walled gardens or labyrinths.

**Plants-** Choose dark flowers and foliage, and interesting textures. Add thick, vining plants to pergolas to shade walk ways. Plant suggestions include: Raven ZZ Plant, Black Mondo Grass, Zwartkop aeonium, Ipomea 'Solar Power Black', perilla, ajuga, Cordyline 'Red Star' and 'Festival Burgundy', black pansies and petunias, Black Magic Elephant Ears, Agonis flexurosa 'After Dark', purple basil and varieties of heuchera.

**Hardscaping-** Stone arches, crumbling walls, elaborate wrought iron gates, ornate cast-iron borders,

dark reflecting pools and meandering paths that lead to garden rooms. Repurpose hardscaping such as stone work for paths or walls, pergolas with patina and arched doors.

**Accessories-** Black urns and containers. Add traditional gothic elements such as cage-like outdoor lanterns, antique urns, fountains, gargoyles, dragons and other statuary. Cherubs, saints and angels can give the feeling of being watched!



**Lighting-** Up light trees to cast shadows and add mystery. Spotlights on statues showcase the art while giving life to inanimate objects. Pathway lighting creates drama along the meandering walkways of the garden. •





## The Unexpected Fall Treat

By Melanie Potter



My brown thumb continues to surprise me. With the advent of pumpkin spice season, I was pining for all things with that flavor and smell. Before I could even bake pumpkin bread, buy pumpkin spice, or down a pumpkin beer, another smelly treat reared it's just-in-time-for Halloween head. The **Starfish Flower (Stapelia grandiflora)** that I had been letting nature work its magic on (ok, I was neglecting it) bloomed. It bloomed just over one year ago and at that time I was anticipating its noxious smell and was disappointed that it wasn't very prominent. This year, it was a knock-your-socks off odor of rotting broccoli. The flies loved it.

This South African native is a perennial succulent that emits a strong odor resembling that of rotting meat, which serves to attract its primary pollinators, flies.

Did you spot the story in this newsletter that updates you on another smelly plant?? •

## Lettuce Types

By Food Gardening Network



When you go to the grocery store, you're likely to find basic representatives of the various types of lettuce varieties: iceberg, Romaine, bibb, leaf. Hit up a farmer's market, and suddenly your choices have expanded within each of those categories. Luckily, lettuce is a crop that can be grown year-round in most parts of San Diego County.

There are hundreds of varieties of lettuce you can grow with delightful names like Tom Thumb, Green Deer Tongue, Red Rosie, and Igloo (which happens to be heat-resistant; go figure).



**In North America, there are four main types of lettuce. Here's an overview of those types:**

### Butterhead

This type of lettuce includes bibb and Boston lettuce. This type forms loose heads with oily leaves. You can pick the leaves as they grow, or harvest the whole loose head at once.



### Crisphead (Iceberg)

This is the big, heavy, round head of lettuce that is often the foundation of salads. It has a high water content and (usually) a low flavor level. But there are some varieties with flavor to rival the best loose-leaf lettuce!

### Looseleaf

As its name describes, this lettuce grows with lots of loosely bunched leaves. This type is a favorite for mixed greens salads; using multiple types of looseleaf lettuce makes for quite a colorful and flavorful salad.

### Romaine

Famous for Caesar salads, this type of lettuce grows in long, upright heads. It's also popular as an addition to sandwiches. Some people even use it as a replacement for bread, taking advantage of the long leaf's cupped shape to hold everything. •





## Recipe: Pumpkin Fluff

### INGREDIENTS:

- 3 large eggs
- 1 (1 lb.) can pumpkin
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 1 can evaporated milk
- 2 tsps. cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp. nutmeg
- 1/2 tsp. ginger
- 1 box yellow cake mix
- 3/4 cup melted margarine
- 1 cup chopped pecans



### DIRECTIONS:

Mix together eggs, pumpkin, sugar, milk and spices on medium speed in mixing bowl. Pour into a greased 9x13 inch pan. Sprinkle the dry cake mix over the batter. Drizzle melted margarine over the top of the cake mix. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes. Remove from the oven and sprinkle nuts on top. Continue baking for 30 additional minutes. Serve with Cool Whip. •



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RADIO

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## To Do List: October



Plant California natives like (L-R) Toyon, Ceanothus, and Coffeeberry

### Plant

- > California natives and drought-tolerant plants are best planted this time of year to get root systems established.
- > Bulbs like Daffodils, Ranunculus, Freesias, Anemones and more.
- > Winter annuals like Stocks, Snapdragons, Pansies, Violas, and Primrose.
- > Cool season vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower, kale, lettuce, peas, carrots and more!
- > Shrubs such as Camellias and Azaleas, and trees that provide wonderful fall color such as Ginkgo, Pistache, and Liquidambar.
- > Overseed Bermuda lawns with Annual Rye. It's a great time to plant Fescue from seed or sod.

### Water

When dry Santa Ana winds are expected, make sure to get extra water on plants and lawns before needed, especially container plants. •



Plant winter annuals like Pansies



Water before Santa Ana winds arrive

### Fertilize

- > For lawns, use Marathon Fertilizer for tall fescue, and Bonide DuraTurf Weed & Feed to feed grass and control broadleaf weeds.
- > Feed ornamentals, vegetables, citrus, avocado, fruit trees, palms and tropicals with E.B. Stone or Dr. Earth.
- > Do not feed Camellias until after they are finished flowering.



# October Savings!

Valid October 1-31, 2024



## 20% OFF Asclepias (Milkweed)

Excludes Moosa Creek



## 50% OFF Potted Fruit Trees

Excludes Citrus, Avocado & Tropical Fruit

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

# Garden Classes: October

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 <https://www.walterandersen.com/classes-events/>.

### SAN DIEGO

9:00AM

10/5

Fall Bulbs  
with Kathleen

10/12

Bonsai Basics  
with Richard

10/19

Camellia Care  
with Kathleen

10/26

Growing Mushrooms  
with Max Goransson  
of Golden Mushroom Co.

### POWAY

9:30AM

10/5

Dragon Fruit:  
Care, Culture & Varieties  
with Alan Ridley

10/12

Autumn/Winter  
Fruit Tree Care  
with Richard Wright

10/19

Culinary Herbs  
with Farmer Roy

10/26

Greenhouse Growing Basics  
with Chuck McClung



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INDEPENDENT & FAMILY-OWNED SINCE 1928!

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# GardenTalk

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**619-224-8271**  
Open 8am-5pm | 7 Days-A-Week

### POWAY

12755 Danielson Court  
Poway, California 92064  
**858-513-4900**  
Open 9am-5pm | 7 Days-A-Week

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