



Walter Andersen Nursery™

SAN DIEGO'S GARDEN RESOURCE

# GardenTalk

INDEPENDENT & FAMILY-OWNED SINCE 1928!

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

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## Basil Choices

By Melanie Potter

Thai basil



Genovese basil - photo: San Diego Seed Co.



After sitting out the cooler weather, basil is back in stock with a staggering number of varieties and you might be inundated with choices.

It seems the most popular is **sweet basil**, you may be familiar with **Genovese** which is what is typically found in the supermarkets.

Have you encountered the exotic licorice-scented **Thai basil**? You may

also discover **lemon basil** which is used in seafood dishes, cinnamon basil may appear in desserts and holy basil in Thai curries.

My husband had the surprise of his life after planting **African Blue basil**. It is a sterile hybrid that combines intense camphor notes with clove-like undertones. I recommend it for adventurous cooks. Ours grew to

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## Say Goodbye To Winter With Spring Bulbs

By Alan Andersen



Winter is typically when the spring bulbs start to arrive. These include old favorites like **Dahlias**, **Gladiolus**, and **Oriental Lilies**. You will also find a couple unusual ones like **Sprekelia** with its striking fleur de lis-shaped deep red flowers

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## All About Asparagus

By WAN Staff & Food Gardening Network

### Some Fast Fun Facts!

- > Asparagus is considered a finger food in many countries.
- > Asparagus officinalis is related to the lily.
- > Plants are male or female, and the females produce red berries that are toxic to humans.
- > Asparagus comes in three colors: green, purple, and white.
- > Asparagus has been prized as a vegetable, a diuretic, and a purported



aphrodisiac for millennia. Egyptians pictured it as an offering to the gods in 3000 B.C. and it was known in ancient Syria and Spain. The Greeks and Romans ate it fresh in season

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**Spring Bulbs**  
continued from p1



and Gloriosa Lily which is a beautiful climbing lily with red and yellow flowers.

All of these bulbs can be planted in containers or in flower beds with rich amended soil. Be sure to add some **Gro-Power Plus** at planting time to get them off to a good start. Dahlias, especially the large dinner plate varieties, will benefit from some extra support from stakes as the flowers truly get huge and weighty. Dahlias, Gladiolus, and Oriental Lilies all make excellent cut flowers.

The biggest pests to watch out for are thrips on Gladiolus and slugs and snails on Dahlias. Applying **Sluggo Plus** to the beds will take care of slugs and snails and other crawling insects. The **Bio Advance 2-in-1 Rose & Flower Food** can help keep thrips at bay on the Gladiolus. You can also dust your Gladiolus bulbs prior to planting with Sevin to get a jump on anything that might be living on the bulb prior to planting. If you have the time to bring bulbs into bloom, you will get great joy from growing and cutting them to enjoy indoors. •

**Basil Choices** continued from p1



*The many varieties of basil*



be a rather large shrub and the bees adored it. To harvest or trim it back, we had to wait until evening after the bees went to bed.

**Holy basil** or **Tulsi**, is a sacred plant in Hindu traditions that contains high levels of eugenol and beta-caryophyllene, creating a powerful fragrance that's both peppery and clove-like.

**Persian basil** deserves special mention for its uniquely intense, slightly medicinal flavor. The leaves contain unusually high concentrations of methyl chavicol, creating an anise-forward taste that's completely different from what you would expect from basil. You would use it with Persian-style rice dishes and meat marinades.

The intensity of basil's flavor is related to environmental conditions and stress levels. Higher temperatures and moderate water stress can increase the concentration of essential oils in the leaves, leading to more potent flavors.

This is particularly noticeable in varieties like **lime basil**, which produces elevated levels of citral and limonene under optimal conditions.

**Cardinal basil** represents another fascinating example of botanical chemistry at work. Its deep purple coloration comes from anthocyanins, the same compounds found in blueberries and other purple fruits.



*Ingredients for pesto*

But what's really interesting is how these compounds interact with the plant's flavor molecules, creating a more complex taste profile than its green counterparts.

Growing different types of basil in close proximity can actually enhance their aromatic qualities through competitive stress responses. This phenomenon, known as allelopathy, causes plants to increase their production of defensive compounds, in this case, the essential oils prized for their flavors and fragrances. •



*Exotic  
Dragon Fruit Is  
Easy To Grow*

By Melanie Potter



Known as Dragon Fruit or Pitaya, this vine that can be trained into a tree, is an epiphytic that produces an exotic fruit that is popular in cuisine. Some bartenders will even shake up a Dragontini for you.

The brightly colored fruit with a white or pink interior contains many small black edible (but indigestible) seeds. It contains high amounts of vitamin C and dietary fiber. The flesh is sweet, quite refreshing and similar to melons or kiwi in flavor. Dragon Fruit is best eaten ripe and it is opined that it tastes better when chilled. To eat, cut fruit in half (chill and sprinkle with lemon or lime to enhance the flavor), and scoop out the flesh or cut in cubes, or strips.

Native to Mexico and Central and South America, these are also cultivated in Southeast Asian countries such as Vietnam, the Philippines, and

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**Asparagus** continued from p1



*The British Asparagus Festival in Worcestershire, UK*

and dried it for use in winter, while Roman Epicureans froze it high in the Alps for the Feast of Epicurus.

> Asparagus has long been associated with royalty. Emperor Augustus created the “Asparagus Fleet” for hauling the vegetable and coined the expression “faster than cooking asparagus” for quick action.

> The Greeks associated it with fertility and the goddess of love, Aphrodite. Starting in the 16th century, asparagus was served in the royal courts of Europe and in the 17th century it was cultivated in France for Louis XIV who deemed asparagus “the king of vegetables.”

> Today, China grows the most asparagus by far, followed by Peru and Mexico.

> The United States is one of the biggest importers of asparagus worldwide, though Michigan, California, and Washington are large producers.

> Asparagus is so popular in the U.S. that festivals are held in

*Illustrated details of Asparagus, 1831*



California and Michigan to celebrate the noble spears. Cities in England and Germany, also top asparagus producers, hold festivals lauding asparagus and asparagus queens are crowned.

**Growing Tips**

**If you are sufficiently dazzled with asparagus facts, here’s some tips for growing it.**

- It’s a perennial and will need plenty of space as asparagus will spread and create new shoots each year. Asparagus plants also grow upwards of six feet.
- Asparagus needs plenty of sun and moist soil with a pH range of 6.5 to 7.0, so avoid planting near a crop that prefers dry or acidic soil.
- After you plant, make sure to sprinkle Sluggo Plus around the plants because snails are big fans.
- Don’t expect to be eating home grown asparagus any time soon as it takes two to three years for plants to become established and yield a harvest. •

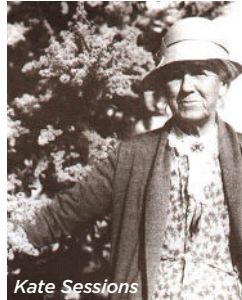
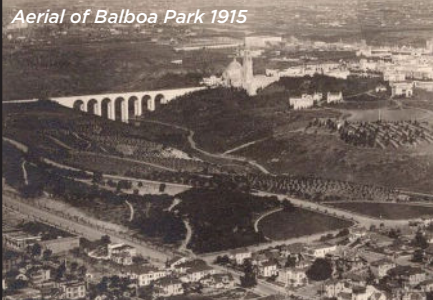


# Back in the Day

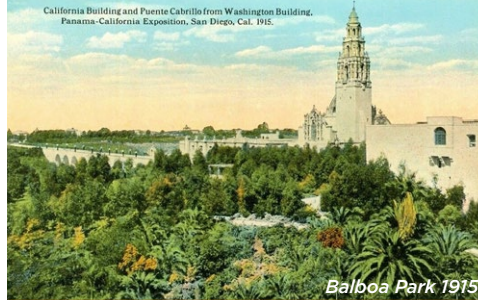
with John Clements

## A Tale of Two Parks

Aerial of Balboa Park 1915



Kate Sessions



Balboa Park 1915

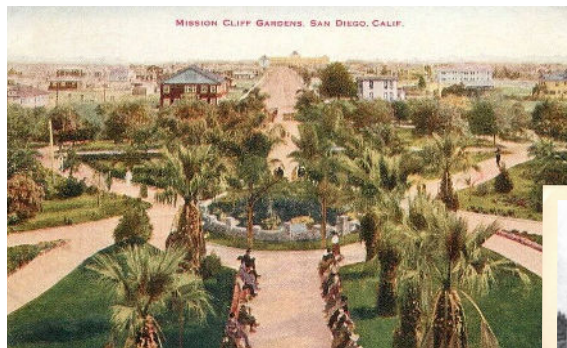


### Balboa Park

San Diego has long been a paradise for gardeners. In the early 1900s, **Kate Sessions** was laying out plans for what was then called City Park at the urging of her longtime friend, George Marston. She began a practice of planting trees throughout what became Balboa Park. The city also allowed her to have a nursery on the eastern edge of the park to raise trees to be planted throughout San Diego.



*John Clements has been a horticultural professional since 1976. Former nursery owner, gardener and koi pond builder to the rich and famous, horticulturalist, commercial fruit tree farmer, garden writer, agricultural historian, and now a co-host on Garden Talk!*



MISSION CLIFF GARDENS, SAN DIEGO, CALIF.

Overview of Mission Cliff Gardens in University Heights



Ostriches on the farm 1902

SHOOTING AND WITH BENTLEY'S OSTRICH FARM, SAN DIEGO, CAL. COPYRIGHT, 1902, BY DETROIT PHOTOGRAPHIC CO.



Trolley at the entrance to Mission Cliff Gardens

### Mission Cliff Gardens

**John D. Spreckels**, the sugar magnate was also an avid gardener and booster of local gardens, especially if he could make a little money from the public's love of gardens at the same time.

Spreckels built a trolley line to the edge of the cliffs overlooking Mission Valley from downtown San Diego. At the turn of the century, this was considered "way out in the country." To encourage ridership, Spreckels built Mission Cliff Gardens and an ostrich farm to attract riders to the area of Adams Ave. and Park Blvd. Some of the cobblestone walls from Mission Cliff Gardens survive in the area to this day, and ostrich eggs and ostrich graphics decorate local architectural details. ●

The Bentley Ostrich Farm entrance at Park & Adams



413. Pereda and Pavilion, Mission Cliff Gardens, San Diego, Cal.

An overlook with pergola & pavilion

## Dragon Fruit

continued from p3



Malaysia. The pitaya blooms only at night with large white fragrant flowers, typical of cactus, that are often called Moonflower or Queen of the Night. It grows best in dry, tropical or subtropical climates where annual rainfall ranges from 20-50" per year. It will tolerate temperatures to 104F, and short periods of frost, but prolonged cold will damage or kill the plant. The plants aren't picky as to soil type, but because of their epiphytic nature, it is recommended to grow them in soil that is supplemented with high amounts of organic material.

The plant is easy to propagate and like other succulents and cacti, if you break or cut off a large enough piece of a mature plant it will attempt to put down roots and start growing itself to form a new plant. Try cutting a section of the mature pitaya vine (stem) and plant it directly in the ground or suitable soil medium. •



## To Do List: March



Look for Azaleas



Plant Citrus

### Prune

Camellias and Azaleas after done blooming to shape. Cut back frost damaged plants and feed with Gro-Power to encourage new growth and regeneration.

### Fertilize

Feed 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

- > 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 Garden Soil is great for edibles and ornamentals.

### Look For:

Azaleas, Tuberous Begonias, Caladiums, Calla Lilies and Roses. •



Fertilize Avocado



Big Harvest Garden Soil is a great soil amendment for edibles and ornamentals



Plant warm-season vegetables

## Holiday Closing

**April 20**

Both stores will be closed for Easter.





# Garden Talk RADIO

Listen to the WAN Experts  
Saturdays 6am-7am  
AM 1170 & 1210 | FM 96.1 & 106.1

Or Listen Anytime on our Podcasts Page

### Shows This Month:

- 3/1 – Ken, George & John with guest Mike Letzring, San Diego Zoo Horticulturalist
- 3/8 – Ken, George & John
- 3/15 – Ken, George & John with guest TBD
- 3/22 – Ken, George & John
- 3/29 – Ken, George, John and Jennifer Thomson from Felco

Guests subject to change without notice



[walterandersen.com](http://walterandersen.com)

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

SAN DIEGO	POWAY
<b>9:00AM</b>	<b>9:30AM</b>
3/1 Spring Seed Starting with Richard	3/1 Growing Tomatoes with Farmer Roy
3/8 Creating a Pollinator Paradise with Olivia	3/8 Designing Your California Native Garden with Sharon
3/15 Landscaping 101 with Ted	3/15 For the Love of Hoyas! with Tammy
3/22 Real Organic Gardening with Randy from Malibu Compost	3/22 Deciduous Fruit Tree Grafting with Adams
3/29 Growing Tomatoes with Cyarah	3/29 Dragon Fruit: Care, Culture & Varieties with Tyler Trimble



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SAN DIEGO'S GARDEN RESOURCE



### Visit Our 2 Locations

#### SAN DIEGO

3642 Enterprise Street  
San Diego, California 92110  
**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

### Visit Us Online



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