

UC Santa Cruz

News & Notes of the UCSC Farm & Garden

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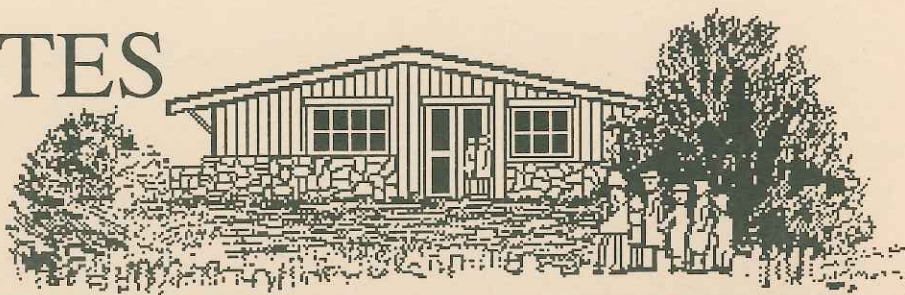
UC Santa Cruz

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NEWS & NOTES

*of the UCSC FARM
and GARDEN*



Issue 46

April, 1989

Louise Cain, Editor

Join The Friends Twice in the merry month of May!

Orin Martin on Visions of A Summer Garden

Date: Saturday, May 20

Time: 10:00 --2:00

Place: Farm Gatehouse (free Saturday parking up main drive by Carriage House and campus facilities. Cross road, over cattle guard, up sandy fork. Five minute walk.)

Program: There is always an eager crowd of aficionados to hear Orin, our Garden manager. He will focus on choice annuals and perennials, covering sources, growth requirements, and care in a season of drought.

Field Trip To Dennis Tamura's

Blue Heron Farm
216 Merk Road
Watsonville

Date: Wednesday, May 24

Time: 1:30 if car-pooling. Meet promptly at K-Mart, 41st, upper corner parking lot, closest to freeway or...

start in time to meet us at 2:00 at Blue Heron Farm in Corralitos if you need to go directly. Phone Kima if you have questions. (429-3299)

Features: In our opinion Dennis is one of the best organic gardeners of northern California. A student of Chadwick, and key staff director and teacher of Farm and Garden apprentices until 1984, Dennis will welcome current apprentices and Friends and guide us over his wholesale organic gardens and storing barn. His vegetables grace outstanding restaurants and food emporiums in San Francisco and the Bay Area. Much of his produce will be ready for the market in May.

Three Flowers For Late Season Bloom Welcome

(a perennial, a biennial, an annual)

Since 1978 your editor has featured articles about particular flowers and herbs in *The News And Notes* - usually in retrospect, at the close of a season. It occurs to me that the timing might be more practical to talk in anticipation of what you might like to have blooming in your garden from August to November, a period when mine in the past has occasionally threatened to close down in some disarray.

In the last several years, however, I have enjoyed some special late bloomers beside the omnipresent chrysanthemum. In 1987 I wrote a paean of praise to the fall Japanese anemone. Now I want to speak of two others: *Trachelium caeruleum* and *Lisianthus russellianus*.

Trachelium caeruleum.

Of the perennials I have been introduced to in the last five years, *Trachelium caeruleum* is my favorite, not a look-at-me flower at all, but of a subtle, quiet beauty whether planted in sun or shade, that finally engages your lasting affection. It is one of the **Campanula** family, and a common name for it (I can't call it that myself!) is throatwort.

Trachelium, which I obtained originally from the UCSC Garden, is sold at the San Lorenzo Garden Center. The plant, rather woody at the base, can grow 3-4 feet high and a foot in diameter, the stems purple and the leaves green with purple overtones as summer turns to fall. It is widely branching toward the top, the leaves up to 3" long and bluntly toothed. It is tough and undemanding. But all this is only a backdrop for the **Trachelium** flower. On my happiest plant there are a half dozen purple-blue flat clusters of flowers at a time like so many rounds of Belgian lace, in bloom for a good three months. The clusters reach 4" across (sometimes more, sometimes less) and I have half-heartedly tried to count the individual small deep-throated flowers in one cluster. It was the third Fall of enjoying these unusual flowers before I thought to touch my nose to one. I was rewarded by one of the most subtle of plant perfumes - a delicate shy sweetness, an altogether unexpected bonus. Last November, after a heavy wind and rain storm, I held one wet and battered cluster of 15 stems and found approximately 30 tiny flowers per stem, adding up to 450 blossoms. And each cluster, like a slightly rounded plate, provides a raised airfield for the descent of bees.



Lisianthus russellianus

... appeared on the Santa Cruz garden scene only three springs ago, was somewhat of a mystery plant. Was it an annual, or perhaps a biennial? The retail centers weren't sure. Those of us who planted it knew only that the clumps of gray-green foliage sent up 1 and 1/2 to 2 foot stems, topped on each plant by purple, light pink or ivory 2" to 3" tulip-shaped lovely blossoms. They bloomed all summer-fall in the garden, and lasted a month in a bouquet indoors.

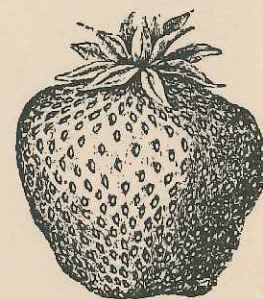
Now we know a little more. *Lisianthus* is classed as a biennial, though it may pull through as a short-lived perennial in Santa Cruz. It also known by another Latin name, *Eustoma grandiflorum*. Of an array of common names my favorite is prairie gentian. It is a time consuming and rather difficult nuisance to raise from seed, but is available locally full grown and also in very slow-to-flower six packs.

Callestephus chinensis

... is the proper Latin name for what we commonly call the garden aster. Though I treasure the true perennial asters in my garden, I am planning to grow the annual garden aster for the first time this year for an irresistible reason: I shall never forget a startling and stunning bouquet of strong purple asters from the UCSC Garden that I enjoyed late last summer. They were fresh for a month, but I kept them in a vase longer than that because they dried still maintaining their petals, their color, and their upright posture. Orin Martin favors six different varieties of them, of which one (Crego giant) is currently for sale at the San Lorenzo Garden Center. Orin will incorporate data on asters in his talk at the Gatehouse May 20, and we will have duplicated copies of his aster notes for you then.

The Strawberry Story

On Saturday, June 17, from 10:00 to 12:00 in the Gatehouse, the Agroecology Program will share the interesting story of its ongoing strawberry research which is being conducted up the coast with grower Jim Cochran. Displays, handouts, a team talk, and even a taste of strawberries are on the docket.



Notations

No wonder we are constructing an outdoor pavilion! Our Gatehouse events attract more and more participants, and we thank our recent 1989 speakers: Farm Manager Jim Nelson on "Winter Pruning of Fruit Trees"; Chris Totten, staff member of San Lorenzo Garden Center, on "Spring Garden Preparations"; and Patricia Wiley, owner of Roses Yesterday and Today, well known country-wide, in a special presentation on standard and special varieties.

We shall save for future reference a seven page essay Phyllis Norris wrote for us on gardening with a minimum of water. Happily the rains came and the Santa Cruz Municipal Water Department issued the good news that we are not going to have mandatory rationing. We must, however, do what we did last year "plus a little extra." The Department has issued an excellent eight page bulletin to help us (*SCMU Review*, no. 4, March 1989). If you don't have a copy, phone the Santa Cruz Water Conservation Office, 429-3662.

The Friends' Board served its annual luncheon honoring some 30 new Farm and Garden apprentices at the Louise Cain Gatehouse earlier this month.

We expect the Farm and Garden market cart to sell freshly picked vegetables and flowers by mid-May. The regular times are Tuesdays and Fridays 12:00-6:00, though if produce is slim initially, sales will occur Fridays only.

A news flash from Agroecology staff member Debra Van Dusen: Friends are invited to a special two-pronged Agroecology program in conjunction with Santa Cruz Environmental Action Day Saturday May 13. In the morning (11:30-12:30) there will be a Food Safety Workshop on pesticide residues. Following that program, at 1:00 p.m. everyone is invited to come to the UCSC Farm for a tour of the activities of the Agroecology Program.

It is good to know that former apprentices are sharing their skills in biodynamic organic gardening in locations from Kenya to Switzerland to the New England states. And it is an immediate pleasure to run into others locally, now residents using their training to enrich our community. One is Wendy Krupnick, who is employed by Renee Shepherd's garden seed company, and in season runs the Felton Farmers' Market. In the next issue we will identify other former apprentices who are now Santa Cruz area residents.

Hot Off The Wire!



At the writing of this issue we wish to report the greatest homegrown news of the Friends since the Louise Cain Gatehouse was built by committee. Now, in mid-March, the surroundings of the Gatehouse are being transformed with the day-after-day hard physical work and gardening and building skills of two of our stalwart Board members, Bob Barnhart and Steve Chambers, aided a few days at a time by the labor of an unexpected Swiss visitor named Daniel.

They have planted manzanitas and ceonothus around part of the Gatehouse's periphery and are well on their way with the construction of the outdoor amphitheatre. The 16 x 6 foot stage is completed, with planks on

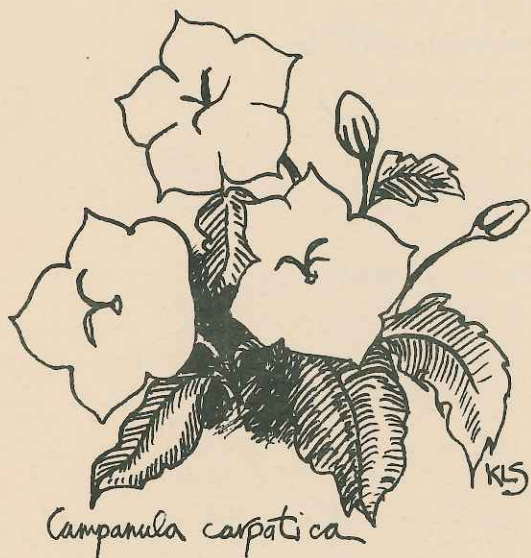
concrete raised piers and a railing surrounding it. The seating area is staked out, including an aisle down the middle flanked on both sides by benches, 7 feet long in the front and 8 feet long in the rear. Five have been completed and cemented in. By summer we'll celebrate!

Steve has built some welcome shelves in the Farm Center kitchen and has started work on our storage shed, being built by the barn to ease our problem with handling our vinegars.

We thank the individual friends whose gifts have enabled Bob and Steve to purchase the wood, plants, and other supplies.

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C/O Agroecology Program
UCSC Farm
Santa Cruz, CA 95064

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Campanula carpatica

Mr. & Mrs. David Heron
120 Las Lomas Drive
Aptos, CA 95003