Rainbow Bridge Nursery

NEWSLETTER | MAY 2018

Hello friends, gardeners and customers,

We hope that all is going well and your garden is growing nicely and recovering from our rough winter. First we would like to apologize for being late with our May newsletter, but we have been quite busy. We are getting things in order and are continuing to work within our shortened hours. Enjoy the May newsletter and keep an eye out for our upcoming sales.

We of course want to acknowledge all the wonderful Moms and hope you had a tremendous Mother's Day. In addition, we wholeheartedly give our support and thanks to all who serve and have served in our military. We give our utmost gratitude to our fallen and their families and will always keep them in our minds and hearts.

Thanks for your continued support and hope to see you all soon. ....*The Folks At Rainbow Bridge Nursery*

GROW YOUR OWN GARDENERS

Ask any parent whose child enjoys gardening if this hobby benefits their kid in some way, and the answer will be crystal clear: yes, gardening is good for kids! You couldn't pay enough for the self-esteem boost a child gets when he grows his own plump, ripe tomato — and gets to eat it when it's ready.

Gardening offers kids multiple benefits. Gardening engages a child's natural curiosity; teaches kids to be better stewards of the environment; helps children relax; and educates them about plants, soil, birds and bugs.

In today's electronic age, when children spend hours every day indoors on computers, cellphones and video games, it's more important than ever to get them outside. And, when parents and older siblings join a gardening effort, the family bond can grow as fast as the seedlings they are tending.

Get the kids inspired

Before getting started, excite the kids by taking them to a local farm or public garden where they can observe plants growing and participate in a kid-friendly gardening activity. They will gain valuable exposure to a wide variety of plants. Visit Tanaka Farms in Irvine, which holds open house events and U-pick tours, or an educational garden like the Fullerton Arboretum. Roger's Gardens and the Sherman Library and Gardens, both in Corona del Mar, host workshops and classes for kids.

Then head out to the backyard and get started! Suzanne Hetrick, a horticulturist with Roger's Gardens, suggests that parents mark off a spot in the yard just for the kids.

If you're planning to plant things in the ground, have them dig in the soil to pull out weeds and add soil amendments. "Just plant a few things — one, two or three things tops — so you can have some success. If you plant too many things, it's overwhelming and nobody wants to take care of it", she says.

What to plant?

Children can get bored fast and want instant gratification. Gardening can teach children to be patient, but you'll still want to select plants that grow fast so they won't lose interest. If this means using small starter plants instead of seeds, then so be it!

It's easy to keep them interested in the beginning, but you have to keep them engaged until the child gets the hang of the weekly watering and weeding. They need something that will give them a quick fix. Children love to grow plants they can eat, like vegetables and herbs. Growing vegetables helps keep children interested in gardening. Keep the kids interested by rotating the crops seasonally. Letting the kids pick the crops they want to cultivate helps keep them interested. Lettuce is an easy crop for children, and radishes are fun because they grow under the ground and remain hidden until pulled up when ready. If you ever seen a kid's face who has just gotten a vegetable out of the ground fresh from his garden is so different from what they are used to at the supermarket, it's fantastic.

Here are some suggestions:

Plant a salad bowl. Use a moss basket or terra cotta pot and make sure it's large enough so the plants have enough room for the roots to grow. Or, use that small plot of dirt set aside for kids and plant in the ground. Use small starter plants and include a few kinds of lettuce, spinach or kale, chives, oregano and thyme. If the pot is large enough, add in a small cherry tomato plant. As the lettuce leaves grow, the kids will have fun picking off a leaf and eating it.

Cultivate radishes from seeds. Radishes grow very fast and can be grown in a pot. You can sow seeds every two weeks, and most will be ready to eat within two to four weeks.

Grow tomatoes. Tomato plants can be started any time now until July, in the ground or in a pot. Smaller varieties like cherry tomatoes are better for kids and require less space. They are easy if your kid likes to look for worms and pests and things like that. Cherry tomatoes from seed take 30-45 days to grow, or use a starter plant. Make sure the cage for the plant is big enough. Tomato plants need 6-8 hours of sun a day, organic fertilizer with calcium, and regular, deep watering twice a week. Teach the kids to mark watering and fertilizer days on a calendar.

Plant a pot of marigolds. Marigolds are among the fastest-growing plants from seed, so cultivate a patch or pot from seeds, or use starter plants. Plant your marigolds near your tomato plants. They make the perfect companion plants and will help with the nematodes and attract the butterflies and the bees.

Grow sunflowers. Plant seeds in the ground and enjoy the flowers over the summer. Birds love sunflower seeds and will be drawn to your yard, as long as you get the ones that have seeds, it's a bird café. You leave the whole plant there, the flower heads dry out, and the birds will take the seeds out of the dried-out flowers.

TRY THESE NATURAL PLANT REMEDIES

MOSQUITO & GNAT REPELLENT SPRAY

#1) 1 Cup fresh parsley – (crush finely) – 16 oz. Apple cider vinegar – 2 tablespoons of canola oil or dish soap. Shake and mix well and refrigerate for 24 hours. Strain and place in spray bottle. VERY beneficial to the shin.

#2) 16 oz. of rubbing alcohol or witch hazel – 1 teas spoon lemon/eucalyptus oil – 4 teas spoons vanilla extract – 8 teas spoons of coconut oil. Mix well and place in spray bottle. Refrigerate unused portion.

#3) ¼ cup of lemon juice – 3 tablespoons of vanilla extract – ¼ teaspoon of lavender oil. Mix well and use as spray.

#4) 16 oz. apple cider vinegar – 15 whole cloves – 2 table spoons of canola oil or dish soap. Bring mixture to a boil, and allow to cool. Strain and place in refrigerator and let sit overnight. Place in spray bottle and spray.

#5) Use straight VODKA in spray bottle.

#6) 4 oz. of coconut oil – 1 teaspoon of neem oil – 10 drops of any of the above essential oils.

#7 ½ cup canola oil – ½ cup shampoo – ½ cup vinegar mix well and use as a spray in the house or in the garden. Spray in corners, under cabinets, under refrigerator, etc. (works on ROACHES as well)

> **Natural Mosquito Repellents: Catnip** (10x's more powerful than DEET) **– Citronella – Thyme – Lemon Grass – Lemon Balm – Citrus Oils – Lemon Thyme – Lavender – Lemon Eucalyptus –** (use at the rate of ½ tsp per gallon of water)**. Also use equal parts of witch hazel and distilled water.**

To make a natural table-top mosquito repellent: Cut a Lemon or lime in half – cut the ends off of the lemon or lime – puncture 12 to 15 whole cloves into the lemons/limes in two or three circles all around – place on cut rear end on table. You can also chop up some sage and place in a small dish and light it to keep mosquitos at bay.

GENERAL INSECT SPRAY

Insecticide; (all-purpose 1 quart ratio) ½ cup brewed coffee, 1 tablespoon dish soap, 1 tablespoon vegetable oil, 2 tablespoons of apple cider vinegar, 1 teaspoon of peppermint oil, 1 teaspoon of cayenne pepper, 1 teaspoon of garlic powder. Allow to steep for 24 to 48 hours, then strain and save. Use at the ratio of 1 to 5 tablespoons per quart of water.

CITRUS OIL

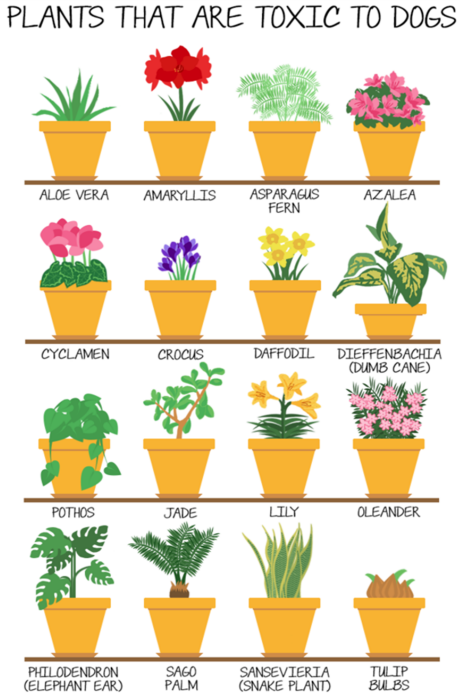
HOW TO MAKE NATURAL CITRUS OIL:
2 cups of citrus peel (Orange – Lemon – Lime – Grapefruit, etc.) grate well and place 2 ½ table spoons of grated peel into 4 oz. of EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL. Place mixture in a frying pan at medium-high heat and bring to a boil. Strain through a cotton cloth and put in a clean tight sealing bottle.

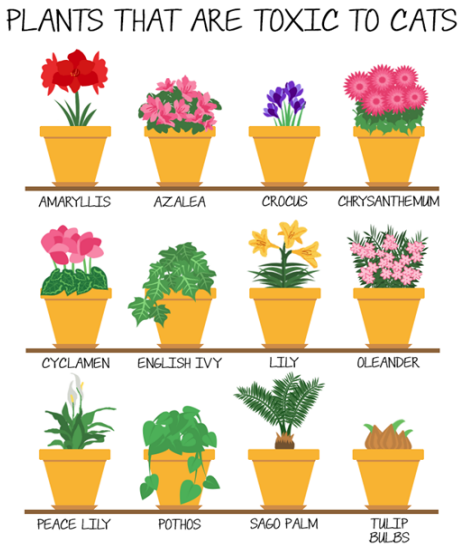
CUT PASTE

Use Cut Paste to prevent fungus and drying out on plants. Apply to open wounds on cut or injured plants.

To make a good and effective cut paste: Put 1 tablespoon of cinnamon powder in a small jar or container, slowly add honey while mixing. Mix well until it forms a thick paste. Apply paste to cuts or open wounds. Keep jar well sealed when not in use.

When cutting plants it is advisable to seal the open wounds. The easiest methods are simple. You can simply drip hot wax on the cut opening and seal it to prevent water and insects from entering, or apply the cinnamon cut paste to the wounds.





Plants "Eavesdrop" on Slimy Snails

Tomato plants detect snail slime and mount preemptive defenses

Plants cannot run or hide, so they need other strategies to avoid being eaten. Some curl up their leaves; others churn out chemicals to make themselves taste bad if they sense animals drooling on them, chewing them up or laying eggs on them—all surefire signals of an attack. New research now shows some flora can detect an herbivorous animal well before it launches an assault, letting a plant mount a preemptive defense that even works against other pest species.

When ecologist John Orrock of the University of Wisconsin–Madison squirted snail slime—lubricating mucus the animals ooze as they slide along—into soil, nearby tomato plants appeared to notice. They increased their levels of an enzyme called lipoxygenase, which is known to deter herbivores. "None of the plants were ever actually attacked," Orrock says. "We just gave them cues that suggested an attack was coming, and that was enough to trigger big changes in their chemistry."

Initially Orrock found this defense worked against snails; in the latest study, his team measured the slimy warning's impact on another potential threat. The investigators found that hungry caterpillars, which usually gorge on tomato leaves, had no appetite for them after the plants were exposed to snail slime and activated their chemical resistance. This nonspecific defense may be a strategy that gets the plants more bang for their buck by further improving their overall odds of survival, says Orrock, who reported the results with his colleagues in March in *Oecologia*.

The finding that a snail's approach can trigger a plant response that affects a different animal intrigued Richard Karban, a plant communications expert at the University of California, Davis, who was not involved in the study. "It is significant that the plants are responding before being damaged and that these cues are having such far-ranging effects," Karban says. The research was comprehensive, he adds, but he wonders how the tomato plants detected chemicals in snail slime that never actually touched them. "That's the million-dollar question," Orrock says. He hopes future research will tease out the mechanisms that enable plants to perceive these relatively distant cues.