



# Scripps Miramar Seed Library

## “GROW & SHARE “

*Take a Seed, Grow a Seed, Return a Seed*

### Newsletter

Second Quarter 24

#### SEED LIBRARIES

Scripps Ranch Organic Seed Library began in 2019 to assist new gardeners and others to learn to grow vegetables and flowers in their gardens. Then, by sharing the seeds from their crops with the seed library, it can become self-sustaining and continue to grow. With donations from the community, seed companies, nurseries and Scripps Ranch Friends of the Library, we have increased our inventory dramatically. The seed library patron list has reached over five hundred, including those who are receiving seeds through the mail. Our reserve now has a large assortment of vegetable seeds, different types of herbs, and flowers, including native flower seeds as well. Community donations from home grown plants has also increased the varieties available. In addition, Scripps Ranch Seed Library not only provides seeds but also support through books, lectures and newsletters. These provide more detailed information and suggestions to facilitate your gardening experience.



Multiple seed libraries have been opened at various locations throughout San Diego Public Library branches. These seed libraries are free to use and seeds can be picked up onsite or even mailed out! Seed varieties, pickup options and requirements vary by location. Seeds are limited to what is on hand. Please check each seed library location for more details on what is available. By borrowing seeds, growing a plant, and sending seeds back to our seed libraries, you'll be helping us keep our seed library programs going. We want our communities and patrons to borrow, grow and harvest seeds! In addition, many of these seed libraries have related workshops and events on gardening, composting and more. You can also find resources for growing and harvesting food on the City's [Urban Farming](#) website.

College-Rolando Library (619-533-3902)

Mission Hills-Hillcrest/Knox Library (619-692-4910)

Ocean Beach Library (619-531-1532)

Pacific Beach/Taylor Library (858-581-9934)

Rancho Peñasquitos Library (858-538-8159)

Skyline Hills Library (619-527-3485)

One of the least-known treasure troves of information in San Diego County is that over three hundred Master Gardeners (MGs) provide home gardening and pest control information throughout the county, FREE



## Master Gardener Association of San Diego County

to the public. Master Gardeners are volunteers trained and supervised by the University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE), part of UC's Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

The mission of the UCCE is to conduct research on new pests and issues affecting the county, and to provide research-based information to the public. The County of San Diego provides funding to support the the local UCCE office.

Garden enthusiasts won't want to miss the Master Gardener Plant Sale on **Saturday, June 16, in Balboa Park**. The annual event – bigger and better than ever – will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Room 101 and the patio of Casa Del Prado.

### Container Gardening

While you might be a longtime gardener, full of experience and wisdom, odds are you have never attempted container gardening. Whether or not you're an absolute beginner cultivator, or somewhere in between, gardening in containers is a wonderfully fulfilling endeavor. You will be amazed at the amount of foodstuff you can grow in just a few carefully planned containers. In addition, utilizing containers instead of the ground allows for better control of conditions and ease of developing the plants.



Container gardening is not a new thing. It began in World War I, when Americans planted a few vegetables in whatever little patch of ground they could find. Many of them had neither gardening experience nor a suitable garden space, and so they just did the best they could. In World War II, this type of gardening was known as Victory Gardens. Once again in 2020, a pandemic overtook the world, similar to being at war. We had to struggle for our survival against an unseen enemy. This included, among other things, to limit contact with others and avoid grocery stores. Once again, Americans responded with the age-old, life affirming act of planting a garden. And we are seeing a modern-day version of those wartime Victory Gardens. A year-end survey from leading industry organization finds that in 2020, 18.3 million people started gardening for the first time. Most of the people are under thirty-five-year-old males, young parents working full time, and mostly urban. It means many of them grow their vegetable gardens in containers.



Planning a garden is important for all gardeners, but even more so for container gardeners. They have such a limited space to work in and thus little room for error.

#### **Here is an overview of the general process.**

**Space:** What area are you planning to use? It can be the patio, deck, balcony, back porch, front porch, or the front stoop.

**Sunlight:** How much sunlight does it get? It is quite possible that you never paid much attention to it, but it is the most important of all. Sunlight and

**The golden rule of containers: every container you plant must, absolutely must, have drainage holes. There are no exceptions.**

water are two things that are vital for any plant on earth. Water can be added but not sunlight. North facing gets the least sunlight and the south the most. However, shady areas can be used for growing leafy vegetables.

**Water:** An immutable fact of life, plants grown in containers need more frequent watering than ground ones.

**Wind:** Can be a problem also, but it is simple to mitigate with some preplanning. To make your container heavy, place rocks inside before you add soil. Position your vulnerable containers as close to a wall as possible and attach strong cord or wire to the containers to hold them.

Here are some hacks for container gardeners.

Stop soil leaking with coffee filters. Placing the filters by the drainage holes will allow water to pass through but will stop soil from escaping into your tray or onto the floor.

It's very important to have aerated, loose soil that drains quickly so the roots get plenty of oxygen. Therefore, it is best not to overfill your pot with soil as it can pack down around the roots.

Some veggies will fail to grow without enough calcium. Thus, to ensure more calcium, wash your eggshells and crush them into small pieces. Then incorporate them into the soil of the containers.

Plants also love a dose of coffee grounds. Instead of throwing the coffee away, just mix it into the potting soil. These grounds have macro and micronutrients which are essential for plant growth.

Add a thick layer of stones or gravel to the surface of the soil of your container. This will cut down on the

**Sunlight rule: If a vegetable plant makes a flower before it makes the part we eat, that plant needs six hours of sunlight a day.**



**Pruning** is the process of cutting unwanted or dead branches and leaves to improve air circulation. Pruning increases the flow of nutrients from the roots to the new buds. This allows the plant to grow beautifully and vigorously. Pruning is best done in the period from May to July.

**Replanting** is necessary when the plant stock is large and unstable, more than two years since the plant was purchased, roots are emerging from the pot base, and water comes out as soon as it is watered. If any of these apply, it is time to repot. Again, the best time to repot is spring to fall when the plants have strength.

amount of water that is needed.

## WHAT TO GROW FIRST?

There are many possibilities and while it's exciting, the myriad of choices may sometimes be confusing. Starting with something quick and easy is a good method to build confidence, get experience and learn about space. It's also motivating to grow something successfully, harvest it and then eat it.

Here are a few crops which are easy to grow in containers:

Microgreens are delicious, easy to grow and usually ready to eat in just 15-20 days. A few hours of sunlight each day can give high yields in very little space.



Supermarket herb plants are one of most rewarding crops for containers. These small pots have lots of plants crammed together in one container. Moving them to a larger pot will extend their life considerably. An example is mint, which can be kept indefinitely this way.



Potatoes in a bag are fun when you harvest them. Children love it, they taste delicious and it's not difficult to do. Just start with good compost and water regularly, especially as the plants get larger. Just be sure to put the bag where it gets at least four hours of sun daily.

**SEED LIBRARY PICK-PLANT-CHIVES** -Chives are a commonly used herb and can be found in grocery stores or grown in home gardens. In culinary use, the green stalks (scapes) and the unopened, immature flower buds are diced and used as an ingredient for omelets, fish, potatoes, soups, and many other dishes. The edible flowers can be used in salads. Chives have insect-repelling properties that can be used in gardens to control pests. Plant chives in an average, well-drained soil in raised beds, the garden, or in containers. They are evergreen in warmer climates but they prefer cool air, between 40 and 85 degrees. They also will grow through winter if the ground does not freeze. Chives are somewhat drought tolerate and don't require plant food or much attention besides regular cutting.



### **SEED LIBRARY PICK-RECIPE -Crispy Marjoram Potatoes**



#### **Ingredients -**

Olive oil- 2 tbsp,

Yukon Gold Potato= 1 pound,

Kosher Salt - as per taste,

Butter - 1 tbsp

Chopped Marjoram - 2 tbsp

Black Pepper freshly ground.

**How to cook-**Preheat the oven to 350-degrees F. In a large oven-proof sauté pan over medium heat, place the olive oil and butter. When the butter is melted and hot, add potatoes to the pan in single layer, cut side down, sprinkle with some salt and cook it for 8-10 mins. Sprinkle half of the marjoram and place the entire pan in the oven. Bake until a sharp knife can easily pierce through the potatoes, 10 to 15 min. Remove from the oven and transfer to a shallow bowl. Then toss with the remaining marjoram and adjust the seasoning with salt and pepper.

**SEED LIBRARY BOOK SUGGESTION- The Container Victory Garden ( Call no. 635.986/ Stuckey)** Best selling author and expert gardener Maggie Stuckey share the rich history of the original Victory Gardens along with complete information for planning, planting, nurturing, and harvesting-everything.



**References:** Pennington, Amy, (2022) "Tiny Space Gardening". Published by Sasquatch Books

There are multiple resources available at Scripps Ranch Library that are not cited here. We request that you share pictures of your garden and tells us about your experiences, which can be helpful for other gardeners. Also, we invite you to send in your garden related questions and we will answer them in the next newsletter.

This newsletter is composed by Ashu Agarwal and edited by Jeff Lash For any questions, please contact Ashu Agarwal (seedlibrary@srfol.org )

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