

SAN DIEGO BOTANIC GARDEN

THE GARDEN

A newsletter for staff & volunteers

This week

- Message from Ari
- Brandi's Message
- Sarah's Kitchen Counter
- Eric's Blooms
- Bloomin' Orchids from Ashley



Rhododendron indicum 'George L. Taber'
& *Cistus salviifolius* (rockrose)

This week, we have colorful contributions from several staff members. Aside from working hard to keep our Garden growing, we are all finding creative ways to stay grounded but with a healthy dose of amusement.

We are beginning to imagine our new normal. And while we are not exactly certain how that will all look, we're confident it will offer opportunity and require creativity. We also recognize we are so fortunate to have a beautiful Garden palate with which to create new possibilities.

Take a look at we're all up to!

A Message from Ari Novy, PhD

President & CEO

The pace of life under our 'stay at home' order seems to be both slowing down and speeding up at the same time. As I try balance the tasks of work, childcare, keeping up with family and friends, and reading the news I feel that time moves fast. On the other hand, spending so much time at home brings makes me more mindful and observant of my surroundings, allowing me to savor the moment.

I've been walking my yard with my two sons (Isaac is 7 and Kai is 3) almost everyday, noticing how the plants are growing, what the prodigious rain has done, and carefully tending to my few fruit trees. We're getting a bumper crop of lemons. With the need to be more creative with food preparation to decrease trips to the grocery store, we've been finding lots of uses for lemons. We've got a large store of lemonade, a good supply of candied lemon peels, salad dressing with fresh lemons and zest, and garnish galore for food and drink. It's astounding to think of the number of uses of the humble lemon, and how the wonderful citrus smell brightens the day as we candy lemon peels. It seems everywhere I turn, I am reminded of the wonders of plants and the immense joy they provide.

With the positive news that Coronavirus cases are decreasing in our area, it feels easier to find the silver linings to our current challenges. Our leaders are even whispering about opening things back up again. We don't yet have a time table, but I'm thrilled that we're starting to talk about it. We can't wait to welcome you all back to the Garden just as soon as possible.

In the meantime, I'm so glad we are able to send these weekly updates to you, complete with educational activities for the home, gardening tips and wonderful photos and videos of San Diego Botanic Garden. Wherever you are, we hope you are finding ways to enjoy the bounty of plants. Whether you're managing a large garden, growing a few herbs in the windowsill or just munching on some previously frozen vegetables, I hope you find a few minutes to think about the plants that make our lives possible and worth living. Plants truly make the spices of life.

Happy gardening and stay safe,

Ari Novy



Garden Fares Well

In Spite of Record Rainfall Last Week

Brandi Eide, Managing Director

As many of you know, we had record setting rains in Encinitas last week – with 5 out of the 7 inches falling on Friday alone. Thankfully, the new roof on the Lawn House was installed just in time! And our plant collection held up well in spite of the massive volume of rain.

Unfortunately, we did lose three trees last week, which was far better than I anticipated. This speaks to the overall good health of our trees; with saturated soils, failing trees or poorly developed root systems often reveal themselves, and with large quantities of water quickly eroding channels, otherwise healthy plants can fall. One of each of the following trees came down after the deluge – *Cupressus guadalupensis*, Guadalupe Island cypress, *Brachychiton rupestris*, Queensland bottle tree and the endangered *Quercus dumosa*, Nutall's scrub oak.

Thankfully each of these trees has at least one backup on property. Having multiple plants of a taxon is vital in a living collection for many reasons, including potential plant damage or death. This can be challenging to accomplish with trees due to their space requirements and the long-term commitment to care that spans several generations.

With ongoing plant maintenance and careful planning, we can mitigate risk and plant loss. Collections planning, including record keeping and mapping, informs many of our decisions at the Garden. We'll be sharing more of this important information with you in future eblasts and communications pieces.

Construction of our new buildings faced a few challenges due to the rains last week; mostly some minor delays and a focus on moving water and mud for several days. However, thankfully, the new buildings sustained no water damage.

I hope you all are able to reflect and appreciate nature in some form during this time, whether by being outdoors, from a window, with houseplants or with images and writings about the natural world.

We look forward to seeing each of you back at the Garden just as soon as it is safe for us to reopen.



What's in Bloom at SDBG

By Eric Evans, Gardener

One of the awesome things about being a botanic garden is that we're not limited by narrow definitions of "pretty." We're free to marvel at some of the more weird ways nature can be beautiful! This week at the Garden, there are some truly wacky flowers in bloom—these great plants help expand the palate of those fortunate to see them.

CHEERS to the weird and wonderful. Stay safe and healthy!

It's *Echium* season! Swaths of *Pride of Madeira* are erupting into a veritable symphony of blooming spires in shades of blue, purple, pink, and white! True blue is so rare in nature that seeing the cerulean towers of *Echium candicans* always feels like a little miracle. The bees love them.



Echium candicans



Callistemon citrinus 'Jeffersii'

Pink fuzz! This is actually a type of Bottlebrush, *Callistemon citrinus* 'Jeffersii'. This shrub form's neon pink flowers make a really shocking but welcome change from the ketchupy red flowers typical of bottlebrushes. If you want even MORE pink fuzz in your garden, your only other bet may be *Sanguisorba hakusanensis*. Let us know if you know of any others!



Veltheimia bracteata

If this doesn't scream at you, nothing will! This is *Banksia solandri* from the Protea family. Spring's fresh flowers and last Fall's seedheads make a stunning hodgepodge!.



Banksia solandri



Marah macrocarpa

It's a Red Hot Poker! No... Yes? The trouble with common names is they often refer to multiple plants! This is not *Kniphofia*, which makes a cold-hardy perennial in most of the US, this is *Veltheimia bracteata*, a frost-tender bulb that puts off similar-looking flowers! How lucky are we to be able to grow this genus outside with shameful ease—competitors in the Philadelphia Flower Show have to lovingly coddle theirs through the winter indoors!

Wait, is that a model of the coronavirus? A deep-sea mine? No, it's actually the crazy fruit of our native—and aggressive—Wild Cucumber (*Marah macrocarpa*)! A serious weed in some parts of the garden, it makes a sign-worthy specimen in others. As difficult as it is to control, there's just no denying how cool these fruits are!

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Refuse, Regrow

Sarah Morgan Sickler, Education Manager

Cooking veggies for dinner? Don't throw the scraps away! Some of them can keep on growing with a little help.

In honor of Earth Day next week and a time when we all need a little something healthy to spice up our cooking, here are some tips for things you can easily regrow on your kitchen counter!

Kitchen Counter Gardening:

The wonder of recycling and growing your kitchen scraps

Did you know that there are many different edibles that you can grow from last night's dinner? Lettuce, bok choy, cabbage, celery, avocados, potatoes, garlic, onions, basil, cilantro, and even pineapple are just some of the things you can continue to grow in your own home. Here are a few examples you can grow in your kitchen.



After Two Weeks

BEET GREENS

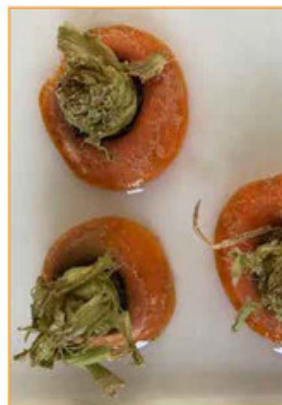
Simply cut the top off of a beet root and place in a dish with a small amount of water. Place in a bright, but indirectly lit spot, like a window sill or on your counter. The leaves will start to regrow in a couple of days. You can leave the beet in the dish of water or plant in a pot with soil. If you leave it in water, make sure to change out the water every few days. Note: you will not be able to regrow the beet root. The new plant may flower and produce seeds that you can grow more beets from.

You can trim off the leaves and eat them fresh in a salad or steamed or sautéed like spinach.

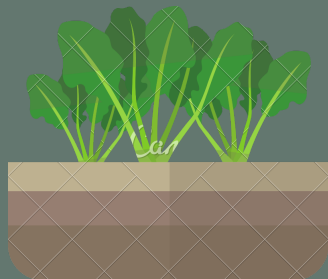
CARROT TOP

Just like the beet, cut the top off of your carrots and place them in a dish with a small amount of water. Change out the water every few days. You can eventually put the carrot tops into soil or leave on your countertop. Note: the orange part of the carrot will not grow, just the greens. The carrot tops will eventually flower and produce seeds that you can plant.

The leaves can be trimmed off and eaten raw, although they are a little bitter. They are yummy sautéed, make a great pesto, or provide seasoning when making stock for soup.



After Two Weeks



Kitchen Counter Gardening

GREEN ONION, GARLIC AND WHITE ONION

After you trim your green onions or chives down to the thicker white part, you can simply place them root-side down in a bowl of water. Watch the green part re-grow in a matter of days. This is a great way to always have green onions or chives on hand!

You can place the entire head of garlic in water or a single clove at a time, making sure to cover the roots with water. You can plant the garlic in soil and it will grow more cloves in a few months. Surprisingly, the garlic greens provide a nice garlicky garnish.

The same is true for a large onion. You can either cut a 1/2 inch of the base off near the root and place it into water, or save the central part like pictured here. If planted in soil, it will produce a new bulb in about a month depending on the type.



After One Week

BOK CHOY

Cut about 1/2 inch off of the bottom of a stalk of bok choy. Place in a bowl with a small amount of water and change daily. Cut away brown or slimy areas that form. The new leaves will start to grow out of the center of the base. Harvest as you wish to enjoy fresh bok choy leaves!

(This is very similar to what you would do with celery too.)

No pots or room to grow in the ground? No worries! You can get creative with using cardboard boxes, old take-out containers, or layered paper sacks.

Happy recycling and countertop growing!



Kitchen Counter Gardening

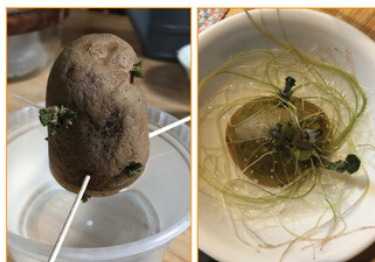


After Three Weeks

After One year

AVOCADO

Simply take the clean seed from your avocado and pierce it with 3 toothpicks. The toothpicks will help hold it in water. Submerge it about half way and watch it sprout. The seed may eventually split. When the plant is 6 inches tall, you can transplant it into soil and place in a sunny spot. Leave about half of the seed exposed above the soil. Avocados are a long-term commitment if you would like more fruit. Plant them in the ground outside in full sun and enjoy!



After 2 weeks

POTATO

To sprout potatoes on your countertop, you can either use an entire potato or a piece like pictured here. Like the avocado, you can puncture the potato with 3 toothpicks to hold it in a bowl of water, partway submerged. It will start to sprout from the eyes. If you want to grow more potatoes, eventually place your potatoes sprout-side up about 2-3 inches deep. It may take up to 4 months for the new potatoes to grow.



Orchid Species

Blooming at Home

By Ashley Grable

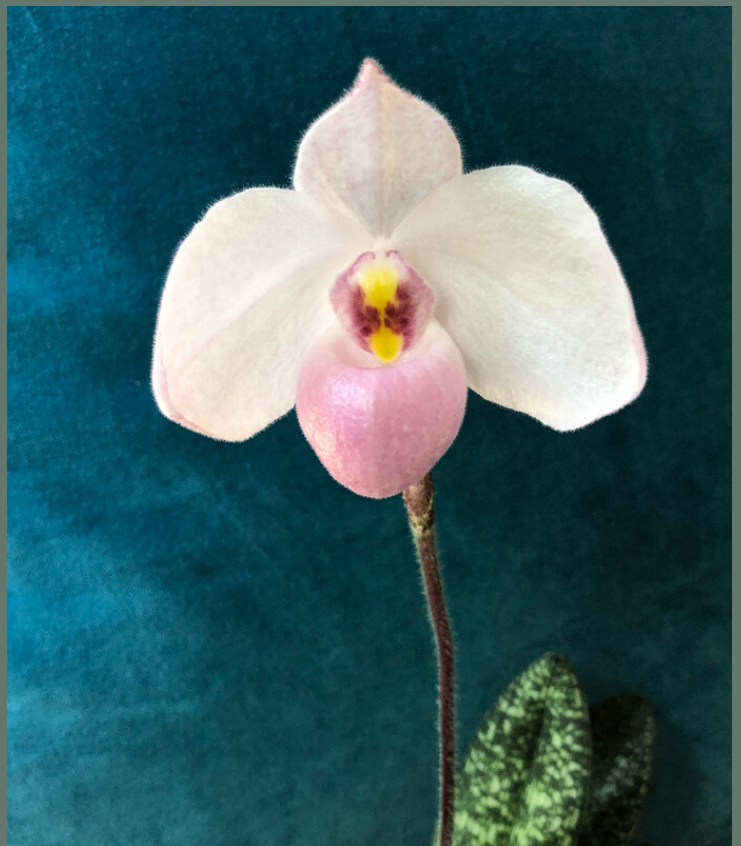
When I joined San Diego Botanic Garden as our new Corporate and Community Relations Manager in February, I was delighted to discover, among the epiphytes in the newly opened Dickinson Family Education Center, many members of the family that started my plant growing hobby: Orchidaceae.

One of the aspects of orchids I enjoy most is learning about the wide variety of shapes, sizes, colors, smells, and growing cultures among the 28,000 species found in nature. While staying at home for the past few weeks, I have been lucky enough to watch half a dozen orchids in my collection open their buds into beautiful blooms. Two of my plants in bloom – *Brassavola cucullata* and *Paphiopedilum delantii* – offer quite a contrast to one another and illustrate the diversity in this family.

The former, a cultivar named ‘Lue’s Red Spider’ was unfurling its long, leggy petals, sepals and fringed lip the morning I took this photo. I grow it bare-rooted and mounted to a slab of wood in bright light, just as it its native habitat from Mexico to Peru. The latter, a slipper orchid, hails from cloud forests in southern Vietnam, where it grows terrestrially. Accordingly, I keep this plant potted in a moisture-retentive mix of sphagnum moss, charcoal and bark chips, and I grow it in lower light.



Brassavola cucullata



Paphiopedilum delantii

Garden Photos

by Brandi



Aeonium sp



Lawn House - new roof



Echeveria sp.



Opuntia occidentalis



John Clements being creative in propagation