

# Belle Vie

## Gardens & Nursery

June 2003 Newsletter

Finally, warm weather . . .

After wondering if summer was going to completely skip on by, it finally warmed up and we were able to set out more plants in the U-Pick. The weather is perfect for planting now--nights have been in the 50°-60° range and the days are sunny and warm. One question we get asked a lot is, "***Is it too late to plant tomatoes (or melons, cucumbers, etc.)***"--see our topic of the month for the answer.

Ever wonder who takes care of all those planters in Morgan Hill? Don't they look great and lend a certain ambience to downtown Morgan Hill? It is all done by a group of wonderful, dedicated volunteers headed by Margaret Johnston, Program Coordinator of the ***Adopt-a-Planter*** program. This volunteer activity is supported by the City of Morgan Hill. If you would like to be part of this beautification program, or love gardening, but don't have a garden of your own, they are looking for more volunteers. If you're interested, call Margaret Johnston at 778-2078. I'm sure she would love to have you join her group of volunteers.

We have been asked many times if we would consider having more workshops and classes. So many of you who have been out the gardens have expressed an interest in the landscape and ponds. It truly is a beautiful place to spend our day. Well, we are excited to be able to tell you that we have scheduled two classes on **Saturday, June 21<sup>st</sup>**. "Your Living Pond" at 10am and "Tree Care and Pruning Basics" at 1pm. See our flyers for all the details. We'll be here at the gardens all day, please come see us even if you are not attending one of the classes.

### Topic of the Month: **TOMATOES** (**& Other Summer Vegetables**)

Did you know that as late as the early 1900's, some people thought tomatoes were poisonous? Not so today. Next to potatoes, tomatoes are the most popular veggie (or is that fruit, but more about that another time) in the USA. Nothing beats eating a ripe tomato right off the vine on a hot summer day, and **no, it is not too late to plant tomatoes** or any of the other summer veggies. As a matter of fact, some people like to wait until June or July to plant in order to avoid the wide temperature variations we sometimes experience in the spring. Tomatoes, as well as other summer veggies like peppers, squash, cucumber, & melons, need at least 8 (or more) hours of sunlight each day, well-drained soil amended with a good compost, and regular, deep watering. Avoid over-head watering, which can promote disease, and irrigate at root level instead.

Determinate varieties, like **Legend, Honey Bunch, & Micro-Tom**, spread laterally & are bushier, needing little staking. They typically grow to a set size & produce most of their fruit at one time (although our Legends produced all season last year). Indeterminate varieties, like **Early Girl, Mr. Stripecy, Old German, Sun Gold, Pompeii**, etc., grow vertically & require staking or trellising, and produce fruit until frost (yum, yum).

There are hundreds of varieties of tomatoes available today and it's fun finding just the right tomato that suits your taste. Last year, during one of our frequent family barbecues, we blind taste-tested all of the 13 varieties we grew in the U-Pick. We reached no consensus! What one family member thought was the greatest, another one thought was too sweet (imagine), or too tart, etc. So, go ahead and try a variety you haven't tried before and let us know what you think about it when you're harvesting in August or September (or even later).

Space (and time) doesn't permit a recipe this month, but we'll make up for it in our next issue

### June Garden Hours and Events:

❖ **Thursdays & Fridays**

❖ **Saturday June 21<sup>st</sup>**

❖ **Saturdays, June 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 28<sup>th</sup>**

**9:00 AM to 4:00 PM**

**9:00 AM to 4:00 PM (No Farmers' Market)**

**9:00 AM to 1:00 PM (at the Farmers' Market)**

**1:30 PM to 4:00 PM (at Belle Vie Gardens)**

Happy Gardening (and Good Eating),  
Donna Ahern and Kathy Nolan