“Flowers always make people better, happier and more helpful; they are sunshine, food and medicine for the soul.”

–Luther Burbank

While the first, last, and deciding reason for growing flowers in the garden is for the sheer beauty of it, there are other compelling reasons:

- By planning properly, the home gardener can have blooms in the garden and in the vase throughout the year—think endless gray days in February and a viable, affordable antidote.
- Flowers also make biological sense. Showy flowers often attract crop pollinators as well as providing pollen and nectar for beneficial insects.

The concept of using flowers to attract and maintain populations of beneficial insects that in turn control detrimental insects is now a well-documented sector of entomology. Terms such as farmscaping, provisioning of resources to natural enemies, and habitat management to enhance biological control of insects pests speak to the confluence of age-old populist wisdom and research-based studies showing that fewer crop pests are found as the diversity of agroecological (gardens and farms) systems increases.

Whatever your reasoning, life is enhanced by the planting of flowers; as food builds bodies, flowers feed the soul.

**Herbaceous Perennial Flowers**

I have always had a special affinity for herbaceous perennial flowers, defined as any non-woody flowering plant living for three years or more. To the degree that perennial implies permanence without effort, it is a misnomer. Perennials are not “magic” plants that come up unbidden year after year. And yet … this class of plants, often no more than selected wildflowers of the meadows, mountains, marshes, and woodlands of the Mediterranean and temperate zones of the world offer much once established. Among their many attributes to consider, they alleviate the need to start anew and re-dig beds annually. And many are tough — that is to say, they not only subsist but prosper on low inputs of water and fertility and are not particularly fussy about soil.

Among the perennials at this year’s UCSC Farm & Garden Spring Plant Sale on April 30 and May 1 are a number of herbaceous species, including –

- *Achillea* (yarrow)
- *Erigeron* (fleabane)
- *Eryngium* (sea holly)
- *Erysimum* (wallflowers)
- *Limonium* spp. (sea lavenders)
- *Origanum* spp. (marjoram and oregano)
- *Scabiosa* (pincushion flowers)
- *Silene* spp. (campions)

Many of these perennials can get by with a few well-timed inputs: a spring weeding and top dressing of compost, a good layer of mulch (see sidebar, next page), and average garden watering. This year we are offering perennials in both 4” pots and 1-gallon formats, with many varieties priced at 3/$20 in 1-gallon containers.

continued on page 2
The Benefits of Wood Chips

My mulch of choice these days is ramial chipped wood made from deciduous tree branches 3–4” in diameter (from various pruning efforts). When used in perennial planting systems as a surface mulch, the chips conserve soil moisture. And as they break down, the chips both leach nutrients into the topsoil for plants to retrieve, and offer a feedstock to beneficial soil microbes, which in turn break down the chips and other sources of soil organic matter and render it up as available food for plants.

These chips give rise to a type of microbe called actinomycetes, which can break down materials high in carbon in no time at all, and contribute to binding soil particles together into stable aggregates. Cornell University has done extensive research trials using wood chips in orchards and rates their use high.

So here’s a suggestion — along with your favorite annual flowers (and we’ll have a nice selection at the plant sale), try some herbaceous perennials flowers in your garden this year. They will not only reward you with intriguing architectural form and foliage, but offer a special allure when in bloom. It is really their blooms that distinguish them from their annual counterparts — often they have more sophisticated flower shapes and more subtle (and yet strong) hues than annuals. And while annuals may produce more flowers for a longer bloom period than perennials, many perennials offer the dividend of producing fleshy crowns that can be divided every few years. This is a way to clonally reproduce their beauty, and it’s free!

Here are some of the “greatest hits” of our perennial flowers, raised in both the handworked garden at the UCSC Farm and up on the hill at the Alan Chadwick Garden. All have been raised by the next generation of emerging organic growers, our cohort of 2015-16 advanced apprentices; they deserve both kudos and encouragement, the highest of praise.

*Aquilegia caerulea* ‘Song Bird’

This is a distinctive columbine variety with mid blue and white flowers. Long bloom period, late April–June. Adapted to either direct sun or semi-shade. Lovely in the landscape, distinctive in bouquets. Preferred by hummingbirds.

*Digitalis purpurea* ‘Apricot Delight’, ‘Excelsior’

A biennial that often propagates itself from little basal offsets, a.k.a. “pups,” foxgloves are good in sunny spots and quite adaptive to semi-shade. The prominent feature is the tall (4–6’) racemes, or spikes, that display tubular flowers in soft pastel colors with spotting in the “throat.” The floral pattern serves as a nectar guide to attract hummingbirds and bees. It is also a serviceable cut flower.

*Eryngium planum* ‘Blue Glitter’

A refined, but glorified, thistle, 36–40” tall. Glistening blue flower sprays with strong silver-tinged blue stems. Will bloom on with little or no care year after year. Spiney flowers add texture as well as soft, subtle colors to arrangements. Lasts as a cut flower and a good dried flower. Attracts bees and beneficials.

*Erigeron speciosus* ‘Blue Beauty’, ‘Pink Jewel’

The name *speciosus* means “pretty” in Latin. And so it is. Low mounds of foliage give rise to stiff, erect stems topped by simple quill-like small daisies. Both varieties have golden “eyes.” ‘Blue Beauty’ has attractive, semi-double daisy flowers that give it a frilly appearance. Lasts well as a cut flower and distinctive in a perennial flower bed as well as in a bouquet. Attracts birds, bees, and beneficial insects.

*Dianthus x hybrida* ‘Rainbow Loveliness’

Similar in habit to the above ‘Cheddar Pink’, but what makes it stand out is that it is taller (18”) and has a strong, lemon-citrus scent. Adds an interesting element to bouquets. Lacy, fringe-petaled flowers. Attracts bees, beneficial insects.

‘Apricot Delight’ grows to 40” tall, and ‘Excelsior’ has 5–6’ tall, tubular, funnel-shaped flowers in shades of soft pink, lavender, yellow, and white. Unlike modern varieties of foxglove, these throwbacks feature blooms that are fuller and displayed 360º around the stem. Most modern varieties have blooms on only one side of the stem.

*Dianthus gratianopolitanus* ‘Cheddar Pink’ or ‘Clove Spice Pink’.

Features diminutive gray foliage with simple, single-flowered carnation look-a-likes. 2” soft pink flowers in spring that smell strongly of cloves. Attracts bees, beneficial insects.

*Elizabeth Birnbaum*
UCSC Farm & Garden Spring Plant Sale  
Saturday, April 30, 10 am – 3 pm, and  
Sunday, May 1, 10 am – 2 pm  
Barn Theatre Parking Lot, UC Santa Cruz  
Note: Friends of the UCSC Farm & Garden have pre-entry priority on Saturday from 9 am – 10 am  
Enhance your home and garden with organically grown flower, herb, and vegetable starts as well as perennial landscape plants.  
Friends’ members receive 10% off all plant and merchandise purchases. Use your Plant Sale receipt for a 10% discount at Companion Bakeshop during the week following the sale. Please remember that we can only accept cash or checks for purchases, no credit cards. See cover story for additional details. Plant lists online at casfs.ucsc.edu/news-events/events/index.html.

Demeter Library Seed Exchange  
Saturday, April 30, 10 am – 2 pm, and  
Sunday, May 1, 10 am – 2 pm  
Barn Theatre Parking Lot, UC Santa Cruz  
This year’s Spring Plant Sale includes a free heirloom, open-pollinated seed exchange hosted by UCSC’s Demeter Seed Library. Get information on saving seeds from your own crops and pick up seeds to grow out for your garden and for the seed library.

Docent-Led Tour of the UCSC Farm  
Sunday, May 1, 2 pm – 3:30 pm  
UCSC Farm  
Join us for a guided tour of one of Santa Cruz’s most beautiful locations—the 30-acre organic farm at UC Santa Cruz. Tours meet at the Louise Cain Gatehouse, just inside the entrance gate to the Farm.  
Visitors can enjoy touring the organically managed greenhouses, hand-worked garden beds, orchards, row crop fields, and children’s garden, while learning about the history of the site and the basic concepts of organic farming and gardening, including water conservation practices. The monthly tour is free and does not require a reservation.

A Garden of Poetry and Music  
Saturday, June 4, 12 noon – 2 pm  
Alan Chadwick Garden, UCSC  
Join us in the historic Alan Chadwick Garden for an afternoon of poetry and music. Hear from some of our best regional poets at this free event. This is a wonderful time of year to explore the beautiful Chadwick Garden. Snacks provided, free parking in the Merrill College parking lot.

Farmer-Florist Bootcamp: A Workshop on Floral Design & the Business of Event Flowers  
Saturday, June 25, 10:00 am – 3:00 pm  
Cowell Ranch Hay Barn  
Join professional flower grower Zoe Hitchner of Front Porch Farm in Healdsburg, and Sky DeMuro of UCSC’s Alan Chadwick Garden for a training on establishing a floristry enterprise for your existing farming business, no matter the scale. Although this workshop is geared toward professional flower growers and florists, or those thinking about adding flowers to their farming business, others interested in learning to arrange event flowers are welcome to enroll.  
Cost of the workshop is $250 (all supplies included), or $200 for members of the Friends of the UCSC Farm & Garden. Note that discounts are available for beginning farmers—email casfs@ucsc.edu to inquire. Space is limited to 30 participants and you’ll take home your arrangements. Coffee, tea, and snacks provided. Please bring a picnic lunch.  
Pre-registration is required: see flowers2016.bpt.me.

Also coming up—  
July 29–31: National Sustainable Agriculture Education Association (SAEA) Conference, UC Santa Cruz  
Join sustainable agriculture educators and students from around the country to share and learn about the latest ideas in applied education. See the conference home page for details: sustainableaged.org/conferences/2016-santa-cruz-ca/

If you’d like more information about these events, need directions, or have questions about access, please call 831.459-3240, email casfs@ucsc.edu, or see our web site, casfs.ucsc.edu.

Sponsored by the UCSC Center for Agroecology & Sustainable Food Systems (CASFS), and the Friends of the UCSC Farm & Garden.
Get Your Share in the 2016 CSA Program!

Be a part of the UCSC Farm’s Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) project and support your local farm! The CSA program runs for 22 weeks, early June–early November (weather permitting). Boxes include same-day harvest of a wide range of vegetables and fruits, including strawberries and blueberries, plums, apples, and pears. A pick-your-own herb and flower garden is also offered. New this year: Pick ups will take place at the newly renovated Hay Barn, near the base of the UCSC campus and adjacent to the UCSC Farm. Or pick up your share at Westside Farm & Feed on Swift Street.

Shares for the 2016 season cost $560, and include 8–12 items per week. Payment can be made in full, or divided up into two or four installments. Limited-income and “late season” shares at $280 are available, and the CSA accepts SNAP/EBT Benefits.

If you’d like to receive a CSA Pledge Form or have any questions regarding the CSA program, please contact Pam Dewey at 831.459-3240 or email casfs@ucsc.edu. More information and the CSA Pledge Form are also available at casfs.ucsc.edu; see Produce Sales under the Community link.

Friends’ Members –
ENJOY EARLY ENTRY AND DISCOUNTS AT THE PLANT SALE

Put your Friends’ membership to great use by enjoying early entry to the UCSC Farm & Garden’s Spring Plant Sale on Saturday, April 30. Friends’ members have shopping priority from 9 am to 10 am, with the sale opening to the general public from 10 am to 3 pm. On Sunday, May 1, the sale will open to everyone at 10 am. Friends’ members also receive a 10% discount on all plant and merchandise purchases. Please note that we can only accept cash or checks for plants and merchandise.

If you’re not sure whether your membership will be current for this year’s sale, take a look at the mailing label of this newsletter. If it says May 2016 or later, your membership will be current for the sale.

If your membership expires in April 2016 or earlier, you can renew it at the sale on Saturday morning starting at 8:30 am. You can also download a membership form or use our online renewal link at: casfs.ucsc.edu/community/friends-of-the-farm-and-garden/membership-form.html

Call 831.459-3240 or send email to casfs@ucsc.edu if you have any questions about the status of your membership.

Apprenticeship Alumni Notes

We enjoy hearing from our Apprenticeship graduates and following the many ways they put their skills and knowledge to work on farms, community gardening projects, farmer training programs, and more. Here are some recent updates –

Herb Machelder (2007) received a Certificate of Appreciation from the City of Los Angeles for his decade of work establishing fruit orchards in public schools. The recognition read in part, “His commitment to creating and sustaining beautiful, verdant learning environments and vibrant experiences for children and adults alike has enriched the lives of many, and has inspired a deep appreciation for the natural world and the sciences. An exemplary Master Gardener and Orchardist, he has taught wondrous lessons and illuminated the minds and hearts of students, teachers and families, thereby promoting a spirit of communion and friendship, and making the City of Los Angeles a better place in which to live.”

Blair Randall (2005), Executive Director of Garden for the Environment, was honored by Supervisor Robert Yee for the garden’s 25 years of service to San Francisco (see below). GFE provides classes, workshops, and other educational opportunities for San Francisco residents (gardenfortheenvironment.org).
Apprenticeship Updates

Meet the 2016 Apprentices

Here’s a brief introduction to the new group of apprentices that joined us on April 11 from across the U.S. and abroad. For the next six months they’ll be learning organic farming and gardening skills at the UCSC Farm & Garden. Note that here we list just over half the group, and will introduce the other members of the 2016 class in the next issue—or go online to meet them all now: casfs.ucsc.edu/about/publications/news_notes.html.

Your membership in the Friends of the UCSC Farm & Garden helps fund this 49-year-old internationally known training program by providing funds for scholarships, teaching staff, equipment, outreach, and facility improvements. Many thanks for your ongoing support!

Neil Berezovsky: I live in Santa Cruz, California, and this past year I’ve been working as a teacher at a Waldorf high school. In years past, I have been a naturalist and wilderness guide, and have worked on small organic farms in northern California. During the apprenticeship I’d like to strengthen my skill as a farmer and explore ways to integrate my passions for education and living closely with the land.

Jack Bodine: I’m from San Francisco, California. After graduating Haverford College in Pennsylvania last May I worked on Wild Blue Farm, an organic, regenerative produce farm in Tomales, California, in Marin County. I assisted in tilling, planting, harvesting, and also enjoyed sharing our produce at the Farmer’s Market. At CASFS, I am excited to further my farm education and learn the agro-ecological approach to farm management.

Katie Brimm: I live in Oakland, California, and for the past four years directed an educational travel program through Food First, a nonprofit food movement think-tank. I organized international delegations focused on building the food sovereignty movement and just, community-based food systems. Through CASFS, I hope to gain skills to be a better food systems advocate, farmer and educator by occupying the space between theory and practice, using farming to demonstrate alternatives and empower others.

Marika Brown: I live in Redwood City, California, and have recently completed my Environmental Horticulture & Landscape Design certificate from Foothill Community College, California. I have been working as a landscape designer and project manager for a landscaping company based out of Cupertino, California. I specialize in lawn replacement and drought tolerant/native landscape design and maintenance. I look forward to growing my agricultural skills and blending sustainable urban landscapes with thoughtful food production.

Moretta Browne: I live in Richmond, Virginia, and I am the Front End Manager of Ellwood Thompson’s. We are a local grocers dedicated to feeding the community with local, all natural foods. I am with Renew Richmond, a non-profit that brings knowledge and great food to the food insecure. I hope to take what I learn from CASFS and help Renew Richmond grow by establishing a central farming location that educates through hands-on learning.

Beth Burzynski: I began farming in 2014, when my love for food and cooking led me to the soil. For the previous two seasons, I worked for Abbondanza, a seed and market farm located in Boulder, Colorado where I discovered a passion for growing seeds. I look forward to the teachings of CASFS, as I believe that they will help me one day in starting a culinary seed and oil CSA in Colorado.

Mahalia Clark: Since finishing college in May, I’ve been working as a research assistant studying arctic plant ecology, first based in Alaska and then on Cape Cod. In college I studied chemistry and ecology; I’ve always been most interested in agricultural ecosystems. Now I want to learn the details of environmental farming techniques so that I have the practical knowledge to study Agroecology in more depth, educate others, and work toward sustainable agricultural development.

Emilia Cordero: I’m from Mexico City, Mexico. I have a Masters degree in Latin American Studies from University of California, Berkeley. During the past year I travelled to Bolivia to work at an agroforestry farm in Cochabamba and also spent some time at an Agroecology farm in Veracruz, Mexico. I want to use the knowledge I gain during this apprenticeship to start a farm where farmers from rural areas in Mexico can come learn about alternative agriculture practices.

Sarah Cousins: I live in Portland, Oregon. I spent the previous growing season participating in Oregon State University’s Beginning Urban Farmer Apprenticeship Program. I worked with Grow Portland and the Oregon Food Bank to cultivate urban sites into mixed vegetable plots for produce donation. I am interested in food security issues and adult education. After CASFS I plan to return to Portland to continue teaching and farming in and with underserved communities.

Andre d’Anjou: I live in Sunrise, Florida, and I’m currently finishing up my second season farming at Treehugger Organic Farms. I’ve discovered what it means to be alive through agriculture, and I plan on growing and sharing the best food on the planet with family and friends for the rest of my life. I look forward to learning how during my time at CASFS. I love fruit!

continued on next page
**News & Notes**

**Anh Doan.** I live in College Park, Maryland, and this past year I interned at the Terp Farm, University of Maryland’s sustainable campus vegetable farm, where I met Guy and Meredith, Apprenticeship graduates. I was blown away after hearing about the Apprenticeship. During my time at CASFS I’m looking to learn more of organic farming practices so that I can develop a CASFS-like model in my home country, Vietnam, in the near future.

**Kalimba Edwards:** I live in Atlanta, Georgia, and I have been retired since I was 28 years of age. I feed the homeless community here in Atlanta and am myself a very strict vegan. During my time at CASFS I am looking to gain the foundation to becoming a master farmer of fruits, vegetables, and herbs, so that I can produce the food that I myself eat and serve to homeless here in Atlanta.

**Tracey Fine.** Farming is a second career for me, but I have always been interested in growing food and understanding how and why plants grow. As an urban youth, I grew windowsill gardens. In college, I studied plant biology. I left a long career in science writing for the biotech industry to farm across the US last year. My career goal is to work in urban farming and education. The organization Growing Power, Inc. inspired me.

**Shaneece Flores.** I live in Santa Cruz, California, and I was a Plant Sciences student here at UC Santa Cruz, where I did research on plant disease. During my time at CASFS, I hope to better understand sustainable agriculture and responsible soil nutrient management. I hope to be able to educate others and start a nursery. Later on, I hope to continue on to graduate school to research sustainable agricultural practices.

**Clark Foy.** I live in Los Gatos, California, and I am coming to the Apprenticeship Program from a career in high tech in Silicon Valley. Most recently, I was co-founder of a cycling technology startup that was acquired by Garmin. My goal is to utilize the Apprenticeship education and experiences to create or partner in a food-related startup that is based upon healthy ingredients with outstanding flavor from a sustainable food system.

**Leigh Robbie Gaymon-Jones.** I am a San Francisco, California-based artist. For several years, I led Urban Roots, a youth-development farm program in Austin, Texas, my hometown! I completed a Permaculture Design Course and volunteered on family and permaculture farms in Austin and Brazil. I’m currently building a garden project through an arts organization in the Tenderloin (a San Francisco neighborhood). I’m excited to vision/create projects that combine my relationship to both land and art.

**Martina Gruber.** I’m from Austria and I study Agricultural Sciences at university. Through interning at different farms, I found my passion for doing hands-on farm and gardening work. I’m excited about getting to do that; and I would love to learn how to successfully run a gardening project, since concepts like CSA and Community Gardening have only started growing in Austria in the past few years, and I would like to contribute to that movement.

**Flaam Hardy.** I have been living in New York City, New York, and working as an Environmental Planner in the Hudson Valley focusing on land use planning and flood mitigation projects. I studied Environmental Science with a focus on ecological agriculture at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec. I am excited to gain hands-on experience in farming to help improve people’s access to healthy food and create more resilient food systems.

**Cameron Highfill.** I live in San Diego, California. For the past two years, I have been a student and volunteer at Wild Willow Farm and Education Center. The organization works to educate the community with the knowledge and skills to grow food while also operating a small CSA. My future goals include helping to expand healthy food markets to communities without access or the income, and possibly joining the Peace Corp as an Agricultural Volunteer.

**Joseph Johnson.** I live in Belle Chasse, Louisiana. I recently completed my Associates degree in Clinical Dietetics. During my studies I became interested in community nutrition and urban farming. I am currently a volunteer with the Backyard Gardener’s network in their food as medicine program. I also began small-scale vegetable gardening at my home. It is my intent to teach farming/self-sustainable techniques to urban communities with the skills I acquire while at CASFS.

**Rachel Lane.** Previously, I worked at a rare plants nursery, Annie’s Annuals, in Richmond, California—communing with other garden nerds, and stoking my own passion for gardening. I was an ally with City Slicker Farms, a food justice non-profit that grows organic produce in Oakland, California. I hope to deepen my knowledge of regenerative farming/community living—with the intention of reawakening and restructuring the connections between food production and community.

**Shelley Lewton.** I live in Bozeman, Montana. I enjoy working in greenhouses and on small-acreage farms, as well as creating community gardens in both rural and urban settings. During this apprenticeship I would like to enhance my knowledge and skills in sustainable agricultural practices. My hope is to work with refugee and immigrant communities to increase self-sufficiency through farming and educational opportunities.
Charlie McIntosh: Growing up in St. Louis, Missouri, food has always brought people together in my family. I studied biochemical engineering in Boulder, Colorado, learning about energy, water, and waste systems. After graduating I found myself drawn to the study of permaculture and natural building at Aprovecho in Cottage Grove, Oregon. Most recently I served in AmeriCorps with the International Institute of St. Louis growing healthy food with refugees in the heart of the city.

Lucas McKinnon: A Santa Cruz, California, native, I recently moved back after one year abroad and four years in Seattle, Washington. I studied history and biology and worked on Seattle University’s urban farm, CitySoil. I’m hoping to develop stronger tangible skills in agroecology to support a career that focuses on securing land rights for agriculturalists internationally as a means of preventative healthcare.

Jaynie Miller: I grew up in Michigan, and did my undergraduate studies in sustainability in Lake Tahoe, California. Post-college, I worked on two organic farms in the Sierra Nevada foothills, as well as grow my own food. It was during this time that I cultivated a love for agriculture. I love heirloom varieties and diversity, so at CASFS, I want to gain additional skills so that I may run my own diverse community supported agriculture (CSA) farm.

Phuc Nguyen: I’m originally from Vietnam, have been living in Orange County, California, for a couple of years, and went to California State University of Fullerton for Sociology. Bringing the people and the land back together – to heal ourselves, our communities and the land is what I set out to do. May all beings and nonbeings be happy and free!

Marianne Olney-Hamel: I live in Oakland, California, and have worked as a program assistant for refugee resettlement organizations both in Oakland and Kansas City that aim to help resettled refugees start their own farming businesses. As an apprentice with CASFS, I’m hoping to strengthen my farming skills so that I have a more well-rounded skill set to put to apply to urban agriculture projects in the East Bay.

Tamir Pelleg: Originally from Israel/Palestine, I’m currently living/working in New South Wales (NSW), Australia, in the Permaculture Research Institute (PRI), which experiments with ecological ways of supplying human needs that are mindful of nature’s needs and patterns. Since finishing my BA in Psychology and Philosophy I’ve been experiencing and learning Permaculture and Organic Gardening with the intention of creating learning opportunities for children and youth in order to help them be agents of beneficial change.

Vivian Santana Pacheco: I’m from Greater Los Angeles, California, and have lived in San Francisco, California, for 10 years. In 2015, I learned basic gardening skills at a farm cooperative in Mexico and continued learning locally. After CASFS, I’d like to be part of putting community food growing projects, ending racism, and putting sustainability at the center of local justice movements. I have a master’s in public policy.

Natania Schaumburg: I live in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and have worked with local food systems in some capacity over the past few years. Most recently, I ran the Fresh2You Mobile Market, a pilot project of the Chester County Food Bank, which aims to increase consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables in underserved communities. I’m looking forward to increasing my knowledge of organic agriculture and hope to apply these skills to my future work combating food insecurity.

Mark Spicer: I live in Oakland, California, but am originally from Detroit, Michigan. I went to undergrad in Tennessee where I lived and worked on a cattle farm. I completed my graduate education in Hayward, California and I worked on a farm in Sonoma County. I would eventually like to open my own operation after getting the required experience. I was in the Marines for nearly 10 years.

Jeremy Teperman: I’m a lifelong resident of Queens, New York, where, for the past four years, I’ve worked with the New York City Compost Project. Teaching and helping others to set up community-driven compost projects has given indescribable meaning to my urban existence. I’m incredibly excited and honored to take part in the CASFS apprenticeship, where I’m hoping to hone more concrete farming skills so I can continue contributing to the food justice movement in New York City.

Betsy Thomas: I live in Pescadero, California, and have spent the past two seasons working at Fifth Crow Farm as part of their organic flower production team. Before entering the farming and gardening world, I worked as a social worker in the mental health field. My hope is to broaden my knowledge and skills at CASFS, to connect with people interested in alternative ideas surrounding farming, and to explore my vision for using farming therapeutically.

Warren Uesato: San Francisco Bay Area native, I live in San Jose, California. After obtaining a chemical engineering degree in the 80s, I spent my working career as a semiconductor process engineer. Discovered the joy of community-based agriculture at Veggieolution in the latter part of 2014. Served last year as a volunteer at the Asian Rural Institute in Nasushiobara, Japan. At CASFS, I would like to further develop my knowledge/skills of sustainable agriculture and discern my next steps.

Andy Vasconcellos: I live in Oceanside, California, and this past year I was working at a resort spa called Cal-a-vie growing produce for their kitchen. The past four years I have been working and living on various farms, mostly in northern California. At CASFS I am looking to broaden my agricultural knowledge and meet like-minded individuals in the process. I plan to work towards developing suburban market gardens, providing fresh produce to my local community.
News & Notes

Meet the 2016 Apprentices

Laura Vollset: I live in Santa Cruz, California, and am a thirty-seven year-old illustrator and mum of toddler twins. I am apprenticing at Love Apple Farms and run my own micro farm (livingleavesmicrogreens.com), supplying restaurants with micro greens and edible flowers. I hope CASFS will help me deepen my knowledge of small scale agriculture, helping me expand my business, explore new avenues, and become a fully fledged member of the amazing farming community in this area.

Jas Wade: I was born & raised in Los Angeles, California. These last two years I have volunteered and worked with local organizations that run community gardens throughout the city, and dedicate their work to addressing oppression within the food system while building agency within communities to address health conditions. During CASFS I am looking to build and strengthen my agricultural knowledge/skills in the service of community sustainability and resilience.

Emma Wood: Where I live is a loaded question. I just came back to the United States from four months in South East Asia. Most recently I was working on a biodynamic farm in Michigan. The last three years I have been on farms in and out of the United States absorbing information. At CASFS I hope to gain a deeper understanding of the science side of farming so I can be more successful in my own farming endeavors.

Alumni Notes (from page 4)

Maggie Barrett (2015) checked in from Ft. Bragg, California: “I am currently working for a non-profit educational market garden called the Noyo Food Forest. We run an internship/job-training program for high school students. Our garden is located on the Fort Bragg High School campus—I graduated from here in 2010. It has been an incredible learning experience to come home and continue this work in my community. I’ve realized that our garden primarily grows people, the produce is a byproduct. We do sell at our local Farmer’s Market, to the Fort Bragg High School cafeteria, and to a few restaurants in town. We also host community events throughout the year.”

Eric Hansen (1988) recently dropped by the Farm & Garden on a visit from his home in Mackay, Australia. Following his Apprenticeship training, Eric returned to Mackay and started the Organic & Natural Store, the first and still only fully certified organic store in the region featuring locally grown organic produce.

Edible Silicon Valley profiled a suite of alumni farming on the San Mateo Coast in a recent issue. See the feature article “Farming in the Fog” at: ediblesiliconvalley.ediblefeast.com/food-thought/farming-fog-san-mateo-county-s-fertile-ground

Spades and forks ready for the 2016 apprentices at the UCSC Farm.
**Plant Sale Preview (from page 2)**

*Erysimum* (or *Cheiranthus allionii*)

Compact 18–24”-tall Siberian wallflower covered with soft orange flowers spring into summer. The scent will drive you wild (in a good way). As a member of the Brassicaceae family (broccoli, cabbage, kale, etc.) it is a strong attractant for bees and beneficial (non-stinging) predatory wasps. The ‘Treasure’ variety series has yellow blooms. BBB.

*Hydrangea macrophylla ‘Lace Cap’*

A succulent, 4–5’ shrub that thrives in full sun (on the coast) or partial shade. May–July features large, white, flat 6” flowers that attract bees, beneficial insects, and butterflies. Makes a distinctive fresh or dried flower. This is the simple, single flower form, not the ones that look like huge Hostess snowballs.

*Limonium bellidiformis/caspia ‘Dazzling Blue’*

A low mat of foliage gives rise to wiry stems 2’ tall topped with clusters of dense, cloud-like mauve blooms. Very airy effect, much like Gysophila (baby’s breath). This staticle produces flowers from late spring through mid summer. Excellent in the landscape or as either a fresh or dried flower. Will seriously elevate the quality of any bouquet. BBB.

*Limonium suworowii* (a.k.a. rattail statice)

Low-growing, strap-like foliage gives rise to delicate-looking, light pink spikes that twist slightly, but are long and graceful as well. A real cute show stopper, great as a fresh or dried flower. BBB.

*Limonium latifolium*

A very long-lived and extremely drought tolerant herbaceous perennial. Dense clouds of blue to mauve flowers rise above waxy-green basal rosettes. Gives air of a delicate puff of soft color. BBB.

*Origanum laevigatum ‘Hopley’s Purple’*

A distinctive ornamental version of oregano, growing 24–36” high. It features long wands of purple/subtle pink flowers through the summer that eventually turn a reddish-purple. Very tough, drought- and heat-tolerant. Easily divided to create new plants. While it has some value as a culinary herb, it is best as an ornamental in the landscape or used as either a fresh or dried flower. Attracts birds and beneficials.

*Origanum ‘Adriatica’*

Probably a misnomer, and yet I can see it thriving on the limestone crags of the Adriatic Sea, on either the Italian Peninsula side or across the waters in Albania (opposite the “Boot of Italy”). This is a plant similar in habit to the above-mentioned ‘Hopley’s Purple’, but with a softer, more subtle pink hue.

In truth it came to us from an unknown source in the late 1970s. After extensive research trying to pinpoint the proper botanical species came up short we dubbed it ‘Adriatica’. I have seen it for sale occasionally in retail nurseries labeled *Origanum ‘U.C.S.C.’* BBB.

*Scabiosa caucasica ‘Fama Blue’, ‘Fama White’*

This plant is a bit of a “sleeper.” Not the biggest or showiest of foliar plants, it forms a dense tuft of lance/strap-shaped leaves barely a foot high. And yet when it comes to producing flowers, it is a veritable factory. From early spring through late fall it produces 30 or more 18–24”-long, strong stems with an artistic, wiry curve. Each stem terminates in a solitary 3” open lilac blue or pure white bloom. The outer petals are “frilly” or slightly serrated. If a soft lilac blue can be intense then the ‘Fama Blue’ *Scabiosa* is. It lasts 8–10 days as a cut flower.

A native of the Caucasus region that separates Europe from Asia, *S. caucasica* ranges from the southern steppes of Russia to Armenia, northern Turkey, and Iran. In both the garden and its native habitat, *Scabiosa* grows in well-drained, sandy soils and requires little water and minimum fertility inputs. It lives for years. BBB.

*Silene maritima*

This one might get the award for all-time cutest little plant. One of more than 100 species in this genus, it is a member of the Caryophyllaceae (pink) family, as are the carnations, Sweet Williams, *Agrostemma*, and *Gysophila*, along with many California natives. This coastal Mediterranean dweller is prostrate, with a tufted mound of beautiful, glaucous, soft-gray foliage. It will spread to 2’ wide. While the foliage is calming and serves as a foil to brighter-colored blooms, its crowning feature is loads and loads of pristine white, flat flowers with distinct notches at the tip of the petals and an inflated calyx. BBB.

*Veronica spicata ‘Chadwick’s Especial’*

I began working at the Student Garden Project (now the Chadwick Garden) in 1974. Alan Chadwick had left by then and activity in the garden was at a low ebb: there were only a handful of beds on the main slope still being tended, literally 6 fruit trees, a partially framed greenhouse, and a smattering of perennial flowers. One such was this *Veronica*. It was and still remains distinctive: a 2 ½ x 3-foot mound of glossy, dark green, disease-free foliage, topped by plentiful, long, graceful flower spikes in soft blue. Often visited by hummingbirds, bees, and butterflies, it holds up well and in fact offers a striking silhouette in bouquets. It can be divided and increased in numbers even after the first year.

**Plenty of Peppers**

Among the notable peppers being offered at this year’s sale are those that range from the really cute, mini snack type to the truly impressive full-size bullhorn or Corno di Toro types.

From Renee Shepherd and her fine (retail pack) Renee’s Garden Seeds come ‘Baby Bells’. Offered in red and yellow, they have the typical 3-lobed bell shape but are true minis at 3–4” long. They are truly sweet and make great fresh-eating snacks; when put on a skewer and grilled they soften and sweeten beyond compare. While
the plants are diminutive (18” tall) they produce early and are loaded with fruit (20–30 per plant).

A step up in size are Johnny’s Seed Co. specialty pepper varieties:

`‘Lipstick’ has been around for over 20 years. It is sweet, juicy, and crunchy—three requirements for any non-pungent pepper. They are early ripeners and highly productive over a long period (2+ months). Top-shaped to 5” long.

‘Glow’ is tapered with thick, meaty walls, 2–3 lobed and 4–5” long. Bright orange; sweet and fruity either raw or sautéed.

“Johnny” of Johnny’s Seed Co. (Rob Johnston) and his professional plant breeder partner Janika Eckert consistently produce excellent pepper varieties. Such is the case for their full-sized Corno di Toro or Bullhorn peppers.

‘Carmen’ has set the standard for a disease-free, highly productive, early ripening red bullhorn. The catalogue says it is 6” long x 2 ½” wide with each pepper weight 5 ounces, but over the 10 years we have grown them they have ranged from 8–10” long and weighed in at 8–12 ounces each.

While they can be eaten raw or sautéed in oil, they truly shine when roasted and skinned, marinated in their own juices. So in late summer, at the height of harvest, be voracious and consume as many roasted bullhorns as possible. But do think about putting some up for winter. It’s easy: they can be roasted, then frozen in zip-lock bags or other containers. Bring them out in February and they are the perfect antidote to a gray day, along with a good strong cup of French roast coffee.

‘Escamillo’ is Johnny’s new bullhorn release (home bred as well). After over 10 years of breeding efforts they now have a golden-yellow bullhorn to rival the red ‘Carmen’.

The references here (‘Carmen’ / ‘Escamillo’) are to the gypsy Carmen (replete with a red rose in her teeth) and her toreador lover Escamillo from the opera Carmen by Bizet. As is so often the case with operatic divas, it did not end well for Carmen. Nonetheless, these two pepper varieties—like their namesakes—have a flair for the dramatic: big, bold, and brightly attired, with over-the-top sweetness and succulence “to die for,” so to speak. And yes, the rainbow colors of peppers (and other vegetables and flowers) are eye catching and enhance the gustatory appeal. But what color yields is also nutritional: plant pigments (color) are important sources of vitamins and antioxidants.

Another great pepper variety comes to us from Renee’s Garden Seeds—‘Jewel Toned Bells’. Innovatively, this single seed packet offers three varieties in crimson, gold, and orange. The seeds are color coated with a non-toxic vegetable dye for I.D. purposes. The varieties are all superior:

- ‘Northstar’ is a crimson-red, early-maturing bell
- ‘Admiral’ is glossy gold and matures mid to late season
- ‘Gourmet Orange’ is plump and rich flavored with a strong, compact plant that sets abundant and very early fruit

For details on the Farm & Garden’s Spring Plant Sale, see page 4 of this issue. For more information on making your garden beneficial-friendly, see Attracting Beneficial Insects to the Garden with Beneficial Flowers, by Rich Merrill, available for download from reneesgarden.com.