

Geraniamania

Planting Since 1972



A Publication of the San Diego Geranium Society
The San Diego Geranium Society meets the Second
Tuesday of the month, 7 p.m., in Room 101 of the
Casa Del Prado in Balboa Park.
Meetings are Free! All Welcome!

President's Message

December brings us the opportunity to participate in Balboa Park's "Festival of Trees". This year the theme is "Holidays through the Eyes of Children". It starts with Staff viewing of the trees at 3:00 PM on Thursday December 6th through Dec 8th in Room 101. What a great way to start feeling the Holiday Spirit. We will donate our tree to charity after the showing.

Our Christmas Party will be at our meeting next Tuesday. Come early and help decorate if you can. It's a potluck dinner, with the Club providing a decorated cake for dessert.

Please bring a gardening related gift with a \$10 price limit to exchange. A fun program is planned.

New officers for 2019 will be installed. Patrick Powell will take over as President.

I want to thank all the Club members for the help and support you provided last year. I know Patrick will have that same help and support next year and that he will be successful in leading us through a Fun, and Profitable, and Educational New Year!

Marilyn Ketteringham, President

MERRY



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December Meeting

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

6:30pm



Christmas PotLuck Dinner -

Please bring a main dish or side dish to serve 6-8

We'll be setting up early - so if you can come by 5:30-6:00, we can use extra hands!

Don't forget to -

Bring Cuttings from your Garden -
Bring a plant for "Show and Tell"

Program

Jack Ohmstede



Tune up your vocal cords and get ready for a Christmas song quiz, and join me in singing the right answer. Also - I will have a slideshow of all the trees on display in room 101 for Holiday Nights. Lets celebrate the holidays together!

Missing Rita

Rita Winningham, a long-time member of our club, passed away on Thursday, November 29, due to complications of multiple sclerosis. Her husband, Bud Winningham, passed away some years ago. The club will miss their contributions and enthusiasm.

Be Sure to Check Your Plants After the Rain!

Isn't the rain wonderful?! It might be tempting to think that you can ignore your garden for awhile now that you don't have to water as much - but that could be a mistake! Dead foliage that gets wet and isn't removed can cause botrytis blight (a fungus), and you could lose your prized plants. SO - between rainfalls - go out and take a walk around your garden and be sure that your plants are well groomed - that they have breathable space between branches - and that their pots are draining well!

Botrytis Fungus on Geraniums

Geraniums love full sun, and prefer moist, well-drained soils with a cool root zone.

The popular geranium (*Pelargonium x hortorum*), or zonal geranium, is prized both as an indoor plant and in the garden because of its wide variety of colorful flowers and foliage. Zonal geraniums, which are tender perennials, usually are grown as annuals and prefer moist soil. However, their preferred growing conditions make geraniums vulnerable to fungal infections. One of the most common fungi that attack geranium plants is botrytis blight, which is caused by the fungus *Botrytis cinerea*.

Botrytis Blight

Botrytis is spread through the air as the fine spores are lifted from the soil and carried to your geranium. Even the air caused by walking past or pruning your plant can spread botrytis spores. Botrytis fungi prefer to feed on dead or dying plant material, but if the fungus has ideal conditions for growth, it attacks living plant tissue as well. Botrytis fungi prefer cool, moist conditions. Temperatures ranging from 50 to 60 degrees Fahrenheit are ideal for its growth. Because geraniums also prefer cool, moist conditions, botrytis is a common problem for these plants.

Symptoms of Infection

Botrytis fungi prefer to feed on dead plant material, but it is hard to detect infection in the dead foliage of your geranium. However, dried leaves infected by botrytis fungus disperse a fine dust into the air when moved. These are the fungus spores. On living plant tissue, botrytis infections are indicated by fuzzy gray or brown blooms and black spots on the stems. If cool, damp conditions exist, these small black spots eat into the stem itself, consuming it entirely. On the leaves, you may see spots, lesions or large dead areas with concentric rings around them. Flowers and leaves may also begin to drop prematurely.

Cultural Control

Good sanitation practices, such as pulling weeds and keeping the soil clear of debris, are helpful in controlling botrytis blight in geraniums. Prune away infected plant parts and dispose of these in the garbage. Do not compost dead plant material infected with botrytis. Avoid watering your plants overhead. Instead, water the soil early in the day so that it has adequate time to dry before the cool evening temperatures arrive.

Chemical Control

Fungicide sprays containing chlorothalonil, copper ammonium carbonate, neem oil, potassium bicarbonate or bacillus subtilis can effectively control botrytis blight in geraniums. Apply fungicides after periods of wet weather. Fungicide sprays can contribute to moisture levels, so adequate ventilation and circulation of air around your plant are necessary to prevent further infections.

Prevention

The best way to fight botrytis infection is to prevent it from taking over your plant. Pick all dead leaves and blooms from your plant as you see them, and remove debris from the soil as well. If your geranium is growing in damp or cool conditions, thin the branches, and give plants ample space to ensure that there is enough air circulation to dry the leaves. Indoors, place your plant in an open window or near a fan to receive air that keeps the foliage and soil surface dry, and deprives the fungus of the moisture it needs to multiply.

SOURCE: <https://homeguides.sfgate.com/botrytis-fungus-geraniums-40682.html>

