



Presidents Message

Question - is summer over?! Jean and I have enjoyed this awesome weather since arriving home from Illinois. We visited Jim and Erma Budlove in their beautiful little cottage back in St Elmo, IL. They get lots of rain, and Erma's woods were wonderful. Jim and Erma showed us a great time. We were in Branson for a week in the middle of the Ozarks, in a beautiful hardwood forest. On the way home we toured St Louis Botanical Garden, which is huge. It was 95 degrees - too hot to see all of it. It's better to visit this garden in the spring.

Don't forget that in October Jim wants all the members to bring in their worst plant - the one you don't know where to cut it back. Jim will help you prepare your plant for the show next year. He'll follow up your progress at future meetings.

Jean and I will not be at the October meeting - we will be at the lighthouse in Crescent City, CA!

Jack Ohmstede

SDGS Officers and General Contact

President - Jack Ohmstede
jackohm@att.net

Vice President - Gloria Barry
frontandcenterstudios@hotmail.com

Treasurer - Brenda Archer
leocat25@cox.net

Secretary - Cathy Miller
dlmcym@cox.net

September Meeting

September 13

7:00pm



Don't forget to -

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

PROGRAM

Our speaker this month will be Steve Brown. He'll be sharing his slides, photographs and memories of the different geranium growers in Southern California. He comes from a family that was in the commercial business for many years, and now resides in North San Diego County. His wife, Lisa, is an artist and will be bringing clay leaf impressions of geraniums and other plants that she sells at craft and plant sales - we'll have the opportunity to purchase from her, so be sure to bring your wallet! throughout California.

Growing Geraniums From Seed

Growing geraniums from seed used to take a back seat to propagation from cuttings. In the past, most nursery-grown plants came from cuttings. But that has changed with advances in plant breeding. Now we can choose from excellent seed-grown varieties that outperform many older cutting-grown varieties.

I've grown geraniums from seed, and was really happy with the beautiful and vigorous plants I got, which were several colors in the popular 'Orbit' series.

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Many seed companies offer excellent Geranium hybrids. Try Thompson & Morgan's 'Black Velvet' series with unique dark leaves. Vesey's Seeds carries the early-flowering 'Ringo 2000' series. Stokes offers 'Orbit', which has intense leaf zone patterns, and is available in a variety of colors. Also from Stokes is the excellent early-flowering 'Elite' series, and 'Bulleye' with good dark foliage that holds up in bright sun conditions. All of the hybrids mentioned here are available in a variety of colors.



Geraniums are slow from seed, so start them early – in mid- to late January. Your plants will begin blooming about 12 to 16 weeks after sowing.

The seeds have a tough outer coats, so to increase germination rates, it helps to moisten them before sowing. Dampen several paper towels. Spread seeds over half the surface, and fold other half over top. Put damp folded paper towels and seeds into a plastic zip-lock bag to keep moist. After 24 hours, the seeds should have started to germinate.

For sowing, use a commercial growing mix. To avoid fungal disease (damping-off), make sure your containers are clean and have drainage holes. If you like to reuse two-and-a-half inch nursery pots like I do, wash them in soapy water, and disinfect in a rinse containing a little bleach (one part chlorine bleach to nine parts water). Moisten growing mix in a big container. Add just enough water to get the mix damp as a sponge, but avoid letting it get sopping wet. Let stand for an hour or two to absorb moisture. Fill individual pots with growing mix to about one inch from the top. Pack lightly and, sow 2 or 3 seeds per pot and cover with a small amount growing mix, about 1/8 to 1/4 inch thick. Water lightly. (Use a spray bottle or a small watering can with a fine rose.) Label pots and put them in a plastic bag closed with a twist tie. (Or if you've bought cell packs and growing flats, set the plastic cover in place.)

Geranium seeds don't need light to germinate. Give them a warm spot between 70 and 75°F (21 to 24°C). I've put them on top of my refrigerator, and that works well.



When you notice green sprouts, open the plastic cover to allow air circulation, but don't remove it entirely. Make sure your seedlings have good light. Once two true leaves appear (the first leaves are seed leaves), remove covers. Let them grow a week or two before transplanting seedlings into individual pots.

Be sure to keep the soil mix moist – but not soggy. Watering from the bottom is ideal. Set the pots into a shallow tray with water, and remove them when the top is moist.

Grow your seedlings on a window sill with good sunlight – south-facing is ideal – or set them under fluorescent lights with the lights on for 12 to 14 hours daily. This is easy with a timer.

Once a week, feed with a water-soluble fertilizer diluted to half-strength. Once the plants are growing strongly, pinch off the tops to keep plants compact and promote branching.

Geraniums from seed are usually single-flowered. Their flowers tend to shatter when blooming is finished, which means not as much deadheading for you. Seed grown types are available in a wide range of colors: soft pink, hot pink, pure white, pink-and-white, lavender, red, scarlet, scarlet-and-white, orange-salmon and coral. You can take cuttings of your seed-grown plants if you want to keep them going another season.



Source: <http://www.flower-gardening-made-easy.com/geraniums-from-seed.html>