

OVF NEWS



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Karen Andersen, Editor

SECRETS OF OVF TOMATOES

by Nancy Howell, Ph 3L, S5A

I have been growing tomatoes in Mar Vista for the past 25 years and have been a member of OVF since its inception. I do not claim to be an expert but I've done a lot of research and have had a lot of experience through trial and error which I would like to share with other gardeners.

In the past 5 years, I've noticed that success in growing tomatoes at OVF has become more challenging. I find that hybrid tomatoes are by far more successful than the popular heirloom varieties which become diseased early in the season. Celebrity is my favorite variety. It is VFFNT. This means this plant has been bred to be resistant to Verticillium Wilt, Fusarium Wilt 1 & 2, Root Knot Nematodes and Tomato Mosaic. This tomato has a good sweet flavor, is intermediate in size and has a tender skin. My second choice is Big Beef which is also VFFNT resistant but is larger than the Celebrity.

Based on my research with tomato diseases, it appears that the OVF soil has become infested with Late Blight (but it occurs early in the season). I have been more successful when I planted tomatoes later in the season and protected the plant from soil splashing upon the leaves (although it also appears to be transmitted through the air). I previously have planted tomatoes as early as February and had ripe tomatoes by early June. Now I have discovered more success in planting tomatoes in April when the soil is warmer and they grow faster. Planting tomatoes in a different location is best but somewhat impossible for those who have only one plot. Replacing the immediate soil with good compost is important and then I cover this with a mulch. I have tried cocoa mulch,



store bought ground cover, volcanic rock (this is used successfully in the Canary Islands), but have found that the red plastic is the most successful. The plastic has been researched by Climson University and Gardeners Supply Co. in Vermont. The red plastic not only protects the tomatoes from the soil splashing on the plant, but also ripens and sweetens the tomatoes and protects the plants from organisms. Watering the plant can be done through small holes in the plastic or by using the aqua cones attached to a large soda bottle which are filled with water. Additives to the soil which I feel are helpful include Epsom salts which provide magnesium, and ground up eggshells which helps to produce calcium. Even watering and adequate calcium helps to prevent black rot on the bottom of the tomatoes. Staking tomatoes also helps them from touching the soil. I use tomato cages. I also break off the lower leaves and the first few suckers thus making the plant grow taller and this also strengthens the stem. Suckers are the new growth which occurs between the leaves and the stem. Eliminating all suckers will reduce the number of tomatoes produced, but will also make the remaining tomatoes larger.

I am continuing to learn each year more about gardening. If you have been successful with your tomato crop, I would love to hear from you by email: nghowell@verizon.net Tel: (310) 398-7973.



Saturday, August 14th

Community Workday 9:00 • Potluck 12:00 • General Meeting 1:00

GardenMaster's Report

SALVAGE PIPE Please check your garden plots for unused galvanized metal pipes. Take them to the area under the lumber cage at the tool shed. If you have some in the ground in your plot and you cannot get it out, tell the garden master or leave a note in his mail slot. The pipe is used to repair plot walls.

TOMATOES This is definitely one of the most popular vegetables in the garden, but also one of the most difficult to grow at OVF. Our climate is cool and the air at night is very moist. These are challenging conditions for tomatoes. Do not water them late in the evening as any moisture that gets on the leaves will not have a chance to dry off. Too much watering will cause "end rot", a soft black spot on the bottom of the tomato. Tomatoes at OVF require water about every 5 days.



With all these Do's and Don't's, the most important bit of advice is don't panic if your plants get the "blight." Do not rip them out. Be patient as the plants will still produce tomatoes. They may be fewer than what you had hoped for but I guarantee you they will still be much better than anything you can buy at the supermarket.

SWEET CORN There are so many delicious varieties and this is an easy plant to grow here at OVF. These simple steps will yield a successful crop.

1. Plant only one variety. Do not mix varieties because they will cross pollinate and the ears will be stunted and create a black fungus on the end of the ear.
2. Plant in rows on flat ground, spacing as directed on the seed package. Use NEW seeds.
3. Soak seeds for 24 hours or at least overnight before putting them into the ground.
4. Be considerate of your neighbors and do not shade their plot. Corn grows to a height of 6 to 12 feet depending on the variety. Leave enough room at your borders to prevent shading.
5. Water seeds every other day after they are planted to insure germination.
6. When stalks reach a height of 10 to 12 inches, dig a furrow between the rows piling the soil up against the stalks on both sides. This will provide a watering ditch and support the stalks when the wind blows.
7. Put manure in the ditch to feed the roots.

OVF Farewell



Pamela Crombie

On April 18th, 2004 Ocean View Farms lost a dear and valued friend when Pamela Crombie died suddenly. Pam was born on September 3rd, 1944 in San Diego and received a BA from Cal State Northridge. She served in the Peace Corps in Brazil and later worked in health care and research at UCLA. Pam's devotions in life were her photography, table tennis and Ocean View Farms. She was the Lower Phase III Phase Representative for seven years and will be deeply missed by all of her family, friends, and fellow gardeners. Donations in her memory can be sent to Alexandria House, 426 S. Alexandria Ave., L.A., CA 90020.

ASSISTANT I.P. MONITOR

OVF is seeking an Assistant Independent Project Monitor. Responsibilities include assigning open projects, insuring Independent Projects are properly maintained and maintaining an IP roster. Community credit will be given. Leave a note in the "Chair" mailbox in the small shed if you have questions or interest. Candidate will be chosen at the July 17, 2004 Board Meeting.

Water every 3 days by filling the ditch. You will get two ears per stalk and you can harvest them when the silks turn brown and are dusty when you touch them.

THANK YOU To two new members KIM and SHELBY JONES (Phase 2 E31), for volunteering to paint the serving table, round tables and umbrella storage boxes in the meeting area.

-- Ed Mosman, Gardenmaster

Takai's Sunglow

Portrait of James Takai



by Janice Norton, Ph. IV, 63A

How does it feel to have a famous orchid named after you?

James Takai, (Ph. I, C 22-24, D 21-23) and his wife, Yoko, have been growing orchids for over 15 years. It all started in the 1980's. Yoko had "a few orchids around" she said humbly when I asked her how James first got bitten by the "cymbidium bug." Yoko's sister used to grow and sell orchids in Hawaii and, lucky for all of us orchid-lovers out here, Yoko happened to have a few that caught James's eye and imagination.

From just those few orchids James and Yoko now have over a thousand orchids in their garden in Culver City. The most famous orchid of them all is "Takai's Sunglow," which is the centerpiece of James's many successful years of orchid-growing. "Designer Lip Takai's Sunglow" (the orchid's full name) won James his very first award.

Over 15 years ago, James took a baby cymbidium and carefully tended it for six or seven years until it developed into an extraordinary plant. His award-winning orchid is a cross between a "Design South Bay" and a "Red Beauty Princess Fredrica".

He first entered "Takai's Sunglow" in an orchid show in 1996 when the plant was approximately seven or eight years old. He was immediately awarded with "Best First Blooming Cymbidium" — a Best of Show the first time out! "He was shocked!" remembers Yoko. In that same year, he entered the annual Bay Cities Orchid Show at Stoner Park for the first time and he won First Place, receiving the "Best Standard Blooming Cymbidium" award for the same plant. He also won two Stuart-Austin engraved quartz clocks.

"Takai's Sunglow" was also honored in the 1996

Las Vegas orchid show with a "Best of Show Cymbidium". The Takai's received "a little trophy" and "a hotel stay at the California Hotel in Las Vegas." Already it was clear, even in the early days, that this passion for orchids would be leading James and his wife into all kinds of adventures!

In 1997 he entered and received lots of prizes in the Bay Cities competition yet again, and again this spring he has received another "First Place—Best of Show" award from the Bay Cities Orchid Show. James has received many trophies and blue ribbons and most recently this Spring he was awarded a gift certificate from an oriental market.

How does James grow so many beautiful, prize-winning orchids? Consistency is the key. Here's his method:

■ First, James built orchid tables with wire on them, so that the air can circulate all around the orchid— underneath and on top. They get plenty of breezy, moist ocean air circulating on all sides. One of the biggest problems is that they grow so many that it gets a bit crowded, thus proper air circulation through the wire tables is key.

■ Another secret of James's success: he uses lots of fertilizer dissolved in water—1/2 cup dissolved in a bit of hot water and then mixed into a 5 gallon container with cold water to dilute it. From January 1st to June 30th, he uses high nitrogen fertilizer: 21-7-7, and from July 1st to December 31st he uses low nitrogen fertilizer: 6-30-30. Every week the orchids receive a treatment—on the 1st and 2nd week, an application of the appropriate fertilizer concentration, using a "hazon" to disperse the liquid. On the 3rd week he uses magnesium sulfate. On the 4th week he flushes the orchids with water and no fertilizer.

James's passion for orchids has truly paid off. If you have a yen to try your hand and experiment with his methods, be sure to keep us posted at the News as to how your orchids are doing!!



James Takai's famous orchid takes the blue ribbon.

Why Can't We Just Get Along?

SOME PLANTS MAKE GOOD NEIGHBORS, SOME DON'T.

Without much scientific corroboration, gardeners throughout the centuries have practiced the folk art of companion planting. Plants out in the garden have very specific likes and dislikes. Give it a try! If it doesn't work, you haven't hurt their feelings!

Anise	Close to coriander, far from carrots.
Asparagus	Thrives near basil, parsley and tomatoes. Hates onions.
Basil	Great companion for tomatoes and asparagus.
Beans	Great companion for tomatoes and asparagus.
Borage	Likes tomatoes and spinach. Bees love this herb, too!
Cabbage	The whole family (brassica) love herbs and get along with beets, cucumbers, lettuce, onions, radishes potatoes and marigolds.
Carrot	Plant near tomatoes, cucumbers, beans onions, lettuce, and peas. Keep them away from dill.
Cucumber	Grows well near radishes, beans members of the cabbage family, tomatoes, peas, marigolds and oregano. Keep away from sage.
Dill	Grow near onions and members of the cabbage family. Keep away from carrots and tomatoes.
Eggplant	Grows well near beans, peppers, tarragon, thyme and marigolds.
Garlic	Repels many different garden pests. Grow anywhere sunny.
Lettuce	Plant near cabbage, beets, carrots, chives, garlic and onion. Doesn't like broccoli.
Mint	Attracts many beneficial insects.
Mustard	Likes beans, hates turnips.
Nasturtium	Traps aphids, repels many pests. Good companion for cabbage crops, beans and peppers.
Onions	Set near beets, carrots, lettuce, spinach, potatoes, and cabbage crops. Keep away from sage and peas.
Parsley	Good near asparagus, corn and tomatoes. Repels pests.
Peas	Likes tomatoes, eggplant, lettuce, spinach, peppers and corn, radishes, cucumbers, carrots, and beans. Keep them far from garlic and onions.
Peppers	Plant near carrots, onions, marigolds, basil, marjoram or oregano. Avoid beans, eggplant, tomatoes, fennel and kohlrabi.
Radishes	Interplant with lettuce, cabbage, tomatoes, beans or beets. Good with peas, parsnips, onions, carrots, cucumbers or squash.
Spinach	Good companion for eggplant, cabbage crops, peas, onions, marigolds, beans. Not so friendly to potatoes.
Squash	Plant with beans, corn, sunflowers, marigolds, radishes, mint. Keep away from potatoes.
Tomatoes	Plant near asparagus, cabbage, carrots, cucumbers, onions, peppers, marigolds, basil, parsley, and sage. Keep away from corn, dill, fennel, kohlrabi and potatoes.

There are two really great reference books on companion gardening: *Carrots Love Tomatoes* and *Roses Love Garlic*.

Know Your Rules & Regs

All members should be aware that any plot rented must be gardened by the member renting the plot. Any member who cannot garden part or all of the plots rented must return the plot or plots to OVF for reassignment to another gardener. Failure to comply with this regulation may result in the confiscation of the plot or plots. *All Rules & Regs are posted on the bulletin board in the wheelbarrow shed, or consult your Phase Rep for a printed copy.*

ARE YOU A
NATURAL DESIGNER?

WANT TO BECOME PART
OF OVF HISTORY?

OVF would very much like to build a permanent Memorial somewhere on the garden property to honor our friends who are no longer with us.

All submissions will be considered and voted on at the next general meeting, August 14th, 2004. The board will approve the winning design based on cost, feasibility and practicality at the September 18th, 2004 board meeting. Winning nominee and runner-up will be required to provide estimated expense of project prior to the board meeting.

Please submit ideas either in writing or as drawings to the "Chair" mailbox in the small shed, or via email to oceanviewfarms@earthlink.net.

Submissions too large to fit in the mail slot can be delivered to the small office on the left hand side of the large shed. There is a large opening between the bottom of the door and the floor. Any additional question or comments can be directed to Chairman, Frank Harris.

WORKDAY SCHEDULE

JULY

10 Sat 9-12 Work
17 Sat 9:30 Board Mtg.
25 Sun 1-4 Work

AUGUST

14 Sat 9-12 Work
12 Potluck
1 Gen. Mtg.
29 Sun 1-4 Work

SEPT.

11 Sat 9-12 Work
18 Sat 9:30 Board Mtg.
26 Sun 1-4 Work