



FLORA  
GARDEN  
SOCIETY

*Planting and Planning for Spring*



# Our Secret Garden

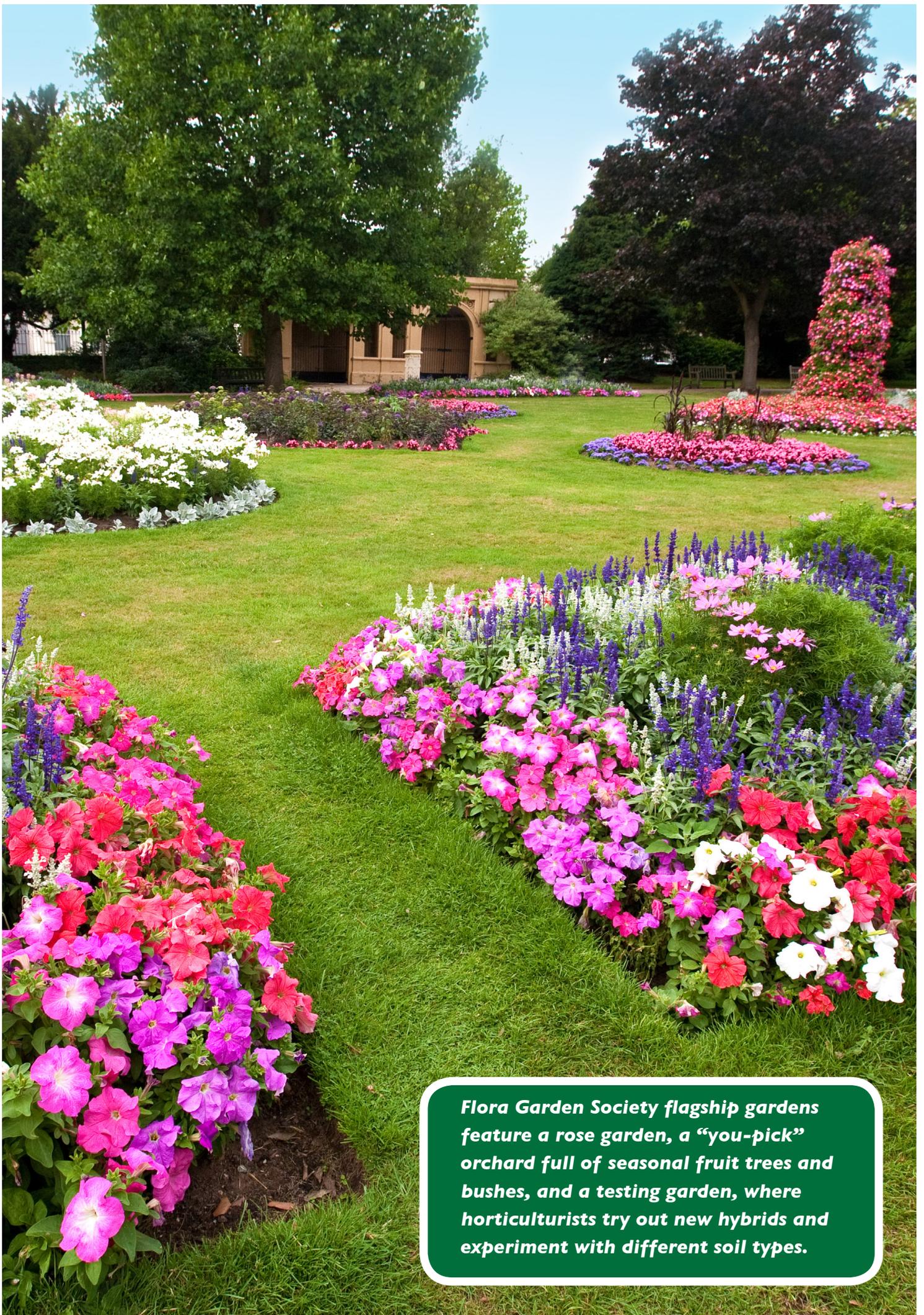
It's no secret the Flora Garden Society's garden at the San Luis Obispo, California headquarters draws thousands of visitors each year. Nestled in one of the "Happiest Cities in America," the FGS flagship garden is truly a wonder to behold.

When FGS first launched in 1950, it was the goal of the founding members to inspire others by creating a lush and beautiful garden full of grandeur. The grounds consist of eight sprawling acres located minutes from the FGS office building in downtown San Luis Obispo.

Noteworthy attractions in the garden include a sprawling rose garden, a "you-pick" orchard full of seasonal fruit trees and bushes, and a testing garden, where horticulturists try out new hybrids and experiment with different soil types. 🌱

1: Pink peonies serve as cut flowers in the FGS office. 2: Clematis climbers ramble throughout the garden. 3: Helleborus is one of many species in the spring garden. 4: Purple crocus emerge from the rich mulch. 5: FGS volunteer Nancy Stimson gathers cut flowers from the garden. 6: The FGS flagship garden is in full bloom for spring. *Opposite page:* Casual walking paths lined with petunias lead to the "you-pick" orchard.





*Flora Garden Society flagship gardens feature a rose garden, a “you-pick” orchard full of seasonal fruit trees and bushes, and a testing garden, where horticulturists try out new hybrids and experiment with different soil types.*

# Spring Planning Guide



*“A little preparation  
can go a long way  
towards growing a  
lush and plentiful  
garden. Do your  
homework before  
you dig.”*

*Jon Summers*



*Spring has finally sprung, and you have decided to plant your first garden—but where to begin? That’s where Jon Summers comes in. Summers is Flora Garden Society’s expert horticulturist, and he’s starting off with the basics for what you need to know before you start planting.*

Growing your own garden is an exciting and rewarding process. A successful garden takes careful planning and patience. Taking the time to do a little research will help ensure the plants you choose will be healthy and beautiful.

The type of soil you plan to use will determine which plants and flowers grow best in your garden. Most plants need well-drained soil to thrive. To test your soil, begin by digging a 1 foot hole. Fill the hole with water, and let the water drain out. Then, refill

the hole again. Wait 15 minutes then measure (in inches) how much the water has dropped. Multiply that figure by 4 to calculate how much the water drops in an hour. Less than 1 inch per hour indicates poor drainage, and you will need to choose plants that are able to tolerate wet soil for long periods of time. The optimal drainage time for most plants is 1 to 6 inches per hour. If your water drains more than 6 inches in an hour, you may want to choose drought-resistant plants for your garden.

Before you select flowers to plant in your garden, you will need to take into account the amount of sun your garden receives. Different plants require varying amounts of sun exposure. The amount of sun an area is exposed to can be categorized into three groups. Full Sun receives 6 or more hours of direct sunlight, Partial Sun/Partial Shade receives 3-6 hours of direct sun, and Full Shade receives less than 3 hours of sunlight.

By doing background work first, you can feel confident in the flowers you choose to grow. Always look at the needs of each plant before you buy to determine the best fit for you! 🌱

# Our Top Picks for Spring



## Dahlia

There are over 35 species of dahlias, which are native to Mexico, Central America and parts of South America. Dahlias are closely related to the sunflower, daisy, and zinnia. Dahlias are grown from tubers, which are underground shoots or stems. Tubers should be planted in the spring, after the ground has warmed from the winter. Dahlias can grow quite tall, so take care to anchor a stake to support the plant as it grows. These plants prefer occasional deep watering, as opposed to frequent light watering. Take care not to over water, as too much moisture may cause tubers to rot. To encourage larger blooms, gardeners often practice disbudding, which is the removal of the two outer flower buds that grow at the end of each dahlia branch.



## Parrot Tulip

There are several different varieties of parrot tulips, ranging in color from blues to reds to whites. Parrot tulips were developed for their curly, twisted, or waved petals. These unique flowers are part of the Triumph class, and a result of blending different varieties of late-flowering tulips. Parrot tulips should be planted in an area with well-drained soil that receives full sun. Do not plant in a windy area, as these plants are relatively fragile. Bulbs should be planted in the early fall, and will bloom in mid-spring. Parrot tulips should be watered once a week between spring and fall months. Bulbs can be dug up and saved after blooms have died in early summer.



## Daffodil

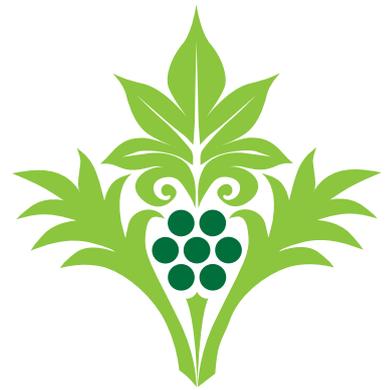
Daffodils, also known as narcissus, are native to Europe, North Africa, and West Asia. Botanists estimate between 26 to 60 different species of daffodils, not including hybrid versions. Daffodils grow from bulbs, which should be planted in the spring. Big, heavy bulbs are the most likely to produce large flowers. If bulbs are too light, they might have already suffered damage by insects or disease. Daffodil bulbs should be planted in well-drained soil. These plants prefer full sun and need to be watered frequently. Daffodil bulbs can be left in the ground between 3 to 5 years. To replant bulbs, cut foliage when it begins to turn yellow. Dig up bulbs and wash and dry thoroughly. Bulbs should be stored in a cool, aerated location until they are ready to be planted again.



## Freesia

Freesia is an herbaceous flowering plant, native to Africa. There are about 16 different species of freesias. Flowers range from white to blue to yellow, and are very fragrant. Many gardeners love incorporating freesias into their flowerbeds, as they are easy to grow and require little maintenance. Freesias should be planted in areas that receive full sun. Wait until the winter frost is over to plant freesia bulbs. Bulbs should be pointed up, and spaced at least eight inches apart. Cover each bulb with at least one inch of soil. Once freesias flower, they should be watered frequently; however, watering should be scaled back once the blooms die. Bulbs can be dug up in the fall, and stored in a dry place until the spring.





# FLORA GARDEN SOCIETY

265 Rose Avenue  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
987.654.3210  
[www.floragardensociety.com](http://www.floragardensociety.com)

The Flora Garden Society is a private, not-for-profit organization funded entirely by donations, membership, memorials, grants, and garden tour admissions. It was formed in the early 1950s by citizens interested in promoting a more intimate relationship between the earth and our passion for gardening.

This booklet is one of four seasonal planning and planting booklets available for paid members.

Member Photo: *Jane Hanson is a passionate gardener and a fourth generation Flora Garden Society member.*

Share your photos by posting to our web site: [www.floragardensociety.com](http://www.floragardensociety.com)



6750 Dumbarton Circle  
Fremont, CA 94555  
650-357-3500  
[www.efi.com](http://www.efi.com)

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