Upcoming plant sales a gardener’s delight

By BONNIE MORBUS
morgans@currantinformatics.com

SANTA CRUZ — Even if you don’t have a green thumb, it’s easy to pretend with experts abounding at two of Santa Cruz County’s more popular plant sales at the UC Santa Cruz Arboretum and Cabrillo College Horticulture.

“It’s for expert gardeners and novices,” said Stephen McCabe, Arboretum director of development and research. “There are easily 100 experts here at a time to answer questions. It’s just a wide range of things, and having all of that expert knowledge will help even the novice gardeners for their garden choices.”

The UCSC Arboretum will host its sale Saturday, April 20, with the banana ericofolia “Fireworks,” damiana trigona “Purple wire” and the island bush poppy plants taking center stage. The Cabrillo College horticulture program will continue the blossoming festivities May 10-12 with its 35th annual Spring Plant Sale.

So why a host a plant sale this time of year?

Now’s the time to get your plants in the garden, said Stephen McCabe of the UCSC Arboretum. McCabe said he’s particularly excited about the variety of edible perennials, as well as a sprinkling of unusual choices.

“We probably have the best collection of salvias and California natives for sale,” said Peter Shaw, department chair of Cabrillo College Horticulture.

There also will be a host of crafts on-hand at the event. The SeaHawks Metal Art Club will sell traditional metal arts and jewelry, and students will sell pottery at the event.

“I try to reach out to as many clubs as possible,” Shaw said. “It’s a community college, and we have a venue that allows us to interact with the public in such a great way. We’re so fortunate to have this event that thousands of people come to.

And expect plenty of variety at both sales, an important factor to consider when living in the Monterey Bay, McCabe said.

“It’s really diverse in terms of habitat and climates,” McCabe said. “It’s good at any nursery or any sale to take some time to consider which plants to put in your garden. The full sun in Bonny Doon is different from the full sun at the beach, not to mention the climate in the redwoods.”

SALES

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IF YOU GO

UCSC ARBORETUM-CNPS SPRING PLANT SALE

WHAT: The UC Santa Cruz Arboretum is hosting a plant sale at the Arboretum Eucalyptus Grove.

WHEN: 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, April 20, for members of Friends of the Arboretum and California Native Plant Society, noon to 4 p.m. for general public

WHERE: UC Santa Cruz Arboretum, 1150 High St., Santa Cruz

DETAiLS: 831-457-2999, arboretum.ucsc.edu

35TH ANNUAL CABRILLO COLLEGE SPRING PLANT SALE

WHAT: Cabrillo College Horticulture is hosting its 35th annual Spring Plant Sale. The event will feature over 1,000 different organic plants.

WHEN: 3-7 p.m. Friday, May 10; 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, May 11; 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday, May 12

WHERE: Environmental Horticulture Center & Botanic Gardens, 8500 Seaside Drive, Aptos

DETAiLS: 831-479-4243, www.cabrillo.edu

This is an Australian pea family vine, Kennedia hooksianna ‘Flamboyant,’ which will be for sale at the Arboretum’s annual spring plant sale.

UC SANTA CRUZ ARBORETUM

Giant Cereopsis will be available at the UCSC Arboretum sale.