



# EMERALD KEEPERS

For an Emerald Green, Ocean Blue Coronado



## GARDENING GUIDE



Coronado residents are sprucing up their gardens in preparation for the Coronado Floral Association's Home Front judging March 31 to April 2. The Floral Association celebrates colorful blooms and manicured yards, and Emerald Keepers encourages gardening that supports healthy plants, insects, animals, soil, and people. Earth-friendly gardening tips include:

**SELECT NATIVE PLANTS.** A wide selection of native plants are adapted to our dry, coastal climate. They need less water and pesticides while attracting pollinating bees and birds. More than just succulents, native plants include flowering varieties with seeds and pollen critical to our local ecosystems. Avoid invasive plants that thrive with watering but take over and destroy native plants.

**MANAGE WEEDS.** Your plants appreciate fertile soil, sunshine, and water, but so do weeds. Many

**LEARN MORE**  
The Coronado Public Library's Eco-speaker series features local plant expert Mary Berube discussing the importance of native plants in your home garden. Wednesday, Feb. 22, at 6:30 pm, in the Library Winn Room.

commercial weed killers such as Ortho Weed B Gone or Weedone contain 2,4-D, one of the most toxic chemicals on the market. Instead, prevent weeds from growing by placing mulch at least 2 inches deep around your plants. This will deprive weeds of the light they need to grow. Be sure to pull mulch a couple of inches away from the stem of a plant to aid growth. Vinegar or boiling water are also effective ways to kill weeds, although you will likely need multiple doses.

**FERTILIZE.** You may want to give

your plants a boost, but many plants, including most perennials, as well as bushes, trees, shrubs, and native plants, don't need fertilizer at all. If your soil is deficient, you can add organic nutrients, such as well-made compost, fish-based fertilizer, or worm castings. Avoid synthetic fertilizers that introduce chemicals and pollute the groundwater.

**MANAGE PESTS.** Avoid spraying toxic pesticides that indiscriminately harm all insects including beneficials that help your plants flourish. Instead, pick off pests or spray the plant with a jet of water. If these are inadequate, try less-toxic pesticides such as insecticidal soaps, microbials, horticulture oil, or neem oil. Encourage natural enemies that will eat your problematic pests, such as the lady bugs, mealybug destroyer, and the syrphid fly.

Your gardening and beautiful home fronts can help keep Coronado Emerald Green, Ocean Blue.

**NEW FOR 2023**  
Emerald Keepers is pleased to collaborate with the Coronado Floral Association to recognize Earth Friendly Home Fronts with a green ribbon. All local home fronts will be judged based on both the Flower Association standards and the following Earthy Friendly standards:

- Majority native or low water plants
- Limited to no lawn
- Limited to no artificial grass
- Natural mulches (bark, rocks, sand, granite, etc.) covering soil
- Majority ground surface non paved
- Good level of design and maintenance
- Curb appeal
- Obvious effort

Any questions can be directed to [info@emeraldkeepers.com](mailto:info@emeraldkeepers.com)

For more information visit [EMERALDKEEPERS.ORG](http://EMERALDKEEPERS.ORG)