

TIPS  
FROM OUR  
TEAM

# In the SUNSET GARDEN

## DIY RAKE TO RACK

That rusty rake may be ready to retire from yard work, but don't toss it just yet. Reinvent it as a vintage-style hand-tool rack by mounting it teeth-out on a shed wall. If a hole in a tool handle doesn't fit over the teeth, nest the handle between the teeth or add a loop of twine to the hole.



### PLANT NOW

## Couture seeds

We're one step closer to living the dreamy life of our favorite farmer-florist, Erin Benzakein of Floret in Mount Vernon, Washington, thanks to her new line of cut-flower seeds and tubers to grow in our own gardens. All of her 100 seed varieties—including a pale blush *Scabiosa*, 30 colors of sweet peas, and a custom color blend of globe amaranth, shown here—are tried-and-true (and tried again) performers. On Floret's website, you can choose based on filler, flower, or foliage, as well as by color. And because growing is only half the fun, Benzakein includes detailed harvest recommendations and vase-life tips right on the seed packets. From \$4; [floretfloret.com/shop](http://floretfloret.com/shop).

### BOOK CLUB

## Go for the gold

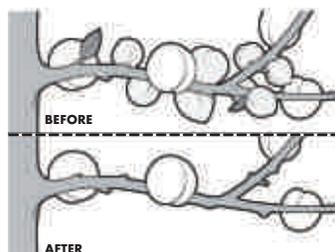
Learn the secrets to growing prizeworthy produce in the new *Blue Ribbon Vegetable Gardening* (Storey Publishing; \$17). Inspired by childhood trips to the Colorado State Fair, author Jodi Torpey talked to county-fair winners to learn their tricks for growing mammoth pumpkins and soldier-straight green beans. Here's one tip: To grow a massive onion, plant it in a gallon-size container with rich soil and use a tomato cage for support.



### KNOW-HOW

## Fruitful endeavor

It's a little counterintuitive, we know, but removing small fruits from trees will give you a healthier harvest of larger individual fruits. Thin apples and stone fruit when they are 1/2 to 1 inch in diameter. For apples, leave 1 or 2 of the largest fruits per cluster. For plums and apricots, leave 2 to 4 inches between fruit; for peaches and nectarines, leave 3 to 5 inches.



### MUST-SEE

## NEW DIGS

Join us in Sonoma for the unveiling of our new Test Garden at Celebration Week-end (May 14-15; [sunset.com/cw](http://sunset.com/cw)). Tour our cut-flower garden, orchard, and cocktail garden, all designed by Homestead Design Collective ([homesteaddesigncollective.com](http://homesteaddesigncollective.com)). 🌱

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: CHRIS BENZAKEIN, RYAN DONNELL, E. SPENCER TOY; ILLUSTRATION: BROWN BIRD DESIGN