

## Sandy Oaks Olive Orchard

Nov 17, 2015 | [Nov/Dec 15, Sustainable Gardening](#) |

One of the more fascinating agricultural stories in Texas depicts Sandra Winokur and her journey over the past 17 years establishing a successful commercial olive tree orchard just outside of San Antonio. The orchards are thriving and orderly, with lovely facilities to browse and a staff who loves to cook. Open to the public Wed.-Sat., 11 a.m.-3 p.m.



They host free tours on Saturdays at 11:30 a.m. and offer a \$10 farm-to-table lunch including salad, main course and iced tea. They also host occasional nighttime dinners with paired wines. Check out their website for directions, details, plus a full menu that surprises and delights eaters with creative and original (olive oil ice cream!) starters, entrees and desserts.

Browse their gift shop in person at Sandy Oaks or Pearl Farmers' Market (Saturdays 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.) or online. They offer several gift packages, including a "Gardener & Artist Takeout," which for \$32 includes bug repellent, herbal salve, olive leaf hand cream, hand

cleaner and gardener's soap — all made on premises with their own locally pressed olive oil. They also offer gift certificates, pantry items such as olive almond brittle (\$12), jars of olive butter (\$16), jars of olives, bottles of olive oil and more.

Sandy Oaks Olive Orchard, 25195 Mathis Road,  
Elmendorf 78112, 210-621-0044

**By Josie Seeligson**

## **San Antonio Botanical Garden**

Nov 17, 2015 | [Nov/Dec 15, Sustainable Gardening](#) |



### **San Antonio Botanical Garden**

Tour the various garden walks, architecture and ever-changing garden exhibits. Eat lunch (or brunch Sat./Sun.) at the charming Anne Marie's Carriage House Bistro (closed Mondays). You can also give your gardener one of the Botanical Garden's gardening classes, which take place year-round and include topics in water conservation, native plants, nature

drawing, Tai Chi and more; prices begin as low as \$10. They have an on-premises Garden Gate gift shop brimming with gardening and children's books, wind chimes, hats, toys, natural products and more. A Botanical Garden membership might also make a great gift, as members receive free daily and event admission for one year, reciprocal privileges at many gardens, arboreta and conservatories across the nation, discounts for classes and camps, gift shop items, plant sales and at the Bistro. Or you can even dedicate a living garden bed for a year to a loved one. Check out their website for more details.

San Antonio Botanical Garden, 555 Funston Place, San Antonio 78209, 210 207-3250.  
www.sabot.org.

**By Josie Seeligson**

## **Digging the Holidays**

Nov 18, 2015 | [Nov/Dec 15, Sustainable Gardening](#) |

### **Glorious Gifts for the Gardner in your Life**

As a long-time nature lover and gardener, I've been the lucky recipient and giver of a wide list of gardening and yard art gifts: serene wind chimes, vibrant hummingbird feeders, practical pruners, pre-potted plants and mischievous garden gnomes, to name a few.

My favorite gift ever was a purple martin house my husband crafted from our recycling bin and leftover construction materials. Its "tin" roof was made watertight with Coca-Cola and Dr Pepper cans, the front porch checkered with black and white grouted tile — strangely reminiscent of our bathroom — and we joked the birds were going to slip and slide on wet days. My kids took cues and painted raw wooden birdhouses with leftover craft paint. One of these kids has now flown the coop, yet I still spy her childhood creativity in a tree across the yard, winking with globs of glitter and kaleidoscope colors.

During the holidays, however, most of us don't have time to make gifts; we need items crossed off the list, but we still aim to please. With that in mind, here are some local tips for gifts for the gardener or nature lover in your life.



### **Tangible gifts**

Practical gifts are often acutely needed and appreciated. For example, gardeners disdain weak hoses that kink when pulled around and love high-quality, “heavy use” hoses, no matter how short — they can be screwed together as needed. Or gift a fresh set of gardening gloves (in the right size), un-rusted bypass hand pruners or a wide-brimmed shade hat (a chin tie can be nice for windy days).

Then there are more whimsical items that people don’t always buy for themselves: rain chains to help showers trickle down where wanted, fountains for peaceful water gurgling, light catchers for reflection, wind chimes to give voice to the breeze. Buy an attractive pot and place a few gardening items, a plant, or food/beverage inside, tie a bow around it and you’re done. Many local nurseries have all of these products in addition to quality plants, small trees and succulents, soils, fertilizers, mulches and more.

### **Experience gifts**

My siblings and I started a tradition years ago to gift a joint meal to each other rather than objects. We probably spend the same amount of cash we might have on gifts, but gain togetherness that’s hard to find time for with busy lives. With that in mind, here are some ideas for gardening and culinary “experiences” you could try with your nature lover.

**By Josie Seeligson**

