

## ROTATION MAKES GARDENS GO ROUND

By Tony Tomeo

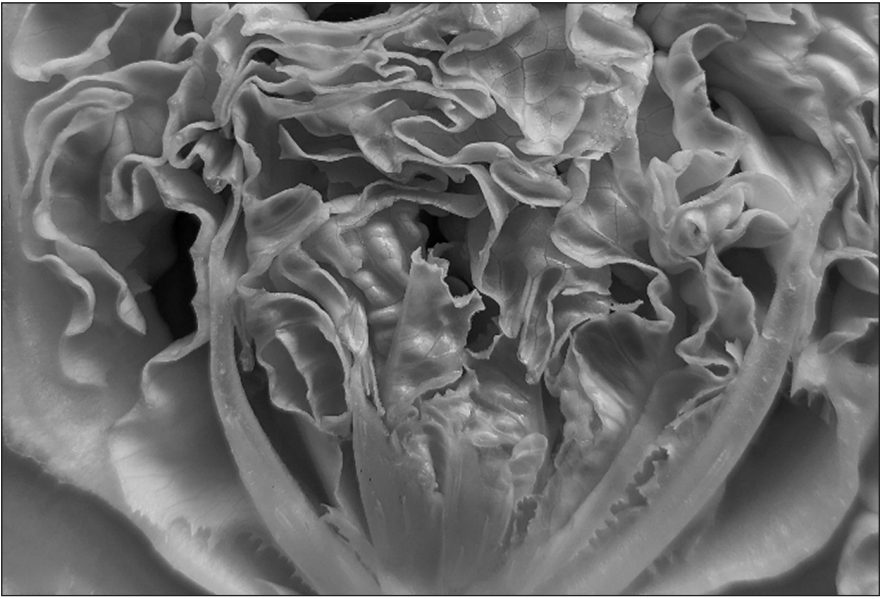
UNITED STATES—Vegetables are greedy as they grow. They crave rich soil. They exploit it and abandon it at the end of their season. Nutrient depletion can be a problem for subsequent phases of similar vegetables. In other words, vegetables of any particular family consume the same nutrients. Each phase leaves a bit less for the next. Crop rotation disrupts this process.

Different types of vegetables deplete different types of nutrients. This is an advantage for a vegetable garden. Tomatoes can deplete soil nutrients for subsequent tomatoes. Corn, however, may not notice such depletion. It craves different nutrients, some may be content with what tomatoes did not consume. This is how and why crop rotation is so effective.

Crop rotation is simply a technique of not growing vegetables where similar types grew. Vegetables grow better where different types grew previously. Their formerly depleted but vacated soil can recuperate in their absence. They can return to the same soil after three years or so. Other vegetables that grow there for that time accelerate recuperation.

The benefits of rotation are more evident among warm season vegetables.

Warm season vegetables are generally more consumptive than cool season vegetables. That is because so many of them are actually fruits, such



Lettuce prefers spring and autumn weather.

as tomatoes, corn and squash. More cool season vegetables are truly vegetative, such as lettuce, cabbage and carrots. Because they produce no bloom, seed or fruit prior to harvest, they need less resources.

Therefore, warm season vegetables are more responsive to crop rotation. Most are not relatives of the cool season vegetables that they are now replacing. Similar vegetables of the previous few summers are more of a concern. Tomatoes, eggplants and chilis are all of the Solanaceae family. They should avoid soil that their relatives used previously.

Similarly, if possible, corn should not grow where it grew within the past few years. Nor should beans. Fertilizer can compensate somewhat for soil depletion where rotation is

impractical. For example, a fence may perpetually be the ideal support for pole beans. Spring lettuce, carrots and other vegetative vegetables may be less reliant on rotation. Although most squash benefit from rotation, zucchini seems to be productive regardless.

Highlight: Lettuce  
Warm season vegetables are replacing cool season vegetables about now. Technically, lettuce, *Lactuca sativa*, is a cool season vegetable. It grows through spring and autumn though. The last of it can continue almost until May. Within the mildest coastal climates, it can continue later. By the time it finishes there, it is almost time to plant more for autumn.

After thousands of years of cultivation and breeding, let-

tuce is now remarkably diverse. Most popular varieties are leaf, head or romaine types. Leaf lettuce is mostly green, but can be bronze, reddish or irregularly blotched. Most varieties develop loosely ruffly foliage texture. Romaine and head lettuce is denser but larger. Some grow a foot high and wide.

One commonality among lettuce varieties is that they tolerate neither frost nor arid heat. Some are a bit more tolerant of one or the other, which can prolong their season. Some of the larger romaine and head types need nearly four months to mature, though. Only a single phase matures within each season. Smaller types might mature in about a month.

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## BANANA YELLOW (102)

By Grady Miller



Banana on Vine...

UNITED STATES—Moreover, being invited to the myth-finding mission implied obligation from reporters whose attention was directed with the precision of a master magician—only underscored by Bernie’s and the Company’s repeated claims to the contrary. Bernie came up to most people’s shoulder.

To be sure, Bernie was gaining ground with the press but, like a relentless general, each step forward only made him more determined to gain more ground.

In March 1952, Guatemala offered Allied Fruit the labor contract it had long sought. The pay was peanuts and there were provisions against strikes and forming labor unions, Sam and his minions crowded about it. They were top banana again. They assembled were all smiles. “You did it again, Bernie.” They patted him on the back. x “Don’t be too hasty to declare victory,” he said in his sluggish voice that induced drowsiness. “This is only a tactical retreat by the communists,” Bernie Lukasey told a meeting of Allied Fruit managers at his 42nd Street office in New York. With a view of the New Jersey timberlands and tugboats scudding past the green-cast Statue of Liberty.

“It does not mean in any sense that the cancer has been eliminated,” Bernie said. The appropriate response, he added in a letter to Allied Fruit President Kenneth H. Pritchard, would be “to carry forward the strong aggressive tactics employed by the Allied Fruit Company in pointing the finger at Communism in Guatemala.”

In letters over the next two years to Edmund Wilson, the fruit company’s publicity chief,

Bernie spelled out the “aggressive tactics” he had in mind. One way to strike out at the regime would be to issue the “first book on Communist propaganda” and outline the “scientific method of approach” needed to fight back. (This would become IT CAN’T HAPPEN HERE...IT ALREADY HAS: What you should know about communism in our back yard. Soon after he proposed hiring Leigh White, “an outstanding investigating expert” working in Cairo, to undertake a “private intelligence survey” of the political situation in Guatemala.

That was the first in a series of references by Bernie to a network of intelligence agents, spies of sorts, he helped set up in Central America to be coordinated by “the company’s ‘state department.’” Bernie’s memos to Pritchard and to newspaper executives suggest the network did supply valuable information. In a May 1954 letter to David Keyes of the International News Service, he said weapons were being funneled from the Soviet embassy in Mexico City to “Guatemalan reds,” adding that some of that information came from “a very responsible correspondent of

ours in Guatemala City” while the rest was from “an equally responsible gentleman in Honduras.” Only select journalists—on what Bernie called his “confidential list of approximately 100 special writers interested in Latin America”—received such sensitive leaks.

In June 1952, Bernie brought up the topic of psychological warfare. History suggested how valuable such activities could be, Bernie argued in another memo, writing that in “studies of the Nazi criminals by psychologists, the studies psychiatrists make of court cases after the criminal has been sentenced would indicate that had previous knowledge been had of the situation, one might have coped much more effectively.” In the case of President Gascón and his colleagues, Bernie wanted “information about the cultural background of the individual, his family background, his early upbringing, his education, development of career and a look at the various incidents and activities in his life that might shed light on his personality.” And thus discovered areas of vulnerability.

Things in Guatemala, meanwhile, were heating up. The new tenant of the White House,

who assumed office in 1953, stepped up the pressure on Gascón. The Guatemalan president responded by hardening his socialist stance. Month by month, the situation edged surely towards confrontation. As Bernie assured the Allied Fruit brass:

“Only the top three percent of Guatemalan households have a radio. It’s a very poor country. The efforts of my Intelligence Bureau are concentrated around those populations with the greatest wealth and influence—the decision-makers.”

The perception that the country was on the verge of a communist takeover was supported by false radio reports produced in Miami, explosive flashes of detonation on the horizons and hordes of screaming people stampeding (amplified by giant speakers), flashes of Kleig lights supplied by Hollywood. It was a gig the Hollywood director Jules Kaminsky, later hailed as an auteur by the French New Wave, was not proud.

The final showdown began on 18 June 1954 when Lieutenant Colonel Juan David Conde Castillo, an army officer living in exile, crossed the border from Honduras with two hundred men recruited and trained by the CIA—a band Bernie called the “army of liberation.” Conde Castillo’s “invasion,” supported by a CIA air attack, painted colors of the Guatemala Air Force, quickly achieved its end, and on 27 June a military junta took control of Guatemala. Conde Castillo was named president a week later.

To be continued...  
Grady is the Wizard of Fiction.

## IS AT-HOME RECOVERY AFTER A TRANSPLANT COVERED BY MEDICARE?

By Toni King



UNITED STATES—Dear Readers: This week, I received a text message from a local Toni Says Medicare client that I would like to share with you. The text reads:Toni: I need to put together a 24/7 home care recovery plan after a liver transplant. The surgery is over a year out, but I would appreciate tips on how to plan for this medical event. Thanks in advance, (name withheld for confidentiality)

To My Readers: This text made me realize that America is not prepared for a life changing medical need such as a transplant.

Luckily, my client has Original Medicare with a Medicare Supplement allowing him and his medical team to decide which skilled nursing/rehab facility and home health agency he will use while recuperating from his liver transplant.

Page 52 of the 2024 Medicare & You handbook, under “Transplants and Immunosuppressive drugs, states that “you must have Part A in place at time of the covered transplant and that you must have Part B at the time you get immunosuppressive drugs. You pay 20% of the Medicare-approved amount for the drugs and the Part B deductible applies. Medicare drug coverage (Part D) covers immunosuppressive

Toni King.

drugs if Part B doesn’t cover them.”

I would advise Toni Says readers to enroll in Medicare Parts A, B and D (Medicare’s prescription drug plan) when not working full-time and covered under your or your spouse’s employer benefits.

Have a complete Medicare Part D prescription drug plan—nursing consultation before enrolling in a Medicare Part D plan whether applying for Original Medicare for the first time or changing your Part D plan during Medicare’s Annual Enrollment Period from October 15-December 7 every year.

Be sure that the Part D plan you choose covers all your transplant drugs as well as prescriptions you take daily. If your Part D plan does not cover your transplant prescrip-

tion drugs, then who will pay? You will! (Chapter 5 of Toni’s Medicare Survival Guide Advanced edition explains Medicare Part D in depth and how to enroll properly.)

The Medicare handbook also states, “Medicare covers doctor services for heart, lung, kidney, pancreas, intestine and liver transplants under certain conditions, but only in Medicare-certified facilities.”

The handbook continues, “if you’re thinking about joining a Medicare Advantage Plan and are on a transplant waiting list or believe you need a transplant, check with the Medicare Advantage plan before you join to make sure your doctors, other health care providers, and hospitals are in the plan’s network. Also, check the plan’s coverage rules for prior au-

thorization and coverage for your living donors.”

Regarding the Toni Says client’s question about Medicare paying for at-home care while he is recuperating from his liver transplant, I did not have good news for him.

Original Medicare pays zero for at-home care while recuperating from a transplant or any illness. Medicare will pay for home health visits if there is a doctor’s order, and it meets Medicare’s medical requirements.

Medicare will only pay for skilled nursing or rehab facility care. If you do not meet Medicare’s qualifications for skilled nursing, you will pay 100% of the cost for it out of your pocket.

I have informed the Toni Says client to begin speaking with at-home provider services, friends, and family about receiving their help with round-the-clock care at home to aid him and his wife. If he has a long-term care policy, it may pick up costs not paid by Medicare.

Last week’s Medicare column discussed various long-term care options and is available by emailing [info@tonisays.com](mailto:info@tonisays.com). Email or call Toni Says at 832-519-8664 with your Medicare questions or to schedule a consultation.

## WHO ARE THE FAVORITES FOR THE 2024 NBA WINNERS?

By Staff

UNITED STATES—As the regular NBA season inches towards its climax, the buzz around potential 2024 NBA champions is reaching fever pitch. The playoffs, set to start in April, promise high stakes and intense competition. According to recent analyses and betting odds, a few teams have emerged as frontrunners for the coveted title, each with its unique strengths and challenges.

At the forefront of the championship conversation is the Denver Nuggets, heralded for their impressive performance throughout the season. With a robust lineup led by the phenomenal Nikola Jokic, whose versatility and basketball IQ are virtually unmatched, the Nuggets have solidified their position as a powerhouse. Jokic’s ability to impact the game across various fronts—scoring, rebounding, and playmaking—makes Denver a formidable opponent. Most of the overseas sportsbooks place the Nuggets at +350 odds, reflecting their strong championship potential.

Not far behind are the Boston Celtics, a team renowned for its depth and tactical prowess. Under the leadership of Ime Udoka, the Celtics have showcased a balanced attack, blending youth and experience. Jayson Tatum



Photo courtesy of TJ Dragotta via Unsplash.

and Jaylen Brown, in particular, have been pivotal, steering the team with their scoring and defensive efforts. The Celtics’ odds stand at +425, indicating their significant threat in the championship race.

Emerging as a dark horse in the competition are the Los Angeles Clippers. With a trio comprising James Harden, Paul George, and Kawhi Leonard, the Clippers boast one of the most formidable lineups in the league. Their collective contribution of 64 points, 17 rebounds, and 16 assists per game underscores their ability to dominate on both ends of the floor. Since November 15, the Clippers have maintained a 32-10 record, tied with Boston for the fewest losses, propelling their odds to +525. Their

success, however, hinges on their ability to remain healthy, especially considering their recent playoff struggles due to injuries.

While these teams top the list of favorites, the NBA’s competitive nature means that the championship is still up for grabs. Teams like the Phoenix Suns, despite being third in the Western Conference odds table at +700, cannot be discounted. The Suns’ blend of seasoned veterans and emerging talents makes them a potential threat in the postseason.

The narrative around traditional powerhouses like the Los Angeles Lakers, Golden State Warriors, and Miami Heat has shifted this season. Each of these teams has faced challenges, reflected in their odds standing at +4000. The

Lakers and Heat are grappling with roster adjustments and finding consistency, whereas the Warriors are navigating the twilight of their championship window. Despite these obstacles, their playoff experience and star power could still make them unpredictable contenders.

As the playoffs approach, the NBA landscape is ripe with anticipation and speculation. The Denver Nuggets, Boston Celtics, and Los Angeles Clippers currently lead the pack, but in the NBA, fortunes can shift dramatically. The coming weeks promise to be a thrilling preamble to what could be one of the most unpredictable playoffs in recent memory, underscoring the league’s competitive depth and the sheer unpredictability of championship basketball.

The 2023-2024 NBA season has also witnessed the rise of young, hungry teams eager to make their mark. Squads like the Memphis Grizzlies and the Cleveland Cavaliers have shown flashes of brilliance, with young stars like Ja Morant and Darius Garland leading the charge. While these teams may not be the primary favorites for the championship, they represent the NBA’s bright future and have the potential to upset the established titans.

## MARCH MADNESS IS ABOUT TO KICK INTO GEAR

By Davy Jones



Are you ready for March Madness? Photo courtesy of Rokas Tenys/Shutterstock.

UNITED STATES—Oh, I love this time of year. I’m referring to March Madness which is about to kick off in less than a week when it comes to college basketball. It pits the best of the best with the underdogs in the basketball arena and its simple people: win or go home. Things will kick off on Sunday, March 17 of all days, for those not in the know that is also St. Patrick’s Day so you will be seeing plenty of people celebrate their teams making the Big Dance and those who do not.

As of right now, I don’t have any preferential picks. You have your favorites like you have every year rather its Kansas, Villanova, Duke, UCLA, University of Connecticut, the Michigan State Spartans, Kentucky, North Carolina, Purdue or Houston, there are plenty of teams that will vie for that illustrious title. People have to understand just because a team is the favorite doesn’t mean it will be a cakewalk to the Final Four.

Every year, you have those underdogs and Cinderella teams that find their way into the tournament and they make a deep run, many making it all the way to the Final Four and

some actually making it to the Championship game. I love the notion of putting together your bracket as the official NCAA Tournament kicks off and hoping that you have that perfect bracket or the predictions that you have made are actually accurate.

The reality of the situation is who can actually craft a perfect bracket? There is going to be an upset or a series of upsets, there always is and that is what makes college basketball so fun. You don’t have to be perfect to win a game; you just have to be better than your opponent. And for all those teams that are dominant throughout the season, all it takes is having

one bad day or night and BOOM you’re out and there are no second chances!

It really puts the focus on play every single game like it is your last game because a foul, a missed free throw, a three-pointer or not defending the bucket can be the difference between a win and a loss. With that said, you always have those moments that are talked about where literally the final second, or milliseconds of the game can create a point or two differential that catapults one team over the other.

Also the NCAA Tournament brings people together. I don’t know what it is about sports that bring this raging energy to

the country. There is nothing like shouting and screaming at the bar as you watch your favorite team score a basket or make a run from a deficit to put a game that looked like it was finished to an upset. I love it, just drink responsible America. Of course I am rooting for my Spartans. I feel like MSU is synonymous with March Madness, and Coach Tom Izzo just know what to do with this team to get them playing at their best. Team is doing well currently, but they have to kick things into gear this week and next week to really make a deep run like I hope to see.

I’ll never forget 2003 when the team made a run in the Tourney and then again in 2005 that was quite impressive, and of course 2009 was the year that I was on cloud nine the NCAA Final Four was being hosted in my hometown and we were the biggest underdog and seeing the team prove the naysayers wrong it was just glorious to witness people it truly was. Could 2024 be that year? I don’t know, but I’m just going to sit back and watch and enjoy the journey and watch each game like it will be the last.

## UCLA SIGNS ERIC BIENIEMY TO REVAMP BRUINS OFFENSE

By Staff

WESTWOOD—After the rollercoaster offseason where UCLA Head Coach Chip Kelly unexpectedly quit and was replaced by DeShaun Foster, the Bruins have added Eric Bieniemy to be their next Offensive Coordinator.

Bieniemy, one of the masterminds of the Kansas City Chiefs historic and innovative offenses alongside Patrick Mahomes and Andy Reid, is coming home to UCLA.

He is headed back to UCLA, where he coached two decades ago. “This is a great opportunity for me to help support DeShaun [Foster] as a new head coach, to work with him and for him as well,” said Bieniemy.

“It is an opportunity for my family and I to return back to a place we once called home. This is a great opportunity for me to utilize all of my experience working with future Hall of Fame players and a Hall of Fame head coach [Andy Reid] to help teach and inspire young men on what it takes to be successful on and off the field.”



Eric Bieniemy is becoming the UCLA Offensive Coordinator. Photo by Courtesy of UCLA.

The contract is a two-year deal for the 54-year-old. Bieniemy became a hot candidate after his success as the offensive coordinator of the Kansas City Chiefs.

He spent 10 seasons with the Chiefs, and he won two Super Bowls with Kansas City before heading to Washington.

This is the man who has the potential to resurrect the offense. A feat Chip Kelly failed to reach during his tenure.

UCLA went 8-5 last season but finished 4-5 in conference play. The Bruins will play in the Big Ten next season.

Bieniemy has a reputation as tough as nails, the old school style of coaching which is borderline controversial in this new landscape of sports.

Just ask Patrick Mahomes. “EB is going to be harsh on you,” Mahomes said last August. “He’s going to really try and get the best out of you every single day. He’s going to

hold you accountable when you don’t want to hold yourself accountable. [His coaching] made me a better player.”

It’s going to yield success on the gridiron, but the entire Bruins roster is going to have develop an extremely thick skin under him.

It’s important to note that he’s in rare air, having won both a national championship as a player and multiple Super Bowls as a coordinator.

Good luck Coach Bieniemy.