

Let's Talk Plants!

Newsletter of the San Diego Horticultural Society

April 2009, Number 175

Local Garden Tours

SEE PAGES 4, 8, 10 & 20

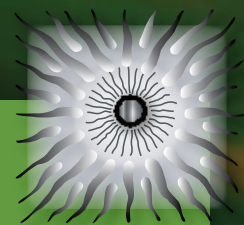
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GARDEN SHOW AWARDS**
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OTHERWISE NORMAL PEOPLE
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TAMING A STEEP SLOPE
PAGES 13 & 14

On the Cover: Pacific Coast Iris



SAN DIEGO
HORTICULTURAL
SOCIETY

MARCH MEETING PHOTOS BY STACEY DORES



Cantua 'Hot Pants'



Grevillea paniculata



Sparaxis tricolor



Grevillea thelemanniana



Spiraea x vanhouttei



Protea cynaroides



Coastal Retreat by Garden Masters Ryan Prange & Zach Swallows, from the Spring Home/Garden Show (see page 5).

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COVER IMAGE: Pacific Coast Iris hybrids are among the showiest accent plants in the native plant garden. They have the longest blooming period of any true iris. They prefer filtered light and cool rich soils.

The San Diego Horticultural Society

MEETINGS

The San Diego Horticultural Society meets the 2nd Monday of every month (except June) from 6:00pm to 9:00pm at the Surfside Race Place, Del Mar Fairgrounds, 2260 Jimmy Durante Blvd. Meetings are open and all are welcome to attend. We encourage you to join the organization to enjoy free admission to regular monthly meetings, receive the monthly newsletter and numerous other benefits. We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

MEETING SCHEDULE

5:00 – 6:00 Meeting room setup
6:00 – 6:45 Vendor sales, opportunity drawing ticket sales, lending library
6:45 – 8:00 Announcements, speaker, drawing for three plants
8:00 – 8:15 Break for vendor sales, opportunity drawing ticket sales, lending library
8:15 – 9:00 Plant forum and opportunity drawing. Vendor sales continue to 9:15.
9:00 – 9:15 Final vendor sales, lending library

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

To join, send your check to: San Diego Horticultural Society, Attn: Membership, P.O. Box 231869, Encinitas, CA 92023-1869. Individual/one year—\$30, two years—\$50, five years—\$120; Family/one year—\$35, two years—\$60, five years—\$140; Group or Business/one year—\$50; Students/\$16 (w/proof of enrollment); Contributing/\$90 or more; Life/\$700. For membership questions contact membership@sdhortsoc.org or Sheldon Lisker at (951) 244-3502.

FUTURE MEETINGS & EVENTS IN 2009

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| May 11 | From Garden to Table: Delicious Tips from the Experts
(members free, non-members \$5) |
| June 8 | The Garden as Companion: A Very Special Evening with internationally celebrated artists and gardeners George Little and David Lewis.
Location: Scottish Rite Event Center, Mission Valley.
Tickets: \$15/members, \$20/non-members. |
| June 12 – July 5 | San Diego County Fair Display Garden |
| July 13 | Perennials, Trees and Shrubs for the Southwest, by Mary Irish
(members free, non-members \$5) |
| August 10 | Special event to honor Steve Brigham as Horticulturist of the Year |

www.sdhortsoc.org

Next Meeting: April 13, 2009, 6:00 – 9:00 PM

Topic: MIKE EVANS ON: “ENGAGEMENT: HOW TO BE A PART OF YOUR NATIVE PLANT GARDEN”

**Meeting is open and everyone is welcome. Admission: Members/free, Non-Members/\$5.
Parking is free. Meeting Place: Del Mar Fairgrounds, Surfside Race Place, Del Mar; Info: (760) 295-7089**

Native plant enthusiast Mike Evans, owner of Tree of Life Nursery, will talk about connecting to nature in your own back yard. California native plant gardens provide much more than just decoration. Since the native plant garden is “sustainable” by design, it functions as a whole rather than as a sum of parts. Everyone who visits the place, especially the people who made it happen, immediately feel they are a part of the whole at a very intimate level. This unique connection often starts with the diverse forms of wildlife that find the garden: birds, butterflies, insects, lizards, frogs, and other species that give us delight. These engaging outdoor experiences make our lives richer. Evans will consider the value of all this for everyone, especially kids, and examine examples and discuss the practical techniques needed to get “nature” to fit into a small garden space.

Evans, a southern California native, established Tree of Life Nursery in 1976. It specializes in California plants and promotes the concept of appropriate landscaping with natives. In 2007, it received the Horticultural Award from the California Native Plant Society and the California Glory Award from the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden. Evans is a past president of the California Society for Ecological Restoration and active in numerous organizations.

To learn more visit www.CaliforniaNativePlants.com and see page 5. 🌿



The Mission of the San Diego Horticultural Society

is to promote the enjoyment, art, knowledge and public awareness of horticulture in the San Diego area, while providing the opportunity for education and research.

ESTABLISHED SEPTEMBER 1994

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Jim Wright – Member at Large

Let's Talk Plants!, the newsletter of the San Diego Horticultural Society, is published the first Monday of every month.

Editor/Advertising: Susi Torre-Bueno; 1941 Vista Grande Dr., Vista, CA 92084; voice (760) 295-7089, fax (760) 295-7119, newsletter@sdhsoc.org

Calendar: Send details by the 10th of the month before event to calendar@sdhsoc.org.

Sponsorship Info: Susi Torre-Bueno (above).

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BECOME A SPONSOR!

Do you own a garden-related business?

SDHS sponsorships have high recognition and valuable benefits, including a link to your website, discounts on memberships for your employees, and free admission to SDHS events. This is a wonderful way to show your support for the SDHS. Sponsors help pay for our free meetings, annual college scholarships, and other important programs. Sponsorships start at just \$100/year; contact info@sdhsoc.org or (760) 295-7089.

Sponsors are listed on page 9; those with ads in the newsletter have the words **SDHS Sponsor** above their ads.

We thank them for their extra support!

Important Member Information

THANKS, SHOW VOLUNTEERS!

The Spring Home/Garden Show had some fabulous display gardens this year, great plants for sale, and, of course, our volunteers were enormously helpful. Many thanks to Paula Verstraete and Shari Matteson for organizing the following folks: Pat Allen, John Gilruth, Mary Ann Glatt, Irina Gronborg, Marilyn Guidroz, Will Johnson, Sue Kelly-Cochrane, Ken Krieger, Jude Mendez, Yvonne Mao, Jane Morton, Patricia Neal, John & Serena Noble, Dale Rekus, Darlene Rogers, Linda Scott, Marcia Van Loy and Darlene Villanueva. Thanks to Shari Matteson (of Buena Creek Gardens) for supplying cut flowers for our membership table. Also, a big hug to our membership co-chairs Susan Morse and Shelly Lisker for their presence throughout the weekend. Bill Teague did his always excellent job organizing the outside plant vendors, very ably aided by Sandy Shapiro.

MISSION SAN LUIS REY EARTH DAY FESTIVAL

A terrific family event is coming up at one of our local National Historic Landmarks in Oceanside. The Mission San Luis Rey Earth Day Festival will be held Sunday, April 26, from 10:00am – 4:00pm. This is an event the whole family will enjoy as well as individuals interested in green workshops, organic gardening lectures, plant sales, the rose garden lady bug release, and much more! Friar James has been nurturing herbs and vegetable starts that will be available for purchase. Susan Morse had a prolific grape tomato crop last year thanks to the tomato plants she bought last year. In addition to the plant sale, there will be a wide variety of booths hosted by non-profit exhibitors and family friendly vendors. Once again, the SDHS will have a booth at the festival and we will again participate in the educational program for children. Last year's event drew over 3000 people. Admission is free; a \$2 donation is requested for parking. For additional information about the festival, check out www.sanluisrey.org. Mission San Luis Rey is at 4050 Mission Avenue, Oceanside, 92057, (760) 757-3651.

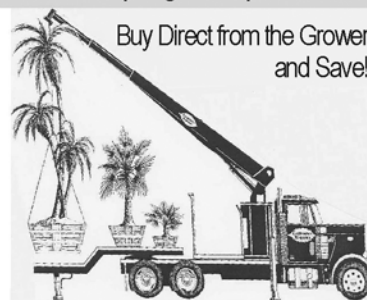
Anyone interested in volunteering at the SDHS booth, please contact Susan Morse, (760) 599-0550 or pfaiff@cox.net. ☺

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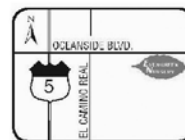
- ♦ Amended Top Soil
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Spring/Summer HOURS
 Monday-Thursday..7:30am-5:00pm
 Friday-Saturday.....7:30am-6:00pm
 Sunday.....9:00am-5:00pm

To Learn More...

PLANTS, WATER AND WILDLIFE

By Ava Torre-Bueno

Mike Evans' talk in April will include the joy of finding that you've invited local wildlife into your garden. For more on what's happening in San Diego County to support and nurture our wildlife, go to the San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy site: <http://www.sdrvc.org/> and the Wildlife Research Institute's site: <http://www.wildlife-research.org/>

A native plant garden is a low-water garden. If you live in the city of San Diego, your water rates will be going up significantly on July 1, 2009 unless you cut your water use dramatically: <http://www.sandiego.gov/water/>

Of course, the place to go locally to learn about water conservation is the Cuyamaca College Water Conservation Garden. The garden is always delightful and they frequently offer classes to help you go native and low-water: <http://www.thegarden.org/>

Member Ava Torre-Bueno is a psychotherapist and organizer of Gardeners 4 Peace, creating a peaceful, organic, permaculture garden (www.sandiegofriendscenter.org/volunteers.htm). ☘

Spring Home/Garden Show Award Winners

*PNA means Perfection in Nomenclature Award

Best of Show: First Place, Best Home Landscape, PNA*

Lush and Water Smart by Dave and Sue Ericson, Secret Gardens Landscape

Best of Show: Second Place, Best Water Feature, PNA*

The Terraced Garden by Darcy Brandon, Bella Terra Design, Inc. Landscape Architecture

Best of Show: Third Place, Judges' Choice, Most Creative Use of Space, Best Use of Hardscape, PNA*

Coastal Retreat by Ryan Prange & Zach Swallows, Falling Waters Landscape, Inc.

Massachusetts Horticultural Society Medal for Design Excellence

Our Italy by Brandon Bullard, Desert Theater and Nick Martin, Nick Martin Landscape Architect, Inc.

San Diego Water Authority Water Smart Award, PNA*

Cultivating the Spirit by Mary Jo Martin, MJ Martin Landscape Designer

Pacific Horticulture Award for Horticultural Excellence

Latitude 33 by Bret Belyea, Bradley Landscape

Most Educational

Water Lights by Glen Schmidt, Schmidt Design Group, Inc.

Most Dramatic, PNA*

Eco-African Dream by Naomi Stein & Brad Gore, Eco-Greenscape, division of M&W Landscaping, Inc.

Most Appealing to Children

Delicious by Bill Tall, City Farmers Nursery

Best Specialty Garden

Courtyard Garden Contained by Tita Heimpel, Courtyard Pottery

Best Interpretation of Theme, PNA*

Beyond the Ordinary – Phytoremediation by Linda Fox and Emma Almandrez, Glorious Gardens

Best Compatibility of Plant Materials

Succulents: Captive vs. Free Range by Jeff Moore, Solana Succulents

Best Combinations of Plant Materials

Mediterranean Environment by Sergio Regalado, PLANTPLAY NURSERY

Best San Diego Adapted Garden

Creative Conservation by Scott Ensign, Scotty's Plantscapes

Best Intimate Garden

Alfresco by Shellene Mueller, Designs by Shellene

Best Art Feature

Desierto Moderno by Morgan Vondrak, Argia Design

Best Interpretive Signage

Native Fun and Folly by Greg Rubin, California's Own Native Landscape Design

Best Garden Composition, PNA*

California Zen – Recycling Redefined! by Roxanne Kim-Perez, Forget-Me-Not Landscape Design

Award of Merit

(also awarded to the gardens above)

Keep It Simple by Jonathan Bosch, Suncoast Natural Waterscapes

Saturday Afternoon by Earl Parker, Park Care

Xer-escape! by Erik Davidson, Davidson Landscape

Cool Green by Calvin Brier, Advanced Waterscape, Inc.

From The Board

By Susi Torre-Bueno

NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION

If you've recently joined SDHS we'd love you to attend a friendly New Member Orientation in Mission Hills on Sunday, April 5 from 10am to noon. This informal get-together will be at the gorgeous garden of Jim Borden and Scott Bishop, which was featured in *San Diego Home/Garden Lifestyles* magazine. Our membership co-Chair, Susan Morse, notes that we hold these gatherings every few months, "to help new members have some people they know and recognize when they attend the meetings." She adds that, "at this casual event you'll meet some of our board members and some of our long-time members. It'll be a fun couple of hours in a lovely garden and a fine way for you to find out more about what we do and what plans we have for future events." If you gave us your e-mail address when you joined you should have gotten an invitation last month. **If you want to attend and haven't sent an RSVP yet, please phone Susan by April 1st at (760) 599-0550.**

TREE BOOK ON SALE

To encourage all of our members to own at least one copy of the new edition of our book, *Ornamental Trees for Mediterranean Climates*, and to celebrate Arbor Day, we've decided to offer the book at a great price. You may purchase this beautiful hardcover book, which has over 600 color photos and full descriptions of 260 trees found in San Diego, at the bargain price of just \$20 at the April and May monthly meetings! The regular retail price is \$34.95 (plus tax).

Stock up on this new edition – get one for yourself, one for your local library, one for that friend who has been so generous in swapping cuttings with you! **To take advantage of the \$20 sale price (which includes tax!) you'll need to buy the book at the April or May meeting.** Pay with cash, checks or credit cards; having a check made out to SDHS (or exact change) will speed up the process. ☘



**Saturday
April 25
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

**Cuyamaca
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**900 Rancho San
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El Cajon**

- ❖ *Plant Sale*
- ❖ *Expert Design Advice*
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- ❖ *Children's Activities*
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Successful Drought Tolerant Gardening

Edited by Cindy Sparks

Initial Planning: Identifying Your Needs and Requirements, Setting Your Water Use Goal

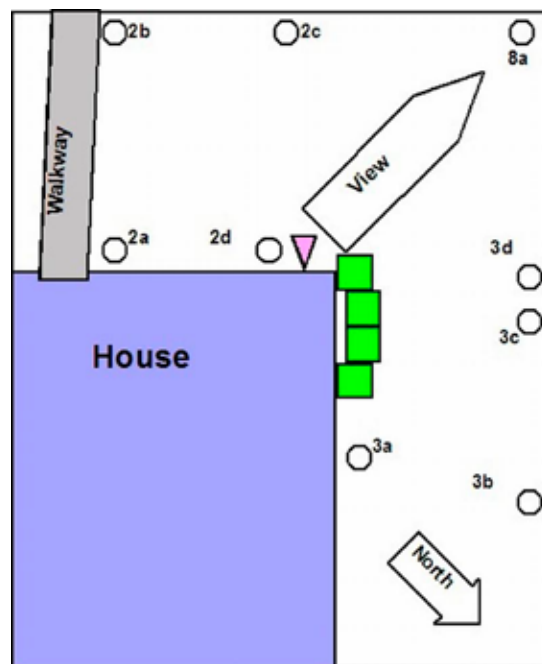
By now you understand where your outdoor water is going and have chosen an area of the yard to reduce water use. It's time to pick a new water use goal. Let's say you have chosen to clear one area and replace it with a landscape that needs water twice a month, or 2" of water per month times your area square footage. I'll use my garden as an example as we cover the **requirements**. Think of this as identifying your needs and wants, the things you want your garden to provide. Your personal needs may be different from mine.

To begin, make a **scale-drawing** of your area. Include sprinkler lines and heads, hose bibs, hardscape, and indicate view, traffic, sun and wind patterns. I've chosen an L-shaped area (see figure) to remove an old weedy lawn and create a nearly-zero-maintenance planting. My **water use goal is 0.5 HCF** (hundred cubic feet) monthly for the entire 560 sq ft. of landscaped area. Half this area will be covered with hardscape, so I'm only watering the 280 square feet that has plants twice a month, with one inch of water each time, or 280 times 2" divided by 12 (to convert inches to feet) = 46.7 cubic feet per month. I'll round this to 50 cu ft or 0.5 HCF.

Set goals for effort, time and dollars. You'll measure your plan against these targets, so be thoughtful in your choices. Installation Effort (one 64-year-old woman augmented sparingly with hired help). Maintenance (1 hour/month once plantings are established). Time (finished in 3 months). Budget (\$500).

Consider the "Givens": **Style** (Our hillside '50's frame house has concrete paths and concrete/block retaining walls; I want to maintain that 50's look). Maintain the ocean **view**. **Prevailing wind** is not a concern (blocked by the McMansion next door). **Thermal/Shading**: Incessant beach fog obviates need for house shading. **Soil type**: sandy loam fill (perfect drainage).

Consider **family needs, traffic patterns, drainage**, etc. to establish functional requirements. (I want a simple lounging area, plus shade at my option. That area takes about half the roof drainage during rains. Gravel pathways and elevation changes can slow and direct runoff – to water the veggie garden - and



facilitate drainage. I like the crunching sound gravel makes when walked on and it's compatible with my style and budget.)

Create **hydrazones** based on existing (or new) sprinkler circuits. (My area includes sprinkler circuits #2/shade, #3/mixed sun, and #8/full sun. Circuit #2 will be removed as the area will be reserved for a swing; circuit #3 will continue as drip irrigation; circuit #8 with one modern rotator will irrigate low water plants.) Remember: don't split sprinkler zones across hydrazone boundaries. In other words, all plants in the same hydrazone should need the same amount of water.

Personal preferences: I want a bird-friendly environment with a water feature (a pocket birdbath with drip), and a wildland connection (I don't plant invasives because I live near the Point Loma preserves). Turf is not compatible with my zero-maintenance goal, so I have removed the old turf.

Now you have created a scale drawing that reflects your needs/requirements and you have identified your water use goal.

Next in the series: Gather Good Ideas and Examples.

Series editor Cindy Sparks is a member of the SDHS board and also an enthusiastic Master Gardener. 🌿

Plants That Produce

BOY, DO I LOVE TOMATOES!

By Richard Frost

Every spring I tell myself that I grew too many tomato plants last year and not to start so many. This is about the time that some of my well-meaning friends bring me starts of a new or old-fashioned variety that they obtained from an acquaintance. And it is about this time that I realize it's going to be more out of control this year than ever.



Now, in an effort to keep the number of plants to a minimum, I have tried to grow just one of each variety. For example, consider the "purple" tomatoes. I just have to grow Cherokee Purple every year and I would choose it if I absolutely had to grow just one tomato plant. If you feed this variety a potassium-based fertilizer it will produce an abundance of rich tasting tomatoes that go well with everything. But then, of course, my neighbor shows up with an extra Prudence's Purple plant and, well, I guess I have room for it. To make matters worse, someone has hybridized a black cherry tomato, and, well ...

O.K., I didn't control myself very well in that category, so maybe I can do better with cherry tomatoes. Oh wait, that's not going to work because I always grow the Sun Gold (not Sun Sugar) and I've already got the black cherry planted. So I guess it wouldn't hurt if I just fill in a small adjacent area with a Green Grape. This variety is great for snacking on – about 1.25 inch wide and 2 inches tall that is mostly green with a yellow hue at the bottom when it is ripe. It won't be too much because I grow it every year anyway ...

Fine. I'm certain I can get a grip in the "fruity" tasting category. There's only one worth growing – Hillbilly. So I open up my tomato seed catalog and find that a diabolical tomato breeding fiend has come up with Virginia Sweets – supposedly a larger, sweeter, fruitier version of the Hillbilly. We'll see about that!

Now I almost forgot about the great tasting fruity yellow tomatoes like Azoychka and Lemon Boy, and the fruity orange Persimmon and Kellogg's Breakfast varieties. Hah! I'll just put them in their own color categories! If I use that logic, then I'm only growing one fruity (Hillbilly), one yellow (Azoychka), and one orange (Persimmon). By the way, the Persimmon tomato has the nickname lil' Pumpkin because about 1 out of 10 fruits grows to an enormous 3 to 5 pounds.

My wife really likes to cook with tomatoes and some of those recipes need what I call a "classic red." Further, they should be round and just "pop" out of their skins when you blanch them for canning. Both the Celebrity and the Burpee Better Boy are great for this. Now if you want an heirloom, choose the Burpee Better Boy because it fits the legal definition: (a) expired patent and (b) reproduces true from seed.

Speaking of heirlooms, I've got to grow a "Brandywine" variety. If you've read *The \$64 Tomato* by William Alexander you know exactly what I'm talking about. So, whether the Suddith Strain is actually better than the standard red Brandywine is something you'll have to taste for yourself. I was just going to grow the Suddith this year, but I got a sample seed packet of the yellow Platfoot Brandywine ...

SDHS member Richard Frost is a certified edible gardening nut. For copies of past articles and more information, please see www.plantsthatproduce.com. 🌱

Garden Gourmet

TEMPERATE SUNDAY SUPPER

By Alice Lowe

Late on a recent Sunday afternoon, with the urge to putter in the kitchen although it was too early to start dinner, I thought about food that is enhanced by being served at room temperature. The word "temperate" comes to mind – moderate, clement, pleasant – not to be confused with "tepid" – indifferent, apathetic, lackadaisical – and bringing to mind a lukewarm bowl of soup.

I would be pan-frying a luscious piece of fresh local halibut, so first I mixed up a marinade of blood orange, which I'd gotten at the Farmers Market that morning, with splashes of sherry and soy sauce, a dash of Sriracha hot sauce (or Tabasco) and a little peanut oil. You don't want to marinate delicate fish too long – 30 minutes to an hour is plenty.

I decided on a few veggie sides that I could prepare now and let them sit a while before putting the fish on. The reigning royalty would be fresh spring asparagus. It's wonderful right out of the pan or off the grill and delicious chilled, but I prefer to steam it and then let it sit at room temp in a light dressing of olive oil and lemon, salt and pepper, gently turning it a time or two. I often do the same thing with broccoli crowns and green beans.

I'm partial to warm potato salad, so that was my next selection from the larder. I boiled up wedges of small red potatoes. I tossed the pieces with ground sea salt and black pepper while they cooled, and whisked up an aioli of sorts, starting with crushed garlic, lemon juice, Dijon mustard and mayonnaise (just a little), to which I added curry powder to taste, and then left it to sit while the flavors blended. I also chopped and set aside a couple of green onions. If I hadn't wanted potatoes, I might have cooked some egg noodles or other wide pasta for the same treatment, tossing them in a little olive oil to keep the noodles from sticking while they cooled.

Lots of carrots from the last CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) delivery – wouldn't gingered carrots be lovely and tasty with the curry-flavored potatoes? I steamed them and then stirred some crushed ginger into a little of the blood orange marinade, tossed it with the carrot slices and added a little fresh dill for color and flavor.

After a well-deserved rest, getting dinner on the table was a snap. I did the fish in peanut oil and ground lots of black pepper on top when I flipped it over. The marinade added just enough zing to the fresh, flaky fish. I tossed the potatoes with the green onions and the aioli, keeping a little aside, which I drizzled over the potatoes and the asparagus, with more ground black pepper. The carrots had absorbed their orange ginger dressing and provided beautiful color on the plate.

Room temperature vegetable dishes are also perfect when entertaining so that you're not held captive in the kitchen when your guests arrive, also for potlucks and picnics.

Member Alice Lowe loves to read, garden, cook and eat, not necessarily in that order. 🌱

LAKE HODGES NATIVE PLANT CLUB GARDEN TOUR

By Linda Bresler, Garden Tour Chair

This year's Spring Garden Tour sponsored by the Lake Hodges Native Plant Club will be held on Friday, April 24 from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. Since water rationing seems likely by summer, the theme of the tour is drought-tolerant gardening, California-friendly plants. Tour five gardens in the Poway and Rancho Bernardo area, all featuring water-wise, low-maintenance plantings. Other outstanding features include hiking trails with fantastic views, sculptures, and two koi ponds. Proceeds will go to the improvement and maintenance of the Nativescapes garden at the Wild Animal Park. Free refreshments will be served at one garden, and vendors will sell plants and garden-related items.

Tickets are \$15 and will be sold at Walter Anderson Nursery, 12755 Danielson Ct. in Poway before the garden tour, and at the Escondido Historical Society Office, 321 N. Broadway, in Grape Day Park, Monday to Friday between 8:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M. Also, tickets can be purchased at the Vons Supermarket in the Rancho Bernardo Plaza Center on Bernardo Center Drive the Saturday before the tour (April 18th) from 10:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M., or the morning of the tour (Friday, April 24th) between 9:00 and 11:00 A.M. Tickets may also be purchased by mail. Send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: Donna Zimmer, 1428 Via Valente, Escondido, CA 92029. Make checks payable to: Lake Hodges Native Plant Club. The Lake Hodges Native Plant Club website www.LHNPC.org has information and photos of the gardens. For further information, please contact Linda Bresler at (858) 486-8733.

The Lake Hodges Native Plant Club was founded over twenty years ago to promote the knowledge and use of plants native to the San Diego area. Its major project has been the installation, enhancement and maintenance of the Nativescapes garden at the Wild Animal Park.

Photo by David Barto



MOTHER'S DAY WEEKEND ARTIST STUDIO AND GARDEN TOUR

The San Dieguito Art Guild is offering their annual Mother's Day Weekend Artist Studio and Garden Tour in the Encinitas coastal area on Saturday and Sunday, May 9th and 10th from 10:00am to 4:00pm. The theme this year is "Coastal Treasures," and it will feature eight Guild members' homes, gardens and art studios. You may visit the homes either or both days and the Off Track Gallery will open at 8:30am for early ticket sales. This tour is unique because of the number and variety of art and artists at each location. It is a lovely way to spend a day with mom.

Tickets are \$20.00 (age 17 and under free with mom). Tickets will be available at the Off Track Gallery in Encinitas or on-line at www.OffTrackGallery.com starting April 1. Each home will feature several artists and offer refreshments. All of the art will be for sale directly from the artist to you, including paintings, prints, ceramics, sculpture, glass, textiles and jewelry. Each item for sale is made by hand by a local artist. A portion of the proceeds from this tour will be donated to a local school's art department.



Continued on page 20

Welcome New Members!

We now have over 1300 members! Hope to see all of you at upcoming meetings. We encourage you to become active participants and share in the fun; to volunteer see page 4. A warm hello to the following folks who have joined recently:

Kimberly Alexander	Chana Mannen
Alta Vista Gardens	Margaret Matlack
Zephyr & Judy Carlyle	May McGrath
Agnieszka Cerra	Kate Miller
Jim Conner	Sue Olin
Marcus Contardo	Ruth Ann Parker
Eileen Druber	Santiago Rosales & John
Jeni-Rae Faggioni	Ramirez
Helena Gillmore	Kathleen Rubenson
Healing Time Books	Tabatha Tovar
Britla Kuhlow	Urban Plantations, Karen
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San Diego Epiphyllum Society (PAGE 18)

The Beauty of Irises (PAGE 22)

The Flower Fields (PAGE 16)

HORT BUCKS ARE GREAT!

Kudos to the members below who brought in new members and therefore received Hort Bucks worth \$5 towards raffle tickets, name-tags, *Plant Forum* CDs or dues. To get **your** Hort Bucks just ask your friends to give your name when they join. The number after the person's name indicates how many members they recruited in 2009:

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What's Up at Quail Botanical Gardens?

SUSTAINABILITY

The buzz word of late is sustainability, and with good reason. As our resources diminish, especially water, we must learn to use only what we need and reduce waste as much as possible. In an effort to help you do that, Quail Botanical Gardens is offering two classes in April.

"Creating a Sustainable Urban Landscape" is a four-session class taught by Steve Jacobs and Chris Herman of Nature Design Landscaping. Steve is an expert in irrigation. On the first night (see date and time below) he will discuss the latest in irrigation, California water legislation, and water wise strategies for your landscape. On subsequent evenings, Chris will address the major considerations when developing a sustainable landscape, including site design, plant selection, use of non-toxic insect and disease control, and reducing the need for excessive amounts of fertilizer, pesticides, and water. She will also touch upon backyard wildlife habitats and maintenance. On Saturday, the group will walk through Quail Botanical Gardens to see many examples of sustainable landscaping.

In another class, you will discover how to grow plants with virtually no waste of resources. "Build a Sustainable Organic Grow Box Using Hydroponic Wick Method," taught by Alex and Lacy Kallas, of the Ag PALS/Homestead Hydroponics, first teaches you the principles of applying hydroponics as a sustainable agriculture and landscape method. You will then build your own grow box planted with leafy greens and herbs to take it home.

Here are the details:

Sustainable Urban Landscaping

Thursdays, April 9, 16, 23, 7 – 9 pm

Saturday, April 25, 9 am – 12 noon

Cost: Members \$80, non-members \$100

Build a Sustainable Grow Box Using Hydroponic Wick Method

Tuesday, April 14, 7 – 9 pm

Saturday, April 18, 10 am – 12 noon

Cost: Members \$80, non-members \$100
(includes all materials)

Pre-registration is required for both classes. Call (760) 436-3036 x206 or visit www.qbgardens.org.

Please note: last month's article, *Bay Laurel: the Myth behind the Magic*, was written by Sally Sandler.

New E-Mail? New Street Address?

Please send all changes (so you will continue to receive the newsletter and important notices) to membership@sdhortsoc.org or SDHS, Attn: Membership, PO Box 231869, Encinitas, CA 92023-1869.

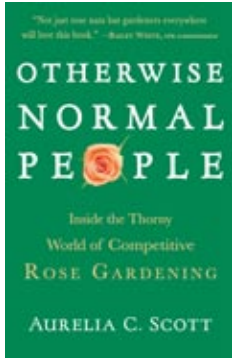
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Book Review

OTHERWISE NORMAL PEOPLE: INSIDE THE THORNY WORLD OF COMPETITIVE ROSE GARDENING

By Aurelia C. Scott

Reviewed by Caroline McCullagh



At one time I lived and gardened in Bowling Green, Ohio. At least I called it gardening. Basically, I just put seeds in the ground and got out of the way. It rained about once a week, so I never had to water. The weeds didn't seem to grow, and insects didn't seem to notice what I'd planted. I thought I was hot stuff until I contemplated planting a rose. After reading what you have to do to get a rose through an Ohio winter, I knew it wasn't for me.

Reading *Otherwise Normal People* has let me meet the people that I missed out on by not planting that rose—and an interesting group they are, too.

Aurelia Scott grows roses in Maine; a challenge for anyone, but she has never grown roses for competition and admits that she didn't understand what made rosarians competitive. We learn with her when she interviews some of the top growers as they prepare for the American Rose Society National Competition at the Town and Country Hotel in San Diego in 2004. She follows a dozen or more people, and as in much of life, although they are all working to reach the same goal, winning prizes for the best roses, they have many more that a dozen ways of trying to achieve that goal.

Scott is a first rate observer and writer. You're right there with her as she walks up someone's driveway for the first time, or sees their trophy room, or watches them don a hazmat suit in the very early morning so they can get their spraying done before the neighbors get up.

It's possible and even likely that she met some people she found uncongenial, but she never lets the reader know. All the people are interesting, if a little odd. They're us, just to a slightly higher degree. Although I'll never be that kind of competitive, I understand now why these people would get up at 3 a.m. to prep their roses for 10 a.m. judging, the last stage in a long process.

They may have as many as a thousand rose plants in their gardens. They start months in advance: spraying, pruning, feeding, and even threatening their plants to achieve peak performance. They cut roses as much as two weeks in advance of a show and try to keep them in top condition in their rose refrigerators. They despair if the weather turns bad before they can get all the good ones cut. But they persevere. If they win, they're triumphant. If they lose, they start planning for next year.

I like books about gardeners. I've reviewed several before, and like those, I give this a high recommendation. You'll read. You'll laugh. You'll have a good time.

Otherwise Normal People is hardbound and 235 pages. It includes a list of rose classifications, a glossary of rose classes, a separate glossary of rose terms, and a list of recommended further reading. It's \$22.95 at your local book dealer. 🌹

Community Outreach

ATTEND GARDEN EVENTS FOR THESE WORTHY CAUSES

By Linda Johnson

Morning Glory Jazz Brunch Saturday, April 18, 9:30 am-2 pm

Join the fun at the beautiful Organic Gardens at St. Madeleine Sophie's Center in El Cajon. Attend this 11th annual event, and enjoy the wonderful bounty of the certified organic gardens, while supporting an important fundraiser and vital community resource that works to empower adults with developmental disabilities. The Center's two-acre garden site includes: greenhouse, propagation house, worm farm, citrus orchard, ornamental trees, vegetable gardens, shrubs, herbs and a variety of seasonal flowers. Enjoy this lovely setting and a delicious champagne brunch while listening to jazz, plant shopping...and watching the Frog Race! Hurry and register for this popular event, and also buy a Frog for the Frog Race Fundraiser.

Tickets are \$50 (\$60 after 4/6/09) for the brunch, and \$100 for a Frog, with a chance to win \$10,000!! Contact: Nora Boswell at sboswell@stmsc.org or 619-442-5129 x3117. Register at: <https://app.etapestry.com/hosted/StMadeleineSophiesCenter/Registration.html>.



St. Madeleine Sophie's Center Garden. CRC Plant Sale at Ecke Ranch.

North County Garden Tour and Plant Sale Saturday, April 18, 9am-4pm

This annual charity event benefits the Community Resource Center (CRC) in Encinitas. All proceeds from this popular tour and sale benefit programs for abused women and children, and support housing assistance for families in need. The tour includes five residential garden stops, and exclusive admission to Ecke Ranch to purchase an incredible selection of blooming "Pack Trial Spring Plants" at below-market prices. Gardens stops include: the award-winning Norby home in Carlsbad (shown on our December 2008 newsletter cover) featuring California native plants; a tropical design by Dave & Sue Ericson in Del Mar; an English garden in Rancho Santa Fe; a drought-tolerant southwest garden in Encinitas; and another Del Mar location by the sea.

Tickets are \$25, and available at <https://www.merchantamerica.com/crcncc/echopay> or by phone at (760) 230-6305. Tickets will also be available at Weidners' Gardens through the day of the event (while they last). Garden Docents are also needed to assist, and will receive a complimentary passport to visit the gardens and access to the exclusive Ecke Ranch Plant Sale. Contact: Suzie Colby, CRC, at scolby@crcncc.org or (760) 230-6305. 🌹

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The Real Dirt On...

GEORGE LEDYARD STEBBINS

By Joan Herskowitz



George Ledyard Stebbins (1906-2000) was a botanist and geneticist who is widely acclaimed as one of the leading evolutionary botanists of the 20th Century. His most important publication, *Variation and Evolution in Plants*, describes the process of plant speciation using Darwin's theory of natural selection and modern genetics. The book forms the core of what is termed the modern evolutionary synthesis that brings the disparate fields of ecology, genetics, systematics, and biogeography to bear on our understanding of plant evolution.

Stebbins was born in Lawrence, New York and for health reasons the family moved to Santa Barbara in 1914. After receiving a Ph.D. in botany at Harvard University, Stebbins took a genetics research position at UC Berkeley. There he worked with E. B. Babcock in characterizing the genetics, species formation, and evolutionary processes of plants in the genus *Crepis* (commonly known as hawksbeards). From their observations, they demonstrated that polyploid types (i.e., plants with more than the normal two sets of chromosomes) had a wider distribution and greater potential to exploit varied environments due to their inheritance of all traits from both parents.

In 1950, Stebbins took an appointment at U. C. Davis, where he was a key figure in the development of the Department of Genetics and where he worked until his retirement. At Davis, the focus of his studies included newer areas of research, such as developmental morphology and genetics in crop plants, although he continued to publish on plant evolution. Stebbins wrote on the importance of hybridization in producing the high degree of genetic variability necessary for major evolutionary advances and the adaptation of plants to new environments.

Stebbins is also remembered for his major influence on the development and growth of the California Native Plant Society (CNPS). Much of our knowledge of California's rare plants began with efforts initiated by him. He was the president of CNPS from 1966 to 1972, and the founder of its Rare Plant Program that maintains and publishes the CNPS *Inventory of Rare and Endangered Vascular Plants of California*, a document relied on by state and federal agencies, decision makers, and the public (<http://cnps.web.aplus.net/cgi-bin/inv/inventory.cgi>).

He contributed numerous articles to the CNPS journal, *Fremontia*, and other publications, and continued to lecture, mentor students, write books, and lead walks in the Sierra Nevada, into his later years. Stebbins was one of the authors of a beautiful and informative book on California native plants entitled *California's Wild Gardens: A Living Legacy*, published by the CNPS for the California Department of Fish and Game. He received many awards for his work, and in 1980, the UC Regents named a 577-acre parcel protected for research the Stebbins Cold Canyon Reserve, in his honor. He died in 2000 at the age of 94.

Member Joan Herskowitz worked as a Biologist for many years, including time spent on staff at the County of San Diego Department of Planning and Land Use. Now retired, she volunteers for the San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy and at Quail Botanic Gardens, and is Co-Chair of the Conservation Committee of the Buena Vista Audubon Society. ☘

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Taming a Steep Slope

By Roxanne Kim-Perez

A steep slope can be a challenge for some homeowners, but as a landscape designer I love to work with elevation. If you don't tackle hillside landscaping you will have erosion problems, especially in the rainy season. However, if you tackle a steep slope as a DIY project you can end up with time and money wasted, so, before you begin, plan and do your homework first.

For steep hill landscaping you will need to put in a retaining wall to keep the hill solid and to be able to retain rainfall and avoid erosion. The slope can be beautiful and interesting if you plan carefully, and it can also add value to your property. These are some options and tips for landscaping a steep slope:

- Build a terraced hill.
- Make retaining walls.
- Build planters.
- Plant erosion controlling plants and mix with native plants.
- Make sure the top of the wall will be higher than the soil level behind it to prevent mud and any liability in case of a landslide.
- Have a curved pathway or paved steps going up the steep hill for access.
- Plant big trees downward of the slope to prevent erosion.



Here are some great groundcover plants that prevent erosion and beautify a sloping hillside:

- *Ceanothus griseus horizontalis*, Carmel Creeper
- *Cotoneaster dammeri*, Bearberry Cotoneaster
- *Baccharis pilularis* 'Pigeon Point', Coyote Bush
- *Artemisia californica* 'Canyon Gray', Canyon Gray Sagebrush
- *Carissa macrocarpa* 'Prostrata', Ground Cover Natal Plum (also fire resistant)
- *Ceratostigma plumbaginoides*, Dwarf Plumbago (also as lawn substitute)
- *Lantana montevidensis* 'Lavender Swirl'™, Lavender Swirl™ Lantana (lawn substitute, fire resistant)
- *Rosmarinus officinalis* 'Prostratus', Prostrate Rosemary (fire resistant)
- *Arctostaphylos* 'Emerald Carpet', Manzanita Emerald Carpet (lawn substitute)
- *Pyracantha* 'Santa Cruz', Santa Cruz Firethorn

Member Roxanne "Roxy" Kim-Perez is a professional landscape designer providing landscape design service in and around San Diego. Her landscape design firm Forget-Me-Not Landscape Design (<http://www.forget-me-notlandscapedesign.com>) specializes in Xeriscape and Modern Zen Garden residential landscape designs with emphasis on energy efficient, low maintenance and comfortable designs for Southern California home owners. She was one of the award-winning Garden Masters at the recent Spring Home/Garden Show. 🌿

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Dealing With Steep Slopes

By Pamela Homfelt

Resist the natural instinct to tame the slope by terracing. It is extremely expensive and unattractive. The end result, narrow, flat strips for planting, is rather nonfunctional and unless more money is spent on steps it is usually difficult to access.

If you are installing a new irrigation system make sure the heads face up the hill so the water is thrown up and slowly seeps down the hill. I always recommend putting a line of heads in the middle of the slope, on a separate valve, and another at the bottom. This way the dry top half of the slope can be watered more often if necessary. Plant the most low water use plants at top, again as it is the driest part of the slope. Obviously, more water loving plants can be used at the bottom of the slope.

Small multi-trunked trees or large shrubs create an accent in the middle of the slope. **Heteromeles**, *Acacia baileyana*, and *Melaleuca nesophila* are a few perfect choices.

In nature, rocks hold water around the roots of the plants. Dry rock walls, retaining blocks, or a few well placed boulders forming "moats" will create a natural feeling and work the same as in nature. Succulents, agaves and cactus are fantastic accents around the rocks.

Meandering steps zigzagging up the slope can be created with railroad ties, retaining blocks, or interlocking pavers.

Member Pamela Homfelt has been designing low water use residential landscapes and gardens since the early nineties. Pamela's new partner and husband, a licensed landscape architect, form a unique partnership. They work as designer or project manager for three low water use demonstration gardens which are the highlights of Pamela's and Randy's new endeavor, pH Exterior Design, phdesign@cox.net.

SHARING SECRETS

This column is written by you, our members! Each month we'll ask a question, and print your responses the following month.

The question for this month was:

How do you deal with a steep slope? (Thanks to So. Cal Hort. (www.socalhort.org) for this suggestion.)

Lisa Bellora (Ornamental Gardens by Lisa) has some great places to research good plants for slopes: "If I am planting a steep slope, I begin by looking at the *Sunset Western Garden Handbook* (pre-2007), which has a list of plants for hillsides. In the list it indicates which plants actually control erosion, and I usually use these for my clients. I try and pick a few different plants with varying heights for interest. I also make sure that the plants are firewise; there is a listing of acceptable plants on the internet (updated June of 2006) for San Diego County. The firewise list has the botanical names of plants, their common names, and climate zones (coast, inland, mountains, desert). I also usually bring in compost to help the plants get established as well as reducing water needs."

Linda Bresler says, "I inherited a steep slope covered only in iceplant from the previous owner. Because iceplant doesn't hold soil on the slopes well, I planted different shrubs among the iceplant. These shrubs bloom at different times of the year, and now there is always some color on my slopes year 'round. I used low-growing

Rockrose, trailing Lantana, *Bauhinia galpinii* (Red Bauhinia), *Caesalpinia gilliesii* (Yellow Bird of Paradise), *Caesalpinia mexicana* (Mexican Bird of Paradise), and *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* (Bearberry)."

Borris H. Brinkman explains how to make use of a slope: "I side-step the slope with railroad ties anchored with 2' long iron pipes. On the level sections of each step I plant my tomatoes, or grapevines, or avocado trees. When watering by overhead sprinklers the water does not run downhill because all of the ground is level."

Barbara P. Clark shares some great advice: "Since I live in a townhouse, except for containers on the porches my only garden area is on a steep slope in back of our house. Technically the area is 'Linda Vista sediment' composed of lots of medium size round rocks, little soil, and on a slope of 45 degrees. Adding to the difficulty was the presence of a family of raccoons, who loved to dig for grubs around anything that was growing. I tried everything to get rid of them. Everything I tried failed, but what started out as an experiment became a solution. I enlarge the holes in the bottom of various types and sizes of plastic and wood containers. Next, I stick a rebar through one of the container's holes, long enough to stick out about 6 to 8 inches from the bottom and to be even with the top of the container when it is pounded into the soil. I plant the container in my normal method with prepared soil and a plant selected for the sun and shade exposure. Taking a hammer along, I hoist the container, along with the rebar sticking out the bottom, up the bank to the planting area. I pound the rebar into the soil on the high side of the slope. This anchors the container to the bank. Many times I hit a rock and have to reposition the container slightly, but usually I can find a spot where the rebar will hold. If not, I pound two shorter rebars in front of the container. Then I put various plants in-between the containers or at the front edge inside the container. These grow up and over the edges and fronts of the containers, camouflaging them. Eventually, the plant's roots grow through the holes in the bottom, further anchoring them to the bank. This spring the area is almost fully covered with foliage and flowers, and the view from our upstairs window is beautiful. Because the planted pots are of different sizes and heights, I think the raccoons just find it too difficult to dig. No more raccoons!"

Steve Jacobs (Nature Designs) tells us, "I like to plant sprawling plants such as Prostrate Rosemary or Bougainvillea and irrigate them with a drip system to provide deep watering with no runoff."

Will Johnson (SECO Landscapes), says: "To deal with a steep slope try three things: Shade the soil: Coarse mulch available from Miramar (\$3.00/cubic yard) applied to the surface protects the top layer of dirt from the impact of rain and watering, helps end erosion. Proper irrigation: Keep the plantings alive by using Low-flow MP Rotator sprinklers, and Cycle/soak: apply water slowly enough to soak in and runoff is eliminated. Shrub it up: Creative, interesting, beautiful plantings transform an ugly eyesore into a beautiful panorama.."

Sharon May sees possibilities in slopes: "Steep slopes are wonderful opportunities! They can be looked at in two ways, as a Canvas, with massed color and texture designed to be viewed from a distance, or as an Experience, using a pathway to draw a person and/or their eyes, up the slope. The pathway should cross the hillside with turns at the edges, much like a beginning skier's path across a steep slope, to allow comfortable and safe access. Access is required for maintenance, if not for the experience of climbing to the top or the benches along the way. An important aspect of establishing growth on the hillside is mulching. Mulch will blunt the impact force of rain or irrigation, the primary culprit in breaking the soil particles in erosion. Mulch will then allow the water to trickle into the soil and reach the

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Sharing Secrets Continued from page 15

roots, making the best use of your irrigation water. Organic mulch will also feed the beneficial mycorrhizae soil fungi which hold the soil in place, minimizing erosion in the future."

M. J. Ross advises, "To prevent slipping, wear a pair of cleats!"

Cindy Sparks says, "For starters I had a man come to add small (3 foot high, requires no permit) retaining walls to terrace the slope into levels as the Italians do. I had old block walls on the other side of the lot using 4" block, so since they no longer make those he had to cut 8" blocks in two. But the new walls match the old, and look nice. Then I added some fill of perfect soil mix and I'm doing veggies in one of the areas, and natives in another, plus some stepping stone paths. And the bottom area which gets all the "trickle down" has existing roses (which love the water). Also, I put a gravel base in the corner up against the house on the bottom level. I previously had a chronic wet area there, but re-routing the downspout off the house took care of part of that while the plants on the terracing took care of another part, using some of that water for plant growth. Adding gravel means that even if it's wet it isn't muddy any more. I am pretty happy with the results. My advice is to keep trying designs in your head until you find a combination which does what you need. And don't be afraid to change the contour."

Patti Vickery uses a combination of plants and mulch: "I planted Pride of Madeira at the top of the hill behind my garden several years ago with other drought tolerant plants. They have spread their seeds down the hill and grown many new plants. The rest of the hill is covered with a thick layer of mulch from the Miramar Landfill, which is free to San Diego residents."

The question for next month is: Tell us about your pruning shears – what brand do you like, how do you keep them sharp, any tips you'd like to share? Send your e-mail reply by April 5 to info@sdshortsoc.org.

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- April 18
- **Canon Photo Workshop**
- April 19
- **Arts & Crafts Fair**
- April 18 & 19
- **Orchid Sale**
- April 24 - 26
- **Bonsai Show and Sale**
- May 9 - 10
- **Mother's Day Celebration**
- May 10

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March Plant Forum

By Steve Brigham, Sue Fouquette, Mo Price and
Susi Torre-Bueno

What is the Plant Forum?

Each month members bring in plants, cuttings or flowers and one of our horticulturists talks about them. What a great way to learn how these plants perform. All plants are welcome – EVERYONE is invited to participate. We encourage you to write descriptions similar to those below, and put them with the plant on the Plant Forum tables. Any questions, call Susi at (760) 295-7089.

Grevillea paniculata (Proteaceae) Australia

This pretty *Grevillea*, native to western Australia, has fine, needle-like prickly foliage that adds an interesting texture to the garden. Flowers bloom for a long period in late winter and spring, and the shrub bears sprays of fine white flowers which attract birds. A fast-growing plant that reaches 4' high by 6-8' wide, it can be pruned to maintain a smaller size. This plant prefers full sun, is drought- and frost-tolerant. Take care when planting, as this species is not well suited to locations near walkways, as they can scratch you. (Mo Price, Encinitas, 3/09) – M.P.

Lachenalia carnosa (Hyacinthaceae) South Africa

For carefree late fall to spring blooming bulbs, few have the charm and impact of the *Lachenalias*, whose tubular or urn-shaped flowers resemble those of a related genus, *Hyacinths*, although most lack the sweet perfume of Dutch *Hyacinths*. Although they can grow in well-drained soil in full sun to very light shade, many do best in pots, as they require a long summer to fall dormant period with no watering. The website for the Pacific Bulb Society (www.pacificbulbsociety.org) notes that the plant displayed is "a Namaqualand species with two bright green ovate leaves with depressed longitudinal veins on the upper surface. Once known as *L. ovatifolia* this species has attractive small flowers in which the inner perianth segments are tipped with a broad magenta band. The outer segments are a sort of dirty white with a tinge of pale blue at the base and green gibbositities. The leaves are different to many *Lachenalia* in that they are broader and have pronounced depressed veins running their whole length. This is one of the species that I give extra drainage to by increasing the quantity of sharp sand in the potting mix." Gibbositities are swellings found on the flowers of a number of *Lachenalia* species. (Sheldon Lisker, Temecula, 3/09) – S.T-B.

Lachenalia 'Romaud' (Hyacinthaceae) Horticultural Cultivar

This early-blooming cultivar, part of the African Beauty® *Lachenalia* series J.H. van der Vossen BV., has soft yellow flowers and mottled stems and leaves. It grows to about 10" tall. The parent plants hail from South Africa. (Sheldon Lisker, Temecula, 3/09) – S.T-B.

Penstemon parryi PARRY'S PENSTEMON (Scrophulariaceae)

Arizona, Mexico

Parry's Penstemon is a spring-blooming perennial native to Southern Arizona and northern Mexico. At the base of the plant are blue-green lanceolate leaves that grow in a rosette pattern. Multiple flower stalks rise from 2 to 5 feet high and they are covered with numerous vibrant pink tubular flowers which attract hummingbirds. This desert plant thrives in full sun and needs good drainage; if not dead-headed it will self-seed in your garden. Though drought tolerant, penstemon can be damaged by several years of drought in a row. This hardy plant can tolerate temperatures to 18°F, perhaps even lower. It was named for

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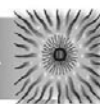
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March Plant Forum

Charles C. Parry, who served as surgeon-naturalist on the Mexican Boundary Survey from 1849-1852. (Susi Torre-Bueno, Vista, 3/9/09) – S.T.B.

Salvia brandegei BRANDEGEE'S SAGE (Lamiaceae)

California and Baja, Mexico

According to Betsy Clebsch's excellent reference, *The New Book of Salvias*, until the 1960s and 1970s, when six large colonies were found in Baja, this species was thought to occur only on Santa Rosa Island (off the coast of Santa Barbara). An evergreen shrub with shiny, narrow, scalloped leaves and pale lavender-blue flowers in early spring, it grows to at least 3-4' tall and wide (Clebsch notes that it can get to 5' tall x 7' wide in the garden). It tolerates temperatures to at least 20°F, and probably lower, and prefers full sun and dry conditions in sandy or clay soil. Both flowering stems and foliage last well in flower arrangements. Deer don't seem to eat it. (Tom Piergrossi, Vista, 3/09) – S.T.B.

Sisyrinchium bellum BLUE-EYED GRASS (Iridaceae)

California, Oregon

This native perennial can naturalize in full sun, and has lovely 1" wide blue-purple flowers in spring. The narrow iris-like leaves are a handsome blue-green, and the plant grows about one foot tall. Common in California on grassy slopes, it will colonize small areas of your garden if happy. While it is drought-tolerant it is very accepting of more water, too, if the soil is well-drained. Heaviest bloom period is in early spring, with sporadic flowers the rest of the year. Often goes dormant and dies back in summer, returning with cooler temperatures and winter rains. (Sue Fouquette, El Cajon, 3/09) – S.F. & S.T.B.

Spiraea x vanhouttei VANHOUTTE SPIRAEA, BRIDAL WREATH SPIRAEA (Rosaceae) Horticultural Hybrid

A cross between *Spiraea trilobata* and *S. cantoniensis*, the Sunset Western Garden Book notes that this deciduous shrub is better in zones up to 21, so you might not want to try it along the coast. The arching branches bear pure white flowers in spring, and the plant grows to about 6' tall by 8' wide (or larger). Dark green leaves appear before the flowers. Prune for size and shape after flowering. Best planted in full sun to light shade. (Sheila Busch, Escondido, 3/09) – S.T.B.

Tabebuia impetiginosa (*T. ipe*) PINK TRUMPET TREE (Bignoniaceae) Mexico to Argentina

The following excerpt is from the description in our book, *Ornamental Trees for Mediterranean Climates*: "With its graceful branching structure, attractive foliage, and extravagant show of spring flowers, the Pink Trumpet Tree is an outstanding small tree for the landscape. It grows fairly quickly as a young tree, slowing to a moderate rate as it attains its mature size of 25-30' tall and wide. Its leaves are divided into 3-7 shiny olive-green leaflets, each to around 4" long by 2" wide. Foliage is shed in early spring just before flowering, the timing of which may vary according to weather, microclimate, and individual tree. Mature trees can bloom for 4-6 weeks with large round clusters of 3" long fragrant, ruffled, trumpet-shaped flowers which vary from pink to lavender-purple and develop a yellow throat as they age. Flowers are followed by a fresh growth of foliage and long, narrow seed pods, and some trees can even bloom again in the fall. The Pink Trumpet Tree likes a well-drained soil in full sun and is cold-hardy to 25°F. It loves heat and typically blooms most profusely in warmer inland climates. This

March Plant Forum

is a tree that needs to be established for a number of years before it blooms well, but after that it just gets better and better as it gets older." (Tom Piergrossi, Vista, 3/09) – S.B.

Thanks to everyone who participated in the March plant forum. Tom Piergrossi did a fine job as our Plant Forum Host. In addition to the plants described above, those below were also displayed.

What's that in front of the plant name? Plants marked 3 are fully described in the *Plant Forum Compilation* (see www.SDHortSoc.org for details on how to order this valuable reference tool).

Can you spot the phony plant this month? The phony plant in the March newsletter was *Kalanchoe tubbywubbyflora* WALL SCONCE PLANT.

Buddleja salviifolia BUTTERFLY BUSH (Tom Piergrossi, Vista, 3/09)

Cantua 'Hot Pants' SACRED-FLOWER-OF-THE-INCAS
(Susi Torre-Bueno, Vista, 3/09)

Euphorbia cv. or sp. (bonsai form) (Phil Tacktil, Solana Beach, 3/09)

Euphorbia bupleurifolia (Peter Walkowiak, Poway, 3/09)

3 *Gladiolus tristis* (Susi Torre-Bueno, Vista, 3/09)

3 *Grevillea thelemanniana* SPIDER NET GREVILLEA
(Mo Price, Encinitas, 3/09)

Hyacinthus cv. HYACINTH (Sue Fouquette, El Cajon, 3/09)

Iris cv. DUTCH IRIS (Sue Fouquette, El Cajon, 3/09)

3 *Lachenalia aloides* var. *quadricolor* (Sheldon Lisker, Temecula, 3/09)

Lachenalia mutabilis (Sheldon Lisker, Temecula, 3/09)

Lavandula angustifolia ENGLISH LAVENDER
(Susi Torre-Bueno, Vista, 3/09)

Lavandula stoechas 'Madrid Purple' SPANISH LAVENDER 'MADRID PURPLE'
(Susi Torre-Bueno, Vista, 3/09)

3 *Leucjum aestivum* WINTER SNOWFLAKE
(Sue Fouquette, El Cajon, 3/09)

Mimulus 'Jeff's Tangerine' MONKEY FLOWER
(Tom Piergrossi, Vista, 3/09)

Mimulus 'Miss Chris' MONKEY FLOWER
(Tom Piergrossi, Vista, 3/09)

Mimulus 'Miss Chievious' MONKEY SEE MONKEY DO FLOWER
(Plant Nut, Vista, 3/09)

3 *Narcissus* cv. (Sue Fouquette, El Cajon, 3/09)

3 *Protea cynaroides* KING PROTEA (Mo Price, Encinitas, 3/09)

Rosa banksiae LADY BANKS' ROSE (Tom Piergrossi, Vista, 3/09)

Salvia macrophylla (Tom Piergrossi, Vista, 3/09)

3 *Sparaxis tricolor* HARLEQUIN FLOWER
(Sue Fouquette, El Cajon, 3/09)

Uncarina roeoesliana UNICORN TREE
(Peter Walkowiak, Poway, 3/09)

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March Plant Forum

HOW TO READ THE PLANT FORUM ENTRIES

- [1] ***Pastryus dulcis*** [2] '**Cheerio**' [3] DONUT PLANT ([4] Pastryaceae)
[5] 7-Eleven to Vons [6] This fast-growing annual produces copious quantities
of distinctive edible fruit that is circular in shape with a central hole. The fruit
resembles a donut, from which the common name derives. Provide ample
moisture. ([7] Betty Crocker, San Diego, 5/96) — [8] K.M.
- [1] Latin name (*Pastryus dulcis*); **bold** names indicate plants with full descriptions.
[2] Cultivar ['Cheerio']
[3] Common Name [DONUT PLANT]
[4] Family [Pastryaceae]
[5] Distribution [7-Eleven to Vons]
[6] Description, comments, cultural directions [This fast-growing...]
[7] Name and city of member, date plant displayed [Betty Crocker, San Diego, 5/96]
[8] Initials of person who wrote description [K.M.]

Congrats, Charley

Our very own Charley Fouquette, who for years
has been bringing drop-dead gorgeous orchids to our
meetings, just won a great award. At the March 2nd
Pacific South Regional Judging by the American Orchid
Society he was awarded a Certificate of Cultural
Excellence. His *Dendrobium* × *delicatum* 'Westwind',
a natural hybrid, was honored because it had 6,240
blooms on 278 inflorescences! Way to go, Charley! 🌺

APRIL GARDEN TOURS/EVENTS

Continued from page 8



ALTA VISTA EARTH DAY FESTIVAL

Alta Vista Botanical Gardens in Vista will hold its annual Earth Day
Festival on Saturday, April 25 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. This year's
event promises to be the biggest and best ever, with plant sales direct
from the growers, tours, an art exhibit, books, prizes, children's activities,
food and drink. Notable speakers will be on hand for lively discussions
about plants and our environment. Public admission is FREE.

For those who are unfamiliar with the 13-acre garden, it has
a stellar view at the top of the hill above Brengle Terrace Park and
the Moonlight Amphitheater. Rather than taking the conventional
approach of creating just another living plant museum, the goal of the
garden is to go as far as possible to "Bring together People, Nature
and Art" in a unique community gathering place. The founders also
hope to provide an interactive, living classroom for North San
Diego County students. Details about this event, membership,
volunteering, and donations are available at www.altavistagardens.org.
For more information please call (760) 945-3954 or email
altavistagardens@att.net.

March Meeting Report

Advertising is designed to make a product appealing to a target audience – including when the product is a chemical or tool intended for garden use. March speaker Pamela Berstler has thought long and hard about the psychology behind the messages we see (many of which she showed us) on TV, the internet, and in magazines, and about how the *unsustainable* gardens they show affect the ways people think a garden *should* look to be beautiful. Images of families relaxing on picture-perfect lawns (achievable only through the use of potentially harmful chemicals and with gas guzzling power mowers) bring to her mind carcinogens and contributors to global warming. Pamela said, "Sustainable landscaping flows from understanding your 'sense of place' in the world," and reminded us that, "advertising utilizes images of 'beauty' and 'repose' in the landscape that only can be achieved through unsustainable practices."

The ads she showed "create a culture of needs" she referred to as "the turf culture." Those lush green lawns and non-Mediterranean plantings help explain why nationwide about 33% of potable water goes into the landscape. In Southern California ornamental

gardening uses a shocking 50-70% of our dwindling water resources. In Los Angeles, she told us, 100 million gallons of runoff goes into the streets on a dry day, and this wasted water, which runs into the ocean, can contain as much as 60% of the fertilizer and other chemicals people apply to their gardens!

Pamela's point is that, "beauty is the result of sustainable practices," and that "understanding the power of these ads and diffusing them is critical to shifting the existing California landscape paradigm towards more sustainability."

Thanks, Pamela, for focusing our attention on these often deceptive ads and for making it clear that we need to avoid accepting the definition of garden beauty as presented by chemical and tool companies whose existence depends on unsustainable gardening styles that harm the environment. We know we can do better in our own gardens, and can lead by example and show our neighbors that a garden which is created and maintained in harmony with the environment is *naturally* and truly beautiful. ☘

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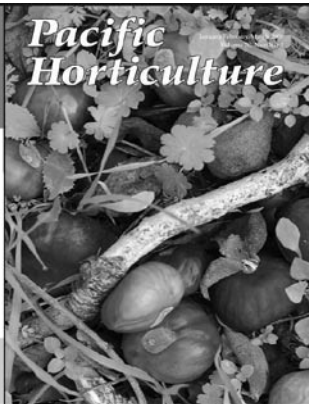
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