

Let's Talk Plants!

Newsletter of the San Diego Horticultural Society

February 2008, Number 161

Garden Party

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FREE GARDEN TOUR & PLANT SALE
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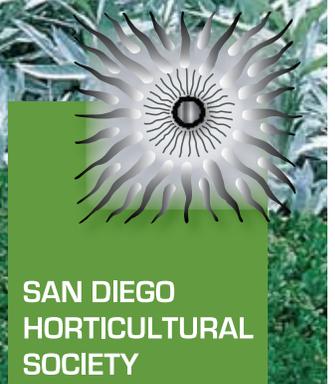
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On the Cover: Elegant Silvers



SAN DIEGO
HORTICULTURAL
SOCIETY



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"GREEN" is Red Hot Free Garden Tour & Plant Sale Saturday, February 16, 9:00am to 3:00pm

Sponsored by the San Diego Horticultural Society

FREE self-guided tour of 3 unique "green" locations in Kearny Mesa. This educational tour of two low water use demonstration gardens and a "green roof" will be eye-opening!
Start your tour at any site; repeating 1-hour lectures at each site at 9:00am, 11:00am & 1:00pm.

FREE to the public - everyone welcome!

See website for map & more info: www.sdhortsoc.org

- ◆ **MAINTAINING A NEW DROUGHT TOLERANT LANDSCAPE.** LOCATION: 4677 OVERLAND AVE., 92123
Techniques for keeping a new drought tolerant landscape healthy. **EXPERTS & EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL HERE.**
- ◆ **GREEN ROOFS: GROWING IN POPULARITY.** LOCATION: 7922 ARMOUR STREET, 92111
The rooftop garden mixes natives, sedums and other drought-tolerant plants in 4" of growing medium. See how it was put together, what's working and what's not, plus see a separate modular system and a "green wall." **PLANT RESCUE SALE HERE WITH INDOOR PLANTS FOR ALMOST PENNIES!**
- ◆ **RIGHT PLANT IN THE RIGHT PLACE.** LOCATION: 9601 RIDGEHAVEN COURT, SAN DIEGO, 92123
Tour focuses on 150 species of mature low water perennials, succulents, natives and trees. **PLANT SALE HERE.**
VENDORS: San Diego Epiphyllum Society, Herb Club, So. California Plumeria Society, Blossom Valley Protea, Garden Glories Nursery, Flower Girls & Rainbow Succulents

San Diego County's 5th Annual

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Cover Image: This wonderful image is from *Elegant Silvers: Striking Plants for Every Garden*, by our February speaker (see below). Green boxwood is a good foil for silvery *Artemisia* 'Valerie Finnis'. We thank Timber Press for granting permission to use it here.

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. Admission is free and all are welcome. We encourage you to join the organization to 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—\$25, two years—\$45, five years—\$100; Family/one year—\$30, two years—\$55, five years—\$120; Group or Business/one year—\$30; Students/\$16 (w/proof of enrollment); Contributing/\$75 or more; Life/\$600. For membership questions contact membership@sdhortsoc.org or Sheldon Lisker at (951) 244-3502.

FUTURE MEETINGS & EVENTS IN 2008

- February 16** "GREEN" is Red Hot! – Garden Tour & Plant Sale (see page 2)
- February 28** Preview Garden Party (see pages 4 and 5)
- March 10** Marcia Donohue, Planting Sculpture, Sculpting Plants
- April 14** Duane Johnson, Low Cost Biodiesel Fuel and Other Plant-Derived Wonders
- May 12** SPECIAL EVENING – Ken Druse, author of *Making More Plants*
- June 2-8** Philadelphia Garden Tour (see page 8 for details)
- NO JUNE MEETING**
- July 14** TBA
- August 11** Pat Welsh, Growing and Harvesting Winter Crops
- September 8** Renee Shepherd, Renee's Garden Seeds
- October 13** Bob Dimattia, Bamboo
- November 10** TBA
- December 8** TBA

www.sdhortsoc.org

Website sponsored by **ALL.EA Web Design & Horticultural Photography**, www.alllea.com

Next Meeting: February 11, 2008, 6:00 – 9:00 PM
Topic: KAREN BUSSOLINI, DESIGNING WITH ELEGANT SILVERS

Admission and parking are both free and all are welcome.
Meeting Place: Del Mar Fairgrounds, Surfside Race Place, Del Mar
Info: (760) 295-7089

Explore using silver plants with **Karen Bussolini**, award-winning photographer and co-author of *Elegant Silvers: Striking Plants for Every Garden*. Silver plants are as tough as they are beautiful, and they're low-maintenance and drought-tolerant. The presentation includes use of regionally appropriate silvers, protective adaptations, using color and texture to create exciting combinations and historical uses from medieval times to modern xeriscaping. Silvers withstand extremes of heat, cold, drought and wind, are adapted to poor soils and desiccating conditions, making them especially useful where water is limited. Silver can be a retiring background or the star of the show, and have a unique ability to intensify other colors or to knit them together. Karen will autograph her book, which will be available for sale.

Karen trained as a painter and was an architectural photographer before specializing in garden photography, writing and lecturing. Her photographs have appeared in *Garden Design*, *Horticulture*, *House Beautiful*, *House and Garden*, *Better Homes and Gardens*, *The New York Times* and in many other magazines and books published worldwide.

To learn more visit www.agpix.com/karenbussolini 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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Liz Youngflesh – Chair-Volunteer Committee

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@sdhortsoc.org.

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

SOMETHING NEW AT PREVIEW GARDEN PARTY

Join us at the annual Preview Garden Party at the Spring Home/Garden Show. You may be the winner of our opportunity drawing—a delightful day of sailing on the San Diego Bay. Kay Harry, our very own member and President of the San Diego Floral Association, has generously donated the grand prize.

In honor of Chuck Ades, other prizes will include extraordinary begonias from his own collection.

Gardening fineries donated by our commercial members will also be among the cache of winnings. Come early to preview items available. Tickets will be \$5 each or 5 for \$20.

Preview Garden Party Thursday, February 28, 7-10 PM Bing Crosby Hall, Del Mar Fairgrounds

- Celebrate Horticulturist of the Year: Chuck Ades
- Meet the Garden Masters in their Gardens
- Preview the Award Winning Gardens
- Enjoy Hors D'oeuvres & a Lavish Chocolate Fountain
- Spend the Evening with all your Gardening Friends

Buy your Preview Garden Party tickets TODAY at www.SDHortSoc.org

GET CREATIVE WITH US!

The SDHS needs an enthusiastic and energetic volunteer to lead our marketing efforts and this will be a tremendously fun and creative experience for the right person. How about you? Have you got some inspired ideas about how we can market our tree book outside San Diego County? Perhaps you can think of resourceful ways to promote our organization and increase attendance at our events? We know we've got an exciting organization, and we need you to help us spread the word about all that we do. Here's the perfect opportunity to really flex your imagination muscle and put your energy to good use for the betterment of the SDHS. Please call Susi at (760) 295-7089 and let's talk! ☺

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SAN DIEGO'S LARGEST WHOLESALE NURSERY OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

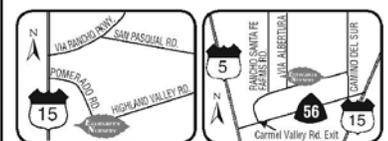
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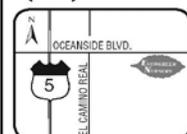
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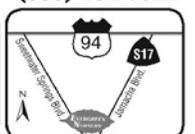


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FALL/WINTER HOURS
Monday-Saturday.. 7:30am-4:30pm
Sunday.....9:00am-4:30pm

To Learn More...

SINGLE COLOR GARDENS

By Ava Torre-Bueno

This month's speaker, Karen Bussolini, has written a book called *Elegant Silvers: Striking Plants for Every Garden*. You can read about her at: www.timberpress.com/authors/id.cfm/1016

If you have purple plant lust, go to: www.doityourself.com/stry/irisitsspring

The Virginia Zoo has four different single-color gardens at: www.virginiazoo.org/horticulture/garden_color.php

For the following sites, go to Google, and on the start page, in the upper left hand area, first click on the "Images" link. Then put in the words "Super Single Color Gardens" and the first picture and article will be about just that.

Next, do the Google Image thing again with the words "Sissinghurst The White Garden" to go to sites with pictures of the famous British white garden of poet Vita Sackville-West.

Then put in the words "Longwood Gardens Laminated" (it's an ad, but a beautiful picture) and click on the first link to see an indoor desert garden in silver tones.

Member **Ava Torre-Bueno** is a psychotherapist in private practice, and has successfully practiced worm composting for a number of years. 🌿

THIS SHOW'S FOR YOU!

23rd Annual Spring/Home/Garden Show

FEBRUARY 29, MARCH 1 & 2

By Lucy Warren

If you love plants, great garden design, and a chance to learn more about gardening, don't miss the Spring Home/Garden Show! As members of the San Diego Horticultural Society we have a vested interest in the Spring Home/Garden Show because we've made it ours. Each year, as we come up with more ideas about what makes a great garden show, we work at making it better. It is one of our biggest shows for public outreach to share our love of plants. We love your ideas and participation. It is our chance to shine and share our love of plants with the greater public of San Diego.

Many of our members especially love to help out at the Spring Home/Garden Show because they get to meet and interact with other Hort society members. What could be more fun than sharing good times with people with similar interests? Volunteers get free entry into the show! Contact Liz Youngflesh at (858) 449-5342.

Highlighting the show are the display gardens by the Garden Masters. Each garden is designed and developed specifically for this show. The Garden Masters put their best efforts into creative new ideas for wonderful gardens for the San Diego climate. See the work of top designers and horticulturists in San Diego, all in one place.

Our seminar series is packed with wonderful, knowledgeable garden experts. It's full of advice

Continued on page 22



From The Board

By Susi Torre-Bueno

TOP TEN REASONS...

February 28 is our annual Preview Garden Party and we've added something NEW this year – an exciting raffle for some extra-special plants and a day of sailing! Details are on page 4. This is one of our most important events of the year, and we hope you'll want to be part of the fun. Each year the Garden Masters pull off some amazing gardens, and I'm always inspired and a little awed by what they can accomplish in four short days! Seeing the display gardens at their absolute freshest is so special, as is seeing so many of you enjoying the evening with me.

Here are the top ten reasons why YOU should join in the fun:

- 10** Enjoy hors d'oeuvres to sound of live music.
- 9** Relax at this crowd-free opportunity to see extraordinary gardens created by the Garden Masters and to ask them questions.
- 8** See how many different foods you can dip into our scrumptious Chocolate Fountain.
- 7** Wear your favorite garden party attire.
- 6** Be first to learn who won the Garden Master awards.
- 5** Visit with friends you never have enough time to talk to at SDHS meetings
- 4** Win a sailboat day trip or a terrific plant at the raffle – see page 4 for details.
- 3** Honor our 2008 Horticulturist of the Year, Chuck Ades (see page 6).
- 2** Check out the newest plants for 2008.
- 1** Have a really FUN evening amid beautiful surroundings!

Tickets are only \$35 for members. Buy yours TODAY at www.SDHortSoc.org or watch your mail for an invitation.

MAY I VISIT YOUR GARDEN?

Several times a month, on average, I'm asked to recommend gardens in San Diego County. Sometimes it's from another garden group putting together a tour. Sometimes the request comes from a garden writer, or a photographer looking for that special site to capture on film for a glossy magazine. As our membership has grown I know there are a great many member gardens that I haven't seen yet. So, if you'd like me to take a peek at yours, I'd be delighted. Who knows – it could lead to seeing your garden in print someday! Please contact me at info@sdhortsoc.org. 🌿

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19th Annual Turf Management Seminar

Friday, March 7th

*Cuyamaca College
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900 Rancho San Diego
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Presented by:

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For more information
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SDHS Horticulturist of the Year for 2008: Chuck Ades

A highlight of our Preview Garden Party, the kick-off event for the Spring Home/Garden Show, is the presentation of the Horticulturist of the Year Award for Excellence in Horticulture. For 2008 we are proud to honor passionate horticulturist **Chuck Ades**, co-founder of Ades & Gish Nurseries. We asked Chuck to share some of his background with us, and he graciously has written the following brief autobiography. We're pleased to honor him as our thirteenth Horticulturist of the Year, and we hope you'll join us on February 28 when we present this award at the Preview Garden Party. Details on this fun event are on the enclosed flyer and on page 5. **Congratulations, Chuck!**



Chuck with his wife, Joan

Chuck's story began last month, when we read about his introduction to horticulture at age six and his subsequent years in college and starting out in the nursery business. His story continues...

Chuck continued working at the Rod McLellan Company for twelve years and rose to Manager of two departments, the potted plant department (138,000 square feet) and the cut rose departments (400,000 square feet). However, he had always wanted to retire to a sub-tropical climate like Santa Barbara or San Diego. One day he decided, "why wait for retirement?," so he looked for and found a job in Encinitas, working for Robert Hall-Encinitas Floral Company. After a little less than three years, he joined forces with Bill Gish. Bill was a new cut flower producer in Encinitas who had just bought a carnation greenhouse in Encinitas. He asked Chuck if he would be interested in leasing and managing the greenhouses of carnations. Chucks response was, "carnations are boring, but how about potted plants?" Thus, Ades and Gish Nurseries was born in 1974.

During the years Ades & Gish grew from 128,000 square feet to 780,000 square feet (about 17 acres of greenhouse) at one time. However, it is now in the process of downsizing to 300,000 square feet (about 7 acres of greenhouse) in San Marcos. Chuck has always been interested in the challenge and experience of growing the new and unusual in plant material. The plant-cutting brokers knew that if they visited him first with something new he would almost always make a sale. Unfortunately, the crop didn't always work out, but Chuck was always willing to give them a try. In the San Diego area, he was one of the first commercial growers to grow ferns (other than Boston ferns) including stag horn ferns, as well as pineapple plants with edible fruit, hanging basket plants such as creeping Charlie, coleus and wandering Jews. In fact he brought to Encinitas the system of growing hanging basket plants hanging from strands of wire instead of on wooden benches. The company ships plants throughout the U.S., but heavily into Texas, the mid-west, and Illinois, as well as Arizona and Nevada. Their customers range from large chains like Home Depot to

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Continued on page 13

Plants That Produce

THE SCOOP ON FERTILIZERS

By Richard Frost

A fertilizer is any substance applied to the plant or soil to increase productivity. Most of our local soils are rich in mineral nutrients tied up in clays. If these nutrients are released by application of humic acids or other soil conditioners, non-native plants will flourish for up to seven years and then decline as the nutrients are diminished. On the other hand, natives to the area, like the San Diego Sage (*Salvia munzii*), are happy with the status quo and hate most fertilizers.

A medium size European or sub-tropical fruit tree needs about one pound of accessible nitrogen (among other things) per year to remain productive. As an example, Gro-Power Citrus and Avocado Food has an N-P-K (nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium) rating of 8-6-8. This means it has 8% accessible nitrogen, 6% accessible phosphorus, and 8% accessible potassium by weight. If you were to use this product to meet the entire nitrogen requirement of a subtropical tree, you would apply 12.5 pounds (one pound divided by 8%) per year. This granular food weighs ½ pound per cup, so that's 25 cups per tree per year. Since a tree planted in the ground will obtain nitrogen from other sources, too, about half of that is sufficient.

As a general rule, subtropicals thrive on a relatively lower phosphorus profile. That is, a lower amount of P in comparison to N and K. Conversely, pit fruits, apples, pears, and bush-size non-tropical vines and vegetables produce better with larger helpings of phosphorus and potassium. For these, one cup per month (six pounds per year) of an 8-15-13 granular is usually sufficient. Day-neutral strawberries such as 'Sequoia' will produce year 'round in the sun if fed a tablespoon or so of 3-12-12 granular each month. For leafy vegetables that you don't want to flower, apply a few tablespoons of 5-3-1 or similar per month.

In addition to N-P-K there are another 17 minerals needed by plants: so called secondary and trace-elements. Plants also need biological agents such as mycorrhizal fungi. Nearly every "complete" fertilizer product on the market contains all of these things. Some notable exceptions are highly distilled products such as "Triple 15." This contains only N, P, K and breaks down into unwanted salts after use. Still, it can be cost effective. A summer foliar spray of kelp extract is an optional way to add micronutrients.

Composted manures are an excellent alternative method for feeding your plants. Composted horse or steer (not cow) manure has a lower-phosphorus N-P-K profile of around 0.7-0.3-0.5 and works well with subtropicals. Use about 3.5 cubic feet per tree per year. You can supplement this with an even mixture of composted sea-bird manure and wood ash on those plants that benefit from extra amounts of P and K. Use 1.5 cups per month on tree and bush-size fruits and vegetables. For day-neutral strawberries use ½ cup per month (only). Composted rabbit manure is a good source of nitrogen. Use it on your leafy vegetables, about ½ cup per month.

Finally, some gardeners have converted to in-line liquid "fertigation" systems to save time, energy, and often money. Typically, you activate your system once per month for a full cycle of watering, with the mixture rate set to 1:100. Look for an N-P-K rating of about 9-2-7 for your subtropicals and 8-12-10 for your pit and pome fruits.

SDHS Member **Richard Frost** is also member of the California Rare Fruit Growers. For more information, see www.frostconcepts.com/horticulture/. 🌱

Garden Gourmet

NEW YEAR'S HARVEST

By Alice Lowe

At long last, I joined a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) program. As many of you know, it's marvelous to have fresh, local, organic produce delivered close to home every other week. If you haven't checked it out or have put off joining, learn all you need to know at www.bewiseranch.com.

I decided, sight unseen, that I would use some of everything in my first delivery this weekend and that this column would feature those dishes. So here's a few things you can do with cherry and slicing tomatoes, mixed salad greens, potatoes, carrots, beets (with greens), and oranges. Nothing unusual or challenging here – no pale, plump root vegetables that I'm unable to identify as turnips or rutabagas – but I wanted to make something more original than a tossed salad and baked potatoes.

Saturday: Niçoisienne

Salade Niçoise is typically made with canned tuna, green beans, potatoes, niçoise olives, other items depending on the recipe, and anchovies for the brave. My "niçoisienne" makes frequent departures while using enough traditional ingredients to maintain the integrity of the mother dish. This time it was albacore seared with salt and pepper in peanut oil and cut into 1/2" wide slices. I boiled cut-up carrots and potatoes, drained and dressed them with a lemon-garlic-mustard vinaigrette. On a bed of greens on each plate, I arranged a few albacore slices, potatoes, carrots, halved cherry tomatoes and kalamata olives. I topped them with crumbled bleu cheese, the essential anchovies, and drizzled the vinaigrette over all. A fresh baguette, a glass of Beaujolais, and Voila!

Sunday: Winter Savory Salad

I expected regular red beets, but I was thrilled to find Chioggias, red and white striped ones with a milder, sweeter flavor. I roast them with a little water in a tightly-covered dish (45-60 minutes at 400), until they pierce easily with a fork. On a bed of greens, I put small mounds of sliced beets (chilled and peeled), chunks of orange, and artichoke hearts (marinated or canned). My topping is crumbled feta cheese and pan-toasted walnut bits; the dressing is vinaigrette with diced shallots and sherry vinegar. I serve this with a simple browned butter and herb-sauced pasta, garlic bread, and a crisp, dry white wine.

Monday: Tomato Salad

Monday will be tomato salad with mushrooms and home-grown parsley and potato latkes (they're not just for Hanukkah!). I'm out of space, but you get the idea. It's easy to adapt meals to whatever bounty the CSA box brings!

Member **Alice Lowe** has pledged to be "greener" than ever in 2008. 🌱

Join SDHS for an
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**Philadelphia's
Extraordinary
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Includes:

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- ❖ Private gardens recommended by Bill Thomas
- ❖ \$100 tax-deductible donation to SDHS

**Cost: \$1175 double occupancy,
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**Price does not include travel to and
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**To learn more please contact
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Chanticleer...a pleasure garden

Plants and The Scientific Method

By Carl Price and Ellen Reardon

We trace the origins of the scientific method to Galileo, who had an idea—contrary to conventional wisdom—that all objects fall at the same rate, regardless of their weight. In 1590 he tested his idea by climbing to the top of the Leaning Tower of Pisa and dropping several large objects of differing weights, while a colleague measured the time they took to reach the ground. They concluded that all of the objects moved at the same rate, confirming Galileo's model.

Galileo's approach came to be known as *the scientific method*. One starts with a few observations; imagines a model (we should now say an *hypothesis*) that would account for the observations; deduces predictions from the model; and then tests the predictions with experiments. If the experiments turn out contrary to the predictions, the hypothesis is probably wrong, and one starts over. When the predictions are confirmed by experiment, especially when the predictions open entirely novel views of the world, the hypothesis becomes a *theory*, and in exceptional cases, a *law*.

Galileo's approach differed strikingly from what had come before. Francis Bacon, who was a near contemporary, wrote that the way to understand the world was to assemble every possible observation of a given phenomenon and, with enough information, a rational pattern would appear. Over the centuries, the physical sciences largely adopted Galileo's scientific method, while the biological sciences followed the Baconian tradition of *observe, observe, and observe some more*.

FROM PHLOGISTON TO PHOTOSYNTHESIS

The accepted view in the 18th century was that a burning candle or the breath of animals fouled the air by adding *phlogiston*. In 1780 an English chemist, Joseph Priestley, found that a sprig of mint placed in a container in which candles had been burned would restore the air so that it "would neither extinguish the candle, nor was it all inconvenient to a mouse which I put into it." Following conventional wisdom, Priestley concluded that the mint plant had "dephlogisticated" the air.

It took several more years and several more chemists to learn that plants produced a gas, which was named *oxygen*, that "phlogiston" was a myth, and that the process required light. It was not until 1845 that another chemist, Julius Robert Mayer, proposed that plants convert one form of energy, light, into a form of chemical energy. Provided with a clear hypothesis for photosynthesis, scientists in the field could use the tools of the growing discipline of organic chemistry to begin to understand nature's most important process.

FROM TOTIPOTENTIALITY TO EMBRYOIDS

Starting in the 1830s, medical scientists proposed that certain cells in animals were *totipotent*; i.e., capable of turning into different kinds of tissues. (We now refer to them as *stem cells*.) Recognizing that for many centuries plants had been grown from bits of stem, roots, or buds, botanists extended the idea to include *all* cells of every plant. Thus was born the hypothesis of *totipotentiality* in plants.

Efforts to test this hypothesis began in 1902 with Gottfried Haberlandt's unsuccessful attempt to culture cells from monocots. It took another 50 years to identify the plant hormones, or extracts

Continued on page 22



We now have over 1200 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 and below. A warm hello to the following folks who have joined recently:

We thank René van Rems for becoming a Contributing Member.

- Aristocrat Landscape Maintenance
- Rob Cromwell
- Alicia Elliott
- Peggy Geyer
- Melody Petersen
- Stephen Sanoer
- Rosemary Stafford

NEW ADVERTISERS:

California Friendly Landscape Contest, PAGE 2

Gardens of the Year Contest, INSERT

Spring Home/Garden Show, BACK COVER

MiraCosta College Job Opening, PAGE 21

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Contact LizYoungflesh at (858) 449-5342 or gardenglories@hotmail.com. We need talented people in many areas, so put **your** skills to good use on fun projects!

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 2008:

- Linda Bressler (1)
- Miriam Kirk (1)
- Shelley Moore (1)

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DISCOUNTS FOR MEMBERS!
See Page 22 for Details

What's Up at Quail Botanical Gardens?

ALOES IN THE GARDEN

By Jeremy Spath and Ruth Sanborn

Aloes form a distinct part of the world's landscape. Whether a botanist, horticulturist or one with only a passing interest, their striking beauty is easily appreciated.

The genus *Aloe* is native to Africa, the Arabian peninsula, and Madagascar as well as other outlying islands. *Aloe vera* has been in cultivation so long that its true origin is a mystery, although it is thought to be of Arabian or North African descent. Worldwide the genus is noted in legends, books of cures and even the Bible. For centuries, the juice from aloes, specifically *Aloe vera*, has been used to heal minor wounds and to treat stomach ailments. Drawings of aloes have been found on the walls of ancient Egyptian ruins. Aristotle urged Alexander the Great to conquer lands in order to gain control over the main supply of aloe. Nearly all aloes have some healing property. Worldwide the aloe industry is worth 100 billion USD annually.

With their bold structural silhouettes and often-prolific blooms, aloes are some of the most rewarding plants to grow in the garden. With close to 500 species of aloe, the genus provides a wide array of different growth forms, from trees to shrubs, and groundcovers to vines. Aloes have colorful rosettes often trumped by dazzling flower displays. Their versatility is matched by their low maintenance. One need not have a green thumb to successfully grow aloes. Furthermore, aloes are ideal for San Diego County as they are both fire resistant and drought tolerant. They store water in their leaves for periods of low rainfall. This stored water also keeps the plant from catching fire. Not providing fuel for the fire will suppress the progress toward homes. Most aloes bloom in late fall and winter lighting up the garden when color is otherwise subdued.

A MORNING WITH ALOES Saturday, February 16, 9:30 – 11:30 AM

Join Patrick Anderson for a slide show on aloes and a walking tour to look at the numerous aloes at Quail Botanical Gardens, many of which should be in full bloom. Members \$25; non-members \$30. Call to register 760/ 436-3036 x 206. 🌿

Book Review

SEED SAVERS 2008 CATALOG: HEIRLOOM SEEDS, BOOKS AND GIFTS

Reviewed by Caroline McCullagh



When I asked myself what I'd most enjoyed reading in the last month, the answer was obvious. Like many of you, I'm reading seed catalogs and dreaming about the wonderful garden that's going to spring forth in my back yard with a minimum of sweat and a maximum of pleasure. The catalog that really puts my imagination in high gear is from Seed Savers.

I think many of the people in the Hort Society are concerned with the loss of genetic diversity in nature. What many of us don't realize is that this isn't just a problem in the wild. We're losing many domesticated plants and animals, too. We're losing these, though, as a result of corporate decision-making, not loss of habitat.

As with many things in our world, ownership of seed producing companies is being concentrated into the hands of a few international corporations. Those corporations concentrate on producing and selling a limited variety of seeds. As a result, we depend on plantings of monocrops in our fields and in our backyards.

If this is something you've been thinking about, or if you'd like to have an opportunity to grow things you never imagined, or if you'd just like to read an exciting seed catalog, Seed Savers is for you. It was started in 1975 and dedicated to helping gardeners save and share heirloom seeds. They now own the 890-acre Heritage Farm in Decorah, Iowa. The statistics of what they accomplish there are astonishing. Every year they grow out more than 2,500 varieties (of the 25,000 seed varieties they maintain) to keep their seed stocks fresh. They have an orchard of 700 pre-1900 apple varieties, grapes, and a herd of White Park Cattle, a breed more than 2,000 years old, but now very rare.

Their beautiful catalog features 647 varieties of vegetables, herbs, and flowers this year, many of them organic. When you see photos and read descriptions of more than 60 varieties of tomatoes in all sorts of colors and shapes (one called Green Sausage looks more like a cucumber than a tomato) you'll be itching to start planting. If flowers are your thing, how about more than 20 varieties of sunflowers? Seed Savers is also a good source of garden books, cook books, and garden posters.

If you're serious about heirloom seeds, you may want to become a member of Seed Savers (\$35/year). Then you have access to their trading network. You can get seeds from other members all over the country, including some in Southern California. And if you happen to have some heirloom seeds that aren't already in their system, they want to talk to you.

You can request a catalog or even download it at their website, www.seedsavers.org, or contact them at 3094 North Winn Road, Decorah, Iowa 52101 (telephone 563 382-5990). ☞

Community Outreach

GARDENING ON A NEW LEVEL February 19, 7:00 PM, Balboa Park, Casa Del Prado, Room 101

Did you ever fall in love with a plant but have questions on how it would do in your garden? The answers are scattered in a dozen different books. None of them address your own garden, with its individual soil, exposure, and microclimate. Mitch Shirts grew up in the San Diego area and loves gardening. He has had all the same frustrations, but he decided to do something about it. For nearly five years he's been accumulating the wisdom of local experts, the resources of proven techniques, and the interests of individual gardeners and made them accessible to everyone, in a way that is easy to use. Learn more about this at a meeting of the San Diego Floral Association.

This new gardening resource and tool is theMulch, a mixture of things which help your garden grow its best. Even if you get quivers at the word "computer" you will be fascinated by the care, devotion, and sensitivity in the ongoing creation of this gardening resource. Techies will appreciate that in just a few months theMulch has become one of the top gardening sites accessed in the country. We all can learn from one another and with membership approaching 1,000, that's a lot of help and experience and advice. There are personal spaces and accommodations for groups to interact. The opportunities are expansive and dynamic. The meeting is free, so go to the S. D. Floral Assoc. meeting to learn more about this exciting new gardening tool at 7:00 p.m. on February 19. For more information call (619) 232-5762.

SAN DIEGO CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY ANNUAL WINTER SHOW

February 9, 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM,
Balboa Park, Casa Del Prado, Room 101

The San Diego Cactus and Succulent Society is hosting its annual winter show featuring Cactus and Succulents. This show features spectacular specimens of cactus and other succulents from around the world. Exhibitors will be on hand to answer your questions concerning culture of these plants. This show



is an informal show, as opposed to the summer show where the plants are stringently judged. Additionally, there will be a broad selection of unique cacti and succulents that will be for sale from specialty growers. The show is FREE and everyone is welcome.

The cactus pictured is *Yavia cryptocarpa*, which is the rarest of all known cactus, from 13,000 ft elevation in northern Argentina. ☞

Steve Brigham's Wide World of Plants

GOING ON A WATER DIET – THE 30% SOLUTION

What if you had to cut back your water usage this year by 30%? With everything from big droughts to little fish limiting our water supplies these days, it may soon happen – and it already has for some of us! Would your garden survive on a water diet? In this three-part series, we'll take a look at some serious water-saving techniques, as we explore "The 30% Solution".

NEW YEAR'S DAY, 2008

O.K., I guess I could stand to lose a little weight, especially after numerous Holiday meals and all. But lose 60 pounds? That would take me all the way down to 140 pounds (a bit slim for a 6'-1" tall guy) – even my doctor wouldn't make me do that! But that's the kind of diet that the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California wants my *garden* to go on this year, and these guys mean business!

As an agricultural water user, Buena Creek Gardens participates in a program where we get a 16% discount on our water rates. But to qualify for this discount, we have to comply with whatever agricultural rationing the MWD chooses to impose, and whenever it chooses to impose it. In 2008, the MWD is imposing some major water rationing for agricultural users. This year, I am required to lower my water-use significantly, by a whopping 30% every month, based on my water usage each month from July 2006 to June 2007. And if I don't, I'll have to pay more than *double* for any water I use over my 70% allotment, plus a host of expensive fines and penalties. Yes, folks, this is the real deal as far as water cutbacks are concerned! And so in 2008, maybe not me, but my *garden* is definitely going on a diet!

WHERE'S MY WATER METER?

The first step in any diet, of course, is to know how much you weigh. And so the first step is to get out all of your old water bills from the past year. This will show you, usually in 100 cubic feet "units," how much water you've been using each month (if you have a big garden, water usage probably goes up significantly during the warmer months). The next step is to figure out how much you're going to reduce each month – in this case, it's 30% of what you used last year in the same month.

Now it's time to "count calories," or in this case, cubic feet of water. Would anyone think of going on a diet without a bathroom scale? Well, in the garden, you have one, and it's called your water meter. If you've never seen your water meter, it's usually below ground in a rectangular box with a plastic or concrete lid, somewhere near the street. To lift the lid off, use a big screwdriver or a sprinkler key. (A word of caution here – if it's been a really long time since you've opened your water meter box, there may be a host of odd bugs and other alien life forms residing within, so you may wish to delegate this initial opening to an entomologist, a Homeland Security officer, or even a husband.) Once you've got your water meter box sufficiently decontaminated, you will see that your water meter resembles a car's odometer, measuring water used in cubic feet (one cubic

foot equals 7.48 gallons). A "sweep hand" makes one revolution for every cubic foot of water used. On many water meters, there's a cute little black triangle that spins around when water is being used. Now you can see how much water you're using at any given time – and if we're going to save 30%, we're going to have to get very serious in counting our cubic feet! So read your water meter often, paying particular attention to how much water you're using when you water your garden.

CHECK FOR LEAKS

Don't close that box – for the first step in saving water is to make sure you're not wasting it unintentionally. Let's hope, first of all, that you don't have any water leaks on your property! To test for leaks, make sure all faucets and water using appliances, inside and out, are turned off. Note the location of the sweep hand, and watch to see if the black triangle is moving (it better not be). Then, without using any water, re-check the sweep hand and the "odometer" in 30 minutes. Unless someone's been flushing toilets when you weren't looking, you'll know if you're actually using water when you think you're not, and you can multiply by 48 to see how much you're wasting a day because of leaks.

Maybe, like me, you've just got some old, drippy garden faucets. Being inherently lazy, what I do is put inexpensive hose-end shut-off valves on all my leaky faucets (it's easy, quick, and it works like a charm). This one quick fix can save a lot of water!

IRRIGATE EFFICIENTLY

No sprinkler system is perfect, and many are far from efficient. How many of us fail to adjust our automatic timers, and sometimes irrigate when we don't really have to? How many of us end up watering the sidewalk as well as the plants? How many of us leave the sprinklers on "just a little longer" because of that one chronically dry spot that never seems to get wet enough? There are all sorts of ways to waste water with sprinklers, so lets try to save the water we've been wasting! Now is the time to take a careful look at your sprinkler system. Are there enough sprinkler heads to get everything wet in the shortest amount of time, without runoff? Maybe some taller plants are blocking some sprinklers (not good) – if so, you need to raise those sprinklers up above the foliage so they can do their job properly.

A good test to run requires you first to drink a lot of coffee (or know someone who does!). Once you've done that, take a bunch of empty coffee cans and put them around your garden, spaced fairly evenly apart. Then run your sprinklers like you usually would. Did each coffee can collect the same amount of water? Presuming all of the plants in the area need about the same amount of water, that's the ideal. But probably, you'll see some wetter areas and some drier areas. Try to adjust your sprinkler system so that the water is more evenly distributed. (An alternative method is simply to plant only very drought-tolerant plants in the dry spots – but that's something we'll discuss in Part 3 of this series.)

Continued on page 22

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The Real Dirt On...

BARBARA McCLINTOCK

By Christy Powell



Barbara McClintock (1902-1992) was a leader in the development of maize (corn) cytogenetics (the study of heredity by chromosomal and genetic methods). From the late 1920's until the end of her active research career, she studied chromosomes and how they change during reproduction in maize. She produced the first genetic map for maize, linking regions of the chromosome with physical traits.

McClintock also discovered transposition and used it to show how genes are responsible for turning physical characteristics on or off. Her cytogenetic research focused on developing ways to visualize and characterize maize chromosomes, and influenced generations of students in the fields of genetics, molecular biology, and agriculture.

Barbara McClintock was born on June 16, 1902, in Hartford, Connecticut, to a physician and his wife. The family with four children moved to rural Brooklyn, New York, when she was six years old. McClintock discovered science in high school, and persuaded her father to allow her to attend college against her mother's protests.

McClintock began studying botany at Cornell's College of Agriculture in 1919. After her first course in genetics as an undergraduate with Professor C.B. Hutchinson, a plant breeder and geneticist, her enthusiasm for the subject prompted him to invite her to take a graduate course in the same subject. McClintock received a B.S., an M.A. and a Ph.D. from Cornell University. By the time that she had graduated with her Ph.D. in 1927, she knew that she wanted to study chromosomes and their genetic content and expressions (cytogenetics).

McClintock was a professor at Cornell University and the University of Missouri from 1927 to 1941. She was offered a research position in 1941 at the Carnegie Institution of Washington's Department of Genetics, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, located on Long Island, New York. In recognition of her prominence in the field of genetics during this period, McClintock was elected to the National Academy of Sciences, only the third woman to be so elected.

In 1957, she received funding from the National Science Foundation, and the Rockefeller Foundation sponsored her to start research on maize in South America, an area that is rich in varieties of this species. After officially retiring from her position at the Carnegie Institution in 1967 she was made a Distinguished Service Member of the Carnegie Institution of Washington.

Barbara McClintock was awarded the National Medal of Science by Richard Nixon in 1971. She received numerous other awards, including 14 Honorary Doctor of Science degrees and an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters. In 1983, McClintock received the Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine for her discovery of mobile genetic elements, over thirty years after she initially described the phenomenon of controlling elements. She is the first and only woman thus far to receive an unshared Nobel Prize in that category.

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In 1986, McClintock was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame. She remained a regular presence in the Cold Spring Harbor community, and gave talks on mobile genetic elements and the history of genetics research for the benefit of junior scientists. McClintock died in Huntington, N.Y. on September 2, 1992. She never married nor had children.

Linda Bresler is a certified landscape designer living in Poway. She specializes in drought-tolerant, low maintenance designs that provide four-season beauty in the garden. 🌿

Chuck Ades Continued from page 6

individual retail nurseries, and plant brokers to interiorscapers, and to theme parks such as Disneyland and the San Diego Zoo.

Returning to his earlier experiences with exchange students... He has been housing and employing them for several years now. He and his wife have had students living with them from Uzbekistan, Check Republic, Ukraine, Indonesia, Brazil, Switzerland, and Romania, Honduras and others. They have had parties at their garden that had 7 countries represented.

Chuck's present focus of attention is the specialty begonias that previously were available only through friends and clubs. The nursery now grows many varieties of begonias. They are classified as Cane (sometimes called angle wing begonias), Rex (the brightly colored foliage begonias), Rhizomatous (interestingly marked and shaped leaves), Trailing/Scandant (climbing and hanging basket types) and others. He is active in the American Begonia Society nationally as well as locally.

Chuck has been married for 43 years to Joan. They have two children: Cheryl, who is an electrical engineer, and Darrell, who now owns and runs Ades & Gish Nurseries. Each of their children has two children of their own. Chuck's hobbies are gardening (of course), square dancing, singing in choirs, traveling and genealogy.

Various accomplishments, positions and offices Chuck has held:

Instrumental in establishing the Bromeliad Society in San Mateo County, CA

President and board member of San Diego County Flower and Plant Assoc.

Board member of San Diego County Farm Bureau

State horticulture representative to Farm Bureau in Sacramento

Steering Committee of Southern California Plant Tour Days

Board member of Quail Botanical Gardens

Quail Botanical Gardens Gala first Honoree

Encinitas Traffic Commission

Initiator of the Encinitas Flower Celebration (tours of local greenhouses)

Honoree Encinitas City Council

President and manager, Ades & Gish Nurseries, 28 years

Active in the American Begonia Society

Encinitas Invasive Plant ad hoc committee member 🌿

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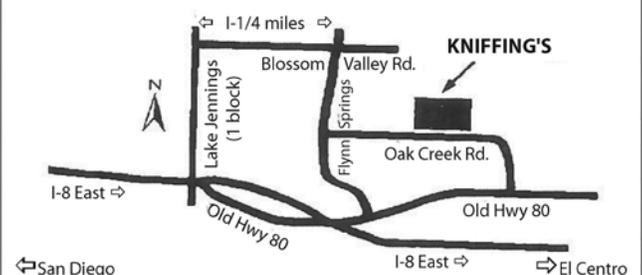
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SHARING SECRETS

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 keep cats and dogs out of your garden? (thanks to So. Cal Hort.)

Debra Lee Baldwin e-mailed to say, "When I catch someone letting their dog use my garden as a toilet, I hand them a plastic bag and thank them for picking up after it. I ask guests who bring large, romping dogs to please keep them leashed. I've trained my own dogs not to go into planted areas by giving them a sharp reprimand whenever they stray off pathways. The neighbor's cat, who hunts at night, has been a bit of a problem. I welcome Kitty's vigilance at gopher holes, but despair for the birds. When I discovered that she was using a newly planted area of the succulent tapestry as a litter box, I took twiggy branches from the oak tree and placed them upright in the area; they'll be easy to remove after the plants fill in, and in the meantime, poke Kitty in the tush."

Jim Bishop says, "We don't really have a problem with dogs since the yard is fenced. However, we do occasionally have the friendly neighbor's chocolate lab wander into our courtyard and scare the cat and knock over a few things with her active tail wagging. We haven't found a good solution other than let our neighbor politely know we don't like it when they leave their dog unattended to roam. Regarding cats, mostly we have plants that aren't much bothered by them...and the neighbor's yards seem to have more open, empty dry beds that they prefer. In the canyon, we'd prefer to have more cats since they are such good rodent hunters. We encourage our neighbor's cats to visit by providing shade, an occasional petting, catnip, cat thyme and a seemingly endless supply of gophers. We also have a lot of birds, but there are so many that they warn each other when cats are around; so we don't have much of a problem with cats killing birds."

Linda Chisari e-mailed about her dog: "Happy hangs out in my vegetable garden during the day, so she keeps the cats, raccoons, etc. away. I just have to be sure to plant an abundance of carrots and broccoli...her favorites. When she was a puppy, I gave her those large 'horse' carrots, from Jimbo's, instead of bones. One day, I pulled a carrot out of the ground in her presence and saw the 'aha' look on her cute little brown face. Carrots have not been safe since then, but she never touches my flowers."

Nancy Gordon says, "My cat lives on a straw bale in the sun in the garden...I CAN'T Keep him out...the real question is RACCOONS? Help!"

Irina Gronborg has some good advice: "Landscape design does a good job of keeping the neighbors' dogs from coming into the garden: we have nothing along the perimeter that is low and walkable (and if they manage to bushwhack through the shrubs, we don't notice it). My own dog keeps the neighbors' cats away. (There are fewer roaming cats to fight off because their owners are becoming more aware that their cats are at risk when they are outdoors, and also that their cats are killing off our songbirds.)"

Steve Harbour likes some cats and dogs: "I have one dog and one cat. My cat is an asset to my garden; he's big and macho and keeps other cats, as well as quite a few dogs from venturing into my yard. Last week, my neighbor's German Sheppard made the mistake of getting nose to nose with my cat. We have not seen the unfortunate dog since he disappeared behind the fence that is suppose to keep him in his own backyard. My cat also catches rodents, ground squirrels, and rabbits so he's a keeper. My dog is only a problem on hot days when she burrows into a shady and cool planter. I let her have one cool spot during summer, then strategically place pieces of flagstone, statuary, border fencing, and whatever else it takes to keep her from digging other nests."

Miriam Kirk has a good reason to like dogs in her garden: "I used to be annoyed when a neighbor's dog dug up our property reaming out gopher holes. Rarely was she successful in nabbing any critters. One day she was hanging around as I was setting a gopher trap. She was behind my back and got into a barking fit. I turned to see what her problem was and discovered that she had cornered a baby rattle snake... I decided she was welcome here any time!"

Sharon May uses "Bait and Switch. I like to 'Bait' by creating spots they are attracted to that are out of sight... a cool, shady dog wallow or a lovely catnip bed. The 'Switch' is to make other areas, which they might damage, unattractive to them. I plant my beautiful plants and then poke clear plastic knives and forks in the ground, handle side up, 3-4 inches apart. The plants grow up to cover the plastic handles, but the animals quickly learn that walking through the area or lying on it is uncomfortable (although the round handles won't do damage to my pets)."

Carol McCollum wrote: "To deter cats around freshly planted areas, I put down obstacles such as sections of chicken-wire, plastic plant flats, rocks, branches or plant trimmings...whatever I have at hand..."

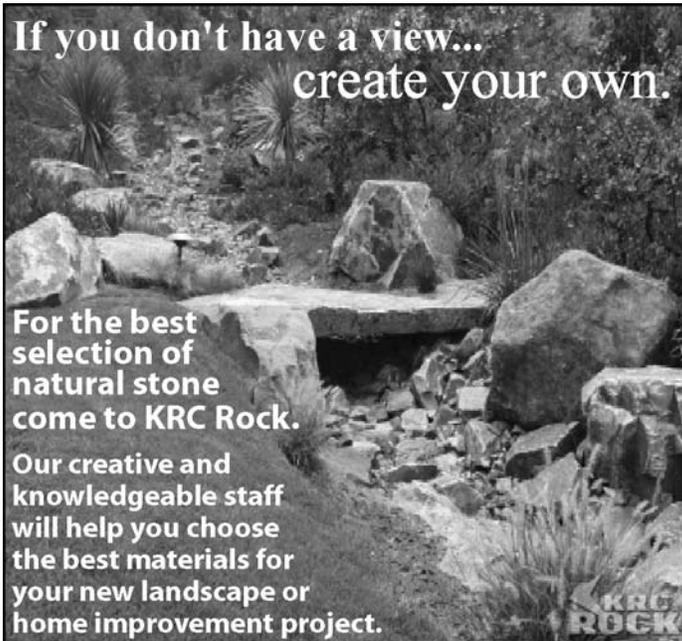
Caroline McCullagh tells us, "I don't know any way to keep cats out of the garden. They just sit on the top of our six-foot fence and laugh at our two big dogs having hysterics below them. As for the dogs, it's a matter of training. We put one-foot high portable fencing around anything we plant. We go into the yard with the dogs, and when they get near the fence, we say 'No!' They get the idea fairly quickly. The fence can come down when the plants get big enough. That being said, I know some dogs can be stubborn, and if you have one that loves to dig, call your doctor. You're going to need tranquilizers."

Mary Milton says "We used to have a problem with cats in our garden, but since we brought home a 150 pound Newfoundland dog, the cats have all but disappeared! Oz, the Newf, is very calm around the yard, and if a toy he is chasing ends up in one of the garden beds, he steps in gently to retrieve it among the succulents. Good boy, Oz!"

Susan Morse appreciates dogs and cats in her garden! "I feel a special peace when my pets join me in the garden. Their curiosity about nature is heartwarming. They bring my attention to gophers then the cat takes over on vermin control. They have alerted me to the presence of harmless snakes, saving me from a

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panic attack if I had discovered them first. My pets have done no more damage than some visiting children."

Al Myrick replies, "There is no way to keep them out, short of using low-voltage electric fencing or wire strands. Other options: for cats get a fierce dog; for dogs get a wolf."

Una Marie Pierce keeps her cat "out of my garden by not letting him out until he has done his duty in his cat box. I'm sure we have other cats in his area at night since he spends a good deal of time smelling everything. I have a terrible time with neighborhood cats in my front yard, which includes my vegetable garden. It's worse when I've turned the soil or have any bare spots. I have tried some wicker loops from a garden supply store, smelly stuff from a can and the cats just laugh at me. Now dogs can only get into my front sidewalk strip and I blame those occasional messes on their Low Life Owners."

Minna Riber has a simple solution: "If we find neighbors dogs in our gardens we notify the dog's owner that the behavior is unacceptable."

Dave Richmond says that "compared to gophers, rabbits, ground squirrels, field bindweed, etc, cats and dogs are a minor problem. Dogs: fence them out. Cats: you don't keep them out; work around them. I have thousands of pencil diameter 3' long bamboo stakes that I salvaged 10 years ago from a nursery that went out of business. I discourage my 6 cats from digging around new plantings my shoving several stakes in the ground in and around the plants. With gophers being a major problem, for me best way to grow freesias is in planter boxes. Bamboo stakes keep cats out of planter boxes. Remove stakes once foliage is up. Several layers of unshredded newspaper mulch covered by an inch or so of a normal organic mulch, to hide the newspaper, keep cats from digging up the garden, as well as stopping field bindweed from growing. Bindweed will grow through a landscape mulch, but several layers of newspaper stop it in its tracks. Cats will dig in the mulch to do their thing, but for me that's no big deal. I'm not anally retentive. Also, I'm on 2 acres so a little cat digging here and there is hardly noticeable."

Julie Rosaler doesn't have problems now that her dog is older: "She picked a couple of spots that she nests at (digs up the dirt) and leaves the rest of the yard alone. When she was a young chocolate lab, I used a 2' fence around the areas I would have liked her to stay out; this didn't always work, but with all relationships there is give and take. I did not like cats digging in my front yard and finding their surprises, but now that the nice cat that would come up and want a scratch from me, is gone, I kind of miss him."

Peggy Ruzich says she doesn't try to keep out dogs and cats, "nor do I try to keep the raccoons, possums and coyotes out. I do put temporary fences around the persimmon tree to try to keep them at bay."

Stephanie Shigematsu has lots of great advice:

- Give your dog his/her very own dig site. Like a child's sand pit, use header board to frame in the area and fill with

fresh turned soil. Bury some of their favorite toys or bones and keep the soil slightly moist. A site in partial shade may be best since dogs like to dig down and lay in cool soil on hot summer days. Keep the soil soft and they should choose it over your favorite planting beds.

- Construct a dog relief site. This could be a fenced-in area or an area you have trained your puppy to relieve itself. Using a header board and compact material like stabilized decomposed granite makes for easy quick clean-up. "Season" the area with dog waste and add a faux fire hydrant or other vertical pole or device to help activate their natural instincts. Kennel training your puppy and bringing them on a leash to the site until they use it regularly is key.
- Whenever possible, select a breed of dog that is less inclined to dig. I've also heard that dogs that like to dig are encouraged to do so when they see their owner dig. It may be helpful to keep them out of the garden when you are busy with these activities.
- When all else fails, an attractive fence should do the trick.
- I love cats, but they belong inside at all times; bird populations across America have been significantly reduced by the domesticated cat. Feral cats can be collected and given to a number of animal friendly organizations. The only remedy I have ever heard for eliminating cats from a garden area is to mulch the area with rose clippings. This seems a bit mean and isn't very great for the gardener either.

Dawn Standke advises that: "the only thing that really keeps dogs out is a fence, and the only thing that really keeps cats out is a dog... To discourage irresponsible dog owners from allowing their (leashed) dog to leave poop on your front yard, plant something dense and at least a foot tall in the first few feet of your property. Grass is just an open invitation."

Cathy Tylka has, "a 6' tall chain link fence, with the points at the top. At the bottom, my husband makes sure there is chicken wire around the 3 acres we have enclosed. If a rabbit or some other critter makes their way in...well, Richard secures the compound with rocks and more chicken wire. Our house cat is not allowed outside."

Karen Utt suggests: "1) Keep your cats and dogs on a leash! 2) Install green chicken wire fencing around your perimeter. It keeps out rabbits, too. 3) Spread pieces of green chicken wire flat on the ground where you don't want critters to go; it's guaranteed to keep them off because they hate to step on it. It will not be visible after your plants grow over it."

James Walters "recently purchased something from Drs. Foster & Smith that detects motion and emits a high pitched sound. It's to deter all critters, including cats & dogs, from entering the area. I thought I'd try it around my goldfish pond. I honestly don't know if it's working or not. My two dogs don't sniff in the flower bed any longer, so either they know they get into trouble or the box is doing its job. I think they just know that they get into trouble."

The question for next month is:
What staking techniques have worked best for you and why?

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January Plant Forum

By Steve Brigham 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.

Brachychiton acerfolius (seed pods)

ILLAWARRA FLAME TREE (Sterculiaceae) Eastern Australia

The following information is from our book, *Ornamental Trees for Mediterranean Climates*. The Illawarra Flame Tree is one of the most spectacular red-flowering trees in the world. It grows fairly quickly to an eventual 40-50' tall with a spread of 25', with a tropical-looking foliage of 6-10" bright green glossy leaves that are deeply-lobed on young plants and shallowly-lobed to oval on older trees. Although its blooming habits can vary from year to year, it usually blooms from May to July here, when all or part of the tree goes deciduous and is quickly covered with clusters of 1" bright red bell-shaped flowers. These flowers fall cleanly from the tree while still fresh, creating a carpet of red on the ground, and are followed by interesting clusters of 5" boat-shaped seed pods. In bloom, the bright red flower color of the Illawarra Flame Tree looks especially stunning in combination with the blue flowers of Jacaranda trees, which bloom at the same time of year. Cold hardy to 25°F., it is usually grown from seed and so may take several years to attain blooming size, but it is well worth the wait. A related tree called the Pink Kurrajong (*Brachychiton x acero-populneus*) is actually a hybrid between the Illawarra Flame Tree and the Bottle Tree (*Brachychiton populneus*). It is a small to medium-sized tree with pink flowers that is intermediate between its two parents and is sold as a grafted plant. (? , 1/08) – S.B.

Cotyledon orbiculata (Crassulaceae) South Africa

This easy-to-grow shrubby succulent might be mistaken for a *Kalanchoe*, but is instead classified in this related genus. In sun or shade, it is a wonderful shrubby clumper to 2-3' tall and wide. Large, fleshy gray-green to nearly white leaves are showy, as are the terminal flower clusters of pendent, bell-shaped orange flowers that attract hummingbirds. This is a drought-tolerant, easy-care plant that looks best when protected from frost, although it will tolerate light frosts. It is also a first-class container plant. (Michael and Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 1/08) – S.B.

Hakea scoparia (Proteaceae) Western Australia

This unusual drought-tolerant evergreen shrub grows to 5-8' tall and wide in full sun or light shade. Its long, narrow leaves are somewhat broom-like, hence its species name. Flowering is showy, with cream to pinkish, strongly-scented grevillea-like flower clusters all along the woody stems, followed by persistent woody seed capsules. This plant prefers well-drained, acid soils (so a decomposed granite soil is ideal), and it will tolerate fairly heavy frosts. Flowers attract hummingbirds. (Sheldon Lisker, Temecula, 1/08) – S.B.

January Plant Forum

Kalanchoe tomentosa TEDDY BEAR PLANT, PANDA PLANT (Crassulaceae) Madagascar

This popular shrubby succulent is often grown in containers, where it can be protected from damaging frosts. Growing to 18" tall and 7" wide in full sun or light shade, it has 2" long felt-fleshy leaves with a dense coating of white "fur." Leaf tips and edges are notched, and strongly marked in dark brown. Small yellowish-green flowers are sometimes produced. (Michael and Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 1/08) – S.B.

Zelkova serrata (bonsai form) SAWLEAF ZELKOVA (Ulmaceae) Eastern China, Taiwan, and Japan

Related to elms, and often used as a replacement for them, the easily-trainable Sawleaf Zelkova is a popular bonsai subject worldwide. This is a deciduous tree, typically with oval, 2-3" long leaves, but plants trained in containers develop much smaller leaves and an intricate branching structure. Fall foliage color is variable here, but can be very showy in colder climates, and plants are fully hardy to cold. (Phil Tackill, Solana Beach, 1/08) – S.B.

Thanks to everyone who brought plants to the meeting; they were discussed by **Michael Buckner**. In addition to those described above, the plants listed below were also displayed. Can you spot the phony plant this month?

What's that in front of the plant name? Plants marked **3** are fully described in the *Plant Forum Compilation* (see page 20). Plants marked **○** were part of the Opportunity Drawing. Can you spot the phony plant?

- *Aeonium* 'Plum Purdy' (Michael & Joyce Buckner, National City, 1/08)
- *Aeonium* 'Sunburst' (crested form) (Michael & Joyce Buckner, National City, 1/08)
- *Agave americana* 'Mediopicta Alba' (Michael & Joyce Buckner, National City, 1/08)
- *Agave patonii* (Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 1/08)
- *Agave* 'Mr. Ripple' (Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 1/08)

Albica circinata (Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 1/08)

Albica spiralis (Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 1/08)

Albica spiralis × *circinata*

(Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 1/08)

○ *Aloe cameronii* (Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 1/08)

3 *Brighamia gundersonii* MATRIMONY TREE (Happy Couple, San Marcos, 1/08)

3 *Brighamia insignis* ALULA, CABBAGE TREE (Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 1/08)

Bursera microphylla (bonsai form) TOROTE (Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 1/08)

○ *Crassula ovata* 'Variegata' (new form) JADE PLANT (Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 1/08)

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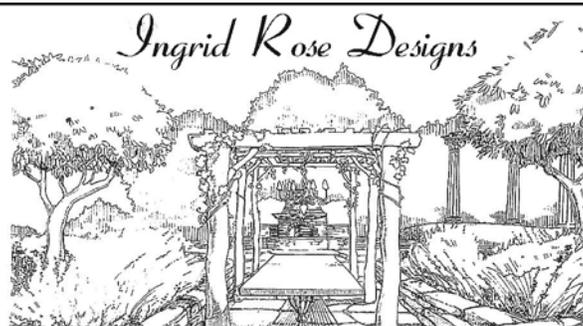
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January Plant Forum

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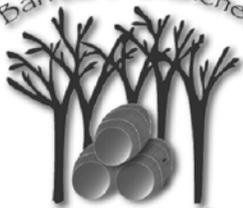
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- *Cremnosedum* 'Little Gem'
(Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 1/08)
- *Cryptanthus zonatus*
(Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 1/08)
- Echeveria agavoides* (crested form)
(Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 1/08)
- *Echeveria* 'Topsy Turvey'
(Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 10/08)
- *Graptopetalum paraguayensis*
(Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 10/08)
- *Kalanchoe luciae* (Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 1/08)
- Massonia depressa* (Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 1/08)
- Pelargonium alternans* (bonsai form)
(Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 1/08)

Also displayed by Phil Tackill was a *Suiseki* from the Yuba Desert in California (*Suiseki* is the Japanese art of stone appreciation).

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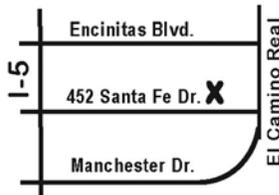
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How to read the entries above.

- 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 & city of member; date plant displayed [Betty Crocker, San Diego, 5/96]
- ⑧ Initials of person who wrote description [K.M.]



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January Meeting Report

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Our first meeting of 2008 had an important environmental topic – sustainable gardening. Speaker **Nan Sterman** shared her insights about three exceptional display gardens at the 2007 Chelsea Flower Show, that springtime British five-day frenzy of all things horticultural. As she was quick to point out, “sustainable gardening” means different things to different people, and is a “philosophy and a set of practices,” rather than a single set of rules. Basically, it involves gardening in harmony with the environment, and Nan’s talk highlighted the sustainable aspects of these Chelsea gardens that make sense for us here in Southern California.

The first garden was designed by a Northern Californian, Kate Frey, for Fetzer Vineyards. It was a “sustainable winery garden,” and included six thousand plants – mostly California wildflowers grown in England for this show – used to attract beneficial insects. There was recycled water, plus edible plants, re-purposed wood from old wine barrels, and wind powered electricity for lighting. To see images and learn more visit www.rustictowers.com/chelsea2007_1.html.

“600 Days with Bradstone” was the name of the second garden, which was a daring “Martian” garden designed to be under a dome on Mars. Designer Sarah Eberle has spent over 8 years thinking about such a garden, which provided food, shelter and a “total environment to sustain astronauts on Mars for a year.” What a tall order, and so well-done that it won Best in Show! The garden used entirely Mediterranean plants because the environment was presumed to be hot (at least during the day) and dry. There’s even a fascinating “water robot” to use minimal amounts of precious water. To find out more visit <http://600dayswithbradstone.co.uk> and www accurain.com.

The third garden Nan showed was the Marshall’s Sustainability Garden, sponsored by a British hardscape company. This high-tech garden featured a water feature of gray-water and emphasis on re-use and recycling of materials on site. For example, the dirt excavated to make the pond created a mound above an underground structure. The plants were a mix of edibles and ornamentals, and the materials used throughout came from companies which follow environmentally and socially conscientious practices. Learn more at www.marshallsforsustainablelandscapes.co.uk.

Nan summed up her thinking about gardening sustainably, in part, as follows: Use as few outside resources as possible. Use little to no pesticides. Practice efficient water use. Provide food and a place to reconnect to ourselves, each other, and to nature. Thanks, Nan, for a very thoughtful presentation! You can visit Nan’s beautiful garden in Encinitas as part of the Encinitas Garden Festival on May 3; visit www. encinitasgardenfestival.org for details.

To learn more about using “graywater” (from your laundry, showers and bathroom sinks) to water your garden, we thank landscape designer Mary Jo Martin for providing the following links to a PDF from the State of California with the guidelines and a link to the recent revision:
www.owue.water.ca.gov/docs/graywater_guide_book.pdf
www.owue.water.ca.gov/docs/Revised_Graywater_Standards.pdf

After the presentation we held our usual Plant Forum and Opportunity Drawing for an excellent array of succulents brought in by **Michael and Joyce Buckner of The Plant Man** nursery in Old Town. Thanks to Michael for doing a great job discussing the forum and drawing plants! 🌿

Join the SDHS as we visit exceptional public and private gardens in Philadelphia from June 2 – 8, 2008. See information on page 8, and contact Cheryl Hedgpath at Sterling Tours, (619) 299-3010 if you have questions or want to sign up for this marvelous tour.

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Spring/Home/Garden Show Continued from page 5

and information for the basic gardener through horti-maniacs. You'll see interesting and unusual plants that will tempt your wallet. Instead of traipsing around the county, top growers and specialty nurseries are all together so you can find just the right plants without all the driving. Talk to these people, they have the expertise to share with you about how to make their plants thrive in your garden.

You won't want to miss the preview gala on February 28th to honor Chuck Ades. You'll also get to see the gardens before the public, meet the Garden Masters who created them, and learn who won the top awards. It's a great way to support our organization and have a great time. 🌿

Going on a Water Diet Continued from page 11

GO TO MANUAL!

Ask any pilot – when times get tough, sometimes you just have to fly the plane yourself to save your neck! That's why I don't have any automated sprinkler systems in my 4-acre garden. You can save so much water by manually varying both the frequency and duration of your irrigation according to the weather; and this is the kind of major water savings we need right now! Next month, in Part 2 of this series, we'll take a look at some irrigation strategies that can play a big part in our 30% water-use reduction. Remember, we're not out to make our plants suffer – we'll keep them healthy with the water they need. What we will do, however, is save all of that precious water that we really didn't have to use in the first place!

Member **Steve Brigham** is a founding board member of SDHS and owner of Buena Creek Gardens (see ads pages 17 and 20). He's also the author of our book, *Ornamental Trees for Mediterranean Climates*. 🌿

Plants and The Scientific Method

Continued from page 8

such as coconut milk, that would support the growth and division of cells isolated from plants. The crowning event came in 1958 when F. C. Steward succeeded in converting undifferentiated callus cells from carrot cortex into embryo-like structures (subsequently named *embryoids*), which went on to develop into normal carrot plants!

Two years later Georges Morel replicated with orchids what Steward had achieved with carrot. This not only revolutionized the production of orchids, but started a whole industry of reproducing plants by cloning.

Members **Ellen Reardon** and **Carl Price** are retired from Rutgers University, where they conducted research on the molecular biology of plastids and served as editors of journals in their field. 🌿

JANUARY MEETING PHOTOS

Pelargonium alternans



Albuca circinata

Albuca spiralis



Hakea scoparia



Massonia depressa



Bursera microphylla



Albuca spiralis x circinata



Echeveria agavoide crest

Photos: Cheryl Leedom

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