

Let's Talk Plants!

Newsletter of the San Diego Horticultural Society

August 2008, Number 167

Plant it Forward

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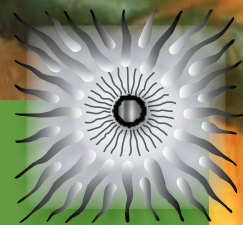
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On the Cover: Rainbow Chard



SAN DIEGO
HORTICULTURAL
SOCIETY

JULY MEETING PHOTOS

Photos by Cheryl Leedom



Hibiscus cv. (bonsai form)



Neoregelia 'Onger'



Aechmea orlandiana
'Ensign' and new
white sport



Mystery plant - can you
identify this for us?



Paphiopedalum orchids



Asclepias physocarpa



Laelia sanguiloba



Lobelia cardinalis

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Calendar/Resources Ongoing Events

Cover Image: Among the cool-season crops that grow very easily from seed is the one featured on our cover, a Swiss Chard variety known as Rainbow Chard. Gorgeous in the garden (try mixing it in your flower beds for an exotic accent) this cousin of spinach is delicious raw or cooked. Our September speaker sells a stunning variety called 'Bright Lights', which has stalks of "yellow, crimson, gold, pink, and white." Photo courtesy of All America Selections (www.all-americaselections.org), which named Swiss Chard 'Bright Lights' an All America winner in 1998.

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 2008

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| September 8 | Renee Shepherd, What's New and Unique From Seed
(members free, non-members \$5) |
| September 12- 14 | Fall Home/Garden Show (details next month) |
| October 13 | Bob Dimattia, Bamboo, the Earth and Us (members free, non-members \$5) |
| November 10 | Koby Hall, Garden Treasures of the Pacific Northwest
(members free, non-members \$5) |
| December 8 | Pete Anderson & other experts, Backyard Vineyards in San Diego County (members free, non-members \$5) |

www.sdhortsoc.org

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

Next Meeting: August 11, 2008, 6:00 – 9:00 PM

Topic: PAT WELSH ON "THE SECRET LIFE OF COOL-SEASON CROPS"

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

Emmy-Award winning TV personality, garden writer, horticultural consultant and longtime SDHS member Pat Welsh will present a program about growing and harvesting winter crops. Growing organic vegetables is all the rage, yet many gardeners only grow tomatoes, a warm-season crop, and never stick their toe into the cooler but bracing waters of growing a year-round garden. Cool-season vegetables are easier to grow than their warm-season counterparts, require less water, have fewer pests, many are more nutritious, and they thrive in our mild Mediterranean climate. Learn the tricks, hints, and secrets of the best-known winter crops from a gal who grew up on a farm growing vegetables the organic way.

Pat is the well-known author of *Pat Welsh's Southern California Gardening: A Month-by-Month Guide*, often called "the gardener's bible." In 1989 she became the first Garden Editor of *San Diego Home/Garden Lifestyles Magazine* and later was longtime host of an evening news segment on the San Diego NBC station, the first of its kind nationwide. Her other books are: *The American Horticultural Society's Southwest SMART GARDEN™ Regional Guide*, *All My Edens: A Gardener's Memoir*, and *The Magic Mural and How It Got Built*. Pat's many awards include the San Diego Area Emmy Award for Performance, the San Diego Press Club Award, the National Quill and Trowel Award, and the Lifetime Achievement Award from Quail Botanical Gardens, and Pat's books will be available for sale.

To learn more visit www.PatWelsh.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

SDHS BOARD MEMBERS

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Susi Torre-Bueno – President, Newsletter Editor
Don Walker (ex officio)
Lucy Warren – Secretary, Liaison to H&G Shows

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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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

LOOKING FOR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

In September we'll be adding new board members, so here's your chance to step up and take part. We meet every other month at Quail Botanical Gardens for about two hours. Board members decide how to allocate our resources, what special events to produce and participate in, who our speakers will be, and much more. It's a great way to share your enthusiasm for our Society and to help determine what we do throughout the year.

One of the open slots we most need to fill is that of Volunteer Coordinator. This person uses e-mail to send requests for volunteers and does other related tasks. We've got a lot of this computerized, so it doesn't take too much time.

In addition to members who serve three-year terms and who have special responsibilities (see column to left), we also have up to three "at large" board members who serve for one year. The main obligation of these at-large members is to attend the board meetings. If you'd like to take a more active role in the SDHS, please call Susi by August 10 at (760) 295-7089 and let's talk.

MARKETING THE SDHS

Here's a perfect opportunity to really flex your imagination muscle and put your creative energy to good use. We're especially interested in finding an enthusiastic and energetic member with experience and/or interest in marketing to lead our marketing efforts. This will be a tremendously fun and creative experience! Have you got some inspired ideas about how we can market our tree book outside San Diego County? Perhaps you know of ways to promote the SDHS to the public, or how to increase attendance at events? Call Susi at (760) 295-7089 and let us know what you'd like to do.

CARPOOL TO MEETINGS



Who isn't concerned about rising gas prices? You can save money by joining a carpool, or starting one! Plus, you'll have the fun of driving to meetings with other garden lovers from your neighborhood. Call Mary Clemons at (619) 441-5233 and ask her how to get going with a carpool. ☘

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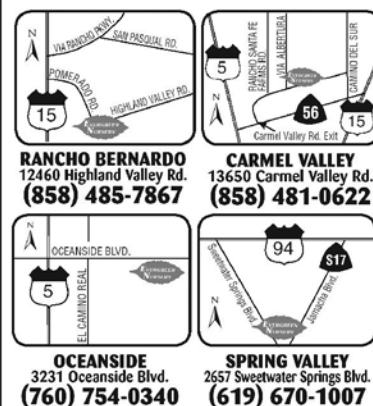


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 Friday & Saturday..7:30am-6:00pm
 Sunday.....9:00am-5:00pm

THANKS, BILL TEAGUE!

Last month we wrote about our display garden at the San Diego County Fair, which was designed, as it has been for the last five years, by board member Bill Teague. While we mentioned that it was an “award-winning garden,” we neglected to name the awards that it won. Bill’s beautiful garden featured water-efficient plants (a list appeared here last month), with plenty of fascinating foliage texture, color and form to assure year-round interest even when there aren’t a lot of flowers in bloom.

We won two awards this year. One was the Award of Merit from the San Diego County Fair. The other was a prize awarded at the Fair for the first time this year – the American Horticultural Society Environmental Award. This is a handsome medallion, and is awarded to “the best demonstration of skillful design that incorporates environmental stewardship in the garden.” We’re so proud of Bill for designing a garden that is not only lovely but also sensitive to our environment. 🌿



Photo: Vicki Broughton

To Learn More...

COOL SEASON VEGGIES

By Ava Torre-Bueno

In keeping with this month’s topic of cool season vegetable gardening, here are some web sites about general and specific themes:

The first article is an overview of how to add cool season vegetables into your garden. It suggests you not be limited to the vegetable patch, but include them in flower beds!

<http://gardening.about.com/od/vegetables/a/GreensAndReds.htm>

Then there’s a site for the Artichoke Festival held in Castroville, CA every year:

<http://www.artichoke-festival.org/>

Some people love ‘em, some hate them ‘em, so read about Brussels sprouts in Wikipedia:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brussels_sprouts

My favorite – garlic – and everything you could ever want to know about it, is on this page:

<http://www.whfoods.com/genpage.php?tname=foodspice&dbid=60>



Photo: Rachel Cobb

Lastly, lettuce. We are so lucky to have this as an all winter crop in most of San Diego County!

<http://gardening.about.com/od/vegetablepatch/a/Lettuce.htm>

Member Ava Torre-Bueno is a psychotherapist in private practice and is the organizer of Gardeners 4 Peace. This group of volunteers is

helping to create a peaceful, organic, permaculture garden at the San Diego Friends Center. To learn more visit <http://www.sandiegofriendscenter.org/volunteers.htm> and contact Ava at gardeners4peace@hotmail.com. 🌿

From The Board

By Susi Torre-Bueno

MAY I VISIT YOUR GARDEN?

A few months ago I asked members to show me their gardens, and I want to thank those who responded. 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 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.

PLANT IT FORWARD

On page 6 you’ll read about the fabulous Gala in the Gardens being held at Quail Botanical Gardens next month. I’m so honored to have been chosen as this year’s recipient of their Paul Ecke, Jr. Award of Excellence. I hope that many of you will join me at Quail on September 13th for what is guaranteed to be an exceedingly delightful evening.

One reason I was selected was because I was on the original committee to bring a Children’s Garden to Quail. I am passionate about getting children involved in gardening, mostly because I started gardening in 2nd grade and I know how much it has meant to me over the years. Helping youngsters to appreciate gardening, and through that the wider natural world all around them, is how we can take our love for nature and “plant it forward” into the hearts of a newer generation. In his book *Last Child in the Woods*, Richard Louv (who was the Quail Gala honoree a couple of years ago), quotes a San Diego fourth-grader as saying: “I like to play indoors better, ‘cause that’s where all the electrical outlets are.” If this statement seems tragic to you, please see page 10 for ways you can help a child connect to nature.

TELL IT TO SUSI

The more you put into the SDHS the more you’ll get out of it! E-mail me at info@sdhortsoc.org or call me at (760) 295-7089 and tell me what you’d like the SDHS to do, especially if you’re willing to be an active participant. 🌿

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Plant it Forward: **Gala in the Gardens,** **September 13**



Photo: Bryan Quesada

Gala in the Gardens is the biggest fundraiser of the year for Quail Botanical Gardens, and it's one of the most enjoyable party experiences in all of San Diego County. In fact, the *Gala* was included in *San Diego Magazine's* "Top 10 plus 10 Best Parties for 2007." Please join Chairperson René van Rems at this year's *Gala in the Gardens* on Saturday, September 13th at 5:30 p.m.; it will be a spectacular outdoor party with an anticipated 500+ guests.

This year's Gala program will be a real treat as the presentation of the Paul Ecke, Jr. Award of Excellence will go to our own **Susi Torre-Bueno**. Susi, well deserving in so many ways, is a past Quail Botanical Gardens board member and is the current president of the San Diego Horticultural Society. Many of you may not know that Susi was instrumental in the beginning steps of the new expansion project at Quail Botanical Gardens – the new Children's Garden which broke ground on Saturday, June 28th of this year. Like so many, Susi attended the ground breaking ceremony and anticipates with great joy the culmination of years of effort and a beautiful new Children's Garden for our community to embrace for generations to come.

Be sure to mark your calendars and support the Gardens as they play on the theme, **Plant It Forward** and fundraise (and "friend-raise") now to nourish and grow the Gardens' future. The evening includes fine cuisine and beverages, all while strolling the many Garden trails and vignettes. A fabulous silent and live auction will also take place in a beautifully decorated open-air pavilion.

Ticket prices for the evening are \$165 per person and can be purchased at www.qbgardens.org. Please come to support Susi and join the festivities, help cultivate an earth-friendly theme for generations to come – attend one of San Diego's best parties of the year and **Plant it Forward!** For additional **Gala in the Gardens** information, please contact Development Special Events Coordinator, Cheryl Mergenthaler, at (760) 436-3036 x. 218 or cmemergenthaler@qbgardens.org.

To purchase tickets go to
www.qbgardens.org

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Plants That Produce

BERRY GOOD PLANTS FOR THE GARDEN

By Richard Frost

Many of the berries in my garden are now ripe. As I walk around eating them at arms' length, I'm considering what new varieties to order either bareroot this Fall or as fresh plants in the Spring. If you'd like to add berries to your San Diego garden, here are some recommendations.

The Blackberry family (a subgroup of *Rubus*) includes well-known varieties like Boysen, Logan, Marion, and Olallie berries. The best-tasting of these is the Young berry. Big, juicy blackberries such as the Marion or the Monrovia thornless hybrid are also a treat.

Raspberries are another subgroup of the genus *Rubus*. I must thank my friend David Ross for insisting that the Bababerry cultivar is a good choice for coastal-influenced gardens. In its second year, my 6' x 10' patch produces bucket loads per week nonstop April through October. The Canby Red cultivar is also a good choice beyond the coastal foothills.

Day-neutral Strawberries (*Fragaria* hybrids) will provide fruit in San Diego almost year-round. The best-tasting selections are Mara de Bois, Quinault, and Sequoia.

The fragrant Currant Berry shrub is a great addition to any garden. Selections made from the Slender-Flowered Golden Currant (*Ribes aureum* var. *gracillimum*) and the Clove Currant (*Ribes odoratum*) such as 'Crandall' are good fruitful choices.

Individual plants of the fruitful native Coast Gooseberry (*Ribes divaricatum*), Sierra Gooseberry (*R. roezlii*), and Fuchsia-Flowering Gooseberry (*R. speciosum*) can vary a lot in taste. Hybrids such as 'Catherine', 'Glendale', and 'Poorman' Gooseberry are consistent winners. Also consider the Jostaberry (*R. x nidigrolaria*) – a Currant x Gooseberry!

The Blueberry (various *Vaccinium*) is the darling of the health food magazines, but alas its nutrition is only skin deep. The tasty cultivars 'Sharp's Blue', 'Jubilee', and 'O'Neal' perform well along the coast – or inland in a sheltered environment. Although tart, the Cranberry (*Vaccinium macrocarpon*) is higher in anthocyanins than Blueberry. Try the cultivar 'Crowley'. For the ultimate in healthful berries, grow California Huckleberry (*Vaccinium ovatum*), True Bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*), and Western Serviceberry (*Amelanchier alnifolia* var. *semiintegrifolia*).

Elderberries (genus *Sambucus*) are plants of ancient lore. All green parts of the plants contain toxins. Try the Yellow Elderberry (*S. australasica*) whose fruits do not require any special preparation for fresh eating or cooking.

The genus *Elaeagnus* is well known for several invasive species – but the hybrid shrub 'Ebbing's Silverberry' (*Elaeagnus x ebbingei*) is an exception. It produces silver-flecked red berries that are excellent fresh or made into a sweet-tart jam.

Karundu (*Carissa spinarum*) is a staple food of northeast Africa and the Himalayan highlands. The plant strongly resembles Natal Plum (*Carissa macrocarpa*) but has a smaller, darker, more flavorful, very healthful fruit.

The Apple Berry (*Billardiera scandens*) is an evergreen vine-like shrub with small yellow trumpet flowers in the spring and summer. It is hardy in temperate USDA zones 9-11 and produces inch-long red-brown berries with a fruity taste.

The Chilean Guava (*Ugni molinae*), Red Guava (*Eugenia nutans*), and Jaboticaba (*Myrciaria jaboticaba*) are berry-producing plants of the Myrtle family (*Myrtaceae*). Also in this family are Pitanga – aka Surinam Cherry (*Eugenia uniflora*), Cherry Of The Rio Grande (*Eugenia aggregata*) and Grumichama (*Eugenia brasiliensis*) which thrives in partial shade.

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

Garden Gourmet

FOOD AND FICTION

By Alice Lowe

Book clubs and food go together like the proverbial love and marriage, horse and carriage. The format varies, but what gathering of readers doesn't munch on tasty treats while chewing the fat about the current reading selection? In mine, rotating hosts provide dinner, often attempting to match the meal's theme to the book. I'm hosting the upcoming session on Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*, so not only do I have to surmount the reputation (no longer valid) of the wretchedness of English food, but I have a tough act to follow – the paella that Kris made for our Spanish novel last time.

After reacquainting myself with *The London Ritz Book of Afternoon Tea* and reflecting on frequent travels in England, I've decided on a San Diego summer version of high tea. There are no limits to what one can serve under this flexible framework, but here's what I have in mind.

Naturally we'll have stacks of little crustless sandwiches (though I draw the line at squishy white bread). Maximizing the use of peak summer produce and the herbs in my garden, I think we'll have some combination of cucumber and smoked salmon with herbed butter, tomato and basil with pesto mayo, goat cheese and arugula with fig jam, radish and cream cheese with lots of black pepper.

I can't imagine any summer spread without a couple of salads. These would replace main dishes like cottage pie or quiche and not require cranking up the oven. For this occasion, I'm planning a fruit salad of peaches and berries, tossed with slivered almonds, fresh mint leaves, and a little orange marmalade diluted with rice vinegar. A second salad might be curried chicken with grapes and cashews.

Scones are essential, as is shortbread. Both are easy, even for non-bakers like myself, can be baked early in the day, and recipes abound in countless cookbooks and online. Both can be made savory as well as sweet with cheddar cheese and herbs, for example, and, more importantly, both can be made with chocolate chips. Another great but easy dessert would be lemon bars, made with homemade lemon curd (or Robertson's from the jar).

Tea? Not this group – we'll be sipping wine, or maybe even Bellinis, which are Italian sparkling wine with peach nectar. It isn't traditional, but I don't think I'll get any protests.

An afternoon or high tea, whichever you call it and whether with or without the tea, is a great option to consider for a luncheon party or summer supper, and for special occasions like showers. And it's not just for "ladies who lunch" with raised pinkies – a hearty tea will satisfy small and large appetites alike.

Member Alice Lowe reads extensively about food and gardening, nutrition and fitness, in addition to a special fondness for English literature.

Discovering Spice Zee, the Nectarplum

By Susan D'Vincent

Prowling around Armstrong's Nursery in Encinitas I was irresistibly drawn to some beautiful burgundy red foliage tucked in among the 5 gal. fruit trees. What appeared at first glance to be a misplaced Photinia, with its contrasting red over green foliage, turned out to be a fruit tree. By burrowing through the growth of the surrounding trees to get down to the label, I discovered it to be a very unusual deciduous fruit tree called Spice Zee Nectarplum, the cross between (what else) a nectarine and a plum. The information on the label was so intriguing I went home and checked it out online. It was hard to find much substantial information on it besides what I read on the label because it had been so recently released. There were only four pages which told me how unusual it was. But the hortbloggers and foodies said if you can find it, get it! Most online nursery stock was sold out until next year's bare root season with some prices as high as 65 bucks for a 5 gal. size! What information I was able to pull together follows.

The fruit looks like a red blushed nectarine with white flesh. The flavor is full of sugar but balanced with just enough acid to make it spicy sweet. The flavors of both nectarine and plum are easily detected. It ranked 6th in August 2006 in a fruit tasting done at Dave Wilson Nursery, which for many years has conducted comprehensive and respected tastings.

As if the exceptional fruit wasn't enough, Spice Zee turns out to be a beautiful ornamental tree described as having "a tremendous bloom" with large cup-shaped white flowers covering the tree in spring. That's followed by the stunning wine red new growth, which matures into a deep green in summer. In autumn the long graceful leaves turn to salmon and peachy tones before they drop. The tree is said to be very productive, bearing fruit the first year. Harvest is in July and August. It is self-fruitful, not requiring a pollinator like many of the pluots and other stone fruits. It requires about 500 hours of chill, which fortunately we get where I live in lower Olivenhain, but it may not produce quite as well by the coast.

This tree is not a genetically modified hybrid, but is the creation of Floyd Zaiger of Zaiger Genetics, Inc., who has been producing new varieties of stone fruit for decades the old fashioned way, cross-pollination. (His operation however, is definitely state of the art.) He's the creator the Aprium and Pluot, two other fruits I would like to acquire. He works with Dave Wilson Nursery, in Modesto in California's Central Valley, where they conduct taste tests of new fruit and release the best.

By the time I had done my research I couldn't wait to get back to Armstrong's to see if they still had my tree. It was still there; in fact they had several, sitting in their 5 gal. pots as yet undiscovered. I found an interesting specimen with a bent trunk and a large opposing branch to balance it. Hopefully, my little vase shaped tree won't grow as tall as the 15 to 25 feet expected on the Nemagard rootstock. However, this rootstock does discourage nematode infestations and the vigorous growth it produces can be summer pruned to keep it in check.

I have been enjoying the beautiful burgundy color of my Spice Zee's new growth and I can't wait for next spring to witness the "tremendous bloom" and hopefully sample the luscious fruit.

Chaste Tree

By Ellen Reardon and Carl Price

In a previous essay* we referred to a meeting at Penn State University at which we listened in awe as John Ritter of North Carolina State University discussed the origin, and decline, of women's "take-charge" roles in managing their bodies prior to the 1400's. He specifically cited the chaste tree, *Vitex agnus-castus*, from both a botanical and medical perspective. Throughout much of history, many European women had "known" how to use the extracts of the chaste tree to enhance or decrease fertility; that is, until the 15th century. As a small group of us discussed the rationale for this sudden termination of the dispensation of knowledge, Dr. Ritter supplied us with the surprising-but-true history — the rise of medical schools: Women who knew these facts had to be witches, therefore they were burned at the stake! Extracts of *Vitex agnus-castus* act by inducing progesterone so that ovulation may be enhanced or repressed, and physicians certainly couldn't allow ignorant peasant women to undercut the medical profession!

The chaste tree is endemic to the Mediterranean regions, New Zealand, and Kenya, so it is also a natural for Southern California. It is heat loving, drought and deer tolerant, and even resistant to salt drift. Unfortunately, it is susceptible to mushroom root rot and nematodes. Formerly classified as in the Verbenaceae family, it has recently been transferred to the Lamiaceae (mint) family. There are about 250 species of the genus *Vitex*, and *V. agnus-castus* can be grown as a small deciduous tree or a large shrub, growing 10–20 feet (3–6 m) tall. A landscape specimen carried by the California Flora nursery bears spikes of lavender-blue flowers in the summer.

The leaves of *V. agnus-castus* are 3–4 inches (7.6–10 cm) in diameter with 5 to 7 fingerlike leaflets, grey-green to dark green, with an aroma similar to that of sage. The leaves bear a strong resemblance to *Cannabis* (!) species, inspiring another common name: hemp tree. While flowering**, it is often mistaken for the butterfly bush (*Buddleia* spp.) because of the similarity of their blooms.

If pruning is necessary, do it in winter, since the blooms form on new wood. It can easily be propagated by seed or by cuttings, which root easily in warm weather. It is hardy in USDA zones 6–10, but may need additional protection against the cold in zone 6. We seldom have that problem here.



**Plants That Heal*, September 2007

**The photograph of flowers of the chaste tree, *Vitex agnus-castus*, is by Jack Scheper, Floridata.com., and can be downloaded from www.floridata.com/ref/v/vitex_a.cfm.

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. ☞

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 and below. A warm hello to the following folks who have joined recently:

We welcome SECO Landscapes as our newest sponsor.

Naomi Kobayashi
Al Harouirtz
Charles & Janet Finney
Water Conservation Garden
Barbara Clark
Amanda Roa
Mark Larson
Leah Bissonette

NEW ADVERTISERS AND INSERTS:

Cuyamaca College, INSERT

House for Sale, PAGE 16

MiraCosta College, INSERT

Quail Botanical Gardens, INSERT

Southwestern College, BACK COVER

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:

Lorraine Bolton (1)	Bobbi Hirschhoff (1)	Samantha Owen (1)
Linda Bressler (1)	Miriam Kirk (2)	Nan Sterman (1)
Helen Dizio (1)	Kathy La Fluer (2)	Donna Sullivan (1)
Sharon Graham (1)	Sharon Lee (1)	Darlene Villaneuva (2)
Pat Hammer (1)	Shelley Moore (1)	
Ginny Hawkins (1)	Taylor Murphy (1)	

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Don & Dorothy Walker
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CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS

Doris Engberg
Ken & Jean Nikodym
Philip Tackill & Janet Wanerka
René van Rems
Village Garden Club of La Jolla

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(for a complete listing and details go to www.qbgardens.org)

To register call (760) 436-3036 x206

Summer Concert Series

Each concert features an optional catered gourmet dinner served in the intimate Walled Garden before the show. Please arrive at 5:00 pm to enjoy dinner and 5:45 pm for the concert-only portion of the evening.

August 3: Gilbert Castellanos Latin Jazz Quintet featuring Irving Flores: San Diego based trumpeter Gilbert Castellanos is a major force on the San Diego jazz scene and one of the leading trumpeters in the Southern California area.

August 17: Raggle Taggle: This San Diego based band has developed an International jazz and Celtic sound that is truly unique. This concert will feature some amazing Irish dancers too.

For tickets see number above. Cost per concert with dinner: members/\$40, non-members/\$45. Please make your reservations by 1 pm Wednesday before the concert. Cost per concert only: members/\$20, non-members/\$22.

PARTIAL LIST OF CLASSES

Creating a Garden Oasis, Saturday, August 2, 9:30 – noon. Ed Simpson shows how to create a simple water garden that will serve as an oasis in your drought tolerant landscape. Cost: Members \$30, non-members \$35 Advance registration required.

Bye Bye Grass! Part I: Tuesday, August 5, 6:00 – 8:00 pm. Join Nan Sterman, gardening expert, host of the PBS show, *A Growing Passion*, to learn how to exterminate your lawn for good. **Part II:** Wednesday, August 6, 6:00 – 8:00 pm. Using Quail Botanical Gardens as an outdoor classroom, Nan will guide you through living examples of water-wise landscapes, show you interesting drought-tolerant ground covers, and introduce you to the variety of hardscape options. FREE, but advance registration required, call (619) 660-0614 x10.

Flower Photography Workshop, Saturday, August 16, 8:30 am – 2 pm. Learn proven techniques from nationally acclaimed flower photographer Bob Bretell such as the creative use of natural light under all conditions, artistic effects using movement and depth of field, exposure techniques, and how to look at flowers in a new way. Cost: Members \$65, non-members \$75. Advance registration required. ☞

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

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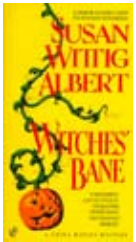
DISCOUNTS FOR MEMBERS!
See Page 22 for Details

Book Review

DIRTY BOOKS

Reviewed by Caroline McCullagh

They're not really dirty. They're my annual crop of summer mysteries with a garden theme—perfect for whiling away the hot days of August. There aren't that many mysteries centered around gardening, so if you've always had a yen to write, I think the field's wide open. I did manage to find a few.



So many mysteries seem to be directed at the female reader. They're called cozies. I wonder if men ever read them. They usually come in a series with a heroine, a sidekick, and an extremely sexy and prickly boyfriend who is alternately bemused and infuriated by the heroine's actions. *Witches Bane* by Susan Wittig Albert is one of these.

The heroine is China Bayless, a former attorney who has dropped out of the rat race and opened an herb store in a small Texas college town. She grows and sells herbs and herb related items. The boyfriend, Mike, is a "tall, dark, sexy, and almost handsome ex-cop." (My guess is that any man reading this column is ready to skip to the next book. Instead, jump to the last one, *The Blue Rose*. It's gender neutral.)

Of course, there's a murder, and Ruby (the sidekick) is the prime suspect. As with life, the end is foretold. It's the journey that's important. Albert makes it tantalizing and entertaining. If you enjoy spending time with China, Mike, and Ruby, you're in for some fun with the rest of the series. The bonus for the gardener is that we get to learn a lot of herb lore.

Mum's the Word by Kate Collins is the first of a series about Abby Knight, who runs a flower shop. She has a plucky roommate, Nikki, and a soon-to-be boyfriend, Marco, an ex-cop, who is mysterious, handsome, and sexy, and has a good sense of humor. He needs it. That he starts calling Abby "Lucy" and Nikki "Ethel" gives the reader a clue as to what Collins is trying to achieve with the book. There's an interesting contrast between almost-slapstick and the darker murder mystery, and the author carries it off to a satisfactory ending. If you're not put off by the cuteness, you may enjoy this series.

The final book, *The Blue Rose*, is the first of a series by Anthony Egin. You know when you read something that's blurbed by David Austin, of David Austin Roses, and Michael Cady, of Jackson and Perkins, that you're on to something interesting, even if the mystery isn't perfect. This book is centered on the development and marketing of roses worldwide. I found it fascinating. I enjoyed and reviewed Egin's second in the series, *The Lost Gardens*, in 2007. Lawrence Kingston, the lead character in that book, shares center stage with two (really stupid) characters in this book, but you can feel the author becoming more interested in Kingston as the story unfolds.

I bought these books (and I don't want to tell you how many others) at Mysterious Galaxy, an old-fashioned neighborhood book store in Clairemont. You can also find them at your local bookstore. ☘

Community Outreach

'SOUTH BAY GREEN SCENE' CELEBRATES SWC'S BOTANIC GARDEN GRAND OPENING ON SATURDAY, AUGUST 30

The Landscape and Nursery Technology Program at Southwestern College (SWC) is proud to announce the acceptance of their four acre horticulture area as a new botanic garden. A grand opening, *South Bay Green Scene*, will be held in celebration of the new "South Bay Botanic Garden at Southwestern College." The festivities include a garden show, plant vendors, horticultural clubs, energy and green-friendly organizations, and additional plant related businesses.

Join the fun on Saturday, August 30, from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. at Southwestern College, South Bay Botanic Garden, 900 Otay Lakes Road, Chula Vista, CA 91910. This event is FREE & open to the Public (booth Space for vendors and plant organizations is available). For a detailed map of the Southwestern College campus, visit <http://www.swccd.edu/4thlevel/index.asp?L3=132>.

The recently named South Bay Botanic Garden has been accepted as a nationally recognized garden by the American Public Garden Association. The beautifully landscape facility consists of a large variety of mature trees, shrubs, ground covers, flowers, and water features. For information on becoming a member of the South Bay Botanic Garden or on being a part of the South Bay Green Scene, contact Bill Homyak at (619) 421-6700 ext. 5371. Member involvement includes attendance at meetings, volunteering of gardening skills, and helping to determine the direction of the garden. The South Bay Botanic Garden is free and open to the public Tuesday's through Saturday's from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

PLANT IT FORWARD

On pages 5 and 6 you will read about the idea of "planting it forward," or making a difference in a child's life through sharing a love of gardening. Our children and grandchildren – the future stewards of our land – often don't get enough encouragement or lack opportunities to get involved in gardening. You can change that and make a huge difference in a child's life.

Each of you has many opportunities to get involved and plant it forward. You could make a donation to the Children's Garden at Quail, and also become active in that important resource.

You could volunteer to help at a nearby school garden – visit www.rcdsandiego.org/programs/schoolgardens.html and http://cesandiego.ucdavis.edu/School_Gardens/ for more information on school gardens.

You could donate to or be part of San Diego Roots Seeds of Leadership Youth Garden Program (visit www.sandiegoroots.org/terra_nova.html).

To read about one school garden that member Jeff Moore of Solana Succulents was involved in, visit http://www.signonsandiego.com/uniontrib/20080524/news_1mc24garden.html ☘

MORE Important Member Information

ADDRESS CORRECTION FOR DONATIONS

Last month we sadly reported the death of long-time member Lise Rasmussen-Wright. The address we gave for donations in her memory was incorrect. Please make your checks out to: Dr. Januario Castro, Research in memory of Lise Rasmussen-Wright, and mail to UCSD Moores Cancer Center, Attn: Pam Werner, 3855 Health Sciences Drive, Box 0658, La Jolla, CA 92093-0658.



YOU'RE INVITED TO VISIT PROVEN WINNERS

You have an opportunity to attend the 7th annual Open House at Proven Winners in Bonsall. You can go on Sept. 6 for a \$15 charge (see below), or for FREE on Sept. 5 or Sept. 8-12. During the free days there will be some tours and talks. Sept. 5 the talks will be on product development, integrated pest management (IPM), and Proven Winners marketing efforts. Sept. 10 is "Landscapers Day," and the topics include low water use varieties and succulents. To attend on a free day you must RSVP by August 30 to Jackie at (888) 323-0730.

For \$15 you can go on Garden Compass Day - details are at www.gardencompass.com/Original/Events.htm. This day will include plant sales (plants will not be sold on other days) and auctions of rare plants, plus several interesting talks.

YOUR MEMBERSHIP CARD IS VALUABLE!

In July we began charging non-members \$5 to attend our meetings. We check for membership status as people arrive, and if you have your card handy it'll greatly speed up the process - thanks! If you can't find your membership card, please contact membership@sdhortsoc.org. In early July we sent an e-mail to members reminding them to bring their membership cards. If you didn't get this e-mail it means we don't have a current e-mail address for you. Please send your current address to info@sdhortsoc.org so we can update our files.

Also, whenever you visit a nursery for the first time you should ask if they offer a discount for members of the San Diego Horticultural Society (for a list of nursery discounts, see page 22). Sometimes they do, and it never hurts to ask. It helps to have your membership card with you when you ask for a discount - another good reason to have your current card handy. If they're willing to give a discount to our members on a regular basis, please send the nursery contact info to Susi Torre-Bueno at info@sdhortsoc.org and Susi will follow up with the nursery - thanks!

FREE GUEST PASSES

We hope you'll want your friends to attend our lively and informative monthly meetings. Starting last month, when you renew your membership each year we'll include 2 guest passes with every

Smart Irrigation = \$aving Water in the Landscape

By Will Johnson

Studies demonstrate just how much water different types of plants require. "Smart Irrigation" means matching the water you provide through irrigation with that plant's optimal water requirements. If most homeowners actually DID that, it's estimated we could save up to half the water we now use.

Many new, exciting technologies help us use our precious water more efficiently, and better yet, make it easy to be green (water-wise). Some are low-tech, like changing or adjusting a sprinkler nozzle. Others, like some of the newest weather based irrigation controllers, involve cutting-edge electronics and wireless technology. Which should you use? This series of articles will help you decide.

Fantastically innovative, and inexpensive, "Multi-Stream Nozzles" and micro sprays can replace existing nozzles in pop-up sprinklers. They apply water very slowly and greatly improve water distribution, so runoff is reduced and efficiency increases. MP Rotator offers the best assortment of adjustable nozzles for larger yards and parking strips. Rainbird's XPCN is adjustable, with a 2.5' to 4' radius micro spray nozzle perfect for small spaces and intimate gardens.

Weather Based Controllers, called Smart Timers, help eliminate over-watering, run-off and other wasteful problems. All Smart Timers use current weather forecasts, plus "evapotranspiration" (ET) data, adjusting sprinkler times to apply the right amount of water, more in hot weather, less on cool days. The hippest new Smart Timer (from Cyber-Rain) runs from your home computer to completely automate the irrigation system, for under \$350 (before rebate!).

New Direct-2-Root watering products have improved performance and durability, and apply appropriate amounts of water and improved aeration directly into the soil, down in the root zone. Plants thrive! "Low flow" and "drip irrigation" conjures up visions of tangles of broken, unsightly black tubing, but our gardens now benefit from reliable, durable, hidden, agricultural "Landscape Drip" watering technology (made by Netafim or Hunter). Water is applied just under the surface, evaporation is reduced, runoff and overspray are both eliminated.

TIPS:

1) Get an Irrigation System Assessment from a CLCA-member Landscape Contractor (estimated cost of \$100-\$200+) to find out how to save as much water as possible. Some water agencies will perform this assessment for free.

2) Multi Starts - If that lawn needs 10 minutes of water a day in the summer, give it 3 minutes, 3 times (5am/6am/7am), and you'll eliminate most runoff. Most traditional timers allow this; it's usually simple to program.

3) MP Rotator nozzles work great and are cool to watch. After rebate, they cost a buck or two a head.

4) Contact your local Water Agency and request a rebate certification for a new Weather Based Controller - for most, a new weather-based timer may be surprisingly low-cost or free!

Continued on page 13

Continued on page 13

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The Real Dirt On...

KATHERINE ESAU

By Linda Bresler

Katherine Esau was born on April 3, 1898, in Ukraine, into a German Mennonite family whose ancestors had been invited to promote agriculture on the Ukrainian steppes by Czarina Catherine the Great. During the Russian Revolution the Bolsheviks greatly distrusted the Mennonite community. When the Germans invaded the Ukraine during World War I, they convinced the Esau family to accompany them back to Germany because of the danger of arrest. The family escaped just in time.

Esau had completed a year at an agricultural college in Russia before she left. In Germany, she attended the Agricultural College of Berlin. After several more years of study, she earned a degree in plant breeding. Because of the deteriorating political condition in Germany, the Esau family departed Germany for America in 1922. They went to Reedley, CA, where there was a large Mennonite community.

After she became more comfortable with the English language she took a job with the Sloan Seed Company in Oxnard, CA. She later worked at the Spreckles Sugar Company in the Salinas Valley. There, she bred strains of sugar beets for resistance to the virus-causing curly-top disease. Professor Wilfred Robbins of the University of California, Davis, visited the company and asked Katherine to show him her research project. She was invited to matriculate as a graduate student at U.C. Davis in 1927.

Esau had intended to develop a sugar beet that was resistant to curly-top virus. However, this would have involved releasing the beet leafhopper into the university fields to infect the sugar beets. This was opposed by other plant researchers. Therefore, she changed the direction of her research to the study of the transmission of curly-top virus and its effect on the sugar beet phloem, effectively changing it from applied research to the more basic study of plant anatomy as it relates to the disease.

In 1932, Esau received her Ph.D. from UC Berkeley. (There was no Ph.D. program at the time at UC Davis.) She remained at Davis as a professor of botany. She studied both diseased and healthy plants, including celery, tobacco, carrot, and pear. In 1953, her classic textbook, *Plant Anatomy*, known worldwide as the bible of plant anatomy, was published. Her second book *Anatomy of Seed Plants*, was published in 1960. Both of these books were published in several languages, and have extended her influence on the quality of instruction of plant anatomy throughout the world. Esau was a wonderful teacher and researcher, and her exceptional abilities were recognized by fellow staff members when she was selected to give the Faculty Research Lecture at Davis in 1946.

Esau served as president of the Botanical Society of America in 1951. In 1956, she was one of the original recipients of the Merit Award of that society at its fiftieth anniversary meeting. She was the sixth woman elected to the National Academy of Sciences in 1957. In 1989, she was awarded the National Medal of Science. Esau established "The Katherine Esau Fellowship Program" in 1993 to provide funds to junior faculty members, visiting scholars, and postdoctoral researchers for the study of plant structure.

Esau died on June 4, 1997, in Santa Barbara, CA.

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. 🌿

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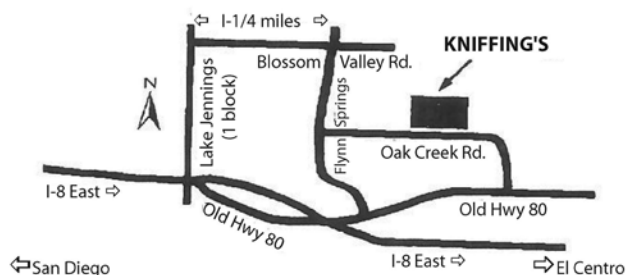
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annual renewal, 4 passes for a 2 year renewal, and 6 passes for five year renewal. This will allow your friends, or your non-member spouse, to attend with you for free. You can also upgrade your individual membership to a family membership for just \$5, so if your spouse (or sweetie) comes more than once a year an upgrade will save you money.

THANKS JULY MEETING VOLUNTEERS

The members below helped at the July meeting by checking membership cards and collecting \$5 from the non-members who attended. Thanks so much for your help! We're looking for people to do this at the August meeting, so if you can help that night, please phone Susi at (760) 295-7089. Thanks to Sandi & Ray Feiock, Shari Matteson, Sue Nelson, Ann & Jim Peter, and Anne Wolfe. ☘

Next month's column will review number of the more popular SmartTimers that qualify for substantial rebates, and introduce the magic of evapotranspiration and just who is CIMIS!?

Member Will Johnson (Hoover '72), a C27 Landscape contractor, lives with his family in Kensington. His company, SECO Landscapes, specializes in complete outdoor living / landscape installation, water gardens, night lighting and irrigation management. Will welcomes your comments/questions at info@secolandscapes.com. ☘

HANDSOME NEW NAMETAGS

Is your SDHS nametag out of date – or have you recently joined and in need of a nametag? Sturdy magnet-back nametags with our NEW logo are available now for only \$8.50; call Diana Goforth to order yours: (760) 753-1545. You can pay for these with your \$5 value Hort Bucks (see page 9).



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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: Please share your tips for building a simple, short flight of stairs in the garden.

Aenne Carver has a technique for creating steps from cement bags: "I learned this technique from Pat Welsh, and I have put my lazy touch on her precise method. Buy small cement bags, one for each step. I save my receipt and buy a couple more bags than I estimate I need. Trust me, you'll be happy to have the extra bags. First, decide the placement for each stair by placing a rock or a marker where your feet naturally fall going up the slope. Take your time with this, because you may decide to have the path zig instead of zag, or you may want extra steps to make the climb less steep. Then, create a level landing spot for each bag to rest on – this part takes the most time and effort. If you are precision-inclined, a leveler helps determine when the spot is flat. Roll each bag several times, to mix the contents well before the final placement. Snuggle the bag towards the back of the level area, and mush it around until it is lying properly. Finally, when you are satisfied with each bag's placement, thoroughly but gently water them. For at least two weeks (in wet, cold weather bags need extra time to set), water the bags occasionally, and let them cure – no walking on them! After they are well cured, peel off any remaining paper covering, and voila you have rustic, chunky, yet serviceable stairs. All my garden projects end with...buying more plants. So, gather favorite creeping plants, like coconut thyme, and plant them in between your new steps!"

Joe Boldt had one good word of advice, which might be the best option for some people: "Contractor."

Bette Childs says, "My husband can use a hammer, saw and drill so he has built simple steps in various places in our garden. He builds wooden frames, levels the ground area, sets the frames down and fills them with DG. These steps are nice and level, practical and look pretty good."

Ann Forseth-Smith recycles: "I use re-cycled concrete. It's free for the taking, from sidewalk and patio projects. Look for concrete in driveways and speak with landscape companies in your area. Homeowners are usually happy to let you take away the debris. Out with the old, in with the new. The steps are beautiful as well, and have an organic style that blends easily into the garden. I also use concrete pieces for shoring up raised beds, making low walls and for stepping stones. Viva Leftovers!"

Jim Hartung has another view about stairs: "We do not like stairs. In fact, we avoid them whenever possible. We prefer gentle sloping ramps and pathways. We think it makes the garden more accessible and inviting."

Barbara Kocmur tells us, "We just installed stairs using railroad ties, DG and banked on the side with river rock. We had them made with a low rise (5-6") and a large landing space (varying from 18" to

30"), so not only are they attractive, they are also easy to access for anyone with creaky joints!"

Candace Kohl uses a tree, "I had to have some Torrey Pine trees removed. I had the workers cut the trunks into about 4" thick rounds and used them for steps on a gentle slope. Looked great and very natural. The wood tended to split as it dried which required some repair but only added to the wild look."

Corinne Lines uses pavers and concrete blocks: "I use two retaining wall block 6" high and 16" long for the riser and 2 patio pavers 16" x 16" for the tread. This makes one complete step. The retaining wall blocks sit on top of the edge of the patio paver (about 1" thick) and so on and so on. They can be turned slightly to go around curves."

Shellene Mueller uses flat stones, "My secret is to use native stone as an inconspicuous, short flight of stairs. I find stones that are approx 2'-3' wide with a flat surface and wind the stones in a gentle curve. This is a natural cohesive set of steps in the garden. You can have some more fun by planting the edges of the steps with lemon scented thyme, so that every time you ascend or descend the steps, you brush the thyme and get a beautiful energizing scent of lemon."

Taylor Murphy has curved stairs: "Use RCP Block's Garden stones. You'll need about 20 blocks for a 2-flight stair. Lay them out in a small semi-circular fashion with large enough stepping area to plant. I suggest Mother-of-Thyme (*Thymus serpyllum* 'Coccineum'), Irish Moss, or Scottish Moss. I used artificial turf on mine."



Photo: Taylor Murphy

Continued on page 16

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Al Myrick sent four different suggestions for steps: "Terrace down-slope four steps. Each level should be about 14 inches deep and about 2 feet wide. Spread 2 inches of pea gravel on each level. Place one or more 90-pound bags of dry ready-mix concrete on each terrace, nestled into pea gravel. Open top of each bag slightly (a few long slits will do). Slowly add water until wet, without washing concrete out of bags. Immediately, place flat plywood pieces on top of wet concrete bags and press or step firmly on top to form a flattened step. Let cure for 3 days, then remove paper bag bags from pillow-shaped concrete staircase. If undersoil is not clay or consolidated sandy loam, you may want to mortar in between concrete pillows, or fill with loose pea gravel. There are lots of other easy techniques, too.

One other is to just take pressure treated, and Jasco saturated, 2- or 3-inch thick 8-inch wide planks, set vertically in place by short pieces of galvanized pipes or iron rods driven into the terraces. Fill each terrace level with pea gravel, and then lay out a pattern of old bricks. Sweep dry concrete mix over surface into cracks until level. Sprinkle with water until wet, but take care not to wash out the concrete mix. Let cure for 3 days. Later, you can waterproof it with mortar water proofing sealer.

Another easy one is to dump 10 inches of redwood bark or shredding or mulch down the slope, terrace into mulch to form steps, and place 2- or 3-inch thick treated planks on top (and nestled firmly)."

Jackie Ravel uses stone treads: "Make solid pile of soil and sand, perhaps, and get beautiful left over pieces of stone from somewhere like KRC where they have bins of leftovers. Stick the stone in the pile to secure it at, say, three levels and then plant plants that agree with the light where the steps are located."

Scott Spencer has some important safety considerations: "For safety sake follow these guidelines when constructing garden stairs. Make all riser heights the same. A variance of as little as 1/2" can cause a stumble. Use risers no higher than 6" or less for a gentle ascent or decent. A riser 5-1/2" tall is the same as a 2 x 6 piece of lumber which can be used as a form during construction. Keep treads pitched forward by 1/4" to 1/8" per foot to prevent water from pooling at the back of the tread. Whenever stair treads are tightly spaced, keep the tread width wide to encourage a pause on each tread. I use tread widths from 18" to 24" as it forces you to walk the staircase with a break in stride. In addition the extra width allows a person to comfortably stand on each change in elevation and stop and smell the flowers growing along the garden path."

Steve Zolezzi uses logs: "While in the process of landscaping my garden I was presented with a steep incline in need of steps. First I graded it so it was even from side to side and top to bottom. Then I used treated peeler logs to frame the sides with a 3 foot width and set a row of evenly spaced peeler logs from top to bottom. All the sections were secured by drilling holes 6 inches from the ends for one foot sections of rebar, which I then pounded through flush to the top of the log. Having secured all the pieces I used a flat shovel to scoop out the steps up the hill just below the top of the wood. I then covered each step with pea gravel to complete the project. Six years later it works great!"

The question for next month is:

What has been the biggest surprise in your garden this year?
Please send your e-mail reply by August 10 to

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July Plant Forum

By 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.

Asclepias physocarpa MILKWEED, SWAN PLANT, GOOSE PLANT, FAMILY JEWELS (Asclepiadaceae) Southern Africa
Here's a drought-tolerant plant to grow for the unusual seedpods, not the flowers. Easily grown from seeds, Swan Plant is an open and airy subshrub that can bloom the first year from seed, and it has star-shaped creamy- to green-white flowers. It can grow to 6' tall in full sun, and is quite undemanding, requiring little water and thriving even in poor soil; it does need good drainage. The fun comes when the pollinated flowers produce pale green, translucent, inflated seedpods about 2-3" wide. The softly hairy pods look great if sited where they will be backlit in the garden, and make exotic additions to floral arrangements. Inside each pod are the flat dark brown seeds, which are attached to silky tufts to help them float on the breeze, as is typical of many plants in the milkweed family. The plant is a food source for monarch butterflies. Although it is weedy and invasive in Hawaii, it doesn't seem to be so here despite a tendency to self-sow. (Louise Anderson, San Marcos, 7/08) – S.T-B.

Lobelia cardinalis CARDINAL FLOWER (Campanulaceae)
North America

This short-lived perennial grows from a basal rosette and sends up stems to about 2-3' tall and 1' wide; it prefers moist soil and boggy conditions. The narrow leaves are a bronzy purple, and the summertime flowers are a striking fire engine red and very showy. Pink and white-flowering cultivars are also available. Found growing wild in Eastern North America, its range extends as far west as East Texas. The Floridata website includes the following toxicity warning: "Despite the fact that Native Americans used infusions and decoctions of cardinal flower to treat all sorts of real and imagined afflictions (including epilepsy, fever sores, parasitic worms, typhoid, witchcraft, and grieving sickness), the plant contains poisonous alkaloids and ingestion has caused deaths in humans." Easily propagated by division, it can also self-sow in the garden, so it's wise to keep it in a pot, as it can be

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July Plant Forum

invasive. Very attractive to hummingbirds. (Tom Biggart, El Cajon, 7/08) – S.T-B.

Melaleuca glomerata INLAND TEA-TREE, INLAND PAPERBARK (Myrtaceae) Australia

A fast-growing tree which tolerates both frost and salty soils, *Melaleuca glomerata* can get to 15' tall and wide in habitat, probably less in San Diego County. Seldom offered for sale here, it is worth searching out if you have a sunny position. In summer it bears many small yellow-cream flowers. The tree has papery bark and narrow leaves, and can be found in wetlands in its native Australia. According to the website for the South Australian Museum, the plant has "wide spreading roots that tolerate saline water and prevent the plant being washed away during floods." These roots might make it helpful for erosion control, too. At Dalhousie Springs in Southern Australia there is an ancient specimen with "a trunk the size of a Volkswagon." (Susan Morse, Vista, 7/08) – S.T-B.

Musella lasiocarpa FLOWERING BANANA, CHINESE YELLOW BANANA, GOLDEN LOTUS BANANA (Musaceae) China (Yunnan Province)

This ornamental relative of the banana is cold hardy to about 5°F, making it ideal for colder parts of the County where a tropical touch is desired in the garden. Growing to about 5-6' tall and about half as wide in sun to part shade, it is popular because it produces a huge yellow flower which can last for months. The plant is monocarpic, dying after it blooms, but is fairly easy from seed and should produce pups at the base that can be separated and grown as new plants. Produces small inedible bananas and needs only moderate water and well-drained soil. Introduced in nurseries here within the last few years, it is considered sacred in China. (VanMoch Nguyen, San Diego, 7/08) – S.T-B.

Pedilanthus macrocarpus SLIPPER PLANT, LADY'S SLIPPER (Euphorbiaceae) Mexico (Sonora, Baja California)

Easily grown from cuttings, this mostly leafless shrub with lime-green stems is very drought-tolerant and does well in full sun to light shade. It grows to about 4-6' tall and wide, and is frost-tender and hardy to around 30°F. Produces a red cyathia (inflorescence type characteristic of Euphorbias) in summer. Attracts hummingbirds to the garden. Like many plants in the Euphorbia Family, *Pedilanthus macrocarpus* has sap that some people find very irritating, so use caution when handling it. (Cathy Tyka, Escondido, 7/08) – S.T-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.

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 O were part of the Opportunity Drawing – an excellent selection was supplied by Michael & Joyce Buckner of The Plant Man nursery in San Diego.

Can you spot the phony plant this month? The phony plant in the May newsletter was *Myoporum parvifolium* 'Spilled Wine' BURGUNDY-ON-THE-CARPET.

July Plant Forum

- *Adenium swazicum*
(Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 7/08)
- *Aechmea carolinae tricolor*
(Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 7/08)
- *Aechmea hybrid* (Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 7/08)
- Aechmea orlandiana* 'Ensign'
(Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 7/08)
- Aechmea orlandiana* (new white sport)
(Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 7/08)
- *Bougainvillea spectabilis* 'Variegata'
(Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 7/08)
- *Cryptanthus bivittatus* 'Pink Starlight' EARTH STAR
(Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 7/08)
- *Cryptanthus bivittatus* 'Tricolor' EARTH STAR
(Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 7/08)
- *Cryptanthus zonatus* 'Zebrinus' ZEBRA PLANT
(Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 7/08)
- Dioscorea elephantipes* HOTTENTOT BREAD, ELEPHANT'S FOOT
(Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 7/08)
- Dioscorea sylvatica* ELEPHANT'S FOOT, WILD YAM
(Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 7/08)
- 3○ *Eucomis comosa* PINEAPPLE LILY
(Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 7/08)
- 3 *Euphorbia lactea* CANDELABRA CACTUS, DRAGON BONES (Cindy Sparks, Point Loma, 7/08)
- 3○ *Euphorbia milii* 'Grandiflora'
(Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 7/08)
- Euphorbia trigona* PURPLE EUPHORBIA, AFRICAN MILK TREE
(Cindy Sparks, Point Loma, 7/08)



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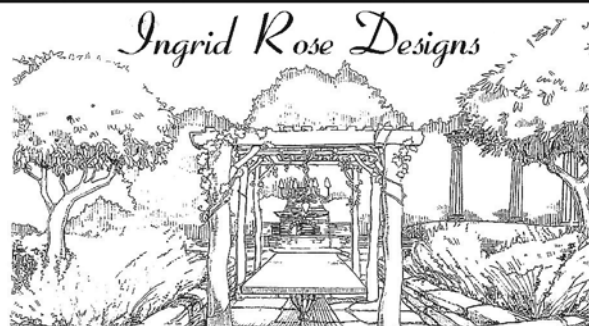
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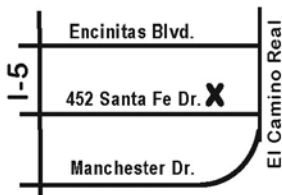
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July Plant Forum

O *Haemaria discolor* 'Dawsoniana' (syn. *Ludisia discolor*)
JEWEL ORCHID (Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 7/08)

O *Haworthia fasciata* cv. Super Zebra form ZEBRA
HAWORTHIA (Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 7/08)

Haemanthus sp. (Julanta Lewak, Del Mar, 7/08)

Hibiscus cv. (bonsai form) (Phil Tacktil, Solana Beach, 7/08)

Hoya kerrii SWEETHEART PLANT, SHAMROCK HOYA
(Cathy Tylka, Escondido, 7/08)

Laelia sanguiloba (Tom Biggart, El Cajon, 7/08)

O *Mimosa pudica* SENSITIVE PLANT
(Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 7/08)

Neoregelia 'Onger'
(Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 7/08)

Paphiopedelum Mrs. Sutton Willoughby SLIPPER ORCHID
(Charley & Sue Fouquette, El Cajon, 7/08)

Paphiopedelum Pedro's Moon SLIPPER ORCHID
(Charley & Sue Fouquette, El Cajon, 7/08)

Platycodon goodyearus BLIMP FLOWER
(Straw Berry, San Diego, 7/08)

Platycodon grandiflorus BALLOON FLOWER
(Joyce Berry, San Diego, 7/08)

O *Plectranthus amboinicus* SPANISH THYME, CUBAN
OREGANO (Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 7/08)

O *Plectranthus* 'Mona Lavender'
(Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 7/08)

O *Plectranthus oertendahlii* 'Variegatus' VARIEGATED
PLECTRANTHUS (Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 7/08)

O *Tillandsia ionantha* 'Peanut Clump' (Michael & Joyce Buckner,
San Diego, 7/08)

O *Uncarina roeoesliana* UNICORN TREE (Michael & Joyce
Buckner, San Diego, 7/08)

Unknown plant with very large flowers
(Michael Silberhorn, San Diego, 7/08)

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.]

July Meeting Report

SDHS SPONSOR ↓

July speaker Robert Herald was the tour guide for our trip in June to visit the finest Philadelphia gardens. About 350 people attended Robert's excellent presentation, and we thank Robert for an insider's look at some very special gardens!

Bartram's Garden was begun in 1728 by John Bartram, who built it himself of local stone. One of the first horticulturists in North America, he collected and sold plants to wealthy Britons, and the garden is planted entirely with historic plants from his catalog. Morris Arboretum is a Victorian garden with modern additions. The rose garden was been continually maintained since it was first planted in 1888 by the original owners. The Arboretum includes the only extant 19th Century glass fernery in the U.S., plus a "stumpery" of plants growing among fallen and uprooted trees.

Longwood Gardens was planted by Quakers in the 19th century, and purchased for preservation and conservation by Pierre DuPont in 1905. DuPont greatly enlarged the garden, and added four acres of world-famous conservatories which are lit up like "jewel boxes" at night. It includes some of the oldest and best yew topiaries in the nation. Winterthur is an early 20th Century garden and was the consuming passion of Henry F. DuPont, who based it on "an idealized English landscape." There is now a whimsical children's garden, too.

Mt. Cuba Center, the former estate of yet another DuPont, Mrs. Lamont duPont Copeland, boasts gardens she began in the 1920s. She promoted natives in the 1960s, long before they were fashionable. Today it is an important center for conservation and research into Trilliums, and other native plants. Robert's showed stunning native orchids and pitcher plants in bogs. Chanticleer, where Robert works as a Plant Recorder, began as a summer home in the early 20th Century. The garden staff is encouraged to be creative and is constantly trying new things. Robert described this place as having, "a serious form of zone denial," as so many of the plants won't over-winter there.

Hedgeleigh Spring is a private garden started in the 1920s, and Robert characterized it as being a "very good plant collector's garden." It is only two acres, but deft use of space makes it feel much larger. Frog Hollow, another private garden treasure with much personality, was designed to be a wildlife habitat, and there were diminutive "safety ladders" so that frogs could safely exit the ponds. The owner has a collection of agaves fashioned from lead which can remain out in winter while the live agaves are safely brought indoors.

Meadowbrook Farms, which Robert called, "one of the most ornamented gardens" he's ever seen, was started in the 20th century by an important Philadelphia-area floral designer. Each year he'd have an exhibit at the Philadelphia Flower Show and subsequently incorporate custom-made gazebos from those displays into his garden.

Michael Buckner from The Plant Man nursery gave the Plant Forum discussion, and also brought in a very nice group of plants for the Opportunity Drawing. Thanks for a great job, Michael. Thanks to Sue Fouquette for bringing many photos from the Philadelphia trip, and to Rachel Jordan and Sara Zlotnik, the winners of the Science Fair awards, for bringing in their fascinating projects. We also got to meet two of the winners of our annual \$1000 college scholarships – Debra Inman and Sara Grise. 🌿

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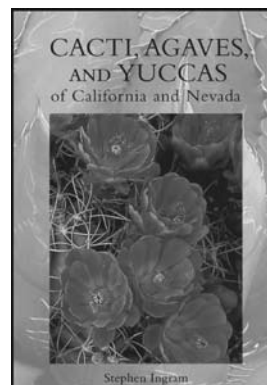
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Valley Center
29219 Juba Rd.
(760) 749-1828



Fall 2008 Schedule of Courses

Landscape and Nursery Technology

Southwestern College

Classes begin Monday, August 18th

Landscape & Nursery Technology Courses

LNT 100 Plant and Horticultural Science (late start class begins 9/4/08)	4 units	Sinclair	Wednesdays and Alternate Saturdays Wednesday Lecture, 5:30 - 8:45 pm Saturday Lab, 8:00 am - 2:00 pm (9/6, 9/20, 10/4, 10/18, 11/1, 11/15, 12/6, 12/13)
LNT 102-104 Plant Identification *	1 unit ea.	Sinclair	Tuesdays and Thursdays
LNT 110-112			
Deciduous Trees or Annuals & Perennials I (8/19 - 9/25)			4:30 - 5:50 pm
Conifers & Palms or Annuals & Perennials II (9/30 - 11/4)			4:30 - 5:50 pm
Broadleaf Trees or Vines & Ground Covers (11/6 - 12/18)			4:00 - 5:30 pm
LNT 120 Landscape Design I *	4 units	Weichert	Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6:00 - 10:00 pm
LNT 125-127 Landscape Construction *	1 unit ea.	Homyak	Saturdays
Concrete & Masonry Skills (6 weeks, 8/23-9/27)			8:00 am - 3:30 pm
Fence, Deck, & Lumber Skills (5 weeks, 10/4 - 11/1)			8:00 am - 4:30 pm
Sprinkler Installation (5 weeks, 11/8-12/13)			8:00 am - 4:30 pm
LNT 134 Soils *	3 units	Homyak	Thursdays, 6:15 - 9:15pm
LNT 138 Floral Design I *	3 units	Sinclair	Tuesdays, 9:00 am - 1:50 pm
LNT 141 Floral Design III * (8/21 - 10/16)	1 unit	Sinclair	Thursdays, 9:00 am - 1:00 pm
LNT 148 Horticultural Business Practices *	3 units	Homyak	Tuesdays, 6:15 - 9:15 pm

Landscape Architecture Courses

LA 200 Introduction to Computer-Aided Landscape Design *	3 units	Homyak	Mondays, 5:00 - 10:00pm
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All classes with an asterisk* are offered as both college credit courses and as non-credit ROP classes. ROP classes may be taken tuition free. To enroll, visit the college website at www.swccd.edu. When enrolling online, be aware that two sections may be listed. The first section is for college credit and will result in a charge for tuition. The second section is the ROP tuition-free section.

Call (619) 421-6700 ext. 5371 for more information
(and to speak to a Landscape and Nursery Technology instructor)
or visit our website at www.lntswc.com

San Diego Horticultural Society
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