

Let's Talk Plants!

Newsletter of the San Diego Horticultural Society

February 2009, Number 173

Fire-Safe Gardening

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SHOW**

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On the Cover:
Fire-safe garden in Big Sur



**SAN DIEGO
HORTICULTURAL
SOCIETY**



San Diego County Orchid Society

PRESENTS

The 63rd Annual Show & Sale

Around the World with Orchids

Friday, March 13, 2009

4 pm to 8 pm

Saturday, March 14

9 am to 6 pm

Sunday, March 15

10 am to 4 pm

**Scottish Rite Center
1895 Camino del Rio South
San Diego, CA 92108**

**General Admission - \$6 Children (under 12) FREE
www.sdorchids.com - for more info, e-mail: sdorchidshow@aol.com**

**Watch for a special discount coupon for SDHS members
in the March newsletter!**

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Cover Image: California poppies, verbena, calendula, and linaria add to the display in Dave Egbert's fire safe garden in the hills of Big Sur. The low carpet of color; that is beautiful and easy to care for while supporting pollinators and butterflies, provides a living fire break to protect against an approaching wildfire. [Photo by February speaker Dave Egbert.]

The San Diego Horticultural Society

MEETINGS

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

MEETING SCHEDULE

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

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

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

FUTURE MEETINGS & EVENTS IN 2009

- Feb. 27-March 1** Spring Home/Garden Show (see pages 4 and 5 and back cover)
March 9 The Deep Psychology of Unsustainable Design – How Sustainable Practices Change Our Ideal Landscape, by Pamela Berstler (members free, non-members \$5)
April 13 Engagement: How to be a Part of Your Native Plant Garden, by Mike Evans (members free, non-members \$5)
May 11 Plant Nerd Night (members free, non-members \$5)
June 8 Special Evening with George Little and David Lewis, Little and Lewis Sculpture Garden
June 12 – July 5 San Diego County Fair display garden
July 13 Perennials, Trees and Shrubs for the Southwest, by Mary Irish (members free, non-members \$5)
August 10 Special event to honor Steve Brigham as Horticulturist of the Year

www.sdhortsoc.org

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

Next Meeting: February 9, 2009, 6:00 – 9:00 PM

Topic: DAVE EGBERT ON “BIG IDEAS FOR WATER-THRIFTY, FIRE-SAFE LANDSCAPES: THE CALIFORNIA CASUAL GARDEN”

Meeting is open and everyone is welcome. Admission: Members/free, Non-Members/\$5.

Parking is free. Meeting Place: Del Mar Fairgrounds, Surfside Race Place, Del Mar; Info: (760) 295-7089

Come hear Dave Egbert, host of national TV series, The Coastal Gardener, talk about how to create a beautiful, flower filled garden that protects you, your home, and the brave firefighters who defend your neighborhood from wildfire. Using perennials, roses, outdoor living spaces, and edible landscaping you can create a “Lean, Clean, and Green Zone of defensible space around your home.” Dave will be selling copies of his beautiful and helpful book, Big Ideas for Small Gardens.

Egbert says that, “Recent wildfires have ravaged neighborhoods statewide, but some of the destruction could have been avoided by employing some creative, colorful landscape solutions.” He is passionate about sharing his ideas for creating defensible space, in any size garden. For years he worked as a professional nurseryman on the Central Coast of California, gaining a wide knowledge of plants and gardening techniques. Egbert learned from horticulture experts to appreciate the value of well-chosen plants for every situation. Australian, Southern Hemisphere, and California native plants are his passion. He strives to instill ideals of organic and sustainable gardening in the viewers of his national syndicated garden TV series, The Coastal Gardener. An active member of the rural Big Sur community, Egbert balances his time in the garden and on the air with community service as a volunteer firefighter.

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



The Mission of the San Diego Horticultural Society

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

ESTABLISHED SEPTEMBER 1994

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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

SPRING HOME/GARDEN SHOW

An article about the Spring Home/Garden Show appears on page 5, and details and a discount coupon are on the back cover. You can be part of this exciting event by volunteering now, and volunteers will get their parking fee reimbursed and get FREE entry into the show! We need people to staff our information table and also to help the show speakers. If you can volunteer for a few hours please contact Volunteer Coordinator Paula Verstraete at volunteer@sdhortsoc.org.

"GREEN" DUES RENEWAL

In January we started sending dues renewal notices via e-mail to save trees and also at least \$500/year in postage and printing. You can continue to mail in your dues checks or, if you prefer, you can renew on-line at our secure website, www.SDHortSoc.org. We accept all major credit cards. Also, if you renew for either 2 or 5 years you'll pay less money and save some green of your own!

Please help us by sending an e-mail today to membership@sdhortsoc.org and saying "I want to save trees – here's my e-mail address." We never share your e-mail address with anyone.

Members can save 36% on a subscription to the gorgeous and exciting *Pacific Horticulture* magazine, which focuses on gardening in our part of the country. Just send an extra \$18 when you renew your membership. If you renew as a Contributing Member, to thank you for your extra support you will receive a FREE 1-year subscription.

MEMBERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE

Every few years we give our members a questionnaire to fill out about their participation in the SDHS and what additions/changes they'd like to see. We gave these out at the January meeting and will also do so at the February meeting. When you return your questionnaire at a meeting you'll get a free ticket for a special plant at our Opportunity Drawing. The questionnaire is also included in this newsletter; so if you don't return it at a meeting please complete the form and mail us your input so that we can plan events and activities to suit your interests. Thanks in advance for returning your form! ☺

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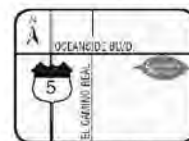
- ♦ Amended Top Soil
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FALL/WINTER HOURS
 Monday-Saturday.. 7:30am-4:30pm
 Sunday.....9:00am-4:30pm

To Learn More...

FIRE-WISE GARDENING

By Ava Torre-Bueno

This month's topic is so important to us here in Southern California. Several members of the Horticultural Society have lost their homes to fire over the past few years!

Let's start with this month's speaker's own web sites: http://www.bigsurfire.org/the_fire_safe_cottage_garde.html and <http://www.thecoastalgardener.com/> And an article by him: http://www.firesafemonterey.org/Pages/tips/dave_egbert/egbert_Nov06.html

Here's a thorough web site by the Fire Safety Council of San Diego County which includes a free chipping service for trees and shrubs you've trimmed back to safeguard your home: <http://www.firesafesdcounty.org/howto/defensiblespace.html>

Here's a demonstration garden that is a response to the 1996 Harmony Grove/Elfin Forest fire in North County: <http://www.elfinforestgardens.info/firesafe.htm>

There are fire-safe demonstration gardens throughout California starting with our own Quail Botanical Gardens: <http://www.firesafecouncil.org/education/firesafegardens.cfm>

And our own Deborah Lee Baldwin (author of *Designing with Succulents*) has an excellent article about succulents as fire-breaks at: <http://www.debraleebaldwin.com/firewise.htm>

When you're finished there, click on "View Slideshow" for some beautiful photos of succulents.

Member Ava Torre-Bueno is a psychotherapist in private practice and 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 contact Ava at gardeners4peace@hotmail.com and visit <http://www.sandiegofriendscenter.org/volunteers.htm>. 🌿

Gardens, Plants, Fun! Spring Home/Garden Show

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 on Friday, Feb. 27 to Sunday, March 1 at the Del Mar Fairgrounds. SDHS members get in at a discount – see ad on back cover for details.

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. It is one of our biggest shows for public outreach to share our love of plants. Those who help at the show get free admission and SDHS will reimburse your parking—see page 4.

Twenty-two dramatically-lit display gardens will be designed and created specifically for this show in the Bing Crosby Building. With an emphasis on water-smart gardens, Garden Masters put their best efforts into creative new ideas for wonderful gardens for the San Diego climate. See the creativity and style of top designers and horticulturists, all in one place.

Our seminar series is always informative and packed full of ideas and they are free for the price of admission. (Now, let's see, if you are a volunteer, that means completely free!) This year speakers from the Metropolitan Water Authority will join us as we grapple with reducing water usage. The schedule is packed with wonderful, knowledgeable garden experts who have wonderful tips and ideas you learn and can apply with your own garden at home.

You'll see interesting and unusual plants that will tempt your wallet. Top growers and specialty nurseries are altogether, 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.

At the exciting preview party you'll rub elbows with local celebrities, see the gardens before the public, meet the Garden Masters who created them, and learn who won the top awards.

Many of our members especially love to help out at the Spring Home/Garden Show because they get to meet and interact with other society members. What could be more fun than sharing good times with people with similar interests? Come. Enjoy. The 2009 Spring Home/Garden Show. 🌿

From The Board

By Susi Torre-Bueno

NEW VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

We're delighted to welcome Paula Verstraete as our new Volunteer Coordinator. She has previously volunteered at a number of SDHS events, including the check-in tables at our meetings. You can share the task of helping members to volunteer by becoming Paula's co-chair. You'll help with signing up volunteers for the annual special speaker event, local garden tours, Spring and Fall Home/Garden shows, etc. For details call Susi at (760) 295-7089.

Paula says, "We moved here from Albuquerque 10 years ago and live close to Lake Hodges. We are on a 1/3 acre and I am enjoying dabbling in the backyard which, by the way I dug up the lawn myself, and started making the yard into a native garden. I am a novice, but learning. I look forward to my role as Volunteer Coordinator with SDHS." Figure about ten words per sentence. Add three sentences here about Paula. Figure about ten words per sentence. Add three sentences here about Paula. Figure about ten words per sentence.

YOUR GARDEN, BUT BETTER!!!

Starting in February we'll have three monthly meetings about how your garden might better fit into the California landscape, use less valuable resources, and still be gorgeous. This month find out about planting water-thrifty species that also help with fire-safety. In March Pamela Berstler presents an eye-opening talk on the psychology behind the generally accepted ideal of a beautiful garden, exploring how we perpetuate this ideal to the detriment of the environment, and contemplating the future of gardens as natural and sustainable environments. In April native plant enthusiast Mike Evans, owner of Tree of Life Nursery (a SDHS sponsor), will examine real-life examples and discuss the practical techniques needed to get "nature" to fit into a small garden space. If your New Year's resolution was to do more for the environment this year, these three talks will get you off to a thoughtful – and beautiful – start.

MAY I VISIT YOUR GARDEN?

Every garden is unique and I love seeing other people's gardens, but not just for my own pleasure. I'm often asked to recommend gardens in San Diego County. Sometimes it's from another 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 magazine. I know there are many member gardens I haven't seen yet, so if you'd let me take a peek at yours I'd be delighted. Who knows – it could lead to seeing your garden in print or on a tour someday! Please contact me at info@sdhortsoc.org. 🌿



Have a **green** idea
to share?

2 DAYS

March 12th & 13th

1 THEME

Sustainable Urban Landscape Conference 2009

Communication Arts
Theater at
Cuyamaca College



for more information or
to register online:

www.cuyamaca.edu/ohweb/
or call: 1 (619) 660-4262



**C U Y A M A C A
· C O L L E G E ·**

900 Rancho San Diego Parkway
El Cajon, CA 92019

Successful Drought Tolerant Gardening

Edited by Cindy Sparks

This kicks off a year-long series of articles on:

- Why water conservation is important
- How a drought tolerant garden can be good for you, the birds and bees, your water bill and your property value
- Setting a water use goal
- Identifying your requirements to meet your goal, including cost, time, and labor limitations
- Planning a drought tolerant landscape
- Picking plants that will succeed in your growing conditions
- Installing and establishing your new landscape



Photo: Cindy Sparks

These articles will provide helpful websites and county-wide resources to give you new ideas and examples of beautiful drought tolerant plants. So join us and learn how to create a garden you'll love while slashing your water consumption. Send your problems or solutions to series editor Cindy Sparks at plantsparks@gmail.com.

Why Water Conservation Is Important

By Vincent Lazaneo, UCCE Horticulture Advisor

A gentle rain is falling as I write this kick-off article on gardens that conserve water and respect our environment. Most landscapes are not yet sustainable. As you read the articles, take a fresh look at your landscape and its impact on our planet.

In past years, plentiful, low cost water encouraged us to use too much. Most landscapes use several times more water than the native vegetation they replaced. They are sustained mostly with imported water and we can easily use less.

The Facts

Of the past eleven years, eight have produced below-normal rainfall, including the driest year on record. Our accumulated deficit of 21.75 inches (Lindberg Field) dried out native vegetation, fueling two major wildfires. Our water sources are 10% local, 55% from the Colorado River, and 35% from northern California. Reservoirs in eight western states have been severely depleted by drought that could last another decade. Court rulings to protect endangered fish could reduce northern California water up to 50% for years to come. A long-term decline in rainfall could further reduce our future supply.

If Not Now, When?

In 2008 the demand for water exceeded our county supply. The allocation to some farmers was cut 30%. Everyone was asked to reduce water use by 10% - but we achieved only 5%. In 2009 water districts are poised to implement mandatory conservation measures.

Changing decades-long habits requires a commitment, yet provides rewards. Conserving water will keep more "green" in your wallet. Local water districts will pass along 2008 wholesale cost increases of 11.9%. San Diego increased its water rate 6.5% and its sewer fee 8.75% in 2008. Similar increases will occur in 2009 and 2010. Expected increases in energy costs and measures to reduce carbon emissions will also increase water rates. Nineteen percent of California's total power is used to transport and process water. Conservation will reduce both power and water use. Conversely, being able to afford as much water as you want is not a good reason to waste our precious resources.

If Not You, Who?

So this is our challenge: to significantly cut landscape water use and minimize water expense!

Series editor Cindy Sparks is a member of the SDHS board and also an enthusiastic Master Gardener. Author Vincent Lazaneo is the founder of the Master Gardeners of San Diego and was the SDHS Horticulturist of the Year in 2004. Cindy's garden, pictured here, includes several kinds of lavender, Bay laurel, *Polygala* cv., rosemary, *Alstroemeria*, *Salvia leucantha*, Bread seed poppies, *Artemisia* 'Powis Castle' and two aged Japonica camellias which survive without supplemental water. ☘

Plants That Produce

THE SCOOP ON FERTILIZERS, PART III‡

By Richard Frost

I believe all of you are savvy shoppers when it comes to purchasing household supplies. For example, when buying paper towels you know to check the cost per sheet instead of the cost per roll. To achieve this with fertilizers, you need to be aware of one wrinkle: nutrients are measured by percentage of weight. This means that to compute the unit cost you must first compute the net weight of the primary nutrient.

Example 1 – Computing the cost per net weight. There is a popular natural fertilizer product called AlgoFlash™ that currently sells for about \$40 per 5-liter bottle. Its N-P-K rating is 6-6-6, and it also contains a nice array of micronutrients. According to the label, the net weight of the liquid product is about 13.5 lbs. Since it is 6% Nitrogen (N), the net weight of N in the product is $0.06 \times 13.5 \text{ lbs} = 0.81 \text{ lbs}$. So the unit cost of this product is \$40 divided by 0.81 lbs, or \$49.38 per net pound of Nitrogen. By the way, you can make 5 liters of this product at home for about \$10. Just add 4 pounds of Scotts or Grow More water-soluble 20-20-20 to about 4 liters of distilled water!

Example 2 – Outdoor Leafy Vegetables and Herbs, plus Non-blooming Ornamentals. Consider these non-synthetic fertilizers, all of which contain a balanced set of micronutrients (see 12/08 column for dosages‡):

Product	lbs	cost	\$ / lb-N
Scotts 30-5-5	5	\$10	\$6.67
GroPower+ 5-3-1	40	\$30	\$15
Neem Seed Meal 5-1-2	5	\$6	\$24
Liquid Fish Fertilizer 4-1-1	2.25	\$5	\$55.55
Worm castings♦	40	\$15	\$75

Worm castings ♦ (0.5–0.4–0.5) contain micronutrients plus important non-plant food ingredients and I use them along with humic acids in my garden. But as you see, they are an expensive choice as a sole source of nitrogen for plants.

Example 3 – Outdoor Subtropical Fruits and Ornamentals. Citrus, Palms, Avocado, Guavas, Myrtles, Pineapples, Sapotes, Cycads, etc. The following products all have similar costs, although the horse manure requires enormous quantities (see 12/08 column for dosages‡):

Product	lbs	cost	\$ / lb-N
Horse manure 0.9-0.3-0.6	100	\$4	\$4.44
Vigoro 12-5-8	20	\$13	\$5.41
Grow More 28-8-18	25	\$40	\$5.71

Example 4 – Outdoor Non-tropical Fruits & Berries, Fruiting Veggies, Flowering Herbs, Ornamentals, Bulbs. Here the primary nutrient is potassium (K). It is hard to find products with the proper N-P-K ratios, but here are a few to consider:

Product	lbs	cost	\$ / lb-K
Grow More 20-5-30	25	\$40	\$5.33
Scotts 10-5-15	25	\$35	\$9.33
*K-Mag 0-0-22	15	\$15	\$4.54

* when used as a supplement to a Nitrogen source, such as those in Example 2.

Member Richard Frost is also a member of the California Rare Fruit Growers. ‡For copies of past articles and more information, please see www.plantsthatproduce.com. 🌱

Garden Gourmet

EDIBLE RAINBOW

By Alice Lowe

A continuation of last month's "cabbages and kings" might be called "shoes & ships & sealing wax," but I can't find a gardening or culinary connection there, so we'll leave the walrus & the carpenter out of it this time. But I do want to add some more about using edibles as or with ornamentals in containers.

For winter and early spring, plentiful lettuce varieties provide a great array of colors and leaf shapes. Many nurseries display shallow bowls of "cutting" lettuces – mostly loose leaf varieties that you can snip and use as needed. Not only will they continue to grow, but they'll be less likely to bolt. Plant your own from seed or starts – you'll find a wonderful selection, from pale yellow-green to dark reds, some of them speckled and splotted with other colors. Combine frilled and curly leaves with pointy, serrated and oak leaf varieties, and don't forget the stately romaines.

A recent CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) produce delivery included a big bunch of chard. The stalks were huge, like elephant ears, with their colorful veins and stems of green, red and yellow. I've grown chard in containers, and there it stays relatively small, but equally tender (maybe more so), tasty and colorful. These lovelies, in mixed colors, can be found in 6-packs as well as seed.

Nasturtiums, which are edible themselves, provide a bright accent to greens and come in a variety of colors from pale yellow to dark red. And you can add a bit of whimsy with the edible flowers of Johnny Jump-Ups in yellows and purples.

I also like to add herbs to window boxes and pots. While most prefer summer sun and heat, many will grow year-round here. Parsley will add a dark green punch in both garden and kitchen. Chives are a delicate contrast to leafy plants, and if you let some of them flower, their little purple blossoms are a visual treat.

Steam or stir-fry leafy greens, cutting the stems small or allowing them a little more time to cook through. A dash of olive oil or butter and black pepper is all they need, although a little vinegar brings out the flavors and complements the delicious bitterness of some greens. I often give them an Asian flavor by tossing them before serving with soy sauce, sesame oil and rice wine vinegar, or a bit of oyster, black bean or chili garlic sauce, which I buy prepared at Asian markets.

Whether in salads or cooked, leafy green vegetables are the core of that healthier diet that ranked high on your new year's resolutions. When you grow them yourselves, even in containers if you don't have garden space, you guarantee their freshness and provide a lovely addition to your green environment.

[Ed. Note: Visit www.reneesgarden.com for a great selection of colorful veggies from our sponsor: Renee's Garden Seeds.]

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

Tomato Fruits: Choose Your Size

By Carl Price and Ellen Reardon

The fruits of wild-type tomatoes are yellow and green, and barely the size of the tip of one's little finger. The tomato probably originated in Peru, but the first written evidence of their domestication was several thousand years ago by Aztecs in what is now Mexico.

The Aztecs selected larger and red-pigmented fruits, which became a staple of the Aztecs' food supply.

While Spanish explorers brought tomatoes to Europe at least as early as the 16th century, several hundred years went by before Europeans dared to eat them. Why, because tomatoes were associated with deadly nightshade (*Atropa belladonna*), a related species of the Solanaceae family. It was not until the 19th century that tomatoes became a fixture of American farms, gardens, and dining-room tables.

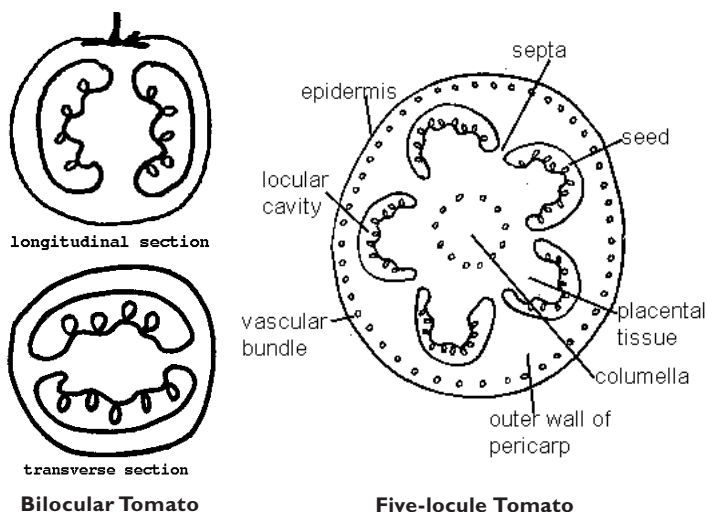
Thomas Jefferson, who grew tomatoes in his garden in Montecello, is often credited with having promoted tomatoes as good to eat, but the history is uncertain.

Tomato size and the *fasciated (fas)* gene

In modern times we recognize a wide range in the size of tomatoes, from cherry tomatoes, with a diameter of a few cm (under an inch), to the large tomatoes commonly seen on grocery shelves. Today's tomatoes can be 1000 times as large as the ancient, wild types.

Recently, a team of scientists at Cornell led by Steve Tanksley¹ found that the size of tomatoes is due to mutations in a single gene, *fasciated*. The product of the gene is a *transcription factor*, a term that refers to the first step in the expression of the cell's DNA. *Fas* is expressed before flowers even begin to form, and it has a *negative* effect on the other genes responsible for flower and fruit development. In other words, the wild-type *fas* gene represses the expression of other genes responsible for the formation of flowers and fruits. As a consequence, plants with the wild type of *fas* have small meristems and correspondingly smaller fruit.

A specific effect of *fas* is to control the number of locules (or carpels) in tomato fruit. Mutants of *fas* have more carpels, and therefore the fruits are larger and heavier.



Longitudinal (top left) and transverse (bottom left & right) slices through a tomato fruit show the number of *locules* or *carpels*. Tomatoes with the wild type of the *fasciated* gene have only two locules, whereas tomatoes with mutant versions of *fasciated* have many more locules. Drawings by Thomas Rost².

Future applications

The Tanksley team expects that their research on the *fasciated* gene will lead to the understanding of events that led to the domestication of fruits. They also expect to apply their understanding of the mechanisms of fruit development to other members of the Solanaceae, including bell pepper, eggplant, and potato.

References

1. Cong, B., L.S. Barrero, S.D. Tanksley, 2008. Regulatory change in YABBY-like transcription factor led to evolution of extreme fruit size during tomato domestication. *Nature Genetics*, 800-804.
2. Tomato Anatomy: <http://www-plb.ucdavis.edu/labs/rost/Tomato/Reproductive/anat.html>

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

California-Friendly Landscape Contest

SDHS is a proud sponsor of the San Diego County California-Friendly Landscape Contest. About two million residents are eligible to enter their water-wise yards for over \$5,000 in prizes, and we hope that many of our members will enter. **The deadline to apply is April 6.** See the ad on page 13 and learn more at www.landscapecontest.com.

Drought conditions throughout the state have made water conservation more important than ever. About 50-70% of household water in our county is used outdoors, making it the best place for savings. California-friendly plants use less water; often require less maintenance and many are fire resistant. Water-wise landscaping conserves our water supply and could lead to a lower water bill.

Judges consider the following elements of water-wise landscaping: overall attractiveness, innovative design with water conservation and function in mind, use of California-Friendly plants, color and texture in the landscape, zoning techniques (grouping plants with similar water requirements), energy-efficient landscape design (proper tree placement), functional use of grass areas, creative use of hardscapes and the use of water-harvesting designs to reduce runoff.

The region's best do-it-yourself homeowner and best professionally landscaped yard will receive \$500 gift certificates to an area nursery. Each water agency will also have a best-in-district winner who will receive a \$250 gift certificate. In addition, each winner will receive a 1-year family membership in SDHS. Prizes will be awarded in May at the Water Conservation Garden in El Cajon. ☞

Welcome New Members!

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

Linda Akers	Mimi Mortensen
Wayne Chapman	Lynne Robinson
Don Lowe	Cheryl Ann Wilson
Steven Mediano	Jayna Wittevrangel

NEW ADVERTISERS:

Briggs Tree Company, PAGE 11

Orchid Show, PAGE 2

California Friendly Landscape Contest, PAGE 13

HORT BUCKS ARE GREAT!

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

Cathy Keller (1 in late 2008)
Linda Bresler (1)

Discounts For Members

Pick up a Grangetto's Preferred Customer Savings Card at any Grangetto's location (see ad page 23). Get a **Hydro-Scape** Preferred Customer Cash Card at any of their 18 locations.

Get a 15% discount at Briggs Tree Co. & Wholesale Nursery in Vista (tell them to look up the "San Diego Hort Society Member" account).

Show your membership card and take 10% off any non-sale item at **Mission Hills Nursery** and **Moose Creek Nursery**.

Take 10% off membership fees at **Quail Botanical Gardens**.

SEE THESE ADS FOR MORE DISCOUNTS: **Barrels & Branches, Botanical Partners, Buena Creek Gardens, Cedros Gardens, Courtyard Pottery, IGS, Kniffing's Discount Nurseries, Pacific Horticulture, The Plant Man** and **Solana Succulents**.

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Walter Andersen* (2002)	Vince Lazaneo* (2004)
Norm Applebaum &	Jane Minshall* (2006)
Barbara Roper	Bill Nelson* (2007)
Gladys T. Baird	Tina & Andy Rathbone
Debra Lee Baldwin	Peggy Ruzich
Wayne Carlson	Susi & Jose Torre-Bueno
Laurie Connable	Don Walker* (2005) &
Julian & Leslie Duval	Dorothy Walker
Edgar Engert* (2000)	Lucy Warren
Jim Farley	Evelyn Weidner* (2001)
Sue & Charles Fouquette	Pat Welsh* (2003)
Penelope Hlavac	Betty Wheeler
Debbie & Richard Johnson	

CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS

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

What's Up at Quail Botanical Gardens?

NOW IS THE TIME

By Diane Hollister

The cold, wet days of winter are perfect for making large pots of hearty vegetable soups. While the soup is nourishing comfort food, this combination of conditions provides all the ingredients for doing some serious soil improvement in our gardens.

This is a great time for making some pockets of deep fertility in our yards. All the rain we've had gives us a chance to dig down deeper than we are normally able to. The wonderful soups we make create bags of vegetable trimming and peelings. The cold weather slows down the activity in our compost bins so we need to find new ways to process our food scraps.

To get started, walk around your yard and look for empty spots two to four feet from established plantings. Dig a hole two feet or more in diameter, as deep as you can. It's not hard to go down three feet or more. Start layering your kitchen scraps with weeds, fallen leaves, yard trimmings, etc., alternating browns and greens as you would when making a compost pile. If you don't have enough kitchen scraps, stockpile your scraps by freezing them in plastic bags. Once you are about a foot from the top, close off the hole with dirt, tamping it down well. Mound some dirt over the top to allow for shrinkage.

To make these deep pockets even more useful in time of drought, sink a length of three-inch PVC pipe that has been drilled with small holes every six inches or so into the pit like a little smokestack. When water is scarce, water saved from cooking or collected when waiting for water to heat can be poured into the pit through the PVC. Your plant's roots will find some wet fertile soil even if the water is turned off. ☺

To find out more, sign up for this class at Quail Botanical Gardens:

Create a Vegetable Garden with an Eye on the Water Meter

Friday, February 6, 10 am – 12 noon

Instructor: Diane Hollister,

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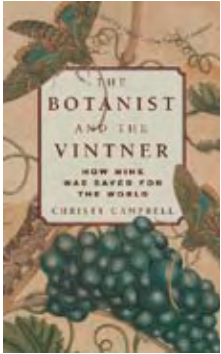
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Book Review

A LITTLE BIT OF THIS, A LITTLE BIT OF THAT

Reviewed by Caroline McCullagh

The voice on the telephone said, "We're closed for inventory until after the first of the year. After that it will probably take ten working days for your books to arrive." Since that was past the January 5 deadline for this article, I had to regroup. As usual, when faced with this situation, I headed for my local library



(one of the libraries on the list for closure—but don't get me started.) Since Pete Anderson spoke to us about vineyards at the December meeting, my eyes lit up when I spotted a book titled *The Botanist and the Vintner: How Wine was Saved for the World* by Christy Campbell. This is a historical recounting of how the world's wine industry was nearly destroyed by an aphid-like insect called *phylloxera*.

Phylloxera originated in the eastern United States and was imported into southern France on the roots of some grapevines sent to a collector there in 1862. Over the 1860s and '70s, it spread through France and the other wine growing regions in Europe as well as jumping to vineyards as far away as South Africa, New Zealand, and California—a slow-motion disaster for all concerned.

If you like the history of science, if you like politics, if you like wine, you'll probably enjoy this book. If it has one fault, it's that Campbell uses too many French words. They're all understandable in context, but they make the reading slow when the reader has to translate each term as it arises. Other than that, Campbell's description of how phylloxera was defeated, even if only temporarily, is comprehensive and interesting. *The Botanist and the Vintner* (ISBN 13: 978-1-56512-460-8) is hard bound and 320 pages.

I found a second delightful book at the Salvation Army Store. It's *Gardens Under Glass: The Miniature Greenhouse in Bottle, Bowl or Dish*, by Jack Kramer. Just leafing through it set me thinking about where I could fit some of these mini-gardens in my house. It's only 90 pages, but the author covers a lot and it includes many black and white photographs. I wouldn't normally recommend a book this old—it was published in 1969—but I checked on Amazon. Fifty-two copies are available in prices ranging from \$1.99 to \$32.95 plus shipping. (The original price was \$4.95.) A lot about the Internet annoys me, but it really is fun to know that almost any book you want is out there somewhere.

Finally, we're getting into planting season. Last winter I reviewed the Seed Savers Catalog. Seed Savers is an organization dedicated to saving heirloom seed, an important mission in our world where genetic diversity is disappearing. You can request a catalog or even download it at www.seedsavers.org or contact them at 3094 North Winn Road, Decorah, Iowa 52101, or (563) 382-5990.

A similar organization is Native Seeds/SEARCH in Tucson. They specialize in heirloom seeds of the southwest. Contact them at 526 N. Fourth Avenue, Tucson 85705 or at www.nativeseeds.org. Their seed listings will open a whole new world for you. ☺

Community Outreach

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY

By Linda Johnson

Help Students Create International Gardens in Golden Hills

Albert Einstein Academies, in Golden Hills, will be creating six international gardens on the campus, including Moorish/Middle Eastern, South African, Japanese, Baja Californian, Pacific Islander, and a formal European maze/topiary garden. Students will be designing and planting the gardens, with generous grant support from the American Society of Landscape Architects/San Diego Chapter. Volunteer experts are needed to help the students in the design and/or plant selection process for 1-2 hours per volunteer. Contact: Terri Hughes-Oelrich at thugheso@sdccd.edu.



Contribute to the Future Edible Landscape in Balboa Park

Creating a community-developed demonstration garden built and cared for by volunteers of all ages with a commitment to sustainable, edible and educational landscapes is the Mission of the Balboa Park Edible Landscape group. Ideas for specific plants to be included, and donations of materials are needed to get the gardens started, which are located just east of the Redwood Bridge Club. Contributions are much appreciated and can include:

IDEAS: lists of edible plants, preferably themed, i.e. herbal tea gardens, soup and salad gardens, bread and cereal gardens, native plants, butterfly and bird gardens, and companion plantings.

PARTICIPATION: donate labor for designing and planting the gardens, maintaining the gardens, and the best part harvesting the gardens!

DONATIONS: garden materials including soil, mulch, compost, portable garden shed, wheel barrows, round point shovels, bow rakes, five-tined pitch forks, digging forks and spades, hoes, hoses, water wands, trowels, hand planting tools, sledge hammers, loppers, hand pruners, hand pruning saws, and irrigation parts and tools.

Contact: Julie Osborn at Julie.Osborn@gmail.com or 619-549-2971. This edible landscape project, once underway, will be part of Community Farms and Gardens (CFG) at <http://www.community-farmsandgardens.org>. Similar to "Trees for Health" in Balboa Park (see photo), this project will demonstrate the use of edible, as well as beautiful, plants for the landscape.

Trees for Health is a project of the San Diego Herb Club. Contact: president@sandiegoherbclub.com. ☺

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DAVID G. FAIRCHILD

By Joan Herskowitz

[This month we welcome Joan Herskowitz, who will alternate writing this column with Linda Bresler.]

David G. Fairchild (1869-1954) is highly acclaimed among rare fruit growers. He was one of the greatest plant explorers at a time when the American diet was somewhat limited compared to today. He traveled the world in search of plants that would be suitable for cultivation in the U.S. and plant varieties that could be bred with local crops to increase their vigor and quality, such as the quest for seedless or better tasting fruits. He also was looking for plants with tolerance for the variety of climatic conditions found in the U.S. Among the species he introduced to the U.S. are avocados, bamboo, flowering cherry trees, horseradish, East Indian mangoes, nectarines, dates, papaya, pistachios and Chinese soybeans. Certain varieties of wheat, cotton and rice became especially economically important. At the age of 22, he created the Section of Foreign Seed and Plant Introduction of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and for 37 years searched worldwide evaluating the suitability of foreign crops for U.S. cultivation.

In his travels he visited village markets and farms and met foreign dignitaries and local tribes in remote localities, undeterred by dangerous situations he encountered. He sought seeds and cuttings to send back home, and sometimes had to use ingenuity and diplomacy to secure plant material from farmers who viewed him suspiciously out of concern for the export value of their crops. The many packages of plant materials sent from Fairchild's travels were distributed to U.S. farmers and agricultural experimental stations for testing. An important station was located in Chico, California.

Fairchild married Alexander Graham Bell's daughter and spent vacations in Nova Scotia, where they witnessed early Bell experiments with flying machines. In later years, Fairchild built a home on an 8-acre property on Biscayne Bay in Coconut Grove, Florida, where he retired in 1935. Here he planted an extraordinary collection of rare tropical plants and wrote a book about it entitled *The World Grows Round My Door*. In 1938, after contracting a life threatening infection on an expedition to the tropics, he was encouraged by friends to write a book describing his career and plant exploration experiences. The result is a fascinating book, *The World Was My Garden: Travels of a Plant Explorer*, based on the detailed diaries he kept throughout his travels. The book contains interesting accounts of his early years in Kansas, his work in the then new field of plant pathology, and his passion and travels in pursuit of new plants that brought him into contact with native cultures untouched by the modern world. The book is a wonderful read for armchair world plant explorers and, in addition to descriptions of his major plant introductions, there are interesting and amusing notes on his methods of preparing plant material for shipment home. One method was to insert the clipped ends of woody plant cuttings in potatoes to keep them moist and viable during transit. In another instance, in India, he secured a group of volunteers who were more than happy to eat a pile of mangoes, making the cleaned seeds more easily packaged for shipping.

The Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden in Coral Gables, Florida, is named in honor of David Fairchild, and still contains many plants that were collected and planted by him. The botanic garden is committed

Continued on page 20

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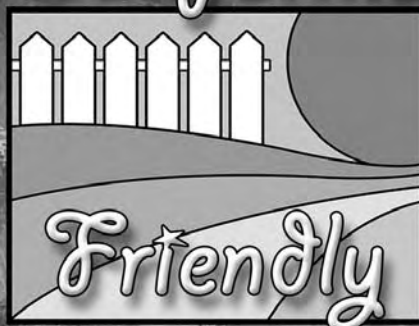
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SHARING SECRETS

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:

What's the biggest mistake you made in your garden and what would you do differently?

Walter Andersen says: "The biggest mistake I made when I landscaped my new house 35+ years ago was that I planted things too close to each other. I also planted a *Ficus benjamina* in the front yard; it got too big real fast. For a few years I trimmed it almost annually, but it was still getting over the roof, the roof had lots of leaves on it and the gutter was always full. One day I took my pole saw out to trim it back just a few feet. After three or four limbs came down. I got the chain saw and trimmed it about 4" from the ground! But the large plants are still too close together in the front, it is quite shady and you can hardly see the house. It is private for sure, but probably not the best. Also, I am sorry that I did not plant more fruit trees back then. I have only four: two avocados, a lime and a tangerine. Last year I planted an apple, so it is small and will be 2 years before much fruit. But think of how big they would be now! I also wish I would have planted more (and different types) of palms. Once they get going they require very little special care, and I really like palms. If we ever get moved things will be a lot different and spaced more so there is more room for smaller things in between. Also more citrus and an apple (Fuji. I think)."

Louise Anderson made a compost boo-boo: "I put cuttings from Mexican Feather Grass in my compost bin. I then spread the compost in the rose garden. Big Mistake. I'm still pulling out Mexican Feather Grass from the rose garden three years later. Obviously the compost bin didn't get hot enough to kill the seeds. Sure won't do that again."

Tom Biggart has tree troubles: "We moved onto our 2 acre home site in East County 20 years ago. We had a small avocado orchard and a huge Norfolk Island Pine and that's basically it. The biggest mistake we made was madly and wildly planting trees all over the property without any attention paid as to what the tree would do in 20 years. The worst was the planting of the grove of Brazilian Peppers, which are now sending up suckers all over the place. We got them as suckers from a neighbor's tree – duh?? The other was the planting of a California Pepper by the patio. The tree is gorgeous, but there is a continuous rain of flowers, leaves and twigs onto the patio! The cost of keeping it laced would pay for an entire forest of a more maintenance-free tree. I would suggest *carefully* studying about a tree you might want to plant before actually committing yourself and your life!"

Vivian Blackstone's mistake was "over-expansion. If I had it to do over again I would have planned a smaller garden so as I get older I could handle it all by myself. It a great garden with live fish, fruit trees, flowers and herbs, but nature expands and we humans contract."

Morris Brinkman says his biggest mistake was "using what fertilizer was readily available to me from my suppliers for my customers and my own garden when the actual desired NPK that I wanted to sell/use was not available. It has been my experience that for good root growth and flower/fruit production the best is a granular fertilizer made up of an NPK where the Phosphorous % was close to three times as strong as the Nitrogen % and it should be not less than 24% in total strength. Back when I first started up my nursery these parameters were not always available. Consequently, I sold, and used in my garden, other fertilizers which were not up to the strengths and ratios that my studies and experiences had dictated to me."

Sharon Corrigan didn't always get plants off to a good start: "The biggest mistake I have made is not breaking up the roots when I buy a pony pack of veggies or flowers. It's amazing how well they grow when the roots are stimulated. Made a big difference in success."

Ric Dykzeul regrets a tree choice: "My biggest mistake was planting a Jacaranda tree which canopies over the patio and driveway. Too messy. Best enjoyed from a distance in someone else's yard!"

Sue Fouquette didn't adequately protect her eyes while gardening: "The other day my left eye started burning while I was fixing dinner. I wondered if a non-hot pepper seed I had just cleaned had landed under my eyelid, but it did not feel like an object was in my eye. The burning got worse and my language got worse than 'Ow!' I washed my eye with water in my hand, then with an eyecup, then with eyewash. The burning was still extreme. I got back in the shower and blinked in the spray. After about an hour of pain I called Kaiser and listened to recorded music for ages before a nice nurse answered. She asked what I thought might have caused problem. I told her pepper seed idea, hand lotion I always apply after a shower, and pruning the Euphorbia 'Sticks on Fire' that afternoon. She gave me the phone number of Calif. Poison Control. That woman was not so pleasant, but instructed me to get back under the showerhead for 15 minutes using a timer, so I wouldn't skimp on the minutes. Charley was my timer and I kept asking, 'Am I done?' After, the pain lessened a little. About an hour later, the pain really subsided. I think the culprit was the Euphorbia even though the pain didn't start at the time. I had topped a couple of branches that were too close to the house; the milky sap from cuts had gone flying. I've gotten such sap on my hands and arms many times and it's never bothered my skin. I'm warning you to wear eye protection when pruning Euphorbias, and to be prepared to listen to recorded music longer than the shower was."

Vickie Hearne says, "I regret that we did not espalier more of our fruit trees when they were young. The espaliers look great, and are a better fit for our urban orchard."

Pamela Homfelt regrets some irrigation choices: "I made a big boo boo: I hydra-zoned my garden into ten different water use zones, eight low water, two high water use. I love the veggie/rose/fruit tree high water zone but really regret the high water use zone around the patio area. There was a beautiful Datura planted so I went with tropical plants when really I should have moved the Angel's Trumpet and used the plants I really love (sages, succulents, proteas and grevilleas) around my outdoor living room. Oh well, maybe a new project is in the offing!!"

Tim Jachlewski says, "My biggest mistake was installing turf in my back/side yard. It's too shady and does not do well. In the future, I hope to create an outdoor courtyard."

Will Johnson cites two mistakes: "Biggest mistake is failing to plan for the final size/composition of the garden; this required re-doing some irrigation, the drainage & some grading. Most common mistake I've seen while maintaining gardens: wrong plant in the wrong place."

Sue Kelly-Cochrane planted a thug: "The biggest mistake I made was planting horsetail. It looked so architecturally different in its native habitat around a pond but is so invasive that it is almost impossible to eradicate. I like it in a rectangular planter but it is horrible running unchecked in a garden!"

Sharon May goofed with both soil and design: "Soil: When I planted my first garden in Southern California, I raked, removed

Continued on page 16

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Sharing Secrets Continued from page 15

rocks and carefully smoothed the bed of my DG soil. I planted my seeds and watched as *nothing* germinated! After a month of rapidly rising frustration, I put in 4" and 1-gallon plants rather than seeds and they barely grew. When a friend suggested that I mulch with compost I wondered if it would even be worth the effort. Within six months the plants were thriving and within a year the seeds I'd planted finally had enough nourishment to sprout! I learned to *always* amend my soil and to mulch if I want my plants to perform. On top of that, I weed and fertilize less! Design: Even as a beginning gardener, I couldn't resist trying new plants. If I hadn't grown it, I planted one. Studying my beloved garden, I was disappointed to see how 'mushy' it looked, with so little impact from so much effort. I then realized how important mass plantings are, not just the onesies stuck here and there. I moved plants that had similar colors together and created the effect of mass plantings to carry from a distance. I've since added a plant shopping rule: always buy at least three of a plant to create mass and repetition."

Lenore Morines planted some invasive plants: "After many years of gardening, my biggest mistake was planting two flowers that are very pretty but send up thousands of volunteers each year. They are *Centranthus ruber* (Jupiter's Beard) and Sweet Alyssum."

Susan Morse found one bargain was "too good to be true: In my naiveté, a few years back, I snapped up the chance to buy 6 bulbs for 50 cents at a local garden club meeting. They were the common red/orange chasmanthe. I swear there are 600 bulbs now. I can't get rid of them – they keep spreading."

Teresa Norris says, "Our biggest mistake was taking a gamble (and we knew we were) and buying a beautiful boxed (\$300) flowering African Tulip Tree, *Spathodea campanulata*, and planting it in the front and center of our yard in Poway. We enjoyed its beautiful blossoms for two years until the freeze of 2006 killed it. Live and learn..."

Katherine Nowak confesses to two mistakes: "The two biggest mistakes I have made in my garden are not watering new plants frequently enough to get them established and planting the same plant in the same area where one died previously when I hadn't figured out why the first one died. I always get the same result!"

Bill & Tamma Nugent's biggest mistake was, "without question, the planting of four Silk Oak (*Grevillea robusta*) trees in our backyard. What were we thinking? Not only are these trees large, ugly and messy, they offer the added benefits of self-pruning (due to rapidly growing softwood with weak branch structure), invasiveness (we are constantly removing seedlings throughout the front and backyards), and almost zero shade. Given a do-over we would probably opt for another, much better behaved Australian native tree – *Pittosporum tenuifolium* 'Silver Sheen.'"

Una Marie Pierce says: "While my hardscape is beautiful and perfectly fitting to my house, I regret allowing contractor to put in so much concrete. In later lectures I have heard lessons on allowing for more gravel, flagstone, etc. walks which allow for more percolation of rain water. When I see water sitting after rain storms or have to sweep or scrub the "acres" of concrete I wish I had been made aware of the benefits of less!"

Stephanie Shigematsu reports that "Over-planting is the biggest mistake I have made in gardening. We all want that instant garden, but before you know it that 15 gallon tree is 20 feet tall. Since reducing water and eliminating unnecessary maintenance should be some of

our New Years resolutions, planting with the mature size and spacing in mind is both aesthetically pleasing and the right thing to do. It breaks my heart to see whole parkways over-planting at significant taxpayer expense. Additional maintenance and resources are needed to edit out these trees and shrubs, in excess of what many municipalities can afford. Make a list of what you'd like to use in your garden and look up those you don't know well. I recommend shopping for plants by first finding mature specimens in your area, so you can see what will become of that cute little tree in the 15 gallon pot."

Cindy Sparks regrets planting an invasive plant: "Biggest mistake of 2008: not listening to the people who said that Jupiter's Beard, *Centranthus ruber*, red (or white) valerian, is invasive. I saw stars in my eyes and purchased a white cultivar for my gray/blue/pink/white drought tolerant garden. They were right; now I have 50 million tiny seedlings, and the mother plant is *still* blooming as I write this in January. It was pretty all summer, but I'll regret my decision each time I pull a seedling."

Cathy Tylka has irrigation issues: "My biggest mistake was setting up the watering system for a garden that didn't exist and I didn't even have a plan, but my dear Richard (aka my husband) wanted to get the sprinklers in, so...I have planted around the system, but if I get around to it this year will have him change the methods he has implemented to get water to spots that are desert now or less to areas that are being flooded by the wrong water delivery tool."

Ramona Valencia didn't plan well: "My biggest mistake was not better space planning by planting too close."

Ron Vanderhoff had problems with his HOA: "In the opinion of my Homeowners Association I guess [my mistake] would be - not planting one of the fifty bland, blah, everybody-has-one trees that were on their 'approved' list. I moved to this home last year and quickly removed a nearly dead olive tree in my front garden. A short while later I planted a rather rare *Erythrina coralloides* 'Bicolor'. I don't think the plant police even knew what it was, but it definitely wasn't on their list of 'good' trees."

Patti Vickery regrets starting late: "The biggest mistake I made in my garden was not planting fruit trees 20 years ago when I bought my home. Last year I removed a few rose bushes and planted a peach tree and a blueberry bush. I enjoyed about 25 small peaches and hope to have blueberries in a few months."

Marilyn Wilson says she is a lazy gardener and "doesn't always put away all of her gardening supplies when through using them. About three years ago, after a few winter rains, labels 'disappeared' from some spray bottles. In the Spring when aphids appeared, I thoroughly sprayed the young shoots and buds of all the roses, lilies, etc. After a few days I noticed that new growth *all over the garden* was wilting and turning brown. Slowly realizing what must have happened, I pruned everything (in case herbicide was systemic), and of course, there were *no flowers for months*. No, I didn't learn to keep my gardening stuff under cover, but I did start using special white spray bottles with weatherproof writing on them using an eyebrow pencil: 'Bugs' or 'Weeds'. I won't be making *that* mistake again!"

The question for next month is:

How do you re-use or re-purpose common household items for garden use? (For example, writing plant names on plastic knives and using those as garden markers.)

Please send your e-mail reply by February 5 to info@sdhortsoc.org.

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January Plant Forum

By Michael & Joyce Buckner, Tom Piergrossi,
 Susi Torre-Bueno and Cathy Tylka

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.

Aloe deltoideodonta (Aloaceae) Madagascar

This is a slow growing compact Madagascar aloe. Attractively spotted light green leaves form clustering rosettes. Best in bright filtered light location. Showy stalks of long tubular blooms – brilliant orange to lime green – appear two to three times a year. Protect from frost. (Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 1/09) – M.J.B.

Aloe descoingsii (syn. *Guillauminia descoingsii*) (Aloaceae) Madagascar

A true dwarf aloe of Madagascar origin. Rigid leaves with dull white raised, rough spots free forming dense rosettes with dull white marginal teeth. There are two recognized subspecies and probably a hundred hybrids or varieties. Leaf colors range from a light melon orange to a dark bluish green depending on variety/hybrid. Bears scarlet cylindrical flowers with wide mouth. Best in bright filtered light. (Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 1/09) – M.J.B.

Begonia 'Mo Reese' (Begoniaceae) Horticultural Hybrid

The January 2004 on-line newsletter for North Haven Gardens (www.nhg.com) notes that this "newly-developed rhizomatous begonia cultivar [has] black wavy leaves with a spiral where the leaf attaches to the petiole. The back of the leaf is a contrasting red. It has a nice mounding growth habit. The plant displayed was grown outside in a shade house in Escondido. (Sheila Busch, Escondido, 1/09) – S.T.B.

Camellia 'California Dawn' (Theaceae) Horticultural Hybrid

Camellias are Japanese shrubs with broad foliage and winter flowers. The selection displayed is a sun-tolerant, vigorous, upright plant. It has large light pink flowers in a semi-double form with crinkled petals. It blooms early to late and is a *Camellia sasanqua* x *C. reticulata* hybrid. Plant it high in well-amended soil with good drainage. (Tom Piergrossi, Vista, 1/09) – T.P.

Camellia japonica 'Mrs. D. W. Davis' (Theaceae)

Horticultural Hybrid

Japanese evergreen shrubs with broad foliage and winter flowers. The selection displayed has very large semi-double blush pink flowers in midseason; the petals are thick like a Magnolia petals. The plant can grow to 8', with an open habit. Plant it in shade in well-amended soil with good drainage; sensitive to being planted too deeply. (Tom Piergrossi, Vista, 1/09) – T.P.

Carpobrotus dimidiatus NATAL SOUR FIG

(Mesembryanthemaceae ([Aizoaceae]) South Africa

This jumbo size trailing ice plant is rarely available. The "ice plant" (*Carpobrotus* species) was brought to California in the 1950's by the Army Corps of Engineers to hold the sand dunes around Ford Ord. This species was quick to rot and difficult to root. The late Paul Hutchinson (founder of Tropic World nursery, Escondido) figured out that this species would root perfectly in pure sand. Noted for its brilliant shiny purple blooms, with a 5" diameter they are the largest flowers in the mesemb family. Abundant blooms from early spring through summer. Flowers open in the morning and close at night. Sharply pointed triangular leaves are a great shade of celadon. The pulpy sourish fruits are eaten fresh, preserved as a popular jam, and used medicinally for treating sore throats, toothaches, and mouth infections in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. (Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 1/09) – M.J.B.

Cymbopogon citratus LEMONGRASS (Poaceae/Gramineae)

India, Sri Lanka

If you enjoy Thai food you'll undoubtedly have encountered lemongrass in soups and other dishes. This tropical grass grows well here in full sun to light shade with moderate water, and grows in dense clumps to about 6' tall and 4-5' wide. Tender to frost, it is killed back to the roots by hard freezes. Site it carefully, as the very sharp edges of the narrow evergreen leaves can

January Plant Forum

inflict painful razor cuts. Lemongrass oil is steam distilled from the leaves. One website says that the plants do not typically produce flowers, but mine has. It does well in large containers. To use for cooking, the Floridata website (www.floridata.com) advises: "dig up a clump, separate the sections, cut off the roots and tops keeping about 6 in (15 cm) of the light colored base." (Susi Torre-Bueno, Vista, 1/12/09) – S.T-B.

Fouquieria columnaris (syn. *Idria columnaris*)

BOOJUM, IDRIA, CIRIO (Fouquieriaceae) Mexico

Anything written about this well-armed tree in the Ocotillo family, seems to be peppered with words like "bizarre" and "science fiction," along with phrases like "the strangest looking tree on earth." But viewing one plant, grown in a big pot and set upon a table, is poor preparation for the vision of a boojum forest. This memorable "Dr. Seuss" tree holds a special place in the heart of every Baja traveler. Indeed, the striking silhouette of our local desert ocotillo pales by comparison. When driving south through central Baja del Norte, solitary plants and small stands start appearing just south of El Rosario. Approaching Catavina finds you in a full blown boojum forest. Imagine, if you can, a rocky hillside covered with huge pale brownish-green upside down carrots. The thick pachycaulescent trunk tapers up to 50' and is crowned by sparse, unruly, thorn covered branches. The *Fouquieria columnaris* displayed at the meeting was about 30-40 years old. Grown in full sun and rarely watered, it thrives. The website for the film *Ocean Oasis* (www.oceanois.org) notes, "The generic name refers to P.E. Fouquier, a Parisian medical professor. The specific epithet refers to the stout upward tapering trunk, which resembles a column. The common name of Boojum Tree was given by Godfrey Sykes of the Desert Botanical Laboratory in Tucson, Arizona. He named it after a 'mythical thing called a boojum found in desolate far-off regions, coined in the book *The Hunting of the Snark* by Lewis Carroll.' Cirio refers to the slender type of altar candles used in religious ceremonies." ["...the boojums were wily; going about each and every way - lawless plants they were." Eric Gauger; c. 2003] (Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 1/09) – M.J.B.

Gasteria glomerata KOUGA GASTERIA (Aloaceae) South Africa (Kouga River; Eastern Cape)

The *Gasteria* derives its name from its stomach-shaped 'gasteriform' flowers. The epithet *glomerata* means compactly clustered. This small plant's glaucous grey-green leaves benefit from some bright filtered light, or a very limited exposure early morning sun. Most gasterias fare better in diffused light or shaded locations. The elegant brilliant orange-red flowers of *Gasteria glomerata* usually appear twice a year – early spring and early fall. The endemic environment for this species is noted for its inhospitable rugged terrain. Plants occur on sheer south-facing rocky sandstone ledges. In the coastal climate of our garden, they are seldom watered more than 5 - 6 times a year. This species grows slowly, forming dense clusters up to 20" in diameter and 6" tall. (Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 1/09) – M.J.B.

Schlumbergera 'Firecracker' HOLIDAY CACTUS

(Cactaceae) Horticultural Hybrid

Schlumbergera are native to Brazil and there are many hybrids available. The plants are easy to grow, drought-resistant, and make good container plants. The color of their flowers is affected by local light conditions, temperature and season. Plants can tolerate temperatures down to 41°F. Some may bloom as early as autumn, but most usually bloom through the winter months. (Cathy Tylka, Escondido, 1/09) – C.T.

Senecio pendulus (syn. *Kleinia pendula*) INCH WORM

(Asteraceae) Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Arabian Peninsula

A winter growing succulent in the Aster/Daisy family. Highly succulent thick textured stems grow random curves – brittle jointed. Stem/leaf with variable coloring from purplish dark green to bronze green and whitish pin striped markings. Unique densely frilled (dandelion-like) orange flower appears on a tall terminal stalk in late winter to early spring. These plants are summer dormant and will rot if given too much water at that time. (Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 1/09) – M.J.B.

Our January meeting included plants from all over the world, including some rare and unusual specimens – thanks to everyone who participated. Michael Buckner was an informative and personable Plant Forum Host. In addition to the plants described above, those below were also displayed.

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January Plant Forum

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

Can you spot the phony plant this month? The phony plant in the January newsletter was *Senna bicapsularis* 'Coconut Creme' COCONUT CREME CASSIA

- 3 *Acacia podalyriifolia* PEARL ACACIA (Tom Piergrossi, Vista, 1/09)
- 3 *Aloe ciliaris* CLIMBING ALOE
(Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 1/09)
- Aloe 'Luz De Luna'* (Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 1/09)
- Aloe 'Malaria'* (Major Plant Lover, San Diego, 1/09)
- Aloe 'Scurvy'* (Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 1/09)
- Aloe sinkatana* (Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 1/09)
- Alstroemeria 'Staprivina'* (= A. 'Zavina') LILY OF PERU
(Susi Torre-Bueno, Vista, 1/09)
- Camellia lutchuensis* 'High Fragrance' (Tom Piergrossi, Vista, 1/09)
- Crassula ovata* 'Gollum' JADE PLANT
(Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 1/09)
- 3 *Heliotropium arborescens* 'White Clouds' HELIOTROPE
(Susi Torre-Bueno, Vista, 1/09)
- Monilaria moniliformis* (Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 1/09)
- Neostylis Lou Sneary* 'Bluebird' (Linda Espino, San Diego, 1/09)
- Pelargonium 'Eclipse'* GERANIUM (Susi Torre-Bueno, Vista, 1/09)
- Pelargonium* sp. or cv. (bonsai form, displayed with suiseki [rock])
GERANIUM (Phil Tackitt, Solana Beach, 1/09)
- Zygopetalum* River Murray × B.G. White 'Stonehurst'
(Charley & Sue Fouquette, El Cajon, 1/09)
- Zygopetalum* 'Los Osos' (B.G. White × Blackii)
(Charley & Sue Fouquette, El Cajon, 1/09)

HOW TO READ THE PLANT FORUM ENTRIES

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

Dirt Continued from page 12

to the collection, conservation and distribution of superior tropical fruit from the Americas and Asia.

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

January Meeting Report

In January it looked like someone had plunked the liveliest colors in a candy store on top of the table where speaker Fred Clarke was selling orchids from his Vista nursery, Sunset Valley Orchids. Clarke's fascinating and dynamic presentation on wild orchids in Venezuela was deservedly very well-received, and it was clear he truly loves what he does for a living.

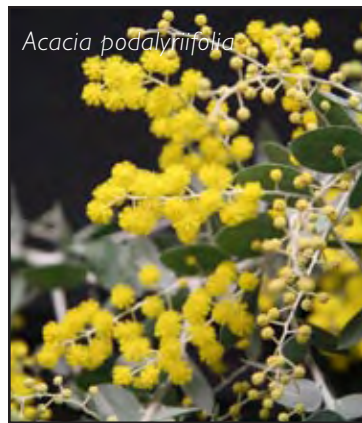
Venezuela's national flower is the orchid *Cattleya mossiae*, enormously popular as a corsage for Easter and Mothers' Day in the 1940s and 50s. It has since largely fallen out of favor for that purpose. The blooms, which can be 5-6" wide, come in an array of colors from a very uncommon pure white to a deep pink. Now popular with orchid breeders because it produces two pseudobulbs a season, it is native to an area about 2500' above sea level with a climate similar to San Diego's.

Most of us don't think of orchids as being particularly long-lived, but individual plants of this species, in the wild, can live for 200-300 years! Fred showed dozens of images of huge old trees with limbs up

to 5' in diameter and dripping with thousands of orchid blooms on old plants that extended many feet in several directions. One coffee farmer had collected dozens of the rarest pure white form, and he traded a plant to Fred's guide (himself an orchid judge) for clippers and a pair of boots. This single plant, because it was wild-collected, could be worth \$5000 to a connoisseur in Japan! Entrepreneurial youngsters were selling blooming plants for \$2 each – although they readily accepted \$1 after the requisite haggling.

As a special encore, Fred shared a short presentation on the "world's blackest orchid," which he had hybridized in a complex cross of three different species. Named *Fredclarkeara* After Dark, it has so far been awarded nine First Class Certificates from the American Orchid Society. So perfectly black that it is difficult to photograph, you can see it at www.SunsetValleyOrchids.com.

Thanks, Fred, for a real insider's look at the joys and perils of wild-grown orchids, and also for supplying a charming array of plants for the Opportunity Drawing. 🌿

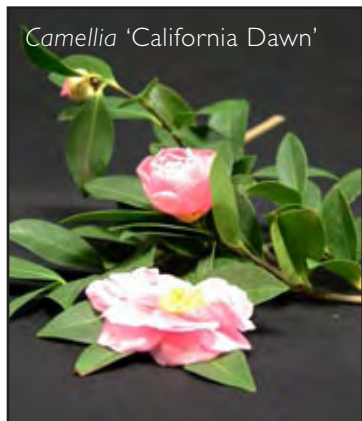


Acacia podalyrifolia



Aloe sinkatana

Photos by Stacey Dore



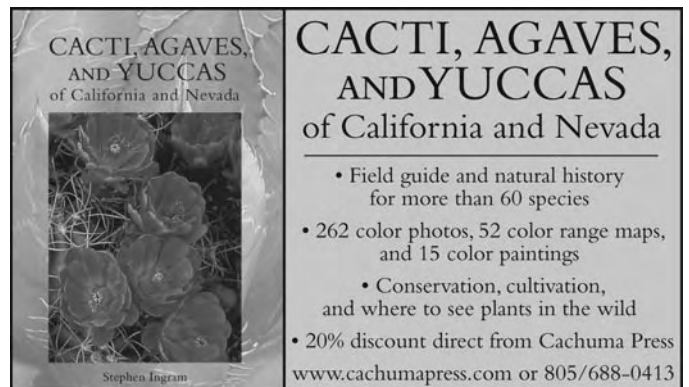
Camellia 'California Dawn'



Pelargonium bonsai



Zygopetalum River Murray
× B.G. White 'Stonehurst'



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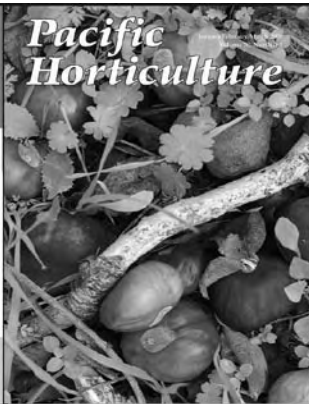
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What's Happening? for February 2009

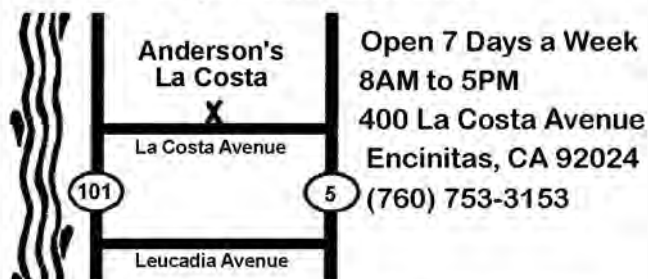
The SDHS is happy to publicize items of horticultural interest. See other side for resources & ongoing events.
Send calendar listings by the 10th of the month before the event to calendar@sdhortsoc.org.

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www.AndersonsLacostaNursery.com

February, 2009 – Welcome to (almost) Spring:

The nursery is getting really stocked up – we see spring just on our radar. Check out our website www.andersonslacostanursery.com for current specials, too.

Here's a few great plant ideas that are great to plant now as a superb addition to your garden:

- Japanese Weeping Cherry trees. *Prunus subhirtella* 'Pendula' gets to 30 ft tall and 20 ft wide. Dark, dark green foliage and long lasting pink flowers in spring.

- *Prunus serrulata* 'Snow Fountains'. Another Weeping Cherry with cascading habit and compact growth make this a truly magnificent specimen tree. Slow-growing dwarf has graceful branches that bend to the ground. Each spring the Snow Fountain Weeping Cherry Tree dons a floral cloak of pure white so beautiful it rivals any flowering ornamental. Ultimately reaches a height of 12-15' and spreads 6-8'. Very hardy, disease and insect resistant.

- Weeping Pussy Willow, *Salix caprea pendula* - in late winter and early spring, this pussy willow tree is adorned with extra large, silver-gray catkins which turn bright yellow. Dark green foliage, and the branches are terrific on flower arrangements. Like the Weeping Cherry trees, this tree is grafted so stays under 10 ft tall and wide.

- *Melaleuca decussata* 'Totem Poles'. This is a quick-growing small multi-stemmed shrub with upright stems and slightly pendulous branch tips, typically grows to a height and spread of 6 to 9 feet but can be found in Australia to nearly 20 feet tall. The leaves are bright green to bluish, narrow.. The bark is brown and shredded. Lavender flowers appear in late spring through summer. This is a good plant to use as a screen or small tree. It will stand some neglect, and is frost hardy to about 20 degrees F.

- *Cupressus macrocarpa* 'Lemon Yellow' (Yellow Cypress) - This plant is upright and conical with good yellow foliage that is strongly lemon scented. Will get to 30 feet tall while remaining conical in shape (to 8ft across).

- Japanese Flowering Apricot; Fragrant pink flowers. Will get to 20 ft tall.

- *Michelea figo* 'Banana Shrub'. A slow growing, compact shrub. It bears small, shiny deep green leaves and tiny spring-blooming heavily scented cream flowers streaked with purple. Pruning produces abundant new flowering growth. Prefers neutral to acid, humus-rich, well-drained soil. Flowers have a distinctive, sweet banana scent.

The Water Conservation Garden (contact info on other side)

Feb. 1, 1:30pm, Free! Ask the Horticulturist Tour: An informative walk through the Garden with our professional horticulture staff. Bring your questions.

Feb. 3, 6:30 – 8:30pm, Hillside Gardening – Preview: Connie Beck on making the most of a slope. \$25. (619) 660-4350, www.cuyamaca.edu/preview.

Feb. 7, 10am – noon, Proper Pruning Practices: Leah Rottke on the do's and don'ts of pruning trees and shrubs. \$15/Members, \$25/Non-members.

Feb. 7, 1 – 3pm, Rainwater Collection for the Homeowner: Bill Toone on options for rainwater harvesting. \$15/Members, \$30/Non-members.

Feb. 8, 1 – 4pm, WaterSmart Landscape -- Beautiful Landscape on a Low-Water Budget: Jan Tubiolo takes the mystery out of Water-Smart Landscaping. \$20/Members, \$30/Non-member.

Feb. 14, 11:30am, Flavors of the Garden: A Valentine's Day tour, sampling sweet and savory delights. Register by February 1. \$20/Members, \$30/Non-members.

Feb. 17, 5:30 – 8:30pm, Ask the Landscape Designer Appointments: Connie Beck provides personalized 45-minute landscape design consultations. \$60/Members, \$75/Non-members. Email for appointments; infor@theGarden.org.

Feb. 19, 6:30 – 8:30pm, H2O – 911! – Living with the Water Crisis: Join Vickie Driver for a fast and furious intro to dealing with the water crisis. \$25.

Feb. 28, 9am – noon, Less Water, less Grass, More Fun! Join Vickie Criver for a short course in turf removal. \$20/Members, \$30/Non-members.

Quail Botanical Gardens (contact info on other side)

Feb. 3, 10, 17 & 24, 10am – noon, Ikebana Session: Learn the art of Ikebana from Rumi Rice. \$80/Members; \$100/Non-members - plus \$30 material fee.

Feb. 6, 10am – noon, Create a Vegetable Garden with an Eye on the Water Meter: Diane Hollister on starting an organic vegetable garden, how to prepare the soil for moisture retention, efficient irrigation, more.. \$25/Members, \$330/Non-members.

Feb. 21, 10am – noon, Free Workshop in Vermicomposting: Learn to compost with worms and build your own worm bin. Contact the Solana Center (760) 436-7986 or www.solanacenter.org.

Feb. 2, 10:30am, Dos Valles/CGCI Palomar District Floral Design Forums: Presented by Palomar District Designers. The Woman's Club of Carlsbad, 3320 Monroe St. Carlsbad. \$8 per session. (760) 729-4976 or www.dosvallesgardenclub.org.

Feb. 3, 6:30pm, San Diego County Orchid Society: Program TBA. Beginners Class at 6:30 in room 104; general meeting begins at 7:30pm in Room 101, Casa del Prado, Balboa Park. Admission free, everyone welcome. www.sdorchids.com.

Feb. 6, 1pm, Carlsbad Garden Club: Diane Bush on "Buzz on the Bees." Heritage Hall, Magee Park, 2650 Garfield St. Free. (760) 845-6339 or carlsbadgardenclub@hotmail.com.

Feb. 6, 1:30pm, Vista Garden Club: Marilyn Stevenson on creating bonsai and the new Bonsai House at the Wild Animal Park. Guests welcome. Gloria McClellan Senior Center, 1400 Vale Terrace, Vista. www.vistagardenclub.org.

Feb. 7, Walter Andersen Nursery: 9:00am Spring Color. (San Diego, 3642 Enterprise Street, (619) 224-8271); 9:30am, Spring Bulbs. (Poway, 12755 Danielson Court, (858) 513-4900). www.walterandersen.com.

Feb. 7, 9 – 11am, Feb. 14, 1 – 3pm, San Diego Audubon Society: Workshop on how to select, plant and maintain native plants. Tecolote Nature Center, 5180 Tecolote Road, San Diego. \$30 – includes a native plant to take home. (619) 682-7200

Feb. 7, 9am – noon, California Coastal Rose Society: Help prune and fertilize over 170 roses. Pruning demonstrations; meet other rose enthusiasts. Free homemade baked goods. Magee Park, Carlsbad. www.californiacoastalrose.com.

Feb. 7, 10am, SVW Hemerocallis Society: Program TBA. Public invited, Free. Inform gate guard you are coming for the daylily meeting and enter. Meeting in the Ecke Bldg, Quail Botanical Gardens, 230 Quail Garden Drive, Encinitas.

Feb. 7, 1 – 4pm, Feb. 8, 9am – 4pm, San Diego Camellia Society Annual Show: Free. Enter your blooms and/or enjoy the show. To enter blooms arrive at 8am. Room 101, Casa del Prado, Balboa Park. (760) 942-1919 or buydean@juno.com.

Feb. 8, 9am, San Diego Bonsai Club: "Bonsai-themed" benefit drawing. Bonsai Classes available to members only, check www.sandiegobonsaiclub.com for more information. Room 101 Casa del Prado, Balboa Park.

Feb. 8, 1pm, Southern California Plumeria Society: Program TBA. Everyone welcome! There will be a raffle and surprise table. War Memorial Building, Balboa Park. www.socalplumeriasociety.com.

Feb. 8, 1:30pm, Mabel Corwin Branch of the American Begonia Society: Michael Kartuz with a photo display of begonias and companion plants; he'll share his secrets of growing begonias. Bring begonias and companion plants to show. (760) 753-3977.

February 9, 6:00pm, details on page 3 Big Ideas for Water-Thrifty, Fire-Safe Landscapes

Feb. 10, Noon, Dos Valles Garden Club: Stephen Catholic Church, 31020 Cole Grade Road, Valley Center. www.dosvallesgardenclub.org.

Feb. 10, 7pm, San Diego Geranium Society: Program TBA – programs focus on growing, propagating and care of geraniums and pelargoniums. Everyone welcome. Room 101 Casa del Prado, Balboa Park. (619) 447-8243 or www.sdgeranium.org.

Feb. 11, 10am, Pt. Loma Garden Club: Jodie Bruhn on "Your Spring Garden"! Free. Portuguese Hall, 2818 Avenida de Portugal, San Diego. (619) 564-7036 or www.plgc.org.

Feb. 11, 10:30am, Poway Valley Garden Club: Elma Garcia design 7 or 8 arrangements with a "Hearts and Flowers" theme and shares ways to bring your garden flowers into your home. Old Poway Park, Templar Hall. (858) 748-1025 or home.san.r.com/pvgc.

Feb. 11, Noon, Ramona Garden Club: Paul Maschka on "Edible Landscaping." Ramona Woman's Club 524 Main St., Ramona (760) 788-6709 or ramonagardenclub.com.

Feb. 11, 7:30pm, San Diego Epiphyllum Society: Workshops at 7pm in room 104. Business meeting at 7:30, Room 101. Casa del Prado, Balboa Park. www.epiphyllum.com.

Feb. 12, 7:30pm, Southern California Horticultural Society: "Success with Succulents", by garden photographer Saxon Holt. Free. Friendship Auditorium, 3201 Riverside Drive, Los Angeles. www.SoCalHort.org

Feb. 14, 10am, San Diego Bromeliad Society: George Allaria with tips on growing bromeliads. Visitors welcome, free. Room 104, Casa del Prado, Balboa Park. Info: (858) 453-6486 or www.bsi.org/webpages/san_diego.html.

Feb 14, 10am – 4pm, San Diego Cactus & Succulent Society Winter Show & Sale: Choice specimen plants, handmade planters and pots. Room 101, Casa del Prado, Balboa Park. www.sdcss.com.

Feb. 14, Walter Andersen Nursery: 9:00am, Cymbidium Orchids. (San Diego see Feb. 7) 9:30 am, Xeriscape. (Poway see Feb. 7).www.walterandersen.com.

Feb. 14, 9am - noon, Gardeners 4 Peace: Peace brig tools, water and a cheerful spirit for the work party. For information contact Ava at gardeners4peace@hotmail.com.

Feb. 17, 7:00pm, Gardens of Hearst Castle: Victoria Kastern on San Simeon's jewel. Meeting of S.D. Floral Assoc. Optional dinner \$15/non-members. (619) 232-5762. Rm 101, Casa del Prado, Balboa Park. www.sdfloal.org.

Feb. 17, 7pm, San Diego California Naive Plant Society: Jonathan Dunn reviews recent Navy habitat and species recovery projects on San Clemente Island. Open to all, Free. Rm 104, Casa del Prado, Balboa Park. cnpsd.org.

Feb. 18, 7pm, San Diego Camellia Society: Tom Nuccio a renowned Camellia aficionado, will speak. Room 101, Casa del Prado, Balboa Park. (760) 942-1919.

Feb. 19, 7:30pm, San Diego Fern Society: Guests welcome. Room 101 Casa del Prado, Balboa Park. www.sdfem.com.

Feb. 20, Plant Day & Orchid Odyssey: San Diego Zoo self-guided walking tour maps available at the entrance. A botanical bus tour and orchid greenhouse open house is available -- meet at the bus unloading area at 2pm. The bus is free with admission. www.sandiegozoo.org/calendar

Feb. 21, Walter Andersen Nursery: 9:00am, Citrus & Avocado Varieties & Care. (San Diego; see Feb. 7) 9:30am, Citrus. (Poway; see Feb. 7). www.walterandersen.com.

Feb. 21, 10am, San Diego Garden Club: Kathie Russell on Ferns & Their Fiddleleafs. Free and open to the public. Malcolm X Library & Performing Arts Center, 5148 Market St., San Diego. (619) 269-6184 or www.sandiegogardenclub.com.

Feb. 22, 10:30am – 3:30pm, San Diego Mycological Society Fungus Fair: Cultivation, identification, gourmet mushrooms, books, food and more. Casa del Prado, Balboa Park. www.sdmnyco.org.

Feb. 23, 7:30, San Diego Rose Society: Program TBA. Free, visitors are always welcome. Room 101, Casa del Prado, Balboa Park. sdrosesociety.org

Feb. 25, 9:30am, San Dieguito Garden Club: Bob Wigand with slides of local birds, displaying objects to attract birds and plants that feed birds. All Welcome. Quail Botanical Gardens (address below).

Feb. 25, 6pm, Mission Hills Garden Club: Michael Buckner will discuss “Landscaping with Succulents”. United Church of Christ, 4070 Jackdaw St. San Diego. (619) 923-3624 or www.missionhillsgardenclub.org.

Feb. 25, 7pm, California Rare Fruit Growers, San Diego Chapter: Program TBD. Room 101, Casa del Prado, Balboa Park. www.crfgsandiego.org.

Feb. 26, 10:30am, Village Garden Club of La Jolla: Marie Lincoln tells how she started a wildly successful business that sparked a national gardening trend for plants with dark foliage/flowers. \$15/non-members. Torrey Pines Christian Church Auditorium, 8320 La Jolla Scenic Drive North, La Jolla. Info: Penelope West, 858/587-9840.

Feb. 27, 10am – 6pm, Feb. 28 & Mar. 1, 10am – 6pm, Spring Home Garden Show: Must see event! See pages 4 & 5 for details. Del Mar Fairgrounds. www.springhomegardenshow.com

Feb. 28, Walter Andersen Nursery: 9:00am, World of Orchids. (San Diego; see Feb. 7) 9:30am, Flower Arrangements You Can Grow! (Poway; see Feb. 7) www.walterandersen.com.

Feb. 28 & Mar. 1, 11am – 4:30pm, Ohara School of Ikebana Show and Bazaar: Free. Four demonstrations daily on the hour starting at noon. Room 101, Casa del Prado, Balboa Park (858) 454-4793.

Early Reservations Required:

Mar. 5, 1:30pm, Village Garden Club of La Jolla: Preston Bailey, Floral Couturier, in his first public West Coast appearance; his one-of-a-kind events have earned him a large list of celebrity clients. Reservation includes reception. \$55/Members, \$65/Non-members; \$250/private reception March 4. Sherwood Auditorium, 700 Prospect Street, La Jolla. (858) 775-0007 or kadams0007@aol.com.

Mar. 5, 6:30 – 8:30pm, Mar. 8, 2 – 4pm, Bye Bye Grass: Nan Sterman on how to exterminate your lawn for good, irrigation systems, more! \$45/Quail Members, \$50/Non-members. Brought to Quail Botanical Gardens by the Water Conservation Garden. Pre-register: Water Conservation Garden (619) 660-0614 x-10.

April 25, 8:35am – 3:10pm; Home Gardening Seminar: Annual seminar by the Master Gardeners, select from a wide range of excellent classes, many on water-wise landscaping. \$40/3 classes at Univ. of San Diego. Sells out very quickly, so visit www.MasterGardenersSanDiego.org and register ASAP.

Resources & Ongoing Events

QUAIL BOTANICAL GARDENS: Open daily 9-5 (closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's Day); 230 Quail Gardens Dr., Encinitas. Fee: \$10/adults, \$7/seniors, \$5/kids; parking \$1. Free to members and on the first Tuesday of every month. (760) 436-3036; www.qbgardens.org

WATER CONSERVATION GARDEN: Open 9-4 daily, free. Docent-led tours every Saturday at 10:30am & Sunday at 1:30pm. 12122 Cuyamaca College Drive West, El Cajon, (619) 660-0614 or www.thegarden.org

MISSION TRAILS REGIONAL PARK: Guided hikes Wed., Sat. & Sun. Visitor Center open 9-5, off Mission Gorge Rd., San Carlos, (858) 668-3275.

MASTER GARDENER HOTLINE: Gardening questions answered by trained volunteers Mon.-Fri., 9-3, (858) 694-2860, www.mastergardenerssandiego.org

SAN ELIJO LAGOON CONSERVANCY: Free 90-minute public nature walk 2nd Saturday of each month start at 9:00 am. Call (760) 436-3944 for details.

DESERT WILDFLOWER HOTLINE: Anza-Borrego Desert State Park: (760) 767-4684. For information, events, road conditions, etc. call (760) 767-5311 or visit <http://desertusa.com/wildflo/wildupdates.html>.

WILDFLOWER HOTLINE: March to May call the Theodore Payne Foundation hotline: (818) 768-3533 for info. on blooms in So. California and elsewhere; visit <http://theodorepayne.org>

BALBOA PARK:

Offshoot Tours: Free 1-hr walking tour in Balboa Park every Sat., 10am. Meet at Visitors Center; canceled if rain or less than 4 people. (619) 235-1122.

Botanical Building is one of the world's largest lath structures, with 1200+ plants and lavish seasonal displays. Open Friday–Wednesday, 10am to 4pm.

Botanical Library: Room 105, Casa del Prado, Mon.-Fri. and first Sat., 10am-3pm, (619) 232-5762.

Japanese Friendship Garden: Tues. to Sun., 10-4. Fees: free 3rd Tuesday; \$5/family; \$2/adult, \$1/seniors/students; (619) 232-2721, www.niwa.org

Canyoneer Walks: Free guided nature walks Saturday & Sunday. (619) 232-3821 X203 or www.sdnhm.org

Balboa Park Ranger Tours: Free guided tours of architecture and horticulture, Tuesdays & Sundays, 1pm, from Visitors Center, (619) 235-1122.

S.D. Natural History Museum: Exhibits, classes, lectures, etc. (619) 232-3821; www.sdnhm.org

S.D. Zoo: Garden day 3rd Friday of every month from 10am. Pick up schedule at entry. Info: (619) 231-1515, ext 4306; www.sandiegozoo.org

Garden TV and Radio Shows

How Does Your Garden Grow?: Saturday 7:30-8:00am; KPRZ 1210. Hosted by Kniffing's Discount Nurseries (page 13). Call-in questions: (866) 577-2473; Ted Kniffing and guest speakers.

Garden Compass Radio Show. Sat. and Sun., 8–10am. KPOP 1360, hosts Bruce and Sharon Asakawa, John Bagnasco. Call-in questions: (619) 570-1360 or (800) 660-4769.

Down To Earth with Host Tom Piergrossi. Award-winning TV show on local gardening, daily at 12:30pm and 7:30pm. CTN (County Television Network, www.ctn.org). Tapes avail. from SDHS library.

- Coffee grinds?** Ever noticed your local coffee shop offering free used grinds and wondered why? The grounds are very high in Nitrogen as well as being quite acidic and can offer these benefits.
- ☛ More worms in the soil
 - ☛ Improved composting
 - ☛ Azaleas & Camellias thrive on it
 - ☛ Houseplants are glossier & greener
 - ☛ Made their Hydrangeas really bright blue
 - ☛ Repels slugs & snails
 - ☛ Sprinkle used grounds around plants before rain or watering as a slow release nitrogen source.
 - ☛ Add to compost piles to increase nitrogen balance. Coffee filters and tea bags break down rapidly during composting.
 - ☛ Dilute with water for a gentle, fast-acting liquid fertilizer. Use about a half-pound can of wet grounds in a five-gallon bucket of water.
 - ☛ Encircle the base of the plant with a coffee and eggshell barrier to repel pests.
 - ☛ If you are into vermi-posting, feed a little bit to your worms

February in the San Diego area usually brings us exceptional gardening weather. Between rains there are plenty of clear, mild days that we can enjoy in the garden. There is a huge selection of plants that may be planted this month. If you haven't completed dormant pruning and spraying of deciduous fruit trees do it right away before they leaf out.

Azaleas & Camellias: Camellias and azaleas are best planted while in bloom not only because you can see what colors you are adding to your garden but also because you can take advantage of the post-bloom growth spurt.

California Native Plants: This is your last good month for planting most of these and still having success. California native plants like to be planted in the cool fall and winter months.

Spring Annuals: Fill in bare spots by planting spring annuals such as snapdragons, calendulas, primroses, pansies, and stock.

Avocado: If you live near the coast (or any frost-free area), start fertilizing your avocados this month. If you live inland, wait until March (to avoid frost damage).

Citrus Trees: Now is a good time to clean up your citrus and take steps to prevent citrus pests. Start by pruning any branches that touch the ground to help close off access to ants. Clean the tree with a spray of soapy water made with insecticidal soap (according to package instructions).

Deciduous Trees: If rains are light be sure to water deciduous trees as this is the time that they put out new leaves and blossoms.

Roses: Apply your first feeding to roses when the new growth is about 4-6 inches long. Granular, well-balanced, organic fertilizers work especially well for roses and most of these will encourage beneficial soil life. Watch for the earliest signs of diseases like powdery mildew or rust.

Cannas: Cut all stalks that have bloomed down to the ground now to encourage new stalks to grow and make plants look as good as new.

Wisterias: Big fat flower buds should be developing now and with close observation can be distinguished from the smaller more slender leaf buds - no pruning now or you may interfere with the blooms.