

Let's Talk Plants!

Newsletter of the San Diego Horticultural Society

January 2010, Number 184

Wicked Plants

SEE PAGE 3

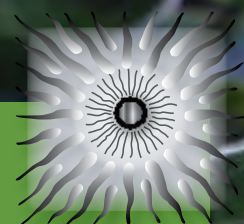
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SAN DIEGO
HORTICULTURAL
SOCIETY

On the Cover: Jimsonweed (*Datura stramonium*)

DECEMBER MEETING PHOTOS BY JANINE FREE

These are just a few of the extraordinary floral arrangements presented by René van Rems. Upper left: white roses in a container covered with eucalyptus seed pods. Upper right: close-up of a four-foot tall topiary cone form with a multitude of materials, including seed pods, long beans, pine cones, and other dried and fresh items. Middle left: branches from Norfolk Island pine spill over the edge of a round container covered with rough bark. Lower left: example of “vegetative design” look more often seen in Europe, this driftwood base has been “planted” with a wide range of plant materials to look as if the plants are actually growing in a garden setting.



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Cuyamaca College (insert live link)

COVER IMAGE: The Jimsonweed (*Datura stramonium*) on the cover was photographed at the San Diego Botanic Garden by Rachel Cobb, our newsletter graphic artist. Eating (or smoking) this beautiful – but deadly – flower can cause hallucinations and even death. Read more about it in *Wicked Plants* (see meeting notice below).

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 – 8:15 Announcements, speaker, opportunity drawing
8:15 – 8:30 Break for vendor sales, lending library
8:30 – 9:00 Plant forum; 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

- February 8** John Greenlee, on *Meadows by Design: A Revolution in Sustainable Landscapes*
- March 8** Pat Welsh on *Growing Summer Vegetables the Organic Way: How to Plant, Feed, Water, Harvest, and Control Pests and Diseases Without Synthetic Fertilizers or Poisonous Sprays*
- March 20** Save the date - SDHS GARDEN TOUR – details soon!
- April 12** Joe Walker on *Australian Perennials: Water-Wise Beauties for Landscape and Cut Arrangements*
- May 10** A Special Evening with Brad Lancaster on *Rainwater Harvesting*

www.SanDiegoHorticulturalSociety.org

Next Meeting: January 11, 2010, 6:00 – 9:00 PM

Topic: AMY STEWART ON “WICKED PLANTS: THE DELICIOUSLY DARK SIDE OF THE PLANT KINGDOM”

Meeting is open and everyone is welcome. Admission: Members/free, Non-Members/\$10. Parking is free.
Meeting Place: Del Mar Fairgrounds, Surfside Race Place, Del Mar; Info: (760) 295-7089

Start the New Year off with a fast-paced and fascinating presentation by Amy Stewart. In her new bestseller, *Wicked Plants: The Weed That Killed Lincoln's Mother and Other Botanical Atrocities*, Stewart takes on Mother Nature's most appalling creations. It's an A to Z of plants that kill, maim, intoxicate, and otherwise offend. Drawing on history, medicine, science, and legend, Stewart presents tales of bloodcurdling botany that will entertain, alarm, and enlighten even the most intrepid gardeners and nature lovers.

Amy Stewart tends a poison garden of her own in northern California. She is the award-winning author of four books on the perils and pleasures of the natural world. Her essays and commentaries have appeared in the *New York Times*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Garden Design*, *Organic Gardening*, and elsewhere. She's been featured on NPR, Good Morning America and CBS Sunday Morning. She is the recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts fellowship and a California Horticultural Society Writer's Award. Stewart lives in Eureka, California, with her husband Scott Brown. They own an antiquarian bookstore called Eureka Books and tend a flock of unruly hens in their backyard. She is the author of *From the Ground Up: The Story of a First Garden*, *The Earth Moved: On the Remarkable Achievements of Earthworms*, and the *New York Times* bestselling *Flower Confidential: The Good, the Bad, and the Beautiful in the Business of Flowers*. Her newest book, *Wicked Plants: The Weed That Killed Lincoln's Mother & Other Botanical Atrocities*, will be available for sale.

The presentation will be followed by an opportunity drawing featuring very special plants, including some that may be poisonous! Watch for an e-mail with a list of these plants. After a short break, there will be the popular Plant Forum, where a plant expert will discuss plants and answer questions about plants brought in by the audience – we encourage you to bring in poisonous plants!

To learn more, visit www.amystewart.com and see page 5. ☘



The Mission of the San Diego Horticultural Society

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

ESTABLISHED SEPTEMBER 1994

SDHS BOARD MEMBERS

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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, .

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

Sponsorship Info: Susan Morse, sponsor@sdhortsoc.org

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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 monthly meetings, annual college scholarships, and other important programs. Sponsorships start at just \$100/year; contact Susan Morse at sponsor@sdhortsoc.org.

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

A GOOD REASON TO JOIN

While all our meetings are open to the public, and we're delighted to have visitors, only our members can attend for free. The fee for non-members who attend our meetings is now \$10. If you attend with a friend who isn't a member, we hope this will encourage them to join, as annual dues are only \$30/year for an individual.

GET YOUR HORT BUCKS!

If someone joins because you told them about us, and they give us your name when they send in their dues, we will mail you a "Hort Buck" worth \$5 towards raffle tickets, name tags, Plant Forum CDs or dues. A list of all the members who got Hort Bucks in 2009 is on page 9. To get your Hort Bucks just ask your friends to give us your name when they join SDHS. Even better – give your friends a membership as a gift and put your name down for the Hort Bucks!



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

1: Spring Home/Garden Show

Paula Verstraete, our Volunteer Coordinator, is looking for members to volunteer at the Spring Home/Garden show, being held on March 5-7 at the Del Mar Fairgrounds. We're planning some exciting new things at our booth, and there will be a number of different ways you can help. To find out more contact Paula at pverstraete@cp-sandiego.com.

2: Membership Committee

Express your outgoing nature, or overcome your shyness by meeting new people in a very friendly setting! The membership committee welcomes more members to increase our hospitality toward new members and in attracting new members. Be a greeter at meetings, visit nurseries and provide membership brochures for their customers, or help with community outreach programs. Contact Susan Morse, (760) 599-0550. ☺

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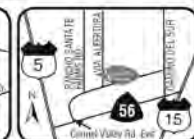
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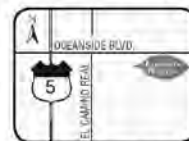
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Fall/Winter HOURS
Monday-Saturday...7:30am-4:30pm
Sunday.....9:00am-4:30pm

To Learn More...

DEADLY PLANTS

By Ava Torre-Bueno

Here is our next speaker's site, complete with a darkly funny video:
<http://www.amystewart.com/wickedplants.html>

And here's the NYTimes blog about her book:
<http://cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/05/26/plants-show-off-their-sinister-sides/>

There are a few web sites for mystery novel readers who are into plant poison:
<http://mysteryreadersinc.blogspot.com/2009/08/poisonous-plant-gardens.html>
and a site for writers who want to learn how to use plants to poison their characters:

<http://www.helium.com/items/1505704-murder-methods-poison>

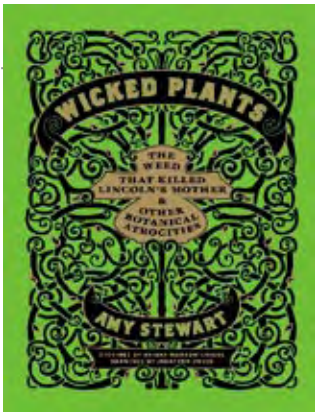
On the other hand, there are plants that are good for you.
Here's a California nursery that sells herbs for health:
<http://www.crimson-sage.com/>

And we have a National Herb Garden (who knew?)!
<http://www.usna.usda.gov/Gardens/collections/herb.html>

Native Americans have used plants for health (and who knows, maybe they poisoned each other too?). Here's a Native herb garden connected to an archeological dig run by the U of Wisconsin:
<http://www.uwlax.edu/mvac/Research/IntroGarden.htm>

Be vigilant when you eat that next salad!!

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>. ☘



Book Review

WICKED PLANTS

By Amy Stewart

Reviewed by Susi Torre-Bueno

I usually buy garden books that help me decide which plants to add to my garden, not which ones not to use, and I think that's true for most gardeners. Amy Stewart's latest best selling book, *Wicked Plants: The Weed that Killed*

Lincoln's Mother & Other Botanical Atrocities, is a departure from that norm – and a fascinating peek at the dark side of Mother Nature. It's a fun and easy read and I highly recommend it. Buy it from our speaker at the January meeting and she'll happily autograph it for you, a lovely bonus for any book collector.

Short chapters highlight a wide range of wicked plants and their relatives, including the striking Jimsonweed on the cover of this newsletter. It's the perfect book to take with you anywhere. Pick it up while waiting at the dentist and read a few paragraphs about ergot, a parasitic fungus that might have been responsible for the Salem witchcraft hysteria of 1691. A few pages further on you'll find out why the stinging tree (*Dendrocnide moroides*) is called "the most

Continued on page 13

From The Board

By Susi Torre-Bueno

NEW YEAR IN THE GARDEN

Our Program Committee has arranged for another year of outstanding speakers, many of them on topics relating to good gardening practices in our low-water climate. As we go to press in mid-December it's too soon to know if we'll have plenty of rain this year – but the last three years of serious drought have made us more sensitive to what plants to select and how to water our existing gardens.

Three of the speakers listed on page 3 will directly address water-related issues, including plant selection. For our annual Special Evening this May we are very enthusiastic about bringing Brad Lancaster to San Diego for what is certain to be a dynamic talk about rainwater harvesting. Find out more about what you can do this winter, during our rainy season, at Brad's website, www.HarvestingRainwater.com.

Our July meeting brings back Debra Lee Baldwin, talking about her new book, *Succulent Container Gardens*. In October Wendy Proud will speak about drought tolerant plant selections that are new to San Diego. Other lectures for the second half of 2010 include bees, native plants of Torrey Pine State Reserve, and improving your soil.

We look forward to seeing you at these dynamic meetings, and encourage you to bring your friends and neighbors.

HORTICULTURISTS OF THE YEAR

Since 1996 we have honored an outstanding horticulturist as our "Horticulturist of the Year" for the San Diego Horticultural Society. For 2010 we have enthusiastically chosen **Bruce and Sharon Asakawa** as our 2010 Horticulturists of the Year. This will be the fifteenth time we have given his honor, and this horticultural couple are the first co-honorees, which seems fitting, since they're a perfect team.

We are privileged to recognize them for their significant contributions to horticulture in this region. From the many wonderful Garden Compass radio programs they've hosted, to marvelous talks, books and articles, they have brought great beauty and a deeper understanding of gardening to thousands of people.

The award will be presented at our August 9 meeting – details to be announced. Congratulations, Bruce and Sharon!

To learn more about this dynamic duo, see page 7.

REMINDER – GUEST FEE INCREASE

The charge for non-members who attend our meetings is now \$10. If you attend with a friend who isn't a member, we hope this will encourage them to join. ☘

Successful Drought Tolerant Gardening

Did You Get That? Summarizing Drought Tolerant Gardening in 11 Easy Steps

By Cindy Sparks

Last February, we set a goal: cut landscape water use and minimize water expense, and produce a drought tolerant garden you'll love. I promised to "provide helpful websites and county-wide resources to give you new ideas and ... learn how to create a garden you'll love while slashing your water consumption." Since then, the county embraced water rationing, helping us get serious about saving water. Let's summarize the guidelines laid out in the first 11 articles.

- 1. Get serious about your water use.**
- 2. Become water savvy.** Review and tune your cultural practices and irrigation schedules. Understand where every drop is going; be sure it's going to the right plants/soil depths. Make a landscape map by hydrazone. If you don't like what you see, plan to re-design and replace.
- 3. Set your goals:** water use, project time, effort and dollars; functional requirements; style.
- 4. Review good example gardens and website tools:** Start a plant list or spreadsheet showing the plants' size at maturity, growing conditions, color, bloom season.
- 5. Succulents.** These good citizens of our desert environment are beautiful, easy-care, top performers.
- 6. For the Birds:** provide food, water, and shelter for our feathered friends.
- 7. Natives.** Consider the plants that were here first and are perfectly matched to our arid West. There's a top performing native for every location and environment.
- 8. Design, Part I:** List all the problems you want to solve. Identify your functional requirements, then make a plot plan. (Start with your map from #2.)
- 9. Design, Part II:** Choose a theme, consider lawn replacement ideas, and arrange your plants. You did make a spreadsheet (#4), didn't you? Be sure you have done your homework, so your new design will meet your stated needs. If you need help, call in a professional for this step. Finish with a plot plan showing every plant in place.
- 10. Ready, Set, Go!** Double-check your plans to assure they meet your expectations. Plot plan including irrigation, plant list and layout ready? All unwanted plant material removed? Install



Garden seating in Meredith French's butterfly habitat garden, with asclepias, pentas, salvias, lavender, and lion's tail (*Leonotis leonurus*), plus California natives.

hardscape and irrigation components. Purchase exactly the plants you have on your list (this may take a while), smaller sizes preferred. Plant each plant according to its needs. Water according to plant type, size at planting, and your conditions. Then mulch heavily. Put your plants on a watering diet that will encourage deep roots. Remember (#3) your water use goal.

11. Maintenance: Smart watering is key to making your landscape drought tolerant. Read this article a second time. Your plants may need special care through this summer and possibly next. Keep your weeder handy so weeds won't get ahead of you. And if you lose a few plants, don't fret. Try to identify why it happened. Otherwise, enjoy the landscape you have worked so hard to establish.

That's all there is to it. To paraphrase Pat Welsh, "You've designed a vibrant garden with tranquil seating area. Now sit down in your garden and enjoy it."

I want to thank all the contributors who made this series special: Vince Lazaneo, UCCE Horticulture Advisor; Dave Shaw, UCCE Farm Advisor; Jeff Moore of Solana Succulents, Mel Hinton and David Kimball of the Audubon Society, Sue Marchetti from the California Native Plant Society, Pamela Homfelt, of pH Exterior Design, and my purple-pen-wielding editor Hanna Richardson, Master Gardener. 🌿

SDHS Garden Tour will be March 20

Save the date for our garden tour, which will feature water-thrifty North County gardens and local nurseries. Details in the February newsletter.

Plants That Produce

ANOTHER NEW YEAR

By Richard Frost

Welcome to 2010, another year of growing possibilities! I hope the previous year was a good one and all of your new year's resolutions come true. And if it wasn't on your list, be sure to add a resolution to attend the local horticultural society meetings here in San Diego. If you've never attended, please go to **www.sdhortsoc.org** right now to learn more about it. You'll be glad you did.

I never seem to run out of room in my garden. Last year I deleted a section of lawn in my backyard so that the vegetables and herbs that my wife adores could be closer to the house. Well, of course that made more room in the orchard. My friend across the street has pointed out that if I want a lot more space, I could just lease land from the neighbors, but that's another story. For the current extra space, I've made a New Years' resolution to ... plant more fruiting plants!

In the fig department, the 'Violette de Bordeaux' is considered the holy grail of dark, fruity figs. I'm going to plant one of those in the ground, and a Rouge de Bordeaux adjacent to it in a 25-gallon pot. These additions will make a more-or-less complete set of fig flavors in permanent residence.

Two years ago I began collecting pomegranate varieties with strident flavor characteristics. In addition to the 'Eversweet', 'Golden Globe', 'White Flower', and 'Arianna' already in the ground, I will plant 'Sirenevi' and 'Myagkosemyanni Rosovyi'. The spectrum of flavors here is analogous to wines – from muscadine to cabernet.

Speaking of grapes, many of you are aware of the 'Black Manukka' seedless table grape. This is not well liked by commercial

growers in the California central valley because the fruit clusters are loosely packed and have poor market appeal. However, this is a great property to have in our local mildew-infested environment. While at the Wolfskill variety collection last summer, I discovered there is also a 'Gold Manukka' seedless table grape! I have ordered some scion wood of this hybrid and will graft over my existing red flame grapes with them late this spring.

In the pit fruit department I am looking to add the black apricot 'Black Alexander', a very sweet white apricot 'Miramudi' from the temperate foothills of Pakistan, an un-named white nectarine from the nearby region Garam Chashma, and the Italian plum 'Morettini' – which is actually the Japanese 'Shiro' x 'Santa Rosa'. If fireblight turns out to be too much of a problem for these plants, then all the ornamental pear trees which host the disease in the north county may mysteriously disappear this summer.

Finally, there is the matter of fruiting mulberries. I have a beautiful 'Che' which has been faithfully waiting in a 2-gallon pot for some months now and a 'Gerald Dwarf' scheduled to arrive in March. These also will find homes in the orchard. Of course, that still leaves room for a winding miniature golf course from top to bottom!

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

Meet our 2010 Horticulturists of the Year: Bruce and Sharon Asakawa

Bruce Asakawa has been in the nursery business for 55 years beginning in 1950 when his parents started Presidio Garden Center. It became one of the premier retail nurseries on the west coast. The business was one of the first to diversify into landscape architectural planning and contracting and FTD floral design.

He received a degree in landscape architecture from Cal Poly, Pomona and developed and taught ornamental horticulture classes for the UCSD Extension Program in addition to being a landscape architect specializing in sustainable, residential and commercial landscape design. He was seen regularly as the garden expert on PM Magazine's television program and was a frequent guest on Sun Up San Diego. Bruce was instrumental in helping to establish the California Association of Nurserymen's Certified Nurserymen's program.



He was appointed by Governor Pete Wilson to be a member of California's Urban Forest Advisory Council and is a certified arborist. Beginning in 1977, Bruce and Sharon owned and operated Bonita Garden Center until they sold the property in 1990. During the early nineties he became the host of West Coast Garden Line, the precursor to the Garden Compass radio show and has been with Garden Compass since its inception.

Sharon graduated from San Diego State University with a double degree in American Foreign Policy and Political Science. After marrying Bruce, she began working at Presidio Nursery in 1963, eventually managing both florist departments at Presidio and Bonita Garden Centers. With over 42 years of experience in the gardening industry, she appeared with Bruce on Over the Hedge's television program and became co-host on the Garden Compass

Continued on page 19

SDHS Garden tour to Portland, Oregon

Save the Date!

San Diego Horticultural Society members and friends are invited to join us on a fabulous garden tour to Portland, Oregon, July 6 – 11, 2010. We will visit ten private gardens featuring the creative use of plant materials and garden art. Public gardens will include docent led visits to the Classical Chinese Garden and the Japanese Garden. We will also visit a specialty nursery or two.

The private gardens will include:

❖ The former garden of Lord and Lady McDonald, we'll visit a subtle garden that relies on foliage for stunning vistas.

🌿 Tom Vetter is known as "Portland's Picasso of Plant Combinations," and his personal garden is beautifully planted to shine in every season as plants show off their textures and shapes.



🌿 A woodland garden, with log gazebo, perennials, rock garden and evergreens, waterfall and pond, all conceived as a natural coast range landscape by a gardener who does all of her own work.

🌿 An urban farm, on approximately 1.2 acres on a hillside overlooking Lake Oswego and Mount Hood; the owners planned a sustainable garden mainly dedicated to organic food production and have ducks, chickens, honeybees, raised beds and a small family vineyard. They are in the process of developing an aquaponic vegetable garden and koi pond for fertilizer production.

🌿 Mike Darcy has a radio show in Portland and is always trying new plants and pushing the zone. His personal haven is a plant person's garden, with many large ceramic pots and lots of container gardening, plus garden art scattered about.

🌿 Our group will enjoy a tour of Nancyland, where plants and "art" mingle. Plants are important – perennials, shrubs, trees, and showy annuals – but they are better when accented by unique elements, many recycled. The front garden features deep beds with a gravel terrace and two unique pebble mosaic features by Jeffrey Bale. The back garden features a paisley-shaped pebble mosaic, potted plants, turquoise fence, and much more. The garden has been featured in numerous American and English publications and was shown on Canadian TV's *Weird Homes*.

🌿 A very large personal garden we'll visit with the owner/designer, who has wonderful stories to share about all of the great aspects of her garden that shows her love of rust and the color blue. She frequents junkyards and collects rusting objects and creates large-scale sculptures and furniture for the garden.



🌿 Jeffrey Bale was originally trained as a landscape architect, and his fabulous pebble and stone mosaics grace some of the most fascinating gardens you're likely to see. It will be a real treat to visit his personal garden! Get a taste of what's in store at his website, www.jeffreygardens.com. He says, "The garden for me is the most sensual place to be aside from the wilds of nature. Finely executed stonework embellishes and frames rich plant combinations, to create a foretaste of Heaven."

🌿 Lucy Hardiman is one of Portland's best-known designers. We'll visit the garden surrounding her big Victorian home, where she tests plants and design ideas.

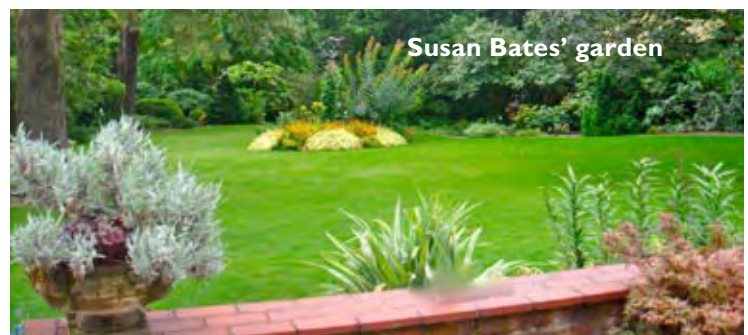
🌿 Garden designer Susan LaTourette's garden was featured in *Sunset* magazine in June 2009. She aims to create a tranquil space, "little nooks make you feel as tho you have escaped civilization. The nooks should remind you of happy moments; bowls of water encourage one to slow down and take notice. It's a very peaceful way to approach your home."

Guests will enjoy a welcome reception, three lunches and special farewell dinner. Our hotel, the Inn at Northrup Station, was chosen for its location and is surrounded by restaurants, boutiques, art galleries and museums. All rooms have small kitchens, and the property is on Portland's streetcar line.

The tour is planned for a maximum of 42 people. After the success of our Philadelphia tour there has been a lot of interest, and we expect the departure to fill quickly. As we go to press the price is still being calculated, and will be available by early January. Please contact Cheryl at Sterling Tours for price, reservations and more information.

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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:

We welcome Healing Time Books as our newest sponsor, see ad on page 20.

Astyanax & Karen	Gary & Barbara Raub
Cassimatis	Greta Ross
Pat Crowl	Jim Ruecker
Judy Fallin	Linda Shaw
Margaret Flickinger	Kim Snyder &
Kathleen Flores	Dan Jackson
Valerie Grimm	Bridget Thompson
Patti Keyes	Cady & Jocelyn
Lucy Kramer	Vortmann
Barbara Jenkins-Lee	

NEW ADVERTISERS:

Cuyamaca College (INSERT)
Southwestern College - BACK COVER

HORT BUCKS ARE GREAT!

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

Kimberly Alexander (1)	Susan Morse (1)
Connie Beck (1)	Al & Dora Myrick (1)
Lisa Bellora (1)	Jan Neill (1)
Cecily Bird (1)	Jackie Ravel (1)
Linda Bresler (2)	Cindy Sparks (1)
Buena Creek Gardens (1)	Linda Stewart (1)
Karylee Feldman (1)	Susi Torre-Bueno (1)
Lori Johansen (2)	Marcia Van Loy (2)
Kathy LaFleur (1)	Darlene Villanueva (1)
Cathy McCaw (1)	Jim Wright (1)

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

What's Up at San Diego Botanic Garden?

SUCCULENT CONTAINER GARDENS DEBUTS THIS MONTH AT THE SDBG



The SDBG is proud to host a celebration for the release of *Succulent Container Gardens* this month. Author Debra Lee Baldwin will give a special presentation that honors the San Diegans whose designs are in the book. Their easy-care container gardens range from creative plant-and-pot combos to miniature landscapes.

Three years ago Debra gave her debut presentation of *Designing with Succulents* at the San Diego Botanic Garden (then Quail Botanical Gardens). "The crowd was enthusiastic, the room was full, and we ran out of books," Debra recalls. *Designing with Succulents* became a bestseller, is now in its fourth printing and has been translated into French.

Her new book, *Succulent Container Gardens*, shows how to use these plump-leaved and sculptural plants in pots, wreaths, window boxes and other containers ideal for patios, balconies and other small-space gardens. The emphasis is on good design, and the book offers more than 300 photos of intriguing, eye-catching ideas. "San Diego is a hotbed of innovation where succulents are concerned," Debra says. "What starts here sparkles outward, to Los Angeles, San Francisco, Denver and beyond."

One local designer whose work is shown in *Succulent Container Gardens* is Bette Childs, who sells at garden shows and donates her time and talents to the SDBG. Look for Bette's one-of-a-kind succulent creations, along with those by Wendy Graham, Lynn Bryant and Jane Wilkerson, at the SDBG gift shop. "I love the way they use antique china teacups and other recycled items for containers," Debra says.

The book launching party for *Succulent Container Gardens* is Saturday, January 30 at 3 p.m. Debra will sign books before and after her 45-minute slide presentation, and celebratory refreshments will be served. Everyone is welcome. Cost: Members \$12, non-members \$15. Pre-registration required. More info: www.SDBGarden.org and www.debraleebaldwin.com. ☺

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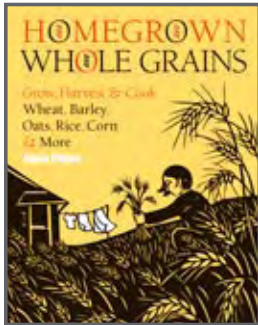
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Book Review

HOMEGROWN WHOLE GRAINS: GROW, HARVEST & COOK WHEAT, BARLEY, OATS, RICE, CORN & MORE

By Sara Pitzer

Reviewed by Caroline McCullagh



Go back one or two generations in your family tree and you'll probably find a farmer. Look at the human family tree and you'll find farmers for well over 10,000 years. That may be why we're so interested in gardening. It's strong in our heritage and possibly even in our genes.

Homegrown Whole Grains allows us to tap into that farming heritage in our own back yards. I found it fascinating. In form it's like many other "how to" books

I've seen over the years, but its content is almost entirely new to me. The ideas fit in with the recent "slow foods" movement and the idea of eating locally. Eating locally entails eating foods that are grown locally to minimize the amount of fuel used to transport them to your dining room table. It also strengthens your local economy by supporting local farmers. You keep your money at home rather than sending it off to Chile, Australia, or somewhere else.

I've reviewed other books about these ideas, including *The Omnivore's Dilemma* by Michael Pollen and *Coming Home to Eat* by Gary Paul Nabham (Sept. '02). They posit (and I agree) that every bite of food you put in your mouth is a direct vote for the kind of food distribution system you want in America.

Sara Pitzer writes that she originally published this book (under the title *Whole Grains*) in 1981 for small-scale homesteaders who were going back to the land in an attempt to become self-sufficient. She and they wanted to live "off the grid," but found that it was more difficult than they had imagined. She's rewritten the book incorporating what she learned from that experience and since then.

The book covers the grains mentioned in the title. The "& more" refers to buckwheat, amaranth, quinoa, spelt, emmer farro, einkorn, millet, and rye. Her first chapter covers basic information on growing, storing, and grinding grain. Chapters two through ten cover information about the individual grains. For example, chapter two on barley has sections on types of barley, growing barley, potential problems, harvesting, threshing, removing hulls, storing, and buying barley for seed or eating. Many of the chapters also have short profiles of individuals and organizations instrumental in the growing and promotion of the grains.

The book includes more than sixty recipes, most of which look absolutely delicious. It also has a good index and a list of resources where you can buy grains to eat or to plant, tools, and other books. A list of relevant websites and films rounds out that section.

Homegrown Whole Grains (ISBN 978-1-60342-153-9) is paperback, 167 pages, and illustrated with attractive line drawings. It's \$14.95 at your local bookstore. It's published by Storey, a publisher I'm surprised I hadn't run into before. They call themselves America's Garden Publisher. I checked out their web site, www.storey.com, and found much of interest. Besides gardening books they publish books on sewing, other crafts, animal care and other topics. 🌿

Community Outreach

By Linda Johnson

WALK THE TRAILS AND ENJOY GARDENS AND PARKS ALL AROUND SAN DIEGO COUNTY

Happy 2010! A great way to start the New Year is to explore many of the horticulturally interesting areas that San Diego County has to offer—and get some exercise too! Here are some parks with walking trails in all corners of the County:

Oceanside's Guajome Regional Park Nature Trails

Over four miles of nature trails meander through diverse Southern California habitats such as woodlands, chaparral, wetlands, and open, mixed grasslands. Enjoy a wealth of plant life and the finest riparian area of any County park. Rich in natural and human history, Guajome Park is also home to an 1850's adobe ranch house, surrounded by established olive and palm trees. Address: 3000 Guajome Lake Rd. Oceanside. Info: (760) 724-4489 or visit www.sdparks.org.

Pala's Wilderness Gardens Preserve

A 700-acre preserve offers four miles of hiking trails, historical and cultural sites, and an interpretive center. Ranger-led hikes are scheduled throughout the year. Address: 14209 Hwy. 76, Pala. Info: (760) 742-1631 or visit www.sdparks.org.

Los Penasquitos Canyon Preserve

Enjoy 3,700 acres of open space in this preserve that includes a National Historic and Archaeological District. The preserve offers 10 miles of hiking, biking and equestrian trails through a beautiful setting along the Penasquitos Creek. The park features a historic adobe ranch house built in 1823 by the recipients of the first Mexican land grant in San Diego County. Address: 12020 Black Mountain Road, San Diego. Info: (858) 484-7504 or visit www.sdparks.org.

Chula Vista's Otay Lakes Park Nature Trails

A highlight of the South Bay, the beautiful views of Otay Lake and the surrounding hills are ready to enjoy at Otay Lakes Park. The 78-acre park is a favorite, with hiking trails and a native plant/demonstration garden as just a few of the many reasons to visit the park. Also, birdwatchers will find much to reward their visit to the park and the surrounding area. Address: 2270 Wueste Rd., Chula Vista. Info: (619) 482-7361 or visit www.sdparks.org.

Lakeside's Stelzer Park Nature Trails

Offering miles of beautiful trails through an abundant plant and animal ecosystem, this Oak Oasis Preserve covers 650 acres in the hills of Lakeside. A 90-minute nature walk through a shaded-oak and sycamore-lined riparian trail is offered the first Saturday of every month through February. Address: 11470 Wildcat Canyon Rd., Lakeside. Info: (619) 561-0580 or visit www.sdparks.org.

La Mesa's Urban Walking Trails

Sponsored by the Grossmont Healthcare District and the La Mesa Parks and Recreation Foundation, the Urban Walking Trails are part of the "ready...set...live well" Community Wellness Initiative. Starting at 8 AM every Saturday, the trails offer three choices for all levels of walkers: the Stroll, the Stride, and the Challenge. La Mesa (the "Jewel of the Hills") has lovely parks to enjoy during the trails: La Mesita Park, Highwood Park, and Jackson Park. All walkers will

Continued on page 13

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The Real Dirt On...**BEATRIX FARRAND**

By Linda Bresler



Beatrix Jones Farrand was a landscape designer whose work defined the American version of gardens throughout the first half of the twentieth century. She was born in 1872 to a prominent New York family. Most of her summers were spent at the family home in Bar Harbor, Maine, where she became interested in plants and garden design.

At the age of twenty Farrand was introduced to Charles Sprague Sargent, professor of horticulture at the Bussey Institute of Harvard, and also the founding director of the

Arnold Arboretum in Boston. She moved to Boston, where she lived with Sargent and his wife and studied landscape gardening, botany and land planning. She also traveled throughout Europe, where she visited well-known gardens and became influenced by Gertrude Jekyll and William Robinson to use native plant species and natural plantings.

Farrand began practicing landscape design at the age of twenty-five, working from the upper floor of her mother's brownstone house in New York. With the help of her mother's and her aunt's social connections, she was introduced to, and later designed for, J. P. Morgan, John D. Rockefeller, and Theodore Roosevelt.

She combined her horticultural expertise with a keen eye for detail, a near perfect sense of proportion, and a broad foundation in the fine arts and in design history. She also applied the advice that she had received from Charles Sargent: to make the design fit the site, and to design to the tastes of her clients.

Early in her career, she became one of the charter members of the American Society of Landscape Architects, and its only female member. Later, she received various honors, such as honorary degrees from Yale University and Smith College.

From 1912 to 1943, Farrand served as Princeton University's first consulting landscape architect. She went on to design the campuses of Yale (Marsh Botanical Garden), and the University of Chicago. Her campus design was based on three concepts; using plants that bloomed throughout the academic year, emphasizing architecture as well as hiding flaws, and using upright and climbing plants so that the small spaces between buildings would not seem reduced in scale.

In 1913, Beatrix married Max Farrand, head of the history department at Yale. Later, when her husband was appointed Director of the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, Farrand moved to California. She helped design the gardens for the Huntington Library, as well as the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden.

Farrand's most notable work was for the Dumbarton Oaks estate in Washington, D.C. Influenced by the gardens that she had visited in Europe, she designed terraced gardens, landscaped the steep slopes, and connected the estate's home with its natural environment. Dumbarton Oaks is often considered as one of the best American neoclassicist gardens.

Continued on page 13

Photo above: Beatrix Farrand, Santa Barbara, California, 1943; courtesy Beatrix Farrand Society Archives. Image courtesy of Judith Tankard, editor of the Beatrix Farrand Society, www.beatrixfarrandsociety.org. Tankard's new book about this ground-breaking American landscape designer is *Beatrix Farrand: Private Gardens, Public Landscapes*; visit www.judithtankard.com to learn more.

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Book Review Continued from page 5

feared tree in Australia," with fine silicon hairs "that resemble peach fuzz and contain a virulent neurotoxin" whose excruciating pain has driven people to suicide.

The wickedest plant kills five million people a year (can you guess what it is?), and even some San Diego County favorites can be deadly. Most people know that Castor Bean is poisonous (as well as invasive), but were you aware that Nandina produces cyanide and that all parts of lilies are toxic to cats? Every page has zingers like these – and I think anyone would enjoy reading about the potential problems with petunias or the hazards of henbane.

Small enough to carry handily, with a helpful place-saving ribbon, and illustrated with appropriately black-inked illustrations and etchings, this handsome volume has won my heart. The book has a useful bibliography and a list of suggested books for continuing your readings, but sadly lacks an index. That's a minor quibble, so don't let it stop you from acquiring this excellent book. 🌿

Community Outreach Continued from page 10

receive a free water bottle! Contact La Mesa Community Services at www.cityoflamesa.com or call (619) 667-1300 for trail locations.

Volunteer Opportunity for California Native Planting!

California native planting season ends in March; Lakeside's River Park Conservancy is looking for groups now to help plant trees that will make a difference for many years to come. There are also other projects (trail building, weeding, trash pick-up and painting). For more information, visit www.volunteersandiego.org/projects or www.lakesideriverpark.org/Volunteers/volunteer.htm. 🌿

Real Dirt Continued from page 12

Farrand believed in using native plant materials to connect the natural and the designed landscape. She also helped to champion the use of perennial plants in combinations based upon color harmony, bloom sequence and texture. This resulted in the mixed border that is used in today's gardens.

Beatrix Farrand passed away in 1959. Her library and related materials were given to the University of California at Berkeley for the Department of Landscape Architecture, where they were welcomed and incorporated as a valued addition to the curriculum. For more information visit www.beatrixfarrand.org.

Linda Bresler is a Landscape Designer living in Poway. She specializes in drought-tolerant, low maintenance designs that provide four season beauty. 🌿

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Bring a plant from your garden to show off at the January Plant Forum!

Photo: Stacey Dores



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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 January was:

What are the top three things on your garden "to do list" for 2010, and why?

Walter Andersen will be working on his new home: "For me, it is kind of start all over. Different house, and there is nothing in the front yard – we ripped it all out. Have already installed a new rock wall (my wife calls it 'The Taj Ma Wall'). It is very pretty, natural stone. Just that made a big difference, now to choose and place all of the plants. (1) New wall and re-grade. (2) Select new plant material (mostly low water use, I suppose). (3) Install a new drip watering system. Should do for about 6 months I'm thinking."

Steve Brigham made three promises: "(1) I promise to finish my backyard greenhouse ASAP, so I can grow plants to give to my 'non-gardening-but-wish-they-could' neighbors and friends next year. (2) I promise to teach those neighbors and friends what they need to know to get their gardens started and make them grow. (3) I promise to help them (a little bit, anyway) plant some plants, and show them how to properly water them! I'm writing this on November 30th. Are you looking, Santa? Am I being a good boy? I promise I'll do these things, I really do!!"

Joy Brinker had these top items on her list: "(1) Replace the drip system in my rose garden as the roses appeared thirsty at various times this past summer. (2) Remove the cannas from the bed near my house as they have taken over and crowded out every other desirable plant. They travel underground and overwhelm everything else. (3) Replant the slope behind my house with hardy flowering iceplant as the rabbits have denuded sections of the hillside this past summer. Always something to do with 1/2 acre of ground to beautify."

Sharon Corrigan told us, "Get someone to fix a broken irrigation sprayer and maybe add one in another place and close a couple. Redo all of my entryway plants for a fresh look. Mulch mulch mulch. Plant something out by garage where I pulled a horrible old oleander that came with the place."

Richard Frost said, "There can never be enough fruit trees in my yard – and so, in 2010 I plan to install 10 new varieties in my orchard."

Sue Fouquette had these top three tasks: "(1) Find time to work in our yard – because I love the outdoors and the exercise. (2) Transplant every plant in a plastic pot into the ground – to save time watering and save water. (3) Transplant many plants in ceramic pots into the ground – to save time watering, save water, and stop ruining the stucco at the base of our house."

Irina Gronborg had one task in mind: "To do less. To leave some untidy tangles (let's call them hedgerows) where birds can hide their nests. Times three."

Marilyn Guidroz's top three include some water-saving features: "(1) Actually lay out my new garden design on paper instead of just waving my hands around. This really helps to keep organized and put things where they will do well the first time. (2) Install a new drip irrigation system to the fruit trees and larger shrubs. This will come in handy for

those dog days of summer when it is really needed. I generally like to water all of my smaller perennials by hand to enjoy them more. (3) Construct a water catchment basin and berms to guide the rain water where it will be most useful. I think this will be a lot of fun and why not use the water instead of watching it run off the property."

Pamela Homfelt had one item: "Simplify, Simplify, Simplify! Typical of plant aficionados, my garden is cluttered with cuttings of this, cuttings of that. I finally have the heart to pull out what is not working, say thank you for growing in my garden, and make a deposit in the greenwaste. I am enjoying the open areas of my garden that allow me to walk through the garden from all sides. To fill in I will repeat existing favorites already in the garden."

Linda Johnson's ideas will save water usage, and more: "(1) Planting a succulent garden; (2) removing invasive iceplant; (3) installing a rainwater collection system. Why? Adding color to the garden, decreasing water usage, and reducing maintenance."

Sue Kelly-Cochrane had big plans: "I am ripping out my front yard, expanding my front courtyard by extending the 5 foot wall, putting an arbor over the wall and training my wisteria over it. I will be getting rid of my grass and changing the hardscape configuration. Exciting stuff!"

Candace Kohl had one item, too: "My main 'to do' for my garden for next year is to spend more time in it, just enjoying it, not always criticizing and working. A garden is a work in progress and my tendency is to see the weeds and not the flowers. Time for an attitude change. To help with this goal I want to establish more comfortable sitting (and hanging out) areas in the different parts of the garden. I managed to actually follow through on one of my goals for this year. I have kept a written record of when I have watered, sprayed and fertilized; both house plants and garden. This has proved to be very helpful on many fronts. Not the least that it has pointed out another goal for 2010 - feed the roses on a more regular schedule."

Kathy LaFleur picked these three: "(1) To make my garden work harder for me. More edibles !! (2) Keep getting rid of more grassy areas. (3) Find time to plant myself in the garden to relax and sit down and enjoy all the hard work."

Don Lowe selected the following: "(1) Reduce the small back yard lawn area by 25% to make room for more succulents to reduce water usage. (2) Continue to grow more seeds in containers from my new potting table and propagating area to replant in the garden. This will save on vegetable costs. Better for you and also tastes better. (3) Experiment with potting mulch mediums, organic fertilizers, ground renovation and various seeds for better growth and insect resistant plants."

Rachele Melious had these top items: (1) Get that drip system in. Most of my backyard plants, including fruit trees, are potted on the deck. Drip should make more fruit with less splitting, save time and water and prevent spills on the deck. (2) Get rid of the Passiflora invading the Camellia... again. Just when I think I finished the job, it rears its soft and twining tendrils again. (It's quite funny when it reaches out and tickles guests at the front door!) (3) Convince my husband that the overgrown Sagos must be moved. Or else expand the sidewalk. "

Janet Milliken's top three are: "(1) Take out some grass to make a small garden around an urn - I have the urn and have not done

Continued on page 16

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the project for a year – time to get on with it. (2) Take out some grass to make a border in front of our picket fence in the front yard – been planning for a couple of years. (3) Make a raised planter in front of a 6 foot solid fence under a large spruce tree – getting tired of putting it off."

Jennifer Morrissey sent her top three items: "(1) Finally replace (after 3 years!) our purposefully dead lawn with a xeric landscape. (2) Mulch, mulch, mulch so that we don't spend all spring weeding. (3) Learn how to properly prune our fruit trees for better harvest and more even growth."

Katharina Notarianni had these top three tasks for 2010: "(1) Reconfigure irrigation system for greater efficiency to save water and reduce costs. (2) Bring in compost to create a mulch layer throughout to help retain moisture, build healthy soil and conserve water. (3) Plant more California natives, bearded irises and other drought tolerant plants."

Ted Overland picked these three: "(1) Install a flagstone patio, because I'm tired of falling through my old wooden deck. (2) Remove a *Schinus molle* (California pepper tree), because one is enough. (3) Pile on the mulch, for a soil amender, a weed barrier, a soil shader, a finished look, etc."

Una Marie Pierce selected the following: "(1) Rework and upgrade existing drip system and move some bubblers that were installed too close to tree trunks. (2) Learn how to use some new (to me) settings on my irrigation controller. (3) Move some plants that have outgrown their current spots and replace some other plants with more succulents and low water use plants."

Nadia Quiros Horvath chose these three: "(1) Plant Blueberries for the first time ever...three varieties. (2) Add more gardening space to my garden by adding halved wine barrels for containers. (3) Try to grow five new vegetables that I have never tried before with heirloom seeds!"

Ida Rigby picked these: "(1) FUN: With very little space left in the garden and the water issues, I'll create more non-plant focal points: places to sit; sculptures; decorative elements (maybe the Pasadena symposium on "whimsy" next fall will inspire. (2) FUN: Spaces opened up through editing will be devoted to Australian and South African plants (discoveries at the Santa Barbara symposium in September). There are so many more choices than when I built the garden some 16 years ago emphasizing Southwest and Mediterranean natives. (3) NOT fun but necessary: I'll rework the tired irrigation system."

Sue Ann Scheck listed her top three garden goals as: "(1) Create an exquisite woodland garden with specimen plants using succulents and California natives. (2) Replace all of my grass with pea pebbles, weathered wood, and specimen succulents. (3) Create an enchanting pathway and turn my landscape into an enchanted serene space... a Brigadoon kind of place which adds joy and laughter to all who meander through it."

Cindy Sparks replied that, "I want to do three things in 2010. Because sustainability is so sensible (and, at last, popular), first I'll implement some re-use of my washing machine grey water. It is the highest water on the property, so it should be easy to lead it, via a spill container, to my citrus. Second I have been wanting to do vermiculture. I really admire the Wiggly Ranch design. I want to buy one and get started with an easy program to keep producing

worms, even when we go on vacations. And third, I want to do more with rainwater retrieval. I already have a small berm and downspout re-direction from a little roof behind the main house. I want to somehow harness water from the two main roof downspouts. This will be the most difficult because my husband is likely to find reason to complain so I'll need a politically correct solution as well as a practical and cost-effective one. I'll leave a large cistern as a project for 2011."

Susi Torre-Bueno picked these three: "(1) Finish installing our gray water system to water all the trees. (2) Finish planting low-water perennial herbs and edible flowers in the labyrinth. (3) Add more low-water trees to the garden."

Peggie Wormington said, "These are my big tasks for 2010: (1) Fix the outdoor lighting - 25-30 years old. A fire hazard in the Italian Stone Pine. (2) Finish planting my back (east facing) canyon slope with Mediterranean plants. We recovered this slope from the ivy monster a year ago and just now are getting around to planting. The soil is amazingly good from years of decomposing ivy leaves! (3) Take out the lawn under the Italian Stone Pine. (Yes, we have an Italian Stone Pine by our front door - 50 years old and doing OK. Planted two owners ago.) The lawn is barely holding on in the shade of the tree. After the lawn is gone we can have a shady spot to sit under the tree and a place for some shade loving plants in pots. If I get all that done, I will be a happy gardener."

Stephen Zolezzi wrote about water: "Have to focus on the life blood of every garden WATER. (1) Compost: get about 10 yards of great compost from A-One Soil and work it into the garden for moisture retention. (2) Evaluate all types of plants and their locations; it's not easy, but it's time to get rid of water guzzlers or group them together with zone watering to minimize overall use. (3) Add water wise plants from divisions or purchased to complement current plantings. Then pray for rain!!!"

The question for December was:

If you could visit any garden in the world, which one would it be and why? Here's a few more replies:

Vivian Blackstone told us, "I would love to go to either the Amsterdam annual garden show, near Lisse, the Keukenhof, or the one in England, the Chelsea. I hear they are both spectacular. I've seen pictures and heard from travelers, they are always overjoyed."

Carol Bratton wanted to see, "Giverny, Monet's home and the setting for so many of his paintings. Somehow I missed it during my 1967 sojourn in Europe as a college student. I still want to stand among his nasturtiums and luxuriate in his courageous color."

Karylee Feldman replied, "Claude Monet's garden at Giverny... sigh... Why? Cause life is meant for living. His devotion to his garden has resonated with me for decades."

Will Johnson had a unique reply: "As many SDHS members may know, I've been very involved with local medical marijuana issues, and have been actively working with patients to grow successfully medical marijuana since 2001, currently with The Kind Gardeners Collective here in San Diego. I would like to visit the medical marijuana gardens that supply the Harborside Health Center, in Oakland, CA. HHC is a leading dispensing collective in northern California, and I'd love to spend a day with their head gardeners, discussing various aspects of cultivation, propagation, etc."

Continued on page 18

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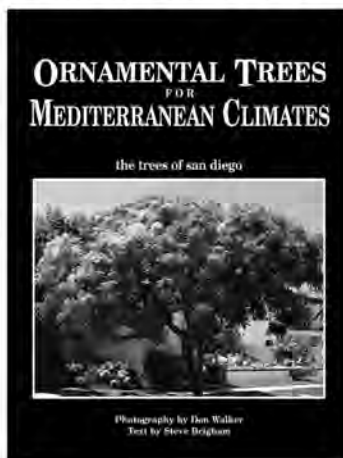
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Secrets Continued from page 17

Don Lowe told us, "Lotusland would be my second choice because of the natural beauty and time spent by one incredible lady to make it all happen for all to enjoy. Butchart Gardens would be my first choice just because it is so pristine and lovely to see in every minute detail all year long. Not a weed in sight and all trimmed to perfection. It is really not my thing or type of gardening, as I like natural vegetation mostly, but it is too beautiful not to savor and enjoy. I have seen others in Europe that are beautiful, but they do not compare with these two."

Ruth Ann Parker would go to Amsterdam: "I would like to visit the Keukenhof Garden (Kitchen Garden) outside Amsterdam. I've been there once but would like to go again. It is the most inspiring in that aesthetics and business interests are served. Dutch bulb growers display the newest and most beautiful of their inventory. The color patterns were as beautiful as a Monet water lily painting."

Sue Ann Scheck said, "I guess it would be the beautiful gardens in Beijing... the beauty was enhanced by old men doing tai chi in the early morning... the peaceful serenity of the garden and its people was a sharp contrast to the bustling traffic just moments away!"

Cathy Tylka said, "The Villa Borghese in Rome would be a place I would like to be whisked away to. I visited there about five years ago and didn't get to see the entire garden, it is so large, but it is a slice of heaven and someday I hope to revisit it. My daughter was with me and she was able to rent a bicycle, so saw more than I did. There was a motorized tour of a portion of the garden, which I did take and then just walked forever. It was a garden that reminded me of so many gardens I have seen, but perhaps it was the model for all those other gardens since it was started in the 1600's."

Lucy Warren wrote, "My top of mind response would be the hanging gardens of Babylon, assuming an alternate time-space continuum."

The question for next month is:

Can you recommend some good trees to use around swimming pools and other water features and tell us why you like them? [Thanks to Christiane Holmquist for suggesting this question.] Send your e-mail reply by January 5 to info@sdhortsoc.org. ☺

HANDSOME NEW NAMETAGS

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

Continued on page 14



Horticulturists of the Year Continued from page 7

radio program in 2000 along with Bruce and John Bagnasco. It continues to air every Saturday morning from 8-10 on AM 1700.

Sharon was the editor of *Garden Compass Magazine* and *Garden Compass Planting Guide* publications. Bruce and Sharon's first book, *Bruce and Sharon Asakawa's California Gardener's Guide*, is now in its 7th printing. They co-wrote with Teri Dunn the Southwestern edition of *Jackson & Perkins Beautiful Roses Made Easy* and the Southwestern edition of *Jackson & Perkins Outstanding Perennials*. With their son, Eric Asakawa, they wrote *California Gardening Rhythms*. Their fifth book, *California Gardener's Resource*, will be available in February 2010.

In June of 2009, Sharon and John began a nationally syndicated gardening show, *GardenLife*, on Sunday mornings from 8-10 on AM 1000 and streaming live on lifestyletalkradio.com. Sharon, Bruce and John also launched the *GardenLife.com* website for the latest on all things gardening.

We are delighted that the knowledgeable and community-minded Asakawas have been selected as our Horticulturists of the Year for 2010. The San Diego Horticultural Society will honor Bruce and Sharon Asakawa this August - details will be in future newsletters.

[We thank the San Diego Bonsai Club (www.SanDiegoBonsaiClub.com) for providing the photo of the Asakawas.]



These two formal arrangements of meticulously-glued seedpods in footed bases were made by one of René van Rems' assistants.

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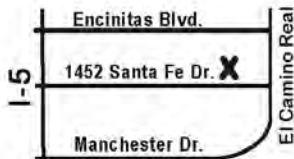
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is over four feet
tall, and uses as
a base an inverted
tomato cage!



A closeup of
part of this
arrangement is
on page 2.



December Meeting Report

When the irrepressible René van Rems speaks, not only do people listen – they also giggle, ooh and ahh, and get as excited about plants that are *out* of the ground as they are about *growing* plants. René gave an exceedingly entertaining and educational presentation on using everyday garden “trash” to create decorative art objects and exceptional and one-of-a-kind holiday décor. We had a capacity crowd of about 375 people, and over 100 of them were non-members, drawn by René’s stellar reputation. Photos of the designs we saw are on pages 2, 19 and 20; you can view them all in color in the digital version of this newsletter which is on our website, www.SanDiegoHorticulturalSociety.org.

In his opening remarks, René mentioned that, “Christmas in Europe is more about bringing the outdoors inside.” He added that, “We respond to things with a ‘life force,’... no matter what you do with artificial materials they have no life.” Using a combination of living and dried natural plant materials, much of it gathered from near his home at the San Diego Botanic Garden, he created very sculptural designs. The range of materials used was impressive – everything from the centers of dried protea flowers and driftwood to cotton bolls, upside-down amaryllis blooms and native toyon berries wound up in the thirty or so arrangements we saw. One testament to the popular appeal of his unconventional designs was the revenue of over \$1200 from Opportunity Drawing tickets – a record amount for us!

Aby assisted by three helpers who gracefully carried the arrangements on and off the stage, René had a fascinating repertoire to share. There were a number of seasonal wreaths, including a 3-foot wide one which included dried protea centers in a simple design that was, “a good example of repetition of form,” exhibiting a “less is more” style. Another larger wreath had 18-inch long sugar pine cones and foliage from Torrey pines and Noble firs. In that wreath scale and proportion were very important. A third wreath was made from a mass-produced wreath that he had embellished with toyon berries and other materials and set on top of a large bowl covered with palm fiber.

A large centerpiece on a tall stand included the aforementioned amaryllis blooms, which he attached upside down to striking effect. Put water in the hollow amaryllis stems and these flowers will then last for a number of days and add color to what would otherwise be a mostly green and brown arrangement. And speaking of color – there was a stunning 8-foot tall assemblage of dried curly willow twigs and honeysuckle vines which had been painted a fire-engine red; the

member who won it proudly posted a photo on Facebook the next day! In the right setting this would make a huge impact – as would many other of his unusual arrangements, like the piece on page 2 with the driftwood base. Another jolt of color came from a very round arrangement with white roses in a bowl covered with eucalyptus seed pods; the symmetry and subtle simplicity of this piece was stunning.

René showed us several stages in the process of making one tall arrangement. A standard 4-foot tall tomato cage was turned upside down and put in a base, then covered with “roadsidia,” his term for materials picked up from the side of the road. Long eucalyptus branches were attached with black zip ties (usually sold for electrical wiring), and other-worldly arucaria stems were added, along with other eucalyptus pieces which had been embellished with gold spray paint.

He encouraged us to experiment with materials from our gardens. We saw mirror frames and vases covered with melaleuca bark, liquidamber seed pods affixed with hot glue to various bases, narrow vases covered with bark and/or dried leaves, and even the dried stalks of aloë flowers used to great advantage. I haven’t looked at my garden quite the same way since watching him in action!

Thanks, René, for helping us to think outside the box when it comes to using materials for floral designs. It was so exciting to see your thought processes at work! We greatly appreciate your generosity, and that of your students, in donating more than 20 arrangements. Thanks, too, to Paul Ecke III for donating some gorgeous and huge poinsettias – many of which are not yet commercially available – for our Opportunity Drawing. 🌿

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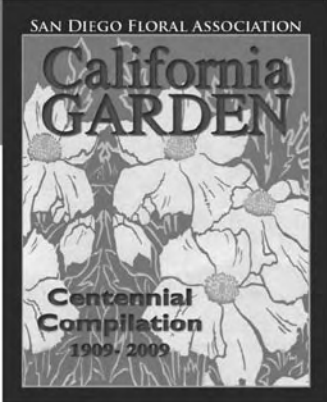


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LNT 106-108* Plant Identification: Shrubs 1 unit ea. Homyak		Tuesday & Thursday, 4:30 - 6:00 pm
LNT 106 Flowering Shrubs (1/14 - 2/18)		
LNT 107 Foliage Shrubs I (2/23 - 4/8)		
LNT 108 Foliage Shrubs II (4/13 - 5/20)		
LNT 110-112* Plant Identification: Herbaceous 1 unit ea. Homyak		Tuesday & Thursday, 4:30 - 6:05 pm
LNT 110 Annuals & Perennials 1 (1/14 - 2/18)		
LNT 111 Annuals & Perennials 2 (2/23 - 4/8)		
LNT 112 Vines & Ground Covers (4/13 - 5/20)		
LNT 132* Turf Management 3 units Homyak		
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Various Saturdays Lab: 8:00 am - 1:50 pm (1/16, 1/30, 2/20, 3/6, 3/20, 4/10, 5/1, 5/15)		
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LNT 140* Floral Design II 3 units Sinclair		Thursday, 5:00 - 10:00 pm
LNT 141* Floral Design III (9 week course 1/13-3/10) 1 unit Sinclair		Wednesday, 5:30 - 9:30 pm
LNT 147* Wedding Design 2 units Del Sol		Monday, 5:30 - 10:15 pm
LA 104 Landscape Graphics and Planting Design 3 units Weichert		Tuesday & Thursday, 6:30 - 9:00 pm
LA 200* Introduction to Computer-Aided Landscape Design 3 units Homyak		Monday, 5:00 - 10:00 pm
LA 201+ Advanced Computer-Aided Landscape Design 3 units Homyak		Monday, 5:00 - 10:00 pm

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NOTE: This is your last chance to take our courses tuition-free through the ROP program. ROP will no longer be available at community colleges or adult programs after the Spring 2010 semester.