

Let's Talk Plants!

Newsletter of the San Diego Horticultural Society

October 2008, Number 169

Sharing Secrets

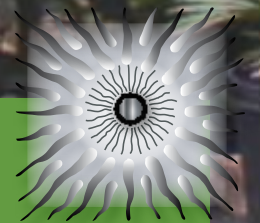
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GARDENS OF THE YEAR
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ORTS, SCRAPS AND FRAGMENTS
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THE BOLD & THE BEAUTIFUL
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HELP SAVE THE BEES
PAGE 11



**SAN DIEGO
HORTICULTURAL
SOCIETY**

On the Cover: Bamboo in the misty morning

SEPTEMBER MEETING PHOTOS

Photos by Cheryl Leedom



Ampelopsis brevipedunculata



Amaryllis belladonna (white)



Callistemon 'Jeffers'



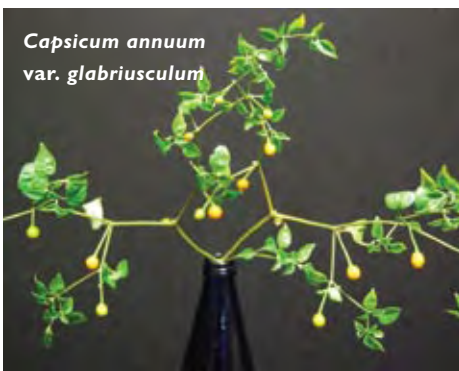
Capsicum annuum 'Variegated'



Distictis laxiflora



Salvia splendens
'Van Houttei - Tall Pink'



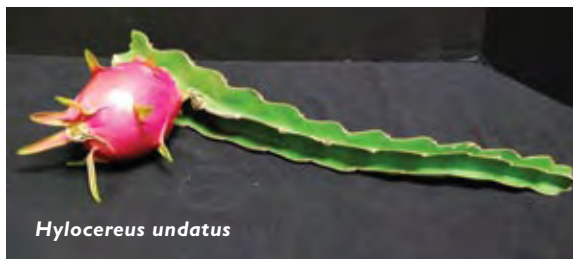
Capsicum annuum
var. *glabrusculum*



Justicia brandegeana 'Pink'



Thunbergia battiscombei (blue)
and *Antigonon leptopus*



Hylocereus undatus



Duvernoia aconitiflora



Saponaria officinalis
(double form)



Chrysanthemum nipponicum



Synadenium grantii

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Separate Attachment

Calendar/Resources Ongoing Events

Cover Image: October speaker Bob Dimattia photographed this beautiful bamboo in his own garden early in the misty morning. About 125 varieties of bamboo are behind the fence, which is made from bamboo grown in his garden, including *Dendrocalamus asper* spp. *betung hitam*.

The San Diego Horticultural Society

MEETINGS

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

MEETING SCHEDULE

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

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

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

FUTURE MEETINGS & EVENTS IN 2008

- November 10** Garden Treasures of the Pacific Northwest, by Koby Hall
(members free, non-members \$5)
- December 8** Backyard Vineyards in San Diego County, by Pete Anderson
(members free, non-members \$5)

www.sdhortsoc.org

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

Next Meeting: October 13, 2008, 6:00 – 9:00 PM

Topic: BOB DIMATTIA ON "BAMBOO, THE EARTH AND US"

**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**

Bob Dimattia, bamboo specialist and owner of Pura Vida Tropical Nursery, presents a program on this enormous grass. From the beginning of history, when mankind relied solely on what nature provided, bamboo played a very vital role in cultures worldwide; no other plant matches its biodiversity. Eventually, bamboo became less valued as other resources were tapped, exploited and are now being depleted. Bob will show how this gentle giant has come full circle; what its prospects are, and how necessary it is and will continue to be.

Bob discovered bamboo in the 1970s while stationed in Thailand during the Viet Nam War. He was immensely impressed with the plant's diversity and deep connection with man's evolution. Returning home, he incorporated bamboo into his life, first as a hedge but evolving into much more as he saw its many possibilities: from bamboo shoot production to construction lumber to its beauty in the landscape. His specialty is giant clumpers, and he has helped introduce and establish some of the rarer clumpers into Southern California (with the help of the American Bamboo Society). His Vista nursery specializes in the propagation and sale of bamboo and other tropical plants. He's been active in the Southern California Chapter of the American Bamboo Society for over 28 years, serving on their board, and is a former board member of the San Diego Horticultural Society.

To learn more 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

- Judy Bradley** — Co-Chair-Program Committee
Mark Collins — Finance/Budget Committee
Julian Duval — Quail Botanical Gardens Representative
Pat Hammer — Events & Outreach Committee
Jason Kubrock — Co-Chair-Events & Outreach Committee
Carol Ann Lewin — Co-Chair-Program Committee
Sheldon Lisker — Co-Chair Membership Committee
Jackie McGee — Treasurer, Chair-Budget & Finance Committee
Susan Morse — Co-Chair Membership Committee, Program Committee
Cindy Sparks — Chair-Publicity Committee
Bill Teague — Co-Chair-Events & Outreach Committee, Opportunity Drawing & Plant Raffle
Susi Torre-Bueno — President, Newsletter Editor
Don Walker — Past President
Lucy Warren — Secretary, Liaison to H&G Shows
Jim Wright — Member at Large

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

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

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

We have a number of volunteer opportunities available, and hope you'll want to take a more active role in the Society. This is a great way to meet other members and be involved in a productive way. Call Susi at (760) 295-7089 and say YES! to one of the following:

CARPOOL COORDINATOR:

Help members contact each other to set up carpools. Anticipated time involved – about 1 hour per week or less.

MEETING CHECK-IN:

Check membership cards as people arrive for our monthly meetings and collect \$5 from non-members. People will take turns doing this, so the same folks don't have to do it every month.

THANKS, VOLUNTEERS

For several years now member Carole Roberts has been shipping out orders for our tree book that come from retail customers (through our website or through Amazon.com). We so much appreciate her handling this important task. Carole is passing the baton to Marci Shirley, and we're delighted that Marci will now take over. Thanks to you both!

In September we had an information table and also sold plants and tree books at the Fall Home/Garden Show. We also provided volunteers to help the Show speakers with their setup, etc. Thanks so much to all the folks who helped out: Lisa Bellora, Vivian Blackstone, Claude & Jackie Gigoux, John Gilruth, Carrie Goode, Julie Hasl, Sue Kelly-Cochrane, Yvonne Mao, Patricia Neal, Sheila Needle, Teri Schmidt, Marci Shirley, Cathy Tylka, Ramona Valencia, Marcia Van Loy, Paula Verstraete and Darlene Villanueva. Several board members also volunteered: Shelly Lisker, Susan Morse and Bill Teague.

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 this year 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! ☺



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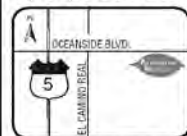
See our web site

www.evergreennursery.com

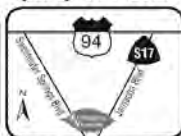


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SPRING/SUMMER HOURS

Monday-Thursday..7:30am-5:00pm

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

Sunday.....9:00am-5:00pm

To Learn More...

BAMBOO

By Ava Torre-Bueno

Bamboo is the fastest growing woody plant in the world. In Asia, giant bamboo is used as scaffolding on skyscrapers that are being built. It cleans the air of greenhouse gasses better than any other plant. It will save us all!

Read all about it at:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bamboo>

Like every other plant, it has its own organization:

<http://www.americanbamboo.org/>

In the future we'll be living in bamboo houses! This site takes you to a picture of a planned woven bamboo building!

<http://www.buildinggreentv.com/node/1594>

And we'll be logging on using our bamboo PC:

<http://blog.businessgreen.com/2007/07/review-bamboo-h.html>

Right here in San Diego there is a van covered in bamboo. I've seen it at the Hillcrest Trader Joe's as has the person who wrote this blog. Scroll down about a third of the way to see the Bamboo Power Van:

<http://truecats.blogspot.com/2008/06/bamboo-power.html>

And to see some of Bamboo Bob's wares, go to:

<http://www.endangeredspecies.com/Projects/1985/A-Dimattia/index.htm>

SEEDY SITES

September's speaker waxed poetic and enthusiastic about what's new in seed hybrids, so I'd like to take this opportunity to look at seeds from a few other angles.

To see some truly funky seed art pages go to:

<http://www.backwoodshome.com/articles/yeager42.html>

and

<http://www.croptart.com/lilliancolton/index.htm>

Nursery and Seed Catalog Illustration is an art unto itself at:

<http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/exhibits/hort/seeds.htm>

If you haven't found GardenWeb yet, here it is in its seed exchange incarnation:

<http://forums2.gardenweb.com/forums/exseed/>

And for vegetable and flower heirlooms:

<http://www.seedsavers.org/>

Here's a website about a Native American garden that predates European invasion, where heirloom seeds are treasured, at the National Monument at Grand Portage MN:

<http://www.nps.gov/grpo/historyculture/the-historic-gardens.htm>

Member Ava Torre-Bueno is a psychotherapist in private practice and is the organizer of Gardeners 4 Peace. This group of volunteers is helping to create a peaceful, organic, permaculture garden at the San Diego Friends Center. To learn more contact Ava at gardeners4peace@hotmail.com and visit <http://www.sandiegofriendscenter.org/volunteers.htm> ☺



Photo: Rachel Cobb

Bamboo Garden at Quail Botanical Gardens.

From The Board

By Susi Torre-Bueno

MORE CHANGES ON THE BOARD

Last month I promised details of the members who joined the board at the September board meeting – we welcome these newcomers as valuable additions. We also have other board changes.

For several years Kay Harry has represented the 100-years young San Diego Floral Association, and we thank her for her excellent service. This position will now be filled by another person from Floral, and we look forward to having their insight and suggestions.

Longtime member Jim Wright joined the board as a member at large. Jim has a fabulous garden in Clairemont, with great palms and over 150 roses. He has 45 years experience as a member of the International Palm Society, and served two terms as the California President and two terms as an International Director. During over 25 years with the Orchid and Bromeliad Societies Jim has been on the board of each, and organized the garden tours for two World Bromeliad Conferences and was on several judging teams.

Jason Kubrock, who was a member-at-large, is now the enthusiastic co-chair of the Events and Outreach Committee. We know he will bring great energy to this position, and with his help we can accomplish even more.

NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION

Now that we have grown to over 1300 members it's hard to meet new members during our monthly meetings and easy to feel intimidated by the size of the crowd. To help new members get to know both each other and our board members, and so that all members have more people they recognize when attending meetings and events, we have begun to host casual New Member Orientation gatherings for up to 20 new members to meet some "old" members. We hope this will also encourage new members to volunteer and be more involved in events.

The first orientation was held in September in the gorgeous Encinitas garden of Bette and Will Childs, and 14 new members attended. We'll hold the next gathering in Del Mar on November 1st. If you'd joined recently watch for an e-mail invitation (or a phone call if you don't have e-mail). Hope you can come and spend a couple of hours in a fascinating garden and get to know other garden lovers. ☺

SDHS SPONSOR ↓

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Bonita Golf Club
5540 Sweetwater Road
Bonita, California

**Friday
October 24, 2008**

10:30 a.m. Registration
Putting Contest - Free Range Balls

11:00 - noon Free Lunch

Tee Time: 12:30 p.m.

\$90 per person:

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2008 Gardens of the Year Awards

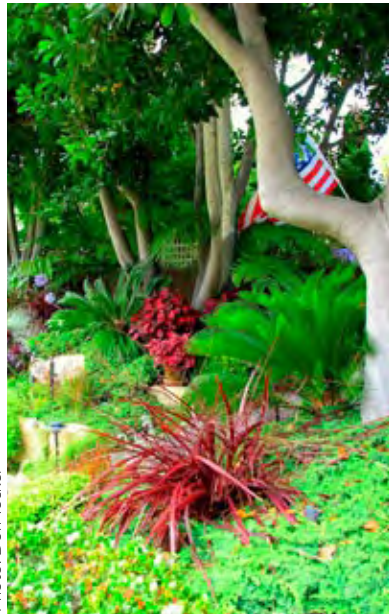


Photo: Don Yeckel

Congratulations to two SDHS members for their winning gardens in the *San Diego Home/Garden Lifestyles* magazine 2008 Gardens of the Year contest. Two of the three jurors are also SDHS members: Bill Schnetz (of sponsor member Schnetz Landscape) and Lynne Blackman (who has a fabulous garden in Del Mar).

Sponsor member Verdant Custom Outdoors won the award for Best Outdoor Living/Garden Space. The handsome landscape was designed by Kate Wiseman and included a variety of features to make the most of a previously under-utilized back yard.

Member Don Yeckel and wife Jeannette won the Best Homeowner Garden award for their beautifully eclectic garden in La Jolla. Whimsical elements compliment interesting plant choices, and having no lawn helps keep water use low.

Part of Don Yeckel's front yard.

Thanks VAP Volunteers & Donors

In late August, on what was probably one of the hottest days of this summer, we held our annual Volunteer Appreciation Party at the amazing garden of Wanda Mallen and Gary Vincent. They've created a wealth of unique garden spaces on their two acres in just nine years – a fabulous dwarf conifer garden like none I've ever seen, several lovely greenhouses, drought-tolerant gardens, a Japanese garden, and much more. All the irrigation is hidden under mulch, too, so it doesn't distract the eye. Wanda's extraordinary planters and Gary's playful bird houses and brightly colored stucco walls and fences add greatly to the joyful spirit of the garden. Many thanks to Wanda and Gary for opening their garden to us.

We want to thank George Yackey for doing a splendid job of organizing the party, which included plentiful food, live music, and great door prizes for everyone. Additional volunteers for this fun event were Tamma and Bill Nugent, Evey Torre-Bueno, Melissa and Chris Worton, plus board members Bette Childs, Carol Ann Lewin, Susan Morse, Cindy Sparks and Susi Torre-Bueno. We hope you'll volunteer between now and July 2009, so that we can invite you to the next VAP!

One of the highlights of the VAP is the prizes that each volunteer gets. Our heartfelt thanks go to the following individuals and businesses who donated plants and other items: Agri Service, Bob Dimattia (Pura Vida Tropicals), Barrels And Branches Nursery, Evergreen Nurseries, Sue Foquette, Garden Glories, Grangetto's, Green Thumb Nursery, Hunters' Nursery, Kellogg Garden Products, Kniffing's Nursery, Mary's Good Snails, *Pacific Horticulture* magazine, Quail Botanical Gardens, Simpson's Nursery, Solana Succulents, Tree Of Life Native Plant Nursery, Cathy Tylka, and Pat Welsh. Please take a moment to thank them yourselves when you see them or visit their businesses.



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Plants That Produce

THE BARE ESSENTIALS, PART I

By Richard Frost

As the summer draws to a close and fall begins it is time to think about ... what bare root plants to order! And as you think about fruiting plants, consider when the fruits will ripen. There is no need to choose a variety that ripens when you are usually on vacation, and also no need to have all your fruit varieties ripen at once.

On the subject of "when things ripen," those who live in a zone of significant coastal influence need to exercise special caution. If you live in an inland area where a wide north-south running ridge of hills is between you and the ocean then no need to worry (and no, the Del Mar-La Jolla rise doesn't count as a ridge of hills!). Otherwise, be cautious with fruit varieties that (1) are late-ripening, (2) require many warm days to ripen, and (3) are deciduous (go dormant in the winter). A fruit cultivar with all three of these characteristics will likely blister, crack, or rot instead of ripening in your area.

Specifically, let's consider table grapes. The flame grape ripens beautifully out in El Cajon, Poway, etc., but can be a real chore to coax along in the coastal zone. Instead, consider the seedless Black Manukka and the ultra sweet black muscadine cultivar 'Ison'. The white 'Perlette Seedless' is also worth trying. If you live inland, the fox grape 'Delaware' and *Vitis vinifera* selection 'Ruby Seedless' (aka 'King Ruby') are great choices.

At the moment it seems that many people are riding the tidal wave of the Pomegranate craze. Have you noticed that the popular 'Wonderful' variety is commercially grown in the intense summer heat of California's central valley and not along the coast of Santa Barbara County, where artichokes thrive? Let me introduce you to one of my heroes – John Chater, who bred Pomegranates in Santa Barbara. His top cultivars, 'Eversweet' and 'Golden Globe', will fully ripen in all but the most extreme of our coastal areas (e.g., La Jolla cove). An independent nursery can easily order these varieties bare root for you at this time of year. Inland, try to obtain a rooting of 'Parfianka' or 'White Flower' from a local CRFG member nursery (www.crfg.org/nurlist.html).

Figs are a popular fruit which you should also be careful with in the coastal zone. The most awesome tasting of the white-barked, coastal-tolerant figs is 'White Greek'. Another variety that works great and ripens late in the year is 'Janice-Kadota Seedless'. For dark fig lovers in the coast zone, 'Vista Black Mission' is the way to go. Often overlooked is 'Celeste', a purple-skinned variety that reproduces reliably along the coast or inland. Those growing figs inland with long, warm or hot summers should plant 'Black Madeira'. If you can't obtain these at your favorite nursery, then you should definitely contact SDHS member Jon Verdick at www.figs4fun.com (click "contact" at the bottom left of the web page).

Another factor to be careful with in all areas of the county is the infamous "chill hour" rating for some fruits. We'll look at that in depth in next month's column.

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

Garden Gourmet

"ORTS, SCRAPS AND FRAGMENTS," OR, WHAT'S IN THE FRIDGE?

By Alice Lowe

The quotation above comes from Virginia Woolf, of whom I'm a devotee, a reference in her last novel, *Between the Acts*, to what we less poetic sorts might call insignificant bits and pieces. For me, it brings to mind those times when you want to save a trip to the store and cobble together a meal from whatever's at hand. Sure, you could look something up in a cookbook or on-line, but why not try your hand at a unique composition?

With luck you're still harvesting delicious tomatoes from your garden, the Farmer's Market or CSA box. Everyone loves Caprese Salad, right? But maybe you don't have any mozzarella or basil handy. Don't scratch the idea, improvise! Blue or goat cheese, feta or shaved Parmesan can substitute for the mozzarella; parsley, cilantro or a mix of fresh herbs for the basil. Add some thin rings of sweet red onion, a splash of sherry vinegar instead of balsamic. A caprese without tomatoes? Try sliced mango or nectarines with the cheese and herbs. It doesn't have to be meatless – maybe there's some prosciutto or a hunk of hard salami around. In my kitchen there's always an industrial-sized jar of anchovies to dip into.

I think the word "ratatouille" actually means a mixture or something to do with stirring, and it doesn't seem to me to be a dish that should adhere to a strict recipe. You have onions, garlic and peppers, fresh or canned tomatoes – voila, you're off and running. It doesn't have to be squash and eggplant – try some combination of green beans, leeks, or potatoes, canned or marinated artichoke hearts, olives and capers. Add fresh greens – chard, spinach or kale – near the end so it doesn't cook down too much. Red wine, crushed red pepper, a squeeze of lemon or lime – it's an eclectic masterpiece.

Sometimes those fragments are leftover meat, chicken or fish. Our mothers stretched dollars and avoided waste with casseroles, which may or may not have a fond place in our food memories and stand-by recipes. Forget the canned cream soups and keep it simple and nutritious by tossing it with pasta or rice and whatever veggies (or fruit) strike your fancy. Brown rice with chicken and grapes; chunky pasta with thin slices of beef, red onion and fresh greens; soba noodles or whole wheat spaghetti with leftover salmon or a can of tuna, cucumber and green onions.

Trust yourself and break free of precise recipes – you won't go wrong. And if you do, you can always eat, but not repeat, your mistakes! By the way, Virginia Woolf also said, in *A Room of One's Own*, "One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well."

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

Greywater: Re-Using “Waste” Water Can Reduce Your Irrigation Water Needs

By Will Johnson

Greywater is defined as “any wastewater generated in the home, except water from toilets.” Laundry, shower, sink, and dish water comprise up to 80% of residential “wastewater;” toilets use most of the rest. Greywater is particularly suitable for re-use irrigating shrubs and trees in the landscape. Keep in mind that the re-use of greywater in California is regulated by very strict/prohibitive building codes. A few states, notably Arizona, have very reasonable greywater regulations; the systems described here are generally in accordance with Arizona guidelines. Hopefully, California will soon follow Arizona in adopting reasonable, safe guidelines. Until then, while what we’re describing may indeed be safe and environmentally correct, it may violate certain building or health and safety codes.

Disclaimer: Neither the author nor San Diego Horticultural Society encourage you to violate any laws! Having said that, let start re-using some valuable water!

Greywater can be further divided into “clearwater” (warm-up water from the faucet, A/C condensation, and R/O purifier drain water), which is great to reuse, and “dark greywater” (laundry water used to clean diapers, or solids-laden kitchen sink water), which isn’t suitable for irrigation.

Toilet-flush water is called “black-water” due to the presence of harmful and potentially dangerous bacteria in large numbers, and though a few systems can safely recycle this, our discussion here will skip this.

The simplest two sources for irrigation re-use are your shower and your laundry. An average shower may generate up to 30-50 gallons of water and a large load of laundry from a typical top-load washing machine will use 30-40 gallons per cycle. If your house is constructed allowing easy access to the drains for showers and laundry (such as a raised foundation), you may want to seriously study the re-use of greywater for your own home. One excellent resource for further research is The Greywater Guerrillas (<http://www.greywaterguerrillas.com>), who recently conducted a demonstration greywater branched-drain installation here in San Diego. The undisputed expert in the field, is Art Ludwig. I own a couple of his books, and recommend you visit his site (<http://oasisdesign.net>) if you want to do-it-yourself.

Diverting greywater almost always involves a diverter-valve, also called a Jandy valve, to switch the path of water either to the sewer, or to the landscape. By locating this valve in a convenient location, you can make sure that only the desirable greywater goes out to your yard. With all greywater systems the water flows directly to the ground below a level of mulch, never sprayed into the air.

We’ll look at just three of the simplest versions of greywater systems. First, an outdoor shower that drains to the landscape is called Landscape Direct. Many urban residences may be unsuitable for this, but I can personally attest to the pleasant experience showering out in nature can be. By plumbing hot and cold water to an outdoor shower, the shower drains directly through a branching drain-pipe system to nearby mulch basins. These drain tubes can be moved from one basin to another nearby basin to control moisture levels.

Continued on page 16

Are Your Leaves Turning Red?

By Ellen Reardon and Carl Price

In Southern California we enjoy two seasons a year: Wet and Dry, but those of us who have lived in northern latitudes look forward to the spectacular beauty of leaves turning red in the fall. Maples are most notable for their fall colors, but the leaves of some oaks, some sweetgum, and dogwood also turn red, and poison ivy is among the earliest harbingers of fall.

Several questions arise: What are the red pigments of fall leaves? What makes the leaves turn red? And do they have a function, other than to delight the human eye?

Anthocyanins¹

The red pigments of fall leaves are *anthocyanins*, a family of red, orange, and blue pigments that are also prominent in flowers and fruits. Anthocyanins are water soluble; they are synthesized in the cytoplasm of the cell, and are then transported to the vacuole. Their location also becomes important when we consider function. Anthocyanins are not the only red pigments of plants—most *carotenoids* are yellow or orange (as in carrots), but some are red.

What makes leaves turn red in the fall?

The average minimum January temperature is 49.7° in San Diego, so that most plants can get along perfectly well through our winters. In most of our country, however, where freezing temperatures are the rule through much of the winter, plants must devise special measures to survive. The strategy of deciduous plants is not simply to shed their leaves but to harvest the valuable nutrients in the leaves and store those nutrients in their stems to fuel the growth of new leaves in the spring. As the days become shorter (or, more specifically, the nights become longer²), the plant’s biological clock sounds an alarm that sets in motion a series of events that tell the leaves to senesce (shut down) and ultimately to abscise (fall off).

Role of anthocyanins in the harvest of leaf nitrogen

Chloroplasts, and especially the chlorophyll in chloroplasts, represent a significant treasure of the nitrogen that will be needed next year. Specifically, 90 percent of the nitrogen that is harvested from leaves and transported to the stems comes from the chloroplasts. But before the nitrogen in chlorophyll can be harvested, it must be cut loose from the membrane proteins to which it has been bound and then enzymatically degraded.

Problem! If free, unbound chlorophyll is exposed to light it will produce *singlet oxygen*, a form of oxygen that is extremely toxic to senescing leaf cells. In other words, the leaf cells could be killed before they were able to harvest their valuable nutrients and transport them to the stem.

Enter anthocyanins! One of the events triggered by the plant’s night-length-sensitive clock is (for some plants) the production of large amounts of red anthocyanins that are stored in the vacuoles of cells on the upper side of the leaf. These anthocyanins absorb light in the blue and green wavelengths, shading the recently freed chlorophyll from excessive sunlight! What the leaves are

Continued on page 12

Welcome New Members!

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

Jane Coogan Beer	Bj Russell
Barb Bolton	Linda Smith
Maureen Burch	Rosemary Stockey
Margaret Davis	Anne & Bill Stroman
Lorraine & Jack Duffy	Derek Woodman,
Charles Hawksford	Tapley Trading Co.
Vickie Hearne	Terry Trickey
Lyla Kimball	Vonnie Varner &
Hilda & Neal King	Ray Martin
Tina Kratz	Rhonda Venard
Ron & Diane Nissen	Nancy Woodard
Howard Pearlman	
Margaret Prouty	

NEW ADVERTISERS & INSERTS:
Blossom Valley Protea, PAGE 22
California Friendly Gardening Festival,
INSERT
California Native Plant Society
Plant Sale, INSERT
Plants That Produce, PAGE 21
Quail Botanical Gardens Fall
Plant Sale, INSERT

HORT BUCKS ARE GREAT!

Kudos to the members below who brought in new members and therefore received Hort Bucks worth \$5 towards raffle tickets, name-tags, *Plant Forum* CDs or dues. To get **your** Hort Bucks just ask your friends to give your name when they join. The number after the person's name indicates how many members they recruited in 2008:

Lorraine Bolton (2)	Miriam Kirk (2)	Nan Sterman (1)
Linda Bresler (2)	Kathy La Fluer (2)	Donna Sullivan (1)
Helen Dizio (1)	Sharon Lee (1)	Bill Teague (1)
Sharon Graham (1)	Shelley Moore (1)	Darlene Villaneuva (3)
Diana Goforth (1)	Anne Murphy (1)	Dana Wahlquist (1)
Pat Hammer (1)	Taylor Murphy (1)	Becky Yianilos (1)
Ginny Hawkins (1)	Samantha Owen (1)	
Bobbi Hirschhoff (1)	Cindy Sparks (1)	

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 Village Garden Club of La Jolla

What's Up at Quail Botanical Gardens?

SCULPTURE IN THE GARDENS

October is a great month to visit Quail Botanical Gardens—the Orchid Fair (October 3–5), the Fall Plant Sale (October 18 and 19 – see insert), and some amazing sculptures.

The 22 sculptures, on view to October 31, came about through a collaboration between the San Diego Fine Art Society and Quail Botanical Gardens. Some have been part of the Urban Trees series displayed along North Harbor Drive in San Diego, like Lia Stell's "Triflow of Truth." This



Photo: Herb Knufken

larger-than-life bloom with a rose quartz center is located in Palm Canyon, where it literally glistens at certain times of the day.

Placing the sculptures has been an enchanting experience, especially when the piece suggests itself to a particular garden. For example, in the Bamboo Garden, Christie Beniston's set of eight "Steeple" blends in with the culms of running bamboo, both having nodes and internodes albeit hers are of colorful ceramic. Benjamin Lavender's "Century," "Ocotillo," and "Uprooted" fit nicely in the New World Desert Garden and in fact were inspired by shapes of the desert. Across the way, Carolyn Guerra's "Free Will," a woman with two masks, is at the entrance of the Mexican Garden where her coloring is beautifully offset by cactus and agave. Maria de Castro's "Osprey" emerges from a perfectly scaled outcrop of rocks in the Australian Garden and, near by, Terry Kuntz's "The Voyage" mimics the form of an adjacent melaleuca. There are many more.

So come on by and take a Sculpture Tour; there is a brochure to guide you. When you arrive you will be greeted by Carolyn Guerra's "I am Woman," pictured above. Quail Botanical Gardens is located at 230 Quail Gardens Drive in Encinitas and is open daily from 9 am to 5 pm. For more information go to www.qbgardens.org or call 760/ 436-3036 x206. ☺

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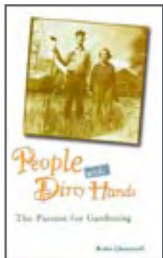
Book Review

PEOPLE WITH DIRTY HANDS: THE PASSION FOR GARDENING

By Robin Chotzinoff

Reviewed by Caroline McCullagh

I read the first page of the introduction to this book. Then I read it again. Finally, I read it to my husband as we both laughed. I'm not sure exactly what we were laughing at, probably just at the joy of reading good writing. Yes, I definitely recommend this book to you. I'll give you a taste of the introduction:



"Velma Stunkard became my next-door neighbor eleven years ago. Her yard was clearly visible through the strands of old wire fence that separated our properties. I saw Zelma and her boyfriend, Vern Wiley, slogging through the spring mud. Zelma was seventy-six then... and she moved through the garden in a plaid western snap shirt, double-knit stretch pants, and pink curlers.

Sometimes she wore an apron. She was usually followed by two medium-mutt dogs and drifts of cats."

Robin Chotzinoff became interested in gardening and then in gardeners. She describes gardeners as having magnificent obsessions. It's clear that she shares that. And, although she'd rather be gardening, the very limited growing season at her 7,000 altitude Colorado home gives her plenty of down time. For her, the next best thing to gardening is talking to gardeners. She travels all over the country to do just that.

She seems to have a talent for finding interesting people. She takes us rose rustling in Texas, chile roasting in New Mexico, and canning the wealth of a vegetable garden in Nebraska. We find out about all kinds of uses for plants that I'll bet you never knew, and in the process we meet a lot of interesting people. She doesn't have any special organization to these interviews. There's no overall message or philosophy she's trying to impart other than the fact that there's a lot of joy in gardening, no matter why you do it.

A word about book design: I know the author isn't responsible for the design and often has little say, but sometimes the design is exactly right for the text, and this is one of those books. The cream-colored dust jacket features a man and woman (maybe Zelma and Vern) posed with hoe in hand a la *American Gothic*. Each chapter is set off with a formal design of leaves and swirled stems. The book looks good and feels good in the hand. I'm sure the person who designed it read it and loved it. If anyone is thinking of giving me an electronic book reader, don't bother. You'll never wean me away from books that you can actually hold in your hands.

This 204-page hardbound book has no pictures, but you don't miss them. It's the words that are important here. It was published in 1996. I bought it recently as a remaindered book, so I paid \$5.98 (plus shipping) rather than the full price of \$22. You can order it from Daedalus Books (800) 395-2665 or at salebooks.com. ☞

Community Outreach

NEW FARMERS' MARKET IN CITY HEIGHTS

The International Rescue Committee, a refugee service provider, has been at work in San Diego for over 30 years assisting victims of violent conflict and war. We provide a host of resettlement services including: case management, an after-school program, ESL classes, immigration services, micro-enterprise assistance, and financial literacy. The newest initiative is housed within IRC's Community and Economic Development Department and is dedicated to increasing access to fresh, affordable, and culturally appropriate foods, primarily focusing on City Heights. After almost a year in collaboration with numerous community-based organizations, the IRC and the San Diego Farm Bureau launched the City Heights Farmers Market on June 7, 2008. The City Heights Farmers Market is a weekly venue for local growers, artisans, and hot prepared food vendors to showcase their products and provide healthy food options for community residents. The City Heights Farmers Market is located on Wightman Street (one block south of University Ave) between Fairmount Ave and 43rd St. Market hours are 9am-1pm every Saturday.

As the first farmers market in San Diego county to accept both WIC and food stamps, the Market strives to increase affordability and access to fresh, healthy, and culturally appropriate food. We also provide food stamp and WIC incentives and free food-stamp prescreening to assist food-stamp eligible customers in obtaining food stamp benefits. Each week, new community organizations provide information on local services and resources, provide nutrition education, and promote healthy living. If you'd like to volunteer visit <http://www.idealists.org/en/volunteeropportunity/154294-26> for details.

THE BOLD AND THE BEAUTIFUL: SUCCULENTS

At the San Diego Floral Association meeting on October 21 speaker Patrick Anderson discusses creating gardens with succulents. Large or small, dramatic or subtle, succulents fit into our San Diego gardens "naturally." They are easy to grow, come with a variety of forms, hues and textures and they can add a dramatic effect to container gardens, small outdoor spaces, even hillsides. Anderson will show how to use these drought-tolerant plants in inspiring ways. An experienced lecturer and horticulturist, he is well known for his knowledge of succulents and cacti. He has developed his design sense by visiting gardens around the world. Inspired by the Tuscan Hills, he bulldozed a citrus orchard to create a spectacular succulent garden on a Fallbrook hillside. This gem of a garden developed organically; no design was put to paper and there are no formally planted areas. "The plants told me where they wanted to be," says Patrick. This garden depends on structure and form rather than flowers to be visually exciting.

The free meeting is at 7:00 pm in room 101, Casa Del Prado, Balboa Park. Dinner will be available at 6:00 pm for \$12/members or \$15/non-members, with paid reservations made by October 20. For more information, call (619) 232-5762. ☞



Please Help Save the Bees (Part One)

By Pat Welsh

Have you noticed how few bees are about this season? Have you seen any bumble bees in your garden, or are there none of these sweet fuzzy creatures visiting your flowers and vegetables this year? Mankind has been causing mass extinctions of plants and animals for thousands of years. It was human beings, for example, who hunted the woolly mammoth to final extinction, and Easter Island is living proof of what can happen to a society that has chopped down all its trees. Right now we are at it again, flattening the Amazon forests, and now it appears as if we are also willy-nilly killing the world's bees. If we kill all the bees, starvation will result, but many good people, even including gardeners are totally unaware of the threat or of the fact that they are contributing to the problem.

A number of disasters threaten domestic and wild bees, but this brief article is just to alert you to some of the hazards to bees from pesticides and to let you know, as gardeners, how you can help. Those of you who attended my talk in August already know that I am on the warpath against Spinosad. Spinosad is a pesticide used by farmers and gardeners and touted by the UC system, the Master Gardeners, and even by organic gardeners as a control for budworm, bougainvillea looper, rose slug, and other caterpillar-like pests. It is a product similar to BT (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) in that it contains fermented soil-bacteria, in this case *Saccharopolyspora spinosa*, an organism originally found under the floorboards of an abandoned rum factory in the Caribbean. This product is totally organic, thus it received the OMRI (Organic Materials Review Institute) seal of approval. But if you read the label, which one would hope all consumers do, you immediately discover in the first line that Spinosad is "highly toxic to bees." How, I wonder, did Spinosad get the OMRI seal of approval? Worse yet, this product is sold in containers with spray attachments on the top of them, inviting the unsuspecting public to broadcast the spray on everything in sight. This is what people did with DDT before Rachel Carson exposed its hazards, and DDT was used against the same pest: the lowly caterpillar. Couldn't we rely on birds and trichogramma wasps to control caterpillars and save our bees?

The instructions on the label of Spinosad suggest spraying in such a way that the spray will be dry before bees return to the sprayed area. What are we supposed to do, put up warning signs? Even if bees could read and would obediently stay away, the dry product will be in the pollen, and this pollen will weaken the bee larvae when the parent bees lovingly take it back to the hive and feed it to their young. Infected pollen will make some of the larvae sick and kill a few of them. (The label won't tell you this. I had to do some research to find it out.) Now if I were a bee I would be more than a little upset if I took food home to my young and discovered it made them all sick and that it even killed a few of them. I wouldn't want any of my babies to be weakened or sickened, let alone killed. And yet organic gardeners are using this product and recommending it to others. It's bad enough knowing the Master Gardeners recommend it. I am an honorary Master Gardener and have always loved that organization, but when it comes to recommending pesticides that damage beneficial creatures such as bees, here is where we part ways.

Please help save the world's bees by your own actions and by

spreading the word. Please never spray with Spinosad unless in the evening hours and in very small quantities while using a small hand sprayer (the kind sold for moistening laundry), and then only moistening the leaves of plants at a distance from flowers or only on geranium blossoms, since bees never visit them. Never purchase or use Spinosad in a broadcast spray container. Never use Sluggo Plus in moist spots visited by bees, because it contains Spinosad.

Stay tuned. More next month on how you can help save bees from extinction. In the meantime, please visit this website for more information: http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_14192.cfm.

Member Pat Welsh is the author of *Pat Welsh's Southern California Gardening: A Month-by-Month Guide* and other books, and is currently writing "as fast as I possibly can," an all-organic book scheduled to be published 2010. 🐝

Book Review

ON GUERRILLA GARDENING: A HANDBOOK FOR GARDENING WITHOUT BOUNDARIES

By Richard Reynolds

Reviewed by Ava Torre-Bueno



"Guerrilla gardening" is a term that covers a variety of gardening activities. What they all have in common though is that gardening is being done on property you don't own. So, if you've ever weeded around the pathetic plantings outside your grocery store, or "accidentally" dropped some seeds in front of your place of work, you are a guerrilla gardener. It can get much more elaborate than that, of course; you can go out at night and put starts along the edge of your child's school property, or you can organize with your neighbors to create a complete community garden in an unused and unsightly abandoned lot in your neighborhood.

A new manifesto on this subject, *On Guerrilla Gardening*, is a delightful little book! The author mixes history, politics, environmentalism and practical gardening into an enjoyable weekend read.

Guerrilla gardening can be a strong political statement about the waste of good land and the potential for abundance even when we're faced with a "food crisis," or it can just be something you do for fun. My only concern is the "waging battle" metaphor that sprouts throughout the book. I wish even as we guerrilla garden that we could make our speech more tender and nurturing. It's only a little quibble though.

If you've ever been saddened by an abandoned tree well near your bus stop or your office, this book will give you the gumption to go out there and turn it into a lovely little garden! 🐝

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The Real Dirt On...

[Time for a change: For two years Christy Powell and Sharon Corrigan (along with Linda Bresler) have contributed a number of fascinating articles to this column, and we thank them so much for their contributions. Last month was Sharon's last article, and this is Christy's final piece. If you'd like to join Linda in writing about important people in botany and horticulture, please call Susi at (760) 295-7089.] ❧

ELISABETTA FIORINI-MAZZANTI

By Christy Powell

Contessa Elisabetta Fiorini-Mazzanti was an Italian botanist born on June 3, 1799 to Conte Giuseppe and Teresa Fiorini in Terracina, an ancient coastal city 60 miles south of Rome. She grew up in a time of turmoil; with the neighboring French revolution and Napoleon armies dominating much of Italy. Her mother died at a young age and Elisabetta's father made sure she had a good education, which was uncommon for girls in that day and age. By the time she was seven, Elisabetta spoke French and studied English, German, and Latin.

Her love of plants began when she was a little girl. Elisabetta was quite sickly and was taken out to the countryside, where she found healing and an appreciation for nature. A friend introduced Elisabetta to the naturalist Giovan Battista Brocchi. She studied under Brocchi and learned the Linnean system of botanical classification and plant identification. Elisabetta focused her research on mosses and published her first paper at age 24.

When she was 30 she married a lawyer, Calvaliere Luca Mazzanti, and they had three children. Two of their children died early, and Elisabetta lost her husband after 12 years of marriage. Shortly afterward her father died and her remaining daughter, Veneranda, died at age 15.

Elisabetta again found comfort and healing with nature. She continued her botanical studies and published close to thirty papers over her fifty years research. Along with her work with mosses, she studied algae, lichens, fungi, and grapevines. Contessa Elisabetta Fiorini-Mazzanti died in 1879 at age 80.

Member Christy Powell is a Plant Propagator at the San Diego Zoo. ❧

Leaves Turning Red Continued from page 8

saying is, "Never mind whether we can enjoy the highest level of photosynthesis; just keep us from dying!"

¹We had extolled anthocyanins in a previous essay, *Please Pass the Chocolate, Therapeutics of Flavonoids*, in *Let's Talk Plants*, January 2004.

²See *Poinsettias, Set Your Clock!*, in *Let's Talk Plants*, November 2004.

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

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My Snake Surprise

By Pat Venolia

[This is Pat's response to our Sharing Secrets question for September, and a wild-but-true garden story! She also took the photos below.]

The biggest garden surprise of this year came for me on May Day. While in the kitchen, I heard an unusual amount of bird sounds coming from my garden where our Western Bluebird house sits on a pole. We had been eagerly waiting to see the first fledgling flights of the young birds that we knew were in there.

Looking out the window, I saw a number of birds flying around, perching in the tomato cages, and sitting in the coral tree. There were the bluebird parents, orioles, hummingbirds, finches, and flycatchers, and they were making a racket. Their attention was focused on the ground, near the railroad ties and birdhouse pole. I thought, "Oh no, not a rattlesnake, and besides, I don't have time to mess with this, because I'm supposed to get cleaned up for an afternoon party." But I knew if it was a snake I had to protect those baby birds.

So I got a shovel and went to investigate. The upset birds all flew off. I was happy to discover a gopher snake instead of a rattler. So I tried to reroute the large, strong, stubborn snake, and he wasn't having any of that! He hissed at me (which gave me the shivers), and eventually he hid under a geranium by coiling up and then moving around again. Poor geranium, I abused it trying to get that snake to move.

Again, he moved toward the birdhouse pole, while all the time I tried to persuade him to go away. We battled probably fifteen minutes, and finally he went into a hole in an old railroad tie. By this time I had worked up an adrenalin sweat, so I went into the house to get cleaned up, but I continued to watch the area from inside our house.

What amazed me after that was seeing the bluebird parents sitting on the tomato cages, looking down at the ground for a very, very long time, watching for the snake again. I went off to the party, still jazzed by what had occurred.

We hoped the babies were okay. We never saw the fledglings leave the birdhouse, but a few weeks later, they were learning from their parents how to take a bath in the basin on our deck. What a treat to watch that!

Believe me, to this day when I'm in that part of the garden, I watch that hole in the railroad tie. I think the snake is the same one that we discovered on my front porch in April 2007. Strangely enough, right after watching the snake, my husband went into the garage and discovered a king snake. Of course we encourage both those snakes to be in our garden, but I just don't want to be surprised or step on one!

Member Pat Venolia grew up around her dad's retail and wholesale nursery in Pomona, CA, and when old enough she worked there, "pulling weeds, watering, potting and propagation, and producing the catalog (also cleaning the office — such dirt!)." Pat adds, "Years later I realized how much I love to get my hands in the dirt and garden."



Gopher Snake



King Snake

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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 LAST month was: What has been the biggest surprise in your garden this year? We had so many replies that we're putting two more here (a third is on page 13).

Mike Brewer had a nice tomato surprise: "I was having trouble finding Sungold cherry tomato plants in nurseries this past spring. Out of desperation for a yellow tomato I bought a Hugh's tomato, with little knowledge as to its' size, flavor, disease resistance, etc. It has become the hit of the year in the tomato garden. Large fruit, great flavor, abundant producer. I'll be planting it every year from now on. I still love the Sungolds, and I did eventually find one, but the Hugh's was a pleasant surprise for me."

Susi Torre-Bueno says, "My biggest surprise was how quickly succulents, especially Echeveria, grow, even with very little water. I had thought I could plant them and pretty much ignore them for at least a few years, but I find myself needing to divide some of them every six months or so."

The question for this month was: If you could see one plant in its natural habitat, what would it be and why? (Thanks to So. California Horticultural Society (www.SoCalHort.org) for suggesting this question.)

Tom Biggart would travel to Brazil: "One of my favorite orchids is *Laelia purpurata*, the national flower of Brazil. I would be thrilled to tromp around in the forests of that beautiful country looking for this flower. I can just imagine huge trees with branches heavily laden with this large plant covered with huge white and purple flowers dripping from the branches. A side trip to Rio for *caipirinhas* wouldn't be bad either!" [See this orchid at <http://www.chadwickorchids.com/Cattleya/laeliapurpurata1.htm>]

Ruth Barnett only has to go outside her back door: "We love California Monkey Flower, *Diplacus*. We have a sun-drenched eastern facing bank behind our house, and every spring, it is covered with beautiful blooms varying from pale yellow, apricot to orange. It is an annual show that amazes us since there is no irrigation and the bank consists of solid granite. Plus, the hummingbirds love it too!" [Learn more at <http://davesgarden.com/guides/pf/go/51477/>]

Julie Ann Callis adores a blue flowering plant: "Four years ago I was in Vancouver in a large botanical garden, and I came upon a Himalayan Poppy (*Meconopsis*) in full bloom. Given that my favorite color is blue, it knocked my socks off. Last year on one of the information-type channels they had a program on early plant explorers and they visited the area where it, and many other plants now in cultivation, was first discovered. So many plants that we are now familiar with! In situ, with all the other plants and rare bulbs, there they were, in full bloom. What could be a better treat than that for any plant lover?" [Read about this plant here: http://www.poppiesinternational.com/articles/himalayan_blue_poppies.html]

Linda Chisari is also longing to see the "Himalayan Blue Poppy! I'm thinking of trying it in my woodland zone 4b garden at our summer home in the mountains of New York."

John Gilruth says, "The plant I would like to see, again, in its native habitat would be Silversword - Ahinahina - growing and blooming in Haleakala Crater on the Island of Maui, Hawaii. I did see it in bloom in the 1960's, but would really like to return to see this marvelous plant again - a bright silver plant growing in the lava fields. Horticulturally speaking it is *Argyroxiphium sandwicense* ssp. *macrocephalum*!" [See this plant at <http://waynesword.palomar.edu/ww0903b.htm>]

Cheryl Hedgpeth wants to see "A lotus. I love the idea of beauty rising from the muck. It seems mystical and exotic. India is at the top of my travel wish list!" [Read more about lotus at http://www.plantcultures.org/plants/lotus_plant_profile.html]

Marlene King has a fascinating choice: "I am dreaming of riding in an aqua colored 57 Chevy, cruising the streets of Havana, Cuba, on a quest for the beautiful *Jatropha integerrima*. While their habit can be somewhat rangy and the leaves can be problematic with our local water, the flowers have never failed to knock me out. Their heavy substance and gorgeous vermilion/coral tones weave their magic every time. I am imagining what effect they would have in that backward and yet curiously robust country of Cuba. The heat, humidity, noise, vitality and vigor of that island must be a beautiful backdrop for the exotic jatropha. Group tour to Cuba, anyone?" [Find out more at http://www.floridata.com/ref/j/jatr_int.cfm]

Candace Kohl actually saw her favorite plant, *Macrozamia macdonnellii*, sort of: "I actually HAVE seen this plant in central Australia but that was before I started growing cycads and I didn't pay attention to it. This one is very hard to grow here (mine died) and I would love to look at the native stands with more educated and appreciative eyes. I know the question is what I would like to see, but I have to add this story about *Welwitschia mirabilis*. I was traveling in Namibia with two non-plant friends and convinced them to drive an hour and a half on very bad dirt roads to see this plant. When we got to the first one they looked at it amazed that I even cared and made several non-printable comments. Then we had to drive an hour and a half back. I bought them dinner." [See this plant at <http://www.plantzafrica.com/plantwxyz/welwitschia.htm>]

Sue Martin has a California native plant in mind: "*Fremontodendron californicum*. I've not found the courage to try one yet, though I've admired them in botanical gardens. When Tom Piergrossi says he's killed them repeatedly, I think twice. By seeing *Fremontodendron in situ*, I might be able to site one successfully in my yard or give up the dream. After all, "You don't have to own it to enjoy it." [Find out more at <http://www.laspilitas.com/plants/317.htm>]

Victoria Schaffer says, "I would have liked to have seen one of the ancient cycad species, as it grew in its natural habitat 200 million years ago. This would require traveling back in time, I know. But hey! This is a wish list!" [Learn more about cycads here: <http://www.zoo.org/factsheets/cycads/cycads.html>]

Susi Torre-Bueno would need to head south: "In 1970 my husband, then in grad school, and I spent a summer doing field research (on

Continued on page 16

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electric fish) deep in the jungle in Guyana, So. America. We had a year's worth of adventures in two short months, and saw some amazing sights. The most awesome tree I saw had buttresses about 15-20' high and a trunk that rose well over 100', disappearing into the leafy forest canopy above. It was probably *Ceiba pentandra*, the kapok tree. I'd dearly love to see it in its natural habitat for a second time and find out for sure what it is. A magnificent specimen is in the Foster Botanic Garden in downtown Honolulu, but it just isn't the same thrill as seeing it rising above you in the middle of nowhere!" [This website is all about Ceiba: <http://www.ceiba.org/ceiba.htm>]

Marilyn Wilson loves South African plants: "I would like to see a natural 'forest' of Protea. Beyond the thrill of witnessing all those feather-flowers, it would mean that I'd be in South Africa and could visit many of the *other* natives there that I love: weird bulbs, drought-tolerant shrubs that you can use as cut flowers, and all the other goodies you can see at: www.africancollectorstrader.co.za/flowers.htm."

The question for next month is:

Sometimes we don't make time to sit in our own gardens, but there is often a place for others to sit. Please share your garden seating ideas. Please send your e-mail reply by October 5 to info@sdhortsoc.org.

Greywater Continued from page 8

The types of soaps, shampoo, or detergents being used are very important, for example, Boron, from laundry detergent is often toxic to plants. Many types of soaps, conditioners, and most laundry detergents may be labeled "biodegradable" (they break down), but are not "biocompatible" (breaking down into useful, or at least, not harmful components), so choose the right soap/detergent! The hands-down favorite brand of laundry and dish soaps are Oasis, available from Bio-pac.com, and for the shower & bath: Dr. Bronner's. An interesting organic and reportedly effective product are "soap nuts," the fruit of the *Sapindus mukorossi* tree. I'll be buying some of these to try out at home. Interestingly, products by Seventh Generation, an organic, biodegradable "socially conscious" company, are not rated as biocompatible due to higher than desirable residual mineral levels.

Second, one great beginner system involves diverting waste water from your top-load washing machine. Because the washing machine has a powerful pump, it can assist in moving water out away from the house into an elevated surge basin, so you can irrigate farther from the greywater source. Again, a diverter/Jandy valve allows for switching between sewer and landscape, in the event you happen to wash a load of clothes soiled with disease or human waste. When the washer drains, the waste water is pumped out thru the Jandy valve via inexpensive PVC or poly tubing to an elevated barrel, called a surge basin. From the surge basin, one-inch distribution tubing (usually PE - polyethylene tubing) drains the greywater to the mulch basins.

A homeowner can do much or all of the work involved in installing this type of system, though a plumber might be required to install the diverter valve, which is often located inside the building. You do NOT want a problem involving flooding with wastewater inside the house!

The third great "low-hanging-fruit" is a system which uses your shower water. Few people use a shutoff valve (or turn off the water) when soaping up; as a result we waste many gallons of relatively

clean water that is useable for the garden. Because the shower drain pipes are at a lower elevation, relative to the garden, reuse is likely more restricted. Without a pump, greywater only flows downhill, needing a 1/4" drop for every foot of run. The gravity limitations require some thought, as many sites are challenging or unsuitable due to a lack of fall. At my own home, I have plans to reuse shower water to irrigate a lovely mature Corkscrew Willow when I remove the front lawn in the next month or two. With the lawn removed, the tree will lose its primary source of water, and will begin to look terrible. As a riverbed native, a willow needs ridiculous amounts of water (compared with native trees), and I'm not inclined to use my tap water to keep it healthy. Fortunately, the tree is within reach of the gravity-fed shower system, and with four adults using the shower, it will be very happy! To be a good neighbor, I even checked the idea with my adjoining neighbor, and he agreed it's a great idea.

With a dry Fall, we are likely to have mandatory water reductions, and personally, I believe it will only get worse. By using all available methods to make the best use, and re-use of the water we consume, we become part of the solution to the problem.

Member Will Johnson, a C27 landscape contractor, lives with his family in Kensington. His company, SECO Landscapes, an SDHS sponsor, specializes in complete outdoor living/landscape installation, water gardens, night lighting and irrigation management. Will welcomes your comments/questions at info@secolandscapes.com. 🌿

September Plant Forum

By Tom Piergrossi and Susi Torre-Bueno

What is the Plant Forum?

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

Due to space constraints last month some of these plants were displayed at the August meeting.

Antigonon leptopus ROSA DE MONTANA, CORAL VINE, QUEEN'S WREATH (Polygonaceae) Mexico
Fast-growing deciduous vine to 30-40' feet in full sun with good drainage. Pink flowers from late spring to fall; a white form is also available. Drought-tolerant once established, it also produces edible tubers. (Walt Meier, Oceanside, 9/08) – S.T.-B.

Bougainvillea 'Pixie Queen' SHRUB BOUGAINVILLEA (Nyctaginaceae) Horticultural Hybrid
A shrubby thornless bougainvillea to 10' tall with an arching habit. Needs full sun to bloom well. Keep dry to encourage more bloom. It makes a beautiful espalier or free-standing shrub. Showy, colorful, soft red bracts are produced at the tips. This form has great variegation. (Tom Piergrossi, Vista, 9/08) – T.P.

Distictis laxiflora VANILLA TRUMPET VINE (Bignoniaceae)
Mexico, Nicaragua
A spring- and summer-blooming tropical self-clinging evergreen vine to 30' tall with clusters of delightfully fragrant purple trumpet

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September Plant Forum

flowers that fade to lavender and then cream. Full sun, any soil. A parent of *Distictis* 'Rivers'. Blooms more with age. (Tom Piergrossi, Vista, 9/08) – T.P.

Duvernoia aconitiflora WHITE TURTLE FLOWER, LEMON PISTOL BUSH (Acanthaceae) So. Africa
 A rare tropical perennial shrub with small glossy foliage and small hooded white flowers in abundance all year. Full sun or shade, easy to grow. Best with regular water in amended soil. Rabbit resistant. (Tom Piergrossi, Vista, 9/08) – T.P.

Penstemon pseudospectabilis DESERT BEARDTONGUE (Scrophulariaceae) California, New Mexico
 A drought-tolerant perennial which grows to about 3-5' tall by 2-4' wide, this plant has a special place in my heart. Its nearly ever-blooming pink flowers attract hummingbirds from spring through fall. It has waxy gray-green leaves and needs good drainage. Mine is rather open and sprawling. A pretty good cut flower, too. In my garden it grows with other California natives that get watered once a week (or less) in summer, not at all in winter or early spring. (Susi Torre-Bueno, Vista, 8/08) – S.T-B.

Philadelphus mexicanus MOCK ORANGE VINE, EVERGREEN MOCK ORANGE (Hydrangeaceae) Mexico
 An evergreen vine to 25' tall with white fragrant flowers in hanging clusters. Blooms year 'round when established. Full sun; great planted on the sunny eaves of a house or on top of an arbor, where flowers can hang through the structure. Easy to grow; uncommon. (Tom Piergrossi, Vista, 9/08) – T.P.

Radermachera sinica CHINA DOLL (Bignoniaceae) Southeast Asia
 The China Doll Tree caused quite a stir in the 1980's when it was first introduced here – as a house plant! ... [I]t has proven to be an excellent and very ornamental evergreen tree that is easy to grow and quite hardy to cold... [growing] quickly to 30-40' tall and 20-30' wide, and looks best with multiple trunks. It is a beautiful tree for its bright green tropical-looking foliage alone... [but it] also produces clusters of beautiful fragrant flowers, which appear in late summer. These 3" funnel-shaped flowers open at night, lasting into the next morning, and are usually pure white, although there is a light yellow flowered form. The tree grows easily in full sun or partial shade, and prefers a rich, well-drained soil away from strong winds. It likes regular watering and fertilizing, but mature trees are also fairly drought-tolerant. Somewhat frost-tender when very young, it has proven surprisingly cold-hardy as it matures... (Michael & Joyce Buckner, San Diego, 8/08) – S.B. [Excerpted from *Ornamental Trees for Mediterranean Climates: The Trees of San Diego.*]

Sphaeralcea incana GREY GLOBEMALLOW (Malvaceae) Arizona, New Mexico, Texas
 A drought-tolerant perennial with grey-green foliage and soft orange flowers over a very long time. Grows to about 3-6' tall and wide. Somewhat rangy in the garden, so site it carefully. (Susi Torre-Bueno, Vista, 8/08) – S.T-B.

Thanks to everyone who brought this excellent assortment of plants to the meeting, where they were enthusiastically described by Tom Piergrossi. The plants listed below were also displayed.

September 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 September newsletter was *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Relaxus' POWDERPUFF GRASS.

Aechmea pectinata (Irina & Erik Gronborg, Solana Beach, 9/08)
Allamanda cathartica GOLDEN TRUMPET
 (Walt Meier, Carlsbad, 9/08)

3 *Amaryllis belladonna* (white) WHITE NAKED LADY (Marilyn Wilson, Rancho Bernardo, 9/08)

Ampelopsis brevipedunculata BLUEBERRY CLIMBER, PORCELAIN BERRY, PORCELAIN VINE (Sue Fouquette, El Cajon, 9/08; Tom Piergrossi, Vista, 9/08)

Asclepias physocarpa MILKWEED, SWAN PLANT, GOOSE PLANT (Sue Fouquette, El Cajon, 9/08)

Begonia hybrid (tuberous begonia) (John Gilruth, Rainbow, 9/08)

Beschorneria sp. 'Queretaro' (Susi Torre-Bueno, Vista, 9/08)

× *Brassolaeliocattleya* BLC. Taoshiaoki × Caclandide (Sue & Charley Fouquette, El Cajon, 9/08)

× *Brassolaeliocattleya* Port of Paradise (John Gilruth, Rainbow, 9/08)

× *Brassolaeliocattleya* Pokai Splash × Ann Miyamoto (John Gilruth, Rainbow, 9/08)

Buddleja cv. BUTTERFLY BUSH (John Gilruth, Rainbow, 9/08)

Buddleja cv. (white-flowered) BUTTERFLY BUSH (Louise Anderson, San Marcos, 9/08)

Callistemon 'Jeffers' (John Gilruth, Rainbow, 9/08)

Campanula coccolactiflora CHOCOLATE MILK BELLFLOWER (Drink Mee, Carlsbad, 9/08)

Campanula lactiflora MILKY BELLFLOWER (Walt Meier, Carlsbad, 9/08)

Capsicum annuum var. CHILHUACLE AMARILLO PEPPER (Mike Brewer, El Cajon, 9/08)

Capsicum annuum var. *glabrusculum* CHILTEPIN, BIRD PEPPER (Mike Brewer, El Cajon, 9/08)

Capsicum annuum 'Shishito' SHISHITO PEPPER (Mike Brewer, El Cajon, 9/08)

Capsicum annuum 'Variegated' ORNAMENTAL VARIEGATED PEPPER (Mike Brewer, El Cajon, 9/08)

Chrysanthemum nipponicum (bonsai form) MONTAUK DAISY (Phil Tackill, Solana Beach, 9/08)

Echeveria cv. (Walt Meier, Carlsbad, 9/08)

3 *Ficus palmeri* ANABA, BAJA FIG, DESERT FIG (Julian Duval, Encinitas, 9/08)

Fuchsia magellanica HARDY FUCHSIA (Walt Meier, Oceanside, 9/08)

Geranium cv. (Walt Meier, Oceanside, 9/08)

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September Plant Forum

Geranium 'Rozanne' (Sue Martin, Point Loma, 9/08)

Hibiscus cv. (John Gilruth, Rainbow, 9/08)

3 *Hibiscus tiliaceus* 'Variegata' VARIEGATED HAU TREE (Tom Piergrossi, Vista, 9/08)

Hylocereus undatus DRAGON FRUIT (? , 9/08)

Ipomoea sp. (Walt Meier, Carlsbad, 9/08)

Justicia brandegeana 'Pink' SHRIMP PLANT (Tom Piergrossi, Vista, 9/08)

Laeliocattleya Loog Tone AFRICAN BEAUTY (John Gilruth, Rainbow, 9/08)

Lycoris squamigera NAKED LADY (Sue Fouquette, El Cajon, 9/08)

Melaleuca lateritia ORANGE MYRTLE, ROBIN RED-BREAST BUSH (Tom Piergrossi, Vista, 9/08)

Oxypetalum caeruleum (syn. *Tweedia caerulea*) (Walt Meier, Oceanside, 9/08)

Passiflora cv. PASSION VINE (John Gilruth, Rainbow, 9/08)

Passiflora cv. PASSION VINE (Carol Lockwood, La Mesa, 9/08)

Salvia microphylla (upright form) BIG LEAF BLUE SAGE (Tom Piergrossi, Vista, 9/08)

Salvia splendens 'Van Houttei – Light Orange' (Tom Piergrossi, Vista, 9/08)

Salvia splendens 'Van Houttei – Tall Pink' (Tom Piergrossi, Vista, 9/08)

3 *Saponaria* 'Bressingham' BOUNCING BET (Walt Meier, Carlsbad, 9/08)

Saponaria officinalis (double form) BOUNCING BET (Walt Meier, Carlsbad, 9/08)

Sphrocattleya Sc. Madge Fordyce x S. Roseum (Sue & Charley Fouquette, Santee, 9/08)

Sphrocattleya Mini Doris 'Carmela' (Sue & Charley Fouquette, Santee, 9/08)

Synadenium grantii AFRICAN RED MILK PLANT (Cathy Tylka, Escondido, 9/08)

Thunbergia battiscombei (Walt Meier, Carlsbad, 9/08)

Zinnia 'State Fair' (Sue Martin, Point Loma, 9/08)

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.]

September Meeting Report

SDHS SPONSOR ↓

Renee Shepherd, whose generous gifts of sweet pea and slow-bolting cilantro seeds endeared her to the audience, has a true gardener's heart. She loves the scent of garden soil, the feel of young lettuce leaves, the crunch of carrots freshly dug up and eaten moments later. Noting "an upturn in interest in growing food," Renee's goal is "showing people how to do it." This is reflected in her new motto, "Success with Seeds," and in the great amount of helpful detail on every seed packet. She's also a great friend of the San Diego Horticultural Society and is our newest Sponsor Member!

Each year Renee travels the world searching for the newest and, more importantly, the *best* seeds for home gardens. She carefully trials these seeds at four locations around the nation, selecting those seeds that grow well everywhere. A member of the Organic Seed Alliance, Renee buys organic seeds when possible, and does not sell genetically modified seeds. She says the best way to store seeds is in a cool dry place, such as a sealed jar inside your refrigerator. "Every seed is an embryo waiting to happen," Renee reminds us. The best way to plant seeds is to sow more than you need and thin as necessary, following package directions. For more details, sign up at www.reneesgarden.com for her free on-line newsletter.

In her own garden Renee uses the "French intensive raised bed biodynamic" method, and lines all her beds with hardware cloth to keep gophers at bay. If you grow your veggies in pots try using Kellogg's Patio Mix for best results. Many of the seeds Renee sells are heirlooms, which means they are at least 30-50 years old and often represent varieties that are tastier than mass-produced veggies, though they might not be as uniformly formed. Her seeds are also often sold with three kinds in one packet – such as three different colors of radishes – with each seed color-coded (using food dye) so you know what you're planting. Just think – do you really need 15 identical sweet pepper plants? Wouldn't you like to grow five each of green, red and yellow peppers – for the same seed cost?

We were treated to beautiful images of about 100 different seed-grown plants, including lettuce mixes, herbs, flowers and gourds. Renee's excellent handout described each plant and I marked off a bunch to try soon (I've had great success with her seeds for a number of years). I plan to buy *Salpiglossis* 'Stained Glass', a distant cousin of tomatoes, which features huge flowers in a stunning array of saturated colors. And now that I know that Gourds 'Wings and Warts' has fragrant white flowers, they're on my must-have list, too. Thanks, Renee, for sharing your love of seeds with us!

We also thank Tom Piergrossi for providing an extra-generous array of plants for the Opportunity Drawing. His lively discussion for the Plant Forum was very illuminating. We congratulate Tom on his recent marriage to Andy Maycen, his partner for 13 years. Their house is for sale – visit www.TomPiergrossi.com for details. 🌱

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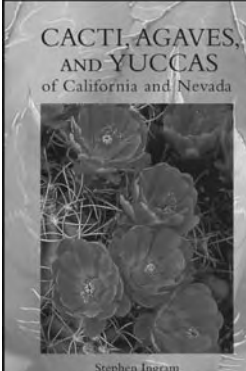
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**The Board of Directors
of the Southern California Branch of
The Mediterranean Garden Society**
invites you to...



A Day-long Program on the Challenge of Invasives

**10:00 till 4:00 on Saturday, October 4th in Carlsbad
The Agua Hedionda Lagoon Discovery Center
1580 Cannon Road, Carlsbad**

- ☆ Greetings by Eric Munoz, President, Agua Hedionda Lagoon Foundation
- ☆ Invasive Plants and Alternatives for California Gardens, by Carl E. Bell,
Regional Advisor - Invasive Plants, UC Cooperative Extension, San Diego
- ☆ Guided tour of the Agua Hedionda Lagoon native plant garden
- ☆ Lunch
- ☆ After lunch -- a tour of several selected near-by private gardens



Suggested donation:

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