

BULLETIN
THE CALIFORNIA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY
California Academy of Sciences
Golden Gate Park
San Francisco, California 94118

AUGUST 2001

4:00 PM Botanical gardens walk with speaker at Strybing Arboretum. Parking is available behind the San Francisco Co. Fair Building and on 9th Ave.

5:30 PM NO HOST Dinner will be at Avenue 9 bistro, 1243 Ninth Ave., San Francisco \$15

7:30PM Meeting will be held at the California Academy of Sciences, Morrison Auditorium Golden Gate Park. *Guest fee \$5.**

The Plant Drawing each month provides an important source of funds for the Grants and Scholarship Program. The drawing in August will include donations from ***A Touch of the Tropics Nursery***, Santa Rosa, courtesy of Dave Franzman; mallows from ***Markham Arboretum***, Concord & mallow relatives courtesy of Kristin Yanker-Hansen; & ***Strybing Arboretum and Botanical Gardens***, courtesy of Dr. Don Mahoney. Our appreciation to *Cottage Garden Growers of Petaluma*, courtesy of owners Bruce Shanks and Daria Morrill and to *Strybing Arboretum & Botanical Gardens* (Dr. Don Mahoney) who graciously donated the beautiful specimens for July meeting.

Monday, August 20, 2001

Co-Sponsored with Strybing Arboretum Society

“Hibiscus—beautiful new hybrids for non-tropical climates”

Presented by **Charles Black**, owner of Hidden Valley Hibiscus, and a specialist in the hybridization, propagation, growing, and distribution of the fancy new forms of *H. rosa-sinensis* which over the last 200 years has been transformed from the original double red flower described by Carl Linnaeus in 1753 into a collection of ornamental plants that is startling in breadth of colors and forms that are now available to us. How did this happen? The story of how the original plant discovered in China spread around the world, and how it was transformed by human manipulation into what we have today, is the subject of this presentation. The talk will include photos and fresh blooms of recent hybrids.



Coming meetings

Co-Sponsored with Strybing Arboretum Society

Monday, September 17, 2001

“Subtropical Style in the San Francisco Bay Area”

Some contemporary Gardens

Tonight's speaker **David Feix**, is a local designer and horticulturist, trained as a landscape architect, who has been designing gardens in California for the past 25 years. Plants were an early interest for David and discovering tropicals as an adult rekindled that initial passion. Various extended stays working in Brazil, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia have all left their mark. Come explore gardens which combine succulents, bromeliads, tropicals and mediterraneans, in a mix that could only be Californian! Is the concept even appropriate for our mediterranean climate? Hear David make his case for erasing winter from our vocabulary, and having fun in the process.



Monday, October 15, 2001

“The Natural History of Soqotra”

Presented by **Dylan Hannon**, Plant Propagator at Rancho Santa Ana Botanical Garden. In the Arabian Sea, off the Horn of Africa (Somalia), lies the island of Soqotra, one of the most intriguing and beautiful destinations in the world. This talk will feature many of Soqotra's famous plants and animals, set amidst towering granite spires and limestone plateaus. See *Adenium obesum* ssp. *socotranum* (bottle tree), *Dendrosicyos socotrana* (cucumber tree), *Dracena cinnabari* (Dragon's blood tree), *Exacum affine* (Persian violet) and *Punica protopunica* (Soqotran pomegranate) in their native habitats on this rarely visited island.

President's Letter

by Dr. Don Mahoney

Cal Hort is fortunate to have among its membership such highly qualified people as our last speaker. Dick Dunmire has expertise on so many subjects that it was too bad his program was limited to just rock garden plants. I just wish we all could grow to perfection the plants he so eloquently described. Needless to say, his program was well received by a large audience and elicited numerous favorable comments.

Some of our newer members (and many others) are from the Sacramento area and we are planning an autumn field trip

to see what these good gardeners can do with a hot climate. They say fall is a good time to visit. Having just returned from a scouting trip to this area I can tell you we are in for a treat, I was amazed to see such well grown and fun plants. We will also have a chance to purchase plants we often don't see in coastal nurseries. Support Cal Hort and sign up for the field trip. This is also a good chance to converse with fellow horticulturists as we will be traveling by bus. ✿

Botanical Tours

October 12-28

Botanical & Cultural Treasures of China's Yunnan Province with Dr. Sun Weibang, Director Kunming Botanical Gardens & Strybing member Wes Conner, a noted horticulturist. Sponsored by Strybing Arboretum Society & San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden. Info: (800) 624-6633.

August 20 - 30

Montane Pteridophytes and Angiosperms of Ecuador Alan Smith (University Herbarium, UC Berkeley) and Grady Webster (Herbarium, UC Davis), Sponsored by: The Friends of the Jepson Herbarium and Betchart Expeditions. Please contact Staci Markos at the Jepson Herbarium for more details. (510) 643-7008.
<http://ucjeps.herb.berkeley.edu/active.html>

April 24 - May 8, 2002

A Springtime Medley of Gardens: Floraide & Keukenhof in Holland-Bruges; Belgium-Paris at cherry Blossom-time
Sponsored by Strybing Arboretum Society. Info: (800) 624-6633.

May 6 - 24, 2002

Sichuan, China - A Botanical Paradise Sponsored by Quarryhill Botanical Garden and Strybing Arboretum Society with Bill Mc Namara.

Notable Nurseries

Every month, various nurseries donate well-grown and wonderful plants for our Plant Raffle at the meetings. The raffle being a raffle and all, you don't always get that mega-cool plant you've been dying for, even if you put all of your tickets in one cup!

To make it easier on you plantaholics, here is the contact information so you can find these great nurseries.

Markham Regional Arboretum

1202 LaVista (Off Clayton Road), Concord
(925) 681-1551

Both an arboretum and creekside nature park on 16 acres, including displays of roses, herbs and an international garden.

A Touch of the Tropics Nursery

Wholesale only, call for more info or orders
(707) 578-1090
Santa Rosa

Strybing Arboretum and Botanical Gardens

(415) 661-1316
Ninth Ave at Lincoln Way in Golden Gate Park, SF
www.strybing.org

Strybing's nursery propagates many truly rare and unusual plants from its gardens. They focus on material that will do well in the Bay Area but there's always a few things worth pushing the climate envelope for. Although not open daily to the public, there are monthly plant sales offering a bounty of treasures. The next sales are August 11, a general sale featuring shade plants, and September 8, an Open Nursery sale with native plants and succulents featured. ✿



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July Plant Forum

by Fred Coe

1. *Salvia patens* var. Cambridge Blue

LAMIACEAE

Kathy Echols, Martinez

A true light-blue form of the species from Central Mexico. It grows 2 to 3-feet high and the same width. Flowering stalks have 1-inch long cornflower-blue flowers on a stalk extending 6 to 12 inches over the plant. It is tuberous-rooted and will stand temperatures into the mid-20s, coming back from the base if frosted.

2. *Vitex rotundifolia*

"Korean vitex"

VERBENACEAE

Kathy Echols, Martinez

Native to both Asia and Australia, this is a low growing or prostrate form very similar to *V. trifolia*, which is more upright. It has terminal short panicles of fragrant blue or purple flowers and is drought tolerant.

3. *Calceolaria* x 'John Innes'

SCROPHULARIACEAE

Wayne Roderick, Orinda

This is a low growing herbaceous hybrid with large yellow pouch-like flowers held above the rosette of leaves. It is considered a hybrid although the parents *C. uniflora* and *C. darwinii* are both found in southern Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego, and may be different forms of the same species. ✨

THE PLANT FORUM is a traditional feature of our monthly meetings. Members are strongly encouraged to bring new plants or old favorites from their gardens to tell about and share. What's old hat to you might be a brand new wonder to another member. What is putting on a display in your garden this summer? Bring it in and share it with us!

Salt-Tolerant Tomato Represents Breakthrough

By Will Dunham

(Reuters) - In a breakthrough that could boost food production in many parts of the world, scientists said on Monday they had inserted a single gene from a relative of the cabbage into a tomato plant to create the first crop able to grow in salty water and soil.

Researchers introduced into a tomato plant a gene from the plant *Arabidopsis* that controls a protein able to corral excess salt before it inflicts damage on a plant. The genetically engineered tomato imprisons the salt in compartments within its cells, and also removes salt from the soil, the scientists said in the journal *Nature Biotechnology*.

The leaves of the genetically engineered tomato plants contained very high concentrations of sodium, but the fruit produced by the plants was not tainted by salt.

"My personal impression is that it tastes great," plant biologist Eduardo Blumwald, of the University of California at Davis, said in an interview. Blumwald conducted the work along with Hong-Xia Zhang of the University of Toronto, who said, "The tomato tastes better than the normal one." Commercially useful salt-tolerant tomato plants could be available within three years.

The researchers said the tomatoes offer hope that other crops also can be genetically modified for use in parts of the world that have salty irrigation water and salt-damaged soils. The creation of the first salt-tolerant crop addresses one of agriculture's key problems. Irrigated land represents only 15 percent of global cropland but generates 40 percent of the crops. But salt is toxic to crops, and water used for irrigation leaves behind salt that eventually ruins the soil.

"It is a problem that does seem to be getting worse," said Stanley Wood, a scientist with the International Food Policy Research Institute in Washington, which studies global agricultural issues. "Anything that increases the productivity of those lands obviously would be a major breakthrough."

About 24.7 million acres—one-fifth the area of California—of once-productive land is being lost annually worldwide because of irrigation-induced salinity, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Feeding a Growing World Population

China and India, the world's two most populous nations, were among the nations with the biggest problems, joining the United States, Pakistan and the former Soviet republics.

Irrigation enables farmers to be less reliant on seasonal rainfall. But water used in irrigation deposits in the fields salts such as sodium, calcium, magnesium, potassium, sulfate and chloride picked up from the soils and rocks. Salt in the soil and irrigation water ruins plants' ability to take in water through their roots. If salt concentrations in the soil are very high, the flow of water into the plant is reversed and the plant dehydrates and dies.

Scientists have failed to develop salt-tolerant crop varieties using selective breeding techniques. Blumwald and Zhang genetically engineered tomato plants that produce higher levels of a naturally occurring protein that transports salt—in the form of sodium ions—into compartments within the cells. That renders the salt unable to interfere with the plant's normal biochemical activity.

The gene that controls increased production of that protein was taken from *Arabidopsis*, a relative of the cabbage that is often used in plant research, and inserted into the tomato.

The plants were grown in greenhouses at the University of Toronto. The researchers said the new tomato plants grew and produced fruit in irrigation water about 50 times saltier than normal. The tomato thrived in water about a third as salty as seawater, but Zhang said it cannot grow in seawater.

They worked with the tomato plant in part because it was easy to manipulate genetically and are now working with canola. ✨

Garden Ramblings

by Michael D. Barclay, © 2001

The Corydalis Capers

Once upon a time there was a unique perennial ground cover called *Corydalis lutea* which was evergreen and bloomed most of the year in the Coastal Bay Area. The small flowers were a rather harsh yellow but the bluish-fenny-foliage more than made up for it. Unfortunately it was a bit of a "thug," spreading by short rhizomes and self-seeding with utter abandon. It thrived in part sun-even full morning sun, but was a fine carpenter in dryish shade as well. It was a first rate ground cover for those sluggish souls searching for an easy, no-fail plant; and who isn't? It had a more genteel cousin, *C. ochroleuca* with a larger creamy-white flowers each sporting a tiny olive spot. Elegant UK gardeners called them "fumatories."

Then the British plant explorer and Roy Lancaster went to China and collected a form of *C. flexuosa* with a thrilling "crayola-blue" flower, an extremely rare color among perennials except for some salvias. He dubbed it *C.f. 'Blue Panda'* (a sharp very commercial name) and within a year every gardener worth her salt was paying extravagant sums for 3" pots and attempting to grow the darn thing. True blue among garden flowers is rare enough but this was a fabulous, radiant spark of electric-blue-power. Unfortunately it had a brief bloom, went summer dormant and rarely if ever returned with the autumnal rains. In short, it was a gorgeous horticultural utter flop! This fish-story might have ended there except that ambitious collectors soon had a plethora of *C. flexuosas* with flowers ranging from sky blue to blackish-purple, heights from 6"-1'+ and varying dormancy periods.

First came Lancaster's 'Pere David,' purple-blue flowers with darker foliage; then the best to date, 'China Blue,' with intense blue flowers which spread rather quickly and was evergreen with summer irrigation. Unfortunately it was the tallest of the clan and invariable flopped "untidily" when in bloom (a UK concept Jeckyl and Robinson rejected). It's still a wonderful plant when used with white bergenis and the late blooming *Aster*

divaricatus, especially Roger Raiche's extra-large foundling.

These were soon joined by the "true species *flexuosa*" with varying shades of blue and purple and then Lancaster's new "Wunderpflanz"- 'Purple Foliage.' This last is also evergreen and longer blooming though the dark somber foliage defeats the blue, spurred flowers to some extent. Perhaps this latter plant would be best planted in the shade when the foliage would recede and the bluish flowers glow. Then several nurseries began finding clones with darker and darker purple flowers-more plants, more names! Ah, gardening, don't you love it!

Now most exciting of all-new species. Mughtar Saltzmann of Emerisa with his wonderful Dutch connections will release next season *Corydalis alata*. It is supposed to be super compact-4"-6" tall with bright flowers and no summer dormancy. Farewell *flexuosa* and "Welcome *C. alata*!" All this, plus Heronswood's riches, suggest that the next wave of important garden plants will be Asian and that there's green and purple gold waiting to be mined in the foothills of the Himalayas. Any rhody collector could have told you that. I'm growing *Primula moupinense* which spreads by runners like

the common strawberry!

The always awaited McClure and Zimmerman bulb catalog arrived last month offering a "new" species with two named clones: *Corydalis solida*. This evergreen species carries a pink to purplish raceme. They describe the plant as native to the former Yugoslavia and Scandinavia, a fast multiplier (once established) and also a mere 6" tall. They picture it squeezing into rock walls and crevices in stone stairways. In the species, bluish ferny foliage supports dense racemes of pale lavender flowers with a two-lipped "scroph" look. 'G.B. Baker' sports porcelain rose flowers fading to translucent blush. Yum, yum-I ordered three! And then there's 'Beth Evans,' a Chelsea winner from 1988 whose nominate clone is light, soft pink with a white spot where *ochroleuca* has its olive one. A star is born...perennialists-get ready, set----- ✨



HORT NOTES:

UCSC FARM & GARDEN APPRENTICESHIP - A six month course in organic gardening and small-scale farming held at the UC Santa Cruz Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems. 20 units of UC Extension credit for app. 300 hours of formal instruction and 700 hours of in-field training and hands-on experience in the greenhouses, gardens, orchards and fields. 2002 program: April 15-October 18, 2002. Application deadline Nov. 1, 2001 for US & Canadian citizens. Info: CASFS UCSC, 1156 High Street, Santa Cruz, CA, 95064; www.ucsc.edu/casfs; (831) 459-3240; apprenticeship@cats.ucsc.edu.

JOBS IN HORTICULTURE

If you're looking for a job in horticulture or have a job that needs filling, check out www.hortjobs.com on the web with jobs updated on a daily basis. Also available as an employment newspaper mailed to your house twice monthly.

Post and search for jobs and even post your resume. (800) 428-2474. ✨



Horticultural Calendar

Tuesdays in August

Have a question about gardening in the Sacramento Valley? Drop-in garden advice from UC Davis Arboretum is available on Tuesday evenings in August from 7–8 PM at the Arboretum Terrace home demonstration garden. Bring your plant samples, site plans, ideas or questions for Arboretum gardener Mark Bibbo. (530) 752-4880.

August 12

Bicycle Tree Tour of the Mission—Friends of the Urban Forest's Elyn Shea leads a leisurely ride featuring the diversity of this very urban forest. Meet 10 AM at the Atlas Café, 20th and Alabama. RSVP to (415) 561-6890 x102.

August 16

Have I Got A Pest For You- Group problem solving. S.F. Gardeners Assn 7 - 9 PM Environmental Hort & Floriculture Dept. City College - S.F.

August 25-26

Annual Dahlia Show by The Dahlia Society of California at the Serramonte Shopping Center, Daly City. Info: (415) 566-5222.

September 3 (Labor Day)

Open Garden—Wayne Roderick's garden featuring 365 days of color with no watering. 166 Cañon Drive, Orinda (510) 254-0912. Take Hwy 24 to Orinda exit, go left under ramp, at third stoplight, go left. About 2 blocks later, hidden by a huge oak tree, is Cañon Drive. 10 AM to 4 PM.

Strybing Arboretum Society
(415) 661-1316 • www.strybing.org

Aug 11

Plant Sale—Shade plants featured at the nursery from 10 AM–1 PM.

August 17

Organic Vineyards and Olive Orchards—Visit a special collection of cutting edge organic producers. \$85, \$75 SAS members. 9 AM–7 PM carpool.

September 8

Plant Sale—Open Nursery with native plants and succulents featured from 10 AM–1 PM.

September 8–29

Botanical Drawing—4 sessions for all skill levels with Michele Meyer, Past-President of the American Society of Botanical Artists. \$115, \$105 SAS members. 10 AM–2 PM.

September 12-19

Photographing Your Own or a Client's Garden—3-session workshop with Margaretta K. Mitchell, Nat'l Director of American Society of Media Photographers. \$105, \$95 SAS members.

UC Botanical Garden - Berkeley
(510) 643-1924 • <http://www.mip.berkeley.edu/garden/>

August 4

Sick Plant Clinic—U.C. Experts diagnose your plant woes the first Saturday of each month. 9AM–NOON, (Free) ✨

Cal Hort is Going to Davis & Sacramento

Saturday September 22, 2001
Departure 8:00 AM Return 6:00 PM

Come spend a day on the bus with other plant lovers.

Visit the private garden of Dick and Trish Bruga with fabulous collections of grasses,

Phlomis and a myriad of other plants. Then on to a docent led tour of the UC Davis Arboretum, where you will see choice plants that thrive in the heat. Lunch will be under the trees at the Arboretum headquarters. After lunch, we will explore the WPA garden in Sacramento, managed by our own Cal Hort member Daisy Mah. Daisy grows nearly everything from seed, and you will see plants that you have never seen before.

The rest of the day will be spent seeing a nursery or two. The details aren't complete. But you will need to bring your checkbook, because you will find plants you can't find anywhere else. The final leg of the trip will be back through the San Joaquin Valley and enjoying a cocktail hour.

The price of the trip is \$49 per member and \$59 per non-member. This includes the cost of transportation on the bus, a light breakfast, with juice and coffee, Box lunch, beverages, water for the day, nibbles on the bus and of course the cocktail hour. In addition we include a \$5 donation to the California Horticultural Society.

Responsibility: The California Horticultural Society acts only as an agent for the passenger in arranging transportation and other services related to this tour from the time of departure to the time of return. The Society holds itself free of responsibility for damage occasioned from the time of departure to the time of return. The right is reserved to substitute modes of transportation and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary.

If you have any questions please call Kristin Yanker-Hansen (925) 831-9499 or E-Mail Yankerhans@hotmail.com. Otherwise fill out the form below and send your check payable to the California Horticultural Society. You will receive directions to our stepping off point upon receipt.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

Mail to: Kristin Yanker-Hansen, 569 Contada Circle, Danville, CA 94526-3553 by September 10, 2001. We need a minimum of 40 people, and there is a maximum of 46 people.



Managing and Protecting Heritage Trees

A Western Chapter ISA and CA Urban Forests Council Regional Workshop
Thursday, August 23, 8:30 AM- 4 PM, Civic Auditorium, 307 Church street, Santa Cruz

The cultural and arboreal legacy of any city can be revealed in how well the community respects its heritage of old trees. In virtually every community there are trees that tell a story of past people and generations who have either planted trees or preserved native specimens and groves.

These old and sometimes historic trees contribute immeasurably to a community's urban forest. However, those grand old trees need special provisions in the planning and management of our urban forests.

This workshop is great for City Planners, Planning Commissioners, Arborists and interested lay-persons interested in tree preservation.

Registration info: (530) 892-1118; fax (530) 892-1006

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Deadline for publication is the third Monday of each month for the following month's *Bulletin*. Events during the first ten days of the month should be remitted *two* months ahead. Please give any information to Elsie at the meeting or, preferably, email to Bruce at the above address. Faxes and postal submissions also accepted.

Membership year begins January 1. Dues are \$40 individual, \$50 joint household, \$25 Student (w/ proof of enrollment). To join, or for full range of membership levels, please visit our website at www.calhortsociety.org or call the Office secretary at the number above.

ADVERTISING: Rates: \$60 for a business card size (3 3/4" w x 2" h), \$75 for 1/8 page (3 3/4" w x 2 1/2" h), \$150 for 1/4 page (3 3/4" w x 5" h). Submit ads or questions to *Bulletin* Editor at above postal or email address.

California Horticultural Society

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