

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



SEPTEMBER 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

7:30 PM 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 September will include donations from **Rosendale Nursery**, courtesy of Jeff & Lisa Rosendale & **Strybing Arboretum and Botanical Gardens**, courtesy of Dr. Don Mahoney. Our appreciation to *A Touch of the Tropics Nursery*, Santa Rosa, courtesy of Dave Franzman; to **Markham Arboretum**, Concord; to Kristin Hansen and to *Strybing Arboretum & Botanical Gardens* (Dr. Don Mahoney) who graciously donated the beautiful specimens for the August meeting.

Monday, September 17, 2001

Co-sponsored with Strybing Arboretum Society

“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? Let me make my case for erasing winter from my vocabulary, and having fun in the process.



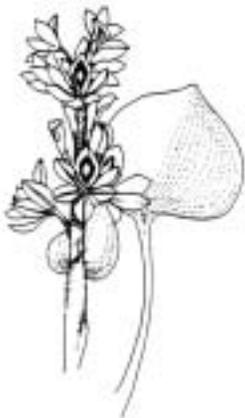
Coming Meetings

Co-Sponsored with Strybing Arboretum Society

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.



Monday, November 19, 2001

“Confessions of A Plant Addict”

Presented by **Kelly Dodson** noted horticulturist and avid plant collector, of Reflective Gardens Nursery near Poulsbo, Washington. His focus is mainly on uncommon plants and species. From seed collected on his expedition to Yunnan, China he has grown the beautiful pink *Allium mairei*. One of his new introductions is *Ficus ti-kona*, a ground cover which he believes holds great promise for the Bay area. You will not want to miss this fascinating slide illustrated program.

President's Letter

by Dr. Don Mahoney

My friends in the midwest are telling me that is a very early autumn with lots of fall color happening a month early. Having watched the seasons progress for many years it seems like there is always something blooming or going deciduous early or late. I'm not sure these year to year changes tell us much about what may or may not be happening to the long range climate but they sure are fun to watch. However if something unusual does happen we gardeners will probably be the first to notice, especially if weather extremes start to change. I've enjoyed the last few relatively freeze-free years

but who knows what this year will bring. Do any of you have climate related plant stories to tell. I'm sure our newsletter editor would love to hear from you as member's contributions are always welcome.

Many thanks to Charles Black for his interesting presentation on Hibiscus. His talk generated a lot more tickets being bought for the plant drawing. While most of us could only grow hibiscus if we overwinter them indoors, their extravagant floral display may well make that worthwhile. ✨

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.

Rosendale and Sierra Azul Nurseries

2660 East Lake Ave
Watsonville, CA 95076-1420

Sierra Azul has retail sales and is open daily, which is good, since you'll need time to study their fantastic large demonstration garden. (831) 763-0939. Visit their web page at sierraazul.com to take the online garden tour!

Rosendale Nursery is wholesale only to the horticultural trade with deliveries to the Bay Area. Call for availability list and more info (831) 728-2599.

A Touch of the Tropics Nursery

by appointment, (707) 578-9317
Santa Rosa. Call for directions.

Remember those beautifully grown hibiscus at the August meeting? You know, the ones with the deep green leaves and the huge blooms? They were grown here, up in Santa Rosa at A Touch of the Tropics. Dave Franzman has 1000's of plants, with almost every Rosa-sinensis cultivar you could want. open by appointment only, for retail or wholesale sales.

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 September 8, an Open Nursery sale with native plants and succulents featured, and October 13, with trees, ferns and Rhododendrons featured. ✨



Do you grow these?

Your fellow members of Cal Hort would be delighted to find any of the following seeds in next year's exchange! If you are growing (or have other means of access to) any of these types of plants, please take a little time to collect the seed. Your fellow Cal Hort members will thank you!

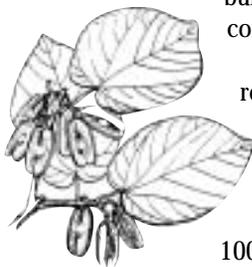
General categories:

trees
palms
conifers
CA natives
South African bulbs/corms
Australian trees and shrubs
New Zealand trees and shrubs
variegated
unusual annuals
perennials
plants for Zone 6 and colder
drought tolerant
heat tolerant
tropicals
fern spores
vines

vines for shade
vines with fragrant flowers
shrubs with fragrant flowers

Genera:

Cyclamen
Echium
Erythrina
Gladiolus
Helleborus
Iris
Ixia
Penstemon
Salvia



Any time before Thanksgiving, please send the seeds to:

Dave Tivol
130 Locksunart Way #4
Sunnyvale CA 94087

It's not mandatory, but if you can take a picture of the plant in leaf or flower, it could be posted on our web site, where it would help illustrate the beauty (or other pertinent feature) of the plant. ✨

My cyclical seasons

OK, summer's coming to a close. At this point every year I start to long for the easy days of winter. I know it's hard to believe, since everyone I know thinks of me as Mr. Plant Guy but after a fun-filled season of watering and watching things burst from the ground, pruning and clipping, shredding and composting, planting and propagating, I'm all tuckered out!

How nice it will be to not have to daily water all those rootbound potted plants that I just don't have room for in my yard (or my neighbor's yard, or any of my friend's yards, or client's yards....), or those flats and flats of seeds that I'm growing just to see what'll happen. I know what will happen. The 100's of seeds will all grow into 100's of little plants. I'll have a hard time culling the less vigorous or interesting ones and I'll have 100's of little pots sitting around needing to be watered every day and everyone I know will be receiving little gifts of *Angelica archangelica*, variegated broccoli, etc. etc.

But how nice it will be just to sit inside and think about what I'll do differently *next year* when the rains have stopped, the days have lengthened and the plants are all growing in their all-out race to reach the sun.

To go through all the seed and plant catalogs, buying plants that I know I don't have room for but I'll be able to find a place in the spring. Somehow it'll be easier to find room later. Something will die in the winter, right? Leaving a gaping hole ready to be filled with this great plant, or this one or this one or....

Of course, next year, I'll also be able to finally rip out that euonymus hedge the old owners planted, and put in a huge number of cool things.

I'll finally rip out that amazingly healthy lemon tree which will give me room for at least three new and different trees. Yeah, I'll be able to do it until I actually haul out the saw next spring and see how lovely the lemons look against the new foliage or how the hedge really *does* guide the eye better than the variegated hodge-podge I'd planned to put there all winter and I'll just put the saw back.

Then the seeds and plants will arrive in the mail, the patio will be once again filled to overflowing with pots which I'll happily water until August, when I'll start pining away for the rainy days of winter again. ✨

-Bruce Peters



Drought Tolerant Info

In an attempt to organize a garden in NE Mendocino Co. over the past two years with a very limited water supply, I have been obliged to explore the possibilities of dry gardening or very infrequent watering compared to Bay Area standards. I have compiled a list of drought tolerant plants based in part on my experiences in this garden and would like to propose the following: if those of you with experience and/or interest in dry gardening would be willing to take the time to jot down a list of plants that have worked for you with minimal summer watering together with an indication of their cold hardiness (minimum temperature F. or USDA Zone) and send it on to me, I would be willing to collate the information into a master list and make it available to you. In this way our collective experience in this difficult area might be shared and we can all proceed with less trial and error and more assurance that what we plant has at least a reasonable chance of not only surviving, but prospering.

Richard H. Wagner
3753 17th Street
San Francisco, CA 94114
codger34@juno.com

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 fall? Bring it in and share it with us!

Tropical plants in less than tropical surroundings

Ramingstein, Austria—In the coldest part of Austria, a farmer is turning conventional wisdom on its head by growing a veritable Garden of Eden full of tropical plants in the open on his steep Alpine pastures.

Amid average annual temperatures of a mere 39.5 Fahrenheit, Sepp Holzer grows everything from apricots to eucalyptus, figs to kiwi fruit, peaches to wheat at an altitude of between 3,300 and 4,900 feet.

Once branded a fool, fined and threatened with imprisonment for defying Austrian regulations that dictate what is planted where, he is now feted worldwide for creating the only functioning “permaculture” farm in Europe.

Permaculture, an abbreviation of permanent culture, is the development of agricultural ecosystems which are complete and self-sustaining.

“Once planted, I do absolutely nothing,” Holzer told Reuters. “It really is just nature working for itself—no weeding, no pruning, no watering, no fertilizer, no pesticides.”

His 110 acres of land in the mountainous Lungau region in the province of Salzburg are classed by European Union directives as unfit for agricultural cultivation due to the steep gradient and poor soil.

When Holzer inherited the farm—then 44.5 acres—39 years ago, it was only used for the grazing of the family's cows and sheep. He carved terraces out of the steep inclines—like the ancient Incas and Maya of South and Central America—to stop erosion and trap rainfall.

He rejected the use of pesticides and fertilizers, which he considered poisonous, and the concept of monoculture—the cultivation of just one plant type over an expanse of land—because he believed it sapped the soil of all nutrients. Instead he began growing a host of timber and fruit trees, shrubs and grasses all mixed up together.

“Everyone said I was mad and I had to pay numerous fines because the authorities said that it was illegal to plant such a combination,” Holzer said.

“When I bought this patch of land off a farmer, it was not fit for the cows and sheep grazing on it. People scoffed that I was neglecting my land—but now they come to harvest cherries from June to October. This is the worst type of soil,

which just goes to prove that there is no bad soil, just bad farmers,” he added.

Proof is in eating of pudding

Most of the plants Holzer and his wife Vroni grow at his “Krameterhof” holding are not meant to flourish in Alpine conditions, according to experts.

In winter, the temperature can fall to below minus 22 degrees Fahrenheit and a blanket of snow lingers into May. Snow can even fall in the height of summer. Holzer said he found agricultural textbooks and his own years at agricultural college virtually useless.

“I followed their advice initially, but my trees started dying off. I then realized that I had to eradicate from my memory all that I'd learnt at college,” he said.



Enlightenment came one winter during one of Holzer's routine moonlight strolls, when he noticed that the only apricot tree faring well in the harsh winter conditions was one he had forgotten to cut back according to ministerial regulations.

Unlike the pruned trees whose main lower branches snapped off under the weight of snow, the “neglected” tree's

branches were intact. Their unrestricted length had allowed them to droop with the tips touching the ground for support while the snow slid off, Holzer found. Allowing natural vegetation to grow around the trunk provided further support and nourishment for the tree.

“If people would only realize that if one leads a life in cooperation with nature and not against it, then nobody in the world need die of starvation,” he said.

Let Nature take it's own course

Holzer's philosophy is that nature knows best and needs negligible interference from Man.

“We're born into paradise, but are destroying its foundation, the soil. The soil can look after itself, there's no need for Man to tamper with it.”

Giant stone slabs pepper the landscape and serve as incubators by absorbing the sunlight and giving off warmth. The trees do their part as well in keeping the ground warm. Fallen foliage helps keep frost from reaching the roots.

Tree stumps dot the plantations to regulate irrigation.

Like a sponge they soak up water and later distribute it.

Animals too have a role in the Holzer ecosystem. Scavenging pigs till the soil in place of a tractor, while grass snakes were reintroduced to keep voracious slugs and mice in check.

Holzer is modest about his achievement which has led to projects in more than 40 countries and lectures on "the elimination of poverty in agriculture." He has rejected suggestions that he should have his method of permaculture patented.

"I would consider that as theft from nature. It's not my possession, I got it from nature and have an obligation to pass this knowledge on," the bearded 59-year-old said.

Inspirational, but economically viable?

Holzer says his method of organic farming produces a much higher quality of crops than conventional farming, and at a fraction of the cost and effort.

He says his rare strain of grain contains 12 times the goodness of conventionally grown grain and as a result fetches a price 100 times higher.

His success means that he no longer lives directly off the crops in his sprawling garden, or the rare fish in his Alpine ponds and lakes.

People pay to pick their own fruit from his land, experts visit to study "Holzer Permaculture," and the man himself regularly holds seminars when not in a far-off country such as Colombia solving chronic problems of the soil.

And only one thing has so far stumped the man with green fingers.

"Bananas," he said with a shrug of his burly frame. "They froze. It's no surprise as they need an average temperature of 30 degrees. But I'm still working on it." ✨

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2001 Cal Hort Grant Winners!

- Lakeside Garden Center Display Garden-\$1000 to the Mediterranean Garden Society
- San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden \$1500 for overhead irrigation system.
- Sonoma State University-Kenneth M. Stocking Native Plant Garden Butterfly Garden Project. Plant Labeling Project, \$260.

Horticultural Calendar

September 20

Business in Retrospect—Tried and true and new tools. SF Professional Gardener's Association. 7-9PM, SF City College. (415) 558-8036.

September 29

Markham Regional Arboretum Society Plant Sale, 10:00AM- 4:00PM. 1202 la Vista Avenue, Concord. For directions and plant availability go to www.markhamarboretum.org or call (925) 681-2968.

September 29

Filoli Country Harvest Festival—9:30AM-3:30PM, Admission by reservation; adults \$15, children under 12 \$1. (650) 364-8300 x508. www.filoli.org

September 29

Prepare your garden now for fall planting—Fall is the best time to plant in the Davis area, so that new plants can establish good root systems before next year's heat and drought. 10:00 AM at the Davis Arboretum Terrace home demonstration garden. Free. (530) 752-4880.

October 6-8

Fall Perennial Plant and Bulb Sale benefitting CARES. 7700 Center Parkway, Sacramento. (916) 429-8315.

October 21

Open House at the home of members Dick Hansen & Kristin Yanker-Hansen. Many plants will be showing their fall bloom. Address: 569 Contada Circle, Danville, 94526.

Strybing Arboretum Society

(415) 661-1316 • www.strybing.org

September 8

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

September 20

Trees of Golden Gate Park—Reception and Book signing with Dr. Elizabeth McClintock, 5-7PM at the HCR Library, Free.

September 22

Plant Clinic—Bring your plant questions, ID, disease, pests, gardening practices to the experts! At the Main Gate, 12-3 PM. Free.

September 24-October 29

Groundcovers for the Garden—Certificate course with J. Charmain Giuliani. \$140, \$125 for SAS Members.

October 13

Plant Sale—trees, ferns and Rhododendrons featured from 10 AM-1 PM. ✨

We welcome the following new members to the California Horticultural Society:

Edy Horwood
Steve Morse
John Thompson



Officers

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Don Mahoney

Vice President

Katherine Henwood

Jr. Past President

Tonie Jones

Recording Secretary

Richard Starkeson

Corresponding Secretary

Dr. Frederick W. Coe

Treasurer

Jan Hamby

Secretary

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Executive Council

1999-2001

First Term

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Second Term

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2000-2002

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Second Term

Michael Barclay
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Katherine Henwood

2001-2003

First Term

Diana Ross

Second Term

Jana Olson Drobinsky
Elise Lew
Don Mahoney

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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