

BULLETIN
THE CALIFORNIA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY
San Francisco County Fair Building
Ninth Avenue at Lincoln Way
San Francisco, California 94122

4:00 PM Botanical gardens walk with speaker at Strybing Arboretum.
Parking is available behind the San Francisco Co. Fair Building on 9th Ave.
5:30 PM NO HOST Dinner will be at Park Chow Restaurant, 1249 Ninth Ave; San Francisco.
7:15 PM Announcements, Plant Forum. Meeting will be held at the San Francisco Botanical Garden in the San Francisco County Fair Building at 9th Avenue and Lincoln Way; San Francisco.

***Non-Members \$5.

Monday, April 17, 2006

Co-sponsored with the San Francisco Botanical Garden Society at Strybing Arboretum

“THE SAVAGE GARDEN” Growing Carnivorous Plants”

Presented by Peter D’Amato

Peter is Co-owner of California Carnivores and internationally noted authority and author on carnivorous plants. His nursery, California Carnivores, was started in 1989, and houses the world’s largest collection of insect and animal eating plants in the world, several hundred varieties. He is the author of the *Savage Garden: Cultivating Carnivorous Plants*, which won the American Horticultural Society’s Book Award, and is in its sixth printing. He and his nursery have appeared many times in the media, from numerous HGTV shows to *Martha Stewart Living*, plus newspapers and magazines. The slide - illustrated program includes the great diversity of species and their natural habitats. A display of many specimens will be of special interest.



The **Plant Dawing** each month is an important source of funds for the Grants and Scholarships Program. In April, the drawing will include donations from **Lone Pine Gardens**, courtesy of Ian Price and from **San Francisco Botanical Garden**, courtesy of Dr. Don Mahoney. Our appreciation to **Emerisa Gardens** in Santa Rosa courtesy of Muchtar Salzman and to the **San Francisco Botanical Garden Society**, courtesy of Dr. Don Mahoney for the outstanding selection of plants donated for the March meeting.

Monday, May 15, 2006

ANNUAL MEETING, POTLUCK DINNER, ANNUAL AWARDS, PROGRAM

Program Presented by Dr. Glenn Keator, noted botanist and writer

Recipient, of the 2006 Annual Award.

6:30 P.M. Socializing & Sale of Special Plants

7 P.M. Potluck followed by Program

Silent Auction of rare plants. Call Elsie Mueller at [800-884-0009] for reservations. Fee is \$5 per person to cover event costs. Your dinner ticket & name tags will be held for you at the door. Bring your favorite dish [enough to serve 8]; your table setting & own silverware; and any plants for sale.

Monday, June 19, 2006

Co-Sponsored with San Francisco Botanical Garden Society at Strybing Arboretum

“Mosaic designs for enhancement of gardens”

Presented by Jeffrey Bale. A presentation of the finest stonework that he has encountered during his travels in Asia, Central and South America, and the work it has inspired him to build for gardens in the western United States. Specializing in pebble mosaic and artistic stone construction, he has designed and built several gardens with a strong emphasis on the structural component, treating it as a sacred art form. The talk will include images ranging from Vastu puranic temple design in India and Cambodia, Inca stonework, Portuguese and Spanish mosaic, and visionary works by self-trained artists in various countries, in addition to Jeffrey’s own work and processes he uses for construction of walls, patios, paths, steps and fountains.

President's Letter

Bruce Peters

What a great spring we had! Our booth at The San Francisco Flower and Garden Show was, as always, a great success. Many of the volunteers noted that the new placement of the booth near one of the presentation stages brought in fewer, but more interested, people. Those who stopped by were often making copious notes about the plants and asking a lot of questions... and since one of our goals as a society is to help disseminate horticultural information, that's a very good thing! Remember that we have photos of (very close to) all the plants on our website, along with the donating nursery and cultural info.

As I write this the plant sale has not yet happened, but I'm sure it was a resounding success and that it will be back again next year, bigger and better! However, I can't stress enough that it's a huge endeavor requiring a large number of volunteers to help out in many ways, some large and some small but all vital. You can always send an email, even today, to plantsale@calhortsociety.org to offer your services for next year, be it driving around to pick up donated plants one morning or baking a batch of cookies.

OK, I need to get something off my chest. I know that water is a good thing, especially here in California where we have periodic droughts but I'm really sick of the rain. Makes it hard to work outside, and when I do, I feel like I'm just compacting the soil and doing more damage than good. Thanks for letting me vent, now back to the President's Letter.

I'm excited to report that we have not one, but TWO fantastic field trips coming up in the month of May. The first is a big one, to North Carolina led by Past President Krsitin Yanker-Hansen and which promises to be on par with all her other trips...unforgettable. I think there **might** still be space left, so if you're interested call Kristin at (925) 831-9499. We have the flyer on the website, too.

Next we have a one day self-guided trip to Santa Cruz to see some extraordinary gardens, not often on the garden tour circuit. Look below for all the details.

Thanks, everyone for all the hard work you're doing to keep Cal Hort flourishing!



Save the Date- Field Trip on May 27!!!

Cal Hort is sponsoring a field trip to visit wonderful private gardens and nurseries in the Santa Cruz area on May 27. We will provide the itinerary. You just have to provide transportation and lunch for yourself and hopefully a friend or two. There is a \$10 suggested donation. If you are interested, please send us your e mail address and phone number (street address if you don't have e mail). We will be sending out the final itinerary shortly before the trip. Send your contact information to SantaCruzFieldTrip@calhortsociety.org.

The first garden visit will probably start around 9 AM, so you can plan your drive to Santa Cruz accordingly. We will provide time for a lunch break during the day. We will be visiting some amazing and exotic private gardens and specialty nurseries, so please join us and prepare to be inspired!



Some Cal Hort Committees

Following is a list of committees that our Society can use help in. Although some are fairly well staffed, we can always use a little extra help! After looking them over for something you're interested in, contact our fearless president, Bruce, via email (bruce@calhortsociety.org) or phone (415 824-1833) and we'll get you on your way! This is a great way to meet and learn from other Cal Hort members.

Advertising – Currently vacant. We'd really love to get some help here in both selling and organizing advertising.

Awards – The Awards committee chooses our Annual Awards, including garden awards, cultural awards etc. See the article in this issue for a full list.

Bulletin – We can always use help in procuring articles and

other interesting tidbits for the *Bulletin*, and wouldn't balk at accepting any layout help, as well!

Field Trip/Open Gardens – This committee organizes our annual local field trips as well as the open garden tours.

Flower and Garden Show – Volunteers seek out and procure new and interesting plants for our exhibit at the Annual Flower and Garden Show at the Cow Palace.

Grants and Scholarships – Mostly, this committee goes through the applications for grants and scholarships and makes their recommendations to the council.

Nominating – Composed of 2 board members and one general member, this committee, formed anew each July, finds interested members to serve on our Council.

Plant Forum – Volunteers here help in writing up each month's submissions and sending them to the *Bulletin* editor.

Program – Coming up with new and exciting ideas for our monthly speakers and then following through to get those speakers is the task our Program committee does so well.

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February Plant Forum

by Don Mahoney

1. **Abutilon pictum 'Thompsonii'**

MALVACEAE

Kristin Yanker Hansen, Danville

This is a must for collectors of variegated plants as this flowering maple cultivar has showy, creamy-yellow variegation which contrasts with its bright orange flowers. It can get 12 feet tall but has a narrow arching form. Abutilons are quite drought tolerant in shade, but need supplemental water in a more sunny location.

2. **Calochortus amabilis**

LILIACEAE

Don Mahoney, Richmond

This delicate native bulb is called, appropriately, the golden fairy lantern. It occurs abundantly in open woodlands in California's north coast ranges. It needs well drained soil and part shade. As with most native bulbs, protection from snails is a must as is a dry, summer dormancy.

3. **Cunonia capensis**

CUNONIACEAE

David Feix, Berkeley

This South African tree is somewhat new to California. It is worthy of cultivation as a specimen because of its elegant foliage, which is bronzy-red when young, and then matures to a glossy green. It has showy spikes of white flowers and can reach 30 feet or more. It is drought tolerant.

4. **Flower arrangements**

David Feix, Berkeley

Again, David Feix displayed beautiful cut flowers to illustrate what is in bloom in the winter in Berkeley.

Bulbine frutescens, South Africa

Gnidia polystrachya, South Africa

Greyia sutherlandii, South Africa

Leucadendron discolor, 'Cloud bank jenny', South Africa

Leucospermum, 'Tango', South Africa

Sedum palmeri, Mexico

Sedum rubrotinctum, Mexico

5. **Heucherella hybrid 'Sunspot'**

SAXIFRAGACEAE

Kathy Echols, Martinez

This is one of several newer inter generic hybrids between Heuchera and Tiarella, best grown in a shady woodland or rock garden. The plants are dainty and have a bright yellow leaf with reddish center. The flowers are pink, but the plant does not need to be in bloom to be showy, as the leaves are so colorful.

6. **Lachenalia pustulata**

LILIACEAE

Don Mahoney, Richmond

Somewhat resembling a small lily of the valley, this South African bulb has small bell-like flowers in pastel shades of blue. The leaves have bumps on them, hence the name. They are summer dormant and must be kept dry for 6 months for them to resprout. They need protection from snails and slugs, but otherwise are easy to grow. Best grown as a container plant.



Serruria florida

7. **Primula hybrid 'blue bicolor'**

PRIMULACEAE

Kathy Echols, Martinez

We are lucky to have an abundance of bedding primroses available. Even though they are much used commercially, their bright color is always welcome. In much of the country they are sought after, but hard to grow. Here they are easy. This new deep strain of blue flowers with white markings are very lovely. Each of the dozen plants shown had slightly different markings. This strain also has some resistance to attacks by snails, a problem with other blue strains.

8. **Serruria florida**

PROTEACEAE

David Grey, San Francisco

The blushing bride is one of about 50 members of this genus from South Africa. It has large translucent white bracts blushed pink and was once thought to be extinct but was re-discovered after fire encouraged dormant seeds to sprout. It is considered difficult to cultivate, as unlike most protea family members, it wants a shallow, cool, yet sunny exposure. Also like other proteas, it requires well-drained acidic mineral-poor soils.

9. **Tulbagia alliacea**

LILIACEAE

Don Mahoney, San Francisco Botanical Garden

The flower on this 10" tall garlic relative are rather small with 4mm green petals with chocolate-colored stamens. Its value lies in its intense, sweet fragrance which only occurs in the evening and night time. A few small flowers perfume an entire room. It is easy to grow but unlike society garlic, this tulbagia is summer dormant. It is native to South Africa.

10. **Zigadenum fremontii**

LILIACEAE

Don Mahoney, Richmond

In keeping with the native theme of the lecture, this

San Francisco native bulb was displayed. Star-shaped white flowers an inch across are clustered on top of 6" stems. This is a grassland species and is a dwarf form which used to be called variety minor. It is easy to grow, requires summer dormancy and protection from snails and slugs. To animals, it is poisonous.



Telopea speciosissima

March 2006 Plant Forum by Don Mahoney

1. *Aechmea ornata* *nationalis*

BROMELIACEAE

David Feix, Berkeley

This is a hardy bromeliad from southeast Brazil that looks remarkably like a yellow and green variegated agave. At close inspection, it has a very un-agave central flower spike. David said this specimen took 10 years to bloom. It takes sun or shade and survives down to 25 degrees.

2. *Cotyledon macantha*

CRASSULACEAE

David Feix, Berkeley

This jade plant relative is a low shrub with large 3-inch by 6-inch leaves that are bright green with red edges. While it thrives outdoors, too much winter wet, like this year, can cause it to rot, so it is best grown as a container plant that can be moved under cover during wet and cold periods. It is a winter bloomer with wonderful 1-inch red bell-shaped flowers hanging from 6-inch stems.

3. *Telopea speciosissima*

PROTEACEAE

David Feix, Berkeley

Telopea means "to be seen at a great distance", and refers to the brilliant coral-red flowers that are 4 inches across. An Australian lanky shrub to 10 feet tall, it needs protea growing conditions, which means well-drained acidic soil and minimal phosphate fertilizers. It is well worth extra care because of the great beauty of its flower. It needs a sunny location and a little supplemental summer water.

4. *Euphorbia tirucalli* 'sticks on fire'

EUPHORBIACEAE

David Feix, Berkeley

Shown in a container with other succulents, this plant has pencil-like stems that can be yellow to pink to bright orange. It can get fairly large, 5 or 6 feet, as a house plant, but is borderline hardy outdoors, unlike the normal green species which can survive as a large shrub outdoors in a protected frost-free site. The small leaves fall off very quickly and photosynthesis occurs in the pencil-like stems. Very drought tolerant.

5. *Iris burcharica*

IRIDACEAE

Don Mahoney, Richmond

When not in bloom, this looks like a group of corn seedlings. The yellow and white iris flowers give away its true identity. It is one of the Juno group of irises that require a dry summer dormant period and a frost-free winter growing period. It gets about a foot tall and is a great container plant. Interestingly, the species was introduced to cultivation from northern Afghanistan by our speaker (Dr. Bob Gibbons) in the early 1970's.

6. *Nepenthes* 'Judith Finn'

NEPENTHACEAE

Kristin Yanker-Hansen, Danville

Nepenthes are insectivorous plants that get added nutrients from digesting insects that are trapped in pitchers that develop at the ends of the leaves. These pitchers look like a curved tobacco pipe and are very attractive in their own right. This plant had a fragrant flower spike composed of many small brownish flowers. This is a hybrid of the tropical group and is a houseplant only. Kristin grew this one on her bedroom window sill so the flower spike is somewhat unusual as it developed with lower humidity.



Iris burcharica

Oscularia deltoides

AIZOACEAE (Ice Plants)

One of my planting beds is along the street in front of our house, and one of the workhorse groundcovers in this sunny, dry bed is *Oscularia deltoides*. Despite being stepped on, hit by cars, and used as a litter box by neighboring cats, this plant always looks great. The leaves are a wonderful icy-blue, and are shaped in a way that is hard to describe, but resembling a jellybean designed by a witch. The stems are light cranberry in color, and the contrast between them and the leaves is great. In the spring, it is covered with little pink daisy-like flowers.



Although one of its common names is 'ice plant', don't be afraid of this well-mannered succulent. It won't take over your garden. In fact, it is a rather well behaved ground cover. Give it some good sun, good drainage, and it is good to go with little fussing. Eventually it can spread to 2-3 feet wide, but usually not more than 8 inches high. Like most succulents, it grows easily from cuttings. In fact, whenever mine gets hit by a parking car, I simply pick up the pieces and stick them into the soil somewhere else in the bed. With a little bit of extra watering, they usually root and grow. *Oscularia* does equally well in pots, and trails nicely from a container.



Hailing from South Africa, this plant's name means a group of little mouths (*osculum*- small mouth). This might refer to the appearance of the seedpods, or even the toothed edges of the leaves. In any event, this is one more mouth that I am happy to feed.

You can help the *Bulletin*!

As I write this, it's raining and dreary outside. An awful time to be a gardener...but a great time to be snug inside behind a warm computer monitor and working on the next Cal Hort *Bulletin*. Don't fret, however! You could be in my position with just a simple phone call or email!

The current *Bulletin* Editor needs to divest himself of the majority of *Bulletin* related duties by year-end and would be tickled pink to help you take it on. You'll need some type of page layout program and... well, I guess and a desire to put out a monthly newsletter! It's basically just taking articles and images from members and fitting them into our format. If you'd like to re-design it, we're open to that, too!

Email the editor@calhortsociety.org for more info.



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The Flora of Greece

Presented by Bob Gibbons, Ph.D.

An exceptional slide tour through the varied botanical landscapes of Greece took place at the March 20, 2006, meeting of the California Horticultural Society, held at the San Francisco County Fair Building in Golden Gate Park. Dr. Bob Gibbons, author of 30 books on plants, wildlife, photography and travel, presented glimpses of the species-rich Mediterranean country at the botanical crossroads of Europe, Asia and Africa. Many in the group appreciated both his deep knowledge of plants and his endearing humor.

For a resident of a mediterranean-climate region like California, viewing the vegetated landscapes of another mediterranean-climate zone was a dreamlike experience. The springtime colors, textures and light of Greece – even the species themselves – look familiar, but the vision is displaced, even alien, set amid ancient stone architecture, towering limestone pinnacles, and warm, aquamarine seas. A place of ancient civilization and modern development with a traditional pastoral life persisting, Greece's human relationship to its land bears little comparison to California's. One example: With wildflowers adapted to millennia of pastoral management, the fields of Greece bloom profusely in spring after grazing by domesticated animals. California's floweriest fields are mostly those protected from domestic grazing, as they are adapted to wild herbivores like elk, deer and antelope. (Fire management, a favorite practice of the first Californians, is another story, of course.)

With the help of several map slides, Dr. Gibbons described the varied regions of Greece, from nearly Alpine mountains extending deeply south from the northern border, to semi-arid Aegean islands hard by the coast of Anatolian Turkey. Rocks rare in California abound in Greece, especially limestone. Nonetheless, serpentine outcrops and volcanic beds can be found in both. Another significant difference in Greek geography is the Mediterranean Sea, a virtual salt lake with hardly any tidal action and warmer summer temperatures than our Pacific Ocean, and thus lacking the intertidal zones characteristic of California.

As in so many areas of seasonal rainfall, sun aspect, substrates and hydrology determine microclimates and thus ecotypes. Dr. Gibbons showed the unique species living in deep, shaded canyons, such as endemic-rich Crete's Samaria Gorge, and the widespread garrigue-like vegetation prevailing on the surrounding exposed lands. He treated the plant-obsessed crowd to the sight of dozens of beautiful aestivating snails clinging to the walls of a cool canyon, waiting out the heat and drought until another lush winter begins and they could venture out to rasp their way through the beautiful Cretan plants.

Ah, the *plants*. Among them, orchids, or mostly, *Orchis*, and *Orphrys* species, took up the rear of the presentation. In detail-

ing the technical differences among species (200-plus in the country), Dr. Gibbons delighted the eye, attempted to scandalize the horticultural audience with slides of the "man orchid," and generated questions from the audience about cultivating these beauties – as few of our summer-drought-adapted California orchids can compete with the Greeks on display. In response, our speaker revealed that his expertise was in natural history, not horticulture. But audience members responded that, yes, some specialists in North America offer Mediterranean terrestrial orchids for sale.

Other wildflower delights shown included *Linum arboreum* (a woody, butter-yellow flax), an astoundingly hairy (white against wine-dark brown) *Aristolochia*, the ribbon-petaled bulb, *Asphodeline lutea*, *Tulipa spp.* from Rhodes and Crete, *Cyclamen spp.*, cultivated *Crocus sativus* (saffron), Rhodes's white *Paeonia rhodense*, diverse *Campanula*, including a pinnate-leaved species, the sunny yellow member of the snapdragon family, *Parentucellia viscosa*, the pale-blue cushion plant from the Corinth Canal, *Trachelium asperuloides*, *Verbascum*, the monstrous *Dracunculus vulgaris*, and *Anemone spp.*

Slides of deciduous trees in fall foliage drew gasps – *Carpinus*, *Acer campestre*, *Quercus spp.* and *A. opalus* among them. *Platanus orientalis* grows in river bottoms, while ancient *Cupressus sempervirens* perched on dry mountains rival bristlecones in age. Newly recategorized *Arctostaphylos alpina* confers a touch of California on Greece's high peaks, while *Pinus spp.* and *Abies spp.* clothe the various Mount Olympuses of the country. These were but a few of the lovely images seen of an ancient, picturesque, and naturally diverse country.

The personable, knowledgeable guide, magnificent photography, and alluring subject matter converged for a splendid presentation overall.



Orchis italica - naked man orchid

Horticultural Calendar

April 19

Monthly Slideshow and Potluck—Walter Teague presents 'Plant Hunting in the Southern Andes.' Please bring a dish to serve eight people. 7 PM at the County Fair Building, 9th Ave. at Lincoln Way, S.F. Free. (415) 753-7090.

April 20

The Ecological Footprint—Paul Wermer, PhD 7-9 PM, SF City College Env. Hort. Dept. 50 Phelan Ave. SFPGA. (415) 558-8036

April 22

Plant Sale—Merritt College's awesome Spring sale held on the Horticulture Dept. grounds, 12500 Campus Drive, Oakland. Time TBA. www.merrittlandhort.com or (510) 531-4911

April 22

Propagation Workshop—With Nursery Manager Meenal Harankhedkar. 10 AM at Quarryhill Botanic Garden in Sonoma Valley, fee is \$25. (707) 996-3802 or email info@quarryhillbg.org.

April 22

Plant Sale—Find natives and other mediterranean plants at the UC Santa Cruz Arboretum Sale, held in the Eucalyptus Grove, noon - 4 PM. (831) 427-2998, or visit www2.ucsc.edu/arboretum.

April 22 & 23

Rhododendron Show and Sale—Hosted by the Cal. Chapter of the Amer. Rhododendron Society at the Lakeside Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Ave, Oakland. Starts both days at 10 AM. Info at www.calchapterars.org or calchapterars@hotmail.com

April 29

Bamboo Festival, Sale and Auction—Held by the No. Cal. Chapter of the American Bamboo Society. 10 AM - 1 PM at the County Fair Building, 9th Ave. at Lincoln Way, S.F. www.americanbamboo.org

April 30

Secret Gardens of the East Bay—Park Day School. 9 AM-5 PM, Info and Tickets, (510) 653-0317 x 103. www.SecretGardenTour.org

May 7

Sunday Garden Market—Season re-opening, find neat plants for sale and free garden talks 10 AM - 2 PM at the Ferry Building SF. www.cuesa.org

SF Botanical Garden Society

(415) 661-1316 • www.sfbotanicalgarden.org

April 8

Palm Saturday—A day with expert David Leaser, includes a tour, sale and auction of palms. 10 AM - 3 PM, members free, public \$5.

April 9

Camelia Day—Celebrate the first bloom of the new Camelia collection 2 - 5 PM. Free

April 22

Fabulous Containers—All about growing plants in pots, with Charmain Guiliani. 10 AM - 3 PM, members \$25, non-members \$35 plus a materials fee.

Regional Parks Botanic Garden (510) 841-8732 • www.nativeplants.org

April 15

Plant Sale—Get your favorite CA natives at the Spring Sale. 10 AM - 3 PM, bring a box.

April 29

Plant Portraits and Garden Images—Improve your photo skills with Bob Case. 9:30 AM - 4:30 PM, members \$70, non-members \$75.

May 6 & 13

Survey of Native Bulbs—Glenn Keator discusses Calochortus, Erythronium, and Fritillaria. 10 AM - 3 PM, members \$80, non-members \$95.

U.C. Botanical Garden At Berkeley (510) 643-2755 • www.botanicalgarden.berkeley.edu

April 23

Create a Perennial Border Using CA Native Plants—A workshop with Nathan Smith. 10:30 AM - noon, members \$20, non-members \$25.

April 29

Plant Sale—Featuring plants propagated from the Garden. 9 AM - 2 PM.

May 7

Children's Container Garden—A family workshop focusing on succulents, 2 - 3:30 PM. Fee for one child and parent-members \$14, non-members \$18.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED for Bringing Back the Natives garden tour, Sunday May 7, 2006. 60 Alameda dn Contra Costa County gardens will be showcased. Registration www.Bringing-BackTheNatives.net. Info: email Kathy@KathyKramerConsulting.net or (510) 236-9558 from 9 AM TO 9 PM.

*Send submissions to calendar@calhortsociety.org
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.*

Annual Dinner coupon inside!

Earn CEU Credits

We now offer Continuing Education Units for the California Certified Nursery Professionals—a program of the California Association of Nurseries & Garden Centers. Attendance at our monthly lectures and plant Forum will qualify you for one CEU. Sign in at the registration desk *following* the program.



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Membership year begins January 1 and includes a full subscription to *Pacific Horticulture*. Dues are \$40 individual, \$50 joint household, \$25 Student (with proof of enrollment). To join, or for full range of membership levels, please visit our website at www.calhortsociety.org or call (800) 884-0009.



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