



Bulletin
of the
California Horticultural Society

April 2007

MEETINGS

4:00 PM Botanical gardens walk with speaker at Strybing Arboretum.
Parking is available behind the San Francisco Co, Fair Building on 9th Ave.
5:30PM 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.

***Members free. Non-members – A donation of \$5 is requested.

Monday, April 16, 2007

“The New Impatiens”

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

The new and exciting species that are emerging from the Old World.

With cool summers and warm winters, Impatiens are perfect plants for Bay Area gardens. **Derick Pitman** will be showing slides of some of the nearly 170 species from his collection. He works with the San Francisco Botanical Gardens and is introducing many new species of Impatiens into cultivation. He is Founder of the International Impatiens Society and has created the educational website mrimpatiens.com. He has also authored articles on Impatiens for Pacific Horticulture as well as lecturing on his passion.

The **Plant Drawing** each month is an important source of funds for the Grants and Scholarships Program. In **April** the drawing will include donations from **Annie's Annuals**, courtesy of **Annie Hayes** and to the **San Francisco Botanical Garden Society**, courtesy of **Dr. Don Mahoney**. Our appreciation to the **UC Botanical Garden**, courtesy of **Anthony Garza** and to the **San Francisco Botanical Garden**, courtesy of **Dr. Don Mahoney** for the outstanding selection of plants donated for the March meeting.

SAVE THIS DATE

Monday, May 21, 2007

**ANNUAL MEEETING, POTLUCK DINNER, ANNUAL AWARDS, PROGRAM
MADAGASCAR'S UNIQUE SUCCULENT FLORA**

PRESENTED BY Inge Hoffmann, Internationally recognized horticulturist.

RECIPIENT OF THE 2007 AWARD for her contributions to the knowledge, discovery and introduction of palms. She has been a hub for palms and succulents not only in the Bay Area but also worldwide. Through her seed distribution business, she has contributed to the cultivation of hundreds of new palm species, and the discovery of many. Inge has also authored many articles for various cactus and succulent journals.

SILENT AUCTION OF RARE PLANTS.

CALL ELSIE MUELLER AT [800-884-0009] for reservations.

Fee is \$5 per person to cover event costs. Advance reservations must be made no later than Friday, May 18th. 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; plants for sale. The Society will provide ham and turkey.

I'm sure you are all out playing in your gardens or visiting other gardens, nurseries, plant sales or seeking the miracles of Mother Nature in her wildflower displays. What a great time of year!!! The SF Flower and Garden Show just passed and I want to thank everyone who manned the booth and broke down the booth after the show. I would especially like to thank Kristin Yanker-Hansen for her knack for getting the coolest plants on the block and Bruce Peters for his amazing energy in putting together the plant list, taking pictures of all the plants and making such a great resource on our website. Take a look, it is really is class act. One of the highlights of the exhibit was the member's plant creations from the "Make your own Plant Contest." I think everyone who manned the booth enjoyed seeing people's reactions and all the visitors enjoyed a little "gotchya!" when they were trying to figure out, "what type of plant is that?"

As I write this, next weekend is the Plant Sale and Gala. Leah Thompson and her committee (Ann DeRosa, Diana Ross and Celena Hoskins) are ready to rock and roll with all the shoppers next weekend and Kristin Yanker-Hansen is sure to have a fabulous spread, as always for the Gala. We are hoping

for a larger net gain with the experience we gained last year with the new format and venue. At the April meeting we will give you a report of how we all did.

I found out at the March board meeting that Ted Kipping has a fabulous field trip in the planning stages to Mount Eddy, which has large outcroppings of serpentine soils. Serpentine brings with it all sorts of specialty plants that can't compete with the big bullies on regular soils, so that should be a treat.

Our Annual awards dinner pot-luck program, which is the May meeting, is being planned by our past president, Bruce Peters. He is calm and collected and has everything under control. Be sure you send Elsie Mueller your RSVP and \$5.00 contribution to cover costs. The program should be great. I've never been to one of these before am really looking forward to it. I'm bringing ham.

See you all on the 16th for an informative talk on *Impatiens* this month.

MAKE YOUR OWN PLANT CONTEST

At the March meeting, some extremely creative plant specimens showed up. All that attended the meeting were the first to see these specialty plants unveiled; what a delight! Everyone voted for their favorite plant and the votes were all within 2 or 3 of each other.

The winner was the Dwarf Chinese Scissor Pine, *Chamaenippon sinensis nana*. This unusual woody perennial is highly drought resistant and does well in full sun to deep shade. It has a long blooming season with large multicolored blossoms that look like colorful children's scissors, very striking. This rare ornamental evergreen is virtually "no care." I have the inside scoop that Christie Hastings glued each one of those "needles" on the pine individually. Congratulations, Christie, for a creative and clever plant.

One plant that really struck people's interest at the New Plant Picks display was Nancy Jan's Donut Plant, pictured at right. *Cakus delectae* 'KCNanJans Variegated' is easy to grow, the crunchy seeds float in milk and it's been rumoured that they can help lower one's cholesterol. In fact, I think someone ate all the seeds that were with the plant at the garden show.

Kathy Till's "must have" California native is a very colorful plant that grows well indoors or it can be taken outside to enjoy in the summer months. The California Cocktail Umbrella Plant, *Umbrellica californica* 'strawmosa' is in the COCKTAILACEAE; the only plant in that family. It grows best around the bar area of the house and it prefers ice rather than water.

The Aluminum Screen Plant, *Screenus aluminus*, was a major source of screen for doors and windows before man-made screen took its place. Ellen Frank says that this is not a



new plant, but a recently rediscovered plant. Cave men used to unravel the leaves of the plant and sew them together for the openings of their caves. This plant extracts aluminum from the soil. It doesn't need light because it captures energy from electro-magnetic fields.

Thank you to the four that gave us all a little chuckle and participated in the "Make your own Plant Contest". Start thinking of ideas for next year's contest.



Arisaema sikokianum & *Macadamia integrifolia*

Arisaema sikokianum

ARACEAE

Barbara and John Hopper, Kentwood

This jack-in-the-pulpit native to Japan is one of the easier to grow, both in the garden or in a container in a protected house. The very blunt shaped white spadix and the three to five parted leaves are characteristic. The spathe is reddish brown with pale stripes running vertically. It needs shade to do well and is best planted in a loose leafy soil. It goes dormant in late summer and blooms very early in the spring.

Macadamia integrifolia

PROTEACEAE

Ann Derosa, El Cerrito

This is one of the best kept secrets of the Bay Area—your own fresh macadamia nuts. Yes they do grow here as evidenced by this flowering branch displayed from a 20 foot tree in the east bay. It is an attractive narrow leaved tree with racemes of pendulous very fragrant flowers in the spring. In the fall through early winter these flowers produce the macadamia nuts of commerce if the cultural requirements of the plant are met. These are foremost full sun, warm summer temperatures, and well drained somewhat acid soil that gets a little extra summer water. Ann has shared the fruit from this tree in the past and they are really delicious.

VIBRANT TECHNICOLOR!

These newsletter photos might be able to convey what a plant looks like, but they pale in comparison to the sharp and delicious full color images available on our website!

Click on the “Bulletin Online” section and download the latest PDF of our newsletter. Clicking on the images in the PDF will also often bring you to a larger version of the photos!

You can even download any issue from 2000 on. How much? All for free, of course! Boy, Cal Hort sure is great and rife with plant info opportunities.

Cycads – Living Fossils

Presented by Maurice Levin, owner, Jurassic Gardens, Los Angeles
Monday, March 19, 2007
San Francisco County Fair Building

Rarely has the connection between horticulture and preserving endangered species been made clearer than during Maurice Levin's March presentation on cycads. Brandishing the motto, "preservation through propagation," Maurice discussed his mission of growing rare cycad species from seed and selling the resulting plants in large numbers so as to reduce collection pressure on wild populations and perpetuate these ancient gymnosperms for future generations.

Habitat protection is the key to the preservation of the vast majority of endangered plant (and animal) species. Horticulture plays only a minor role in most cases, aside from generating awareness for the need to preserve wildlands.

Cycads present a slightly different case. With the number of individuals of some species in habitat approaching zero, cycads are among the rarest of horticulturally desirable plants. Habitat preservation is just as important for cycads as for other plants, but perpetuating species in cultivation also becomes a valuable exercise. What's more, giving gardeners and collectors access to rare species at lower cost reduces the fetish for ancient specimens that drives the cycad-poaching underground. Maurice is creating a new, legal market to supersede the high-stakes criminal trade.

Public collections such as that of Fairchild Tropical Botanical Garden, in Miami, have suffered the depredations of these contract plant thieves. Such thieves also make treks to remove ancient plants from habitat, at even-greater cost to the survival of the species.

With the number of individuals of some species in habitat approaching zero, cycads are among the rarest of horticulturally desirable plants.

Maurice's program gave Cal Hort members a peek at his growing operation in the San Fernando Valley of Los Angeles. Among the messages he conveyed to growers was to provide cycads with excellent drainage. He demonstrated the mounding techniques he uses even in the sandy soil of his nursery to ensure his plants' roots never stay wet. The axiom is that if you're growing callas and cycads together, one plant will be unhappy – either the calla will be too dry or the cycad too wet.



Planting of *Lepidozamia peroffskyana* showing the properly covered base

On his afternoon walk through the San Francisco Botanical Garden's cycad collection, he also demonstrated how important it is to mulch cycads and cover their young caudices halfway with soil. In his slide presentation that evening he showed the differential impact of the January freeze on plants whose caudices had been covered properly versus those whose caudices remained exposed: plants with a cozily covered caudex had less freeze damage visible on the foliage. As caudices develop vertically above ground, they do not need to be reburied, but the ball-shaped caudices of young and non-trunking plants require attention.

Maurice's cultivation advice was otherwise rather straightforward, if sometimes surprising. Cycads love nitrogen. By contrast with flowering plants, nitrogen even encourages the development of reproductive organs – cones. He fertilizes cycads three times a year (March, June and September) with a palm formula (3-1-3), plus the addition of a lawn fertilizer in spring.

Visitors to the lecture encountered a diverse array of very rare species appropriate for Bay Area gardens laid out on tables at the back of the auditorium. At the conclusion of Maurice's lecture, he sold plants and conducted a reverse auction. The advantage of bidding in a new market such as the Bay Area was apparent – plants sold for astoundingly low prices. He generously donated plants to the San Francisco Botanical Garden and a portion of his sales to Cal Hort.

HORTICULTURAL CALENDAR

April 7

Spring Native Plant Sale—Many species of native plants, seeds and bulbs suitable for California gardens. Hidden Villa Ranch, CNPS Nursery, 26870 Moody Rd, Los Altos Hills. 10 AM– 3 PM, for more info visit www.cnps-scv.org.

April 14-15

The 35th Annual Wildflower Show—The premier botanical and horticultural event of the South Bay and Peninsula will showcase over 400 species of wildflowers and native plants. 10 AM– 4 PM, free. For more info visit www.cnps-scv.org or call (650) 941-1068.

April 28-29

Theodore Payne Fourth Annual Native Plant Garden Tour—Visit some of the most beautiful Los Angeles-area gardens each with at least 50% California native plants. 10 AM– 4 PM, \$20 per person. For more info or to register visit www.theodorepayne.org/Tour/tour.html or call (818) 768-1802.

April 29

Fourth Annual Bay-Friendly Garden Tour—Visit a wide assortment of over 40 public and private gardens in Alameda County on this self-guided tour. 10 AM– 4 PM, free. Registration required at www.BayFriendly.org.

April 29

Going Native Garden Tour—A variety of native plant home gardens in the South Bay and Peninsula will be open to the public. 10 AM– 4 PM, free. Registration required at www.GoingNativeGardenTour.org.

THE GARDENS AT HEATHER FARM
(925) 947-1678 • www.gardenshf.org

April 3

Home Irrigation Workshop—Learn to design and install your own professional system, step by step instruction with demonstration. John Piper leads this workshop. 7:00 PM–9 PM, members \$15, non-members \$20.

SF BOTANICAL GARDEN SOCIETY
(415) 661-1316 • www.sfbotanicalgarden.org

April 3

How to Make and Use Biodiesel—An in-depth hands-on class with Jennifer Radtke. 9 AM–5 PM, members/non-members \$120.

April 5

Native Succulents—Paul Heiple will speak about native succulents for local gardens, placing special emphasis on dudleyas. 7:30 PM. Cal Hort and SFBGS members free, non-members \$5.00.

April 20-22

Container Plantings Show—Submissions judged on artistic merit, environmental sensitivity, and original use of materials. At the Demonstration Garden. Cal Hort and SFBGS members free, non-members \$5.00.

U.C. SANTA CRUZ ARBORETUM
(831) 427-2998 • www2.ucsc.edu/arboretum

April 1

The Fynbos Biome—The fynbos biome of the Cape Floral Kingdom will be presented in a talk by UCD researcher Kerrie Reid. She will focus on human impacts with current uses and conservation efforts. 1:30 PM, members \$10, non-members \$15.

April 21

Spring Plant Sale—Sale held in the Eucalyptus Grove, Noon–4 PM

UC DAVIS ARBORETUM
(530)752-4880 • <http://arboretum.ucdavis.edu>

April 7 & 21

Spring Plant Sale—Hundreds of varieties of uncommon plants for Mediterranean-climate gardens. 9 AM–1 PM, Arboretum Nursery at Orchard Park.

April 8

Native Garden Tour—See native plants in bloom and learn about gardening with them in the Central Valley. 2 PM, Buehler Alumni & Visitors Center. Free.

April 21

Tour: Spring Care for Flowering Roses—A workshop on how to get your roses to produce magnificent blooms. 11 AM, meet at the Gazebo. Free.

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.

Helleborus x hybrids

RANUNCULACEAE Family

Many gardeners list the Hellebore hybrids among their favorite perennials. They are generally low maintenance, produce beautiful flowers in the middle of winter, and provide interesting deep green foliage as an understory for woody shrubs and trees. Simply provide them with slightly alkaline, well-drained soil; mild shade from harsh afternoon sun; and a reasonable amount of water, and they will usually be happy. While many of the species Hellebores are tricky to grow, the hybrids adapt to most garden settings. I've even seen them growing in San Francisco's famous heavy clay. Once established, they usually can get by with minimal summer water. Like many plants grown in California, they are usually killed by too much, rather than too little, water. Hellebores have become so popular in recent years that the most recent issue of *Pacific Horticulture* devoted four articles to these great plants.

Hellebores contain toxic alkaloids that have been used both as poison and as medical treatments for various conditions, including delirium and stupefaction (like the kind I get at the beginning of every Cal Hort plant sale...). In fact, a long time ago, the daughters of the King of Argos were driven mad by a curse placed upon them. Responding to the king's pleas, the seer Dionysus cured the girls with hellebore. The same alkaloids that worked magic on the girls makes hellebores unattractive to deer, which is always magic in the eyes of California gardeners. If you want to be viewed as a wise seer in the eyes of your gardening friends, consider one of the hellebore hybrids for a shady spot in your garden.

*Double Hellebore hybrid**Variegated Helleborus orientalis*

Help to create a new *Bulletin*!



The current *Bulletin* Editor needs again to divest himself of the majority of *Bulletin* related duties as soon as possible and would be tickled pink to help you take it on. You'll need some type of page layout program and a desire to put out a monthly newsletter (maybe an heretofore unknown desire?). 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.

Thanks!

YOUR EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

The start of each new year bring a slight change-over in the Council as new members come in to take the place of members whose Council terms have elapsed. We thought it would be nice for you to get an idea of who the people are filling those spots. Note that we're not all garden professionals or career gardeners, but all people who care about our Society and are looking to guide it into the future in the best possible manner.

Don Gerimonte

I was born in Spokane, lived in the Spokane Valley and spent far too many years tolerating the Russian winters before finding San Francisco. In my early years, the Spokane Valley was noted as a garden spot, and this is where my interest in gardening developed.

The wanderlust finally took over my life and San Francisco, in the foggy Richmond district, became the place where I farm snails and garden oxalis.

It has been over 40 years since I left the well defined seasons of inland Washington state. During most of those years, I have been a member of Cal Hort and my small backyard is where I garden.

Ted Kipping

Ted Kipping studied Natural History at Columbia University, New York and has been involved in horticulture for thirty-five years. After completing his studies, Ted wanted to apply his knowledge, and went to work at Strybing Arboretum in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco. There, he worked with a broad range of trees and other plants. His interest grew toward trees and

Steve Morse

I've been a member for about 6 years. Recently retired, I'm still adjusting, but I'm working on fulfilling all those plant nut dreams. My garden looks like the typical collector, lots of "onesies", since I'm willing to try almost anything, but with limited success. Even in retirement there isn't enough time, something about the physical not keeping up with the mental. My personal mantra keeps me going, "...so many plants, so little time."

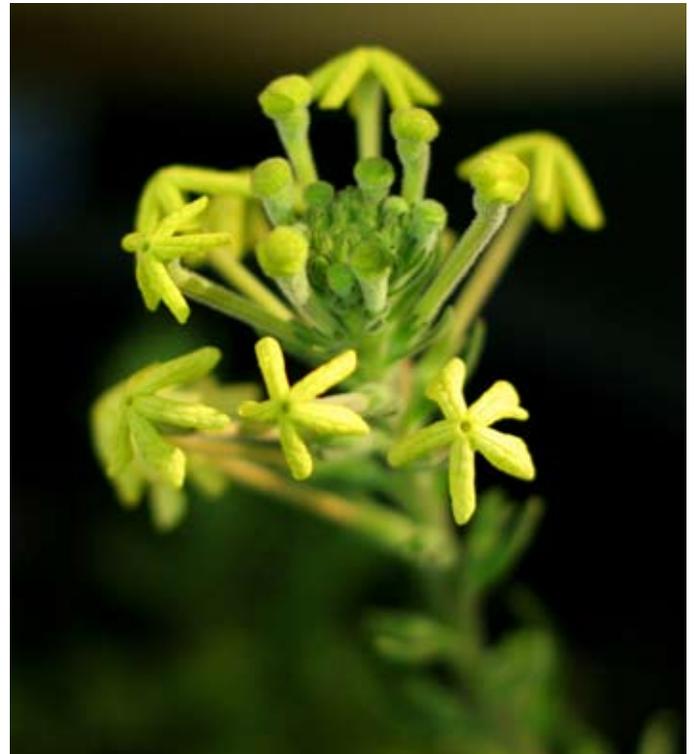
Andy Stone

I have worked in Golden Gate Park for the past 25 years. I love all plants, especially succulents. I enjoy gardening with volunteers, especially children. I like to swim in San Francisco Bay, especially in Winter.

We've been busy updating our electronic announcement list. If you haven't been getting electronic mails and would like to be kept up to date on Cal Hort happenings please send your preferred email address to bruce@calhortsociety.org.



Upon receipt of your name and email address, we'll send you a link to subscribe to our spam-free list. Then, you'll be kept in the Cal Hort loop. Who wouldn't want that?



Lyperia lychnidea from our
Hot Plant Picks booth

SF Flower and Garden Show 2007

Photos online now

We had a great turnout at our Hot Plant Picks booth at the 2007 San Francisco Flower and Garden Show at the Cow Palace.

We're posted photos of the plants we had on display, along with their cultural information and growers, on our website. Just go to the Flower Show link on the left of the home page and relive the wonder you experienced in March.

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Quark? InDesign? Word?

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Email the editor@calhortsociety.org for more info.

Thanks!

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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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