

The next monthly general meeting is Monday, April 18, 2016, at 7:00 PM

Monthly meetings are held at the San Francisco County Fair Building, Ninth Avenue at Lincoln Way in Golden Gate Park.

Free parking is available behind the San Francisco County Fair Building on Lincoln Way.

3:15 PM – This month’s meeting will be held at City College of San Francisco. Parking is available. For details see announcement inside this newsletter. Cal Hort members may attend for free. Non-members are welcome; Cal Hort requests a donation of \$5.

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Plant of the Month

Pteronia camphorata



MONDAY, APRIL 18, 2016

Garden Design Process

with Patricia St. John



How do you approach landscape and garden design? Patricia St. John will share strategies for making a successful garden plan, discussing how the selection of plants and ongoing maintenance fit into the process.



MONDAY, MAY 16, 2016

Annual Dinner

with Ellen Zagory as Honored Speaker

At our Annual Dinner, Cal Hort presents the Annual Award to someone who has made a significant contribution to horticulture in California. This year, we are honoring Ellen Zagory of UC Davis for her work on the Arboretum All-Stars. The title of her talk will be announced in the May Bulletin.

This month's meeting featuring speaker Patricia St. John will be held at City College of San Francisco, Ocean Campus, on April 18. We have been generously invited by the Department of Environmental Horticulture and Floristry for a tour of the campus and greenhouse facilities with Department Chair Steven Brown, followed by a dinner generously hosted by Horticulture Instructor Thomas Wang and his students. A special tour of Diego Rivera's mural of Pan American Unity will also be available. Members of the SF Professional Gardeners Association will also be attending the events.

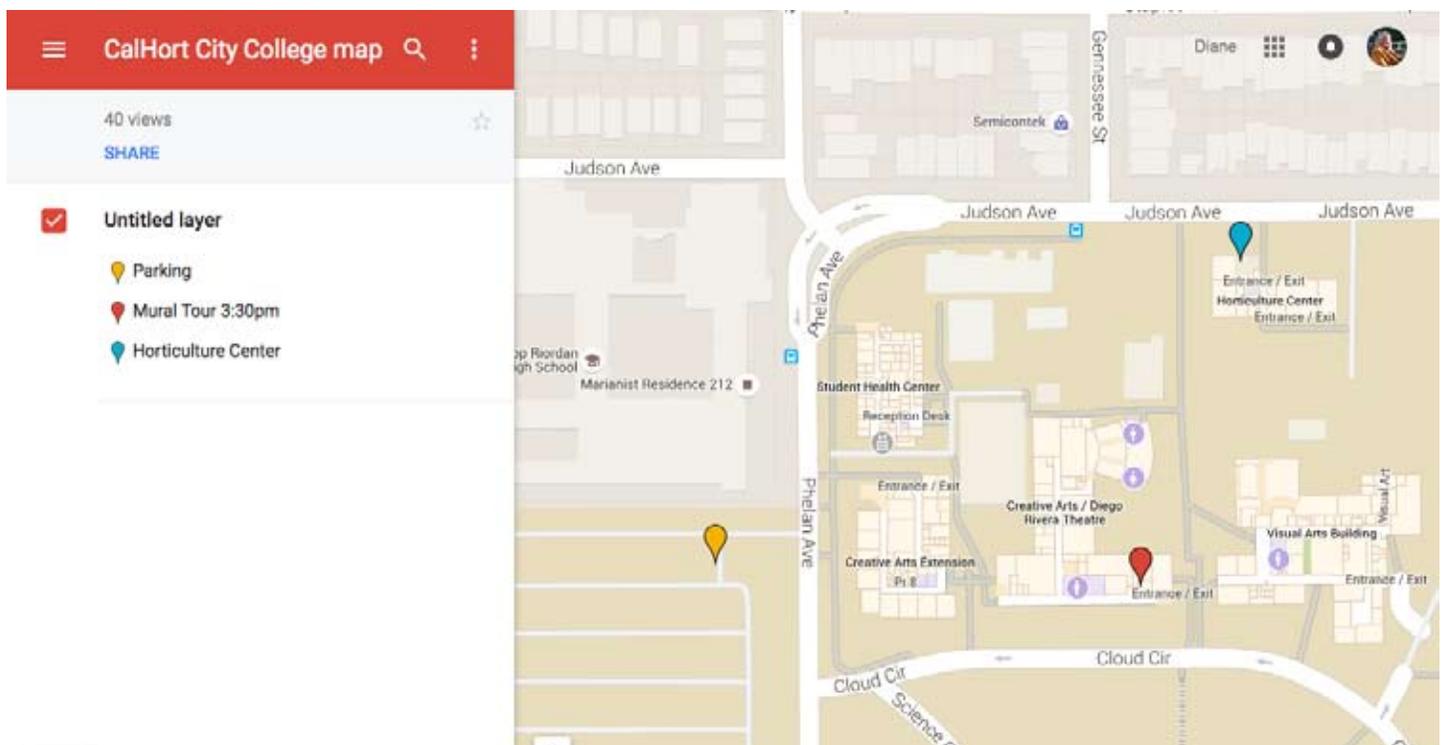
3:15 PM - Meet Steven Brown at the Upper Reservoir parking lot to begin tour. (This is the yellow pin on the map).

3:30 PM - Tour of Diego Rivera's mural "PanAmerican Unity". Located in Diego Rivera Theatre (red pin on map).

4:30 PM - Garden and greenhouse walk with Department Chair Steven Brown and Patricia St. John.

5:30 PM - Dinner with will be served at Department of Environmental Horticulture (turquoise pin on map).

7:00 PM - Announcements, Plant Forum and Program in CCSF Horticulture Center.



We are grateful for the assistance from the CCSF Horticulture Department, and an accurate head count is required for the event. RSVP by April 10 to calhortsociety@gmail.com. If you are unable to use email, call Archangelo at (415)261-8257. In your reply, please indicate your name(s), which portions of the event you will be attending, and how many people will be attending. Please note also whether you have any special dietary requirements [vegetarian, gluten-free, etcetera], which we will pass these on to our hosts.

Printable Parking Permits will be emailed to all those who RSVP. .

General parking will be in the Upper Reservoir Lot on Phelan Avenue (yellow pin on map).

Disabled Parking locations throughout the campus are shown on the CCSF campus map.

Plant of the Month

by Arcangelo Wessells

Pteronia camphorata

Sand Gumbush

Family: ASTERACEAE

Before I started to make a sand dune, I had already been searching for plants to grow on it. Sand dune!? I needed a sand dune to create good conditions to grow certain South African and Chilean bulbs in a naturalistic setting, with low growing shrubs that could handle excellent drainage and close to no supplemental water in summer. I found *Pteronia camphorata* in a catalogue of South African seeds: "0.3-1m aromatic shrub, white stems, needle-like leaves, yellow fl[owers] with papery bracts Sp[ring], coastal. Sow Au[tumn]. Zone 8." It turned out to be perfect for this role, with the additional joy of an expedition out a limb to test a plant for horticultural use.

Pteronia camphorata was named by Linnaeus in 1763. The genus *Pteronia* consists of around 80 species from arid parts of southern Africa. They are known as gumbushes, or Gombossie, for the sticky gum exuded by some species, but not this one. *Pteronia camphorata* is from the southwestern cape of South Africa, where it grows in coastal areas and sandy soils. In overall appearance and habitat preference, *Pteronia* has great similarities to some *Ericameria* in California.

The sand gumbush, *Pteronia camphorata*, is a three-foot-high vase shaped shrub with the delicate texture of santolina and the stiffness of an upright rosemary. Healthy plants can be three feet wide, with an unusual flattened top, but remain narrow at the base. This creates excellent opportunities for planting bulbs, grasses, smaller perennials and parasitic plants like *Castilleja* at their base. The foliage is very delicate and has a light fragrance reminiscent of wormwood and santolina. The leaves are one and a half inches long, but no thicker than a thread. They grow from all sides of the reddish stems, disguising their stiffness. The plant becomes woody below, but new stems continue to form on older stems. The plant branches sparsely until it begins to flower, so it has an open, airy quality.

As flowering begins, the stems branch extensively within the top half of the plant. The main stems can have up to thirty branchlets, which each end with one inflorescence, creating an effect similar to a corymb. Blooming starts from the central flower heads and continues outward. Several hundreds of inflorescences cover the plant with beautiful heads of yellow disk



flowers over an inch wide. The individual florets extend a little over three-eighths of an inch from the receptacle, angling outward, and from these the styles protrude another three-eighths of an inch. The effect is like a tiny sea urchin. It is quite a lovely sight, popular with bees and other tiny insects.

A few other insects find this plant popular for all the wrong reasons. Lace bugs, probably of the genus *Corythucha*, are attracted to *Pteronia* and other yellow flowered Asteraceae, including *Grindelia* and *Isocoma*. These insects cause stippling of foliage similar to thrip damage, although many sources say it is only cosmetic. Spittle bugs also feed on *Pteronia*, but can be effectively removed by hand.

Sand gumbush prefers well drained soils and full sun. If you don't have a sand dune, improve drainage with sand or pumice. On heavy soil and more shade, the plants resist filling out, and remain slender. Wild plants of *Pteronia camphorata* are often very thin even in full sun. Hard pruning promotes thicker growth. It may again be like *Ericameria* and need regular rejuvenative pruning to remain attractive, but three year old plants are not overly woody or congested. Plants will bloom their second year from seed. Seedlings have emerged around plants grown with a mulch of wood chips, and survival rates are being carefully monitored.

Pteronia is tolerant of summer dryness. As it comes from sandy areas, it is no surprise that it is not well suited to heavy soils. It can be watered once a week until it is established, but will tolerate more water if the soil drains well. Amend soil with sand or pumice for drainage. The west side of San Francisco with its sandy soil would be an interesting location to try *Pteronia* and investigate its opinion of fog. Seeds of *Pteronia camphorata* are available from the incredible Silverhill Seeds at www.silverhillseeds.co.za.



California Horticultural Society
 San Francisco County Fair Building
 Ninth Avenue and Lincoln Way
 San Francisco, CA 94122

www.calhortsociety.org

Monthly Plant Drawing

Plant Drawing News Due to the change in venue there will not be a plant drawing this month.

Monthly Plant Display and Discussion

Each month there is a lively discussion about plants brought in by our members. It may be a well grown specimen or an unusual discovery, or a plant that has attributes that are not known by many. If you are interested in participating, bring in a plant to show to the group.

To join the California Horticultural Society or to find out about a full range of membership levels, please visit our web site at www.calhortsociety.org.

Questions from members about your membership? Please address them to the Cal Hort membership chair: Charlotte Masson, 579 Los Paltos Drive, San Francisco, CA 94127-2209.

The California Horticultural Society has maintained its quality programs because of the dedication of the volunteer officers, chairs and members. The future of the Society depends upon its member volunteers to provide leadership. The Board asks that members volunteer for positions to keep Cal Hort the best organization it can be.

COUNCIL

2015-2017 (First Term) Mark Delepine, Steve Morse, Andy Stone
 2016-2018 (Second Term) Ellen Edelson, Charlotte Masson, Kristin Yanker-Hansen
 2016-2018 (First Term) Mary Engle, Bart O'Brien, Arcangelo Wessells

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Parliamentarian	Open
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Deadline for publication in this Bulletin is the third Monday of each month for the following month's Bulletin; no Bulletin is published in December. Events during the first ten days of the month should be submitted two months ahead.