



Hamelioboschman bodinieri (Lévl.) Rehd.



Amentotaxus yunnanensis Li.

BULLETIN
THE CALIFORNIA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY
San Francisco County Fair Building
Ninth Avenue at Lincoln Way
San Francisco, California 94122
January 19, 2004

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 Park Chow Restaurant, 1249 Ninth Ave., San Francisco.

7:15 PM Meeting will be held at Strybing Arboretum in the San Francisco County Fair Building at 9th Avenue and Lincoln Way

***Guest fee \$5.

Coming Programs
Co-sponsored with Strybing Arboretum Society

Monday, January 19, 2004

Plant collecting in China:

“A biodiversity inventory of the Gaoligongshan mountain range of western Yunnan”

Presented by

Dr. Bruce Bartholomew

Senior Collections Manager, Botany Department, California Academy of Sciences

The speaker has worked with the Academy since 1982 and has supervised all aspects of the Botany Department. In addition to these duties, he has an integral role in the *Flora of China Project*, a multi-institutional international project to produce the first English language flora of China. Dating from 1975, he has made numerous botanical expeditions to China. Dr. Bartholomew will share some of the special discoveries made on his 2002 expedition to the Gaoligongshan region of northwestern Yunnan Province. This region, which extends from the eastern Himalayas to southern Yunnan Province, is unanimously recognized by global conservation agencies as one of the “hottest” of biodiversity hotspots worldwide. At the heart of this region lies the Gaoligongshan, a spectacular high ridge of mountains running some 600 km from north to south along the border between southwestern China and northeastern Myanmar (Burma). Unlike much of the surrounding area, the forests here have remained intact. This has led to the recent establishment of two large national nature reserves. The biotic diversity of this region has remained poorly known. The expedition’s inventory was very broad taxonomically including all plant groups as well as arthropods, and vertebrates. Many species new to science were found as well as many rare and seldom seen plant species such as *Balanophora involucreata*, an obligate parasite which does not possess chlorophyll. Beautiful and unusual *Impatiens*, *Luculia*, Gesneriads, and *Arisaemas* were also found.

The Plant Drawing each month provides an important source of funds for the Grants and Scholarships Program. In January, the drawing will include donations from **Suncrest Nursery**, Watsonville, courtesy of Michael Craib and **Strybing Arboretum & Botanical Gardens**, courtesy of Dr. Don Mahoney. Our appreciation to **Plantopia Nursery**, Castro Valley, courtesy of Lawrence Lee; **Sloat Garden Center of San Rafael**, courtesy of Teresa Packer and to **Strybing Arboretum**, courtesy of Dr. Don Mahoney for the outstanding plants donated for the November meeting.

Monday, February 16, 2004

“Plant Exploring in Southern Mexico”

Presented by

**Gary Hammer, noted plant explorer, horticulturist
& founder of ‘Desert To Jungle Nursery’**

The program will feature scenes from the states of Vera Cruz and Oaxaca exploring a range of habitats of plants that Gary has successfully introduced to horticulture in California. Habitats include: higher elevation sub-tropicals, cloud forests; and pine-oak woodlands. Special introductions include unusual Bromeliads and Heliconias.

President's Letter

by Katherine Henwood

"Dreary is the time when the flowers of earth are withered"

William Cullen Bryant: *The Third of November*

Our Novembers are frequently still graced with flowers of some sort. In my garden the tagetes are vivid, the cyclamen have started, there are a few tattered scabiosa, and the salvia is still enticing the hummingbirds. Three of my cymbidiums are in bloom and two others have flower spikes. But November does bring the continuing shorter days and there is a definite nip in the air. Showers never get under the eaves, so watering is still a must, but hard to remember when everything else is soaking wet.

Our November program was delightful! The plants available for the raffle and the ones that Larry Lee and Robin Parer brought for sale offered a grand variety. I'm sorry if you missed it!

No meeting next month, I can hardly wait for January!

"The rain is raining all around,
It falls on field and tree,
It rains on the umbrellas here,
And on the ships at sea."

Robert Lois Stevenson; *A Child's Garden of verses*

Yes, It is raining as I write this in mid-December. I was able to get the third raking of the leaves done yesterday before it started. I hate to rake soggy leaves! Since we have removed the screen on the fish pool, I now get to go fishing for leaves in there, too. It all balances out: unobstructed view of the pool, leaves to be removed. As they say, no free lunch.

Of course, by the time you read this, the Holidays will be over. I hope that yours were richly enjoyed, that you and all of your families were and are in good health, as are mine.

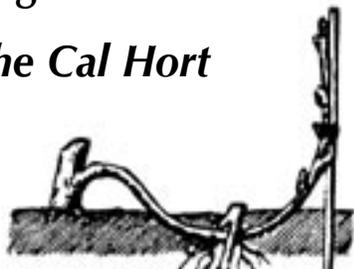
At the January Council meeting, held the week after the general meeting, new officers will be elected to oversee the work of the Society. So this will be my last letter to you. I have enjoyed being the President of the California Horticultural Society, and being able to write these ramblings to you. I hope you have enjoyed reading them!

Winter can be a great time to

propagate for the Cal Hort

Annual Plant

Sale!



Botanical Tours

January 22–February 4, 2004

Drakensbergs—a floral treasure—South Africa in Summer. In support of The Botanical Society of South Africa for flora conservation.

May 11–23, 2004

Botanical Excursion in Eastern Macedonia & Thrace (Northeastern Greece) with noted greek botanist George Sfikas & Richard Turner. A *Pacific Horticulture* tour.

May 16–June 3, 2004

Botanical & Cultural Treasures of China's Sichuan & Yunnan Provinces. Escorted by Kristin Yanker-Hansen in support of California Horticultural Society. www.calhortsociety.org for full itinerary.

For information please call (800) 624-6633 or visit www.geostartravel.com.

Volunteer Corner

Being a volunteer-run organization, Cal Hort is always in need of people with various skills and talents to help out. Look below to see how you can help our Society to grow!

Hospitality Committee: Tasks include showing new members the different areas and aspects of the monthly meetings. This is a great way to get to know new people and have fun at the same time. The only pre-requisite is having attended one previous meeting. *We really need people here!* Contact Renee (reneef@worldpassage.net) or Diana (lambeaux@pacbell.net) for info.

Open Garden Coordinator: We're again looking to start up our popular Open Gardens Program where members open their gardens on specific days to other members. This is a great 'tidy-up' motivator and also a great way to share our gardens and see different garden styles. Contact Renee (reneef@worldpassage.net) if interested in opening your garden or coordinating the openings.

Newsletter: The *Bulletin* is always happy to accept stories, articles or fun garden-related tidbits. If you would like to start a column, write something or even just run across an interesting item, share it with the rest of us! Contact Bruce at editor@calhortsociety.org or (415) 824-1833.

November Plant Forum by Don Mahoney

"A picture is a worth a thousand words." Fully believing the old adage, color photos are available on our website at www.calhortsociety.org in the 'Plant Forum' section.



Acacia iteaphylla

1. **Acacia iteaphylla**

FABACEAE

Kathy Echols, Martinez

The genus *Acacia* contains numerous garden worthy species, most of which are well behaved, attractive small trees or shrubs. This one and the two following are drought tolerant, will grow in poor soils, prefer full sun and will take moderate frost. *Acacia iteaphylla* has 4' narrow pale blue-gray leaves. New growth is pinkish and the profuse winter flowers (Oct. to May) are pale yellow and fragrant. It may reach 10' tall and is native to Australia.

2. **Acacia pravissima**

FABACEAE

Kathy Echols, Martinez

This is another Australian small tree to 20' with short gray-green triangular leaves packed tightly on the stems. The winter and spring blooming flower buds are pink and open to bright yellow scented flowers. It has a wonderful form and casts a beautiful shadow onto a walkway or building.

3. **Acacia stenophylla hybrid**

FABACEAE

Kathy Echols, Martinez

Yet another Australian native, *Acacia stenophylla* is a weeping tree to 30'. Its long graceful very narrow leaves can be 16" long, giving the plant the appearance of a wispy weeping willow. It has pale yellow flowers and this hybrid blooms off and on all year, with the most profuse bloom in late winter and early spring.

4. **Dyckia velascana**

BROMELIACEAE

Larry Lee

The genus *Dyckia* includes many terrestrial bromeliads that are usually small rosettes with puya-like silvery or gray narrow leaves with spines along the edges. They are best grown like agaves, in bright light or full sun in well-drained soil and are mostly both drought and frost tolerant. The species on display had incredible silvery-purple leaves which seemed to glow and make it an award-winning container plant. All *Dyckias* hail from South America.

5. **Epicactus 'Dainty delight'**

CACTACEAE

Don Mahoney, San Francisco

Orchid cactus are usually spring bloomers but actually include bi-generic hybrids of several epiphytic cactus genera. This particular hybrid has *Epiphyllum* and *Disocactus* parents and the *Disocactus* parent give it the potential to bloom off and on all summer and fall. This particular specimen had numerous 2" dark pink tubular flowers along arching 2' long *epiphyllum*-like stems. Like most epiphytic cactus, it needs well-drained but rich soil.

A good soil is half rhododendron mix and half cactus mix. They are best grown in hanging baskets in bright light or filtered sun and need protection from frost. Keeping them on the dry side in winter encourages better bloom. They are native to Central and South America.

6. **Epiphyllum chrysocardium**

CACTACEAE

Larry Lee

Like the preceding one, this epiphytic cactus is a great hanging basket plant. It needs the same care as stated above except that it needs to stay a little warmer in the winter and should be kept in a cool greenhouse. This spectacular plant has zig-zag stems that can be 1' across, and is a show plant even without flowers. The flowers, which occur in summer, are also spectacular. They are white and fragrant, to 1' long. It is native to Chiapas, Mexico.

7. **Firmiana simplex**

STERCULIACEAE

Barbara and John Hopper, Kenwood

This lovely deciduous tree is a relative of our native *Fremontodendron*, although it is native to Southeast Asia. The leaves look like thinner and much larger *Fremontodendron* leaves. Those shown had beautiful yellow fall color. This specimen is 10' tall after 9 or 10 years and has a trunk very straight like a pole with a crown of large leaves at the top. Thus, its common name of Chinese parasol tree. It takes normal garden soil and care and needs some summer water. The flowers in July are small and greenish white.

8. **Massonia pustulata**

HYACINTHACEAE (LILIACEAE)

Larry Lee

This bulb from the winter, rainfall region of South Africa is a charming geophyte best grown in a container as it is beloved by snails and slugs. In early winter the bulb develops two large 3" by 5" leaves that are prostrate on the ground. It develops in its center a shaving-brush like inflorescence of small white flowers with long extended stamens. Leaves are pustulate-hairy and are sometimes spotted. These bulbs need very well-drained sandy soil, protection from frost and snails, and a dry, dormant summer period.

Horticultural Calendar

First Saturday of the Month

Sick Plant Clinic— Let plant pathologist Dr. Raabe and entomologist Dr. Mills diagnose what ails your plants. 9 AM – Noon. Free. No reservations required.

January 17

Annual Scion Exchange—An event to share grafting wood and cuttings from an assortment of wonderful and uncommon fruits donated by local growers. Demonstrations and a plant raffle too. Golden Gate Chapter of the California Rare Fruit Growers. Noon – 3 PM. Multi-use room, 1700 Park Blvd. Pleasant Hill. \$2 donation (510) 843-1657 or www.cfrg.org.

January 18

Annual Scion Exchange—A great place to find choice grafting wood of uncommon fruit and nut trees donated by local growers. Sponsored by the Sacramento Chapter of the California Rare Fruit Growers. Noon – 1 PM, Sacto AG Coop Center, 4145 Branch Center Road, Sacramento. \$1 donation. (530) 666-7182 or www.cfrg.org.

January 25

Annual Scion Exchange—Another chance to get and exchange heirloom fruit tree and vine cuttings for your garden. Come early and let the experts create a custom tree for you. Sponsored by the Redwood Chapter of the CFRG. 9:30 AM – 2:30 PM at the Veteran's Memorial Building, 282 High St., Sebastopol. Small donation. www.cfrg.org

January 27

Slideshow: Four Billion Years of History in 90 Minutes—Alan Kaplan presents a history of life on Earth. This is a Potluck, so please bring a dish to serve 8 people. 7 PM at the County Fair Bldg. Free

February 10

Filoli Season Opening—The Garden will be open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 AM – 3:30 PM until the season ends on October 23. Adults \$10, students \$5 and \$1 for children ages 7 –12. No reservations required for self-guided tours.

February 15

Sunday Garden Market—The season begins again at the SF Ferry Plaza with unusual plants for sale and free lectures. Sundays, 9 AM – 3 PM. (415) 291-3276 or www.cuesa.org.

The Gardens At Heather Farm
(925) 947-1678 • www.gardenshf.org

January 17

Camellias—Robert Ehrhart shows you how to select and care for your favorite camellia. Includes a visit to see Robert's own garden and his beautiful camellias. 9 AM – Noon. Members \$15, non-members \$20.

January 24

Dormant Pruning— A discussion and demonstration pruning for healthier plants, with Bonnie Brusseau. 9 – 11 AM. Members \$15, non-members \$20.

January 28 – February 14

Garden Design Series with Bobbi Feyerabend— Learn about basic garden design, plant selection, site planning and more from a local landscape architect. Includes a field trip to Orchard Nursery. 7 - 9 PM. Members \$45, non-members \$60.

U.C. Santa Cruz Arboretum

(831) 427-2998 • www2.ucsc.edu/arboretum

January 7 – February 11

Docent Training for Volunteers—A series of six classes to orient new volunteers and those interested in becoming arboretum docents. 9:30 AM – Noon at the Horticulture Building.

January 11

Planting CA Native Annuals—Annie Hayes discusses easy natives to plant in your garden. 1:30 PM at the Horticulture Building. Members \$10, non-members \$15.

January 22

California Native Plant ID—UC Santa Cruz propagator Linda Willis will lead a hands-on workshop on keying native plants of Monterey County. Bring a 7x or 10x hand lens if you have one. 1:30 – 3:30 PM. Free.

Lotusland

(805) 969-3767 • www.lotusland.org

February 19

End of Winter Recess—Regular tours resume again Wednesdays through Saturdays. Tour reservations should be made well in advance and by telephone only. Adults \$10, children under ten are \$8. (805) 969-9990.

March 13

Sustainable Garden Design—Seminar with Virginia Hayes, Carol Bornstein, Billy Goodnick, Allyson Biskner and Owen Dell. 9:30 AM – 4:30 PM. Fee is \$50 and includes lunch. Advance reservations only. (805) 969-3767, ext. 107.

May 31

Talking Plants with Ketzell Levine—Join Nation Public Radio's gardening correspondent for an afternoon of 'horticulture, humor and provocative ideas'. Wine and hor d'oeuvres will follow, as will a leisurely stroll through the gardens. 3 PM. Members \$35, non-members \$40 and remember to register early.

Strybing Arboretum Society

(415) 661-1316 • www.strybing.org

January 12 – February 18

Taxonomy for Gardeners—A six-session certificate course with J. Charmain Guiliani. 6:30 – 9:30 PM plus two fieldtrips. Members \$200, non-members \$240.

January 17

Lunar New Year Flower Market—It's the Year of the Monkey and proceeds from this sale will benefit the Asian plant collections. 10 AM – 1 PM at the Strybing Nursery.

Hort Notes continued bottom of following page

Melianthus major

Our plant of the month is the wonderful South African *Melianthus major*, or Capehoneybush. A member of the MELIANTHACEAE family, it is one of six *Melianthus* species found in Africa. This plant never fails to attract admirers, due to its wonderfully toothed, glaucous blue leaves growing in even intervals. It is a great plant for creating a tropical look, even in areas with some frost. The flower stalks are rather striking brick red, and the hummingbirds in my garden seem drawn to them. It creates a great, architectural specimen in a pot, or a great backdrop behind other plants in the border.

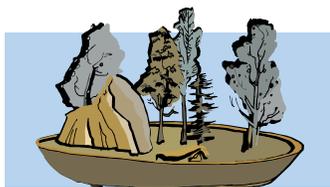
Melianthus major is an easy to grow plant. It prefers a warm, sunny spot in the garden, and isn't fussy about soil type as long as it has regular watering and good drainage. Here in California, it is fairly hardy, even in areas with light frosts. In the colder parts of the state, it can be cut back and heavily mulched at the end of the growing season. In areas without frost, it can be grown to its full height of 8 to 10 feet. *Melianthus major* can get a little leggy if it doesn't receive enough sunlight, or if it isn't pruned occasionally. In the latter case, early spring pruning is recommended. This will encourage the plant to sucker from the base and become fuller. And for those of you in suburban and rural areas, *Melianthus* is deer resistant!

In its native habitat, honeybush is used for making poultices for wounds, but it is toxic if taken internally, so be careful when planning a garden where children will have access to it. When rubbed, the leaves give off an odor resembling peanut butter. Depending on whom you ask, this is either a charming trait or a noxious problem. You can decide for yourself.

Melianthus is supposedly easy to grow from seed or cuttings. The seed is sown in autumn in a well-draining



medium and covered lightly with sand or finely milled compost. Germination usually takes place within a month. The young seedlings can be potted up in small pots and grown on until strong enough to be planted out in the garden. Although some sources say that cuttings can be made at any time throughout the year, locally, mid-spring to summer seems to work best. Use a new shoot from the base of the plant, and use moist sand or another sterile, quick draining medium until good roots have developed. Although *Melianthus major* has become naturalized in western Australia, it seems well behaved in California and is a great addition to a sunny garden.



January 31

Permaculture Fundamentals—Learn the 'art and science of designing human beings' place in the environment,' with David Blume. 9 AM - 3:30 PM. Members \$65, non-members \$90.

February 10, 14, 17

Greenhouse Gardening—Jim Henrich teaches you how to maintain your plants that grow best under glass. 6:30 - 9 pm at the County Fair Bldg. Saturday class is a field trip, 10 AM - 3 PM. Members \$75, non-members \$90.

February 12

Long Blooming Perennials— Learn about unusual perennials to make your garden's bloom time last, with Leana Beeman-Sims. 6:30 - 9 PM. Members \$40, non-members \$55.

Camilla's cheese ball recipe

Recipe request from Cal Hort Oct. 11-12, 2003 Field Trip

- 8oz. + 4oz. Cream cheese
- 3 Tbs [tablespoons] sour cream or small container
- Dash curry powder - to taste
- Small bunch green onions - chopped.
- 1/2 cup [halfcup] currants
- 1/2 cup [half cup] peanuts - chopped
- Dash Worcester sauce
- Mix and refrigerate overnight.

Make a mound

Cover with mango/ginger chutney (Major Grey)

Cover with toasted coconut

Serve on Party Rye or crackers.

Seed Packets

Springtime is near and do you know what that means? Yes, it's time, once again, to come help assemble seed packets from this year's Seed Exchange. Why not spend the day with a happy, and a bit eccentric, group of your fellow Cal Hort members arranging and packaging all the great seeds that were donated this year. This is a great way to make new friends, chat about plants, and perhaps get ahold of some unclaimed seeds...

The date is Saturday, March 6 at Diablo Valley College, 321 Golf Club Road, Pleasant Hill, CA, in the Hort Building. We'll start at about 9:30 AM until we finish, usually no later than 3 or 3:30. Come for the whole time or just some of the time. We'll be supplying the seeds and info and you bring a sack lunch and anything else to make yourself comfortable. There's no special plant knowledge necessary, just willing hands.

Hope to see you there!



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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.

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.

Advertising

Rates are \$12 for a business card size (3.5 x 2) and \$24 for a quarter page per month. We accept both digital and camera-ready art.

Visit our website for more info or call Bruce at (415) 824-1833.

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