

BULLETIN
THE CALIFORNIA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY
San Francisco County Fair Building
Ninth Avenue at Lincoln Way
San Francisco, California 94122
January 16, 2006

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.

*** Guest fee \$5.***

Monday, January 16, 2006

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

“2005, California Wildflowers in Their Glory”

Presented by **Ron Parsons**, noted flower photographer, lecturer, horticulturist and author. Ron has been photographing California wildflowers for almost 20 years, and he has never seen a year like this due to the extremely heavy and prolonged rains and snow. There has been such an abundance and diversity of flowers this year, such that many species that have bloomed this year have not been seen for a long time. Ron has looked for and photographed our wildflowers every weekend from February until August, from one end of the state to the other. The speaker has recently co-authored a book with Mary Gerritsen on the orchid genus *Masdevallia* entitled “*Masdevallias – Gems of the Orchid World*” published by Timber Press and just released in October. Ron is currently working on another book, this time on the genus *Calochortus*, which includes the Mariposa Lilies, Star Tulips, Cat’s Ears and Globe Lilies”.



The **Plant Drawing** each month is an important source of funds for the Grants and Scholarships Program. In January, the drawing will include donations from **Guerrero Street Gardens** and **San Francisco Botanical Garden**, courtesy of Dr. Don Mahoney. Our appreciation to the **Sloat Garden Center in Kentfield**, courtesy of Laura Muschietti; to **Plantopia Nursery**, Half Moon Bay, courtesy of Lawrence Lee and to the **San Francisco Botanical Garden Society**, courtesy of Dr. Don Mahoney for the outstanding selection of plants donated for the November meeting.

Monday, February 20, 2006

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

“California Native Plants for the Garden”

Presented by three of the pioneering horticulturists who have championed this flora and are authors of *California Native Plants for the Garden*. Carol Bornstein, Director of Living Collections and nursery Santa Barbara Botanic Garden; David Fross Founder and President of Native Sons Nursery, a grower specializing in plants from the Mediterranean-climate regions of the world; and Bart O’Brien, Director of Horticulture and Curator of Living Collections at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, Claremont, California.

California’s astonishing floras have long attracted worldwide interest and is justifiably famous. From redwood forests to Joshua tree woodlands, many of the state’s most treasured wildlands are largely defined by their plantlife. Until recent years the fascination with California plants in the wild was not matched by an equal enthusiasm for cultivating them in gardens and landscapes. Today, however, an increasing number of horticulturists extol the California flora as a source of beautiful, diverse and durable garden plants. Their advocacy has pushed native plants out of the horticultural fringes and toward the mainstream of the landscape and nursery industries. The authors will discuss their favorite plants and the program will be illustrated with beautiful photos of native flora included in their new book.

President's Letter

Bruce Peters

Welcome to the New Year! Hopefully, it will bring many wonderful and exciting new plants into your life. Wait...aren't ALL new plant wonderful and exciting?

Speaking of new plants, I want to thank the large number of you who signed up to help out with our upcoming plant sale, April 8 & 9. After a slow start, we encountered a bit of a flood of excitement and quickly filled all the necessary early planning jobs! That's not to say you're off the hook just yet, however.

Our membership is filled with those of us who tirelessly search nurseries, hillsides, seed packets, catalogs etc. the world over seeking fantabulous plant material. Now is a great time to plant a few extra seeds for inclusion in our plant sale. Or take a few extra cuttings of those fast rooting friends who don't mind being called on to propagate in the depths of winter. I seem to

recall I set out 25 leaves of different variegated African Violets last winter, almost all of which obliged me by rooting and growing numerous plantlets for each leaf! I was a little overwhelmed for a while.

Our speaker schedule is already firmed up for the first half of 2006 and we're casting about for the second half. If you have any ideas for interesting topics or just have something you would like to see, contact Barbara Hopper (contact info on back page) and we'll see what we can do. Look on our website for the full list we've booked so far.

Also, look to the website for a color version of this newsletter and color photos of our plant forums. And tell your friends, too! I'll see you all on the 16th!

November Meeting Recap by Jason Dewees

"The Garden as Sanctuary"

A presentation by Lawrence Lee

Lawrence Lee, horticulturalist and owner of Plantopia Nursery in Danville, California, and self-described "plant nerd," presented a slide program for Cal Hort members on the garden as sanctuary. Held as usual at the San Francisco County Fair Building, this final presentation of the year focused on the ways humans have found sanctuary for the bodily senses, the mind and the spirit.

Richly illustrated with artwork and photographs from across centuries and civilizations, Lawrence's lecture gave a view of how the functions of the garden serve all dimensions of human life. At the origin of the garden, perhaps, is its food-growing purpose. Fruit, vegetables, domesticated animals -- these sustain us and provide pleasure for the palate and often for the other senses as well. A 1400 BCE garden painting in Thebes, Egypt, shows basic necessities of the society: dates, fish, fowl.

The body, and its senses of smell, sound, sight, taste and touch, all find gratification in the garden with its edibles, watercourses, animal life, textures and flowers. A mural in the Villa of Livia, built for a Roman noble in the first century, BCE, illustrates the combination of edible and incidental pleasures of a food garden: Fruits, flowers and birds adorn the ancient, pre-Christian walls. The painting also captures the sense of seclusion and escape integral to many civilizations' notion of the garden. Lawrence told the Cal Hort audience that the word "paradise" derives from a Persian word meaning "enclosure." Some might say it's Eden -- blissfully protected, bountifully providing -- that lies at the origin of our green environs. The quadripartite gardens of many Muslim civilizations exemplify the orderly and serene qualities we seek.

A modern image from a cohort of Tennyson and Ruskin, Helen



Ficus religiosa-click for larger

Allingham's painting of a woman reading in a warm garden, surrounded by flowers and bathed in golden sunshine, makes clear that the horticultural achievements of sanctuary include personal escape into literature, and implies relishing other cultural forms such as music and art.

"Big Beauty," a sculpture in Marcia Donohue's Berkeley garden created by her daughter, stretches upward in the light amidst the leaves, integral to the deeply intertwined cultural and horticultural delights there.

The seeking of spiritual sanctuary was central Lawrence's theme. After all, Buddha reached enlightenment beneath the Bodhi Tree (*Ficus religiosa*), and Paradise and Eden are gardens. Katsura, the celebrated villa in Kyoto, Japan, is surrounded by exquisite contemplative gardens, where behind secure walls and amidst unparalleled artistry, visitors may pursue spiritual insight. The repose and manifest care of such gardens acts upon the seeker in the manner of a temple or church interior.

Other spiritual garden-places Lawrence shared with the audience included an early European painting of a monk in a treehouse; a Chinese garden rock expressing the mysteries of the cosmos; and Jana Olson's Grotto of Santa Basura, in Berkeley, where Quan Yin resides with treasures of the industrial consumer society (as in, one person's garbage is another's treasure), votive candles, and natural objects like seashells.

Through the rich and winding path of Lawrence's lecture, the audience found in his last slides images of the labyrinth, a garden pattern designed for contemplation. At Chartres, the masterwork of French Gothic architecture, a convoluted path inside a circle was built, resemble perhaps the outlines of the petals of a rose. Reproduced now at Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, it takes the walker from the outside inward, providing a process for finding individual sanctuary.

November Plant Forum by Don Mahoney

1. *Aechmea recurvata* var. *benrathii*

BROMELIACEAE

David Feix, Berkeley

This delightful small bromeliad is only 10" across and is hardy outdoors in the Bay Area. It has the darkest violet flowers of all the varieties of this species. The center of the rosette also turns a brilliant red. It is very easy to grow in part shade. It hails from Southern Brazil and Uruguay.

2. *Impatiens arguta*

BALSAMACEAE

Cal Hort Member

From Nepal comes this cold hardy perennial *Impatiens*. To 18" tall and very branching, it bears numerous, 2" long, mid-violet tubular, flaring, flowers from Spring till Fall. It needs to be kept moist at all times to stay looking its best. It is quite hardy and will even survive freezing temperatures.

3. *Impatiens* hybrid

BALSAMACEAE

David Feix, Berkeley

This is another *impatiens* that is perennial outdoors in coastal California. It has *Impatiens sodenii* (the common hardy shrub) in its breeding history and so has some of that species' hardiness. The specimen shown had clear fuchsia-magenta flowers on a sturdy attractive plant. It is becoming common in Southern California, but it is just becoming available to Bay Area gardeners.

4. *Petrocosmea sericea*

GESNERIACEAE

Katherine Henwood, Pacifica

From China comes a whole array of beautiful African violet relatives that are sure to become widely grown in the future, as they are very attractive. This species has silky grey-green leaves and was smothered with lavender flowers with a dark purple throat. As in all *Petrocosmeas*, the upper two



Petrocosmea minor



Photo: Bruce Peters

Impatiens arguta
Click image for larger version

petals are fused together. The plant is a small, perfect rosette like a well-grown African violet. These plants are best in a cool greenhouse or a sheltered outdoor location as heavy rain would damage the leaves.

5. *Petrocosmea minor*

GESNERIACEAE

Katherine Henwood, Pacifica

This species, also from China, forms a very flat rosette of shiny green leaves and also has lavender flowers. This also was grown in an unheated plant shelter, a few miles from the coast in "sunny" Pacifica.

6. *Taiwania cryptomerioides pendula*

TAXODIACEAE

Ted Kipping, San Francisco

Like the *Taiwania* described last month, this plant is an evergreen tree with somewhat prickly, small leaves encircling the stems. This particular branch was brought from Medford, Oregon by Ted, where it was grown by Boyd Kline. It is different from the regular species in that the branches are pendulous, hence its name.

7. *Tecoma x smithii*

BIGNONIACEAE

David Feix, Berkeley

This is a possible hybrid between *Tecoma mollis* and *Tecomaria capensis*, introduced from Australia in the late 1800s. It is a 8 to 10 foot shrub with somewhat rough green leaves and large, yellow-tinted-orange flowers. It wants a sunny location, is somewhat drought tolerant, and can handle a few degrees of frost. It is being distributed by San Marcos growers.

Vancouveria hexandra, the Inside-out Flower
Family: BERBERIDACEAE

Many of us face the problem of what to plant in those shady patches. Almost all of us have them- a corner that the sun never reaches, a space under a larger shrub or tree that gets only scattered light. Well, *Vancouveria* is the answer. This beautiful native plant only looks delicate, with its wiry stems and duckfoot-shaped leaves that quake in the slightest breeze. It is actually pretty tough, living in the fir and oak forests of Washington, Oregon and northern California. Growing to about 16 inches tall, it spreads slowly by underground rhizomes.

The common name "inside-out-flower" comes from the unusual looking tiny white flowers which appear on stalks above the foliage from April through June. The petals are reflexed, making it look like the flowers are indeed inside out. The other common name for this plant is American Barrenwort. How did such a nice plant get such a horrible name? Probably some bitter, jealous European botanist thought this one up. Forget that I even mentioned it. The



Photo: © Br. Alfred Brousseau, Saint Mary's College

botanical name refers to the famous Pacific explorer George Vancouver, and the species name refers to the six stamens in the flower. I thought Hexandra referred to one of Samantha's relatives on the old TV show 'Bewitched', but I was wrong.

Like many of my favorite plants, *Vancouveria* is a multi-tasker. Besides looking good, it was used by native Americans as a cough medicine, and is still used as a treatment for congestion, rhinitis and hay fever.

Vancouveria enjoys partial shade with its roots in a humusy, well-draining soil. Being a native, it can get by with little summer water once established. It can be propagated by dividing it in the spring, or by seed. Allow the small seed pods to ripen, and when they begin to peel open, carefully remove the seeds and sow them in pots to grow out until large enough to plant in the garden or bring to a plant sale.



Photo: Robert Potts © California Academy of Sciences.

Cal Hort Council Meeting Schedule 2006

All California Horticultural Society Board meetings are open to any member who might wish to come and see how things are run or who would like to have some extra input into Society dealings. We meet the fourth Monday of every other month, starting in January, in the Recreation Room at the County Fair Building in San Francisco, right next to where the monthly meetings are held. If you'd like a place on the agenda, please contact the president at least 7 days in advance. Also, it would probably be wise to call ahead just to make sure any of the times or dates haven't been changed at the last minute, just to be safe.

Monday, Jan 23, 7:30 PM
Monday, March 27, 7:30 PM
Monday May 29, 7:30 PM

Monday July 24, 7:30 PM
Monday September 25, 7:30 PM
Monday November 27, 7:30 PM

History of the California Horticultural Society

In the winter of 1933 as unusually frigid air mass withered gardens in the greater bay area. Because of the patchwork of microclimates that define the region, then as now, plants that came through with minimal damage in one place were turned to black mush a few miles away. To come to terms with this seemingly whimsical destruction, a cadre of concerned gardeners called a meeting to compare notes on the catastrophe. They met at a restaurant in North Beach and included estate owners and their gardeners, UC Berkeley academics, nurserymen, and backyard gardeners. The meeting proved very rewarding for those attending leading to a series of meetings which culminated in a decision to formally inaugurate the California Horticultural Society.

The instigating impulse to compare notes has been maintained with a plant materials display and discussion that is

part of every meeting. In the past 63 years, over 6000 different species of plants have been shown, 10% of all plants in world cultivation. In addition, the Society (1) sponsors field trips to unusual gardens and nurseries; (2) hosts a monthly series of well-illustrated lectures on a wide variety of horticultural topics; (3) holds a yearly plant sale in the spring; (4) makes annual cash awards that support the introduction of new and unusual garden plants; (5) runs a seed exchange that makes rare plants not yet stocked by nurseries available to members; and (6) has begun a series of oral histories that will help to illuminate and preserve the activities and accomplishments of the large network of amateur and professional gardeners who have forged the warp and woof of the Society since 1933.

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 at the UC Botanical Garden at Berkeley. Free (510) 643-2755
www.botanicalgarden.berkeley.edu

January 20 - 22

Arctostaphylos—A serious weekend-long workshop held in Carmel Valley and hosted by the Jepson Herbarium. Members \$335, non-members \$360.
www.ucjeps.berkeley.edu/jepwkshp.html

January 21

Scion exchange—Share grafting wood and cuttings of uncommon fruits, includes demos and a plant raffle too. Golden Gate Chapter of the California Rare Fruit Growers. Noon – 3 PM at the UCSF Mission Center, 1855 Folsom St. SF. www.crfg.org/chapters/golden-gate/scionex.htm or (510) 843-1657.

February 11

Basic Birding Class—Enjoy a walk around the Ruth Bancroft Garden while learning about your feathered friends. Starts at 8 AM, members \$10, non-members \$15.
www.ruthbancroftgarden.org or (925) 210-9663.

Through February 26

The Modern Art of Orchids—The Conservatory of Flowers features this stylish orchid exhibition. 9 AM – 4:30 PM Tuesday – Sunday, \$5 general admission.
www.conservatoryofflowers.org.

SF Botanical Garden Society

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

January 14

Cloud Forest Passion Vines—Learn to propagate and grow these unusual vines with Don Mahoney. 1 – 3 PM, members \$25, non-members \$35.

January 21

Lunar New Year Flower Market and Plant Sale—The seventh annual sale with activities and demonstrations for all. 10 AM - 3 PM at the County Fair Bldg.

February 11

Plant Sale—General sale at the nursery. 10 AM - 2 PM

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

January 7

The Botany of Pt. Reyes Seashore—A slide lecture with Steve Edwards. 10:30 AM, free.

January 21

California Classics—A lecture with Dave Fross. 10:30 AM, free.

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

January 21

Winter Pruning—Marie Miller discusses this basics of this season's pruning. 9 – 11:30 AM, members \$15, non-members \$20.

January 28

Camellias—Care and selection of old and new favorites. 9:30 AM – noon, Free.

February 11 & 12

The Garden Journal—Learn book binding in the first part and botanically illuminate your journal in the second. With Andie Thrams, 10 AM – 4 pm both days. Members \$60 or non-members \$70 for each section.

U.C. Santa Cruz Arboretum
(831) 427-2998 • www2.ucsc.edu/arboretum

January 8

Designing with CA Natives—A illustrated talk Lisa McAndrews. 1:30 PM, members \$10, non-members \$15.

January 26

Native Plant ID Workshop—Learn to key out plants using your Jepson Manual and 10x hand lens. 1:30 PM, Free

February 5

Cacti, Succulents and Bromeliads of Argentina—Join Naomi Bloss as she talks of her recent S. American travels. 1:30 PM, members \$10, non-members \$15.

*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.*

Dues are Due!

Dues for 2006 are now due and payable. If you do not have a 2006 membership card, your prompt remittance would be appreciated. We don't want you to miss your monthly *Bulletin* or *Pacific Horticulture*.

Please use the form and reply envelope from your November 2005 *Bulletin* for your remittance. Forms can also be printed out from our website. For First Class Mailing of your *Bulletin*, please add \$4.00. Make checks payable to The California Horticultural Society and mail to Elsie Mueller, 1847 34th Ave. San Francisco, CA 94122-4109..

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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Seed List Enclosed!

www.calhortsociety.org