



Bulletin

of the

California Horticultural Society

Cultivating friendship, gardens and fun for 75 years!

January 2008

M E E T I N G S

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, 1240 9th Ave, San Francisco.

7:15 PM Announcements, Plant Forum, and 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 for monthly meeting. Non-members – A donation of \$5 is requested.

Monday, January 21, 2008

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

“Pollination Ecology and the current concerns regarding Honey Bee Populations”

Presented by **Gordon W. Frankie, PhD of the Division of Insect Biology, University of California Berkeley**. He is studying the affect of honey bee diseases on their populations and the serious threat they present to the success of many insect pollinated crops. For a preview of some bee information, check out <http://nature.berkeley.edu/urbanbeegardens/>

The **Plant Drawing** each month is an important source of funds for the Grants and Scholarships Program.

In November, the drawing included donations from The San Francisco Botanical Garden, courtesy of Dr. Don Mahoney, and from Sloat Garden Center, Kentfield courtesy of Ashly McQuade.

Our appreciation to the San Francisco Botanical Garden courtesy of Dr. Don Mahoney and to Grand Lake Ace Garden Center, Oakland, courtesy of Tom Nelson for the outstanding selection of plants donated for the October meeting.

Monday, February 18, 2008

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

“Plants & Wildflowers of Central Mexico”

The program will feature the things that our speaker and noted photographer, **Ron Parsons**, saw on his recent tour to Central Mexico. His trip there in September included traveling through 11 states and driving 2600 miles from Guadalajara and back. The focus of the trip was to see Calochortus, and the program will include 11 of the 16 Mexican Calochortus as well as other bulbs, orchids, begonias, dahlias, cosmos, cacti, succulents, pingulas and much more.

Fuchsia sp., L Baptiste photo



This year Cal Hort will celebrate its 75th anniversary

Cal Hort has been “Cultivating friendships, gardens and fun for 75 years!!!” What a significant milestone! In the winter of 1932-33 the temperatures dropped down to unusually low lows....Probably just at this time of year succulents were turning to mush, tender exotics were wilting and turning black. After a few days of this destruction, or at least what appeared to be total devastation, gardeners and nursery people wanted to compare notes of what had survived and what had not, especially when the spring's warm temperatures initiated bud growth for any that had survived. This gathering of the interested and the curious was the start of Cal Hort.

We have grown in our 75 years. The Society and the world have changed from those early years in the 30's, information is much more accessible and easier to obtain with the web, new technology and HGTV. Cal Hort has a great deal to be proud of, to be thankful for and we deserve a huge YEAR-LONG celebration to commemorate such a huge turning point.

We started planning late last year to have at least one outing/workshop/event besides the meeting each month. Some of these will be formal with reservations and arrangements and some will be very casual with information on where to show up and when. January we are promoting and supporting the SF Botanical Garden/Horticulture Magazine's symposium on January 27th (see the SF Botanical Garden website or the yahoo groups calendar). In February, we are going to explore San Bruno Mountain and see the diversity that grows in that urban oasis that we all see as we are flying out of the Bay area or driving past in our cars. We hope to focus on horticultural selections that have been chosen from the Mountain.

We have celebratory T-shirts and grocery/tote bags that we hope you will find attractive and want to buy and promote the Society.

You will notice a few extra articles in the newsletter. We have a series of articles on the history of Cal Hort and a series of articles written by Aaron Dillon regarding the history of the nursery industry from the 30's to the present. Linda Baptiste, our editor has started a column called “The Question Lady” and she will present a question each month that you can answer and she will publish the following month.

The Society owes a big debt of gratitude to Dan Carlson and Alex Riggs for representing the Society at the SF Recreation and Parks meeting and then again at the City Council meeting this past December. The topic of concern was raising the rental fee of the County Fair Building. Their being at the meeting made a big difference and Cal Hort's budget is pretty much still intact. Thank you, Dan and Alex.

How did Alex and Dan learn of the threat? Dan was aware because he is on the Council and the Society received notice of the first meeting. Dan went to that and reported back through the Yahoo Groups website and Alex volunteered to jump in and help. Yahoo Groups is a wonderful vehicle to spread the word fast. The only people that would have access to your email are other Cal Hort Yahoo Group members, so don't worry about everyone and their mother getting your email address. Send me an email (president@calhortsociety.org) and I will send you an invite so you can keep up on the latest happenings at Cal Hort.

We have a great year in store for our big 75th, so stay tuned, get involved and I hope to see you all at the January meeting.

“If you would understand anything, observe its beginning and its development” Aristotle

As you all know The California Horticultural Society is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year. During this period there has been a tremendous amount of change within the horticultural industry of the Bay Area. Many of these changes have impacted western gardeners in ways most may not even realize. In an effort to bring the numerous contributions of Bay Area horticultural professionals to light, I will be submitting an article each month focusing one segment or period of the industry’s history. These articles will give readers a better understanding of who the key players were that shaped the Bay Area nursery scene since Cal Hort’s inception, as well as some of the major horticultural related events and trends that took place during this 75 year period.

These articles will be an extension of the work I am currently undertaking in the process of completing a Master Degree in Geography from San Francisco State University. My thesis project focuses on documenting changes to the Bay Area Nursery Industry in the Post War Era. I chose this time frame because in many ways this period can be categorized as the modern nursery era during which the nursery business began to take a form which we can all recognize today. My interest in this subject was born out of my background growing up in the nursery business. My great grandfather, Floyd Dillon, founded Four Winds Growers in the late 1940s. He moved his fledgling dwarf citrus nursery to Fremont in 1951, where we continue to operate the business to this day.

Early on in my research it became evident that there was a lack of scholarly studies focusing on the role that nurseries have played in shaping urban and suburban landscapes. As a fourth generation nurseryman with a passion for history, I found this fact disturbing, so I began to contemplate how to fill this void within the literature. I started looking for information about the history of nurseries in the Bay Area and found that little work had been done since the 1970’s.

In 1975 the late Charlie Burr, former president of the Western Horticultural Society and Pacific Horticultural Foundation, published a pamphlet entitled “The First 25 Years” documenting the early history of the Peninsula Chapter of the California Association of Nurserymen (today known as CANGC). Outside of Charlie’s work, little effort has been made to capture the rich history of the Bay Area nurseries in the modern era. So over the course of the last few months I have had the pleasure of interviewing many of the industry leaders who have been active in the Bay Area plant scene during this period. I look forward to sharing their stories with you over the course of the next year.

Answer the Question Lady: December’s Question - What was your best garden gift ever?

From Ellen Frank:

My most treasured “gardening” gift was from my Auntie Phyllis. She had this long driveway up to her house and all along this long driveway she had masses of California Poppies she had sown. It was gorgeous. At about that same time, early college years for me, everything I did was wildflowers. I went wildflower hunting and collected California Poppy anything. The most treasured gift that I received was a square Tupperware container with a red lid, a little smaller than a sandwich, about 4” tall and three quarters filled with California Poppy seeds. It was fun to see those thousands, if not millions of tiny black spheres of promised life. That winter I enlisted a friend and we took a drive up through

Tilden Park and took that Tupperware container with us. I drove and my friend tossed seeds out the passenger car window. It was fun playing Ellen Poppy Seed and spreading my Aunt’s gift of orange sunshine. I never did get back in the spring to see if Wildcat Canyon Road had an orange shoulder of poppies, but I’m sure it was probably gorgeous.

From Jill Salmon:

I actually give a bucket of horse manure (from the stable where my daughter rides)-well aged - to a couple of my friends who love their roses and seem very pleased to receive it-I hope they are not faking it!

Leonotus dysophylla
Lamiaceae
Kathy Echols, Martinez

One of 30 species in this African genus, according to Kathy this is a tall plant to 8 feet from a woody base. It's common name is tall lion's tail. The orange flowers are in thick whirls widely spaced on the upper stems. It likes full sun and tolerates low water. It is hardy to moderate frost.



Banksia blechnifolia
proteaceae
David Feix, Berkeley

Known as the fern Banksia, this plant should be grown for its leaves alone. The pale green thick fernlike leaves are very long-lasting and arise from a creeping wooly ground-hugging stem. It can eventually form a large drift a few feet wide. It has a brush like inflorescence of reddish-pink flowers with cream colored styles. It needs full sun, especially in winter, with well-drained acidic nutrient poor soil to thrive. It tolerates light frost.



Haemanthus albiflos
Amaryllidaceae
Bruce Peters, San Francisco

This charming evergreen bulb is one of the easiest amaryllids from South Africa to grow. The evergreen strap-shaped 2 inch wide leaves are usually in pairs and are held parallel to the ground. In late fall a shaving-brush like stalk arises with white flowers. This plant can grow in either full or part shade. It is easy to grow outdoors year round as long as it is in well drained soil and is protected from snails and slugs. For that reason container growing is best. It is not frost tolerant.



Steve
Morse
photos



Hippeastrum hybrid
Amaryllidaceae
Paul Landis

The beautiful Hippeastrum may be a form of *H. aulicum* or it may be a hybrid with that species as a parent. The plant shown had reddish flowers 4-5 inches across. Like

others brought in by the speaker it had a more delicate species look rather than the large bold florist "amaryllis", seen so often around the holidays. These species Hippeastrums are best grown in containers so they can be protected from excessive winter wet or cold. While they are almost evergreen, most species need a dry resting phase after their post flowering flush of new leaves, which usually occurs in late winter or spring.



Steve
Morse
photos



Lachenalia rubida
Liliaceae
Bruce Peters, San Francisco

In South Africa numerous species of *Lachenalia* dot the winter rainfall landscapes with spots of color, even in very dry desert regions. This species is known as the first to bloom and here in California can bloom as early as October. It has spikes of one inch ruby-red flowers, usually 6 or 8 per stem. Like most lachenalias, it has two lance like green four inch long leaves at ground level. It is summer dormant and quite prone to damage from slugs or snails. It is not frost hardy.

Massonia pustulata
Hyacinthaceae
Don Mahoney, Richmond

This winter growing summer dormant South African bulb has two prostrate 2 inch wide leaves that are covered with small bumps, hence it's species name. The shaving brush fragrant white flowers are held tightly at ground level between the two leaves. The best forms have red tinted new growth. They need full sun, well drained soil and protection from snails, slugs and frost.

January 17- February 21, Thursday 1 PM – 4:30 PM

Bay Friendly Landscape Maintenance Training & Qualification Program - Class for experienced public and private professionals who manage landscape in Alameda County. Learn environmentally friendly maintenance practices that keep your clients' landscapes beautiful and healthy. Classes will meet Thursdays, 1:00 PM – 4:30 PM in Oakland, \$35. For more info and to apply visit www.BayFriendly.Org

February 29, Friday 8 AM – 5 PM

Bay-Friendly Landscaping and Gardening Conference - Hosted by StopWaste.org. Topics will include: Bay-Friendly practices for nurturing the soil, Innovations in irrigation for making every drop of water count, Anatomy of a Bay-Friendly landscape, and Beyond ladybugs and lacewings: an in-depth look at beneficial insects. 8:00 AM – 5 PM, \$75 includes lunch and all conference materials. For more info and to register visit www.bayfriendly.org/conference

May 10, Saturday 10 AM – 4 PM

Anderson Valley Horticultural Forum's Garden Tour - The Fourth annual "spectacular garden tour" will consist of four private gardens and one commercial garden. Proceeds benefit the Anderson Valley Elder Home. Tickets will be limited so early purchase is recommended. 10:00 AM – 4 PM; cost \$40/person. Checks payable to the AV ElderHome and mailed to Ginger Valen, P.O. Box 222, Boonville, CA. 95415. For more info call (707)895-9424 or e-mail waldenvalen@pacific.net

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

January 9 – February 13, Wednesday mornings, 9:30 AM – Noon

Training Sessions for Volunteers at the Arboretum - These classes are open to anyone who has an interest in gardening and volunteering. Presentations will cover Arboretum gardens and plant collections, plant conservation, gardening tips, plant propagation, and much more. Volunteer opportunities include: Garden Work, Tours, Special Events, Library, Gift Shop, Education Program, and Propagation! Attend all or just a few sessions. 9:30 AM – Noon, for more info, call Susie Bower at (831) 427-2998.

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

January 19, Saturday 10 AM – 1 PM

Lilies for the Garden - Many of the lilies in the garden trade today are born and bred by Judith Freeman on her Lily Garden Farm in Vancouver. Judith will make a rare public appearance here to give us a 'behind the scenes' look at how new lilies are developed and propagated for the garden. You will get expert advice on how to grow these magnificent garden plants along with sensational examples of the best lily types and previews of new introductions. Coffee and refreshments. 10:00 AM – 1 PM, members \$25, non-members \$35.

January 26, Saturday 8 AM – 5 PM

Down to Earth Gardening - A symposium on gardening that works in harmony with nature, pays attention to sustainability, and results in a garden that is beautiful and responsible. Led by two of Europe's most prominent garden-makers, Helen Dillon and David Howard, both leaders in their dedication to putting plants in the "right" place and joined by Debra Lee Baldwin and Richie Steffen, who bring their local knowledge to the topic. 8:00 AM – 5 PM, members \$124, non-members \$134.

February 9, Thursday evening, 7:30 PM

California Desert Plants: Amazing Beauty in a Harsh Environment - Steve Hartman, veteran leader of many CNPS desert field trips over the past two decades, will take you on a Powerpoint tour of the Sonoran and Mojave deserts. Learn about the many plant communities and the key plant species that inhabit these hot arid regions. 7:30 PM, members free, non-members \$5.

February 9, Saturday 9 AM – 1 PM

Urban Gardening with Hydroponics - Using lights and hydroponic methods can extend your garden's growing season to 365 days, providing year-round fresh salads and herbs, even in a small area. Join Plant-It Earth's Brooke Taggart and Erin Worthing for an introduction to Light, Wind, Water, and Earth approach to gardening indoors. Course fee includes the equipment and supplies you will need to create a passive hydroponic system. 9:00 AM – 1 PM, members \$40, non-members \$50.

U.C. BOTANICAL GARDEN AT BERKELEY
(510) 643-2755 • www.botanicalgarden.berkeley.edu

February 2, Saturday morning, 9 AM – Noon

Sick plant clinic - UC plant pathologist Dr. Robert Raabe, UC entomologist Dr. Nick Mills and their team of experts will diagnose your plant's ailments. 9 AM – Noon, free.

Furcraea foetida mediopicta
Family: Agavaceae

Plants of the genus *Furcraea* are native to a large area, from Mexico south to Brazil. Similar to their yucca relatives, these plants grow a large rosette of long leaves. Unlike their agave cousins, they have no spines! While some species grow a trunk, *Furcraea foetida* doesn't. It will grow in cool sun or light shade to about 6 or 7 feet high, and once established, requires little water. This is a striking plant, with bold creamy stripes on its blue-green leaves. Unlike other succulents, it doesn't need lots of heat in order to thrive, making it an ideal plant near the coast, where it can be too cool for other large succulents.

A monocarp, *furcraea* flowers only once in its

life, usually when it is 15-20 years old. The huge flower spike can be 15 to 25 feet tall, and develops long, weeping branches covered in flowers. The flowers produce small bulbils, that fall off and quickly begin to grow around the mother plant, which gradually dies after flowering. Although native to the new world, this plant was named after Antoine Francois de Fourcroy, an 18th century French chemist who helped establish the system of chemical nomenclature. The species name translates as 'stinking'. It is unclear how this name was selected, as there is no strong odor from the plant. Perhaps this name tells us more about Antoine Francois de Fourcroy than we need to know...

SAVE THE DATE, 2008

Save the dates of May 27 to June 2, 2008 for the California Horticultural Society's field trip to Pennsylvania. This is an opportunity for you to visit the historical birthplace of gardening in the US .

There will be many private gardens as well as the famous Dupont Public gardens and of course nurseries. To find out more, e-mail Kristin Yanker Hansen at yankerhansen@sbcglobal.net or call 925 831-9499

Membership year begins January 1 and includes a full subscription to *Pacific Horticulture*. Dues are \$50 individual, \$65 joint household, \$25 student (with proof of enrollment). To join, or for full range of membership levels, please visit our web site at www.calhortsociety.org

Deadline for publication is the third Monday of each month for the following month's Bulletin, with the exception of December. Events during the first ten days of the month should be submitted two months ahead.

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