

BULLETIN
THE CALIFORNIA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

California Academy of Sciences
Golden Gate Park
San Francisco, California 94118



JUNE 2001

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 Avenue 9 bistro, 1243 Ninth Ave., San Francisco \$15

7:30PM Meeting will be held at the California Academy of Sciences, Morrison Auditorium Golden Gate Park. *Guest fee \$5.**

The Plant Drawing each month provides an important source of funds for the Grants and Scholarship Program. The drawing in June will include donations from **Wayward Gardens of Sebastopol**, California (Leana Sims) and **Strybing Arboretum Society** (Dr. Don Mahoney). Our appreciation to all those who graciously donated the beautiful specimens for the Silent Auction at the Annual Meeting.

Monday, June 18, 2001

Co-sponsored with Strybing Arboretum Society & Mediterranean Garden Society
"Cistus Species & Natural Hybrids Around the Mediterranean"

Presented by Olivier Filippi, well known authority on Cistus who has collected species & hybrids in various parts of the world & maintains France's National Collection of *Cistus* numbering 250 different plants in his experimental garden. He will review 60-70 of the best forms for gardens as well as their native habitats, the landscapes & other plants with which they are commonly associated. In a beautiful double screen presentation, he will show *Cistus* species and their natural hybrids and give a more global understanding of their natural habitat. As cistus are found all around the Mediterranean in very different conditions of soil, altitude and climate, he will give an overview of the 'best companion plants' from the Mediterranean flora. For example *Artemisia arborescens* in Crete, *Euphorbia dendroides* in Greece, *Retama roetam* near the Nequev desert in Israel, *Pistacia lentiscus* in France, *Phlomis purpurea* in Spain, *Teucrium truticans* in the Atlas Mountains.



Monday, July 16, 2001

Coming Meetings

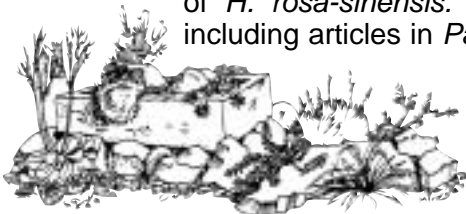
Co-Sponsored with Strybing Arboretum Society
"Rock Gardens and Rock Garden Plants"

Presented by **Dick Dunmire**, former Senior Editor of *Sunset Magazine* and *Sunset Western Garden book*. The illustrated program will show many of the common and rare rock garden plants with photographs of rock gardens under construction and some finished rock gardens from various places here and abroad. The principal display will be of rock garden plants, individually and in groups, including many unusual or rare species such as *Daphne petraea* and *Dicentra peregrina*. There will also be some pots, troughs, and alpine plants from Edinburgh to Inverewe, Denver and Vancouver and south. The slides for this presentation were made for possible *Sunset* rock garden stories or for a rock garden book that never materialized.

Monday, August 20, 2001

"Hibiscus—beautiful new hybrids for non-tropical climates"

Presented by **Charles Black**, owner of Hidden Valley Hibiscus, and a specialist in the hybridization, propagation, growing, and distribution of the fancy new forms of *H. rosa-sinensis*. He has spoken and written extensively on this subject including articles in *Pacific Horticulture* and the *American Nurseryman*



President's Letter

by Dr. Don Mahoney

This is being written the day of our extraordinary annual Plant Sale. It is truly a group effort led by our stalwart plant sale committee members and is the Society's primary fundraiser. It's also a public service, as it provides a great opportunity for the gardening public to purchase plants not usually available through normal retail outlets. It's a great way for us Cal Hort members to exchange plant material with each other and, at the same time, help keep the Society solvent.

A great deal of thanks to those who volunteered to do all the hard work to put the event together.

Notable Nurseries

Every month, various nurseries donate well-grown and wonderful plants for our Plant Raffle at the meetings. The raffle being a raffle and all, you don't always get that mega-cool plant you've been dying for, even if you put all of your tickets in one cup!

To make it easier on you plantaholics, here is the contact information so you can find these great nurseries.

Wayward Gardens

1296 Tilton Road
Sebastopol, CA
(707) 829-8225
Fri-Sun 11-5 or by appt.

Wayward Gardens is a relatively new nursery nestled into a gorgeous country setting specializing in plants for bird & butterfly habitats. Leana Beeman-Sims has quickly built this nursery into a respected plant and animal lover haven through hard work and breadth of plant choices. For example, she grows almost all the larval plants needed by our CA native butterflies!

A must see is the annual spiral/labyrinth garden planted with the monarch butterfly in mind, growing to over 8' with choice larval and nectar plants. Best viewed from August to October.

Most plants in 4" and 1 gallon. Also has an array of natives and unusual plants which keep people coming back again and again. Retail only.



Strybing Arboretum and Botanical Gardens

(415) 661-1316
Ninth Ave at Lincoln Way

Strybing's nursery propagates many truly rare and unusual plants from its gardens. They focus on material that will do well in the Bay Area but there's always a few things worth pushing the climate envelope for. Although not open daily to the public, there are monthly plant sales offering a bounty of treasures. The next sales are June 9 and July 14. ✨

This is the time of the year I really begin to appreciate the drought tolerant Mediterranean plants in my garden. All those tomatoes and bedding plants I planted with such grandiose visions of a big harvest somehow don't want to grow without water and this warm May is seriously giving me second thoughts! Maybe next year, a few more ceanothus or hebes and a few less tomatoes might be a better way to go.

Of course, I've just bought four very full flats of plants from our Annual Cal Hort Plant Sale, including a water iris, so here we go again... ✨

Botanical Tours

August 14–September 1

Namaqualand & the Western Cape with *Pacific Horticulture* editor Richard Turner as leader. Info: (800) 624-6633.

October 12–28

Botanical & Cultural Treasures of China's Yunnan Province sponsored by Strybing Arboretum Society & San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden. Info: (800) 624-6633.

January 9-27, 2002

Argentina, Chile & Patagonia Sponsored by *Pacific Horticulture* and Strybing Arboretum Society and led by Dr. Don Mahoney. Info: (800) 624-6633.

August 20 - 30, 2001

Montane Pteridophytes and Angiosperms of Ecuador Alan Smith (University Herbarium, UC Berkeley) and Grady Webster (Herbarium, UC Davis), Sponsored by: The Friends of the Jepson Herbarium and Betchart Expeditions. Please contact Staci Markos at the Jepson Herbarium for more details. (510) 643-7008.
<http://ucjeps.herb.berkeley.edu/active.html>

April 24 - May 8, 2002

A Springtime Medley of Gardens: Floraide & Keukenhof in Holland-Bruges; Belgium-Paris at cherry Blossom-time
Sponsored by Strybing Arboretum Society. Info: (800) 624-6633.



April Plant Forum by Fred Coe

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

1. *Lunaria annua* 'albo marginata'

(Honesty, Silver Dollar)

BRASSICACEAE

David Feix, Berkeley

This is a commonly grown plant in the usual form, but not often seen with the white-edged leaves. This may be the form called 'Haslemere' although the description doesn't quite fit. In spite of the name "annua", it is actually a biennial, the variegation showing the second year. The septum of the 0.75 inch seed pod gives it the generic name, as it is round and silvery - like the moon. I grew the usual form when I was in my early teens, apparently shortly after it was introduced to the U.S. Native to Central and Southern Europe; there is also *L. rediviva*, which is perennial. The flowers are purple-red.

2. *Jovellana violacea*

SCROPHULARIACEAE

David Feix, Berkeley

This is a semi-evergreen shrub native to Chile and closely related to *Calceolaria*. The violet flowers are about 0.5 inch across in terminal corymbs. The dark green leaves set off the flowers and are evergreen down to about 20°F.

3. Mixed bromeliad-echeveria pot

BROMELIACEAE

David Feix, Berkeley

Shown in a 10-inch pot were two *Aechmeas* (*A. recurvata* and *A. recurvata* v. *benrathii*) with orange-colored foliage as well as *Echeveria amoena* and *E. agavoides*, which carried out the color scheme. Also included were two *Kalanchoes*.

4. *Podophyllum pleianthum*

BERBERIDACEAE

Barbara and John Hopper, Kenwood

Shown growing in a container with an enormous glossy leaf or leaves 2 feet across supported by an upright stem about 12-14 inches high. This is a plant of Central and S.E. China, which grows in moist woodlands. It was in flower with dark maroon petals exuding a rotten-meat odor. This is very similar to another Chinese species, *P. versipelle*. The plant shown is 3-1/2 years old.

5. *Pleione x Tangariro* 'Jackdaw'

ORCHIDACEAE

Frederick Coe, Ross

A brilliant magenta-flowered hardy orchid created by Ian Butterfield in England. The parents are native to China and the plants bloom before the leaf growth. The flower is 2.5 inches across with a lip colored yellow inside. The leaves drop in late fall and the pseudo bulbs tolerate dry, cold temperatures in the high 20's during winter.

6. *Iris confusa* 'Chengdu'

IRIDACEAE

David Feix, Berkeley

This is one of the *Evansia* ("cristata") irises and it gets the curious name "confusa" because it is easily confused with *I. japonica* or *I. wattii* when not in bloom. All three of these species have woody stalks about 1.5-2+ feet tall bearing a fan of shiny foliage. The cut stalk shown was in flower, the flowering scape coming out of the center of the fan and bearing 8-10 two-inch flowers. These are white or very pale blue with yellow spots. Native to western China.

7. *Bartlettina sordida*

David Feix, Berkeley

Although the *Eupatoriums* found in the U.S. can grow to 7 or 8 feet, this close relative from Mexico reaches 10 feet and is a real shrub. The stems are covered with red hairs at first. The heads of violet colored flowers are about five inches across and fragrant.

8. *Dichroa febrifuga*

HYDRANGEACEAE

David Feix, Berkeley

This is a sub-tropical species probably hardy to 28°F. It is an evergreen shrub 4 to 8 feet tall with hydrangea-like heads of blue and lavender (*dichroa* - 2 colors) flowers. From the species name it must be used for treating fever. Himalayas?

9. *Impatiens balfourii*

BALSAMINACEAE

David Feix, Berkeley

This is an annual growing to about 20 inches in height with racemes of flowers colored white, pink, yellow and bright rose. It is an attractive plant tolerant of sun and shade so long as there is water. It is native to the western Himalayas and will naturalize if happy.

10. *Parahebe perflata*

SCROPHULARIACEAE

David Feix, Berkeley

Native to the higher country of New South Wales in Australia, this is a perennial to 2 feet with arching stems of gray-green ovate, stem-clasping leaves and nodding sprays of bright blue flowers. The foliage is excellent in arrangements and could be mistaken for eucalyptus. It needs to be cutting propagated every 2 or 3 years. Cut back old stems after blooming. ♡

THE PLANT FORUM is a traditional feature of our monthly meetings. Members are strongly encouraged to bring new plants or old favorites from their gardens to tell about and share. What's old hat to you might be a brand new wonder to another member. What is putting on a display in **your** garden this winter? Bring it in and share it with us!

Garden Ramblings

by Michael D. Barclay

The Collector's Garden

First let me thank the many of you who have written to me asking that I resume this monthly column. It was fun working with Fred Coe on the Plant Forum report but this is far more enjoyable. Your letters and phone calls and the support of my fellow council members have helped me toward full recovery and I know Barbara Hopper will feel the same way as her arm heals.

I remember when I won 'Best Collector's Garden' in the first Berkeley Hort. Garden Contest last century. I was pleased that I'd won and even more that my garden was understood! There are those of us "in total thrall to plants"* who will shamelessly squeeze something exciting into every square cubit of space. How then can we find order in chaos, beauty in naked greed? I've learned certain lessons, which I'd like to share with you in this, and future columns. First we must reconcile ourselves to the fact that even if we begin to garden on a sunny hillside that "down the path a piece" we will become full-fledged shade gardeners searching for perennials or fabulous fungi to decorate the ground beneath our forest of trees and shrubs. This is a given. Of course there is the alternative of editing, BUT who are we kidding? One tree goes and six shrubs take its place.

Second one ought to recognize that the garden of someone suffering from "terminal plant avarice"** will never have an overall design but in fact will by necessity become "a garden of vignettes."*** This means that to the lay visitor the garden will appear chaotic as if it grew "like Topsy." But to our Cal Hort friends and their ilk it will appear as a gem with thousands of facets ever-changing through the light and time continuum.

I was looking out my back door quite early this morning to revel in several scented rhododendrons which were blooming, *Rh.* 'Scott's Starbright', a *R. rhabdotum* x 'Else Frye' cross which retains the bright red stripes of *rhabdotum* and adds some of Else's tremendous fragrance, 'Lady Alice Fitzwilliams', a contemporary of 'Fragrantissimum' and its superior in fragrance, blossom form and pest resistance, her flowers 4"+ wide flat white moons, and the dazzling pure pink of *Rh. formosum* 'Tashi's Form.' My attention was diverted by the centifolia Rose 'Tour de Malakoff' covered with enormous buds. I stared at the scene before me realizing it was a vignette writ large and complex.

At ground level the last ensilvered leaves of my *Cyclamen hederifolium* were being engulfed by a sea of "Baby Tears." Emerging from the froth were the fronds of five "absurd" lady-

ferns *Athyrium felix-femina* 'Frizelliae Cristatum,' each emerald frond wrapped in a boa of circular leaves, a wonderfully defined architectonic design among the froth. *Geranium* 'Biokovo' climbed through the ferns and into the trunk of the old 19th century fragrant rhododendron hybrid, 'Lady Alice Fitzwilliams,' her potent nocturnal sweetness still lingering in the garden. Next to her *Rh.* 'Bill Massey' had begun to open its large fragrant frilled trumpets of cream from its blush-pink buds. The white of the rhododendron blossoms sent my gaze back down to a painfully slowly expanding clump of *Hedera helix* 'Stift Neuburg' with its dazzling white variegated leaves, blush pink petioles and fuchsia stems.

Funny that I'd never noticed her stems before since they echoed the huge buds of the centifolia rose hanging high above them threaded through the vining form of 'Lady Alice.' The verticality of *Lophomyrtus* x *ralphii* 'Sundae' was slowly being squashed under the weight of the huge rose whose cerise-pink buds struck a tense discord against the blush pinks of 'Biokovo' and the ivy's leaf stems. The entire affair was suspended magically from the branches of my favorite Japanese Maple, 'Beni Shishihenge,' these days being often incorrectly sold as 'Butterfly.' From the bed beneath my kitchen windows the tea rose 'Lady Hillingdon' threw her first enormous apricot colored and scented flowers across the path which picked up

the color of the dozens of corollas of *Abutilon* 'Victor's Folly' (flaxen-apricot corollas with red veins and wonderful maroon calyces) which this year appears to have strolled ten feet across the garden away from *Phormium* 'Rubrum.'

It was chaotic with the exuberance of spring, many weeks from strangling me with the overripeness of summer. It made little sense, the blue-pinks peeking out of the warm shadows beneath the salmon-orange-pink of the maple and

the discord of the rose's cerise buds. Those were almost frightening in their profusion, since I knew they'd soon open to huge blossoms of cherry-pink, dove grey, blood red and mauve swirling like hallucinatory pinwheels, silencing anything less loud, and I knew I was studying a collector's garden so much stronger than the collector himself no editorial assistance could help, and slightly embarrassed, I laughed out loud.

* Marcia Donahue 1986 ** Keith Cahoon 1988 *** the author's title of a book he is writing.

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Horticultural Calendar

June 21

Field Observations, Spotting insect and disease issues—a walk through Strybing Arboretum (early time 4:30 p.m.). SFPGA, \$20 non-members for CEU hours, (415) 753-1366.

July 11

Learn grassroots fundraising for your neighborhood park—12–1:30 PM in the law offices of Pillsbury, Madison & Sutro, 50 Fremont St. Free, but reservations required. Nick (415) 750-5224 or nick@frp.org.

July 9–August 17

Summer Day Camp—for children ages 8-11 at UC Davis Arboretum. “Hands-On Nature” & “Putah Players” Six week-long sessions from 8:30 AM to 12:30 PM, with optional afternoon add-ons available until 5:30 pm. The cost is \$115 per child per session (\$95 members), or \$215 for two sessions (\$175 members). Limited to twenty students per session. For more information, please call (530) 752-4880.

Strybing Arboretum Society
(415) 661-1316 • www.strybing.org

June 9

Sick Plant Clinic—Bring your plant questions to experts, ID, mystery pests & diseases, etc. Main Gate from NOON-3PM. Free.

June 9

Plant Sale—Perennials & epiphyllums featured at the nursery from 10 AM–1PM.

June 14

Trees & Shrubs of California—Lecture & Booksigning with authors John Stuart & John Sawyer. In the Goethe Room, CA Academy of Sciences, \$6, non-SAS, CNPS, or Acad. of Sci. members \$10.

June 16

New Zealand's Cabbages—Explore the ethnobotany and botany of NZ's remarkable flora with Dr. Warwick Harris and Scot Medbury. \$20, docents/volunteers \$10, non-SAS members \$25.

June 17

Story Time & Garden Walk for Children—“Lotus Fairies and Root Children,” for children 4–8. Free. HCR Library. 10:15AM.

June 21-June 23

Advancing Alternatives: Creative Solutions for Bay Area Pest Problems—detailed, practical techniques for Bay Area's toughest pests and weeds. Thu. 6:30-9:30 pm in HCR Library; Sat. 9 am-1:30 pm in greenhouse. \$35, non-SAS members \$40.

July 14

Plant Sale—Bird & butterfly plants featured at the nursery from 10 AM–1PM.

UC Botanical Garden - Berkeley
(510) 643-1924 • <http://www.mip.berkeley.edu/garden/>
Second Annual Garden Party

June 16

Celebrate the completion of the new Cactus House and the renovation of African Hill. Sample wines from

“Mediterranean” vineyards, delicious nibbles and lively music in our incomparable setting! 3:00–6:00 PM \$25.

June 18

Summer Day Camp—Weekly, beginning June 18. For information, please call (510) 643-1924.

July 1

Sick Plant Clinic—U.C. Experts diagnose your plant woes the first Saturday of each month. 9AM–NOON, (Free)

HORT NOTES:

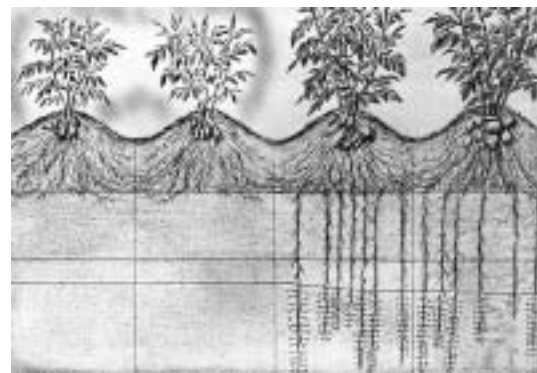
✦ **SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS** applications now available from Barbara K. Hopper, Box 783, Kenwood CA, online at www.calhortsociety.org or by email request to bhopper@calhortsociety.org. Maximum grant \$2500. Deadline for receipt of applications July 10, 2001. ✦



MASTER GARDENER is seeking a rental around Berkeley to create a great garden as well as pay rent. Please call Garry Bernhardt, (415) 285-3363.

New “Super Spud” Glows Green to Ask for Water

Reuters - Scientists have pioneered a genetically modified “super potato” that glows when it needs water, the head of the project said.



Researchers at Edinburgh University injected potato plants with a fluorescence gene borrowed from the luminous jellyfish *aequorea victoria*, which causes their leaves to glow green when dehydrated.

“This is an agriculture of the future,” Professor Anthony Trewavas said. “We were trying to design a way of monitoring the resources within a field and decided it was the plant itself which has that information.”

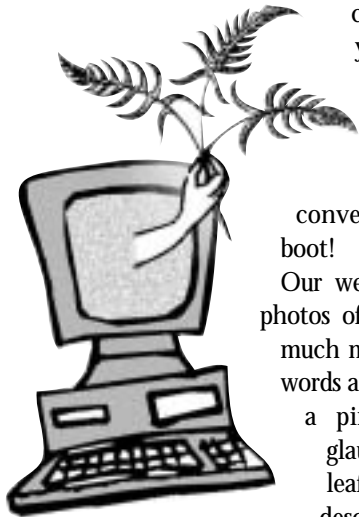
The potatoes are not intended to be eaten but would act as “sentinels,” planted beside the commercial crop to alert a farmer that the rest of his field needed watering.

The glow is barely visible to the naked eye but can be detected using a small hand-held device. Field trials are due to start next year though Trewavas predicted it could take some 20 years before the plants are commonly used.

The technology could be extended to other fruit and vegetables, he added. ✦

Instant Info!

If you just can't wait to get the latest news from our *Society Bulletin*, log on to www.calhortsociety.org and go to the 'Bulletin Online' section to see a PDF version of each issue. The *Bulletin* is posted on our site by the first of every month. You can also see past Bulletins—it's



a virtual filing cabinet! Even if you're not a World Wide Web kind of person, give it a try. It's super easy, immensely

convenient and free, to boot!

Our web site also contains photos of the Plant Displays, much more descriptive than words alone (can you picture a pinnately compound, glaucous, highly dentate leaf?) along with their descriptions.

It's also a great repository for info you might need about the upcoming meetings, dues etc. ❁

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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. Please give any information to Elsie at the meeting or, preferably, email to Bruce at the above address. Faxes and postal submissions also accepted.

Membership year begins January 1. Dues are \$40 individual, \$50 joint household, \$25 Student (w/ proof of enrollment). To join, or for full range of membership levels, please visit our website at www.calhortsociety.org or call the Office secretary at the number above.

ADVERTISING: Rates: \$60 for a business card size (3 3/4" w x 2" h), \$75 for 1/8 page (3 3/4" w x 2 1/2" h), \$150 for 1/4 page (3 3/4" w x 5" h). Submit ads or questions to *Bulletin* Editor at above postal or email address.

California Horticultural Society

California Academy of Sciences

San Francisco, CA 94118

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