



BULLETIN
THE CALIFORNIA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY
San Francisco County Fair Building
Ninth Avenue at Lincoln Way
San Francisco, California 94122
March 21, 2005



4:00 PM Botanical gardens walk with speaker at Strybing Arboretum.
Parking is available behind the San Francisco Co, Fair Building on 9th Ave.
5:30PM 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 Strybing Arboretum in the San Francisco County Fair Building at 9th Avenue and Lincoln Way; San Francisco.
8:00 PM Speaker and Plant Drawing.

***Guest fee \$5.

Monday, March 21, 2005

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

“Exploring Taiwan with the Dendrological Atlas Project”

Presented by **Kathy Musial**, Curator of Living Collections Huntington Botanical Gardens for 21 years. “Made in Taiwan is most likely the first image to come to mind when one thinks of the island dubbed “Ilha Formosa” (“Beautiful Island”) centuries ago by colonizing Portuguese. But despite its 30 million inhabitants, who mostly occupy the western lowlands, the eastern half of this small island is a wilderness of rugged mountains and forests and home to a flora ranging from tropical to alpine. Kathy worked throughout Taiwan with the Dendrological Atlas Project, where she was able to see a variety of habitats including virgin forests with impressive specimens of *Taiwania cryptomerioides* and rare species such as *Amentotaxus formosana*.



The Plant Drawing each month is an important source of funds for the Grants and Scholarships Program. In March, the drawing will include donations from UC Botanical Garden, Berkeley, California, courtesy of **Anthony Garza** and from the **San Francisco Botanical Garden Society**, courtesy of **Dr. Don Mahoney**. Our appreciation to **Plantopia Nursery**, Castro Valley, courtesy of **Lawrence Lee** ; and to the **San Francisco Botanical Garden Society at Strybing Arboretum** courtesy of **Dr. Don Mahoney** for the outstanding plants donated for the February meeting.

Monday, April 18, 2005

Co-sponsored with

San Francisco Botanical Garden Society at Strybing Arboretum

“Modern-Day Plant Hunters: the New Explorers and Their Discoveries”

Presented by Bobby J. Ward, environmental scientist, past president of the American Rock Garden Society and noted author. Many gardeners are aware of the “greats” of historical plant exploration, such as E.H. Wilson, George Forrest, or John Tradescant. Fewer of us may know the names of today’s plant explorers or recognize the makings of a new golden age of plant discovery-the post-Cold War era-of which we are the beneficiaries. A visit to almost any nursery will reveal the bounty of these current-day intrepid plant collectors, whose handiwork enriches public and private gardens everywhere. In his talk on modern-day plant hunters, the speaker profiles some of today’s more prolific plant hunters and some of the many plants they’ve introduced and promoted. From the Czech Republic and the U.K., to South Africa and Chile, and to the U.S. and Canada, Ward has sought out those explorers in the private sphere who are collecting plants specifically for horticultural introduction through their nurseries or businesses.



President's Letter

by Bruce Peters

If you weren't at the February meeting, you missed the big, depressing announcement. Our major fundraiser, the annual Cal Hort Plant Sale, has been cancelled. The worst part is that there's no reason it should have been.

We have lots of great members who grow tons of healthy, cool, interesting plants and who are willing to donate them to our cause. We also have a large number of people -- members and nonmembers alike -- who are willing to come to our sale and spend large amounts of money to snag those cool plants and help out a worthy cause at the same time (I'd wager many are focused mostly on the former reason; I know that's often true for me!).

The one thing we do NOT have, however, is a team of people -- or even a single person -- willing to set aside some time to organize the sale. That is the very discouraging reality I'm trying to deal with.

I know most volunteer-run organizations survive through the efforts of a few dedicated, hard workers. We've been trying hard to spread the work around so more people are involved, thereby lessening the load for everyone. In some ways, it's been working, but the cancellation of a vital and important annual event shows that it's not working very well.

Being the optimist that I am, I hope the 2004 sale was not the last and that we're just on a brief hiatus, storing energy so that we come back bigger, stronger and better next year. There have been many people who have given us some

great ideas but, as yet, no one's willing to help turn those ideas into reality—a necessary step if we're ever going to have another plant sale.

Other, less optimistic people might think that this marks the beginning of the end of our organization. They might feel the plant sale is just the first in a long line of casualties as everyone leaves the work to nonexistent "others." Let's all prove them wrong!

I know it's a big hurdle deciding to do something you've never done before. I still remember signing up for the first time on one of Kristin YankerHansen's infamous clipboards years ago, but I (finally) did it and you can too! Please call or email me (the info is on the back of this newsletter) to let me know I can tell those pessimists that they're wrong!



The Plant Forum...

...will return next month. Be sure to bring in your horticultural delights to share!

Botanical Tours

April 21-25, 2005

A Springtime Medley of Private Gardens in the Santa Barbara Area with Barbara and John Hopper. In support of SF Botanical Garden Society.

May 19 - June 8, 2005

Botanical and Cultural Treasures of China's Sichuan & Yunnan Provinces escorted by Kathy Musial, Curator of living Collections at the Huntington Botanical Gardens. A *Pacific Horticulture* tour.

August 26-September 9, 2005

South Africa in Springtime, Natural History of Namaqualand & the Western Cape Province—In support of the California Horticultural Society led by Kristen Yanker-Hansen.

October 12-21, 2005

Wildflowers, Gardens, Natural History and Fjordland of Chile at the Peak of Springtime Bloom with noted horticulturist and Landscape Architect Professor Wes Conner. In support of the SF Botanical Garden Society.

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!

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 have just run across an interesting item, share it with the rest of us! Contact Bruce at editor@calhortsociety.org or (415) 824-1833.

Open Gardens: if you'd like to open your garden to other members, either for inclusion on a tour or just as a single garden, email opengardens@calhortsociety.org or call Renee at (415) 388-6850.

Publicity Chair: We're looking for someone to help coordinate our publicity efforts. As it is now, we have various people doing various things and it would be nice to have one person keep track of it all. Not very time-intensive, but very important for the Society! Call Bruce at (415) 824-1833.

Seeing Color in a Different Light

Presented by Karen Platt
www.karenplatt.co.uk

Black mondo grass. Purple beech. These are the colored plants that set Karen Platt on the trail that eventually led her to the San Francisco County Fair Building on February 21 to speak at our monthly meeting.

As a child, the only tree that interested Platt was the purple-leaf (or copperleaf) beech, a marvelously dark-toned selection of *Fagus sylvatica*, the European beech. Later, when she first noted the inky straps of black mondo grass, *Ophiopogon planiscapus* 'Nigrescens', in a garden, she began a search for other black and near-black plants. Since then, she has published several references for plant sources, such as *Garden Surf* (surveying websites) and *The Seed Search* (covering seed catalogues), as well as three plant compendia in a few editions, *Black Magic and Purple Passion*, *Gold Fever*, and *Silver Linings*.

Platt is interested in color. No doubt. Now we are too, that is, if we weren't so before her talk. She brought our attention to subtle differences in tones and luminosity, to surface patterns and textures highlighted by the deep dark purples, blues, oxbloods, and, yes, blacks that pigment the wide range of black plants she showed in her slides, and to the contrasts and spatial effects that blacks can have in the garden. No, black is not dull, nor does it create "holes" in the landscape. Later in the presentation, Platt showed a good number of gold, chartreuse and silver plants to demonstrate pleasing color combinations.

Particularly enchanting in the parade of slides were the flowers of *Pelargonium* 'Springfield Black', the new Dutch calla, *Zantedeschia* 'Black Star', and *Iris* 'Old Black Magic'. Other plant parts deliver darkness, too: *Phyllostachys nigra* (stems), *Ipomoea batatas* 'Black Heart' (leaves), *Colocasia esculenta* 'Illustris', *Ajuga* 'Braunherz', and *Aeonium* 'Swarzkopf'. Begonias are a special interest for Platt. She showed



Colocasia 'Black Magic'



Ipomoeas 'Ace of Spades' and 'Ivory Tower'

the rhizomatous *B.* 'Helen Teupel', *B.* 'Brown Twist' and *B.* 'Midnight Twister', each more lovely than the last.

Two patterns of black coloration occur, each linked to temperature. Some plants start out in the spring green or pallid, but develop deeper color as the summer weather comes on. Others show darker colors in cooler temperatures, coloring best in spring, fall, and sometimes winter.

Chartreuse and gold plants Platt shared included *Sambucus* 'Sutherland Gold', with filigreed pinnate foliage, *Spiraea* 'Ogon' ('ogon' means yellow in Japanese), *Hydrangea* 'Summer Sunlight', and the striking gold-dusted leaves of *Bergenias* 'Tubby Andrews'. A large yellow-striped *Agave* was a familiar sight to our Californian eyes.

Among the silver plants Platt showed were *Eryngium giganteum* (bracts), *Begonia* 'Silver Lace', the tropical Thai stunner *Cornukaempferia*, *Constancea*, (*Constancea nevinii* (a Catalina Island native), *Graptopetalum paraguayense*, and the unsurpassed silvertree, *Leucodendron argenteum*, whose Latin name means "silver white tree."

Integral to Platt's marvelously clear speaking style was her exact and consistent pronunciation of horticultural Latin as well as the various live-language epithets, such as *Aeonium* 'Swarzkopf'. Her sensitive and disciplined perspective brought a new way of seeing to the room.

Please Welcome The Following New Members To The California Horticultural Society

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| Beijing Book Co. | James Nackley & |
| Sondra Bierre | Elizabeth Gray |
| Paul Lee Cannon | Marietta O'Byrne |
| Caven Forrist | Beryt Oliver |
| Mary Goroff | Sue Powell |
| Patricia Gray | Roberta Ridenour |
| Jean Hansen | Linda Hansen Solinsky |
| Sonia Hildebrand | Mary TeSelle |
| Dan Johnson | Michael Tyler & |
| Glenda Jones | Amy Schustack |

Horticultural Calendar

Every Sunday

Garden Market—Neat plants for sale and free garden talks 10 AM – 2 PM at the Ferry Building SF. www.cuesa.org

March 12

Summer Blooming Bulbs—A slide lecture reviewing the basics of growing exotic bulbs for summer color. 9 – 11 AM at the Gamble Garden, 141 Waverly St, Palo Alto. Members \$30, non-members \$35 plus \$10 material fee for a surprise bag of bulbs. (650) 329-1356 or www.gamblegarden.org

March 19

Build your own Hypertufa Trough— This popular class is back. All materials will be provided to make two planters. 9:30 AM – noon, at the Gardens at Heather Farm, 1540 Marchbanks Drive, Walnut Creek. Members \$20, non-members \$25, plus a \$15 materials fee. (925) 947-1678 or www.gardenshf.org

March 19

Filoli Spring Fling—Spend the whole day exploring the gardens and estate with activities for all ages. 10 AM – 3 PM, members \$15, non-members \$20. Filoli Center, 86 La Canada Rd, Woodside, (650) 364-8300 or www.filoli.org

April 9

Spring Plant Sale and Opening Day—This sale features rare and unusual plants propagated from the garden, and no reservations required to tour the garden. 9:30 AM – 2 PM at the Ruth Bancroft Garden, 1500 Bancroft Rd, Walnut Creek. Free. (925) 210-9663 or www.ruthbancroftgarden.org

Regional Parks Botanic Garden

(510) 841-8732 • www.nativeplants.org

March 19

Compost Happens—A workshop on creating great compost. 9 – 11 AM, members \$30, non-members \$35.

March 26 & 27

Drawing and Painting CA Wildflowers—A two day hands-on workshop for all levels of students, with Linda Ann Vorobik. 10 AM – 4 PM, members \$110, non-members \$125.

April 2

Ponds, Creeks, and Puddles—An introduction to water chemistry with an eye towards the garden, with Greti Sequin. 9:30 AM – 12:30 PM, members \$30, non-members \$35.

U.C. Davis Arboretum

(530) 752-4880 • arboretum.ucdavis.edu

March 12

Spring in the Native Garden—Start off a great year for natives by touring the garden's early bloomers. 11:00 AM at the Buehler and Visitor Center, located on Old Davis Road at Mark Hall Drive, Davis. Free

March 26

Container Gardening—Tour the Terrace Garden and learn the ins and outs of the potted outdoor garden, with Mary Horton. 11:00 AM at the Terrace Garden on First Street, Davis. Free

The Gardens At Heather Farm

(925) 947-1678 • www.gardenshf.org

March 19

Build your own Hypertufa Trough— This popular class is back. All materials will be provided to make two planters. 9:30 AM – noon. Members \$20, non-members \$25, plus a \$15 materials fee.

April 6

Lighting Effects Demonstration—Learn how to light up your garden. 6 – 8 PM, free. Please RSVP by calling (510) 524-1604 XL.

April 23

Great Performers; Great Plants!—A tour and lecture on combining beautiful plants and low water needs. With Susan Handjian and Patrice Hanlon. 9 – 11:30 AM, members \$15, non-members \$20.

SF Botanical Garden Society

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

March 14

Gardening with Succulents—Create year-round interest and bold accents using these unusual plants. 6:30 – 9 PM, members \$35, non-members \$50.

April 2

Introduction to Bromeliads—Do you find Bromeliads daunting yet mysterious? Join Lupe Cota and Daniel Arcos as they bring you closer to these marvelous plants. Noon – 3 PM, members \$35, non-members \$50.

April 2

Plant Sale—Featuring Spring bloomers. 10 AM – 1 PM at the nursery.

U.C. Botanical Garden At Berkeley

(510) 643-2755 • www.botanicalgarden.berkeley.edu

First Saturday of each Month

Sick Plant Clinic—Let plant pathologist Dr. Raabe and entomologist Dr. Mills diagnose what ails your plants. 9 AM – noon, free.

April 2

Rhododendron Walk—Join Elaine Sedlack on a tour of the garden's diverse collection of rhodies. 10 AM – noon, members \$8, non-members \$12.

April 30

Spring Plant Sale—Featuring an exciting collection of unusual plants for sale. 9 AM – 2 PM.

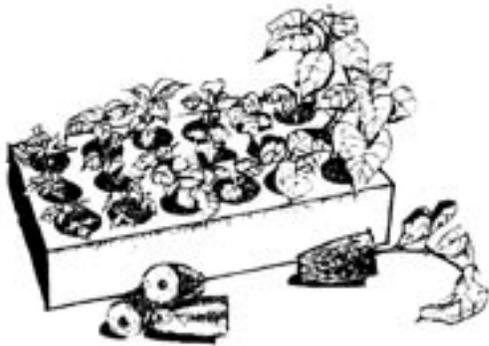
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Salvia mexicana 'limelight'

From mid-summer through the fall months, one plant in our front garden literally stops traffic. With whorls of deep blue-purple flowers emerging from chartreuse calyxes, *Salvia mexicana* 'Limelight' forces passersby to stop and stare. This beautiful plant reaches about 6 feet in our garden, and is pruned down to about a third of that height every winter. 'Limelight' rewards the diligent gardener (who really wants to be out there with pruners in all that rain and cold?) with massive growth of lush green foliage topped by the upright spikes of flowers.

Although Mexican sage loves high temperatures, it does very well in the relatively cool environment of coastal California. It can even grow in areas with light frosts if it is cut back and mulched thoroughly. This plant is not very fussy about

soil type, as long as the drainage is good. Full sun or light shade, moderate watering until established, and this plant will be happy for many years. If you can't bear just one plant, and need more, Mexican sage can be grown from tip cuttings taken during the summer. It is supposedly easy to start from seed, but I haven't tried this. There are other cultivars of *Salvia mexicana*, but the dramatic zing of 'Limelight' makes it my favorite. If you've got the space in your perennial bed, give this showstopper a try- your neighbors will thank you.



Need some Horticultural Help?

The back page of your Cal Hort Roster contains a special listing of our Business members. What better way to insure your future landscaper knows a tulip from a petunia? It's also a great place to find recommendations for your friends !



Hot Plant Picks at SF Flower & Garden Show

Once again Cal Hort is hosting the New Plant Introduction Booth at the San Francisco Flower and Garden Show on March 16th through the 20th. This is a great opportunity for us to promote new membership interest in the Society and to do a service to the all those great gardeners. People in the trade are interested in what is new and what people are responding to and the general gardening public is always looking for new exciting plants to try in their gardens. We are the hot ticket!!!

We still need a few volunteers to do a two hour shift at the booth to tell people about Cal Hort and that the plants are featured on our website, so they don't have to take too many notes. We also could use a few volunteers for set up on Monday and Tuesday and to transport plants to the Cow Palace if needed. If you would like to volunteer, contact Ellen Frank (925) 372-5559. See you at the show!

U.C. Santa Cruz Arboretum

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

March 17

Tasmania: Paradise Lost—Bill Grant will lecture on this unique island and its life forms. 7 PM, Free

March 24

Native Plant ID Workshop—Learn how to key-out native plants with help from the Jepson Manual. Bring a 7x or 10x lens if you have one. 1:30 PM, free.

April 16

Spring Plant Sale—Mark your calendars now, more details in the next Bulletin.

*Send submissions to calendar@calbortsociety.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.*

LAST CALL FOR 2005 MEMBERSHIP DUES!!!

Our bylaws state that members not renewed by March will be dropped from the roster and mailing list. We **don't** want to lose you—please respond immediately if you do not have the yellow 2005 membership card! Make checks payable to 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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2004–2006

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Diana Ross

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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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