



Bulletin  
of the  
California Horticultural Society

March  
2007

MEETINGS

4:00 PM Botanical gardens walk with speaker at Strybing Arboretum.  
Parking is available behind the San Francisco Co, Fair Building on 9<sup>th</sup> 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 SF County Fair Building at 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Lincoln Way; San Francisco.**

\*\*\*Members free. Non-members – A donation of \$5 requested .



Monday, March 19, 2007

**“Cycads – Living Fossils”**

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

***Cycad Horticultural Practices - Preservation through Propagation:***

***How to Preserve and Not Kill the Endangered Species We're Growing in Our Back Yards***

**Presented by Maurice Levin**, noted authority and grower of Cycads and owner of the **Jurassic Garden Nursery in North Hollywood, Southern California.**

*Cycads are truly living fossils, having existed for nearly 280 million years on earth, since the Cretaceous and Jurassic periods. Many believe that cycads were a primary food of herbivorous dinosaurs.*

*There are nearly 300 described species of these plants. Cycads are found mostly in tropical and subtropical areas of the world. Cycads have become very popular landscape plants over the past 15-20 years, as many people have come to appreciate their primitive and exotic beauty, as well as their rarity and value.*

This beautifully illustrated program will include the challenges facing cycad growers, specifically how they propagate, germinate, and grow these endangered species successfully. Maurice will detail the specifics of creating and building an endangered species nursery, and why this is different from typical nurseries. Specific things that all gardeners can do in their own backyards to preserve endangered species will be discussed.

***Additionally, a limited selection of endangered species plants that can be grown in Northern California gardens will be available for purchase.***

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 the **UC Botanical Garden**, courtesy of **Anthony Garza** and to the **San Francisco Botanical Garden Society**, courtesy of **Dr. Don Mahoney**. Our appreciation to the **Ruth Bancroft Garden**, courtesy of **Brian Kimble** for the outstanding selection of plants donated for the February meeting.

SAVE THIS DATE

SPECIALTY NURSERY PLANT SALE

Sponsored by the California Horticultural Society

Members only Preview Sale and Gala Saturday, March 31<sup>st</sup> 6PM- 9PM

General Sale Sunday, April 1<sup>st</sup> 11AM –3PM Lakeside Garden Center, Oakland

Thousands of beautiful, dramatic & rare plants direct to you from renowned boutique nurseries.

Monday, April 16, 2007

**“The New Impatiens”**

**The new and exciting species that are emerging from the Old World.**

With cool summers and warm winters, *Impatiens* are perfect plants for Bay Area gardens. **Derick Pitman** will be showing slides of some of the nearly 170 species from his collection. He works with the San Francisco Botanical Gardens and is introducing many new species of *Impatiens* into cultivation. In addition to founding the International Impatiens Society, Derick has created the educational website [mrimpatiens.com](http://mrimpatiens.com) and authored articles on *Impatiens* for *Pacific Horticulture* as well as lecturing on his passion.

Oh glorious rain, an essential ingredient to a glorious garden.....of course artificial rain is almost as good, but rain is free of charge and it is from the heavens. A little hoaky, but how true. There is something truly amazing in rain. It just falls in a uniform pattern (why isn't it "an uniform pattern"???) and gives life to all that drinks.

We've been having the tug of war between winter and summer. It can't make up its mind....cold? rain? Clear and warm? What about snow????? Hail? S P R I N G. I love it. It brings variety, transition and life. Gardeners are so aware of these transformations; from a dormant dreary winter garden to the popping up of daffodils and grape hyacinths, a bit of color from a primrose that was planted years ago and surprising you in this corner of the garden or that corner.

The calendar starts filling up with activities: The Cal Hort meeting on March 19<sup>th</sup>, The San Francisco Flower and Garden Show on March 21<sup>st</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup>. When am I scheduled to work my 2 hours and get in to see the show? Oh and then the following week on Saturday evening, March 31<sup>st</sup>, Cal Hort has

the Gala, which is so much fun; plants, food and wine, what else could one ask for?

The next day is the plant sale for the general public, April fools day; a wealth of volunteer opportunities awaits to make this year's sale a success. Leah Thompson, Celina Hoskins, Ann DeRosa and Diana Ross have been doing a great job in securing vendors, speakers, an auctioneer (live auction this year at the gala), the Garden Center at Lake Merritt, and publicizing the event. All they need is a little support to ring up plants (charging!!!). This is our main fund raiser to support our scholarship and grant fund.

What is still in store this spring??? Initial preparations for a spring field trip up north are in the works. What will be the highlights of the field trip? Well, of course gardens and nurseries, Silly!!!! More to come on that; so stay tuned.

Enjoy this glorious time of year. Support Cal Hort in all of our volunteer opportunities. Volunteering is not drudgery, it is opportunity to get involved with Cal Hort, play with all the crazy plant people and enjoy the world of plants.

**YOUR EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

The start of each new year bring a slight change-over in the Council as new members come in to take the place of members whose Council terms have elapsed. We thought it would be nice for you to get an idea of who the people are filling those spots. Note that we're not all garden professionals or career gardeners, but all people who care about our Society and are looking to guide it into the future in the best possible manner.

**Dave Tivol**

A member of Cal Hort for a long time, I've served on the Council and as Treasurer before managing the Seed Exchange. I no longer have a garden, but I try to grow plants on a balcony, where my biggest challenge is a destructive squirrel!

**Jim Budke**

I grew up in the Willamette Valley of Oregon where one of my responsibilities was to take care of the yard and vegetable

garden. In 1970 after serving in the U.S. Army I moved to San Francisco where I practiced internal medicine and geriatrics until retiring last year. My home is in the upper Market Street area and most of my garden is on a steep hillside. I joined Cal Hort about 20 years ago and have made a lot of friends and have benefited from the many talks, field trips and tours available to members. I look forward to serving on the council.

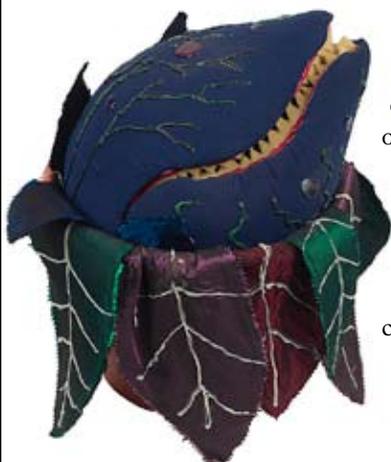
**Ellen Frank**

Plant fancier....I love seeing plants on their own growing in nature. And I love to see how people manipulate plants to make a quilt of foliage and flowers and to create an atmosphere of their choosing: tranquility, excitement, woodsy, desert, refined formal enclosures or mimicry of nature. My first job was at a neighborhood nursery and after college I started my career

*Council continued on page 6*

**New Plant Introduction Contest !!!**

**Introduce your own New Plant!**



Ever wish you could have that ideal plant.... one that would not freeze or would bloom in the winter when nothing else would or would grow tall and skinny like a hedge without having to be trimmed.....now is your chance.

Use any 3D media – clay, wire, papier-mâché, dowels, silk plant parts, etc. and “plant” the plant in a decorative container or just a plain old 1 gallon can.

Be creative in your naming...Latin and common name required, as well as cultural requirements and description.

BRING YOUR “PLANT” TO THE MARCH MEETING – March 19<sup>th</sup> and we will vote for the 3 most creative and display them at the “New Plant Picks” Exhibit at the San Francisco Flower and Garden Show...If you are willing to give them up, we can auction them off at the Gala at the plant sale.

QUESTIONS---email Ellen – president@calhortsociety.org, or call (415) 385-9862.

*Fritillaria meleagris**Fritillaria meleagris*

LILIACEAE

Fritillarias are often called checkered lilies and this European species is the most commonly seen in the trade. Many of the California species are difficult to grow and take many years to bloom from seed and so are rarely encountered in cultivation. The plant shown had several 2 inch bells on 10 inch stems. Most were a beautiful reddish brown with purple spots but one was white with purple spots. These plants are often sold at Trader Joe's and other chain stores and are treated as annuals. They are bulbs, however, and can be grown for many years if given a dry summer rest and a relatively cold winter. They often skip a year after they bloom heavily. They prefer part shade or sun and regular water during the growing season.

*Musa 'Orinoco variety'*

MUSACEAE

Larry Shore, San Leandro

Edible bananas are usually thought of as a tropical fruit, but the clump shown was grown in the east bay in a relatively cool climate. It was originally obtained from another northern California rare fruit grower and has proved that edible bananas are possible in the Bay Area. The flavor, especially for fruit that ripens in the summertime is excellent. Monterey Bay nursery in Watsonville is now growing many kinds of bananas and have both regular and dwarf orinocos available in the wholesale trade. Their website gives extensive information about banana history and culture. Bananas do best with water, sun, and as much heat as possible. They need protection from frost in the coldest of winters here in the Bay Area.

### Ron Parsons on Calochortus

Noted photographer, horticulturalist, and friend of Cal Hort, Ron Parsons gave an enthusiastic and fast-paced slide presentation on North American wildflowers, especially those in the genus *Calochortus*. Ron is the co-author of *Masdevallias* with Mary Gerritsen, Ph.D., with whom he also authored *Calochortus: Mariposa Lilies and Their Relatives*, due to be published in July 2007. His orchid photography has helped build the San Francisco Bay Area's reputation as a center for cool-growing orchid culture, and his beautifully documented travels across North America and the world have brought attention to the beauty of native wildflowers and their unique habitats. His attention to detail enables him to comment on the intriguing taxonomic relationships of plants he examines in the field.

*Calochortus* comprises the mariposa lilies, globe lilies, star tulips, and fairy lanterns; its species are scattered across western North America, from British Columbia to Guatemala to the Great Plains. Many species have restricted ranges, such as *Calochortus tiburonensis*, which is endemic to the serpentine-rock grasslands of Ring Mountain at the base of the Tiburon Peninsula in Marin County.

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***This local botanical star, described as recently as 1973, presents a rather more grotesque – if fascinating – face than most of its co-generic cousins,***

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This local botanical star, described as recently as 1973, presents a rather more grotesque – if fascinating – face than most of its co-generic cousins, which tend toward pretty colors and traditionally attractive forms.

Ron started off with peeks at very pretty bulbous natives, like *Fritillaria phaenothera*, from Butte County, *Calypso bulbosa* var. *occidentalis*, an exquisite fragrant orchid from Mt. Tamalpais, *Viola sempervirens*, an unusual species of yellow violet also from Mt. Tam, and *Calochortus monophyllus*, a species common in the northern Sierra Nevada foothills. Amidst urbanization, agriculture, and invasive plants and animals, it's a joy to see what native species thrive – or at least persist – a within minutes of home. Ron noted that thanks to copious winter rains, the wildflower season of 2005 was centennial in its floriferousness, casting 2006 in its shadow.

An easy-to-cultivate species Ron shared was *Calochortus uniflorus*, a pale pink or lavender species native to moist parts of California. Another common local stunner he showed was *Dodecatheon hendersonii*, the shooting star, a relative of *Cyclamen* in the *Primula* family.



The orchid family captures a good bit of Ron's heart share, and his pictures of wild North American terrestrials were a treat for the Cal Hort crowd. Besides the Mt. Tam *Calypso*, he documented numerous breathtaking species of *Cypripedium*, the slipper orchid, in habitat in Manitoba, Canada, as well as species of *Corallorhiza*, *Platanthera*, *Listera*, and *Goodyera*, many looking in close-up as compelling as the more-tropical epiphytes seen recently at the Pacific Orchid Exposition in San Francisco.

California geophytes like *Calochortus* rival tropical epiphytes, at least in their season. The newfound *Calochortus raichei*, named for the celebrated horticulturalist, naturalist and garden designer, Roger Raiche, who has preserved part of its serpentine-substrate habitat at The Cedars in northwestern Sonoma County, presents a marvelous contrast of golden yellow globe lily with blue-glaucous reedy foliage.

The fuzzy pussy ears of *Calochortus tolmiei* can be found in the Coast Ranges; Ron projected shots of a race at Salt Point State Park, on the Sonoma Coast, and of a strain in the Santa Cruz Mountains near Woodside that showed distinct differences in the two populations' forms. Diversity is a hallmark of *Calochortus*, itself a representative genus of California's botanical diversity.

In his final suite of slides, Ron took us to Jalisco, Mexico, near Guadalajara, where *Calochortus* species grow among neighbors unlike their California counterparts: *Ferrocactus*, *Cosmos*, *Bidens*, and *Polianthes* (Tuberose). It seems the genus so characteristic of California's flora cannot be kept inside the political bounds of the state, nor restrained inside the ecological bounds of our floristic province.

## HORTICULTURAL CALENDAR

### March 10

**Seed Packet Assembly and Arranging**—Come help assemble seed packets from this year's Seed Exchange with fellow Cal Hort members. At 321 Golf Club Road, Pleasant Hill, CA in the Hort Building. From 9:30 AM until we finish, usually by 3 or 3:30 PM.

### March 10

**Introduction to the World of Orchids**—Explore the history, terminology, classification and beauty of orchids. Published orchid writer, Steve Klitzing, leads this workshop. 9:30 AM–NOON, The Gardens at Heather Farm. (925) 947-1678. members \$15, non-members \$20.

### March 15

**Reducing Infrastructure Damage by Tree Roots**—by Larry Costello. 7–9 PM, City College, SF. SF Prof. Gardener's Ass'n.

### March 21 – 25

**San Francisco Flower and Garden Show**—Wed thru Sat. 9 AM–8 PM; Sun. 9 AM – 6 PM. \$17 advance purchase, \$20 at the door. At the Cow Palace. [www.gardenshow.com](http://www.gardenshow.com)

### March 30-31

**Gardens of the Mind**—The Garden Conservancy presents a seminar/study tour on landscapes that excite the intellect and the emotions. For more information and registration, contact the Garden Conservancy (415) 561-7895 or [www.gardenconservancy.org](http://www.gardenconservancy.org).

### March 31 & April 1

**Specialty Nursery Plant Sale**—Sponsored by Cal Hort. Sat. night Members Only Gala, 6 PM – 9 PM, Sunday General Sale 11 AM – 3 PM. Lakeside Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Ave, Oakland.

### April 7

**Annual Dahlia Tuber and Plant Sale**—by the Dahlia Society of CA. 9AM – NOON. SF County Fair Bldg, 9th Ave & Lincoln Way. (415) 566-5222 for info.

### April 29

**Fourth Annual Bay-Friendly Garden Tour**—Visit a wide assortment of over 40 public and private gardens in Alameda County on this self-guided tour. Online registration and sneak preview at [www.BayFriendly.org](http://www.BayFriendly.org).

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

### March 3

**Tour of the Arboretum**—Monthly guided tour of the collections of the arboretum. Meet at Norrie's Gift Shop. 11 AM. Members free, non-members \$3.

### March 4

**Gardening With Succulents**—Patrick Anderson, whose gardens have been featured in Sunset Magazine, will talk about designing gardens around succulent plants. 1:30 PM, members \$10, non-members \$15.

SF BOTANICAL GARDEN SOCIETY  
(415) 661-1316 • [www.sfbotanicalgarden.org](http://www.sfbotanicalgarden.org)

### March 19

**Cycad Horticultural Practices**—How to preserve and not kill the living fossils growing in our backyards. 7:00 PM–9:00 PM. Cal Hort and SFBGS members free, non-members \$5.00.

U.C. BOTANICAL GARDEN AT BERKELEY  
(510) 643-2755 • [www.botanicalgarden.berkeley.edu](http://www.botanicalgarden.berkeley.edu)

### First Saturday of every month

**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.

### March 11

**Learn the art of organic home farming**—Bed preparation and transplanting with demonstration, harvesting techniques for maximum production, summer care. Registration required. Noon–3:30 PM, \$40.

UC DAVIS ARBORETUM  
(530)752-4880 • <http://arboretum.ucdavis.edu>

### March 4

**Tour of the Container Gardens**—Improve your container garden by picking up tips during this tour of the arboretum container gardens. Meet at the Arboretum Terrace Garden. 2 PM, free.

### March 21

**Day Trip: San Francisco Flower & Garden Show**—Visit four acres of inspiring gardens, attend free seminars and shop at 300 exhibits. 7:45–5:00 PM, \$45 members, \$55 non-members, includes transportation and admission.

### March 24

**Tour: Living Under the Redwoods**—Learn about the redwood forest ecosystem and the plants of the understory. Meet at the Buehler Alumni & Visitors Center. 11 AM, free.

FILOLI  
(650) 364-8300 x508 for tickets • [www.filoli.org/](http://www.filoli.org/)

### March 20

**The Tropical Paradise Garden -Bulbs for the Summer Garden.** 3:30 – 4:30 PM. \$15 members; \$20 non-members

### March 24

**Spring Bulb Walks at Filoli**—11 AM, \$15 members; \$20 non-members

Send submissions to [calendar@calhortsociety.org](mailto: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.

***Ceanothus*, California lilac**

Family RHAMNACEAE

Although this column is called 'Plant of the Month', occasionally I change it to 'Plants of the Month' or even 'Plant Family of the Month'. This is one of those months. I couldn't select just one *Ceanothus* to write about, so I decided to write about all of them. Not individually, of course- there are over 50 species, and who-knows-how-many cultivars. This will just be a general praising of the genus, so that you will want at least one of them in your garden. *Ceanothus* are native to North America, from the east coast of the US to Canada, and as far south as Central America. However, most are native to California, making them our wild California lilac.



The wonder of *Ceanothus* is that they grow in all shapes and sizes, from ground covers to small trees. Most bloom in shades of white through indigo to violet, and many have wonderful fragrance and a long blooming season stretching from early spring to mid summer.

*Ceanothus* are infamous for their short lifespan in the garden. This is usually because they are planted in an unsuitable location. With the proper conditions, best termed benign neglect, they can thrive for decades. Just remember to provide sun, good drainage and NO summer water once they are established. Generally, these tough shrubs don't need fertilizing. Proper cultivation will not only enable these wonderful plants to live longer, it will also make them less palatable to deer, who prefer their greens to be well-watered. Since there are so many species native to the west coast, it is fairly easy to find one or more that is native to your area. These are generally the best to plant, since they are likely to be well-suited to your soil and local microclimate. Some species and cultivars, such as 'Blue Jeans', 'Louis Edmunds' and *Ceanothus crassifolius*, can tolerate heavier soil than most. If you prefer to be stingy with the water when you garden, then you should consider at least one of our native California lilacs. Although most of them are not in bloom now, this is an ideal time to plant them in the garden.

Photo © GGNRA

**Council continued from page 2**

working in retail nurseries in San Jose and then down South in Torrance. Now that I have an inside desk type paper pushing job, I long for my long lost connection talking plants with people on a daily basis, so I have Cal Hort to satisfy that craving....Yea, Cal Hort!!!!

**Jason Dewees**

A member of Cal Hort over the last 12 years, Jason recently joined the staff at Flora Grubb Gardens in San Francisco. He is interested in trees -- especially palms -- as well as California natives, New Zealand natives, plants of mediterranean climates, plant books, subtropical and tropical gardens, orchids, island plants, and conifers. He has gardened in Connecticut and California, for a hobby and a profession. *Pyrus calleryana* is his second-least-favorite San Francisco street tree. Having recently visited the Yucatan during a welcome cold spell, this perennially pale native San Franciscan's new motto is: Love the tropics; hate the weather."

**Fred Bové**

After a lifetime of in field market research, Fred Bové has turned his talents to environmental education and sustainability. He formerly worked for local and multinational clients in the areas of business and consumer research, conducting both quantitative and qualitative studies with a specialization in event and user experience research. He served for six years on the board of the American Marketing Association, and is the past president of the San Francisco Bay Area Chapter of the AMA. Currently, he is the Associate Director of Adult Education at the San Francisco Botanical Gardens at Strybing Arboretum and is responsible for the Garden's educational programs, symposia and public events. He is a Certified Permaculture Designer, and has studied Permaculture techniques and practices in California, Hawaii and Southeast Asia. Recent speaking engagements include Permaculture talks and demonstrations to community organizations and the SF Botanical Garden.

**More to come next month!**

# PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS!

Congratulations to the winners and a very big thanks to everyone who participated in the initial California Horticultural Society Photography Contest.

First place winner is Rebecca Ford for the beautiful close up of a jade vine flower. Second place goes to Lisa Frank and her group of lovely Lotus at Lotusland. Our Third place winner is Linda Baptiste with her beautifully composed shot of a cactus grouping. Nancy Jan and Dave Hermeyer are Honorable Mention winners.

The winning photographs caused quite a stir at our last monthly meeting and can now be seen on the Cal Hort website at <http://www.calhortsociety.org>. Check out what your fellow members can do!

Due to the success of this, our inaugural contest, we are happy to announce that the Cal Hort Photo Contest is now the Annual Cal Hort Photo Contest! The next contest is immediately open for submissions until the deadline of Sunday, September 30, 2007. We accept digital submissions only, via either CD or email to [photocontest@calhortsociety.org](mailto:photocontest@calhortsociety.org).

Some rules for entering a photograph are:

- Open to Cal Hort members only
- Each participant is limited to three entries.
- Photos must be submitted in the name of the photographer.
- The photographs must be of horticultural interest.
- The California Horticultural Society is granted permission to use any photograph, whether or not it is a winner, for promotional or commercial purposes.
- There is no limit to when the picture was taken.

The full set of guidelines for submissions are available on our website in the Photo Contest section.

If you know someone interested in garden photographs, tell them about the contest and invite them to join Cal Hort and submit pictures to the contest.



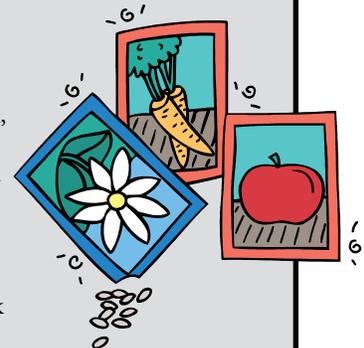
**Third Place Winner**  
**Linda Baptiste**  
**Ruth Bancroft Garden**

## D'you love Seeds?

Springtime is near. Springtime means planting time. That means you'll need something to plant. Like seeds. Where to get those seeds? Come help assemble the seed packets from this year's Seed Exchange. 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 10** 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!



**Don't forget to visit our New Plant Introductions booth at the SF Flower and Garden Show, March 21 - 25 at the Cow Palace!**  
[www.gardenshow.com](http://www.gardenshow.com)

# Dues are Due!

Dues for 2007 are now due and payable. If you do not have a green membership card, your prompt remittance will save us the time and postage of a 2nd notice. Members who have not renewed by March 1st will be dropped from the roster and mailing list. We don't want you to miss your monthly *Bulletin* or *Pacific Horticulture*.

Please use the form and reply envelope from your November 2006 *Bulletin* for your remittance. **For First Class Mailing of your Bulletin, please add \$4.00. (First class is much faster than the standard 4th class default.)**

Make checks payable to The California Horticultural Society and mail to Elsie Mueller, 1847 34th Ave. San Francisco, CA 94122-4109.



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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](http://www.calhortsociety.org) or call (800) 884-0009.



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