

**BULLETIN**  
**THE CALIFORNIA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY**  
**San Francisco County Fair Building**  
**Ninth Avenue at Lincoln Way**  
**San Francisco, California 94122**  
**May 16, 2005**



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.  
6:30PM socializing, sale of special plants & silent auction.  
7:00 PM Potluck & Program will be held at the SF Botanical Garden's Hall of Flowers at 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Lincoln Way; San Francisco.

\*\*\*Donation requested \$5.

**Monday, May 16, 2005**  
**ANNUAL MEETING, POTLUCK DINNER, ANNUAL AWARDS, PROGRAM**  
**“Water-wise gardening”**

Presented by

**Susan Handjian & Christine Finch of East Bay MUD,**  
recipients of the 2005 Annual Award for their efforts in promoting water-wise gardening.  
**Presentation of Photographic Award of the Year**  
to noted garden photographer **Saxon Holt.**

**Silent Auction of rare plants. Call Elsie Mueller at [800-884-0009] for reservations.** Fee is \$5 per person to cover event costs. Advance reservations must be made no later than Friday, May 13<sup>th</sup>. Your dinner ticket & name tags will be held for you at the door. Bring your favorite dish [enough to serve 8]; your table setting & own silverware; plants for sale.

**The Plant Drawing** each month is an important source of funds for the Grants and Scholarships Program. In May, the drawing will be replaced with a Silent Auction of many rare and beautiful plants. Our appreciation to **The Ruth Bancroft Garden**, and to the **San Francisco Botanical Garden Society at Strybing Arboretum** courtesy of **Dr. Don Mahoney** for the outstanding plants donated for the April meeting. A special thanks goes to Inge Hoffman for the marvelous *Pachypodium* donated in March.

**Monday, June 20, 2005**

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

**“Rays of Splendor: Passionflowers of the World”**

**Presented by John MacDougal, Research Associate, Missouri Botanical Garden specializing in passionflowers, noted author and Professor of Biology.** Since they were first described in Europe in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, passionflowers have held a special fascination among plant collectors for their bold, beautiful, complicated blossoms and delectable passionfruits. John is a founding member of the Passionflower Society International, and with over 50 publications on passionflowers and 28 years of study of their biology, he is considered an expert on the passionflower family. He has collected, grown, and photographed tropical plants from Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica, and Ecuador. As a broadly trained biologist with extensive horticultural experience, he was manager of the Climatron, conservatories, and public greenhouses at Missouri Botanical garden for 12 years. John will showcase a range of the natural diversity from among the 530 species of passiflora known. Passionflowers range in size from smaller than an apple seed to larger than a grapefruit, solitary or blooming in groups of thousands, the vines from a foot long to more than 120 feet tall, and the fruits from tiny purple berries to large green melons or even capsules that split open to release their seeds. This presentation on passionflowers, rich in sumptuous images of the exotic blooms, focuses on the many wild species in the New World tropics and relates the sometimes sensual, sometimes bizarre flowers to the life styles and adaptations of these amazing vines in their natural habitats.

# President's Letter

Bruce Peters

As I look out my window I am amazed at how much the garden has grown in the past two months. It is almost a completely different place with all the bare spots filled in, all the trees in leaf and everything just growing wild.

Like the garden, Cal Hort has also seen a similar, if smaller burst of growth which just gladdens my heart. Volunteers have been sort of trickling in, slowly but steadily. I hesitate to say this for fear of scaring any potential volunteers away, but I'm not very good at keeping good news under wraps! Don't let it scare you away! It's fun! Educational! Fulfilling! Seriously!

We're going to start printing out a **list of committees** in each newsletter and on the website for you to pick and choose the area you think suits you best. It's actually kind of

interesting to choose something you might not have tons of experience in just to broaden your mind and learn new stuff. I keep reading that lifelong mental activity is the best way to keep the mind fresh and this is a great way to do it!

Also on the horizon is a **website re-design** which is both exciting and frightening. We're still in the very early planning stages so those of you who have used our site, let me know what's working and what's not working for you so we can make it as good as can be. If you've not yet been to [www.calhortsociety.org](http://www.calhortsociety.org), check out all the great stuff we have online! Color photos of the Plant Forums, old Seed Exchange lists, easy access to Meeting recaps and slide lists (sometimes)....the list goes on and on but I won't.

I look forward to hearing from you soon!



## Botanical Tours

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](http://www.geostartravel.com).

## Nursery Openings

After building and moving the Nursery during the wettest winter in years, **Carman's Nursery** is planning our grand opening for May 15, 2005 from 10–5. You're invited to come visit our new location and see our current selection of rare and unusual plants. Carman's Nursery, 8470 Pharmer Road, Gilroy, CA 95020 (408) 847-2313. Pharmer Road is off Watsonville Road, 7/10 mile north of Hecker Pass Hwy, 6 8/10 miles south of Monterey Hwy. Our normal hours will be Thurs, Fri & Sun 10-5 or by appointment. Sat AM Farmer's Markets.

## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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.

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# April Plant Forum

by Bruce Peters

*"A picture is a worth a thousand words." Fully believing the old adage, color photos are available on our website at [www.calhortsociety.org](http://www.calhortsociety.org) in the 'Plant Forum' section.*

## 1. *Ledebouria socialis* (syn. *Scilla socialis*, *Scilla violacea*)

LILIACEAE

Grown by Bruce Peters, San Francisco

*Ledebouria* = after Carl Friedrich von Ledebour (1785-1851)

*socialis* = growing in colonies

From South Africa, this easy to grow bulbous perennial was shown at the peak of flowering in an old orchid pot lined with window screen to provide excellent drainage. Although grown mainly for its spotted foliage, the fairly nondescript flowers still make quite a show through their sheer numbers in the spring. It grows to about 6" in colonies of tightly clumped reddish bulbs which should remain partially above soil-level to ward off rotting.

References say it grows best in light shade, but in San Francisco, Bruce has it in full sun to about 2PM with no problems. Seemingly pest-free and highly tolerant of capricious watering, this little plant will make anyone feel like the ultimate gardener, especially with the addition of organic (read, long-lasting) fertilizer to the soil.

## Four Days In A Cloud Of Roses

**My favorite rose**, always in bloom, is fragrant, gracefully upright, and clothed with disease-free foliage. If I could grow just one rose, it would be "**Grandmother's Hat**," a rose of unknown origin and exceptional merit.

Through the 20th Century, "Rose" meant, in practice, "Hybrid Tea." Today, rose lovers have begun to appreciate again the "...perfect gracefulness..." of the varied forms of the rose. Attention turns to the Old Garden Roses - the many types that preceded the modern Hybrid Tea. With their kaleidoscope of forms and fragrances, these Comtesses, Duchesses, and Mesdames inhabit a world of beauty, history, and occasionally mystery.

Among such royalty, "Grandmother's Hat" has an odd, plebian sound. But this rose is different - its name an "alias," its true name and that of its creator, lost in time. This is one of many "Found" roses - little mysteries, rescued by dedicated seekers driven to rescue roses on the brink of extinction.

Often scant hours ahead of the developer's bulldozer, these horticultural adventurers search deserted gardens, old home sites, and long-neglected cemeteries for horticultural treasures, once loved, now lost, too often forgotten.

They are the heart of the Heritage Roses Movement. Their stories are the focus of the 2005 International Conference of the Heritage Rose Foundation, May 13 through 15, in El Cerrito, California.

## 2. *Ledebouria cooperi*

LILIACEAE

Grown by Bruce Peters, San Francisco

Although this was shown last April, as well, Bruce just couldn't resist bringing it again to show the extraordinary effects of a repotting with the addition of copious amounts of organic fertilizer. The entire colony of bulbs fairly exploded with flowers to a degree they never have before, almost overshadowing the beauty of the vertically striped foliage—its conventional main attraction. Compare photos on page 5 from April 2004 and April 2005...and then go fertilize your plants!

Unlike the evergreen *L. socialis*, *L. cooperi* is winter dormant, disappearing completely in late summer to early fall. In SF, it handles being consistently drenched by the winter rains with no problems, reappearing with the lengthening days. While most sources advise to plant with the neck of the bulb above soil-level, Bruce completely buried the whole thing and topped it all off with a layer of gravel to no ill-effect. Maybe he's just lucky.

The *Ledebourias* are also found in India and Madagascar. This species does well in a sunny, well-drained location. Be wary of slugs and snails.

### The Heritage Rose Foundation

Established in 1986, the non-profit Heritage Rose Foundation is dedicated to the preservation of Old Garden Roses, their origins, and their history.

### The Annual HRF International Conference

draws speakers and participants from around the world. The 2005 Conference will take place in the El Cerrito

Community Center, (7007 Moeser Lane, El Cerrito, California). Live and silent auctions of rare, extraordinary, found, unusual, and all-but-unobtainable roses will highlight the event. Many of the cultivar offered are the products of the rose rescuer's art. Some will be offered at fixed prices

**On Sunday, May 15**, guests will enjoy the "**Celebration Of Old Roses**" of the **Heritage Roses Group**, which is held annually on the Sunday after Mother's Day.

The **HRG's flagship event** is the nation's largest, least formal, most enjoyable display of Old Garden Roses. Here, visitors may not only see but also touch and smell rare Old Roses. Sales of "roses, rose jewelry, rose-clothing, rose food, and all things rosey" are part of this joyful event. Admission is free to all.

For conference information and registration materials, visit: <http://www.heritagerosesfoundation.org/goals.html>



# Horticultural Calendar

## Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays

**Free Arboretum Tours**—The U.C. Davis Arboretum offers a variety of seasonal, guided tours. Meeting times and places vary. Free. (530) 752-4880 or arboretum.ucdavis.edu.

## May 13

**Practical Pruning: A Workshop for arborists**—UC Davis Extension. \$190 includes course materials and box lunch. (800) 752-0881, aginfo@unexmail.ucdavis.edu or www.extension.ucdavis.edu/agriculture.

## May 14

**Birding Breakfast and Bird Walk**—Eat breakfast with fellow birders and then enjoy a walk through the U.C. Botanical Garden. 8 – 11 AM. Free (510) 643-2755 or visit www.botanicalgarden.berkeley.edu

## May 14

**U.C. Davis Plant Sale**—Featuring a selection of plants adapted to Central Valley conditions. 9 am – 1 pm at the Arboretum Nursery. (530) 752-4880 or visit arboretum.ucdavis.edu.

## May 14 & 15

**Ikebana 2005**—The 25th annual exhibition of Japanese style floral arrangements. 10 AM – 5 PM at the SF County Fair Bldg. Admission \$7. (415) 331-3205

## May 15

**Carmen's Nursery Grand Opening**—A new location and interesting selection of rare and unusual plants. Open 10 AM – 5 PM at 8470 Pharmed Rd, Gilroy Ca, (408) 847-2313.

## May 15

**New Zealand Day at the U.C. Santa Cruz Arboretum**—A day full of free events celebrating New Zealand culture and biodiversity. 1 – 9 PM, Free. (831) 427-2998 or www2.ucsc.edu/arboretum.

## May 19

**Weeds! Can we or should we live with them?**—Bob Fiorello, PCA and SF Botanical Gardens gardener. SF Prof. Gardeners Assn. Phelan Campus, CCSF Env. hort & Floriculture Dept.

## May 21

**South African and Australian Plants**—A free class sponsored by Magic Gardens Nursery at 729 Heinz Ave, Berkeley. Class begins at 10 AM. www.magicgardens.com.

## May 22

**Open Gardens Tour**—Visit six private gardens in S.F., hosted by The Garden Conservancy. Fee per garden is \$5. Order a directory at www.gardenconservancy.org.

## June 4

**Ornamental Grasses**—A free class sponsored by Magic Gardens Nursery at 729 Heinz Ave, Berkeley. Class begins at 10 AM. www.magicgardens.com.

## May 14

**Journal Binding and Design Magic**—Learn basic book binding to create your own field journal. 10 AM – 3 PM, members \$55, non-members \$60, plus a \$20 materials fee.

## June 4

**Build a Pond for Wildlife**—A workshop on building and maintaining your natural pond. 9:30 AM – noon with an optional fieldtrip. Members \$30, non-members \$35.

## June 11

**Dragonflies of CA and the Southwest**—A slide show, lecture and nature walk focusing on these amazing insects. 9:30 AM – noon with a n afternoon fieldtrip. Members \$30, non-members \$35.

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

## May 17

**Home Irrigation Workshop**—Learn the basics of systems and setups to the ins and outs of drip irrigation. 7 – 9 PM, members \$15, non-members \$20.

## May 19 & 26

**Planting Design Series**—Learn about design principles and color combinations for year-round interest, with Jim Dixon. 7 – 9:30 PM, members \$45, non-members \$55.

## June 18

**Flower Drawing and Painting Workshop**—With Stephanie Scott. 9 AM – 5 PM, members \$65, non-members \$75, plus a \$10 materials fee.

**Filoli Center**  
(650) 364-8300 • www.filoli.org

## May 14

**Citrus Care**—All you need to know about growing citrus in your backyard. 10 AM – noon or 1– 3 pm. Members \$25, non-members \$35.

## June 18

**Summer Rose Care**—Keep your roses looking great through the summer. 10 AM – 12:30 PM. Members \$25, non-members \$35.

## June 19 – September 25

**Filoli Jazz Series**—Six different jazzy, lunchtime outdoor concerts. Tickets are \$45 for a single show or \$225 for the whole series. Box lunches are \$15.

**SF Botanical Garden Society**  
(415) 661-1316 • www.sfbotanicalgarden.org

## May 21

**Perfect Roses for Cool SF**—Get your roses growing

*Continued -->*

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

*Artemisia arborescens absinthium* 'Powis Castle'

Who would have thought that a place like Wales, not exactly known for its aridity, would be the homeland of a plant that is perfect for mediterranean gardens? Well, it is. Somewhere in another galaxy, far far away (OK- on another continent, about 6000 miles away) a horticulturalist at the amazing Powis Castle (check out [www.castlewales.com/powis.html](http://www.castlewales.com/powis.html)) was playing around with some of the wormwoods in the collection. As the story goes, this person chanced upon producing a hybrid that turned out to be the plant that today we call *Artemisia* 'Powis Castle.' As a mixed breed conceived on royal grounds, this plant comes from a lineage associated with royal mongrels. The genus *Artemisia* is named after Artemis, the goddess of the hunt. She was the daughter of a Greek father and a Titan mother, and became a queen herself. So don't disrespect the artemisias. In fact, we should toast to them—these plants are also the key ingredient in the magical liqueur known as absinthe.

Despite its royal lineage, this plant is one of the work horses of the California garden. Give it sun, well draining soil, and stand back. Its finely cut, gray-green leaves form a fragrant mound that is the perfect foil for just about anything else in a garden or in a cut bouquet. I've seen this plant used with everything from ornamental grasses and lavenders in a naturalized setting to rosemary and leptospermum in a formal knot garden. This feathery mound can get about three feet high and up to four or five feet across. However, with pruning in early spring, it can be kept smaller. Once



established, it needs little summer water. After several years, especially if we're not so diligent with our pruning, it may become a bit of a leggy mess. No worries—'Powis Castle' is easy to propagate from cuttings. Simply start some cuttings and when they are ready, pull out the woody old plant and pop in the fresh new ones. I've done this to keep my plants looking fresh, and in the process have started plants for friends, neighbors and Cal Hort plant sales. Even the Welsh in-laws were impressed.

Deer, however, are not very impressed with this plant, and tend to leave the aromatic leaves alone unless very desperate. So, even if you weren't invited to Chuck and Camilla's shindig, with *Artemisia* 'Powis Castle' in your garden, you can rub shoulders with royalty anytime you want.

right with this lecture. 9:30 AM – noon, members \$35, non-members \$40.

**June 4**

**Plant Sale**—Featuring Perennials and Epiphyllums. 10 AM – 1 PM at the Nursery.

**June 11**

**Begonias from A to Z**—If you love Begonias, then this 'know and grow' class is for you. 9:30 – 11 AM.

**HORT NOTES**

**SNAPDRAGONS WITH FRAGRANCE!** Basic research, funded in part by the American Floral Endowment, is providing insights into the genesis of fragrance in flowers. Dr. Natalia Dudareva at Purdue University has examined the emittance of fragrance from 50 varieties and isolated 2 genes that are critical to the formation of compounds that give fragrance to snapdragons. Full info is avail as Special Research Report #408 at [www.endowment.org](http://www.endowment.org).

*Send submissions to [calendar@calhortsociety.org](mailto:calendar@calhortsociety.org)  
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**Why you should fertilize**



What I thought was a happy *Ledebouria cooperi* in April 2004 after 3 years in same pot.

The same plant, one year later, after repotting and adding a handful of 5-5-5 organic fertilizer.



# Remember To Send In Your Annual Dinner Reservation!

Using the coupon from the April *Bulletin* or call our Secretary, Elsie Mueller at (415) 566-5122 or (800) 884-0009.

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



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