

The next monthly general meeting is Monday, May 16, 2016

Monthly meetings are held at the San Francisco County Fair Building, Ninth Avenue at Lincoln Way in Golden Gate Park.

Free parking is available behind the San Francisco County Fair Building on Lincoln Way.

5:30 PM—Due to the Annual Dinner, there will be no walk before the meeting. If you wish to help with set up, including going into the garden for flowers for arrangements, please arrive at 5:30.

6:30 PM—Pot Luck Annual Dinner. Bring a dish for eight. Also bring a plant for the silent auction if you have one. See the announcement inside.

7:15 PM – Announcements, Plant Forum, and Program Meeting will be held at the San Francisco County Fair Building. Cal Hort members may attend for FREE.

Non-members—a donation of \$5 is requested.

Plant of the Month

Galium aparine



MONDAY, MAY 16, 2016

**Annual Dinner
with Ellen Zagory as Honored Speaker
Plants for the Living Landscape
by Ellen Zagory**

Gardens sustain us with their beauty and connect us to the natural world—a shrinking commodity within the cities and suburban sprawl of human development. Our gardens and plant choices can help sustain natural systems by providing food and shelter for native insects and birds, becoming a part of a growing system of habitat corridors in cities, havens for migratory species, and mini-Edens accessible to us in our own back yards. In the face of a warming planet we need low-water and heat-tolerant plants that attract and sustain the creatures that share our gardens. Want to create a garden with the ability to do all these things? Come and see what our Annual Award Recipient, Public Horticulture Director, Ellen Zagory, of UC Davis has learned about plant choices and beautiful garden combinations that can reduce water use and attract native creatures, providing a window to experience and to learn about nature around us.



MONDAY, JUNE 20, 2016

**Oxalis, The Beauty or the Beast
by Nhu Nguyen**



Oxalis is both feared and admired by gardeners who know them. Apart from their complex reproductive mechanism, varied morphological traits, and global distribution, they are valuable as garden plants. I will present an introduction to the diversity of this exciting genus and highlight the species that have great horticultural potential in our local gardens.

Spring HORTICULTURAL EVENTS

THE AMAZING FLORA OF CUBA

Thursday, May 5; 4–6 PM

UC Botanical Garden, 200 Centennial Drive, Berkeley

Dr. Carlos Sanchez, Senior Professor and Senior Research Botanist at the National Botanic Garden (Cuba) of the University of Havana, will present an overview of The Amazing Flora of Cuba. With more than 6,500 species of native plants, Cuba is among the world's islands with the highest plant diversity. More than half of the plants are endemic to the island and found in habitats ranging from coastal wetlands to palm-studded grasslands and pine forests in mountain regions. Dr. Sanchez will talk about Cuba's major plant families as well as current projects at the National Botanic Garden of Cuba. \$15, \$10 members. Register online, or by calling 510-642-7082, or by emailing gardenprograms@berkeley.edu.

CREATING SUCCESSFUL MEADOWS AND GRASS ECOLOGIES

Saturday, May 14; 10–Noon

UC Botanical Garden, 200 Centennial Drive, Berkeley

Come learn the latest developments in the world of meadows, natural lawns and grass gardens in California and the west with Bay Area author of *The American Meadow Garden* John Greenlee, an expert in grass ecology and champion of sustainable design. John Greenlee has made meadows all around the world. His designs are featured at such notable public spaces as the San Diego Zoo, Disney's Animal Kingdom in Florida, and the Getty Center in Los Angeles. John Greenlee has also created beautiful meadows gardens in private residences all over California and beyond. \$25, \$20 members. Register online, or by calling 510-642-7082, or by emailing gardenprograms@berkeley.edu.

ALOES & AGAVES

Saturday, May 14; 10:30–11:30 AM

The Ruth Bancroft Garden, 1552 Bancroft Road, Walnut Creek

Jeff Moore, owner of Solana Succulents, will be at the garden to talk about the wide diversity of succulents and guide you on a journey to look at these botanical beauties in a totally different light. Moore is also the author of *Under the Spell of Succulents* and the recently published *Aloes and Agaves in Cultivation*.

Both books will be available for sale and class participants will have the opportunity to have books autographed by Moore. Pre-registration is required for this workshop; \$20, \$15 members.

ADVANCED TECHNIQUES IN PROPAGATION

Saturday, May 21; 1:30–3 PM

The Ruth Bancroft Garden, 1552 Bancroft Road, Walnut Creek

Assistant Curator Walker Young will lead this session for more experienced enthusiasts focusing on advanced propagation techniques. Registration is required for this workshop; \$25, \$20 members.

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SALE: OPEN NURSERY

Thursday, May 26; 10:30 AM–1:30 PM

UC Botanical Garden, 200 Centennial Drive, Berkeley

The entire California Natives propagation area (across the street from the garden entrance) will be open for the public to shop, browse, get advice and chat with the volunteer propagators who specialize in California native plants. View the most current plant list at <http://ucbgcn.blogspot.com>.

BEGINNERS GARDEN PHOTOGRAPHY

Saturday, May 28; 8–11 AM

The Ruth Bancroft Garden, 1552 Bancroft Road, Walnut Creek

Learn how to use your camera for amazing garden landscape and plant close-up shots. You will have the rare opportunity to get early morning access into the garden for great lighting. The instructors will guide you with lessons on exposure, depth of field, focus, and other techniques. (Check out www.riccapics.com and www.rjvalenti.com for more details about the instructors.) Bring your camera, tripod (if you have one) and camera manual. Registration in advance is required for this workshop; \$25, members free. For this class participants may apply the class fee towards a garden membership, which must be purchased on or before May 28, 2016.

Join Us for A Cup of Coffee in Arcangelo's Garden



The California Horticultural Society is pleased to announce the first of what we hope will become a regular event for members. In addition to the occasional garden tour, we are hoping to follow the San Diego Horticultural Society's lead in having informal get togethers at member gardens, something they do every month. New board member Arcangelo Wessells has kindly volunteered to host the first of these at his Vallejo garden on Sunday, May 22 at 10 AM.

You may have noticed the many fascinating and unusual plants Arcangelo has brought in to share at our monthly meetings. So now you will have a chance to see how he is growing these rarities in his own garden, while enjoying the company of your fellow Cal Hort members and a hot beverage. You are invited to bring along a pot luck treat to share. Please RSVP to Mark Delepine (mdelepine@liacook.com) as soon as possible to help us plan, and to receive directions to the Arcangelo's garden.

You are also invited to consider hosting us in your own garden some time. All we need is enough notice to make the announcement in advance in the Bulletin and at a meeting. In time, this could become a monthly event.

Plant of the Month

by Arcangelo Wessells

Galium aparine

Cleavers

Family: RUBIACEAE

When we moved into our house in 1999, the yard was all weeds. Only weeds. Since that time I have practically eliminated uninvited plants from the garden. *Oxalis pes-caprae* still tries to creep in from the neighbor's yard. There is enough mallow seed in the ground to last a lifetime, and sow thistle will always blow in on the wind, but is easy to spot and pull at a young age.

Last year, though, something started sprouting in odd spots. It had big cotyledon leaves and it actually looked like it might be something interesting. Maybe even a sprout from a pot of seeds that I had given up on and thrown back into the garden (Yes, this does happen!). Then a cross or a wheel appeared: the giveaway that it was a *Galium*.

I had brought a lot of gravel and sand into the garden, and wondered whether the seeds had come from whatever desolate hell the gravel pit had become. I was talking to my neighbor, and she had it too. Hers was growing down the gravel path on the side of her house—the path of cats and raccoons. That explained where the seeds were coming from. The seedlings hadn't developed their typical prickles, so I wasn't thinking of the seeds arriving on the outside of an animal. *Galium* seeds are perfect little velcro balls that get caught in an animal's fur until it brushes against something or gets groomed out.

It grows along the fence of the empty lot garden down the street, along the ivy where discreet creatures cautiously head out for the night. It makes a carpet under the canopy of large live oaks on Mare Island and in Marin County. It is in Danville. Other gardeners have also noticed its sudden appearance, or at least its sudden proliferation.

Its leaves are in attractive whorls of six to eight. The whole plant is clingy, and can grow on top of low plants or emerge from inside bigger plants, especially if there is an animal hideout inside.

But what is it? *Galium aparine*. It has a lot of common names, including Cleavers, Sticky Willy, and Catchgrass. I had always assumed it was a non-native weed, but it is considered to be native to California (and North America in general), as well as being found from Europe and North Africa to Japan. *Galium* is one



of the largest genera of flowering plants, with around 650 species, over 40 of which are native to California. *Galium* is in the madder family, Rubiaceae.

Galium have leaves in whorls, usually numbering either six or eight leaves per whorl, four in some other species. The leaves and stems are covered in hooked hairs that grab on to hair, clothing and other plants. The seeds are especially hairy and sticky, although a few species have fruits that are translucent gelatinous berries.

Here in California, cleavers germinates in early winter. They seem to grow slowly until spring and then suddenly burst into growth and flowering, and before you notice they are already making seed. When trying to eradicate *Galium*, make sure to pay attention to the stem. The plant can be several feet long, but the main stem always seems to be very thin at the base. The green leafy stems tend to break away from the base when pulled, leaving the plant ready to resprout with even more vigor than before. Avoid cutting it back for the same reason. Reach your hand down to where the thin brown stem is attached to the ground and pull the whole plant out. Most likely, one would want to put any material in the green bin to be composted in a facility that generates enough heat to destroy seeds. You could also feed it to geese. They apparently love it so much that one of its common names is Goosegrass.

In case you want to keep your plant material, *Galium* has a lot of uses. The name *Galium* refers to the use of some species to curdle milk to make cheese. It is also called Bedstraw because the dried plants were used to stuff mattresses. The prickles on the leaves and stems keep the stuffing connected and prevent it from becoming thin in spots. The seeds can be dried and roasted to make a coffee substitute with less caffeine. The roots can be used to make a red dye like Madder, the namesake of the family Rubiaceae.

The Kew Royal Botanic Gardens website has advice for cultivating cleavers, with a note saying "care should be taken to prevent its spread into farmland or sensitive areas of conservation importance." It might be best to avoid cultivating it at all.

**California Horticultural Society
Annual Meeting and Potluck Dinner**

Monday, May 16, 2016

**San Francisco Botanical Garden,
Hall of Flowers,
Ninth Avenue at Lincoln Way in
Golden Gate Park**

**Program Presented
by Ellen Zagory
of UC Davis**

- 6:30 PM Socializing
- 7 PM Potluck. If you can assist with set up, please come any time after 5 PM.
We will make flower arrangements from the Arboretum, set up plant displays, and so on.
- Advance Reservations must be made with Tena Gallagher no later than Friday, May 13.

What to Bring:

- Your favorite dish (enough to serve eight)
 - A serving utensil
 - Your own silverware and plate, beverages, and perhaps some wine to share
 - **Unusual and choice plants for the Silent Auction**
 - A \$5 donation is requested to cover costs of materials, supplies.
- Your dinner ticket and name tags will be held for you at the door.

We will be attending the Annual Dinner Monday, May 16, 2016

Name(s) (please print) _____

Enclosed is a check (\$5 each) made payable to the:
The California Horticultural Society for \$ _____

Mail to:

Tena Gallagher, 400 Cliffside Drive, Danville, CA 94526

Email: tena@aol.com



California Horticultural Society
 San Francisco County Fair Building
 Ninth Avenue and Lincoln Way
 San Francisco, CA 94122

www.calhortsociety.org

Plant Drawing News

The month of May is our Annual Dinner. Instead of our usual drawing, we are asking members to bring in special plants they have propagated for a Silent Auction.

Plant Display and Discussion

Due to the annual dinner there will be no plant display and discussion.

To join the California Horticultural Society or to find out about a full range of membership levels, please visit our web site at www.calhortsociety.org.

Questions from members about your membership? Please address them to the Cal Hort membership chair: Charlotte Masson, 579 Los Paltos Drive, San Francisco, CA 94127-2209.

The California Horticultural Society has maintained its quality programs because of the dedication of the volunteer officers, chairs and members. The future of the Society depends upon its member volunteers to provide leadership. The Board asks that members volunteer for positions to keep Cal Hort the best organization it can be.

COUNCIL

2015-2017 (First Term) Mark Delepine, Steve Morse, Andy Stone
 2016-2018 (Second Term) Ellen Edelson, Charlotte Masson, Kristin Yanker-Hansen
 2016-2018 (First Term) Mary Engle, Bart O'Brien, Arcangelo Wessells

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Deadline for publication in this Bulletin is the third Monday of each month for the following month's Bulletin; no Bulletin is published in December. Events during the first ten days of the month should be submitted two months ahead.