



*Arisaema sibiricum*

**BULLETIN**  
**THE CALIFORNIA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY**  
**San Francisco County Fair Building**  
**Ninth Avenue at Lincoln Way**  
**San Francisco, California 94122**  
**November 15, 2004**



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 Strybing Arboretum in the San Francisco County Fair Building at 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Lincoln Way .  
8:00 PM Speaker and Plant Drawing.  
\*\*\*Guest fee \$5.

**Monday, November 15, 2004**  
**Co-sponsored with San Francisco Botanical Garden Society at Strybing Arboretum**  
**“Hot Borders – Cool Plants Exciting Borders and Interesting Uses of New plants”**  
**Presented by Marietta O’Byrne**, long time nurserywoman who along with her husband, Ernie, owns and runs Northwest Garden Nursery in Eugene, Oregon. Their collector’s garden displays all types of plants from rock garden, with a collection of rare alpiners and conifers, to woodland perennials along with a large collection of hellebores. The nursery specializes in unusual border perennials for sun and shade including a large selection of hard-to-find perennials such as *Hepatica*, podophyllums, primulas, arisaemas and *Meconopsis*. Northwest Garden is widely recognized for its unusual plants and has been featured in a number of magazines.



*Papaver spicatum*



*Primula vialii*

The Plant Drawing each month is an important source of funds for the Grants and Scholarships Program. In November, the drawing will include donations from **Sloat Nursery of San Rafael**, courtesy of **Steve Mauricio** and from **Strybing Arboretum**, courtesy of **Dr. Don Mahoney**. Our appreciation to **A Touch of the Tropics in Santa Rosa** courtesy of **David Franzman**, **Strybing Arboretum Society** courtesy of **Dr. Don Mahoney** and Larry Shore and Inge Hoffman for the outstanding plants donated for the October meeting.

**December 2004**

There is no monthly meeting. Our very best wishes to you and yours for a very happy holiday season and for a rewarding New Year filled with new plant treasures for your gardens.

**Monday, January 17, 2005**

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

**“Broadleaved evergreen trees, shrubs and climbers”**

**Presented by Sean Hogan**, well known horticulturist, author, co-owner of Cistus Nursery and Design in Portland, Oregon.

Learn about the avalanche of species and forms allowing us to use new textures far outside of accepted boundaries from evergreen oaks with orange furry leaves, to Scheffleras and relatives able to withstand ten degrees F. and maples that look like live oaks to Mahonia species from Mexico that make great shade trees.



*Helleborus x hybridus*



*Meconopsis betonicifolia*

# President's Letter

by Bruce Peters

I know it happens every year but I'm once again shocked at how quickly the year has gone. It seems just yesterday I was pining for the longer, warmer days of summer. Now I'm glad for the rains to come and take over my daily watering duties. Mother Nature does a much better job than I do, anyway. Perhaps a little more sporadic but always much more thorough.

This next year looks really exciting. The program committee, headed up by the dynamo known as Barbara Hopper, has already lined up a whole slew of interesting speakers from the popular Karen Platt, author of *Black Plants*, to the American Rock Garden Society's president, Bobby Ward, and his talk entitled 'The Plant Hunter's Garden.' As always, the wide variety of topics will certainly have something to please everyone.

As an added bonus, all of our programs through April will be worth one California Certified Professional Continuing Education Unit. Tell your friends! Cal Hort just keeps getting better and better!

Just around the corner is New Year's and along with the first of January comes New Year's resolutions. We all

know that those resolutions are notoriously difficult to keep but I've come up with a scheme to make it easier to follow-through with at least SOME of your resolutions. All you need to do it choose a discrete and finite goal that you can finish at your leisure but by finishing will still allow you to check it off of your list and allow you to tell people that you're well on your way to doing the impossible and keeping your resolutions.

For example? Well, how about writing an article of just 500-1000 words for the Bulletin? Tell about your favorite plant or the history of your garden, your neighbor's garden, a good way to deal with a type of pest, etc. Writing about when you know is a lot easier than you think and a great way to actually fulfill a resolution. Whoo hooo! Let the writing party begin!

Remember that there's no meeting in December. However, you could always use that time to write up a little something for Cal Hort since you are all used to reserving the third Monday of each month for the Society anyway, right? RIGHT!

## Botanical Tours

**February 5-18, 2005**

**Gardens of Singapore** with Bian Tan & Kristin Yanker-Hansen, Malaysia's Kuala Lumpur & Taman Negara National Park. Co-sponsored with the SF Botanical Garden Society

**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.

**August 26-September 9, 2005**

**South Africa in Springtime, Natural History of Namaqualand & the Western Cape Province**—  
In support of the California Horticultural Society with Annie Hayes, award winning horticulturist & owner of Annie's Annuals

**October 11-27, 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).

## 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.

**Propagation group:** Call Bruce @ (415) 824-1833 or email to [propgroup@calhortsociety.org](mailto:propgroup@calhortsociety.org)

**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.

**Seed Collecting:** Some people have some great seeds for our Seed Exchange but don't have the time/ability to collect the seeds themselves...that's where you come in. We need people to visit other people's gardens (a treat in and of itself!) and collect said seeds. A fun and interesting task. Call Dave Tivol (408) 732-2743 for info and to volunteer.

**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.

# October Plant Forum by Ted Kipping

"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. *Angraecum* 'Lemford White Beauty'

ORCHIDACEAE (100-150 SPECIES)

Grown by Alek Koomanoff, San Francisco

*Angraecum* - from Malay *anggrek* or *angurek* for all epiphytic orchids with aerial roots.

Native to Madagascar. Alek, an accomplished and professional nurseryman, recommends high light in a moist environment of 40-100°F (50-55° ideal) in an uninsulated room with afternoon light. Alek startled us all by pulling the potted orchid in a 2" pot out of the seemingly crowded 5" pot in which he displayed it.



*Angraecum* 'Lemford White Beauty'

## 2. *Asimina triloba*

ANNONACEAE (-8 SPECIES)

Grown by Katherine Pyle, Berkeley

*triloba* - 3 lobes

From eastern North America, the pawpaw is the only hardy member of a tropical family that also includes cherimoya. To 30 ft. tall; spreads as wide as high when grown alone. Purple cup-shaped flowers produce ripe edible fruit in October, followed by attractive clear yellow autumn foliage. Fruit needs summer warmth to ripen properly. Sun, deep loamy, fertile soil and summer water are preferred. Note: some people experience dermatitis from the fruit.

## 3. *Clerodendrum trichotomum* / Harlequin Glorybower

VERBENACEAE (-400 SPECIES OF WOODY TREES, SHRUBS AND VINES)

Grown by Kristin Yanker Hansen, Danville

*Cleros* - lot or chance; *dendron* - tree, referring to variable medicinal properties of some of the species; *trichosi* - hairs

A deciduous shrub/small tree hardy to 5°F (will resprout) producing many gracefully nodding canes carrying 8" x 4" softly hairy leaves bearing clusters of fragrant tubular white flowers enwrapped by fleshy and flashy scarlet calyces in late summer to fall followed by eye-catching shiny turquoise to blue-green fruit often still set off by the calyx. Likes summer water and will colonize.

## 4. *Dioscorea batata*

Chinese Yam

DIOSCOREACEAE (-600 SPECIES)

Grown by Katherine Pyle, Berkeley

*Dioscorea* - for Dioscorides, 1st Century Greek physician and herbalist

*batata* - derived Haitian vernacular for sweet potato

Katherine offered us small tubers formed on the vine which she said grow to edible tubers in 1-2 years. She recommends storing the little "seed" tubers in a cool but frost-free place over winter and planting in soil once past frost. She enjoys this yam for the beauty of its vining, scrambling foliage. The flowers B.I.O. (of Botanical

Interest Only, unless you are the pollinator of choice, of course). Many forms are grown for their colorful foliage.

## 5. *Petrocosmea minor*

GESNERIACEAE (-29 SPECIES)

Grown by Katherine Henwood, Pacifica

*Petros* - rocks; *kosmos* - decorative, referring to the natural habitat; *minus* - small

## 6. *Petrocosmea nervosa*

GESNERIACEAE

Grown by Katherine Henwood, Pacifica

*Nervosa* - refers to prominent veins on leaves

## 7. *Petrocosmea parryorum*

GESNERIACEAE

Grown by Katherine Henwood, Pacifica

*parryorum* - after Parry

Native to China and related to African "Violets", these late summer to fall blooming jewels can be appreciated as much for their foliage as for their dainty and elegant flowers which repay close scrutiny. Fibrous, gritty, acid soil mix can be grown outdoors in frost protected sites near coast in morning sun to bright shade.

## 8. *Abutilon* X hybrids

MALVACEAE (-150 SPECIES)

Grown by Ted Kipping, San Francisco

*abutilon* - from the Arabic for a mallow like plant

Tropics and subtropics of New World, Africa, Asia and Australia. Abutilons are cane like mallow-hibiscus relatives from which bloom non-stop year-round in our mild climate, pleasing hummingbird and horticulturists alike. You can even add the colorful corollas to your salads like *Tropaeolums* but mellow (or is that mallow)? Grow in full sun to part shade, free-standing and espaliered - a great way to quickly increase privacy along a fence line. Ted showed two selections attaining 4-5 feet and about another twenty selected for heights of 16-18 feet.

# Mushroom Compost

by David Sarasua

One of the joys of living in the Bay Area is that this is one of the largest mushroom growing regions in the United States. Now you ask why is this a joy? If you live next to a mushroom farm, they produce a smell that can only be described as very unpleasant. Well, I love to garden and happen to have clay soil. Actually, I should say, that I *had* clay soil. I now garden in pure mushroom compost.

I am fickle when it comes to gardening. What I plant somewhere today, I usually will dig up and plant somewhere else in the future. I am not sure why I do this, but I do.

Anyway, when I first bought the house, I had to dig a hole to mount a mailbox. It took about four hours to dig that hole. I finally borrowed an electric jackhammer. Gardening in clay is not a pleasure. I had heard that if I would turn the soil and add a bit of gypsum, my soil would be nice and fluffy. I'm not sure where I heard this, but it was advice that I heard time and time again.

I borrowed a rototiller to turn 12 inches of soil. Well, even the rototiller that I borrowed, a real beast, could only go down six inches. So I rototilled six inches and used a shovel to till the other six inches by hand. I did not know how much gypsum to add so I added about 100 bags to my back yard. It was not real expensive and I really wanted my soil to be fluffy. Boy, was I wrong. One good rain and the material would revert back to its same hard character.

At the time, a friend of mine was having his house torn down and he asked me if I wanted some of his plants, as they were all going to be replaced. My neighbor and I went over in my pickup truck and we proceeded to dig them out. This soil was the same clay that I had and we broke two indestructible shovels from Home Depot. These were the fiberglass shovels that have a limited lifetime guarantee—limited to what you use them for and how you use them.

I really enjoy gardening but this clay soil made what I enjoy a real drudgery. I was donating my time to Saratoga Horticulture Research Foundation and noticed they did not garden in clay, they used a potting mix.

Now here is soil that urges you to garden...nice and fluffy! This is the way I wanted my garden soil to be but how could I get my garden similar to the potting mix?

Driving around the neighborhood, I noticed these ugly raised beds in the parking strips. Why would anyone do such an ugly thing? Answer: the clay soil was so hard that it was easier to bring in six inches of soil than to deal with the material.

Well, getting back to mushroom compost. Clay weighs about 2,000 lbs. per cubic yard and it has a high cohesion level...it binds with itself. A friend of mine who operates a back hoe states that clay is considered bed rock for grad-

ing. I think having a house built on a clay foundation is great, but as a foundation for gardening, I was not pleased. Mushroom compost weighs 500 lbs. per cubic yard and has a much lower cohesion level. I started to think...

There is a simple pie pan test where you take the material in your garden and mix it with any amendment to determine how much of that amendment you should add. Take ten pie pans and mix your soil with an increasing 10% amendment mixture (the first one is 10%, the second is 20% and so on). Take this mixture and mix with water and let it dry. When you get a mixture that makes you happy, then you know how much to add to your garden. Now when I did this, it was not until I got to 50% before I was satisfied. Adding 50% of some amendment to my garden was not going to be an easy task. Think about this. I remember reading somewhere that the roots of most plants reside in the first twenty four inches of your soil.

What I wanted to do was to completely remove the first twelve inches of soil and then mix the second twelve inches with some type of amendment. Economically this is difficult. I found it was cheaper to just remove all twenty four inches and put in a potting mix. Since potting mixes range from about \$20 to \$40 a cubic yard, this was not a cheap solution. I needed a more affordable solution.

I read all I could find on soil and was amazed at the science. Did you know that loam is a combination of sand, silt and clay? In all my research on soil, I found that a number of potting mixes contained a material called mushroom compost. Why were they using this product and why was it relatively inexpensive when compared to other mixes? The

reason is that it is a waste product of the mushroom farms in our area. Mushrooms, actually mycelium, need organic material to colonize and produce mushrooms. After the mycelium breaks down organic material and reproduces the material is spent as far as the mushroom farm is concerned.

However, this is the stage where the plant material loves the waste product. This happens in nature all the time. Fungus breaks down organic material and the plants

use the material to grow.

Not knowing about this material, I decided to learn more. There was a lot of information on mushroom compost. A lot of it wrong—just like the advice I got on adding gypsum to the garden.

Some people stated that the material was salty and hot. Now salty or hot was not the same when you talked to different people. I thought salty meant table salt and hot meant heat. When you asked people to explain what they meant by salty or hot, not many could explain. It was something they had heard but did not understand.



.....

All fertilizers are salts. Salts have a unique type of chemical bonding, a weak one that comes apart when in solution. For example, if you take water, specifically deionized water, and test for electrical conductivity, you will find that water is not a very good conductor but we all know that water conducts electricity, right? Salt dissolved in water readily conducts electricity.

Plants need fertilizers but are limited in how much they can deal with at any one point in time. When you first see a soil analysis, you wonder what are all these new terms such as pH, EC and CEC. The first time I saw this, I thought you had to be a scientist to read this stuff but it really is not difficult to understand. EC stands for Electric Conductivity. This is how they determine how much salt is in the material. Most plants can only tolerate an EC under 4. I was surprised to find that the EC for most soil amendments was about 14 .

Let's talk about pH for a minute. Most plants can not easily take up nutrients unless the pH is between 6.5 and 7.5. If the pH gets too far outside this range, the plant cannot absorb the nutrients.

CEC stands for cation exchange capacity. Soil is negatively charged. What holds the nutrient is this negative charge. Most nutrients are positively charged. Some have more voltage than others and the higher the voltage the stronger they can hold on to the soil particle. Nitrogen is a very weak charge and is easily displaced by other nutrients. This is the reason that many soils are deficient in nitrogen.

All soils are not equal. Some soils have a higher negative charge than other soils and can therefore hold onto more nutrients. One of the reasons that organic material is a blessing to gardeners is that organic material naturally has a strong negative charge.

This is an article on mushroom compost so let's get back to it. I went down to a rockery and purchased some material and really enjoyed running my hands through it. I smelled it and noticed an earthy smell. Well, it turns out that there is a life form called Actinomyces. It is supposed to be part bacteria and part fungus...the scientific community in classifying fungus and bacteria did not know where this life form belongs. It is this life form that excretes the earthy smell.

After much research on mushroom compost and soil, it turns out that, given certain parameters, a soil scientist can tell you if a plant will do well in a particular material, but you need to actually try the material to determine if it really can do what they say. So I planted in varying mixes of mushroom compost.

Mushroom compost is sort of like wine, in that wine is a living breathing medium. I found that when I took a fresh batch of material to the soil lab, it had an EC of 14. A year later, the same material would have an EC of 6. What happened? One of the nitrogen sources that this mushroom farm would use was DPW, Dried Poultry Waste, a very nice term for chicken manure.

DPW contains appreciable amounts of potassium chloride which has a low charge and is extremely water-soluble. One good rain and, from an EC standpoint, the medium is very close to what plants can tolerate.

Anyway, I tried growing in varying mixes of mushroom compost. The plants that I tried were agapanthus, vinca, onions, roses and geraniums and they all did

rather well.

I was talking to a backhoe operator who gave me some prices to do some mixing. It was cheaper to dig out and replace the soil than it was to mix. So I crossed my fingers and had a part of my parking strip dug out and replaced with mushroom compost. We dug three feet down and backfilled with pure mushroom compost. After a year, I found this part of the garden was the best to garden in...the soil was a pleasure to work with.

My wife thinks this is the man's approach to gardening as she stated that she would have constantly amended the soil. The problem with this, as with the computer that I use—she has her own computer but insists on using mine—is that she likes to garden in the spot that is pure mushroom compost.

My last thought on this is that mushroom compost is not the same material everywhere. Also, mushroom compost has very little to do with mushrooms except that it is the medium that is used to grow mushrooms. A fungus is a life form that decomposes organic material and after the fungus does what it needs to do, the plants just love the material. The term mushroom compost that we are discussing is called by many names. The farms call it their spent material, I call it my garden's salvation.



**Rosemary's Mushroom Farm**  
**Mushroom Compost for \$6 a cubic yard**

Our mushroom compost is Lab tested,  
Pasteurized, and is weed free.

We have two locations:

Morgan Hill and Watsonville

Size of delivery truck is 20 and 40 cubic yards

Commercial Delivery Rates Apply

(408) 972-5809

# Horticultural Calendar

## November 10

**Protea Slide-lecture**—Tom Eltzroth will discuss growing proteas and their many garden uses. Lecture starts at 7:30 PM at Ron's Nursery, 1207 S 13<sup>th</sup> St., in Grover Beach CA. (805) 489-4747.

## November 13

**Fall Plant Sale**—Featuring hundreds of Central Valley appropriate plants including newly introduced varieties. 9 AM – 1 PM at the U.C. Davis Arboretum Nursery on Orchard Rd at La Rue in Davis. (530) 752-4880 or arboretum.ucdavis.edu.

## November 13 or December 11

**Birding at the Ruth Bancroft Garden**—A guided birding tour of the garden. Reserve a spot early. Starts at 9 AM, \$5 members, \$10 non-members. (925) 210-9663 or [www.ruthbancroftgarden.org](http://www.ruthbancroftgarden.org)

## November 17

**Monthly Slideshow and Potluck**—Carl Fredericks presents "Plant Hunting in Namibia." Please bring a dish to serve eight people. 7 PM at the County Fair Building, 9<sup>th</sup> Ave. at Lincoln Way, S.F. Free. (415) 753-7090.

## November 22

**Sasanqua Camellia Lecture**—Design ideas for the Holidays. 7 PM at the Peninsula Camellia Society, 1455 Madison Ave., Redwood City. (650) 401-6785 or [www.camelliaspcs.org](http://www.camelliaspcs.org).

## November 28 – December 4

**Holiday Traditions at Filoli**—A wonderful assortment of holiday events including tours, parties and more. Prices vary and tickets are required. See the website for more info at [www.filoli.org](http://www.filoli.org) or call (650) 364-8300 ext 507.

## December 4 & 5

**Fungus Fair**—The annual mushroom extravaganza at the Oakland Museum and sponsored by the Mycological Society of SF. 10 AM – 5 PM and noon – 5 PM. For more info: (415) 863-7618, [www.mssf.org](http://www.mssf.org) or [www.oaklandmuseum.org](http://www.oaklandmuseum.org).

## Regional Parks Botanic Garden

(510) 841-8732 • [www.nativeplants.org](http://www.nativeplants.org)

## November 21

**Seed Propagation**—Learn how to collect, store, treat, and sow a wide variety of seeds, with Martin Grantham. 10 AM – 4 PM, members \$40, non-members \$45.

## November 20

**Botanizing the Drakensburg Mtns**—Slide lecture with Ted Kipping. 10:30 AM at the Visitors Center. Go to the website for a complete list of lectures. Free

## November 28

**Native Ferns From Spores**—A hands-on afternoon covering all you need to know on how to grow your own ferns, with Martin Grantham. 10 AM – 4 PM, members \$40, non-members \$45.

## The Gardens At Heather Farm

(925) 947-1678 • [www.gardenshf.org](http://www.gardenshf.org)

## November 19

**Holiday Floral Demo**—Holiday ideas and a raffle after class, with Najat Nicola. 9:30 – 11:30 AM, \$15 members, \$20

## November 10

**Protea Slide-lecture**—Tom Eltzroth will discuss growing proteas and their many garden uses. Lecture starts at 7:30 PM at Ron's Nursery, 1207 S 13<sup>th</sup> St., in Grover Beach CA. (805) 489-4747.

## November 13

**Fall Plant Sale**—Featuring hundreds of Central Valley appropriate plants including newly introduced varieties. 9 AM – 1 PM at the U.C. Davis Arboretum Nursery on Orchard Rd at La Rue in Davis. (530) 752-4880 or arboretum.ucdavis.edu.

## November 13 or December 11

**Birding at the Ruth Bancroft Garden**—A guided birding tour of the garden. Reserve a spot early. Starts at 9 AM, \$5 members, \$10 non-members. (925) 210-9663 or [www.ruthbancroftgarden.org](http://www.ruthbancroftgarden.org)

## November 17

**Monthly Slideshow and Potluck**—Carl Fredericks presents "Plant Hunting in Namibia." Please bring a dish to serve eight people. 7 PM at the County Fair Building, 9<sup>th</sup> Ave. at Lincoln Way, S.F. Free. (415) 753-7090.

## November 22

**Sasanqua Camellia Lecture**—Design ideas for the Holidays. 7 PM at the Peninsula Camellia Society, 1455 Madison Ave., Redwood City. (650) 401-6785 or [www.camelliaspcs.org](http://www.camelliaspcs.org).

## November 28 – December 4

**Holiday Traditions at Filoli**—A wonderful assortment of holiday events including tours, parties and more. Prices vary and tickets are required. See the website for more info at [www.filoli.org](http://www.filoli.org) or call (650) 364-8300 ext 507.

## December 4 & 5

**Fungus Fair**—The annual mushroom extravaganza at the Oakland Museum and sponsored by the Mycological Society of SF. 10 AM – 5 PM and noon – 5 PM. For more info: (415) 863-7618, [www.mssf.org](http://www.mssf.org) or [www.oaklandmuseum.org](http://www.oaklandmuseum.org).

## Regional Parks Botanic Garden

(510) 841-8732 • [www.nativeplants.org](http://www.nativeplants.org)

## November 21

**Seed Propagation**—Learn how to collect, store, treat, and sow a wide variety of seeds, with Martin Grantham. 10 AM – 4 PM, members \$40, non-members \$45.

## November 20

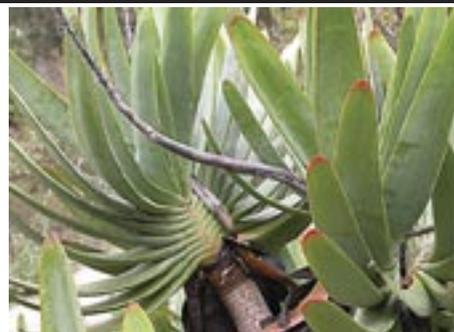
**Botanizing the Drakensburg Mtns**—Slide lecture

## Aloe plicatilis

Deep in the heart of the family ASPHODELACEAE reside the Aloes, and among them are some favorites of west coast gardeners. One in particular that is very suitable to many parts of the west is *Aloe plicatilis*. For the Latin lovers in the crowd, *plicatilis* means 'pleated' or 'fanned', which is a great description of the leaves on this beautiful plant. When the catalogs describe a plant as one that 'likes winter and spring rains, but prefers a dry summer,' my ears perk right up. Sounds ideal to me... And *Aloe plicatilis* is ideal!

Hailing from the southwestern Cape Province of South Africa, this aloe's leaves are a blue-green color, with smooth margins devoid of the evil teeth that some other aloes carry. The wonderful growth habit, known to those in botanical circles as a dichotomous, means that the leaves are organized as outward branches rather than a clumped rosette, creating the amazing fan-like formation. During late fall to mid winter the tubular red-orange flowers are held on long stems above the leaves, where they act as beacons for hummingbirds.

*Aloe plicatilis* prefers well draining soil in a site with full sun to partial shade. It may burn if it gets too much direct afternoon sun. Although this plant can tolerate cold, it is not frost hardy. In cooler areas, it will do very well in a pot that can be moved indoors during the colder months. It can be grown from seed or stem cuttings, and is fairly slow growing. It will take many years for it to reach its maximum height of 3 to 5 meters. In the Bay area, this plant seems to stay much smaller, at 1 to 2 meters. This is a well-behaved plant that mixes well with other waterwise plants and doesn't have the biting teeth of other aloes. Plant it and enjoy the show!



### Calendar continued from previous page

with Ted Kipping. 10:30 AM at the Visitors Center. Go to the website for a complete list of lectures. Free

#### November 28

**Native Ferns From Spores**—A hands-on afternoon covering all you need to know on how to grow your own ferns, with Martin Grantham. 10 AM - 4 PM, members \$40, non-members \$45.

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

#### November 19

**Holiday Floral Demo**—Holiday ideas and a raffle after class, with Najat Nicola. 9:30 - 11:30 AM, \$15 members, \$20 non-members.

#### November 20

**Wreath Workshop**—Learn to make wreaths with Patrice Hanlon. 9 AM - noon, \$15 members, \$20 non-members, plus \$10 material fee.

### SF Botanical Garden at Strybing Arboretum (415) 661-1316 • www.strybing.org

#### November 19

**Garden-style Propagation**—With Don Mahoney. 12:30 - 3 PM, members \$25, non-members \$35.

#### November 13

**Plant Sale**—End of season sale, at the Nursery. 10 AM - 1 PM.

#### December 4

**Wreath Making Workshop**—Learn to make a wreath

using greens from Strybing, with Marjorie Dunbar. 10 AM - 2 PM, \$15 - \$35 (materials). All ages welcome.

#### Dec 6, 12 & 13

**Ferns in the Garden**—The wonderful world of ferns with Glen Keator. 6:30 - 9 pm and a field trip 10 AM - 2:30 PM. Members \$45, non-members \$55.

### U.C. Botanical Garden At Berkeley (510) 643-2755 • 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.

#### December 4

Holiday Plant and Gift Sale—10 AM - 2 PM.

### U.C. Santa Cruz Arboretum

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

#### November 13 & 14

**Annual Dried Flower and Succulent Wreath Sale**—10 AM - 4 PM, until 2 pm on Sunday. At the Horticulture Bldg.

#### December 12

**Mediterranean Gardening in California**—Russ Beatty will speak on this popular gardening style. 1:30 PM, \$10 members, \$15 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.

**“Madagascar: A Floral Treasure Chest”  
Presented by Gary James,**

Retired professor of biology at Orange Coast Community College, Gary James has traveled through the Indian Ocean documenting fascinating flora. His presentation to the Society addressed plants from Madagascar, a continental island of splendid diversity that is under siege from human needs for food, fuel and subsistence.

Separated by miles of ocean from the African coastal nation of Mozambique, Madagascar stretches from subtropical latitudes in the south to the wet tropics in the north. A spine of highlands reaching a pinnacle of over 9000 feet divides the rainforest on the east coast from the western uplands and coast and drier woodlands, grasslands and desert.

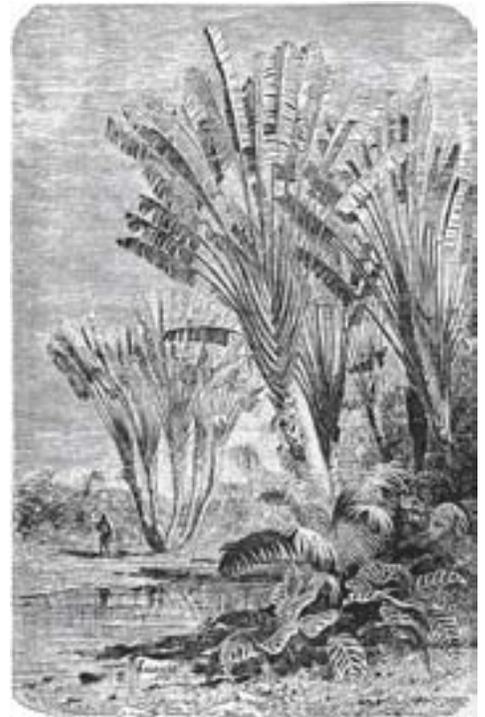
Madagascar’s isolation protected archaic lines of animals and plants from the extermination that might have otherwise occurred at the claws and teeth of the likes of African predators, and promoted profuse speciation. Of mammals on Madagascar, the best-known of which are perhaps the lemur line of primates, 95% are endemic. Chameleons, geckos and insects also show tremendous uniqueness.

Of plant life, 84% of species are endemic. Famous horticultural introductions from the mini-continent include the Traveler’s Tree, *Ravenala madagascariensis*, the Poinciana or Flamboyan, *Delonix regia* (one of several species in the genus), the Triangle palm, *Dyopsis decaryi* and the monumental fan palm *Bismarckia nobilis*, many of the enchanting night-fragrant *Angraecum* orchid species, and the humble periwinkle, *Catharanthus roseus*.

Gary’s talk gave emphasis to dryland species, with members of the endemic DIDIERACEAE family kicking off the parade of succulent slides. These Ocotillo- or Boojum-like succulent trees give Dr. Seuss a run for his illustrator’s laurels with their bizarre, wand-like growth. After a rain, tiny leaves sprout on the thorny stems like too many chads hanging to a cylindrical ballot.

The “Madagascar Palm” is a succulent genus in the APOCYNACEAE, *Pachypodium*, of exceptional beauty. It, too, arms its limb-like stems with long thorns, but during the rainy season (10 inches worth a year) it pushes out long leaves from the top, and flowers like its kin Plumeria’s burst forth.

Geological diversity underpins much of the botanical. Granite outcrops—enselbergs—present raw-rock faces to the sky and give no fuel to the frequent fires that people set to surrounding grasslands. In fissures and soil pockets, gardens of fire-protected plants persist: *Aloes*, tuberous deciduous *Euphorbias*, *Ceropegia*.



*Euphorbia quartzicola* wears its soil substrate on its nametag; it lives on a mountain range made mostly of quartz! Sandstones and the many other soil types give rise to specialized collections of endemics all over the island. Riparian corridors give rise to unusual vertical *Pandanus* trees, while 80-foot *Euphorbia enterophora* grows in nearby dry habitat

Other unforgettable botanical sights Gary shared with the audience included “Baobab Alley,” where a few ancient *Adansonia* trees represent their diverse genus against an onslaught of habitat destruction and wood-collecting. Impressive, too, were fences made of branches of *Allauaudia*, another member of the DIDIERACEAE, and sights of moister forest in the north, where *Begonia madagascariensis* grows atop sharp, uplifted limestone terrain. Finally, Gary showed evidence that alternatives to subsistence living are springing up, like rare-gem mining, and a French-owned bark-paper workshop.

Absent images of the Malagasy people and their daily lives in Gary’s slides, one might believe Madagascar were truly a different world. Yet some of the alien plants he showed are now growing in Orange County.

**A sampling of plants (*Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* cultivars) from the October Plant Drawing table.**



# Cal Hort T-Shirts make great gifts



\$16.24 (tax incl.)

Size: large

Color: soft green with darker green logo

Call Ann DeRosa (510) 528-8404

## Seed Exchange reminder

Remember to bring your seeds to our next meeting or mail them before thanksgiving to:

Dave Tivol  
130 Locksunart Way #4  
Sunnyvale CA 94087



It's not mandatory, but if you can take a picture of the plant in leaf or flower, it could be posted on our web site, where it would help illustrate the beauty (or other pertinent feature) of the plant. Digital photos can be sent to [seeds@calhortsociety.org](mailto:seeds@calhortsociety.org). Prints can be sent in with seeds; we will digitize them and return the originals, if requested. Thanks for supporting our Seed Exchange!

Dues for 2005 are now due and payable. Members are requested to use this dues form for remittance. A return envelope to Elsie Mueller, 1847 34th Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94122 is enclosed for your convenience. Those interested in providing additional funds to expand the work of the society are invited to do so by choosing special categories of membership. Endowment

and Grant funds are tax-deductible. If you wish your *Bulletin* to be mailed to you first class for speedier delivery, please add \$4.00 to your membership remittance. For those who wish to have their membership card mailed to them, please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Otherwise, membership cards will be available at the desk at the monthly meeting.

Board action requires that student members are enrolled in a full-time accredited horticultural program and that they may be classified in the student membership status category for a maximum of five years.

Be sure to pick up your 2004 membership card promptly so you will not be delayed in presenting it for admission to the monthly meetings.

Please detach at dotted line and mail in enclosed envelope to:  
Elsie Mueller, Secy., 1847 34<sup>th</sup> Ave., San Francisco, CA 94122-4109

### Membership Dues

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$40.00 Single Membership   | <input type="checkbox"/> Additional contribution to Grants/Scholarship Fund _____              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50.00 Joint Membership<br>(two in same household or corporation)  | <input type="checkbox"/> Add \$4 if you wish 1 <sup>st</sup> Class mailing for <i>Bulletin</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$40.00 International   | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100.00 Sustaining Membership  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25.00 Student Membership  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$200.00 Supporting Membership  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$75.00 Horticultural Business (per location, 2 cards,<br>back page separate entry in directory, 3 ads in <i>Bulletin</i> ) | <input type="checkbox"/> \$400.00 Life Membership, Individual                                  |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$600.00 Life Membership, Joint                                       |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000.00 Endowment (Including Life Membership)                      |

Make checks and money orders payable to: **California Horticultural Society**

Kindly return this statement with your remittance - your current name and address appears on the back. If it does not, or if it's changed, please fill out the following form. Mark any fields below () you would NOT like printed in our bi-ennial roster.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  Fax: \_\_\_\_\_  E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

# Do Your Holiday Shopping Early!

A thoughtful gift to a gardening friend that will last the whole year is a membership in the California Horticultural Society. Each month they can enjoy great horticulture slide lectures and be informed of local gardening events and topics in our *Bulletin*. They will also get the opportunity to select additions to their gardens from our ever popular Seed Exchange, join exciting Field Trips (both locally and abroad) and enjoy a subscription to *Pacific Horticulture*. What a gift package!

Send your check and the recipient's name and address by December 15th to Elsie Mueller, 1847 34th Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94122-4109. A holiday greeting and acknowledgment will be sent in your name. (You may enclose this with your 2004 dues.)

## Bring your seed donations to the November meeting!

### Officers

**President**  
Bruce Peters  
president@calhortsociety.org

**Vice President**  
Renee Fittinghoff  
vicepresident@calhortsociety.org

**Past President**  
Katherine Henwood

**Recording Secretary**  
Richard Starkeson  
rstarkeson@calhortsociety.org

**Corresponding Secretary**  
Barbara Hopper  
jbhopper@calhortsociety.org

**Treasurer**  
Jan Hamby

**Parliamentarian**  
Jan Hamby

### Secretary

Elsie Mueller  
1847 34th Avenue  
San Francisco, CA  
94122-4109  
(415) 566-5222  
(800) 884-0009

### Executive Council

#### 2002-2004

**First Term**  
Michael Craib  
Renee Fittinghoff

**Second Term**  
Richard Starkeson  
Keitha DeMara

#### 2003-2005

**First Term**  
Bruce Peters  
Jason Dewees

**Second Term**  
Katherine Henwood  
Ann DeRosa

#### 2004-2006

**First Term**  
Dan Carlson  
Scot Medbury  
Josh Schechtel

**Second Term**  
Diana Ross

### Bulletin

**Editor**  
Bruce Peters  
25 Chattanooga Street  
San Francisco, CA  
94114-3024  
(415) 824-1833  
editor@calhortsociety.org

**Hort Calendar Editor**  
Corina Rieder  
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.

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.



San Francisco County Fair Building  
9th Avenue & Lincoln Way  
San Francisco, CA 94122

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Permit #4143  
San Francisco

[www.calhortsociety.org](http://www.calhortsociety.org)