



Bulletin
of the
California Horticultural Society

November
2006

MEETINGS

November 20, 2006

4:00 PM

Botanical gardens walk with speaker at Strybing Arboretum. Parking is available behind the San Francisco Co, Fair Building on 9th Ave.

5:30 PM NO HOST Dinner will be at Park Chow Restaurant, 1249 Ninth Ave; San Francisco.

7:15 PM Meeting will be held at the SF Botanical Garden's Hall of Flowers at 9th Avenue and Lincoln Way; San Francisco.

Announcements, Plant Forum, Program.

\$5 Donation requested.

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS ON CALIFORNIA

Monday, November 20, 2006 Presented by Dr. Michael Loik, Department of Environmental Studies, UCSC

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

California is a trendsetter and the world's seventh largest economy. We also emit a lot of global warming pollutants. What is in store for California's future climate? How will it impact California's amazing flora? How will it impact the horticultural community? Michael Loik of UC Santa Cruz will provide some answers to these questions and pose a few for you to think about for yourself.

Dr. Loik has conducted extensive research on the biology of stress tolerance of cacti, yuccas, creosote bush and sagebrush. He has also published on the impacts of climate change on desert and montane ecosystems of the Great Basin, Mojave, Sonoran, and Chihuahuan Deserts, as well as the Rocky Mountains and Sierra Nevada.

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 the **Sloat Garden Center** in Kentfield, courtesy of **Laura Muschiatti** and from **San Francisco Botanical Garden**, courtesy of **Dr. Don Mahoney**. Our appreciation to **Grand Lake Ace Hardware**, courtesy of **Steve Mauricio** and to the **San Francisco Botanical Garden**, courtesy of **Dr. Don Mahoney** who contributed the outstanding selection of plants for the October meeting.

December 2006

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

CEANOTHUS: GARDENING WITH A CALIFORNIA CLASSIC

Monday, January 15, 2007 Presented by David Fross

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

David Fross, founder and President of Native Sons Wholesale Nursery, Arroyo Grande California. He is co-author of two recently released books: *California Native Plants for the Garden* and *Ceanothus* (with Dieter Wilken). He will take us from California to Europe and back again, viewing gardens displaying the many ways our California Lilacs can add to our own native landscapes. Drawing on his decades in native horticulture, Dave will show us his favorite varieties and cultivars ranging from mat-like groundcovers, gorgeous shrubs, to lovely small trees, all with a broad garden and landscape potential that will make you appreciate these beauties to an even greater degree. He will also show how many of our natives work well in combination with Ceanothus. Prior to and after his presentation David will sign his new book *Ceanothus*, a complete horticultural and botanical treatment of the genus aimed at both gardeners and botanists.

It's shocking to me to find that an entire year has passed yet again. It seems to me the rains were just ending and I was bummed that only about 10% of my Cyclamen seedlings had sprouted (I did plant them kind of late...). Now, all of a sudden, the rains have once again commenced and those same seedlings I more or less forgot about, are sprouting anew. I'm up to about 50%, with a few summer losses due to capricious watering, but since I put in about 250 seeds, I think I'll still be happy with this crop!

Our Society has had a few similar experiences over this past year. Most notably, the plant sale which had a great rebirth in April as the Specialty Nursery Sale but which may now suffer an early demise unless we can find someone (or a couple of people) to fill Celena's shoes and organize the 2007 sale. Much of the hard work of figuring out how to set things up has already been done. Now we just need someone to organize and follow through with the ideas and plans already set in motion from the previous sale. Being the prime fund raiser for the Society, we really can't afford to miss another sale. Please give me a call if you've ever thought of helping out at all, and maybe we could work something out.

On a brighter note, we had a wonderful member donate the necessary money for a new digital projector! The new digital projectors are very bright and deliver amazing image quality, often surpassing the quality offered by slide projectors. Look forward to even more visually satisfying presentations at our monthly meetings!

After writing 32 of these President's Letters, I've reached the end of my term as president so I wanted to thank all of those who have helped me to keep our Society running smoothly. There are so many things which need tending to in a large organization that it would be impossible for one person to even come close to dealing with it alone. Every person doing their small part really keeps Cal Hort flourishing and moving forward, without creating too much of a sense of burn-out in any one member... not an easy task in the non-profit sector!

Keep gardening, learning and sharing horticultural knowledge and giving Cal Hort memberships as holiday gifts to help spread the joy!

OCTOBER PLANT FORUM

Don Mahoney

Maxillaria lepidota

ORCHIDACEAE

John and Barbara Hopper, Kenwood

This showy species is known from the Andes in Columbia, Ecuador, and Venezuela at elevations of 5-6,000 feet. The plants are caespitose with elongate inflorescences arising from the base of the one-leaved pseudobulbs. Flowers are spidery and yellow with brown apices to the sepals, the labellum yellow with red spots. It requires an intermediate or cool greenhouse, high humidity, bright light, but no direct sun and good air movement for successful cultivation. The blossoms last for up to 3 weeks. We grow it in the coolest area of an intermediate greenhouse.

Cyrtanthus sanguineus

AMARYLLIDACEAE

Don Mahoney, Richmond

Appropriately named, the deep blood-red color of the 2" flowers makes this one of the showiest of the genus. The bulb goes top dormant during the dry season, but the roots stay active and fleshy so some summer water is necessary. The blooms appear in autumn just as the leaves appear. Give some fertilizer during active growth to insure bloom later. It grows on shady cliffs in Natal, so some shade is beneficial.

Nerine sarniensis, white form

AMARYLLIDACEAE

Don Mahoney, Richmond

Originally collected on Table Mountain near Cape Town in the 1920s, this beautiful white-flowering bulb is still fairly uncommon in cultivation. The 2" Flowers appear to be flecked with

silver dust in bright sunlight. They naturally occur in acid sandstone, and bloom in fall, just as the leaves emerge. Some clones apparently bloom better than others. Using bloom fertilizer in spring before they go dormant for the summer may encourage blooming. Not every bulb blooms every year, but a pot with several bulbs usually has one that will bloom each year.

Nerine undulate

AMARYLLIDACEAE

Don Mahoney, Richmond

Unlike some other Nerines, this species is almost evergreen and is very free-flowering. The inch-wide flowers have wavy edges and are a soft pink. The leaves are very narrow and the flower stalks are tall to about 2 feet. It comes from the central eastern cape and may go dormant for a few weeks in the middle of the dry season.

Hibiscus paramutabilis

MALVACEAE

Kristin Yanker-Hansen, Danville

This Asian semi-deciduous shrub is somewhat like an abutilon, only the flowers are much bigger and hibiscus-like. The rose-red flowers are produced in abundance from summer through fall. Grow in part shade or sun and water moderately. It may go semi-deciduous in cold weather.

Osmanthus aurantiacus

OLEACEAE

Carol and Barrie Coate, Los Gatos

This is a dense, compact shrub to 8' tall with long narrow leaves. It is delightful in October when the branches are covered with tiny



Setaria palmifolia

orange-yellow flowers that are intensely and sweetly fragrant. It blooms best in hot climates where it likes part shade. Sometimes this plant from Asia is listed as a variety of *Osmanthus fragrans*.

Crotalaria agatiflora

FABACEAE

Carol and Barrie Coate, Los Gatos

This East African native has very showy spikes of large chartreuse flowers that look like birds. It blooms best in warmer climates but will bloom some anywhere in the Bay Area. It needs frequent pruning to keep in shape and good bloom. Left to itself, it becomes a sprawling 8' shrub. It has gray-green leaves and in frost-free areas can bloom for many months in the fall and winter. It recovers quickly from frost damage.

Setaria palmifolia (variegated)

POACEAE

Bruce Peters, San Francisco

This tropical-looking grass has 2'-long by 2"-wide leaves. This particular clone has narrow-white stripes on the leaf edges. It grows best in warm humid conditions where it can quickly fill a large area. Outdoors in the Bay Area, it grows very slowly. It is evergreen unless it freezes to the ground. It's roots must not freeze, however. It requires a lot of water.

DO YOU GROW THESE?

If you have enjoyed growing these types of plants, please collect and contribute seed for our exchange. Please indicate, too, which of these qualities pertain to each type of seed you donate. Thanks!

Laperousia pyramidalis

- California natives
- California native grasses
- California native annuals
- California native high-altitude plants
- California native bulbs
- wild-collected seed from the SF Bay Area

- South African natives
- trees for hot and summer dry conditions
- shrubs for shade
- attractive to butterflies
- "quick" seed (flower in one season)
- succulents
- bulbs
- tropicals
- bamboos
- variegates (!)
- vegetables

“My name is Kathy Echols and I’m an addict.” In an era when behavior has been redefined as brain chemistry, Kathy Echols, Cal Hort’s own longtime member—and a loyal presence at meetings—gave a slide presentation that might very well have been renamed “compulsive propagation, sexual and asexual.”

Echols’s vision divides the green world into that which is ready for propagation, and that which is not. Some of us are obsessed with leaves, some with fruit, some with stems, some with flowers. For Kathy, these organs, beautiful as they are, tell her if and when she can make more of the plant of which they are a part. And boy, can she make a lot of baby plants.

She has been propagating plants for the last 30 years and has been teaching the subject for the last 17. She is past president of International Plant Propagators Western Region. “It is a disease,” said Echols. “It seems to encompass your whole life. You can never get over it.”

Then you get enough plants around that you have to figure out a way to get rid of them. How did Echols start to get rid of her prolific brood? “I became the sole vendor for Payless nursery in Martinez.”

She has been sharing her skill as a teacher at Diablo Valley College, generating 100–150 flats of new plants for DVC sales. Her specialty is hands-on teaching, using vernacular terms to make plant propagation accessible: showing while telling.

For Cal Hort, she showed her techniques on-screen, her hands on the projector controls, rather than in a mix of peat, perlite, and propagules. (By the way, peat offers special protection against the pathogens that cause cuttings and seedlings to damp off.) She offered tips like researching the provenance of the plant you’re propagating so that you can use conditions of its habitat, such as cold stratification, before sowing seeds from cold-temperate-climate plants, for example. She also suggested scarifying seeds with thick seed coats, and using pencils to write the labels (in botanical Latin, not common names!), because pencil doesn’t wash off in the constant spray of an active cutting bed or seed tray. Once seedlings emerge, Echols said, they will need a light fertilizing regime until moved into soil mix. Seed mix lacks necessary nutrients for vigorous growth. The advantage to propagating with seed is the natural variation in any batch.

Cuttings took center stage in the presentation. One advantage for cuttings is that the descendent plant is an exact clone of the parent. Echols promoted rooting hormone, delivered in carefully calibrated concentrations, for success with cuttings. All-purpose Rootone won’t cut it: Use a product like Dip N Grow, Hormex, or Snip n Dip. They offer kits with a range of concentrations. She also scoffed at the artificially early expiration dates on rooting-hormone products. Echols keeps dipping until the hormone mix is too dirty or wetted to be useful anymore.

Echols provided a wealth of tips for successful propagation—and one hopes they will be put to good use in advance of the next Cal Hort plant sale. Clearly, even if there’s not an epidemic of propagation addiction, just a few good addicts can produce enough choice saleable plants to keep Cal Hort and other horticultural organizations in the green.



November 15

Exploring Northern Ecuador with Richard Wigen—The Kippings potluck/slideshows. Please bring a dish for 8 people to share. At the San Francisco County Fair Building, 9th Avenue at Lincoln Way, (415) 753-7090.

November 24–December 2

Holiday Traditions—The Filoli Estate's annual holiday fete'. Tickets on sale in early October. (650) 364-8300 or www.filoli.org.

December 2 & 3

Fungus Fair—The Mycological Society hosts its 38th annual fair at the Oakland Museum. (415) 759-0495 or www.mssf.org

February 2007

Master Composter Training Program—Stopwaste.org is currently accepting applications for this 4-month training and environmental education program. (510) 444-SOIL or www.BayFriendly.org (look in the "What's New" section.)

SF BOTANICAL GARDEN SOCIETY

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

November 11

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

December 8

How to make and use biodiesel—An in-depth hands-on class with Jennifer Radtke. 9 AM–5 PM, fee TBA.

December 10

Wreath Making Workshop—Make a holiday wreath using cuttings from the Botanical Garden. Fee is \$20–\$40 depending on the size of wreath, time TBA.

U.C. BOTANICAL GARDEN AT BERKELEY

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

November 12

Orchid Identification and Care—Learn the basics with Jerry Parsons. Includes a tour of the Garden's orchid collection. 9 AM–noon, members \$40, non-members \$50.

November 18

A cultural taste of chocolate—Join John Scharffenbeger as he discusses the cultural and agricultural origins of chocolate. Learn about and taste the principle components of chocolate that give it its flavor. Book signing to follow. 3 PM–5 PM, members \$35, non-members \$40.

THE GARDENS AT HEATHER FARM

(925) 947-1678 • www.gardenshf.org

November 17

Holiday Floral Demo—Get ideas with Najat Nicola. 9:30–11:30 AM, members \$15, non-members \$20.

U.C. SANTA CRUZ ARBORETUM

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

November 5

Vertical Gardening—Slide lecture on vines, trailers, espaliers and roses by Bill Grant. 1:30 PM, members \$10, non-members \$15.

November 11 & 12

Dried Flower and Succulent Wreath Sale—Held in the Hort Bldg. 10 AM – 4 PM and 10 AM – 2 PM.

UC DAVIS ARBORETUM

(530) 752-4880 • <http://arboretum.ucdavis>

November 4

Arboretum bicycle tour—Come join for leisurely ride and an overview of the arboretum's different plant collections and gardens. Bring your bike and meet at the Buehler Alumni & Visitors Center. 11 AM, free.

November 5

Family Wildlife Day—Learn about and meet local birds, mammals, fish, and insects at the UC Davis Arboretum. Explore techniques used by UC Davis wildlife researchers. Event at Putah Creek Lodge. 2 PM – 4 PM, non-members, \$5 or \$15 per family.

November 8

Walk with Warren—Lunchtime tour of the arboretum with Arboretum Superintendent Warren Roberts. Meet at the Gazebo on Garrod Dr. on UC Davis campus. 12:00 Noon.

November 12

Central Valley gardens—Learn about great plants with a lot of color that thrive with little maintenance. Meet at the Gazebo on Garrod Dr. on UC Davis campus. 2:00 PM, free.

November 18

White Flower Garden tour—Garden features plants with white flowers and white, grey, or silvery foliage. Tour and learn about plants for the autumn garden. 11:00 AM, free.

Send submissions to 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.

Cyclamen hederifolium

PRIMULACEAE

I know, I know. You read “cyclamen,” and you automatically think of the ubiquitous gift plant (*C. persicum*), usually sold in a plastic pot wrapped in colored foil, available at every supermarket checkout stand and hospital gift shop. Well, guess again! This family contains some wonderful species that do well on the west coast. In fact, *Cyclamen hederifolium* is a workhorse, so don't be fooled by its dainty little appearance.

In order to fully appreciate this plant, you must understand its natural history. Hailing from the Mediterranean region, this plant is dormant during the spring and summer and requires little water. Sounds like a plant for California so far... At the end of August, delicate, pale pink or white flowers emerge from

the ground. The show continues through the autumn. So far, so good. After the flowers appear, heart-shaped leaves with beautiful silver markings form a low mat and last until spring, when the cycle repeats itself. The name ‘hederifolium’ means ivy-like leaf, which describes the general shape of the leaves, not the plant's behavior. What's not to like?! And best of all, this plant thrives on neglect. Just make sure that it is in a shady, well drained location. Do you have areas of dry soil under a tree where almost nothing survives? *Cyclamen hederifolium* could be the plant you are looking for!

Over time, the corm produces offsets, and eventually this plant can form a large clump. Once established, this cyclamen is long lived and it is easily divided. What to do with the new plants? Bring them to Cal Hort meetings—your Cal Hort friends will appreciate this plant as much as you do!



DIABLO VALLEY COLLEGE NEEDS YOU!

There is a good chance that the Horticulture Department Program at Diablo Valley College in Pleasant Hill will be closed after the Spring semester if we don't fill our classes for Spring. Most classes are offered in the evening or late afternoon. Classes offered are: Introduction to Horticulture, Annuals and perennial I.D., Annuals and Perennials Lab, California Native Plants, Plant Propagation, Plant Propagation Lab, Landscape Construction, Introduction to Landscape Architecture, Planting Design, and Home Landscape design. If you have ever wanted to take a class on Horticulture, now is the time to do it and help save an outstanding program. Web site is www.DVC.edu. or for more information, email Kathy Echols at kechols@dvc.edu

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. Prints can be sent in with seeds; we will digitize them and return the originals, if requested. Thanks for supporting our Seed Exchange!

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Dues for 2007 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 2007 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 34th Ave., San Francisco, CA 94122-4109

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$40.00 Single Membership* | <input type="checkbox"/> Additional contribution to Grants/Scholarship Fund |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50.00 Joint Membership
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| | <input type="checkbox"/> \$700.00 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 they do 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: _____

*Roster entry for Single Membership must be an individual's, but not a business, name.

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 or call (800) 884-0009.



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