

The next monthly general meeting is Monday, November 21, 2016, at 7:15 PM

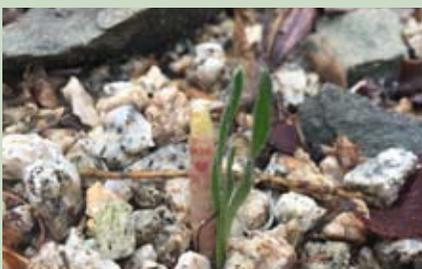
Monthly meetings are held at the San Francisco County Fair Building, Ninth Avenue at Lincoln Way in Golden Gate Park.

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

4:00 PM – Botanical gardens walk with the featured speaker. Meet outside the entrance gate to the San Francisco Botanical Garden. New rules require that if you do not enter with the California Horticultural Society as a group, need to pay the entry fee if you are neither a SFBG member nor a resident of San Francisco. So be on time.

5:30 PM – No-host dinner will take place at Park Chow Restaurant, located at 1240 Ninth Avenue in San Francisco.

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 are welcome; Cal Hort requests a donation of \$5.



Seed-filled *Gethyllis* fruit emerging from the ground.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2016

Wild Cyclamens: Delicate Marvels from Nature

by Ori Fragman-Sapir

Head Scientist at the Jerusalem Botanical Gardens



Cyclamens are native in Europe from the Mediterranean into Iran and south to Somalia. Ori Fragman-Sapir, a world-renowned bulb specialist, will show images of the genus in nature and interpret the natural habitats of cyclamen with regard to horticultural characteristics.



MONDAY, JANUARY 16, 2017

So Many Plants, So Little Time!

We had a great time last year, and we plan to do it again this year, a full meeting of plant display and discussion only this time two months later in the season since we don't have a December meeting. For the colder parts of the bay area, January is a difficult month. Frost and low light can be hard on our gardens. Even the areas around the Bay and the Coast can have bad experiences. So if you have a special plant or a few that you would like to discuss with the group come to our January meeting and bring it along. It could be a cutting or a beautifully grown specimen, or something you are having trouble growing. This is a meeting for everyone to learn.

A *Gethyllis* on Halloween

by Arcangelo Wessells

At the last minute, I dressed up for Halloween. The last time I made a costume, I was a mandrake, *Mandragora autumnalis*. It was 2003 and I went to my surprise birthday party. This year I only had fifteen minutes to get ready after a quick trip to the supermarket for supplies. I had no fear of missing out on candy, but I had to get in position before Robin, my wife, got home. I was a *Gethyllis* fruit and I dressed up just for her. She loved it.

You may remember I wrote about *Gethyllis* in our [July Bulletin](#), when several of these tiny Amaryllidaceae had flowered. They were beautiful and ephemeral, but I may be more excited about the fruit and the seeds. And this is the time for seeds. I thought I had started my seeds too early since we had some hot weather in early October, but the temperatures cooled and then the rain started. Seeds of many winter-growing plants need twenty degrees of difference between daytime and nighttime temperatures to begin the long process of germination.

What joy the rain has brought. I have been commuting from Vallejo to Inverness for work, and am amazed by the sudden appearance of the color green in the hills. At home, my observations are mostly limited to seedlings of *Malva nicaeensis* (still coming up after sixteen years in the soil) and looking for signs of growth in early bulbs. Leaves have already appeared on *Paeonia californica*, *Lapiedra martinezii*, *Geissorhiza corrugata* and a few *Rhodophiala*. The *Gethyllis* not only have leaves, but some have already made fruit.

I planted the *Gethyllis* bulbs in the ground last September. They are growing in deep sandy gravel, but I am still concerned that if we have a wet winter they may suffer. I have three species in the ground and I think the risk is worth it. When the first flower made its surprise appearance in June, I saved a bit of pollen in the freezer for use in hybridizing later in

the year. Sometimes other growers request pollen, but I didn't expect to need it the next day when another flower appeared. Of course, I blew it and put pollen from two species in one baggie, so I won't know the pollen parents until I see flowers.

The first fruit emerged October 9 from *Gethyllis ciliaris*. In the morning a slender pale worm lay on the gravel. It was about two and a half inches long. This was during hot weather, and by late afternoon, the fruit was at least two inches longer than before, translucent in the afternoon light. The seeds are confined to the upper part of the fruit, where the skin is thin and breaks down within a few days. The lower section, which grew so suddenly, reminds me of the foam netting sometimes wrapped around apples: thin but strong. The whole fruit relaxed onto the ground and the tip disintegrated in the rain, leaving the seeds in a loose pile. The seeds were about one millimeter around, and deep reddish pink, and fairly hard.

The second fruit, from *Gethyllis grandiflora*, emerged thick and opaque. However, it was eaten by an animal that pulled it out of the ground, which may be the plant's primary dispersal strategy beyond the lengthening of the fruit.



Fruit of *Gethyllis ciliaris*. Note the seeds in a translucent covering at the tip.

Autumn HORTICULTURAL EVENTS

FALL 2016 GRATITUDE GATHERING

Saturday, November 12; 9 AM–2 PM

60124 29 Palms Highway, Joshua Tree CA 92252

The Mojave Desert Land Trust will have tours of its Native Plant Restoration Nursery and Seed Bank, as well as a native plant sale. The event will also feature a speaker, Doug Tallamy, entomologist and author of *Bringing Nature Home*. The Mojave Desert is cooling down and the fall is a great time of year to visit Joshua Tree.

CNPS Santa Clara Valley Chapter Extends Due Date for 2016-2017 Scholarship Application

The Santa Clara Valley Chapter of the California Native Plant Society is again offering scholarships to students doing research on native plant or plant community conservation and other related botanical studies of native plants that grow in habitats in Central and Northern California. Scholarships may be awarded to: graduate students or an undergraduate student or undergraduate research team (consisting of one or more undergraduates and a supervising faculty member).

Academic scholarships of \$1,500 for graduate student research and a \$1,000 scholarship for undergraduate student research are available. The application deadline has been extended to December 2, 2016 and scholarships will be awarded by December 31, 2016.

Complete scholarship information and applications can be found at this link: <http://cnps-scv.org/index.php/education/scholarships>.



Arcangelo's Halloween costume: He dressed as the seed-filled fruit of a *Gethyllis*. Compare and contrast this image with that on p.2

The last fruit, *Gethyllis grandiflora*, filled with many more seeds, was on the edge of a path. I put a basket-like contraption of quarter inch mesh over it. A few days later I found the protection was gone. Robin had thought the wire mesh had blown there in the storm, so she had moved it. I told her that I had put it there and that the fruit was very important. This amused her and she has teased me a lot with this quote since then. She later found a social media post from last year with a photo of a dried up *Gethyllis* fruit saying: "This is important."

The fruit sat on the ground a week before I decided to plant it and belatedly eat a bit of it. It was creamy and tasted like an overripe strawberry, but best of all it had sixteen seeds inside. These were about two millimeters across, pale pink and softer than the others. They also had creamy residue from the flesh that I didn't remove thoroughly.

A friend from out of town got Robin's embellished update about my recent *Gethyllis* activities and on Halloween he asked me if I was "dressing up as that fruit in your garden". Instantly I knew that all I would need was clear tape, a few pink balloons and some painter's plastic. Since I had taped my legs together, I had to be lay in place and slowly tape myself into the skin and add balloons as I went. I thought I was doing a good job, but since I had no mirror and no help, I blew the balloons up too much and looked more like a group of polyps than a fruit.

The seeds in these fruit don't go dormant. They will sprout in warm weather, without water, and even in the mail. They germinate relatively quickly, but will dry up and die without moisture. Unfortunately, this prevents me from being able to donate these to the Cal Hort Seed Exchange, but I hope to be able to be generous with the plants.



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

www.calhortsociety.org

Plant Drawing News

Each month various nurseries and individual members donate plants for the plant drawing. In September, we had many interesting donations. Please do not hesitate to bring in unusual plants from your garden to share with the members. Also remember the meeting is an excellent place to find plants for your garden that you have never seen before.

Monthly Plant Display and Discussion

Each month there is a lively discussion about plants brought in by our members. It may be a well-grown specimen or an unusual discovery, or a plant that has attributes that are not known by the mainstream. If you are interested in participating, bring in a plant to show to the group. You can also donate this plant afterwards to the plant drawing.

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.

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 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.