

Important plant sale information inside!

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.



Officers

President
Bruce Peters
president@calhortsociety.org

Vice President
Vacant

Past President
Katherine Henwood

Recording Secretaries
Michael Craib
Ann DeRosa
Jason Dewees

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

2003–2005

First Term
Bruce Peters
Jason Dewees

Second Term
Katherine Henwood
Ann DeRosa

2004–2006

First Term
Dan Carlson
Josh Schechtel

Second Term

Michael Craib
Diana Ross

2005–2007

First Term
Sue Gaylord
Bonnie Remigio
Ted Kipping

Bulletin

Editor
Bruce Peters
25 Chattanooga Street
San Francisco, CA
94114-3024
(415) 203-4407
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 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



BULLETIN
THE CALIFORNIA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY
San Francisco County Fair Building
Ninth Avenue at Lincoln Way
San Francisco, California 94122
October 17, 2005

4:00 PM Botanical gardens walk with speaker at Strybing Arboretum.
 Parking is available behind the San Francisco Co, Fair Building on 9th Ave.
 5:30PM 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 the San Francisco Botanical Garden in the San Francisco County Fair Building at 9th Avenue and Lincoln Way; San Francisco.

Non members 5.

Monday, October 17, 2005

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

‘On the hunt for rare plants’
“Plants from the Edge of the World-New Explorations in the Far East”



Presented by **Tony Kirkham**, Head of the Arboretum at the Royal Botanic Garden, Kew, and **Mark Flanagan**, Keeper of the Gardens at Windsor Great Park. They are two of the most important and influential horticulturists in Great Britain. As authors of the new book, ‘Plants From the Edge of the World’, they will share their adventures to remote areas in the Far East where they concentrated on the species rich temperate woodlands of South Korea, Taiwan, eastern Russia and Japan.



The **Plant Drawing** each month is an important source of funds for the Grants and Scholarships Program. In October, the drawing will include donations from the **San Francisco Botanical Garden**, courtesy of Dr. Don Mahoney. Our appreciation to California Flora Nursery, Fulton, CA, Hortica Nursery, SF, Monterey Bay Nursery, SF Foliage & LA Tropicals and to the San Francisco Botanical Garden Society, courtesy of Dr. Don Mahoney for the outstanding selection of plants donated for the September meeting.



Monday, November 21, 2005

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

‘The Garden as Sanctuary’

Presented by **Lawrence Lee**, horticulturist and owner of Plantopia Nursery, in Danville, California. The nursery is known for the great variety of rare and unusual plants. The program touches upon the different ways in which gardens provide sanctuary. It includes how plants can play a pivotal role in creating our sanctuary, or “how plants speak to us” and nourish our senses and our souls. A special feature will be a selection of some choice plants from Plantopia for the Plant Drawing and purchase after the program.



President's Letter

Bruce Peters

Ahh, finally San Francisco is getting some sun. It being Fall and all, it's coming when the sun's already quite low in the sky so I've found myself moving all my sun-lovers up from the now shaded patio to the little landing outside my kitchen door, which is quickly running out of room. Now, hopefully, there won't be any very strong winds to knock all my little pots off of the 4" handrails upon which they're precariously perched!

Remember I was trying to figure out the carpool thing last month and we were going to try something new at the last meeting? Well, that didn't quite work out the way I had hoped so we council members decided that we'd try a *Bul* *letin*-based approach and see how that works. I know that a

bunch of you already do carpool to the meetings. I'm hoping our 'Green Thumb Carpool' list will make it easier to find rides, and maybe even help members get to know each other better!

Our October meeting is when we ask for Council Nominations from the floor so if you have someone in mind, don't forget to come! Also, remember to bring both seeds for the Seed Exchange and plants for the plant forum table.

Be sure to read the enclosed Plant Sale information sheet full of exciting information and don't be frightened to volunteer for one of the positions. How great would it be to tell people that you helped create the biggest money-making plant sale in Cal Hort's history? Really great, I think!

Green Thumb Carpool

Stick out your Green Thumb for a Ride!

What with gas prices going sky high, global warming becoming an issue, and people just not wanting to drive alone in the dark, we're instigating this carpool section in the *Bulletin* to help facilitate matching you guys up. Call or email the *Bulletin* Editor (info on back) to put your name on the list. When you get a match, let us know and we'll take you off the list.



Carpool WANTED

Marie Hammock, Sonoma. (707) 933-9653

Carpool AVAILABLE

Botanical Tours

February 4 - 17, 2006

**A South African Wilderness Experience,
Drakensberg Flora & Bushveld Fauna—**

Drakensberg Park, trails alongside mountain streams, alpine flora on the 'roof of South Africa,' day and night safari drives with expert naturalists, fine mountain resort hotels...this tour has it all! In support of the California Horticultural Society

For information please call (800) 624-6633 or visit www.geostartravel.com.

A long way from home

This past September, Robert Jubb, our new Cal Hort member from England, came all the way to San Francisco to attend his first Cal Hort meeting. As an American would say "way to go Robert!"

Robert is a structural and civil engineer by profession but decided to take The Royal Horticultural Society Diploma in Horticulture. He traveled 90 miles each Friday for two years to attend classes. Congratulations on your great achievement, Robert! Anyway, I, and some others, got to know Robert a little when he came on the walk, and to dinner before our meeting.

He also told us that he had come to see the *Sequoiadendron gigantea* trees of the Sierra Nevada. Unfortunately, he did not get to see them because the travel agent made a mistake. He was devastated and nearly returned home without visiting us. Having received an e-mail from Robert since his return, his comments were, "I must thank everyone I met at the meeting for the warm welcome I received. I so enjoyed the meeting and I do not think I have been to a meeting with so many enthusiastic and knowledgeable people."

Thank you Robert for the raffle tickets you gave me. I won one plant with your tickets and four with mine ("what a night!")

We look forward to seeing you again sometime in the near future.

Plants bring us together, let's stay in touch.
—Kathy Till

Please Welcome The Following New Members To The California Horticultural Society

Chris Bezek
Barbara Boyd-Morris
Susan Handjian
Pauline Haro

Nancy Jan
Debra Smith
Mat McGrath
Kathy Southern

Foliage Color and Texture, or Plants I Like and How to Use Them

Presented by Luen Miller, Monterey Bay Nursery

Luen Miller, principal of Monterey Bay Nursery in Watsonville, California, brought slides of flamboyant foliage and flowering plants to the September 19, 2005, Cal Hort meeting in the San Francisco County Fair Building. To accompany his gorgeous images, he shared an admiration for experimentation, whether as a result of scientific method or naïve luck.

Miller cited several waves of American exotic-foliage trends since the 1940s, from GIs' taste for plants a la "South Pacific" (e.g., *Philodendron* 'Evansii') acquired in the Pacific Theater, to 1976-1977 Drought-panicked gardeners' yen for xeriscape imports (e.g., PROTEACEAE), and the 1980s hunger for ornamental grasses on the East Coast. Back in 1988, he couldn't sell the then-rare *Elegia capensis* and had to compost his young stock, but now it's de rigueur in California.

In the ever-changing balance of foliage versus flowers in the plant trade, exemplified at an Ohio horticultural show, the leaves have been throwing their weight around of late. Miller showed many examples of wholesale displays dominated by colorful, distinctly textured plants without flowers as their selling points. At the same time, he didn't resist expressing his enthusiasm for flowers both rare and common.

Calliandra californica appeared more than once in Miller's slides as a successful experiment. The Baja native turns out to thrive in the fog belt of Monterey Bay as well as in more *Sunset*-approved climates like Palm Springs. The shrub, a natural espalier, even tolerates part shade in Watsonville and still produces garnet powder-puff flowers. Among naïve successes Miller cited was the backyard banana patch (and sugarcane clump) popping up in droves around Central California, attributed to the comfort on the part of immigrants from tropical climates with plants from back home.

In turn, Miller showed the specific bananas that have proven especially hardy and tolerant in our mediterranean climate, such as the glaucous-leaved and yellow-blooming *Musella lasiocarpa* from Yunnan Province, China, and the red-striped *Musa sikkimensis* from Darjeeling, India.

A favorite plant of Miller's, one proven successful in milder California climates through more scientific experimentation at the Royal Botanical Gardens Melbourne, Australia, and San Francisco Botanical Garden, is the Mexican cloud forest native, *Bartlettina sordida*, a giant asteraceous shrub with bright, broad velvety leaves and showy *Ageratum* like flowers.

The mix of subtropical and hardy temperate plants Miller showed mark a gardening style that evinces the exuberant



M. sikkimensis displaying variegation common on juvenile foliage

triumph of aesthetic effects over zonal and ecological correctness. It's a style that Miller first noted among the plant innovators of the Pacific Northwest but that now extends nationwide, with woody tropicals grown as annuals, and hardy Siberians keeping company with cool-tolerant *Amor phophallus*. Each plant stands on its impact, not its origin or long-term viability. In Ohio, Miller told, a favorite poolside plant now is *Hibiscus rosa sinensis*, a selection doomed to death at first freeze in October, but vivacious and evocative throughout the natatory season. Buyers don't flinch, because it's the tropical effect that matters to them, not the propriety of growing tropicals in a freezing zone.

The spirit of experiment Miller conveyed was: "Be happy. Be bold. Use plants you like. Simple is best, but be a collector if you want. Use isolation and contrast to present a plant and make it a star." Perhaps the most heartening gardening secret he told was, "weed fu": dense planting crowds out weeds.

If a *Colocasia* species grows vigorously through a tropical winter, it makes no difference to a California gardener who grows it for summer-fall foliage should it retreat to roots in December. It will bounce back in May.

Sales Rep wanted

for Sebastopol Growers.
Contact Peggy or Ken (707) 546-6330

Plant Forum will return next month

Horticultural Calendar

Through October 22

Botanical Illustrations—Watercolors and ink drawings by Kristen Jacob are on display at Mrs. Dalloway's Literary and Garden Arts, 2904 College Ave., Berkeley. (510) 704-8222 or www.mrsdalloways.com.

October 11 - June 8

Jungle Guide Tours—The Conservatory of Flowers is again offering docent led exploratory tours for third and fourth grade classes. Tuesdays - Thursdays, 10 - 11:15 AM, free to SF public and private schools. www.conservatoryofflowers.org or (415) 666-7001

October 20

Soil Amendments and Plant Health—Malcolm Hillan discusses reducing pesticide use. Hosted by the SF Prof. Gardeners Assoc., 7 - 9 PM at the CCSF Hort. Dept. Non-members \$20 for CEU hours. www.sfpga.org or (415) 558-8036.

October 22

Fruit Tasting Tour—The Ruth Bancroft Garden hosts a walking tour of delicious autumn fruits with a tasting to follow. Starts at 10 AM, reservations required, \$5 members, \$10 non-members. (925) 210-9663 or www.ruthbancroftgarden.org

October 23

Flower Arranging—With Sogetsu Ikebana Master Soho Sakai at the Quarryhill Botanical Garden. Class starts at 10 AM, \$25 per person. (707) 996-3166 or www.quarryhillbg.org.

October 23

Book Reading—William Bryant Logan reads from his book *Oak: The Frame of Civilization*. 3 PM at Mrs. Dalloway's Literary and Garden Arts, 2904 College Ave., Berkeley. (510) 704-8222 or www.mrsdalloways.com.

November 20

Winterize your Native Garden—A practical course on basic CA native plant maintenance. 10 AM - 1:30 PM at the Regional Parks Botanic Garden in Berkeley, with an optional field trip. Members \$40, non-members \$45. (510) 841-8732 or www.nativeplants.org.

October 29

Plant Sale—from 9 AM until 1 PM, Diablo Valley College Horticulture, 321 Golf Club Rd. Pleasant Hill, Ca 925-685-1230 ext 2443 or 2478. Thousands of perennials, shrubs, natives and trees at wholesale prices.

November 25 - December 3

Holiday Traditions—The 'Don't Miss It' event at the Filoli Estate featuring buffets, galas, dancing, boutiques, a children's party and more. Tickets on sale October 3rd. (650) 364-8300 or www.filoli.org.

December 3 & 4

Fungus Fair—The Mycological Society hosts its 36th annual fair at the Oakland Museum. (415) 759-0495 or www.mssf.org

December 3 - 18

Holidays at Dunsmuir—Don't miss tours of the decorated mansion, horse-drawn carriage rides of the grounds, carolers, holiday teas and more. Saturdays and Sundays 11 AM - 5 PM. (510) 615-5555 or www.dunsmuir.org.

Elizabeth Gamble Garden

(650) 329-1356 • www.gamblegarden.org

October 15

Creating Japanese Gardens for California—A slide lecture with Mark Bourne discussing how to use CA natives in Japanese Design. 9 - 11 AM, members \$20, non-members \$25.

October 20

Design a Garden of Alliteration—Katsy Swan will help you visualize design ideas for your fabulous garden. 10 AM - noon, members \$20, non-members \$25.

November 19

Care and Pruning of Fruit Trees—Learn how to keep your backyard fruit trees healthy and producing with arborist Kevin Raftery. 9 - 11 AM, members \$20, non-members \$25.

U.C. Davis Arboretum

(530) 752-4880 • arboretum.ucdavis.edu

October 15

Meet the Native Plants of California—A guided tour to see the mellow colors of the Native Garden. Starts at 11 AM at the Visitors Center. Free

October 22

The Oaks of the Arboretum—A guided tour starts at 11 AM at the Gazebo. Free

November 12

Container Gardening—A guided tour with tips on growing in containers. Starts at 11 AM at the Arboretum Terrace Garden. Free

SF Botanical Garden Society

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

October 28

Harvest Festival—Autumnal food presentations, evening tours, door prizes, plants for sale, kid's activities and more. 3 - 9 PM at the Main Gate, free.

November 13

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

November 19

The Mint Family—A refreshing slide lecture with Betsy Clebsch featuring care and design. 10 AM - noon, members \$20, non-members \$25.

Thysanolaena maxima, Tiger Grass

Thysanolaena: from the Greek thysanos (fringe) and chlaina (cloak), referring to a fringed upper lemma.

Maxima: from the ancient word for “as big as a house”.

I seem to gravitate to grasses. With over 10,000 species, including most of my favorite grains (rice, wheat, corn), the POACEAE are hard to avoid. If you attended the September meeting, you had your eyes filled with tropical-looking plants. Almost lost among the loud and showy bananas, *Hedychiums* and other plants from *Alocasias* to *Xanthosomas* was a small specimen of *Thysanolaena maxima*, the tiger grass. Although this young specimen appeared pretty unspectacular compared to all its showy neighbors, it was the horticultural equivalent of the ugly duckling.

Hailing from a wide area of Asia, including China, India and Indonesia, tiger grass forms wonderful arching clumps up to 10 feet tall. The large leaves can grow up to 18 inches long, and hang from thin stems, very much like a bamboo. However, as aggressive as the name sounds, tiger grass is not a garden thug, and won't run rampant like some of the running bamboos. Although it looks very tropicalismo, this is a tough plant that can take temperatures down to just above freezing. If you want your tiger grass to purr happily, give



it full sun to partial shade, and fairly good watering. It is a great plant for pondsides or low-lying areas of questionable drainage, where moisture won't be lacking. Tiger grass also makes a dramatic statement as a container plant, as long as it gets enough water.

Like many members of the POACEAE, this plant is a multi-tasker, which always endears a plant to me. Besides looking great in the garden, in its native lands this plant is used to make brooms, and the leaves are used to wrap and steam food. Hey, what about a POACEAE-themed barbecue?

U.C. Botanical Garden At Berkeley
(510) 643-2755
www.botanicalgarden.berkeley.edu

October 23

Children's Carnivorous Plant Bog Garden Workshop—Join your child in creating a creepy insect eating 'garden' to take home. 1 - 2 PM, members \$12, non-members \$15.

November 6

CA Natives: Plants and Peoples Tour—See and learn the different uses for native plants. Noon - 3 PM, free with garden admission.

November 13

Autumn in Asia—A guided tour of the Asian Area with Elaine Sedlack showcasing the maple collection. 10 AM - noon, members \$8, non-members \$12.

U.C. Santa Cruz Arboretum

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

October 27

Native Plant ID Workshop—Learn to key out plants using your Jepson Manual and 10x hand lens. 1:30 PM, Free

November 6

Grevilleas—Bill Grant will give a talk on these most

diverse and useful of Australian plants.

1:30 PM, \$15 non-members, \$10 members.

November 19 & 20

Dried Flower and Succulent Wreath Sale—Hand-made and Living Holiday Decorations galore! Saturday 10 AM to 4 PM or Sunday 10 AM to 2 PM in the Horticulture Building.

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!