



Bulletin
of the
California Horticultural Society

October
2006

MEETINGS

October 16, 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.

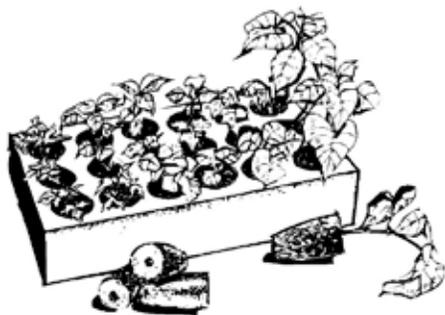
Announcements, Plant Forum, Program.

\$5 Donation requested.

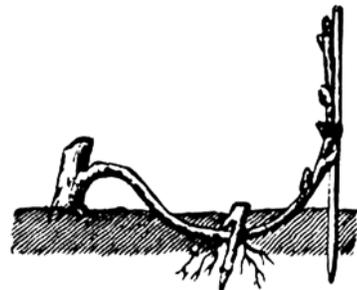
LOVE IT, GROW IT: HOW TO PROPAGATE PLANTS FOR FUN AND PROFIT

Monday, October 16, 2006 Presented by Kathy Echols

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



Plant Propagation has fascinated people since the beginning of time. Once you start propagating plants, you find that you can't stop. Making new plants starts out with seeds and gradually works into plant parts. From there, you gradually work your way into doing a little hybridizing and soon, you are a total addict. Kathy Echols has been propagating plants for the last 23 years and has been teaching the subject for the last 17. She is past president of International Plant Propagators Western Region, and will talk and show slides of the methods of propagation. She will share techniques she has found that will help you be successful as a propagator. Have you always wanted to grow some special plant that you own? Come learn how to do it.



The Plant Drawing each month is an important source of funds for the Grants and Scholarships Program. In September, the drawing will include donations from the Sloat Garden Center in San Rafael, courtesy of Steve Mauricio and from San Francisco Botanical Garden, courtesy of Dr. Don Mahoney. Our appreciation to Berkeley Horticultural Nursery courtesy of Paul Doty, members Kristin Yanker-Hansen and Linda Baptiste, Suncrest Nursery courtesy of Michael Craib, and to the San Francisco Botanical Garden, courtesy of Dr. Don Mahoney, who contributed the outstanding selection of plants for the August meeting.

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS ON CALIFORNIA

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

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.

Ahhh, the season is changing again. Here in San Francisco we're getting some deliciously warm weather and another respite from the fog. A last hurrah of sorts, before we move on to cool season and native plants. Although I've said it before, I'll say it again, as much as I like our dry summers, I'm going to be happy for Mother Nature to help out with watering all my pots! Well, at least those that are exposed to the elements.

I'm also excited to see that my Cyclamen are all coming up again, and a bunch of Cycalmen seed I planted late last March have all started sprouting. There is little that is more exciting to me than watching bare pots come alive with new and different seedlings... especially when one of those seedlings happens to come up variegated! That hasn't happened for me, yet, this year but I always get at least ONE so we'll see what happens.

Speaking of seeds, go out into your garden now (or some gardens you work on, or in etc.) and do a bit of seed collecting. Novem-

ber is the deadline for the Seed Exchange and I've been looking around and seeing tons of seed everywhere just waiting to find its way into Cal Hort members' gardens via the Seed Exchange. In fact, once I started thinking about it, I saw more and more plants full of seed in my own yard that I guess I had been ignoring (probably because I didn't have time to clean them up so I just filtered them out...bad for keeping a yard tidy, good for donating to the Seed Exchange).

Many of you are now aware that we've switched over our email announcement list. If you haven't received the confirmation email that means either you don't have email, we have the wrong address for you or that we just don't have it. If either of the latter are the case, send your current email to updates@calhortsociety.org and we'll keep you up to date on when the Bulletin's online (it really does look fantastic with those color photos), and other important Society news.

SEPTEMBER PLANT FORUM

Don Mahoney

Agave attenuata variegated forms

AGAVACEAE

Bruce Peters, San Francisco

Even the non-variegated form of this species (photo below) is worth growing, but the variegated forms are even more worthwhile. It is a spineless agave that forms a small trunk for many,many years before it blooms and dies. The regular species develops a trunk about 5 feet tall, but the variegated forms probably develop only a trunk a foot or two high. Bruce says the variegated ones are growing much slower than his regular one. They can take full sun near the coast but the vast expanses on the yellow-variegated one will burn with too much hot sun so a little mid-day and afternoon is best, They are drought tolerant, but are not very frost tolerant, and will suffer in a hard freeze.

Sarracenia leucophylla

SARRACENIACEAE

Ellen Frank, Martinez

This is a plant similiar to ones that were seen by the Cal Hort members who took the North Carolina field trip. This species grows a little farther south from Georgia to Florida. It has leaves (pitchers) which can get to four feet tall. The tips become almost white with with red veins. The flowers appear in the spring before the pitchers and can be four inches across. It is quite a showy plant and it just the last few years has become available at a lot of commercial outlets.

It is easy to grow if you plant it in half spagnum and half sand, and then stand it in a saucer of pure water. San Francisco water is apparently mineral free enough to work, although distilled water is usually recommended. They need full sun and are quite hardy to freezes since they are winter deciduous. They should not be fertilized as they get their nutrition form dissolvng insects unlucky enough to slip into their traps.



Impatiens nachabawensis

BALSAMACEAE

Kristen Yanker Hansen, Danville

This is another Derick Pitman introduction. Possibly from northern India or Tibet, this is one on the bluest Impatiens that he is growing, The flowers are an



Sarracenia leucophylla

inch long, somewhat tubular with an open face and are a rich blue with a purple undertone. It has shiny deep green leaves about two inches long and makes a mound several feet tall. It apparently does better in cool climates, and while an annual, it may overwinter in a greenhouse. It is very new to cultivation but undoubtedly will become a staple because of its rich blue flowers.

Scadoxus multiflorus
 AMARYLLIDACEAE
 John and Barbara Hopper, Kenwood

Looking almost like fireworks in suspended animation, these south african bulbs put on quite a display when in bloom. They are closely related to Haemanthus or blood lilies in that they have a large bulb which likes to sit just below ground level with the neck above ground. They are deciduous during the dry season and bloom just before the leaves appear. These are subtropical plants needing protection where winters are frosty. They love full sun. The individual starry flowers are red and as many as 100 can fill an umbel.

Achimenes hybrids
 GESNERIACEAE
 Kristen Yanker Hansen, Danville

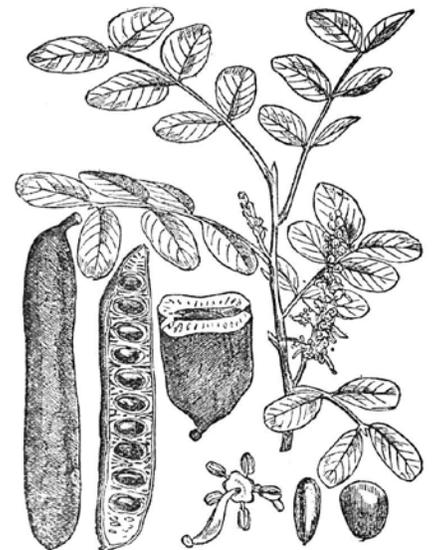
Sometimes called flame violets because of their relationship to African violets, these plants have one to two inch flowers in a variety of brilliant colors from scarlet to indigo. They are usually grown as bedding plants or in hanging baskets. They have fleshy underground stems that act like rhizomes and which can be harvested in the fall and broken into pieces which are stored over the winter to be started the next spring. They can be quite prolific. They require lots of water and never want to dry out as that is the trigger that makes them go dormant. They need bright dappled shade to bloom best. They hail from Mexico through Central America.

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
- (guess who wants those...)
- vegetables



When Plants Cascade

TED KIPPING

For our September meeting, we were lucky to have our renowned Cal Hort life member Ted Kipping speak to us. Ted is so knowledgeable about so many topics; he probably could speak about something new every month for the next few years... Tonight, he wanted to discuss one of his favorite topics: plants that grow in a weeping, pendulous, or cascading form. He divided his talk loosely into trees, shrubs, vines, grasses and groundcovers, much like an extremely exotic plant catalog. With his usual effusive nature and good humor, he took us on a whirlwind botanical tour.

Ted opened his talk with his favorites: trees. He explained that many of the weeping cultivars familiar to gardeners began with the discovery of a pendulous seedling amongst many upright growing plants. This specimen is then selected and cloned, or hybridized, to produce nursery stock.

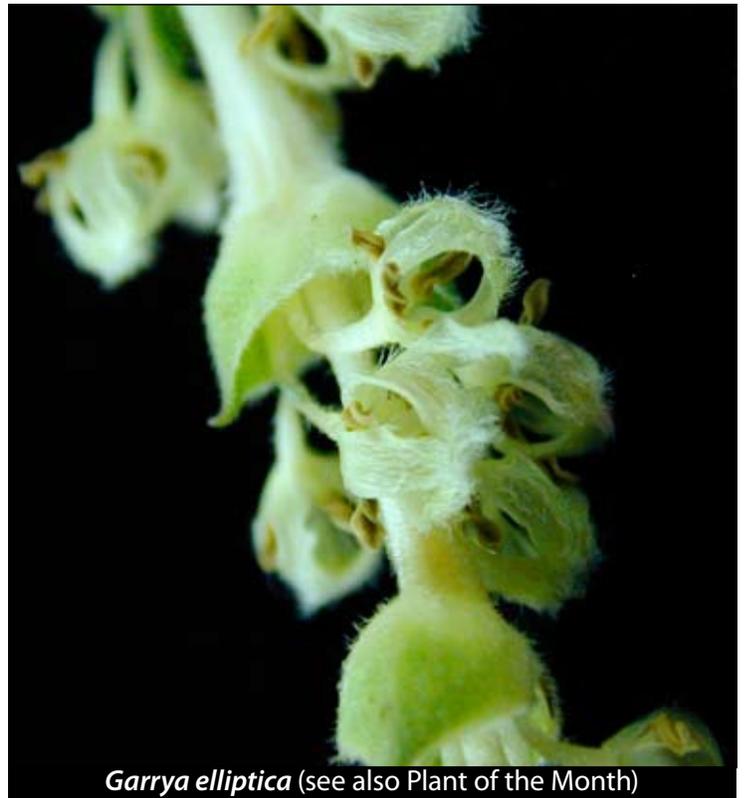
The first twenty or so slides showed weeping forms of evergreens from around the world. Among them were Brewer's spruce (*Picea breweriana*) native to the California/Oregon border, and the Santa Lucia fir (*Abies bracteata*) from the Santa Lucia Mountains. One beautiful tree from another part of the world was the Rimu (*Dacrydium cupressinum*) from New Zealand. In addition to beautiful, soft, curtain-like foliage, the pitch on the bark resembles teardrops. Closer to home, we were treated to a slide of a beautiful weeping golden form of Monterey cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa*) in front of the home of Marcia Donohue. In her back garden, we were treated to a photo of *Juniperus rigida pendula*, an oxymoron of a tree name!

At another garden, Ted showed a common mistake—a *Podocarpus macrophylla* planted against a house. While this looked good when the plant was small, it was now a large tree plastered against the wall of the house, soon to crack the foundation. A striking slide showed two very sculptural pendulous Sequoias (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*) saluting the Governor's Palace in Victoria, British Columbia. There were several slides of Cryptomerias, and Ted commented on the fact that there are now dozens of forms to choose from in all shapes and sizes.

Moving on to deciduous trees, Ted brought us back to the Bay area with the Camperdon Elms (*Ulmus glabra* 'Camperdownii') of Filoli. There was even a photograph of a semi-weeping form of American Elm (*Ulmus americana*). Several photos demonstrated the beauty of a local favorite, the South American Mayten tree (*Maytenus boaria*). However, Ted explained that this is a plant from riparian habitats, and so its roots search far and wide for water sources, including sewer pipes and lawns. It is also prone to suckering, and is not a good choice for a street tree despite its popularity. A similar-looking tree, the California Pepper tree (*Schinus molle*), is actually from South America and is a better choice. In the past, native peoples ground up the peppery tasting seeds and brewed them into a psychedelic-inducing beer. Another interesting tree shown was the Shoestring Acacia (*Acacia stenophylla*). Its long 'leaves' are actually elongated petioles. Several beautiful eucalyptus species, well suited for much of the west coast, were shown before moving into the shrubs.

Among the shrubs were some that were not necessarily thought of as weeping forms. As Ted explained, sometimes plants need

to be coaxed to cascade. Hence, bush lupines (*Lupinus arboreus*) cascaded over the edge of a planter, and a smoke bush (*Cotinus* x 'Grace') formed a weeping mound. There were also naturally weeping plants, such as several Fuchsia species, and the wonderful native Silk Tassel (*Garrya elliptica*). Among the more unusual plants was the Spiketail (*Stachyurus praecox*). This shrub blooms in February, with racemes of small flowers cascading from the branches. The section on shrubs ended with tree cultivars that remain much smaller than their parents: the Weeping Blue Atlas Cedar (*Cedrus atlantica glauca pendula*) and Cole's Prostrate Hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis* 'Coles Prostrate'), both of which were less than six feet high at maturity.



Garrya elliptica (see also Plant of the Month)

There were many showy vines represented. One of the showiest was a Flame vine (*Pyrostegia ignea-venusta*) growing over an arbor in San Diego. Another favorite vine is the Silver Vein Creeper (*Parthenocissus henryana*), which has the added benefit of wonderful autumn color.

Among the grass-like plants, the Mexican weeping bamboo (*Otatea acuminata aztecorum*) and the Tibetan Princess bamboo (*Himalayacalamus asper*) demonstrated how beautiful arching foliage can be. A hanging basket of Bent grass (*Agrostis stolonifera* 'Green Twist') formed a dramatic cascade to the ground in a Monterey garden. Other favorite grass-like plants included the Dieramas for their graceful motion in the wind and *Hakonechloa macra* 'Aureola' for creating a golden waterfall in the shade.

Lithodora diffusa 'Grace Ward' was among the nicest of the many groundcovers shown. It was a surprise to learn that this plant had almost died out of the nursery trade at one point, and was saved by Victor Reiter, who was also one of the founders of the California Horticultural Society.

The last couple of years my Raphiolepis border between my house and my neighbors was on its way out bit by bit... branch tip by branch tip. Eventually over this past winter they turned a pleasant russet brown; still a nice tidy visual barrier. No watering, no trimming, not that I ever trimmed them before, but low maintenance never the less. Along with that, no blooming and no new bronzy tip growth contrasting with the dark green foliage. Okay, I admit it, I was a bit slow in getting them pulled out. I finally did and boy it was a job! I pulled them out in Spring and the area sat idle there until I could figure out what look I wanted, or until the right plant came along; still no inspiration. I had always admired the new sunflower varieties, but never had a spot for them. I decided while I was waiting for inspiration that I would plant myself a sunflower patch. In June I planted tall, medium and short varieties (Bright Bandolier, The Joker and Music Box). What ever happened to 10 cents a packet or 69 cents a packet seeds? It used to be cheap to plant seeds. I guess I will have to pay more attention to the seed exchange at the end of the year... maybe you'll find some tall, medium and short varieties of sunflowers to choose from this year in the seed exchange.

I was out there watering each day to make sure they came up. My neighbor at this same time was putting in a new yard next door; lawn, tree in the middle and flowers around the edge. While he was working one day, he asks what I had planted... "Oh," he says, "like corn, huh?" He thinks I'm something from the turn of the century anyway with no cable or air conditioning, I think he expected to see Kansas next door with drooping heads following the sun. He didn't seem too enthused.

As my sunflowers started to mature I think he was pleasantly surprised. They were so delightful; multi-headed, multi-colored flowers in hues of gold, sulfur, cream, rust and lemon. Not a nodder in the bunch. The flowers were turned every which way. They were a lovely backdrop to his newly refurbished yard and it



made a clear delineation between my "natural" style front and his groomed green lawn. Now I am getting asked by the neighbor across the street if I am going to put in a lawn Hmmmmmm. I obviously need to work on it, but a lawn is not the direction I had in mind.

If you have a spot (it doesn't take much room because they grow vertical), then I would recommend some of the multi-flowered varieties of sunflowers. In late summer mine were in the peak of their season, and are now starting to fade. I haven't seen any bird activity, but I can imagine that will be an attraction as the seed mature. If the birds don't eat them all, look for some seeds in the seed exchange this winter and start your own sunflower patch next summer. It will just make you smile!



GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

The deadline for Grants and Scholarships submissions is November 1. And that means in the hands of the committee, not just postmade, so now's the time to get your application together! All of the details, requirements and forms are available in the Grants and Scholarships sections on our website at www.calhortsociety.org.

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!

Garrya elliptica

Coast Silk Tassel

GARRYACEAE (Silk Tassel family)

October is always a busy month for California gardeners. Unlike the rest of the country, this is our best season for planting, especially if you are planting native plants. Among my favorite natives is the Silk Tassel, *Garrya elliptica*. This plant came to botanical prominence when it was brought to England from Oregon by David Douglas (of Douglas Fir fame) in 1834. Silk Tassel is a member of one of only four plant families found only in North America. It grows in the coast range from Oregon south to the middle of California, preferring areas that do not get excessively hot in the summer. In the inland portion of its range, it is found on north facing slopes or shadier locations, while along the coast it will grow in full sun.

Silk Tassel grows as a 'V' shaped, multi-trunked shrub to about twelve feet, although under ideal conditions it can become a small tree to 30 feet. Its leaves are dark green and glossy on the top surface, and woolly white on the bottom. The common name describes the long catkins that hang from the branches in the springtime. These tend to be cream colored, turning gray as they dry over time. The tassels are found on both male and female plants, although the male tassels are longer. The cultivar 'James Roof', named after the former director of the UC Berkeley Botanic Garden, has catkins up to 10 inches long on the male plant.

The Silk Tassel is not fussy about soil type, as long as it is well draining. Although it can become drought tolerant once established, it always looks better with some regular watering. I think it looks best in its natural form, but if you must prune your plant, do this as soon as it finishes flowering.

Garrya elliptica was named after Nicholas Garry, who was an assistant to David Douglas in his explorations of the northwest United States. The species name refers to the shape of the leaves. If you have the space for this large shrub, it will reward you with a wonderful, long lasting display every spring.

**NO, SERIOUSLY**

OK, guys. You're killing me here. November is the very last month that our current Calendar Editor can do her job so we really need to find a replacement ASAP. The task simply requires formatting the month's events from emails and press releases (which get delivered right into your email inbox) into the Bulletin's Calendar format.

The thing is, we need someone or the calendar is going to go the way of the Dodo. And the dinosaurs. And the Woolly mammoth. And the quagga. **You don't want the Calendar to end up like the quagga, do you?**

Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sunday

Free Arboretum Tours—The U.C. Davis Arboretum offers a variety of seasonal, guided tours. Meeting times and places vary. Free. (530) 752-4880 or visit on the web at arboretum.ucdavis.edu.

October 14

Plant Sale—A great selection of plants propagated from the grounds of the Ruth Bancroft Garden. 9:30 AM–2 PM at 1500 Bancroft Rd, Walnut Creek. (925) 210-9663 or www.ruthbancroftgarden.org.

October 26-29

ASCFG Conference—Assoc. of Specialty Cut Flower Growers will hold its annual meeting in San Jose featuring a wide variety of presentations and tours. For more info (440) 774-2887 or www.ascfg.org.

Until October 29

Butterfly Zone: Plants and Pollinators—See live butterflies at the Conservatory of Flowers in Golden Gate Park. Tuesday–Sunday, 9 AM–4:30 PM, \$5 adults, \$3 children. www.conservatoryofflowers.org or (415) 666-7001

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

SF BOTANICAL GARDEN SOCIETY

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

October 14

Plant Sale—Featuring Trees, Ferns and Rhodies. 10 AM – 1 PM at the Nursery.

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

October 29

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 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.

THE GARDENS AT HEATHER FARM

(925) 947-1678 • www.gardenshf.org

October 21

All Plants Variegated—With Bob Hornback. 9:30 AM–noon, members \$15, non-members \$20

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

October 14

Plant Sale—Held in the Eucalyptus Grove, noon – 4 PM.

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.

Send submissions to calendar@calhortsociety.org
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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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