



Bulletin
of the
California Horticultural Society

October 2007

M E E T I N G S

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, 1240 Ninth Ave, San Francisco.

7:15 PM Announcements, Plant Forum, and 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.

***Members free for monthly meeting. Non-members – A donation of \$5 is requested.

Monday, October 15, 2007

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

“Bromeliads in Habitat for Your Garden”

A Neo-tropic family of monocots, Bromeliads have been gaining popularity with plant collectors and gardeners for the last 40 years. Because of the diversity of microclimates in the Bay Area and the range of natural habitats that bromeliads come from, there are a large number of bromeliads that can be used to great advantage in Bay Area landscapes. David Feix and Dan Arcos will discuss the bromeliads in habitat and their suitability in various types of gardens as observed and experienced through their own use.

Dan Arcos has been collecting and growing bromeliads in San Francisco for over 30 years. Because of the city's cooler environment he has focused on collecting Tillandsias and Vrieseas from the Mexican and Central American highlands and cloud forests as well as bromeliads from the Andes and the *Mata Atlantica* (East Atlantic Mountain Range) of Brazil. Dan has collected bromeliads in Mexico, Honduras, Costa Rica and Panama.

David Feix is a longtime Cal Hort member with a borderline obsession with bromeliads. He is a Bay Area landscape designer who uses bromeliads and other sub-tropicals in many if not most of his landscape designs, and has come to depend on them for a touch of the tropics and the unique style they impart as seldom-seen garden plants for northern California. David has been designing gardens both locally and internationally for the past 30 years, and will be sharing his experiences with collecting, growing, and designing with outdoor hardy bromeliads for the SF Bay area.

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 **San Francisco Botanical Garden** courtesy of **Dr. Don Mahoney**; from **Sloat Garden Center** in San Rafael, courtesy of **Steve Mauricio** Our appreciation to **Berkeley Horticultural Nursery** courtesy **Paul Doty** and to the **San Francisco Botanical Garden** courtesy of **Dr. Don Mahoney** for the outstanding selection of plants donated for the August meeting.

Monday, November 19, 2007

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

“Treasures of the Andes – Bulbs of South America”

Diana Chapman, bulb specialist, grower, owner and sole proprietor of **Telos Rare Bulbs**, located in Ferndale, California will present a program featuring many beautiful South American bulbs that are suitable for garden culture in the Bay Area, and other than Hippeastrums, they are seldom seen in cultivation. Many are well suited to growing in gardens in mild climates, and some are even suitable as house plants.

Rare bulbs including Phaedranassa, Stenomesson, Bomarea, etc. will be offered for sale.

There was a bromeliad that drank from a cup
Is that unusual? Is that odd? No, it is how they drink up

They grow on trees, yes it is true
They're up in the branches where they stick like glue.

They catch moisture & nutrients from falling rain and dew.
I must have one of these bromeliads, this, I need to pursue.

As gardeners we can stick them in containers
They're adaptable, they're not complainers

They reward year-round with amazing architectural style,
And then the bracts, the flowers, it makes growing them very worthwhile.

A Bromeliad's lifecycle is to grow, flower and die
The end is the beginning, no need to say goodbye

A bunch of babies will sprout at the base,
A new generation to take the old's place



Okay, I am tempted to do this whole article in rhyme; I'm getting in the groove, but I will spare all of you that torture...

I am looking forward to David Feix and Dan Arcos' talk on Bromeliads this month. Two years ago David Feix brought this spectacular blooming *Billbergia sandleriana* to the plant forum. It really made an impression on me. I've always loved the flowers of the Queen's Tears, *Billbergia nutans* with the elegant pink bracted inflorescence arching out from the foliage with the dangling apple green flowers with the dark blue picotee edge, but this *Billbergia* had a HUGE, monstrously beautiful inflorescence. The following spring David was selling offshoots at Cal Hort's plant sale. I bought one, planted it and David said it would sprout several pups and the original plant would die. Well, now a year and a half later it is beautiful and sits on my front porch. It has 3 gorgeous apple green and mahogany-brown blotched "cups" and on the edges of the leaves is this mahogany-brown rick-rack saw-toothed edge. I can't wait for the flowers.

What else is going on??? Lots; rest is not on the agenda for us gardeners, growers, designers

and vendors....no, no, no, as they say, Fall is the time for planting in California. And it is a very busy time in our gardens, the gardens of our client's and at Cal Hort.

We have a field trip on Oct. 13th to some fantastic private gardens and some very interesting nurseries in the Watsonville area. I am looking forward to going to cool plant places with cool plant people. The trip promises inspiration, buying opportunities, education and a darn good time. Turn in your reservation forms by Oct. 3rd.

Check out the Yahoo Groups Calendar, I've been posting every event I happen to come across. Please feel free to add any of your other organizations events on there so we all can go if we choose.

Keep the suggestions coming in. The board and I love the feed back – good and bad. It helps us try to forge middle ground to please the masses. Can you believe we just had rain already? Fall is here and it is a great time to be in the garden. I will see you all at the field trip and if I miss you there....I'll see you all on the 15th. Make a note that is early this month.

August 20, 2007

The Society's August speaker, Charles Price, a Seattle landscape designer in partnership with Glenn Withey, works in the wonderful world of *Helleborus x hybridus*. Price presented a slide story of making hybrids in the popular perennial genus at host nurseries in the Pacific Northwest.

In flower before spring, when much of the garden lies in moist, green slumber, hellebores join a select group of bloomers at the center of floral focus in Northern California gardens. Hellebores' durable, sculpted foliage can add year-round interest, while the tolerance of some types for dryish shade makes them very attractive components of our local palette.

Cold-hardiness adds to hellebores' appeal in more-continental climes as well. Price stated that if temperatures drop below 20F, the plants' growth simply stops. Freezing weather wilts them, but does not usually do damage. Three of the species Price has been working with are reliably evergreen, including *Helleborus orientalis*. Those with divided palmate foliage tend to be more deciduous. Many come from the Balkans region, but the genus ranges to western China.

Plants go from seed to blooming age in three years. Seed germination over two years reaches 90%. The ideal cycle for germination is moist warmth followed by moist chill. Seeds are best sown in August ¼-inch below the surface in a fine peat/vermiculite mix.

For those used to green and perhaps red, the colors Price showed created a spectacle. Flowers open steely purple, pink, yellow, apricot, cream, red, and white, usually nodding or outward-facing. Flowers that face upward catch rain, hail and sleet and tend to suffer disfiguring fungal disease.

The goal for Price and Withey, is to produce landscape-quality plants with minimal color-concealing green bracts. While beautiful as cut flowers, hellebores that show in the landscape do double and triple duty with their color and foliage.

Among the details he pointed out was the complementary coloration of the outside and inside surfaces of sepals. Color change upon

pollination combines with stiffening flower stems to alter the plants' appearance as well. Nectaries may offer greenish contrast to colored sepals, while pollen offers colorful accents. A waxy bloom akin to that of blueberries contributes to the impact of greenish or slate-colored flowers. Dark basal nectaries render otherwise simple green sepals a dramatic jade. Dark, veiny striping and blotching on pale tones add textile-like patterns. One breathtaking slide shot in January showed a turquoise ceramic bowl of blossoms in deep red, streaked creamy green, yellow, magenta, and spotted cranberry on cream. Price informed us that colors that emerge in colder morning temperatures pale next to warmer, afternoon tones.

Withey and Price are also developing varied form in hellebores. Doubles give a lush, peony-like, cottage-garden effect, especially in reds, creams and pinks. Bunched sepals can be ruffled, rounded or pointed.

After enduring a series of incompatible nursery hosts (whom Price hilariously lamented), Price and Withey's work has found a home at Grace Dinsdale's wholesale operation in Oregon, Blooming Nursery. New combinations to come!

For those of you who might be traveling south:

Theodore Payne Nursery
Fall Festival & Plant Sale

Oct. 12 & 13 - 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. - Discount Days for everyone. All 1-gallon plants and larger: 15% discount for members, 10% for nonmembers 10% discount on seed

Come help us celebrate fall, the optimal planting season for California native plants. In addition to more than 400 species of California native plants (including grasses, perennials, groundcovers, shrubs and trees) and 200 species of native seed, we will have workshops, vendors and native bulbs. Theodore Payne Nursery, 10459 Tuxford Street, Sun Valley, CA 91352 818-768-1802, www.theodorepayne.org

Adenium obesum "Red Ribbons"
 Apocynaceae
 Kathy Echols, Martinez



Bruce Peters photo

Last year Kathy brought in a white form of this species. No matter what color, they are a great succulent houseplant for temperate areas and a much used outdoor ornamental in tropical climates. It needs a dry, warm, winter and low water during it's spring and summer active growing season. It blooms profusely with clusters of two inch wide flowers for much of the growing season. It is native to Africa and needs a lot of bright light or sun. Besides the red form shown , it comes in all shades of pink also.

Sphaeralcea incana selections
 Malvaceae
 Kathy Echols, Martinez

Native to the southwestern United States, this mallow is usually orange in the wild, but forms have been selected and propagated that include purple and pink flowers. The cut stems shown are from seedlings grown by Kathy and show a range of colors. The one inch flowers are held on spikes and open fully during the day. The 3 foot plants are very drought tolerant and need full sun. They tolerate wet winters surprisingly well for a desert species.

Lavatera maritima 'bicolor'
 Malvaceae
 Kristen Yanker-Hansen, Danville

Sometimes listed as a true species *L. bicolor*, by any name this is a very long blooming colorful shrub. It is occasionally seen as a freeway plant. It can be kept compact by a hard pruning after it's main early summer bloom period. Otherwise it gets to 8 feet and can be a bit floppy, although it continues to bloom at the ends of the stems. It's lovely light pink with a dark center flowers are produced in abundance. Drought tolerant, it grows in almost any soil in full sun.

Bruce Peters photo



Opuntia hybrid "Bride of Frankenstein"
 Cactaceae
 Bob Hornback, Oakland

Luther Burbank in the early 20th century bred a spineless Opuntia for farmers to use as cattle fodder. Variations of the Burbank Opuntia have survived in old gardens and nurseries, although few are truly spineless. This latest reincarnation to surface has a viral-type variegation which comes true from cuttings and has been given the name "Bride of Frankenstein" by the exhibitor. It is best grown as a houseplant, but can survive outside in bright light if given good drainage and protection from severe frost.

Bruce Peters photo



Helianthus maximilliani
 Asteraceae
 Kristin Yanker-Hansen, Danville

This very hardy perennial sunflower comes from the central and southwestern United States and so is very drought tolerant. It can get quite large to 10 feet and can reseed sparingly. Clump forming, it needs to be cut to the ground when new growth shows at the base. It may need staking in the wind. The flowers are very showy 3 inch clear yellow sunflowers that make long lasting cut flowers. It needs full sun and tolerates summer water.

Bruce Peters photo



SEED EXCHANGE

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!

SAVE THE DATE, 2008

Save the dates of May 27 to June 2, 2008 for the California Horticultural Society's field trip to Pennsylvania. This is an opportunity for you to visit the historical birthplace of gardening in the US .

There will be many private gardens as well as the famous Dupont Public gardens and of course nurseries. To find out more, e-mail Kristin Yanker Hansen at yankerhansen@sbcglobal.net or call 925 831-9499

Carpenteria californica, the Bush Anemone
Family- Saxifragaceae

Despite my best ramblings, there are *still* gardeners out there who don't believe that native plants can be beautiful additions to the garden. The bush anemone will finally put these heretics in their place. Found in the hills of Fresno county, usually growing on north-facing slopes near seasonal streams from 1500 to 4000 feet elevation, this evergreen shrub is a nice, if not overly noticeable, plant for most of the year. However, in springtime, it is covered with big, bold, wonderfully white, yellow-centered, heavenly-scented flowers.

In the garden, it adds green structure to the back of a mixed border, or some interest in light shade under taller trees. It will grow to about six feet tall and half as wide, and can tolerate being pruned into a loose hedge. It can take full sun near the coast, but prefers some afternoon shade inland, and can tolerate frost. Bush anemone isn't too fussy about watering, but definitely prefers to be under watered rather than over watered. Like ceanothus, it is underused by gardeners in this

country, and absolutely worshiped by gardeners in the United Kingdom, where it grows well despite lots more water during the summer. In fact, the legendary Gertrude Jekyll was among the first gardeners to produce blooms of this plant in Britain.

Carpenteria was discovered by John Fremont in 1845, but its natural range went unknown for 30 more years (Mr. Fremont apparently kept rather vague field notes while collecting plants...). In 1875, Gustav Eisen of Sweden rediscovered the wild population of these plants, and shortly after, it was being grown in European gardens. The bush anemone was named after William Carpenter, a doctor and professor in Louisiana. Its discoverer kept himself rather busy-Fremont also introduced *Torreya*, *Darlingtonia*, and many other new world plants. The genus *Fremontodendron* is named after him. Although you won't be able to enjoy the flowers until spring, this is a great time to plant *Carpenteria* and other natives in your garden.

WEST COAST GREEN by Linda Baptiste

I had the good fortune to attend the West Coast Green conference in San Francisco last week. I even got to help build the display garden, in Civic Center Plaza. What fun! Even slipping on the ramp and landing in the mulch didn't dampen my spirits.

San Francisco has taken the lead in green building; LEED silver became the standard in 2004. More about LEED next issue...

Taking a well needed break

L Baptiste photo



The new Academy of Sciences building for example even has a green roof, for cooling and storm water retention, as an example of green building.

The display house featured recycled and renewable furnishing and fixtures. The roof was 3/4 sod and 1/4 solar panels; the doors opened accordion fashion to open the house to the exterior. The garden, designed by Nick Thayer, emphasized native and drought adaptable plants.

The conference was a coming together of public policy and grass roots efforts, to build more sustainable cities. The reality is most people live in urban areas. The exhibit hall had beautiful counter tops of recycled glass and concrete, exotic reused woods, and recycled plastics that looked like very expensive art glass. There were a multitude of speakers and ideas, for city planners and homeowners.

Some of the take-aways included these: by Gavin Newsom, Mayor of San Francisco: "It is time to move away from who's to blame to what to do"; from Donald Simon, attorney with Wendel, Rosenblack & Dean: "Never underestimate the power of one letter, because no one ever does it"; and from Sarah Susanka, FAIA, architect and author: "Home is a state of mind."

October 17, Wednesday evening 7PM

The Kipping's potluck/slideshows—Ron Parsons on "Wildflowers and Orchids of Crete". Please bring a dish for 8 people to share. At the San Francisco County Fair Building, 9th Avenue at Lincoln Way, 7 PM. (415) 753-7090

October 19, Friday and October 20, Saturday

Ruth Bancroft Garden Horticultural Seminar: Influence of S. America on California Gardens, Pt. 2 —Seminar and field study for professionals and home gardeners. Friday seminar at the Civic Arts Education Building 111 N Wiget Ln, Walnut Ck, 8:30 AM –5 PM, Saturday field study will be a tour of gardens capturing an essence of S. America. 8:30 AM–6 PM, members \$150, non-members \$170. For more info and registration call (415) 561-7895 or visit www.gardenconservancy.org.

October 20, Saturday and October 21, Sunday

Native Plant Fair—Thousands of plants native to Alameda and Contra Costa Co. Talks by experts on gardening with native plants. At Native Here Nursery 101 Golf Course Drive, Tilden Park, Berkeley. Saturday 10:00 AM –3 PM and Sunday Noon–3 PM. For more info, visit www.ebcnps.org.

October 25, Thursday 10AM – 7PM

Cornerstone Garden Design Lecture Series: Great Gardens of the West—Spend a day with five master designers and learn how they turned their ideas into their personal styles. Talks at Cornerstone Gardens, Sonoma Valley. 10:00 AM –7 PM, members \$95, non-members \$115. Pre-registration required. For more info and to register call (415) 561-7895 or visit www.gardenconservancy.org

Saturday October 13, 10 AM to 3 PM.

Hard-to-find native plants, seeds, and bulbs suitable for California gardens. Speak to experts about lawn alternatives such as native perennials, wildflowers, and grasses. Native plant books, posters, and note cards. Organized by California Native Plant Society, Santa Clara Chapter. Hidden Villa Ranch, CNPS Nursery, 26870 Moody Road, Los Altos Hills. 2 miles west of I-280. Free parking, bring boxes. Cash or check only. www.cnp-x-scv.org, email cnp-x-scv@yahoo.com; 650-941-1068.

U.C. BOTANICAL GARDEN AT BERKELEY
(510) 643-2755 • www.botanicalgarden.berkeley.edu

October 21, Sunday 11AM – 2:30PM

Mayan and Aztec Medicinal Plant Tour—Walk through the Garden's collection of Mayan and Aztec medicinal plants in the renowned Mexico/Central American Area with Horticulturist Eric Schulz. 11:00 AM –2:30 PM, members \$12, non-members \$15.

SF BOTANICAL GARDEN SOCIETY
(415) 661-1316 • www.sfbotanicalgarden.org

October 20, November 3, and November 4 10AM – 1PM
Aesthetic Pruning Workshop—Three day class to demystify the art of pruning. Day one will be devoted to basic principles, tool use, care and safety as well as addressing specific types of cuts, day two will delve into how to approach a tree or shrub systematically in a goal-oriented way, and day three will be dedicated to hands-on field work. 10:00 AM –1 PM, members \$125, non-members \$140.

November 1, Thursday

San Francisco Native Plant Sale—Plants propagated from seeds and cuttings which were gathered in San Francisco or Montara and San Bruno mountains will be offered in this annual sale.

U.C. SANTA CRUZ ARBORETUM
(831) 427-2998 • www2.ucsc.edu/arboretum

October 21, Sunday 1PM

Cactus Flowers in the Arboretum—Horticulturist Steve McCabe will give an illustrated lecture of the Flowers of Cacti on the premises. 1:00 PM, free.

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

October 14, Sunday 2PM

Arboretum Tour: Planning Your Garden to Conserve Water—Learn the best watering approaches and plant choices in planning your garden during a tour of the Ruth Storer Garden. Meet at the Gazebo. 2 PM, free.

October 20, Saturday morning 11AM

Guided Tour: Fall in the Native Plant Garden—Fall in the native plant garden brings brilliant foliage, beautiful seed pods, colorful bark, and some late blooms. Meet at the Buehler Alumni & Visitors Center. 11:00 AM, free.

October 27, Saturday morning 11AM

Arboretum Tour: Gardening With the Local Environment—Working with your local conditions can make creating a garden a lot easier. Learn the best plants to use in your Central Valley garden. Meet at the Gazebo. 11:00 AM, free.

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 web site at www.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 submitted two months ahead.

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www.calhortsociety.org

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