



Bulletin
of the
California Horticultural Society

September
2006

MEETINGS

September 18, 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.

WHEN PLANTS CASCADE

Monday, September, 18 2006 Presented by Ted P. Kipping, noted horticulturalist

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

Even the most quotidian, over-used workhouse plants seem more refined and expressive when allowed to flow over the edge of a wall or container revealing a new quality of form and seeming gracefulness in their release from the merely vertical or horizontal. Other plants, unusable in most garden situations "come into their own" when given an opportunity to cascade. Let us explore and celebrate some of the possibilities. I am sure your creativity will conjure up many more.



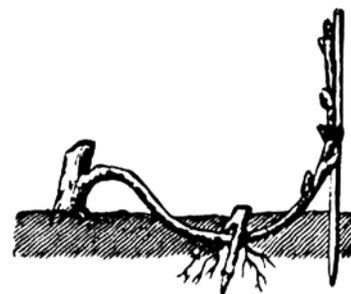
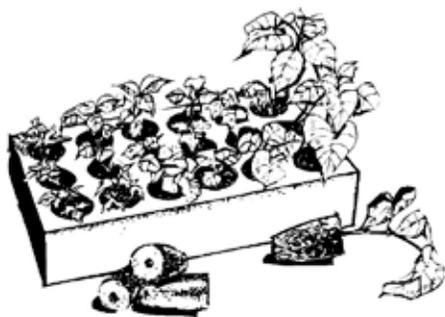
The Plant Drawing each month is an important source of funds for the Grants and Scholarships Program. In September, the drawing will include donations from the **Sloat Garden Center in San Rafael**, courtesy of **Steve Mauricio** and from **San Francisco Botanical Garden**, courtesy of **Dr. Don Mahoney**. 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.

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.



What a meeting we had in August! Tons of gift plants generously donated to all by our speaker, seemingly hundreds of desirable plants auctioned off in our plant drawing (bringing in a healthy \$195!), a full two tables of Plant Forum treasures, a very different and exciting slide show, a few technical mishaps, an overly caffeinated president... and all of this packed into a short 2.5 hours. Phew! Talk about whirlwind!

The end of the year is coming around, which means we're going to be looking for council members again. Each year two to four members rotate out and we get to bring in new people to help guide the Society on a strong and stable path. If you're interested in knowing what goes on behind closed doors, email or call or

even come up to one of the board members at a meeting and ask some questions. Actually, we used to have people nominate other members, too, so if you know someone who could benefit from being on our council, and who would be a benefit to the Society, be sure to contact me or any other council member.

In fact, there are many committees and groups you can help out with, Our annual plant sale, the main fundraiser is currently crying out for some leadership and help. We need a new calendar editor for the newsletter, too. Those are some vital tasks in critical need of filling. And you know what? I'm sure that YOU could do them so give me a call!

AUGUST PLANT FORUM

Don Mahoney

Amorphophallus Konjac

ARACEAE

Barbara and John Hopper, Kenwood

This is one of the many plants with the common name voodoo lily, in reference to the almost black large calla lily like flower. Possibly a large flowered form of the more widespread species *A. rivieri*, the plant has a single leaf similar to the more common voodoo lily *Sauromatum guttatum*. The flower can have a rotten smell when at peak bloom as it is pollinated by flies. This species is not as hardy as *Sauromatum* but can still be grown outdoors if given a little winter protection. The corms are eaten in tropical Asia and are said to help in reducing cholesterol. Bruce just found a variegated one which he's very excited about! Maybe he'll bring it in one day (hint hint).

Tradescantia zamnia var. albolineata

COMMELINIACEAE

Barbara and John Hopper, Kenwood

A great new variegated plant for the protected warm border or else as a houseplant. It is native from Mexico to Bolivia. The erect bamboo-like stalks can grow to 3 feet. The leaves are beautifully variegated with longitudinal stripes of white and green. It needs regular water and shade as too much sun will damage the white stripes.

Arisaema sikokianum

ARACEAE

Barbara and John Hopper, Kenwood

This plant in its regular green form was recently shown and described. This interesting form of the species has a beautiful white or silver mottling down the center of each leaflet. This is an unusual blister variegation which is caused by air pockets under the epidermis which appear silver or white. The same process causes the variegation in cyclamen leaves.

Celsia arcturus

SCROPULARIACEAE

Kathy Echols Martinez

Celsia is a genus very similar to *Verbascum* and the yellow 1" flowers are very mullien-like. This is a small plant, rarely more than 6" tall. The green-grey leaves are in a rosette the first year, but can eventually develop a short trunk. It is usually considered to be a biennial, but it can live longer. Almost drought tolerant, it does better with regular water and must have full sun. It hails from Crete and Asia Minor.

Salvia 'Dancing Dolls'

LAMIACEAE

Kathy Echols, Martinez

Suncrest wholesale nursery is introducing this new salvia selection. It is somewhat like a true *Salvia greggi*, only the flowers are larger and held on very upright stems. They are a wonderful shade of pink and have a dark calyx. Like all of the *Salvia greggi* types they need full to part sun and some summer water to thrive.

Eryngium maritimum

APIACEAE

David Feix, Berkeley

For those who like silver or blue vegetation this plant is a must. There are large clumps in the parking lot where our meetings are held. They make a mound of blue shiny, thorny leaves out of which arise sturdy silver and blue strawflower-like heads which persist for several months. While they may not mind being touched you may not like touching them as they are very thorny. They are reasonably drought tolerant although they can handle a lot of water if the soil is well drained. They are native to sunny areas of Europe.

Blechnum gibbum

BLECNACEAE

David Feix, Berkeley

The common name of this plant, miniature tree fern, somewhat describes this fern, although the trunk can get to be 3 or 4 foot tall, which is more than miniature if you are raising it as a houseplant. Luckily we can grow this outdoors in protected areas where it can be stunning if properly placed. The leaves can get to be two feet long and are shiny bright green. Like all blechnums it occasionally sends up a ring of different fronds which are the spore producing fronds. They are narrower and the backsides are coated with brown spores. It is native to Pacific Islands like Fiji and so prefers the warmest site you can provide. It survives all but our coldest winters.

Drimia gigantea

HYACINTHACEAE

Bruce Peters, San Francisco

This has gone by various names over the years and more people may know it as *Ledebouria gigantea*. It is similar to other *Ledebourias*, only as the name implies it is much bigger. The plant shown had numerous bulb like swollen above ground stems from which several spoon shaped leaves give rise to two inch stems of small bell like flowers. They are very succulent and are best used as container plants. They are native to South Africa.



Blechnum gibbum



Drimia gigantea

Gardens Sought for Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour

Gardens are being sought to participate in the Sunday, May 6, 2007 Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour, which will showcase bird- and butterfly-friendly, pesticide-free, water conserving gardens that contain 30% or more California native plants. Gardens must be located in Alameda or Contra Costa counties. The application, which is due by Sept. 15, 2006, can be downloaded from www.BringingBackTheNatives.net. For more information, or to be added to the mailing list email Kathy@KathyKramerConsulting.net or call (510) 236-9558 between 9 am and 9 pm.

Breeding New Crops for Ball
Dr. Scott Trees
Ball FloraPlant

Dr. Scott Trees spoke to the Society about his work for Ball FloraPlant, a world leader in the breeding and production of vegetative plants for the wholesale market. Dr. Trees is responsible for creating and introducing new plant forms for commercial markets. To date he has patented 144 plants.

While we Cal Hort members readily hand over money for choice plants at nurseries, and many of us work as gardeners, designers, arborists, brokers, sales agents, propagators, nursery retailers and wholesalers, we don't often talk about the industrial backbone of horticulture—the source of the millions of plants available for purchase at Home Depot, Trader Joe's, and WalMart, as well as local specialty nurseries. We mostly get together to nerd out over plants, often the wild, pre-commercialization, plants in their native habitats, or plants in gardens and landscapes—post-procurement. The products of human intervention—hybrids, forced mutations, tetraploids, selections—also thrill us, as any rose-orchid- or conifer-fancier can attest, but we don't often have the chance to learn how they were created.

Dr. Trees provided a fascinating introduction to the low-profile process by which new plants enter the mass market. His work involves creating new ornamental crops by collecting seed and other propagules, creating new hybrids, sports and selections, and then introducing them with breeding techniques, cultivation trials, and commercialization—enabling the new plants to get into wholesalers' hands and into retail nurseries.

Many of our valued sources of rare and novel plant material, such as Berkeley Horticultural Nursery, Annie's Annuals and even botanical gardens, like San Francisco Botanical Garden, also act as sources for Dr. Trees's creations. In fact, SF Bot volunteer, Derick Pitman, "Mr. Impatiens", is sharing his newly introduced species of this highly ornamental genus of flowering annuals and perennials with Dr. Trees.

Among the new plants he discussed—and shared in four-inch pots with the audience—is *Salvia* 'Mystic Spires Blue', a plant resulting from mutation through irradiation of the sterile hybrid *Salvia* 'Indigo Spires'. (Found at Huntington Botanical Garden, S. 'Indigo Spires' is thought to be a seedling of the Mexican species *S. farinacea* and *S. longispicata*.) 'Mystic Spires Blue' is a compact, dense plant with comparatively large inflorescences and many of the features desirable for large-scale production and sale: drought tolerance, heat and cold tolerance, long retail shelf life, quick productivity from cuttings (5–10 cuttings per week at least), good shipping in boxes, long flowering period, disease/insect tolerance, and short crop time. (The writer's own little plant suffered at least three days of drying out and bounced back with nary a yellow leaf.)

Ball's new plants originate in territories defined as Eastern Europe, Asia and South Africa, Western Europe, North and South America, and Dr. Trees' own responsibility, South Pacific (including Australia and New Zealand, important to us California gardeners). The company's production and testing facilities are in Mexico, Costa Rica, Illinois, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties, and China.



Salvia 'Mystic Spires Blue'

Botanical gardens with which Ball has established cooperative relationships include the National Botanical Gardens, South Africa, King's Park Botanical Garden in West Australia, and Queensland University, Australia. Ball provides financial assistance to So. African gardens in exchange for source material. Half of their royalties go back to South Africa, in keeping with the Rio Convention on Biological Diversity, which allows origin countries to share in the revenues from commercially exploited species of plants and animals.

Dr. Trees gave the group a fascinating and valuable insight into the work of Ball FloraPlant and the world of industrial new-plant introductions.

Native Treasures: Gardening with the Plants of California

By M. Nevin Smith

UC Press

This lovely book is written with the home garden and gardener in mind. It is not an all inclusive plant encyclopedia of California native plants, but rather a chosen selection of some of the more desirable and available natives. Nevin has extensive background in plants in general, being the Director of Horticulture at Suncrest Nurseries, but especially in natives. He is a frequent contributor to *Fremontia*, the Journal of the California Native Plant Society. His love of natives comes through in his sometimes poetic prose and his descriptions of plants communities that he's enjoyed visiting over the years.

This is an excellent companion plant to other native plant books. It has detailed, practical propagation information on each genus or type of plant, their cultural needs and tolerances for the garden, where you would find it in the wild, descriptions of each species and each selection, their uses in the landscape and the outcome of what you can expect from each variety and the genus as a whole. There are not pictures of each variety, and that is why I think it is a good companion book, because the variety descriptions are detailed and very helpful and it guides you to just the right plant for the specific space you are investigating, but pictures are also helpful in visualizing how plants fit into your design.

The beginning of the book opens with a whole philosophy of plants in their native communities, and then goes in to design, exclusively with natives or mixing in exotics. The next section tells of the practical growing and survival of plants, adaptability, their environment in nature, choosing and placing plants, soils, spacing, fire, how to plant, after care, pruning, mulches, insects, disease and weeds. Then there is an extensive propagation chapter that gives you an option if your local nursery or specialty nursery doesn't carry the plants you have settled on in your mind and are exactly what you have to have.



Calochortus venustus

Some of the plant sections include, trees, shrubs, sages and buckwheats, subshrubs and herbaceous perennials, bulbs and corms and annuals

This is a welcome addition to anyone's native plant gardening library. I would think you could purchase this book at the bookstore at the S.F. Botanic Garden at Strybing Arboretum or at any local or on-line bookstore. We are raffling off our "examination copy" at the September meeting, so put your "tickies" in the cup for a treat of native plant reading.

MISSING CLUES FROM LAST MONTH'S PUZZLE

Across

- 33. Never flowers
- 35. Flowers with faces
- 38. These little things ruin roots
- 39. Pampas or blue
- 40. Morning drops

Down

- 31. Yellow flowered mega-weed in CA
- 34. *Pyrus communis*
- 36. This can germinate
- 37. Smelly emulsion plants love

Sorry! Answers are on the next page

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.calhortociety.org.

Dicentra scandens
 The Bleeding Heart Vine
 FUMARIACEAE family

A few weeks ago, I was on a garden tour in San Francisco, sponsored by one of the local garden societies. At the home of a well-known local gardener, I spied a small vine happily growing over a fence in a shady portion of the garden. Its small clusters of yellow flowers bobbed in the slight breeze, and its small, lobed leaves floated among the other plants nearby. I had just come under the spell of *Dicentra scandens*, the bleeding heart vine.

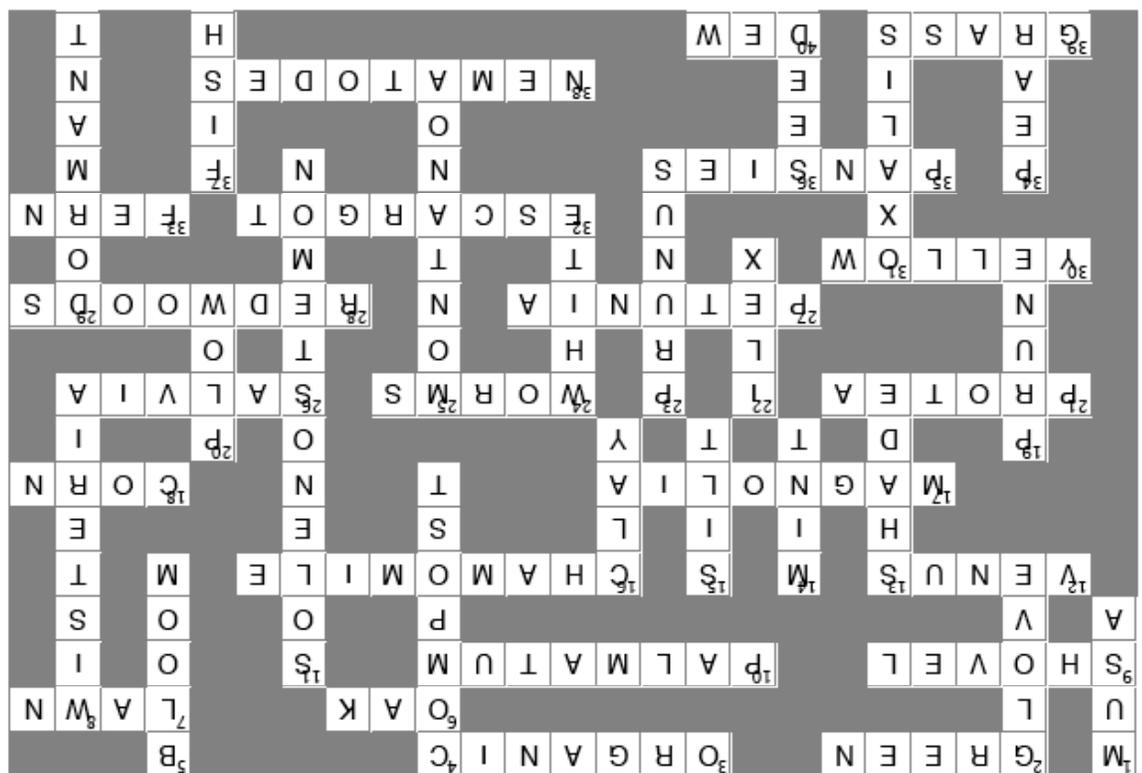
Most of the familiar dicentras are perennials that grow as short clumps of fern-like leaves with white or pink flowers in the spring. Many of them are notoriously short-lived in frost free zones. *Dicentra scandens* is different. This Asian native is a perennial that prefers a frost free zone, although with mulching it can do well in areas with light frost. Unlike other dicentras, it grows as a small vine, reaching about 10 feet long. It is perfect for an area with morning sun or dappled afternoon light, and will clamber over a fence, trellis, or larger plants. Because it has small leaves and doesn't form a dense thicket, it won't harm other plants. In fact, it looks wonderful and provides a nice spot of lemon yellow color growing over the green foliage of larger shrubs.



This plant's name comes from the Greek *di* meaning two and *kentron* meaning a spur. The flowers of this genus have two spurs. *Scandens* is from the Latin word for climbing, referring to the plant's growth habit.

Like its relatives, *Dicentra scandens* does best in rich, evenly moist soil. Although I haven't propagated this plant, it reportedly roots easily from stem cuttings. Although snails can sometimes be a problem, the main difficulty with this plant is finding it. Because it bruises easily, and doesn't look its best in a pot, few nurseries carry it. However, it is available at botanical garden sales and some

ANSWERS TO LAST MONTH'S CROSSWORD



HORTICULTURAL CALENDAR

Third Fridays, September–May

Ikebana Demonstrations—Come see accomplished Ikebana artists create beautiful flower arrangements in the County Fair Building in Golden Gate Park for a \$5 entry fee. Starts at noon. Hosted by the SF Chapter of Ikebana International. For more info and a list of events go to www.ikebana.org.

September 21

Pest Control Efficiency—An IPM lecture with Bob Fiorello. 7–9 PM at City College of SF Hort Dept. Non-member CEU hours fee \$20. www.sfpga.org or (415) 558-8036.

October 7

Plant Sale—Good food, live music, garden advice and most importantly: great plants at the Merritt College Hort Dept.'s Fall sale. Time TBA. 12500 Campus Drive in Oakland, (510) 436-2418 or www.merrittlandhort.com

October 7

Plant Sale—The 32nd Annual U.C. Davis Arboretum Fall sale with plants suitable for Central Valley gardens. 10 AM -3 PM at the Arboretum Nursery, (530) 752-4880 or www.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.

SF BOTANICAL GARDEN SOCIETY

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

September 11–October 16

Ornamental Trees—A seven session course with Charmain Guiliani. 6–9 PM, Fee TBA

October 6 – December 1

Holiday Botanicals and Card Design—Focusing on Autumn colors with Mary Harden. 10 AM–1 PM; members \$130, non-members \$150.

October 14

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

REGIONAL PARKS BOTANIC GARDEN

(510) 841-8732 • www.nativeplants.org

September 17

Beginning Hypertufa Trough Construction—Bring your own dishwashing gloves. 9–11 AM, members \$60, non-members \$65.

September 23

Pruning CA Native Shrubs and Trees—Lecture plus hands-on practice with Jocelyn Cohen. 10 AM–4 PM, members \$40 and non-members \$45. Bring lunch.

THE GARDENS AT HEATHER FARM

(925) 947-1678 • www.gardenshf.org

September 16

Plant Sale—9 AM – noon at 600 North San Carlos Dr., Walnut Creek. Plant list available on the website.

September 30

Introduction to Gourd Art—Learn it all from the history of gourds to decorating them. 10 AM -3 PM, members \$35, non-members \$45, plus \$12 materials fee.

October 7

The Garden in Fall—The class title says it all. 9 AM – noon, members \$15, non-members \$20.

October 21

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

U.C. SANTA CRUZ ARBORETUM

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

September 10

Gardening with the Plants of Calif.—At 1:30 PM with Nevin Smith. Members \$10, non-members \$15.

October 8

Ceanothus—At 1:30 PM with David Fross and Dieter Wilken. Members \$10, non-members \$15.

October 14

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

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JOB OPENINGS

See CalHort website for details

Professional printer located in San Francisco is presently seeking a part-time bookkeeper.

Executive Director—California Center for Urban Horticulture
Presidio Trust—Natural Resources Stewardship Coordinator

PHOTO CONTEST

The California Horticultural Society is having a photography contest for its members. In this round, we are offering no prizes, but think of the honor that will be bestowed on the winners!

Enter as many horticulturally-oriented photos as you choose.

Our intention is to allow the entrants to submit photographs until after the vacation season has ended. September 31, 2006 will be the deadline. The rules of the contest are on the California Horticultural Society website.

The contest is limited to members of the California Horticultural Society. Membership is only 40 dollars!



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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.



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