



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Where passionate gardeners meet to share knowledge and learn from each other.

socalhort.org

NEWSLETTER

January 2024

OUR NEXT LIVE MEETING

Thursday, January 11

Announcements at 7:10 p.m.

Plant Forum at 7:15 p.m.

Program at 7:30



Visit: www.socalhort.org
for more information

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

The holidays gifted us with:

Raquel Folgado

Mindy Lemoine

Jill Morganelli

Pat Smith

Happy to have you with us!



Find membership options at:
www.socalhort.org/join

CONNECT WITH SCHS

Please engage with us online.

YOU CAN FIND US AT:

www.socalhort.org

www.facebook.com/pg/socalhort

www.instagram.com/socalhort



All membership options
are listed on our website.

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The Gardener Did It! Following the Clues of Japanese-American Landscaping and Flower Growing in Southern California

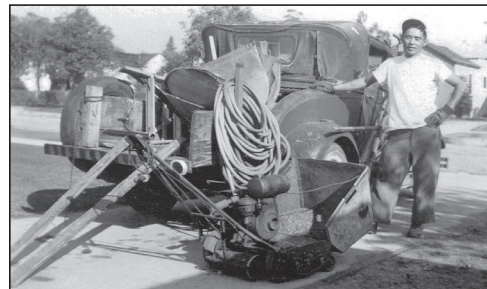
The SCHS will start off the new year on January 11 with a look back into L.A. gardening history, as we welcome *Angeleno* author Naomi Hirahara. She will be speaking to us in person about the significant Japanese-American influences on the gardens of Southern California, from the past to the present. Her presentation will be tailored for us, with a focus on Japanese-American gardeners and nurseries.

Hirahara is an Edgar Award-winning writer of mysteries and nonfiction history books for both adults and children. Her *Mas Arai* mysteries feature an Altadena gardener who solves crimes, and *Clark and Division*, her first historical mystery, won a Mary Higgins Clark award in 2022. Among her history books are *A Scent of Flowers: The History of the Southern California Flower Market*



and *Green Makers: Japanese American Gardeners in Southern California*. In addition, she is a former editor of *The Rafu Shimpo* newspaper, and was part of the original team who developed the exhibition at the Visitor Center at the Manzanar National Historic Site. She has also curated exhibits at Descanso Gardens and the Los Angeles Maritime Museum. You can find out more on her website: www.naomihirahara.com.

In addition to the evening's intriguing program, Hirahara will be bringing along one of her mystery books as a door prize – both good reasons for attending this first program of 2024... and we hope to see you there! 



Both photos courtesy of speaker.

This program will be in person and recorded to subsequently be made available for viewing on our YouTube channel. With the uptick in COVID cases, and in keeping with L.A. County Health Dept. guidelines, we recommend that masks be worn indoors.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

IN THE WORKS FOR 2024

The SCHS Board is currently planning events for the year ahead, including:

- 2024 Ruth Borun Lecture Series
- new Coffee-In-The-Garden venues
- next Oral History interview
- favorite activities, including:
Plant Forum - with members' plants
Plant Sales - new & returning vendors
Raffles / Drawings - at live meetings

We are also talking about a possible Field Trip this year, and hosting another of our popular Horticultural Yard Sales!

We are hoping to offer something of interest for all of our members – and are open to suggestions!



WE'D LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU

The SCHS's mission is to share horticultural knowledge with Southern California gardeners for the benefit of our members and the community.

If you would like to share info, suggest speakers or topics of interest for future programs, or just have a question about gardening, please reach out at:

www.socalhort.org
www.facebook.com/socalhort
www.instagram.com/socalhort

Someone will get back to you.

DECEMBER PROGRAM & HOLIDAY EVENT RECAP • GARDEN SHARE

On December 14, the SCHS closed out the year with our annual holiday gathering, featuring guest speaker Eric Focht of UC Riverside who presented "Avocados: Their Natural History and How to Grow Them in Southern California". He is a doctoral candidate at UCR and has been working there since 1999 in avocado research and breeding. Focht's presentation combined a historical time line of the avocado's cultivation, with scientific analysis of the fruit's properties that impact successful production.

Currently the U.S. is the world's greatest consumer of avocados, with Haas accounting for more than 95% of total sales, and 85% of all fruits sold coming from Mexico. Depending on which varieties are grown, and where, avocados can be "in season" all year. Globally, avocados are predominantly grown from seedlings, while in California the majority of new trees are planted on clonal rootstock.

Historical documentation indicates that avocados have been a food crop throughout Central and South America since about 1200 BC, with references to selective cultivation by the Mayans dating to 500 AD. By the 1500s the Aztecs had categorized avocados into the three dominant classifications still in use today:

the Mexican, the Guatemalan and the lowland tropical, each having distinguishing characteristics in terms of appearance, size and flavor. Humans moved these from one location to another for millennia, and in modern times cross-breeding, grafting and other propagation methods resulted in varieties currently being grown.

Early California breeders focused on three sub-species of the *Persea americana* (which hybridized freely) with their main focus being on climate-related traits that would make them suitable for successful cultivation. Before 1905 fruits were propagated from seed, at which time C.P. Taft began grafting them in the city of Orange, paving the way for growers to source genetic material from a greater range of locations. Many varieties resulted, but the most popular and enduring – Haas and Fuerte – dominate the global market today.

Focht indicated that yield quantity and quality, pollination, structural pruning of trees, harvesting schedules, climate, pest and disease resistance, plus fertilization are all important aspects for successful cultivation, both commercially and for home orchards. These factors and others are what he and his colleagues in the UCR avocado breeding program must consider when selecting new varieties that could be viable for mass-marketing. The research that has been ongoing there since the 1960s has led to a number of avocado introductions, including the Lamb Haas, Sir Prize, and GEM,

as well as the recent Luna UCR, which will be available to the public in the next few years. You can learn more about current and future projects by linking to this recent UCR article, or by reviewing Focht's presentation in SCHS's video archives (link below). It's a really fascinating subject!

✂ Sabine Steinmetz

Link here to watch the entire program on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AZvjsWle4MQ>

SCHS MONTHLY GARDEN SHARE

Let's make plans & resolutions for the new gardening year and:

- Finish winter rose tasks: hard pruning, transplanting or planting new bare root varieties by the end of the month.
- Cut back deciduous fruit trees, taking care to retain fruiting wood (varies by species).
- Prune back grape vines and cane berries while they're leafless.
- Keep your seedlings watered in between forecasted rain days.
- Do general clean up chores, but keep some leaf litter as insulating mulch around your shrubs.

Cheers to glorious gardens in 2024!

✂ Sabine Steinmetz

HOLIDAY FESTIVITIES & SEASONAL GRATITUDE

In addition to featuring a seasonal program, our December meeting typically doubles as a holiday party, with potluck treats provided by members, plants for sale and our popular giveaway table filled with members' donations.

We wanted to give a shout out to all who contributed food this year as we had a scrumptious assortment on offer! There were warm quiches, hand-made Filipino lumpia, hummus, veggies and a huge fruit bowl, plus an assortment of sweets including Italian wedding cookies, Mexican pastries and brownie bites topped with tasty avocado cream, as well as many more delicacies to appeal to every palate.

And special thanks go to Aprille Curtis for providing table bouquets with cuttings from her home garden. They



Photo by: Jill Vig

featured *Pyrostegia venusta*, *Gomphrena decumbens*, *Tulbaghia fragrans*, and *Eucalyptus lunata* for a seasonal pop of color that everyone was admiring and which set a cheerful tone for our party.

We're grateful to everyone who was able to attend – your presence made for a most festive evening! ✂

Learn more about SCHS and connect with us online at:

www.facebook.com/pg/socalhort • www.instagram.com/socalhort • www.socalhort.org

JANUARY HORTICULTURAL HAPPENINGS

Venues open at press time are marked  or  for those that are online only.

Organizations are offering events, both online and in person, but may have updated protocols in place.
Please continue to check with your favorites for current info if you are planning a visit.

ARLINGTON GARDEN

275 Arlington Drive, Pasadena 91105
626.578.5434
www.arlingtongardenpasadena.com

CALIFORNIA BOTANIC GARDEN

(formerly RANCHO SANTA ANA)
1500 N. College Ave., Claremont 91711
909.625.8767 www.calbg.org

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAINS CHAPTER
1750 N. Altadena Dr., Pasadena 91107
818.398.5420 www.cnps-sgm.org

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

L.A. / Sta Monica Mtns Chapter / Sepulveda Garden Ctr
16633 Magnolia Blvd., Encino 91436
818-782-9346 www.lasmmcnps.org

DESCANSO GARDENS

1418 Descanso Drive, La Canada 91011
818.949.7980 www.descansogardens.org

EATON CANYON NATURE CENTER

1750 N. Altadena Dr., Pasadena 91107
626.398.5420 www.ecnca.org

FULLERTON ARBORETUM

1900 Associated Road, Fullerton 92831
657.278.3407 www.fullertonarboretum.org

HUNTINGTON BOTANICAL GARDENS

1151 Oxford Road, San Marino 91108
626.405.2100 www.huntington.org

LOS ANGELES COUNTY ARBORETUM

301 N. Baldwin Ave., Arcadia 91007
626.821.4623 www.arboretum.org

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM OF L.A.

900 Exposition Blvd., Los Angeles 90007
213.763.3466 www.nhm.org

RANCHO LOS ALAMITOS

6400 E. Bixby Hill Rd., Long Beach 90815
562.431.3541 www.rancholosalamitos.org

RANCHO LOS CERRITOS

4600 Virginia Road, Long Beach 90807
562.206.2040 www.rancholoscerritos.org

SAN DIEGO BOTANIC GARDEN

230 Quail Gardens Dr., Encinitas 92024
760.436.3036 www.sdbgarden.org

SOUTH COAST BOTANIC GARDEN

26300 Crenshaw Blvd., Palos Verdes 90274
310.544.1948
www.southcoastbotanicgarden.org

THEODORE PAYNE FOUNDATION

10459 Tuxford St., Sun Valley 91352
818.768.1802 www.theodorepayne.org

UC RIVERSIDE BOTANIC GARDENS

900 University Ave., Riverside 92521
951-784-6962 www.gardens.ucr.edu

 Yvonne Savio

See more events at: www.gardeninginla.net/submit-your-garden-events.

THINGS TO LEARN IN THE NEW GARDENING YEAR!

HUMMINGBIRD FLIGHTS: MAKE A FEEDER WITH RECYCLED BOTTLES

\$31.50 for Members / \$35 for Non-Members

Sunday, January 14, 2:00 - 3:30 p.m.

South Coast Botanic Garden

26300 Crenshaw Blvd., Palos Verdes Peninsula, 90274

Get your garden humming with activity by creating the perfect spot to attract our pollinator friends. Make your own hummingbird feeder out of recycled wine bottles and learn what you need to know about maintenance and plant pairings to ensure plenty of return visits.

Recommended for ages 12 and up.

For more info visit:

www.southcoastbotanicgarden.org/classes

NATURAL DYEING WITH LOCAL PLANTS

\$85 for Members / \$100 for Non-Members

All materials needed will be provided.

Saturday, January 27, 12:00 noon - 3:00 p.m.

California Botanic Garden

1500 N. College Avenue, Claremont, 91711

Learn to harvest, process, and brew natural dyes from local plants in this workshop with artist and naturalist Erin Berkowitz. Take a walk to learn about responsible wild-crafting, seasonality, and indicators of natural dye, and then work with resist dye techniques to create two cotton bandanas. Go home with dye recipes and knowledge to repeat the process on your own!

Suitable for all skill levels, ages 12 and up.

For more info visit:

www.calbg.org/event/natural-dyeing-with-local-plants-immersion-dyeing-012724

In-person monthly meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month in the evening, **unless otherwise noted**. Address for live meetings is:

Friendship Auditorium

3201 Riverside Drive, Los Angeles CA 90027

NOTE: Online meetings are either recorded for YouTube or live-streamed for Zoom viewing (with pre-registration.)

Please visit www.socalhort.org for monthly schedule.

SCHS EVENTS CALENDAR

🌀 January 11 *IN PERSON*

Author and journalist Naomi Hirahara will speak to us about the history of Japanese-American landscaping and flower growing in Southern California.

🌀 February 8 *ONLINE*

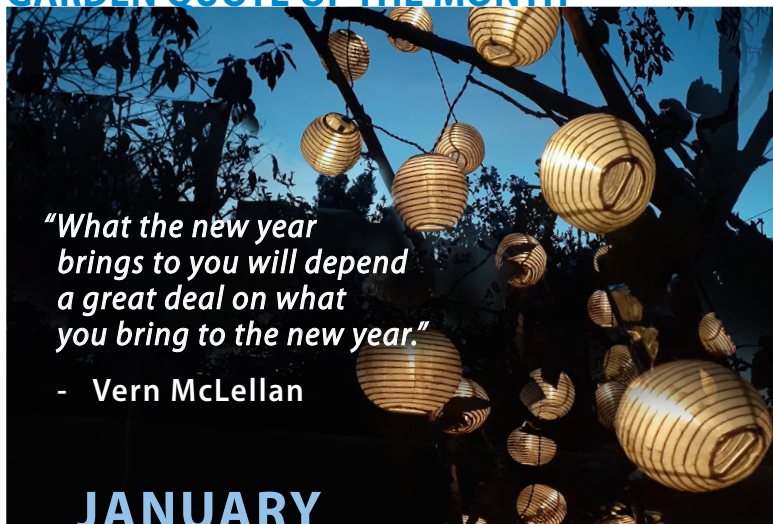
Paul Mills, Curator of Living Collections at Lotusland will present a program on the plants of Chile.

🌀 March & April *TBA*

Details about our spring speakers and programs are being finalized and will be posted soon.

Check for updates on: www.socalhort.org

GARDEN QUOTE OF THE MONTH



"What the new year brings to you will depend a great deal on what you bring to the new year."

- Vern McLellan

JANUARY

SCHS BOARD & COMMITTEES

Laura Bauer - President, HOTY Committee, Finance Committee, RBLs Committee, Website Committee (Chair), Voicemail and Communications

Lili Singer - Vice President and Secretary, Fundraising Committee, HOTY Committee, Plant Forum Committee, RBLs Committee and Archives

Yoav Paskowitz - Treasurer, Finance Committee (Chair), Newsletter Copy Editor, Oral History Committee and Website Committee

Carol Aronson - Fundraising Committee, Program Committee, RBLs Committee and Special Events Committee

Carol Bornstein - RBLs Committee and Program Committee (Chair)

Mardi Caruso - Recording Secretary, Special Events Committee and Event Greeter

Aprille Curtis - Plant Forum Committee, Social Media Committee and Special Events Committee

Steven Gerischer - Fundraising Committee, HOTY Committee & Silent Auction Coordinator, Plant Forum Committee and Oral History Committee

Steven Ormenyi - Finance Committee and Internships

John Schoustra - Special Events Committee

Sabine Steinmetz - Garden Share, Graphic Design, Newsletter Editor and Website Committee

Layla Valenzuela - Fundraising Committee and Membership Coordinator

Jill Vig - Oral History Committee (Chair) and Special Events Committee



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Contact us via mail, phone or social media:

818-567-1496 • www.socalhort.org
www.facebook.com/socalhort
www.instagram.com/socalhort

SUBMISSIONS TO NEWSLETTER

You may contribute an article of interest or information to be considered for publication in future issues.

Next deadline (for February newsletter): Monday, January 15

Newsletter Editor: Sabine Steinmetz • Contributors to this issue: Yvonne Savio