

May Meeting Recap

The May meeting of the Southern California Horticultural Society was a presentation by SCHS members, Eric and Ann Brooks, titled: *Gardening is for the Birds*. The Brooks showed us how they have translated their love of birding, and all things avian, into a passion for attracting birds to their garden. The photographic (and even video) documentation of the many bird species that regularly visit their garden was impressive. The plants and trees Eric and Ann have cultivated in their landscape were often chosen for their usefulness in feeding, sheltering and in other ways, supporting the birds that call our area home—or are just passing through on their annual migrations.

The dedication Eric and Ann bring to the task of attracting birds was highlighted by the large display of feeders, birdhouses, watering gadgets and other paraphernalia they had on display at the front of the hall. It was remarkable to see how many different strategies there are for helping attract, feed and support the populations of birds that we can see in California. (This state has the largest number of species recorded of all the United States—just the other day a Caracara was spotted on Santa Cruz Island—a species of bird of prey usually found south of our border with Mexico and into Central America)

Feeding wild birds can bring many unusual species into your yard, allowing you to get a closer look—but as Eric and Ann showed us, water is key. Any kind of water birds can get at, from the simplest dish to elaborate offshoots of an irrigation system dripping into a bird bath, water will bring birds out to play, bathe and drink—sometimes in great numbers. There were many valuable points in the presentation for anyone wishing to see more birds in their garden.

We would like to thank Eric and Ann Brooks for showing how to go to the birds! (A special thanks as well to our ever handy AV tech, Al Steen for shepherding the talk through some technical glitches—thanks Al!) Thank you to all who helped set up, run and clean up after, the meeting.

Now that we've done the birds, the bees are next. Please join us for the June 12 meeting of SCHS as we welcome Hartmut Wisch and his: *Introduction to Native Bees of California*.

—Steven Gerischer

SHARING SECRETS

In May, we asked you to answer “Which plants do you grow to attract birds to your garden?” and here are some of your responses. Read more on our SCHS MemberLodge website, schs.memberlodge.org.

I adore Hummingbirds and have planted many different Salvias as well as others for us both to enjoy.

—Aprille Curtis

Anigozanthos, Kangaroo Paws attract lots of hummingbirds. I like to sit and watch them after doing some gardening.

—Irma Arvizu

Prostrate rosemary brings house finches, American goldfinches and warblers in droves. I have also seen the elusive Orchard Orioles around an Iochroma, but maybe on their way to the orange tree? I don't really know what brings the Orchard Orioles but they are in my yard and are the hot bird right now.

—Jill Vig

I am very fortunate to live right next to the Santa Monica Conservancy, so many bird species have visited my home. I currently have two new families of house finches that have set up house under the eaves of my home. In addition, there are two pairs of red-tail hawks that fly around hunting during the hot weather we're currently having.

There are many colorful varieties of hummingbirds that reside in the area and are attracted to the following plants in the garden: *Salvia greggii* 'Alba' which blooms most of the year, *Galvezia speciosa* 'Bocarosa' - Island Snapdragon, a very floriferous native small shrub and *Leonotis leonurus* - Lion's tail - which blooms in the late spring and summer; and *Agapanthus* "Getty White" with it's huge white flowers that are just starting now.

—Magda Krachmalnick

My go-to plant for hummingbirds is *Salvia* 'Waverly', so easy to grow. *Iochroma* in my garden is a hotbed of aerial dogfights between competing pairs of hummingbirds. The local Mockingbirds are certain I grow blueberries specifically for their benefit (but right now a chance seedling of *Ochma serrulata* is producing its black berry-like seeds and the Mockingbirds are distracted!

—Steven Gerischer

SCHS INTERN PRESENTATION

The 2013 SCHS intern awardee, **Cynthia Robinson** gave us a presentation of her work at Los Angeles County Arboretum and Botanic Garden at the May meeting. Her project to determine which cloud forest plants would be appropriate for the refurbished greenhouse at the Arboretum was fascinating. Cynthia used Google Maps to produce an overlay onto information about botanical specimens and where they were collected to determine if certain plants were from cloud forest regions. This was an inventive use of new technology to further the study and understanding of how these botanically rich areas work. Thank you Cynthia!

Silent Auction Donations, and Note regarding Horticulturist of the Year Award Dinner.

Our Horticulturist of the Year Award Dinner honoring Don Hodel, will be held on a **Saturday (September 13)** instead of the usual second Thursday of the month—look for details in the upcoming announcement. In the meantime we are seeking interesting and exciting donations for the silent auction to raise funds for SCHS and the work we do (including funding our speakers and our internship program). If you have favorite shops or service providers who might be willing to donate time, or gift certificates, or even a planted pot from your favorite nursery, ask them if they would be willing to support us. If you have anything to donate or need a question answered please contact Steven Gerischer at: sglarkspur@aol.com. Or call at: (323) 257-3629.

