

NOVEMBER MEETING RECAP

Our November meeting was held at the Witherbee Auditorium of the Los Angeles Zoo and featured multiple plant sales, as well as a presentation by SCHS board vice-president and plant breeder, John Schoustra.

“I love horticulture and could go off in many directions - and I probably will,” commented John. Indeed, the long-time board member with the Nursery Growers Association of California took us wandering on a journey through time and space, providing an overview of the nursery trade from its historical roots to a summary of its current state of affairs, as well as its relevance to himself both professionally and personally.

John first gave us a brief description of his own horticultural “roots”: beginning with house-sitting plants at age 7, to selling Burpee seeds at 9 and growing *Gloxinia* at 14, to eventually graduating from UC Berkeley and beginning his professional career in landscape architecture. He has held varied positions in the horticultural industry since then and currently is the owner of Greenwood Daylily Gardens, where he has been growing and breeding primarily daylilies and pelargoniums since 1989. Switching from the personal to the global, John then took us on a magical history tour of the nursery trade.

Since its origins in the orchards of fifteenth century Boskoop, Holland, the science and art of plant breeding has become an industry driven primarily by mass market demand for “color,” otherwise known as annuals. On a micro-level, independent breeders such as Jay Kapac (“the Picasso of pelargoniums”) continue to develop inspired hybrids and unusual cultivars. On a macro-level, like so many other industries, it has become consolidated in the hands of a few corporate giants such as Ball Horticultural (the “General Motors of plants”) whose motto, “We color the world,” is no overstatement.

John also provided a vivid summary of how operations such as Ball work, marshaling enormous resources around the globe to propagate plants with specific traits (reliable hues or tolerant temperaments) under carefully controlled conditions that would seem to have more in common with the International Space Station than the average greenhouse - all because, John observed, “a bunch of

people in Ohio want impatiens that will all be dead by October.”

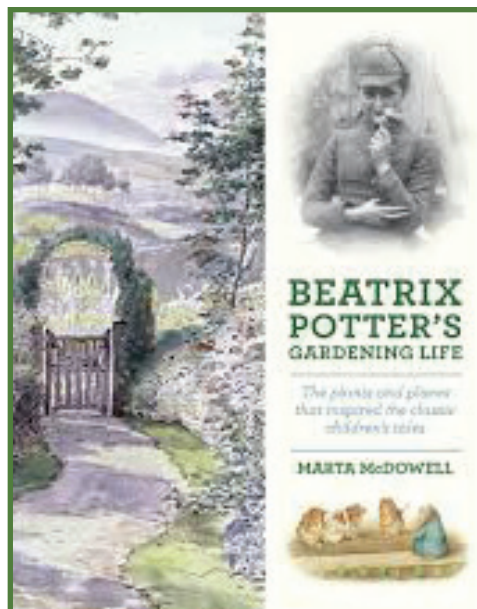
Sterile lab cuttings are shipped for propagation to countries clustered in Equatorial regions where day length remains almost constant throughout the year affording a perpetual spring/autumn growing season. However, while these practices sustain year-round production, John pointed out that these international companies also provide better livelihoods for the people they employ than many alternative local industries.

These days, marketing is by and large geared toward a clientele that views plants as a lifestyle purchase versus targeting the “plant geeks”. And although profit is its primary goal, the passion for plants is still at the heart of the nursery industry - so for every utilitarian ‘Knock Out’ rose (“the most widely sold rose in North America,” boasts the Star website), there’s a *Coreopsis* ‘Jethro Tull,’ developed by ITSAUL Plants and named for its whimsical petals, which are... fluted.

 Sandy Masuo
with Sabine Steinmetz

JUST PUBLISHED

Thanks to Yvonne Savio for making us aware of this new book, released just in time to give to ourselves for the holidays!



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SHARING SECRETS

(cont'd from Page 1)

Members' "Go-To" Plants

Here are my favorite reliable perennials for garden renovation:

1. *Teucrium chamaedrys*
2. *Ceratostigma plumbaginoides*
3. *Plectranthus* 'Mona Lavender'
4. *Helichrysum* 'Variegatum', *H.* 'Limelight'
5. *Cotoneaster dammeri* 'Lowfast'
6. *Salvia greggii* 'Furman's Red'
7. *Trichostema lanatum*
8. *Penstemon spectabilis*
9. *Salvia spathacea*
10. *Sesleria autumnalis*

- Kathy Glascock
Landscape Designer,
Studio City



During 2015, I worked on a number of lawn replacement projects, and found myself using several plants again and again.

Their individual traits (in addition to being water wise), when used in combination meet many of the criteria I try to adhere to when choosing plants for home gardens: providing seasonal interest through bloom, seed production or leaf color, offering unique attributes such as attractive pods or being a food source for wildlife, ease of maintenance, and /or having a pleasing scent.

It's easy to mix 'n' match from the following list using your client's personal preferences as a guide... Have fun!

Abutilon palmeri - California native with soft leaves, apricot flowers, attractive pods

Cassia artemisioides - feathery gray foliage, yellow flowers, chartreuse pods

Eriogonum arborescens - compact form, pale pink flowers, rusty seed heads; attracts butterflies

Salvia clevelandii - Flowers! Fragrance!

Salvia microphylla (various) - good accent, edging or filler, many colors to choose from and most can be kept short

Westringia 'Blue Gem' - same look as 'Wynnie Gem', but shorter and denser; plant singly or mass as a low hedge

- Sabine Steinmetz
Garden Designer, Burbank