

The speaker for the May meeting of the Southern California Horticultural Society was David King, on the subject of The Why & How of Seeds. King is the Garden Master at the Venice High School Learning Garden, teaches several courses in the UCLA Gardening and Horticulture Extension Program, and is the Founding Chair of the Los Angeles Seed Bank Library. His talk stemmed from the same passion that prompted him to create the seed bank library: preserving genetic diversity.

The easy availability of garden seed is often taken for granted, as we think nothing of purchasing a packet of seed for a favorite variety of vegetable or



flower from our nursery, hardware store or even the supermarket. More adventurous gardeners may order seeds from the numerous catalogs that come in the mail, or from online sources. However, this was not always the way things were done in the gardening world. Most of the heirloom varieties of seeds (mainly vegetable crop seed) were saved from generation to generation, passed down through families or traded between farmers, until enterprising gardeners began to package and sell those seeds.

A hundred years ago there were an astonishing variety of seeds being offered for sale by numerous, local seed sellers and nurseries. King pointed out that as larger commercial interests took over from the local, small purveyor of garden seeds this remarkable diversity of seed material was left behind. A one-size-fits-all approach replaced the husbandry of generations of gardeners and farmers. From there, the mega-corporations began to swallow smaller seed growing outfits and reduce the choices even further. Concerned gardeners and farmers began to take matters into their own hands, and the first seed saver exchanges were born.

From these grass-roots beginnings has grown a world-wide concern for the future preservation of germ plasm - our heritage of seeds and plants.

King answered audience questions during his presentation and also provided hand-outs about pollination and seed diversity, as well as detailing the processes by which home growers can begin saving seed themselves. He then outlined how local gardeners could go about using the resources of the Los Angeles Seed Library.

Everyone participating with the library program is required to sign a contract agreeing to grow plants from the seeds taken out, and to return a portion of new, fresh seed collected from the plants grown. This ensures a continual, expanding source of fresh seed and helps preserve the rich diversity that we have taken for granted in the past. If Monsanto isn't interested in keeping purple tomatoes and forty pound winter squash around for the next generation, perhaps the rest of us can. We would like to thank King for giving us this look into the future of seed saving.

✂ Steven Gerischer

## SCHS NEWS and ANNOUNCEMENTS

### CONTROLLING COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION

Over the course of the last year, the SCHS Board has been discussing the impending necessity for offsetting the increasing cost associated with printing and mailing the newsletter to those members who currently receive it via the USPS. Adding a fee to the annual membership dues of those electing to receive a hard copy of the newsletter is being considered as the most fair option for the general membership, but is still under discussion and will also be addressed at upcoming General Meetings. The fee amount has not yet been determined and would not be implemented until June 2017.

### 2016 HOTY BANQUET SILENT AUCTION

Summer is the perfect time to begin cleaning out your garden shed, garage shelves or gardening library to donate items to the Silent Auction at this year's Horticulturist of the Year Banquet... September is coming up sooner than you think! More details to come in July.

## MEL BARTHOLOMEW

*Mel Bartholomew, a construction engineer who popularized what he called "Square Foot Gardening," died on April 28, 2016 in San Diego at the age of 84.*

*Mr. Bartholomew originally turned to gardening after retiring at 42 from his engineering and construction firm and moving to Long Island, New York. There, frustrated with tending rows of vegetables, he applied his engineering expertise to conceive a densely packed, 12 x 12 foot subdivided plot.*

*His vision eventually evolved into a raised, open-bottom bed made up of nine 4 x 4 foot squares, subdivided into 16 separate square foot plots, each planted with a different crop. In two months, it produced 32 carrots, 12 bunches of leaf lettuce, 18 bunches of spinach, 16 radishes, 16 scallions, 9 Japanese turnips, 5 pounds of peas, 4 heads of romaine lettuce, 1 head of cauliflower and 1 of broccoli.*

*He said of his philosophy, "I garden with a salad bowl in mind, not a wheelbarrow."*

*Mr. Bartholomew explained his matrix in a public television series, "Square Foot Gardening," which began in 1982 and ran for six years, and in a book by the same title, published in 1981 by Rodale Press. He and his sister, Althea Mott, also established the Square Foot Gardening Foundation, which started planting programs at nursing homes, schools, community gardens and nutrition education classes in the United States and other countries.*

*Excerpted from the New York Times, May 10, 2016 edition*

## DAVID LANNOM

*Retired Mount San Antonio College Horticulture Professor Dave Lannom, passed away on May 12, 2016, at the age of 70.*

*While at Mt. SAC, he served as Agriculture Department Chair and Horticulture Farm Manager, and taught classes ranging from landscape design, to integrated pest management, to trees and shrubs. After his official retirement, Professor Lannom continued to work part-time and volunteer in the Horticulture Unit at Mt. SAC. He received numerous honors during his career, including the Mt. SAC Faculty Member of the Year award, the Cal Poly Pomona Alumnus of the Year award, and was named the Southern California Horticultural Society's 2013 Horticulturist of the Year. Most recently, he was selected as the Mt. SAC Alumnus of the Year Speaker for their 2015 commencement ceremonies.*

*Professor Lannom will be missed by all who knew and loved him. Services will be held on Saturday, June 11 at 10:00 a.m., at Pilgrim Congregational Church, 600 N. Garey Avenue, Pomona 91767. Immediately following the services will be a Celebration of Life for Dave at the Mt. SAC Horticulture Unit.*

*Forwarded by John Schoustra, courtesy of the Nursery Growers Association*