



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

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

socalhort.org

NEWSLETTER

March 2016

OUR NEXT MEETING

Thursday, March 10

Friendship Auditorium
3201 Riverside Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90027



Socializing: 7:00 pm

Meeting begins: 7:30 pm

SCHS WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

*We had one new household
membership join us last month:*

Lisa and Jason Miller

Welcome to the group!



SHARING SECRETS

The SCHS Sharing Secrets
question for February is:

*What marks the first sign
of Spring in your garden?*

Answer on our web site at
schs.memberlodge.org
or e-mail your response to:
gardensbysabine@aol.com
by Friday, March 11

IN THIS ISSUE

SCHS Announcements	1
February Meeting Recap ..	2
Sharing Secrets	2
Horticultural Happenings and Opportunities	3
Upcoming Programs and SCHS Contact info.	4

Floral Diversity and Conservation in the Mediterranean-Climate Regions of the World

Philip Rundel is a Distinguished Professor of Biology in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at UCLA, and Director of the Mildred E. Mathias Botanical Garden. He received his undergraduate degree at Pomona College in Claremont, followed by Master's and Ph.D. degrees at Duke University.



Photo credit - UCLA archives

Dr. Rundel joined UCLA in 1983 after serving as Professor of Biology at UC Irvine. His research

has centered on the ecology, biodiversity, and conservation of plants and plant communities in the five mediterranean-climate regions of the world. This focus has led to an increasing involvement in collaborative work with both government agencies and non-government organizations (NGOs), to promote public awareness of the biodiversity significance and conservation of these regions.

Dr. Rundel's talk and slide show will present an overview of the remarkable plant richness found in the five mediterranean-climate regions of the world, and some of their iconic species. Each of these regions is a designated global hotspot for biodiversity, but the floras face multiple threats for their conservation. Additionally, while all of the mediterranean-climate regions have long been a source of horticultural introductions to Southern California gardens, the Mediterranean Basin most notably continues to have a rich potential for new water-efficient plant materials.

Please join us for this timely presentation as we all consider some last minute planting for our spring gardens!

SCHS ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEW MEETING TIMES

Beginning this month, our Monthly Meeting times will be adjusted by a half hour. **Socializing will begin at 7:00 p.m., and the meeting will start at 7:30.**

GREEN SHEET TO RETURN

Beginning with the April issue of the newsletter, the "Green Sheet" feature will return. Therein you will find a round-up of the previous month's Plant Forum selections and related botanical information.

IN MEMORIAM

ELMER LORENZ

We were recently informed of the passing of long-time SCHS member and friend, Elmer Lorenz. His family asked us to pass on the information about his memorial service.

Saturday, March 5, 2016 - 10:00 a.m.

Eagle Rock United Presbyterian Church
4848 Eagle Rock Blvd., L.A. 90041

***Look for a special tribute to Elmer in
the April issue of the newsletter.***

Patricia Tsai, founder of ChocoVivo, a small boutique chocolate factory and retail store located in Culver City, was our featured speaker for February. She spoke to us about her journey from working as a CPA to becoming an entrepreneur in the food industry who specializes in processing her own chocolate using methods that began in Mesoamerica 2,000 years ago. She stressed, repeatedly, it is her mission to educate people that real chocolate is a food, not a confection, providing historical anecdotes as well as edible samples.

Patricia's path to chocolate-making began on a trip to Mexico, where she first became aware of the history of the cacao



bean and its processing. She shared with us how both the Mayans and Aztecs would make a chocolate drink from the raw beans, because in its natural state it has no sugar in it and is a very pure energy source. It is said that Montezuma drank it for virility, and soldiers would drink it before going into battle. These early civilizations would also use the beans as currency in trade, and it was the Spanish conquistadors who first introduced the beans to Europe as a luxury import, where it was sweetened with sugar. Patricia's interests led her back to Tabasco, Mexico, where she began studying with Vicente Gutierrez from Cacep Chocolates. He is a multi-generational cacao grower, who became Patricia's mentor and subsequently grower when she began importing beans for her business.

In addition to showing us slides of the plantation and the fascinating way in which the cacao pods grow on the trees, Patricia also brought a couple of pods to share. She cracked them open, and we were able to sample the pulp



surrounding the raw beans while she explained the difference between the three types of beans used in chocolate production. Criollo, the most difficult to grow, is the rarest and most expensive, accounting for only 5% of the world's production, while Forastero is the most common, because it has the highest yields and is therefore suitable for mass consumption. Forastero is mainly grown in Africa, where 80% of the world's cocoa production occurs. The third, a natural hybrid of the other two, is Trinitario, which is the main bean used in the production of most fine chocolates, and is what Patricia uses in her factory. The beans are variable and their quality cannot be determined until the pods are opened.

She next explained to us the process of growing, harvesting and fermenting cacao. The *Theobroma cacao* tree grows globally in a zone 20° north and south of the equator. Mature trees begin producing pods after 3-5 years, and they are typically harvested when they turn yellow after the rainy season in January. After harvesting, they are cut open and the seeds are dried at 180° inside a fermentation box, although they can also be sun-dried, which takes longer. The length of fermentation affects their taste - the longer the period, the more acidic the flavor. After the seeds have been fermented, they can be ground into paste from which chocolate products are made.

Patricia chooses to grind her chocolate with a modern tool similar to the traditional "mano and metate" which resemble a mortar and pestle. She uses two lava grinding stones - one spinning and one stationary - which create a wet paste from the beans that is spread onto sheet

pans, frozen for 20 minutes and then cut into bars. Additionally, she incorporates other ingredients during the grinding process to produce flavored chocolate bars, some of which she had available for us to taste. The percentage of cacao is clearly marked on her packaging, and she now even offers a 100% bar because her customers have requested it. Patricia also passed around samples of her roasted cacao beans, which have had the shell winnowed off but remain textural and crunchy.

While we tasted various bar samples such as "Shangri-La" and "Mayan Traditions" that are available both at her shop and on-line at chocovivo.com, Patricia told us that she also offers chocolate drinks at her factory which can be customized with multiple flavors. The base drinks are made with either pure, undiluted brown rice or hazelnut milk, or just plain water. Water combined with 100% cacao is the strongest combination and is a high energy drink favored by some of her athletic clientele.

Patricia concluded her presentation with a short question and answer session and by reiterating her mantra of: "Chocolate is food. Know where your chocolate is coming from. Understand how it is processed and its ingredients". Words to consider, as the audience was invited to purchase bars and beans for themselves or their loved ones - just in time for Valentine's Day.

✿ Sabine Steinmetz



SHARING SECRETS RESPONSES:

What "Bucket List" garden do you hope to visit someday?

I would love to see Sissinghurst, both for its gardens as well as for its relationship with English literature. Also, I'd love to have a private tour of Giverny (sans crowds). There are more gardens, all over the world, but these two came to mind, first!

- Joan McGuire

Charles Jencks' "Garden of Cosmic Speculation" in Scotland. It's only open to the public one day a year so you can't just spontaneously drop by when you're in the neighborhood...

- Anonymous

Living in Southern California, we are spoiled with the wealth of natural and man-made gardens that surround us, and sometimes forget about some of the hidden gems to be found "in our own backyard". Here are a few:

- Hortense Miller Garden in Laguna Beach
- Tillman Japanese Garden in Van Nuys
- Wattles Park (and Mansion) in Hollywood
- Murphy Sculpture Garden at UCLA

And don't forget the Garden Conservancy's Open Days - get out and explore this year!

HORTICULTURAL HAPPENINGS

Please contact location(s) to confirm listed events, and for a full schedule.

Events are free with admission unless otherwise indicated.

Locations are listed by Zip Code.

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM OF L.A.

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

Saturday, 3/12, 7-11 am. Birding Field Trip in Ballona with NHM Museum Ornithologist, Kimball Garrett. Explore the birdlife of the Ballona Creek and Marina del Rey channels. See oystercatchers, loons, scoters, herons and more; learn about the area and its uncertain future. Free for members, \$25 non-members. Register online.



SOUTH COAST BOTANIC GARDEN

26300 Crenshaw, PV Peninsula 90274
310.544.1948 southcoastbotanicgarden.org

Now through 5/8, 9am-5pm. Nature Connects. A virtual garden built with LEGO pieces, featuring 27 larger-than-life sculptures, including an 8 foot tall hummingbird and a 7 foot tall rose. This is a hands-on, interactive installation.



LOS ANGELES COUNTY ARBORETUM

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

Thursday, 3/17, 9:30am-12noon, Palm Room. South African Plants with Frank McDonough. Learn about 15 water-saving plants from South Africa through a lecture and visit to the South Africa Garden. Part of "What's Happening in Gardening" series hosted by Matt-Dell & Rebecca Tufenkian. \$100 for series of 8 Thursday classes, or \$20 per class.

Saturday, 3/19, 10am-12noon, Bamboo Room. Australian Trees for a Drought-Stressed Southern California with Botany Professor Matt Ritter. This part lecture / part tree walk will explore Acacias, eucalypts, Callistemons, Brachychitons, and many more Australian trees that will become part of the solution toward creating diverse and resilient urban forests using less water. \$30 members, \$40 non-members.

Saturday, 3/19, 12noon-4pm, Bamboo Room. Organic Fruit & Vegetable Gardening with Jill Morganelli. Learn Biodynamic, Permaculture and other techniques that align with seasonal growing, plus proper irrigation and protection for your crops. Start identifying summer weeds. Demos on planting edibles will be presented. \$25 members, \$35 non-members.

Thursday, 3/24, 9:30am-12noon, Palm Room. Butterfly & Herb Garden with Patrick Craig & Brian Burks. Attract butterflies and grow herbs; includes a tour. Part of "What's Happening in Gardening" series hosted by Matt-Dell & Rebecca Tufenkian. \$100 for series of 8 Thursday classes, or \$20 per class.

Thursday, 3/31, 9:30am-12noon, Palm Room. The Who, How, and Where of New Garden Plants with John Schoustra. Who breeds garden plants? How are they selected, propagated, promoted? Where do they travel before reaching our gardens? John Schoustra of Greenwood Daylily Gardens provides answers and offers new plants for sale. Part of "What's Happening in Gardening" series hosted by Matt-Dell & Rebecca Tufenkian. \$100 for series of 8 Thursday classes, or \$20 per class.

DESCANSO GARDENS

1418 Descanso Drive, La Canada 91011
818.949.7980 descansogardens.org

Saturday 3/12, 9am-6pm & Sunday 3/13, 9am-7pm. Cherry Blossom Festival. Activities include: Cherry tree sale, Discovery Stations, Origami workshops, June Kuramoto performance on the koto, and George Abe playing the Japanese flute as he walks through the Gardens.



HUNTINGTON BOTANICAL GARDENS

1151 Oxford Road, San Marino 91108
626.405.2100 huntington.org

Saturday & Sunday, 3/12 & 13, 10:30am-4:30pm, Brody Botanical Center. 13th Annual Clivia Show and Sale. Plants compete for honors; also featured are sales, an auction, informal talks and "Viewer's Choice" voting.



RANCHO SANTA ANA BOTANIC GARDEN

1500 N. College Ave., Claremont 91711
909.625.8767 rsabg.org

Saturday, 3/26, 8am-5pm. Field Trip: Flora of Joshua Tree. Participants will learn taxa of the Joshua Tree National Park in field, up close and personal. Transportation from RSABG provided. Limited spaces. \$85 RSABG or So. California Botanists members, \$100 non-members. Register on-line.



THEODORE PAYNE FOUNDATION

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

Thursday, 3/17, 9-11am. Look, Ma, No Lawn! with Lili Singer. We'll explain how to take it out and offer alternatives - specifically low-care native plants that need no fertilizer and use a fraction of the water required for turf. \$25 members, \$35 non-members.

Saturday, 3/19, 9am-1pm. Native Plant Garden Maintenance with Lili Singer. Watering, fertilizing (or not), pruning, grooming, mulching and other aspects of garden maintenance are covered, as well as how native plants respond to pruning, what we trigger with gardening activities, and developing good maintenance goals. \$45 members, \$55 non-members.

Saturday, 3/19, 1:30-3:30pm. Designing with Color in the Native Garden with Steve Gerischer. Learn from a landscape designer how to mix and match colors in your native plant garden, and how colors influence design and plant placement. \$25 members, \$35 non-members.

Tuesday, 3/22, 9am-1pm. School Native Plant Gardens with Lisa Novick. A hands-on class for teachers covering planning, design, plants, installation and maintenance for native plant school gardens. Includes practical do's and don'ts, and ways to use the garden in conjunction with Common Core Standards. All materials provided. Lisa is TPF's Director of Outreach and a credentialed K-8 teacher. \$50 members, \$60 non-members.



OPPORTUNITIES

SAN DIEGO BOTANIC GARDEN

230 Quail Gardens Dr., Encinitas 92024
760-436-3036 sdbgarden.org

Daily through April, 9am-5pm. Sculpture in the Garden. Curator Naomi Nussbaum Art & Design has pulled together an exhibition ranging from functional garden art to large abstract work, with an emphasis on diversity of media and scale. \$14 adults, \$10 seniors/students/active military, \$8 children ages 3-12, free for children ages 2 and under. Register on-line.

Saturday & Sunday, 3/19 & 20, 9am-5pm. Spring Planting Jubilee & Tomato Sale. Locally-sourced and grown tomatoes, vegetables, seeds, herbs, spring plants, cut flowers, annuals, garden art and implements available for purchase. Food, a Kids' Zone and musical entertainment add to the festivities.



FULLERTON ARBORETUM

1900 Associated Rd., Fullerton 92831
657-278-3407 fullertonarboretum.org

Thursday, 3/10, 9am-12noon. Plant Propagation Class. Nursery Manager Brian Maddock will lead a tour to collect California and drought-tolerant plant species' seeds and cuttings, and then instruct on propagating them utilizing numerous techniques. \$5 members, \$10 non-members. Repeats second Thursdays.

Saturday & Sunday 3/19 & 20, 9am-4pm, Veggiepalooza! Plant sale of more than 200 varieties of heirloom tomatoes; sweet, mild & hot peppers; and varietal veggies. Full schedule available on-line.



COASTKEEPER GARDEN

1560 E. Santiago Cyn. Rd., Orange 92869
714.850.1965 coastkeeper.org

Saturday, 3/12, 9:30-11am, Garden Share. Bring garden-related items to trade, such as plants, cuttings, pots, tools, produce, etc. This is a great way to obtain new plants and meet like-minded plant people. For more info. visit: www.facebook.com/groups/OCPlantTrading. Repeats second Saturdays.

Yvonne Savio

SPRING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Theodore Payne's First Saturday Volunteer Day - now thru June. Join TPF family of volunteers to clear, plant, mulch, prune and do other tasks on the grounds to help showcase the beauty of native plant gardens. Bring hat, gloves, knee pads and personal tools. TPF will provide shovels, trowels, rakes, loppers, hoes, pruners, and refreshments. RSVP to andrew@theodorepayne.org



Coastkeeper Garden in Orange is always looking for volunteers and interns throughout the year. Weekday and weekend opportunities are available for individuals or groups. Contact julia@coastkeeper.org if interested.

Meetings regularly held at Friendship Auditorium, 3201 Riverside Drive, Los Angeles CA 90027, starting at 7:00 pm, unless otherwise noted.

March 10 - Mediterranean Climates Around the World with Phil Rundel

NEW MEETING TIMES BEGIN
Socializing at 7:00 • Meeting at 7:30

April 14 - New Plant Introductions - Panel Presentation
Speakers TBA

GARDEN QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"I love spring anywhere,
but if I could choose,
I would always greet it
in a garden."

- Ruth Stout

MARCH

Steven Gerischer, *President, Pacific Horticulture Board*

Laura Bauer, *Treasurer & Finance, Website Liaison*

Pat Steen, *Secretary, Membership, Internship Coordinator*

Carol Bornstein, *Programs*

Yoav Paskowitz, *Finance*

Yvonne Savio, *Hort Happenings, Coffee in the Garden, Field Trips*

John Schoustra, *Vice-President, Plant Raffle & Plant Sales*

Lili Singer, *Selected Book Sales, Programs, Archives*

Jill Vig, *Pacific Horticulture Board, Special Projects*

Rachel Young, *Finance*

Sabine Steinmetz, *Newsletter*

Steven Ormenyi, *Finance, Coffee in the Garden*

Marilee Kuhlmann, *Programs*

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Contributors to this issue: Yvonne Savio

Next deadline: Friday, March 11 (for April newsletter)

Please contribute an article or information of interest.



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