

In November, Betsy Collins, Director of Horticulture at Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, presented a program on the “Horticultural Treasures of the Channel Islands” and also gave us a look at the new Conservation Center and Island View Garden recently installed at SBBG. During her 28 years working there, she has been actively involved in the process of bringing new plants into cultivation, from exploration to propagation testing and evaluation, with the ultimate goal of introducing exemplary garden plants into the horticultural trade.

Betsy's slide presentation showcased the 16 Channel Islands from a horticulturist explorer's point of view – searching for plants whose evolutionary tendencies could make them suitable for cultivation. Depending on the extent of man's disturbance of each island, some specimens have grown in undisturbed conditions making them unusual finds, while others are in need of rescuing through propagation to prevent their extinction.

One of the islands that has yielded specimens readily available in the trade is San Miguel, whose topographical features resemble many found on the mainland. Betsy cited *Adenostoma fasciculatum*, *Artemisia californica*, *Leymus condensatus* ‘Canyon Prince’, *Dendromecon harfordii*, and a pink-flowering *Achillea millefolium* as examples of excellent garden plants originating there.

Of the endemic and rare plants not found anywhere else but the Channel Islands, ones such as *Quercus tomentella* and *Lyonothamnus floribundus* are not often used in landscaping, even though they are adaptable in cultivation. Other genera such as *Eriogonum* exhibit high diversity (*E. rubescens*, *E. arborescens*, *E. giganteum*), and are now commonly used garden plants.

Another genus that is a particular favorite of Betsy's – *Dudleya* – offers a large selection of species as well.

On a recent SBBG collection trip to the eight Mexican Channel Islands (all a part of the California Floristic Province), Betsy participated in gathering specimens for study as candidates for propagation, including *Xylomera arborea* and *Eriogonum molle*. Well-known species from these islands include: *Ceanothus arborescens*, *Ribes viburnifolium*, *Encelia californica*, *Rhus lentii* plus various *Dudleya* and *Mammillaria*. She indicated the Mexican government is currently working toward conservation and regeneration of endemic vegetation that for centuries had been ravaged by unchecked goat populations introduced by the Spanish explorers.



Photo by Carol Bornstein.

The final images in her slide show were of the Conservation Center at SBBG and the surrounding Island View Garden designed by Betsy, which features primarily island species. *Betula gracilis*, pink *Achillea millefolium*, and SBBG's “Conservation Collection” including *Ceanothus hearstiorum*, *Berberis pinnata* ssp. *insularis* and *Dudleya nesiotica* are some of the plants installed there. They are irrigated by three 15,000 gallon tanks installed under the boardwalk and fed by rooftop runoff and a bioswale. Plans for the future include introducing even more island species currently being trialed for cultivation.

Betsy concluded her presentation with a question and answer session about the testing processes employed before plants are introduced into the trade, including checks and balances for “weediness”, as well as some species-specific queries. Sharing the wealth of knowledge she has amassed in her years at SBBG can inform what we choose to grow in our own gardens as we plan for the future.

✂ Sabine Steinmetz

SHARING SECRETS

Last month we asked members:

What botanical gifts from your garden have you shared during the holidays?

We were hoping to get tips for making seasonal treats or botanical gifts - BUT, we got NO responses!

So, at this time, we will wish you safe and happy holidays, that are restful and give you plenty of time to ponder the following question to begin 2019 -

What kinds of gardening plans have you made for the New Year?

Please tell us about your:

*grand schemes • clever ideas
new plants • tools you're trying
tips & tricks OR real-life
gardening “resolutions”?*

Members want to know what other members are up to – and also to wish one another a

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

REMEMBERING A FRIEND - ON THE PASSING OF DON WOOD

On Friday, November 9, 2018, long-time SCHS member Don Wood passed away. He will be remembered by many as the bearded gentleman who frequently made announcements for the Fern Society, one of his horticultural passions. Of course, he also had other interests, and for a few SCHS members, he is remembered here as a friend and more.



My good friend Don Wood was a plantsman. I would ask him about different kinds of plants and he would tell me about them. I would often bring him to the SCHS meetings, which he loved, and we would talk about the programs on the way home. Don enjoyed growing many kinds of plants, especially ferns.

In the Fern World he was one of the best on his good days. He would help to run the Los Angeles International Fern Society Show each year, do the Green Scene at Fullerton, plus any show or sale we would have! Don

would enter lots of ferns and plants at all of the shows. He also gave talks on mounting staghorn ferns to all the local plant clubs, as well as at the L.A. County Fair each year.

For years he would play Santa Claus, doing 20 to 25 engagements all over L.A. A few years ago in Las Vegas at a Santa Claus Convention he won first ticket for a Custom Santa Claus Suit. He was so happy about this.... sometimes I think that he was the real Santa Claus!

Your Good Friend,
Michael Moody



I remember Don Wood from the Year Around Garden Club (YAGC), Whittier, part of the California Garden Clubs, Inc. He was our Santa for many years, and had given many talks about ferns through the years.

A few years ago, he sold his house and moved in with his sister, Rhonda Wood.

When he moved, he gave me a lot of mature Bromeliads, which, of course, I love. He also gave me a *Dahlia imperialis* tuber and it's blooming now for the 1st time — it gets 12-20' tall! My dad had one that I moved over to my place and one year my garden helpers (??) dug it up and threw it away before I knew it, so I was glad to get another one.

Don paid for my SCHS membership so that I would bring him to the meetings. I hated the drive, but loved going there and always learning so much.

Nancy Bird
President, YAGC



Many thanks to Michael and Nancy for sharing their remembrances of Don with us. He clearly will be missed in the horticultural world — but will live on in the memories of the many lives he has touched.