



# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

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

socalhort.org

NEWSLETTER

December 2020

## OUR NEXT VIRTUAL MEETING

Thursday, December 10

Announcements at 7:10 p.m.

Plant Forum at 7:15 p.m.

Webinar at 7:30 p.m.



Visit: [www.socalhort.org](http://www.socalhort.org)  
for registration info.

## SCHS WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

Joining us to close out the old year & ring in the new are:

Vicki Lyons

Christopher Niklas

David Patrick

*Glad to have you!*

## CONNECT WITH SCHS

We invite members to engage with us online until we can meet again.

### FIND US AT:

[www.socalhort.org](http://www.socalhort.org)

[www.facebook.com/pg/socalhort](https://www.facebook.com/pg/socalhort)

[www.instagram.com/socalhort](https://www.instagram.com/socalhort)



All membership options are also listed on our website.

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Until we are able to meet again in person, the SCHS continues to host monthly webinars and other virtual events. Presentations are being archived on YouTube for your viewing convenience.

## Mission Possible: Growing Roses Organically

Photo courtesy of speaker.



For our December webinar, we are pleased to welcome Steve Gerischer, who will be speaking about methods for growing roses using organic gardening practices. His program will focus on the procedures he has found to work best in Southern California gardens in the 30+ years he's been growing roses without using chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

Gerischer has gardened in Southern California all his life. He started his professional horticultural career at Smith & Hawken, and then worked at Hortus Nursery in Pasadena until it closed, where he was in charge of ordering bare-root roses. He has also been designing and installing gardens for many years as the owner of Larkspur Garden Design.

Additionally, Gerischer has taught courses in Basic Gardening, as well as Landscaping for the Homeowner for the Covina Valley Adult Education system, and has been giving presentations over the years for the Los Angeles County Arboretum, the Theodore Payne Foundation, Descanso Gardens in addition to a number of other outlets. He is currently the vice president of the Southern California Horticultural Society, and has served in the

past as president of both the SCHS and the Pacific Horticulture Society.

For this presentation, Gerischer will talk about his personal approach to the full year in the rose garden; planting, cultivation, pruning, fertilizing, watering and the cycles of bloom and what to expect when growing organically. Using the idea that healthy soils promote healthy gardens, he will cover how building up soil fertility will go a long way toward developing a rose garden that doesn't require constant fussing and feeding. Pest management in the garden will also be covered, as well as new problems facing rose gardens in Southern California. For anyone wishing to convert their existing rose garden to a more organic approach, he will talk about weaning roses off of manufactured-chemical diets and treatments that are still prevalent in many gardens.

Gerischer describes himself as a "recovering rose addict", but is still enamored of the genus and has 35 plants - down from 104 - in his home garden. While he does not recommend gardening as a profession unless you are used to hardship, angst, toil, pain and wondering how you can afford to pay bills, he nevertheless is happiest in a garden.

With rose pruning and planting season fast approaching, we will be eager to learn new rose care tips and techniques. Please join us.

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

### CELEBRATING 2020

As we look back on the last year, in spite of the challenges presented by the coronavirus, the SCHS has much to be grateful for. Although our members have been unable to meet in person since February, the society has adapted, and continues to further its mission of sharing horticultural knowledge in new and modified ways. We celebrate several successes in our 83rd year, including:

- Receiving a most generous endowment from the Anna and Harry Borun Foundation to fund a horticultural speaker series in memory of longtime SCHS member Ruth Borun.
- Growing our online presence across various social media platforms, thereby increasing awareness of our organization.
- Retaining our existing membership and enrolling new members throughout a year that was difficult for everyone.



### LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021

We wish all of our members and their families a safe and healthy holiday season, so they may join in on SCHS's plans for the new year!

Here are a few of the things we have planned:

- The first speaker in the Borun series will be presenting this spring. Details coming soon!
- Premiering video "Coffee In The Garden" events featuring unique local gardens.
- Creating new opportunities for members to be involved with the society through virtual (and live?) activities, raffles and expert Q&A.

The SCHS monthly webinar in November featured Dennis Mudd, a self-taught native plant gardener who founded the Calscape website in 2010 with the goal of enabling small scale nature restoration efforts in California. Mudd talked about how he wanted his own garden to mimic the wild spaces he loved and that inspired him throughout San Diego county where he lives. He began developing the website to provide native plant enthusiasts like himself with a resource that would show which plants are likely to be native to any location in the state. The site also enables users to create plant lists and research nurseries as well as other resources to obtain specific plants, plus it provides growing information.

As an avid mountain biker, Mudd wanted to mimic the look of the wild spaces he loved seeing while biking throughout San Diego county. He spoke about the “trial and error” process he personally went through in creating his garden, and his presentation focused on the lessons he learned from building it and the Calscape website.

Mudd’s presentation showed not only the before & after transformation of his garden, including mistakes made early on, but also reviewed the processes he undertook to recreate nature through biomimicry. He covered plant selection, irrigation, mulching, weed and pest control practices, and shared photos of the native plants he grows and the associated wildlife that is attracted to his built environment.

Early efforts included having a landscaper put in a “native” garden before Mudd knew a lot about California’s flora, resulting in a drought-tolerant plant palette comprised of many plants native to South Africa and Australia. Mudd oversaw the next phase of planting, which incorporated lots of California native cultivars selected for their aesthetic value, many of which were not adapted to his area and eventually died. These lessons led him to focus on the plants which did survive and flourish, and to eventually expand his plant palette to include more of those, as well as related species that were appropriate to the conditions of his site.

In addition to discovering which of the more than 8,000 plants native to California were best-suited to his garden, Mudd found

that this type of landscape was also easier to manage and that it supported a large amount of biodiversity. These insights led him to establish the Calscape website, with one of its goals being to encourage traditional gardeners to give nature restoration landscaping a try by making the entire process easier, regardless of where they lived in California. His ultimate aim is that homeowners who restore nature in their gardens can slow, and one day even reverse, the loss of biodiversity being caused by widespread development in California, one of the major contributors to the destruction of approximately 100 acres of natural habitat every day.

Some of the observations Mudd shared from his personal experiences included learning about the relationship between mycorrhizae and plant health; adjusting his irrigation practices to mimic nature by creating catch basins and a seasonal creek to capture rainwater which plants can access during the dry seasons, and bioswales to direct water flow; allowing mature plants to create their own mulch, thereby improving soil health; and the need to eliminate fertilizers and avoid chemical weed killers. He also learned that natural insect control was a direct result of these practices, by allowing his plant selections to attract birds and insect predators that keep pest populations in check, while also supporting butterfly and other pollinator activities.

Highlights of Mudd’s garden included information about the conversion of his chlorinated swimming pool into a “natural” pond which now supports aquatic life and attracts passing waterfowl; photos of the diversity of wildlife his garden supports including great horned owls and various raptors in addition to songbirds and butterflies (all part of a co-evolved food chain that began with his choice of plants); and many pictures of the great variety of plants he grows on his two-acre property.

In addition to the personal satisfaction Mudd’s garden – located in Poway – has provided him, he also won the San Diego Home and Garden’s Garden of the Year Award in 2014. That same year he donated Calscape to the California Native Plant Society, but continued leading development of the site in partnership with CNPS and the Jepson eFlora group at UC Berkeley

until 2019. Calscape is currently the largest California native plant website with over two million unique users. In addition to the website, his favorite recommendations for gardeners are: *California Native Plants for the Garden* by Carol Bornstein, David Fross and Bart O’Brien; *Bringing Nature Home* by Douglas W. Tallamy; and the international website [www.iNaturalist.org](http://www.iNaturalist.org).

Mudd’s program and beautiful home garden provided much food for thought for gardeners considering using California native plants as they work on their own fall planting. For inspiration and tips, you can review his presentation and other helpful videos by visiting the SCHS archives on our YouTube channel.

 Sabine Steinmetz

To watch this program on YouTube, click the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eilqQPUR3a4>

## SCHS MONTHLY GARDEN SHARE

**As your garden enters winter dormancy, allow yourself to slow down a little too...**

- Complete your fall clean-up
- Continue with new plantings, so perennials can establish healthy roots during dormancy
  - Cut back on irrigation
- Finish putting in spring bulbs and sowing wildflower seeds
- Keep on adding to your cool-season vegetable patch
- Late in the month, begin rose pruning and planting

**WE WISH YOU & YOUR GARDEN A HAPPY & HEALTHY NEW YEAR!**

 Sabine Steinmetz

Learn more about SCHS and check us out online at:

[www.facebook.com/pg/socalhort](http://www.facebook.com/pg/socalhort) • [www.instagram.com/socalhort](http://www.instagram.com/socalhort) • [www.socalhort.org](http://www.socalhort.org)

**COVID-19 UPDATES FOR LOCAL GARDEN VENUES**

Organizations below that have reopened as of press time are marked  Those with only an online presence, or holding virtual meetings, are marked 

Please support your local favorites, but check with individual venues for updated info if you are planning a visit. And don't forget, your local nurseries need support too!


 CALIFORNIA BOTANIC GARDEN  
(formerly RANCHO SANTA ANA)  
1500 N. College Ave., Claremont 91711  
909.625.8767 [www.calbg.org](http://www.calbg.org)

 CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY  
SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAINS CHAPTER  
1750 N. Altadena Dr., Pasadena 91107  
818.398.5420 [www.cnps-sgm.org](http://www.cnps-sgm.org)

 CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY  
L.A. / Sta Monica Mtns Chapter / Sepulveda Garden Ctr  
16633 Magnolia Blvd., Encino 91436  
818-782-9346 [www.lasmmcnps.org](http://www.lasmmcnps.org)

 COASTKEEPER GARDEN  
1560 E. Santiago Cyn. Rd., Orange 92869  
714.850.1965 [www.coastkeeper.org](http://www.coastkeeper.org)

 DESCANSO GARDENS  
1418 Descanso Drive, La Canada 91011  
818.949.7980 [www.descansogardens.org](http://www.descansogardens.org)

 EATON CANYON NATURE CENTER  
1750 N. Altadena Dr., Pasadena 91107  
626.398.5420 [www.ecnca.org](http://www.ecnca.org)

 FULLERTON ARBORETUM  
1900 Associated Road, Fullerton 92831  
657.278.3407 [www.fullertonarboretum.org](http://www.fullertonarboretum.org)

 HUNTINGTON BOTANICAL GARDENS  
1151 Oxford Road, San Marino 91108  
626.405.2100 [www.huntington.org](http://www.huntington.org)

 LOS ANGELES COUNTY ARBORETUM  
301 N. Baldwin Ave., Arcadia 91007  
626.821.4623 [www.arboretum.org](http://www.arboretum.org)

 NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM OF L.A.  
900 Exposition Blvd., Los Angeles 90007  
213.763.3466 [www.nhm.org](http://www.nhm.org)

 RANCHO LOS ALAMITOS  
6400 E. Bixby Hill Rd., Long Beach 90815  
562.431.3541 [www.rancholosalamitos.org](http://www.rancholosalamitos.org)

 RANCHO LOS CERRITOS  
4600 Virginia Road, Long Beach 90807  
562.206.2040 [www.rancholoscerritos.org](http://www.rancholoscerritos.org)

 SAN DIEGO BOTANIC GARDEN  
230 Quail Gardens Dr., Encinitas 92024  
760.436.3036 [www.sdbgarden.org](http://www.sdbgarden.org)

 SOUTH COAST BOTANIC GARDEN  
26300 Crenshaw Blvd., Palos Verdes 90274  
310.544.1948 [www.southcoastbotanicgarden.org](http://www.southcoastbotanicgarden.org)

 THEODORE PAYNE FOUNDATION  
10459 Tuxford St., Sun Valley 91352  
818.768.1802 [www.theodorepayne.org](http://www.theodorepayne.org)

 UC RIVERSIDE BOTANIC GARDENS  
900 University Ave., Riverside 92521  
951-784-6962 [www.gardens.ucr.edu](http://www.gardens.ucr.edu)

 Yvonne Savio  
[www.gardeninginla.net/blog](http://www.gardeninginla.net/blog)

**FREE DECEMBER WEBINARS**

**Saturday, December 5, 2020 from 10:30 am to Noon**

**RAIN BARREL INSTALLATION**

*Presented by: L.A. Sanitation and Environment Watershed Protection Program*

Installing rain barrels is a simple way to conserve water, protect the environment and reduce water bills. Sustainable gardening and landscaping expert Mike Garcia, founder of EnviroScape, will host the webinar and provide instructions on how to install rain barrels and highlight how collected rainwater can be used for irrigation to minimize the amount of water flowing into storm drains and waterways. Participants will also learn about rebates for the purchase of a rain barrel. Every day, more than 100 million gallons of urban runoff flows through L.A.'s storm drain system and out to the ocean. During storms, that figure can increase to tens of billions of gallons. L.A. Sanitation and

Environment's Watershed Protection Program encourages Angelenos to help reduce the amount of pollution flowing through local rivers and creeks to the beaches.

Attendance to the webinar is free, and afterward, City of L.A. residents who participate in a short survey will be entered to win a \$25 Home Depot gift card. For more information and to register, go to:

[www.eventbrite.com/e/rain-barrel-webinar-by-city-of-los-angeles-watershedprotectionprogram-registration-122165740017](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/rain-barrel-webinar-by-city-of-los-angeles-watershedprotectionprogram-registration-122165740017)

**Thursday, December 10, 2020 at 7:30 pm** (Preceded by Announcements at 7:10 & Plant Forum at 7:15)




**MISSION POSSIBLE: GROWING ROSES ORGANICALLY**

*Presented by Steve Gerischer, Vice President of Southern California Horticultural Society*

Detailed description on Page 1 of this newsletter, and registration information online at: [www.socalhort.org](http://www.socalhort.org).



*Until we are able to meet again in person, monthly programs will continue to be scheduled as online webinars.*

-  December 10 - Steve Gerischer, Owner of Larkspur Garden Design, presents "Mission Possible: Growing Roses Organically"  
 WEBINAR
-  January 14 - "Planting California Natives Created a Wildlife Oasis!" with wildlife photographer Scott Logan, currently the naturalist for the Gottlieb Native Garden  
 WEBINAR
-  February 11 - Details being finalized, info coming soon!  
 TBA Check back online for latest updates.

## GARDEN QUOTE OF THE MONTH



Southern California  
Horticultural Society  
P.O. Box 94476  
Pasadena CA 91109-4476

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**John Schoustra** - President, Field-Trip Committee, Finance Committee, Plant Raffle, Plant Sales at meetings  
**Steven Gerischer** - Vice President, Oral History Committee, PR  
**Laura Bauer** - Treasurer, Finance Committee, Website Committee, HOTY Event Committee, Voicemail  
**Pat Steen** - Membership Secretary, Recording Secretary, Field Trip and Coffee-in-the-Garden Committees, Greeter  
**Carol Aronson** - Field Trip & Coffee-in-the-Garden Committees, Program Committee  
**Carol Bornstein** - Program Committee  
**Aprille Curtis** - Social Media Committee, Plant Forum supplies  
**Fleur Nooyen** - Program Committee  
**Steven Ormenyi** - Finance Committee  
**Yoav Paskowitz** - Finance Committee, Oral History Committee, Website Committee, Newsletter Copy Editor  
**Yvonne Savio** - Horticultural Happenings, Field Trip and Coffee-in-the-Garden Committees  
**Lili Singer** - Board Nomination Committee, PR, Archives, Social Media Committee  
**Sabine Steinmetz** - Newsletter Editor, Sharing Secrets, Graphic Design  
**Jill Vig** - Coffee-in-the-Garden Committee, Oral History Committee, Special Projects

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Contributors to this issue: Steve Gerischer, Yvonne Savio

Next deadline: Monday, December 14 (for January newsletter)  
Please contribute an article or information of interest.