

In lieu of an in-person holiday meeting, SCHS's December 9 webinar with Lucinda McDade, California Botanic Garden's Executive Director and Linda Prendergast, head of the Native Designs volunteer group at CalBG, provided plenty of seasonal cheer. Their presentation – based on the book *California in a Vase* – was an “in-conversation” talk and instructive step-by-step arranging demo on how to create centerpieces using native plant materials.

*California in a Vase*, was written by David Bryant, former Director of Visitor Experience at CalBG, with a foreword by Susan Gottlieb. It features arrangements from both CalBG's Native Designs group and The Gottlieb Native Garden, celebrating the seasonal palettes of California native plants. Prendergast, an experienced florist and McDade, a plant scientist, both contributed to the book, and their teamwork was showcased in their collaborations in this presentation.

McDade began by crediting the inspiration for the book to the work done by CalBG's Native Designs Group along with Susan Gottlieb. She then introduced Prendergast, who created two beautiful arrangements during the webinar with both women narrating the process.

Prendergast's first arrangement was a seasonal centerpiece featuring a predominately yellow and gray palette. Before beginning, she described the tools she would be using and why they were essential, as well as how plant materials

are selected and harvested. She suggested gathering them early in the day to have fresh cuttings, and immediately putting them into fresh lukewarm water sprinkled with Floralife, Chrysal or some other powdered flower food. Next, she prepared a block of floral foam (see note at end of article) into which stems – stripped of any foliage that would be below the water line – are pressed and arranged for the desired effect. The block is cut to fit the container you will be using to hold the water, and secured with florist's tape. Working on a small turntable, Prendergast built her design from the bottom up, first inserting layers of foliage to visually hide the foam block, establishing the width and height of her arrangement. She left gaps into which were placed the showy parts of the centerpiece: yellow *Heteromeles arbutifolia* 'Davis Gold' berries, autumn *Quercus kelloggii* foliage, gray *Salvia apiana* stems, pink *Rhus ovata* berries, plus the yellow flowers of *Helianthus* and *Baileya*, the latter of which she had to secure with floral tubes due to their tender stems.



The second design was composed of a traditional “Christmas” palette and began with a red pillar candle in the center, surrounded by natural materials.

Prendergast followed the same construction process as before, beginning with greens, including *Calocedrus decurrens*, *Pseudotsuga menziesii* (with cones left on), *Pinus quadrifolia*, *Juniperus californica* and



finishing with red *Heteromeles* berries, always keeping the larger components lower in her arrangement.

Prendergast offered numerous tips during both demonstrations, but the most important was to change the water daily, and to refresh it throughout the day as the level goes down. This helps slow the decay of the plant materials and should help your arrangement last for about a week.

To learn more about CalBG and their planned 2022 “Arrange Wild” workshops on flower arranging, please check their website for all the latest information. And have fun creating your own masterpieces!

✂ Sabine Steinmetz



Click on link to view program and get all the designer's tips:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1z8\\_LKGvEc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1z8_LKGvEc)

### NOTE FROM THE SCHS BOARD

During the program, viewers raised concerns about the non-biodegradable floral foam being used. We plan to post more information and resources re: this topic online, but for now offer the following alternatives to consider using instead:

#### Decomposable Blocks

<https://agra-wool.nl/bloemisten/>

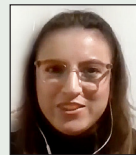
#### Floral Frogs

<https://www.hhfshop.com/collections/arranging-tools>

Other ways to secure arrangements include pebbles, marbles and even chicken wire.

### SCHS 2021 INTERN

As a non-profit, part of SCHS's mission is to provide educational opportunities to horticulture students through sponsored internships at various institutions.



In 2021, Marisa Virgen, a recent graduate of Mt. San Antonio College with an A.S. in Ornamental Horticulture, completed an internship at the campus nursery. There she was tasked with identifying plants around both the Horticulture Unit and the Agriculture Building, and then making permanent labels for 126 plants on a Gravograph machine. Virgen was hired upon graduation and is currently working at the nursery.

Virgen's full presentation can be seen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aMS8zYvV5sl>

### ✂ SCHS MONTHLY GARDEN SHARE ✂

Maintenance during dormancy is the name of the game in January!

- Complete winter rose pruning by the end of the month while they're dormant!
- Plant any new bare root roses.
- Stop cutting perennial shrubs because they won't be ready to push new growth and could sustain frost damage.
- If needed, have deciduous trees pruned by a professional.
- Harvest your citrus before the critters remove the fruits!
- Finish pruning cane berries and cut back grape vines.
- Keep your wildflower seedlings watered during dry spells.
- Do not fertilize this month - let your plants have a rest.
- Enjoy the bare bones of your garden and its seasonal charms!

✂ Sabine Steinmetz

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