

On June 10th the SCHS was pleased to welcome speaker Saxon Holt, photojournalist and sole photographer of more than 30 garden books, to talk about his new book *Gardening in Summer-Dry Climates*, coauthored with landscape architect Nora Harlow. His program



Photo credit: Saxon Holt.

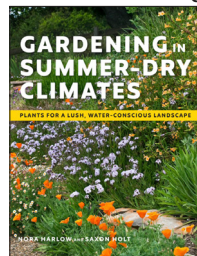
derived from the book's objective which is to expand the climate conversation to include the entire Pacific Coast, all of which is summer-dry, but cannot all be considered Mediterranean. *Gardening in Summer-Dry Climates* is also part of Holt and Harlow's online Summer-Dry Project (www.summer-dry.com) which is helping Water Use Classification of Landscape Species (WUCOLS) update the state database of plant photographs and descriptions.

Holt spoke briefly about his career as a photojournalist (www.saxonholt.com, www.photobotanic.com) and how he is currently using his skills primarily to promote a "gardening where you are" philosophy. He encourages gardeners to understand and work in harmony with their region to create healthy ecosystems, one yard at a time, by becoming "stewards of the land, attuned to the local environment on behalf of all creatures" because "every act we do adds resiliency." He went on to talk about the Pacific coast regions described in his book, and further broke them down into "ecotopes" defined as the "smallest ecologically distinct landscape feature in a mapping and classification system."

Gardens that share common ecotopes can benefit from using plants that are

adapted for various vegetation border zones, called "ecotones." These are places where "ecological systems meet and mingle, sometimes forming new communities" including our own gardens. If consciously designed using climate-appropriate plants, they will help support wildlife and conserve biodiversity. By considering local microclimates and trying to connect wild nature with our built landscapes, we can have a positive impact on surrounding habitats that are under threat in our summer-dry climates. Gardeners who need to rely on supplemental water can plan for building a healthy green infrastructure by connecting individual gardens to local ecotones.

As a photojournalist, Holt has observed that gardeners are increasingly opting for climate-adapted plants and he believes part of his job is to help others understand the importance of this practice by showcasing gardens planted to a new standard of beauty that works with – rather than against – our summer-dry climate. He shared a series of garden photos from his book illustrating design solutions including water-banking through the use of bioswales, rain barrels or cisterns; firescaping to mitigate danger during the fire season by planting low-water grasses such as carex or succulents closer to structures; and also increasing carbon-sequestration by planting to cover a lot of ground. When selecting plants, Holt suggested considering which cultivars can coexist in your environment (especially crucial when selecting native species), as well as recognizing their eventual scale as they grow. He also recommended checking



local botanical gardens for practical examples when planning your space.

Whether you are just planning your landscape, or working in an established space, by using the principles and plant lists found in *Gardening in Summer-Dry Climates* you can begin developing a summer-dry garden that is personally satisfying from both an aesthetic and an ecological perspective.

✂ Sabine Steinmetz

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

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7d7zMXtHd08>

REPORT FROM THE SCHS BOARD

The Southern California Horticultural Society board has been committed to maintaining a slate of events during the pandemic for our membership that is both safe and enriching. To that end, we have been working on bringing back routine functions that were either reworked for a virtual format or in some cases indefinitely postponed.

Currently we are pleased to report that the following are all on track to be resolved by the end of this year.

- Return to an alternating schedule of live and online meetings, so we can accommodate a larger audience and support a greater range of speakers. *Resuming in August 2021.*
- Holding a live Silent Auction event in conjunction with a monthly meeting. *Being considered for late 2021.*
- Finalizing selection of our 2022 Ruth Borun Lecture Series speaker. *To be announced by end of 2021.*

Additionally, we are planning more Coffee In The Garden events, working on building the SCHS Oral History library and seeking ways to increase our student membership, as well as attending to routine society business – all with an eye toward to future of the organization.

Questions? Please reach out to a board member – names and committees are listed on Page 4.

✂ the SCHS Board

✂ SCHS MONTHLY GARDEN SHARE ✂

As the days get hotter, ease into your chores as you do the following.

- Harvest your squash, tomatoes, peppers and other veggies to keep them producing longer.
- Remove rotting produce to help prevent the spread of diseases.
- Pot up those succulent cuttings you've been accumulating.
- Keep adding mulch to beds to help stabilize soil temperatures.
- Start (or continue) collecting annual seeds as you dead-head.
- Try to do any supplemental watering early in the day - it's better for you and your plants!

✂ Sabine Steinmetz

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