



# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

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

socalhort.org

NEWSLETTER

April 2021

## OUR NEXT VIRTUAL MEETING

**Thursday, April 8**

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 this month are:*

David A.  
Clare Ashbrook  
Joan Borgman  
Antonio Castillo  
Steve Illott  
Anne Mizutani  
Rosalie Preston  
Diane Ratigan

*We're glad to have you!*

## CONNECT WITH SCHS

Please engage with us online!

### 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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## Composting for Climate & Community Resiliency

Photo courtesy of speaker.



On April 8, the SCHS welcomes Michael Martinez, the founder and executive director of LA Compost, who will be presenting a webinar on the importance of composting for both the soil and human health.

His organization's mission is "to restore lost connections to the soil and to one another" which Martinez does by "working cooperatively with a diverse network of partners within L.A. County, to co-create spaces for local compost access and engagement, regenerative practices, and community empowerment."

A former elementary school teacher and a father of two, Martinez is also a certified Master Gardener who has grown LA Compost from a group of volunteers collecting organics using bicycles, to a decentralized network of community compost hubs that spans the most populated county in the country. LA Compost now oversees over 30 compost hubs,

all in partnership with existing communities, non-profits and other organizations committed to healthy ecosystems that are also inclusive of food access and healthy community engagement.

Martinez will review the basic composting process, how community-based composting works and what his organization does to facilitate the sharing process. We will also learn how we can become involved simply by reducing food waste in the kitchen before composting, or how we can take on a more active role in the compost community in Los Angeles. His website also lists online and live events ranging from nutrition and cooking demos to training to become an LA Compost "cultivator."

Get the dirt on this new age of composting by viewing a short introductory video provided by Martinez on our website at: [www.socalhort.org](http://www.socalhort.org), where you can also register for this important webinar. We are looking forward to "seeing" you online this month and hopefully in the gardens again soon!



## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

### PLANT FORUM ONLINE

Since August of 2020, we have been regularly archiving our Plant Forums on our YouTube channel. They are available for you to check out anytime at:

[www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLK2MX-Nk1f0vfDKLSI3ZnAGrW0MCmQaS](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLK2MX-Nk1f0vfDKLSI3ZnAGrW0MCmQaS)

If you would like to submit a plant for inclusion in a Plant Forum, you can find a link in the first paragraph on our home page, or

*Click here to show us your plants!*



### 2021 HOTY

Last month, we solicited nominees for this year's Horticulturist of the Year awards from our members, and want to thank you for your participation! We are currently reviewing a slate of names and will be making an announcement soon.



### LIVE EVENTS

While our monthly meetings will still be virtual for awhile, and pending loosening pandemic-related restrictions, the SCHS board has been discussing the resumption of small-scale events such as Coffee In The Garden. Details will be coming soon!

**Please check online for latest news:**

[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)

*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.*

For our March webinar, SCHS was pleased to host David Brenner of Habitat Horticulture, a vertical landscaping firm that is a leader in designing world-class living wall systems. Combining high art and science, these non-traditional landscapes are seen by Brenner as an integral part of a public shift in consciousness towards the restorative effect of plants on health and well-being. He frequently speaks on the benefits of living walls in urban architecture and has worked on a wide range of projects, a number of which were showcased during his presentation and used to illustrate the design process used for creating these "living walls."

By way of introduction, Brenner spoke briefly about his background which includes a degree in Environmental Horticulture Sciences from California Polytechnic University at San Luis Obispo and studies at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew in London. Learning how to best grow plants vertically led to his founding of Habitat Horticulture eleven years ago, where as lead designer Brenner is known for bringing a deep expertise and artistic intent to enhance the sensory and environmental impact of each project. The firm has several offices in Northern California and one in Los Angeles, and through their development of proprietary and durable techniques in vertical landscaping they have become a force in vertical garden design.

While explaining the processes of designing, building and maintaining these installations, Brenner repeatedly emphasized the psychological and physical benefits of plant life in work and living spaces, both psychological and physical. He shared examples of interior and exterior projects to illustrate some of these benefits which range from stress reduction and restorative effects to acoustical dampening and thermal insulation. While many of his commissions are large-scale, Brenner is known to be a dedicated collaborator on residential, commercial and public spaces of any size as he promotes the philosophy that plants are integral to our well-being, especially in urban settings.

He shared the design process of assessing a space for its functionality and purpose, to considering suitable plant palettes and how the installation would be maintained. Addressing these factors establishes parameters for increased success in any landscape design regardless of the location. From there, aesthetic decisions regarding color, texture, shape, size and how the design will blend with its surroundings can be considered much the same as in traditional landscapes. Brenner's expertise with growing mediums and plant species interaction have led to his work with clients ranging from the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Hammer Museum in L.A., to Facebook Cafe, Del Amo Fashion Center, Cal Poly Vista Grande, and residences in both northern and southern California.



"Living Wall" at SFMOMA Photo by: Garry Belinsky

Brenner used SFMOMA's living wall installation as a case study to illustrate a number of design considerations that can impact the final layout, plant palette, etc. The wall is on the third floor terrace, facing southwest, but during most of the day many sections are in the shade of nearby architectural features. Based on available light, he determined the wall would have to be divided into four light regions. He then based his selections on plant companions and communities found in nature that were suitable for each region. Textures, colors, and even the reflective light qualities of foliage were factors in the selection process. Brenner then drew a chalk outline once the wall was covered in GroTex (the proprietary growing fabric used by his firm) to designate where the different plants would be installed, while keeping in mind that the wall is visible from many angles, heights and vantage points. In addition to the GroTex base, a site-specific irrigation system is critical to any vertical landscape, and at SFMOMA this included a waterproofing membrane, an irrigation catch basin with a special drain pipe, and more. Additionally, fail-safes with remote monitoring had to be built to protect the landscape from any unexpected system

failures. And finally, scheduled maintenance had to occur routinely to groom the plants, replace specimens as needed, and to keep the integrity of the original design. These and other factors, plus budget and client expectations, make designing each project unique, and Brenner noted that different systems available commercially should be assessed/selected to fit the conditions of each individual project.

In conclusion, he shared a selection of systems which might be appropriate for a novice to experiment with, including Habitat Horticulture's wall-mounted Gromeo pods which are self-watering and available with or without plants. Regardless of the scale of an installation, Brenner's belief that living walls afford the chance to promote awareness of plants' benefits and to have a direct impact on our quality of life was evident from the many beautiful examples he shared in this unique presentation. The Q&A that followed also made it clear what an intriguing topic vertical landscaping is, and that the webinar inspired a number of attendees to consider trying their hand at creating a living wall of their own.

To see more examples of Brenner's designs (including several in Los Angeles), and learn more about the topic, you can visit: [www.habitathorticulture.com](http://www.habitathorticulture.com).

✿ Sabine Steinmetz

## SCHS MONTHLY GARDEN SHARE

*Let's all hope for April showers as we do the following:*

- Continue planting herbs and warm season veggies
- Monitor pests, and abate using least intrusive IPM methods first
- Begin routine dead-heading of roses & other repeat bloomers
- Get fruit trees on a feeding schedule during active growth
- Finish mulching before soil temperatures begin heating up
- Adjust irrigation based on needs

✿ Sabine Steinmetz

*Learn more about SCHS and check us out online at:*

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

## APRIL HORTICULTURAL HAPPENINGS

### COVID-19 UPDATES FOR LOCAL GARDEN VENUES

Venues open at press time are marked  and  for those that are online only.

With the increase in vaccinations, organizations and venues are working on reopening, but will still have restricted hours, limited capacity and revised policies.

Please continue to check with your favorites for updated info if you are planning a visit.

**New listing:**  
(as of March 2021)

**WATERWISE COMMUNITY CENTER, CHINO BASIN WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

Visit [www.cbwcd.org/calendar.aspx](http://www.cbwcd.org/calendar.aspx) to see their calendar of online classes.


 **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*

To see more events as they're posted, check: [www.gardeninginla.net/submit-your-garden-events](http://www.gardeninginla.net/submit-your-garden-events).



## TOMATOMANIA!

returns to Descanso Gardens  
April 9-11, 9am - 5pm

This popular annual event is back LIVE and will be showcasing over 150 varieties of tomatoes, plus everything else you'll need for the perfect growing season. Peppers and other garden veggies will be on hand to keep your tomatoes company, although we regret that we are still not yet able to offer in-person classes.

Descanso will split the entry process this year, with a special complementary entrance and exit for Tomatomania visitors only. Entry will be restricted and appointments are required.

Access to Descanso from Tomatomania will not be available. If you are planning to also visit the gardens, a separate appointment must be reserved, and entry will be through the main gate.

To make entry appointments, and for more info., visit:  
[www.descansogardens.org](http://www.descansogardens.org)



If you are aware of any upcoming horticultural events you think other members might be interested in, please get in touch at [www.socalhort.org](http://www.socalhort.org), so we can try to post the info. in the newsletter and on our various social media platforms!

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

-  April 8  
WEBINAR - Michael Martinez, master gardener and founder of L.A. Compost will speak about home composting
-  May 13  
WEBINAR - Rebecca Burgess, exec. director of Fibershed, presents "Native Plant Palettes; Creating Dyes from our Fibershed"
-  June 10  
WEBINAR - Garden photographer Saxon Holt shares photos from Nora Harlow's book *Gardening in Summer-Dry Climates*
-  July 8  
WEBINAR - Joanna Glovinsky, founder of Fruitstitute will talk about managing residential "Fruit Tree Ins-and-Outs"
-  July 10  
CITG - Stone fruit pruning demo with Joanna Glovinsky *Coffee in the Garden* event - details coming soon!

## GARDEN QUOTE OF THE MONTH



*"Everything is blooming  
most recklessly..."*

- Rainer Maria Rilke



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

NEWSLETTER April 2021

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

Connect with us at: 818-567-1496 • [socalhort.org](http://socalhort.org) • [facebook.com/socalhort](https://facebook.com/socalhort) • [instagram.com/socalhort](https://instagram.com/socalhort)

Newsletter Editor: Sabine Steinmetz

Contributors: Michael Martinez, Yvonne Savio

**Next deadline: Monday, April 12** (for May newsletter)

*Please contribute an article or information of interest.*