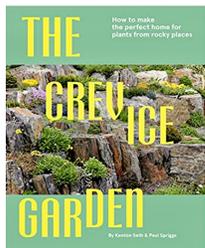


On November 10, the SCHS hosted Kenton J. Seth, a Colorado-based garden designer, to present a webinar on crevice gardening. He has been working in this unusual planting style for the last 12 years, and recently, with coauthor Paul Spriggs, published “*The Modern Crevice Garden*” on this increasingly popular topic. During the

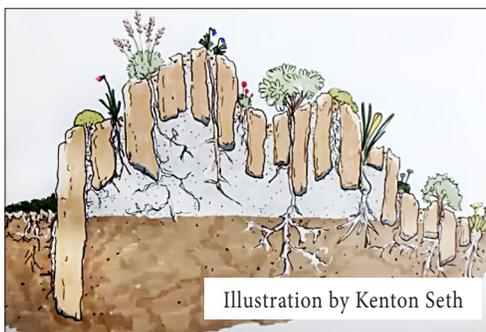


writing of the book, Seth recognized what he calls “the universal quality” of crevice gardening as a planting system, as they can be found worldwide.

As an example, he cited the first such garden that was recently created by Michael Uhler at Tilden Regional Park in Northern California, using mostly alpine plants native to the Sierras.

The origins of the traditional rock garden can be traced to the late 1800s when they were created to showcase small alpine plants adapted to specific conditions. While this type of rockery is still a popular niche gardening category today, Seth traces the beginnings of the modern crevice garden to Prague in the Czech Republic, and two men who wanted to grow local cliff-dwelling plants in their home gardens. Zdenek Zvolanek and Vojtech Holubec were successful in replicating cliff conditions by standing stone slabs upright and only allowing space for vertical root growth in between the sandwiched slabs. As their method became more popular this type of rock stacking became known as the “Czech System,” and the style eventually spread internationally, primarily through showcases in botanic gardens. Designers began adopting the system to try out new opportunities for artistic expression and ecological gardening, including saving water.

Seth describes the system as a purpose-built rock garden consisting of mostly buried rocks that are structured to provide open spaces for special types of plants to grow in (see illustration.) The placement of the rocks will only accommodate plants



with deep running roots that can survive in nutrient-deficient soils. He cited examples of plants from different climatic regions worldwide that meet these criteria ranging from mountains to deserts, including ones native to Southern California. Good drainage is also essential, as water needs to be able to move downward deeply and rapidly. To achieve this, the media between the rocks should be primarily loose gravel or other coarse, gritty rock, with only a minimal amount of soil. The foundation rocks can be anything from quarried stone, to on-site materials, or even recycled broken concrete.

Images that Seth shared of crevice gardens established in spaces ranging from large parks to small gardens and containers highlighted the versatility of using this system as a design tool, and how it might be applied in a home garden. It provides opportunities to experiment with growing specialty plants, creating a unique garden feature, or even establishing habitat spaces in areas that might otherwise be overlooked or under-planted.

While crevice gardens still dominate Seth’s projects, he also works with natives, dryland gardens, and most recently, meadows. Samples of his work can be seen by visiting PaintbrushGardens.com, or Instagram at plantfortheapocalypse, as well as on selected YouTube videos and on his own blog at [www.kentonjseth.blogspot.com](http://www.kentonjseth.blogspot.com).

✎ Sabine Steinmetz

**Link to view entire program:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PmnUIRfwO0g>

## ANNUAL HOLIDAY GIVEAWAY TABLE DETAILS

This annual tradition allows members to donate “gently used” treasures of a horticultural nature to be shared with others in a timed giveaway. In the past, members have donated tools, pots, books, garden art, baskets, etc. which are displayed early in the evening for everyone to peruse.

*An announcement will be made when it is time to snatch up your desired “freebie” items. Please be considerate of those nearby – it can get messy!*

Enjoy the charitable spirit of the season by participating in the giving and receiving, but be prepared to take your donated items back home if no one snaps them up this time...

*Donations are not required to participate - we just want everyone to have fun!*

## SCHS MONTHLY GARDEN SHARE

*Here are a few things you can do in your garden this month - if you have the time to spare!*

- Finish any touch-ups & mulching left over from your fall clean-up.
- Continue any new planting that that needs to get in the ground now, so perennials can set down healthy roots in their dormancy.
- It’s not too late to plant bulbs and wildflower seeds for spring, plus more cool-season vegetables.
- Cut back on regular irrigation for established and mature plants - but don’t let new plants dry out, especially if they’re small.
- At month’s end, begin your winter rose pruning (and planting).
- Treat yourself to an outing at a nearby public garden - it’s the perfect time of year to get out for an inspiring walk in nature!

✎ Sabine Steinmetz

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