

APRIL 2000 PLANT FORUM NOTES

One could certainly tell that spring was in full swing by the abundance of plants on the forum table. In addition to the plants discussed below the following plants were shown: *Aloysia virgata*, *Berberis darwinii*, *Ceanothus* 'Wheeler Canyon', *Cuphea llavea*, *Delostoma lobbii*, *Dendrobium* 'Mt. Fuji', *Eremophila laanii* 'Rodger's Pink', *Euphorbia globosa*, *Euphorbia milii* 'Big Red', *Euphorbia milii*– hybrid, *Fortunella margarita* 'Nagami', *Gasteria bicolor* (shown as *G. maculata*), *Geranium maderense*, *Gladiolus communis* (perhaps ssp. *byzantinus*), *Helleborus foetidus*, *Hippeastrum cybister*, *Hippeastrum papilio*, *Ixia maculata*, *Kalanchoe pumila*, *Lavandula heterophylla*, *Lupinus succulentus*, *XMaclellanara* 'Pagan Love Song', *Nassella (Stipa) cernua*, *Ornithogalum caudatum*, *Penstemon barbatus* 'Pink Elf', *Phacelia tanacetifolia*, *Potentilla fruticosa* 'Alba' (the correct cultivar name is likely 'Mount Everest'), *Prunus glandulosa* 'Sinensis' (this was shown as *P. g.* 'Rosea'), *Prunus ilicifolia* ssp. *lyonii*, *Rosa* 'First Prize', *Rosa* 'Queen Elizabeth', *Salvia canariensis*, and *Syringa* x *laciniata*. The following unidentified plants were also shown: a rhizomatous *Begonia*, a *Cymbidium* hybrid, a *Phalaenopsis* hybrid, and a *Vireya Rhododendron*. The following name could not be verified: *Dudleya rubens*.

Chionanthus retusus (Oleaceae). China and Taiwan. Fringe Tree. A choice deciduous tree that is often slow growing when young. A mature specimen can reach at least 25 feet tall and may have an equal spread. It flowers for 3 to 4 weeks generally between April and early June with a profusion of three to six inch clusters of white frothy blooms. Grow it with average watering when young (mature trees can tolerate some drought). Easy to grow in full sun and most soils. The fringe tree is appearing as a street tree in a number of cities in the Pomona Valley. Catherine noted that the plant has golden fall color and is disease free. (C. Pannell)

Choisya ternata (Rutaceae). Highlands of Mexico. Mexican Mock Orange, Mexican Orange. A moderate sized evergreen shrub that may reach six feet or more in height with an equal spread. Glossy three-parted rich green leaves are attractive all year and are pleasantly aromatic when crushed. Showy clusters of inch wide white flowers are sweetly fragrant, reminding many of citrus blossoms. This shrub is best grown near the coast with ample water and good drainage and acid soil conditions. In hotter, drier gardens it is very susceptible to scale, spider mites and a variety of other ailments. (C. Ratner)

Michelia figo (Magnoliaceae). Western China. Banana Shrub. A large evergreen typically slow growing shrub that can eventually be pruned into a small multi-trunked tree from 10 to 15 feet tall. New leaves are often sprinkled with rusty brown hairs that disappear from the upper surface of the leaf leaving it a shiny green. The 2 - 3 inch creamy flowers carry a rich banana scent. The flowers can be flushed or outlined with purple, conspicuously so

on the cultivar 'Port Wine'. This cultivar is usually the plant that is offered for sale in our area. Plants can be grown in full sun or in partial shade. It is generally recommended that this plant be grown in rich soil with ample water. (K. Eriksson)

Phlomis fruticosa (Lamiaceae). Southern Europe - Mediterranean. Jerusalem Sage. Though best categorized as a subshrub, this evergreen "woody" plant may reach 5 to 6 feet tall and will have an equal to slightly greater spread. The plant naturally develops a rounded growth habit. The plant produces attractive ½ to 1 inch yellow mint-like flowers in dense whorls. The broadly lanceolate leaves are densely covered with felt-like hairs. There are a number of different forms of this plant in the nursery trade. In the garden, or in cut arrangements, this plant looks good with California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) and the blue potato bush (*Lycianthes [Solanum] rantonnetii*). Grow Jerusalem sage in full sun. Established plants are drought tolerant. (J. Seidel)

Salvia 'Bee's Bliss' [*Salvia sonomensis* X *Salvia leucophylla*] (Lamiaceae). California. Bee's Bliss Sage. A choice evergreen groundcover that may form a gray foliage mat up to one foot tall and up to six to eight feet wide. The showy inch long pale violet blue flowers are held in inch wide whorl-like clusters of calyces. The flower spikes are about a foot long and appear in early spring (near the coast) and may continue until early summer (inland). Tolerates a variety of garden conditions, including bright shade and heavy soils. Best when grown fairly dry, but will often tolerate more water than the average Californian sage. Spectacular in flower. In a few gardens this plant has suffered from mildew during moist winter months. (A. Brinkmann-Busi)

Sphaeralcea ambigua (Malvaceae). California and the southwest. Apricot Mallow. A showy spring blooming perennial for full sun. The flowers are quite variable in size and color, though they are typically a shade of orange, they can be pink, rose, or even salmon. When in bloom, a typical plant will be about two feet tall and wide, though some specimens may be twice as large. Cut the plants back after they have finished flowering. This plant does not have much of a garden presence when it is not in flower. The plant prefers full hot sun, but will tolerate coastal conditions. Drought tolerant when established. As with most of the mallows, this plant is often preyed upon by a variety of pests from caterpillars to rabbits. Young plants will need to be protected. (J. Seidel)

This last entry is given as it will appear in the upcoming SCHS book, edited by our own Joan Citron:

“*Tetranema roseum*. SCROPHULARIACEAE. Mexico. Mexican Violet, Mexican Foxglove. A perennial to 8" high and 12" across, that forms nearly stemless rosettes of spoon-shaped, glossy dark green leaves to 5" long that are blue-green beneath. It blooms in summer on 4-8" high, leafless purple stalks with clusters of 1/2" wide, trumpet-shaped, rose-pink flowers that have darker markings. The plant needs well drained soil in partial shade or bright indirect light. It is tender and is probably best in a greenhouse in winter.”

On the forum table card, it was noted that *Tetranema roseum* has some flowers nearly year-round, it was noted as easy to grow but that it can not take drying out. This specimen is being grown indoors. (H. Lachs)

Apologies on the misspelling of *Veltheimia capensis*(white flowers) in the March forum notes. Thanks to Elmer Lorenz for bringing this typo to my attention! Some further notes on this plant are in order. Although *V. capensis* typically does have blue-gray leaves, this white flowered form has bright green shiny leaves that have led some people to speculate that it may be more properly categorized as a form of *V. bracteata*. It should be noted, however, that the foliage of many white flowered plants can substantially differ from typical forms. The difference often is brighter green foliage due to the lack of other pigments in the plant. A more detailed look at one of these white flowered *Veltheimia* plants is warranted and a herbarium specimen of one of these plants should be made.

- B. O'B.