

DECEMBER 2001 PLANT FORUM NOTES

Thank you to all that brought plants to the December meeting!!! All are encouraged to bring in plants to share with the group. Remember that you do get one free “exhibitor’s ticket” for the plant raffle if you bring in one or more plants for discussion at the forum table.

In addition to the plants discussed below the following plants were shown: *Aloe* ‘Soledad Hybrid’, *Caesalpinia mexicana*, *Chrysanthemum pacificum*, *Cotyledon orbiculata*, *Kalanchoe thrysiflora*, *Limonium latifolium*, *Polygala x dalmaisiana*, and *Tulbaghia simmleri*.

The identity of the following plants could not be completely ascertained: *Lachenalia* sp. (yellow flowers), *Lachenalia* sp. (carmine flowers). Both plants were similar in appearance to *L. bulbifera* and both were purchased at a Trader Joe’s Market. The yellow flowered specimen was particularly interesting as the flowers were uniformly bright yellow with no other markings (P. Colville).

Correction to the October Green Sheet: the identity of *Grevillea* that was described as *G. superba* is now thought to be in error. The plant was most likely *Grevillea* ‘Robyn Gordon’.

Featured Plant:

Polypodium californicum ‘Sarah Lyman’ (Polypodiaceae). Sarah Lyman Fern. Napa County, California. This is the choice, and rarely seen, cut-leaf form of California polypody fern. The bright green fronds may reach 20 inches or so in length and are up to 8 inches across. It was originally discovered by Sarah Lyman and her son (Dr. W. W. “Jack” Lyman) in 1897 near their home on a hillside between St. Helena and Calistoga in Napa County. It is likely the oldest fern cultivar that is definitively of California origin and still in cultivation. This fern is summer deciduous, with the first new fronds appearing in November after the first fall rains. Plants are completely sterile and have never been known to form sori or spores, therefore all propagation is vegetative by division. ‘Sarah Lyman’ grows best in partial shade and is an excellent container plant. In summer, potted plants should be placed in the shade and may only need a splash or two of water in our hottest areas. When the plants are actively growing they should receive regular watering if the rains fail to come. It is easy to grow and is, obviously, long lived. (B. O’Brien/RSABG)

Cuphea ‘David Verity’ (Lythraceae). Garden Hybrid?: *Cuphea ignea* x ?*Cuphea micropetala*. David Verity Cuphea. David Verity found this plant overhanging a wall into

a street at the back part of a garden in Westchester, a number of years ago. He took a few cuttings of the plant as it was unfamiliar to him. The tubular, salmon-orange flowers have a white flared tip and are 1 to 1 1/2 inch long. Filaments are dark violet. The broadly oval shaped leaves will reach 3 inches or more in length and are around 1 inch wide.

In colder weather the leaves become flushed a deep bronze. The plant is very easy to grow in full sun to partial shade, as long as it receives plenty of water. It may be cut back hard in late winter to control its size. Hummingbirds are attracted to this plant. The plant was subsequently named by Steve Brigham of Buena Creek Gardens. It is now grown across the country, but with plenty of confusion about its origin. (B. O'Brien)

Cuphea 'Starfire' (Lythraceae). Garden Hybrid: *Cuphea ignea* x *Cuphea angustifolia*. Starfire Cuphea. The plant was registered in 1994, published in 1995 and is now a world traveler – already showing up in Australia, New Zealand, etc. The flowers are about 1 inch long, the tube is red and the 6 reflexed petals are lavender. This plant may be grown in full sun or partial shade and requires regular watering. It wilts if it is at all drought stressed, but recovers overnight if watered. Mid-green lanceolate leaves may reach 3 inches or so in length and are about 1 inch across. They do not color in with winter. This plant was selected by A. E. Thompson in 1990 from a hybrid cross made in 1986. It is noted as a sterile hybrid. It was made at the U. S. Water Conservation Laboratory in Phoenix, Arizona and was released by the USDA – Agricultural Research Service – U. S. Water Conservation Laboratory and the University of Arizona, Tucson. It was originally suggested to be a greenhouse or pot plant. (B. O'Brien)

Diospyros kaki 'Jiru' (Ebenaceae). Garden Origin. Jiru Persimmon. Squat tomato-like orange fruits, resembling 'Fuyu' but said to be much better. Medium sized rounded fruits that are sweetly crisp. The plant is growing at the South Coast Field Station. (J. Jaeger)

Rosa 'China Doll' (Rosaceae). Garden Origin: *Rosa* 'Mrs. Dudley Fulton X *Rosa* 'Tom Thumb'. China Doll Rose. This polyantha rose was introduced in 1946 by Dr. Walter Lammerts of UCLA. This rose is most notable for its 2 1/2 inch single pink flowers that appear on plants that are less than 2 feet tall! Flowers are produced in large clusters and the plant is both a heavy and a repeat bloomer. Leaves are green and shiny. It is an excellent choice as a edging plant, container subject, or as a tiny standard. 'China Doll' is the parent of 'Pinkie' which in turn produced 'Climbing Pinkie'. Joan mentioned that 'China Doll' has the best flower color during the colder months of the year. (J. Citron)

Rosa 'Mrs. Oakley Fisher' (Rosaceae). Garden Origin. Mrs. Oakley Fisher Rose. This rose was introduced in 1921 by Benjamin R Cant of Colchester, England. The large single flowers have orange buds that open to apricot-yellow. It is very fragrant and is a repeat bloomer. The parentage of this plant is not known, but it is considered a hybrid tea rose. A mature specimen may reach 4 feet tall and 3 feet wide. Rose hips of this plant were shown. (C. Ratner)

Serissa foetida 'Pink Swan' (Rubiaceae). Southeast Asia. 'Pink Swan' is a fast growing selection that will reach 2 to 3 feet tall. The star-shaped 3/4 inch flowers are pink. The lustrous oval shaped leaves are bordered with cream.

These plants generally require partial shade in the hotter parts of the LA region, and may tolerate full sun in coastal conditions. Plants will need regular garden watering, and prefer well-drained soils. This plant is an are excellent container subject. (J. Citron)

- B. O'B.