

MARCH 2002 PLANT FORUM NOTES

Thank you to all that brought plants to the March meeting – it was a particularly good showing!!! 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, described in the Society’s **Selected Plants for Southern California Gardens**, were shown: *Araucaria cunninghamii*, *Asphodelus fistulosus*, *Euphorbia characias* ssp. *wulfenii*, *Fremontodendron* ‘San Gabriel’, *Furcraea selloa*, *Gladiolus alatus*, *Gladiolus tristis*, *Isopogon formosus*, *Justicia californica*, *Loropetalum chinense*, *Nertera granadensis*, *Pelargonium echinatum*, *Quillaja saponaria*, *Sansevieria trifasciata*, *Sansevieria parva*, and *Tabebuia impetiginosa*.

The identity of the following plants could not be completely ascertained: *Acacia* sp., *Begonia* – rhizomatous hybrid, *Cercis* sp., *Freesia* sp., and *Sansevieria* sp.

The following plants were also shown but are not described in the Society’s **Selected Plants for Southern California Gardens**: *Acanthus mollis* – a new unnamed variegated selection, *Dendrobium kingianum*, *Dendrobium kingianum* hybrid, *Dendrobium x delicatum*, *Euphorbia nicaeensis*, and *Justicia californica* – yellow flowered selection from Santa Barbara Botanic Garden.

Convolvulus cneorum (Convolvulaceae). Bush Morning Glory. Southern Europe to North Africa. Evergreen – or rather ever-silver – small subshrub to 4 feet tall and equally wide. This plant is widely grown for its spectacular silvery foliage and ample supply of inch-wide, pure white morning glory flowers from spring to summer. Best when grown in full hot sun and well-drained soil. Over-watered plants die quickly and are the source of the plant’s reputation for being short-lived. Joan notes to prune the plant to renew it. (Joan Seidel)

Crassula pubescens ssp. *radicans* (Crassulaceae). Cape Province of South Africa. Shrubby evergreen succulent. Plants will reach a foot or so in height and will spread wider by rooting stems. When grown in the sun, the foliage turns bright red and is very showy. The summer-blooming flowers are white to yellow and are produced in rounded, head-like inflorescences. It is best used as a small scale ground cover and is considered very easy to grow. (Mary & Joe Brosius)

Malacothamnus clementinus (Malvaceae). San Clemente Island Bush Mallow. San Clemente Island, California. This plant is on both the state and federal endangered species list. Like most *Malacothamnus* species, this plant spreads underground to form large colonies. Mature plants may reach 4 to 5 feet tall. A vigorous colony may easily reach 10 feet or more across. Liberally produced, attractive inflorescences may be 1 to 2 feet long and are best characterized as interrupted spikes. Flowers vary in color from white to pink and are pleasantly fragrant. Individual blossoms are an inch or so across and resemble those of hibiscus. As is typically the case – “everything loves a mallow” – deer, rabbits, ground squirrels and insects will all graze upon leaves, flowers, seeds, etc. Leaves of all Californian *Malacothamnus* species are covered with fascinating stellate (star-like) hairs – however, a hand lens or a microscope is need to appreciate them. Chris noted that their plant produces both white and pink flowers in the same inflorescence. (Trish & Chris Meyer)

Passiflora herbertiana (Passifloraceae). No Common Name. Australia. Evergreen vine. This vine grows at the edges of rainforests along the east coast of Australia. The flowers are typically creamy-white and appear star-like due to the different lengths of the sepals and petals. The back-side of the “petals” resemble citrus peel and vary in color from pale yellow to pale orange. Unlike most passion vines, the flowers on this species may last up to three days. Jorge grows this vine in full sun and notes that it should be kept “on the dry side.” (Jorge Ochoa)

Pinellia ternata (Araceae). No Common Name. Japan, Korea, China. An unusual cormous perennial plant. Note that some authors and gardeners refer to this plant as a weed!! It is a relative newcomer to California, where it has been grown for at least the late 1980’s. The plant is noted for having beautiful foliage and very unusual flowers. Mature plants will reach a foot or so in height and spread. The three parted pale- to yellow-green leaves are held atop 6 to 8 inch stems. The flowers are hard to describe, but here goes: The flower, like many aroids, has a thickened spathe surrounding the central column (spadix). In this case, the spathe is the same color as the foliage and appears narrow and tubular (about 1/2 inch wide) and 3 inches or so long. Just above the tip of the spadix, the spathe curves abruptly and narrows to a long green filament. The effect is most unusual. Plants go completely dormant in fall and reappear in late winter or early spring. Average garden watering is desired – drought stressed plants wilt readily but perk up immediately with water. Plants grow best in partial shade, but are adaptable. Mature corms may reach 1 inch in diameter. (Steve Gerischer)

Salvia ‘Desperado’ (Lamiaceae). Desperado Sage. Garden Hybrid: *Salvia apiana* X *Salvia leucophylla*. This is, by far, the largest of the California native sages. Vigorous specimens have been known to produced inflorescences up to 10 feet in length and with up to 26 fully developed side branches. The whorl-like (technically these are called “glomerules”) flower clusters are similarly large, and may reach three inches across. Individual flowers greatly favor the *Salvia leucophylla* parent and are rosy-pink. The foliage of the plant favors its white sage parent, *Salvia apiana*, but the leaves tend to be a narrower and longer. The lush winter-spring leaves turn pink, orange or reddish before they drop in late spring or early summer. As is typical for most of the Californian

sages, their summer foliage is much reduced in size and is typically whiter. This plant is a relatively new cultivar as it was introduced by Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden in 1999. (Trish & Chris Meyer)

- B. O'B.