



# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

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## GREEN SHEET

## JULY 2003 PLANT FORUM NOTES

In addition to the plants discussed, the following plants, described in the Society's *Selected Plants for Southern California Gardens*, were also shown:

*Aloe striatula*  
*Aloe tomentosa*  
*Buddleia crispa*  
*Cordyline terminalis*  
*Duranta repens*  
*Eriogonum giganteum*  
*Erythrina crista-galli*  
*Helianthus annuum*  
*Lavandula augustifolia*  
*Limonium latifolium*  
*Limonium virgatum*  
*Malus sylvestris* var. *domestica* 'Anna'  
*Manihot esculenta*  
*Plectranthus fruticosus*  
*Plumeria rubra*  
*Sisyrinchium striatum*  
*Xanthosoma sagittifolium*

Following a marvelous lecture and question and answer session presented by Greg Bartman of the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, it was most appropriate that a plant pest was presented for review at our July Plant Forum. Kathy Cooper submitted (under glass, of course) a tobacco hornworm, which is the larvae of the tobacco sphynx moth. It is a lovely, large creature with that distinctive hook or horn at the top, similar to the tomato hornworm. Unfortunately for Kathy, its favorite food seems to be her fuchsias in her Pasadena garden.

Thank you Kathy, and all the others who brought plant specimens to our forum. A few are described below. (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.)

*Ballota pseudodictamnus* (Lamiaceae). A small shrub in the mint family, this species is native to Crete, Turkey and Libya. Small, rounded and bluntly-toothed leaves are arranged in opposite pairs. The aromatic foliage resembles that of horehound. It prefers a dry sunny location and good drainage. Combining its growing conditions with its maximum height of 18 inches makes this a wonderful candidate for a rockery. (Joan Citron)

*Begonia nelumbifolia* (Begoniaceae). A rhizomatous begonia with up to 12-inch long mid-green leaves with hairs underneath. Small, pinkish white flowers are produced in early spring. This begonia is native from Mexico to Columbia. Gary grows it in light shade. (Gary Hammer)



*Eriogonum grande* var. *rubescens*

*Eriogonum grande* var. *rubescens* (Polygonaceae). This submission is a case of a rose by any other name would smell as sweet. There was some discussion over the proper identification of this plant. Joan Citron purchased it from Trish and Chris Meyer, who grew it from seed collected from *Eriogonum grande* var. *rubescens*. However, *Eriogonum grande* var. *grande* is also grown in the same garden, and the seed may have hybridized. To add to the confusion, RHS says *E. grande* Greene is now *E. latifolium* ssp. *grande*. It was decided safest to call the plant a segregate out of the *Eriogonum grande*, *latifolium*, *rubescens* complex. Nevertheless, it is a native of San Miguel, Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz Islands. This 24-inch mounding California native produces dense flower heads at the end of brittle stems, each containing puffs of red flowers that are very attractive to small butterflies. This Channel Island native thrives in Valley gardens with water only once or twice a month. (Joan Citron)

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The following plants were also shown but are not described in the Society's *Selected Plants for Southern California Gardens*:

*Pelargonium trifidum*  
*Strobilanthes gossypinus*

*Hoya longifolia* (Apocynaceae). We were fortunate to have had two species of the wax flower vine brought into the July forum. Historically, Hoya was named in honor of Thomas Hoy, a gardener for the Duke of Northumberland at Syon House, in eighteenth century Middlesex, England. The genus is found in India, China and the hotter parts of Australia. The attractive, dark green leathery leaves are 2–6 inches long and 1/3-inch wide with small white and rose-colored flowers in umbels about two inches wide. Debra grew the forum plant in a container in light shade. The plant was grown from cuttings taken in February of this year. (Debra Galliani)

*Hoya multiflora* (Apocynaceae). The common name for the second Hoya is Shooting Star. The flowers on this stout, glabrous climber are straw yellow and white. All Hoya flowers are star-shaped, scented and resemble cake ornaments; one star sitting upon another larger one. Although Debra grows hers in light shade, bright sun is recommended for better bloom. Its also best not to clean up the old flowers too soon, as new ones usually emerge from the same spurs as the old one. (Debra Galliani)

*Limonium gmelinii* (Plumbaginaceae). This is a royal statice, in that its flowers are a deeper lilac or purple than other species. The corolla is blue. Ironically, this sun-lover is native to Eastern Europe and Siberia! It can be grown in many kinds of soil, but must be well drained. Joan hopes it will self-seed like *L. latifolium* as this was the only plant out of six seedlings to survive. (Joan Citron)

*Nicotiana langsdorffii* (Plumbaginaceae). For the chartreuse-loving gardeners among us, this 5 feet tall flowering tobacco with masses of lime green flowers is the cat's meow! It may self-seed if dead-heading is delayed. The only drawback to growing this species is that it lacks the fragrance of *N. sylvestris*. We can't have everything. (At least not until a scented cultivar of *langsdorffii* is created!) (Susan Rudnicki)



*Passiflora mixta* (Passifloraceae). This is another unusual and beautiful passionflower vine from Jorge. It has 3-lobed ovate, oblong leaves and pink to orange-red flowers with lavender or purple coronas. It comes to us from Ecuador and other parts of South America. It produces edible, banana-tasting fruit and has climbed to 30 feet in Jorge's garden in Long Beach. He grows it in full sun and it flowers from April through July in Southern California. (Jorge Ochoa)

— Edited by Christine Riesenfeld  
Photos by Trish Meyer & Jorge Ochoa

