



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

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GREEN SHEET

AUGUST 2003 PLANT FORUM NOTES

(Reminder: There will be no plant forum at the SCHS annual dinner meeting at Huntington Gardens on September 11.)

Our members brought in an outstanding 39 plant specimens from their gardens for our August plant forum. Remember that you do get one free "exhibitor's ticket" for the Plant Raffle if you bring in one or more plants!

Calylophus hartwegii (Onagraceae). Native to the US and commonly referred to as the Texas primrose, this yellow-flowering primrose rewards some Southern California gardeners with year-round flowers. The plant reaches a height of only 8 inches and spreads about 2 feet via underground rhizomes. If it goes dormant in winter in your location, the stems should be cut back. As a typical native, water minimally and grow it in full sun or part shade. (Eunice Nero)

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

Amaryllis belladonna
Angelonia hybrids
Adenium obesum
Bauhinia galpinii
Caesalpinia gilliesii
Caesalpinia pulcherrima
Crassula perfoliata var. *falcata*
Cyrtanthus hybrid
Dendrobium hybrid
Echeveria sp.
Eriogonum arborescens
Eryngium planum
Globularia × *indubia*
Hamelia patens
Hatiora salicornioides
Hymenocallis narcissiflora
Leucophyllum laevigatum
Lycoris radiata
Oncidium hybrid
Orthosiphon labiatus
Penstemon spectabilis
Phalaenopsis hybrid
Pitcairnia corallina
Rhagodia spinescens
Salvia clevelandii 'Winifred Gilman'

Dahlia coccinea (Asteraceae/Compositae). What a delight to see one of the species plants (the other being *D. pinnata*) that was used to produce most of the estimated 20,000 Dahlia cultivars that are available today. The Dahlia is native to the mountainous areas of Mexico and Central America. This plant was named in honor of Dr. Andreas Dahl, a Swedish botanist and pupil of Linnaeus. Given such lineage, it is not surprising that the species have produced such outstanding cultivars. Cathy's plant is a beautiful red which was a seedling of a cerise/purple flowering parent. The edible tubers of the genus produce plants from 1 to 2 feet tall and come in all colors, except blue. Many are some of the best cut flowers for arranging. They do require rich organic soil, staking, deadheading and pruning for best results. (Cathy Ratner)

Encyclia alata (Orchidaceae). Steve was fortunate enough to obtain this deliciously fragrant orchid, with pale green and brown tipped flowers, from Jeanne Woodbury's garden in Silverlake. He grows it in full morning sun with afternoon shade in his Eagle Rock garden. He says it is easy to grow, "...the more I ignore it, the better it blooms!" Horticultural references recommend keeping this Central American native a bit dry in winter to encourage spring/summer bloom. Another wonderful footnote: Lili Singer says the bloom itself reminds her of Jeanne. (Steve Gerischer)

Hibiscus elatus (Malvaceae). Leave it to Jorge to "stump the experts" who could not recall having seen this before. This large tree (to 80 feet), native to Cuba and Jamaica, has very large, beautiful, heart-shaped leaves with equally large yellowish to orange flowers. Jorge's specimen came from a 50-foot tree in Elysian Park. The wood is reportedly used for cabinetry, gunstocks and fishing rods. (Jorge Ochoa)

Mandevilla 'Moonlight Parfait' (Apocynaceae). This showy genus was formerly called *Dipladenia*. The blossoms have 5 broad lobes that fan out from a tubular throat. Usually evergreen, these vines have dark green leaves and twining stems that reach 15–20 feet long. They bloom continuously in

summer. Joan grows hers in partial shade, but they do need heat in order to bloom. As the name of this new cultivar from Monrovia suggests, the flowers are a pale pink which probably reflect moonlight quite well. (Joan Seidel)

Monopsis lutea (Campanulaceae). This is a genus of eighteen species of herbs from South Africa that closely resemble their cousins, *Lobelia*. This plant blooms bright yellow and grows as a spreading, trailing ground cover, with wiry stems to 12 inches in length. The leaves are linear with toothed margins. Wendy grows her specimen in full sun to part shade in a damp location where it blooms mid-summer to fall. It's a pretty "spill-over" plant for cool walls and rock gardens, but it is not recommended for hanging baskets. (Wendy Gault)

Origanum rotundifolium 'Kent Beauty' (Lamiaceae). *Origanum* was an ancient Greek name used by Hippocrates and is a genus of about 25 species. Mary and Joe brought what this editor considers a "beauty" ('Kent' or otherwise). This Mediterranean native has the typical small, rounded aromatic leaves. The enhancement offered by this cultivar is the mass of nodding, pale pink blossoms, encased in deep rose-colored bracts. Add Mary and Joe's lovely container and we had a "stunner" of a specimen. This plant would also look wonderful cascading over a rock wall. (Mary and Joe Brosius)

Passiflora penduliflora (Passifloraceae). Where does Jorge get all his plants? With over 300 species, it will take him time to exhaust the genus. This glabrous climber vines its tendrils to 20 feet with greenish-yellow flowers. Its origin is Jamaica and it blooms in spring and summer in Long Beach, where Jorge grows it in full sun. There must be bats in his area, because they are the pollinators. Ants love it, too. (Jorge Ochoa)

Physocarpus opulifolius 'Diablo' (Rosaceae). This deciduous shrub is commonly referred to as "Ninebark" referring to the peeling bark. The species has green leaves with spiraea-like flowers. This selection's focus is the leaf color which is a dark reddish-purple. It grows to a width and height of 12 feet as an arching shrub. In addition to the nice habit, the alternate leaves are attractively lobed. Grown in light shade, some of the leaves began turning green, but cool nights returned them to the dark color. It's a very nice accent plant for the shade garden. (Christine Riesenfeld)

Plumeria rubra (Apocynaceae). Although this plant was originally labeled *rubra*, its dark maroon, almost velvety color belies an unusual specimen. This magnificent cluster of blooms on an 8-year-old, container-grown plant was nurtured by Sam in his Hollywood Hills garden. This species is also referred to as "Temple Tree" and "Nosegay Frangipani." The "nosegay" description aptly applies to our specimen. Sam's plant is 6 feet high and blooms in summer and fall. The genus, *Plumeria*, was named in honor of Charles Plumier, a seventeenth-century French botanist who described several tropical species. However, the editor could find no horticultural references that include the deep, rich crimson color of Sam's entry. (Sam Trueblood)



Salvia chamelaeagnea (Lamiaceae). With a genus of over 900 species, we're bound to see a new one now and then at our meetings. This 5-foot shrub from the coastline of the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa, has soft gray-green leaves with terminal soft lavender and white flowers. Our specimen receives little or no water; perhaps once a month. Betsy Clebsch states in her *New Book of Salvias* that this salvia was given the Latin name meaning "dwarf olive," probably because of the lovely mid-green color of its leaves. (Robert Smaus)

Vitex rotundifolia (Verbenaceae). This small, round-leaved version of the chaste tree, (called pohinahina in Hawaii), grows in coastal areas of Hawaii, Australia and Asia. Pliny was the first to refer to its ability to "cool the heat of lust." Later Chaucer referred to it as an attribute of virginal Diana. Those historic and colorful descriptions aside, this species can grow to 1 to 4 feet high and 6 to 8 feet wide. It has aromatic mid-green leaves and spiky purple flowers in summer. The flower is used in lei making. (Joan Seidel)

— Edited by Christine Riesenfeld
Photo by Chris Meyer

