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SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

GREEN SHEET

MARCH 2004 PLANT FORUM NOTES

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

Boronia megastigma
Buddleja asiatica
Ceanothus 'Joyce Coulter'
Cantua buxifolia 'Hot Pants'
Chasmanthe aethiopica, *C. floribunda*,
 C.f. var. duckittii (yellow flowers)
Dudleya cymosa
Euphorbia xantii
Gladiolus tristis
Greyia radlkoferi
Helleborus orientalis (mistakenly
 labeled *H. argutifolius*)
Isolexis canariensis
Justicia leonardii (brought in as
 J. incana)
Lachenalia mutabilis
Muscari macrocarpa
Narcissus sp.
Phacelia tanacetifolia
Phlomis fruticosa
Psoralea pinnata
Sansevieria cylindrica
Scadoxus puniceus
Sisyrinchium bellum
Veltheimia bracteata (*V. viridifolia*)
 – a pink variety, a white variety,
 and a pale pink variety that is a
 Gary Hammer seedling
Verbena lilacina 'De La Mina'

Maybe it was our speaker, Cathy Ratner, who subconsciously influenced everyone to share their favorite plants as she has shared hers over the years, or maybe it was just the time of year, but we had an abundance of beautiful blooms on the Forum table. While space does not permit reviewing all of the plants shown at the March meeting, some standouts that are not described in the Society's *Selected Plants for Southern California Gardens* included:

Berberis pinnata (*Mahonia p.*) ssp. *insularis* 'Shnilemoon' (Berberidaceae). Santa Cruz Island. How can you help but love a plant named for the coyote god of the underworld? A handsome plant with spineless leaves, clusters of small, yellow, sweetly fragrant flowers in spring, and an upright growth habit to roughly 6 ft. In late summer it produces blue-black berries that provide a feast for the birds. Though drought tolerant once established, it looks better with some water. Bart says they water it about once a month in the summer. On the coast it will grow in full, or nearly full sun, but inland it prefers at least afternoon shade. This selection is from the U.C. Santa Cruz Arboretum. (Bart O'Brien)

Boronia megastigma 'Jack McGuire's Red' (Rutaceae). SW Australia. Bart reports he has good luck growing boronias, perhaps due to the fact that he grows them in clay pots 10 inches or larger, in a soil mixture that's 50% perlite – a combination that enables him to provide the careful watering boronias demand. Pruning lightly after they bloom also helps to prolong their lives. Certainly they're worth attempting given their diminutive size of 1–2 ft., their delicate appearance, and their wonderful fragrance. (Bart O'Brien)

Clivia miniata, Solomone Hybrid (Amaryllidaceae). South Africa. When yellow clivias first came on the market in the early 1990s, prices were astronomical (\$950 per plant was not uncommon). The price has dropped considerably since then (\$30 is typical) thanks in large part to the efforts of several breeders. Chief among them is Joe Solomone in Central California, whom Harold Koopowitz calls the "clivia king of North America." Marketed through Monterey Bay Nurseries, Joe's yellow plants are known as Solomone Yellows. Clivias prefer to grow in the ground undisturbed for years, and in containers they bloom best when pot-bound. Surprisingly drought tolerant, their biggest requirement is shade: Any portion of the foliage touched by sun seems to burn, although they can handle bright, indirect light. Both orange and yellow clivias bloom in the spring, but the yellows are also fragrant. The flowers are followed by large, decorative berries. (Ric Dykzeul)



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

Calendula officinalis
Ceanothus oliganthus
Crassula arborescens 'Variegata'
Dendrobium kingianum
Fuchsia 'First Success'
Hermannia flamma
Lachenalia aloides, yellow form
(bought at Trader Joe's)
Lathyrus jepsonii var. *californicum*
Lavandula stoechas 'Madrid
Sky Blue'
Lotus crassifolius var. *otayensis*
Paphiopedilum 'Amanda' × 'Kevin
Wine'
Persea indica
Salvia leucophylla 'Amethyst Bluff'
Streptanthus insignis
Tropaeolum tricolor
x Vuylstekeara Melissa Brianne
'Shady Lady's'

The identity of the following plants could not be completely ascertained:

Gladiolus (Homoglossum) priorii,
or *Gladiolus watsonius*
(*Homoglossum watsonium*) –
mistakenly identified as
Watsonia
Salvia 'Gracias' (*S. sonomensis* ×
S. clevelandii?) – this plant
may be *S.* 'Bee's Bliss'
Schizostylis coccinea 'Mrs. Hegarty'
Plant brought in as *Moraea aristata*
was not a *Moraea* – possibly
Hesperantha pauciflora
Strobilanthes isophyllus

Euryops speciosissimus (Asteraceae). Clanwilliam Daisy. South Africa. Similar in growth habit to California's native *Coreopsis gigantea*, this coarse-branched shrub looks like "broomsticks with mops on top" according to Steve Morgan. Narrow and upright, to 4 ft. high and 3 ft. wide, it has never been cut back at UC Riverside where it is growing with aloes and ice plant in full inland sun. It's watered about once every 3 weeks in the summer, on a slope that provides the good drainage it needs. Dramatic when it's in bloom in the spring with large, yellow daisy flowers, it has a strange, Dr. Seuss-type charm year round. UC Riverside will have a number of plants at their spring sale, April 3–4; otherwise, it is not commonly available. (Steve Morgan/UCRBG)

Euphorbia characias ssp. *wulfenii*, dwarf variety. (Euphorbiaceae). Mediterranean. What could be more attractive than the blue-green foliage and large, chartreuse inflorescences of *E. c. wulfenii*? How about a dwarf form of the normally 4–6 ft. plant? Joe Brosius of Magic Growers Nursery created a stir with what he believes is an accidental cross between *E. c. wulfenii* and another unknown euphorbia. It is much more compact, and a different color – more grey-green than blue-green, with smaller, tighter internodes – than the straight species. In bloom, the yellow seed heads are also shorter, and less globular. This is the second year it's been in a five-gallon, so Joe is confident it will stay at 14 inches, replacing the rather blowsy look of its parent with a dense, compact structure ideal for the front of the border. Joe is propagating it now and hopes to have enough plants to make it available by winter 2005. (Joe Brosius)

Salvia heldreichiana syn. *S. benthamiana* (Lamiaceae). Turkey. Cuttings of this plant were given to Chris by Christine Yeo, owner of Pleasant View Nursery in Devon and a National Collection holder of salvias in England. The showy purple and white flowers, the quiet grey-green foliage, and the well-behaved size – 2.5 ft. high and wide – make this a salvia that will fit into any garden scheme. In Chris' experience so far it seems at home in a variety of settings, from sun to part shade, from clay soils to containers, as long as it doesn't dry out. Chris reports that while it started blooming in his Sherman Oaks garden from March, in Europe it blooms from May through August. He adds that it's related to *S. candelabrum* and *S. interrupta*, although those two bloom later and have longer flowering spikes, but with fewer flowers per spike. (Chris Meyer)



Onixotis stricta (Colchicaceae). Star-of-the-Marsh. South Africa. Its common name says it all. This pretty bulb, one of only two species in the genus *Onixotis*, lifts its star-shaped flowers out of marshes and pools in early spring in the Cape regions of South Africa. The pale pink, almost white flowers, enhanced with a maroon eye, are set off by three dark-green leaves and the effect en masse in the wild is lyrical. It's an ideal Mediterranean bulb for Southern California, providing our winters offer the very wet conditions it prefers at that time of year. Sheldon Lisker, who grows it outside in Temecula, submerges pots in water if rainfall isn't adequate. During the summer, it wants to be completely dry. Rare and hard to find, it's occasionally available from Jim Duggan, www.thebulbman.com. (Sheldon Lisker)

Photos by Joe Brosius & Chris Meyer

