



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

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GREEN SHEET AUGUST 2004 PLANT FORUM NOTES



Encyclia alata

Thank you to all who brought plants to the August 2004 meeting. Everyone is 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!

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

Cosmos sulphureus ‘Polidor’ (Asteraceae). The species is a summer-blooming annual native from Mexico to northern S. America. The ferny-leaved plants can reach 6–7 feet tall and half as wide. Yellow or orange single flowers are 1–2 inches across. The species is rarely grown but there are a number of smaller-sized kinds such as the Bright Lights strain. ‘Polidor’ is a cultivar offered by Thompson and Morgan Seeds. Plants are bushy and 2-1/2 feet tall with a mix of red, orange and yellow semi-double medium-sized flowers. Seeds can be direct sown in the garden in spring in full sun and with moderate water. Said by T & M to bloom earlier than many other cosmos. (Debra Galliani)

Encyclia alata (Orchidaceae). The genus *Encyclia* is closely related to and was formerly included in *Epidendrum*. *Encyclia* includes about 150 species of epiphytes and lithophytes found in subtropical S. America and the W. Indies. *E. alata* is native at low elevations from Mexico to Nicaragua. The linear-lanceolate leaves can reach up to 2 ft. long and the flower spike can be 3 times that. In summer the spikes contain many large (1-1/2 inch), long-lasting, fragrant flowers of pale- or yellow-green with purple or reddish-brown markings. Grow in warm conditions inside or shade outdoors mounted or in a loose orchid mix. (Laura Brannon)



Ficus salicaria

Ficus salicaria (Moraceae) (described in *Selected Plants* as *F. subulata*). This “mystery fig” has been around under a variety of names including *Ficus salicifolia*, *F. neriifolia*, *F. subulata*, and *F. mexicana*. Despite being in cultivation for many years it was never positively identified but has now been described as a new species, *F. salicaria*. It is evidently unknown in the wild, which surely perpetuated the confusion. Plants purchased from Kartuz Greenhouses (still sold as *F. subulata*) have been growing outdoors at the Huntington Botanical Gardens for 20 years, where it is a small rounded densely leafy shrub to about 3 ft. The specimen exhibited was in a container and growing in half sun in the foothills area. (Matt Dell)

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

Achillea millefolium cvs.
Brachychiton discolor
Campsis* × *tagliabuana
 'Mme Galen'
Cotyledon orbiculata
***Dahlia* cvs.**
Duranta erecta
***Duranta erecta* 'Alba'**
Gaillardia* × *grandiflora
Globba winitii
Impatiens balfourii
Ipomoea wolcottiana
Montanoa leucantha
 var. *arborescens*
Passiflora phoenicia
Podocarpus macrophyllus
Portulacaria afra
Radermachera sinica
Salvia azurea* ssp. *grandiflora
Senecio tropaeolifolius
Senna didymobotrya
Stenocarpus sinuatus
Tecoma stans

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

Hymenocallis sp.

Passiflora nigradenia (Passifloraceae). This species is native to the Amazon Basin of Peru, Bolivia, Brazil and Venezuela. It is a 30 ft. vine blooming in spring-summer with pendant white flowers with a large "cup" of thick white corona filaments banded with purple. The large leaves are elliptic and waxy. Fist-sized fruit is green with white spots and is edible. The specimen exhibited is grown in a container in part shade in Long Beach. (Jorge Ochoa)

*Rhododendron christiana*e (Ericaceae). This species is one of the 300 members of Section Vireya of the genus *Rhododendron*. They are often called "Malesian" rhododendrons after the geographic region where they are native, stretching from the Malay Archipelago through Indonesia, Borneo, New Guinea and the Philippines. They are sun-lovers in their native habitat but in cultivation need protection from strong burning sun. They often grow epiphytically in litter in crevices of tree trunks or on mossy logs. Vireyas are noted for their brilliant flower colors and *R. christiana*e is no exception, with bright yellow-orange flowers. This species is a compact shrub from New Guinea and is one that is recommended for areas with warm climates. Plants grown outdoors in Southern California need shade, frost protection, well-draining soil preferably amended with peat moss, and plenty of moisture. They are good container plants. (Harvey Meyer)

Tillandsia xerographica (Bromeliaceae). This epiphytic bromeliad rather resembles a Medusa's head. It is found from southern Mexico to El Salvador and Guatemala, typically in desert; indeed *xeros* means "dry". The plants can reach a foot high by wide, composed of a rosette of twisting, curving long gray-white leaves. The flower spike is about a foot tall and very colorful, with the stem covered with pinkish-orange scape bracts, and the floral bracts are green from which emerge mauve flowers, the whole remaining colorful for many months. The plants are easily cultivated, simply absorbing moisture or rainfall from the air or an occasional dousing from the hose.

(Doug Woodfell)



Tillandsia xerographica

— Edited by Kathy Musial

Photos by Steve Gerischer

