

MAY 2005 PLANT FORUM NOTES

Thank you to all who brought plants to the May 2005 meeting it was a diverse showing of spring blooms - many are early since we've had so much rain over such a long period of time. 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!

In addition to the plants discussed below the following plants, described (or listed) in the Society's *Selected Plants for Southern California Gardens*, were shown: *Centaurea crassifolia* (shown as *Palaeocyanus crassifolius*), *Deutzia scabra*, *Erigeron* 'W. R.', *Hippeastrum advenum*, *Hypericum calycinum*, *Lavandula pinnata*, *Oenothera speciosa*, *Salvia guaranitica* 'Costa Rica Blue', *Thunbergia grandiflora*, and *Triteleia laxa* 'Queen Fabiola'.

The following plants were also shown but are not described in the Society's *Selected Plants for Southern California Gardens*: *Actinidia deliciosa*, *Alstroemeria* 'Little Eleanor', *Anomatheca laxa* (shown as *Lapeirousia cruenta*), *Indigofera incarnata*, *Kalanchoe suarezensis*, *Pelargonium* 'Tweedle Dee', *Pelargonium* 'Tweedle Dum', *Pelargonium* 'Vancouver Bicentennial', *Penstemon superbus*, *Primula viali*, *Streptanthus farnsworthianus*, and *Tagetes nelsonii*.

Allium dichlamydeum (Alliaceae). Wild Onion. Central to Northern California at low elevations near the coast. Deciduous winter growing, spring blooming bulb. 4 to 12 inches tall. The showy red-purple (sometimes these are much paler in cultivation) flowers are produced in an umbellate cluster. In the wild, this plant grows in clay soils that dry in the summer. If you don't have such conditions naturally in your garden, it may be best to grow this plant in a container in a well-drained soil – Elizabeth notes that hers are growing in a "sandyish" mix. When the plant goes dormant for the summer, move the container to a cool dry location (don't let it bake in full sun). As with all of our native onions, all parts are edible. (Elizabeth Schwartz)

Ceanothus griseus var. *horizontalis* 'All Gold' (Rhamnaceae). All Gold Ceanothus. California. Evergreen shrub. This cultivar is a mutation of a mutation – it is a regularly occurring sport of *Ceanothus griseus* var. *horizontalis* 'Diamond Heights' that lacks dark green splotches on the leaves, hence the name 'All Gold'. In my experience it is a bit weaker grower than 'Diamond Heights'. It is an outstanding plant for mixed containers as its unusual foliage color cascading over the edge contrasts or blends with nearly anything – get creative! This one is NOT grown for its flowers as their pale blue color is not attractive against the chartreuse-yellow foliage – and besides it doesn't flower much

anyway. Pinch tips of specimens that are not full enough. This cultivar was first observed, named and introduced by California Flora Nursery in Fulton. (Bart O'Brien)

Erigeron glaucus 'Sea Breeze' (Asteraceae). Sea Breeze Seaside Daisy. California, southwestern Oregon. Evergreen perennial. This patented selection comes from England – as such one should not be surprised to learn that it is quite unsatisfactory when grown in our Southern California hot interior climate. Keep this one only in a coastal or near coastal garden. The profusion of spring and early summer showy daisy flowers are bright pink with the typical yellow-green centers. A compact grower, 'Sea Breeze' may reach 12 inches tall and is roughly 24 inches wide. Near the coast, lightly cut back or lightly shear the plant back after it blooms, and if you continue watering you should get additional blooms. (Bart O'Brien)

Erigeron glaucus 'Wayne Roderick' (Asteraceae). Wayne Roderick Seaside Daisy. California, southwestern Oregon. Evergreen perennial. Don't confuse this selection with the hybrid, *Erigeron* 'W. R.' – though both are named for the famous California native plant horticulturist of Northern California. This selection is much less known but is quite showy and is a worthy addition to your garden. The unique flower color of this cultivar is frequently referred to as "electric purple" not unlike some Cinerarias. This selection is taller (and hence may be floppier) than most other selections of *Erigeron glaucus* that are currently in cultivation – the leafy flowering stems may reach up to 24 inches in height. 'Wayne Roderick' should be cut back after flowering when it starts looking shabby. Plants perk up with cooler fall weather. As with most selections of *Erigeron glaucus*, the more sun the plants receive the more flowers they will produce – but at a price; the foliage burns and the plants may die in the heat of the summer. (Bart O'Brien)

Euphorbia characias 'Tasmanian Tiger' (Euphorbiaceae). Tasmanian Tiger Euphorbia. Evergreen shrub. Wow! A vigorous white variegated euphorbia – something as rare as a Tasmanian tiger – or at least that's what I'm guessing from that name. Indeed, there's nothing like this one. I thought it might burn in our hot inland sun. Wrong. It is a great durable plant (even as I re-edit this in August!). Quite unexpectedly, the inflorescence is equally variegated. This plant is making quite a stir amongst the gardening cognoscenti of California – nearly everyone wants it and it is frequently sold out. It is ideally suited to our Southern California climate where everyone that gets a hold of it should be able to grow it well: full sun, little water when established, light pinching & deadheading (use caution to avoid that awful euphorbian sap) and it will perform. It also is good container subject. Some young plants that don't yet have side branches but decide to flower may exhaust themselves and poop out – in these cases it is best to pinch off the developing inflorescence and force the plant to produce a more branches instead. (Bart O'Brien)

Oenothera longiflora 'Lemon Sunset' (Onagraceae). Lemon Sunset Evening Primrose. Perennial to 3 to 4 feet tall. Plants may need staking. Very showy 4" wide pale yellow fragrant flowers open in the evening and fade to sunset red the next day. Plants have red stems. This is the one that delayed this Green Sheet. Sometimes one has no idea what one is getting into taxonomically – Oenotheras are more than a bit messy. (Jane Beer)

Solanum quitoense (Solanaceae). Common names: Naranjilla, Lulo, Lulum. Columbia. Evergreen shrub. The plant has large lobed leaves that often have prominent white veins and purple spines along them. New growth is often colored rich purple. Flowers are whitish and often marked with purple and have yellow stamens. The orange fruits are egg-shaped. An exotic edible, this plant's fruits have been juiced since Incan times – they called the plant lulum. Seeds were apparently sent to the U.S. in 1913 and the juice made a splash (pun intended) at the New York World's Fair in 1939. It is currently used for juice, wine, sherbet, jelly, marmalade, and sauces. It is often combined with bananas in pies and in ice cream. (Anonymous)

Trichostema lanatum 'Fremont Peak' (Lamiaceae). Fremont Peak Woolly Blue Curls. California – this selection from Fremont Peak in San Benito County, the northernmost outpost for this species. Evergreen subshrub. A personal favorite of mine, that I've unfortunately lost, 'Fremont Peak' is still one of the most showy selections to date of Woolly Blue Curls. Tim's plant reaches 5 feet tall and wide, though he cuts it back severely after flowering. In addition to having spectacular large dense inflorescences covered with red-violet fuzz and blue flowers, this cultivar is also noted for broader and lighter green foliage. (Tim Evans)

– Edited by Bart O'Brien