



# Southern California Horticultural Society

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## GREEN SHEET      FEBRUARY 2006 PLANT FORUM NOTES

Thank you to all who brought plants to the February 2006 meeting! With such warm, dry weather there were a number of unexpected flowers – quite a good showing for early February. 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: *Acmena smithii*, *Aeonium arboreum* (likely a seedling of ‘Atropurpureum’), *Artemisia californica*, *Banksia media* [shown as *B. conferta?*], *Billbergia windii* (*B. decora* x *B. nutans*), *Euphorbia rigida*, *Ferraria crispa*, *Helleborus argutifolius*, *Helleborus orientalis*, *Iris germanica*, *Kennedia nigricans*, *Lewisia* ‘Sunset Strain’ (peachy-pink flowers), *Ruttya fruticosa* (both red and yellow flowered forms were shown), *Solandra maxima*, *Tulbaghia simmleri*, and *Tulbaghia simmleri* ‘Alba’.

The identity of the following plants could not be completely ascertained: *Epidendrum* sp., *Kalanchoe* (*Bryophyllum*) with red flowers, *Lachenalia* sp. with blue-violet/ purple flowers, *Narcissus* with double flowers - perhaps ‘Erlicheer’, and an unidentified *Salvia* sp. thought to be from Ecuador.

The following plants were also shown but are not described in the Society’s **Selected Plants for Southern California Gardens**: *Plectranthus comosus* (= *Coleus barbatus*) and *Salvia karwinskii*.

*Agonis flexuosa* ‘After Dark’ (Myrtaceae). After Dark Willow Myrtle, After Dark Willow Peppermint. Australia. This is a new selection with fine textured, dark purplish foliage. Kathleen notes that this will become a 25 foot tall tree with a semi-weeping growth habit. Flowers appear in late spring. Plants are adaptable to a variety of soil types and are fairly drought tolerant when established. They may be grown in full sun or partial shade and are useful for windbreaks, erosion control, and in coastal conditions. Plants tolerate heavy pruning. Kathleen also notes that *Sunset* considers this species “one of the best small trees for California gardens.”

(Kathleen Brown)

*Forsythia* x *intermedia* ‘Lynwood’ (Oleaceae). Lynwood Forsythia. Hybrid between *F. suspensa* and *F. viridissima*, this clone originated as a bud mutation on the cultivar ‘Spectabilis’ in 1935 in a garden in Cookstown, County Tyrone, Ireland. The hybrid *F. x intermedia* dates back to 1878. Diana notes that her plant is 12 feet tall and that it is grown in

sandy soil in the San Gabriel area with little water. We are not 100% sure that this is the cultivar 'Lynwood'.

(Diana Barney)

*Geranium x magnificentum* (Geraniaceae). Crane's Bill Geranium. According to Yeo, this is a hybrid between *G. platypetalum* and *G. ibericum* ssp. *ibericum*. This hybrid is known for its late winter and early spring display of abundant rich purple sterile flowers (seeds are never produced). In cold climates the leaves color well in the fall. This plant is best used as a groundcover, and it may reach from 18 to 24 inches in height. Ric notes that the plant grows in full sun to partial shade in Palos Verdes.

(Ric Dykzeul)

*Salvia* 'Pacific Blue' (Lamiaceae). Pacific Blue Sage. Either a selection of *S. brandegeei* or a hybrid between it and *S. munzii*. This clone originated as a chance garden seedling at Santa Barbara Botanic Garden that was subsequently selected by Carol Bornstein and introduced by SBBG in 2005. This attractive evergreen shrub will reach 3 to 4 feet high and 4 to 6 feet wide. This plant has the attractive foliage typical of *S. brandegeei*. Nice, though rather small, gentian blue flowers on firmly upright stalks. If this plant really is *S. brandegeei*, it will likely grow much larger.

(Lili Singer)

*Senecio macroglossus* 'Variegatus' (Asteraceae). Variegated Wax Vine, Variegated Natal Ivy, or Variegated Rubber Ivy. The species is from eastern South Africa (Natal), and the cultivar is thought to have originated in Kenya. Evergreen, semi-succulent vine that may reach 6 feet or so in length. Attractive waxy leaves are three lobes and have creamy-white markings. Inflorescences have the typical daisy appearance and are about half an inch across and occur singly or in groups of up to three. Leslie notes that the plant thrives with "succulent-type care" and is growing on a west facing porch near the beach.

(Leslie Walker)

*Thamnochortus cinereus* (Restionaceae). No common name. South Africa. Evergreen, winter-growing perennial reaching 3 to 5 feet tall and about 2 feet wide. Like many restios, this plant has an attractive reed-like appearance. Male and female plants have strikingly different appearances. The female inflorescences are silvery-brown tufts that occur in a more or less spiral arrangement at the top of the stems. Vegetative growth of both sexes appears soft and mossy. This species is noted for its tolerance to coastal conditions. Susan notes that her garden in Manhattan Beach is on pure sand and that the plant is growing in full sun on a slope with a southwest exposure. She waters this plant via drip irrigation. Susan also states that this plant resents fertile soils, preferring those that are sandy and well-drained. This species is often recommended for containers.

(Susan Rudnicki)

*Tillandsia leonamiana* (Bromeliaceae). No common name. Central South America. Evergreen, perennial epiphyte with rosettes of silvery-grey foliage. Plants display showy orange-red floral bracts and white flowers from winter to spring. Jim notes that this specimen is growing on a slab in Santa Monica, and that it is fairly commonly available.

(Jim Jaeger)

– Edited by Bart O'Brien