



Southern California Horticultural Society

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GREEN SHEET

MAY 2006 PLANT FORUM NOTES

Edited by Joan Citron

Thanks to everyone who brought plants to the May 2006 meeting. The warmer weather has provoked everything into blooming at once and the Plant Forum had a lovely selection of flowers. In addition to getting lots of comments on your gardening prowess, remember that you get one free "exhibitor's ticket" for the plant raffle if you bring in one or more plants for 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: *Briza maxima*, *Calochortus albus*, *Calochortus amabilis*, *Calochortus venustus* -red form, *Senna artemisoides* (shown as *Cassia artemisoides*), *Chionanthus retusus*, *Deutzia scabra*, *Lavatera maritima*, *Mimulus aurantiaca*, *Pimelea ferruginea*, *Russelia equisetiformis* and *Viburnum macrocephalum*.

The complete identification for the following plants could not be ascertained: *Cantua* hybrid, *Echinopsis* sp., *Kalanchoe* (noted as "Bubble Plant"), *Lupinus* sp., *Sanseveria* sp. and *Spirea* sp.

The following selections were also shown, and added considerably to the colorful display: *Columbine* 'Nora Barlow', *Iris* 'Skating Party', *Iris* 'Rococo', *Iris* 'Ann's Child', a Louisiana iris selection, and an un-named spuria iris.



x *Aporophyllum* 'Moonlight', brought in as *Aporophyllum* 'Moon Glow'. *Aporophyllums* are bi-generic hybrids between *Aporocactus* and *Epiphyllum*. This entitles / requires the genus name to be preceded by x. It also means that any plant grown from a seed of this crossing can legitimately have its own selection name. There are 2 species of *Aporocactus*, about 15 species of *Epiphyllum* and probably hundreds of *Epiphyllum* hybrids, so the potential for named *Aporophyllum* selections would appear to be unlimited. *Aporocactus*, known as Rat-tail Cactus, has slender cylindrical stems that are generally pendent with age. *Epiphyllum*, known as Orchid Cactus, can have thin, rounded stems at the base, but generally has wide, flat stems with lobed margins. The hybrids seem to have ribbed, almost quadrangular, pendent stems with flowers that are similar to but, smaller than those of *Epiphyllum*. One selling point for these hybrids is that they will apparently take more direct sunlight and lower temperatures than the *Epiphyllum*. The flowers on the displayed plant

were not open, but the coloration of the buds - pale peach-pink outer petals and white inner ones - indicate to this editor that the selection was most likely x *Aporophyllum* 'Moonlight'. (Jim Nones)

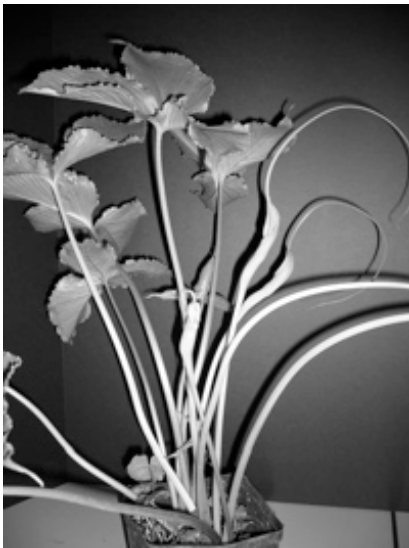
Azalea 'Northern Lights' (Ericaceae). Curiosity about this plant sent me to my computer and the world wide web, where I found the following: "Northern Lights ... is a series of hybrid azaleas being developed and released by the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum. Any azalea released and included in this series will have flower bud hardiness of -30 degrees to -45 degrees F to withstand Minnesota winters. ... new selections ... will be denoted by a cultivar name that includes "lights." The plant brought in had large white flowers, which, considering the information from the University of Minnesota website, is probably *Rhododendron* 'White Lights' aka *Azalea* "White Lights" with the common name of White Lights Azalea. It "is a hybrid of *Rhododendron prinophyllum* and a white flowered Exbury hybrid. ... flower buds have a delicate pale pink cast but open to a white flower with a

slight yellow blotch." The plant brought in showed no yellow, but this might have already faded in the stronger southern California sunlight. This strain of *Azalea* is deciduous, and the flowers were noted by Kathleen as being very fragrant. The plant's cold tolerance is unlikely to be tested in southern California. It will be a lot more interesting to see what kind of heat tolerance it has. (Kathleen Brown)



Lathyrus sativus (Fabaceae). Indian Pea, Grass Pea, Indian Vetch. From Europe. An annual vine to about 3' high with angular stems and lanceolate leaves composed of one or two pairs of pointed, 6" long, 3/8" wide leaflets. It blooms with solitary blue, white or pink flowers about an inch across on stalks about an inch long. The seeds have been used for human and animal food and for medicine. The entire plant can also be dug back into the soil as a green manure, but it can become very weedy when used this way. The plant is very drought tolerant and easy to grow. (Steve Gerischer)

Mecardonia procumbens, brought in as *Mecardonia* 'Prima' (Scrophulariaceae). From south central and southeastern US. (Previously called *Bacopa procumbens*.) A sprawling annual or perennial with small bright green leaves that is in bloom from February through October with half-inch wide, bright yellow tubular flowers. The plant takes full sun or partial shade, has good heat tolerance and is frost tolerant to 25°F. It does extremely well in a hanging basket, which is how it was displayed, but John says it will also work as a ground cover - though probably with very little foot traffic. Regular watering seems to be needed. Common names for this plant are Goldflake or Baby Jump-up, both of which are very descriptive of the flowers. No information could be found on the selection 'Prima' but, from the pictures of the species on the "web," any difference between the species and this selection was not obvious. (John Schoustra)



Pinellia ternata (Araceae). From China, Japan, Korea and the Ryukyus. This is an aroid, to about 10 inches high, with 3-part pale to yellow-green leaves to 5 inches long on 6-8" stems. It blooms in spring and summer with a spathe that is green on the outside and purple-black on the inside. The plant produces one or more bulbils on the leaf stalk, thus giving it a good start on becoming a garden pest. Since it needs dampness to stay alive, it is unlikely to become an escapee in the Los Angeles area; northern California may not be so fortunate. It is dormant in winter and is, not surprisingly, very frost tolerant. The corm contains calcium oxalate, but is used for food and medicine in the Orient. Steve grows his plant in a pot, making it easier to keep it damp and easier to control its weediness. The common names for this plant are Crow Dipper, as one or two words, and Mouse Plant, because of the 4" long tail at the tip of the spathe. (Steve Greischer)

Weigela coraeensis. (Caprifoliaceae). From Japan, Korea and China. A fast-growing, dense, deciduous shrub, from 5 to 10 feet high or more, with pointed, serrated, ovate to oblong leaves, 2 to 6 inches long. It blooms in spring with clusters of 1 1/4" long pink, white or red flowers. There is also an uncommon form with yellow flowers. The genus is listed in the **Sunset Western Garden Book** for regions that get more winter chill than the Los Angeles basin. However, weigelas do well by the coast and will even survive inland if given some shade. There are a great many hybrids and selections on the market, so perhaps local gardeners will be tempted to try their luck. The common name of this species is Peek-a-boo Weigela. (Dick Kohlschreiber)

- Photographs by Wendy Gault