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GREEN SHEET

Southern California Horticultural Society

NOVEMBER 2006 PLANT FORUM NOTES

Compiled by Susan C. Eubank

Thank you to all who brought plants to the November 2006 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!

In addition to the plants discussed below the following plants, described (or listed) in the Society’s *Selected Plants for Southern California Gardens* (2000), were shown: *Amaranthus caudatus*, *Aristolochia californica*, *Barleria obtusa*, *Duranta erecta* ‘Alba,’ *Justicia californica*, *Justicia fulvicoma*, *Gladiolus priorii*, *Polypodium formosanum*, *Salvia munzii*, *Salvia purpurea*, *Tagetes lucida*, *Tillandsia cacticola*, and *Veltheimia bracteata*.

The identity of the following plants could not be completely ascertained: two *Aster* spp. and a *Chrysanthemum* cultivar.

Information in this compilation was gleaned and condensed from the Plant Forum exhibit cards, numerous sources at the Arboretum Library at the Los Angeles County Arboretum & Botanic Garden and various internet sites. For specific sources of information on the plants, please contact me at the Arboretum Library at 626-821-3213.

Agave ‘Kichi Joka’ (Agavaceae) – Exhibited by Dick Kohlschreiber

This is an attractive hybrid of garden origin with distinctive black terminal spines. It also has obvious yellow, to russet, to black teeth on the sides of the shield-like leaves reminiscent of *A. colorata*. The plant can grow to 1 ½ to 2 feet wide and it is propagated by offsets. Dick received his plant from Myron Kinnach and it is planted in the South Coast Botanic Garden Cactus Garden. It has been sold by Plantopia and is coveted by cactus and succulent aficionados.



Billbergia vittata (Bromeliaceae) – Exhibited by Doug Woodfell
(Pictured at left.)

This bromeliad family plant comes from the warm-temperate montane forests of Brazil between 3600 and 4200 feet altitude and so will tolerate some frost. It has spiny leaves which are olive-green or purplish-brown with silver banding or flecked with dots. The upright vase grows to 35 inches tall. The pendulous inflorescence has large, red bracts, and dark blue, and green flowers. It blooms for Doug in October and November in a covered patio. His is grown to its best in bromeliad mix. In its native habitat it is epiphytic or grows on rocks.

Coprosma ‘Rainbow Surprise’ (Rubiaceae) – Exhibited by Bart O’Brien

This Australian shrub can grow to 5 feet round, but the striking feature it is known for are its small, glossy leaves that vary in color. They are cream and green in the summer and in winter the cream and green is highlighted with hot pink, red and dark green. It can be pruned and even hedged. It is drought tolerant in Perth, but that city receives higher rainfall totals than most of the Southern California basin even though it is in a Mediterranean climate region. Consider additional water here.

Three cultivars of *Cordyline* spp. (Dracaenaceae) – Exhibited by Eileen Fiumara

Cordyline fruticosa 'Kiwi' has a fine marginal tracery of red around a green leaf with an irregular internal pattern of yellow-green, yellow and ivory stripes which follow the leaf veins. There are also a few fine red lines in the internal pattern on some leaves.

Cordyline australis 'Sundance' has a pleasing red central vein on its broad green leaves creating a red heart to the plant.

Cordyline australis 'Dark Star' has very dark reddish bronze sword-like strap leaves. It appears to be a mutation of 'Red Star' and was received mixed with this cultivar from a tissue culture lab. It is like 'Red Star' but distinctly darker.



Dudleya pachyphytum (Crassulaceae) – Exhibited by Cathy Ratner
(Pictured at left.)

This plant is only native to the north end of the Islas Cedros in Baja California between 300 and 1500 feet altitude. It grows abundantly on north and northwestern exposure cliffs and rocky slopes in the fog zone and less so in the pine forest (*Pinus radiata* in native habitat). Five inch long, thick, waxy leaves reside on rosettes that can group to as many as 50 on each plant. The white flowers are considered “undistinguished.” It is considered hard to grow in cultivation.

Gladiolus carmineus (Iridaceae) Cliff Gladiolus, Hermanus Gladiolus – Exhibited by Tim Evans

This gladiolus has light pink to deep pink 3 inch wide flowers with a whitish streak surround by a mauve halo down the center of each “petal.” It is a narrow endemic from the southwestern Cape coast of South Africa. It grows in rocky sandstone outcrops usually wedged into cracks with very little soil. It does not grow inland. In its native habitat it flowers in late summer, early autumn on mostly leafless stalks. Those with leaves do not usually bloom that year. The leaves sprout during the winter rainy season and are gone by early summer.

Nerine pudica (Amaryllidaceae) – Exhibited by Sheldon Lisker

This is another fall blooming, winter growing *Nerine*. Its native habit is the Western Cape Province of South Africa. Unlike the other well-known Nerines, its flowers can often be white as well as pink and some have stripes of pink or red inside. The “naked” flower stems are 12 inches to 2 feet tall and the foliage that appears after the flowers is blue-grey. For Sheldon the flowers are long-lasting and the culture is “easy”. They can be grown in containers, too.

Plectranthus comosus (Lamiaceae) Abyssinian Coleus – Exhibited by Joan Seidel

This plant is native to tropical east Africa and Sri Lanka. It's happy in shade and can reach a height of 9 feet tall, but will tolerate drastic pruning after it blooms. The leaves are positioned in opposite ranks like a hebe, are dull-green, have rounded-teeth, are 6 to 8 inches long and faintly fragrant when crushed. The flowers are spectacular. It blooms for eight months of the year starting in October with blueish, purple flower inflorescences ranging to 14 inches tall with up to 50 flowers per stalk and up to 50 stalks at a time. It has been declared a Category 3 invasive plant (declared invaders with ornamental value) in South Africa.

Salvia leucantha x *elegans* 'Anthony Parker' (Lamiaceae) – Exhibited by Chris Meyer

This plant is a seed hybrid named by South Carolina garden designer Frances Parker with the size of Mexican sage (3 feet by 4 feet or larger), the compactness of pineapple sage and the midnight purple in both the calyxes and the flowers. The leaves are not fragrant. It blooms in the fall for Chris in Sherman Oaks.

Salvia splendens 'Dancing Flame' (Lamiaceae) – Exhibited by Bart O'Brien

This plant is just like the species in all aspects except that it has yellow variegated foliage with many creamy white spots.

- Photographs by Paul Martin