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GREEN SHEET

Southern California Horticultural Society

DECEMBER 2006 PLANT FORUM NOTES

Compiled by Susan C. Eubank

Thank you to all who brought plants to the December 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: *Justicia adhatoda* and *Sinningia pusilla*. The identity of the following plants could not be completely ascertained: a *Dendrobium* sp. and a *Euphorbia pulcherrima* 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.

Aloe calcairophila (Aloaceae) – Exhibited by Huntington Botanical Gardens

This unusual little aloe is from marble outcrops at about 4000 foot elevation in central Madagascar. Its succulent and drought-resistant, hillock companions on the marble (a.k.a. alkaline) are also unusual and are most closely related to plants of the arid and hot regions in southern Madagascar. The winters are dry and hot, so the non-showy, white flowers bloom during the humid early summer. The plant is very architectural in appearance with leaves in two rows. The fan of leaves and multiple shoots expand to fill the rock crevices in which it grows. The old leaves persist and perhaps prevent moisture loss in the soil. The Huntington Botanical Gardens suggest growing it indoors on a windowsill.

Columnnea (Tricantha) purpureovittata (Gesneriaceae) – Exhibited by the Huntington Botanical Gardens

This plant is a Peruvian endemic from a dense forest at about 4300 foot elevation. In its native habitat it is epiphytic or grows on rocks. The attractive foliage is opposite and decussate (like a hebe), “bubbled” on its surface and a little hairy. The leaves are also strongly asymmetrical. The flowers are yellow and maroon and produce rosy berries. The Huntington Botanical Garden suggests growing it indoors in a terrarium or in a greenhouse.

Portlandia albiflora (Rubiaceae) – Exhibited by the Huntington Botanical Gardens

This small tree or shrub is critically endangered in its habitat in Jamaica. It is only known from one locality of limestone (a.k.a. alkaline) rocks and cliffs in St. Andrews. The population numbers are less than 250 individuals. The lush green, leathery foliage grows on a 3 to 6 foot plant which produces 4 to 5 inch long, white, tinged with pink, trumpet-shaped flowers. They are wonderfully fragrant and smell something like warm, creamy chocolate. The fragrance is most intense in the evening or early morning. The Huntington suggests growing it in a “warm greenhouse.”

Pyrus calleryana ‘Aristocrat’ (Rosaceae) – Exhibited by Jim Jaeger (collected from the Huntington Botanical Gardens)

This thornless, pyramidal, flowering pear is used as a street tree in Southern California. The tree can eventually reach 30 feet high with a 40 foot spread. Its narrow branch crotches prevent storm damage. It flowers early with clusters of white flowers that can be damaged by frost. The fall color for which Jim brought it in can be brilliant yellow to maroon. It is tolerant of heat, alkaline and heavy soils and only needs moderate watering when established. A Southern California source calls it fireblight resistant while a Seattle source calls it susceptible.

Scaphosepalum swertiifolium (Orchidaceae) – Exhibited by the Huntington Botanical Gardens

I misspelled the name of this interesting orchid when I wrote its profile in the October 2006 *Green Sheet*. I can now add that the flowers are quite variable and the largest flowered form comes from the Andes in Ecuador. Sources also emphasize keeping its roots moist.

Sedum makinoi ‘Ogon’ (Crassulaceae) – Exhibited by Cathy Ratner

The straight species of this sedum is native to China and Japan. It, along with other sedums, is used medicinally there as an antiphlogistic, depurative, febrifuge and haemostatic; fresh leaves are crushed and applied to wounds. The leaves of the cultivar are considered bright gold, chartreuse or bright yellow with a flush of pink. They are also small and create a dense mat. The summer yellow flowers are not showy and this sedum is not very hardy; only down to USDA zone 7. Cathy states it “requires moisture and light shade” and that it “multiplies slowly.”

The Plant Exchange brought over 100 kinds of plants. Those brought that are in **Selected Plants for Southern California Gardens** were:

<i>Achillea filipendulina</i> ‘Coronation Gold’	<i>Jasminum angulare</i>
<i>Aeonium arboreum</i>	<i>Lagenaria siceraria</i>
<i>Aloe aristata</i>	<i>Ledebouria socialis</i>
<i>Aspidistra</i> ‘Milky Way’	<i>Limonium perezii</i>
<i>Ceanothus cyaneus</i>	<i>Ochna serrulata</i>
<i>Ceanothus</i> ‘Joan Mirov’	<i>Ornithogalum arabicum</i>
<i>Cuphea micropetala</i>	<i>Pachypodium succulentum</i>
<i>Euphorbia lambii</i>	<i>Pseudobombax ellipticum</i>
<i>Fockea edulis</i>	<i>Quercus agrifolia</i>
<i>Gladiolus cardinalis</i>	<i>Radermachera sinica</i>
<i>Gladiolus tristis</i>	<i>Streptocarpus saxorum</i>
<i>Haworthia</i> x <i>cuspidata</i>	<i>Teucrium fruticans</i>
<i>Hesperoyucca whipplei</i>	<i>Teucrium fruticans</i> ‘Azureum’
<i>Heuchera sanguinea</i>	<i>Tillandsia usneoides</i>
<i>Homalocladium platycladum</i>	<i>Veltheimia bracteata</i>
<i>Iberis sempervirens</i>	

Those brought to the Plant Exchange that have not appeared in **Selected Plants for Southern California Gardens** were:

<i>Aechmea nudicaulis</i> hybrid	<i>Lavatera assurgentiflora</i>
<i>Agave americana</i> var. <i>medio-picta</i> ‘Alba’	<i>Mahonia (Berberis) haematocarpa</i>
<i>Aloe calcairophila</i>	<i>Malvaviscus arboreus</i>
<i>Aloe cryptopoda</i> x <i>A. arborescens</i>	<i>Neomarica gracilis</i>
<i>Anthurium mancutiense</i>	<i>Oenothera versicolor</i> ‘Sunset Boulevard’
<i>Ceanothus cyaneus</i> ‘Cal-Poly’	<i>Papaver somniferum</i> ‘Drama Queen’
<i>Columnnea purpureo-vittata</i>	<i>Pinguicula gigantea</i>
<i>Crassula arborescens</i>	<i>Plectranthus forsteri</i> ‘Aureus Variegatus’
<i>Cyanella orchidiformis</i>	<i>Pritchardia thurstonii</i>
<i>Cyathea robusta</i>	<i>Ruellia amoena</i>
<i>Dierama robustum</i>	<i>Ruellia mexicana</i>
<i>Echinocereus pentalophus</i>	<i>Sedum nussbaumerianum</i>
<i>Epipactis gigantea</i>	<i>Sinningia iarae</i>
<i>Heuchera</i> ‘Canyon Chimes’	<i>Solandra guttata</i>
<i>Hoya macgillivrayi</i>	<i>Sparaxis tricolor</i>
<i>Iberis sempervirens</i> ‘Autumn Beauty’	<i>Woodwardia radicans</i>
<i>Kalanchoe beharensis</i>	

Other names were either incomplete or I couldn’t verify the name. What a wonderful group of plants and a successful holiday activity!