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## GREEN SHEET

# Southern California Horticultural Society

NOVEMBER 2007 PLANT FORUM NOTES

*Compiled by Susan C. Eubank*

Thank you to all who brought plants to the November 2007 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 in November: *Acacia baileyana* ‘Purpurea’, *Aloe bellatula*, *Bouvardia ternifolia*, *Celosia argentea* var. *crispata*, *Cestrum aurantiacum*, *Cestrum elegans*, *Clerodendrum ugandense*, *Hakea laurina* (pictured at right), *Salvia confertiflora*, *Salvia gesneraeflora* ‘Mole Poblano’, *Salvia purpurea*, *Senna artemisioides*, *Tagetes lemmonii*, *Tecoma stans* and *Tithonia rotundifolia*.



The identity of the following plants could not be completely ascertained: several *Nerine* spp., varieties or cultivars, a *Ruellia* sp., a *Senecio* sp. (pictured at left) and a mystery plant.

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.

*Adenanthos sericeus* (Coastal Woollybush) (Proteaceae)– Exhibited by Michell Babbitt

Michell has this wonderful Western Australian shrub planted only eight blocks from the beach in Manhattan Beach. In its native habitat on the southern coast of the state, it thrives in sandy soil such as Michell’s. Manhattan Beach is approximately 100 miles farther north from the equator as King George’s Sound (Woollybush native habitat) is south of the equator. The soft, ferny, gray foliage is used for cut foliage and the red flowers nestle in the leaves. Michell waters it twice a month. It will grow up to 10 feet. Inland planters would need to be cautious of sun, frost (below 25° F) and poorly-drained soils.

*Agave tequilana* (Agavaceae) – Exhibited by Philip Giroux

Yes, tequila is made from this agave. Its native range is only near Tequila in Jalisco, Mexico, on semi-arid slopes and in oak woodland. The 3 to 5 inch wide leaves are generally quite variable ranging from blue-gray to gray-green with cross-banding or variegation. At maturity the plant can become a 4 to 6 foot rosette. The upright habit of the leaves is accentuated in tequila production by cutting back the basal leaves at 2 to 3 year intervals. Propagation is generally done through “pups” or mecuates so the mescal

azul clone used for tequila is not as variable as the species is generally. Tequila cabezas (literally the 'heads' or stem part of the plants) generally take 7 to 10 years to mature. As they are about to flower, the leaves are cut off, leaving only the head. The head is steamed to convert its starch to sugars and the resulting liquid is then distilled. After distillation the various flavors develop through adding additional ingredients and storing in oak barrels for various periods of time. Tequila was developed by the Spaniards, bringing European distillation methods to use on plants the indigenous people had developed into fermented pulque. Ornamentally it can be frost tender and is susceptible to sun scald.



*Grevillea* 'Moonlight' (Proteaceae) – Exhibited by Michell Babbitt

Also known as *Grevillea* 'Edna Ellen', this shrub can grow up to 12 by 9 feet. The ivory- or cream-colored flowers are produced year-round, but summertime creates the greatest flush. It is probably a hybrid of *G. banksii* and *G. whiteana*. *G. banksii* is quite variable in form and is native to central-eastern and southeastern Queensland. It is a prominent plant in the coastal regions of that area. *G. whiteana* is also native in Queensland, but grows on hillsides in sandy or stony soils in open forest. Queensland is typically more tropical than California, but the mountain habitat of *G. whiteana* contributes to some frost hardiness. Both species are native to well-draining soils although *G. banksii* is found in some clay soil habitat. In Australia, *G.* 'Moonlight' attracts nectar seeking birds, so hummingbirds may use it here. (Pictured at left with *Tagetes lemonii*.)

*Mimulus* 'Agua Tibia' (Scrophulariaceae) – Exhibited by Debra Bushweit Galliani

The seed of this Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden introduction was collected May 17, 1995, in the Agua Tibia Wilderness Area of Cleveland National Forest near San Diego. It is believed to be a hybrid between *M. puniceus* (formerly *M. aurantiacus*) and *M. clevelandii*. Its flowers are large and yellow with a splash of rusty orange. The plant will grow to 2 feet tall and can be spreading or erect. Both parents are found in disturbed areas and forest and chaparral edges.

*Salvia fulgens* (Cardinal Sage) (Lamiaceae) – Exhibited by Chris Meyer

This salvia is another one needing regular watering. It is native to oak and pine woodlands that receive 31 inches of precipitation yearly, mostly arriving in the summer. Its astonishing red flowers bloom most heavily in autumn and contrast well with the dark green of the forests or other dark green shrubs. In contrast, its leaves are a pale yellow-green. In Chris' garden it is 8 feet high by 5 feet wide. (Pictured at right.)



*Salvia semiatrata* (Lamiaceae) – Exhibited by Cathy Ratner

This Oaxacan pine forest edge plant grows at 6500 feet in elevation (and higher) in the Sierra Madre Sur. The mountains receive 2 1/2 to 5 feet of precipitation a year, so this plant would not be considered drought-tolerant, although it is found on limestone cliffs and in cactus scrub. It rains there in mid-summer. Leaves are light green-yellow and flowers have a violet upper lip and a lavender lower lip with a darker violet spot. It can grow to 6 feet high. It blooms on and off throughout the year, but for Cathy it blooms the fullest in the fall.