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GREEN SHEET

Southern California Horticultural Society

DECEMBER 2007 PLANT FORUM NOTES

Compiled by Susan C. Eubank

Thank you to all who brought plants to the December 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 December: *Montanoa grandiflora*, *Podranea brycei* and *Punica granatum* ‘Nana’.

The identity of the following plants could not be completely ascertained: a *Salvia* sp. and a bouquet of fall color from the Huntington Botanical Gardens parking lot.

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.



Agastache ‘Wildfire’ (Lamiaceae)

– Exhibited by Bart O’Brien

Bart got this plant at Suncrest Nurseries last year. He suggests that it is probably a hybrid. His has grown to 2-3 feet and has bloomed from summer through now. The red flowers attract hummingbirds. It is also offered on the internet at Morning Sun Herb Farm. (Pictured at left.)

Puya humilis (Bromeliaceae)

– Exhibited by Bart O'Brien

This puya is endemic to Bolivia in dry valleys of the Andes at an elevation between 6000 and 13000 feet. It is a dwarf plant. Bart's has been growing in the driest, hottest part of his garden for 15 years and is still only 1 foot tall. He received his from the Huntington Botanical Garden. Its blooms are the typical psychedelic aqua of other puyas and the bracts are reddish-pink. The marginal spines are arrayed on the leaf to allow for easy entry and to catch the unsuspecting when trying to pull out. There is some speculation that these puyas trap animals in that way and gain nitrogen from the rotting corpses. The puya is listed as "vulnerable" in its habitat which is rich in endemic bromeliad and cactus family plants.

Ribes malvaceum var. *viridifolium* 'Ortega Ruby'

(Grossulariaceae)

– Exhibited by Debra Bushweit Galliani

This plant was collected as a cutting on the Palms to Pines Scenic Byway (California Highway 74) near Ortega Pass. It was introduced by Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Gardens because its pendulous flowers are richer and redder than the typical variety. It flowers from December to March and needs moderate water to encourage it to retain its leaves longer into the dry season. (Pictured at right.)



Salvia vasquezii (Lamiaceae)

– Exhibited by Bart O'Brien

This is another plant that Bart obtained from Suncrest Nurseries. Nurseryman Michael Craib brought back cuttings of this plant from Mexico. It is a large plant up to 6 feet tall and blooms very late. It is still in bloom and had mostly buds when the plant was brought for the December meeting. It was recently described by H.H. Iltis (corn expert and botany professor emeritus at University of Wisconsin) and T.P. Ramamoorthy (botanist at the Instituto Biologia in Mexico). Herbarium specimens have been collected near the city of Tancitaro in Michoacan, Mexico, at about 6000-6500 feet in elevation in mesophyllic forests, both cool and humid. It would not be considered drought-tolerant, but the extended season, red-violet, nodding flowers and showy bracts make it worth watering. (Pictured at left.)

– Photographs by Paul Martin