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## GREEN SHEET

# Southern California Horticultural Society

**AUGUST 2008 PLANT FORUM NOTES**

*Compiled by Susan C. Eubank*

Thank you to all who brought plants to the August 2008 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 Opportunity Drawing if you bring in one or more plants for discussion at the Plant 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) or previously written up for a Green Sheet, were shown in August: *Bauhinia galpinii*, *Erynium amethystinum*, *Erythrina humeana*, *Hamelia patens* and *Lapageria rosea*,



The identity of the following plants could not be completely ascertained: an *Adromischus* sp., a newly discovered species of *Echeveria* to be described by Myron Kinnach (pictured at left), a *Sinningia* open hybrid from *S. leucotricha* and a *Tillandsia* sp.

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.

*Cussonia natalensis* (Araliaceae) Natal Cabbage Tree – Exhibited by Eileen Fiumara

This small tree is one of six species of *Cussonia* that are native to South Africa according to Eve Palmer's and Norah Pitman's **Trees of Southern Africa** (Cape Town: A.A. Balkema, 1972). They go on to tell of interesting uses for its very soft wood: brake blocks, drinking vessels, wood for carved animals and hollowed out as flumes for irrigation. Its range is Zimbabwe, Southern Africa and Swaziland. According to the online Flora of Zimbabwe it has good yellow fall color. The Flora also documents its habitat in Zimbabwe on granite, in areas ranging from 2400 to 5400 feet above sea level, getting 24 to 48 inches of rainfall per year. It probably needs supplemental water in our climate. (Pictured at right.)



*Deppea splendens* ‘Cristóbal’ (Rubiaceae) – Exhibited by Ann and Eric Brooks

This was the first **Pacific Horticulture** Pacific Plant Promotion. The specific cultivar was named by our own Bart O’Brien and the plant’s history is well described by our own Kathy Musial in **Pacific Horticulture** (April 2000). It is presumed to be extinct in the wild, now only known from plants grown from wild-collected seed brought back from the cloud forest of Chiapas, Mexico. *D. splendens* ‘Cristobal’ is a selected cultivar from the eight known genotypes. Ann and Eric give theirs regular or less water. It grows in full sun in Baldwin Hills. They consider it “easy.” It is available from San Marcos Growers.



*Mertensia maritima* (Boraginaceae) Oysterleaf – Exhibited by Lisa Ceazan

According to the online Flora of North Ireland website, this is a protected species there that grows on the beaches where it has fresh water and protection from weather. Northern Ireland is the southernmost geographic area where the plant grows. Its southernmost distribution in North America is Massachusetts. According to Cornell University’s website on perennials, its flowers, leaves and roots are edible. A website on Scottish plant uses refers to the use of its leaves in salads. Lisa purchased hers from Annie’s Annuals. Annie’s website mentions that the leaves taste like oysters and thus the common name. Lisa has it in a container in average soil. She gives it regular water and it is placed in bright, indirect light.

(Pictured at left.)

*Origanum* ‘Hopleys’ (Labiatae) – Exhibited by Cathy Ratner

According to the Roger Phillips & Martyn Rix book, **The Random House Book of Perennials** (1991) this cultivar was introduced by David Barker of Hopleys Nursery in England. The nursery website considers it a cultivar of *O. laevigatum*, but Phillips and Rix dispute that because of its closer resemblance to *O. vulgare* ssp. *gracile*. They do admit it could be a hybrid between the two. Phillips & Rix’s plant is native to Turkey, Iran and east to Pakistan. Cathy grows hers in full sun with regular water in Palos Verdes. She says it is “easy.”

*Perilla* ‘Fantasy’ (Labiatae) – Exhibited by Anonymous from Los Feliz

W. Atlee Burpee & Co. advertises this annual with striking coleus-like foliage. It has received many positive reviews from Burpee customers. *Perilla* is the plant genus of Japanese culinary *shiso*.

*Sedum* ‘Herbstfreude’ (Crassulaceae) Autumn Joy Sedum – Exhibited by Joan Seidel

Here is a plant with a very confused naming history. There appears to be a general consensus that it was developed by the German nurseryman George Arend, who was exhibiting it as early as 1906 in Royal Horticultural Society shows. His nursery still exists today and is run by his granddaughter. Neither websites nor books agree whether it’s a known cross between *Sedum spectabile* and *S. telephium*. (*S. telephium*’s name is also in dispute.) Some have moved it to *Hylotelephium* and even the venerated Missouri Botanic Garden has two different names for the plant in two different parts of its website. Its beauty has also been disputed. Some consider it too lanky, but in other parts of the United States it is an ubiquitous perennial, esteemed for its appearance in fall.

– Photographs by Paul Martin