

Green Sheet

November & December 2009

Plant Forum Notes

Compiled by Sula and Jorge Ochoa
Photographs by Paul Martin

Thank you to all who brought plants to the November and December 2009 meeting! Everyone is encouraged to bring in plants to share with the group. Remember that you get one free “exhibitor’s ticket” for the opportunity drawing if you bring in one or more plants for discussion at the forum table!



The durable, decorative seedpods of *Iris foetidissima*, brought by Laura Bauer

November:

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 November [taxon, common name (Family)]:

- Barleria obtusa*, barleria (Acanthaceae)
- Clerodendrum ugandense*, blue butterfly bush (Lamiaceae)
- Cotoneaster pannosus*, silver leaf cotoneaster (Rosaceae)
- Excoecaria cochinchinensis*, crenate Chinese croton (Euphorbiaceae)
- Haemanthus albiflos*, white paintbrush (Amaryllidaceae)
- Hypoestes aristata*, ribbon plant (Acanthaceae)
- Iris foetidissima*, beefsteak iris (Iridaceae)
- Iris unguicularis* ‘Walter Butt’, winter iris (Iridaceae)
- Montanoa grandiflora*, daisy tree (Asteraceae)
- Nerine sarniensis*, guernsey lily (Amaryllidaceae)
- Odontonema tubaeforme* [syn. *Odontonema strictum*], firespike (Acanthaceae)
- Ruttya fruticosa*, hummingbird flower (Acanthaceae)
- Tecoma stans*, yellow bells (Bignoniaceae)

Information in this compilation was gleaned and condensed from the Plant Forum exhibit cards, numerous sources in the library of Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, and a suite of internet sites.

Leucophyllum zygophyllum ‘Cimarron’, blue ranger (Lamiaceae) Exhibited by Joan Citron. This evergreen shrub



Ruttya fruticosa, hummingbird flower, brought by Eric Brooks

native to the southwest USA and northern Mexico has soft gray foliage with rounded leaves that distinctively are slightly cupped at the tip. The variety ‘Cimarron’ has bluish purple flowers and a compact growth habit reaching 3 ft. tall by 3 ft. wide. Joan is growing the plant with sun exposure in Reseda. Typically used as an accent plant, border, or hedge. Flowers in response to water. Less susceptible to root rot than other *Leucophyllum* species.

Machaerina rubiginosa ‘Variegata’ [*Baumea rubiginosa*], variegated striped rush (Cyperaceae) Exhibited by Eileen Fiumara. A perennial water-lover, this upright sedge-like plant originates from the swamps of New Zealand and East Australia. This plant is a great accent piece for the garden with long, deep green leaves striped with yellow. It can grow in water as a marginal aquatic as long as the crown is not submerged. Although red-brown flowers appear in fall, it is mostly grown for its foliage. Reaches 3 ft in height and can run to form large wide clumps. Can be grown readily from seed. Eileen grows it in Sherman Oaks and comments that it can be grown in full sun but must be kept moist



Puschkinia scilloides flower spikes, brought by Sheldon Lisker

December:

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 December [*taxon*, common name (Family)]:

Aloe arborescens, tree aloe (Asphodelaceae)

Arctostaphylos 'Sunset', manzanita hybrid (Ericaceae)

Neoregelia 'Fireball', (Bromeliaceae)

Salvia discolor, Andean sage (Lamiaceae)

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Puschkinia scilliodes var. *libanotica* [*P. libanotica*] (striped squill) Hyacinthaceae Exhibited by Sheldon Lisker. (Photo below left)

This striking bulb is native to Asia Minor and has beautiful white flowers in the large clusters typical of the hyacinth family. It gets its common name from the distinct stripes down the center of each petal which can be varying shades of blue. Frost hardy, this bulb is suitable for pots or out-planting, but if planted out will self-propagate readily, and can form large colonies in the garden. It is recommended under deciduous trees and large shrubs since it is known to do well in shade and can cope with drier soils.

December addendum from the Plant Exchange:

Although the display table was not as full as usual, the plant exchange offered a wealth of southern California plants for participating members to choose from. Several of them have not previously been featured in the Green Sheets, including:

Dorycnium hirsutum (hairy canary flower) Fabaceae Brought by Cathy Ratner. This low-growing (>50 cm) silver pea has very attractive foliage and tightly clustered light-colored flowers with pink tips in spring and summer, with dark reddish-brown seed pods in fall. Recommended for the garden as a low maintenance rock garden species, there is no need to trim dead flower heads. Originating from Portugal, it is very drought tolerant (favoring sunny spots), but is also fairly frost hardy (20-25 F). This downy shrub self-seeds readily, which is fortunate, as it can be relatively short-lived for a perennial (San Marcos Growers 2009).

Senecio decaryi Asteraceae Brought by Kathy Musial. This upright shrubby succulent has leaves similar in shape to an echeveria, with red veins, making it an attractive addition to the garden. One of more than a thousand succulent senecios, the more unusual *S. decaryi* originates from Madagascar and Zambia, and may grow into a 6 ft shrub. Kathy grows this plant in full sun in Pasadena where it flowers for much of the year. She notes that it is often sold as *S. amamiensis*. It is drought-tolerant and has been listed by the *Global Compendium of Weeds* as a potentially invasive plant due to reports from the drylands of Australia (hear.org/gcw/species/senecio_decaryi/).



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