



# Southern California Horticultural Society Newsletter

[www.SoCalHort.org](http://www.SoCalHort.org)

November 2009



*Clarkia williamsonii*. Photograph by Ginny Hunt.

## **OUR NEXT MEETING: Ginny Hunt: *Some Annuals to Consider***

Thursday, November 12, 2009 at 7:30 pm  
Announcements 7:45 pm  
Speaker 8:00 pm  
Friendship Auditorium  
3201 Riverside Drive, Los Angeles

*(We meet the 2nd Thursday of each month at 7:30 pm.  
Program free to members with the membership card.  
Non-members pay \$5. Ample on-site free parking is  
available.)*

Annual plants are typically used in our gardens for fast and easy color display. But there is a wide range of annuals that are rarely offered in garden centers. This talk will focus on a range of annual possibilities that do well in California's climate—from the glorious to the simply charming, with an emphasis on California natives. Techniques for starting seeds will be discussed.

A native Californian, Ginny Hunt has grown plants for many years in central and northern California. She has worked at a variety of plant establishments, including the UC Santa Cruz Arboretum and Western Hills Nursery. She is currently employed at Suncrest Nurseries and also is the proprietor of a seed business, Seedhunt.

*Opportunity drawing provided by  
Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden*

**Please join us in welcoming the following new members:**

Donna Capka	Patricia and Putnam Crafts
Vicky Geaga	Emily Green
Richard Hayden	Rachel Young

**H O R T I C U L T U R A L  
H A P P E N I N G S**

**November  
2009**

**Compiled by  
Bettina Gatti**

**Late Fall Plant Shows  
& Sales**

The **Winter Cactus Show and Sale** will take place at the **Los Angeles County Arboretum and Botanic Garden** on Saturday and Sunday, November 7 & 8<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The San Gabriel Valley Cactus and Succulent Society will have on exhibit plants rarely seen in summer shows. Among the featured plants will be succulent pelargoniums and cyphostemma-succulent members of the grape family. This event is free with regular admission.

301 N. Baldwin Avenue, Arcadia CA 91007;

[www.arboretum.org](http://www.arboretum.org)

Also taking place on November 7 & 8<sup>th</sup> is the Japanese Garden Festival at **Descanso Gardens**. Included in the weekend festivities is a **Chrysanthemum Show & Sale**. The Glendale Chrysanthemum society will have flowers and plants on display and for sale. In addition, Kaz Kitajama of the Sogetsu School of Ikebana will present beautiful examples of the fine art of flower arranging in the Japanese Garden. This event is free with general admission and takes place from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

1418 Descanso Drive, La Cañada, CA 91011;

[www.descansogardens.org](http://www.descansogardens.org)

Also worth mention is a **Chrysanthemum Sale** which will take place on Saturday, November 14 at the **South Coast Botanic Gardens** from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Available at this one day sale will be many varieties and colors of plants grown at the gardens.

26300 Crenshaw Blvd., Palos Verdes, CA 90274:

[www.southcoastbotanicgarden.org](http://www.southcoastbotanicgarden.org)

**Send your events to Joan DeFato at  
[xlibris04@earthlink.net](mailto:xlibris04@earthlink.net)**



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**For general questions, call: 818-567-1496**

**Website: [www.SoCalHort.org](http://www.SoCalHort.org)**

**Update to the August 2009  
Create-a-Plant Contest**

This year's winning entry *Psuedo-caesalpinia strelitzia* 'Copperous' (aka the Common Rain Bird) was created by Kay and Ken Hoevel. The photograph of the entry appeared in the October newsletter. Thanks again to everyone who participated! - Laura Bauer"



*Cercis occidentalis* (western redbud) with rustling autumn seed pods in the Celebration Garden at Los Angeles County Arboretum & Botanic Garden.

## Rhythm and motion

By Debra Prinzing

Photographs by Paul Martin

In landscape design, you can create a visual flow through the garden with the dynamic element of rhythm. As a beat is to music, as choreographed steps are to a dance, rhythm animates a garden. Even if the wind doesn't blow, your garden can look and feel infused with energy.

### MOTION

We experience a physical sensation when something rustles or sways in the garden. We pause to appreciate movements, subtle or dramatic – flowing water, rippling leaves, a billowing banner, or clanging chimes – because they signal life's evanescent qualities. Such movements resonate as the garden responds to the earth's vital elements.

By the very act of creating a garden, we embrace the external forces of nature, most of which are out of our control. In addition to rays of sunlight and rain showers, the kinetic presence of wind and breeze in our landscapes is important to channel – as movement – in a planting scheme.

It's rewarding to see how climatic changes affect the garden, something we can't help but notice, whether there are extreme gusts or light flurries flowing through branches and stems. When we intentionally design the garden to capture these movements, we infuse an otherwise commonplace landscape with vitality.

The choices of plants that can catch the airflow, gently dance, or furiously shake are endless. Perennials with tall, slender stems ripple like the fringe on a canopy (think of a vibrant stand of daylilies or a swath of lavender).

Fluffy inflorescences of maiden grass undulate above its finely-textured blades – and the overall effect is a seductive rhythm. The leaves of a California pepper tree shimmer like sequins on an evening gown. Agapanthus seedpods rattle and whisper as autumn arrives. The natural symphony energizes any landscape.



The seedpods of *Sophora secundiflora* (mescal bean) at Los Angeles County Arboretum and Botanic Garden are another potential source of movement.

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A river of *Echinocactus grusonii* (golden barrel cactus, on the left) and *Mammillaria compressa* (right foreground) flow next to a path at the Desert Garden at Huntington Botanical Gardens.

(Continued from page 3)

**RHYTHM**

Beyond individual plants, the visual suggestion of animation or motion can also be incorporated into the overall template of a garden. The repetition of organic forms, the course of a sinuous path, or the sensual outlines of beds and borders suggest movement. Alternating shapes – the gradual widening or narrowing of a space, the regular spacing of trees – do as well.

When the tiny stones in a Zen garden are raked into concentric circles, movement appears. When a “stream” of large, smooth, river rocks fills a gully or trench, the sense of running water is implied. The sequence of stepping stones spaced through a cushioned ground cover of fragrant thyme invigorates the scene and helps direct the viewer’s eye through the garden. The scene is emotionally alive and visually pleasing.

Movement in a garden is essential. It’s the organic rhythm, the fluid characteristic that every garden needs in



“Waves” in the Zen garden at Huntington Botanical Gardens.

order to come to life for those who enjoy it.

Here are some tips for “animating” your garden:

•**Develop a repertoire of plants:** Base your plant selection on the scale of your house and the natural setting around it. Once you’ve selected the primary plants – those that provide structure and have multiseason interest, such as ornamental grasses – you can choose a second wave of plants to “star” in specific seasons.

•**Create a basic framework for design:** Choose a template and follow it consistently throughout the garden. One method is to mirror dominant lines of your house, such as repeating key architectural shapes in the landscape. Use these as a guide for shaping pathways and planting beds. For example, a home’s arched windows and doorways might be echoed in the contour of a border or patio. Alternately, you can borrow a framework for design from nature, such as the irregular rhythm of distant hills.

•**Consider the vertical dimension:** Select plants that bring height, energy, and motion into the garden, and vary their placement for impact. Even if surrounded by buildings on every side, your garden will respond to daily and seasonal climate changes. Watch how breezes move through the garden, and capture that energy by placing fluid plants where currents flow. Notice where the sun rises and sets in relation to your landscape, and choose trees, shrubs, grasses, and other perennials that will reflect the morning light or absorb sunset’s glow. Red and purple foliage turns flame-like when

backlit. As the sun’s rays shine through fringed tassels of fountain grass or pampas grass, the garden will shimmer in response.



*Yucca decipens*, *Washingtonia filifera* (California fan palm), *Beaucarnea stricta* (with distinct flower spikes and straight leaves in the background), and *B. recurvata* (with less distinct flower spikes, nearer background) create vertical interest in the Desert Garden of Huntington Botanical Gardens.



*Alluaudia procera* (foreground) and *Pachypodium lamerei* (left) and *P. geayi* (right) create vertical interest in the Madagascar Spiny Forest at Los Angeles County Arboretum and Botanic Garden.

Southern California Horticultural Society  
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NEWSLETTER  
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## **Upcoming Southern California Horticultural Society Programs**

**November 12 — Ginny Hunt of Seedhunt:** Some Annuals to Consider

**December 10 — Annual Plant Exchange & Holiday Cheer**

**January 14 — Amy Stewart:** Flower Confidential

**February 11 — Jim Downer:** What's Bugging Your Garden

**March 11 — John Greenlee:** The American Meadow Garden

**April 8 — Dr. Rachel S. Jabaily :** Up, Down, Wet then Dry: The Quest for *Puya* (Bromeliaceae) in the Andes

**May 13 —Bob Hornback,** The Horticulturist's Alice: A Garden Tour of Wonderland