# April Meeting Recap

The April meeting was a savory experience, in more ways than one. Presenter Karen England, owner of Edgehill Herb Farm, gave an lively, unconventional, and flavorful talk about herbs, sans slide show and seasoned with quirky humor. England's knowledge of herbs is very hands-on, and she emphasized her vocation as "herbologist" rather than herbalist. She provided an overview of her professional experience, which includes decades in the nursery business, soap making, and lavender farming. The main focus of the evening was uses for herbs (culinary, crafting, medicine), rather than the horticulture of herbs. "Is Greek oregano the best type to grow?" asked one audience member. "Well, it's the only one that will grow in my garden, so, yes!" quipped England.

In addition to many colorful anecdotes (and a recurrent theme of savory, 2015 herb of the year selected by the International Herb Association), she imparted a wealth of useful tips. French thyme and English thyme are one and the same; French tarragon is sterile, so any seeds you find for sale are for some other plant—hopefully not Russian tarragon, which is apparently horrid. If you forgo the most common variety of rosemary (Tuscan blue) for Miss Jessopp's upright, you will have a steady supply of skewers that will impart your kabobs with a delightful infusion of rosemary. Rather than a mortar and pestle, which yield mixed results in crushing herbs (and make some seeds into projectiles), an old fashioned hand-cranked coffee grinder, or an electric model, can be more effective, and is easily

cleaned by grinding raw rice to a powder.

To cap the evening off, England, who studied at Ballymaloe Cookery School in County Cork, Ireland, not only provided recipes for herbs de provence, herbs de provence chutney, and cheese ball, but also a smorgasbord of well herbed samples, including rice pudding with cinnamon and sweet bay, deviled eggs, and a cheese ball that England observed had slumped into more a fromage Frisbee. Accompanying the canapes were refreshing cups of cool "froofy" water infused with lime leaves, pineapple sage, mint, and rose.

Heartfelt thanks to Karen England for a tasteful (and tasty) evening. Raffle plants were generously provided by SCHS Board member Rachel Young, who was able to offer some rare rose varieties from Descanso Gardens. Special thanks to the fabulous Steen Team (Al and Pat) for taking over the coffee duties in President Steven Gerischer's absence.

—Sandy Masuo

### **SHARING SECRETS**

In April, we asked you to answer more of an informal poll than a Sharing Secrets question. We wondered how many of you would like to see the meeting start a half hour earlier. The overwhelming majority of responses were in favor of starting earlier, while a few members worried that with traffic always bad, it would be even worse a half hour earlier. This is still in the talking stage and we would have to re-negotiate our rental of the Friendship Auditorium, so don't start showing up any earlier yet! We always welcome input from our members so if you didn't get a chance to respond, you can speak to any board member at our general meeting.

-Steven Gerischer

#### HORT HAPPENINGS EXTRAS

## PALOS VERDES PENINSULA 90274

South Coast Botanic Garden 26300 Crenshaw Blvd Palos Verdes Peninsula 90274 310-544-1948

www.southcoastbotanicgarden.org

Saturday, 5/9, 9am-5pm. National Public Gardens Day – Discover South Coast Botanic Garden. National Public Gardens Day raises awareness of America's public gardens and the various roles they play in communities nationwide.

Sunday, 5/24, 3-4pm. Garden Lecture: The History of Palos Verdes and the South Coast Botanic Garden: Past, Present and Future. Board President of the South Coast Botanic Garden Foundation Peter Olpe will talk about the history, people and the geology of Palos Verdes that helped create the South Coast Botanic Garden.

#### **ENCINO 91406**

California Native Plant Society Sepulveda Garden Center 16633 Magnolia Blvd Encino 91406 818-881-3706 www.lacnps.org

Tuesday, 5/12, 7:30-9pm. Sepulveda Basin Wildlife and Native Vegetation Areas – Past, Present and Future. Steven Hartman, chair of the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee, will discuss plans for restoring the area.