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SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

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“How do you deal with a slope?”

We received both written and verbal responses at the last meeting. You really had to be there to hear about a fascinating invention that won't be recounted here for possible legal liability reasons. Suffice to say it has a decidedly medieval approach to slopes. Here's a sampling of some of the less scary answers we received:

I have terraced approximately 300 roses with boards and pipe. I used *Vinca major* and *V. minor*, wandering jew and plumbago to hold some slope areas. - *NS*

Establishing shrubby plants on relatively steep slopes usually requires a basin to keep them watered, unless you are using drip irrigation. The basins tend to fill with soil in time and the base gets covered and the plant then dies. I found that planting the plant at the outside edge avoids this problem. - *DV*

Covering the slope with jute netting helps to get plants started. Spreading vines which grow down rather than up make a colorful display while helping to hold the slope in place. - *Anon.*

Our slopes were originally covered with a mixture of ivy, cape honeysuckle and lantana. What a mess!! We dug everything up by hand and then terraced the hillside using treated 2x8 wood which is held in place with pipe pounded into the ground to China! This created small level terraces which we have planted using native and Mediterranean climate plants. By the time the wood rots, we hope that our new plants will have established themselves and that they will become the new “hillside management” stabilizers. - *GS*

GS also had some great advice on what NOT to do based on experience:

My really, really steep vertical slopes are covered with ivy and have been for over 60 years. I have no idea what else to do with them. Only once did we have a slide and that was caused by my own meddlings ... I disturbed the top of the slope, near the edge, when I put in a small concrete retaining wall (with footing) in order to create a pathway. Because I dug the footing too close to the edge of the “drop off” on the top, the slope below this “construction” gave way during the heavy rains in the late 90's when the hillside became saturated. - *GS*