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SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

SHARING
SECRETS

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“What plant has become a pest in your garden and in what way?”

When one of our members kindly warned us about a South African corm at a membership meeting, we knew we had found a future sharing Sharing Secrets subject.

Two of my best loved plants turned out to be pests. *Gladiolus tristis* var. *concolor* seemed to have all the virtues: it's a cormous plant that blooms in late winter with slender leaves and elegantly set pale yellow flowers, fragrant at night. I liked it so much that I grew it in several areas. Then I noticed around each plant, new plants were coming up like a patch of grass. Every corm produces multitudes of cormlets barely bigger than pinheads but quite capable of turning into corms with their own cormlets which somehow found their way to other parts of the garden.

The other one is *Cuphea viscosissima*, an annual with especially large-petalled flowers for a *Cuphea*. They are in shades of rich purple and a well-grown patch is a sight to see. It's a very free seeder, producing more, and more, and more plants in new places every year – a beautiful weed! - CR

Euphorbia cyparissias turned out to be a pest in my garden. Within a year it started sending up root suckers and taking over the little bed I had planted it in. Even after removing it, suckers continued to come up for another two years. I think it's finally gone now. - KM

One of my least favorite plants is a little South American bulb, *Ipheion uniflorum* (*Tritelia uniflora*). It is pretty enough, but it seeds everywhere. In my formal garden the seeding is a real pain. It is around for only a short time, but the bulbs multiply rapidly, so I don't know how successfully one can overplant it with something else if open areas are not desired. - JC

My calla lilies (*Zantedeschia aethiopica*) became huge after only two years and I pulled them, but they had multiplied deep underground and continue to come up.

Ficus repens covered my block wall but it took a lot of pruning to keep it tidy. The stems and roots took over the planter and even rooted in the wall. It's now gone – at least I hope it is. - DBG

Vinca major has wiry stems that root in “trip size” loops everywhere. - DC

Ammi majus variegated (Bishop's Weed) is wonderful if you have a concrete barrier. To add insult to injury it was sent to me by a nursery as a bonus! *Caveat Emptor!* - JC

Verbena bonariensis! Although the butterflies love it, it seeds all over, hits 6' tall in spring and then falls over. - *LB*

Equisetum, *Allium triquetrum*, *Ruellia* (large purple flowers), *Dietes* and *Clerodendrum bungei*. - *EF*

The Blue Dawn Flower (*Ipomoea*) grows on freeways, sometimes crawls everywhere and roots, is hard to eliminate, but has beautiful flowers. - *SL*

Clerodendrum bungei (Cashmere Bouquet) has the bad habit of sending underground runners (as far as 5' away under a concrete walk) all over the place. The pretty, fragrant flowers do not compensate for the stinky foliage (over 7' tall). We are in the process of painting its leaves with Roundup to kill this horrible pest. - *BK*

Zucchini plant. No matter how hard I try, I always plant too many. I can't even give the zucchini away. - *KK*

Anonymous Contributors

Mexican Lobelia (*Lobelia laxiflora*) is invasive, has masses of top growth and has runners. Also, the bulb *Crocsmia* has reproduced itself throughout my garden, forms clumps of roots and mini bulbs and very few actually bloom!

Euphorbia wulfenii. *Viola labradorica*.

Campanula punctata has invasive roots. Any little tiny root makes more plants and roots get into other plant roots!