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# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

SHARING  
SECRETS

**AUGUST & SEPTEMBER 2008**

*Compiled by Laura Bauer & Debra Bushweit Galliani*

**“What plants do you grow or have you grown from seed and why?”**

*Orthosiphon stamineus* (Cat’s Whiskers). I’m trying to grow this seed because I find the plant very interesting – love the leaves for floral arranging. - *EF, Sherman Oaks*

Tomatoes! What is better than an heirloom fresh from the garden? - *CN*

My husband and I grow a lot from seed because some plants that you can’t obtain in nurseries are available by seed; especially through plant society seed exchanges such as the North American Rock Garden Society, the Species Iris Group and the American Penstemon Society. - *SE*

I grow iris species and other plants which are not available, or are very expensive, otherwise. - *PM*

I have grown many plants from seeds. I’m growing my first *Cycas revoluta* (Sago Palm) – a friend provided several generations of seed. Plant in greenhouse in flat of sand, peat and perlite. Several are sprouting and one is about eight inches high. - *SW*

I grew papaya from the seed. The plant is now almost 5-6 feet tall and am waiting to have some papaya. - *SM*

I have a forest of *Euphorbia wulfenii* that increases each year from seed. I don’t do a thing. - *PW*

Vegetables you can’t get – like interesting beets, tomato and heirloom varieties. Mexican feather grasses. You get more interesting varieties for less money. - *GK*

*Eriogonum crocatum* (Saffron Buckwheat). I couldn't find the plant for sale and I was dead set on growing some for a rock garden. So I bought the seeds and already have 4 beautiful little plants after 10 months – and I saved money! - *AS*

Larkspur in blue and white colors - sowed once years ago and wouldn't be without them. I now collect seeds from my plants and sow in winter. - *RC*

I grow heirloom tomatoes and hot chili peppers from seed for the special needs students to plant in the Harvest Garden at Descanso Gardens. The students then harvest and make fresh salsa! - *BG*

The Devil's Claw seed pod I got from the SCHS December meeting Sharing Table. I took seeds from one claw and planted them. I grew them because they're used in basket making for the black color. It's an adventure. - *LW*

*Tweedia caerulea* (*Oxypetalum caeruleum*) – Sky blue flowers produced spring to fall, longer if warm weather continues. Very drought tolerant but accepts water gladly.

*Hunnemannia fumariifolia* (Mexican Tulip Poppy) – Bright yellow flowers; finely-cut blue-gray foliage, drought tolerant but accepts water. Blooms during warm months also into winter if warm. A very dependable perennial in Northridge.

And, not to ignore non-flowering plants. A few years ago, I started some spores of a rare *Blechnum* fern. However, what eventually developed was not a *Blechnum*, but an *Athyrium japonicum* 'Pictum', the Japanese Painted Fern. Nevertheless, it still has a special place on my plant shelf as one of my first spore-grown ferns.  
- *BK, CSUN Botanic Garden*

I grow a variety of flowers that I can't find at nurseries. I love to grow flowers from the Victorian era. I also am presently growing Pinks and Canterbury Bells I bought in Williamsburg, Virginia. These plants are supposedly the same as our colonial forefathers. I love to have a bit of history in the garden!

Basil for fragrance, color and pesto; Swiss chard for color in the garden; Johnny-Jump-Ups, Foxglove, Pinks (China and cottage), Larkspur, Canterbury Bells, Morning Glory, Nigella, Love-Lies-Bleeding, Nicotiana, Sweetpeas, Forget-Me-Nots and Pansies. - *GL*

Daylily, tomato, clivia, avocado. To see what comes up that might be new or different. - *H*

'Big Jim' chilis, 'Navaho Blue' corn, 'Rattlesnake' pole beans and other heirloom veggies I order by mail. - *LB*

Not much. I almost always forget to water at some point and either nothing sprouts or the seedlings die. But I have better luck if the seeds are big enough. *Caesalpinia gilliesii* will sprout in three days in the heat of summer. I can't recall if soaking the seeds is even necessary. *Caesalpinia pulcherrima* is a whole different story. I've never been able to get those seeds to sprout even when I sand and soak them. But it does volunteer sparingly in my garden. Ditto with most Cassias. No luck with seeds, but I get volunteers.

I have had great luck with Erythrina seeds. At least they sprout. About 23 years ago I got some seeds of *Erythrina crista-galli* from the Arboretum. (I wanted a red-flowering tree and didn't know where to buy one.) I now have a gorgeous specimen tree, grown from one of those seeds. I didn't realize it at the time I got the seeds, but all of the Arboretum trees are thornless. (Or have no prickles – whatever.) My tree is thornless and so are all of its seedlings – so far. It volunteers regularly and this year I have decided to save a few.

Another tree that is also volunteering for me is *Schota brachypetala*. I've decided to pot up a few of those volunteers also. This June, I planted some *Tabebuia chrysotricha* seeds, even though I really doubted that I'd be able to keep them moist. Somehow, I managed, and now they are sprouting. I also planted some Clivia seeds. So far they've done nothing, even though they're supposed to be easy from seed.

Several years ago I took a bulb scale from an Ureginea and planted it. After a year, it produced eight small bulblets. This year I tried a piece of a large Gasteria leaf, and it is now producing offsets. It's a much easier method for me than seeds. - JC

### *Anonymous Contributors*

*Cerithe major* has lovely blue-gray spotted with white foliage that contrasts well with all other plants. After reaching about 2 feet, arching stems of purple 1/2 inch bells bloom for a few months. Annual, seeds prolifically, but easy to pull up, good filler anywhere. From Greece, unusual plant not often seen.

Wonderful plants you can't easily find in nurseries - like heirloom vegetables and *Scabiosa atropurpurea* 'Ace of Spades'.

Coffee tree from Honduras; couldn't get at nursery.

1. Begonias – I had to do it for my work. 2. Sesbania – I wanted to! 3. Etc.