Ron Rasmussen:
The El Moro Elfin Forest in Los Osos.
Thursday, July 10, 2014

Ron Rasmussen, Ph.D. is Adjunct Professor Emeritus from the School of Community and Environmental Medicine at UC Irvine. He has also taught and worked on numerous research projects at UC San Francisco and NASA’s Ames Research Center in Mountain View, CA, specializing in papers that reported on cancer-causing chemicals found in our environment.

Upon his retirement, Dr. Rasmussen chose the Central Coast city of Morro Bay to settle. There he quickly became involved with local, natural area preservation efforts. He is currently the President and Chair of the Los Osos/Morro Bay Chapter of Small Wilderness Area Preservation, Inc., which is in charge of preserving the Los Osos Elfin Forest. His talk will cover the history of the forest, the success of the restoration efforts (rescue from Human and Non-Native Plant invasions), and information on the unique native plants and animals that live there.

Small Wilderness Area Preserves, Inc. (S.W.A.P.) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) California corporation founded in 1971 by Ansel Adams, Margaret Owings, Emily Folk and Edgar Wayburn. The specific and primary purposes of the corporation are exclusively to receive, administer and disburse funds for tax-exempt, charitable, scientific, literary and educational purposes in order to provide a mechanism by which the people can preserve vitally important natural areas of undeveloped land, or small wilderness areas, through contributions for the use and benefit of the general public.

Since its incorporation S.W.A.P., Inc. has been instrumental in land acquisition and preservation in Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, San Diego and San Luis Obispo counties. Local chapters have been active in Santa Barbara, Los Osos/Morro Bay and Cambria where volunteers, in collaboration with State and local agencies, have acted to preserve, maintain and oversee the preserved lands. Combined membership of the branches was approximately 800. Once acquired, lands have been deeded to California State or County Parks or other local governmental agencies. A formal maintenance agreement between the Los Osos/Morro Bay Chapter of S.W.A.P. and the San Luis Obispo Department of General Services has continued since July 1994.

Los Osos/Morro Bay Chapter of S.W.A.P. This chapter was primarily responsible for the purchase in 1994 of a 90-acre parcel of land at the southern edge of Morro Bay and transfer of that land to California State Parks and San Luis Obispo County Parks. This land, now known as El Moro Elfin Forest Natural Area, was originally slated for development and construction of as many as 150 houses. The northern 51 acres were added to Morro Bay State Park. Through intensive fund raising efforts in the community and by obtaining grants from state and federal agencies, the purchase price of $1.6M for the remaining 39 acres was gathered. The goal was reached with only 2 months before the option to purchase would have expired. Today, the Elfin Forest is considered a prime example of California Coastal chaparral, and visitors from other areas often comment on the beauty of the area and the striking views of the Bay and surrounding hills. The local chapter of S.W.A.P. continues to be formally responsible for the restoration and maintenance of the Elfin Forest.

(An example of one of the Elfin Oak Groves that make the forest so unique.)
SHARING SECRETS

In June, we asked you to answer “How has the lack of a pronounced winter chill affected your garden?” and here are some of your responses. Read more on our SCHS MemberLodge website, schs.memberlodge.org.

Natural selection is the guiding principle in my yard, and frost tender plants that can’t hack it at 33 degrees in Burbank generally fall out of the gene pool. I have an interesting tradescantia that does not like the chill so it is very lush right now! If the climate stays like this, I may have to try the Pedilanthus tithymaloides again!

– Sandy Masuo

Several of my fruit trees did a double-take – early ones like Tomcot apricot bloomed and set fruit two times two months apart, and later ones like Double Delight nectarine leafed out only on the bottom half of the tree and now in June are just leafing out on the top half. Definitely strange!

– Yvonne Savio

My low-chill fruit trees don’t require many chill hours to set a crop, but the mild winter definitely did affect their schedule. Compared with the past couple years, my ‘Royal Rosa’ apricot was about two weeks premature, while my ‘Arctic Star’ nectarine and ‘Cotton Candy’ apricot were closer to four weeks ahead of schedule.

– Yoav Paskowitz

COFFEE IN THE GARDEN: DOUBLE FEATURE

Our wonderful June event took place on a mild morning and afternoon in Beachwood Canyon in the shadow of the Hollywood sign. We were privileged to see the gardens of SCHS members, Judy Horton and Gail Cottman. The two gardens could not have been more different, yet each was a beautiful expression of the passions and interests of its owner. The morning began at the garden of Judy Horton. This garden was designed to be seen from inside her charming bungalow-style home. However, the views outside and around the garden were intriguing and spectacular. The hostess and the Coffee in the Garden committee provide tables full of wonderful sweet and savory things to snack on while we toured the garden.

The next stop was the remarkable garden of Gail Cottman. This garden is as much an art installation as it is a garden, with thousands of tiles set into cement to create a series of colorful mosaics stretching up many levels of a steep hillside. There were themed areas (many referencing Oz) and whimsical collections of curious and beautiful things. The whole was almost overwhelming.

Thank you! to Judy Horton and Gail Cottman for letting us see and enjoy these two beautiful gardens. Thank you as well to Joel Lichtenwalter, Yvonne Savio and Al and Pat Steen, as well as everyone else who helped make this Coffee in the Garden such a special experience.

Below: the garden from inside the house.
Thank you to all who brought plants to the April 2014 meetings. Everyone is encouraged to bring in plants to share with the group. Remember that you receive one free Exhibitor’s Ticket for the Plant Raffle if you bring one or more plants for discussion at the Plant Forum table (if there is a Plant Raffle that night).

In addition to the plants discussed below, the following plants, described or listed in the Society’s Selected Plants for Southern California Gardens (2000) or previously written up as Green Sheet, were shown. [Family names in accordance with the Angiosperm Phylogeny Group II (http://www.mobot.org/mobot/research/apweb/) are included for your reference.] Information in this compilation was gleaned and condensed from the Plant Forum exhibit cards, my personal library and a suite of various internet sites.

* Aloysia triphylla, lemon verbena (Verbenaceae), by Gary Kamisher, West Los Angeles. [SPSCG, pg. 26]
* Beta vulgaris subsp. cicla ‘Bright Lights’, Swiss chard (Chenopodiaceae), by Cynthia Robinson, Rancho Cucamonga. [SPSCG, pg. 54]
* Calochortus venustus, mariposa lily (Liliaceae), by James E. Henrich, Azusa. [GS, April 2003]
* Epipactis gigantea, stream orchid (Orchidaceae), by Paul Martin, Pasadena. [SPSCG, pg. 132]
* Freesia laxa, false freesia (Iridaceae), by Ann Brooks, Baldwin Hills. (as Anomatheca laxa) [SPSCG, pg. 32]
* Gladiolus cardinalis, waterfall gladiolus (Iridaceae), by Paul Martin, Pasadena. [SPSCG, pg. 165]
* Leucospermum ‘Spider Hybrid’, spider pincushion (Proteaceae), by Gary Kamisher, West Los Angeles. [GS, February 2011]
* Maireana sedifolia, pearl bluebush (Amaranthaceae), by Gary Kamisher, West Los Angeles. [SPSCG, pg. 238]
* Papaver somniferum, opium poppy (Papaveraceae), by Aprille Curtis, Burbank. [SPSCG, pg. 270]
* Salvia discolor, Andean silver leaf sage (Lamiaceae), by Dianne Connell, Torrance. [GS, January 2007]
* Solanum pyracanthum, porcupine tomato (Solanaceae), by Cynthia Robinson, Rancho Cucamonga. [SPSCG, pg. 333]
* Tillandsia aeranthos, air plant (Bromeliaceae), by Debra Galliani, Redondo Beach; & Jim Jaeger, Santa Monica. [SPSCG, pg. 349]

Plants that could not be fully identified:
* Aeonium, houseleek (Crassulaceae), by Gail Cottman, Los Angeles.
* Convolvulus tricolor ‘Blue Ensign’, dwarf morning glory (Convolvulaceae), by Cynthia Robinson, Rancho Cucamonga. Southern Europe and northern Africa (species). 2- to 2.5-inch fluted, vivid nautical blue flowers have a white star pattern from the throat and yellow centers. Flowers are held above the foliage for several months in summer. Habit is as a low mounding plan to 12 inches tall and 36 inches wide. Trim plants back halfway in summer if they get rangy to stimulate more flowers. This plant self sows.
* Dianthus ‘Cheshire Cat’, pink (Caryophyllaceae), by Cynthia Robinson, Rancho Cucamonga. Large blooms (to 4” across) sport pink-based petals, flecked and streaked with deep, cherry crimson; heaviest flowering occurs in spring and summer. Flowers cut for arrangements are long lasting. This long-lived perennial grows to 30 inches tall and across with stout, arching, bluish-green stems. Provide rich, well-drained soil and side dress with compost once or twice a year for maximum bloom. Cut back to 6 inches tall to stimulate new growth and more flowers. ‘Cheshire Cat’ was created by John Barrington of Taunton, England, a passionate breeder, to resemble similar varieties grown in the 1800s.
* Pelargonium ‘Crystal Palace Gem’, geranium (Geraniaceae), by Cynthia Robinson, Rancho Cucamonga. Plants grow to 24 inches tall and wide in full sun to partial shade and medium soil moisture. ‘Crystal Palace Gem’ was first introduced in 1869 and has been a show stopper ever since. It was named for Joseph Paxton’s elaborate glass house designed in 1851 for London’s Great Exhibition in Hyde Park. Like its namesake, the plant is showy with its round, chartreuse leaves and mid-green centers which contrast dramatically with its salmon-red flowers.
**Polygala fruticosa**, sweet pea shrub (Polygalaceae), by Jim Jaeger, Santa Monica. South Africa. Plants grow to about 30 inches tall and 18 inches wide. Masses of vibrant purplish-magenta pea-like flowers adorn the compact mound of gray-green leaves for much of the year. Grow in full sun to partial shade with moderate water. Prune back to about ten inches in midwinter to maintain compact habit. These pea-like plants are distinguished from legumes by having a fringed keel and fruits that are capsules.

*Rosa* ‘Peace’, Peace rose (Rosaceae), by Cynthia Robinson, Rancho Cucamonga. This hybrid tea rose has large, light yellow to cream flowers with petals flushed crimson-pink along the edges. It was developed by French horticulturist Francis Meilland between 1935 and 1939 and originally named ‘Madame A. Meilland’. With the impending invasion of France by Germany, Meilland sent cuttings to friends in Italy, Turkey, Germany and the United States (safeguarded and propagated by the Conard Pyle Co.), where each country gave the rose a different name. After the war, Meilland asked Field Marshall Alan Brooke (principal strategist that won World War II) to give his name to the rose. Brooke, though honored, graciously declined and suggested the more enduring name ‘Peace’. Conard Pyle Co. announced the name in the United States on April 29, 1945, the day Berlin fell.

**Teucrium glandulosum**, desert germander (Lamiaceae), by Ann & Eric Brooks, Baldwin Hills. Arizona, northeast Sonoran Desert, Baja California. Woody perennial or small shrub to about 3 feet tall and variously branched. Leaves to nearly 5 inches long and about 0.5 inch wide with margins that can be entire, palmate-lobed or few-toothed. Flowers are white or bluish, appearing from May to July. Plants in the wild grow in washes or canyons, or on rocky slopes. This species is considered rare.

**Tillandsia caerulea**, air plant (Bromeliaceae), by Debra Galliani, Redondo Beach. Southeastern Ecuador to northern Peru. This delicate-looking bromeliad is very resilient. It grows well in bright conditions and forms a lovely, symmetrical clump to 10 inches in diameter after several seasons. The long, slender inflorescences complement the leaves and add to the overall beauty. The sky-blue flowers have a delicious, delicate fragrance. Silver hairs on the leaves provide protection from the sun and reduce desiccation. It does not require high humidity.

**Tritonia crocata** ‘Flaming Fancy’, kalkoentjie (Iridaceae), by Ann & Eric Brooks, Baldwin Hills. [species SPSCG, pg. 355] South Africa. This cormous plant grows to 18 inches tall, with bright coral-orange flowers. It is winter growing and summer dormant. Provide average water for this drought-tolerant plant. Grow in sun to light shade in the ground or containers. The flowers are suitable for cutting.

**Euphorbia pulcherrima** ‘Luv U Pink’, poinsettia (Euphorbiaceae), by Cynthia Robinson, Rancho Cucamonga. [sp. SPSCG, pg. 149]

**Pelargonium** ‘Dark Mystery’, geranium (Geraniaceae), by Cynthia Robinson, Rancho Cucamonga.

**Rosa** ‘Rock n Roll’, Rock n Roll rose (Rosaceae), by Cynthia Robinson, Rancho Cucamonga.

**Scabiosa atropurpurea** ‘Black’, black pincushion flower (Caprifoliaceae), by Cynthia Robinson, Rancho Cucamonga. [sp. SPSCG, pp. 322-323]

**Tillandsia bourgaei**, air plant (Bromeliaceae), by Debra Galliani, Redondo Beach. Mexico.

**Tillandsia meridionalis**, air plant (Bromeliaceae) by Jim Jaeger, Santa Monica.
Arcadia 91007
L.A. COUNTY ARBORETUM & BOTANIC GARDEN
301 North Baldwin Ave, Arcadia, CA 91007
626-628-1110 arborcenter.org

Saturday & Sunday, July 26&27, 9:00 am–4:30 pm. 50th Annual Fern & Exotic Plant Show. Displays of ferns and other exotic plants, vendors, lectures, and “opportunity” drawings.

Los Angeles 90007
NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM
900 Exposition Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90007
(213) 763-3499 nhm.org

Tuesday, July 15, 7:00 pm–9:00 pm Moonlight Gardens. Twilight is a magical time in the garden. Join Carol Bornstein for an evening stroll through the Nature Gardens as we explore timeless garden traditions that make the most of moonlight. The workshop focuses on water-thrifty plants with silvery foliage, white blossoms, of fragrant, night-blooming flowers that are well suited to southern California gardens. Member $10/Non-member $15.

Pasadena 91107
EATON CANYON NATURE CENTER
1750 North Altadena Drive
Pasadena 91107
616-398-5420 ecnca.org

Sunday, July 13, 9:00 am – 11:30 am California Native Plant Society Walk Meet leader in front of the Nature Center. Rain cancels walk.

Fullerton 92831
FULLERTON ARBORETUM
1900 Associated Road
Fullerton 92831
657-278-3407 fullertonarboretum.org

Saturday, July 19, 5:30pm. 17th Annual Midsummer Night in the Garden. Special event of exquisite food, fine wines, moonlight dancing, opportunity baskets and live auction and dancing honors Dr. Don Shields, the 2014 Golden Oak Honoree. Dinner by award-winning David Slay of Park Ave Restaurant, one of the Zagat-rated five best restaurants in Orange County. $125 per person.

San Marino 91108
HUNTINGTON BOTANICAL GARDENS
1151 Oxford Road
San Marino 91108
626-405-2100 huntington.org

Thursday, July 10, 2:30 pm. Garden Talk & Sale: Beneficial Bugs in the Garden. Horticulturist Lili Singer of the Theodore Payne Foundation discusses some of the good bugs to look for in your garden, with tips on how to attract and support them. A plant sale follows the talk. No reservations required. Saturday, July 26, 10:30 am–1:00 pm. Ranch Open House. Self-tour The Huntington’s urban agriculture site and take home some fresh ideas for sustainable gardening. From the Teaching Greenhouse, follow signs to the site.

San Pedro 90731
WHITE POINT NATURE EDUCATION CENTER
Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy
1600 West Paseo del Mar
San Pedro 90731
310-541-7613 pvplc.org

July 12, 9:00 am, Moderate Nature Walk. Explore Alta Vicente Reserve North Spur Trail through the last farm area on the Peninsula with coastal views, and a site of the Conservancy’s recent habitat restoration to turn degraded land into native habitat for attracting birds and wildlife. All walks are free and do not require reservations. Walks are on dirt trails, and participants are urged to wear comfortable shoes with good traction and sun protection. Bring plenty of drinking water. In case of serious rain, walks are cancelled and not rescheduled. For up-to-date information on a walk, call (310) 541-7613.

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Saturday, July 26, 10:00 am–12:00 noon. Explore cultural history on the preserve including how this site was used as farmland and defense during World War II.

Saturday, July 26, 12:00 pm–2:00 pm, Native Plant Sale. Purchase drought-resistant native plants grown in the Conservancy’s nursery. 4th Saturday of every month.

- Compiled by Yvonne Savio
Send notices to: yvonne@earthlink.net
UPCOMING 2014 SCHS PROGRAMS

At Friendship Auditorium, 3201 Riverside Drive, Los Angeles CA 90027, starting at 7:30 pm, unless otherwise noted.

July 10—Ron Rasmussen: The El Moro Elfin Forest in Los Osos.
August 14—Lucy Tolmach: Restoring the Fruit Orchard in Ojai. (NOTE! This meeting will take place at the Los Angeles Zoo!)
September—13:(NOTE! This is a Saturday!)—Horticulturist of the Year Award Dinner: Honoring Don Hodel. To be held at the Arboretum & Botanic Garden of Los Angeles, in Arcadia.
October—9: Bulb Panel (speakers TBD)

SILENT AUCTION DONATIONS

It is time to start collecting (or propagating!) items to donate for the silent auction at the Horticulturist of the Year Award Dinner in September. If you are growing really interesting or rare plants, start a cutting or plant up a nice container. Contact Steven Gerischer with any questions/donations: sglarkspur@aol.com.

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Next deadline: Friday, July 11 (for August newsletter).
It is the Friday following our monthly membership meeting. Please contribute an article or information of interest.