

Our August speaker, Genevieve Arnold, presented a program entitled “Celebrating Seed Season” just as we’re heading into prime planting weather, with a focus on harvesting and processing seed from the native garden. She is the Seed Program Manager at the Theodore Payne Foundation for Native Plants, and shared much useful information for those interested in trying their hand at gathering, cleaning and saving seed, as well as providing “how-to” hand-outs for home use.



Genevieve began by talking about the bounty that native seeds provide - from simple food sources for birds, animals and man, to varied uses that derive from processed seeds, such as porridge, soap, cups, bowls, and even hypoallergenic pillow stuffing. However, in order to harvest seeds for any use at all, it is imperative to know when a plant will set seed, how to determine if they are ripe, and what techniques to use for collecting and storing them. This led to the detailed part of her presentation called “Fantastic Inflorescences and Their Fun Fruits.”

When collecting seed, it is important to recognize whether the inflorescences of a plant are determinate or indeterminate. In the first case, an axis will terminate in a flower and everything on the plant ripens around the same time, allowing all seed to be collected at once. Sages are an example of determinate plants. Indeterminate inflorescences ripen gradually and must be observed and collected across the season. Genevieve cited sunflowers as an example of indeterminate inflorescences, whose heads can be cut before they are completely dried out, and then allowed to ripen in a brown bag. She showed slides of both types, as well as of dehiscent seeds, which split open on their own, and indehiscent seeds, whose walls need to decay or be broken open. A selection of photos depicting seeds at various stages of ripeness were also shown.

Learning to identify when a seed is at its peak of ripeness will increase chances for favorable results if you are collecting to plant. Genevieve recommended the *Complete Guide to Saving Seeds* by Robert Gough as a resource, and presented tools for the audience to handle which are used for harvesting seeds in different ways, including threshing, sifting and winnowing. She also mentioned that unplanted seeds can be stored for indefinite periods and remain viable, as long as they are kept in a temperate, air-tight and dark place.

In addition to explaining the proper methods for harvesting and processing seeds, Genevieve answered audience questions before concluding her informative program.

🌀 Sabine Steinmetz

## SHARING SECRETS

Thank you to everyone who responded to last month's question:

**What plant do you love or hate more than any other?**

### 🌀 LOVE 🌀

*Michelia spp.* - ALL !

- Keith Peabody

*Acalypha hispida*, aka Chenille - I absolutely LOVE the fuzzy blooms! It's the coolest plant ever (next to Shrimp Plant).

- Denice Vasquez

*Brugmansia*, for its weird exoticism.

- Ron Lanyi

*Agapanthus*, all sizes and all sorts! Wonderfully easy and neat and BLUE - especially nice under Jacaranda!

- Shirley Marneus

### 🌀 HATE 🌀

*Salsola kali*

- Anonymous

*Bougainvillea* received 2 negative cards, citing the thorns, the glaring color and the messy bracts!

- Anonymous

### 🌀 MIXED 🌀

Chinese mimosa tree (*Albizia julibrissin*) I hate it for the mess it drops on my roof every quarter, but my wife calls it a “beauty”...

- Charles Ortiz

See page 1 for this month's question!

Thanks to all of you for sharing...

## Southern California Horticultural Society 2017 Annual Award Banquet Thursday, September 14, 2017

Los Angeles County Arboretum and Botanic Garden · 301 N Baldwin Ave, Arcadia, CA 91007

Social hour & silent auction. Dinner & presentation begin at 7pm. *Silent Auction bidding ends at 7 pm*

(Reminder: We are unable to accept credit cards at the auction. Cash and checks only please.)

### STILL NEED A TICKET?

On-line registration closes Sept. 12, but you may call Laura Bauer at (626) 437-9459 to check for availability.