THE DIRT ON PLANT SEX

Birds do it. Bees do it. Sponges, English soles, romantic sponges, Lithuanians, chimpanzees, giraffes, royalty, and educated fleas do it. The only plant mentioned in Cole Porter’s classic is Boston beans. But it’s because plants do it that every other living organism on our planet is able to do it. For our June meeting we welcome back as our speaker, Sandy Masuo, former SCHS Board member, author, inveterate plant nerd and self-described garden voyeur. In this presentation, she will be presenting her take on the earthly and diverse realm of plant sex.

The natural world is dominated by the need for sexual reproduction. But that’s not always possible, so necessity has given rise to some alternatives. As many gardeners know, certain insects such as aphids are able to asexually produce offspring that are female clones of the mother and many plants reproduce asexually by producing offsets and clones. But the advantage of sexual reproduction is the potential for fresh genetic combinations - and plants have evolved an astonishing array of strategies for sexual reproduction, including threesomes with pollinators (both exclusive and open relationships), and single-sex plants (dioecious) that need partners to reproduce. This talk will dig into the sex lives of plants and reveal some lesser known “dirty secrets.”

Sandy’s day job for the last 14 years is that of associate editor in the publications division of the Los Angeles Zoo, where she is surrounded by intriguing flora and fauna daily. She also co-edits the Association for Zoological Horticulture (AZH) newsletter and is the author of Unnatural Selection: Lessons of Life and Death on the Paper Trail, published last year, which draws on some of her experiences in the zoological world. When not spying on plants, Sandy makes use of her Master’s degree in Education from Harvard teaching adult education workshops for Glendale Community College, including fiction and business writing, and a popular succulent centerpiece design class.

Clearly Sandy is obsessed. As a horticultural group, this is something we can all relate to and appreciate. Please join us at our June meeting for a new talk by a passionate gardener and persistent citizen scientist - it’s sure to be revealing and entertaining, and you’ll never look at flowers the same way again! 

Sandy Masuo & Sabine Steinmetz

Saturday, June 17
1:00 - 4:00 pm
COFFEE IN THE GARDEN
at the Arboretum Library
FREE for Members / $5. for Guests

REGISTER ON-LINE or at the JUNE MEETING

SAVE THE DATE!
The May SCHS presentation was on the subject of tree health, with an emphasis on the future of our urban forests in Southern California. Speaking on this most timely topic was arborist and horticultural consultant Rebecca Latta, who has been working with trees in the greater Los Angeles region for more than 25 years. As an arboricultural and a water management consultant, she spoke to us from a position of seeing first-hand what our local trees’ struggle for survival has been in recent years. She talked about factors contributing to the problems facing our urban forests and some of the things we can personally do to keep our trees as healthy as possible.

The first point Latta addressed was the current status of the prolonged drought and its impact on our landscapes. She indicated that with ground water levels being low and overall temperatures still rising, on-going conservation efforts continue to be important, both by individuals and municipalities. In home landscapes, she stressed the need to capture as much rainfall as possible to prevent wasteful run-off. The use of cisterns and swales were several options she mentioned to achieve this, as well as the proper use of mulch. Flushing soils to manage the salt, boron and chlorides found in irrigation water was another suggestion she made towards improving soil health, which in turn contributes to the overall health of all plants and trees.

This led Latta to talk about the difference between a plant’s drought-tolerance and its heat-tolerance. Drought tolerance refers to the plant’s ability to go for extended periods of dryness in the soil or the air, while heat tolerance refers to its ability to withstand increased temperatures without sustaining damage to foliage or tissues. She remarked that typically three days of prolonged heat (without any remediating action being taken) would result in the greatest amount of damage. Additionally, Latta mentioned that plants which require chilling time and don’t receive enough are unable to rest, thereby causing them to lose insect and disease resistance.

Latta continued with a discussion of the damage that our drought-stressed trees have been suffering from. In some cases, stress can cause the release of pheromones which attract beetles, or cause botryosphaeria cankers, or give other pests opportunities to attack vulnerable trees, such as the polyphagous shot hole borer which has caused fatal and widespread damage. She maintains that efficient water management is the key to promoting strong, healthy trees which can withstand some of these problems. Over-watering and saturated soils can also lead to disease, so sufficient watering at proper intervals is crucial. While different species will have varying schedules, Latta did provide some general watering tips such as: keep water away from trunks, avoid misting, try flooding every 7 to 21 days (depending on soil type), and protect the feeder roots. Strategies for the latter include: not planting directly under trees, leaving leaf litter whenever possible (in lieu of rocks piled against trunks), and encouraging, or importing, red worms to help “roto-till” the soil.

Latta concluded her presentation by talking about ways that municipalities are trying to select trees for the new paradigm, as a large percentage of our urban forest will have to be replaced in the near future. Selections will need to be drought, heat and salt tolerant, and preferably a diversity of species will be chosen. Species which meet these criteria also appear to share some common characteristics, such as having pinnately compound and/or waxy leaves. Latta mentioned a variety of trees that are being considered, ranging from pines to broadleaf shade trees to ornamental selections which meet cities’ aesthetic criteria as well.

With such a broad topic to cover, Latta gave attendees much to consider in her overview of the current situation. She was able to answer additional audience questions after her talk, but many questions remain. The preservation of our urban forests will require proactive measures to protect what remains, and careful consideration for selecting new plantings in the future.

- Sabine Steinmetz

On May 7, attending SCHS members and guests were treated to a garden tour of a private and very original garden in the Hollywood Hills. The garden’s unique look was created through the joint efforts of the homeowners: landscape designer Johanna Woollcott and her husband Eugene McCarthy.

By artfully combining collected treasures and found objects with carefully chosen plant selections, their garden of drought-tolerant plantings and recycled materials works together to create an eclectic showpiece of landscape possibilities. Glass bottles, mosaic balls, gabion walls, benches, sculptures and containers repurposed from any number of unexpected items provided inspiration and wonder for visitors as they strolled upwards along curved paths. From the top of the garden, the Hollywood sign was visible directly across the canyon, and looking down, the garden could be appreciated in its entirety. The perfect spring weather made the experience even more special for everyone in attendance.

The SCHS would like to thank Johanna and Eugene for generously allowing us into their space, and also for being on hand to walk visitors through and to answer questions. Pictures of this garden as well as Johanna’s other designs can be seen on her website at: wildgardensla.com, and on SCHS’s Facebook page.

We look forward to returning for a visit in the future and discovering new delights!

- Sabine Steinmetz
The Plant Forum is a display of plants grown by members & exhibited at our monthly general meeting.

**PLANTS SHOWN at MARCH 9, 2017 MEETING**

**Paeonia cambessedesii** (Paeoneaceae)
Majorcan Peony shown by Laura Bauer. From Spain and the Mediterranean. This herbaceous perennial blooms in spring with fragrant pinkish-purple flowers. Foliage is dark glossy green with reddish tints and distinctive red backed leaves. Needing little winter chill this peony grows well in Southern California, even in clay soils. Occasionally available from Annie’s Annuals.

Collection of blooming **Ceanothus** (Rhamnaceae)
From the Nature Garden of the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. Shown by Carol Bornstein. All are California natives, and all have low water needs.

- **Ceanothus** ‘Snow Flurry’: with white flowers. Shrub 10-20’ h & w.
- **Ceanothus** ‘Anchor Bay’: shrub or ground cover to 3’ x 6’ with blue flowers & hard, waxy foliage that is somewhat holly-like.
- **Ceanothus** ‘Ray Hartman’: large shrub/small tree 10-15’ h & w. Large glossy leaves and mid-blue flowers. Fast and easy grower. Nearly white bark shows nicely when grown as a tree.
- **Ceanothus** ‘Concha’: shrub, 4-8’ h & w. Dark green glossy leaves and dark blue flowers.
- **Ceanothus** ‘Julia Phelps’: shrub 4-6’ h & w. Glossy deep green foliage with deep blue/purplish flowers.
- **Ceanothus** ‘Blue Jeans’: 4-6’ h & w. Arching growth with glossy, waxy holly-like foliage and denim blue flowers.
- **Ceanothus** ‘Sierra Blue’: shrub or small tree 10-15’ h & w. Glossy foliage & cobalt blue flowers.
- **Ceanothus** maritimus: shrub/ground cover 3’ x 5’ with small, glossy holly-like leaves on arching stems. Mid-blue flowers.

**Fouquieria columnaris** (Fouquieriaceae)
Boojum from Baja California. Shown by Matt-Dell Tufenkian. A tree in the Ocotillo family that can grow to 60’ with honey-scented flowers in spring and summer.

**Also exhibited but not pictured:**

**Dendrobium kingianum** (Orchidaceae)
Pink rock orchid, shown by Gloria Leinbach. From Eastern Australia. These orchids can be grown outdoors in Southern California in a shaded spot. They bear fragrant flowers in late winter/early spring. Many hybrids and varieties available.

**Sclaranthus uniflorus** (Caryophyllaceae)
Knawel Cushion, from New Zealand, shown by Matt-Dell Tufenkian. This drought-tolerant hummock plant looks like moss but has stiff tightly-packed foliage in a solid mound.

**Agave guiengola** (Agavaceae)
From Mexico. Shown by Matt-Dell Tufenkian

**Brunfelsia pauciflora** (Solanaceae)
Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow, from the neotropics. Shown by Yvonne Savio

**Ferraria crispa** (Iridaceae)
From tropical and Southern Africa. Shown by Yvonne Savio

**Salvia Africana-lutea** (Lamiaceae)
From South Africa. Shown by Yvonne Savio

 Compiled by Steven Gerischer
Photos by Sabine Steinmetz
Cont’d. on reverse
The Plant Forum is a display of plants grown by members & exhibited at our monthly general meeting.

There was no Plant Forum in April because of venue change.

PLANTS SHOWN at MAY 11, 2017 MEETING

Albuca clanwilliam-gloria  
(Asparagaceae)  
From South Africa. Shown by Sheldon Lisker. Tall growing bulb to 6’ with yellow pendant bell-like flowers.

Puya violacea  
(Bromeliaceae)  
From Chile. Shown by Sheldon Lisker. Dramatic terrestrial bromeliad requiring many years to bloom from initial planting. Violet, near black flowers.

Salvia canariensis  
(Lamiaceae)  
From the Canary Islands. Shown by Aprille Curtis. Large shrub that can grow 6’ - 8’ x 4’ annually. Tall, profuse flower stalks range purple to magenta. Gray-green leaves are tomentose and triangular.

Also exhibited but not pictured:

Chlorogalum pomeridianum  
(Hyacinthaceae)  
Soap plant from California. Shown by Sheldon Lisker. This perennial grows from a bulb and is found in the western foothills of the Sierra Nevada, on rock bluffs, in chaparral, grasslands and open woodlands. Wavy-leafed soap plant has white flowers that open in the evening through the night, closing by morning.

Eremophila ‘Fire & Ice’  
(Scrophulariaceae)  
Emu Bush, from Australia. Shown by Eric and Ann Brooks. Evergreen drought-tolerant shrub to 4’ x 5’. Red-orange flowers and cool gray foliage give this hummingbird-magnet its name.

Eremophila ‘Summertime Blue’  
(Scrophulariaceae)  

Euphorbia xanti  
(Euphorbiaceae)  
Baja Spurge, from Baja California. Shown by Eric and Ann Brooks. Shrub to 6’ or taller with nearly leafless stems and small pink to white flowers. Drought-tolerant.

Compiled by Steven Gerischer  
Photos by Sabine Steinmetz

There will be no Plant Forum in June because of venue change.
At the end of each fiscal year, the Southern California Horticultural Society reviews the current roster of active Board Members and submits names for membership approval to serve during the new term. At this time, the Society is seeking to fill three vacancies. Write-in votes for qualified candidates are encouraged.

Please review the slate of names below and vote for THREE

- Carol Bornstein (incumbent)
- Steve Gerischer (incumbent)
- John Schoustra (incumbent)

WRITE-IN: ________________________________
(Must be a current member and willing to serve)

Please complete this form and turn in at the June 8 General Meeting

OR

mail back in an envelope postmarked no later than June 30, 2017 to:

SCHS • P.O. Box 94476 • Pasadena, California 91109-4476
JUNE HORTICULTURAL HAPPENINGS

Please contact location(s) to confirm listed events, and for a full schedule. Events are free with admission unless otherwise indicated.

Locations are listed by Zip Code.

SOUTH COAST BOTANIC GARDEN
26300 Crenshaw Blvd., Palos Verdes 90274
310.544.1948 southcoastbotanicgarden.org
Saturday, 6/18, 12noon-1pm, Gift Shop Patio. Mini Succulent Planter Workshop. Learn basics of planting and caring for succulents while crafting your own masterpiece. Materials fee of $9 members, $12 non-members includes pot, soil, succulent cuttings and top dressing. Register on-line or pay on day of at Gift Shop.

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY - L.A. / SANTA MONICA MTNS. CHAPTER
First United Methodist Church
1008 11th St., Santa Monica 90403
818.782.9346 lacnps.org
Tuesday, 6/13, 7:30pm. Shot-Hole Borers are Here! Talk and slide show on drought-weakened trees resistance to borer invasions, how pests spread, how to identify them, and recent research done in California. For more info. call Snowdy Dodson 818-782-9346, or visit website.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY ARBORETUM
301 N. Baldwin Ave., Arcadia 91007
626.821.4623 arboretum.org
Saturday, 6/17, 10am. Crescent Farm Series: Crescent Farm Horticulture. Learn about low water lawn alternatives, California native ethnobotanic plants, wildflowers and more! Growing tips will be discussed.
Saturday, 6/17, 10am-12noon Plumeria Grafting with Diana Donnellan. Meet in Rotunda and walk to the Plumeria Grove for a hands-on workshop on mechanics of grafting as well as best practices. Demo trees will show both good and bad ideas, each to be discussed in depth. $25 members, $35 non-members. Reservations preferred. Call 626-821-4623 or pay at the door.

DESCANSO GARDENS
1418 Descanso Drive, La Canada 91011
818.949.7980 descansogardens.org
Monday thru Friday, 6/19 - 6/26, 9am-3pm. Descanso Discoveries Summer Camp in partnership with the Child Educational Center. Children will tend their own garden plots and investigate the natural world through art and science-based activities. Free extended care available from 7am-6pm. $511 per week. For info. or to register, call 818-354-3418 or go to https://cec.campbrainregistration.com.

HUNTINGTON BOTANICAL GARDENS
1151 Oxford Road, San Marino 91108
626.405.2100 huntington.org
Saturdays, 10am-1pm. Ranch Open House. Get ideas for sustainable gardening at our urban agriculture site. Experts from the University of California L.A. County Master Gardener program will be on hand to answer questions and offer seasonal tips.

Thursday, 6/8, 2:30pm, Ahmanson Room, Brody Botanical Center. Garden Talk & Sale: Moving the Whitelock Cycads. In 2015, The Huntington received a donation of 620 cycads from the estate of Loran Whitelock, a local plantsman. Gary Roberson, head gardener of the cycad collection, will speak about how these plants were transported, documented and transplanted. Plant sale follows the talk.

Friday - Sunday, 6/10 - 7/2, 10am-5pm, Brody Botanical Center. Cactus & Succulent Annual Show hosted by the Cactus & Succulent Society of America. Friday = pre-show sale. Saturday/Sunday = show & sale. Hundreds of intriguing plants will be on view and available to purchase.

GLENDALE COMMUNITY SERVICES & PARKS
GLENDALE NARROWS RIVERWALK
300 Paula Avenue, Glendale 91201
818.548.3795 glendaleca.gov
Saturday, 6/10, 8am-12noon. Riverwalk Workday. Help maintain landscaped areas along the L.A. River. Wear long pants, sunscreen, sunglasses, and a hat. We provide tools, drinks and snacks! All participants must sign a liability waiver and minors must provide a waiver signed by a parent or guardian.

THEODORE PAYNE FOUNDATION
10459 Tuxford St., Sun Valley 91352
818.768.1802 theodorepayne.org
Saturday, 6/3, 8:30am-12:30pm. California Native Plant Horticulture with Lili Singer. Covers value of natives, plant communities, planting techniques, irrigation, pruning and maintenance. Recommended for beginners; prerequisite to our Three-Part California Native Plant Garden Design course. $45 members, $55 non-members.

RANCHO SANTA ANA BOTANIC GARDEN
1500 N. College Ave., Claremont 91711
909.625.8767 rsabg.org
Sunday, 6/4, 8-9:30am. Beginner’s Bird Walk. Walk leisurely through the Garden to spot numerous bird species that migrate through the region. Sponsored by the Pomona Valley Audubon Society. To register, go to http://www.rسابg.org/bird-walks.

Saturday, 6/17, 8-9:30am. Family Bird Walk with Chris Verma of Wild Birds Unlimited takes you on a family-friendly bird walk in the Garden. Register at: www.rسابg.org/bird-walks.

Wednesday, 6/7, 14, 21, 28, 6-8pm. Butterflies & Brews. Enjoy a local brew and music among the butterflies at dusk. Staff will answer any questions about the butterflies during this exclusive access in the Butterfly Pavilion. $15/ public, $10/members. Ticket includes one beverage of choice; additional available for purchase. Ages 21+ only.

IDYLLWILD NATURE CENTER
Saturday & Sunday, 6/24 & 6/25, 10am-4pm. 8th Annual Lemon Lily Festival. Includes: guided nature walks to see blooming lemon lilies in the wild; guest speakers; kid-friendly hands-on demos of gold panning, flint-knapping and leather work; traditional crafts and pony rides; live music; and craft vendors. Lemon lily hybrids are able to grow in lower elevations and different environments, giving low-land lily lovers access to plants that are at least in part, “Lemon Lilies.” Genetically variable populations in the wild are important for lemon lilies to persist. For details, go to www.lemonlilyfestival.com.

COASTKEEPER GARDEN
1560 E. Santiago Cyn. Rd., Orange 92869 714.850.1965 coastkeeper.org
Saturday, 6/10, 9:30am. Monthly Garden Share. Attendees bring garden-related items such as plants, cuttings, pots, tools, produce, etc., to trade. This is a great way to obtain new plants and meet like-minded plant lovers. For more information, go to https://www.facebook.com/groups/CoastkeeperGardenShare. Repeats second Saturdays.

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY HORT. SOCIETY
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
909 N. La Cumbre Rd., Santa Barbara 93110
805.684.5725 www.sbcshs.org
Wednesday, 6/7, 7pm. Monthly meeting. Gwen Stauffer, Executive Director of Lotusland will talk about plans for the Lotusland Japanese Garden. Free plant exchange prior to meeting, and after the speaker there will be a plant raffle. More info. & details on website.

Yvonne Savio
June 8 - PLEASE NOTE UP-DATED INFORMATION
Sandy Masuo, author, editor and teacher, will talk about “The Dirt on Plant Sex”
VENUE: Witherbee Auditorium, Los Angeles Zoo

July 13 - Lara Hermanson, Principal & Co-Owner of Farmscape talking about Building Sustainable Urban Farms

August 10 - Genevieve Arnold, Seed Program Manager at Theodore Payne, speaking on Collecting, Cleaning & Storing Seeds

GARDEN QUOTE OF THE MONTH
“... the month of June trembled like a butterfly...”
- Pablo Neruda

Southern California Horticultural Society
P.O. Box 94476
Pasadena CA 91109-4476

NEWSLETTER June 2017