The speaker we have scheduled for December is Jerry Robinson, one of the owners of Rainforest Flora, Inc., which was begun with a passion for tillandsias and has since expanded to encompass more Bromeliad genera and other plant families as well. Jerry’s program will be a “show and tell” showcasing plants from his nursery, some of which will also be available in a Plant Raffle, as well as for purchase.

Jerry grew up in the San Francisco East Bay Area, enjoying many outdoor activities including: skiing, backpacking and camping in the Sierra Nevadas, California Coast Range, White-Inyo Mountains and Death Valley. He was also influenced in his adventurous life choices by trail rides and pack trips on horses in the Trinity Alps, and white water rafting through the Grand Canyon.

Upon graduating from UCLA in 1971 with a degree in Geology and minor in Scuba Diving, Jerry joined an expedition to salvage sunken Spanish Galleons in Caribbean locations, where he first met his future business partner, Paul Isley III. In 1976 Rainforest Flora was formed and has since expanded into almost 300,000 square feet of growing space, with tillandsias in various stages of growth numbering in the millions. It is the largest producer of tillandsias in North America and one of the largest in the world, boasting plants Jerry has collected in travels to Mexico, and various Central and South American countries, to name just a few.

When Jerry is not collecting or propagating plants for his nursery, he might be out scuba-diving, hang-gliding, or on occasion relaxing with his wife Rhonda in Manhattan Beach where they reside.

Please join us for a fun and festive evening as we celebrate the winter holiday season.
Our November meeting was held in the Witherbee Auditorium at the Los Angeles Zoo, with guest speaker Jeff Moore, co-owner of Solana Succulents Nursery, who shared with us a slide show based on his book ALOES and AGAVES in Culture. He spoke briefly about his SOLANA BEACH nursery, which has stocked common, rare, and unusual succulents for the past 25 years. His expertise with these plants was evident as he spoke about aloes, agaves and their relatives, with an emphasis on how they grow throughout California.

Jeff began his presentation by giving a short description of the differences between agaves and aloes. Aloes are Old World plants which have leaves that are easily broken off and rarely, if ever, will poke you. Agaves on the other hand are New World plants with fibrous leaves and have sharp spines on the margins of their leaves. However, they both have similar growing habits, and therefore make excellent planting companions, which Jeff showed in his slides, beginning with the aloes.

Some of the plants he showed were A. arborescens, the most common aloe in California for the last 150 years, A. bainesii, a tree form that can grow to over 20’, A. plicatilis with its distinct fan-shape, A. castanea which grows horizontally, the somewhat rare A. heleneae, the misleadingly-named A. striata, and a species that Jeff calls Aloe ‘Dave Verity’, which has pretty bicolor flowers. Most of his pictures featured aloes during their blooming season, and many also showed hummingbirds enjoying the flowers.

He spoke next about the true “red” aloes, such as A. dorothaea, A. cameronii and A. vanbalenii, and mentioned that many other species’ leaves turn reddish when they are stressed or have too much sun exposure. Before moving on to agaves, Jeff mentioned a few other aloe features, including: many can be grown from seed; blooms can be used as cut flowers; and they have very few health problems, except for aloe mite infestations which are non-fatal and easily treated.

Agaves, originating primarily in Mexico and Central America, made up the remainder of his talk. Agaves are monocarpic, meaning they can only flower once before dying, but they can produce off-shoots, and there is much diversity within the genus. There are large specimens such as A. americana, A. ferox and A. vilmoriniana; smaller species and cultivars like A. victoriae-reginae, A. ‘Little Shark’ and A. ‘Royal Spine’; plus everything in-between. Some specimens he highlighted were the tentacled A. bracteosa; the stunning but hard-to-grow A. pelona; the scarily-sounding A. horrida with its nasty spines; and designer favorites such as A. ‘Blue Glow’; A. ‘Red Margin’ and the only “soft” agave, A. attenuata, which does not need to have its tips clipped. Jeff encouraged questions during and after his talk and, in addition to sharing his beautiful images, design tips and botanical information, he brought along plants for sale, plus copies of the book that inspired the presentation, as well as his first publication, UNDER the Spell of Succulents. His latest book, Soft Succulents, will be available by the end of 2017, and all three titles can be ordered through his website at www.solanasucculents.com.

- Sabine Steinmetz

SHARING SECRETS RESPONSES

What is your favorite So Cal deciduous or “winter” tree and why?

I have several “favorite” deciduous trees, including: my just-harvested Meyer persimmon; my new Babcock peach which will bear fruit this late spring for the first time; my ‘Near East’ crape myrtle for its bark; and my Sicilian honey fig. I also love my evergreen, dwarf Meyer lemon for its yellow fruit against the dark of winter.

- Shirley Marneus

My favorites are the ginkgo and the liquidambar. Ginkgo leaves turn seasonally until the entire tree is a mass of golden yellow with the ground underneath covered by a golden carpet. I look forward to this each year and have two favorites in my neighborhood that I try not to miss. Liquidambars provide interest for a longer period of time, and depending on the tree, leaves can turn maroon, red, gold, yellow or brown (generally a mix) before dropping. When the tree is bare in winter, many seed “balls” dangle down. Small birds attach themselves upside down to the balls to take seed from the pods. If your tree is planted in the right location you can enjoy watching this tree in the winter from a comfortable warm spot inside your house!

- Barbara Crane

Ginkgo – because it makes beautiful yellow snow.

- Kathy Musial

In late fall, I love our California black walnuts where they coexist with the (evergreen) toyon in the canyons, especially in the Santa Monicas. Walnut leaves turn a bright, golden yellow and make an exquisite companion to the green leaves and red berries of the toyon. But if the question is about wonderful Chinese magnolias that drop their burnt brown leaves (ugh), to reveal silvery trunks and stems, soon to be decorated with either white star shaped flowers (Magnolia stellata), or pink, white or purple cup shaped flowers (M. soulangiana).

- Anonymous

During this season of giving we ask that you consider making a tax-deductible donation to the SCHS to support our on-going programs including student internships, oral histories documenting the horticultural contributions of our treasured members, and the guest speakers / programs / events we present at our monthly meetings. A letter detailing SCHS objectives will be arriving soon, as well as being posted on our website. Any and all donations are welcomed and appreciated.

Thank you!
RANCHO LOS CERRITOS
4600 Virginia Road, Long Beach 90807
562-206-2040 rancholoscerritos.org
Every Saturday & Sunday, 1-5pm. Free One-Hour Garden Tours. See trees dating to the mid-19th century, plus landscaping from the early 1930s by landscape architect Ralph Cornell. For details, visit http://www.rancholoscerritos.org/things-to-do/hub/tours/
Saturday, 12/16, 1:30-4:30pm. Drought-Tolerant Plants with the Water Replenishment District of Southern California. Registration required. Contact Monica Sijder at 562-275-4234 or msijder@wrd.org.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY ARBORETUM
301 N. Baldwin Ave., Arcadia 91007
626.821.4623 arboretum.org
Saturday, 12/9, 10am-12noon. Tree Identification, Do You Know the Trees of Southern California? with Dr. Jerrold Turney, plant pathologist and certified arborist. This lecture will cover 15-20 species followed by a walk in the ArboRETum to see the trees covered in the lecture. Learn about identification, growth habits, proper care, common diseases and pests, plus best places to plant them in your garden. Dr. Turney is currently the plant pathologist for the Department of Agricultural Commission/Weights and Measures for the County of Los Angeles. $25 ArboRETum members / $35 non-members. Call Education Dept. to register or pay at class.
Saturday, 12/16, 10am-12noon, The Year In Crescent Farm. Learn sustainable gardening through hands-on experience at the Crescent Farm, a reclaimed landscape where we explore horticulture techniques for water conservation and food production. Please bring gloves, drinking water, wear closed-toe shoes and a hat. Review planning and results of this year’s work as we share our successes and failures. Free for members and non-members with arboRETum admission. Call Education Dept. to register or pay at class.

DESCANSO GARDENS
1418 Descanso Drive, La Canada 91011
818.949.7980 descansogardens.org
Saturday, 12/9, 10am. Wreathmaking. Make a winter wreath with natural materials, including botanicals gathered in the Gardens. Expert instruction will be provided to get you started. $40 members, $50 non-members. Includes materials. Register online, at Descanso Visitor Center, or by phone. Early registration encouraged as class usually sells out.
Saturday, 12/9, 2pm. Wreathmaking class repeats.
Sunday, 12/10, 2pm. Wreathmaking class repeats.

EATON CANYON NATURE CENTER
1750 No. Altadena Dr., Pasadena 91107
626-398-5420 www.ecnca.org

HUNTINGTON BOTANICAL GARDENS
1151 Oxford Road, San Marino 91108
626.405.2100 huntington.org
Every Saturday, 10am-1pm. Ranch Open House. Stop by our urban agriculture site during the weekly open house and pick up some fresh ideas for sustainable gardening. Experts from the University of California Los Angeles County Master Gardener program will be on hand to answer questions and offer seasonal tips.
Thursday, 12/14, 2:30pm, Ahmanson Room, Brody Botanical Center. Garden Talk & Sale: California “Super Bloom” 2017. Revisit last spring’s “super bloom” of California wildflowers in an illustrated lecture by Kathy Musial, curator of living collections at The Huntington. Images from Anza-Borrego, Joshua Tree, Antelope Valley, and Carrizo Plain will be included. Plant sale follows the talk.

THEODORE PAYNE FOUNDATION
10459 Tuxford St., Sun Valley 91352
818.768.1802 theodorepayne.org
Saturday, 12/9, 9-11:30am. Native Plant Garden Maintenance with Lili Singer and Steve Singer. Learn about watering, fertilizing, mulching, pest management and how to develop good maintenance goals. Part of the class is outdoors; bring your hat and water. $40 TPF members, $50 non-members.
Saturday, 12/16, 9:30-3:00pm. La Tuna Canyon Regeneration Series: Prepping for Fire with Ellen MacKay. Learn how one homeowner has protected her house from fire with practical solutions. Free for those affected by the La Tuna Fire, those who serve that community, and residents of other fire-prone areas.

Saturday, 12/16, 1-3:30pm. La Tuna Canyon Regeneration Series: Tipping the Scales - Invasive Species in Fire Preparation and Recovery with Dr. Sabrina Drill. Learn how exotic (non-native) plants, insect pests, and other invasive species affect pre- and post-fire situations – and how fire prep, suppression, and recovery can help or hinder the spread of invaders. Also included: a call for volunteers to help with Theodore Payne Foundation post-fire regeneration projects. Free for those affected by the La Tuna Fire, those who serve that community, and residents of other fire-prone areas.

COASTKEEPER GARDEN
1560 E. Santiago Cyn. Rd., Orange 92869
714.850.1965 coastkeeper.org
Saturday, 12/9, 9:30am. Monthly Garden Share. Attendees bring garden-related items such as plants, cuttings, pots, tools, produce, etc., to trade. For more information, go to https://www.facebook.com/groups/CoastkeeperGardenShare. Repeats second Saturdays.

Yvonne Savio

DECEMBER HORTICULTURAL HAPPENINGS • EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

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.

Friday, 12/29, 5pm. Deadline for enrollment for 3-Part Native Garden Design with Shawn Maestredit, beginning January 6. This course offers a foundation in design styles and process, the importance of sustainability and how to model a garden after patterns in nature. Students will devise a base/plot plan, implementing knowledge of hardscape materials, irrigation, soils and more. $225 TPF members, $275 nonmembers; $285 member couples, $335 nonmember couples.

RANCHO SANTA ANA BOTANIC GARDEN
1500 N. College Ave., Claremont 91711
909.625.8767 rsabg.org
Saturday, 12/16, 8-9:30am. Free Family Bird Walk through the Garden with Chris Verma of Wild Birds Unlimited Register online: www.rsabg.org/bird-walks
Saturday, 12/16, 10-11am. Free Grow Native Nursery Workshop: Seed Bombs. Learn how to craft a seed bomb using California Native Wildflower seeds. Register online: www.rsabg.org/nursery-calendar

FULLERTON ARBORETUM
1900 Associated Road, Fullerton 92831
657.278.3407 fullertonarboretum.org
Saturdays, 12/9 and 12/23, 10am. Free Nature Tour. Meet at the Nature Center and join one of our knowledgeable docents as they guide you on a tour through the beautiful garden. Repeats 2nd and 4th Saturdays.

COASTKEEPER GARDEN
1560 E. Santiago Cyn. Rd., Orange 92869
714.850.1965 coastkeeper.org
Saturday, 12/9, 9:30am. Monthly Garden Share. Attendees bring garden-related items such as plants, cuttings, pots, tools, produce, etc., to trade. For more information, go to https://www.facebook.com/groups/CoastkeeperGardenShare. Repeats second Saturdays.

Yvonne Savio

MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM ENROLLMENT INFORMATION
If you live in L.A. County and would like to become a Master Gardener, here’s the link:
http://celosangeles.ucanr.edu/UC_Master_Gardener_Program/
Deadline to submit online application is January 8 at 6 p.m.
Unless otherwise noted, meetings are regularly held at Friendship Auditorium, 3201 Riverside Drive, Los Angeles, 90027

December 14 - Jerry Robinson of Rainforest Flora talks about Bromeliads for the Home Garden PLUS our Annual SCHS Holiday Party!

January 11 - 1st Meeting of 2018 - program TBA - Check socalthort.org for up-dates...

February 8 - Jeff Chemnick of Aloes in Wonderland presents a plant collector’s travelogue

GARDEN QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“If a tree dies, plant another one.”
- Carolus Linnaeus

DECEMBER

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

NEWSLETTER December 2017