

Our speakers in October were local landscape designers Shawn Maestretti and Wynne Wilson, who presented insights on blending California's native flora with other culturally similar plants from around the world. They both spoke about design philosophies and concepts, and shared pictures of selected projects and some favorite plants they like to use.

First to present was Shawn Maestretti, who is a designer, certified arborist, educator, and licensed landscape contractor. He has been working in Los Angeles since 2006, and spoke on "how to blend with success" by using his system of matching a plant palette to a space and then properly hydrozoning. He stated that the trees at any given site will dictate the zones as well as everything else that will work there. He typically uses a master plant list and edits down based on site conditions.



Photo courtesy of speaker.

Shawn likes to break down his selections by plant communities and shared some blending examples such as using *Rhamnus*, *Berberis* and ornamental grasses with *Olea* and *Arbutus* trees, or combining *Vitis*, *Salvia* and *Sesleria* 'Greenlee' with *Cercidium* x 'Desert Museum.' He also spoke about



using rain gardens to capture water and keep it on your property, and shared diagrams illustrating these principals before turning the program over to Wynne Wilson.

Wynne is a Southern California native and a garden designer with over 20 years experience. Her work has often involved preserving and restoring habitats through the use of primarily California native plants and sustainable materials. Wynne's talk focused on her own design principles, which she broke down into four categories.

She first spoke about "Space and Form" wherein you assess the space you have to determine how best to fill it, i.e. with plants that act as sculptural forms, or grassy meadows for larger areas, or a single focal point that frames a section of the garden. This was followed by "Light and Shadow" which dealt with using areas of filtered light to create micro-climates for understory plantings, or using light and shadow to provide tonality. Then came "Rhythm and Movement" which mimics a painterly palette by grouping plants by color families and massing for greater impact if the space allows. Her final category was "Texture and Layering" wherein you are combining two or three plants in complementary arrangements, such as *Agave attenuata* with *Eriogonum crocatum*, or inserting *Muhlenbergia rigens* and an olive tree into a *Carex* meadow. Wynne also showed pictures of her home garden where she has employed these principles, and which was the destination for an SCHS Coffee in the Garden on the following weekend. (See summary below.)



Photo: Sabine Steinmetz

Both designers concluded their talks by answering questions from an enthusiastic audience. We were all given plenty of excellent design insights and suggestions to try in our own home gardens - applicable for this planting season and well into the future.

✂ Sabine Steinmetz

### SHARING SECRETS RESPONSES

We know autumn is a busy time in So Cal gardens, and suspect that is why we only received a few anonymous and very brief answers to the following question:

*Tell us about your favorite garden designers or gardens that you love...*



Therefore, we are simply listing the responses below, so you can research them further if they pique your interest!

### DESIGNERS

- Marc Peter Keane - Ithaca, New York
- Piet Oudolf - Netherlands
- Dan Pearson - United Kingdom
- Chris Rosmini - Los Angeles

### GARDENS

- Butchart Gardens - British Columbia, Canada
- Filoli Gardens - Woodside, CA
- Garden of Cosmic Speculation - Scotland
- Gilroy Gardens "Circus Trees" - Gilroy, CA
- Hortense Miller Garden - Laguna Beach, CA
- Huntington Botanical Gardens - San Marino, CA
- Jardin Majorelle - Marrakech, Morocco
- San Diego Botanic Garden - Encinitas, CA
- Sissinghurst Castle Garden - Kent, England
- Villa d'Este Gardens - Tivoli, Italy

On Sunday, October 14, 2018, the SCHS hosted a Coffee in the Garden event at the Altadena home garden of landscape designer Wynne Wilson and her husband Brian. They have been working on the garden for 20 years and it has been featured on a variety of garden tours, but is not visited often in the autumn.

During the first hour, attendees wandered through the garden taking pictures and enjoying refreshments provided by SCHS board members. This also provided ample opportunity for them to consider a host of questions for the designer about the garden's layout, plants, irrigation and more.

At 11:30, Wynne gave a brief talk about the garden's history from its earliest days in

### COFFEE IN THE GARDEN



Photo: Sabine Steinmetz

which there was a lawn and predominantly Mediterranean plantings, through its evolution to its present state. Currently, there is no lawn, the presence of California native plants has significantly increased,

and new oaks have been planted to eventually replace aging trees. She also spoke about the various micro-climates on-site such as the natural stream; the abundance of wildlife that is encouraged; and specific plants that do well, including *Heuchera*, *Mahonia* 'Ken Hartman', *Carex*, *Carpenteria* 'Elizabeth' as well as the show-stopping *Ampelopsis glandulosa* var. *brevipedunculata* (porcelain berry) that everyone was enchanted by.

We would again like to thank Wynne and Brian for opening their beautiful garden to us at this time of year. Much appreciation also goes to the SCHS board for arranging and hosting this special Coffee in the Garden event.

✂ Sabine Steinmetz