March, with its transitional nature, is the perfect time to welcome speaker Mike Evans, who will present us with beautiful and practical options for replacing our tired lawns with sustainable planting alternatives. As the founder and president of Tree of Life Nursery in San Juan Capistrano, which has been producing and selling California native plants for over 40 years, Mike has experience in native plant production, design, landscaping and ecological restoration. He also writes extensively for the nursery’s website and blog, and recently led two years of horticultural training for the garden staff at Disneyland. Tree of Life promotes a style of authentic horticulture, specifically the concept of appropriate landscaping with native California plants.

Mike was born and raised in Southern California and demonstrated an early love for the outdoors. He worked with retail and wholesale nurseries before establishing Tree of Life in 1976. The 40-acre nursery specializes in native California plants and produces more than 500 species and varieties. In 2007, it was honored to receive two awards: Horticultural Award from the California Native Plant Society and the California Glory Award from the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden. Tree of Life provides plants for landscaping and ecological restoration at the wholesale level, but plants are also available for sale to the general public through Casa ‘La Paz’. Their website, www.CaliforniaNativePlants.com, provides information on the use of native plants in the garden.

In this presentation Mike will focus on his advocacy for a present-day California that deserves to look like the true California. He believes that replacing useless turf in our landscapes provides a perfect opportunity to plant a real garden, with a real purpose... one that is both sustainable and truly beautiful. A well-designed California natural garden will always pass the test of time, and continually provide valuable habitat for birds, beneficial pollinators, and other friendly wildlife species.

In addition to his talk, Mike will be bringing plants from Tree of Life for purchase. Just as we move from a wet winter into spring, many of us are looking for new planting options for our own gardens, and this program is sure to give us plenty of inspiration to create something lovely that is meaningful as well.

**Ugly is Not a Turf Replacement**

In this presentation Mike will focus on his advocacy for a present-day California that deserves to look like the true California. He believes that replacing useless turf in our landscapes provides a perfect opportunity to plant a real garden, with a real purpose... one that is both sustainable and truly beautiful. A well-designed California natural garden will always pass the test of time, and continually provide valuable habitat for birds, beneficial pollinators, and other friendly wildlife species.

**SCHS PHILANTHROPY**

The SCHS recently received a thank you note from Mountains Restoration Trust for the $500 donation we contributed to help rebuild the greenhouse they lost to the Woolsey Fire. SCHS will be named on a plaque when the greenhouse is completed, and MRT also planted a geo-tagged Heteromeles arbutifolia in honor of our donation. Follow this link to see its location:

www.Tinyurl.com/mrtdonorplants

If you type So Cal Horticultural Society into the donor search box and click on “attachments”, you can see our toyon!

**PLANT FORUM**

We look forward to seeing what the rain has brought forth in your gardens. Please bring along something to share in our monthly members’ exhibit - we’re all eager to see what’s blooming!
Our February program, “Designing With Palms for Dry climates,” was presented by Jason Dewees, the horticulturist and palm expert at Flora Grubb Gardens in San Francisco, and East West Trees in Fallbrook. He shared that it was his experience that nursery customers often don’t know what to do with palms, and he wanted to address this lack of information in his recently published book “Designing with Palms.” Photos taken for the book by Caitlin Atkinson, of unexpected and creative uses of palms from visits to over 70 gardens, were included in his slide presentation.

By way of introduction to the Arecales family, Jason began by telling us that after grasses and legumes, the palms make up the third most useful plant family globally, especially in areas where they are found indigenously. They are also known to be one of the earliest cultivated trees in civilization. While they are typically thought of as a “tropical” plant, he stressed that with over 800 genera and 2,500 species, palms can easily be adapted to more diverse landscaping applications. If selected for color, size, shape and height, they can be successfully integrated into a variety of design styles, as his presentation illustrated.

We were shown beautiful pictures from the Fairchild Tropical Botanical Garden in Coral Gables, Florida, where palms are used extensively for dramatic effect. Also in Florida, Jason shared images of the Brazilian Garden created by landscape designer Raymond Jungles (a student of Roberto Burle Marx), located inside the Naples Botanical Garden. There, palms blended seamlessly with a mixture of native Brazilian plants, for an entirely different effect than at Fairchild. In still another application, landscape architect Steve Martino combined Washingtonia filifera with yucca and a variety of succulents for a dramatic desert-themed residential garden in Palm Springs.

Jason went on to explain some basic design principles to consider when using palms, specifically that their habit will change as they go through growth phases while maturing. When they are young, many palms go through a “rosette” phase before developing a trunk, at which time they can tuck nicely into a mixed bed. At maturity, they are better suited as design elements to anchor a planting scheme, or for dramatic effect. They can also be used as a vertical element to create the illusion of more space in a small area, by drawing the eye upward. He showed a staircase at the Virginia Robinson Gardens in Los Angeles, flanked by palm trunks, and a grouping of potted palms on a small patio in San Francisco as further examples of the versatility of palms. He then went on to give examples of palms used in a variety of design styles which can be found in gardens throughout California.

Trachycarpus fortunei is commonly used in Japanese gardens, including the San Francisco Botanical Garden, while Jubaea chilensis can be seen rising above California native plants at the Ruth Bancroft Garden in Walnut Creek. A Brahea is used in combination with grasses to create a savannah-like look at the Huntington Library’s entrance in San Marino, while a variety of palms are used in the “Blue Garden” at LotusLand in Santa Barbara, selected primarily for their color. The multi-trunked Dypsis baronii (example in photo below) is often used to evoke a coastal or an island feeling.

After the slide show concluded, Jason answered questions from the audience, including which palms are well-suited to Southern California (Chamaerops humilis, which can get by on very little irrigation, Washingtonia robusta, and Syagrus romanziifianum were a few). He mentioned that Flora Grubb is no longer growing Phoenix canariensis because it is under attack by a disease which can spread to other trees. He also shared that when transferring potted palms into the ground, it is very important to minimize root disturbance and to cover all visible roots with a layer of mulch.

Unfortunately, due to the recent rains which flooded the Fallbrook nursery, Jason was unable to bring any copies of his book for purchase, but it is readily available online through Amazon. We did, however, have plant sales from several vendors going on, and had a good showing of members’ plants at our monthly Plant Forum, seemingly indicating everyone’s eagerness to get back to gardening as soon as there is a break in the winter rains!
MARCH 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, 3/9, 10:30am-4pm. African Violet Show and Sale. Learn how to propagate a leaf, repot, and prune plants with curator Kelly Fernandez. Touch, taste, and smell unusual plants; and learn how to grow them. Ages 5+. Fee includes 1 child and accompanying adult. $10 members, $20 non-members. Registration: horticulture@scbg.org.

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HUNTINGTON BOTANICAL GARDENS
1151 Oxford Road, San Marino 91108
626.405.2100 huntington.org
Thursday, 3/14, 230pm. Ahmanson Room, Brody Botanical Center. Garden Talk & Plant Sale: The Changing California Landscape with nurseryman Nicholas Staddon. Learn about new plant choices from the desert southwest that are ideal for Southern California’s climate, require low water, care, and attention. Staddon will also discuss latest trends in the gardening world. Plant sale follows talk. No reservations required.

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RANCHO LOS ALAMITOS
6400 E. Bixby Hill Rd., Long Beach 90815
562-431-3541 rancholosalamitos.org
Saturday, 3/9, 12noon-230pm, Rancho Gift Shop. A Curated Tour of Florence Bixby’s Gardens guided by Janet Brown Becker. Ms. Becker has a master’s degree in Landscape Architecture and oversees the historic interpretation, curatorial documentation and horticultural integrity of the Rancho’s gardens. Tour is for adults and interested teens. Visitors will be on their feet for entire tour. Comfortable shoes, preferably with closed toes, a hat and drinking water are advisable. $10 per person. Advance reservations required on website. Not refundable but may be transferred.

RANCHO LOS ALAMITOS
6400 E. Bixby Hill Rd., Long Beach 90815
562-431-3541 rancholosalamitos.org
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LOS ANGELES COUNTY ARBORETUM
301 N. Baldwin Ave., Arcadia 91007
626.821.4623 arborbroaden.org
Friday & Saturday, 3/22 & 3/23, 9am-430pm. Tomato Plant Sale. Stop by our popular tomato talk and plant sale! You’ll also find other vegetables, herbs and plants to add to your garden.

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THEODORE PAYNE FOUNDATION
10459 Tuxford St., Sun Valley 91352
818.768.1802 theodorepayne.org

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DESSERT HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY OF THE COACHELLA VALLEY
75080 Frank Sinatra Dr, Palm Desert, CA 92211
deserthorticultural.org
Sunday, 3/17, 1130am-4pm. 14th Annual Desert Garden Tour in Palm Springs. Self-drive to 5 desert-friendly, water-conserving gardens. Free for current members; $20 non-members, $5 students. Cash only. Register at deserthorticultural.org or on day of event at Sagewood, 1943 E. Sandalwood Rd, Palm Springs. Info on website, or Facebook at dhscvgardentour, or Tracy Merrigan at tracymerr@mce.com or 310-428-9500.

DESSERT HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY OF THE COACHELLA VALLEY
75080 Frank Sinatra Dr, Palm Desert, CA 92211
deserthorticultural.org
Sunday, 3/17, 1130am-4pm. 14th Annual Desert Garden Tour in Palm Springs. Self-drive to 5 desert-friendly, water-conserving gardens. Free for current members; $20 non-members, $5 students. Cash only. Register at deserthorticultural.org or on day of event at Sagewood, 1943 E. Sandalwood Rd, Palm Springs. Info on website, or Facebook at dhscvgardentour, or Tracy Merrigan at tracymerr@mce.com or 310-428-9500.

FULLERTON ARBORETUM
1900 Associated Road, Fullerton 92831
657.278.3407 fullertonarboretum.org
Tuesday, 3/12, 1pm. Spring & Summer Gardening with Yvonne Savio. Learn which edible and ornamental plants to add to your garden and enjoy during our warm season. $20 members, $25 non-members.

FULLERTON ARBORETUM
1900 Associated Road, Fullerton 92831
657.278.3407 fullertonarboretum.org
Tuesday, 3/12, 1pm. Spring & Summer Gardening with Yvonne Savio. Learn which edible and ornamental plants to add to your garden and enjoy during our warm season. $20 members, $25 non-members.

UNIQUE GARDEN TOUR OPPORTUNITY
The Glendale Historical Society Presents: The Secret Gardens of Forest Lawn Glendale
2-part event exploring the park’s landmark gardens
Part 1: Thursday, March 21, 700–830 pm, is a lecture and slideshow about the memorial park’s gardens, conducted by Forest Lawn Glendale Gardening Supervisor Rick Leach, with remarks by Don Snyder of Glendale Historical Society.

UNIQUE GARDEN TOUR OPPORTUNITY
The Glendale Historical Society Presents: The Secret Gardens of Forest Lawn Glendale
2-part event exploring the park’s landmark gardens
Part 1: Thursday, March 21, 700–830 pm, is a lecture and slideshow about the memorial park’s gardens, conducted by Forest Lawn Glendale Gardening Supervisor Rick Leach, with remarks by Don Snyder of Glendale Historical Society.

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2-part event exploring the park’s landmark gardens
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Unless otherwise noted, meetings are regularly held at Friendship Auditorium, 3201 Riverside Drive, Los Angeles, 90027

**UPCOMING SCHS PROGRAMS**

- **March 14** - Mike Evans, owner of Tree of Life Nursery presents “Ugly Is Not A Turf Replacement”
- **April 11** - Speaker Matt Candeias, author of the popular *In Defense of Plants* blog (Presentation topic TBA)
- **May 9** - Garden expert and author, Nan Sterman, presents a program based on her landscape design book, *Hot Color, Dry Garden*
- **June 13** - Botany professor & author, Matt Ritter, speaks on “Tree Selection: Keeping Our Urban Forests Healthy”

**GARDEN QUOTE OF THE MONTH**

“The air is like a butterfly with frail blue wings. The happy earth looks at the sky and sings.”

- Joyce Kilmer

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Newsletter Editor: Sabine Steinmetz

Contributors to this issue: Mike Evans, Yvonne Savio

**Next deadline: Monday, March 18 (for April newsletter)**

Please contribute an article or information of interest.

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**NEWSLETTER March 2019**