

After a two month suspension of activities, the SCHS resumed the presentation portion of our monthly meetings in May with an online webinar featuring popular speaker Sandy Masuo talking about “Winging It: Birding Basics for Gardeners.”

Masuo is an editor, educator, author, and conservationist, and holds a BA from Brown University and an Ed. M from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Since 2003, she has been the associate editor in the publications division at the Los Angeles Zoo, and from 2010 to 2014, served on the SCHS board. Masuo also teaches a variety of classes including succulent gardening and birding at local community colleges as well as sharing her knowledge on the lecture circuit. Her full bio and current activities can be found on her website at: [www.sandymasuo.com](http://www.sandymasuo.com).

Masuo began the program by describing the evolution of birds and their anatomy. In short, most of their physical adaptations exist to enable flight, and because flight expends so much energy, birds are always eating to refuel. Their digestive systems are very simple so that they can replenish their fuel for flight without carrying much weight around. And this is where the relationship of gardening to birds comes in.

Gardeners who are looking to attract more bird species can begin by offering appropriate food sources to draw them in, namely plants. Instead of putting out bird feeders which also appeal to rats and squirrels and can breed bacteria, plant life will bring in birds by offering nectar, insect treats and seeds. Also, a varied habitat will encourage more visitors by offering shelter, nesting materials and water in

addition to food. Water sources appeal to all birds, whereas birds are selective about food. However, water must be refreshed every few days to stay clean, bacteria-free and to prevent mosquito infestations.

Masuo then listed garden plants that attract a variety of birds, ranging from sycamores and oaks to grasses. Specifically, she mentioned shrubs and plants such as Toyon, Elderberry, Gasteria, Bulbine, Salvia, Helianthus, Eriogonum and Aloe as being successful at bringing in assorted species. Aloes in particular were mentioned as excellent hummingbird plants. She also encouraged minimizing the use of pesticides because they destroy bugs which birds would otherwise be eating.

Additionally, Masuo spoke about taking measures to avoid window-strikes by birds and how to mitigate light pollution which can confuse, distract and disrupt migrating birds. Resources were also provided for those interested in obtaining gear to pursue bird-watching as a hobby. She mentioned that we currently have increased opportunities to experience birds because our environments are quieter during this time of quarantine and many people are at home more to see their local birds.

Following the presentation, the program offered a live Q & A session for attendees, and featured a virtual prize wheel which awarded one lucky winner the book *Birds of Southern California*, from the Theodore Payne Foundation for Native Plants, plus a bird feeder from Wild Wings LA!

While webinars are not an ideal substitute for in-person meetings, and this was a new experience for many, we were able to register over 100 “attendees”. We are planning to continue the interactive portion of these virtual meetings as we move forward, including offering prize incentives for registrants. We hope to increase viewership and awareness, as well as encourage more people to become active members of the SCHS.

 Sabine Steinmetz

*Click on the link below to see the entire presentation (including plant & resource lists) on SCHS's YouTube channel:*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l0fXisGpOIY>

## SCHS MONTHLY GARDEN SHARE

As temperatures begin heating up throughout June, you might want to:

- **Adjust your irrigation by increasing OR decreasing times, depending on the types of plants**
- **Make sure your containers are watered more frequently and your trees get a deep soaking monthly**
- **Finish mulching to help regulate soil temperatures**
- **Continue feeding your ornamentals and edibles on a regular schedule**
- **Harvest your edibles to keep them producing throughout the summer months**
- **Slow down on the chores a bit and enjoy your garden!**

 Sabine Steinmetz

## SCHS Meetings Archived on YouTube

The SCHS is always looking for new ways to reach out to a wider audience to increase awareness of our organization, share knowledge, and encourage more gardeners to consider becoming members.

To this end, we have been steadily increasing our online presence, including growing our YouTube

channel, which has already been active for a year. Videos of monthly meetings and other activities have been archived and can easily be accessed for anyone wishing to view these presentations.

It is our hope that as we grow our library of videos, we will also experience growth as an organization.

Part of our mission is education, which we wish to continue providing for many future generations of Southern California gardeners as we have done since 1937.

You can link to our YouTube channel below, and please encourage your interested friends to check us out too.

*Thank you for your support!*

View SCHS on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYYBy88Q361IQVnV69qgmGg>