Growing Weed in The Garden: An introduction to One of The Oldest Plants in Cultivation

From peonies to pot – Johanna Silver, former *Sunset* garden editor, will share her journey into cannabis with the SCHS on October 14. Spoiler – she’s not a stoner. Her presentation will provide a brief history of the plant, which is one of (if not the) oldest plants under human cultivation, including how regional climates impacted the plant’s evolution. Silver will paint a picture of the current state of the plant’s genetics, unrivaled by anything else in horticulture, as it has not yet gone through modern breeding practices. Myths and misinformation when it comes to cultivation, coming from approximately a 100 years of prohibition, will be discussed and corrected.

In addition to her time at *Sunset*, Silver is a James Beard Award-winning author who writes mostly about plants and people. Her two books, *The Bold Dry Garden: Lessons from the Ruth Bancroft Garden* (Timber Press, 2017) and *Growing Weed in the Garden: A No-Fuss, Seed-to-Stash Guide to Outdoor Cannabis Cultivation* (Abrams, 2020) are available everywhere books are sold. She is also a contributing editor at *Better Homes & Gardens*, and her work has been featured in *Martha Stewart Living* magazine, the *San Francisco Chronicle* newspaper, and *Eating Well* magazine. Previously, she spent ten years at *Sunset* magazine, beginning with a shovel in her hands and culminating as head of the garden department.

Silver lives and gardens in Berkeley, California, where she grows fruits, veggies, and, in her words, “entirely too many cut flowers.” It should be noted that her approach to cannabis cultivation is outdoor-only and garden-scale. She grows for a love of the plant, not with a goal of maximizing yield. The gardening techniques she most adheres to are those that are easiest, simplest, and the most tried-and-true, and we anticipate learning more on this trending topic during her presentation. Please tune in for this one-of-a-kind program. Registration is open at: www.socal.hort.org.
On September 23, the SCHS presented its annual Horticulturist of the Year Award Program as a virtual event for the second year in a row, due to the pandemic. We once again elected to use this as an opportunity to present the HOTY award posthumously to three recipients that influenced horticulture throughout Southern California during their lifetimes. Following is a summary of the program honoring these deserving HOTY recipients.

Current SCHS board member and former HOTY recipient Lili Singer spoke about honoree Bill Baker. He was well-known in Southern California horticultural circles and beyond – as a nurseryman, plant hybridizer and landscape designer.

As a young man, Baker worked at West Valley Nursery in Tarzana, and eventually opened California Gardens Nursery on land he acquired in 1972. According to his catalog, the nursery specialized in “bulbs, bromeliads, epiphytic cactus and succulents,” but Baker’s plant interests were much more diversified. He travelled and explored Baja California and mainland Mexico, as well as Central and South America, hunting and collecting unusual flora.

Baker was an active member of the San Fernando Valley Bromeliad Society and was well-known for his many hybrids, including Dyckia ‘Brittle Star’ and D. ‘Tarzana.’ His plants were featured at Huntington Botanical Gardens and often at the San Diego Botanic Garden. He was well-known in horticultural circles.

For more than 50 years, Baker acted as “plant broker” to many nurseries and was an active member of the Southern California Horticultural Society. He travelled and explored Baja California and mainland Mexico, as well as Central and South America, hunting and collecting unusual flora.

Dourley came to America from Scotland in 1952, and by 1967 he had settled in Claremont and began working at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden with almost no prior knowledge of California native plants. He soon became a recognized expert, making new horticultural contributions at RSABG where he served as the Director of Horticulture until 1987.

During his tenure at RSABG – and continuing after his retirement – he was active in Claremont and the surrounding communities, often as a horticultural consultant – particularly regarding trees. In 1981 he co-authored the book California Native Trees and Shrubs, with Dr. Lee Lenz. Dourley was an influence on many California native plant experts including Carol Bornstein and Bart O’Brien, as well as Evans. He cited Dourley as a mentor when Tree of Life Nursery was being established.

In honor of his many personal horticultural contributions, Tree of Life introduced the Arctostaphylos cultivar ‘John Dourley’ in 1990, and it remains one of the most reliable and popular mid-sized manzanitas for California native gardens to this day.

Presenting on our second honoree, John Dourley, was 2019 HOTY recipient Mike Evans, the owner of Tree of Life Nursery in San Juan Capistrano.

Our final honoree, Virginia Hayes, was Curator of the Living Collection at Lotusland in Montecito for 25 years until her retirement in 2017. She was 2019 HOTY recipient Lili Singer spoke about her impact on the gardens there and on the greater horticultural community.

Early on, Hayes worked for Santa Barbara Water Gardens, eventually buying its maintenance division. During this time, she became a world-renowned expert on Nelumbo nucifera and was a founding member of the International Lotus Society. In 1982 she began working for Lotusland and was soon promoted to Curator of Living Collections. Her accomplishments included expanding the plant collections, cataloging the library, photos, and Ganna Walska’s personal documents, and updating the plant records database. She trained the docents and mentored many others, including Mills. Hayes’ extensive work did much to bring Lotusland into the national and international limelight.

A prolific writer, Hayes wrote columns for the Santa Barbara Independent newspaper and authored the book The Gourmet Gardener. She served on the board of the American Public Garden Association, was a reviewer for their Plant Collections Network, and cofounded the Horticulture Consortium of Santa Barbara. Her influence and contributions are felt daily at Lotusland as well as far beyond its borders.

SCHS INTERN

On October 14, in conjunction with our monthly webinar, the SCHS will hear a short presentation by Bridget Lee, our 2021 Horticultural internship recipient.

Lee will be scheduled ahead of the evening’s scheduled program and speak briefly about her recent time interning at the Huntington Library and Botanical Gardens.

SCHS 2021 INTERN

Learn more about SCHS and check us out online at:

- www.facebook.com/pg/socalhort
- www.instagram.com/socalhort
- www.socalhort.org
COVID-19 UPDATES FOR LOCAL GARDEN VENUES

Venues open at press time are marked 🍃 and 🌿 for those that are online only.

Organizations and venues are offering more events and classes, both online and in person, while maintaining safety protocols, limited attendance and hours.

Please continue to check with your favorites for updated info if you are planning a visit.

LINKS TO UPCOMING EVENTS & WEBINARS

Please check with individual organizations for class fees & details

Department of Public Works
Los Angeles County

- FREE Upcoming Zoom Classes -
(Webinars repeat throughout October & November)

• Intro to Composting
• Waterwise Gardening
• Organic Gardening
• Small Space Gardening

California Garden & Landscape History Society
- Upcoming Zoom Lecture -
Apples & Ciders & Trees

https://cglhs.org/upcoming-events

Waterwise Community Center,
Chino Basin Water Conservation District
- Upcoming Zoom Gardening Workshops -

https://www.cbwcd.org/354/Free-Workshops
Until we are able to meet again in person, monthly programs will continue to be scheduled as online webinars.

October 14 - Johanna Silver, former *Sunset* editor and author will talk about Growing Weed in The Garden
- *Plus:* SCHS Intern, Bridget Lee, will speak briefly on her studies at the Huntington

November 11 - Matty Williams, landscaper and urban planner presents a program on “A Brief History of African American Landscape Architects”

December 9 - “California in A Vase” flower arranging demo by Lucinda McDade and Linda Prendergast of California Botanic Garden

**WEBINAR**

October 14 - October 11 - November 11 - December 9 - **WEBINAR**

**GARDEN QUOTE OF THE MONTH**

“All the flowers of all the tomorrows are in the seeds of today.”
- *Indian Proverb*

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