## WILD SUBURBIA: LEARNING TO GARDEN WITH NATIVE PLANTS

Speaking to us in March will be Barbara Eisenstein, a research associate and former horticultural outreach coordinator at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden in Claremont, California, as well as a South Pasadena resident and gardener.

She is the horticultural chair of the San Gabriel Mountains chapter of the California Native Plant Society, and founder and head of Friends of South Pasadena Nature Park, and author of the recently published book: *Wild Suburbia: Learning to Garden with Native Plants*.

Barbara will reference the book as she guides us through the process of transforming a traditional, high water-use yard into a peaceful habitat garden abounding with native plants. Because there are so many variables in gardening, answers to even simple questions about establishing a native plant garden are rife with caveats and exceptions. *Wild Suburbia* describes some of these variables so that gardeners will be better able to select the best practices for their own specific garden conditions.

Attendees will be encouraged to share their thoughts and experiences on horticultural practices that worked, and those that did not. For example, how do you water your native plants? What is the best way to get rid of a lawn of weedy Bermuda grass? What were some of your most surprising successes and failures?

Her presentation will conclude with a discussion of how we, as horticultural enthusiasts and professionals, might improve the dissemination of accurate information on sustainable gardening with California native plants.

Following the talk, Barbara will be available to sign copies of her book which can be purchased at the meeting. Please join us.

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### MARCH MEETING RAFFLE and SALE

At the March meeting, we will also be holding a raffle of 30+ South African “Mystery Bulbs” in 4” pots from the late Charles Hardman’s collection - a unique opportunity!

Additionally, our own Joan Citron is generously donating about 40 decorative pots of assorted sizes (many of them glazed) for purchase at bargain prices. Maybe you can find a match for your newly won bulbs?

Bring your dollar bills and treat yourself while supporting the SCHS...
The speaker for our February meeting was Australian-born horticulturist Robin Parer, owner and operator of Geraniaceae Nursery in Marin County. She has been featured in magazines such as *Garden Design, Horticulture, Martha Stewart Living* and *Sunset*, and recently debuted *The Plant Lover’s Guide to Hardy Geraniums*, published by Timber Press. During her 34 years at Geraniaceae Nursery, Robin has collected and propagated over 500 geranium species, selected color forms and hybrids, and she drew upon her extensive knowledge to tailor her slide show and lecture to those varieties best suited to Southern California gardens.

By way of introduction, Robin made it clear that her focus for the evening would be on Geraniums, not their Pelargonium, Erodium or Monsonia cousins, which are the four genera within the Geraniaceae family. She indicated that Geraniums are usually classified as hardy and are typically simple, five-petaled wildflowers that are winter dormant. While the genus contains around 420 species, and is found on all continents except Antarctica, Robin’s presentation was composed primarily of the Mediterranean-climate types.

She began her talk with *G. californicum*, or *California cranesbill*, which can be found in the wilds of the Sierra Nevada and Southern California coastal ranges. While available in the trade, she said that the seeds of this pink-flowering native can easily be harvested to grow at home. Continuing with ground covers, she showed slides of the various *G. x cantabrigena*, including ‘Biokovo’, ‘Hanne’, and ‘Cambridge’, all of which are widely available, and have a color range from white to purple. Rounding out the ground covers, she spoke about *G. macrorrhizum* and its numerous cultivars, including ‘Album’, ‘Ridsko’, ‘Pindus’, ‘Variegatum’ and ‘White-Ness’ among others. Finishing this class of plants was *G. dalmaticum*, a pinkish-purple species that only blooms in May.

The next category Robin shared was made up of the many shade-loving species which she considers to be the “supporting cast” in any garden - useful as fillers, edging and at the base of trees and shrubs. These included the many varieties of *G. maderense* (all of which can be crossed), *G. pyrenaicum*, *G. nostrum*, and the very large group of *G. phaeum* that have a wide range of colors (including the yellow ‘Springtime’) and sizes, making them useful in many garden settings. Some of the highlights were ‘Mrs. Withey Price’, ‘Merry Widow’, ‘Lily Lovell’ and ‘Wargrave Pink’. Next among the shade lovers were *G. gracile*, *G. x oxonianum*, and *G. endressii*, which offered some taller options for the back of the border. She also showed some pictures from the 2016 Chaumont Garden Festival in France, including *G. oxonianum* ‘Ankum’s White’, which is very pure, and *G. oxonianum* ‘Dreamland’ in a container, and is in flower from May through December.

Next came plants for rock gardens and containers that were limited to selections of *G. cinereum*, including ‘Signal’, ‘Thumbling Heart’ and ‘Rothbury Gem’, followed by border and bedding plants. This last was the largest group by far, with over 40 different species, including *G. magniflorum*, *G. sanguineum*, *G. ibani*, *G. x magnificum*, *G. himalayense* and the popular *G. pratense*, which Robin indicated cannot survive more than a season in the heat of Southern California. She also warned against *G. incanum*, which she described as a “thug” because it seeds like crazy and is impossible to remove once it takes hold.

Robin concluded her presentation with some general recommendations covering basic care guidelines applicable for most geraniums, as follows:

- plant in fast-draining soil
- make a soilless mixture for container plants, which can include perlite, sand, coir, red lava rock, or finely ground bark
- don’t allow plants to dry out
- cut plants back in late fall, or winter
- give them “morning sun / afternoon shade” as a general rule

Afterward, she answered a round of audience questions and then made herself available to sign copies of her book. Both her book and plants from her nursery were for sale during the meeting and received positive attention, much as her informative presentation did.

For a complete list of the slides shown, go to the “Past Meetings” page on SCHS website at: www.socalhort.org, and to learn more about specific plants, visit Robin’s website at: geraniaceae.com.

*Sabine Steinmetz*

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**SCHS GARDEN EVENT**

The SCHS is excited to offer a new local Garden Tour at the Hollywood Hills home of Johanna and Eugene Woollcott. Here is one view of the garden from Joanna’s website, wildgardeningla.com (Park Oak page).

Mark your calendar for this event!

**Sunday, May 7**

9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

A flyer with more info. will be available at the March meeting, and a reservation form will be posted online, as well as included in the April newsletter.

**Reservations will be required for this event, so don’t miss out!**

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**SHARING SECRETS RESPONSES**

What is your favorite rainy day, garden-based reading material? Design magazines? Seed catalogs? Botanical-themed mysteries?

Unfortunately, we did not receive any responses to the above question we posted last month! Perhaps everyone was too engrossed in their reading to write about it...

However, we did receive a friendly letter from former member, Roger Boddart, who is an ecological landscape designer in Fallbrook, California. He calls himself a “maker of natural gardens” and sent along a very detailed list of gardening resolutions which are never too late to apply. As we have no reading recommendations to share, we will pass along some of Roger’s suggestions instead.

- tackle that problem area in your garden - and take joy in fixing it
- create a “secret niche” in your landscape to rest and meditate awhile
- share your extra bounty with a Senior Center, food bank, or others in need
- think globally and act locally, for you, your family and community are part of the solution for a sustainable Earth

Thank you for your positive words and for staying in touch with the SCHS, Roger. We appreciate it and wish you the best! Feel free to correspond with us in the future... - Ed.
**PLANTS SHOWN at JANUARY 12, 2017 MEETING**

**Leonotis nepetifolia** (Lamiaceae)

Lion’s ear, shown by Eric and Ann Brooks in a bouquet with an unidentified Salvia, is a plant species that is native to South Africa and southern India, but it is also commonly found growing in Latin America. Flowers grow as whorls of orange flowers on stems that can reach 6-8 feet high. Can be distinguished from *L. leonurus* by its cordate leaves. It is typically considered an annual, but will survive as a perennial in Zones 8 and above.

This specimen was grown in Baldwin Hills.

**Aloe vaombe** (Aloaceae)

This aloe (exhibited in bloom) was grown from seed and shown by Matt-Dell Tufenkian. *Aloe vaombe* is from Madagascar, and when full grown can reach a height of 12 feet, earning it the name Malagasy Tree Aloe.

The flowers are red and held in candelabra-like spikes well above the foliage.

**Dombeya wallichii** (Malvaceae)

Pink ball tree shown by Eric and Ann Brooks. This plant, with flowers resembling a hydrangea, is a large evergreen shrub/small tree to 25 feet, with a native range including India, East Africa, and Madagascar. It blooms fall to winter with large, pendulous clusters of pink flowers that are both showy and fragrant. Needs regular water and pruning back to prevent having a ragged appearance.

**Also exhibited (not all shown):**

**Crassula perforata** (Crassulaceae)

from South Africa

Shown by Gary Kamisher.

**Calathea sp. ‘Prayer Plant’**

(Marantaceae)

from tropical regions of the Americas

Shown by Gary Kamisher.

**Aloe hybd. × haworthioides ‘Twilight Zone’**

(Tissue cultured)

Shown by Matt-Dell Tufenkian.

**Poellnitzia rubriflora × Gasteria** (Grown from seed)

Shown by Matt-Dell Tufenkian.

Compiled by Steven Gerischer

Photos by Sabine Steinmetz
Southern California Horticultural Society

GREEN SHEET

Plant Forum Selections • February 2017

The Plant Forum is a display of plants grown by members & exhibited at our monthly general meeting.

PLANTS SHOWN at FEBRUARY 9, 2016 MEETING

Hermodactylus tuberosa (Iridaceae)
Snake Head iris, from the Mediterranean region, shown by Laura Bauer. This summer dormant bulb has small, slightly fragrant iris flowers of greenish-yellow with black purple falls. Needs well-drained, summer dry soils to thrive.

Collection of Lachenalia (Asparagaceae)
Shown by John Wickham. These South African bulbs are perfect subjects for growing and displaying in small containers - also allowing for the summer dry conditions they need. Many are available from specialist growers, or through bulb exchanges.

Lachenalia aloides var. aurea
This selection has pure golden flowers

Lachenalia aloides var. quadricolor (pictured here)
This selection has golden-yellow blooms with green and red markings and a pronounced flare of the petals at the end of the flower tube, marked with pale purple

Lachenalia bulbifera 'Mango'
Large orange tubular flowers

Lachenalia framesii
Bottle-shaped blooms of delicate lilac and yellow

Lachenalia gillettii 'Dark Purple'

Lachenalia mutabilis 'Electric Blue'
Darker blue flowered selection with long flower spikes of small but brightly colored bloom

Ipheion uniflorum ‘Rolf Fiedler’ (Amaryllidaceae)
Shown by Kathy Itomura, ‘Rolf Fiedler’ is a darker blue selection of this flowering bulb native to Argentina and Uruguay. Often used as a carpet grower under native oak trees as it appreciates the shaded, summer dry conditions there.

Ixia rapunculoides (Iridaceae)
Shown by Joan Citron, this bulb from South Africa has small lavender bluebell-like blooms.

Arctostaphylos densiflora ‘Sentinel’ (Ericaceae)
Manzanita, native to California, shown by Sheldon Lisker. Shrub to 6 feet high and wide with silvery green foliage. White blooms have a pink blush. Specimen shown has been in his garden for 30 years. Needs good drainage but will tolerate clay soil with care. No summer water!

Crossosoma californicum (Crossosomataceae)
California rockflower, native to the Channel Islands and a few spots on the mainland. Shown by Sheldon Lisker. Not often found for sale. This shrub with white flowers can reach 6 feet. After flowers fade the seed pods are of interest. Tolerates clay soils.

Also exhibited (but not shown):

Bulbine latifolia (Asphodelaceae) from South Africa. Shown by Joan Citron.

Coffea arabica (Rubiaceae) endemic to the mountains of Yemen and south-west Ethiopia. Shown by Matt-Dell Tufenkian.

Iris unguicularis (Iridaceae) from the Mediterranean. Shown by Sheldon Lisker.

Compiled by Steven Gerischer
Photos by Yoav Paskowitz
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.

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM OF L.A.
900 Exposition Blvd., Los Angeles 90007
213.763.3466
nhm.org
Saturday & Sunday, 3/18 & 3/19, 9:30am-5pm. L.A. Nature Fest. Celebrate city wildlife including plants and animals in our Nature Gardens, which are also a research site where our educators explain nature's stories. Fest features performances, workshops and tours. Members: Free; Non-members: $12 for adults, $9 for students & seniors with valid ID, $5 for children, free for ages 2 and under. For tickets and info, visit: nhm.org/naturefest.

RANCHO LOS CERRITOS
4600 Virginia Road, Long Beach 90807
562-206-2040
rantoloscerritos.org

LOS ANGELES COUNTY ARBORETUM
301 N. Baldwin Ave., Arcadia 91007
626.821.4623
arboretum.org
Thursday, 3/9, 9:30am-12noon. What’s Happening In Gardening Field Trip - Less Common Australian Trees, Beyond Eucalyptus, at The Huntington with Kathy Musial. Learn which Australian trees can be grown in Southern California, from the familiar Brachychiton to the lesser-known Hernandia. Wear comfortable shoes to walk in the Australian Garden. $25 (incl. Huntington admission). Pre-registration required through Education Dept. Sunday, 3/12, 1-3pm. What’s Happening In Gardening - Planning The Summer Garden with Christine Anthony, the Renee’s Garden Seeds rep for The Arboretum and a UCCE Master Gardener. She will give tips on plant choices from the garden to the kitchen. $25 members, $35 non-members. Call Education Dept. to register or pay at class.

Thursday, 3/16, 9:30am-12noon. What’s Happening In Gardening - Landscaping with Herbs & Edibles with Matt Tufefkin. Learn practical applications of a variety of plants to create attractive and useful gardens. $25. Call Education Dept. to register or pay at class. Saturday, 3/18, 10am-12noon. Plant Propagation with Laramie Haynes. Class will cover and demonstrate basic techniques (seeds, cuttings, divisions) you can do at home. Handout with easy-to-propagate plants will be provided. $25 members, $35 non-members. Call Education Dept. to register or pay at class. Sunday, 3/19, 1-3pm. What’s Happening In Gardening - Scented Geranium Garden. Matt-Dell Tufefkin will share his family legacy and favorite plants: geraniums. See slides from the building of the Scented Geranium Garden (which Matt helped create) and go on a walk-through tour. $25 members, $35 non-members. Call Education Dept. to register or pay at class.

Thursday, 3/23, 9:30am-12noon. What’s Happening In Gardening - 5 Things That Will Completely Blow Your Mind About Trees. Frank McDonough, the Arboretum’s answer man, will talk about trees, and the difference between success and failure in caring for them. $25. Call Education Dept. to register or pay at class.


Saturday, 3/25, 10am, Palm Room. Tomato Talk. Christine Anthony, the Renee’s Garden Seeds rep for The Arboretum and a UCCE Master Gardener, will talk about tomato plants and seeds, including heirloom varieties, and how to grow them. Free with admission. Saturday, 3/25, 10am-4pm. Peacock Day! Celebrating the birds and learn about their habits and natural attributes. Reservations required for 3pm lecture: $5 members, $10 non-members, $4 children 5-12. Call to reserve.

Thursday, 3/30, 9:30am-12noon. What’s Happening In Gardening - Spring Blooming Plants. Joe Brosius, Production Manager at Magic Growers will bring a wide array of plants from the nursery for show and tell. www.magicgrowers.com. $25. Call Education Dept. to register or pay at class.

DESCANSO GARDENS
1418 Descanso Drive, La Canada 91011
818.949.7980
descansogardens.org
Saturday & Sundays, 3/4 & 3/5, and 3/11 & 3/12, 10am-4pm. Cherry Blossom Festival. Two weekends of live music, origami, food and beautiful blooms in the gardens. NOTE: Advance Timed Tickets are required and available at descansogardens.org.

Saturday & Sunday, 3/25 & 3/26, 9am-5pm. Tomatomania! World’s largest tomato seedling sale returns with plant sales, growing classes, cooking demos, food offerings and hands-on, tomato-themed fun for everyone! Activities free with admission unless otherwise noted.

HUNTINGTON BOTANICAL GARDENS
1151 Oxford Road, San Marino 91088
626.405.2100
huntington.org

THEODORE PAYNE FOUNDATION
10459 Tuxford St., Sun Valley 91352
818.768.1802
thedoorepayne.org
Friday, 3/10, 9:00am-noon. Propagating California Native Plants with TPF’s Propagation Manager Jordan Isken. Learn basics of vegetative propagation from cuttings and divisions, and leave with a flat of TPF’s Native Nursery (seeds, cuttings, divisions) you can do at home. Handout with basic tips on plant care. $65 members, $75 non-members. Register on-line at: http://rsabg.org/nursery-calendar.

SUNDAY, 3/12
Sunday, 3/12, 2pm. Plants of Disneyland: Jungle Cruise with Dr. George Spiliotis. $20 members, $25 non-members. RSVP on-line at: ucrbg@ucr.edu or call 951-784-6962. Check payable to UC Regents, memo: 3/12 lecture/tour, mail to: UC Riverside, Attn. Botanic Gardens, 2460 Geology, Riverside, CA 92521.

Sunday, 3/19, 10:12noon. Creating a Backyard Habitat with Ann Platzer. $20 members, $25 non-members. RSVP on-line at: ucrbg@ucr.edu or call 951-784-6962. Check payable to UC Regents, memo: 3/12 lecture/tour, mail to: UC Riverside, Attn. Botanic Gardens, 2460 Geology, Riverside, CA 92521.

FULLERTON ARBORETUM
1900 Associated Rd., Fullerton 92831
657-278-3407
fullertonarborcetum.org

RANCHO SANTA ANA BOTANIC GARDEN
1500 N. College Ave., Claremont 91711
909.625.8767
rسابg.org

Saturday, 3/18, 9:30am-12noon. “How to plant the right kind of plants in the right place”; A presentation by Matt Tufefkin, Master Gardener, of Fullerton Arboretum. $15 members, $20 non-members. Register on-line at: http://rsабg.org/nursery-calendar.

DESSERT HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY OF THE COACHELLA VALLEY
92264
www.deserthorticulturalsoociety.org
Sunday, 3/26, 12noon-4pm. 12th Annual Desert Garden Tour. $25 members, $35 non-members. Register now at: http://deserthorticulturalsoociety.org. For more information, contact: Dr. Charles G. Gross, President, cggross9@gmail.com or 909.661.6076.

U.C. RIVERSIDE BOTANIC GARDEN
900 University Ave., Riverside 92521
951-784-8692
gardens.ucr.edu
Sunday, 3/11, 9:30-11am. California Native Plant Walk and Talk with George Spiliotis. $20 members, $25 non-members, RSVP on-line at: ucrbg@ucr.edu or call 951-784-6962. Check payable to UC Regents, memo: 3/11 walk/talk, mail to: UC Riverside, Attn. Botanic Gardens, 2460 Geology, Riverside, CA 92521.

Saturday, 3/18, 10am-12noon. Creating a Backyard Habitat with Ann Platzer. $20 members, $25 non-members. RSVP on-line at: ucrbg@ucr.edu or call 951-784-6962. Check payable to UC Regents, memo: 3/11 walk/talk, mail to: UC Riverside, Attn. Botanic Gardens, 2460 Geology, Riverside, CA 92521.

Yvonne Savio
Meetings regularly held at Friendship Auditorium, 3201 Riverside Drive, Los Angeles CA 90027, unless otherwise noted.

March 9 - Barbara Eisenstein, author of *Wild Suburbia: Learning to Garden with Native Plants*

April 13 - Scott Kleinrock, designer of the new California Garden at the Huntington Botanical Gardens

VENUE: The Huntington - Details TBA

May 11 - Rebecca Latta, horticultural consultant, speaking about TLC for Your Trees

GARDEN QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt.”

- Margaret Atwood

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

NEWSLETTER March 2017