



## *WHS May Speaker*

Wednesday, May 11, 2011

Doors open at 7:00 p.m.; meeting begins at 7:30 p.m.

**Kristin Yanker-Hansen**, Kristin's Garden, Danville, CA

### **Year-Round Cut Flowers from the Garden**

One of the most common requests from clients to their landscape gardener is for year-round color. Well, lucky us here in wonderful California where our climate allows us to grow flowers for cutting in winter, spring, summer and fall. Even if you live in an area with winter frost or extreme summer heat, it is possible to fill your vases with flowers from the garden. Kristin will show us many varieties of flowers she has grown which are suitable for four seasons of cut flowers.

Kristin Yanker-Hansen, flower garden specialist, was born on the East Coast but has spent more than half her life gardening in California. She lives in Danville, which experiences considerable frost in the winter and very high temperatures in the summer, and she has experimented with numerous plants in order to attain the nirvana of year-round bloom.

Kristin is the former president of the California Horticultural Society, the former Horticulture Chair for the California State Garden Club and has written articles for Pacific Horticulture as well as numerous newsletters.

**MEETING LOCATION** Our monthly meetings feature the speakers listed above. Doors open at 7:00 p.m. and meetings begin at 7:30 p.m. The location is the Parish Hall of Christ Episcopal Church, 1040 Border Road, Los Altos, 94024.

You are invited to join our speaker for dinner at 5:30 p.m. at **Chef Chu's**, 1067 North San Antonio Road, Los Altos, 94022 (near El Camino). This is a terrific opportunity for our members to get to know each other better, and to get to chat with our speakers. Please contact Pat Knight to confirm: [deerproof@yahoo.com](mailto:deerproof@yahoo.com) or (650) 941-6136.

Would you like to sponsor a lecture for the WHS that is of particular interest to you? It would be much appreciated! Please call Pat Knight at (650) 941-6136 if you are interested.

## *Plant of the Month: Wisteria floribunda 'Ed's Blue Dragon'*

There was enough interest in the story I told at the April WHS meeting about my Dad's wisteria that I thought I'd re-tell it, ending up the year with my current favorite. I also did a little research, and have a few more details.

In the 1980's, Ed Carman (in California) and Trevor Davies (in New Zealand) were each (cooperatively) collecting named wisteria cultivars in an effort to gather the true examples of each. This effort included letters traveling all over the world following rumors of the fabled red wisteria, and the elusive true (super dark, double purple) 'Black Dragon.' One of Ed's nurseryman friends was Toichi Domoto, known for many plant introductions, and responsible for supplying many of the plants originally purchased and grown at Filoli.

In 1988, Toichi gave Ed some wisteria seed. According to Ed's oral history, he "planted a bunch of seedlings, and in three years some of them started to bloom, and one of the first ones to bloom was a double one, which I thought was very unusual ... Since then I've had three or four more doubles bloom out of that same seed batch." Well, I was in charge of watering these plants in the 15-gallon cans, and Dad told me to watch out for them. I did, and in 1996 one looked different when it started blooming, I told Dad he'd better take a look, because it looked blue to me. He agreed, and sent scions or rooted cuttings to Trevor in New Zealand, since Trevor was working with Paul Turner of NZ Liners with wisteria by this time. They grew them on, and both agreed when the plants started blooming in New Zealand that the double blue was indeed unique. So Paul started the I-o-n-g process of building up stock and applying for a plant patent. And all during that time we could not sell this double blue wisteria in order that a patent might be granted.

Time passed. Ed consulted with Pete Sugawara about a possible name, and asked Toichi for his opinion. No one came up with any great ideas. In 2008 I met Paul when he visited Carman's Nursery in Gilroy. He asked what I thought of 'Ed's Blue Dragon', and I thought that was the best idea I'd heard! More time passed. Fast forward to February 2011, when I went to the NORCAL trade show, and picked up the new Ball Ornamentals plant catalog. As usual, it took several weeks for me to look through all the catalogs, but one evening as I paged through the Ball catalog, as I neared the end, I noticed the word "Wisteria" followed by "New 'Ed's Blue'." I have to admit I got pretty jazzed to see that. When I emailed Paul about the name, he replied that yes, this is Dad's selection, making its first appearance in the United States. Paul still intends that the name be 'Ed's Blue Dragon', but it keeps getting shortened.

## Western Hort News and Business

### WHS Field Trip ~ Jim Dixon's Estate, Sunday, May 15, 11 a.m.

We have an invitation from Jim Dixon to visit his "estate" and view his remarkable plants and landscape designs in Occidental. But wait, there's more! Not only will we be permitted to picnic on the premises and but also we are welcome to see Jim's home which is adorned with remarkable artifacts and ancient rugs. To sign up and receive information on transportation and detailed directions (trust me on that one – don't use Google), contact Janice Gillmore at [janicegillmore@yahoo.com](mailto:janicegillmore@yahoo.com) or (408) 867-9428.

### WHS Summer Picnic at "Welterverde" (Well at Peace), Sunday, June 12, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Please join us for our summer picnic at the Garden of Jeanne McFarland & Niki Muller, "Welterverde." There will be a short tour of the gardening at 10:30 a.m. This is a 1 ½+ acre garden with its many pathways and "secret" places, places to sit, places to view the hills and visit with friends. Rhododendrons, roses, clematis, abutilons and European perennials are among the plants that flower in the spring. Summer flowerings are mainly from California and the southern hemisphere.

**Food** People are welcome to bring potluck, brown bags or food to put on the BBQ. Please supply your own plates and utensils.

**Drinks** Ice, lemonade, tea and coffee.

**Activities** Nothing!! or swimming – the pool should be warm (solar heated). Please bring your own towels.

Please remember this is a country garden. Paths are uneven, steps can be slippery and watch for low branches, so please be careful while exploring the garden. Wear safe shoes. **Hold on to railings.**



**Directions & Address. 161 Sausal Dr. Portola Valley Ca 94028.** From 280, and Alpine overpass proceed SW along Alpine to 2<sup>nd</sup> Golden Oak on right. Turn right heading NW for 0.2 miles, bear left to Sausal Drive heading W 0.3 miles to #161 Sausal Drive, on the left. (650) 851-4097.

Please park on the road; there are 6 or 7 spaces for parking at the house these for handicapped parking only. All others please park on the road. Please carpool if possible. If disabled, please use the top parking or have someone drive you to the top level and have them re-park on the road. ~Niki Muller

*Sweet flowers are slow  
And weeds make haste  
~ Shakespeare*

### Raffle Table ~ Great Plants from our WHS Plant Sale

A big thanks to Nancy Schramm for organizing the very successful silent auction at our April meeting. Once again, we raised over \$800 and sent many happy gardeners home with wonderful plants from the Hot Plant Picks Exhibit at the SF Flower and Garden Show. Also, thanks to the nurseries who donated new and reintroduced plants for the exhibit. The May raffle table will have lots of great plants from our WHS plant sale. There should be something for everyone! ~Roberta Barnes

### 28 Years Ago

On Monday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 1983, WHS met to hear about "Perennial Favorites" a talk given by "two of our favorite members, Emily Brown and Betsy Clebsch." The two women teamed up using slides and cut material to show the uses and requirements of some "outstanding ornamentals." The June meeting was announced: a picnic supper and tour of the Stanford campus, led by Dr. Ron Bracewell, author of *Trees of Stanford and its Environs*. Rose Hand taught a 3-part photography workshop: one evening of instruction, one day at Edgewood Park shooting, and a one evening slide and print critique (to which all members were invited). (Wouldn't this be a great workshop to offer for digital photographers?!) The workshop was organized by Mary Kaye; she also announced a July field trip to Goldsmith Seeds (now Syngenta Flowers) in Gilroy. ~Nancy Schramm

### What's New on Our Website, [westernhort.org](http://westernhort.org)

The **photos of the Hot Plant Picks for 2011** from the San Francisco Garden Show have now been downloaded - all 100 of them! Plenty of unusual and new plants to pique your interest. In addition, Mark McCabe's succinct and informative synopsis of the most recent program are now included in the Program page of each speaker, starting with September 2010. Have you **lost or deleted your newsletter?** or **mislaidd the plant notes?** Not to worry. In addition to the current copy, back issues are stored on the website; the newsletters are from September 2006 and the Plant Notes are from January 2008.

Members are encouraged to familiarize themselves with our website. There are many interesting links especially in the recycling fields. Any new ideas or suggestions are welcome. Pat Knight, Webmaster [deerproof@yahoo.com](mailto:deerproof@yahoo.com). ~Pat Knight



## Commentary on April's Speaker: Jim Dixon

How does one go about starting to construct a garden? Do you read a few books, perhaps take a class or two, or just wing it, with results that could be less than desirable? Maybe the best way is to hire a professional, one who is truly in tune with both his client's wishes and his own natural artistic talent.

Such a "pro" was introduced to us at our April program. Jim Dixon, of Jim Dixon Gardens in Kensington, wowed the crowd with slides of eye-popping color and land sculpture, all the while keeping us grounded with his keen sense of proportion and horticultural knowledge. It's one thing to know about plants and gardens; it is quite another to put the whole thing together with a look and feel that leaves you spellbound.

Our speaker began his talk with some humorous musing: "So much of the lore of gardening is fantasy" and "an avalanche of garden literature" were just a few remarks Mr. Dixon made in a good-natured manner. His intention was to make us realize that garden design is as much art as it is science – a synthesis of all of its elements. Our speaker made the observation that musical and visual color, texture and form are not all that different.

Mr. Dixon went on to say that most of us are accustomed to thinking of gardens as ornamentation to the house, much like wallpaper is inside. He suggested looking at the house as part of the garden: that is, a garden with a house rather than a house with a garden.

Our speaker's slide presentation showed numerous pictures of his handiwork and philosophy. Contrasting "Before" and "After" pictures displayed stark differences of how illusions of space and size can be achieved by the use of mounds, boulders and paths. Massive plantings of varying shapes and colors help tie all of the elements together, with careful thought as to flowering times and cultural needs.

While all of this can seem a bit daunting, especially with the numerous impressive estates Mr. Dixon has worked on, my sense is that there are still valuable lessons and insight we all can gain from our speaker's dynamic presentation. If we are open to new ideas and ways of looking at a garden, as well as trusting our own sense of beauty and "inner self," a garden transformation, large or small, is certainly within reach. ~Mark McCabe

**Incredible new website ~ The Plant List** at <http://www.theplantlist.org> is a working list of all known plant species. Version 1 aims to be comprehensive for species of Vascular plant (flowering plants, conifers, ferns and their allies) and of *Bryophytes* (mosses and liverworts). Collaboration between the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and Missouri Botanical Garden enabled the creation of The Plant List by combining multiple checklist data sets held by these institutions and other collaborators. *The Plant List* includes 1,040,426 scientific plant names of species rank. Of these 298,900 are accepted species names. *The Plant List* contains 620 plant families and 16,167 plant genera. ~web tip from Leslie Dean and Nancy Schramm



### ***Wisteria floribunda* 'Ed's Blue Dragon'**

Extremely long racemes of mid-blue, fully double blooms. Flowers emerge progressively down the racemes at the same time that the green foliage develops.

*Photo: ballhort.com*

### **Western Horticultural Society Officers and Board Members**

President: Richard Tiede

Vice President: Christine Bate

Recording Secretary: Mark McCabe

Treasurer: Steve Staiger

Other Board Members: Kerry Barrs, Roberta Barnes, Jon Craig, Abby Garner, Sherry Hall, Rosalie Shepherd and Katie Wong.

To contact us, please send email to [info@westernhort.org](mailto:info@westernhort.org), or contact Chris Egan at 650-948-4614, or send mail to Western Horticulture Society, PO Box 60507, Palo Alto, CA, 94306.

### **About membership in Western Hort:**

To join or renew, send your name, address, phone number and a check made out to "Western Horticultural Society" to PO Box 620673, Woodside, CA 94062-0673.

Membership Rates: A 1-year membership (Sep-Aug) includes four issues of Pacific Horticulture magazine. Regular membership is \$35, Sustaining is \$45, Contributing is \$60 and Plant Lover is \$100+. We have also added a Family membership of \$50 for two or more members at the same address, and a Student rate of \$20.

Please visit our website at [westernhort.org](http://westernhort.org) for a membership form.

### **Newsletter Submissions & Address Changes:**

Please send submissions for the September newsletter by August 18 to [mrm@sonic.net](mailto:mrm@sonic.net) or (650) 326-2029.

Please send address changes to [grew@pacbell.net](mailto:grew@pacbell.net) or (650) 851-5162.



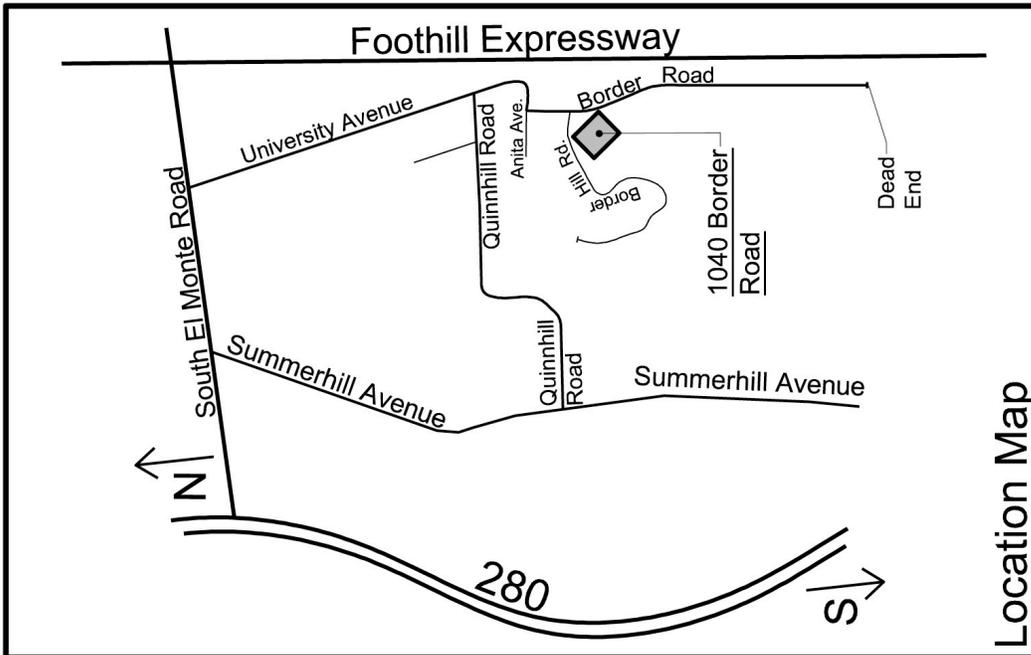
PO Box 60507  
Palo Alto, CA 94306

First Class Mail

---

VISIT US AT WESTERNHORT.ORG

---



Western Horticultural Society  
Monthly Meetings  
Christ Episcopal Church  
Parish Hall  
1040 Border Road, Los Altos 94024