



WHS February Speaker

Wednesday, February 9, 2011

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

Don Mahoney, Curator/Nursery Manager, San Francisco Botanical Gardens at Strybing Arboretum, San Francisco

The Best New Plants For Shade

Shade can be one of the most challenging gardening conditions. Trying to create color, texture, and interest while dealing with competition from tree roots, leaf debris, and little light, makes gardening in this microclimate a frustrating endeavor.

Don Mahoney will show us new and exciting plants for those dark little places. These plants have come into cultivation in the last decade from places like Central and South America, South East Asia, and even South Africa.

Some of these plants come from the tropical mountain Cloud Forests, others from Mediterranean climate forests. Most will grow in the Bay Area with only minimal frost protection, partial shade, and normal water. *Come and get new ideas for your shady garden spot!*

Don Mahoney has worked many years at Strybing Arboretum with plants from all over the world. His current position as Curator and Nursery Manager affords him the luxury of working with plants all day long, a dream job for most of us! Visit the San Francisco Botanical Garden's website at <http://www.sfbotanicalgarden.org>.

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 **Bella Vita, 376 First St., Los Altos**. 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 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.

Note: Different restaurant this month!
Bella Vita, 376 First St., Los Altos

March 2011 Speaker

Wednesday, March 9, 7:30 p.m.

Cliff Low, Perry Laboratory, Watsonville, California.
Fertilizers, Amendments, Organic? Conventional? Oh My! Lab Testing to Decide What to Use for Improving Your Soil Condition.

Commentary on January's Speaker: Andrea Hurd

There is a special quality about a person who can take something mundane as a rock and use it to create a thing of long-lasting beauty and function. That person is January's speaker, Andrea Hurd of Mariposa Gardening and Design, Berkeley. Ms. Hurd's presentation, "Mallorcan Masonry: Dry Stacked Stone Walls for Beauty and Habitat" aroused our curiosity and interest, not to mention a desire to make travel plans to visit this beautiful island off mainland Spain.

Andrea got her training and appreciation of "dry" walls by attending a stonework symposium held on the island in 2007. This was a "hands-on" workshop – learning by observing and building with others. Our speaker expressed her preference for dry stacked stone walls for the way nooks and crannies result from this type of construction, providing a living habitat for creatures and small plants. Here at home, she incorporates this philosophy and style into her gardens.

The slides Ms. Hurd presented showed us, in varying stages, the thought and care one must undertake to build a strong wall. Borne out of necessity, Mallorcans over centuries have built these incredible walls, some over 20 feet high, to terrace into the hilly, rocky land to eke out a living as farmers. Andrea mentioned that walls of good quality last 200-300 years; those of poorer quality about 50. Eventually, though, all must be rebuilt – not a small undertaking.

Our speaker delved further into some building techniques the Mallorcans use. The native rock is a type of limestone, carefully selected, shaped and fitted in a "honeycomb" pattern, a technique she feels is stronger than the "one over two" method employed in New England. Andrea felt the five-sided shaped stones fit more snugly and resist the natural shifting (including that caused by earthquakes) that regularly occur over time. Whether we decide to undertake building a wall ourselves or hire someone to do it, I felt this excellent lecture gave our audience a greater appreciation for the philosophy and art of constructing this ever-more popular element of garden design. ~Mark McCabe

Western Hort News and Business

Hello everyone. I'd like to take this opportunity to again thank retiring Board of Director members Chris Egan, Michelle Bond, Nancy Schramm, and Niki Muller, for their 6 years of service to the WHS. Our newly elected Board members are Ann Griesse, Roberta Barnes, and Rosalie Shepherd. Our officers, Christine Bate - VP, Steve Staiger - Treasurer, Mark McCabe - Secretary, and myself, Richard Tiede - President, are continuing for another year. ~Richard Tiede

Raffle Table

Thank you board members for all your contributions to the January raffle table. The February table is traditionally supplied by the general membership. So bring your plants, books and garden tools and help create another tempting raffle table. ~Roberta Barnes

28 Years Ago

In February 1983, WHS met on Valentine's Day to hear Dr. Winslow Briggs: "Plant Responses to the Environment." At the time he was ten years into his position as "Director of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, Department of Plant Biology, located here on the Stanford Campus." Among many other accomplishments, he was co-author of "the extremely popular biology text, *Life on Earth*."

His research interests included "the effects of hormones and...blue and red light on the growth of plants... the isolation and description of the blue light activated pigment which causes plants to turn towards the sun... the discovery of 'light piping,' whereby the sun's light is optically piped to dark parts of the plant where it causes growth changes." I'll bet that some of Dr. Briggs research laid part of the foundation for the talk Luen Miller gave WHS in February 2006 entitled "What Makes Plants Bloom." New officers for the year were announced, as well as a welcome to new board member Mary Kaye, who brought in a very fragrant *Erysimum concinnum* for discussion. My dad, Ed Carman, brought in a couple of my favorite winter bloomers, *Michelia doltsopa* and *Prunus campanulata*, and Charlotte Anderson showed *Spiraea thunbergii*, *Bulbinella robusta* and *B. floribunda*. ~Nancy Schramm

Hot Plant Pick

It's Back! WHS will once more be in charge of the HPP exhibit at the San Francisco Flower and Garden Show from March 23rd to 27th. At our February 9th meeting (and at the February 21st Cal Hort meeting) we will have sign-ups for volunteers to staff the exhibit (and get in free to the show!) But lots of prep is happening now. We're designing new, computer-friendly plant information signs, asking for cool plant donations, and making plans for increased visibility at the show. If you want to join in on the fun, or have suggestions or questions, call or email Nancy Schramm at (408) 847-2313, greenthumb@carmansnursery.com. ~Nancy Schramm

News from the Website

Still plenty of space for you to advertise yourself on our "Professionals" page, anything garden-related. We are adding a "Landscape Designers" section. Photos wanted for our members page: any plants or flowers, wonderful, weird or just plain interesting. Use digital format and send by e-mail to deerproof@yahoo.com. ~Pat Knight

General Meeting Report, January 12, 2011

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. President Richard Tiede. Treasurer Steve Staiger reported that "we are in the black." Our checking account began with \$13,500 and ended the year at \$14,550. Our C.D. account, reflecting a weak market, maintained its value at \$29,000 with no net profit. We have currently 166 members, an increase from 2009. Printing costs are down, thanks to more newsletters being received electronically. Staiger noted that the money in our checking account sustains our monthly payments for rent and speakers, as well as expenses such as insurance and the scholarship award.

Outgoing board members Michelle Bosch, Chris Egan, Nancy Schramm and Niki Muller were recognized and presented each with a gift. Also acknowledged was Liz Calhoon for her beautiful centerpieces and help with the potluck dinner. New board members unanimously voted in approval were Roberta Barnes, Rosalie Shepherd and Ann Griesse. In addition, Griesse became our new Corresponding Secretary.

Abby Garner, Pacific Horticulture Society Representative, reviewed the previous year's accomplishments and upcoming events. As she read the new year's Officers and Board members, it was noted that one of our own, Bracey Tiede, was among this group. Garner reminded the audience that all Pac Hort-sponsored events are discounted to WHS members.

The General Meeting was adjourned at 8 p.m. by our President. Respectfully submitted, Mark McCabe, Recording Secretary.

February Calendar of Horticultural Events

Unusual Citrus for the Garden by Luen Miller. Cal Hort Society monthly meeting, February 21, 7:15 p.m. County Fair Building, San Francisco Botanical Garden, San Francisco. Guest fee: \$5.

Annual Bonsai Garden Lake Merritt Mammoth Fundraiser. Feb 26-27, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Lakeside Garden Center, Oakland. Benefit for Golden State Bonsai Federation. Nancy Schramm will be there on Sunday (vendor's day).

See pacifichorticulture.org for an extensive calendar of horticultural events

Plant of the Month: *Salvia macrophylla*

I talked with Richard Tiede about a plant for this month's column, something from the much beloved genus of *Salvia*. Richard admitted to growing some, well, quite a few different sages, but *S. macrophylla*, the upright form from Ecuador is just about top of his list of favorites. He got it at the 2009 plant sale at Cabrillo College and has had it in the ground at about 300' elevation in East San Jose for almost two years. The plant is frost tender, but Richard hasn't seen much damage from the short periods of 28F he's experienced.

S. macrophylla is a multi-stemmed shrub that can get quite tall, easily 6'. It tends to be a little floppy, so Richard has erected a natural looking grapestake corral to help keep it upright, rather than designing around what could be an 8' diameter monster. It's definitely worth the little extra effort. Imagine a shrub with perhaps 20 stems, covered with 6" long, bright green leaves that are dusty purple on the reverse. Accent that with flowers that are in inflorescences of a dozen stems with 10-15 flowers per stem open at any one time. And oh, what flowers! They are a rich, vibrant, cobalt blue when open (good luck catching this color accurately in a picture) and the buds, calyx, and flower stems are all blue-black, which makes the open flowers stand out dramatically. This salvia, like many, blooms most of the year (including right now) with a little time off in late fall. Bees and hummingbirds find it irresistible.

Richard prunes *S. macrophylla* selectively, removing the larger, bloomed out stems at various times of the year. Bracey always knows when he's been 'playing' with this plant, since various sticky parts will cling tenaciously to his clothing. This salvia requires some summer water (not a lot) and a little afternoon shade would be good. It's growing fine in Richard's garden, where it has about a foot of good garden soil, underlaid by native clay and rock. It grows easily from cuttings, and probably comes true from seed as well. There is a Peruvian form that has pure green leaves. ~Nancy Schramm



Salvia macrophylla
Photo: Richard Tiede

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, Ann Griese, Sherry Hall, Rosalie Shepherd and Katie Wong.

To contact us, please send email to 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 for a membership form.

Return to Monterey: Regionalism and Sustainability

A Pacific Horticulture Study Weekend

On May 21-22, on the beautiful Monterey Peninsula, we will explore the work of Bernard Trainor, his colleagues and cohorts, and study the designs, details, and plantings that make their gardens so distinctively regional and sustainable. The days will begin with talks and lunch at the historic Casa Munras Hotel, followed by garden tours in the afternoon. On Friday, May 20, there will be an optional pre-conference garden tour.

Registration is limited to 100 for the Study Weekend and to 50 for the Friday garden tour. Registration is being accepted by mail only. If you are interested in these events, print out the registration form from the *Pacific Horticulture* website and mail promptly.

Pacific Horticulture Tours 2011

Each of the tours will be escorted by a member of our board of directors as well as have a local guide or guides. For more information, see <http://pacifichorticulture.org> or contact the office at office@pacifichorticulture.org or 510-849-1627.

Feb 24-28	Winter Bloom in San Diego
Apr 7-17	Sicily: Natural History, Antiquities, Culture & Cuisine
May 9-16	Gardens of New York City, the Hudson River Valley, & the Hamptons
Jul 9-14	Gardens of Portland, Oregon
Sept 25-Oct 7	Chile: From Desert to Forest

Newsletter Submissions & Address Changes:

Please send submissions for the March newsletter by February 18 to mrm@sonic.net or 650-326-2029.

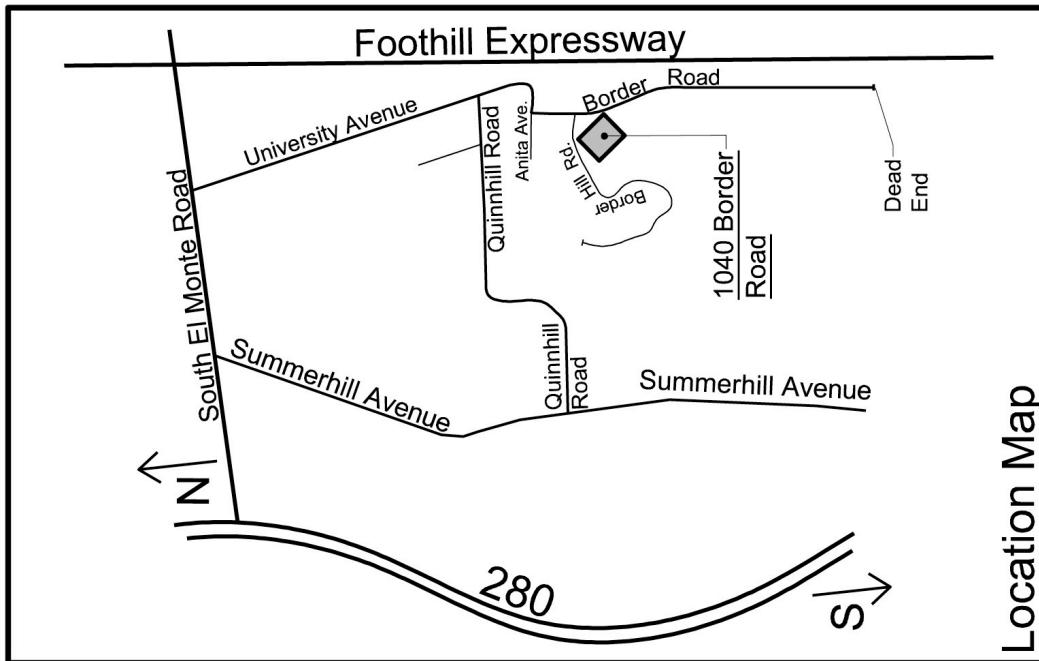
Please send address changes to grew@pacbell.net or 650-851-5162.



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