

FEBRUARY 2024 MEETING

February 14, 7:30pm

The February meeting will be in-person in the Garden House at Shoup Park in Los Altos. *The meeting room officially opens to members and the public at 7pm but if you can arrive by 6.30pm to help with set-up, your assistance would be greatly appreciated. Masks are recommended but optional.* Meetings are free for members, non-member in-person attendees are \$10.00. See page 7 of this newsletter for information about joining Western Horticultural Society.

SPEAKER: JENNIFER DUNGAN

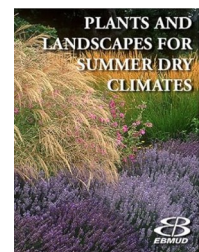
TOPIC: MEMORIES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY GARDEN

Jennifer Dungan will speak about the making of a garden (1990-2009) in Carmel Valley by her late mother, Claire, an avid amateur horticulturist. Originally, this was a rocky site with a steep hillside at the mouth of the valley that Jennifer's parents purchased in 1988. Through terracing, placement of stairs, trellises, stone pavement and walls, complete lawn replacement and continual soil improvement, the basis for an amazing plant and wildlife paradise was created. Claire was constantly seeking rare or unusual cultivars and had a true artist's eye for striking and inspiring compositions. Pictures of her garden (Saxon Holt photography) can be found on many pages of *Plants and Landscapes for Summer-Dry Climates of the San Francisco Bay Region* (East Bay Municipal Utility District, 2004). There is something for everyone in this talk, from the macro to the micro. Jennifer Dungan gained her garden-love at her mother's knee.



The family lived in the East until the late 1980s, when they all moved to California. While Jennifer's career developed at NASA where she studied vegetation from satellite, in her spare time she often visited her parents as they built their Carmel Valley garden. Together, mother and daughter learned about the very different climate, soils and vegetation of the West and got to know the people and places of the Bay Area horticultural world. Both Jennifer's garden in Mountain View and her sister's garden in Davis were cultivated in collaboration with their mother. Since her passing, both sisters feel her spirit among the foliage and flowers.

To enjoy more of Saxon Holt's photographs, *Plants and Landscapes for Summer Dry Gardens* is available from Amazon or directly from East Bay Municipal Utility District.



Speaker Dinners have resumed! Come join our speaker for dinner at Chef Chu's before the meeting. This is an opportunity to talk more intimately with our speaker and ask any questions you might like about their field of expertise. If you would like to join us, please email Western Hort member Carol Dahout at: caroldahout@yahoo.com by Tuesday, Feb. 6, so we can make a reservation for the appropriate attendance. Early sign up due to Valentines Day. Dinner for February will start at 5:00 pm. Chef Chu's is located at 1067 N. San Antonio Road, Los Altos.

CO-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A thread running through our January and February talks by Fergus Garrett of Great Dixter Gardens, UK and by Jennifer Dungan on her mother Claire's Carmel Valley garden is that of how horticultural knowledge (love and care) is passed on between generations, from mentors and teachers to students. Fergus trained by working alongside Christopher Lloyd, likewise Jennifer was inspired by collaboration with her mother.

We all have a list of folks who opened our eyes to various aspects of horticulture. I remember planting trees for Canopy with Dave Muffly, pruning roses with Debbie Stern at Roz Creasy's edible garden in Los Altos, dealing with fire blight with Arnie Cornez at Hakone Gardens, hearing Frank Niccoli tell us the use by indigenous people of each California native plant. "I hope you'll pay it forward," said the late local sustainable garden designer, Sherri Osaka. And we do that in whatever capacity we can muster.

Please note that Fergus' talk has been recorded. A link was emailed on January 11th to WHS and CalHort members.

~ Grace Tsang & Meri-Beth Bird

GET INVOLVED

WHEN YOU'RE NERVOUS ABOUT STEPPING OUTSIDE OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE, REMIND YOURSELF; "IT FEELS SCARY BECAUSE IT'S UNFAMILIAR, NOT BECAUSE I'M INCAPABLE."

~MICHELLE C. CLARK

Vice president & Board members : These positions are still open. Get to know your fellow WHS members and help keep the society vibrant and well rounded. If you have an interest in helping in any one of these capacities, or feel you can help in any other way, feel free to e-mail us at info@westernhort.org or speak to any of the current board members at our meetings.

Second Chance Viewing

The celebration of our 60th anniversary continues! Our December potluck was filled with so much good cheer and socialization that some members felt the special 60th anniversary slideshow needed another viewing. Here's your chance. **Wednesday, February 7th at 7:00pm** the slide show will be shown over a special zoom session dedicated to just this presentation. Log in and watch the show and we can reminisce over all the wonderful times we have had in Western Hort afterwards. The link to the show will be emailed directly to members so watch for it in your inboxes.

~ Leslie Dean

UPCOMING MEETINGS

SPEAKERS SCHEDULED FOR 2024

March 13th: Lori Palmquist, Water in Your Garden—Taking Control

April 10th: Documentary Movie Night— Five Seasons: The Gardens of Piet Ouldolf

May 8th: Arvind Kumar, Gardening for Habitat with Native Plants

June: Annual Picnic, TBD

UPCOMING CAL HORT ZOOM MEETINGS:

February 19th, 6:30 pm Plant Diversity in Oaxaca, Mexico with Troy Stevens. Plant grower, collector and enthusiast.

March 18, 6:30 pm The Calochortus of California with Kipp McMichael, active contributor of the Pacific Bulb Society, hortiphile and software developer.

JANUARY SPEAKER NOTES

Our January speaker came to us via Zoom all the way from the U.K. and eight hours ahead, making it 3:30 am when he began his talk. Talk about dedication! Fergus Garrett is the Head Gardener and Chief Executive of the Great Dixter Charitable Trust, near Northiam and the South Downs in southeast England. Nathaniel Lloyd and Sir Edward Lutyens started the garden around buildings from the 15th century that Lloyd acquired in 1909. Christopher Lloyd, or “Christo” as Fergus called him, took over from his father and made the garden famous. Fergus continues this amazing legacy and works to ensure its continuation by educating the next generation of head gardeners. The garden itself is closed from end of October through March 26th, though there are events and special openings throughout the winter, so check out the website if you find yourself in the southeast of England before opening day.

The climate at Great Dixter is Zone 8 (though Fergus said it’s close to Zone 7) with about 35” of rain per year, more than twice that of our local area. Like our area though, total rainfall can be quite variable, with only 25” in some years. In such drought years, supplemental watering is still only done four times in the year and last year only two waterings were needed. In this zone, freezing temperatures are rare though a bit of snow occasionally occurs. The heat of the summer is normally 77- 82°F, but in the last two summers there were days that reached 95°F. Fergus commented that his preferred season is May-June-July when he enjoys the cacophonous birdsong. The soil in this six-acre garden has a neutral pH.

The overall look of the garden comprises formal and informal elements. The formality is created with “rooms” defined by dry stone walls and hedges and large topiaries which emerge from a dynamic mix of plants including self-sowers. It may appear as “laissez-faire” given the riot of color, foliage and structure, but is it most certainly not! A naturalistic look is cultivated, but unwanted seedlings are picked out assiduously and planting sites are chosen with precision. Native and non-native species are used throughout. Wildflower meadows exist as remnants of a 400-year-old complex, one of the richest in the country with old and diverse soil mycorrhiza.

Fergus shared some planting principles and tactics used to create the spectacular effects we saw in his numerous, gorgeous slides. Architectural plants with contrasting colors are emphasized and strong textures reduce the need to rely on flowering. As we heard from Rebecca Sweet’s talk a year ago, if you turn a photograph of the garden black and white, it still looks good. There are pockets of cannas and dahlias as “hot spots” for color. Undulations and negative spaces are used to great effect. Planting is multilayered with 3-7 layers in some beds. Multilayered areas are not dug up unless a plant dies. Bedding pockets do get dug up -- about 15% of the area. Dead leaves are usually left. Occasionally if there is a tall brown plant that detracts it will be removed. Mulching reduces the need to weed out unwanted self-sowers. While organic compost is lightly applied in some beds, fertilizers are generally not used.

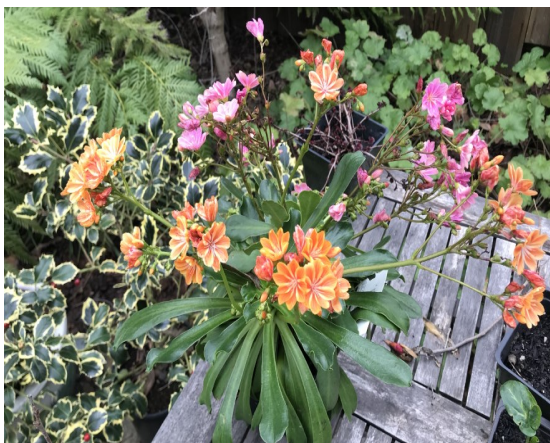
Fergus’s talk was replete with specific plants that are used at Great Dixter. *Pinus mugo*, *Yuccas*, *Pleioblastus*, *Phlomis*, *Cotinus*, *Spiraea* and *Euonymus* create interest through all four seasons. *Leptospermum longigerum*, *Osmanthus*, *Santolina*, *Astelia*, *Artemisia arborescens*, *Campanula patula*, *Daucus carota* (Queen Anne’s Lace), *Dactylorhiza* and *Leucanthemum vulgare* (oxeye daisy) are all used. *Allium globemaster* is a favorite for the great shape of the flower head. *Rodgersia pinnata* ‘Maurice Mason’ has striking red leaves and does well whereas its relative *Rodgersia podophylla* suffers for water at Great Dixter. *Rosa* ‘Florence Mary Morse’ has beautiful red flowers showing up four or five times per year. Fergus gave several examples of how contrast is created, for example *Dryopteris* versus *Euphorbia*, *Agapanthus* versus *Artemisia*, *Phlomis* versus *Verbascum olympicum x bombiciferum* and *Echinacea* versus *Agastache* with their flower and seed pod shapes. He discussed the way the layering results in successions of plants through the seasons. In the early spring, there are snowdrops or daffodils or *Primula vulgaris* or *Crocus tommasinianus* first, followed by ferns, bluebells, anemones and orchids. *Allium* and pink cow parsley is succeeded by *Cyclamens*. Snakeshead fritillaries emerge after the crocuses and snowdrops. Maidenhair fern comes up underneath the *Rodgersia*. *Spiraea* ‘Magic Carpet’ has amber stems and when it is without leaves it is a lovely feature and provides a space underneath where bulbs can grow. Planting *Anemone ranunculoides* on top of hostas allows the hostas to take over the show when the anemones are done. There is very deliberate positioning of plants with awareness of competition, since some things are intolerant of crowding. For example, the leaves of the *Allium* could squeeze out others, so growing points of neighbors have to be kept track of.

Fergus shared his pride over the biodiversity that has been cultivated at Great Dixter, which has been noted as the 30th most biodiverse place in the UK. Over 2400 species were recorded in one year from a handful of visits by researchers. These include over 110 species of lichen, 32 species of butterfly (out of 59 in the UK), 250 species of spiders (out of the UK’s 650), 110 out of 230 UK species of bees, 16 out of 24 species of UK bumble bees and over 400 species of moths. While this diversity is certainly partly anthropogenic, it can be thought of as an example of “creative ecology,” in which a variety of habitats, a long season of food availability and the lack of spraying pesticides (for the last 14 years) combine to allow many sorts of creatures to flourish in a relatively small area. Great Dixter is an international star in the horticultural world, and we were very fortunate to hear Fergus tell us about it!

~ Jen Dungan

JANUARY PLANT SHARE

Eva Huala, from Palo Alto, shared two nice selections with us.



Lewisia cotyledon 'Elise' - Cliff Maids
This evergreen, summer semi-deciduous perennial herb in the purslane family is commonly known as Siskiyou Lewisia and cliff maids. Native to southern Oregon and northern California, it grows in a rocky sub-alpine mountain habitat. Growing from a thick taproot, it produces a basal rosette of many thick, fleshy oval or spoon-shaped leaves up to four inches long and spreading up to twelve inches wide. Reaching four to eleven inches tall, it produces a large array of flowers in colors ranging from orange, pink, yellow and white.

Ribes malvaceum – Chaparral currant
A member of the gooseberry family, this plant is endemic to California. Lacking the nodal spines of other members in this genus, it is a perennial with hairy, double toothed leaves bearing bright pink flowers and producing edible purple berries. Flowering in winter-spring, it has a pleasant fragrance. Give it fast drainage and part shade to full sun. Supports native bees, butterflies and hummingbirds

Lewisia cotyledon 'Elise'

Cliff Maids

Native to: California, Oregon
Zones: 3-9
Blooms: almost year round
Size: 6" x 10"

Growing conditions in my garden:

Loves 4" plastic pots, hates my heavy clay soil. Will survive on the edge of a raised bed but does not thrive there.

From: Summerwinds nursery



Ribes malvaceum

Chaparral currant

Native to: California, Baja
Zones: 3-9
Blooms: Nov-Feb
Size: 5-10' tall

Growing conditions in my garden:

Under Siberian elm, sunny in winter and mostly shady in summer, dry soil

From: cutting



Plant Share or Plant Questions?

Look around your garden and bring us a sample of what you love most in your late winter super early spring garden. Or, do you have a plant you would love to love but can't seem to get it to love you back? Bring it and get some suggestions from your fellow members on how to improve your relationship!

PEOPLE IN HORTICULTURE



Article submitted by Nancy Schramm. Some may recall Ryan (Sherry and John Hall's son) spoke to WHS about new plants some years ago.

Three Questions// by Katie McDaniel, July 2023, Greenhouse Management Magazine

Ryan Hall

Hall, the head of marketing at Syngenta Flowers, discusses getting into horticulture, his favorite part of the job and his hobbies.

Greenhouse Management: How did you get started in horticulture?

Ryan Hall: I started in high school, working for a retail nursery in the city I grew up in, Fremont, California. I started as a carry out, loading potting soil and whatnot in customers' cars. From there, I really learned to appreciate horticulture and learned it was a proper career track. It was actually my math teacher that told me there was a degree in horticulture, and that's when I learned about the path I wanted to take. The rest is history. I applied to Cal Poly to get a degree in horticulture and fortunately got in. Once I graduated, I worked for a grower here in California.

GM: What's your favorite part of your job?

RH: If I had to pick one thing, I love getting out in the greenhouse and looking at our breeding pipeline. That's probably the most exciting because you get to see what the future holds and how our products stack up against others. Product development is still my key passion at heart. I'll go to an event and the first thing I'll do is walk over to the plants and do a quick cruise through the trials just to see what pops out that's interesting (laughs).

GM: When you're not working, what are some of your hobbies?

RH: I have a young family with kids that are 11, nine and seven. They keep us quite busy outside of work hours with just their schedules. We do a lot of hiking. When we can take vacations, we are very much on the national park kick right now. If I do have down time, I'm usually in my garage messing around with all sorts of things. I am a tinkerer (laughs). I like woodworking, metalworking and forging. All that type of stuff I really enjoy.

I started making kitchen knives, and that's been a fun journey. I've made furniture in the past, but nothing to really lay claim to. I always tell everybody I don't guarantee my work (laughs). Also gardening is a sense of pride for me, I like my garden to be in a great place, so I'm constantly ripping things out and planting new things. It's a small yard, but it's amazing how many times I can fill that green compost bin.



CAL HORT SEED EXCHANGE LIST IS NOW AVAILABLE!

Check the Cal Hort website for how to order:

<https://calhortsociety.org/about/annual-seed-exchange/>

The list of available seeds:

<https://calhortsociety.files.wordpress.com/2024/01/24ch-ase-form-and-seedlist.pdf>

28 YEARS AGO

In February 1996, Western Hort met on Wednesday the 14th to hear Bill McNamara of Quarryhill Botanical Garden speak on Collecting in China. (Quarryhill Botanical Garden is now known as Sonoma Botanical Garden. They are currently hosting a display of bonsai on loan from the Redwood Empire Bonsai Society - NLS)

The February meeting's 'raffle table' was instead to be populated by a "...sale and silent auction of gardening-related books. There are about 450 books available, which will cost in a range from 50 cents to \$10.00, so there should be treasures for everybody."

New and returning board members were announced, including Judy Wong as Vice President. In addition, "Judy Wong has volunteered to coordinate our exhibit at the Landscape Garden Show in April, and is looking for volunteers to help the endeavor. This year's theme is Windows on the Garden"

Members were busy growing plants "...for the Master Gardener Plant Sale and Flea Market to be held at the end of March. ...Also be considering which excess pieces of garden equipment you can part with. ...flea market items can be dropped off at Roz Bray's house."

Member Faith Duhring was part of an Ad Hoc Committee "making plans for enhancements to the Community Plaza in Los Altos" and asking for those with "comments, suggestions or interest about the project" to contact her. (Long-time members may remember the exquisite holiday wreaths Faith would create each year for a lucky WHS member to take home - NLS)

~ Nancy Schramm

BONSAI THEFT AT LAKE MERRITT

Bonsai trees valued at more than \$20,000 were stolen from the Bonsai Garden at Oakland's Lake Merritt Garden. Breaking through two fences thieves took 8 irreplaceable trees. The link to the first story has pictures of the missing trees. They request you watch for any you might see on sale anywhere.

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/video/c2850305-us-20k-worth-of-bonsai-trees-stolen-in-calif->

<https://www.ktvu.com/video/1398450>

HORTICULTURAL HAPPENINGS

Filoli Gardens Orchid exhibit, February 2-22nd Includes orchids from the San Francisco Orchid Society, Santa Clara Valley Orchid Society, Gold Coast Cymbidium Growers and Pacific Central Branch of the American Orchid Society. For more information on this event go to: <https://filoli.org/orchid-show/>

Ruth Bancroft Garden & Nursery, **Dry Garden Pruning Primer Workshop**, February 24, 11-12:30 pm Limited tickets available. 1552 Bancroft Rd. Walnut Creek, CA 94598 www.ruthbancroftgarden.org

Gamble Garden, 1431 Waverley St. Palo Alto. **Victorian Pressed Flowers Class**, Saturday, February 24 @ 2:00- 4 pm. Create your own herbarium, a collection of dried flora assembled for decorative use. Sign up to secure your spot. \$88—\$110.00 www.gamblegarden.org

Cherry Blossoms Festival, Gardens of Golden Gate Park, San Francisco March 1- April 1 <https://gggp.org>

100th Camellia Show, Camellia Society of Sacramento, Scottish Rite Temple, Sacramento, CA www.camelliasocietyofsacramento.org

Sonoma Botanical Garden Bonsai Exhibit, Living Sculptures: The Art & Science of Bonsai, now thru March 22nd. 12841 HWY 12 Glen Ellen, CA 95442 Open 9am- 4pm daily, closed on Tuesdays <https://sonomabg.org/visit/bonsai/>

STROLLING AROUND THE INTERNET

Sign up for **Pest Prevention Tips** through the ANR Blog from the UC IPM. This online tool provides month-by-month pest prevention and management tips. <https://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/menu.homegarden.html?src=302-www&fr=3723>

February 15th deadline to apply

This year we are teaming up with the CNPS-Santa Clara Valley Chapter to offer a \$1,500 scholarship with a native plant focus. Our other scholarship remains at \$1,000 for someone with a general horticulture interest.

Did you know that WHS offers two scholarships each year for college students (or college-bound high schoolers) who intend to study horticulture? Do you know any students who are interested in plants and hope to make a career in horticulture?

Please encourage any student you know who might qualify to apply. The applications will be available on the WHS website. If you belong to another group where you think you could advertise the scholarships, please let someone on the scholarship committee (Grace Tsang, Meri-Beth Bird, Jennifer Doniach, Janet Hoffmann, Nancy Schramm) know and help us spread the word! <https://www.westernhort.org/scholarships>.

Officers and Board Members:

Co-Presidents: Grace Tsang & Meri-Beth Bird
Vice President: **Open Position**
Secretary : Jennifer Dungan
Corresponding Secretary: **Open Position**

Treasurer: Eva Huala
Other Board Members: Jim Salyards, Carol Dahout
(Open Positions here)

Volunteer Committees and Responsibilities:

Plant Sale Table: Carol Dahout
Email and website maintenance: Ursula Haschke
Membership: Ursula Haschke
Publicity and Outreach: Grace Tsang
Meeting Tech: Grace Tsang, Jennifer Doniach,
Janet Hoffmann & John Hammerschmidt
Welcome Table: Meri-Beth Bird & Eva Huala

Speaker Program Committee: Leslie Dean (chair),
Nancy Schramm, Judy Wong, Glenda Jones, Eva Huala &
Meri-Beth Bird
Newsletter Editor: Kathy Anberg
Newsletter Contributors: Jennifer Dungan & Nancy
Schramm
Scholarships: Grace Tsang, Jennifer Doniach,
Meri-Beth Bird, Janet Hoffmann & Nancy Schramm

About Membership in Western Hort:

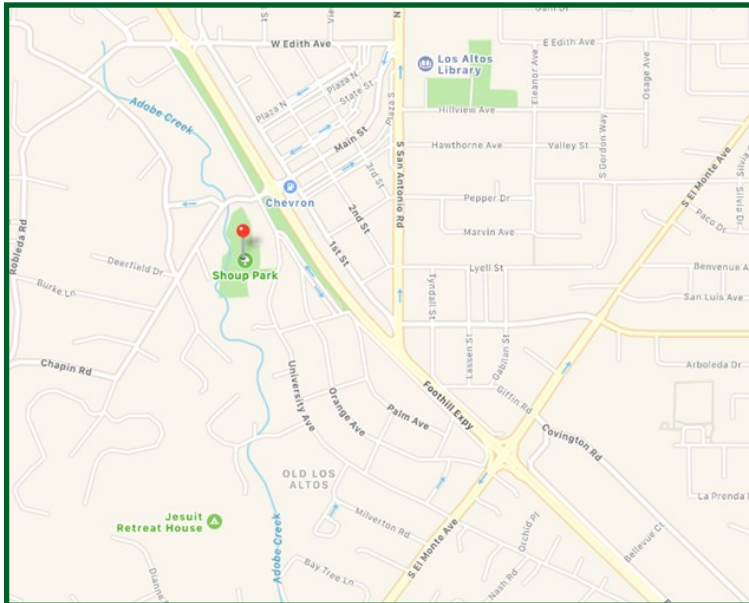
Membership Rates: A one-year membership (Sep-Aug) includes an e-mail copy of this newsletter and admittance to all of our monthly meetings. Regular membership is \$35, Family membership for two or more members at the same address is \$50, and a discounted rate for students is \$20. Please visit the Pac Hort page for more information or to join Pacific Horticulture Society, for whom we are now a sponsoring organization, go to: pacifichorticulture.org.

To join or renew visit our website at: <https://www.westernhort.org/membership> You may pay online with a credit card or print form and mail with your check to the contact us address below.

To contact us: Please send email to: info@westernhort.org or snail mail to: PO Box 166, Mountain View, CA 94042



PO Box 166
Mountain View, CA 94042
First Class Mail
VISIT US AT WESTERNHORT.ORG



Meeting date & location : February 14, 2024
In Person at Shoup Park Garden House, 400 University Ave., Los Altos
(Masks optional)
Meeting starts at 7:30 pm.
Would you like to **sponsor a lecture** or suggest a speaker for the WHS that is of particular interest to you?
It would be much appreciated!
Please call Leslie Dean at 650-966-8364.

Newsletter Submissions
The newsletter publishes on the first of the month. **Note: deadline for submission for the next newsletter is the 20th of February.** Submissions after this date will likely appear in the next month's newsletter. Send submissions to: Kjanberg@gmail.com or snail mail to Kathy Anberg, 1332 Peggy Ct. Campbell, CA 95008-6342