

WESTERN HORT

January 2024 | PO Box 166, Mountain View, CA 94042 | www.westernhort.org

JANUARY 2024 MEETING

January 10th, 7:30pm

The January meeting will be a **ZOOM** meeting this month. Meetings are free for members, non-member attendees are \$10.00. A link to the meeting will be sent out via e-mail to all Western Horticultural and California Horticultural members before the meeting. See page 8 of this newsletter for information about joining Western Horticultural Society.

SPEAKER: FERGUS GARRETT

TOPIC: PLANT COMBINATIONS FOR A LONG-LASTING AND RESILIENT GARDEN

Fergus will talk about the plant combinations at Great Dixter, Northiam, East Sussex, which is an incredibly resilient and biodiverse garden. A long season of interest is achieved by mimicking multi-layered, natural systems that are present in the surrounding ancient woodlands, meadows and pastures. He will touch on individual plants and how they can be placed in a community, as well as horticultural techniques which help to support good plant growth with the changing climate and adverse weather conditions. Fergus will also give examples from other gardens striving towards water wise resilient horticulture. In addition, he will discuss soil, composting and sustainable practices within the garden at Dixter, striving towards a circular system and creating a more harmonious place for humans and other life.



Fergus Garrett has been Head Gardener for the world famous Great Dixter Garden in Northiam, East Sussex, United Kingdom since 1993. In 2006 Fergus took over the position of CEO of the Great Dixter Charitable Trust. He has a Turkish mother and an English father, was born in England but grew up in Turkey until he was 12 years old. He studied horticulture at Wye College, University of London, graduating in 1989. Fergus has received many horticultural honors, including the Royal Horticultural Society Associate of Honor, the International Contributor Award from the Perennial Plant Association, the Longhouse Landscape Award, the Garden Media Guild Golden Nisse Award, the Veitch Memorial Medal of the Royal Horticultural Society and the RHS Victoria Medal of Honor. Fergus believes in passing on his knowledge and expertise through national and international student and volunteer programs at Great Dixter. He has written many magazine articles and lectures widely both nationally and internationally. Fergus is a hands-on gardener who is deeply interested not only in the artistic aspect of gardening but also education and biodiversity.

Photo credit: Mark Cocksedge

CO-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I hope you have enjoyed the past period of winter solstice celebrations, including our own potluck meeting held on December 13. Your feedback is appreciated about our year-end meetings.

Please join us on January 10, ***ON ZOOM*** for our annual Tiede speaker coming to us from one of the world's most famous gardener's gardens, Great Dixter, Northiam, East Sussex, UK. Fergus Garrett will give a talk entitled, *Plant Combinations for a Long-Lasting and Resilient Garden*.

The zoom link will be e-mailed the day of the talk to Western Horticultural Society and California Horticultural Society members. We may allow guests, for the usual fee, to attend, if we have the bandwidth.

To complement our December talk on mushroom propagation, I can organize a group buy of mushroom kits from Far West Fungi. These are usually half price in quantity. Send email if interested to info@westernhort.org.

~ Grace Tsang & Meri-Beth Bird



Yellow Oyster Mushroom



Mushroom Mini-Farm Grow Kit and Forager Knife Bundle



Tree Oyster Mushroom

A few samples of what Far West Fungi has available in kits. For more options go to their website at:

<https://farwestfungi.com/collections/mushroom-grow-kits>

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Note: For the January Zoom meeting you will be able to sign in at 7:00 to socialize with other members and the plant share will start at 7:30 with the speaker beginning at 7:45. A link for the meeting will be sent to your email address.

February 14th: Jennifer Dungan, Memories of an Extraordinary Garden

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 Picnic: TBD

*** Don't forget that Cal Hort invites us to all their meetings as well. January 15th@ 6pm will be Mark Akimoff, owner of Illahe Rare Plants speaking about Gardens and Alpines of New Zealand

DECEMBER SPEAKER NOTES

All Mushrooms are Magical - Experiencing the Phantasmagorical Realm of Fungi

with Ken Litchfield

Our December speaker entertained us with terrific teaser stories about mushrooms. He was passionate about his subject, having devoted decades to understanding and teaching about their characteristics, cultivation and culinary uses. He acknowledged at the outset that mushroom identification can be intimidating to people given the wide variety of forms and the fact that some varieties are deadly if consumed. While there are several ways to categorize mushrooms using taxonomic, genetic, and evolutionary criteria for example, the simplest categorization is whether you can eat them. Interestingly, Ken said that almost every edible mushroom has a deadly look-alike, making it necessary to forage with experts until you become an expert yourself. Generally, there are three groups: saprobic (those that live on dead stuff, like raw cellulose or compost), parasitic (those that live on live stuff), and mycorrhizal (those that are symbiotes with live stuff). Some have qualities from more than one group, such as *Cordyceps* which are both parasitic and saprobic (they have two life cycles). Ken mentioned a TV show called “The Last of Us” about a global pandemic in which mushrooms infect humans, inspired by *Cordyceps* behavior.

Ken recommended Mykoweb.com as the best place to find mushroom information for our state. It includes details on 829 species of fungi and Ken discussed a few these during the talk. *Boletus edulis*, better known as porcinis, grow under pine trees. You can propagate porcinis yourself by making a slurry from all the porcinis you don't eat and pouring it into the base of trees, especially in a mixed forest situation. *Cantharellus californicus*, as of this year our state mushroom, grows under oak trees. He compared harvesting to dead-heading as it encourages more fruiting bodies to emerge. Cutting near the base is a good practice as often there are little mushrooms underneath that'll come up. *Clathrus rubra* or lattice stinkhorn, is very stinky and uses flies to spread its spores. It is not poisonous and quite nice for eating in the egg stage – Ken called it vegan bacon. *Morchella rufobrunnea* grows where there was previous wildfire. You won't find *Ustilago maydis* in Mycoweb, because it is not native in California. But it can be cultivated in very hot places in the state like Gilroy or the Capay Valley. Commonly called huitlacoche (aka corn truffle), it creates a delectable treat for a period during its life cycle, but later on in the cycle it is called corn smut as it ruins the cob. *Claviceps gigantea* is the evil lookalike to huitlacoche, and causes vasoconstriction (“herbal Viagra”) and hallucinations (as does *Claviceps purpurea*).

The Bay Area is a treasure trove of opportunities for learning about mushrooms as well as eating them. The Mycological Society of San Francisco, where Ken chaired the Cultivation Committee for over 30 years, hosts many activities, including the SF Fungus Fair which happened on December 16th at El Camino High School. Ken highlighted the Far West Fungi Farm as a really friendly and helpful source for buying. Then there is Bay Area Applied Mycology which hosts projects for education, research ecological remediation. The Santa Cruz Fungi Festival is coming up January 12-14, hosted by the Fungus Federation of Santa Cruz. (Find the link for this event in Horticultural Happenings pg. 7)

~ Jen Dungan

MORE MUSHROOM NEWS FROM DISCOVER MAGAZINE

<https://www.discovermagazine.com/planet-earth/after-thousands-of-years-humans-are-still-finding-new-uses-for-mushrooms>

Plant Share

A fun part of our Zoom get-togethers is seeing what is happening in your gardens. The ability to send photos of the plants that you want to share is one benefit of the virtual meeting format. Submit your photos of plants that you wish to share along with the botanical and common name (if you know them) to info@westernhort.org by Friday, January 5. Either send or be prepared to speak online about the plant's geographical location, exposure, soil, water and other growth requirements. If you have plants that you would like help identifying or want some cultural advice on, feel free to submit those also.

2023 FOUNDERS AWARD

Our Founder's Award for 2023 fittingly goes to an individual with very deep gardening roots. Those deep roots started growing when still a teenager with mowing lawns, taking care of a mother's HUGE hybrid tea rose garden, doing landscaping jobs and installing and repairing home irrigation in California's Fruit Basket.

Born in Fresno and growing up on the family's 20-acre peach farm, the San Francisco Farmer's Market was a round trip undertaken weekly to sell old-world Italian grape varieties to the winemakers and peaches and persimmons to the public. Many of the peach trees were replaced with persimmons as peaches became a crop dominated by large farm corporations and persimmons emerged as a popular Asian boutique crop and proved to be more profitable.

This oldest of six children majored in Horticulture and Landscaping at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. Upon graduation, a job path opened in irrigation equipment sales to wineries. One of the deliveries of irrigation equipment was to an address on Lucas Valley Road. After a long conversation with the owner about irrigation, they viewed the owner's Star Wars collection. The owner was none other than George Lucas, director of the Star Wars movies!

In the 1980's our awardee built an independent landscaping business. In the 1990's, following in the footsteps of two Grandfathers and father who were builders as well as farmers, this business owner earned a General Contractor's license moving into traditional construction during the drought and recession. This individual is currently the CEO of a design-build residential remodeling company founded more than 25 years ago.

While still primarily a landscaper, this awardee was introduced to WHS by a past member and colleague, landscape architect, Don Brandeau, ("he was like a salesman for WHS, he can be obsessed") joining in 1988. Our awardee is also member of CNPS, California Rare Fruit Growers, National Organization of the Remodeling Industry (NARI), the Los Altos Rotary and is rebuilding a 1956 Ford F100 truck he had in college. Sunday mornings may find this gardener teaching Sunday School kids about plants and at other times teaching a 4 year old grandson about gardening.

Today, this married father of two and grandfather of one grows fruit trees and vegetables in a large organic garden, starting many plants in his greenhouse. He is always seeking the Holy Grail of a better, tastier and more productive tomato! He is known to have grafted up to 20 varieties of fruit onto one tree because "you can't eat that many fruits of a single variety, this way you can try a lot of varieties!"

At one time this gardener had 151, mostly David Austin and heirloom, rose varieties. His garden is also filled with California native plants, succulents and perennials.

His wife Lynn, sons Alex and "V" benefit from his love of cooking and gardening!

After joining WHS in 1988, this individual has contributed in many ways including as Vice President, 1998-1999, announcing at monthly meetings and memorably as "the booming voice" announcing raffle numbers. He regularly shares plants, books and fruit tree cuttings, is our audio-visual tech guy (even though he says he is not tech savvy) including storing WHS AV equipment in his garage, he has schlepped materials for our SFFGS garden vignettes and volunteered at WHS Hot Plant Picks display at the show. He is ever helpful and supportive of WHS and always with a smile!



A previous WHS president, Janice Gillmore had this to say, "John Hammerschmidt: Not actually on the Board but our beloved Perennial Favorite. He is the mainstay of monthly meetings both in setting up for the evening and taking care of Raffle Tickets. Remember his trek with Scott Medbury to buy a Power Pointer an hour before his lecture? And still in good spirits! Amazing Person."

The Western Horticultural Society established the Founders' Award to honor those who have contributed time, talents and devotion to the high standards Western Horticultural Society wishes to promote. We wish to express our profound gratitude for your continuing contributions over the past 30 plus years.

It is with great pleasure that I present the 2023 Western Horticultural Society's Founders' Award to John Hammerschmidt.

~ Judy Wong

GARDEN SHARE

Since December had no plant sharing here is a link to a residential Montana garden that I know you will enjoy. Ed.

www.joyfulmontanagarden.com



Photo credit: Linda Schell

Many thanks to our industrious member Carol Dahout for organizing the 60th Anniversary pins for our Western Horticultural Society. Next time you see her at the plant sale table be sure to stop and let her know how much you like them!



Memories from the 2023 December Christmas Potluck



Memories from the 2023 December Christmas Potluck

We can always count on our wonderful members to supply delicious and unusual items at our meetings. Here are the descriptions of the jams given as door prizes:

Jim Salyards brought:

Huckleberry Jam- Fruit collected in Mendocino County in the Pygmy Forest October 2023. With the abundant rains the previous winter, the wild huckleberry shrubs were loaded with fruit this year. We harvested over 5 gallons of fruit, and then painstakingly cleaned the berries before making into jam, jelly and syrup.

Loquat Jam- Fruit harvested from Filoli. With a particularly abundant crop, I searched and found recipes for loquat jam online. To me, the jam is very much like apricot jam.

Medlar Butter- Medlar are an unusual and much praised and loathed fruit. They had a moment of popularity in England and France in the 17th and 18th centuries, especially by wealthy landowners who had collections of fruits in their orchards. Like Hachiya persimmons, medlar fruit must be bletted, or allowed to experience frosts, before the hard pomes become soft and palatable. The only additions to the spicy tasting butter are water, vanilla bean and sugar.

Chestnut Jam- Upon discovering chestnut jam in Europe, and then finding very expensive jars of Bonne Maman chestnut jam at a French import grocery, I wanted to recreate something similar. Using purchased cooked chestnuts, the nuts are cooked with water and sugar, put through a blender and canned. ... like a fruit butter, but has the more starchy consistency of chestnuts. For people who love chestnuts, it is to die for!

Eva Huala's 3 jams are from her own homegrown fruit - blueberry, sour cherry and Santa Rosa plum. "I add some sugar but not a lot, and pectin, bring to a boil briefly and put in jars. Have been doing this for many years now. They are tart-sweet with lots of fruit taste."

~ Grace Tsang



SCHOLARSHIPS

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>.

NEW KID ON THE BLOCK

BY NANCY SCHRAMM



I'm talking about Los Arroyos International Wholesale Nursery, that is. While Los Arroyos is definitely the new kid on the block, having been in business only since 2022, there is an entire family behind the enterprise with the knowledge and experience needed to be successful.

I spoke with Amy Bernal last week about Los Arroyos. This is her baby, but she is quick to credit her father, Manuel Morales with founding the nursery. Manuel spends most of his time with his other propagation nursery, Gerd Schneider Nursery at the south edge of Gilroy. He, however, readily provides much guidance and inspiration after 46+ years in the nursery industry. Amy's mom

Luis, Amy, Andrew, Manuel and Avila maintains the legacy of her father, Joe Solomone, hybridizing clivias. And Amy's sister Rachel Wilkinson is finding her passion and focusing on a tissue culture lab. It's definitely a family with some chlorophyll mixed into their blood!

But back to Los Arroyos. I first heard about the nursery at the NorCal Trade Show and didn't know much about it. Then I learned they had hired Leonel Morales-Bajarano to be in charge of propagation and I knew they would be selling quality plants. Amy told me they are specializing in Californian as well as Australian native plants. But like any plant loving nursery owner I've ever known, she admitted that she is always interested in any new or different plants and a special love of hers are plants that bring color into the garden. Right now they are propagating a lot of different proteas.

Los Arroyos has about 10 acres in production with more to add soon. Amy credited building a successful nursery to their "talented and dedicated team", about 20 employees. (Including Andrew and Avila who help out in the nursery too – helping pull weeds, select and load samples and picking up trash!) She said "Luis Marquez runs the day-to-day operations here, he is a WEALTH of knowledge and is indispensable to the operation". He brings with him 34+ years in inside sales and dispatch.



Los Arroyos is a wholesale nursery selling mostly to landscapers and retailers. The physical address is 350 Kleiwer Lane, Watsonville, CA. 95076. They are open to walk-in sales from about 7:30-3:30, Mon-Fri, and they deliver plants all over the state. For an availability list you can call or text Amy at 831-566-9827, or email: a.bernal@losarroyosnursery.com.

PS After Leonel gave us the presentation about propagation in November, I wanted to learn and share a bit more about this new nursery (Los Arroyos) where he is head propagator. I'm looking forward to seeing it in person, soon. I'd also like to correct a mistake I made at the potluck. The donated plants I brought with me actually came from Manuel, from the Gerd Schneider Nursery. It was my mistake to label them from Los Arroyos.

STROLLING AROUND THE INTERNET

Ladybugs have a Killer Secret: <https://youtu.be/Fo57-cBPuzI?si=HvGV8Uryha1eC7mc> This short YouTube video has interesting facts about our beloved aphid-eating Ladybugs.

HORTICULTURAL HAPPENINGS

Volunteer Opportunity at the Municipal Rose Garden: Saturday, Jan. 6, 8:45 am-12pm at the Municipal Rose Garden, 1649 Naglee Ave, San Jose, CA. Help prune 3,500 rose bushes during this annual event. No experience necessary! Reserve a spot here:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/municipal-rose-garden-annual-pruning-event-tickets-759088493117>

Download and fill out the service agreement found here:

<https://www.sanjoseca.gov/Home/ShowDocument?id=61834>

50th Anniversary Santa Cruz Fungus Fair, January 12-14 hosted by the Fungus Federation of Santa Cruz, London Nelson Community Center, 301 Center St.Santa Cruz, CA. \$10 admission fee <https://ffsc.us/fair/2024/about>

DIY Lawn Conversion Workshop offered by Our City Forest: Sat., Jan. 20, 9-10am. This workshop and shrub tour will teach you how to convert your lawn into a drought-tolerant garden! Go to the Eventbrite link for sign up information. <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/diy-lawn-conversion-workshop-tickets-772582293437>

Tilden Fungus Fair, Jan. 20-21 and is a great way to celebrate and learn more about the fruits of winter. In addition to viewing hundreds of local mushroom specimens on display, guests can mingle with the mycological community and see presentations by guest speakers at this two-day special event held at the Tilden Nature Area, 1500 Central Park Drive in Berkeley.

The event runs from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, Jan. 20-21. This is a free event and there is no pre-registration; it is a drop-in event only. Go to Ebparks.org/events/tilden-fungus-fair for more info.

Seed Swap and Sharing: Saturday, Jan. 27th there are two events. **#1. Santa Clara Seed Share** from 2-4 pm at the Everett N. "Eddie" Souza Park, 2380 Monroe Street, Santa Clara, CA. Join them to talk about spring gardening, share different seed varieties, exchange knowledge and enjoy some time outdoors.

#2. National Seed Swap Day, 11am-1pm at the Willow Glen Library, 1157 Minnesota Ave, San Jose, CA. Join Master Gardeners for National Seed Swap Day at the newly launched Willow Glen Seed Library. Master Gardeners will be there to answer questions. Bring your saved seeds to share and leftover seed packets but this is not required.

Officers and Board Members:

Co-Presidents: Grace Tsang & Meri-Beth Bird

Vice President: Open Position

Secretary : Leslie Dean

Corresponding Secretary: Jennifer Dungan

Treasurer: Jennifer Doniach

Other Board Members: Jim Salyards, Carol Dahout, and Eva Huala (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

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. To receive a print copy of this newsletter by mail add \$10 to the membership fee listed above. 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.

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