



### January Meeting

Wednesday, January 11, 2012, 7:30 p.m.

Marcia Donahue, Artist and Gardener

#### “Planting Sculpture, Sculpting Plants”

For Marcia Donahue, to garden is to sculpt. The gardener collaborates with nature hoping to produce a site-specific sculpture, a living tapestry that is kinetic, multidimensional, personally expressive and even profoundly moving. A garden of this sort can be a site for sculpture, inspire sculpture and be a sculpture. She has been working in this manner in her garden in Berkeley for 33 years.

Her work is in many public and private collections including San Francisco Chinatown and Chanticleer, a public pleasure garden in Pennsylvania. Her work has been published in books, including New California Garden Design by Zahid Sardar and Marion Brenner, and magazines including Pacific Horticulture, Fine Gardening, Garden Design and Gardens Illustrated.

She collaborates with garden designers Brandon Tyson, Cevan Forrist and Davis Dalbok, contributing sculptural bling to their brilliant designs. Much of her work is inspired by plants and she loves to make works that fit in so well to their gardens as to seem endemic. Placing sculpture is as thoughtful a project as placing a plant. Her garden is open to anyone who is interested on Sunday afternoons.

**MEETING LOCATION** Our monthly meetings feature the speakers listed above; doors open at 7 p.m. and meetings begin at 7:30. The location is Christ Episcopal Church, Parish Hall, 1040 Border Road, Los Altos. (See page 4 for map.)

You are invited to join our January speaker, Marcia Donahue, for **dinner on January 11** at 5:30 p.m. at Chef Chu’s, 1067 N. San Antonio Road, Los Altos (at the corner of El Camino). Please contact Rosalie Shepherd to confirm: shep8283@earthlink.net or 650-321-8283.



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.



### February Meeting

**February 8 Speaker TBD** (Lucy Tolmach unfortunately had to cancel.) Watch for announcement in February newsletter.

### December 2011 Holiday Party

What’s better than a monthly WHS meeting, which features plant discussions, an informative speaker and plant raffle? It’s our annual Holiday Potluck Party – the best ever!

Our members and guests were first treated to a festive and tastefully decorated hall, courtesy of Roberta Barnes and her hard-working helpers. A delicious array of hors d’oeuvres, main dishes, wine and desserts assured us that no one left hungry. With a book sale thrown in for good measure, we were ready to settle into an evening of visual and audible delight. As our unparalleled Ted Kipping dazzled the audience with a botanical/natural landscape slideshow, the incomparable Sherry Austin and her band got our juices flowing with a great selection of California folk music. Love that steel guitar!

Yet, for all this merriment, the highlight of the evening came, for myself at least, in an unexpected way. As we do every year, and as she does so nobly well, Claudia Stopp rose and delivered a heart-warming Founders Award presentation in the middle of our party. I’ve heard the name Bill Kurtz often enough, as well as read about his numerous past contributions to our wonderful organization. Bill doesn’t attend our meetings much anymore as it has become more difficult for him to get around. Our award’s recipient rose and spoke to us for a few minutes, not about himself but about our Society. I saw and heard a man speak with youthful energy, with passion about Western Hort and what it has to offer. I felt humbled as I met a man who has given so much for others. What a fitting tribute to someone who exemplifies the true spirit of the holiday season.

Thank you, Bill.

~Mark McCabe

# Western Hort News

## Note from the President

I hope you all had a good holiday season. Remember our January meeting is also our annual business meeting where we elect new board members, hear the Treasurer's report, and more.

**We are looking for five people to serve on our Board of Directors.** The term is three years and time flies by quickly. We meet five times a year at board member homes, most of whom live north of San Jose. If you would like to nominate someone, or if you would like to be on the board, this is the time.

Thank you all for your support of our wonderful organization.

## Speakers Committee

The planning session for the 2012-2013 season will take place at the end of January, 2012. Now is your chance to make suggestions or requests for speaker programs. Please contact Pat Knight at [deerproof@yahoo.com](mailto:deerproof@yahoo.com). ~Pat Knight

### ***The Botanical Obsession: Prints and Porcelain*** **A talk for the San Francisco Ceramic Circle at the Florence Gould Theater, Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco** **Sunday, January 15, 2012, 10:00 a.m.**

Pat Knight, a former WHS Board member, current chair of the Speakers Committee and our Webmaster will show how horticulture in the eighteenth century had an effect on artists and how in turn botanical prints had an impact on the decoration of porcelain. This is a digital powerpoint presentation with fascinating gardening history and great slides. The lecture is free after the museum entrance. Pat would love to see you there!

## Raffle Table

January's raffle table will be brought to you by the Western Hort Board. Also, everyone is welcome to bring garden related items or interesting plants. Maybe you have some holiday presents to re-gift? Take a look at our raffle table and see if anything interests you! Winter is a good time to plant in our Mediterranean climate! ~Roberta Barnes

## ***Holiday Potluck Party the Best Ever – Thank you to all who helped put it on!***

What a great evening! Many thanks to Roberta Barnes for cooking the festive turkey (yum) and organizing & creating the centerpieces (thinking of a design – the hardest part – buying and otherwise gathering the “ingredients” – and finally creating the centerpieces along with a few elves, namely Abby Garner, Rosalie Shepherd and Marianne Mueller) and to Roberta, Chris Egan and the small army of people who helped set up. Many hands went into the party's success and we thank you all. A very special thank you to Sherry Austin and Ted Kipping for great music and photography – a treat that will be long remembered. If you are interested in purchasing Sherry's band's CD, please visit her website at [sherry-austin.com](http://sherry-austin.com) or contact Sherry at 831-251-0720 or [sherry@sherry-austin.com](mailto:sherry@sherry-austin.com). ~WHS Board

## 28 Years Ago

Western Hort met on January 9, 1984 to hear “Plant Names, their Problems and Some Solutions” by Dr. Elizabeth McClintock, University Herbarium, Department of Botany, UC Berkeley. I'm sure that Dr. McClintock spoke that night with accuracy and authority.

**Please note!** Lorena Gorsche's new email is [lorena.gorsche@gmail.com](mailto:lorena.gorsche@gmail.com).

Long time readers of Pacific Hort magazine will remember the twenty-four-year series she wrote on the trees of Golden Gate Park. May I also remind you that in 2001 the Royal Horticultural Society gave the Gold Veitch Memorial Medal to Elizabeth—the highest award the society can give to a non-British horticulturist.

I also discovered a publicity release for WHS from the Hardy Plant Society dated Dec 3, 1983, about their upcoming Study Weekend slated for July in Portland. The featured speakers included Beth Chatto, Pamela Harper, Brewster Rogerson, and David Palmer—did anyone from WHS attend? ~Nancy Schramm

## Plant of the Month: *Kniphofia*

I got a phone call the other day from my friend Don Polensky. He wanted to tell me that it was time to visit and get my annual quota of fig cuttings from his garden. He and his wife Flavia have an amazing garden in the northwest area of Morgan Hill. They have about ten different figs, at least as many citrus, three or four Feijoa, paw-paws, pomegranates ... and that's just the edibles. So I thought it might be fun to ask Don about his favorite plant for this month's article. To my surprise, considering the variety of unusual fruiting plants and cactus & succulents they grow, Don, after a few moments of consideration, said that at the moment, his favorite plant is *Kniphofia*. *Kniphofia*? Did I hear that right? Yes, and he said there is a lot going for *Kniphofia*. They are low maintenance, drought tolerant, for the most part VERY cold hardy, gopher and deer resistant. And did I say to grow?

Don has observed (and I find this fascinating) that three plants that he has seen surviving time and again around old, abandoned homesteads are figs, pomegranates, and red-hot poker. Give them at least a half a day of sun (full sun is better) and water to get them established, and you've probably got this one for life. There are loads of species (maybe thirty?) and as of 1992 over 60 cultivars. There are some as small as eighteen inches tall and some that will get over six feet tall. The flowers grow in clusters ranged along a central spike, looking for all the world like a small torch. Flower spikes stand proud of the clumping, grassy foliage, and range in color from creamy white, yellow, orange, light green, peach to coral red. You can find different varieties of *Kniphofia* blooming pretty much any time of the year, including K. 'Christmas Cheer' right now in Don's yard. (Perhaps that prompted his choice?) And that's a nice bonus for your local hummingbirds. Some of Don's favorite planting companions for *Kniphofia* include *Nepeta*, rosemary, *Salvias* especially *S. officinalis* 'Icterina', Pacific Coast Iris, and species *Geraniums*. ~Nancy Schram



### Red Hot Poker, *Kniphofia uvaira*.

Growing at the Master Gardener Palo Alto Demonstration Garden, 851 Center Dr., Palo Alto. This waterwise garden is open dawn to dusk, 365 days a year. Find cultural info on *Kniphofia* and 100+ other waterwise plants that grow at the Master Gardener demo garden at [mastergardeners.org/plant-dictionary](http://mastergardeners.org/plant-dictionary).

Photo: Rebecca Schoenenberger

## Horticultural Calendar

**Scion Exchange** The California Rare Fruit Growers' Scion Exchange will be held January 14, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. (10 a.m. for members paid up at local and state levels – renew or join at the door). Free grafting lessons at 11:15 a.m. and 1 p.m. Scions free or low cost. Some grafting supplies and rootstocks for sale. Location: Multi-Cultural Center and Meeting Hall of Prusch Farm Park, at the intersection of Story and King Roads in San Jose (entrance is off King Road). See [scvcrfg.wordpress.com](http://scvcrfg.wordpress.com).

**Free Rose Pruning Lessons at the Heritage Rose Garden in San Jose** ... and an opportunity to help with the marathon pruning of the Heritage Rose Garden in San Jose. Every Wednesday and Saturday morning, 9 a.m. SHARP until noon, through March. Location: San Jose Heritage Rose Garden, near Spring & Taylor Streets, Guadalupe River Park & Gardens, San Jose. Contact Emily Creegan at [emily@grpg.org](mailto:emily@grpg.org) or 408-298-7657 about when to come, or just show up on a Wednesday or Saturday morning. Bring pruners, loppers and saws if you have them; else loaners are available. Wear long-sleeved sturdy shirts and gloves. Our expert rosarians will demonstrate how to prune at 9 a.m. (late arrivals cannot be accommodated) and then you will, with supervision, prune several roses. This hands-on experience will build your confidence in caring for your own roses. See [www.heritageroses.us/PruningLessons.htm](http://www.heritageroses.us/PruningLessons.htm) for full details.

### Western Horticultural Society Officers and Board Members

President: Richard Tiede

Vice President: Christine Bate

Recording Secretary: Mark McCabe

Acting Treasurer: Daxin Liu

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 one-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 and Address Changes

Please send info for the February newsletter by January 18 to Marianne Mueller, [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.



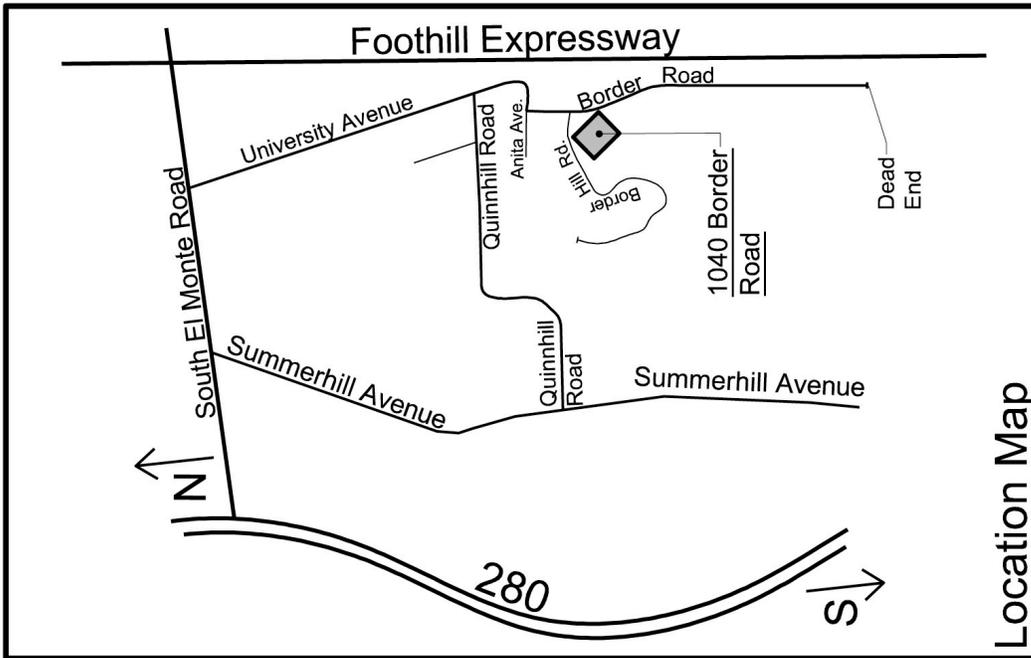
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Monthly Meetings  
Christ Episcopal Church  
Parish Hall  
1040 Border Road, Los Altos