



Jan. 2026 | PO Box 166, Mountain View, CA 94042 | [www.westernhort.org](http://www.westernhort.org)



## JANUARY 2026 MEETING

January 14, 7:30pm

The January meeting will be an in-person meeting. Meetings are free for members, non-member attendees are \$10.00. 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. See page 6 of this newsletter for information about joining the Western Horticultural Society.

### TOPIC: OUR WINTER IS DIFFERENT: SEASONS IN CALIFORNIA NATIVE GARDENS

**SPEAKER: HELEN POPPER (OUR LOUISA BECK SPEAKER FOR THE YEAR)**



California Native Gardening  
A MONTH-BY-MONTH GUIDE HELEN POPPER



Do you have California native plants in your garden? Have you been frustrated by garden maintenance recommendations originating in England or the East Coast? Helen Popper understands that California's gardening seasons are different from those in other parts of the world, that our 'winter' makes maintaining a California native garden distinctive. Helen will begin with a discussion of the local progression of seasons and how central that is to understanding the timing of maintenance. She will tell us how to maintain California native plants throughout the year, while emphasizing winter tasks we can do in our gardens right now.



Helen Popper grew up in the Bay Area, took horticulture in high school and has been a long-time member of the California Native Plant Society. Her professional path diverged from plants and led to her current position as professor of economics in the Business School at Santa Clara University. In 2012, at an author's event hosted by the Association of Professional Landscape Designers, she was honored as one of the ten best garden authors of California by Live Outside magazine, and will have her book *California Native Gardening: A Month-by-Month Guide* available at the meeting.

**There will be a speakers dinner this month.**

If you would like to join us, please email Western Hort member Carol Dahout at: [caroldahout@yahoo.com](mailto:caroldahout@yahoo.com) by Monday, January 12th so we can make a reservation for the appropriate attendance. Dinner will start at 5:00pm. Chef Chu's is located at 1067 N. San Antonio Road, Los Altos.

## CO-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

"January is our wettest month." So opens the January chapter of the book by our January meeting speaker, Helen Popper, entitled *California Native Gardening; a month-by-month guide*. Of course, some years, January rains don't come (January 2025 was dry), and then we must water newly planted specimens. Her list of January jobs consists of pruning, propagating, planting, sowing, rarely fertilizing, controlling pests and weeding. The problem of gophers is written up in the previous chapter on December gardening, but I doubt my gopher issues will subside without more intervention in the new year. Helen Popper begins her book with the month of October because that is when the California native planting season begins - with the lessening of heat and dryness.

*California Native Gardening; a month-by-month guide* resulted from the notes Helen took as part of the early version of the forum (still ongoing, now online and open to all), known as *Gardening with Natives*. Luminaries such as Jeffrey Caldwell, Sally Casey, Melanie Cross, Ellie Giomousis, Paul Heiple, Ken Himes and Jean Struthers participated in these first meetings around 2000. Jean Struthers was instrumental in establishing the CNPS native plant nursery at Hidden Villa. This nursery is turning over its leadership and needs new volunteers willing to organize and supervise its activities.

From Helen's book introduction we read, "Echoing the wilderness, [native plants bring habitat back], and they bring a sense of place. Into a native garden comes the call of a quail, the revelry of cedar waxwings, the scurrying of a fence lizard. Into a native garden comes the surprise and delight of volunteer natives, some brought by birds\*\* from a distant park, others sprung from long-dormant seeds. From each native garden, a thread extends to the exquisite tapestry that defines our state."

Ref:

- 1) GWN forum with 1460 members - <https://groups.io/g/GardeningWithNatives>
- 2) CNPS nursery - <https://www.cnps-scv.org/gardening/cnps-nursery>  
\*\* see for example, the wondrous writing of Judith Larner, [The Landscaping Ideas of Jays](https://www.ucpress.edu/books/the-landscaping-ideas-of-jays) (<https://www.ucpress.edu/books/the-landscaping-ideas-of-jays/paper>)

~ Grace Tsang & Meri-Beth Bird

### Special Request to all members:

If you have a permanent name tag that you can wear to the meetings, Please do so! This will help cut down on paper waste at the check in table. It may even be fun to design something to wear that is unique to you. Thank you.

Want to keep up on horticultural events and exchange ideas with other members?? Join our online forum at:  
<https://groups.io/g/WHSmembers>.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

### WESTERN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

**February 11th**– **Lisa Roper**, *Chanticleer Gravel Garden*

**March 11th**– **Nikki Hanson**, *Fire Safe(r) Landscaping*

**April 8th**– **Tim Wong**, *Gardening for California Pipevine Swallowtail and other Butterflies in the SF Bay Area*

**May 13th**– **Movie and Vendor night**,  
Movie: *Sexual Encounters of the Floral Kind*

### CALIFORNIA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

**January 19th, 7pm** **Lisa Erdos**, will speak about growing *Orchids – Tips for the San Francisco and Bay Area Climate*. In person at the San Francisco County Fair Building.



**February 16th, 7pm** **Greg Rubin** will speak on the subject of protecting California homes against wildfires and be able to have some landscaping. **Zoom Meeting, watch your email for a link.**

**March 16th, 7pm** **Marlene Simon** is the UC Davis director of the Tropical House. This will be an in-person meeting at the San Francisco County Fair Building.

**April 20th, 7pm** **Cricket Reiley and Alice Kitajime** will do a presentation on *Lush Landscapes in a Dry Climate*. This is an in-person meeting and you will have the opportunity to purchase their book.

## DECEMBER POTLUCK FUN, FOOD & FRIENDSHIP



The Garden House was a festive affair for our WHS holiday potluck with winter greens lining the kitchen counter, tables decked with red tablecloths and stunning succulent pieces created by our talented Marci Hayden. The arrangements were raffled off at the end of the evening with many lucky attendees going home with pieces that will last months as a reminder of the evening!

Delicious dishes lined the kitchen counter for everyone to taste. Many a plate was overflowing. I know mine was! Our membership certainly has an abundance of wonderful cooks.

Delightful conversations over scrumptious food is the perfect combination for a good time and the evening did not disappoint. The 60th Anniversary and Beyond slide show was playing throughout the evening as a way



to remember those members who were not able to attend and those who are no longer with us. Many slides generated conversations of good times we have had at various WHS events and excitement for more to come!

~Leslie K Dean



Happy



New Year!

## 28 YEARS AGO

Western Hort met on January 14, 1998 to hear Greg Lowry from Sebastopol talk about *Vintage Roses*. (According to the Friends of Vintage Roses website, the spelling should be Gregg Lowery.) The meeting was held in a “TEMPORARY NEW LOCATION: Los Altos High School Cafeteria, 291 Almond, Los Altos.”

(I happened to look forward several newsletters and discovered this: “Note from Lorrie Freeman: It was a thrill for me to present the program on Heritage Roses at the January meeting, filling in for Gregg Lowery!” – NLS)

Five new members were welcomed. There were several repeat announcements, the banner was yet to be found, a slide show of members’ gardens for a meeting was still in the planning stages and a coordinator was needed for organizing field trips.

Carol Coate was thanked for “the raffle plants and the table Poinsettias that so enhanced our Xmas party!!”

A Protea Festival was announced: “an international symposium at UC Santa Cruz Arboretum, April 3-5. A three day celebration of the Proteas of South Africa and their relatives from Australia through slide shows, garden tours, plant sales, book sales, food and an art show. Cost \$125. (110. members).”

There was to be a Perennial and Rare Plant Sale in Sacramento on April 17-19, 9am-3pm to benefit the Sacramento AIDS Foundation.

“Sakamoto Plants, in Los Gatos, is having a 20% off sale the month of December. It’s a neat trip if you haven’t discovered it.”

The Plant Notes began with *Ruscus aculeatus*, shared by Judy Wong, who found the plant at the Santa Barbara Arboretum. Commonly known as butcher’s broom, “What appears to be leaves, are instead cladophylls. The tiny, true leaves are replaced by the cladophylls so the 1/16” greenish-white flowers and subsequent red berries (if there is a male and female plant) appear to be growing from the middle of the 1”, spine-tipped ‘leaves’.”

Ed Carman brought a *Cyclamen coum*, “This specimen has fuschia-colored flowers, but its silver-streaked leaves are the distinguishing feature”. “He is hoping (it) will set seed.” (And that’s where I got MY love of seeds! – NLS)

“Bill Kurtz showed exotic bulbs in flower. He brought an *Albuca* sp., a member of the lily family, sporting racemes of 3/4”, greenish-white bells.” “Bill’s second contribution was *Stenomesson variegatum*...with a peach-colored lily flower with green-striped tepals.”

It turns out that Elaine Levin was filling in as Plant Note author, and she brought in two blooming and one almost-blooming manzanitas, *Arctostaphylos densiflora* ‘Sentinel’ (pink) and *A. manzanita* ‘Dr. Hurd’ (white). “These evergreen shrubs are usually not grown for showy flowers but for the bark. ‘Dr. Hurd’ has particularly lovely mahogany-colored, peeling bark.” “...‘Howard McMinn’ (pink) wasn’t quite in bloom yet...is a workhorse in my garden...I think the dense foliage serves a garden...as green blobs.”

She ended by saying “Manzanitas, by the way, should be only pruned in summer when they are dormant...Evolving in the chaparral, they are fire-dependent, and should be kept away from buildings.”

~ Nancy Schramm

## STROLLING AROUND THE INTERNET

**Fireweed Ice Cream** - For all the ice cream lovers out there:

<https://www.wildscoops.com/post/2018/08/28/botany-of-ice-cream-fireweed-chamerion-angustifolium>

**Researchers use living fossils to use genes for seed improvement:**

<https://www.nyu.edu/about/news-publications/news/2025/november/living-fossils-genes-seed-improvement.html>

**Browse the Brooklyn Botanic Garden Articles:** <https://www.bbg.org/articles>



## In Memorium



### *Betsy Birchfield Clebsch*

August 29, 1924—November 26, 2025

We have received the sad news from Bill and Sarah, Betsy's son and daughter, that Betsy passed peacefully in her sleep on Wednesday, November 26, the evening before Thanksgiving.



For the last two-and-a-half years, Betsy had been living in a wonderful memory care facility in the Baltimore area, not far from where Sarah lives.

Sarah wrote "On the Sunday before she passed, Betsy had been somewhat talkative while she ate her supper when Sarah visited her. Early Wednesday evening, Sarah and her daughter Annie sat with Betsy for a few hours while Betsy slept comfortably. We reminisced and chatted so Betsy could hear our voices."

For more information, to share memories, make donations in Betsy's memory, and to get reminders of obituary updates, please visit the following web address:

<https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/nottingham-md/betsy-clebsch-12633246>

Thank you for your friendship with Betsy.

Bill and Sarah

Long-time members of WHS will remember how dearly Betsy loved plants and her garden. Up until the time she moved from her home, Big Swing, in the Santa Cruz Mountains to Palo Alto, she would spend hours, daily, gardening. Betsy shared the joys and pitfalls of the intriguing salvia family, and charmed every WHS member with her passion for all plants. She delved into many areas of the horticultural world and helped and encouraged others to follow her lead. She was active in many facets of WHS, and was honored in 2008 with the Western Horticultural Society Founders' Award. Betsy was also involved for many years in the garden at Gamble Garden in Palo Alto.

Betsy, we will miss you.

### *Linda Stremel*

It's with a sad heart that I inform you of the death of Linda Stremel. She died November 11th in her home. Linda's life was full of exploration, digging, and growth.



She was a woman that loved growth in many forms. She loved visiting far-off exotic places and their gardens. Linda also built a growing garden at her home that she was proud of and enjoyed working in it.



She enjoyed her time in the Clara B Reese Iris Society, Monterey Bay Iris Society and the Western Horticultural Society. It truly led to her personal growth, both root and flowers.

Survived by her two sons, James and Jed, who both miss her greatly. She also left behind two grandkids who miss her over this holiday season and forward. Linda's memory will live on through her family, whose lives have been enriched through her love.

~ James Stremel, Loving Son

## HORTICULTURAL HAPPENINGS

Checkout other ongoing events, Plant Sales, Talks and Workshops at the Master Gardener website:  
<https://mgsantaclara.ucanr.edu/events-calendar/>

**Clara B Reese Iris Society 2026 Spring Show** April 19th 2026 at the Joan Pisani Community Center, Saratoga CA 95070. To join or get more information on the Clara B Reese Iris Society go to: <https://www.irises.org> or [www.cbris.org](http://www.cbris.org)

**The Garden Conservancy Webinar, Three Part Program. The Emperor's Western Maze and the Making of a Global Garden in China.** Part 1 - January 29th, Part 2 - February 26th, Part 3 - March 19th. All air at 9am. <https://www.gardenconservancy.org/events/web26-the-emperor-s-western-maze-and-the-making-of-a-global-garden-bundle>  
Register now, \$32 non-members of Garden Conservancy.

### SNACKS!

**Bring your own mug to better enjoy the beverages at the treat table and cut down on disposable cups!**

Please sign up to bring something in January. We're hoping for 2-4 contributions each month. Snacks can be home baked sweet or savory bites. They can be purchased at your local market. Fruits and vegetables are great too.

Here is a link to sign up:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/19rOJXS374RI3aV3sSG-3RfALQWOq-D0Ps5AdaKR81Bg/edit?tab=t.0>

Thanks to Lori Tuttle and Alicia Evans for their participation and for setting up the snack table each month!

### GET INVOLVED

**Vice president, Board members and Corresponding Secretary:** 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](mailto:info@westernhort.org) or speak to any of the current board members at our meetings.

#### 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, Gabrielle Sala, Marci Hayden & Mil Milutin.

(More board members welcomed and needed)

#### Volunteer Committees and Responsibilities:

Plant Sale Table: Carol Dahout & Mil Milutin

Email and website maintenance: Eva Huala

Membership: Eva Huala & Kathy Anberg

Publicity and Outreach: Grace Tsang

Meeting Tech: Jennifer Doniach, Eva Huala, Jennifer Dungan, Meri-Beth Bird & John Hammerschmidt

Welcome Table: Pam Noyer

Treat Table Set up: Lori Tuttle and Alicia Evans

Speaker Program Committee: Leslie Dean (chair), Nancy Schramm, Judy Wong, Meri-Beth Bird, Jim Salyards & Marci Hayden

Newsletter Editor: Kathy Anberg

Newsletter Contributors: Jennifer Dungan & Nancy Schramm

Scholarships: Grace Tsang, Jennifer Doniach, Meri-Beth Bird, & Janet Hoffmann

#### About Membership in Western Hort:

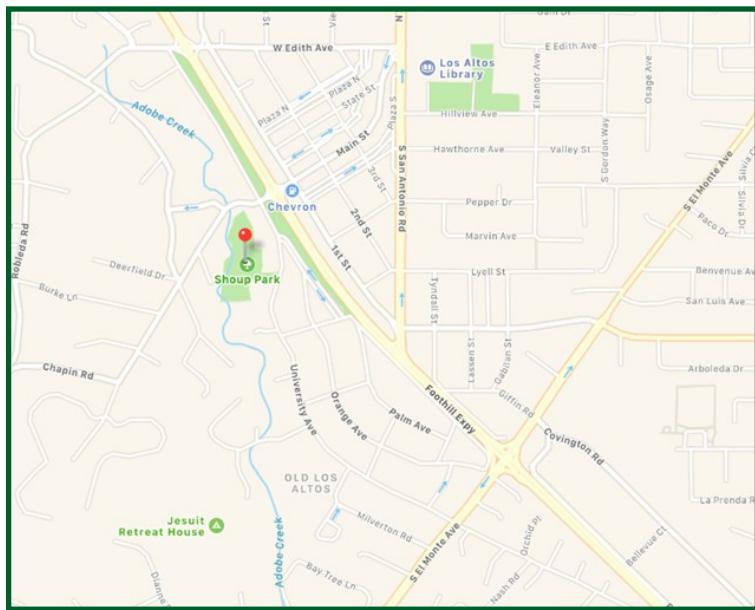
**Membership Rates:** A one-year membership (Sep-Aug) includes an e-mail copy of this newsletter and admittance to all of our monthly meetings. Regular membership is \$35, Family membership for two or more members at the same address is \$50, and a discounted rate for students is \$20. Please visit the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

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



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VISIT US AT [WESTERNHORT.ORG](http://WESTERNHORT.ORG)



### Meeting date & location : January 14th, 2026

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 January.** Submissions after this date will likely appear in the next month's newsletter. Send submissions to: [Kjanberg@gmail.com](mailto:Kjanberg@gmail.com).