

DECEMBER 2023 MEETING

December 13th, 6:00pm

The December 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 6pm but if you can arrive by 5:00pm 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: KEN LITCHFIELD

TOPIC: ALL MUSHROOMS ARE MAGICAL— EXPERIENCING THE PHANTASMAGORICAL REALM OF FUNGI

We will learn about many of our favorite local Bay Area and Northern California mushrooms and their culinary, herbal/medicinal, dye and psychoactive properties and uses. Ken will discuss their healing properties for human health and also their mycoremediation properties for healing the earth and building healthy soils. He will share easy to learn techniques he has implemented in woodland, garden and lab situations. He will cover many mushroom lore topics of interest including fruit of the roots of the pine and the oak, ergot and huitlacoche lore in Aztec fermentations, candy cap mushroom psychoactivity, stoned ape theory, Hollywood mushroom stories and much more. Ken will illustrate his talk with stories and anecdotes from his many years of mycological escapades so that we can partake in the creative flavors and juices of his MycoMondo late nite events.

Ken encourages us to bring our locally collected mushrooms to add to table decorations and for him to identify and discuss.



Ken Litchfield has been the Chair of the Cultivation Committee of the Mycological Society of San Francisco for over 30 years. During that time he led a team of mushroom cultivation enthusiasts to institute the mushroom society's first mushroom garden at Randall Museum. He moved it to the Presidio National Park during a remodel of the museum. At the Presidio Ken and his committee instituted the society's first mushroom lab. When the Presidio had to remodel he moved the lab and garden to Merritt Community College Landscape Horticulture Dept. where he instituted the first community college accredited Mushroom Cultivation course in the country. He also instituted Growing and Using Healthful Herbs and Beneficial Beasts in the Garden classes as part of the horticulture and permaculture programs (Applied Biology for the Plant, Animal and Fungi Kingdoms) which he taught for 10 years before retiring. He moved the lab and programs as citizen science to Omni Commons in Oakland where it resided for several years until Covid.



DECEMBER IS HOLIDAY POTLUCK !

To celebrate the season and our 60th Anniversary, the Western Hort Board will supply Hors d'oeuvres, a main meat dish and drinks. Please bring a side dish serving six to eight to share if you wish to participate. Please bring your own plate and utensils. There will be no Plant Share or Plant Sale Table at this meeting.

CO-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



We are looking forward to seeing you for our end-of-the-year party. The evening will be a celebration of our 60th anniversary with fun and fanfare. In today's society, any organization that has been in existence for 60 years is quite an accomplishment! We are a proud group of horticultural enthusiasts with a vibrant community of members. We have put together a presentation of history and memories for you to enjoy and have a special gift for you to celebrate our milestone. We hope you can join in this event and celebrate all our achievements with your fellow horticulture friends. We will also announce our Founders' Award and give away door prizes and 60th anniversary gifts.

Wednesday, December 13, The Garden House at Shoup Park (Please arrive by 5:00 pm if you can help with set-up)

Program for the evening:

6:00 Hors d'oeuvres and wine provided by WHS board

6:30 Potluck Dinner (Please bring dish to share if you wish to participate)

7:30 Speaker *Ken Litchfield, All Mushrooms are Magical: Experiencing the Phantasmagorical Realm of Fungi*

8:45 Social time

9:10 Clean-up (Please stay to help with this if you can.)

9:30 Close the doors

WHS will provide a ham along with hors d'oeuvres, wine, sparkling cider and non-alcoholic beverages including coffee and tea. Please bring a dish serving six to eight to share - side dish, salad, entrée, or a dessert. Please bring your own plate and eating utensils.

~ Grace Tsang & Meri-Beth Bird

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Speakers scheduled for 2024

January 10th, Fergus Garrett, Plant Combinations for a Long-lasting and Resilient Garden

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

NOVEMBER SPEAKER NOTES

Speaker notes (mostly from Leslie Dean)

Notes from Leonel Morales-Bejarano talk

His new nursery is Los Arroyos International Wholesale Nursery in Watsonville, and they are focusing on growing CA Natives, Australian and So. African plants.

There are three ways to propagate: seeds and seedlings, cuttings, divisions.

1. Seeds and Seedlings

Most cost effective.

Lupine seeds are easy to propagate but the plant is hard to grow.

Toyon seeds easy to propagate but cuttings are hard to propagate

Process: Collect seeds. Clean and separate seeds. Some seeds require treatment to sprout

Store seeds using envelopes and label so you remember what the seeds are!

Some seeds require a smoke treatment or need refrigeration/cold or need soaking like Heteromeles.

Soil mix: 10% perlite 60-80% peat moss

Aesculus is easy to propagate. Big seeds so one per pot.

Asarum is hard to propagate. Seeds need gas and smoke to germinate

Cercis easy to soften seeds by using smoke treatment which “burns” the outer layer so the seed can sprout. Some people do this process on the BBQ.

Eriogonum, Heuchera, and Penstemon are easy to propagate.

Salvia spathacea needs a smoke treatment – Soak the seeds for 1 day, Gas for 1 day, smoke for 1 day.

2. Cuttings

Lilies are best done in winter.

Leonel uses 70% alcohol to disinfect his tools, in a bucket.

He doesn't use bottom heat for cuttings when first planted. He leaves them outside until they begin to root then he brings them inside and uses bottom heat.

Rooting hormone - Leonel recommends Rootone® Brand F #8, or #3 if the plant is sensitive.

Plant ½”-1” deep, e.g, Salvia apiana ½” ok

The shorter the cutting the better the quality of the eventual plant.

If you propagate in the summer, you need to put them under a mister but be careful about the risk of too much water and fungal growth.

Water 1x a week once they start growing. When first planted lightly sprinkle 3x a day but don't keep too wet.

It is important to keep seeds moist. They will die if they dry out.

Epilobium cuttings must be from soft wood. Must keep them on the dry side and don't let them get too hot.

Put wet newspaper over the cuttings to keep cool and moist.

Propagate Ribes sanquineum in spring or winter. Ribes californicum anytime

3. Divisions

Disinfect tools by soaking in bucket with 70% alcohol

Iris are disease prone. Dig up and wash in soap then cut roots apart then planting. Don't plant too deep. Don't cover the red/pink part of the leaves at the base with soil.

4. Questions

Gas used? White Camping fuel. Manufacturers now add an Anti flurry/slurry? agent to the gas which is toxic to seeds.

So once they use up their current supply they won't have this gas to use anymore.

Rootone ® Brand F – strengths? Uses Hormex. Comes in #3, 8, 16. 3 is for sensitive plants. 8 is most popular to use.

Length of cuttings? Shortest cuts make the best plants overall.

Salvia – plant about ½” below soil.

Is propagation for Australian and So. African plants similar to CA native? Yes, similar in their methods and growth. The foliage must be kept dry. Not too humid or they get fungus.

Grevillea best to propagate in fall

Leucadendrons late summer to early fall and monitor for hot weather. When over 80 degrees cover with wet newspaper to keep cool

Keep dry and they like lots of light

Ceanothus and manzanita are better propagated in winter or late fall even though you can propagate all year. They need more care to be successful when propagated at other times.

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Mimulus – easy to propagate but must use soft stems only. They can root in a week. They are working on a new line of mimulus and will introduce them next year.

Leonel has close to 100% success rate in his propagation!

Nevin Smith has been his mentor for many years - they worked together for decades at Suncrest Nursery. Nevin Smith was in attendance on November 8.

Here is a shorter article by Nevin, https://sa.ipps.org/uploads/docs/58_089.pdf, and his book, <https://www.ucpress.edu/book/9780520244269/native-treasures>, is one of the bibles for California native plant growers. This link has databases for propagation, <https://rngr.net/>

~ Grace Tsang

NOVEMBER PLANT SHARE

Judy Wong - Menlo Park

Nerine sarniensis- Guernsey lily, bulb from Japan, it got it's name from a legend about a shipment of the lilies from Japan which was involved in a shipwreck on Guernsey, one of the islands in the English Channel. The lilies apparently started growing there in the 17th century and liked the sandy soils and moist climate. Judy says that she grows hers in pots and waters them lightly starting later summer. Growth begins in August to September and they are blooming late October to early November on 1.5-2 foot stalks. They produce long-lasting bright red flowers that look like they are speckled with gold-dust. Plant in well-draining soil with the tip of the bulb above soil level. She brought some bulbs to share that she said would bloom in about 3 years.

Judy also brought cuttings of Pelargonium 'Platinum' to share and for more information on this little beauty the Calhortsociety.org website has a good article.

<https://calhortsociety.org/2019/02/26/a-climbing-geranium/>



John Hammerschmidt - Los Altos

Vitis 'Roger's Red', Roger's red grape, John brought in a cutting with nice red fall color. He said that he gets better color on the top leaves on his large vine, than on the sides. He said that it is really low care, once established he gives his plant no summer water in Los Altos where he lives. He said that the grapes do not ripen all at once but gradually over a period of time. They are very small and the birds really like them. Grace added that she finds the grapes tasty.



Photo credit: Calscape

Grace Tsang - Los Altos Hills

Quercus douglasii, blue oak, Grace brought leaves from the large tree in her yard in Los Altos Hills. She is not sure if the tree was native or planted by a previous owner of their house. She mentioned that it is part of the white oak group which is not as subject to Sudden Oak Death as the red oak group. She also mentioned that the blue oaks occur especially around the foothills surrounding the Central Valley, like a 'bathtub ring'.



Photo credit: Oaktown Native Plant Nursery

Carol Dahout - San Jose

Don Gillogly Avocado, Carol showed us a fruit from this wonderful avocado variety. She said that originated in southern California and produces fruit year-round in her San Jose yard. She also said that the tree was supposed to be dwarf but has grown huge in her yard. It started producing fruit at 7 years of age. Some people may remember that she brought some of her fruit to share at the June picnic and they were delicious!



Photo credit: Epicenter Nursery and Fruit

Many thanks to Janet Hoffmann for doing the plant notes this month! Editor

This Unusual Plant From the Amazon Rainforest Has Baffled Scientists for 50 Years

By Tessa Koumoundouros October 7, 2021

Photo: Patricia Alvarez-Loayza

Within one of the lushest places on our planet, an unobtrusive green plant grows amongst many other green plants. Although long used by the Indigenous Machiguenga people, the plant's strange mish-mash of characteristics had scientists mystified for 50 years.



"I didn't really think it was special, except for the fact that it had characteristics of plants in several different plant families," said Smithsonian Institution botanist Robin Foster, who initially collected the plant back in 1973.

"Usually I can tell the family by a quick glance, but damned if I could place this one."

In the floodplain forest of the Manu River, this enigmatic plant flowers at the end of both the wet and dry seasons, bearing either male or female flowers. During the wet and dry seasons it's adorned with small, vibrant orange, delicate fruits, shaped like paper lanterns.



But even this plant's distinctive bounty, which tastes sweet and creamy, was no help in figuring out where on the tree of life this strange species belonged. All the scientists Foster had shown the plant samples to were baffled - they couldn't even work out which plant family it should be part of.

"I tried to get it identified using little fine technical characters like boiling up the ovaries of the flowers and taking pictures of the pollen, and after all that, we still didn't know," Field Museum botanist Nancy Hensold recalled. "It really bugged me."

The fruit. (CE Timothy Paine/ Thomas et al. *Taxon*, 2021)

Initial attempts to analyze the DNA from the dried specimens failed, as the genetic material was too degraded. Luckily, Manu National Park ecologist Patricia Alvarez-Loayza had collected fresher samples.

Genes from the plant's nucleus and chloroplasts (the photosynthesizing organs) finally revealed it belongs to a family of neotropical plants called *Picramniaceae*.

"My first reaction was, 'What the heck?'" said The New York Botanical Garden curator Wayt Thomas. "These plants didn't look like anything else in the family."

Some of the features of its flowers are similar to another plant, *Nothotalisia* also from the *Picramniaceae* family, growing in the same region, but its fruit and green bits are very different. That, along with its genetics, support the idea this plant belongs to an entirely different genus, which the researchers have called *Aenigmanu*, meaning "mystery of Manu".

Thomas and colleagues gave the plant the species name *alvareziae*, in honor of Alvarez-Loayza and her groundbreaking work in ecology, teaching and conservation.

"Now it is classified in *Picramniaceae*, we know to look for secondary compounds of potential use as anti-cancer drugs, which are a feature of this family," London's Royal Botanic Gardens taxonomist, Martin Cheek, who was not involved in the study, told The CNN Wire.

As the type of habitat *Aenigmanu alvareziae* has been found within is rare and disappearing rapidly, and the plant has only been collected from a few sites, the researchers recommend it should be classified as endangered.

"Plants are understudied in general. Especially tropical forest plants. Especially Amazon plants. And especially plants in the upper Amazon," explained Foster. "To understand the changes taking place in the tropics, to protect what remains, and to restore areas that have been wiped out, plants are the foundation for everything that lives there and the most important to study."

This research was published in *Taxon*.

28 YEARS AGO

Western Hort's annual December potluck was Wednesday, December 13, 1995 at the Shoup Park Garden House. Our organization has come a long way in the last 28 years, and even further when we look back 60 years, while still remaining true to the heart of why WHS was founded. Western Horticultural Society has provided a place where people who care quite a lot about plants can gather and share horticultural knowledge in all forms.

There isn't a lot more to share from the newsletter except I like the following excerpt:

"Also, please bring your own non-disposable plate and cutlery, because as gardeners it seems appropriate that we should be environmentally friendly, and not clutter the planet with more disposable stuff than we have to."

~ Nancy Schramm

Western Horticultural Society Memories by Janet Hoffmann

I was working in my garden recently and it occurred to me that my memories of Western Hort revolve around people and the plants that they have shared. I started attending WHS in the late 1980's when I worked at Yamagami's Nursery and they encouraged horticultural education for their employees. I have a frequently divided potted *Ledebouria socialis* that Dick Dunmire brought pieces to meetings around that time. I also have a *Haemanthus albiflos* from Bill Kurtz, I fell in love with this unusual S. African plant and am still looking for the red form, *Haemanthus coccineus*, that he showed in the plant share at the same meeting. Ed Carman was also a frequent plant sharer at those meetings. I have several plants in my yard from him including an *Oreganum rotundifolia* that is a very satisfying ground cover, *Dittany of Crete* and an *Aristea ecklonii* that was a bonus in one of the plants that I got from him. He warned me that the *Aristia* could become invasive but I have kept it under control by removing the flower heads as soon as they set seed.

I stopped attending meetings for a while in the late 90's-early 2000's while I pursued a career in teaching. Sometime around 2010, I started attending meetings again with other Yamagami expatriots, Kathy Anberg, Lorena Gorshe and Ron Kanemoto. Kathy has shared many enduring plants with me including the blue bearded iris, rain lilies and *Hyacinthoides hispanica* in my yard. Lorena was also very generous in sharing both her garden in Santa Clara as well as potted plants including a small Aloe and an unnamed succulent that I have managed to keep alive. She has a better green thumb for potted plants than I do.

In 2016, Judy Wong approached me for the vacant newsletter editor position that she was covering for after the retirement of Marianne Mueller. To learn more about the group dynamics, I also attended my first board meeting that fall and ended up joining the board. Judy's horticultural enthusiasm inspired me to start collecting S. African bulbs, several of which she shared with me including some *Lachenalia*, *Babiana*, *Ferraria*, *Neomarica*, *Albuca* and *Pelargoniums*. She and Lorena got me started following and eventually joining the Pacific Bulb Society.

Picnics that I recall include Sherry Austin's garden where I got a small yellow daylily that thrived in her Santa Cruz Mountains yard and is alive and but struggling in my yard. Also one at Terra Sole Nurseries with all of it's unusual plants from which I still have a Sparrieshoop rose that is doing well in my back yard. Unfortunately the *Bauhinia* vine was wonderful for a year then I think, succumbed to frost. For some reason the variegated *Scrophularia* also did not like my yard, perhaps not enough moisture. I fondly remember presentations by Betsy Clebsch as well as the picnic at her amazing garden off Skyline Blvd. She was definitely the inspiration for many of the *Salvia* in my yard.

Being newsletter editor and on the board allowed me to get to know other amazing gardeners. I was able to enjoy both the garden and houseplants of Leslie Dean. My zig-zag plant in my front entry is from a cutting that she shared with me. I also got the opportunity to see Liz Calhoun's garden before she moved away. She shared cuttings of her *Plectranthus barbatus* that I now have growing behind my house. On many visits I admired Carrie Parker's home and garden. Taking care of WHS business also gave me the opportunity to visit Jennifer Doniach's home and garden and Katie Wong's garden. Katie was another generous sharer of plants from whom I have a very hardy mint that she called Mint Julip and a *Galanga* ginger plant.

I remember the scrumptious turkeys that Katie supplied for our Christmas potlucks and the wonderful flower arrangements from Liz Calhoun for the potluck and other meetings. I joined Carrie in setting up and staffing the Hot Plant Picks booths only for the last couple of SF Flower Shows in the Cow Palace, but that experience also added to my plant collection.

My memories are not complete without a mention of Nancy Schramm. I learned a lot about plants and nomenclature while working with her on the newsletter. I have made a couple visits to her wonderful nursery where she, in her father's footsteps, grows so many unusual plants of which I have several in my yard. On the trellis outside my window right now is the *Vitis vinifera* 'Atropurea' which is showing its wonderful fall color. It produced loads of grapes that probably would make good wine, but I am too lazy for that. I made some wonderful grape juice from them though. I know there are many other ways, too numerous to list them all, in which Western Hort people have enriched and continue to enrich my garden and my life. My never-ending appreciation goes to the program committee which is the real backbone of the society and provides so many educational and inspiring programs.

STROLLING AROUND THE INTERNET

Audubon Society article on the difference between Native, Non-native and Invasive Plants:

https://www.audubon.org/news/what-difference-between-native-non-native-and-invasive-plants?ms=digital-eng-email-ea-x-engagement_difference-native-non-native-invasive_&utm_source=ea&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=engagement_difference-native-non-native-invasive&utm_content=

Newsflash

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 : 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
Publicity and Outreach: Grace Tsang
Membership: Ursula Haschke
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:

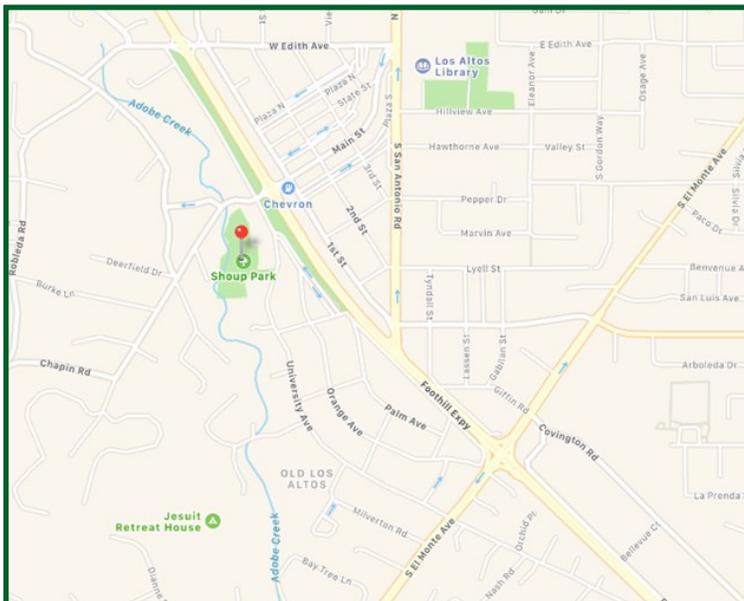
Membership Rates: A one-year membership (Sep-Aug) includes an e-mail copy of this newsletter and admittance to all of our monthly meetings. Regular membership is \$35, Family membership for two or more members at the same address is \$50, and a discounted rate for students is \$20. To receive a print 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.

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 : December 13th
In Person at Shoup Park Garden House, 400 University Ave., Los Altos
(Masks optional)
Activities start at 6 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 December.** 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