

WESTERN HORT

November 2026 | PO Box 166, Mountain View, CA 94042 | www.westernhort.org

NOVEMBER 11TH, 2026 MEETING 7:30PM

The November meeting will be a **hybrid in-person and on Zoom meeting**. Meetings are free for members (bring a friend and their first meeting is free too!) 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 set up, your assistance would be greatly appreciated. Masks are recommended but optional. See page 7 of this newsletter for information about joining the Western Horticultural Society.

SPEAKER: DR. BENJAMIN HOOVER

TOPIC: PLANT SELECTION IN A COMPLEX WORLD: NAVIGATING SPECIES, CULTIVARS AND EXPECTATIONS FOR THE BEST PLANTS TO USE IN YOUR GARDEN

We know that selecting the right plant for a landscape is important, but how do we evaluate plants to make smart decisions? Should we only plant native plants? Are the newest cultivars always the best choice? In this session, we acknowledge the myriad stakeholders in plant selection, then talk about cultivars and plant species. The conversation involves genetic outliers and mutations, grafted plants, plant adaptations to stresses, and how they might affect aesthetic and ecological outcomes. Plants are diverse and have a lot to offer; we just need to know how to pick the right fit.



Benjamin Hoover is a Professor of Sustainable Nursery Production in the Plant Sciences Department at California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly) in San Luis Obispo, CA. Ben started working at Behmerwald Nursery (Schwenksville, PA) as a teenager, fell in love with plants, then studied them till he had a PhD in Horticulture from Penn State.

Now he enjoys helping students at Cal Poly see the art and science of horticulture, as well as myriad exciting opportunities for innovation. Ben loves being an educator and researcher because it lets him indulge his eternal curiosity. Every day is a day to learn something new!

There will be a speakers dinner this month.

If you would like to join us at Chef Chu's, please email Western Hort member Carol Dahout at: caroldahout@yahoo.com by Monday, November 9th 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

By now, you have probably heard that Andy Mariani's orchard lands in Morgan Hill are to be sold. Here are some excerpts from "A Silicon Valley Dirt Farmer Hangs Up His Shears", The New York Times*, Aug. 14, 2026. And by 'dirt', Andy means someone who farms for their living, not for a hobby, as does a 'gentleman' farmer. Mr. Mariani's 7,000 trees [some 300 varieties of sweet cherries, apricots, peaches, nectarines, and plums] will be uprooted and replaced with hundreds of homes, two parks, a playground and pickleball courts. Now 80, Mr. Mariani says his once profitable orchard is no longer sustainable. "We always, always, always go to Andy's Orchard," said Ken Takayama, co-chef of Mélisse Restaurant, Santa Monica. "The first time I tried a nectarine they produced, it was as if I never tasted a nectarine before." Mr. Mariani's fruit is best eaten over the kitchen sink. Or right from the tree. "When you're out in the orchard," he said, "you don't worry about the juice." When he was young, Mr. Mariani plucked fruit in the orchard next to his family's house in Morgan Hill, where he still lives. He learned grafting and other farming techniques from his father, who, along with his mother and two oldest siblings, emigrated in the 1930s from the island of Vis, now a part of Croatia. Mr. Mariani remembers a seminal moment in his childhood when he tasted a peach his father had grown by grafting an early Crawford peach onto an apricot tree. "I spent my whole lifetime trying to bring back that flavor and relive that joy," he said.

From KQED, "Why One of the Last Stone Fruit Growers in the Valley of Heart's Delight Is Downsizing": "Modern society seems to define progress as escaping physical work, even when that work leads to something very special," he wrote in a recent newsletter. "Our once picturesque agricultural landscape that defined the valley was not simply replaced by what we call progress. Within that landscape there was also a culture, a special way of life. Unfortunately, as evidenced over several decades now, that way of life became increasingly difficult to financially sustain as the region transformed."

Andy has spoken to Western Hort over the years several times: Andy Mariani, *Stone Fruits for the Bay Area: History, Cultivation, and Varieties* (Oct 11, 2006) Andy Mariani & Charlie Olson with moderator Robin Chapman, *Farming in the Valley of Heart's Delight* (Oct 12, 2022) Andy Mariani, *Growing Stone Fruits in the Home Garden* (Oct 11th, 2023) You can watch the 2022 video on the WHS youtube channel, but better still is to bring a carload of friends down to Andy's orchard store this fall, and to keep abreast of news for the tastings for next year's last growing season of the orchard. Note that Andy has maintained one of the largest collections of stone fruit varieties on the west coast, and during the summer months he personally hosts fruit tastings and tours.

*Most libraries let you check out an online pass to read The New York Times

~ Grace Tsang & Meri-Beth Bird

UPCOMING MEETINGS

WESTERN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

December 9th 2026 Potluck Celebration, No Speaker

January 13th, 2027 Eva Huala & John Hammerschmidt: *Grafting Made Easy: The Art and Science Behind Joining Multiple Plants onto One*

February 10, 2027 M. Kat Anderson: *California Wildlands: Lessons from Nature and Native People* (Louisa Beck Speaker)

March 10th, 2027 Marion Brenner: *Tips for Superior Garden Photography*

April 14th, 2027 Patricia Saint John: *How to Combine Edibles and Ornamentals in Your Garden* (Tiede Speaker)

May 12th, 2027 Movie (TBD) and Vendor Night

CALIFORNIA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

November 16th, 2026 Dr. Jamie Chan & Dr. John Hafernick: *Native Bee Stewardship*

An introduction to the diversity of native and wild bees found in Northern California. Practical ideas for creating gardens to help support our bees will be discussed.

2027 Seed Exchange Reminder

Cal Hort would like to remind you that now is the perfect time to collect seeds and send them by the end of November for the yearly seed exchange. Mail seeds to Barbara Siegel, 4424 Norton Ave, Oakland CA 94602

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

For more info about Cal Hort go to:

<https://calhortsociety.org/>

There is still time to offer a helping hand with the December Potluck Party! Contact Grace Tsang and ask her how you can help. cosang@gmail.com

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

SEPTEMBER SPEAKER NOTES BY JEN DUNGAN

Following in their Footsteps

The 1887 Grays Peak Trip: Alice Eastwood and Alfred Russel Wallace with Amy Schneider

Amy Schneider, zooming in from the Denver Botanic Garden where she works as a curator and horticulturist, gave us a sparkling adventure yarn about an expedition undertaken by two leading lights of the botanical world 139 years ago. Alice Eastwood was the savior of the California Academy of Science's herbarium (containing over 300,000 plant specimens) after the 1906 earthquake. You will remember Alfred Russell Wallace as the co-discoverer with Charles Darwin of the theory of evolution through natural selection. Neither of these intrepid explorers are household names but should be! They hiked together in July 1887 up Grays Peak, the highest summit in the Front Range of the Rockies about 40 miles west of Denver, when cultural and climate conditions were very different than they are today. Though Wallace was hampered by age (at 67) and Alice was hindered by Victorian dress (at 28), they managed to get to the peak at 14,278' and collect many native alpine plants.

Amy reconstructed the circumstances of the hike through assiduous study of Wallace's journal from that year and by hiking the same trails and obtaining herbarium vouchers at likely the very same locations recorded by Wallace. She showed many gorgeous photographs of the landscapes and some of the plants that were collected on this expedition:

Androsace septentrionalis
Aquilegia caerulea
Arnica cordifolia
Caltha leptosepala
Chaenactis alpina
Campanula rotundifolia
Chionophila jamesii
Claytonia megarhiza
Dryas arctopetala
Eritrichium argenteum
Gentiana prostrata
Lloydia serotina
Mertensia alpina
Moneses uniflora
Papaver kluanense



Pedicularis groenlandica
Pedicularis parryi
Penstemon halli
Penstemon whippleanus
Polemonium confertum
Primula angustifolia
Primula parryi

Pyrola americana
Rhodiola rhodantha
Phlox condensata
Salix arctica
Salix reticulata var. *nana*
Saxifraga flagellaris
Saxifraga chrysantha
Senecio soldanella
Silene acaulis
Swertia perrenis
Besseyia alpina
Tetraneuris grandiflora
Trifolium nanum
Veronica wormskjoldii
Zigadenus glaucus x *elegans*

She related the sometimes-harrowing conditions of the journey by Eastwood and Wallace and then something of their lives afterwards. Even more harrowing was the tale of Eastwood's experiences and heroic actions after she moved to San Francisco and lived through the 1906 earthquake. The two continued corresponding for the rest of Wallace's life and sweetly had a final visit not too long before he died at age 90. For more reading on related topics, Amy recommended Herbarium: *The Quest to Preserve and Classify the World's Plants* by Barbara M. Thiers and *The Feather Thief* by Kirk Wallace Johnson. The artifacts, plant pics, scenes of the places they visited, and excerpts from original letters and news articles in Amy's talk really brought to life the world of these giants of natural science.

SNACKS IN November!

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

September snacks were provided by the WHS Board for your enjoyment! Thank you! Please sign up to bring something in November! 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

28 YEARS AGO BY NANCY SCHRAMM

On November 11, 1998 Western Hort gathered to hear John Bryon's talk: *A Visit to South Africa*.

The very few announcements included: a reminder to renew memberships; Leslie Dean would be hosting the October 29th board meeting; there was a request for someone to do the plant notes since "Elizabeth Garbett will be on vacation all of November"; and "Copies of *Successful Vines for the Peninsula* will be available for purchase at the meeting".

Also in the news, "The Gamble Garden Center has an interesting education program" and "Filoli has lots of events for the Christmas holidays."

Elaine Levine volunteered to write the Plant Notes, which she accomplished with the same combination of description and humor that Elizabeth was known for.

The Notes began with two fragrant plants that Dick Dunmire brought in. *Osmanthus fragrans aurantiacus* has small orange flowers in the fall, which smell like apricot preserves. At 30 years old, it stands 18' tall in part shade. In contrast, Dick thought that his *Oncidium* 'Sharry Baby' smelled like "cheap Halloween candy". It was covered with magenta and white flowers.

"Some day I'd like to sit in on a meeting of botanists who decide on name changes. Next to changing *Zauschneria* to *Epilobium*, I was most upset by changing *Farfugium* to *Ligularia*." Now it's back to *Farfugium* again. (I totally agree with Elaine's feelings! – NLS) Keith Bickford brought in three plants of this shade and water loving plant. "*F. japonicum* 'Crispata' with curled and crested leaf edges; *F. 'Aureo-maculatum'*, leopard plant, spotted as the common name suggests, and another with a gold edge."

John Hammerschmidt brought in his *Callicarpa bodinieri* (beauty bush) with many tiny lavender berries on an arching stem. (Remind me, John, to ask you to save me some seed if you still have the plant, please! – NLS)

"An intriguing name is 'Fanny's Fall Aster'. Does it refer to the season or Fanny's morals?" Betsy Clebsch shared the 3' tall blue aster along with *Abutilon* 'Huntington Pink' (8' tall), *Trichostema lanatum* (CA native wooly blue curls), *Cynoglossum amabile*, (a hound's tongue from China with deep blue flowers), *Berberis replicata* (at 6' tall and wide is twice the size expected) and *Salvia greggii* 'Desert Blaze' (Betsy likes the variegated leaves but not with the red flowers.)

Don Brandeau was told that he should have consulted Betsy Clebsch's *A Book of Salvias* to learn more about the two plants he showed. *S. chiapensis* (a tropical rainforest sage with bright fuchsia flowers) and *S. glechomaefolia* (slightly more hardy, yellow-green foliage with blue-violet flowers).

Bill Kurtz brought in *Haemanthus albiflos*, a bulb from South Africa with the common name - shaving brush plant.

UPCOMING NOVEMBER EVENTS

Sunday, November 1st, 10am-1pm Coffee in the Garden at Suzanne Legallet's beautiful Atherton home. WHS will provide coffee and we encourage everyone to bring snacks to share. Carpooling is strongly encouraged. Please park on the street. 88 Selby Lane, Atherton, CA. Contact Jim Salyards with any questions: jsalyards@filoli.org

Saturday November 7th, 10am-11am Webinar: What To Do in the Garden Right Now. Sloat Gardens offers this for no charge. Kylea, assistant Manager of their Pleasant Hill location will cover how to prepare for the rainy months ahead and stay on top of maintenance for spring.

<https://sloatgardens.com/event/webinar-what-to-do-in-the-garden-right-now/>

OCTOBER PLANT SHARE BY JANET HOFFMANN

Nancy Schramm from Gilroy showed: *Oxalis gigantea*– This is one of the two largest Oxalis species reaching 3-4' tall with a shrubby form. It produces yellow flowers in spring. Nancy first saw the plant in Richard Ward's Dry Garden Nursery in Oakland. She has been experimenting with propagating it from tip cuttings. She started the cuttings last spring and they promptly went dormant and she thought that she had lost them. However, the cuttings continued to receive water and started leafing out and forming roots by the end of summer. Judy Wong also grows the plant and has let it go dry over the summer, but Nancy's feeling was that it would be better to water it year-round because it will remain green and doesn't seem to mind the summer water. The Pacific Bulb Society wiki says that the species is from Chile and will grow well in cooler Mediterranean climates, however watering must be carefully controlled in warmer climates. It can be grown in pots or in well-drained soil in the ground. Full sun will keep the stem from becoming weak, elongated, and convoluted.



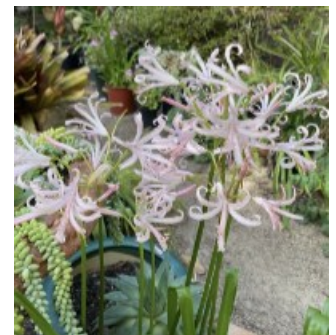
Phyllostachys nigra, black bamboo – Nancy shared a couple updated photos of her blooming plants which she first shared with us last January. They appear to be producing new shoots. Sherry observed that she has seen similar growth on some of her bamboo but it was just more blooming stalks and her plants did eventually die.

spikes of pink flowers in late spring to early summer. Grow it in well-drained soil in full sun or part shade, a nice subject for borders, rock gardens or containers. It apparently doesn't have the same tendency to spread by runners as the species.

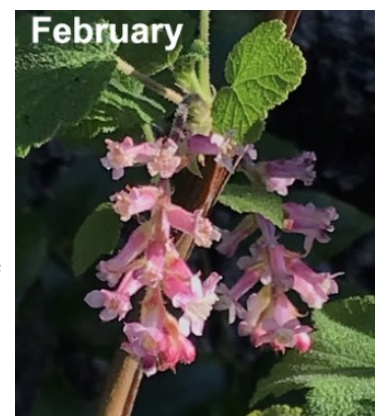
Stachys officinalis 'Nana', dwarf betony – This was a new acquisition from the UC Botanical Garden at Berkeley nursery. A perennial growing to 6-8" x 8-12", with



Sherry Austin from Soquel showed: *Nerine bowdenii*– A member of the Amaryllidaceae family that is hardy enough to grow outdoors in the ground in most Bay area locations, although Sherry has hers in pots. The plant needs summer water to put up 15" tall, pale to deep pink flower spikes in October before the strap-shape leaves appear. Sherry said that the pale pink flowers have a lacier appearance. It grows best in full sun with reasonable drainage. Sherry got her selections from Dancing Oaks Nursery in Oregon.



Eva Huala from Palo Alto showed:
Ribes malvaceum, chapparral currant- The plants that she showed us photos of were from her property in the Santa Cruz Mountains. They seem to prefer some shade and well-drained soil. The shrubs can get 6-8' tall and wide. Eva gives her shrubs some year-round water so they start blooming in September and continue through February or March. She said that she has noticed that the flowers start out white and become pinker over time.
(Author's note: The shrub can survive without summer water once established but will loose many of its leaves in the summer and tend to flower for a shorter period.)



Continued...



Galanthus elwesii, giant snowdrop – Eva’s plants were poking up now in a bed of native strawberry leaves. The small, nodding white, bell-shape flowers usually start blooming about now and continue through the winter for her. She said that there are several species and cultivars of snowdrop popular in England, where they bloom in February. These bulbs are a member of the Amaryllidaceae family, go dormant after blooming and require no summer water.

Member ISO: Charlotte Masson mentioned in the chat that she is looking for *Manettia luteorubra*, (Candy Corn Vine or Firecracker Vine) if you have any leads for her, contact her at gardengurus@gmail.com.

FROM THE DENVER BOTANIC GARDEN IN COLORADO

Nancy Schramm shared this photo sent to her from a friend who got it from a friend. Would this be an owl phone tree?



DON'T FORGET THESE RESOURCES!



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.

GET INVOLVED !

We are actively looking for a few new board members including a Vice President. Yes, to your question, “If I was on the board in the past, can I join again?” We enjoy having new board members as well as members who have served in the past. It makes for a well rounded board. Volunteer and get to know other WHS members and keep our organization growing.

Available Positions:

Vice president: In addition to board member duties below, the vice president runs the general meeting or board meetings when the President is unavailable. Helps the President as needed and updates new board members on duties and functions of the organization.

Board Members: Position involves regular attendance at monthly meetings Sept – June and regular attendance at bi-monthly board meetings as well as helping on committees as needed to carry out Western Hort activities.

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.

STROLLING AROUND THE INTERNET

You might have to copy and paste these links to get them to work this month. I don't know why!

This Substance Is 1,000 Times More Potent Than the World's Spiciest Pepper — and It Could Provide Pain Relief

https://www.discovermagazine.com/this-substance-is-1-000-times-more-potent-than-the-world-s-spiciest-pepper-and-it-could-provide-pain-relief-49072?utm_source=flipboard&utm_content=DiscoverMag1mrv/magazine/Discover+Magazine

Mushrooms in lawns: From the UC Pest Notes [/https://ucanr.edu/blog/pests-urban-landscape/article/mushrooms-lawns-revised-pest-notes](https://ucanr.edu/blog/pests-urban-landscape/article/mushrooms-lawns-revised-pest-notes)

Officers and Board Members:

Co-Presidents: Grace Tsang & Meri-Beth Bird

Vice President: **Open Position**

Secretary: Jennifer Dungan

Corresponding Secretary: Mil Milutin

Treasurer: Eva Huala

Other Board Members: Jim Salyards, Carol Dahout, 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, 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, Janet Hoffmann

Scholarships: Grace Tsang, Jennifer Doniach,

Meri-Beth Bird, Janet Hoffmann

About Membership in Western Hort:

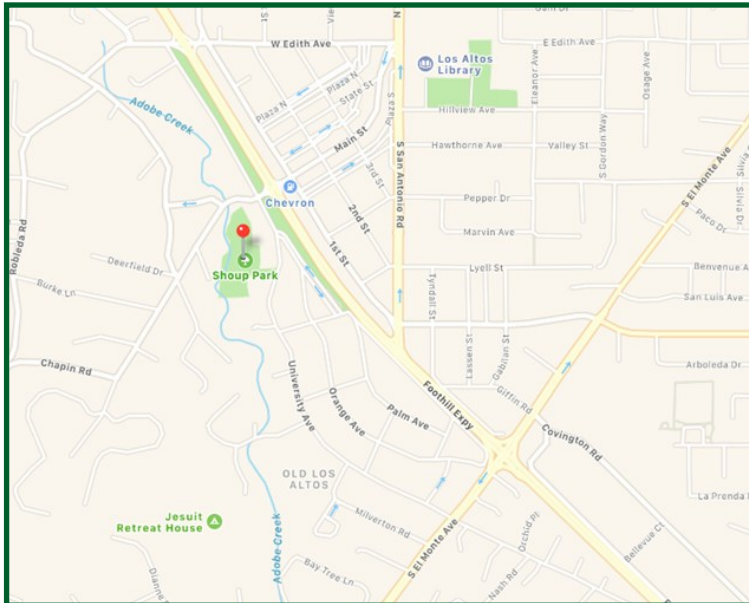
Membership Rates: A one-year membership (Sep-Aug) includes an e-mail copy of this newsletter and admittance to all of our monthly meetings. Regular membership is \$35, Family membership for two or more members at the same address is \$50, and a discounted rate for students is \$20. Please visit the Pac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

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 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 : November 11th, 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 November.** Submissions after this date will likely appear in the next month's newsletter. Send submissions to: Kjanberg@gmail.com.