

WESTERN HORT

April 2023 | PO Box 166, Mountain View, CA 94042 | www.westernhort.org

APRIL 2023 MEETING

April 12th, 7:30pm

The April 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 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 while indoors.* 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: MARTIN QUIGLEY

**TOPIC: THE INS & OUTS, UPS & DOWNS OF SUCCULENT
CONTAINER GARDENING**



Martin will describe the whole process of container gardening with succulents. This includes choosing the plants, the containers, the planting material and a design for placement in the garden. Always keeping in mind that some succulents will outgrow the container, he will discuss what to do when that happens.



Martin F. Quigley, MLA, PhD, Executive Director, UC Santa Cruz Arboretum & Botanic Garden since 2016, has been employed as a nursery laborer, horticulturist, landscape architect, land planner, environmental consultant, field ecologist and researcher, and professor of botany. He has worked in New York, California, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Louisiana, Illinois, Ohio and Florida, as well as in Mexico, Puerto Rico, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Guyana, Brazil, Uruguay, Turkey and Lebanon. Quigley attended Deep Springs College in California, and earned his B.A. in Comparative Literature at Cornell University, M.L.A. in Landscape Architecture at Utah State University, and Ph.D. in Botany and Plant Ecology at Louisiana State University.

CO-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dovetailing with March's talk on creating hypertufa containers is April's talk by UC Santa Cruz Arboretum chief, Martin Quigley, on succulent gardening in containers. See you at the Los Altos Garden House!

NPK is often the mantra for plant cultivators. What about that P for phosphorus? Check out this just-released book, [The Devil's Element: Phosphorus and A World Out of Balance](#) by Dan Egan. If TL;DR applies, this book review will help, <https://undark.org/2023/03/17/book-review-for-a-centuries-long-phosphorous-binge-a-reckoning/>.

"In nature, phosphorus cycles through ecosystems in a mostly closed loop as organisms live, die, and decay, making it "the elemental link that completes the circle of life," writes Egan." We break that loop with our sewage systems, and now rely on ruinous mining of phosphorus. We have overused phosphorus and expect a shortage this century. In addition, phosphorus run-off from our croplands creates deadly algae blooms.

Which brings us 'round to the subject of urine in the garden. Said to be a very good fertilizer with nutrients like phosphorus in bio-available form, much** has been written about it. Some communities (even in the USA) collect and distribute urine to growers. Some people have a low-salt diet, not only for their health, but because their urine, as used in the garden, will have lower salts. Note that using urine as a garden fertilizer does not mean peeing on plants. Dilution is necessary, depending on the plant and probably one's diet. So, for your consideration, "liquid gold":

**<https://laidbackgardener.blog/2020/08/29/fertilizing-plants-with-urine/>

**<https://www.epicgardening.com/urine-as-fertilizer/>

**<https://www.offthegridnews.com/survival-gardening-2/peecycling-how-to-fertilize-your-garden-with-nutrient-rich-urine/>

~ Grace Tsang & Meri-Beth Bird

MARCH SPEAKER NOTES

Our March speaker, John Tsutakawa, gave us an excellent tutorial on creating planters from a combination of easily obtainable materials to simulate rock troughs. This simulated rock, called "hypertufa," was invented in the 1930s by members of the Alpine Garden Society in England. The progenitors of hypertufa troughs were those made of stone for feeding and watering animals. Since these became popular as planters, and thus very expensive as the supply ran low, the "hypertufa" material was developed to serve the function. This constructed version provides advantages over stone aside from affordability: good aeration and water absorption and not as heavy by a factor of three or four. The shapes attainable are also more varied depending on the forms or molds used. Planting in troughs brings plants closer to eye-level and eliminates competition from in ground plants.

In 2019, John constructed twelve of his own hypertufa troughs to create alpine plant demonstration gardens for The Gardens at Lake Merritt. Most of these were rectangular, measuring 2'x3' and 3'x4' and a couple were circular. The Lake Merritt channel on YouTube includes a five-minute video featuring John describing these gardens (<https://youtu.be/jDaGHsVnAfc>). You can find them in real life right outside the Bonsai Garden near the Torii gate. John stressed that though there are few ingredients, the creation of these troughs has some time-sensitive steps, so advance planning is required to achieve success. The ingredients are coconut coir, Portland cement and perlite in approximately equal proportions. The coir has been used in recent years as a more sustainable substitute for peat moss. Fiberglass and other material can be added in small quantities to improve structural strength. John stressed that wearing gloves when handling fiberglass was required.

In addition to sharing his practical knowledge of trough-making, John brought four flats of various *Meconopsis* species. John has cultivated this genus for many years — his tips for its care and feeding can be found on the Flora Grubb web site (<https://www.floragrubb.com/meconopsis>). For those of you who bought a plant or two, please do keep in touch about your experience. Perhaps we will see that gorgeous blue hue of the flower at a future plant share at a Wednesday night meeting. Without the right conditions, we might especially appreciate this bit of doggerel:

Attempting to grow *Meconopsis*
Often leaves gardeners feeling blue
For a beginner, our synopsis:
choose plants that will self-renew
Like an orange coreopsis
Since we are not in Katmandu

~Jen Dungan

MARCH PLANT SHARE



Eva Huala from Mountain View brought:

Fritillaria affinis (Checker Lily, Chocolate Lily, Mission Bells) – Eva container grows this bulb in full sun from December until February. She then moves it to get part shade (March through June) and finally puts it in dry shade (July to November) when it is fully dormant. It gets to be 1' tall x 0.5' wide but the flower spikes can get to be 4' tall. The leaves appear first and are followed by the flowers. When they are not flowering the leaves have a different form. Flowers appear from February 20th to March 31st for Eva. The stem has whorls of leaves on the lower section with the nodding flowers above (may be one solitary flower or have many flowers). The colors are variable, but Eva's are a lime green that are speckled with dark splotches. She waters them once a week during the dry spells. They take several years from seed to bloom.



Please note:

Eva wanted to clarify that the Shooting Star plants she showed last month were grown from seed collected from her own property in the mountains. She has offered seed from her own cultivated plants to WHS members, not wild-collected seed. (WHS does not endorse collecting seeds from wild areas without a permit or express permission)



Leslie Dean from Mountain View brought two plants native to Australia:

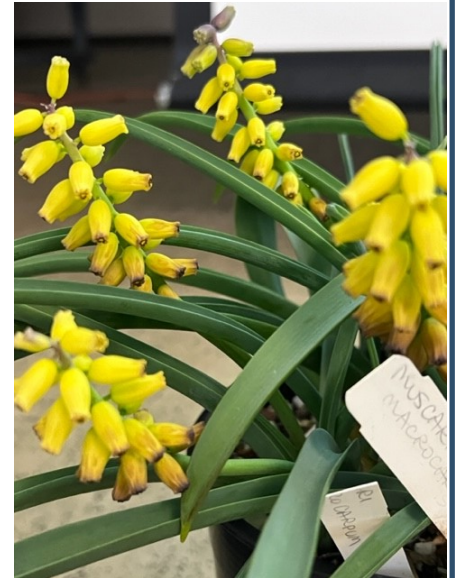
Banksia blechnifolia (Fern-like Banksia, Southern Blechnum Banksia) – Leslie loves this low growing shrub. In Australia it is found growing in white sand and in full sun (zones 9-11) in well-drained soil. If grown in part shade, it may not bloom very well. It has gotten to be 1' tall x 3' wide in 5 years. Deeply lobed leathery fern-like leaves protrude upwards of the prostrate branches. New foliage emerges a rusty color and then turns blue green. The 6" flowers are reddish-pink on the top and cream colored at the base and start to bloom from late winter to early spring. It grows in arid climates so it is drought tolerant, but appreciates a bit of watering in the dry months. It is also wind and salt spray tolerant and hardy to 20°.

Eremophila glabra 'Grey Horizon' (Fuchsia emu bush) – This low growing evergreen groundcover grows in full sun to part shade (zones 9-11) in well-draining soil. It gets to be 1' tall x 6' wide. It has narrow 1-2" long icy blue velvety leaves (covered with whitish hairs) that contrast nicely with the tubular yellow-orange flowers that appear from winter to spring. It is drought tolerant and Leslie only waters it once a month during the summer. Do not over water if growing in heavy soils. Prune after flowering if needed to manage size. It is hardy to 20°. Cactus Jungle sometimes carries it and San Marcos Growers and Suncrest nurseries also grow it.



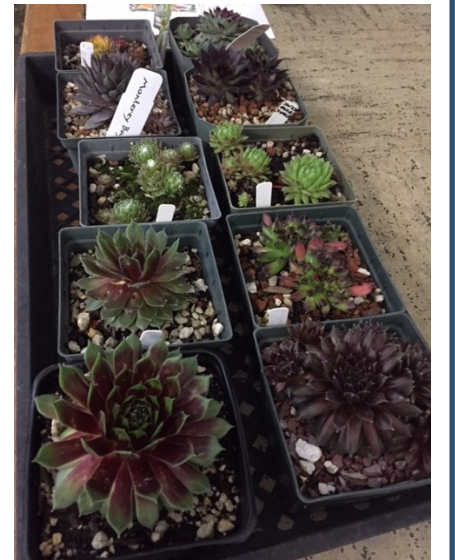
Judy Wong from Menlo Park brought:

Muscari macrocarpum (Yellow grape hyacinth) – Judy got this deciduous bulb from Baldassare Mineo at his former Siskiyou Rare Plant Nursery in Talent, Oregon. It is originally from Eastern Crete and Southwest Turkey and grows in rocky environments. It grows in full sun (zones 3-9) in well-drained soil. It has purple flowers in the spring that turn to yellow as they mature and they have a wonderful fragrance. It also can be grown in a deep pot and is hardy to at least 0°.



Pelargonium echinatum (Sweetheart Geranium, Prickly-stemmed pelargonium) – This summer deciduous South African perennial grows in full sun in well-drained soil. Judy is growing it in a one gallon pot and it is 2' tall x 1' wide. The silver-grey leaves are heart shaped and the stems appear to have spines (they are actually a remnant of the leaf stipule that dried up after the leaf dropped). From February to April beautiful flowers appear. They may be white, pink or purple-lavender and can have dark red heart-shaped spots on all of the 5 petals or just the top two. The flowers darken with age. Judy starts watering it in September and please do not water it in the summer.

Judy also brought a tray, which contained a variety of 10 different *Sempervivum*, which show off the many different colors and markings. Any of these would make excellent additions in hypertufa troughs.



~ Ana Muir

Here is the special phrase in the newsletter this month for a chance to win a prize. “CAM photosynthesis” There is a link to a video if you want to learn more on page 7.

PLANT SALE TABLE

The popular Plant Sale Table happens monthly at our in-person Shoup Park Garden House meeting. Keep propagating those plants, or bring in any unused books or gardening tools you want to donate! All money collected goes to support WHS programs and the scholarship fund. If you would like to get involved and help out with the plant sales contact Carol or any board member for information.

You can get quite a lot out of vegetable gardens if you cultivate the owners!

28 YEARS AGO

Western Hort met on April 12th, 1995 to hear “Robert Kourik, author, landscape consultant and designer, (will) talk on *Trees in Bondage*. Based on chapters from his forthcoming book *Tree Care for the Modern Gardener*, due out later this year, this promises to be an entertaining and informative account of the atrocities which have been committed on trees (in the name of love) and how to avoid similar maltreatment.”

Heritage Gardens was thanked for supplying plants for the raffle table, and it was mentioned that the plants were “...still of high quality after their change of management.”

WHS and Elaine Levine continued work on the forthcoming book *Successful Vines for the Peninsula*.

WHS and Pacific Horticulture were both finalizing plans for exhibits at *The Landscape Garden Show*, April 24th – May 1st.

April 1st (no foolin’) was the date announced for the “...first-ever Spring Garden Flea Market, to be held...at Guadalupe Gardens in San Jose.”

No doubt excitement was building for spring sales: “In honor of Spring: Bell’s Book Store...long famous for its excellent horticultural section, will have a 20% discount sale on all garden books...”; other sales included one at Saratoga Hort in San Martin on April 8th and another at Strybing Arboretum (now the SF Botanical Garden) starting May 5th.

Plant Notes for April 1995 began with iris, one species and two crosses brought in by Elizabeth Garbett. ‘William Mohr Giant’ is a tall bearded iris (clear blue-lavender with a silky sheen); *Iris tectorum* is “...known as the roof iris because it grows on the thatched roofs of houses in China and Japan.” (blue-violet flowers with a white comb, needs summer water) And “The third iris in the bunch was a Louisiana hybrid iris, *Iris x vinicolor*...” (purple wine red with bright yellow stripe).

“Dick Dunmire brought in a flower cluster from his *Wisteria floribunda* ‘Longissima’ that was an amazing 51 inches long. This is the longest it has gotten in the thirty years he has had it and Dick attributes this to the large amount of rain we have had this winter.” He also showed *Azara dentata* (evergreen shrub, fragrant flowers, white berries).

Don Brandeau shared a bright pink flowered *Echium fatuosum*. It’s a large, bold, drought and salt tolerant plant. (I used to hate having to clean up after Dad’s echium plants, the hairs from the dried leaves always stuck to and irritated tender areas of sweaty skin – NLS)

Mildred Hargrave showed *Billbergian nutans*, easy to grow, tolerant of neglect with showy flowers.

Ed Carman brought *Buddleia alternifolia*, (deciduous, arching habit shrub or small tree with lilac-purple flowers) as well as “a gem of a rock garden plant, *Campanula thessela*, which has soft blue up-facing bells”, grown from seed from the RHS Wisley Alpine Garden.

~ Nancy Schramm

Nancy Schramm was kind enough to share John’s tips with us. They can also be accessed through the Flora Grubb website mentioned in the speaker notes. (ed.)

John Tsutakawa’s tips for Growing Meconopsis

1. Best to grow in a cool area
 2. Keep it watered – no drying out
 3. Give regular fertilization
 4. Grow in shade, avoid hot afternoon sun
 5. Use a rich, lightly acidic soil (6-7 ph)
 6. To develop a perennial clump with multiple shoots, clip flower buds early
- If the climate is too hot, I would encourage letting the plant bloom out and saving the seeds

Upcoming Meetings

May 10th: Rose Loveall, Hardworking Herbs

June Picnic? Please let us know if you have an idea for where to host the picnic this year!

HORTICULTURAL HAPPENINGS

UCCE Santa Clara County Composting Basics Workshop—Sunnyvale: April 8, 10 –2 PM at the Murphy Park Building 250 North Sunnyvale Ave, Sunnyvale, CA. Register to attend. www.ucanr.edu/compost
(Also happening are Basic Composting in Morgan Hill and Worm Composting in Palo Alto on the 15th.)

California Native Plant Society events: <https://www.cnps-scv.org/events> Wildflower Show, Saturday, April 22nd at West Valley College. Featuring hundreds of species of wildflowers and native plants from Santa Clara, San Mateo and surrounding counties.

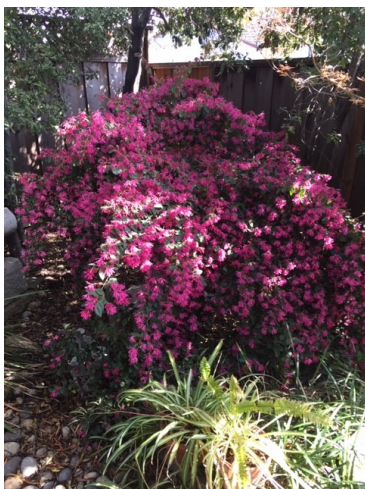
Bring Back the Natives Garden Tour and Green Home Features Showcase Virtual Tour: April 15th and 16;
In-person tour May 6th and 7th <https://www.bringingbackthenatives.net/>

Santa Clara Master Gardeners Spring Garden Fair: April 15th at Martial Cottle Park. For updates and details please use this link <https://mgsantaclara.ucanr.edu/events-calendar/spring-garden-market/> \$6. parking fee

Clara B. Rees Iris Society Spring Show: April 16th, 12-5pm, Campbell Community Center, 1 West Campbell Ave., Campbell, CA. Free!

Gamble Garden Spring Tour: April 28 & 29th 1431 Waverley St. Palo Alto. Featuring five beautiful homes to tour. Go to <https://www.gamblegarden.org/event/spring-tour-2023/> for ticket prices and to register.

38th National Garden Railway Convention: Hosted by the Bay Area Garden Railway Society July 1-8, 2023. To participate in tours and other activities you must register soon. Visit <https://ngrc2023.org>. To visit exhibits and the vendor hall at the Santa Clara Convention Center it will be open to the public on July 8th from 10am to 4pm.



Loropetalum chinense



Camellia japonica



Malus floribunda

I had some extra space so I am sharing what I love to see bloom every year! The bees really love the crabapple.
(Editor)

GET INVOLVED

Would you like to help Western Hort and get to know a speaker better? Once or twice a year, we host speakers from outside our area. We frequently arrange for housing for them and many times the speakers enjoy the more personal experience of staying with someone in the area. We are looking for Western Hort members who would like to open their home for out of town speakers to stay a night or two. This is an opportunity to spend time with fascinating people in the horticultural world right in your own home. The speaker committee is compiling a list of those willing to share their home and will contact you as needed. You do not have to transport the speaker anywhere or host them beyond a nice bed and perhaps a breakfast if you feel up to it. If this is an opportunity that appeals to you or if you have any questions, please contact Leslie Dean at lesliekdean@sonic.net or speak to a board member at any of our meetings.

Vice president and Board members : 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 or speak to any of the current board members at our meetings.

Thank You to Jen Dugan for stepping up and becoming our Corresponding Secretary. Jen also writes our Speaker Notes for the newsletter. Be sure and let her know how much we appreciate her!

STROLLING AROUND THE INTERNET

Tutorial on CAM photosynthesis: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=13h5oC4jIsk>. This is a short and informative video about the three types of photosynthesis, C3, C4 and CAM. CAM is especially applicable to our talk this month on succulents!

Bloom California site for native plants, inspiration and resources. <https://bloomcalifornia.org/resources/>

California Native Plant Society Resource Page: <https://www.cnps-scv.org/gardening/gardening-resources>

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: Carol Dahout,
Jennifer Dungan and Eva Huala

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, Ana Muir &
Nancy Schramm
Scholarships: Grace Tsang, Jennifer Doniach,
Meri-Beth Bird, Janet Hoffmann & Nancy Schramm

About Membership in Western Hort:

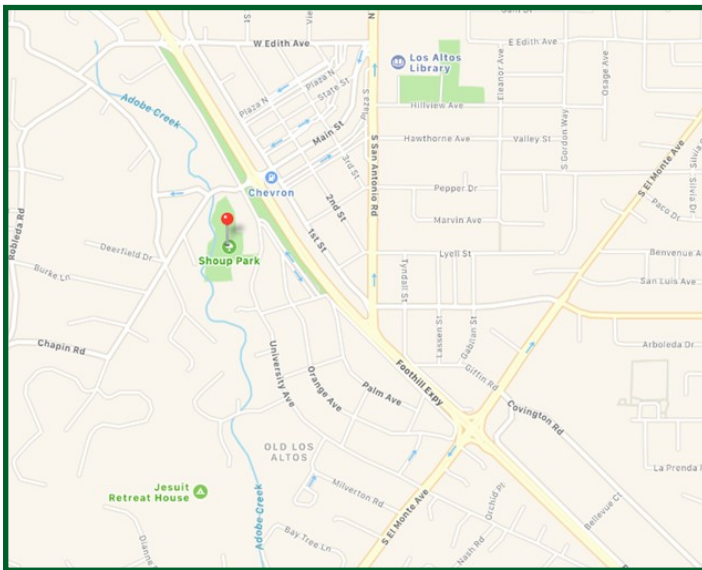
Membership Rates: A one-year membership (Sep-Aug) includes an e-mail copy of this newsletter and admittance to all of our monthly meetings. Regular membership is \$35, Family membership for two or more members at the same address is \$50, and a discounted rate for students is \$20. To receive a print 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 : April 12th
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 22nd of April** 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