

APRIL 2022 MEETING

April 13th, 7:30 PM Zoom Meeting

April meeting will be available on Zoom for Western Hort and Cal Hort members. There will be no recording by request of the speaker. The link will be sent to members prior to the meeting date.

Speaker: Patricia Rain Vanilla Queen author, educator, culinary historian and owner of *The Vanilla Company*, Santa Cruz, CA.

Topic: Vanilla: the Botany, the History and the Culture

Patricia's photographic presentation begins along the Gulf Coast of Mexico where vanilla was first harvested from the rain forest and then domesticated by the indigenous Totonacas. She will touch on how Moctezuma was introduced to vanilla and his role in introducing vanilla to the conquering Spaniards.

The cycle of vanilla begins with the various ways the vanilla vines are grown throughout the tropics. We will follow the pollination process, the stages of growth, harvest, curing and drying, packing and shipping. We will also see a glimpse of the plantations and the people who grow and/or prepare the vanilla beans for market. Vanilla has been integrated into the cultures of the countries that grow it and Patricia will tell us how climate change is already impacting the three primary luxury crops we love so much (coffee, cacao and vanilla) and how this will affect the future of these crops.



Patricia Rain is an author, educator, culinary historian and owner of The Vanilla Company, a socially conscious, product-driven information and education site dedicated to the promotion of pure natural vanilla and the support of vanilla farmers worldwide. *The Vanilla Cookbook* (Celestial Arts, 1986) established her as an authority on this exotic rainforest product. She has continued to do research on the uses of vanilla in a diverse variety of applications: as a flavor in both sweet and savory foods, as a medicinal, as a fragrance and in aromatherapy. *The Vanilla Chef* (Vanilla Queen Press, 2002) is a companion book to the internet business. *Vanilla: The Cultural History of The World's Favorite Flavor and Fragrance* (Tarcher, a member of the US Penguin Group, 2004) is her most recent book.

Upcoming Meetings

May 11th: Dave Muffly, arborist, horticulturalist and ecological engineer, Santa Barbara, CA, *Resiliency: Choosing Trees for Climate Adaptation in Coastal California*

June Picnic, TBA, Feel free to share suggestions or volunteer to help with arrangements by contacting any board member or sending email to info@westernhort.org.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We hope the spring equinox finds you well, and that all the budding and blooming can still bring joy and wonder amidst these unhappy times for our world.

April 2nd and 3rd are the dates for Santa Clara and San Mateo counties **Growing Natives Garden Tour**. There are open gardens near each of us, presenting the bounty of California native plants for human and wildlife habitat. See <https://gngt.org/GNGT/HomeRO.php> for more information.

~ Grace Tsang

Cal Hort President Bart O'Brian honored by The American Horticultural Society!



The American Horticultural Society has named Bart O'Brian, who is the director of the Regional Parks Botanic Garden and the president of Cal Hort, the winner of this year's Liberty Hyde Bailey Award. This is their highest award given to an individual who has made significant lifetime contributions to at least three of the following horticultural fields: teaching, research, communications, plant exploration, administration, art, business and leadership.

Any members who have tuned into the Cal Hort monthly meetings will agree it is a well deserved accolade as his horticultural knowledge always impresses!

Read more about Bart on [the award page](#).

HORTICULTURAL HAPPENINGS

San Francisco Bay Flower and Garden Show - April 7-10, Alameda County Fairgrounds, Pleasanton. Beautiful Floral Arrangements, Informative DIY - Hands-on Workshops, over 75 Free Seminars and Workshops from some of the top experts in the world! Hundreds of vendors with everything for your garden and outdoor living. Tickets and more information: norcalgardenshow.com.

UCCE Master Gardeners of San Mateo and SF Counties, Spring Garden Market and Education Fair- April 10, Redwood Hall San Mateo Event Center, 2495 S Delaware St, San Mateo. Public Spring Garden Market and Education Fair featuring a large variety of tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, herbs, and other plants that have been selected and grown just for the San Francisco and SF Peninsula climate zone. In addition to plants, there will be free demonstrations and workshops, presentations and displays, and Master Gardeners will be available throughout the day to answer any questions. Funds raised will be used to purchase material and supplies for future training and workshops that will be free to the public. Free admission, free parking, cash or check only, plant list and more information at: smsf-mastergardeners.ucanr.edu/spring-garden-market-and-education-fair/

Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour - Virtual tour April 16 and 17, In-person tour April 30 and May 1. Free tours of East Bay native plant gardens, including the garden of our February speaker, Leslie Buck. Suggested donation \$15, pre-registration required. More information at bringingbackthenatives.net.

Elizabeth F. Gamble Garden looking for new Executive Director - The Executive Director position requires steadfast commitment to the mission of Gamble Gardens, previous experience in nonprofit operations management, verifiable experience in fundraising, ability to work with diverse constituents and have excellent communication skills. Contact Tod Gregory at tod.gregory@gmail.com for more information.

Join **Gamble Gardens** for the **36th Annual Spring Tour** on Friday and Saturday, April 22nd and 23rd. 10am to 4pm. Visit five private gardens, advance tickets are \$35.00. www.gamblegarden.org

S.C. County Master Gardener Plant Sale – This year there will be no public plant sale due to UC Davis rules concerning Covid. If you want to buy you can order through a Santa Clara County Master Gardener. Check your Western Horticulture Roster for contact information for Master Gardener Members. Place orders from April 4th to 6th and they will be picked up by the Master Gardener who has agreed to order for you on April 15- 18th. The MG's have access to lists of plants that will be available including heirloom tomatoes, peppers, herbs which also include native plants, ornamental plants and succulents.

MARCH SPEAKER NOTES

Kipp McMichael entertained and enlightened us at our March meeting with his extensive knowledge of succulents large and small for Bay Area gardens. Kipp led off with his interpretation of what succulents are. He defines them as perennials adapted to store water in their leaves and stems. Some examples of stem water storage succulents included cacti, *Euphorbia*, *Pachypodium*, palms and cycads. Leaf water storage succulents can include *Kalenchoe*, *Sansevieria*, *Aloidendron* and *Agave*.

Mr. McMichael also delved into the various reasons why plants are succulent. He emphasized that not all succulents grow in dry desert climates. Some are succulent because they grow in rapidly draining substrates, like epiphytic *Peperomia* and *Rhipsalis*, cacti that grow in the rainforests of Central and South America. He also mentioned the vining milkweed relative, *Hoya*, as an example of a succulent that normally grows in warm moist environments.

Kipp shared slides of the leaf succulent, *Sedum* that were growing in the diverse environments of Alabama and California. Another interesting reason for succulent leaves is the case of the *Sarcocornia* which grow in salt water environments and concentrate salts in leaves that later drop off to rid the plant of the excess salt. Explaining that because stems are tougher than leaves, some plants growing in tough wind-scoured environments, high heat areas or areas subject to browsing animals and seasonal drought tend to develop bigger stems for water storage allowing for greatly reduced leaf size. *Alluadia*, *Fouquieria*, *Pachypodium*, *Lithops* and *Ocotillo* are examples of these types of plants.

Kipp has spent years putting together his large succulent collection and emphasized that because many succulents are slow growing, building a collection like his takes time and patience or lots of money as larger specimens can be quite pricey. He has found Craig's List to be a good source for some unusual plants that are inherited in a yard that the new owners have no interest in maintaining. One of his rare finds was the cycad, *Encephalartos*.

Kipp concluded his presentation with some tips for growing succulents. He emphasized that using different size rocks are an important part of creating a natural looking succulent garden. Rocks also can provide radiant heat and rocky soils provide better drainage. Building up rocks, like in his own crevice garden, allows for more plants in a small space. Paying attention to the environment that a succulent comes from is key to successfully growing it in your garden. One aspect that is particularly important to note is whether the plant lives in an area with a dry cool season or a dry warm season.

Weeding can be a challenge especially around spiny succulents like cacti and agave. Kipp uses long tweezers to pull weeds around some plants and avoids planting barrel cactus in the ground because he has found them to be magnets for grassy weeds that are difficult to extricate from around the spines.

Attention should be paid to the ultimate size of the succulents that you choose. Many succulents tend to grow wider rather than taller like *Aloe plicatilis*, owl eye cactus and *Agave paryii*. Some of the taller succulents that he shared slides of included the cardon, *Pachycereus pringlei*, *Opuntia*, candelabra and tree *Euphorbias*, *Aloidendron*, *Kalenchoe baharensis*, bottle palm, *Chorisia insignis*, and *Brachychiton rupestris*.

Many Western Hort and Cal Hort members had the opportunity to see Kipp's amazing garden in person on March 13th. He has made good use of his free time in the past two years to create a crevice garden with a mind-blowing array of succulents and cacti in his "postage stamp" front yard in Berkeley. If you did not make the tour, you can drive by 1515 Ashby Ave for a look and see most of the plantings from the sidewalk in front. We had some technical issues with recording this meeting and only got the sound recorded. Kipp has kindly shared this link to the visuals of his presentation here: <http://anexaminedlife.net/succulents-at-large>. If we get a technically inclined volunteer we might be able to work out a way to show this on Youtube along with the audio recording but for now you will have his outline and my notes above to use with his visuals. There is also Youtube recording of a talk that he did on succulents for the SF Public Library at <https://youtu.be/zpfErh2SQmw>. Photos below of Kipps garden.

~ Janet Hoffmann



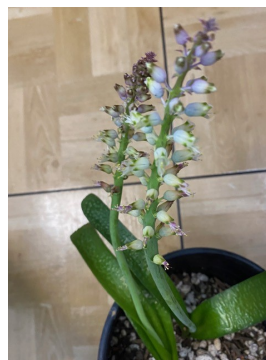
MARCH PLANT SHARE



Ferraria crispa



*Lachenalia
pustulata*



*Lachenalia
pallida*



Moraea tripetala

Judy Wong, Menlo Park, presented:

Ferraria crispa (Spider Iris/Starfish Lily) - This South African bulb grows in full sun in rich well-drained soil and should only get winter rains. It gets to be 1.5' tall. Judy has it growing in a 10" deep pot and says it benefits by being in a warm and protected area. It produces unusual flowers in the spring. The blooms have a starfish shape and crinkly edges. Her margins are a brownish-green. Some people believe it has an unpleasant odor but Judy thinks it smells sweet, like molasses. Crispa means curled or crinkled.

Lachenalia pustulata - This South African bulb from the SW Cape grows in full sun to part shade in well-drained soil and naturalizes very well, forming large colonies. This species is sometimes included in *L. pallida*. The flowers may be white or purple even though they have the same genus and species. Narrow bell shaped flowers on 7-14" stems start appearing in late winter through spring. The leaves have bumps on them (pustulated). Do not water in the summer. It is frost tolerant to 32°. Lachenalia is named in honor of the Swiss botanist Werner de Lachenal.

Lachenalia pallida – Same information as above except it has oblong pale flowers. Pallida means pale.

Moraea tripetala - This South African bulb grows in full sun in well drained soil and should only get winter rains. It gets to be 4-9 inches tall, with a solitary leaf and purple flowers appearing from February to April. Judy has been growing this bulb for 4 years and this is the best it has bloomed. She's not sure if it's due to the early rains or because she fertilized it. There are 9 species of this plant so you may also have blue, violet, pale pink or yellow flowers. It is easy to grow from seed. Moraea is named in honor of the English botanist Robert Moore. Tripetala is a reference to the 3 tepals.

Nancy Schramm, Gilroy, presented:

Sciadopitys verticillata (Japanese Umbrella Pine) – This slow growing evergreen conifer dates back to the Dinosaurs just like the Ginkgo tree. Its prehistoric range was from Eurasia to North America. It grows in full sun to part shade (zones 5-9) in rich moist acid soil and in hotter areas needs afternoon shade. Nancy grows it under 40% shade cloth year 'round in Gilroy. It can very slowly grow to 70' feet tall (100' in its native habitat). Glossy green needles in a tuft resemble an upside down umbrella. It has both male and female flowers on it. In Japan, the spicy-scented, water-resistant wood is highly valued for making boats. Its' bark, in the form of oakum, is used for caulking. It only grows about 6 inches/year. Skias or skiados means umbrella or parasol. Pitys can be a fir or pine. Verticillata means whorled.



Leslie Dean, Mt. View, presented:

Agave americana – Leslie was recently gifted this and believes this is a Century Plant. It grows in full sun to part shade (zones 8-11) in well-drained soil. It will probably get to be 6-8' tall and wide. The rosettes have a lovely blue gray color. Give it little water. It is monocarpic but will produce offsets or bulbils. Agave from the word agauos means noble, splendid or admirable. Americana means native to America.



Leslie Dean continued:

Aeoniums - (Tree Houseleek) – Aeoniums come in all colors. Leslie has a pot that has several varieties (‘Cyclops’, *A. undulatum*, ‘Zwartkop’, *A. haworthii*, *A. urbicum* and ‘Voodoo’) and it is growing underneath a lemon tree where it gets morning sun and afternoon shade. Aeoniums need well-drained soil and she lightly waters them in the summer. Colors can vary from green to yellow and garnet and sometimes variegated. The heights vary from very short (4-8”) to tall (2-3’). Stems elongate to begin the flowering process (which happens in spring or summer) resulting in masses of flowers in dainty shades of yellow, white or rose. They are monocarpic which means they will die after flowering

but many species do branch so you don’t always lose the entire plant and others leave pups. They are hardy to 30°. Aionos means ageless.

Agave parryi var. truncata - (Parry Agave or Artichoke Agave) – This succulent is a native of southwest Arizona, New Mexico and Texas and is endemic to Durango, Mexico. It has a smaller compact form and very short, broader and rounder leaves than *A. parryi*. It grows in full sun to light shade almost everywhere (zones 2-24) in well drained soil. It prefers low water and tolerates drought, rocky soil, deer, heat and cold. Each compact rosette can get 2’ tall x 3’ wide. Leaves are a silvery blue gray with reddish brown teeth and terminal spikes. It will readily form pups and create a cluster of plants. Mature specimens eventually can form spikes up to 15’ tall of yellow flowers that are tinged with orange. Flowers attract birds, especially hummingbirds. Parryi in honor of the English born American botanist Dr. Charles Christopher Parry. Truncata meaning shorter or cut off.



Agave vilmoriniana - (Octopus Agave) - Leslie brought bulbils of her plant, which flowered last year and died. This succulent grows in full sun (zones 9-11) in well-drained soil and gets to be 4’ tall x 5’ wide. The long slender green leaves resemble octopus tentacles. Leslie likes the fact that it is unarmed (has no spines) although it does have soft serrations on the leaf margins. The bulbils/plantlets should flower in 7-10 years. It is hardy to 25°. Vilmoriniana is named in honor of the French botanist Charles Nicolas Vilmorin.

Aloe arborescens - (Torch Aloe Candelabra Aloe) – This attractive native shrub from South Africa grows in full sun or shade (zones 9-11) in well-drained soil. Leslie’s is 4’ tall x 6’ wide but it can get to be 8’ tall and wide. It forms a dense shrub that has rosettes with leaves that are a dull green to blue green with recurved soft tooth margins. Coral red flowers appear in the winter giving the plant a colorful pop. Give it low water. It is deer tolerant and hardy to 25°. Aloe from the word alsos or alloeh referring to the bitter juice in the leaves. Arborescens meaning tree-like.



Aloiampelos ciliaris - (Climbing Aloe or Fringe-Leaved Aloe) – This fast growing South African aloe grows in full sun to part shade (zones 9-11) and can get to be 10’ tall. Leslie has hers growing under a small acacia (part shade) where it is growing very vertical and is blooming right now. The tubular orange red flowers have a green tip. Ampelos means a climbing plant so Aloiampelos means climbing aloe. Ciliaris refers to the marginal teeth that resemble an eyelash.

~Ana Muir

28 YEARS AGO

Western Hort met on April 13, 1994 to hear David and Dorothy Rodal speak on *Clematis*. The Rodals created a six page handout in outline form to accompany their talk. They began with types of clematis including species & small flowered hybrids, herbaceous & non-climbing shrubs and large flowered hybrids. Descriptions of each type included pruning techniques, bloom time, named varieties and species names.

Part II of the talk illustrated suitable places to plant clematis, such as walls & fences, arbors & trellises, tripods, hanging baskets and in other shrubs, perennials and trees.

Parts III and IV covered planting needs and more details about pruning, and Part V listed six recommended books about clematis.

It was announced that the May meeting was to be the 5th Annual Members' Slide Presentation, with a request that those who had offered to participate to please contact Dorothy Rodal, the organizer, as at least three of those who had offered had not yet followed through with the needed information and Dorothy stated "I feel rather panicked."

Eleven new members were welcomed to WHS.

The new roster had been printed and was available to members.

Four spring sales were announced: Saratoga Horticultural Foundation, Strybing Arboretum, UC Botanic, Berkeley and an Iris sale.

And finally there were two field trips upcoming: "...three of the gardens in the East Bay that Ted talked about will be on May 15" and "*10 East Bay Secret Gardens* which will benefit the Park Day School."

April's Plant Notes describe a riot of blooms on display.

"Albert Wilson has just come back from gallivanting about the country talking about plants with a nice trophy in the form of *Gerbera jamesonii*, the Transvaal daisy." Elizabeth Garbett, our plant note author noted: "Good drainage and regular feeding are necessary if you want good bloom because with gerberas you get what you pay for."

"Betsy Clebsch introduced us to a bevy of euphorbias, those tough stalwarts of the perennial garden." *E. characias* and its subspecies *E. characias wulfenii* (3' and 5' tall, fully hardy, prune to base when they look shabby), *E. martinii* (hyb between *E. characias* & *E. amygdaloides*, bushy plant to 2', blue green foliage & red stems), *E. cyparissias* (useful as groundcover but spreads "viciously, according to one reference"), *E. nicaeensis* (from the Mediterranean, bushy & erect) and finally, one of Elizabeth's favorites, *E. niciciana* (small, compact, rounded clump which spreads slowly).

"Keith Bickford is always on the alert for a good plant to add to his elegant garden...*Ajuga pyramidalis metallica crispa*...is an example of somebody's law that states that the smaller the plant, the longer the name." Keith also showed *Bletilla striata* (Chinese ground orchid—very showy) and *Lavatera arborea* "native of Europe but has naturalized in coastal California" (variegated form with mottled leaves, purple flowers).

Sherry Austin brought "...a huge pink ruffled bloom from her tree peony, *Paeonia suffruticosa*, almost embarrassingly lush, *Kerria japonica variegata* (arching, deciduous shrub, 2" single yellow flowers, will sucker from base) and *Myrrhinium atropurpureum* (from South America, purple flowers spring directly from old wood, clustered at the lower part of the branchlets).

Ed Carman "grew his *Tropeolum sp.* from seed he got from Australia many years ago, so long ago that the species name has been lost, but he still remembers the common name: pink ladies' legs" (extremely pretty red & yellow flowers). He also brought "an impressive array of blooms", grown from seeds set on his 'Nellie Moser' clematis. All the seedlings had large blooms of good clear white or blue flowers.

Elizabeth Garbett brought *Linaria alpina*, described by Reginald Ferrar as "of imperial violet blossoms lipped with orange flame, crowding out of sight the weak shoots and blue-gray delicate fleshy foliage". Elizabeth was hoping that this year it would set seed for her as she called it "an exuberant color combination and that it is a naturally occurring species seems amazing to me".

~Nancy Schramm

PLANT SHARE

A fun part of our Zoom get-togethers is seeing what is happening in your gardens. The ability to send photos of the plants that you want to share is one benefit of the virtual meeting format. Submit your photos of plants that you wish to share along with the botanical and common name (if you know them) to info@westernhort.org by Monday April 11th. Either send or be prepared to speak online about the plant's geographical location, exposure, soil, water and other growth requirements. If you have plants that you would like help identifying or want some cultural advice on, feel free to submit those also.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Exciting News! There's an upcoming Native Plants class at Foothill College, Mondays, 9-10:50 am, April 4-June 24, taught by the venerable Frank Niccolai [Faculty & Staff Directory | Environmental Horticulture & Design \(foothill.edu\)](#) Sign up by clicking this link and choosing "Adult Learner": [Admission Guidelines \(foothill.edu\)](#)

You need to enroll at Foothill and then register for the class. You can find it here by simply writing "Native Plants" in the description. The description will look like this: [Class Schedule | Foothill College](#)

STROLLING AROUND THE INTERNET

National Geographic article about endangered succulents in South Africa.

https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/article/tiny-succulents-are-under-siege-from-international-crime-rings?rid=22AA4387B5566CB40ADD9C9C22BEA233&cmpid=org=ngp::mc=crm-email::src=ngp::cmp=editorial::add=Planet_Possible_20220308

UC IPM Webinars - There are two upcoming webinars that may be of interest offered by the University of California. **April 21st at 12 PM** an Invasive Species Webinar presented by Karey Windbiel-Rojas the Associate Director for Urban & Community IPM.

May 19th at 12 PM Dr. Niamh Quinn, Human-Wildlife Interactions Advisor in Southern California will present on the topic of Squirrel Pest Management. To register or learn more about these webinars go to the website at : <https://ucanr.edu/sites/ucipm-community-webinars>

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Nancy Schramm, Judy Wong, Glenda Jones
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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



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First Class Mail
VISIT US AT WESTERNHORT.ORG

Meeting location : April 13th

**Online Zoom Meeting. Note: There will be no recording of this meeting.
Link will be sent prior to the meeting date.**

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