

WESTERN HORT

December 2025 | PO Box 166, Mountain View, CA 94042 | www.westernhort.org

DECEMBER 2025 MEETING

December 2nd, 6:30pm

The December meeting will be our annual potluck dinner get together. Set up begins at 6:00, guests arrive at 6:30, dinner begins at 7pm.

See page 5 of this newsletter for information about joining the Western Horticultural Society.

ANNUAL DECEMBER POTLUCK **DATE CHANGE: DECEMBER 2ND**

TOPIC: FOOD, FUN AND ENTERTAINMENT

Come and enjoy the company of your fellow Western Horticultural Society members at the annual December potluck.

All members are welcome and can bring a guest if they desire.

Remember to bring your own plate, utensils and cups.

The Board will provide cider and beverages. Members please bring an appetizer, main or side dish or dessert.



6:30 arrival time with a showing of the 60th anniversary slide show

7:00 dinner

8:00 there will be a raffle of the centerpieces, attendees can socialize until all clean up and leave at 10pm.

Please RSVP on this form https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1GcNzuw1mzVp_mtUfHvbkHcS5b-GWbF-xj7rEP3YOSWA/viewform?edit_requested=true

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.

CO-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In the run-up to winter, the will-it-rain or won't-it-rain season, we all resort to our favorite weather apps to figure out when our seedlings and new plantings will require watering, covering, or other help.

A point forecast, e.g. <https://forecast.weather.gov/MapClick.php?lon=-122.141&lat=37.355>, lets you poke at a map to get a more local forecast. You can then choose to see the hourly forecast over the next six days for temperature, rain, wind, sky cover, etc.

Reading the forecast discussion can also be helpful, as it includes a short-term and long-term overview. If you want to delve into weather model simulation results (where the forecasts come from), see tropicaltidbits.com. If you want to see what the weather satellites are seeing: <https://www.star.nesdis.noaa.gov/GOES/>. If you want to see "a visualization of global weather conditions forecasted by supercomputers", see <https://earth.nullschool.net/about>, which has nice explanations of what you are looking at. For the more geeky links, some meteorology 101 will be illuminating.

"Everything is connected to everything else," said ecologist Barry Commoner. Which is why you might find yourself watching the depiction of a spinning sphere and its terribly gorgeous but thin swirling atmosphere, when you were trying to ferret out more information about tending new Pacific madrone plants on your fourth try.

Happy upcoming winter and may all our beloved plant buds enjoy their season of dormancy and then emergence.

~ Grace Tsang & Meri-Beth Bird

WHS Scholarships

Western Horticultural Society is pleased to announce new \$1500.00 horticultural scholarships to be given to inspired, deserving students who show a keen commitment to their horticultural studies. One is the Richard & Bracey Tiede Scholarship. This will be given to a student whose focus is on native plant horticulture.

The others are general WHS Scholarships to be given to students whose studies focus on any aspect of horticulture. The field is open to all horticultural students from the Bay Area. We can use help in getting the word out to students who might benefit from these scholarships. If you know of persons or schools who would be interested please point them to our website.

<https://www.westernhort.org/scholarships>.

We are also looking for members of WHS to sit on the evaluation committee to determine the recipients of our scholarships and help with other aspects of the program.

Please contact Grace Tsang for further information. 650-391-4654 or e-mail cosang@gmail.com

Link to application:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf1-cdHJDu7F53IFjtck3Sw8gBpRkdK_yogm7Obw-PX6kE65w/viewform

UPCOMING MEETINGS

WESTERN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

January 14th– Helen Popper, *Our Winter is Different: Seasons in California Native Gardens*

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

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

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

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

CALIFORNIA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

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



February 16th, 7pm. Zoom meeting. Greg Rubin will speak about protecting California homes against wildfires and still have some landscaping. Watch for an e-mail with the zoom link.

March 16th, 7pm. Marlene Simon, UC Davis director of the Tropical House. In person meeting at the San Francisco County Fair Building.

April 20th, 7pm, Cricket Reiley and Alice Kitajime will present ideas for creating a lush landscape in a dry climate. Their book will be available to purchase and this is an in person meeting at the San Francisco County Fair Building.

28 YEARS AGO

There isn't much to report about the Western Hort goings-on from December 10, 1997. Almost the entire newsletter was about the annual pot luck holiday party. Two highlights to look forward to were: "For those who wish to do so, we will have our traditional gift exchange. Garden related items should be under \$10." "AND WE WILL HAVE A SPECIAL RAFFLE!"

There was one other announcement from Yerba Buena Nursery: "Xmas tea and delicious luncheon in the great room in the old farmhouse amidst splendor of special holiday decorations" with six different dates to choose from.

~ Nancy Schramm

NOVEMBER SPEAKER NOTES

Food Forests in Suburbia: How to Create a Micro-farm and Still Have a Life

with Lisa Stapleton

Many Western Hort members can relate to the thought, "just one more plant," as they contemplate nursery (or plant-sale table) offerings. Our November speaker, Lisa Stapleton, described how turning those thoughts into reality has led over the years to a verdant, productive and exciting "micro-farm" on her suburban lot in San Jose. She described many of the trees, shrubs and ground cover plants that bear both familiar and uncommon fruits, including some I had never heard of. Cherimoyas (likely related to pawpaw), for example, sound like they would be delicious. This particular fruit has some steep requirements (flowers must be hand-pollinated), but most of the plants she grows bear well without time-consuming intervention. Lisa emphasized how to make gardening easier on yourself and be able to eat fresh fruit every day of the year. Early spring and late fall are the trickiest seasons in terms of fruit production, but you can get oranges, avocados and bananas and even some berries January through March and, along with the oranges and avocados; persimmons, apples and pineapple guavas bear in the late fall. Bananas are more possible in the Bay Area now because of our warming climate, as proven by Lisa and her colleagues in the California Rare Fruit Growers organization. She gets bananas about every third year. Lisa also extolled the qualities of serviceberry (*Amelanchier sp.*) as an alternative to blueberries (*Vaccinium sp.*). I was particularly keen to hear about this, as I was just about to try growing blueberries, which require acid soil and plenty of water unlike serviceberries. She offered recommendations on specific varieties of these fruits and many others, such as low-growing day-neutral strawberries, New Zealand spinach, thornless blackberries/raspberries, some varieties of melons, cucumbers and pumpkins. Lisa warned us about the addictive nature of growing fruit. I confess I have succumbed to the charms of *Passiflora* myself and am this year experimenting with an edible variety (*Passiflora edulis* 'Frederick'). With an intelligent use of vertical space, smart pruning, and the use of empty spots, a "densepack" approach can be wonderful. You can overcome possible objections by neighbors on aesthetic grounds when you offer them scrumptious fresh fruit. Members who attended in-person got to taste some of the "proof-is-in-the-pudding", with Lisa's jujubes, pineapple guava, pawpaw, and passionfruit.

~ Jen Dungan

STROLLING AROUND THE INTERNET

CNPS Reminds Gardeners to Plant Now for a Thriving Garden and a Brighter Future

<https://www.cnps.org/news-releases/cnps-reminds-gardeners-to-plant-now-for-a-thriving-garden-and-a-brighter-future-44537>

NOVEMBER PLANT SHARE

Judy Wong from Menlo Park shared:

Synagenium grantii - Euphorbia, African Milk Bush
Native to the dry tropical areas of Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Uganda and Zaire. In Kenya it traditionally is used as a grave marker. The poisonous latex sap has many uses beyond killing animals and is used in traditional medicine to treat everything from parasites, coughs and sore throats to cardiac issues. (Please thoroughly research this plant before using it medicinally) Contact with skin can cause dermatitis and blisters. Evergreen but can be deciduous in colder areas.
Height: 3- 9 feet as a shrub, 6 - 12 feet as small tree, medium growth rate
Exposure: Full to part sun or bright indirect light.
Soil: Well drained with sand or loam, low water. USPS Zones 9a - 11b



Janet Hoffmann from Campbell shared:

Polyxena ensifolia - South African bulb in the *Hyacinthaceae* family and closely related to *Lachenalia*. This tiny plant grows to two inches high and is best in containers. Janet comments that the flowers have a nice fragrance. Dormant in summer it comes up with the fall rains.
Exposure: Full sun or part shade, protect from hard frost.
Soil: Well drained, keep dry over summer and protect from excessive rainfall.



Oxalis bowiei - Cape Shamrock
South African bulb, this oxalis can take most soils but will spread where there is moisture. Grow in a container if concerned about it spreading.
Dormant in summer, blooms fall through spring.
Height: Flowering stems to one foot or more.
Exposure: Full sun to light shade.
Soil: Most soils, low water.



Glenda Jones from Palo Alto shared:



Agave parryi This succulent is native to Arizona, Southern California, New Mexico and Northern Mexico.
Easy to grow this evergreen succulent needs space to reach full size.
Height: 1.5 feet tall and 2.5 feet in diameter. In 10 to 25 years the plant will form a 12 foot tall flowering stalk with yellow flowers on branchlets. In a few months, after blooming has finished, the entire plant dies leaving behind pups that formed from the roots or runners.
Exposure: Full sun.
Soil: Well drained rocky or sandy soil.
Water: Highly drought tolerant, minimal watering. Protect from excessive winter moisture to prevent root rot.
Sunset Zones 2b, 3, 6-24.
Handle this plant with care as it has sharp spines on the end of the leaves. You can snip off these spines without damage to the plant. Glenda generously brought some lovely big specimens for our plant sale table.

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

HORTICULTURAL HAPPENINGS

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

Gamble Gardens Events link: <https://www.gamblegarden.org/events/>

Filoli Gardens link: <https://filoli.org/> Check out all the special events happening at this very special place!

California Native Plant Society link: <https://www.cnps.org/about/newsroom>

SNACKS IN JANUARY!

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

November snacks were provided by Jim Salyards, Carol, Grace Tsang and Gabrielle Sala for your enjoyment! Thank you! Please sign up to bring something in January. We're hoping for 2-4 contributions each month. Snacks can be home baked sweet or savory bites. They can be purchased at your local market. Fruits and vegetables are great too.

Here is a link to sign up:

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

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

GET INVOLVED

Vice president, Board members and Corresponding Secretary: These positions are still open. Get to know your fellow WHS members and help keep the society vibrant and well rounded. If you have an interest in helping in any one of these capacities, or feel you can help in any other way, feel free to e-mail us at info@westernhort.org or speak to any of the current board members at our meetings.

Officers and Board Members:

Co-Presidents: Grace Tsang & Meri-Beth Bird

Vice President: **Open Position**

Secretary: Jennifer Dungan

Corresponding Secretary: **Open Position**

Treasurer: Eva Huala

Other Board Members: Jim Salyards, Carol Dahout, Gabrielle Sala, Marci Hayden & Mil Milutin.
(More board members welcomed and needed)

Volunteer Committees and Responsibilities:

Plant Sale Table: Carol Dahout

Email and website maintenance: Eva Huala

Membership: Eva Huala & Kathy Anberg

Publicity and Outreach: Grace Tsang

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

Welcome Table: Pam Noyer

Treat Table Set up: Lori Tuttle and Alicia Evans

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

Newsletter Editor: Kathy Anberg

Newsletter Contributors: Jennifer Dungan & Nancy Schramm

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

About Membership in Western Hort:

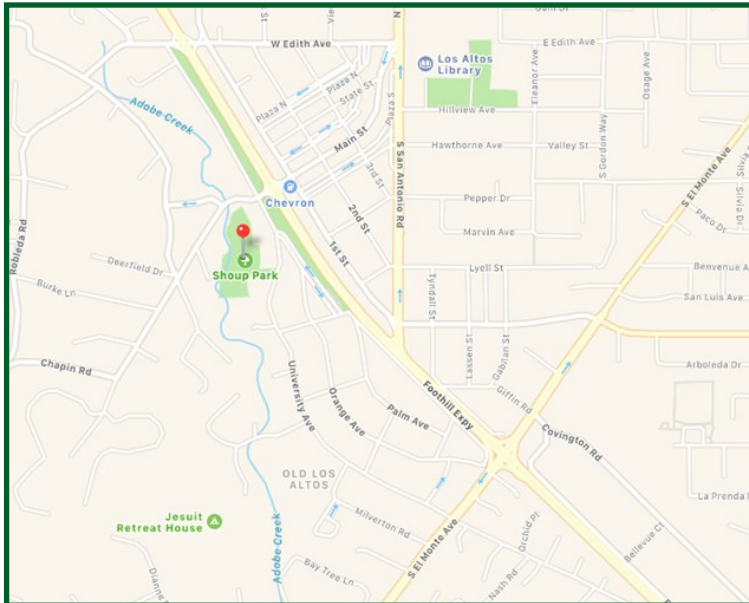
Membership Rates: A one-year membership (Sep-Aug) includes an e-mail copy of this newsletter and admittance to all of our monthly meetings. Regular membership is \$35, Family membership for two or more members at the same address is \$50, and a discounted rate for students is \$20. Please visit the Pac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

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 : December 2nd, 2025

In Person at Shoup Park Garden House,
400 University Ave., Los Altos

(Masks optional)

Potluck starts at 6:30 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 December.** Submissions after this date will likely appear in the next month's newsletter. Send submissions to: Kjanberg@gmail.com.