

# WESTERN HORT

October 2026 | PO Box 166, Mountain View, CA 94042 | [www.westernhort.org](http://www.westernhort.org)

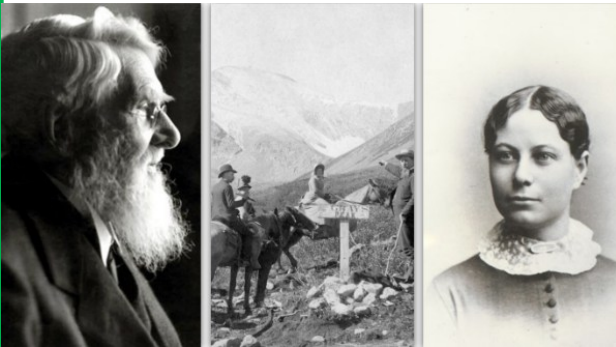
## ***OCTOBER 14TH, 2026 MEETING***

The October meeting will be a **Zoom meeting ONLY**. Enjoy it from the comfort of your own home! Watch your email for a link to log on.

See page 7 of this newsletter for information about joining the Western Horticultural Society.

**SPEAKER: AMY SCHNEIDER**

**TOPIC: FOLLOWING IN THEIR FOOTSTEPS: THE 1887 GRAYS PEAK TRIP: ALICE EASTWOOD AND ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE**



Alice Eastwood and Alfred Russel Wallace crossed paths in Denver, Colorado in May, 1887. Eastwood, then a Denver area schoolteacher and amateur botanist, took Wallace, a famous English naturalist, known for discovering the theory of natural selection, up to the top of Grays Peak, Colorado that July. Their week-long trip included adventure, plant collection and a bit of adversity. As you know, Eastwood went on to become the Herbarium Director at the California Academy of Sciences, her heroic save of the type specimen cabinet during the 1906 earthquake and fire, and her life afterward is detailed.



Amy has been working for the Horticulture Department at beautiful Denver Botanic Gardens since 2008. Currently an Assistant Curator, she loves spending her days growing plants at the three gardens she manages at DBG York Street location. Her largest garden is an hour west of Denver at Mt Goliath, a shoulder peak on the Mt Blue Sky massif, where she documents the incredible number of alpine species blooming there every summer. Amy works with the US Forest Service and Denver Mountain Parks to collect seed to grow and plant in the Alpine Interpretive Garden surrounding the Mt Goliath Nature Center at 11,500 feet in elevation.

She currently is on a project to re-collect many of the species Alice Eastwood and Alfred Russel Wallace collected approximately 130 years ago in Colorado. One of her favorite summer joys is when she turns into a trailhead parking lot in the early morning and sees some of

her best friends waiting so they can start hiking and working on alpine plants all day.

**Watch for the link to tune into the zoom presentation on October 14th.**



**There will NOT be a speakers dinner this month.**

## CO-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

With the October talk focusing on the prolific plant-namer (395 species) Alice Eastwood (1859-1953), I have found this article of hers tying some California plants back to a famous, ill-fated expedition. From the *California Historical Society Quarterly* (1939) 18 (4): 335–346: "Early Botanical Explorers on the Pacific Coast and the Trees They Found There."

".. Able scientists in geology, botany, geography and astronomy eagerly joined the expedition of Jean-François Galaup de La Pérouse. During their stay at Monterey, in September, 1786, the gardener-botanist, Collignon, sent seeds of a lovely herbaceous plant to the Jardin des Plantes [in Paris, must visit!], where they were planted. This, the first plant from California to be grown in the Old World, proved to be the rose-colored Sand Verbena, common on the coast of California. It was named Abronia by Jussieu and later Lamarck named it Abronia umbellata. Collignon also sent a cone containing ripe seeds, and from them twelve trees were grown in the Jardin des Plantes. The pine was named Pinus californica. Since the exact locality was uncertain and the trees were no longer living, what was probably the Monterey Pine was later named from the collection of Thomas Coulter, Pinus radiata. La Pérouse's last letter was from Botany Bay [located in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia]."

Separately, from the Wikipedia entry about the voyage: "One of the young men who applied for the voyage was a 16-year-old Corsican named Napoléon Bonaparte. Bonaparte, a second lieutenant from Paris' military academy at the time, made the preliminary list but he was ultimately not chosen for the voyage list and remained behind in France. At the time, Bonaparte was interested in serving in the navy rather than army because of his proficiency in mathematics and artillery, both valued skills on warships."

Reading the rest of Alice Eastwood's article is a time-traveling experience back to the scientific (and otherwise) expeditions of the 1800's as acquaintance is made with the forebears of our favorite California plants. See [jstor.org](https://www.jstor.org) if you also would like to read this.

The Western Hort board is grateful to the persons who volunteered to help with the holiday party, the scholarship committee, the PR effort for our talks and organization as well as to help review gardens for the 2027 Growing Natives Garden Tour. Please email [info@westernhort.org](mailto:info@westernhort.org) if you can contribute to these efforts or in any other way. In the words of long-time local plant person, WHS member and CNPS Fellow, Jean Struthers, "If we all do a little bit, it will all get done."

~ Grace Tsang & Meri-Beth Bird

**Time for all the party planners to sign up to help!** The December Potluck Party only has one volunteer! If you have ideas to share to make the party more fun, memorable or exciting please contact Grace at [cosang@gmail.com](mailto:cosang@gmail.com) and let her know how you can help!

### 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.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

### WESTERN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

**November 11, 2026 Dr. Benjamin Hoover:**

*Plant Selection in a Complex World: Navigating Species, Cultivars and Expectations for the Best Plants to Use in Your Garden*

**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

**October 19th, 2026 Briana Lyon:** *General Manager and Design Chief, California Wild Gardens.* Discover the practice of gardening with plant functionality in mind before beauty. The talk will include design strategies behind combining native and low maintenance species.

### 2027 Seed Exchange Reminder

Cal Hort would like to remind you that now is the perfect time to start collecting those late summer seeds for the yearly seed exchange.

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

For more info about Cal Hort go to:

<https://calhortsociety.org/>

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

### Designing the Lush Dry Garden

with Cricket Riley and Alice Kitajima

Cricket and Alice taught the Dry Garden Design Certificate program at the Ruth Bancroft Garden (RBG) for five years, initiated just after the pandemic had begun. (Both Marci Hayden and I had the good fortune of being able to do the program.) The book they published, along with landscape designer Kier Holmes, is called, *Designing the Lush Dry Garden*. It captures, on beautiful full color pages, the material from the certificate program as well as inspirational photographs and stories from 17 exemplary California gardens that illustrate those lessons. Given that succulents are focal points in many of these gardens, as well as a large component of the RBG, Cricket oriented her talk around the maintenance of these plants, especially the agaves, aloes, cacti and yuccas.

Succulents tend to look very good and healthy when purchased at a garden center or nursery but can look a little ratty without the application of some specific care tips, which Cricket provided in spades (no pun intended). Other tools you will want besides spades are of course saws, loppers and secateurs. To clear debris from inside the crowns of spiky or spiny plants, suture tongs and fishhook remover tools are great. Chopsticks and even shop vacs can also work. A particularly good time to remove dead or damaged leaves and take out pups is in the spring after the last rain, but really any time during the dry season. For cacti (such as epiphyllum or opuntia), you can shape the plant and thereby gain new plants by cutting at the joints to the shape you desire. For aloes, wait until bottom leaves begin to dry out, then gently pull them off. For yuccas, trim off the skirt by cutting leaves at the place in the crown where you want the trunk to show, then work your way around and down. To keep your echeverias and graptoverias looking their best, you can dig them out of the soil and pull off dead leaves. Cut off long stems let them callus for a few days and they'll be ready to pot up anew.

Fertilize during the growing season (usually in the spring or summer). Cricket recommended using coffee grounds, wood chips and biochar compost. These are all safe for companion proteaceous plants, which can't tolerate added phosphorus. Keep about a hand's width of soil around the base of the plant clear of mulch to prevent moisture being trapped. In some cases when fertilizer is really needed, Cricket recommended fish fertilizer (10-10-10), though it's smelly and tends to draw critters.

Dealing with pests – including scale, mealybug, aphids, agave mite, aloe mite, and burrowing caterpillars on yuccas – can be necessary. I'm having my first encounter with mealybugs myself this year. Cricket described escalating approaches depending on the severity of the infestation: manual removal with tools or a hard water spray, use of beneficial insects, spraying with non-toxic agents (straight 70% alcohol, insecticidal soap, or horticultural oil) or, in the last resort, removing the plant entirely. To increase the chances that purchased ladybugs or other insects will stay put, Cricket's tip was to spray water on the garden late in the day and then release them as they are drawn to the water. A common misunderstanding is that desert plants don't need water, but deserts get summer monsoons and plants are adapted to this. For agaves and cacti, deep water every week for slow growth; for faster growth, they can thrive on thrice weekly watering in the summertime. For succulents natively found in high mountain or foggy areas, our sunny lowland locations can cause sun damage. The RBG solution for guarding against this possibility is to put two layers of 30% shade cloth on freshly planted succulents for a week. After a week, one layer can be removed, leaving the first layer for an extra week. For somewhat cold-sensitive succulents, it may be possible to plant them in a sheltered location in the garden. The RBG has its famous folly and long wooden structure that are used strategically for the more tender species.

As for the soil – excellent drainage is critical. Dig in volcanic rock (red or black lava pumice, 3/8-inch size) at a ratio of 50% to native soil, about 12–18 inches deep. It's also possible to mound up the mixture to ensure sharp drainage. In a pot, even 70% volcanic rock can be excellent.

Cricket is the owner and designer of [Lush Dry Gardens](#), a landscape design firm. I had the pleasure of seeing her garden when it was open a few years ago and was very impressed by her vibrant colors and texture combinations.

Additional recommendations and resources:

[Hida Tool](#): garden tool store in Berkeley; Extensive [plant highlight articles](#) written by the prolific Ruth Bancroft Garden Curator, Brian Kemble; An explanation and helpful photos about [etiolation with succulents](#); [CA Agave Species Catalog](#) by UC Agriculture and Natural Resources; For reference on trunking leafy succulents, see Jeff Moore's [Soft Succulents](#) publication; [Urban Farmer Store](#) in Richmond (now called Heritage Landscape Supply); [Sources](#) for biochar compost (soil amendment); [Photos](#) of common agave and aloe pests; Learn more about IPM (integrated pest management) [here](#); [30% shade cloth](#); An excellent [resource about Aloes from San Marcos Growers](#) (the nursery is now closed, but their website is still very relevant and helpful); [American Soil & Stone](#)- a Richmond institution for soil amendments and mulch; [Free Starbucks coffee grounds](#) for your garden.

## BEHIND THE SCENES AT FILOLI WITH JIM SALYARDS

Jim,

We want to thank you for the informative and inspiring “Behind the Scene” tour at Filoli.

We were impressed that the historical greenhouses and buildings are still sustaining the plants and gardens.

Your efforts to bring interesting horticultural information to WHS is very much appreciated!

John & Sherry Hall



I hope most of the tour attendees had the opportunity to walk around the rest of this historic property and enjoy the gardens and the prep work for the upcoming event of *Nightfall, A Delightfully Spooky World*.

There was more to see but my time ran

short so I will have to come back again!

Thank you Jim for having us come on this special tour and feel first hand all the hard work put into keeping Filoli so wonderful.



## 28 YEARS AGO BY NANCY SCHRAMM

Western Hort met on October 14, 1998 to hear Rosemary Donlon's talk "*On Lester Rowntree, an Exceptional Plant Woman*".

The only announcement of note was about a meeting of the Rock Garden Society to be held on 10-18-1998 at Lake Merritt. "Ed Carman to be honored...There will be a small party and short ceremony at the beginning of the meeting when Ed will officially be presented with the published copy of his oral history by Suzanne Riess of the Bancroft Library. The program following will be a slide talk by Phyllis Gustafson (of Siskiyou Nursery and Rogue House seeds) on Crevice Gardens."

Plant Notes began with a discussion of newer hybrids of scabiosa. Bob Young shared *S. atropurpurea* 'Dwarf Double', 18" tall, blue flowers. Plant Notes author Elizabeth Garbett also recommended "Two other scabiosas that I have found to be good performers are *S. columbaria* 'Butterfly Blue' and 'Pink Mist', 16" in height and spread."

Next there was a comparison of *Streptocarpus* and its sub-genus *Streptocarpella*. The major difference between the two being that "In *Streptocarpus* the stemless leaves are in basal rosettes." and *Streptocarpella* has "long, fleshy stems that bear the wrinkled ovate leaves and the flowers."

"Bill Kurtz has an extensive collection of sansevierias--a whole greenhouse full in every size and shape imaginable." He brought two recent hybrids of *S. trifasciata*, 'Silver Moon' and 'Futura'. After some research, I discovered that 'Silver Moon' is now known as 'Moonshine', a selection that I've been drooling over since I saw it last week at Los Arroyos Nursery. If you are interested in learning more about these two plants, I suggest you visit the San Marcos Growers website, one of my favorite sites for plant information.

"Also from Bill's greenhouse is the hybrid *Aloe* 'Lizard Lips'. "Growing in a rosette, the narrow pointed leaves have dark green zigzag transverse bands on a very pale green ground. The leaves are edged with tiny spines."

"Chris Montague showed a specimen of *Chusquea coronalis*...(an) evergreen clump forming bamboo relative. At the nodes there arise three branches that rebranch again and again, making a dense cluster of leaves at every node and so appear more bushy than ordinary bamboos."

## UPCOMING OCTOBER /NOVEMBER EVENTS

**Saturday, October 3rd, 9am-2pm** Join the UC Master Gardeners of Santa Clara County for our annual Fall Garden Fair at Martial Cottle Park in the Master Gardeners Demonstration Garden located close to the Chynoweth Avenue walk - in entrance to the park. Admission is free and Parking is \$6.00 in the park. Free parking along Chynoweth Avenue.

Shop for locally grown plants, Attend free gardening talks, Get advice from our Help Desk, Learn to sharpen your pruners, Tour our Demonstration Gardens, Enjoy fun children's activities and more.

See attached link for more details regarding the Fall Garden Fair.

<https://ucanr.edu/site/uc-master-gardeners-santa-clara-county/fall-garden-fair>

**Saturday, October 3rd, 10am-5pm Midori Bonsai & Ikebana Show.** Quinlan Community Center, 10185 N. Stelling Road, Cupertino. Free admission, demonstrations, beginners workshop, Dr. Bonsai, club and vendor sales.

<https://www.midoribonsai.org/2026-show>

**Thursday, October 8th, 6pm Carrie Brown** from the UC Cooperative Extension service will present a webinar on Preparing for a Potentially Wet Winter. Focus is on practical steps nursery and greenhouse growers can take now to prepare there may be ideas for the home gardener as well. Webinar will be recorded and sent to everyone who registers at this link: <https://ucanr.zoom.us/meeting/register/TJHeYBakRU-Y9dZkErKnUg>

**October 24th, 10:30 am. Western Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society** is co-hosting with the Regional Parks Botanic Garden a presentation with **Sven Bronckaers**. The topic is *The Tufa Wall*.

Free admittance, but discreet donations are welcome via check or Venmo to the Western Chapter of NARG. Check the website for updates. <https://www.ebparks.org/parks/tilden/botanic-garden>

## SEPTEMBER PLANT SHARE BY MIL MILUTIN

Nancy Schramm from Gilroy shared:

***Capparis spinosa***, Caper

Plant hails from the Mediterranean region. Because of this, this tough perennial shrub does well in our climate zone (zone 9-11). Tolerates heat and drought but requires good drainage. Can grow to 5' x 5'. Holds 2-3" flowers with lavender stamens. Culinary capers are the pickled unopened flower buds.



### ***Capparis spinosa* v. *inermis* and the Caper Seed Experiment by Nancy Schramm**

My dad, Ed Carman, started growing caper plants at least as far back as the early 1980's, because I remember him going to see if what I think was his original mother plant survived the freeze of 1990. (Yes, it did). I don't remember if he grew them from seed or cuttings, but when I started propagating capers, I tried seed, and they seemed to germinate readily. Over the years I found that they germinated more quickly in the hot summer weather, while in the winter germination might take several months. I would often hear from customers that they had purchased seed packet after seed packet with no success, and concluded that the seed had to be fresh. Then one year I sowed seed in early summer that had been in my refrigerator since the previous fall and it germinated just fine, so I figured that refrigeration would extend the seed viability. This June I realized I needed to get more plants going and discovered I'd squirreled multiple years of caper seed pods in my refrigerator. (Thanks to Joan Halperin who faithfully saved the seeds from her plants each year for me). So I decided to experiment. I had five different years of pods. June 25, 2026, I sowed a 5" pot of each year: 2017, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2025. In the sixth pot I put half of the 2025 seeds which had been soaked overnight in my well water. 22 days later (July 17th) they started germinating. By July 29th I had seedlings in every pot, and on August 4th I decided that by refrigerating the caper seeds, the viability could be at least somewhat guaranteed for nine years. In addition, an overnight soak in plain water before sowing made a dramatic difference.

| June 25 <sup>th</sup><br>age of seed pod | July 17 <sup>th</sup><br>first seedlings | July 29 <sup>th</sup><br># seeds germinated | August 4 <sup>th</sup><br># seeds germinated |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| 2017                                     | 2                                        | 11                                          | 25                                           |
| 2020                                     | 3                                        | 11                                          | 17                                           |
| 2021                                     | 0                                        | 6                                           | 10                                           |
| 2022                                     | 1                                        | 11                                          | 18                                           |
| 2025                                     | 0                                        | 13                                          | 20                                           |
| 2025 soaked 18hrs                        | 9                                        | 40                                          | 63                                           |



***Quercus lobata*** Valley Oak or California White Oak

Nancy believes that it is a mast year for oaks and brought a big bag of acorns to share. Perhaps those that don't have room for a huge tree could make acorn flour? Thank you Nancy!

Leslie Dean from Mountain View shared:

***Liriope muscari*** 'Monroe White'

Grown in filtered sun the plant develops grass-like leaves. Flowering in late summer into early fall this variety holds its flowers well above the foliage. Great as a small area groundcover or as a border. Spreads by rizomes and grows 14-18" tall and wide. Takes moderate regular water but can tolerate low water as it matures. Evergreen in our zone 9 (zone 5 – 11). Plant can be cleaned up in early spring before new growth appears.

The name Liriope comes from the Greek word leirion, a name for the narcissus flower. Liriope was also the mother of the Narkissos who was transformed into his self-named flower and became the root of the word narcissistic.



## Plant Notes Continued:

**Judy Wong** from Menlo Park shared:

### *Sansevieria trifasciata* 'Hahnii'

Commonly known as the Bird's Nest Snake Plant, is a compact, low-growing succulent that forms a tight rosette of yellow leaves with a green central band and edged in dark green. Native to Western Africa it is not suitable for outdoor planting because of our cool wet winters. Grown in containers they can be brought indoors in the cooler season and make remarkable indoor plants.

Thrives in bright, indirect light, but easily tolerates low-light office or indoor spaces. Avoid harsh direct sunlight. Water sparingly—about once or twice a month in winter and weekly only when dry in summer. Overwatering causes root rot. Sansevieria have a remarkable variety of forms and can be propagated by separating offshoots and potting them up. Use a fast-draining cactus or succulent potting mix blended with perlite.

Toxic to cats and dogs if ingested.

Flowering season: Rarely flowers unless grown in ideal conditions

Temps: Grow indoors with temps greater than 50F



**John Hammerschmidt** from Los Altos shared:

John generously brought in seed packets for two special plants. In honor of Judy Wong's mother he has decided to call a variety of snow peas 'Judy's Mom'. These snow peas are reported to do well in our warmer climate.

*Lathyrus* 'Purple Prince' according to John is a very fragrant sweet pea.

## STROLLING AROUND THE INTERNET

**Walbridge Apple variety rediscovered!** Pullman, Washington has the only known Walbridge tree still growing in Washington State.

<https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2026/sep/13/its-the-no-1-lost-apple-that-were-looking-at-acros/>

**CBS News story on rescuing the Venus Flytrap in the Carolinas.** The most interesting plant in the world!

<https://www.cbsnews.com/video/protecting-the-venus-fly-trap/>

**Rare Plant near Lake Tahoe may benefit from heavy snows.** <https://www.abridged.org/news/rare-plant-lake-tahoe/>

### Officers and Board Members:

Co-Presidents: Grace Tsang & Meri-Beth Bird

Vice President: **Open Position**

Secretary: Jennifer Dungan

Corresponding Secretary: Mil Milutin (Thank you Mil!!)

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,

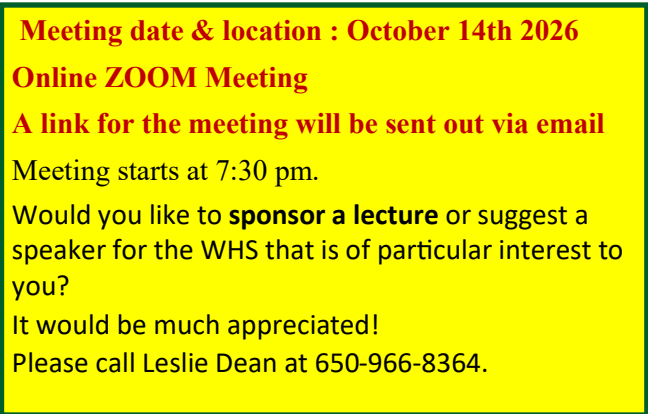
Meri-Beth Bird, Janet Hoffmann

### 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](https://www.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](mailto:info@westernhort.org) or snail mail to: PO Box 166, Mountain View, CA 94042



The newsletter publishes on the first of the month. **Note: deadline for submission for the next newsletter is the 20th of October.** Submissions after this date will likely appear in the next month's newsletter. Send submissions to: [Kjanberg@gmail.com](mailto:Kjanberg@gmail.com).