

WESTERN HORT

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

MAY 2025 MEETING

May 14th, 7:30pm

The May meeting will be an in-person meeting. Meetings are free for members, non-member attendees are \$10.00. The meeting room officially opens to members and the public at 7pm but if you can arrive by 6:30 pm to help with set-up, your assistance would be greatly appreciated. Masks are recommended but optional. See page 11 of this newsletter for information about joining the Western Horticultural Society.

MOVIE & VENDOR NIGHT

TOPIC: *THE GARDENER*, FRANK CABOT'S LES QUATRE VENTS

This documentary directed by Sebastien Chabot is about Frank Cabot and how he gave birth to one of the greatest gardens in the world. Les Quatre Vents is a private garden nestled in the rolling hills of Quebec's Charlevoix region, Canada.

Succulent lovers in the Bay Area are well aware of the magnificent Ruth Bancroft Gardens in Walnut Creek. Many of us also know that it is part of the Garden Conservancy. But did you know that it was the very first garden saved by the Garden Conservancy, and that Frank Cabot was inspired by the Bancroft garden to create the organization as a means to save the garden?



Message from Mr. Toad
"Watch carefully and you may see
some friends of mine!"

Frank Cabot was no stranger to magnificent gardens. According to his obituary, he was instrumental in the creation (or rescue) of three world-famous gardens beyond the RBG. Born in 1925, Cabot spent his life involved with plants, horticulture and Gardens with a capital "G". Stonecrop Gardens (63 acres) in Cold Spring; a sixteenth-century garden in Cartmarthenshire, Wales and most famous of all, Les Quatre Vents (20 acres) in La Malbaie, Quebec.

Les Quatre Vents and Frank Cabot himself are the subjects of the film *The Gardener*. Filmmaker Sébastien Chabot visited Le Quatre Vents in 2007 and almost immediately decided that he wanted to make a film in order to share "the beauty, the perfection of the place" with the world. Chabot was able to interview Cabot in 2009, shortly before Cabot's passing in 2011, but it took four more years of visiting Les Quatre Vents for Chabot to be satisfied that he'd filmed "every plant at the perfect timing."

According to *The Gardener* website, the film "...looks back at this remarkable man's personal story and the artistic philosophy that gave birth to one of the greatest gardens in the world."

The April 2005 issue of *Fine Gardening* has an interview with Frank Cabot, and the book, *The Greater Perfection: The Story of the Gardens at Les Quatre Vents* is available from Amazon for those who are interested in more.

May Meeting Vendors: Nancy Schramm, Carman's Nursery - bonsai starters, rare and unusual plants
Sherry and John Hall, Terra Sole Nursery - drought tolerant perennials and shrubs
Katie Wong, Alivensilk Nursery - interesting edible plants and other exotics
Danny Chambers - glass items
M K Chan - Begonias and some other select plants

CO-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

On behalf of the WHS Scholarship Committee of Jennifer Doniach, Janet Hoffmann, Meri-Beth Bird and Grace Tsang, we would like to announce that our two award recipients for 2025 are Tim Kunakov from Foothill College and Ali Maiorano from Merritt College.

They come highly recommended by their instructors and employers for outstanding skills in the field, the classroom and with their peers.

Tim is heading toward a nursery career with substantial know-how in irrigation and Ali is working toward a landscape design career. They will have honorary memberships in WHS with full benefits and are invited to join the board to share their insights.

On a separate note, we hope April and May have not been too dry, hot and punishing on blossoms. The soil and weeds are now in tight bonds and the mowing of fields to prevent the formation of invasive plant seeds has gone through one or two rounds. Many of us have viewed the wildfire severity maps and are making recommended adjustments in our landscapes and in hardening our homes against ember casts. We hope you have been enjoying the wildflower show on roadsides and hiking trails.

~ Grace Tsang & Meri-Beth Bird



APRIL FIELD TRIP TO HOG HILL AND WESTERN GARDENS BY LESLIE DEAN

We could not have asked for a more beautiful day for a field trip. The sun was shining and the temperature was just right for those who ventured to Sebastopol and Occidental to saunter through two lovely gardens.

We started at Hog Hill, a private home and garden owned and designed by Mary and Lew Reid. Mary's background in landscape design was evident in the layout of the garden, with meandering paths and lovely terraces filled with exciting plantings. After every turn there was a tree, shrub or perennial that would excite us. Some of the plants that caught my eye were the *Wollemia nobilis* pine, dogwoods in full bloom, *Greyia sutherlandii*, *Heptacodium miconioides*, and a *Cercidiphyllum japonicum* 'Claim Jumper'. There was a long row of espaliered apple trees, vegetable beds and an enormous *Cercis occidentalis* in full bloom. The Reids were gracious hosts, answering all our plant nerd questions and hosting us on their patio for snacks and drinks overlooking the lovely countryside.

Our next stop was Western Hills Garden. Our January speaker was Hadley Dynak who gave us the history behind this magical garden and what she and her husband, Kent Strader, have been working on as new owners of the property. We were all excited to see the garden in person and wander through its 300 species of trees and countless shrubs and perennials. Hadley and Kent greeted us in their picnic area. While we ate our lunch, they went over a bit of the history of the garden and mentioned the not-to-be-missed highlights. Some of those highlights (it was hard to choose as there were so many!) was the *Eucalyptus rubida* or affectionately called the 'White Whale' for its bright white trunk which has been nationally recognized as the tallest of its kind in the US at 121' tall, more *Wollemia nobilis* pines with their fascinating cone structures, *Azalea occidentalis*, camellias, dawn redwood, *Weigela*, *Stachyurus praecox* with its long dangling flower spikes (hence the name early spiketail), and the lovely crafted folly with vines climbing up the sides and cool seating below.

By the end of the day, we were not disappointed and had our fill of rare and unusual plants. Many thanks to Jim Salyards for organizing this delightful field trip!

APRIL FIELD TRIP PHOTOS FROM LESLIE DEAN, JUDY WONG, ELLEN FRANK AND JANET HOFFMANN.



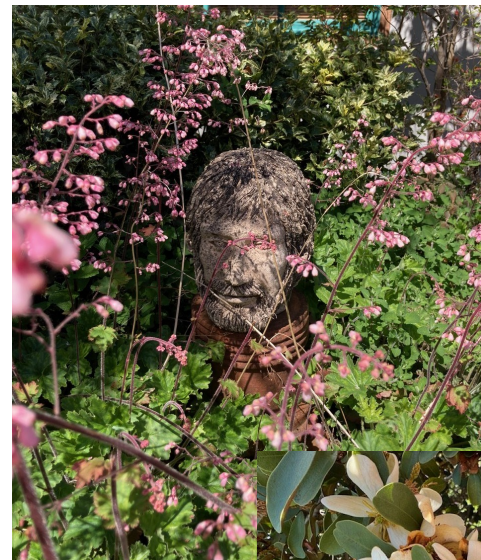
Hog Hill Owners
Mary and Lew Reid



Cornus kousa 'Cherokee Sunset'



Tosh Phillips, Katie Wong, Jennifer Doniach, Sherry Hall
& Ellen Frank



Hog Hill Continued



Jen Dungan and Jim Salyards



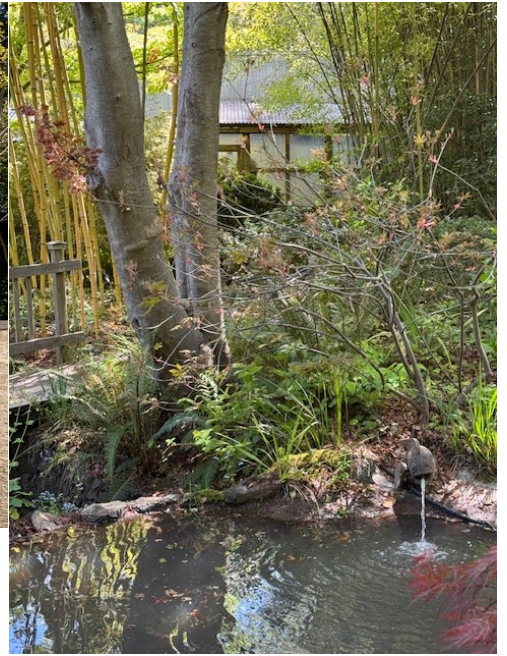
Onward to Western Gardens



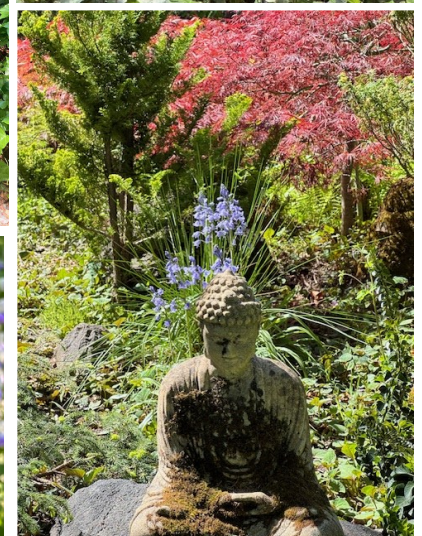
The Folly



Owners of Western Gardens
Kent Stader & Hadley Dynak



Eucalyptus rubia
‘The White Whale’



Stachyurus praeceox
Early Spiketail



28 YEARS AGO

Western Hort met May 14th, 1997 to hear our own Betsy Clebsch's talk *Salvias: Exciting, Garden-worthy Plants*. "Her book *A Book of Salvias* should be available at the meeting – I saw it in Berkeley so it must be just off the press."

"The Guadalupe Gardens Spring Festival netted \$348.40. Thanks to all donators, Faith for organizing, John for trucking, and Bill, Fran, Helen, Elizabeth and Jean for spending the day selling plants."

There was also a thank-you in the newsletter for the team who created our WHS booth at the Landscape Garden Show.

The June 1st WHS picnic location was announced: Yerba Buena Nursery, hosted by Kathy Crane. And the following weekend at Yerba Buena Nursery was to be a celebration of Gerda Isenberg Day, "commemorating Gerda's 96th birthday and her contributions to California native plants." "Gerda (was) a longtime and Honorary Life Member of Western Hort."

As is usual in springtime in the Bay Area, many events and open gardens were scheduled. The Garbett's Matadero Valley Garden Railroad was open and running trains around the swimming pool on May 17th, the same day as Lisa Ketcham's collector's garden was open in Menlo Park. The following day was the Celebration of Old Roses in El Cerrito.

A special event in Santa Rosa at the Luther Burbank Home and Gardens was to be held June 21st, the same day as Art & Wine in the Bancroft Garden in Walnut Creek.

Plant Notes for May 1997 describe a series of new, unusual and strange plants.

Paula Lion brought the strange, *Sauromatum venosum*, a voodoo lily from northern India. "The opening flower has an unpleasant odor that lasts only a short time but during which time you may prefer to keep it outdoors."

"Bill Duncan likes tough plants so *Dianella intermedia* is just the plant for him. This is not a plant for the rich soil and moisture of the perennial border but is a good choice for that neglected corner out by the compost pile."

"Kristine Montague's rose, 'Dortmund' was truly amazing, unbelievably floriferous."

"Ed Carman showed an unusual flowering tobacco, *Nicotiana langsdorffii*, from Chile and Brazil." It has greenish cream-colored flowers with turquoise blue anthers.

Bill Kurtz brought *Albuca altissima*, and Plant Note author Elizabeth Garbett commented "It is a quietly elegant plant with stylish coloring and I hope it proves to be hardy here."

"Jean Fowkes went to the UC Berkeley Botanic Gardens sale in May and came away with two hydrangeas only recently introduced." *Hydrangea serratifolia* is from Chile and Argentina, and *Hydrangea asterolasia* is from Costa Rica. "According to Martin Grantham they have yet to flower in cultivation, and they have been growing it since 1991."

"Jean brought another unusual plant, *Bowiea volubilis*."

~ Nancy Schramm

COME TO THE OPENING CELEBRATION OF THE NEW NURSERY COMPLEX AT THE GARDENS OF GOLDEN GATE PARK!

The Gardens of Golden Gate Park, a public-private partnership of the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department and the San Francisco Botanical Garden Society is hosting an opening celebration of the new Nursery Complex on Wednesday May 28th from 2:00-4:00 PM. This event will be open to the public, but will require an RSVP so keep an eye out for it or email the Garden Director, Joseph Rothleutner at joseph.rothleutner@sfgov.org to stay informed of the event registration. Opening remarks by will be followed by a tour of the facility. The new nursery complex is a 9-million-dollar project focused on improving horticultural operations and nursery phytosanitation best practices. Be sure to RSVP, wear close toed shoes and please be prepared to use foot brushes and sanitizer on your footwear.

APRIL SPEAKER NOTES

In Search of Alpines in the Sierra Nevada

with Michael Uhler

Michael Uhler joined us from the East Bay, where he is the curator and horticulturist of the Sierran collection at the Regional Parks Botanic Garden, also known as Tilden. Creating conditions in which alpine plants can survive and even thrive at an elevation of about 165m in a coastally influenced climate, when the plants are adapted to 2700 to 3500m in the Sierra Nevada climate, is a herculean effort. Plants often surprise us, and many plants do settle into the crevice rock garden and environs at Tilden.

Michael and his wife Ellen have been plant explorers for many decades. He gave us a taste of expeditions they have taken in the Sweetwater Mountains (which have 6.2 square miles in the alpine zone where 173 species have been documented), Baxter Pass in Kings Canyon National Park, Mount Mary Austin in the John Muir Wilderness and the northernmost terminus of the high Sierra, Tower Peak in Yosemite National Park. These expeditions entail a many-hour drive and then backpacking in sometimes harrowing conditions, dealing with wind, rain, hail, mud, rutted dirt roads, cold temperatures, treacherous terrain, and the vicissitudes of timing trips such that target plants have mature seeds available to be collected. The fruit of these efforts not only include the propagules collected, but beautiful photographs of plants in flower. Michael showed *Eriogonum rosense* var *rosense*, *Phlox condensata*, *Draba incompressa*, *D. sharsmithii* (named for Carl Sharsmith, 1903-1994, who was the first botanist to document the Sierra's alpine flora), *Hackelia sharsmithii* (actually named for Carl's wife Helen), *Androsace septentrionali*, *Polemonium chartaceum*, *Anelsonia eurycarpa*, *Packera wernerifolia*, *Townsendia scapigera*, *T. condensata*, *Claytonia umbellatum*, *C. megarhiza*, *Cymopterus cinereus*, *Festuca brachyphylla* ssp. *breviculmis*, *Senecio pattersonensis*, *Hulsea algida*, and *Penstemon rostriflorus*. Besides plants, other creatures seen included *Acrodactes philapagus* (the Alpine Shieldback), Clark's Nutcracker, and mosquitoes galore.

The photographs and videos in his presentation evoked the sensations that go hand-in-hand with plant exploration — strenuous effort, wet clothes, mosquito attacks, blistered feet and cold extremities. But the joy of discovering a highly adapted, rare or endangered plant in a rock crevice or a field of flowering alpine plants is a powerful motivator for those fit enough to undertake such exploration. While we sat near sea-level, we could greatly appreciate and delight in the alpine environment vicariously.

~ Jen Dungan

U C Davis Arboretum

I had the good fortune to visit the UC Davis campus and see the arboretum grounds. This wall of ceramic flowers was stunning and this picture is only about a third of it.

Beautiful native flowers bloom along with some familiar favorites. They have added some “islands” in the water course and the geese and other birds are loving it.

This renovation looks to be a big success and it is well worth the visit if you are in the area.

Editor



APRIL PLANT SHARE

Carol Dahout from San Jose brought in a colorful assortment of Pacific Coast Hybrid irises. She commented that her yard was awash in color this spring.



Iridaceae Pacific Coast Hybrids

There are eleven known species within the members of the beardless iris group that are native to the Pacific Coast states. Breeders have developed these hybrids from several species.

Exposure: Sun to light shade

Size: 8-24 inches tall; clumps expand to several feet across (divide in early fall to midwinter in mild areas)

Evergreen

Soil: Well drained (poor drainage can be fatal)

Water: Moderate to scant water in summer

Sunset Zones 4-9 and 14-24

Leslie Dean from Mt. View shared a fragrant sample of *Syringa x laciniata* (Cutleaf Lilac) In the Oleaceae family it is from Turkestan and China.

This old hybrid is of unknown origin but possibly a cross between *Syringa vulgaris* and *Syringa protolaciniata* from Western China. Leslie got this from Barbara Worl. Deciduous shrub (yellow fall color)

Height: 4-6 feet and Width: 4-6 feet with a rounded habit

Exposure: Full sun or part shade but flowers best in sun. Needs good air circulation

Soil: Fertile, alkaline to neutral

Water: Moderate

This shrub is tolerant of heat and is mildew resistant. Attracts butterflies and hummingbirds. Sunset Zones 3-12, 14-16, 18-22



***Mangave* 'Praying Hands'**

This evergreen succulent in the Asparagaceae family comes to us from Mexico. It is a cross between *Mangave* 'Bloodspot' x *Agave ocahulii*

Exposure: Full sun

Size: 10-12 inches high and wide

Soil: Well drained

Water: Low to occasional

San Marcos Growers comment that it should prove hardy to at least 25 degrees. This plant was a new introduction in the Walters Gardens MAD ABOUT MANGAVE® collection from 2021, so they have not seen it bloom yet. Slow growing, it will look much like an artichoke eventually developing a teardrop shape. Good in containers or the ground.



Nancy Schramm from Gilroy brought a special rosemary.

***Salvia Rosmarinus, Rosmarinus officinalis* 'Ed Carman'** (Carman's Tuscan Rosemary)

Evergreen with medium violet blue, fragrant flowers from the Mediterranean region of Europe.

Exposure: Full sun

Size: 6 + feet tall, 4-6 feet wide, mostly erect upright shrub

Soil: Give good drainage

Water: Occasional to infrequent

Sunset Zones 4-24

San Marcos Growers calls this variety somewhat of a mystery. Ed Carman maintained that it was the "true" 'Tuscan Blue' rosemary and that the plant all the other nurseries were growing under this name was actually a cultivar called 'Blue Spires'. They go on to say, "He might be right but unfortunately the finer textured plant now grown in the trade as 'Tuscan Blue' is so universally grown and known by everyone that it would be nearly impossible to correct this situation and so we instead named this plant 'Ed Carman'.

Continued next page.....

Nancy had this to say, “Many years ago I potted up some ‘Tuscan Blue’ rosemary cuttings for my dad, but I put them in the wrong size pots. After they sat there for quite awhile, I suggested that he plant them out in front of the house where customers parked their cars, as a hedge between the cars and the front garden. He did, and in my memory, I remember the hedge growing at least 6’ tall.”

San Marcos Growers shares a bit more history: We received this plant in the 1980s from legendary nurseryman Ed Carman, who operated Carman's Nursery (started by his father Hugh in 1937) from 1945 until his death in 2002. Ed had a hedge of this rosemary growing in front of his Los Gatos, California nursery.

Sunset Western Garden Book also mentions the original ‘Tuscan Blue’ being brought into England by Vita Sackville-West and it had “relatively broad (to 1/4 inch wide), 1-1 & 1/2 inch long leaves with deep violet-blue flowers....A plant long sold as ‘Tuscan Blue’ in the U.S. fits this general description but has light blue flowers....Some nurseries sell ‘Blue Spires’ under this name.”

Judy Wong from Menlo Park continues to amaze with the variety of South African bulbs she brings to share.



Geissorhiza heterostyla has wide distribution in the South African Cape and can be found on stony clay slopes. Grown from corms and flowers open when sunny for two to three weeks.

Exposure: Full sun

Height: 5 –17 inches

Soil: Good drainage

Water: Winter rain, no summer water during summer dormancy

Pelargonium echinatum (Prickly-stemmed pelargonium)

This winter flowering pelargonium from the Northern and Western Cape of Africa is a succulent perennial shrublet with spines on the stem. Of the over 200 pelargonium species in South Africa this is certainly unique. It is summer deciduous.

Exposure: Full sun to semi shade

Height: In ideal conditions to 3 feet

Soil: Sandy loam

Water: Summer dry giving the plant a rest period



Kalanchoe laetivirens (Mother of Thousands)

Native to Madagascar this succulent gets its name from its unique ability to produce a lot of plantlets along the edges of its leaves. Judy brought some of these babies to share. Pink blooms (usually in winter) are tubular that dangle like bells.

Exposure: Bright indirect light

Height: to 12 inches

Soil: Well draining

Water: Water when soil is dry an inch down, less in winter while plant is in a dormant phase.

USDA Zones 9-11 outdoors; or grow indoors

Many thanks to Janet Hoffmann for being the photographer this month!

STROLLING AROUND THE INTERNET

The return of Sicily’s ancient ‘white gold’ mentioned in the Bible many times, this Mediterranean “superfood” is once again being harvested off of *Fraxinus ornus* trees.

<https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20250328-the-return-of-sicilys-ancient-white-gold>

A Celebration of



Excellenz von Schubert

OLD ROSES

Sunday, May 18, 2025 from 11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

What's old is new! Numerous tables with hundreds of beautiful rose blossoms, labeled and sorted by class! Purchase heirloom and hard-to-find roses from specialty nurseries.

Rose experts will be available to answer questions. Vendors will also be selling rare perennials, crafts, books, jam, jewelry, and clothing, all inspired by roses.

Sponsored by Heritage Roses Group Bay Area (HRGBA)

Celebrationofoldroses.org

Children are welcome!!

Children will receive a FREE rose plant
(While supplies last!)

Admission is FREE!

VETERAN'S MEMORIAL BUILDING – ALBANY, 1325 Portland at Carmel.
Take Hwy 80 or 580 to the Albany exit. Go east to San Pablo Ave, then left to Portland and right to Carmel.

HORTICULTURAL HAPPENINGS

Checkout other ongoing events, Plant Sales, Talks and Workshops at the Master Gardener website:

<https://mgsantaclara.ucanr.edu/events-calendar/>

Carmel Valley Flower Show—May 3 & 4, 10am – 4pm, Hidden Valley Music Seminars in Carmel Valley Village, 104 West Carmel Valley Road, Carmel Valley, CA. This is the 54th annual show benefiting nonprofit organizations in Carmel Valley that contribute to the natural beauty and sustainability of the area. For more information go to:

https://cvgc.clubexpress.com/content.aspx?page_id=22&club_id=324042&module_id=383508

California Native Plant Society– How to Install Native Plants May 8th, 7 – 8:30pm Room 201 Cupertino Library 10800 Torre Ave. Cupertino, 95014. Stephanie Morris will speak on the process of adding native plants to your garden. Included will be lawn removal options, types of drip irrigation and installation of the plants. This is #2 in a 3-part series. The final talk will be on July 24th and cover pruning, garden clean up and general maintenance. For a calendar of events go to the CNPS website: cnps-scv.org

UPCOMING MEETINGS

June Picnic– ?

California Horticultural Society– The Genus Echeveria, April 21st, 7:00pm This will be an in-person meeting with **Brian Kemble**, curator at Ruth Bancroft Garden, writer and lecturer on botanical topics. (Brian was recently awarded the Liberty Hyde Bailey Award from the American Horticultural Society!) Meeting is held at the San Francisco County Fair Building, Ninth Avenue at Lincoln Way in Golden Gate Park, Free parking on Lincoln Way. Keep up with Cal Hort on their website: calhortsociety.org

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 & Mil Milutin

(More board members welcomed and needed)

Volunteer Committees and Responsibilities:

Plant Sale Table: Carol Dahout

Email and website maintenance: Ursula Haschke

Membership: Ursula Haschke

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, Glenda Jones, Eva Huala, Meri-Beth Bird & Jim Salyards

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:

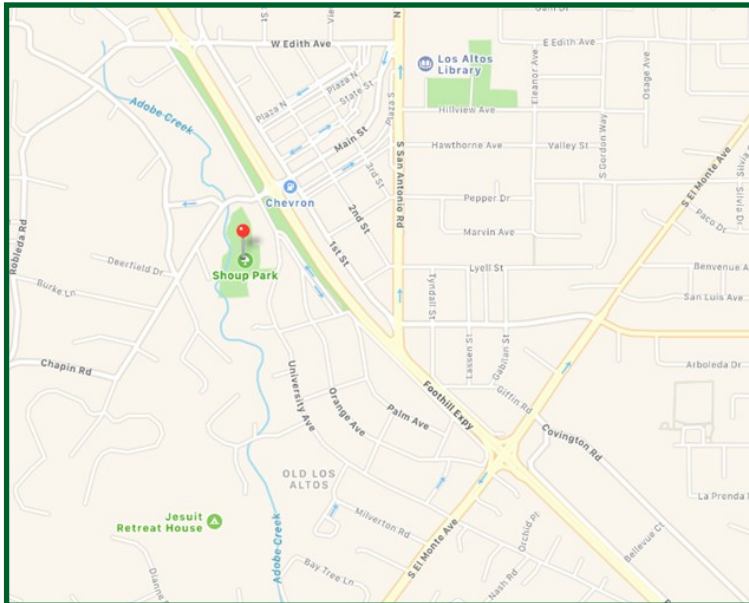
Membership Rates: A one-year membership (Sep-Aug) includes an e-mail copy of this newsletter and admittance to all of our monthly meetings. Regular membership is \$35, Family membership for two or more members at the same address is \$50, and a discounted rate for students is \$20. Please visit the Pac 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 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 : May 14th, 2024

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