

WESTERN HORT

February 2026 | PO Box 166, Mountain View, CA 94042 | www.westernhort.org



The February meeting will be an in-person meeting. Meetings are free for members, (bring a friend and their first meeting is free too!), non-member attendees are \$10.00. The meeting room officially opens to members and the public at 7pm but if you can arrive by 6:30pm to help set up your assistance would be greatly appreciated. Masks are recommended but optional.

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

SPEAKER: LISA ROPER

TOPIC: CHANTICLEER GRAVEL GARDEN

For the past 11 years, Lisa Roper has managed the Gravel Garden at the renowned Chanticleer Garden in Wayne, Pa. A gently sloping site planted with a mix of fine textured grasses, gray-leafed Mediterranean plants, drought tolerant perennials, annuals grown from seed and hardy succulents, the gravel garden is a stunning and unique landscape. Lisa will discuss some of her design choices, favorite plants, combinations, planting techniques and the importance of editing. She will also touch upon her photography techniques.



Lisa's Bio

Lisa Roper is the Gravel Garden and Ruin horticulturist at Chanticleer, a public garden in Wayne, PA, where she has gardened for the past 35 years in various parts of the garden. Lisa also photographs Chanticleer Garden weekly for What's in Bloom on the Chanticleer website.

Lisa has a BFA in fine art from The Cooper Union in NYC where she studied fine art and photography. She is a graduate of the Longwood Gardens Professional Gardener Training Program. Lisa has been a guest gardener at Stellenbosch University Garden in South Africa and Great Dixter in East Sussex, UK. She is also a contributor to *The Art of Gardening*, design inspiration and planting techniques from Chanticleer.



There will be a speakers dinner this month.

If you would like to join us at Chef Chu's, please email Western Hort member Carol Dahout at: caroldahout@yahoo.com by Monday, February 9th so we can make a reservation for the appropriate attendance. Dinner will start at 5:00pm. Chef Chu's is located at 1067 N. San Antonio Road, Los Altos.

CO-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Save the date! Coming to us on April 18-19 is the Growing Natives Garden Tour (NGGT). Now in its 23rd year, this free tour is put together by the Santa Clara Valley chapter of the California Native Plant Society in association with local chapters of the UC Master Gardeners. This year Western Horticultural Society is one of the sponsors with a donation of funds and publicizing efforts.

The tour "aims to educate the public about the beauty and importance of California native plants. Through an annual, self-guided, and free tour of private and public gardens (spanning Santa Clara and southern San Mateo counties), the organizers promote biodiversity and emphasize the benefits of native plants for water and energy conservation."

Our recent WHS member, Liz Calhoon (now in Provincetown, MA) writes,

"I've been gone from the Bay Area for almost 5 years now. And one of the things I miss the most: NGGT. Don't take it for granted. So educational! I've always learned so much by seeing what talented, knowledgeable people have done with their gardens as seen on these tours. I'm homesick once again for CA!"

With 2025 clocking in at over 6000 garden visits to 54 gardens, join the fun by marking off the third weekend of April 2026. Saturday has open gardens for the southern half of the tour area, while Sunday is for gardens of the northern section. Register at gngt.org

Please help get the word out among your acquaintances for this tour, and of course for Western Hort and Cal Hort events (print & post or email those flyers you receive via email from:

whsmembers@groups.io

~ Grace Tsang & Meri-Beth Bird

WHS Scholarships - Application Deadline in March

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-cdHJDdu7F53lFjtck3Sw8gBpRkdK_yogm7Obw-PX6kE65w/viewform

UPCOMING MEETINGS

WESTERN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

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



Photo: Greg Rubin

February 16th, 7pm. Zoom meeting. Greg Rubin will speak about protecting California homes against wildfires with appropriately designed native plant landscaping. Greg is a designer, horticulturist and author. Watch for an e-mail with the zoom link.

March 16th, 7pm.

Marlene Simon, *Plants of the Botanical Conservatory* Curator of the UC Davis Botanical Conservatory, Marlene, will showcase some unusual specimens found in the Tropical House there. 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, Ninth Avenue at Lincoln Way in Golden Gate Park. Free parking is available behind the SF County Fair building on Lincoln Way.

Find more information about these talks on the Cal Hort Website:

<https://calhortsociety.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/bulletin-v93v01-january-f.pdf>

2025 FOUNDERS AWARD



Janet receiving award from Nancy The Western Horticultural Society, has been around since 1963 and is a completely volunteer organization. As such, I think it's really important that we recognize the volunteers who have contributed to our longevity. We don't give out a lot of awards, in fact, only one each year, so I think it's worth taking a little time to tell you about this year's recipient, Janet Hoffmann.

In addition to being an avid gardener and plant propagator, Janet has worked at local nurseries, taught school, has been active on the Western Hort Board, volunteered with native plant groups and outdoor activity groups. Free time is spent traveling, backpacking, participating in winter sports and spending time with friends and family.

In alphabetical order, she has traveled to Africa, Alaska, Australia, the Bahamas, Canada, Iceland, India, Mexico, Nepal, New Zealand, Patagonia and Peru.

If you were to visit Janet's garden, you would see MANY California natives, seasonal vegetables, fruit trees with multiple grafts, in fact, she told me that she learned grafting techniques through the California Rare Fruit Growers annual scion exchange, where there are very worthwhile grafting seminars. Her garden also features various methods of rodent exclusion and protection for summer dry bulbs.

Janet has long been interested in plants and the natural landscape. Originally interested in forestry, she was told that in order to get a job in forestry "you need to be 6' tall and have a 15" neck". So she graduated from Cal Poly with a BS in ornamental horticulture.

In the early 1980's, her first nursery job was working at Saratoga Gardens Nursery, located on Saratoga-Sunnyvale Rd near Cox Ave. One time she was sent to pick up plants purchased from Jack Christianson's wholesale nursery, located across from Sanborn Park above Saratoga. It was there that she sprained her ankle when she jumped off the back of a pickup truck into the river bed. In 1983 she started working at Yamagami's Nursery where she had multiple responsibilities. Following that she was the San Francisco Bay Area Sales Rep for Skylark Wholesale Nursery, Lake Valley Seeds and Ezell Nursery Supply.

Janet also had a teaching career, beginning part-time at Foothill College teaching horticulture classes. She then returned to San Jose State to get her teaching credentials. She says she "taught middle school science and math for 4 years before figuring out that middle school students and she did not really click". Following that was perhaps a dream association with the Youth Science Institute; she taught, was in charge of the maintenance of the Sanborn gardens and Vasona Park nature trail, worked with volunteers and created curriculum for the Institute from 2002 until she retired in 2020.

When it comes to what Janet has done for Western Hort, it's a long list. She volunteered at the Western Hort Hot Plant Picks exhibit at the San Francisco Flower and Garden Show, she was editor of the newsletter, she was president, she wrote the speaker notes for the newsletter and she is on the scholarship committee. She responded with thoughtful participation when there was a discussion concerning updates to the Western Hort bylaws. Her first challenge as president was helping organize all the details for when Dan Hinkley spoke to our group. Quick on the heels of that was the even bigger challenge of handling the switch to Zoom meetings that Covid required.

Just a little bit more about her. She grew up in Wisconsin. She has an older sister, Barbara who lives in Long Beach, and a younger brother, Burt, who lives in Novato. One funny story she told me was about how they all had cowboy boots as kids and loved to wear them. Her parents took the family to a dude ranch in Arizona about the time they got the boots and they all thought the whole thing was really something else!

She can speak, read and write Spanish.

She loves backpacking and cross country skiing, and has been involved in the Snowlands Network, a non-profit advocacy organization for human powered winter sports for almost 40 years.

And the last thing I'd like to mention is about a donation she made in October 2024 that changed the life of others in a profound way. But you'll have to ask her about that yourself!

~Nancy Schramm

28 YEARS AGO

On February 11, 1998, Western Hort met to hear a very special speaker “Stephen Lacey, author of *Scent in Your Garden* and *Gardens of the National Trust* and narrator of *Gardeners’ World*, a weekly gardening show on BBC”. His talk was called *Scent in Your Garden*.

“A \$2 donation is requested for this special meeting. Book signing and some books will be available. There will be NO plant discussion.”

“If you have fragrant flowers, cut or potted, that you could lend for a display arrangement, please call Faith Duhring.”

One announcement said “Our firm intentions are to start (the meeting) promptly at 7:30!!!

The Landscape Garden Show dates were to be March 26th to 29th and WHS was to have a display at the show, so volunteers were requested.

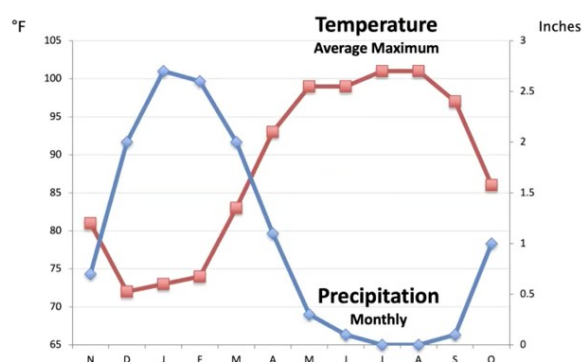
As stated above, there was no plant discussion so that’s all I have for this month.

~ Nancy Schramm

JANUARY SPEAKER NOTES

Our Winter is Different: Seasons in Native California Gardens with Helen Popper

The Louisa Beck Guest Lecture was given by Helen Popper, author of “California Native Gardening: A Month-by-Month Guide (2012). Probably you have seen well-intentioned neighbors have a native garden installed, only to see it overwhelmed with non-native weeds within a year or two. If only these neighbors had first heard our speaker’s advice to disabuse peoples’ idea that a native garden takes care of itself. The need to weed, water, plant, prune and control pests continues throughout the year, though on a different schedule than elsewhere in the temperate zone. As an economics professor, Helen is skilled at presenting charts – in this talk she had a wealth of climate graphs showing the highly “curvaceous” nature of climate-average precipitation amounts plotted against maximum temperatures in Los Altos, Benicia, Kentfield, Napa, Murphys, Moss Landing, Eureka, Redding, Sacramento, Los Angeles and San Diego. It was impressive seeing charts from these far-ranging locations looking remarkably similar in shape, as shown here with her chart from Los Altos.



Helen discussed planting, pruning and dividing in wintertime. While common advice is to do your planting in the fall, if deer are present, it can be better to wait until substantial rains start since the deer may be less desperate for the moisture in tender young plants. She highlighted a few plants in particular, such as *Heteromeles arbutifolia* (Toyon), whose berries in the winter are a huge draw for birds. *Calystegia macrostegia* provides great coverage over a fence but needs to be cut way back to prevent matting. *Zauschnerias* also benefit from being cut back – Helen even suggested using a string trimmer! *Disporum hookeri* (Hooker’s Fairy Bells), Douglas Iris and cool-season grasses can be divided in winter. Just because it rains in winter does not mean some plants don’t need some supplemental water in this season. As we have seen for a number of

years, long stretches of no rain in the winter months can dry out the soil and give a bad start to new plantings. Conversely, in the summer, for many natives, dry soil is exactly what established natives prefer.

Helen’s slides were stunning and included her own photographs as well as those by Saxon Holt and Judy Kramer. A couple of them were from the “Town Mouse Country Mouse” blog, written by Renate Kempf and Jackie Pascoe from 2007 to 2019 (<https://tmousecmouse.blogspot.com/>). Though the blog is no longer active, there is a wealth of interesting information for those keen on native gardening. Hearing Helen’s talk made me want to run out to my (only partly native) garden and do some planting and conscientious weeding!

Some sources for natives that were mentioned included Bay Natives in San Francisco, Summerwinds in Palo Alto, and the Johnson Garden Center in Morgan Hill. You can already put the native garden tours on your calendar – April 18 and 19 on the peninsula (<https://gngt.org>) and May 2 and 3 in the East Bay (<https://bringingbackthenatives.net>).

~ Jen Dungan

JANUARY PLANT SHARE

Judy Wong from Menlo Park shared two unusual bulb selections:



Massonia (possibly depressa)

Perennial bulb from South Africa. Judy got seed for this from the Cal Hort seed exchange and found it easy to propagate.

Evergreen, Spring flower

Size: to 2 inches

Exposure: part sun

Soil: well drained

Water: winter rain, dry in summer

Hardiness: Frost tender

The flower has a honeydew substance on it which makes it very shiny.



Lachenalia viridifolia

This winter growing, and blooming *Lachenalia* bulb sports a turquoise colored flower! Western South Africa in a Mediterranean climate.

Deciduous in summer

Size: leaves 2-4 inches, flower spike to 6 inches

Exposure: part sun

Soil: well drained

Water: winter rain, dry in summer

Hardiness: Frost tender, protect below 30 degrees

Excellent pot plant



Nancy Schramm from Gilroy shared:

***Phyllostachys nigra* (Black Bamboo) Evergreen**

Size: 4-8 feet controlled, 10-15 feet uncontrolled. Running type

Exposure: sun to part shade and afternoon shade in hot areas

Soil: tolerant of wide variety of soils

Water: average. Once established will tolerate some drought and will not spread into dry soils.

Hardiness: very hardy

Nancy shared this example of a bamboo in flower. It is unfortunate that once bamboo flowers it will die. It can reseed itself around the parent plant.



***Ophiopogon planiscapus* 'Nigrescens' (Black Mondo Grass) Asia**

Nancy brought in the more common standard Mondo Grass and a dwarf variety, 'Hosoba Kokuryu' from New Zealand. 'Teague's Black' introduced from San Marcos Growers in 2016 is another similar one.

It was noted that the dwarf mondo has narrower leaves than 'Nigrescens' and 'Teague's Black' has leaves that stay a bit shorter than 'Hosoba k'.

Size: N.- 12 x 12 inches, 8 inches high H.K.- 4 to 6 inches high

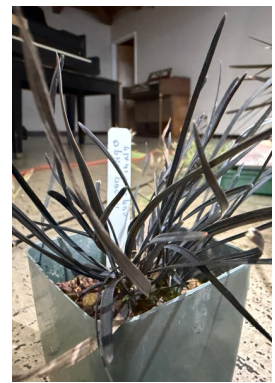
Exposure: part sun, light shade

Soil: well drained to average

Water: medium needs

Hardiness: tolerates down to 0 degrees

Occasionally produces short spikes with whitish lilac flowers in summer.



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

COOKIE RECIPES!

Leslie and Alicia brought standout cookies to the January meeting. Due to the rave reviews it has been requested that we share these recipes with the membership. Next month will feature Alicia's Chocolate Chunk Cookies.

Cowboy Cookies

From Leslie Dean and her friend and past WH member Elaine Marlow (cookie version of a pass around plant? Ed.)

We prefer old-fashioned rolled oats in this recipe, but you can use quick or instant oats in a pinch. Do not use thick-cut oats here: the cookies will spread too much.

Makes 16 cookies

- 1 ¼ cups (6 1/4 oz) all- purpose flour
- ¾ teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 ½ cups packed (10 1/2 oz) light brown sugar
- 12 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted and cooled
- 1 large egg plus 1 large yolk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 ¼ cups (3 ¾ oz) old- fashioned rolled oats
- 1 cup pecans, toasted and chopped coarse
- 1 cup (3 oz) sweetened shredded coconut
- 2/3 cup (4 oz) semisweet chocolate chips

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 350 degrees. Line 2 large cookie sheets with parchment paper. Whisk flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt together in bowl.
2. Whisk sugar, melted butter, egg and yolk, and vanilla in large bowl until combined. Stir in flour mixture until no dry streaks remain. Stir in oats, pecans, coconut, and chocolate chips until fully combined (mixture will be sticky).
3. Lightly spray ¼ cup dry measuring cup with vegetable oil spray or use an Ice Cream Scoop (I use the scoop without oil and it works fine). Drop level ¼ cup portions of dough onto prepared sheets, staggering 8 portions per sheet and spacing them about 2 ½ inches apart.
4. Bake cookies, 1 sheet at a time, until edges are browned and set and centers are puffed with pale, raw spots, 15 to 17 minutes, rotating sheet halfway through baking. Do not overbake.
5. Let cookies cool on sheet for 5 minutes, then transfer to wire rack and let cool completely before serving. Cookies can be stored in airtight container for up to 3-7 days.

To Make Ahead

At end of step 3, wrap sheets tightly in plastic wrap and refrigerate for up to 2 days. When ready to bake, increase baking time to 16 to 18 minutes. To freeze, portion dough onto parchment lined sheet and freeze until solid. Transfer frozen portions to zipper-lock bag and freeze for up to 2 months. Do not thaw before baking. Increase baking time to 17 to 19 minutes.

GROWING NATIVES GARDEN TOUR



Saturday & Sunday, April 18th & 19th, 2026.

Gardens will be open for the tour from 10am to 4pm each day. Please register to attend the tour by Sunday, April 19th. <https://gngt.org/GNGT/register.php>

You can also volunteer to help with the tour and enjoy preview events, receive a custom GNGT T-shirt and make a difference by working a 3-hour shift as a docent or greeter.

https://gngt.org/GNGT/vol_register.php

HORTICULTURAL HAPPENINGS

Rare Fruit Growers Scion Exchange February 14th, Mountain View Buddhist Temple 575 N. Shoreline Blvd. Mountain View, 94043. Free to SCV Chapter members, \$10.00 to non-members. Bring scions from your own garden. There will be a selection of rootstocks available for purchase. <https://crfg-scv.elementor.cloud/scion-exchange/>

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

Clara B Rees Iris Society 2026 Spring Show April 19th 2026 at the Joan Pisani Community Center, Saratoga CA 95070. To join or get more information on the Clara B Rees Iris Society go to: <https://www.irises.org> or www.cbris.org

The Garden Conservancy Webinar, Three Part Program. The Emperor's Western Maze and the Making of a Global Garden in China. Part 1 - January 29th, **Part 2** - February 26th, **Part 3** - March 19th. All air at 9am. <https://www.gardenconservancy.org/events/web26-the-emperor-s-western-maze-and-the-making-of-a-global-garden-bundle>
Register now, \$32 non-members of Garden Conservancy.

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

SNACKS IN FEBRUARY!

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

January snacks were provided by Leslie Dean and Alicia Evans for your enjoyment! Thank you! Please sign up to bring something in February! 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!

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 & 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 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:

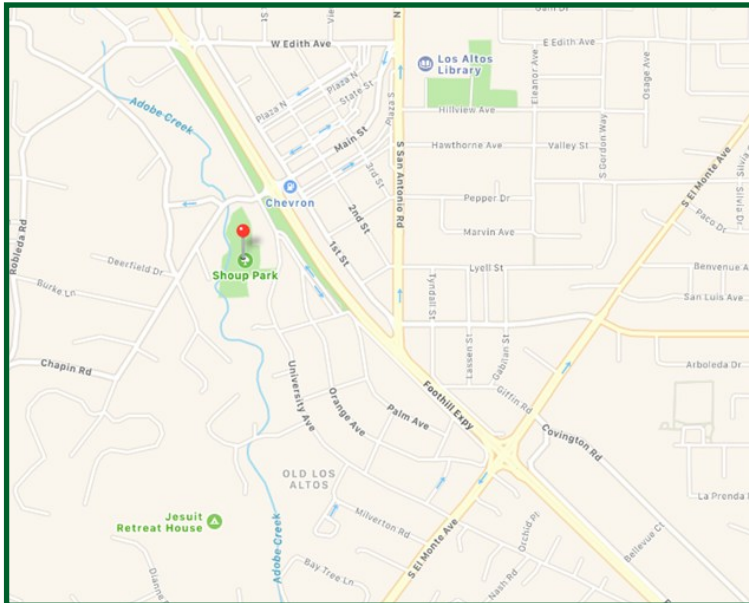
Membership Rates: A one-year membership (Sep-Aug) includes an e-mail copy of this newsletter and admittance to all of our monthly meetings. Regular membership is \$35, Family membership for two or more members at the same address is \$50, and a discounted rate for students is \$20. Please visit the Pac 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 : February 11th

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

(Masks optional)

Meeting starts at 7:30

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