



May 2013 Speaker

Wednesday, May 8, 7:30 p.m.

Mimi Clark, Fiddle Fern Landscaping

“Summer Into Fall: A How-To Guide”

Learn to create a summer garden display that not only looks beautiful all summer long but carries into the fall months. Mimi Clark will discuss Dahlia care, annual and perennial plant ideas, and maintenance tips to help nurture the garden along.

Mimi Clarke earned her Bachelor of Science degree in horticulture from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. She started her gardening career through the internship program at Filoli and soon became a member of the garden staff and then a Lead Horticulturist.

After nine years Mimi left Filoli to start her own business, Fiddle Fern Landscaping. She has been in business for five years performing a variety of duties. Throughout San Francisco and the Peninsula she manages residential estates, does speciality pruning, garden consulting and design, as well as teaching horticulture classes at Filoli. Her love for gardening is all encompassing.

Gardens of Alcatraz Field Trip Wednesday, May 15. If you signed up for the field trip to Alcatraz Island, please board the 9:10 a.m. ferry in San Francisco for Alcatraz Island. Shelagh Fritz, Garden Conservancy's project manager for the Gardens of Alcatraz, will meet us for a one-hour tour. Questions? Contact Rosalie Shepherd at shep8283@comcast.net or 650-321-8283. ~Rosalie Shepherd

MEETING LOCATION Christ Episcopal Church, Parish Hall, 1040 Border Road, Los Altos. Doors open at 7 p.m. and meetings begin at 7:30.

You are invited to join our May speaker, Mimi Clark, for **dinner on May 8** at 5:30 p.m. at Chef Chu's, 1067 N. San Antonio Road, Los Altos. Please contact Rosalie Shepherd to confirm: shep8283@comcast.net or 650-321-8283.

Would you like to **sponsor a lecture** for the WHS that is of particular interest to you? It would be much appreciated! Please call Pat Knight at 650-941-6136.

Mark Your Calendar

CNPS Spring Native Plant Sale Saturday, May 4, 10 a.m.- 3 p.m. at Hidden Villa Ranch, 26870 Moody Rd., Los Altos. See cnps-scv.org for lists of plants for sale.

Getting Started with Espalier—A Technique for Growing Fruit Trees Saturday, May 4, 11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. A Master Gardener workshop at the Palo Alto Demonstration Garden, 851 Center Drive, Palo Alto. Preceded by a workshop on “Superstars of the Summer Veggie Garden: How to Grow the Best Ever Tomatoes, Peppers, Beans, and Cucumbers” (10 a.m. – 11 a.m.) Followed by Open Garden. See mastergardeners.org/events for the full line-up of Master Gardener talks and workshops.

Cabrillo College 35th Annual Plant Sale May 10, 11 and 12, Mother’s Day Weekend. Members presale: Friday 3:00–7:00 p.m. \$25 to become a member at the gate. General public: Saturday 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. and Sunday 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. 6500 Soquel Drive (top of campus), Aptos. See cabrillo.edu/academics/horticulture/plantinventory.html for plant list.

South County Garden Railroad Open Layouts If you attended our December potluck and were fascinated by the idea of G-scale railroads and the plants used to make these gardens look real, here is a garden tour for you. On Saturday, August 17, you can go on a self-guided tour of about ten garden railroads from Morgan Hill to Prunedale. This is a food/fund raiser for the Gilroy and Hollister food banks with a free-will offering. Email dalemcanally@verizon.net or call Dale at 408-848-1440 and ask to receive the email tour book when the exact gardens have been chosen.



Furcraea sp. in bloom. Photo: Jerry Warning

Plant Table The Hot Plant Picks from the San Francisco Flower & Garden Show provided us with an exciting silent auction. Great plants were available to all! May's meeting will have our last Plant Table for the 2012-2013 year. Take this opportunity to bring in any of your plants needing a new home! Also, there will be plants from our Spring Garden Market plant sale last month to choose from. ~Roberta Barnes

Plant Sale A big thanks to all the members who helped with our plant sale on April 13 at the Spring Garden Market, hosted by the Master Gardeners. We sold \$750 worth of plants. Plus, it was a wonderful opportunity to tell gardeners about Western Hort Society. ~Roberta Barnes

28 Years Ago Western Hort met on Monday, May 13, 1985 for a little armchair traveling. Dr. Bruce M. Bartholomew talked about "Plant Hunting in Yunnan Province, China." I did a little research and discovered that just a few years ago,

Arisaema brucei was named for Dr. Bartholomew after yearly plant collecting trips to the area. The plant discussion ended in deep frustration for all—it sounds like the cafeteria lights were not working, so once the sun truly set, no one could see any of the plants. Up to that point, trees & shrubs in bloom dominated the discussion with Rupert Gurnee showing Cornus kousa, Mackaya bella & a Rhododendron occidentale that came from the Smith-Mossman hybrids at San Francisco Botanical Garden. Allan Reid brought a blooming Kalmia latifolia and Gerda Isenberg showed off a Carpenteria californica. Gerda went on to say that "Carpenteria cuttings root readily when taken after the first spurt of growth that comes after flowering." ~Nancy Schramm

Plant of the Month: Jerry Warning's Furcraea I went to my cousin's garden party last weekend in Watsonville, and it wasn't just any garden party, but was held in honor of two fourteen-foot tall Furcraea flower spikes. 'Wow' is probably an understatement. So I figured I'd finish out the WHS year by telling you about a spectacular plant that you, too, can grow. My cousin Jerry landscapes and maintains some interesting gardens in the Watsonville area, and about eight years ago took on a new client with eclectic tastes. In the client's garden was a blooming Furcraea, and Jerry noticed that not only had the flowers been pollinated, there were tiny plantlets on the flower spike and on the ground all around the mother plant. Of course he dug some to take home, and of course, like many plant lovers with good intentions, he kept the baby Furcraea in gallon containers much longer than he intended. Finally, perhaps four years ago, Jerry planted several Furcraea in his garden. The plants thrived in the hillside succulent bed on little water (maybe every other week) and in pretty much full sun.

Suddenly, this year, around the end of February or beginning of March, Jerry and his wife Anna noticed two flower spikes heading skyward. Jerry said they were like bamboo shoots; you could almost watch them grow. So here it is, no more than two months from first sign of a spike, and the plants are in full bloom. The spikes are hung like a Christmas tree with hundreds of flowers. The flowers are about two inches across with six very fleshy petals that are a creamy yellow color with a darker greenish area down the middle. This flowering spectacle is the Furcraea's swan song—once the plant finishes blooming, it dies. So it's a good thing that it makes many babies!

The plant itself is Yucca-like, four to five feet tall and wide, with blue-green strappy leaves a couple inches wide and several feet long. Jerry has not noticed any pollinators visiting, either during the day or evening. He's also not sure of the species. He has promised me some babies from this crop, so I will pass on a baby Furcraea to the first WHS member to positively ID it for us. The San Marcos Growers website indicates that Furcraea is fairly frost hardy, tolerating 20-25 degrees.



Pigeon Point Lighthouse. Photo: norcalhostels.org

April 2013 Speaker Notes The purpose of a lighthouse, simply put, is to save ships from grounding. Today, the Pigeon Point Lighthouse and its natural surroundings are being saved. Botanist and author Toni Corelli of Half Moon Bay explained how in her presentation “Pigeon Point Lighthouse: Native Plant Restoration.”

Perched on a cliff on the craggy San Mateo County coast, the Pigeon Point Lighthouse has been guiding passing vessels since 1872. While still functioning as a lighthouse, it has been closed to visitors since December 2001, when a chunk of the tower came crashing down. Now a possession of the state of California, the lighthouse awaits the necessary funding to receive guests inside her storied self.

Surrounding the lighthouse is a 19-acre park, also owned by the state. Dedicated members and guests of the coastside State Parks Association have undertaken the Herculean task of removing ice plant and other non-native flora in order to restore this section of the coastline to a more environmentally-friendly landscape. It's an uphill battle, but Toni's slides showed some spectacular results from sheer hard work and determination. Ice plant, a South African native, was planted here up through the 1970s, primarily to stabilize the soil. Ironically, it contributes to coastal erosion due to its shallow rooting and the sheer weight of its water-holding leaves. A rapid grower with no known North American natural enemies, it can cover a large area quickly—and it has. Still, five acres have been fully restored to a native state thanks to the hand-working volunteers. One volunteer, the late Dean Saylor, had the vision of starting a native plant nursery, which did start up in 2002 at Half Moon Bay State Beach. Native species started from seeds and cuttings begin their lives here, and after being established in the nursery, are set out in the landscape, receiving no supplemental water. The results are telling, not only in the beauty and diversity of the native landscape, but in the return of native animals and insects as well.

It's an uphill battle, to be sure, but a struggle worth continuing. Man versus (the former contributions of) man can sometimes be a daunting endeavor, but these determined restoration specialists have shown the war can be won. They provide a beacon of hope, like the lighthouse on the cliff: a beautiful, native park can be a reality. ~Mark McCabe

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To contact us, please send email to info@westernhort.org, or contact Chris Egan at 650-948-4614, or send mail to Western Horticulture Society, PO Box 60507, Palo Alto, CA, 94306.

About membership in Western Hort:

To join or renew, send your name, address, phone number and a check made out to “Western Horticultural Society” to PO Box 620673, Woodside, CA 94062-0673.

Membership Rates: A one-year membership (Sep-Aug) includes four issues of Pacific Horticulture magazine. Regular membership is \$35, Sustaining is \$45, Contributing is \$60 and Plant Lover is \$100+. We have also added a Family membership of \$50 for two or more members at the same address, and a Student rate of \$20.

Please visit our website at westernhort.org for a membership form.

Newsletter Submissions and Address Changes

Send submissions for the September 2013 newsletter by August 18 to Marianne Mueller: mrm@sonic.net, 650-326-2029, or 333 Kingsley Ave., Palo Alto 94301.

Send address changes to grew@pacbell.net or 650-851-5162.

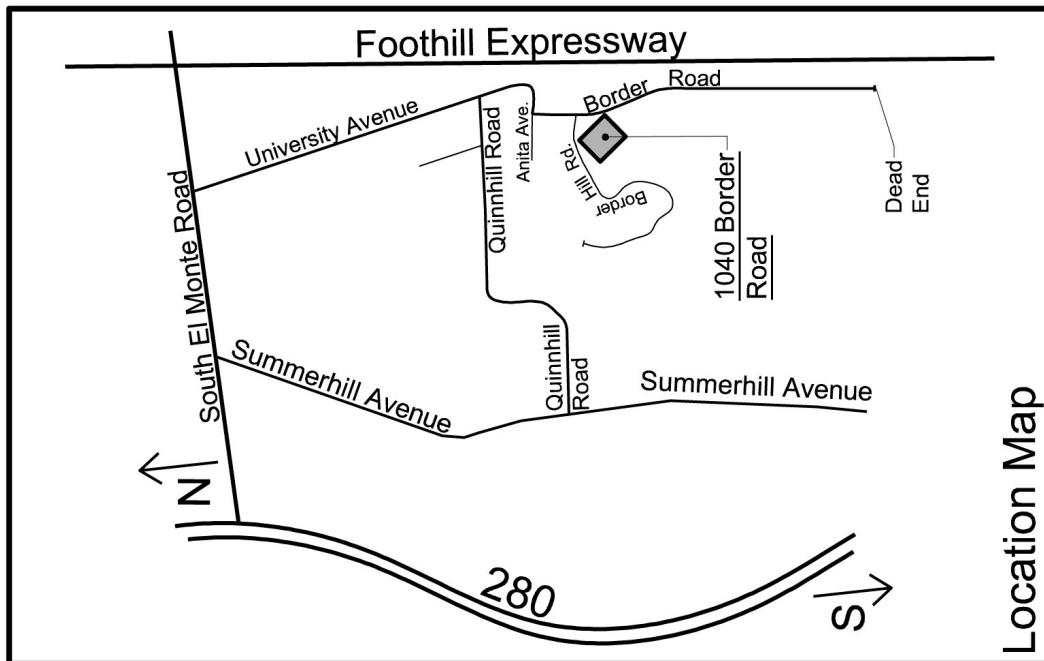


**Western
Horticultural
Society**

PO Box 60507
Palo Alto, CA 94306

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Monthly Meetings
Christ Episcopal Church
Parish Hall
1040 Border Road, Los Altos