



February 2013 Speakers

Wednesday, February 13, 7:30 p.m.

Barrie Coate and Dick Dunmire

Panel Discussion

The panel will be adjudicated by Jon Craig. Written questions for our two experts were collected from the audience in the January WHS meeting. Barrie and Dick are both founding members of the Western Horticultural Society.

Barrie Coate is a certified arborist and renowned tree care specialist who has advised Palo Alto and other cities on the health of their street trees, as well as helping with the re-forestation of Monterey. Dick Dunmire has an extensive knowledge of horticulture from his years as editor of *Sunset* magazine and as editor of the *Sunset Western Garden Book*.

January 2013 Speaker Notes

To start the new year on the right foot, horticulturally speaking, we were treated to a wide variety of do's and don'ts by Kathy Echols in her presentation "Garden Myths." Ms. Echols is an instructor at Diablo Valley College's Horticultural Department, and long-time plant propagator. She began her talk stating that all of the information she shared with us was taken or verified from university papers, studies, and research. Here are some myths debunked:

Vitamin B1, sold in vast quantities in the past, mainly to reduce transplant shock, has been shown to be useless by many studies—but it is still offered for sale. The molecule size in the "vitamin" is larger than the root pore that needs it. Ammonium sulfate is quick-acting but contaminates our ground water. Ms. Echols mentioned she was taught our Bay Area's soils lacked only nitrogen; subsequent tests in later years indicated this wasn't true. For soil amendments, Ms. Echols recommended steering away from manure—steer manure, that is. It is high in salts due to the cattle feed used to "bulk up" cattle before slaughter. Horse manure is OK, but can contain weed seeds. Chicken manure is "hot" because it contains both manure and urine—use sparingly. Redwood compost, that long-used amendment in the landscape trade, can rob the soil of nitrogen. "Nitrogen stabilized" redwood may not contain enough of the element to offset the deficiency, so more nitrogen would have to be added to the soil. Perhaps the best amendment, then, is organic garden waste compost.

Speaking of amendments, that time-honored practice of mixing compost into the soil of a planting hole is a waste of time, not to mention being detrimental to the growth of the plant. Ms. Echols felt that the roots of the container-grown plant would never want to leave the nice loose "bowl" that was created, resulting in circling roots.

Ms. Echols touched on two long-time practices of tree "care." Pollarding, which is the drastic pruning performed every winter on many trees, including mulberries, can only hasten their demise. Few species of trees respond favorably to this pruning method. Staking is another abused practice. Ms. Echols mentioned that staking a tree should be temporary. She also suggested leaving some lower, shortened branches on young trees to promote caliper growth, as well as using soft flexible ties to allow some movement.

Other interesting information Ms. Echols shared concerned the pollination requirements of zucchini. She mentioned that blossom end rot on tomatoes and blind eye on roses result from a lack of calcium. She suggested both maladies might be cured with Epsom salts, but test your soil before applying any particular amendment. An informative question and answer session followed, giving all of us in attendance enough information to break some old habits and start some good ones—the right way to start a new year in our gardens. ~Mark McCabe

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 February speakers, Barrie Coate and Dick Dunmire, for **dinner on February 13** 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.

Note from the President The newly elected officers of the Western Horticultural Society Board of Directors are Richard Tiede, President; Christine Bate, Vice President; Roberta Barnes, Recording Secretary; Rosalie Shepherd, Corresponding Secretary; and Daxin Liu, Treasurer. The other current and **newly elected** Board members are Liz Calhoon, **Chris Egan**, Abby Garner, **Virginia Kean**, **Wendy van der Linden**, Judy Wong, and Katie Wong. Welcome, and thank you all so much for joining the WHS Board of Directors. ~Richard Tiede, President

Volunteers Needed for SFFGS!

Spring is just around the corner and that means the San Francisco Flower and Garden Show will be in town March 20-24 at the San Mateo County Event Center. **Pacific Horticulture** is looking for volunteers to help monitor the seminar rooms at the show. Free entrance to the show on the day you volunteer. If you are interested, contact Leslie Dean at lesliekdean@mindspring.com or 650-967-5408. ~Leslie Dean

Hot Plant Picks—It's that time again!

Hot Plant Picks—It's that time again! WHS is once again creating the Hot Plant Picks exhibit at the SF Flower & Garden Show. WE NEED YOUR HELP to staff the booth in teams of two for two hour shifts. Various other volunteer positions await—get involved with the team that gets to play with the newest, coolest plants at the show! Contact Nancy now to reserve your favorite time slot (408-847-2313 or nancy@carmansnursery.com), or sign up at the February WHS meeting. Free admission for volunteers! ~Nancy Schramm

Raffle Table

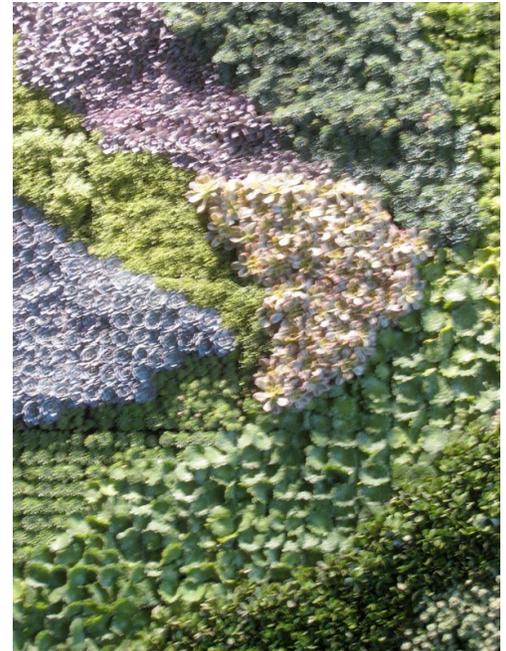
A big thanks to the Board and members who brought in such wonderful plants for the raffle table. Many people went home with great new plants. This month, the general membership is responsible for the raffle table. Plants are always welcome, but garden related books, tools and other items are also welcome. ~Roberta Barnes

Western Hort Plant Sale at the Spring Garden Market

For the past several years, Western Hort has held a plant sale at the Master Gardeners Spring Garden Market in San Jose. We have a good time selling plants and promoting Western Hort. This year the plant sale will be on Saturday, April 13. This is a little later than previous years and it will give our sale plants more time to grow up. Popular sale plants are succulents, natives, colorful foliaged plants and anything blooming! This is a good time of the year to look for plants that have self-seeded in your garden and perennials that can be divided. If you have questions, please email me at robertabarnes2011@yahoo.com. ~Roberta Barnes

Annual General Meeting Report January 9, 2013. With the required quorum of 25+ members present, at 7:35, President Richard Tiede called to order the annual WHS meeting at Christ Episcopal Church in Los Altos. Treasurer Daxin Liu reported that our finances have remained stable. Our checking account has \$16,600.33 and our CDs are at \$29,948.98. President Richard Tiede told us that we have 172 members at this time. He also pointed out our wonderful new screen, which the church purchased with the help of a WHS donation. Retiring board members Jon Craig and Mark McCabe were recognized for their contributions and thank you gifts were presented. Richard then called for board nominations. Wendy Van der Linden, Virginia Kean and Chris Egan were nominated and approved by a unanimous voice vote. Congratulations and thank you!

Pacific Horticulture representative Abby Garner reported on changes that happened in the last year. Leslie Dean is retiring as a Pacific Horticulture representative. She has been a key player both with the reorganizing of Pacific Horticulture and organizing the garden talks sponsored by Pacific Horticulture at the San Francisco Garden Show. Thank you Leslie for



2010 SFFGS Wall o' Succulents

Photo: Marianne Mueller

your hard work. Sairus Patel became a new representative this year. A big welcome for Sairus! Abby mentioned that we could have a third representative if another member was interested in joining. Contact Abby for more information (email or phone). Other changes at Pacific Horticulture include new Executive Director, Carol Moholt, and a new Editor, Lorene Edwards Forkner. Check out the new website, pacifichorticulture.org! The website has archived magazines from the past seven years, and Pacific Horticulture magazine has a new format. Abby encouraged us to give feedback regarding what we like or don't like about the new magazine.

Judy Wong spoke about our upcoming 50th anniversary. Historical information will be included in some of the meetings this year. President Richard Tiede talked about the new raffle procedures, which will enable us to comply with new California laws. More information will be published in future newsletters.

The General Meeting was adjourned at 8:00 by our president. ~Roberta Barnes, Recording Secretary

Congratulations to Mary Kaye, 2012 WHS Founder's Award Recipient

The Western Horticultural Society Founder's Award was established in honor of those who had the vision and dedication to create a fellowship of nurserymen, horticultural professionals, and avid gardeners.

The Ninth WHS Founders' Awardee, Mary Kaye, was honored at the December 2012 Holiday dinner.

Mary is modest about her accomplishments, a characteristic that I came up against when I asked her good friend Roz Bray to try and find out more about her WHS activities! Please see the full write-up of the evening's festivities on our website at westernhort.org/archive_2012_Mary_Kaye.html.

Mary has been a long and active member of Western Horticultural Society including service as President and Recording Secretary, organizing field trips and other WHS events, sharing design and building skills for exhibits at the SF Garden Show, contributing to WHS publications, and serving on the boards of both Western Horticultural Society and Pacific Horticulture. She continues to share plants from her garden in our Plant Discussions. *Lathyrus odoratus* 'Cupani' is just one of many plants she has brought to our plant discussion. She was gracious to share seeds. I enjoy them year after year and they are the most fragrant I have ever smelled. Thanks Mary! ~Judy Wong



Judy Wong, right, presenting the award to Mary Kaye at the 2012 Founder's Award Ceremony.

28 Years Ago On Monday, February 11, 1985 Western Hort members met to hear Rose Lewis' talk about "Plant Hunting in the Western Himalayas." "She has visited this mountain range in 1982 and again in 1983 and has many interesting photographs and drawings of plants in that area. Copies of her drawings will be for sale."

Heritage Garden Nursery in Portola Valley donated the plants for the month's raffle table. Two field trips were announced, including an April 28 excursion to Sally McBride's garden in Woodside. Sally's garden was one of those featured in the book *The American Woman's Garden* by Rosemary Verey and Ellen Samuels. Three gardens were to be on the schedule for the June 9 tour, those belonging to Miriam Miloradovitch, Timmy Gallagher, and Charlotte Anderson.

The plant notes included an enticing description of *Guichenotia macrantha*, native to West Australia. The dark lavender flowers were described as "reminiscent of our Coast Range's *Calochortus albus*, Fairy Lantern." Another note, "Barbara Worl brought in a spray of Japanese apricot, *Prunus mume* 'Rosemary Clarke' ", got me to thinking about the contorted prunus bonsai I just saw that belongs to Barrie Coate. I didn't write down the name, so I looked up images online. I was delighted to see that one of the images took me to the Pacific Horticulture website and the January 2008 issue available for viewing online. I'll have to ask if *Prunus mume* 'Koten Bai' is the correct name. And I'll have to learn to graft so I can have one of these lovely things for my very own! ~Nancy Schramm

Plant of the Month: Geranium phaeum

Geranium phaeum is one of Robin Parer's favorite species. When I asked Robin to choose a favorite geranium for me to write about in my monthly plant column in the Out & About magazine, her very first thought was G. 'Rozanne'. She said that it is simply the very best geranium she has ever grown. But if you want to read more about that one, you'll have to pick up a (free) copy of Out & About—new, local version available—see myoutabout.com.



Geranium phaeum

Photo: davesgarden.com

So for the benefit of WHS, Robin also told me about one of her favorite less common geranium species, Geranium phaeum. This species, as a group, is often called the 'mourning widows' for the mostly chocolate brown/brown maroon dime-sized flowers. However, the flowers aren't usually why you want to grow them. They are shade-loving plants with a wide tolerance for hot

or cold weather with some very charming variegated members. As a group, they are generally 15" tall and 18" wide, with the flowers held 3-5" above the leaves. Found originally as woodland wildflowers, they adapt well to shady areas in our gardens. Robin says they will even tolerate dryish soil once well established. In areas with cool summers, they will bloom spring through fall; hotter summers will cause them to pause for a breath, and then bloom again in the fall.

But to be honest, the foliage is the real prize. If you want to bring a touch of (imitation) sun to a shady area, take a serious look at this is a group of plants. To quote from the Geraniaceae catalog, "G. phaeum 'Margaret Wilson' ... is the most stunning of all variegated geraniums, with reticulated yellow leaves." Or maybe you like a splashy type of variegation—check out 'Mrs. Withey Price' with a bright yellow aspect. 'Springtime' leaves are variegated cream, green and red when young, maturing to green in summer. Or how about 'Shadowlands,' with leaves that have lots of red, with cream and light green. I could go on and on (Robin's 2004 catalog lists 26 different varieties!) but I'll leave it to you to find your favorite. ~Nancy Schramm

Mammoth Fundraiser for the Golden State Bonsai Federation

Golden State Bonsai Collection February 23—Auction starts at 1 p.m. (Preview noon.) February 24—Vendor sales from 9 a.m.—4 p.m. Lakeside Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Ave, Lake Merritt.

Western Horticultural Society Officers and Board Members

President: Richard Tiede
Vice President: Christine Bate
Recording Secretary: Roberta Barnes
Corresponding Secretary: Rosalie Shepherd
Treasurer: Daxin Liu

Other Board Members: Liz Calhoon, Chris Egan, Abby Garner, Virginia Kean, Wendy van der Linden, Judy Wong and Katie Wong.

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 March 2013 newsletter by February 18 to Marianne Mueller: mrm@sonic.net, 650-326-2029, or 333 Kingsley Ave., Palo Alto 94301.

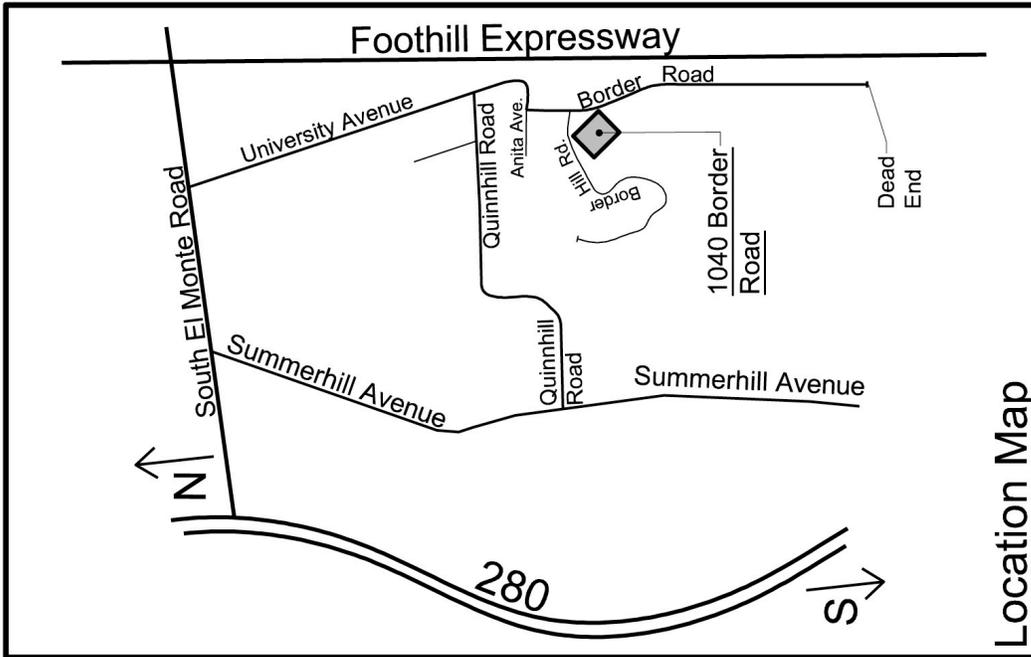
Send address changes to grew@pacbell.net or 650-851-5162.



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