

NOVEMBER 2023 MEETING

November 8th, 7:30pm

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

SPEAKER: LEONEL MORALES-BAJARANO,

TOPIC: PLANT PROPAGATION TIPS FROM A-Z

Plant propagation around the world is both the same and completely different. Certain basic techniques can be applied to many plants, but when we're faced with more difficult subjects, independent experimentation can yield some surprising results. Leonel's talk will be about more than just the basics. He will focus on the propagation of California natives, combining a short history of his work at Suncrest Nurseries and real-life illustrations of challenges he's met.



Leonel Morales-Bajarano's career path is an example of what can be accomplished through hard work, constant experimentation and a willingness to learn from mentors. He began working at Suncrest Nurseries Inc in about 1990 after working for a short time at Soquel Nursery and then at a landscape company. His first duties included the basics: planting, weeding and watering. In short order he moved to the pull order group and then to propagation where he set about learning two languages, English and botanical Latin. In 1993 Leonel began learning the intricacies of propagation, working with Nevin Smith, and became head of propagation in



2000 where he remained for more than twenty years, responsible for the 3,000+ different plants available at Suncrest. Leonel left Suncrest in 2021 to work for Manuel Morales at Los Arroyos International Wholesale Nursery as head of propagation.



Speaker Dinners have resumed! Come join our speakers for dinner at Chef Chu's before the meeting. This is an opportunity to talk more intimately with our speakers and ask any questions you might like about their field of expertise. If you would like to join us, please email Western Hort member Carol Dahout at: caroldahout@yahoo.com by the Monday before the meeting so we can make a reservation for the appropriate attendance. Dinner for November will start at 5:00pm. Chef Chu's is located at 1067 N. San Antonio Road, Los Altos.

CO-PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

“Of all the seasons, fall is the one that comes with the most mixed emotions: relief at the return of moderate temperatures, pleasure at nature's autumn color show, and a feeling of melancholy at the darkening of the light.

Technical interventions like Daylight Saving Time can't hide the fact that the amount of daylight is decreasing. In the Northern Hemisphere, we're counting down to the Winter Solstice—the shortest day of the year, around December 21st.”

from *Hearts of Space* radio, <https://www.hos.com>

In our moderate, winter-wet, summer-dry climate, fall is many a gardeners' delight, for this is the season to put in perennials without the stress of heat and drought. For native plant landscapers, this is a very busy time, as we seek to have plants in the ground in time to benefit from winter watering, whether from the atmosphere or water pipes. Certain plants, including many natives, fail if their roots are in the wet warmth of a hot summer day - deleterious soil microbes proliferate in that condition.

Western Hort has resumed garden tours! We had lovely visits to the gardens of Leslie Dean and Eva Huala on Sunday, October 15. Stay tuned for more garden tours and even field trips.

As a member, you receive a monthly newsletter and other announcements via e-mail. We also have an on-line bulletin board where you can post plant ID queries, garden offerings (or requests) - anything horticulture-related. As well, it's where less formal announcements are posted, for example, updates to a CalHort invitation. Go to <https://groups.io/g/WHSmembers/>, scroll to the bottom half of the page and click on the blue rectangle, “+ Apply For Membership In This Group”.

~ Grace Tsang & Meri-Beth Bird



In 1963 the Western Horticultural Society was formed by a group of horticultural enthusiasts and professionals. This year marks our 60th anniversary. We will be celebrating this milestone at our December potluck with a presentation documenting the journey of our organization over the years.

We would love to hear of your own experience with Western Hort. There is a form you can fill out with stories, memories of past picnics, field trips, garden tours, favorite speakers and things you have learned or friendships made with other members. You can pick up this form from the welcome table at the next meeting or alternately you can email us with anything you would like to share. Photos are great too. We will put these memories together for all to enjoy at the potluck. Let's celebrate our wonderful horticultural community together!

Email your memories to: info@westernhort.org.

For long time members who knew Don Brandeau, we sadly report that he passed away peacefully in his Oregon garden on July 3, 2023. Here is a link on Facebook for his obituary:

<https://m.facebook.com/groups/1517082655287774permalink/3614916638837688/?mibextid=l6gGtw>

OCTOBER SPEAKER NOTES

Growing Stone Fruits for Home Gardens
Andrew Mariani

Andy Mariani returned for our October meeting to talk to us about apricots, cherries, Asian plums, nectarines, peaches and other stone fruits. He humbly denied knowing too much about home gardens, but as a successful artisan commercial grower for many decades, we knew he had enormous knowledge to impart about making choices on what to grow, where to grow it, and how to plant and tend a home orchard that bears scrumptious fruit.

There are many reasons to decide to include fruit trees in your garden, the most obvious is of course to provide food that can surpass the flavor and quality of store-bought produce. But other reasons as Andy enumerated were to provide education for children to see where their food comes from, to admire the beautiful blooms in the spring and attractive foliage throughout the growing season, to provide shade, improve air quality, sequester carbon and help recharge the water table. The activity of tending trees and their fruit is a diversion from an increasingly urban, technological lifestyle and it can be satisfying to carry on the tradition of fruit culture as a nod to our rich local history.

Most stone fruits require a certain amount of winter cold to enter a period of rest so that they can later emerge from dormancy, flower, foliate and set fruit successfully. For the purpose of assessing this need, winters are measured in “chill units,” or hours between 45° and 32° F. Locally, winters have become increasingly milder due to the effects of development including extensive pavement and building structures, El Nino events, and climate change, dropping from 1200 chill units in the 1950’s to 400 hours today. Other variables affecting success include solar radiation and warm spells during the winter that affect the total accumulation of chill units. When there isn’t enough winter chill, Andy used the metaphor of trees “waking up grumpy.”

You will likely want to grow varieties that are not sold in stores. Andy urged us to read the labels on a prospective plant carefully for all of its preferences. Check especially for disease and pest susceptibility, how many years it will take to get fruit (this is not an instant gratification exercise!), general productivity, how long fruit takes to ripen and when to pick. Our Bay Area Sunset zones are 14, 15, 16 and 17, and stone fruits can struggle in the latter zones. There are exceptions though, and Andy described a peach variety called ‘Sugar Lady’ that an acquaintance was able to grow in Pacifica (zone 17).

Andy showed a nice chart comparing cherries, apricots, peaches, nectarines, Asian plum/pluot, and European plum in terms of how easy they are to grow, their yield and “reward,” showing Asian plums and pluots as best, but of course your experience may be different.

You will want to site your tree in such a way as to get 6-8 hours a day of full sunlight during the growing season. Andy is in favor of amending the soil to give the tree a really good start, but after establishment, it’s not necessary to apply fertilizer. His tip on irrigation of young trees is to saturate the soil. As the soil dries, you can assess its state by grabbing a bit with your hands -- if it crumbles, it is about 60% saturated which is time for more water. At the initial planting, cut trunks to 2-2.5 feet and prune your tree to hollow out the center into an inverted cone shape. This keeps the tree smaller and the fruit accessible. While peaches require a lot of annual pruning (60% of new growth), cherries don’t need much. Don’t be afraid to prune the dominant vigorous shoots hard to keep the shape balanced. In addition to pruning, once fruit appears you will need to thin it. Peaches have to be plucked off whereas apricots and Asian plums can be easily knocked off. Apricots need to be thinned early in the season.

Andy spent a bit of time describing diseases and pests, many of which he’s learned about through harsh experience. All stone fruits are susceptible to brown-rot blossom blight, a fungal disease that also causes fruit rot. Perhaps apricots are the most susceptible. Peach leaf curl can be controlled fairly easily with copper sprays, but Andy suggests retail sprays don’t have enough copper in them. Andy lost 60 young trees to bacterial canker aka bacterial blast this year. Then there’s oak root fungus, which I have experience with in my own front garden. I watched as the small trees in neighbors’ yards and my own died over a period of a few months and several perennials went belly-up without warning. Apparently, all the stone fruits are very susceptible and this fungus often kills a tree in 3-5 years. Thankfully, that problem may ebb over time. Then there are the critters: peach twig borer and “wormy” pests, aphids, thrips (which are devastating to nectarines), the Spotted-wing Drosophila (an exotic that came in about twelve years ago) and of course squirrels, gophers, deer and birds.

One of Andy’s favorite fruits is the Baby Crawford Peach. This was a variety originally considered for development by UC Davis, but it was found to be too small and too soft to be a commercial peach. Andy rescued it and made it available

SPEAKER NOTES CONTINUED

and now it is popular for home growing. He also mentioned the ‘Candy Cot’ apricot varieties ‘Anya’ and ‘Yuliya’, as well as French prunes, as being particularly delectable.

Andy’s summary of the whole endeavor of cultivating your own stone fruit is that, yes, it’s challenging but fun! He generously provided his slides which are available in the files section of the WHS members’ online group [here](#).

To visit Andy’s Orchard, his address is 1615 Half Road, Morgan Hill, CA 95037. Phone (408) 782-7600. He is open seven days a week: Monday thru Friday 10-6 and weekends 10-4 until Dec. 31, with the exception of a few holidays. Jan. 1-May 14 open by appointment only, call first. The link below has the family story, an event calendar and online store connections.

https://andysorchard.com/?page_id=18

~ Jen Dungan

UPCOMING MEETINGS

December 13th: Ken Litchfield, All Mushrooms are Magical—Experiencing the Phantasmagorical Realm of Fungi
Speakers scheduled for 2024

January 10th, Fergus Garrett, Plant Combinations for a Long-lasting and Resilient Garden

February 14th: Jennifer Dungan, Memories of an Extraordinary Garden

March 13th: Lori Palmquist, Water in Your Garden—Taking Control

April 10th: Documentary Movie Night– Five Seasons: The Gardens of Piet Ouldolf

May 8th: Arvind Kumar, Gardening for Habitat with Native Plants

Many thanks to Leslie Dean and Eva Huala for being so generous to not just share a plant from their garden, but to share their entire garden for everyone who attended the open garden event! It was quite well attended on a beautiful day and the hostesses were gracious in giving tours around their gardens as well as sharing growing advice and cuttings from plants that attendees were particularly enamored with. Be sure to thank these two busy members of our society for making time in their busy schedules to open their gardens to us!



Time is running out to participate in Cal Hort’s seed exchange. The timeline for this is:

July–end of November: Members submit properly prepared seeds collected from their gardens. If you plan to submit seeds that ripen later send Dave Tivol (130 Locksunart Way #2, Sunnyvale CA 94087-4666) a list so he can prepare for them.

January: A list of the donated seeds with a request form is made available to members.

February: Completed request forms along with \$5 for supplies and postage must be received by the end of the month.

March: Seeds are distributed by mail.

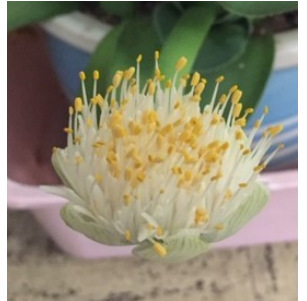
If you would like to help with cataloging and mailing the seeds please email us at calhortinfo@gmail.com and type “Volunteer” in the subject line. For more information on how to harvest and save seeds go to:

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

OCTOBER PLANT SHARE



Judy Wong from Menlo Park shared this unusual plant: *Haemanthus albiflos* is a member of the Amaryllidaceae family that is confined to South Africa and Namibia. Commonly called the shaving brush plant, the compact brush-like inflorescences are white with yellow tips. There are currently 22 known species of *Haemanthus* with colors ranging from pink to orange with a variety of shades and forms. This easy to grow plant seems to be adaptable to many sites from shady forest floors to rocky sea shores. Propagate vegetatively or by seed and give afternoon shade to prevent leaf burn. Hardy down to 34 degrees



but will not tolerate prolonged freezing temperatures. Blooms appear in late autumn and winter on plants growing eight to twelve inches tall and six inches wide. Grows well in containers in a well drained mix. Parts of it are considered to be poisonous due to the presence of several toxic alkaloids. If ingested, it may cause severe discomfort and it is also a skin irritant. Judy got her plant from Bill Kurtz and says she got exceptional bloom this year. Lots more information at: <https://pza.sanbi.org/haemanthus-albiflos>

Nancy Schramm from Gilroy shared her unusual plant:

This humble *Ronde De Nice* squash plant has fasciation. Notice that the stem has flattened out and gotten quite wide with multiple leaf stems coming off it. This condition has many causes, both internal and external. Internally, it happens because of a hormonal imbalance in the growth cells, a bacterial or viral infection or a random genetic mutation. Some agriculturalists are very interested in figuring out the genetic mechanisms that cause this as some crop plants like tomatoes greatly increase fruit production when fasciated. Nancy shared a story about how she first learned of this when she saw a tree in her dad's nursery with the condition. She thought it was fascinating so she remembered it that way. This is the second time she has seen this happen to her squash but it hasn't happened in consecutive years.



Aster 'Bill's Big Blue' This vigorous aster is from Bay Area nurseryman Ed Carman. It's sturdy, erect stems can reach four to five tall and three feet wide with narrow deep green leaves. It flowers profusely late in the season with medium sized lavender blue daisies. It can be somewhat invasive, but is a wonderful late nectar source for bees and butterflies. And this plant has a story! Ed saw it in his friend Bill's garden. Bill got it from Covelo, CA. Then in 2001 Ed got a letter from Richard Wagner that continued the saga of *Aster 'Bill's Big Blue'* as there was some interest in the history of the "found" plant. Richard relates the story of a trip to Connecticut to visit a cousin and stopping in a small used book store in Centerbrook he came upon a 1943 edition of *Britton and Brown, An Illustrated Flora of the Northern United States, Canada and the British Possessions*. Recalling the quest for the specific name of *Bill's Big Blue* he scanned the key for *Aster* and came up with *Aster laevis*. The illustration and habitat description matched so he went to the desk to purchase the three volume tome. When he told the owner of the store the story of finding the *Aster*, she so enjoyed it that she gave him a discount on the books. He still wasn't sure if *Bill's Big Blue* was a selection or the species itself, but it's a good story!

Plant Share at the meetings

Look around your garden and bring us a sample of what you love most. Share it with the membership! Don't be shy. Even if you think the plant you love most is too common or not interesting enough it could still be something new or inspiring to someone else. Or, it may just be so lovely we will all enjoy just looking at it. Bring it, share it, let us all enjoy it. Thank you for sharing. Editor

28 YEARS AGO

Western Hort met on November 8, 1995 to hear “Warren Roberts, Superintendent of the Arboretum of the University of California, Davis, speak on *The U.C. Davis Arboretum*.”

Newsletter announcements included mention of new members, one of whom was Bernard Trainor.

A call went out for “used garden books, in preparation for the sale in early 1996.”

And another request was made for a volunteer to take on the job of newsletter editor for Ellie Hawkins, either temporarily, for two years, or permanently, as desired.

Since I don’t have any plant notes for November 1995 and I’ve used up all the items of interest from the newsletter, let me share a few tidbits from the June 1995 newsletter:

The June picnic for the year took place on Sunday the 11th at Bee Brown’s home on Skyline Blvd. (In a bit of serendipity, I had the pleasure of seeing Bee’s current garden last spring and then re-meeting her when I gave a talk to the Rhododendron club at Suzanne Legallet’s home—the location of our June 2023 WHS picnic! – NLS)

WHS President Ed Carman placed an “ad”: “Job Opportunity for knowledgeable landscape gardener for a collector’s garden in Los Altos. One day a week.” (I wonder who’s garden that was??? – NLS)

There was a note of thanks: “Elizabeth Garbett has given us another wonderful year of singlehanded production of the Plant Notes. When sometimes I have to miss a meeting, it is good to know that there will be a consolation prize in the form of the Notes.”

(I, too look forward to the Plant Notes, and would like to thank our newsletter editor Kathy Anberg for ably taking on that job when Ana Muir had to start working different hours last spring. At the same time, we need to thank Ana for volunteering to write the Plant Notes – I believe since October 2016! – NLS)

Plant lover opportunities for June included: Two WHS members’ open gardens on June 18th; a lecture “*Painterly Borders – Bringing Art into the Garden* by Anne Lovejoy: Gardening as art – from painting with plants to gardening with sculpture” on June 19th; and a Garden Photography Class starting June 17th at Foothill College by David Goldberg and Pam Peirce.

~ Nancy Schramm

STROLLING AROUND THE INTERNET

‘Freak of Nature’ Tree is the find of a lifetime for forest explorer. Read in The Washington Post: <https://apple.news/A9RWTfy5vT12cLKurKObAJQ>

Black Fig Fly (Diptera: Lonchaeidae: *Silba adipata*) The University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources is alerting us again about this invasive fig pest which has been found in Southern California as well as Santa Cruz County in Seabright and Soquel. For an article detailing it’s life cycle, management and the recommendation not to move figs to prevent the spread follow the link to the full article:

https://ipm.ucanr.edu/legacy_assets/pdf/pestalert/pestalert_blackfigfly.pdf

Also more information at:

<https://www.ourfigs.com/forum/figs-home/1002499-urgent-psa-for-all-california-growers/page15#post1115982>



Figure 1. BFF female depositing eggs into the fig ostiole. Photo: H. Wilson



Figure 2. Internal damage to the fig from larval feeding. Photos: H. Wilson



Figure 3. Exit hole from larva burrowing out of the fruit.

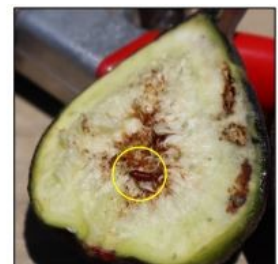


Figure 4. BFF pupa found inside of a fig.

HORTICULTURAL HAPPENINGS

Plant Expo, Nov. 4, 11-5 San Mateo County Event Center Sequoia Hall, 1346 Saratoga Drive, San Mateo, CA 94403
Free entry but a \$15 parking fee. Park near Gate E and D, East Gate. Are you a plant enthusiast looking to enhance indoor or outdoor spaces with beautiful greenery? Look no further! Our Plant Expo 2023 is here to delight your senses with various plants and gardening supplies. <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/plant-expo-2023-tickets-713834326687>

Philodendrons * Monstera * Caladiums * Alocasias * Carnivorous Plants & much more!

Native Plant Propagation, a talk by Ann Finney + Seed and Cutting Exchange

Thursday, November 09, 2023 07:00pm Cupertino Library Program Room (2nd floor), 10800 Torre Ave, Cupertino, CA 95014

Contact info@cnps-scv.org

Are you a gardener on a budget? Do you like growing things "from scratch"? Come to this talk to learn about easy and effective propagation best practices for California native plants, both from cuttings as well as seeds. The talk will include show-and-tell demos.

The program concludes with the popular Seed & Cutting Exchange. Browse the diverse offerings, ranging from easy-to-grow to hard-to-find, and go home with seeds and cuttings of new native plants – for free! We will provide coin envelopes for seeds, but bring containers to carry cuttings home. Bring native plant material from your own garden to share. Label it to make it easy to browse; some gardeners attach helpful hints about growing; others display photos of plants in bloom. Keep cuttings cool and moist in a bucket of water. You will have a chance to show and tell what you brought. Don't have native material to share? No problem; there is usually enough for all.

Speaker bio:

Ann Finney is a Master Gardener and a long-time member of the Growing Natives Garden Tour Committee. She grows a variety of native plants in her home garden in San Jose, and tends the stunning Master Gardener Demonstration Garden at Martial Cottle Park, San Jose.

Design Lessons from a Water Wise Garden, Tuesday Nov. 14 6:30-7:30pm, Mountain View Library, 585 Franklin Street, Mt. View (650) 903-6337. Free, First Floor Program Room. Master Gardeners Dyane Matas and Sandy Wright presenters. Registration Recommended:

<https://mountainview.libcal.com/event/11279426>

Officers and Board Members:

Co-Presidents: Grace Tsang & Meri-Beth Bird

Vice President: Open Position

Secretary : Leslie Dean

Corresponding Secretary: Jennifer Dungan

Treasurer: Jennifer Doniach

Other Board Members: Jim Salyards, Carol Dahout, Jennifer Dungan and Eva Huala (Open Positions here)

Volunteer Committees and Responsibilities:

Plant Sale Table: Carol Dahout

Email and website maintenance: Ursula Haschke

Publicity and Outreach: Grace Tsang

Membership: Ursula Haschke

Meeting Tech: Grace Tsang, Jennifer Doniach,

Janet Hoffmann & John Hammerschmidt

Welcome Table: Meri-Beth Bird & Eva Huala

Speaker Program Committee: Leslie Dean (chair), Nancy Schramm, Judy Wong, Glenda Jones, Eva Huala & Meri-Beth Bird

Newsletter Editor: Kathy Anberg

Newsletter Contributors: Jennifer Dungan & Nancy Schramm

Scholarships: Grace Tsang, Jennifer Doniach, Meri-Beth Bird, Janet Hoffmann & Nancy Schramm

About Membership in Western Hort:

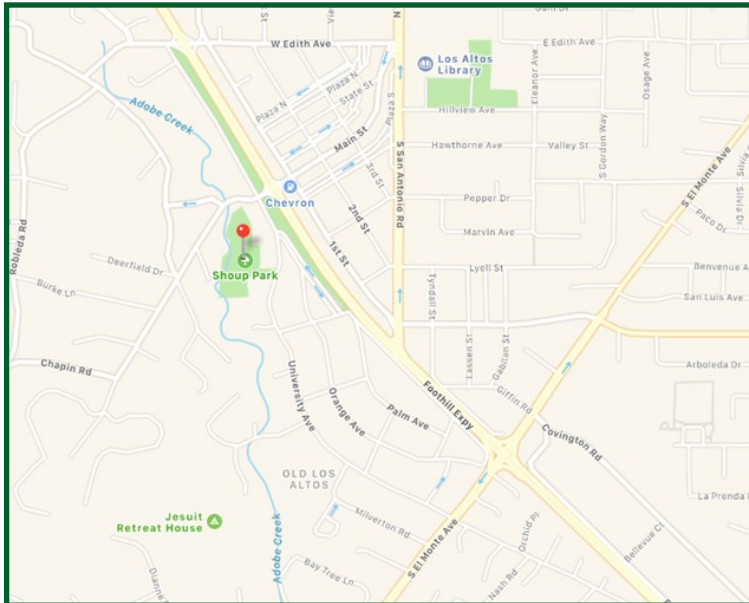
Membership Rates: A one-year membership (Sep-Aug) includes an e-mail copy of this newsletter and admittance to all of our monthly meetings. Regular membership is \$35, Family membership for two or more members at the same address is \$50, and a discounted rate for students is \$20. To receive a print copy of this newsletter by mail add \$10 to the membership fee listed above. 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 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 : November 8th
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 November.** Submissions after this date will likely appear in the next month's newsletter. Send submissions to: Kjanberg@gmail.com or snail mail to Kathy Anberg, 1332 Peggy Ct. Campbell, CA 95008-6342