

AUGUST MEETING RECAP

The August meeting covered a lot of ground - from California natives to a world of exotic fruits. The program began with SCHS intern Adriana Garcia, who shared an overview of her experiences at Rancho Los Cerritos in Long Beach. Her presentation included charts and photos of projects she had participated in. These ranged from assisting with maintenance pruning, espalier, and iris rhizome division to tracking the growth rates of various native plants in a landscape setting and installing a drought-tolerant garden at the Virginia Country Club. It is gratifying to know that there are inspired young people such as Adriana who are eager to carry Southern California horticulture into the future.

The featured speaker, Bruce Blavin, program chair of the California Rare Fruit Growers, spoke about the dazzling array of great fruit trees suitable for growing in Southern California. In addition to presenting a comprehensive PowerPoint tour that included many of the 5,000 plants growing in his personal one-acre Beverly Hills area garden, Bruce also provided useful information about a wide range of trees and shrubs as well as cursory information about such related topics as pruning, grafting, chill factor, and plant selection. Counter-intuitively, he advised that when selecting tropicals to grow in Southern California it is better to purchase the largest specimen available. This is contrary to the conventional wisdom pertaining to non-tropicals - that a smaller tree will adapt more readily and produce fruit within a year or two. Bruce also briefly touched on his experiences with honeybees and beekeeping.

There were a good many questions from the audience after his talk, and the intriguing variety of exotic fruit samples that Bruce provided drew an inquisitive gathering of frugivores. Some selections were more familiar (cherimoya, figs, jack fruit, avocado, dragon fruit) than others (rose apple, finger lime, marian plum), but all were fascinating. Bruce invited interested parties to join California Rare Fruit Growers' regular monthly meetings, which alternate between lectures and field trips. For those interested, it is advisable to check the California Rare Fruit Growers website for the nearest chapter and current program schedule: www.crfg.org/.

🌀 Sandy Masuo

SCHS BOARD PLANNING MEETING OVERVIEW

The majority of the current Board Members of the Southern California Horticultural Society met on August 23 in the Somis garden of SCHS Board Member John Schoustra to discuss the current state of our Society. The intent of this "Strategic Planning Meeting" was to begin an open dialogue about the future of the organization in general, develop specific goals, and to exchange ideas in answer to questions posed by more recent additions to our board.

Our purpose on the Board is to consider ways we might improve what the SCHS already does, and determine how we would like to grow in response to the changing face of gardening and horticulture in our region. Certain areas were targeted for improvement and there was much discussion about ways we can position ourselves to be a better recognized resource for people getting past the introductory side of gardening and horticulture, and

who are wanting more. Web development and future meeting content are two of the specific ways we will be working on to achieve this objective.

Keeping in mind that everyone is very busy, and we are a volunteer organization, the Board is still committed to seeing the SCHS grow and adapt to the changing needs of our membership while maintaining our unique position within the Southern California horticultural community. While we continue to work on various agenda items, we will share more details through the newsletter, on the website, and at our general meetings in the near future.

As always, we also encourage, welcome and appreciate active participation by more of our members as we begin to shape the future of the SCHS.

🌀 Steven Gerischer
Sabine Steinmetz

LAST CHANCE (Almost) FOR SCHS PUBLICATIONS!

We will be discontinuing the sale of our three SCHS publications at the end of December. If you would like a copy for your library, you can purchase them with a downloadable mail-order form through our website (see the Publications page) or contact Joan Citron directly at: jobie.garden@yahoo.com

Selected Plants for So. California Gardens
Editor: Joan Citron, Illustrator: Leslie Walker
Aka "The Opus", this brings together the collected wisdom of SCHS members from Plant Forums and personal observations covering 50 years. This encyclopedia of native and exotic plants covers over 2700 species grown in Southern California. A very useful reference! (Published in 2000; 416 pages)
Members price: \$25.00 (Regular: \$34.95) + CA Sales Tax

Reference Lists of Ornamental Plants for Southern California Gardens
By: Philip E. Chandler Editor: Kathy Musial
Can't think of what to plant in that shady location with sandy soil? This collection of reference lists is great for the landscape designer as well as the backyard gardener. (Published in 1993, 1998; 330 pages)
Members price: \$15.95 (Regular: \$19.95) + CA Sales Tax

Outdoor Growing Orchids for Greater L.A. Area
Editor: Joan Citron, Illustrator: Leslie Walker
This booklet gives basic information on size, culture, blooms and fragrance for over 250 orchids that will do well in Southern California. (Published in 1997, 2003; 28 pages)
Members price: \$5.00 (Regular: \$6.00) + CA Sales Tax

SHARING SECRETS RESPONSES:

*What exotic fruits do you grow?
And how do you use them?*

Just picked up two new **Dragon Fruit** cultivars this spring. I have grown other Epis, but these are the fastest growing I've ever seen, having almost doubled in size in just 3 months! Looking forward to bloom and fruit.

- Lynn M. Hoopgarner

I started growing **Finger Lime** last year. It's the first exotic fruit I've tried. It has not produced yet (5 gal. at planting), though we get fragrant flowers occasionally, and there seems to be one fruit on it. I don't know if it will grow to maturity. I'll be patient. Fruits resemble clear fish roe and when sprinkled on food, a burst of lime is your reward when you bite into one. They are delightful - visually and as a taste explosion. I have high hopes.

- Kathy Itomura

Of course the **grape** is not rare, but the **Kyoho variety** is uncommon here, seen only in some farmers markets. Dark purple and seeded, similar to our Concord, it was hybridized in the 1930s in Japan where it is apparently their most popular variety. Mine is only a few years old but produces delicious fruit, which is why raccoons and other wild critters usually get it before I do. This year I'm letting Elephant Food grow up around the vine which seems to be successfully hiding the sweet bunches from the hungry wildlife.

- Yoav Paskowitz

