

May Meeting Recap

At the May meeting our speaker, Laramee Haynes presented a program investigating 'Using Art Principles in Garden Design'. With the historic drought heading into its fourth year many homeowners are tearing out their thirsty lawns and replacing them with drought tolerant gardens. But are these replacements always an improvement? We have all seen yards that have not been designed with any great consideration—lacking in any artistry. The purpose of this talk was to get an overview of what makes good garden design good. Laramee, who has been designing gardens for fourteen years, led us through the many aspects of artistic principles that are used in the creation of pleasing, useful and lasting landscapes. He began with a discussion of things like lines and form, texture and contrast – and many of the ideas represented in other visual arts. The next section of the talk focused on common mistakes or missed opportunities found in many gardens—the garden and house not relating, not enough room for growth, one of everything. Laramee showed us a series of images of gardens and asked us to look at certain parts of the whole and having to imagine them without certain things or with changes always asking ourselves, "better with, or without?". This was a valuable, easy to remember way of simplifying the best parts of design. This last part of the discussion was an audience participation with a lot of back and forth about what could improve each garden we were seeing. (This also led to some interesting, awkward moments as some of the pictured gardens were

designed by our audience members—but Laramee steered the talk well, keeping it from diving into 'snarkiness'.) The focus was kept to the positive, always asking, "how could this be better?" – instead of just pointing out what makes it bad. It is always valuable to anyone working in a creative/ design arena to look through other eyes and learn how others approach the same challenges.

We would like to thank Laramee Haynes for guiding this talk and sharing his vision with our group. Thanks go out as well to all of the members who work so diligently to organize, set up and run a meeting as well as those who stay after it is finished to help clean up.

—Steven Gerischer

SHARING SECRETS

In May, we asked "*Have you seen any yards with really well designed gardens? Where?*" Here is the one (very extensive and well thought out) answer we received.

Well, one of the finest gardens I've seen recently is in Hanford, California and on the grounds of the Clark Center for Japanese Art and Culture. The garden is the Clark family's private garden set in the middle of their orchards and farm in Hanford. Not exactly close. The collection has been given to the Minneapolis Museum of Art and the bonsai collection has been moved, but the garden has always been private and it is beautiful.

And there was a gorgeous garden in Altadena that has been on the Theodore Payne Foundation tour multiple times and they seem to be generous with it. It is for want of a better description, simply lovely, <http://www.nativeplantgardentour.org/>

[gardens/garden-11-in-altadena/](#). I'm sure you've seen it.

They have restored their garden at Rancho Los Cerritos and refurbished the buildings. Its quite lovely and I bet they'd be glad to host us off hours. The one that John Schoustra worked on at Rancho Los Alamitos is lovely, too. These were once private "home" gardens.

Further afield is Mike Evans' garden at Tree of Life Nursery. Real old California but in OC.

Another private garden is the Gypsy Johnson garden in Downey. The property is owned by the Assistance League. The garden is private and maintained by them. The house was designed by Roland Gates and the garden by Frances Yoch and Lucille Council.

—Catherine Waters

KATHY MUSIAL, SCHS 'HORTICULTURIST OF THE YEAR' 2015



On September 10, the SCHS will honor Kathy Musial as our 'HOTY' for 2015 (about time!). The event will be held at the Los Angeles Arboretum and Botanic Garden. Details will be published in a future newsletter.