

Botany professor Matt Ritter, of Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, spoke to the SCHS in June about Southern California tree selection in an era of climate change and decreasing biodiversity. He spoke about patterns and trends in tree selection and considerations for helping to ensure a healthy urban forest for the future of Southern California cities.



Photo courtesy of speaker.

With climate change becoming more erratic every year, and 150,000,000 of California's trees lost due to drought-related issues since 2009, Matt shared ideas about solutions to increasing tree populations again, particularly in urban areas. He provided statistics about trees' abilities to reduce energy consumption and heat as well as increasing wildlife habitat. He also spoke of studies showing how trees improve our quality of life physically and psychologically.

Citing thoughtful tree selection as a major tool for introducing more trees with more species diversity to urban centers, Matt provided a formula for "Successful Tree Planting". His selection formula includes three things: 1. Human Benefits (for health, aesthetics and well-being); 2. Carbon Sequestration (to aid in climate change mitigation); and 3. Conservation of Biodiversity. Combined with these factors, matching species selection with site

criteria will increase chances for successful tree survival.

To aid with thoughtful tree selection, Matt shared information on the SelecTree website, an interactive program and guide he helped create. It is designed to help people select appropriate trees for particular sites, based on compatible characteristics and is maintained by the Urban Forest Ecosystems Institute at Cal Poly SLO, and can be found at: <https://selectree.calpoly.edu/>.

Other suggestions Matt made include selecting the largest tree (at maturity) suitable for a given location based on its expected longevity, drought tolerance, provenance (native or non-native), size of canopy cover (for wildlife), and resistance to extreme environmental conditions. Because increasing populations displace green spaces in urban areas, he believes we need to be planting trees in urban areas continually, and making careful selections for future benefit.

Following his presentation, Matt took audience questions and signed copies of his book *A Californian's Guide to the Trees Among Us*, which he brought along for purchase.

✂ Sabine Steinmetz

Related: in attendance this evening was landscape designer Jacky Surber, co-founder of "Angelenos for Trees" a community group seeking to preserve and regenerate the shrinking tree canopies in our neighborhoods. Learn more at: www.angelenosfortrees.org.

SHARING SECRETS

In June we asked you:

What favorite fruits and vegetables are you currently growing successfully?



We are having a lot of success with our onions and giant carrots!

- Jim Fletcher

Tomatoes, tomatoes, tomatoes, plus figs, basil and zucchini.

- Suzanna

Apples, tomatoes, apricots, oranges, watermelons, kumquats, cucumbers, guava, and strawberries...

- Karen Peterson

Paprika pepper, "Easypick Gold" zucchini and tangerines.

- Parker K.

We just picked our corn – there are few ears left. They were small, but very tasty!

- Rebecca

Babcock peaches, feijoa, mache, dwarf Meyer lemons, Fuyu persimmons, figs, blood orange, Black Monica grapes, and tomatoes: Cherokee Purple, Brandywine Red, Black Krim and Green Zebra.

- Shirley Marneus

Zucchini, basil and grapes are the only things going for me this summer -

- Aprille Curtis

Thanks for sharing - yum – wish we could taste your successes too!

SCHS "RETURN TO SOMIS" FIELD TRIP RECAP

On Saturday, June 15, the SCHS hosted a chartered bus tour to Somis to visit three horticultural destinations. The all-day event took participants to behind-the-scenes places not usually open to the public.

First up was Berylwood Tree Farm, where Sales Manager Charles Thomas toured guests through rows of enormous trees, including the state's largest *Beaucarnea recurvata* (pictured here) per the California Big Tree Registry. Charles shared stories of how giant trees are transported



Photo credit: Tom Henderson

and transplanted, and showed specimens planted by landscape architect Rolla Wilhite who founded Berylwood in 1969.

Greenwood Daylily Gardens, the nursery of SCHS vice president John Schoustra, was next on the tour. John spoke about nursery operations, including irrigation practices using rain-captured water. He shared new plant introductions and gave visitors a chance to shop before opening his beautiful home gardens for exploration and a catered lunch.

The final destination was to former nurseryman Richard Baron's 60-acre property, which

has been featured on previous tours, and is ever-evolving. In addition to featuring a man-made 5-acre lake with an island, Richard toured guests to sculpted trees, a formal rose garden, koi ponds and more.

Many thanks to the SCHS board for putting together this unique field trip. It was a memorable experience for all, and also brought new members to our organization.

✂ Sabine Steinmetz

Visit our Facebook page to see more photos of this trip.