

OCTOBER MEETING RECAP • SCHS INTERN • MONTHLY GARDEN SHARE

For the October 14 webinar, the SCHS hosted Johanna Silver, former *Sunset* garden editor, to talk about growing cannabis. Her current book *Growing Weed in the Garden: A No-Fuss, Seed-to-Stash Guide to Outdoor Cannabis Cultivation* (Abrams, 2020) was the basis for her program and she emphasized that her approach to cannabis

Photo by: Rachel Weill



cultivation is outdoor only and garden-scale. She grows for a love of the plant and shared her personal experiences, research and observations during the presentation.

Silver spent ten years at *Sunset* magazine, beginning with a shovel in her hands and culminating as head of the garden department. After *Sunset* was sold in late 2017, Silver accepted a writing assignment from an outcrop of the *San Francisco Chronicle* newspaper to grow weed in her garden and chronicle the experience. The resulting 10-part series led to her discovery that there was very little information available to interested home gardeners about the cultivation of this plant. She decided to pursue the topic in earnest, which resulted in the publication of her book, which is meant to be an aide for home cannabis growers.

Speaking as a gardener, Silver noted that she is not interested in babying any of

her garden plants, and advocates the “right plant, right place” approach, providing only proper irrigation and some compost, but otherwise not following any of the – in her experience unnecessary – practices she has come across in her research. Silver believes that many of the complicated methods people recommend are the result of weed having been an illegal plant to grow until recently, with cultivation practices not openly shared, as well as the fact that much of the information pertains to indoor growing and does not have practical applications for home gardeners.

Silver provided additional context by giving a brief history of the cannabis plant and its cultural development, and mentioned how it is one of oldest plants under human cultivation, grown for its seed, oil, fibers, ritual practices and medicinal qualities. Because of its clandestine associations, cannabis has never gone through modern-day breeding programs (although currently this is changing), resulting in largely undocumented genetics and today’s hybrid cultivars. Taxonomically it is all *Cannabis sativa*, a dioecious annual, where the female’s flowers will only mature for harvesting if the male plants are culled to prevent fertilization.

In her book, Silver covers two methods of growing - either from seed or from cuttings, the latter of which will allow you to start with exclusively female plants. She also covered how to identify male seedlings by collecting a sample and sending it for lab analysis,

or by sexing your own plants through correctly identifying their pre-flowers. Other than that, she prefers growing her plants with as little fuss as possible until harvesting time (the process which she also described), including the proper storage of the harvested buds. To illustrate her point, she shared pictures of plants growing in various garden settings: in containers, raised planters, tucked into veggie beds, or as featured specimens, advising us only to check on local municipal regulations or restrictions before planting.

Silver lives and gardens in Berkeley, California, where she grows fruits, veggies, flowers and cannabis. In her words, her goal is “to bring weed in, to welcome it into our garden world and show that it is another plant we can embrace” for its unique qualities, as we do with all of our plant selections. You can learn more about Silver on her website at www.johannasilver.com, or follow her on Instagram at [josilver](https://www.instagram.com/josilver) or on Facebook at [JohannaRaeSilver](https://www.facebook.com/JohannaRaeSilver).

✿ Sabine Steinmetz

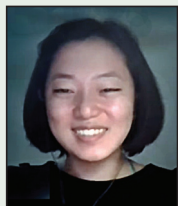
NOTE: The content of this video on YouTube is restricted to ages 18+.

Click on link below to view this presentation:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d2tHqSyUFBw>

SCHS 2021 INTERN

As a non-profit, part of SCHS’s mission is to provide educational opportunities to horticulture students through sponsored internships at various institutions.



In 2021, Bridget Lee, a senior at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, majoring in Biological Sciences/Botany interned at the Huntington Library and Botanical Gardens. She worked on epiphytic desert plant maintenance, both in the greenhouse and outdoors in the Desert Garden, as well as getting hands-on experience in the Huntington herbarium.

Lee’s full presentation can be seen here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=LoSeVypN-t8

✿ SCHS MONTHLY GARDEN SHARE ✿

This month is all about preparing for a slowdown - including your own!

- Plant trees this month so they can get well-established during the cooler months.
- Continue planting seasonally appropriate selections of ornamentals and edibles.
- Routinely dead-head annuals to stimulate more blooms.
- Remove weeds regularly from your sprouting wildflowers.
- Begin pruning cane berries this month and plant strawberries.
- Cut back herbaceous perennials.
- Wrap up annual fall clean-up by pruning shrubs, removing fallen debris, laying fresh mulch.
- Reduce your irrigation schedule – especially for succulents.
- Stop fertilizing roses so they can go into full dormancy.

✿ Sabine Steinmetz

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