

In August, the SCHS was pleased to welcome Katherine Pakradouni, a local educator and native plant horticulturist, to give her presentation on urban micro-forests and the work she has been doing in Los Angeles utilizing this afforestation method. As the designer of L.A.'s first micro-forest project within Griffith Park, Pakradouni shared the process she went through in creating it as a case study to help us understand this concept pioneered by Japanese botanist and ecologist Akira Miyawaki.

The Miyawaki Method was developed during the 1970s to facilitate the creation of micro-forests all over the temperate and tropical world in order to address climate change and restore biodiversity. By growing indigenous trees and shrubs from locally-sourced seeds in a dense and very specific planting layout, Miyawaki was able to produce significant afforestation within the first ten years it was utilized in Japan. This led to other countries experimenting with his method, including the Netherlands, India, Australia and eventually the U.S. in Washington state. Based on the documented successes achieved in these varied locales, Pakradouni decided she wanted to attempt a scaled-down afforestation project in L.A., to provide insights into how this international method might be adapted for more widespread use in our drier, Mediterranean climate.

With the approval of the L.A. Department of Recreation and Parks, and a grant from the Hancock Park Garden Club to the Los Angeles Parks Foundation, Pakradouni was allotted a 1,000 square foot section in the Bette Davis Picnic Area of Griffith Park to work on. She customized the Miyawaki Method to the site by adjusting the ratio of trees to shrubs in favor of more shrubs, which would align with the nearby chaparral plant communities from which she sourced her plant palette.

Photo provided by speaker.



In May of 2021, the area was prepped by clearing the site of weeds – with minimal soil tilling and not adding any compost – and by laying down a decomposed granite path that bisected two large planting beds. In June, using mostly 4-inch and 1-gallon plants, Pakradouni and her crew installed 145 plants within a two-hour period. These were immediately deep-watered to the point of saturation, then watered every 4 days for the first month, followed by once a week and then once a month, which is the current low-water schedule. Other than an additional round of weeding early on, the plants required no maintenance in their first year and grew significantly. Per the Miyawaki Method, new micro-forests should be monitored and maintained for the first two years, and then become “maintenance free.” Pakradouni said she is pleased with the progress of the project to date, including the increase in wildlife that has already found a home there. In a single year, several species of nesting birds, ground squirrels, lizards, toads from the nearby wash, and of course, an increased variety of insects have all been documented as permanent residents in this new ecosystem, despite the small size of the plot.

After her talk, Pakradouni answered audience questions and gave away a number of native plants she propagated. Judging by the response her program received, it's no surprise that interest has been growing to install more micro-forests in different areas throughout L.A. Perhaps in the future, the SCHS can invite Pakradouni back to give an update on the Griffith Park micro-forest and others that may be established by then, or to tell us about her current work with the National Park Service/Santa Monica Mountains Fund as the nursery manager for the Liberty Canyon Wildlife Crossing. Either way, we are sure to learn something new from an experienced educator involved in forward-thinking horticultural pursuits.

✿ Sabine Steinmetz

Link to view entire program:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ap0jvT_y0H4

REMEMBERING June Schmeier

The SCHS recently received the sad news about the passing of long-time member June Schmeier. Her nephew



wanted friends and members to know that June was active in the society for many years and always felt the SCHS to be “a meaningful part” of her life.

We extend our condolences to her family and would like to express that June will be missed and remembered fondly as one of our own.

SCHS MONTHLY GARDEN SHARE

The heat, plus new watering restrictions, will be with us for at least another month, so let's:

- Continue planning for fall planting, but postpone any heavy pruning to avoid potential sun-damage to plants.
- Shop for bulbs now – they are easy to keep until it's time to plant.
- Add more mulch *NOW*, even if you'll be doing so as a part of your “big fall clean-up” in October or November.
- Avoid fertilizing this month! Plants don't need to be stimulated to grow during extreme heat – let them conserve energy.
- Deeply water trees – and large shrubs – and irrigate elsewhere as early as you can and hose dust off leaves early too.
- Check with the MWD re: additional water restrictions (such as the Upper Feeder pipeline repairs) by visiting:

<https://www.mwdh2o.com/>

Enter your zip code (under the “Local Water Agency” tab) to find out what current regulations may impact you.

Good luck to everyone & their gardens - stay safe!

✿ Sabine Steinmetz

Learn more about SCHS and connect with us online at:

www.facebook.com/pg/socalhort • www.instagram.com/socalhort • www.socalhort.org