

DECEMBER PROGRAM RECAP • IN MEMORIAM • GARDEN SHARE

On December 8, the SCHS celebrated in person at our annual holiday meeting which included a members' potluck, our table of giveaway goodies and a special program featuring SCHS board member Layla Valenzuela. She was on hand to demonstrate how she crafts beautiful crepe paper flowers (oversized versions of which were on show-stopping display at our 2022 HOTY banquet) with a nod to the holiday season.

Valenzuela has been active in the California native plant community for the last 15 years, and currently works as a horticulturist with Descanso Gardens, where she is in charge of their Natives Garden section. She introduced her presentation by explaining that her interest in native plants sparked the desire to recreate them artistically. After admiring a crepe paper poppy that Lili Singer showed her, she decided to try her hand at making some by learning from books, online tutorials and websites. Another reason she was drawn to this craft is that at Descanso she is tasked with creating an annual wildflower

display for visitors, and thought that the paper flowers would be a unique way to showcase these blooms and allow for the duration of the display to be extended. After some trial and error Valenzuela settled on several patterns that worked for her (samples of which she had for sale at the meeting) and which she alluded to during her program and demonstration.

First she shared her basic supply list, consisting of specialty crepe paper of different grades in assorted colors (found primarily online), floral stems of different lengths and weights, floral tape for attaching elements together, scissors (a large pair plus a smaller pair for detail work), a paper-scoring tool, a needle-nose awl, small clips to hold pattern pieces together and a fine point glue pen (which she recommends for accuracy with small pieces, although a glue gun is better for large-scale flowers). And for those who are really interested in trying this craft, Valenzuela also recommended two books: *Flowersmith* by Jennifer Tran and *Crepe Paper Flowers* by Lia Griffith, who is considered to be the guru of the craft.

For our holiday meeting Valenzuela selected a poinsettia to use for her demonstration - despite never having made one before! She went through the various steps from orienting the grain of the crepe paper to run in the

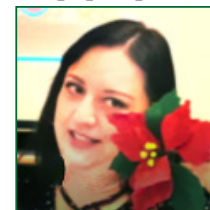
same direction as the "veins" of the leaves and bracts of her sample flower, to making tissue paper balls on the end of floral wires that served as points of attachment for her flower parts. She also shared all the in-between steps of wrapping everything with floral tape and even gave tips on how to manipulate the different sections by tweaking the edges to make the finished flower look more realistic. The demonstration took about 10 minutes (using pre-cut paper pieces) and resulted in a very festive-looking poinsettia blossom! After showing some other types of flowers with different leaves as well as a few oversized samples, Valenzuela concluded her program by encouraging people to try a hand at the craft since these flowers will last year after year as long as they are not damaged by water or exposed to direct sunlight... wonderful for your own home or as special handmade gifts!

🌀 Sabine Steinmetz

Link to view entire program:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=as-k604rqiY>

Photo provided by speaker.



IN MEMORIAM

James Jaeger

Last month the SCHS was notified about the passing in late October of society member Jim Jaeger. He will be remembered for his work as a landscape contractor, an educator who taught horticulture courses at Santa Monica Emeritus College for 25 years, and as a friend to many in the various plant societies he belonged to over the years.

Jaeger's course "Artistic Expression through Gardening" would visit a wide variety of gardens on a weekly basis and was a platform for him to share his humor as well as his extensive plant knowledge. Good friend and long-time SCHS member Patricia McGrath shared his comment that "If I weren't teaching this class, I would be taking this class" as an example of Jim's personality which will be missed by many, but also fondly remembered.

SCHS MONTHLY GARDEN SHARE

The beginning of the year brings new opportunities for our gardens - either to work or to relax!

- Work on your winter rose pruning so you'll finish by early February AND plant any new bare-root varieties that you'll find available in nurseries now!
- If you really want to do planting this month, it's not too late yet to add some California natives - but hurry!
- Cut back any cane berry vines and grape vines, while they're bare.
- Prune back deciduous fruit trees (like apples) but be aware of which branches are fruiting wood (varies by species).
- If there are prolonged dry spells between rainy days, hand water any seeds you've started to keep them from drying out.
- Harvest and enjoy your citrus fruits and at month's end give the trees their first feeding.
- When raking up under deciduous trees, retain some leaf litter to insulate the soil and protect roots.
- If any plants do get frost damage, DO NOT cut it off now or you will expose more of their tissues to damage. Wait until mid-March to do any corrective pruning.
- Check out those seed catalogues for more goodies you can begin planting in about 8 weeks time.
- If you don't have to do any of the aforementioned chores this month you can relax and enjoy your winter garden during this quiet season.

🌀 Sabine Steinmetz

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