



The SCHS was pleased to host a very special meeting on October 6 at the Huntington Library, Art Museum and Botanical Gardens to learn about the Loran Whitelock Cycad Garden from Gary Roberson, who serves as the Lead Project Gardener of the collection. As a bonus, members and guests were able to tour the cycad garden ahead of Roberson's program to see first-hand the many incredible specimens and hear about the specifics of the botanical studies being conducted there.

Attendees split into three groups for the mini-tours, led by the Huntington's Roberson, chief botanical researcher Brian Dorsey and curator of living collections Kathy Musial. They led guests through the Whitelock Collection sharing facts about these "living fossils" that have a 300 million-year history and consist of 365 named species within ten genera, many represented at the Huntington due to the generous bequest of Mr. Whitelock. After the tours, Roberson presented a slide show on the process by which over 640 cycads were relocated from Whitelock's hillside property in Eagle Rock to the Huntington, nearly tripling their existing collection.

Roberson explained that Whitelock, a world-renowned cycad expert and author of the 2002 book *"The Cycads,"* had arranged to make the donation for the purposes of conservation, education and research. When he passed in May of 2014, Roberson was tasked with the responsibility of documenting, labeling, transporting, and transplanting the specimens. In some cases the plants were enormous, like a pair of *Dioone spinulosum* and the rare *Encephalartos woodii* (pictured here in situ prior to the move).



In July of 2014, Roberson took an inventory of the plants on Whitelock's property, using as one of his tools a previous map of the garden made by botanist Tim Gregory in 2010. He also began labeling and microchipping all of the plants to be moved, a process which was not completed until April of 2015. Then began the task of physically transporting the plants – 640 of which were in the ground, 250 in pots

and 400+ in Whitelock's tropical greenhouses. What was to be a 2-year process (because of site prep that was simultaneously happening at the Huntington) was completed in six months because Occidental College wanted to purchase



the property. The Whitelock property was also repopulated with drought-tolerant plants and a new irrigation system after all the transplants had been removed.

Over the course of three years, the plants were installed in their new home below the south terrace of the main art gallery, and fairly close to some of their botanical relatives that had originally been planted by Henry Huntington in 1910. Sidewalks, retaining walls and other hardscape elements were completed in 2018, while the cycads were still in the process of recovering from their move. Roberson indicated that recovery time for the transplants is typically between five and seven years and that now, in their seventh year, he estimates overall losses have only been at 18%. As the Whitelock Collection is meant not only to be appreciated for its botanical significance, but also for its aesthetic qualities, Roberson incorporated over 200 companion plants from Whitelock's personal garden into the design, adding even more color and beauty to the landscape. Today, the collection is a long ribbon winding through several themed gardens and looks like it was always meant to be exactly where it is. 🌿 Sabine Steinmetz

NOTE: All photos were captured from Roberson's slide presentation.

Link to view entire program:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WNsA6qlSypY>

SCHS would like to thank the Huntington for hosting us to experience Roberson's program, as well as providing experts to guide the tours of this unique and exquisite garden.

SCHS MONTHLY GARDEN SHARE will return in December - so relax & enjoy your fall garden!

IN MEMORIAM

REMEMBERING Shirley Kerins

Shirley Kerins was a good friend to many of us and a great ambassador for horticulture in a wide range of aspects. When her three sons hit their teenage years, she went back to school to get a degree in Landscape Architecture from UC Irvine. I first met her in 1977, when she was still completing her studies.



Many of us knew her from her 30+ years at the Huntington Library, Art Museum and Botanical Gardens. She coordinated Plant Production and ruled over the well-respected annual Plant Sales with a big smile and an iron fist. Months of coordination culminated in a few frenzied days that provided significant income to the Huntington and increased its membership rolls – as members always got first choice at the sale.

She was also Curator of the Herb Garden at the Huntington, where her amazing knowledge of plant lore and history came to life. Shirley told fantastic stories... and you always learned something new. Her love of cooking melded with her Herb Garden duties, leading to the publication of *'A Celebration of Herbs: Recipes from the Huntington Herb Garden'* in 2004. As grandchildren came along, she was intent on developing their imaginations with elaborate fairy gardens tucked away to be discovered.

Shirley was well-respected in the landscape architecture community and her residential plantings were featured in prominent gardening magazines and articles. She lectured and taught classes at UCLA, the Huntington, and at botanic gardens like the L.A. County Arboretum – where her design of The Grace Kallam Perennial Garden can be found.

For over 30 years, she was an active member of the Southern California Horticultural Society, serving as its president, providing lectures and bringing plants for the raffle table. She was awarded SCHS Horticulturist of the Year in 2008.

Our old friend quietly faded away over the last 10 years – but the influences she had on each of us will be lasting and irrefutable.

🌿 Tom Carruth

Shannon Curator of the Rose Collection
Huntington Library, Art Museum & Botanical Gardens

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