

## APRIL PROGRAM RECAP • BORUN CITG • GARDEN SHARE

On April 28, at the Los Angeles Zoo's Witherbee Auditorium, the SCHS hosted Fergus Garrett, CEO and Head Gardener



at Great Dixter Garden in the UK as our guest speaker for our 2023 Ruth Borun Lecture Series. His presentation "Great Dixter: A Garden Richer in Biodiversity than the Surrounding Countryside" was not only filled with timely information applicable to all manner of gardens, but also a visual delight as Garrett punctuated his talk with beautiful photos of the gardens.

Great Dixter was the home of gardener and garden writer Christopher Lloyd (1921-2006), who spent his whole life, from childhood on, working in and writing about, this garden for nearly 50 years. Under Lloyd's mentorship, Garrett became Head Gardener in 1993 and learned to keep the garden constantly changing throughout the seasons and to be adventurous in trying out new plants and plant combinations. In 2003, Lloyd founded The Great Dixter Charitable Trust to secure the estate's legacy and in 2006, Garrett took over as CEO upon Lloyd's passing.

In 2007, Garrett began implementing changes to encourage a more naturalistic approach to gardening, being mindful of Lloyd's vision to allow the countryside surrounding Great Dixter to "flow in" from the outside meadows, and expanding upon this philosophy by phasing out the use of pesticides and inorganic fertilizers. This shift eventually led to the commission of a biodiversity audit conducted from 2017-2019, the results of which showed Great Dixter to be richer in biodiversity than all the countryside around it, and most unexpectedly, that the richest part of the entire estate was the ornamental garden.

While the gardens have always been known for their long season of interest, with layers of planting mimicking the wild, and their colorful and exuberant displays mixing natives plants and exotics, Garrett maintains this legacy while continuing to push further toward becoming a model of naturalistic gardening. Using what he calls the "mosaic system", he encourages the 6 acres of gardens and 25 acres of surrounding woodland to grow through "natural succession", enabling Great Dixter to sustain a greater biodiversity throughout the year. He allows the edges of the garden to blur and billow out, cutting nothing back prematurely thus aiding in sustaining wildlife through the winter. And just as

the dynamic nature of Great Dixter has led to greater biodiversity in a cultivated environment, Garrett believes that the results attained from these methods can be replicated throughout private gardens and even in urban settings, resulting in wide-ranging ecological benefits that extend far beyond the grounds of Great Dixter.

 Sabine Steinmetz



*Photos courtesy of speaker.*

*Program will be posted May 28 on SCHS's YouTube channel.*

<https://www.youtube.com/c/SouthernCaliforniaHorticulturalSociety>

**SCHS GARDEN SHARE**

*is taking a spring break and will return in June.*

## COFFEE-IN-THE-GARDEN EVENT: SCHS VISITS THE BORUN GARDEN

During 2020, the Southern California Horticultural Society received a generous endowment from the Anna and Harry Borun Foundation to fund a horticultural speaker series in memory of Ruth Borun, a longtime SCHS member. The Ruth Borun Lecture Series was established to present significant horticulture speakers to fellow and future members of our society and to honor Ruth's legacy.

SCHS was originally invited to tour the garden in March of 2020, but had to postpone due to the pandemic. This April 29, members were finally able to visit this renowned garden, and the experience was well worth the wait.

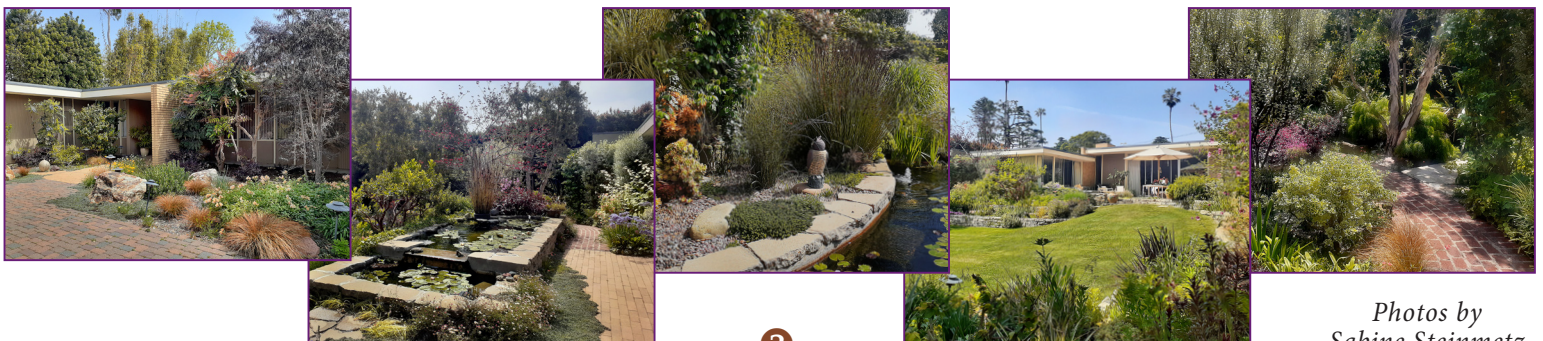
Visitors were led through the garden by SCHS vice president Lili Singer, who provided historical context for the garden's development with the aid of board member Steve Gerischer. They pointed out and identified a large number of the many interesting plants as well as other memorable features of the garden.

The Boruns' mid-century family home was built in 1960, and the

garden layout by landscape architect Garrett Eckbo was designed in a style suited for "California outdoor living." In the ensuing years Ruth tended the garden and expanded the plant palette. In the 1980s, she teamed with landscape designer Chris Rosmini to update the garden, resulting in a collaborative friendship that lasted for years and created the "bones" of the garden seen today. The house and garden were also recently designated a Historic-Cultural Monument by the City of Los Angeles, affording protections against significant alterations to their style.

The SCHS appreciates the graciousness of the Borun family for opening the garden to our members, and would also like to thank the Board – especially the Coffee-In-the-Garden committee – for all the work that went into planning and hosting this event.

*Below are some views of the Borun's spring 2023 garden to hold you over until the next time we're able to visit...*



*Photos by Sabine Steinmetz*