

JULY PROGRAM RECAP • SCHS MONTHLY GARDEN SHARE

On July 13, Madena Asbell, Director of Conservation at the Mojave Desert Land Trust (MDLT), joined the SCHS via Zoom to present a program on “Desert Plants for L.A. Gardens.” The MDLT protects the Mojave and Colorado Desert ecosystems and their natural, cultural and scenic resources. They acquire and conserve land and manage it through routine monitoring and restoration. Asbell is in charge of the MDLT’s seed bank, restoration nursery and its discovery garden, and this evening she shared her experience with a number of native California desert plants that are suitable for Los Angeles gardens.

She provided a brief description of the differences among deserts located in California and some of the common characteristics and adaptations shared by desert plants and discussed why some might – or might not – be suitable for L.A. home gardens. Asbell noted that many of

the plants will never look the same as they do in their native desert settings because their growth will always be responsive to differences in environmental conditions. Compared to the desert, much of L.A. will have poorer draining soils, too much winter rain, cooler springtime temperatures and effects associated with our marine layer.

Asbell showed and discussed in detail a number of desert plants that she would recommend for the best chance of growing successfully. She began with trees, including: *Chilopsis linearis*, *Olneya tesota*, *Parkinsonia florida*, *Prosopis glandulosa* and *Prosopis pubescens*. Suggestions for large to medium shrubs included some common as well as lesser known plants: *Asclepias subulata*, *Atriplex* ssp., *Baccharis sarothroides*, *Condea emoryi*, *Fallugia paradoxa*, *Justicia californica*, *Peritoma arborea* and *Simmondsia chinensis*. For smaller shrubs and perennials, she showed: *Abutilon palmeri*, *Calliandra eriophylla*, *Encelia farinosa*, *Epilobium canum*, *Sphaeralcea ambigua* plus both *Penstemon* ssp. and *Salvia* ssp. for which she specified a number of

varieties. She also recommended the following cacti and succulents: *Agave deserti*, *Echinocereus engelmannii*, *Fouquieria splendens*, *Hesperoyucca whipplei*, *Opuntia basilaris*, *Yucca baccata* and *Yucca schidigera*, as well as ornamental grasses such as *Muhlenbergia rigens*, *Sporobolus airoides* and *Stipa speciosa*.

The program wrapped up with some plants infrequently cultivated in garden settings that Asbell felt might be successful locally, including: *Eremogone macradenia*, *Ericameria cuneata*, *Prunus fasciculata*, *Scutellaria mexicana*, and *Ziziphus parryi*. She also provided some information on desert botanical gardens to check out and stayed for an informative Q&A session. To learn more about the MDLT and Asbell's work, please visit their website at: www.mdlt.org.

🐞 Sabine Steinmetz

Photos courtesy of speaker.



🌀 MONTHLY GARDEN SHARE 🐞

Don't let the August heat overcome you – or your garden! Do the following:

- Monitor irrigation and adjust as needed – or do some extra hand-watering of containers and deep watering of trees.
- Keep harvesting your veggies and summer fruits – those melons should be ripe any day!
- Heavy pruning this month is not advisable – don't risk exposing your shrubs to scalding.
- If you feel the urge to prune: keep dead-heading annuals and start cutting back summer-dormant California natives.
- Check for dying plants and remove asap to control pests.
- Avoid fertilizing this month, except for avid-loving azaleas, camellias, and rhododendrons, which need their final feeding of the year to set spring buds.
- You can still transplant succulent cuttings this month, but hold off on other plantings if possible until the fall.
- Begin planning for fall - check out catalogs and websites for inspiration – and maybe gather donations for our Silent Auction!

🐞 Sabine Steinmetz

SILENT AUCTION AT HOTY BANQUET

Now is the time to start gathering garden-related items to donate to SCHS's major fundraiser of the year... our Silent Auction! This is a huge component of our annual HOTY event, and we encourage you to participate by donating an item or two, even if you cannot attend. We are always excited to see what will come up for auction from our members and community supporters!

Of course, we hope as many members as possible will be at the HOTY banquet and participate in the auction – both are a great opportunity to support the SCHS, enjoy a great event with friends, and bid on a diverse assortment of intriguing, unusual and occasionally rare garden-related treasures and plants...

MORE DETAILS COMING NEXT MONTH!

EVENT IS SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21

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