

MARCH 2023 MEETING

March 8th, 7:30pm

The March meeting will be in-person in the Garden House at Shoup Park in Los Altos. *The meeting room officially opens to members and the public at 7pm but if you can arrive by 6:30pm to help with set-up, your assistance would be greatly appreciated. Masks are recommended but optional while indoors.* Meetings are free for members, non-member in-person attendees are \$10.00. See page 7 of this newsletter for information about joining Western Horticultural Society.

SPEAKER: JOHN TSUTAKAWA **TOPIC: MAKING HYPERTUFA TROUGHS**

Trough gardening has become popular in rock gardening. It's a perfect container for growing small alpine and other plants. It allows exact control of the soil medium, minimizes competition from larger plants, and is great for presentation. Originally rock gardeners used stone troughs, such as those used for watering horses. However, as stone troughs became scarce and expensive, ingenious gardeners figured out how to use a hypertufa mix with cement to create a facsimile of stone. This talk will cover hypertufa trough making. John will explain how to use forms and molds, hypertufa recipes, using reinforcement, finishing, curing and planting.



John specializes in alpine container and rock gardening. He grows and propagates alpine plants, as well as *Meconopsis* (blue poppies). He volunteered at the volunteer nursery at the *San Francisco Botanic Garden* from around 1998 to 2019, and more recently volunteers at the *Gardens at Lake Merritt* and serves on the board of the *Friends of the Gardens at Lake Merritt*.

John has made troughs for over twenty years, using molds and wooden frames. Recently John designed and organized the Rock Garden at the Gardens at Lake Merritt. This garden includes 12 large troughs and a center crevice garden. The troughs were made around the start of the pandemic and were finally planted in February, 2021.



Special Note:
Our Speaker will be bringing six flats of four inch size pots of Meconopsis poppies for sale at the meeting. These are pretty special so don't miss out!



CO-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As always, Western Hort welcomes your ideas and efforts to promote anything horticultural among our members and our community. One of our activities is to award two scholarships for horticulture studies each year. The scholarship committee is happy to announce that Alejandro Gomez of Merritt College and April Thompson of Foothill College are this year's recipients.

'Tis the season to enjoy manzanita blossoms - and the many bees using the hanging lantern blooms. What do you spy? Hounds' tongue, milk maids and warriors' plume are out along our trails.

At the library recently, I spotted *Mini-Forest Revolution: Using the Miyawaki Method to Rapidly Rebuild the World* by Hannah Lewis, and stopped in my tracks. The book outlines the method to, more quickly than natural succession, obtain a sometimes-tiny climax forest community using locally native plants appropriate to the site. This allows more effective sequestration of carbon, cooler temperatures, better retention of rainwater, superb habitat for insects and birds, and a rich soil microbial environment. In as little as the space for six cars, it's a do-it-yourself (with your community) biodiversity hotspot. (Note that the term 'biodiversity hotspot' has a different technical definition). So your screening hedge or neglected back-forty could become something that benefits our environment in many ways. Here's one of many articles about this, or watch one of the TED talks on this subject.

One of many articles:

<https://apnews.com/article/climate-science-entertainment-travel-e4601aa7a823d947609ac5a75ba8af87>

For a chance to win a plant at this month's meeting, you will be asked to answer a quiz question about something that appeared in this newsletter. Read on!

~ Grace Tsang & Meri-Beth Bird

PLANT SALE TABLE

The popular Plant Sale Table is back and better than ever. Keep propagating those plants, and bring any books or other garden related items for the table! All money collected goes to support WHS programs and the scholarship fund. Say "Hi" to Carol Dahout, our manager of the table! If you would like to get involved and help out with the plant sales contact Carol or any board member for information.

GET INVOLVED

Would you like to help Western Hort and get to know a speaker better? Once or twice a year, we host speakers from outside our area. We frequently arrange for housing for them and many times the speakers enjoy the more personal experience of staying with someone in the area. We are looking for Western Hort members who would like to open their home for out of town speakers to stay a night or two. This is an opportunity to spend time with fascinating people in the horticultural world right in your own home. The speaker committee is compiling a list of those willing to share their home and will contact you as needed. You do not have to transport the speaker anywhere or host them beyond a nice bed and perhaps a breakfast if you feel up to it. If this is an opportunity that appeals to you or if you have any questions, please contact Leslie Dean at lesliekdean@sonic.net or speak to a board member at any of our meetings.

Vice president, Board members and Corresponding Secretary: These positions are still open. Get to know your fellow WHS members and help keep the society vibrant and well rounded. If you have an interest in helping in any one of these capacities, or feel you can help in any other way, feel free to e-mail us at info@westernhort.org or speak to any of the current board members at our meetings.

Upcoming Meetings

April 12th: Martin Quigley, The Ins & Outs, Ups & Downs of Succulent Container Gardening

May 10th: Rose Loveall, Hardworking Herbs

If you think hoe, hoe, hoe is a laughing matter,
You're no gardener!

FEBRUARY PLANT SHARE

Nancy Schramm from Gilroy brought:

Dioon edule (Chestnut Dioon, Virgin's Palm) - This slow growing cycad was given to Nancy from Kerry Barrs last year and she doesn't know if it's a male or female (this plant is dioecious). This cycad is the oldest known seed plant in existence and it is endangered. It grows in bright light to part shade (zones 9-11) in well-drained soil with moderate watering. Nancy's is still very young and small. She has it covered with 40% shade cloth. This plant can live up to 1,500 years and Nancy joked that it would be part of her will. Her father also grew one and she believes that it must be 100 years old. It is only 4' tall x 3' wide with a basketball-sized base. In the freeze of December 1990 the temp in Los Gatos got down to about 14° and didn't get above freezing for several days. It is a female and she said she heard that there is a dating service where she might be able to get in contact with someone to get some pollen. She also remembered bending a stiff green pinnate leaflet back and forth to break it off and used it as a Barbie Doll sword. *Edule* refers to the edible seeds that come from the cone. Nancy also brought in an inflorescence.



Dioon edule



Nancy's plant has orange berries

Elaeagnus umbellata (Japanese Silverberry, Autumn Olive) - This fast growing deciduous tree, native to Japan was introduced to the US in 1830. It grows in full sun to part shade (zones 4-9) in well-drained soil. It gets to be 16 feet tall x 30 feet wide. This nitrogen-fixing shrub/small tree tolerates a wide variety of soils. It is considered invasive by the USDA in some states since a single plant can produce up to 80 pounds of fruit, which can result in 200,000 seeds. Besides self-seeding, it spreads by root suckering so it can out-compete native plants.

The 2-3" leathery elliptical leaves with wavy margins are speckled with small silver and brown scales on the top and bottom. The stems may have sharp thorns just like *E. pungens* but Nancy's does not. Clusters of 4-petaled white flowers start appearing in spring which ripen to orange or red edible fruits in fall. The possibly not so tasty fruits can be eaten raw, dried or cooked for pies or jams.



Common Red Berries



Elaeagnus flowers

Ipheion uniflorum 'Froyle Mill' and 'Rolf Fiedler' (Spring Star Flower) - This easy to grow Uruguayan bulb grows in sun to light shade (zones 5-10) in rich, well draining soil. It gets to be 6" tall and wide. The 1" star shaped flowers can be white or some form of blue or lavender. They begin blooming in late winter to early spring. Nancy has two varieties, Froyle Mill which is a purple color and Rolf Fiedler a very blue form.

This summer dormant plant need not receive any water for at least one and a half months. It is hardy to 10°. (I love these little bulbs and find it a real treat when they pop up each year without a care! Ed.)



Photo credit: Suncrest Nursery

Rolf Fiedler

Froyle Mill



Photo credit: John Scheepers Nursery

Eva Huala from Palo Alto brought:

Camellia transnokoensis - (Mount Noko Camellia)

This evergreen shrub native to the central mountains of Taiwan grows in dappled shade (zones 8-10) in moist and acidic well-draining soil. Eva loves this plant that she bought from the San Lorenzo Garden Center in Santa Cruz 6 years ago. It has grown to be 10' tall x 7' but may grow to 26' tall in the wild. She thinks it looks like a snow flurry when all of the delicate small white flowers (which have small red marks on the outside) are in bloom. Their fragrance is very faint. The glossy oblong leaves have serrated margins and new leaves emerge having reddish tints.



Helleborus x lemonnierae 'HGC Madame Lemonnier' - This perennial, native to the mountains of central and southern Europe grows in dappled shade (zones 5-10) in well-drained soil. It is a cross between *H. niger* and *H. hybridus* and gets to be 1' tall and wide. Because of the *H. niger* parentage, you get more forward-facing flowers instead of drooping ones. Sterile plum-pink flowers start appearing for Eva in late December which is much earlier than her other hellebores. She bought it from Digging Dog Nursery. Many hellebore species are poisonous, especially the sap and seeds (so be careful when collecting seeds).

Primula hendersonii (Shooting Star) - This Western North American native wild Flower (formerly Dodecatheon) grows in full sun to part shade (zones 6-9) in well-drained soil. Eva has two pots and puts them in full sun during the months of December through February; she then moves them to get part shade during March through June. She waters them once a week. From July to November she will move them to a cupboard where they receive no water. Prostrate leaves start appearing in January followed by downward pointing lilac flowers in February and March, which look like streaking comets. They will go entirely dormant in early summer so no water should be given during this period. Each of Eva's pots must be happy since they are increasing and seeding into other nearby pots. Eva collected wild seed from the mountains in Santa Cruz to start these and is happy to share seed from her cultivated plant to whoever would like some. (Some members might remember Sally Casey who was a huge fan of this flower. Ed.)



Submitted by Ana Muir

Plant Share

Do you have a plant you would like to let the membership know better? Bring a sample, or if it is small and in a pot bring the whole thing. Don't be shy and let us know the botanical and common name (if you know them) the plant's geographical location, exposure, soil, water and other growth requirements. If you have something in your yard and you don't know what it is, bring it! We have very knowledgeable members and they may know.

FEBRUARY SPEAKER NOTES

Our February guest speaker, Eric Hsu, painted a picture of the origins of the nursery trade in the Bay Area and beyond, much of which can be traced to the Domoto family, Japanese immigrants who were very influential in horticulture. Several members of this family had a big impact on the plants homeowners have used in their gardens and flower arrangements over the twentieth century. Many other families originally from Japan (i.e., the Adachi, Maida, Yoshida, Nomura, Shiraki, and Hayashi families) were part of this development, belying any view that the main influence in horticulture in our area was from Europe.

Eric discussed the geopolitical and cultural factors that set the stage for the Domoto family's arrival in San Francisco in the 1880's. The Edo period in Japan (1603-1868) was characterized by deliberate insularity to limit foreign (especially Christian) influences. As Japanese cities grew in population and infrastructure, horticulture became a common pastime. Flower markets were popular, and the typical alcoves in houses or small courtyards began to be used to grow plants. For example, morning glories (*Ipomea nil*) of different colors and sizes became all the rage in the 19th century. Japanese insularity came to an abrupt end when Commodore Perry, on behalf of the U.S. and with a fleet of warships, threatened Japan if it did not agree to open trade, leading to the Kanagawa Treaty of 1854. The rapid industrialization and militarization of the Meiji period (1868-1912), along with disease epidemics in rice production caused a wave of emigration, including the Domotos', to America. In addition, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 halted Chinese immigration to the U.S., which resulted in a lack of farm labor. This was compensated for by the Japanese influx.

The Domoto Brothers Nursery was started in 1882 by Takanoshin, Kanetaro, Motonoshi and Mitsunoshin Domoto in Oakland. Kanetaro had started by working at the Sutro Estate Gardens. At first, the brothers leased a small piece of land to grow chrysanthemums and carnations, both iconic Japanese plants. There was not yet a cut flower industry on the West coast, and eventually the brothers were leaders in the creation of the San Francisco Flower Market. They purchased a ~40-acre plot in 1902, well before the Alien Land Act of 1913 forbade immigrants from owning land. In time there were twenty greenhouses, with help provided by young Japanese men from their home town. The business thrived through to the late twenties, when the collapse of the stock market precipitated the Depression to follow. The nursery went bankrupt in 1930 and the City of Oakland foreclosed on the property in 1936.

Certain genres that are still popular and commonly grown were staples of the nursery. Besides *Ipomea*, camellias, chrysanthemums, Easter lilies, *Cyclamen*, carnations, *Wisteria*, pelargoniums (300 varieties!), and azaleas were cultivated. The Domotos brought some of the Kurume azaleas showcased at the Pan American Exhibition of 1915 in San Francisco. They were tasked to propagate persimmon (*Diospyros kaki*) after a crop failure in Chico. As their horticultural expertise grew over the years, the nursery became known as "Domoto College," training many who worked there or passed through. For example, the Enomoto family were "graduates" who provided the chrysanthemums for the New Orleans Mardi Gras. Kanetaro's son Toichi (1902-2001) bought twenty-six acres in Hayward to start his own nursery in 1927.

He had lath houses built to provide shade for the camellias, created cultivars of Japanese maples, worked on gerbera daisies to select for good cut flowers, and developed tree peonies among many other activities. Nuccio's Nurseries in Alta Dena named a camellia in honor of Toichi after his death in 2001. "Toichi's Ruby" is a peony that is still available and can be seen at Filoli. Ed Carman (of Carman's Nursery), Marshall Olbrich and Lester Hawkins (Western Hills Nursery), and Victor Reiter (founder of the California Horticultural Society), to name a few prominent plantsmen, all had relationships with Toichi.

The heartbreak portion of the talk referred to the 1940's internment of 120,000 Japanese-Americans, including the Domotos. Some were sent to Amache, Colorado, where Kanetaro died. The Colorado governor did not agree with the internment, so he tried to employ Japanese prisoners, including Wakako Domoto, Toichi's sister. Toichi had a white nursery manager caring for his nursery while he was at Amache, which enabled him to resume operations when he was released. Many other Japanese American nursery owners in the Bay area were not so fortunate and lost their businesses.

A geographic timeline of the nurseries is available here:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/895643e4706940d3b57b0efc216a26f7>

Many more fascinating details of the history are captured in a 1992 interview of Toichi Domoto, a transcript of which is archived at the UC Berkeley library and available here:

<https://oac.cdlib.org/view?docId=hb8f59p20j&query=&brand=calisphere>

~ Jen Dungan

28 YEARS AGO

Western Hort met on March 8, 1995 to hear “Richard Sullivan, Irish landscape designer (who) will speak on *Gardens of Ireland, Public and Private*. He is the owner of Enchanting Planting, a landscape design and construction firm in Oakland.”

Words of thanks were given to Dorothy Rodal for her three-year tenure as newsletter editor.

(An announcement of new members included Jackie Doda, still a member, who later joined the WHS board and took on the job of recording secretary. She also was responsible for producing the plant notes for several years. NLS)

The show committee requested help in the form of muscles and pickup trucks in order to set up and break down the WHS exhibit at the SF Landscape Garden Show.

I don't remember this, but it appears that at this point in time, WHS propagated succulents at Gamble Garden in a couple of succulent beds. An opportunity was presented for WHS to sell “the offspring of our succulent beds” at a “Horticultural Fair sponsored by the Garden Club of Palo Alto...at the Lucie Stern Center” on March 18th.

Events announced included “*Clematis, Queen of the Vines*...an enticing slide tour which David and Dorothy Rodal will give...at Gamble Gardens” on March 11th, and the Saratoga Horticultural Research Foundation, Inc. would be having a spring “rare & unusual plant sale with plants from their research and from commercial growers around the state” on April 8th.

According to the plant notes, seven members participated in the plant share in March 1995. I'd like to thank Eva for stepping up last month to share some choice blooms from her garden and to encourage participation from additional members in 2023!

Back to 1995, Doug Heimforth brought *Heuchera micrantha* ‘Palace Purple’, a “handsome foliage plant (with) bronzy purple wrinkled leaves that are deep red on the backs”.

“Mildred Hargrave showed *Scilla peruviana*, a bulbous perennial that is actually from the Mediterranean region in spite of its misleading specific name.” It features blue-violet flowers and is summer dormant.

“Chuck Koeigsberg, popular horticultural sciences teacher at Foothill College, showed a 7 yr. old bonsai of *Malus floribunda* done by a student of his.”

Mark Hawkins told about a horticultural adventure prompted by an article about arisaemas in the RHS publication *The Garden*. It involved finding seed sources and growing several species including *Arisaema sikokianum* “(at \$5.00 for 5 seeds!)”. Two of the three seeds that germinated bloomed in only three years (rather than the expected seven years) and fortunately his plants turned out to be one male and one female.

Howard Oliver brought two magnolia flowers, *M. ‘Elizabeth’ (M. acuminata x M. denudata)*, “the first garden-worthy and for a long time the best yellow-flowered magnolia available”. He also showed *M. ‘Iolanthe’* with “rose-pink flowers, creamy-white on the inside. It has the advantage of blooming at an early age.”

Two camellias were on display, *C. reticulata* ‘Jean Pursel’, “with large pink, 6-inch flowers and ‘Notre Dame’ with darker pink flowers of the same size.”

“Bob Young brought in a little known California native shrub, *Isomeris arborea*, the bladderpod.” “Bob says it needs some watering to get started and protection from the deer while young but, once established, is drought resistant and deer-proof.”

Elaine Levine spoke about her *Globularia x indubia* which has been growing successfully for ten years on an exposed, rocky hillside. Blue flowers top a compact 2' high mound.

~ Nancy Schramm

~ Remember the word ‘pollination’ for your chance to win a special door prize at the March meeting! ~

HORTICULTURAL HAPPENINGS

Growing Native Garden Tour: April 1st and 2nd <https://www.gngt.org/GNGT/HomeRO.php>
Organized by the [California Native Plant Society \(Santa Clara Valley Chapter\)](#)
in association with [UCCE Master Gardeners of Santa Clara County](#).

Bring Back the Natives Garden Tour and Green Home Features Showcase Virtual Tour: April 15th and 16;
In-person tour May 6th and 7th <https://www.bringingbackthenatives.net/>

Santa Clara Master Gardeners Spring Garden Fair: April 15th at Martial Cottle Park. For updates and details please use this link <https://mgsantaclara.ucanr.edu/events-calendar/spring-garden-market/>

Clara B. Rees Iris Society Spring Show: April 16th, 12-5 pm. At Campbell Community Center. Free!

Composting Workshops happening now, Saturdays at four locations: March 4th @ Lucie Stern Community Center, Palo Alto; March 11th @ Murphy Park Building, Sunnyvale; March 18th @ Everett "Eddie" Souza Park, Santa Clara; March 25th @ Mt. View Community Center, Mt. View. These are all Composting Basic workshops. For more information: https://cesantaclara.ucanr.edu/Home_Composting_Education/Composting_Workshops/

Next month in April will be the Worm Composting & Composting for Small Spaces!
https://cesantaclara.ucanr.edu/Home_Composting_Education/Composting_Workshops/

STROLLING AROUND THE INTERNET

Become a Master Composter, University of California offers a 15 week course taught by University Faculty, Extension Educators and Industry Leaders every two years. The next Master Composter Class will be in 2024. https://cesantaclara.ucanr.edu/Home_Composting_Education/Master_Composter_Training/

New article about interspecific crosses of *Nerine* and *Hippeastrum*. This article came up on the Pacific Bulb Society forum/ *How Hybrid Plants Can be the Best of Both Worlds* . Called *Amarine* the improved vigour makes the flowers last longer and more cold hardy. <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2022/may/29/james-wong-on-gardening-hybrids-for-brighter-tougher-bulbs-best-of-both-worlds>

Officers and Board Members:

Co-Presidents: Grace Tsang & Meri-Beth Bird
Vice President: Open Position
Secretary: Leslie Dean
Corresponding Secretary: Open Position

Treasurer: Jennifer Doniach
Other Board Members: Carol Dahout,
Jennifer Dungan and Eva Huala

Volunteer Committees and Responsibilities:

Plant Sale Table: Carol Dahout
Email and website maintenance: Ursula Haschke
Publicity and Outreach: Grace Tsang
Membership: Ursula Haschke
Meeting Tech: Grace Tsang, Jennifer Doniach,
Janet Hoffmann & John Hammerschmidt
Welcome Table: Meri-Beth Bird & Eva Huala

Speaker Program Committee: Leslie Dean (chair),
Nancy Schramm, Judy Wong, Glenda Jones & Eva Huala
Newsletter Editor: Kathy Anberg
Newsletter Contributors: Jennifer Dungan, Ana Muir &
Nancy Schramm
Scholarships: Grace Tsang, Jennifer Doniach,
Meri-Beth Bird, Janet Hoffmann & Nancy Schramm

About Membership in Western Hort:

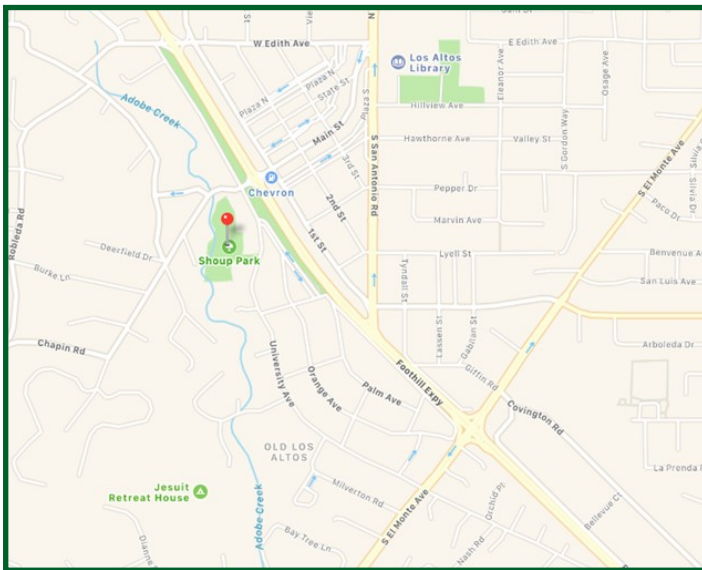
Membership Rates: A one-year membership (Sep-Aug) includes an e-mail copy of this newsletter and admittance to all of our monthly meetings. Regular membership is \$35, Family membership for two or more members at the same address is \$50, and a discounted rate for students is \$20. To receive a print copy of this newsletter by mail add \$10 to the membership fee listed above. Please visit the Pac Hort page for more information or to join Pacific Horticulture Society, for whom we are now a sponsoring organization, go to: pacifichorticulture.org.

To join or renew visit our website at: <https://www.westernhort.org/membership> You may pay online with a credit card or print form and mail with your check to the contact us address below.

To contact us: Please send email to: info@westernhort.org or snail mail to: PO Box 166, Mountain View, CA 94042



PO Box 166
Mountain View, CA 94042
First Class Mail
VISIT US AT WESTERNHORT.ORG



Meeting date & location : March 8th
In Person at Shoup Park Garden House, 400 University Ave., Los Altos
(Wearing masks is optional)
Meeting starts at 7:30 pm.
Would you like to **sponsor a lecture** or suggest a speaker for the WHS that is of particular interest to you?
It would be much appreciated!
Please call Leslie Dean at 650-966-8364.

Newsletter Submissions
The newsletter publishes on the first of the month. **Note: deadline for submission for the next newsletter is the 22nd of March.** Submissions after this date will likely appear in the next month's newsletter. Send submissions to: Kjanberg@gmail.com or snail mail to Kathy Anberg, 1332 Peggy Ct. Campbell, CA 95008-6342