

WESTERN HORT

December 2024 | PO Box 166, Mountain View, CA 94042 | www.westernhort.org

DECEMBER 2024 MEETING

December 11th, 6:30pm

POTLUCK SOCIAL!



Program for the evening:

6:30 Mingle and view door prizes.

7:00 Potluck Dinner (Please bring a dish to share if you wish to participate.)

7:30 Continue dining as Founders' award is bestowed and door prizes are awarded and collected.

8:00 While we are still eating and chatting (the dessert course), either a jazz (or classical) pianist will play, **or** we will have "an open piano session" like those of the SF Botanical Garden Flower Piano summer events. Bring your improv skills, memorized pieces or sheet music, and tinkle away. Duets welcome.

8:30 Clean-up (Please stay to help with this if you can.)

9:00 Close the doors.

WHS will provide non-alcoholic beverages including tea. Please bring a dish-to-share that serves six to eight - appetizer, side dish, salad, entrée, or a dessert. Please bring your own plate, cup and eating utensils.



If you can come early at 6:00pm to help with set up please do!

CO-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Please join our end-of-the-year party! We hope you can come celebrate with your fellow horticulture friends. We will also announce our Founders' Award and give away door prizes.

While learning about 'bomb cyclones', I have been hoping that the recently planted and seeded areas of our gardens will get their first deep drinks of winter rain. My gardening partner and I have been planting black oak acorns (*Quercus kelloggii*, which have wonderful fall colors), Pacific madrones, mountain mahogany, ceanothus and toyon. Many of these plants were unwanted sprouts from another site. Another partner and I laid down seeds of lupine, clarkia (amoena, purpurea, unguiculata aka, respectively: farewell-to-spring, winecup, and mountain garland), plus tidy tips and Chinese houses near a young valley oak. These seeds were from the local CA Native Plant Society bimonthly seed and cutting exchange. In hindsight, our seedbed could use the reusable protector cloth from Lerner Seeds. And I have the pleasure of being able to drop off dozens of black walnuts (from the native *Juglans hindsii*) and fifty blue oak acorns (*Q. douglasii*) to two local nurseries for propagation. A mast year? Happy winter gardening to all!

~Grace Tsang & Meri-Beth Bird

What is a Mast Year?

Every few years certain populations of trees, Oaks in particular, will drop unusually large quantities of acorns. This synchronized phenomenon is known as "masting" and occurs about every 2-5 years. The scientists don't know exactly why or how they do it, but some speculate that it is a clever strategy to achieve "predator satiation". Animal populations that feed on the acorns are kept in check in light production years. In a mast year the trees produce more food than they can possibly eat and this abundance causes a boom in populations of small mammals. This also insures that enough nuts will be left over to survive and grow into new trees.



The trees may also be using the time between these mast years to increase growth and store energy since producing nuts is costly work and can slightly stunt the growth of the tree. It is not only the oaks and other wind-pollinated trees that experiences masting. Certain grasses, shrubs and other perennial plant species mast too.

For a more in-depth article on this go to this article from the Brooklyn Botanic Garden by Ellie Shechet:
https://www.bbg.org/article/the_mysteries_of_masting_in_trees

UPCOMING MEETINGS

January 8th – Hadley Dynak, *An Exquisite Risk - Western Hills Garden; Past, Present and Future*

February 12th – Jim Salyards, *A Garden Lover's Tour of English Gardens and the Many Lessons Learned*

March 12th – Lisa and Kathleen Putnam, *Preventative Medicine for your Summer Veggie Garden*

April 9th – Michael Uhler, *Plants of California's Sierra Nevada*

May 14th – Movie and vendor night, *The Gardener, Frank Cabot's Les Quatre Vents*

28 YEARS AGO

On November 13, 1996, Western Hort gathered to hear Katherine Greenberg's program *Gardens and Architecture of Spain*. Once again it was at a new location, Los Altos High School on Almond Ave. There was a welcome notice for nine new members, probably because of the community outreach surrounding the release of *Successful Vines for the Peninsula*.

We might laugh at the next excerpt, but as written in 1996: "A surprising number of WHS members have e-mail addresses. For those who would like to expand their on-line activities to include horticulture, Lyn Dearborn has information on several plant discussion groups—one on Mediterranean plants originates in the Bay Area."

The last item in the newsletter reported: "BOOK SALES going well!!!! Credit and Thanks to Elaine Levine for editing (and her crew), Mabel Crittenden and Nancy Carman Schramm for illustrations, Carol Moholt for design, all the many contributors, Elaine again for publications, the WHS Board for Marketing, and all the "stockers" in the Bay Area."

The Plant Notes began with the comment that "The plant discussion table was thinly furnished for the November meeting. If I weren't among the slackers myself I'd probably have some sharp words to say about the members' responsibility to support this important part of our program...". (I have to add that I, too am disappointed not to see more plants brought in for discussion at our current meetings. – NLS)

Elaine Levine brought in *Ipomoea lobata* aka *Mina lobata*, a vigorous climber with the common name Spanish Flag. The flowers are dramatic "each branch bearing about ten tubular, dog-tooth shaped flowers in one-sided inflorescences. The flowers are bright red in bud, growing larger and paler as they mature until the oldest are almost white. Elaine finds it to be perennial here and will even take a little frost."

Betsy Clebsch shared a branch of *Cerinthe major purpurea*, "It grows one to two feet high and has gray-green glaucous ovate leaves that clasp the stem. Toward the ends of the stems the leaves grow smaller, more crowded and turn a dusky indigo-purple and the flowers emerge from among them in the typical fiddleneck fashion. The flowers are tubular, the base, hidden by the sepals is yellow but the upper two thirds is purple." (This annual is widely grown these days, but it was quite new in 1996 – NLS) Betsy also shared *Salvia ringens*, with compound leaves and blue-purple flowers, originating in the Balkans; and *Salvia scutellarioides*, "unusual among the salvias because it is low-growing, only 18" high, grows in full shade and needs little water". This salvia has light blue flowers and is "...a recent introduction from South America...not yet available to the public but it can only be a matter of time."

"Lyn Dearborn has just joined Orchid Abusers Anonymous and gave a full confession in the case of a Vanda orchid still clinging desperately to the few remaining sticks of its basket on one end while blooming exuberantly on the other." The flowers were spectacular "...a rich blue-purple, heavily veined with a small lip that was the deepest purple."

And with her typical style, Elizabeth Garbett ended the Plant Notes with this: "As a testimonial to Peters Professional Fertilizer, the praises of which she is never tired of singing, Lyn showed the biggest Granny Smith apple I have ever seen. One would make a pie!" –NLS

~ Nancy Schramm



Plants mentioned 28 years ago. I think we all would enjoy seeing them in our yard today!

NOVEMBER SPEAKER NOTES

Shade Plants for the Dry Garden with Jill Sowards

Jill Sowards, whose own garden is in the Berkeley Hills, took us on a cheerful journey through the virtues and challenges of shade gardening, gently skipping through the qualities of plants in shade, their care, and recommendations on planting under redwood and oak trees. She gave technical definitions of the varieties of shade requirements we can typically see on plant labels or in cultivation instructions. Though I have more and more shade in my own garden due to maturing trees, I had never given enough attention to how sunlight durations might be neatly distinguished. Jill's explanations covered the following shade types:

- Light shade = 5-6 hours of direct sun
- Filtered/dappled = 5+ hours of filtered or indirect sun
- Semi/part/partial shade = 4-5 hours of direct sun
- Moderate/medium shade = 2-3 hours of direct sun
- Full/deep shade = less than 2 hours of direct sun

She also discussed how these situations play with temperature, in that whether the direct light occurs in the cooler morning or hotter afternoons can affect results.

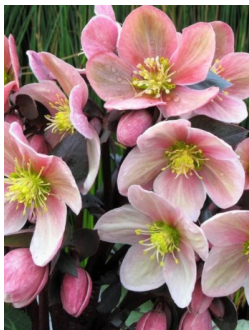
For many of us, our iconic native trees create shady zones in the garden. Jill's list of recommended plants for these situations, where tree roots, leaf litter and soil requirements influence the possible plant palette, is as follows:

Planting under redwoods (starting from four feet from the tree's base):

- Vine Maple (*Acer circinatum*)
- Eve Case Coffeeberry (*Frangula californica* 'Eve Case', aka *Rhamnus californica*)
- Sword Fern (*Polystichum munitum*)
- Japanese Forest Grass (*Hakonechloa macra* 'All Gold')
- Pacific Bleeding Heart (*Dicentra formosa*)
- Coastal Wood Rose (*Rosa gymnocarpa*)
- Redwood Violet (*Viola sempervirens*)

Planting under redwoods (starting from ten feet from the tree's base):

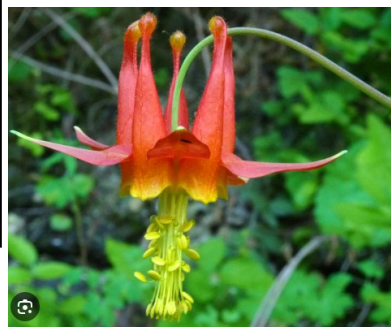
- California Wax Myrtle (*Myrica californica*)
- Pacific Rhododendron (*Rhododendron macrophyllum*)
- Flowering Currant (*Ribes sanguineum*)
- Corsican Hellebore (*Helleborus argutifolius*)
- Perennial Hellebores hybrids (example: Hellebore "Pink Frost")
- Autumn Fern (*Dryopteris erythrosora*)
- Douglas iris and "Pacific Series" hybrids – example: Pacific Coast Hybrid Iris 'Canyon Snow'
- Blue-eyed Grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*)
- Yerba Buena (*Clinopodium douglasii*)
- Japanese Forest Grass (*Hakonechloa macra* 'Aureola')
- Black Mondo Grass (*Ophiopogon planiscapus* 'Nigrescens')



Pink Frost hellebore
Photo credit: Watson's
Greenhouse

Planting under oaks (starting four to six feet from base):

- Bush Anemone (*Carpentaria californica*)
- Coffeeberry (*Frangula californica*)
- Flowering Currant (*Ribes sanguineum*)
- Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)
- Western Columbine (*Aquilegia formosa*)
- Coral Bells (*Heuchera maxima*)
- Iris species
- Daffodil (*Narcissus*)
- California Buttercup (*Ranunculus californica*)
- California Dutchman's pipe (*Aristolochia californica*)
- California Grape, Roger's Red Grape (*Vitis* x Roger's Red)
- Sedges (*Carex* species)
- California Fescue (*Festuca californica*)
- Dwarf Mahonia (*Berberis aquifolium* var. *repens*)
- Catalina Currant (*Ribes viburnifolium*)



Western Columbine
Photo Credit: Calscape

~ Jen Dungan

NOVEMBER PLANT SHARE

Nancy Schramm, Gilroy, shared an interesting assortment:

Begonia dregei 'Partita'

From Katie Wong

Discovered by J.F. Drege in the Cape of Good Hope in 1836

South African species brought into cultivation in 1961

Bonsai subject, swollen basal stem forms caudex

Flowers during 'longer days of the year'

Grow as a houseplant in bright indirect light

If propagated by stem cuttings the caudex will not be nearly as large as those on plants grown from seed

Prone to mealy bug and mildew

Nancy has it growing indoors in kitchen window since August

Zone 10

8" to 10" or 18" to 24" tall depending on your source of information.



Adenium obesum (Desert Rose, Desert Azalea)

From Bonsai show

Type of caudiciform native to tropical Africa, Arabia

Apocynaceae (Dogbane) family

Succulent with toxic latex sap, all parts are poisonous if ingested

Often evergreen in cultivation but deciduous in dry seasons

Keep dry for certain parts of the year

To 5' – 9' tall, 3' – 5' wide in the ground, best in containers

Sun to part shade

Porus well drained soil, very prone to rotting

Sunset Zones 23, 24. Bring in when temperatures go below 50 degrees



Photo credit: Oregon State University



Metasequoia glyptostroboides (Dawn Redwood)

Re-discovered in China in 1945

Deciduous conifer

A pyramidal growth habit

Fast growth when young (up to 4-6 feet a year) reaching as much as 90 feet tall and 20 feet wide at 40 years.

Well drained soil with regular moisture. Resistant to Oak Root fungus.

Sunset zones A3; 3-10, 14-24.

Here you can see the fall color on the right.



Oxalis hirta (tropical woodsorrel, hairy oxalis)

Nancy got from Barbara Worl's garden where she had fantastic specimen in a pot

Native to South Africa

Can be propagated from stem cuttings

Bulbs are easily divided before new growth in fall

Dormant in hot dry summer

Blooms fall through spring

6" to 10" tall 24" wide

Well-drained soil in filtered sun to part shade

Sunset Zones 8,9,14-24

Occasional to regular irrigation but avoid overwatering during the dormant period, can be left completely dry while dormant

Pacific Bulb Society says it is not invasive. Janet Hoffman has it in the ground at her home in Campbell and reports it hasn't been "as invasive as common oxalis".



Photo credit: Garden.net



John Hammerschmidt, Los Altos, shared a winter tomato variety:

Russian Tomato

Growing in unheated greenhouse

Grows in the winter

Produces large cherry tomato type fruit

John reports the flavor pretty good, but still not as nice as a summer tomato.



Here's a reminder from UCANR: **When should you treat for Peach Leaf Curl?**

While you may not notice symptoms of peach leaf curl until the spring, you should manage it in the fall and winter. Timing of the first treatment in the dormant season should be made after leaves have dropped in the fall and winter. This is often in late November or early December. Treat affected trees with a fungicide product containing the active ingredients copper or chlorothalonil. These active ingredients can be alternated to limit copper buildup in the soil. A single treatment is generally sufficient, but a second spray can be done in late January or early February, again before bud break.

Always read the label of the pesticide product and verify that it is labeled to treat peach leaf curl. Use only the rate listed on the label to avoid fungicide resistance and avoid making applications before it rains. For more management information, see the UC IPM [Pest Notes: Peach Leaf Curl](#) and [Pesticides: Safe and Effective Use in the Home and Landscape](#).

GET INVOLVED

We are actively looking for a few new board members including a Vice President. Yes, to your question, "If I was on the board in the past, can I join again?" We enjoy having new board members as well as members who have served in the past. It makes for a well rounded board. Volunteer and get to know other WHS members and keep our organization growing.

Available Positions:

Vice president: In addition to board member duties below, the vice president runs the general meeting or board meetings when the President is unavailable. Helps the President as needed and updates new board members on duties and functions of the organization.

Board Members: Position involves regular attendance at monthly meetings Sept – June and regular attendance at bi-monthly board meetings as well as helping on committees as needed to carry out Western Hort activities.

Plant Sale Table Assistant: Set up and help with the sale of donated plants at the meeting.

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.

HORTICULTURAL HAPPENINGS

Checkout other ongoing events, Plant Sales, Talks and Workshops at the Master Gardener website:
<https://mgsantaclara.ucanr.edu/events-calendar/>

Want to keep up on horticultural events and exchange ideas with other members?? Join our online forum at:
<https://groups.io/g/WHSmembers>.

UC Master Gardeners talk on *Roses - Winter Care and Pruning*, Wednesday, **January 15th** at 7pm. at the Los Altos Library. Everyone loves roses! Come learn about how winter care and pruning can make a big difference to healthy summer blooms. UC Master Gardener Martha Carpenter will give you tips on what to do right now to have healthy, vibrant flowers next summer and will do a pruning demonstration. It's easier than you think! She will also cover the basics of buying and planting a new bare root rose. The talk will be in the Orchard Room at the Los Altos Library, 13 S. San Antonio Road, Los Altos 94022

CAL HORT in 2025: Upcoming speakers for the Cal Hort Society will be an in-person meeting with **Ethan Fenner**, Museum Scientist, horticulturist, author speaking on *The Art and Philosophy of the Garden*, **Monday, January 20th**.

Planned for **Monday, March 17th**, **Susan Karasoff** from the California Native Plant Society will give a talk on *Shade Plants for San Francisco Gardens*. Meetings start at 6:30. In Person meetings held at the SF Fair Building.

Strolling around the internet

UC /Statewide Integrated Pest Management- Neonicotinoid Pesticides off the Shelf in January 2025
<https://ucanr.edu/blogs/blogcore/postdetail.cfm?postnum=60986>

Earwigs are the hero single mothers of the insect world– and good for your garden too
<https://theconversation.com/earwigs-are-the-hero-single-mothers-of-the-insect-world-and-good-for-your-garden-too-196069>

Officers and Board Members:

Co-Presidents: Grace Tsang & Meri-Beth Bird

Vice President: **Open Position**

Secretary : Jennifer Dungan

Corresponding Secretary: **Open Position**

Treasurer: Eva Huala

Other Board Members: Jim Salyards, Carol Dahout
(More board members welcomed and needed)

Volunteer Committees and Responsibilities:

Plant Sale Table: Carol Dahout

Email and website maintenance: Ursula Haschke

Membership: Ursula Haschke

Publicity and Outreach: Grace Tsang

Meeting Tech: Grace Tsang, Jennifer Doniach,

Janet Hoffmann & John Hammerschmidt

Welcome Table: Pam Noyer

Speaker Program Committee: Leslie Dean (chair),
Nancy Schramm, Judy Wong, Glenda Jones, Eva Huala &
Meri-Beth Bird

Newsletter Editor: Kathy Anberg

Newsletter Contributors: Jennifer Dungan & Nancy
Schramm

Scholarships: Grace Tsang, Jennifer Doniach,
Meri-Beth Bird, & Janet Hoffmann

About Membership in Western Hort:

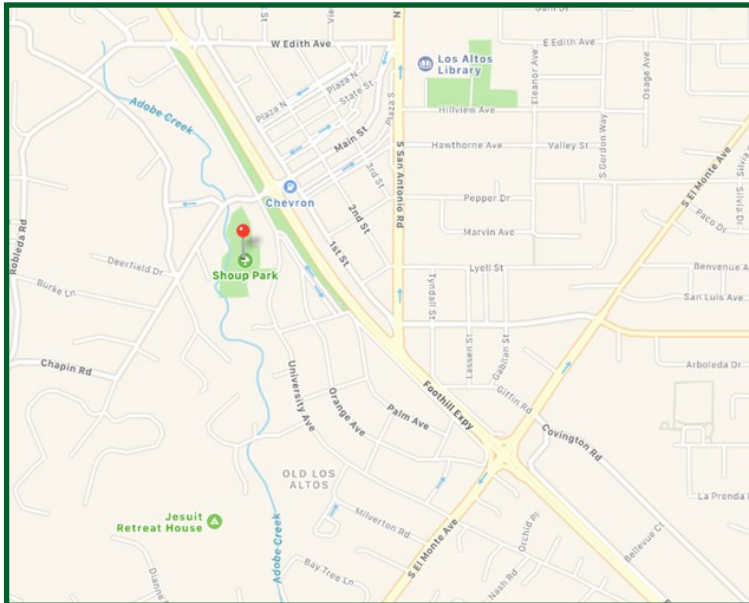
Membership Rates: A one-year membership (Sep-Aug) includes an e-mail copy of this newsletter and admittance to all of our monthly meetings. Regular membership is \$35, Family membership for two or more members at the same address is \$50, and a discounted rate for students is \$20. Please visit the Pac 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 the 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 : December 11th, 2024
In Person at Shoup Park Garden House, 400 University Ave., Los Altos
(Masks optional)
Come at 6:30, Dinner starts at 7pm.
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 20th of December.** 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