



WHS November Speaker

Wednesday, November 9, 2011, 7:30 p.m.
Matt Ritter, Professor of Botany, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

“Small Trees for California Gardens”

Dr. Ritter will use his photographs, insight and humor to share stories, cultivation and selection tips, as well as the natural history of trees appropriate for small California gardens. Many fascinating small trees are featured in his book *A Californian's Guide to the Trees Among Us*, a new natural history and identification guide to urban and suburban trees in California. Finding just the right tree, one that will do everything we want but that won't dominate the yard, raise the house foundation or drop debris on our cars can be a tricky chore for our smaller suburban yards. Matt will show us trees (whether native or cultivated) that muffle noise, create wildlife habitats, mitigate pollution, conserve energy, and make urban living healthier and more peaceful.

Dr. Ritter has a bachelor's degree in microbiology and a Ph.D. in plant developmental biology. He is currently a botany professor in the Biological Sciences Department at the California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, and director of the plant conservatory there. He has authored numerous scientific papers about plants and contributed to botanical references including the *Higher Plants of California and the Flora of North America*. Dr. Ritter holds a Kenan Fellowship at the National Tropical Botanical Gardens, is the Ray Collett Visiting Scholar at the UC Santa Cruz Arboretum, teaches for the Organization of Tropical Studies in Costa Rica, and is the chair of the City of San Luis Obispo Tree Committee. *Guests are welcome. Fee for non-members \$5. Guests are invited to join at the door – bring a friend!*

MEETING LOCATION Our monthly meetings feature the speakers listed above; doors open at 7 p.m. and meetings begin at 7:30. The location is at Christ Episcopal Church, Parish Hall, 1040 Border Road, Los Altos.

You are invited to join our speaker for **dinner on November 9** at 5:30 p.m. at Chef Chu's, 1067 N. San Antonio Road, Los Altos (at the corner of El Camino). This is a terrific opportunity for our members to get to know each other better and to get to chat with our speakers. Please contact Rosalie Shepherd to confirm: shep8283@earthlink.net or 650-321-8283.

Would you like to **sponsor a lecture** for the WHS that is of particular interest to you? It would be much appreciated! Please call Pat Knight at 650-941-6136 if you are interested.

WHS December Meeting

December 14 Holiday Potluck Party. All members are invited for a celebration of good company, good food, and good music. Special entertainment this year – The Sherry Austin Band and Ted Kippling's Slide Show!
Details on page 2

October 2011 Speaker Notes

Hungry for knowledge about water-saving plants? Starving for ideas using new or different trees, shrubs and perennials? Then last month's speaker, Nan Sterman of Plant Soup, Inc., should have been your menu selection. Ms. Sterman, garden designer, educator and author from San Diego, served a delicious selection of plants that any of us could use and enjoy in our gardens.

Sterman began her presentation "Garden Treasures from Arid Mexico and the Southwest" with a map of California, Oregon and Baja California. On this map she showed us her "Red Zone" – the vast areas of these states that we describe as having a Mediterranean climate. This climate is best described as having dry, hot summers and wet, cool winters. Our speaker suggested looking past this zone of ours, into areas that might have slightly higher or lower temperatures than ours, to obtain a wide range of plant material.

Ms. Sterman, a self-professed frugal gardener both in care and water provision, found many of her "new" plants through that age-old process: trial and error. Using cold tolerance as her criterion, she has used many different plants not normally found or used in the Mediterranean zones. Sterman pays close attention to geography and distance, noting plants that might survive or succumb to winter freezes – sometimes within a mile or two of one another.

Our speaker distributed a three-page list of her "treasures," breaking them into groups of trees, shrubs, succulents, perennials and grasses. She described each in detail and with beautiful photographs, leaving us fully nourished with information and enthusiasm to expand our plant palette.
~Mark McCabe

Don't forget to renew your membership

Don't forget to send in your membership renewal. Renew now to avoid missing an issue of Pacific Horticulture. See page 3 for how to renew or join.

Western Hort News

Save This Date – December 14 Holiday Potluck Party

Our annual potluck will be Wednesday, December 14th at Christ Episcopal Church. All members are invited for a celebration of good company, good food and music. Bring a favorite main dish, salad or desert to share and plates and utensils. The WHS Board will provide cups, glasses, wine & beverages and appetizers. We will collect canned and packaged food for the Second Harvest Food Bank. This year we have a real treat in store: Sherry Austin's Band plus Ted Kipling's Slide Show!

THE SHERRY AUSTIN BAND. Sherry will entertain us with her own songs, accompanying herself on the guitar and backed by her band. Her songs are true Americana with a California slant.

TED KIPPING'S SLIDE SHOW. Sherry's performance will be accompanied by Ted's slides. Spectacular and striking images of plants and the natural world will be a feast for our eyes.

Join the Board

Don't be shy; everyone brings their own perspective and input to the Western Horticultural Society Board, and yours is valuable. We are looking for a couple people to join the Board. The Board meets every other month for a two-hour meeting at a Board member's house. Contact Richard Tiede, rtiede@pacbell.net or 408-251-6618, if you can help with this important aspect of Western Hort. ~WHS Board

Raffle Table

We had some interesting plants on the raffle table last month. A big thanks goes to our members who are such wonderful propagators. Carman's Nursery (408-847-2313 and <http://www.carmannursery.com>) also donated a number of little treasures to the table. The Raffle Committee will be providing the plants for the November table. But members are welcome to bring in plants or garden related items as well. ~Roberta Barnes

2012 Spring Plant Sale

This is a good time of the year to make divisions of your favorite plants that will be attractive and blooming in the spring! The last Saturday in March we will be selling plants in 4" and one-gallon containers at the Master Gardeners' Spring Garden Market in San Jose. This is a way we can raise money and bring in wonderful speakers for your enjoyment. Please e-mail me with any questions you might have! robertabarnes2003@yahoo.com ~Roberta Barnes

WHS Book Sale at Yamagami's on November 12 – Donate Your Books!

Yamagami's Nursery has generously offered to host a Garden Book Sale for WHS on Saturday, November 12th from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. They will advertise the sale to their customers, both as a time to purchase garden-related books and as a time to donate books to be sold. We will staff the table, sell the books and collect the money, all of which goes directly to WHS. The event will take place in the seminar room at the nursery; payment will be by cash or check.

Please bring new or gently used books to our next meeting on November 9th. People who live in the area can drop books off at Rosalie Shepherd's house (669 Tennyson Ave., Palo Alto). You can also take books directly to Yamagami's (1361 S. De Anza Blvd., Cupertino) and they will store them for us until the day of the sale. Don't miss coming to the sale yourself. What an opportunity to find the book you have always wanted and benefit our organization at the same time! ~Christine Bate and Rosalie Shepherd

Nan Serman Handouts Online

The handout from Nan Serman's talk is now available on our website. Go to <http://westernhort.org>, click on "speaker programs" on the left and then click on the October program. The link to her handout is on the top right of her page. These handouts will be available for future programs, so if you miss a program you can still catch up. And of course if you wish they can be printed. I encourage you to look around the WHS website; it is full of interesting links and information. Browsing the past "plant notes" is always an incentive to try new plants. For any new ideas or corrections contact me at deerproof@yahoo.com. ~Pat Knight, Webmaster

APLD Credits

The Western Horticulture Speaker Series has been approved again this year by the APLD for Continuing Education Units; 1 CE unit per meeting, excluding the December potluck. APLD is the Association of Professional Landscape Designers (apld.org). ~Jon Craig

Horticultural Calendar

CNPS 2012 Conservation Conference – Conserving and Restoring the Roots of California's Richness This is designed to be an action-oriented conference, to share what we can do (or are doing) to conserve the natural lands, plants and wildlife ... including all those pollinators. Learn how to start a plant restoration nursery, attend talks on the biology of rare native plant species as well as invasive species, and more, including a drawing workshop with John Muir Laws and poetry, photography, botanical art and music events. January 10-14, 2012 in San Diego. See <http://cnps.org>.

Plant of the Month: *Primula vialii*

This month I thought I'd go a little farther afield to talk with someone for this column. Unfortunately, air travel to Alaska wasn't in the budget so I only got to talk with Merrill Jensen on the phone rather than in person. But he's fallen so far under the spell of *Primula vialii* that he was able to paint a delightful picture for me of this stunning little charmer. It is so different from the rest of the family that it really stands out. When it's in bloom, people walk up to the patch of what looks like miniature red hot poker and all they can say is "What's THAT plant?" *P. vialii* has strappy, light green leaves that grow in a low mound, giving no hint of the spectacle to come. It is a later blooming primula, blooming in July or early August rather than in spring, as is more common for primulas. Merrill says that when the flower spike first starts emerging, it looks like a little mini bottlebrush spike. The spike can grow 18" or perhaps 2' tall with the flowering part being the top 4" or so. The calyx are bright scarlet, then starting from the bottom, open up to a blue violet color with a little white around the throat. The individual flowers are only 1/8 to 1/4" long, but collectively make a big impact. But wait, the show doesn't end there! *P. vialii* sets seeds that are larger than the flowers, a mass of red capsules for the second act.

Merrill grows his current favorite primula at the Jensen-Olson Arboretum, 23 miles north of downtown Juneau. He says that our lucky members who garden in some of the cooler, shadier areas of the Bay Area should be able to grow this plant, too. It prefers damp meadows and cooler areas with deep, rich soil. Great companions would include Astilbe & Hosta, forget-me-nots, and the 'Alpine Summer' series of Viola. This year the bright yellow violas made a perfect foil. When asked about pests, Merrill said it's pretty bug-free, and doesn't even attract the odd deer or porky pine!

When I interviewed Merrill on October 10th, he was hoping the weather would hold just a little longer so he would be able to harvest ripe seed from his primula to donate to several seed exchanges. He said there had only been two light frosts so far, and the Japanese maples were about three days from peaking a fire engine red.

~Nancy Schramm

28 Years Ago

I'm sorry I missed last month's report—I was in Sacramento learning all sorts of cool stuff at the IPPS Conference (International Plant Propagators' Society). Here's a "Nugget of Knowledge" from Susan Ashley: "A Tip to Make Airlayering Easier" – Prepare your air layer as usual (wound, add rooting hormone) and surround with a hydrated peat plug. Then use Saran brand Press'n Seal to wrap around the air layer. It seals to itself and is easy to handle. Cover with foil.

OK, back to our regular subject ... On October 10, 1983, WHS met to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the society. It was a real party with past presidents, charter board members, cake and awards. The program was all plant discussion, and I thought the list of participants was fascinating! James Wilson—*Cedrus libani* 'Nana', Bill Schmidt—*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*, Keith Bickford—five species of *Chamaecyparis*, Pete Sugawara—*Juniperus osteosperma* 'Lee Walker', Albert Wilson—*Taxus baccata* 'Fastigiata', John Coulter—*Glyptostrobus lineatus* & *Taxodium distichum*, Gerda Isenberg—*Dendromecon harfordii*, Barbara Barlow—*Celtis sinensis*, Charlotte Anderson—*Alchemilla mollis*, Roman Gankin—*Ceropegia bulbosa*, *C. debilis*, *C. fusca*, and *C. linearis*. ~Nancy Schramm



Photo courtesy Merrill Jensen

Western Horticultural Society Officers and Board Members

President: Richard Tiede

Vice President: Christine Bate

Recording Secretary: Mark McCabe

Acting Treasurer: Daxin Liu

Other Board Members: Kerry Barrs, Roberta Barnes, Jon Craig, Abby Garner, Sherry Hall, Rosalie Shepherd and Katie Wong.

To contact us, please send email to info@westernhort.org, or contact Chris Egan at 650-948-4614, or send mail to Western Horticulture Society, PO Box 60507, Palo Alto, CA, 94306.

About membership in Western Hort:

To join or renew, send your name, address, phone number and a check made out to "Western Horticultural Society" to PO Box 620673, Woodside, CA 94062-0673.

Membership Rates: A one-year membership (Sep-Aug) includes four issues of Pacific Horticulture magazine. Regular membership is \$35, Sustaining is \$45, Contributing is \$60 and Plant Lover is \$100+. We have also added a Family membership of \$50 for two or more members at the same address, and a Student rate of \$20.

Please visit our website at westernhort.org for a membership form.

Newsletter Submissions and Address Changes

Please send info for the December newsletter by November 18 to Marianne Mueller, mrm@sonic.net or 650-326-2029.

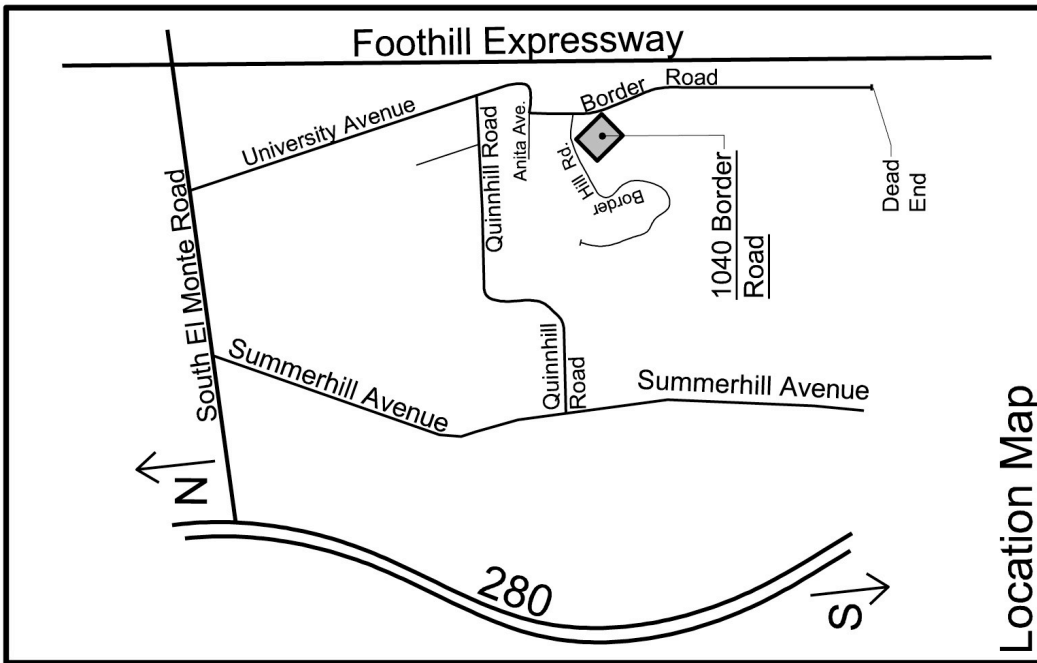
Please send address changes to grew@pacbell.net or 650-851-5162.



PO Box 60507
Palo Alto, CA 94306

First Class Mail

VISIT US AT WESTERNHORT.ORG



Western Horticultural Society
Monthly Meetings
Christ Episcopal Church
Parish Hall
1040 Border Road, Los Altos