



WHS March Speaker

Wednesday, March 9, 2011

Doors open at 7:00 p.m.; meeting begins at 7:30 p.m.

Cliff Low, Perry Laboratory, Watsonville, California
<http://www.perrylaboratory.com>

Fertilizers, Amendments, Organic? Conventional? Oh My!

Lab Testing to Decide What to Use to Improve Soil Condition

Perry Laboratory provides a testing and advising service for the horticultural industry as well as the home gardener. They can test your soil and assess its suitability for growing ornamental and edible plants and provide suggestions and guidelines for soil and site preparation prior to and after planting.

Cliff Low is the owner of Perry Laboratory. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in Plant Science and his Masters of Science in Horticulture from the University of California at Davis.

Having worked in various areas of horticulture, including nursery production, landscape management and construction, and field research, he brings a practical approach to utilizing the laboratory test results to grow the best plants possible in many situations.

MEETING LOCATION Our monthly meetings feature the speakers listed above. Doors open at 7:00 p.m. and meetings begin at 7:30 p.m. The location is the Parish Hall of Christ Episcopal Church, 1040 Border Road, Los Altos, 94024.

You are invited to join our speaker for dinner at 5:30 p.m. at **Bella Vita, 376 First St., Los Altos**. 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 Pat Knight to confirm: deerproof@yahoo.com or 650-941-6136.

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.

Note: Our monthly dinner will be held at Bella Vita, 376 First St., Los Altos

April 2011 Speaker

Wednesday, April 13, 7:30 p.m. **Jim Dixon**, Transforming the Sense of Place: Redefining Space with Shape, Color and Texture

Commentary on February's Speaker: Don Mahoney

Just as any diligent police detective would do, our guest speaker, Don Mahoney, presented the audience with his list of shady characters. "The Best New Plants for Shade" was this night's lineup, replete with mysterious and intriguing suspects from around the globe. Mr. Mahoney, long-time curator/nursery manager of the San Francisco Botanical Gardens, had his work cut out for him, with well over twenty plants to display, talk about, answer questions and pack up and take back home. Lucky for us, some of these plants were made available for sale. Coupled with our monthly raffle, it made a busy evening for those in a shopping mode.

There were no slides in this evening's presentation – it was strictly show-and-tell. Mahoney carefully described each plant's unique attributes as well as its hardiness and use in the landscape. Among some of the many plants that were presented was Wollemi Pine from Australia, earlier thought to be extinct but now becoming plentiful; it was shown earlier in the evening by Barrie Coate. Mahoney described shade-loving begonias, including new discoveries from China and India; impatiens, including some winter-flowering ones and a bright blue flowering variety (there are over four hundred varieties from China alone); and fragrant rhododendrons, most of which are native to New Guinea and Southeast Asia. They can grow in trees or in the ground, and are mostly ever-blooming. Relatively scarce on the west coast, they are grown back east as houseplants. He described several hellebores; this increasingly popular perennial is continually hybridized, with a yellow variety as well as double-flowering ones now being introduced. He described several fuchsias and mentioned that only two to three species are afflicted with the dreaded gall mite; one resistant variety is named 'Firecracker,' with blooms that last a month.

The aforementioned plants are only a small fraction of what our speaker presented, and many other plants are continually being received by San Francisco Botanical Garden for display and evaluation. Mahoney mentioned that the Botanical Gardens is fortunate to receive many donated plants from the nursery industry, including new introductions. I feel that as members of WHS, we too should be supportive of SF Botanical Garden with our visits and plant purchases. Together with a sense of discovery and challenge, perhaps we can find new ways to enliven those dark recesses of our gardens. ~Mark McCabe

Western Hort News and Business

Raffle Table

Thank you, members, for supplying the raffle table last month. This is a fun and valuable fundraiser for us. The March table will be supplied by the raffle committee, but as usual, all donations will be gratefully accepted.

~Roberta Barnes

28 Years Ago

On Monday, March 14, 1983, WHS gathered to hear Lucy Erickson (now Lucy Tolmach) "... address the subject of 'Spring Planting at Filoli.' We will enjoy her professional insight into both the practical and aesthetic aspects of this enjoyable art." Lucy was and still is the superintendent of the Filoli Gardens. She was also kind enough to provide the raffle plants (three tables full!) for the evening in addition to bringing a selection of display material.

The March board meeting minutes mentioned an ongoing problem with the meeting location, Ampex. It seems we lacked access to the control panel, and therefore were unable to dim the lights for the slide presentations. This was the month for CA native plants lovers: selections of *Arbutus*, *Ceanothus*, *Cynoglossum*, *Lonicera*, *Ribes* and more were brought in by Betsy Clebsch, Gerda Isenberg, Emily Brown and others. In addition, Albert Wilson brought in a blooming *Eucharis grandiflora*. ~Nancy Schramm

Hot Plant Pick

It's Back! WHS will once more be in charge of the **Hot Plant Pick** exhibit at the San Francisco Flower and Garden Show from March 23rd to 27th. We're designing new, computer-friendly plant information signs, asking for cool plant donations, and making plans for increased visibility at the show. If you want to join in on the fun, or have suggestions or questions, call or email Nancy Schramm at (408) 847-2313, greenthumb@carmansnursery.com. ~Nancy Schramm

News from the Website

Are you a **Landscape Gardener or Designer**? We have a designated space on our Professional webpage that is blank with NO names! Now is the season to attract new clients while everything looks green and wonderful. If you want free publicity and a free listing, contact me at deerproof@yahoo.com and we will immediately list you on this page.

We are also looking for **digital photos** for the Members webpage. It is fun to share and enjoy photos of unusual plants. We are especially looking for photos of plants growing here in California.

The Links webpage continues to grow. We recently added **Guadalupe River Park & Gardens**. ~Pat Knight, Webmaster

Bare Root Planting

To start with, what is a bare root plant? Bare root plants are dug up during their dormant time and prepared for sale without any soil, thus bare root. For trees they are generally one to three year old plants and ideally should have 1 ½ - 2 inch trunks. Bare root plants are sold only for a short period, generally mid-winter, as they need to be planted as soon as possible after they are dug up.

The advantages of bare root are numerous. They are less work intensive in preparation and transportation and thus cost saving for production and sale. The bare root plants are easier to plant, without the extra soil, and the roots can be spread out evenly at time of planting. You are also able to see the roots to be sure they are evenly distributed and numerous. Many hard to find varieties are available as bare roots including roses, perennial vegetables, berries and fruit trees. Even with all these advantages there are disadvantages to bare roots plants. The need for rapid planting and narrow seasonal planting window can be a restriction for some gardeners. If the roots dry out before the bare roots are planted the plant will suffer from shock and may not recover.

Where does one get bare root plants? You can still order from catalogs (although that will end soon) and there are still some available at nurseries. But it is best to plan ahead. Consider your needs and desires and plan a spot for a new plant – tree, berry or rose, for example. In November or December, visit your favorite nursery (or check a catalog) to preorder a bare root. You will be able to select exactly the variety you want and be ready to plant when it arrives. ~Abby Garner

Special Western Horticultural Society Events

When you go to the **San Francisco Flower & Garden Show** (March 23-27; San Mateo Event Center) be sure to check out our Hot Plant Picks exhibit. This is the second year that we have organized the exhibit, and we've designed new plant information signs. Let us know what you think. And if you haven't volunteered to staff the exhibit yet, there may be a few openings left. Call Nancy Schramm at (408) 847-2313.

This year we will again hold a **Plant Sale** at the annual Master Gardener Spring Garden Market on April 2, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. at History San Jose, 1650 Senter Road, San Jose. <http://mastergardeners.org/sgm>. **See page 3 for plant sale updates!**

See pacifichorticulture.org for an extensive calendar of horticultural events

Book Review: *The World of Trees*, by Hugh Johnson

This completely revised edition from his tree book of 37 years ago still shares his “excitement of discovering for the first time the beauty and diversity there is in trees ... a beauty and meaning I never suspected.” His subject is trees of temperate latitudes in North America and Europe with mention of related species elsewhere. This volume includes the basic facts of tree life (growth, classification, history, economics, care, plus noteworthy enthusiasts) along with a vast compendium of 600+ species. Several pages of pertinent facts appear at the very end. Mr. Johnson adroitly manages to accentuate trees’ inherent beauty both in word and imagery, creating a portal into the ethereal.

The author elaborates on scientific and practical aspects in a clear prose revealing the breadth and depth of his knowledge. His easy style flourishes in each descriptive passage. Rather than an A to Z genus list, there are two sections: evergreens and broadleaves, wherein genera are grouped by botanical family, some of which are further clustered by similar characteristics. Through a careful selection of imagery, artists’ and photographers’ contributions enhance this work by weaving together a subtle pageantry. Full page spreads provide glimpses into trees’ far-flung natural homes while smaller photos, illustrations, and silhouettes pinpoint their systemic features. This thorough blending of word and image combine with Mr. Johnson’s exuberant love of trees. He happily meets his aim to “bring trees into focus for everybody.”

This volume provides solid facts from which to pursue further conversation, study, and enjoyment of trees for any age of reader. It is certain to become a trusty servant to professionals, a lovely companion for inquiring observers, and a life-saver for any student in a tree identification class! Look for this lavish treatise in an upcoming Silent Auction.

Published by UC Press, 2010, 400 pp., \$34.95. ~ *Mary Ann Griese*

Our Plant Sale on April 2 ~ Updates!

Abby Garner gave us a head’s up on the status of the Master Gardener Spring Market Garden at our Board Meeting. Booth locations have not been decided as yet. Inspection of plants are still required at the two drop off sites – Elizabeth Garbett and Leslie Dean residences. Mark McCabe has, once again, offered his muscle power and huge landscaping truck for the transportation of plants and heavy tables. *See page 2 for details on when/where Spring Garden Market is held.*

Members planning to contribute plants tell of their hits and misses. The Year of the Rabbit has not given Pat Knight an auspicious start. Bunnies ate the perennials she was starting for the sale. A potting party at Elizabeth Garbett’s gained us gorgeous succulents. Judy Wong is working on a host of wonderful pelargonium cultivars and various drought tolerant ornamentals. Sally Casey is donating two interesting bulb plants from South Africa both starting with the letter ‘L,’ *Lachenalia* and *Lapeirousia*. Lee Read has started a couple of the ‘Lost Crops of the Incas’ from the Andean cloud forests, a perennial pepper that grows 8-10’ tall and a beautiful edible canna. In the way of natives, Abby is giving us some of her grasses and Richard Tiede his irises. Jon Craig, of course, always brings a Show Stopper.

Please let me know ASAP if you will help out at our booth as parking is at a premium and goes for \$10 a space but volunteers will get free parking. Our plants are not commonly found in the nurseries. Come early for first dibs!! ~ *Katie Wong, Plant Sale Chair, ALIVENSILK@aol.com,*



Lachenalia aloides ‘Pearsonii’
Photo: Pacific Bulb Society



Canna indica (edible roots)
Photo: Zoom’s Edible Plants

Western Horticultural Society Officers and Board Members

President: Richard Tiede

Vice President: Christine Bate

Recording Secretary: Mark McCabe

Treasurer: Steve Staiger

Other Board Members: Kerry Barrs, Roberta Barnes, Jon Craig, Abby Garner, Ann Griese, 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 1-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 & Address Changes:

Please send submissions for the April newsletter by March 18 to mrm@sonic.net or 650-326-2029.

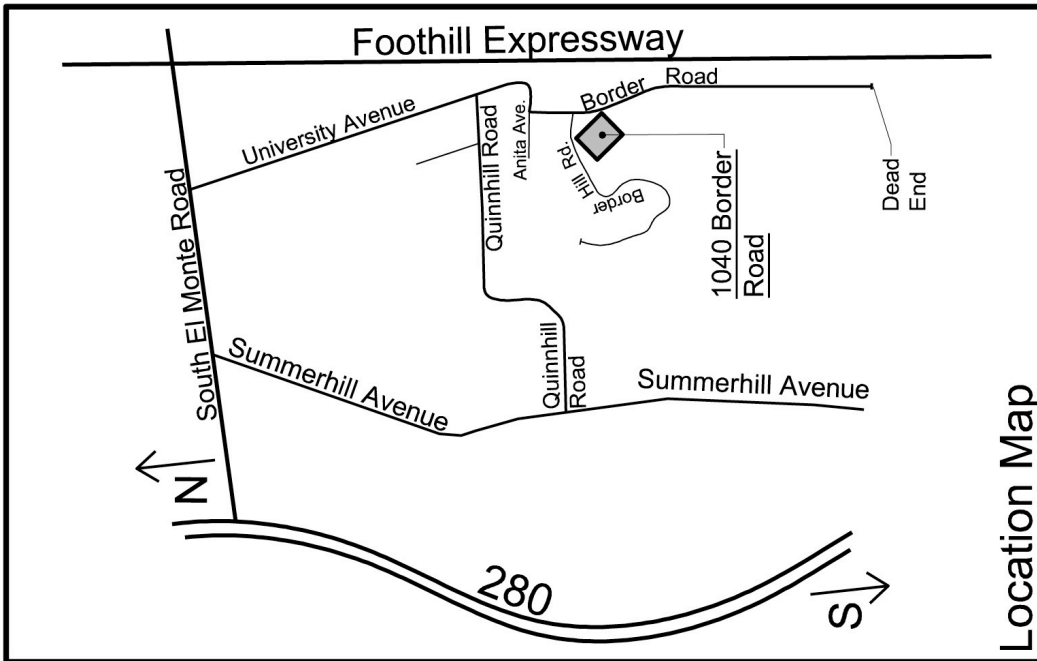
Please send address changes to grew@pacbell.net or 650-851-5162.



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First Class Mail

VISIT US AT WESTERNHORT.ORG



Western Horticultural Society
Monthly Meetings
Christ Episcopal Church
Parish Hall
1040 Border Road, Los Altos 94024