



Holiday Potluck Party

Wednesday, December 14, 2011

All members are invited for a celebration of good company, good food and good music.

Bring a favorite main dish, salad, or dessert to share, as well as your plates, utensils and a bag in which to take unwashed dishes home. The WHS Board will provide appetizers, wine & beverages, cups and glasses. We will collect canned and packaged food for the Second Harvest Food Bank.

We will have books for sale!

The December program is a double treat – an exciting evening with two of our own talented members.

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. For a preview of her videos and lyrics, see Sherry's website: sherry-austin.com.

TED KIPPING'S SLIDESHOW 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. See treeshapers.com for an online gallery of Ted's photos.

The Founders Award will be presented to one of our members on December 14

If you would like to help with decorations or set up, please contact Roberta Barnes at robertabarnes2011@yahoo.com or 650-949-0377.

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 January speaker, Marcia Donahue, for **dinner on January 11** at 5:30 p.m. at Chef Chu's, 1067 N. San Antonio Road, Los Altos (at the corner of El Camino). 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 January Meeting

January 11 Marcia Donahue, "Planting Sculpture, Sculpting Plants"

November 2011 Speaker Notes

With a mixture of seriousness and humor, facts and fun, this month's speaker, Dr. Matt Ritter of Cal Poly, presented "Small Trees for California Gardens" to a big turnout. Dr. Ritter, a professor of botany, began his talk with some eerie projections: a 1990 U.S. climate map in comparison to the same map of 2006, clearly showing the global warming changes we have encountered in roughly fifteen years. He went on to note that until 2008, most people worldwide lived in rural areas. Ritter concluded that biodiversity among plants is diminishing at a rate faster than the last mass extinction, which took place at the end of the Cretaceous period, some 65 million years ago. He stated that there is a possibility of two-thirds of existing terrestrial species becoming extinct by the end of the century.

The purpose of Dr. Ritter's seemingly "doomsday" predictions was not to frighten or discourage the audience, but rather to enlighten and encourage us. He said that his primary purpose of writing his new book, "A Californian's Guide to the Trees Among Us," was to express his love of trees, particularly with their use and effect in the urban forest. Our speaker described California as a conservatory of all the trees of the world, attesting to our climate and growing conditions. Of 8,195 species of plants (native and weedy), Dr. Ritter pointed out this state only grows 6% native trees in our urban forests. Of the 294 native tree species, our speaker identified 78 as suitable for urban environments.

An informative as well as entertaining slide presentation allowed us to see a light-hearted Matt Ritter, who showed us his favorite "smaller" trees, as well as "infrastructural battles" of poor street trees trying to (out)grow their limited spaces of precious earth. Dr. Ritter, who has a special interest in Eucalyptus, commented that there is no "perfect" tree – adding his list could be criticized. During the question and answer portion of his presentation, Ritter stated his opinion of the current "love affair" we Californians have for small or "lollipop"-type trees. Dr. Ritter explained that this focus leads a lack of diversity in the urban landscape, as well as less heat reduction and carbon-oxygen exchange.

From beginning to conclusion, Dr. Ritter informed, entertained and perhaps most importantly, aroused our awareness and enthusiasm for our small spot on this earth – using small (and not so small) trees to make our lives healthier and happier. ~Mark McCabe

Western Hort News

Speakers Committee

The planning session for the 2012-2013 season will take place at the end of January, 2012. Now is your chance to make suggestions or requests for speaker programs. Please contact Pat Knight at deerproof@yahoo.com. ~Pat Knight

The Botanical Obsession: Prints and Porcelain

A talk for the San Francisco Ceramic Circle at the Florence Gould Theater, Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco Sunday, January 15, 2012, 10:00 a.m.

Pat Knight, a former WHS Board member, current chair of the Speakers Committee, and Webmaster will show how horticulture in the eighteenth century had an effect on artists and how in turn botanical prints had an impact on the decoration of porcelain. This is a digital powerpoint presentation with fascinating gardening history and great slides. The lecture is free after the museum entrance. Pat would love to see you there!

Raffle Table

Our raffle committee outdid themselves! Wonderful plants on the raffle table and silent auction last month raised \$217 for Western Hort. Please help support the independently owned nurseries that donated plants and gift certificates: Los Altos Nursery, which reopens in spring ~ Redwood City Nursery ~ Sierra Azul/Rosendale Nursery in Watsonville ~ Common Ground in Palo Alto ~ Roger Reynold's Nursery in Menlo Park ~ Annie's Annuals in Richmond. ~Roberta Barnes

Garden Book Sale at Yamagami's a Great Success

Graciously hosted by Yamagami's nursery and generously stocked with donations from members and friends, the Garden Book Sale held on November 12th was a great success. We had a wide range of books, many volunteers to transport, price and display the books, and some wonderful aprons for the volunteers to wear, all stamped with "Western Horticulture Society." This was a great way of making ourselves known in the community and at the same time replenishing our funds. We made \$322, a good reason to say congratulations and thank you to all the volunteers who made this a successful event. ~Christine Bate and Rosalie Shepherd

News from the Website, westernhort.org

The website is a great resource for our society. This month I recommend you explore "Plant Notes." We have many pages of past plant notes (six years!) where you can see what fellow WHS members are growing. And with the "Founders Award" being presented at the Holiday party, you would enjoy looking at the Founders Award link to read about those members who received the award in past years and who have helped make this such a great society. ~Pat Knight, Webmaster

28 Years Ago

The WHS board met on October 19, 1983. One of the continuing concerns was about finding a new meeting place since there were ongoing problems at the Ampex location. Charles Burr spoke to the board and suggested moving the meetings closer to the Santa Clara Valley where he thought there was a potential for great interest in the organization. At that time meeting attendance averaged 100 persons. It was suggested that Betsy Clebsch might be willing to take over the duty for writing up plant notes from Emily Brown. On November 14th the general membership met to hear Don Dillon of Four Winds Nursery talk about (you only get ONE guess) "For Beauty and Use—Citrus for the Home Grounds."

Plant notes included *Polystichum aculeatum* 'Dahleri' which sometimes forms "buds" that Gerda Isenberg used for propagation (quicker than spores), a "curiosity plant" *Homalocladium platycladium*, and four blooming plants brought in by Ed Carman: *Reinwardtia indica*, *Cuphea micropetala*, *Leycesteria formosa*, and *Montanoa grandiflora*. ~Nancy Schramm

Matt Ritter's Favorite "Smaller" Trees for Western Gardens (Handout for 11/9/11 WHS meeting)

1. <i>Acacia stenophylla</i> (Shoestring Acacia)	11. <i>Eucalyptus nutans</i> (Red Flowering Moort)
2. <i>Acer buergerianum</i> (Trident Maple)	12. <i>Eucalyptus caesia</i> (Silver Princess)
3. <i>Acer campestre</i> (Hedge Maple)	13. <i>Luma apiculata</i> (Luma)
4. <i>Betula nigra</i> (River Birch)	14. <i>Melaleuca linariifolia</i> (Snow in Summer Tree)
5. <i>Brahea edulis</i> (Guadalupe Palm)	15. <i>Michelia champaca</i> (Champaca)
6. <i>Chilopsis linearis</i> (Desert Willow)	16. <i>Michelia doltsopa</i> (Sweet Michelia)
7. <i>Elaeocarpus decipiens</i> (Japanese Blueberry Tree)	17. <i>Parrotia persica</i> (Persian Ironwood)
8. <i>Erythrina crista-galli</i> (Cockspur Coral Tree)	18. <i>Quillaja saponaria</i> (Soapbark Tree)
9. <i>Eucalyptus forrestiana</i> (Fuchsia Gum)	19. <i>Tristanopsis laurina</i> (Water Gum)
10. <i>Eucalyptus kruseana</i> (Book Leaved Mallee)	20. <i>Vitex lucens</i> (New Zealand Chaste Tree)

'A Californian's Guide to the Trees Among Us'

By Matt Ritter Illustrated. 153 pages. Heyday, Berkeley, California.

The author notes in his introduction "There are approximately 350,000 species of plants in the world, and about 60,000 of these grow as trees." Although thousands of different species of trees are grown in California, the same group of 150 or so species are widely planted. *A Californian's Guide to the Trees Among Us* is a natural history and identification guide to these species: the most commonly grown trees in urban and suburban landscapes in California. These 150 species are found in 90 genera and 35 families. The myrtle, legume and rose families are the most well-represented, but the species are widely distributed among the seed-bearing plants.

A startling chart in the introduction lists the origins of California's urban trees:

33%	Australia
25%	East Asia, China & Japan
13%	Europe & Mediterranean
11%	South & Central America
9%	Remainder of North America
6%	California
2%	New Zealand
1%	Africa

Ritter lists the 150 species in alphabetical order by genus, in three broad categories: conifers, broad-leaved or flowering trees, and palms. He presents a clear identification key that is easy to use with a little practice. Photos of elements that would help identify a tree are on every page, whether leaves, buds, flowers, seeds, bark ... as well as a small diagram of the full-grown form. Quite a few additional keys, such as a key to identifying maples, are included with the tree descriptions. In addition to the maples, keys are given for Araucaria, Pine, Acacia, Alder, Brachychiton, Catalpas, Hackberry, Eucalyptus, Ficus, Ash, Melaleuca, Pittosporum, Prunus, Oak, Tilia, Elm, and Palm.

Engaging descriptions include capsule histories and stories of the tree along with botanical features and cultural requirements, and brief notes on the etymology of the tree's name. Each page has at least one tree quote – flipping through the book and reading quotes can be like reading a long ode to the tree.

"Let us try to understand what trees are and we will be perplexed by their mixture of unchanging presence yet complete otherness" (Francis Halle) accompanies the description of *Pyrus kawakamii* (Evergreen Pear, Taiwan, Simple, Alternate, Evergreen, 20-30 ft.) "No town fails to be beautiful, though its walks are gutters and its houses hovels, if venerable trees make magnificent colonnades along its streets" (Henry Ward Beecher). "Trees are Earth's endless effort to speak to the listening heaven" (Rabindranath Tagore).

Short tables appear here and there nestled in among the tree descriptions: California's Most Fragrant Trees (a list of ten trees), Hobo Trees (ten common trees along California's roadways and railroad tracks), California's Showiest Trees, California's Notorious Moreton Bay Figs (eight trees with their planting date and latitude/longitude), The Ten Trees Most Likely to Trip You on the Sidewalk, California's Largest Urban Trees, Eleven Most Widely Cultivated Urban Trees, California's Weediest Trees, Trees with Great Fall Color in California and California's "Old-Timey" Trees (planted in California long ago and now regularly found near old home sites and missions). Each table makes for fascinating reading!

Matt Ritter hopes we will "take the book with us on walks and use it to identify unknown trees, watch them change throughout the year, place a hand on the bark, feel the leaves and smell the flowers." I'm off for a walk! ~*Marianne Mueller*

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 January 2012 newsletter by December 18, 2011 to Marianne Mueller, mrm@sonic.net or 650-326-2029.

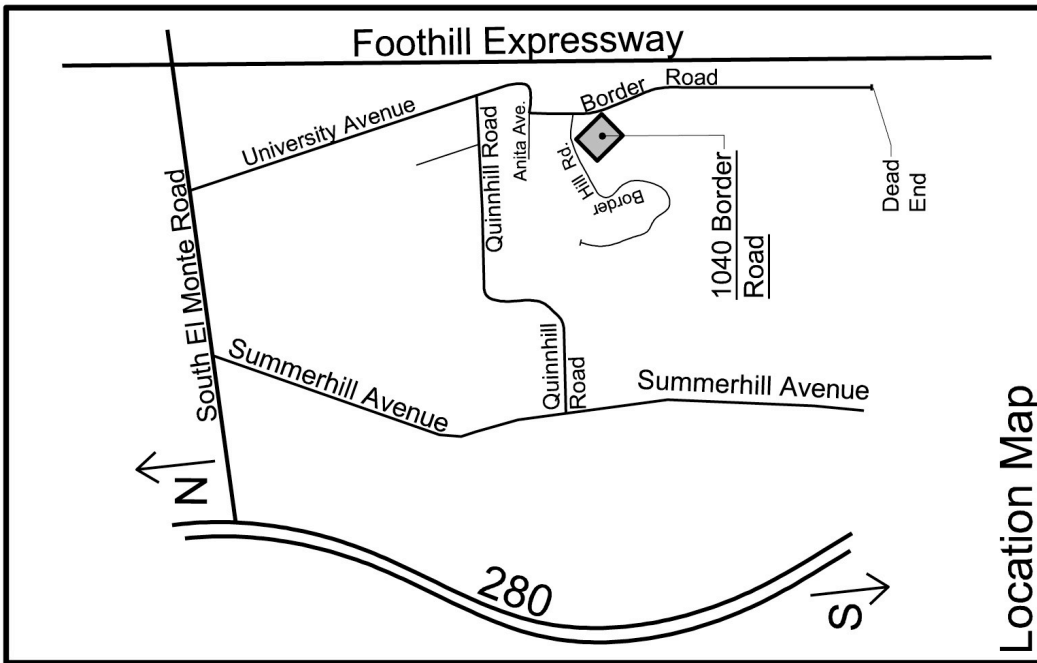
Please send address changes to grew@pacbell.net or 650-851-5162.



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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