

May
2010



Western Horticultural Society

www.westernhort.org • PO Box 60507 • Palo Alto • California • 94306

WHS May Speaker

May 12: Rosemary Foster, Landscape Designer and Horticultural Consultant, Carmel, California

“Lester Rowntree: Contributions to Native Plant Horticulture”

This talk is made possible by a generous gift to WesternHort by Judith Eagle of Bel Air, Maryland, sister-in-law of our member Leslie Dean. Judith is interested in the topic of this program and she also loves the horticultural aspect of Rosemary's name.

Rosemary Foster studied horticulture and botany at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo and is a horticultural consultant in Carmel. Her current projects include compiling and editing a collection of Lester Rowntree's articles on the horticultural use of California native plants for publication by the California Native Plant Society.

Lester G. E. Rowntree (1879-1979) was fifty-two when she decided to travel through the California mountains, deserts,

and forests. Rowntree shared her extensive knowledge of California native plants through public lectures, hundreds of magazine articles and two books. Like John Muir, she was passionately concerned about California and argued zealously for the protection of the state's abundant flora. Her work has remained an inspiration in native plant horticulture and plant conservation to this day.

Rosemary Foster's bibliography of Lester Rowntree's periodical publications (720 entries) was recently published by UC Press in the reprint of Rowntree's *Hardy Californians*. This new edition also includes a comprehensive biographical essay, a chapter on Rowntree's horticultural legacy and an updated species list.

Hardy Californians was first published in 1936. It is an eloquent description of California and its plant life. In graceful prose, Lester Rowntree takes us along on her annual seed-collecting journey through the state and gives a concise introduction to the complexities of California flora, climate, and geography. This book also gives information on the suitability of many native California plants for the garden.

Our monthly meetings feature the speakers listed above; doors open at 7pm and meetings begin at 7:30. The location is at Christ Episcopal Church, 1040 Border Road, Los Altos. Please also join our speaker for dinner prior to the meeting at Chef Chu's at 5:30pm at the corner of El Camino Real and San Antonio Avenue. This is a terrific opportunity for our members to get to know each other better, and to get to chat with our speakers. Please call Pat Knight to confirm at 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.

The next newsletter deadline will be in mid-August for the September 2010 newsletter. The May issue will be the last newsletter edited by Michelle Bosch, so please contact Richard Tiede at rtiede@pacbell.net for newsletter content.

Please contact Jessie Schilling at grew@pacbell.net with any changes of address.



The WHS Annual Picnic: A Hidden Gem in Los Altos Hills

Everyone is invited to our annual potluck picnic at Steve Boboricken's place on Saturday, June 12 from 10am-2pm, located at 11870 Francemont Drive, Los Altos Hills CA 94022. Come experience the horticultural history and Steve's dynamism in a quiet peaceful yet wild setting. Sign up at our next meeting. We hope to see you there! ~ *Katie Wong*



Wanted: A New Editor for the WHS Newsletter

After over 4 years as the WHS newsletter editor, I will be moving on to other things, and we are in need of a new editor. You can start from scratch yourself with a new format or creative layout that you may have in mind, or you are welcome to use the existing layout format for the newsletter—whatever you wish (the current newsletter is edited in Microsoft Publisher 2000.) In addition to gathering and editing newsletter content each month, duties also include emailing newspapers in the local Bay Area about our upcoming lectures, and coordinating the printing of the newsletter with various board members. Are you interested in being the new WHS newsletter editor? If so, please contact either Richard Tiede at rtiede@pacbell.net or Christine Bate at batece@yahoo.com. Thank you! ~ *Michelle Bosch*

Reminder: Have you picked up your WHS membership roster yet? If not, please try to remember to pick them up at the May meeting!

More Western Hort Business and News...

Raffle Table

We had a tremendous assortment of plants on the raffle table, thanks to all the nurseries who donated plants to the Hot Plant Picks Exhibit at the SF Flower & Garden Show in March. There was spirited bidding at the silent auction, and some very happy plants that went to their new homes. We raised over \$800 in the auction, money that will help us continue to bring excellent speakers to educate and entertain the membership. If you didn't get the plant you wanted, be sure to look on the WHS website where our webmaster, Pat Knight has posted a list of all the plants in the exhibit. Thanks to everyone who helped the night of the auction. The May raffle table will consist of plants from the WHS plant sale. Come and get a great deal! ~ Nancy Schramm

28 Years Ago...

On April 12, 1982, WHS heard William Theobald, Director of the Pacific Tropical Botanical Garden in Hawaii, speak, show slides, and present a 16mm sound film *The Tropics in Time*—about destruction of the rain forests of the world. There was an article on the garden in the summer 1980 issue of *Pacific Horticulture*. The newsletter included an announcement of a new introduction by Saratoga Horticultural Foundation: *Maytenus boaria* 'Green Showers'. There were many blooming plants discussed at the meeting, including *Gloriosa 'Rothschildiana'*, *Corokia cotoneaster*, *Pleione bulbicoides*, and several *Trilliums*.

In May, Dr. Bruce Bartholomew, curator of the Botanical Garden at U.C. Berkeley, presented a slide lecture "Plant Collecting in Chiapas, Mexico." Here's a bit straight from the plant notes: "Clematis is fragile, especially to transport. Betsy Clebsch had her three specimens tastefully arranged in three narrow containers and their individuality could be viewed without confusion. Ed (Carman) picked up the three, tipped them gently for examination and all crashed to the floor, splashing water around generously. Nothing broke, not even a petal." And to end the year, the June picnic was held at Hakone Gardens.

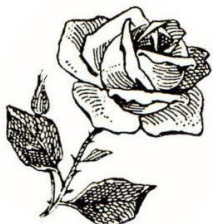
~ Nancy Schramm

Field Trip to Quarryhill Botanical Garden

On April 17th, sixteen of us enjoyed a quiet, beautiful tour of Quarryhill Botanical Garden near Glen Ellen in Sonoma. The weather was perfect. Although Bill McNamara, the Executive Director, had just returned from China 24 hours earlier, he was still gracious enough to lead us on a tour which lasted over two hours. I thought the tour meaningful due to the vision and concern of this organization to save Asian plants from extinction. Be sure to visit our web site and check out the exciting pictures taken by our members. Also consider becoming a member of the Garden so they can continue their unique work. www.quarryhillbg.org. ~ Janice Gillmore

"I don't know whether nice people tend to grow roses or growing roses makes people nice."

~ Roland A. Beowne



Commentary on Last Month's Speakers

To mow or not to mow, that is the question, at least in the opinion of April's speaker, Deva Luna of Earth Care Landscaping. Luna, a master gardener and garden designer, delivered an eye-opening and thought-provoking presentation titled 'Alternatives to Thirsty Lawns'. The purpose of the talk was to make folks aware of and consider alternatives to the traditional lawn-dominated suburban garden. She started by showing our group slides of two gardens, side by side, owned by the city of Santa Monica. The before and after pictures were telling – ten years after installation, the lawn-less yard saved considerable hours of maintenance, gallons of water, and cubic yards of green waste.

Ms. Luna offered more slides showing different gardens paired with various styles of home architecture, all using 'lawn-less' designs. She also showed theme gardens, including children's, butterfly, habitat, sculpture, edible, meditation, and cactus gardens. The speaker suggested herbs, groundcovers, and meadows as suitable lawn substitutes. Another example she discussed was the 'Eco-Lawn', which is a mixture of seed-grown yarrow, red fescue, and clover. While rough in texture, it is hardy and able to withstand foot traffic. She also mentioned that commercially grown native grasses are now being produced in sod form.

If someone is interested in establishing a meadow, Luna advised a 'relaxed' attitude towards the meadow in the sense of the normal expectations of a picture-perfect, mowed lawn, and the willingness to hand-weed frequently until it is established. Given the conditions of future droughts, extensive turf grass maintenance practices and the monetary outlay to keep a lawn thriving, it might just be something a homeowner would consider. ~ Mark McCabe

Other Horticultural Events...

The Garden Conservancy: Open Days in the South Bay and a Lecture at Villa Montalvo

Visit four private gardens in Saratoga, Monte Sereno and Los Gatos, all in close proximity to each other, on Sunday, May 2, from 10am-4pm. The garden tours are self-guided, and no reservations are taken. A \$5 admission fee is collected at each garden, and the proceeds support the national preservation work of the Garden Conservancy. For more information and descriptions of the gardens go to www.opendaysprogram.org or call 1-888-842-2442.

In addition to the private gardens being open, the Italianate Garden at Montalvo Arts Center will be having a free informal talk at 1 pm, "The Italianate Garden Arrives in California", given by Betsy Fryberger. Box lunches are available to order ahead of time. Free parking on site.

CNPS Native Plant Sale

Saturday, May 1st, 10am-3pm

Scores of species of native plants, seeds, and bulbs suitable for California gardens on sale. Native plant books and wildflower related items on sale. Proceeds fund chapter activities such as Gardening With Natives, field trips, conservation, and education. Cash or check only. No pets. Organized by California Native Plant Society. Hidden Villa Ranch, 26870 Moody Road, Los Altos Hills. 2 miles west of I-280. Free parking. Come early for the best selection; bring boxes to carry your purchases home. Info: visit: www.cnps-scv.org or call (650) 260-3450.

The Presidio Garden Lecture Series at the Walt Disney Family Museum

The Garden Conservancy is launching a new series of talks in San Francisco at the Presidio. Talks begin at 7pm and will be preceded by a reception at 6pm. General admission for each event is \$35; Garden Conservancy members \$30. A "two-lecture" discount is available for registrants to both Presidio Garden Lectures (gen. admission \$60; Garden Conservancy members \$50). Registration is available online at www.gardenconservancy.org.

Hearst's San Simeon: The Gardens and the Land Wednesday, May 5, 7pm
Victoria Kastner, author and historian, discusses her new book, *Hearst's San Simeon: The Gardens and the Land*

Landscape Scenography: Setting the Stage for Garden Mystery Wednesday, June 23, 7pm
Elizabeth Boults and Chip Sullivan, authors of the recently released book, *Illustrated History of Landscape Design*, will examine how garden designers past and present choreograph and sequence landscape space.

Ruth Bancroft Garden: Mother's Day Tours

Sunday May 9th, 10am-3pm
Featuring docent tours of the gardens, with refreshments. Location: The Ruth Bancroft Garden, 1500 Bancroft Road, Walnut Creek
Call (925)210-9663 for more information.

Quarryhill's Annual Spring Celebration

Saturday June 5th, 10am-3pm

Featuring a catered lunch, silent auction, plant sale, and a guest speaker; visit the website for more details.

Quarryhill Botanical Garden, 12841 Sonoma Hwy, Glen Ellen
Call (707)996-3166 or email info@quarryhillbg.org for more information.

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, Christine Bate, Jon Craig, Chris Egan, Abby Garner, Sherry Hall, Daxin Liu, Niki Muller, Nancy Schramm, Katie Wong

To contact us, please email us at: info@westernhort.org

Membership in Western Hort:

To join, send in your name, address, phone number and a check made out to:

Western Horticultural Society

PO Box 60507 Palo Alto, CA, 94306

Membership rates: A 1 year membership (Sept-Aug) of \$35 includes 4 issues of Pacific Horticulture magazine; Sustaining is \$45; Contributing is \$60 and Plant Lover is \$100+. We have also added a family membership rate of \$50 for two or more members of the same household, and a Student rate of \$20.

Please visit our web site at www.westernhort.org for a membership form.

May Classes at Common Grounds, Palo Alto

Alternatives to Lawns

Deva Luna Saturday, May 1 2-4pm; \$31

Drip Irrigation

Frank Niccoli Saturday, May 8 2-4pm; \$31

How to Start Your Vegetable Garden

Jody Main Saturday, May 15 10:30 - 12:30; \$31 + \$5 materials fee

Starting Your Summer Garden

Drew Harwell Saturday, May 22 10:30 - 12:30; \$31

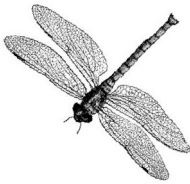
Climate and Microclimate for Gardeners

Pam Peirce Saturday, May 2 10:30 - 12:30; \$31

To register for classes call (650)493-6072.

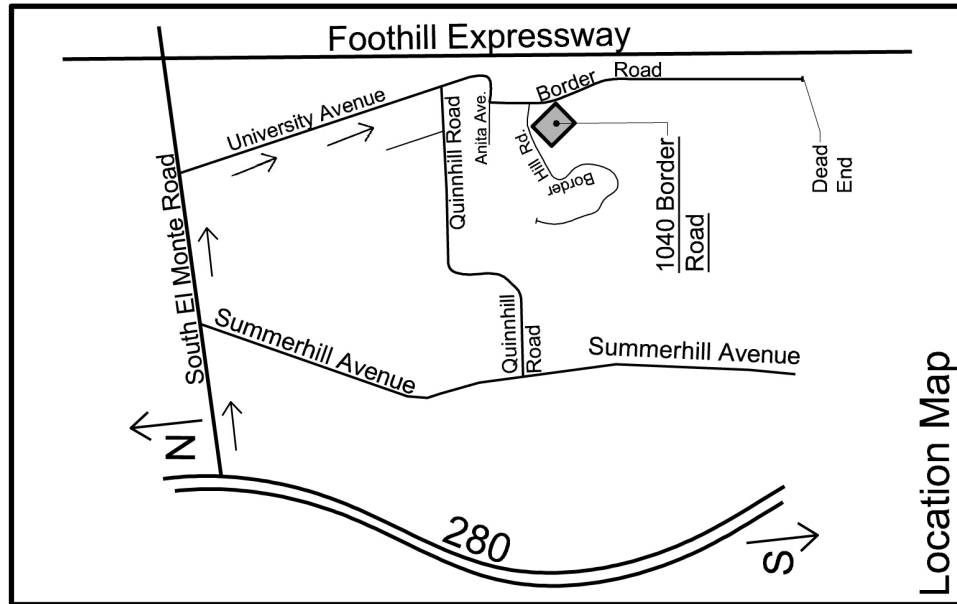
Seniors and low-income persons may request a \$4 discount on classes.





PO Box 60507
Palo Alto, California
First Class Mail

VISIT US AT WWW.WESTERNHORT.ORG



Western Horticultural Society
Monthly Meeting
Christ Episcopal Church
1040 Border Road, Los Altos