



Sacramento Perennial Plant Club NEWSLETTER

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www.sacramentoperennialplantclub.com

May/June 2010

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MAY PROGRAM SPEAKER

Dr. Paul Licht

The Difference Between a Garden and a Plant Collection
Shepard Garden and Arts Center
Thursday, May 27, 2010 at 7:00 PM

Dr Paul Licht joined the UC Berkeley faculty in the Department of Zoology in 1964 and has spent the last 45 years serving in various capacities at Cal. Berkeley.

Although he has generated 300 publications with his research programs in animal physiology, his background was not devoid of plants. Dr Licht co-taught introductory biology with several eminent Berkeley botanists. While in graduate school for his PhD at The University of Michigan, he took extensive course work in botany. (Incidentally he met his wife Barbara 47 years ago in one of these botany classes - *spring wildflowers* although he wasn't very interested in gardens or gardening at the time.) In 1994 he became the Dean of Biological Sciences and that is when his interest in gardens really first started to blossom.

Beginning with a modest garden patch in a relatively large weedy back yard, his love of gardening and gardens grew. It was during this period that he rediscovered and fell in love with the UC Botanical Garden and became more intimately involved in its operation. During his tenure as Dean he was first involved in recruiting the Garden Director and then actively raised funds for the UC Botanical Garden. Dr Licht was successful in funding the new major research Greenhouse, at the cost of almost two million dollars.

In 2002 he stepped down from the Dean's office with the intent of taking a restorative sabbatical and then retiring. However, when the opportunity arose to step into the role of Director at the Botanical Garden, he couldn't say no. The rest is history or will be.

JUNE PROGRAM SPEAKER

Ernie Buda

European Honey Bees: Good for Us, Our Plants & Environment
Shepard Garden and Arts Center; Thursday, June 24, 2010, 7:00 PM

Ernie Buda has been 'retired' for almost 14 years. During this time he has been Owner/Builder of his home he shares with his wife of fifty years in Sloughhouse, besides doing some contracting work.

Mr. Buda became interested in beekeeping about four years ago. His beekeeping efforts have been modest, with the intent of never growing it past the hobby stage. None the less, last year he harvested 250lbs of honey (about 20 gallons) from his four beehives. To offset some of the hobby cost, he sells some of the excess product on an informal 'word of mouth' basis. His chosen beekeeping style is to help the bees do what they do and uses neither chemicals nor organic compounds for treatments of his hives.

Along with being past-president of Sacramento Area Beekeepers Association (SABA), Ernie currently serves on the Executive Board of SABA. During his tenure as president, he oversaw the growth of the Association from forty members to their current membership of well over two hundred members. He also expanded the training program: originally two classes per year to nine this year. In doing so, he has been able to provide beekeeping information to nearly three hundred budding beekeepers. He hopes that his presentation will encourage some of us to take up urban beekeeping

Perennial Plant Club



MAY GARDEN TOUR
William Land Park Gardens
And Private Gardens
Saturday May 22, 2010 at 8:30AM

Daisy Mah will lead us on a tour of the W.P.A. rock garden and pond garden in William Land Park. If you have not been, or it has been a while since you've been in the garden, you are in for a horticultural treat. Daisy's tour will last about 2 hours. We will then tour a couple of private gardens, (directions to homes will be given out at the Rock Garden). We will meet at William Land Park. Exit Sutterville Road off of Interstate 5, go east. Turn left on Land Park Drive, stay to the right just past Fairytale Town. Turn right on 15th Avenue, just beyond the amphitheater. The garden is just across from Fairytale Town.



PLACES YOU MIGHT WANT TO VISIT **Sonoma Horticultural Nursery**

Sonoma Horticultural Nursery is located in Sebastopol, California, and is open Thursday thru Monday from 9:00am to 5:00pm. They specialize in growing rhododendrons and azaleas, and also carry a wide selection of shade-loving trees, shrubs and perennials. The nursery and gardens are open all year and visitors are welcome to tour the eight acres of demonstration gardens. The gardens are beautiful in May with all the large rhododendrons in bloom around the pond. www.sonomahort.com

Big Spring Gardens

Long before there was a garden, Big Springs was a site of unbelievable natural beauty. Big Springs Gardens is a private 118 acre parcel in Sierra City, California largely surrounded by national forest. The gardens are 30 acres of unexcelled beauty with 23 acres of native growth and 7 acres of plantings of flowers, shrubs, and trees to enhance the natural beauty of the site. Big Springs Gardens opens Friday, June 11 and closes Sunday, August 29, 2010. Reservations are required. Call Don Phillips 530-862-1333 www.bigspringsgardens.com



JUNE GARDEN TOUR
UC Berkeley Botanical Gardens
200 Centennial Drive, Berkeley, California
510-643-2755
Saturday, June 5, 2010 at 10:00 A.M.

Join us as we are led by knowledgeable docents through some of the 34 acres of diverse plant collection including many rare and endangered plants. Established in 1890, the garden has over 13,000 different kinds of plants from around the world, cultivated by region in naturalistic landscapes. There is no way to see the diverse collection in one visit. Our tour will be about 2-hours with the expectation that you will return again and again. With over 12,000 different kinds of plants, a 2-hour (120-minute) visit would require that you see 100 different kinds of plants per minute to experience the entire collection. (A much faster pace than we want to attempt.)

We will be taking our own transportation for this tour. Additional information will be sent closer to the event date.

PLEASE NOTE: *They have asked for a 'head count' by May 15th!* If you are interested, please contact Bea Little – 916-296-7882 - bealittle1@juno.com

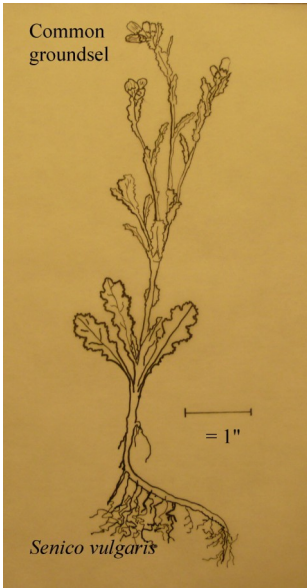


JULY GARDEN TOUR
Lake of the Sky Garden Tour
Saturday July 31, 2010 10:00AM to 4:00PM
Lake Tahoe West Shore, California

The 22nd annual garden tour sponsored by the Lake of the Sky Garden Club. View 7 gardens including two lake-front gardens. Get away from the July heat and tour some gardens in the cool air of Tahoe. For ticket information: go to lake-of-the-sky.org. Tickets are \$20.00. Tickets go on sale at local Tahoe/Truckee nurseries after June 15th.



What's Bugging Me Now!
Sue Mortensen



Round Up won't kill it. Pre-emergents are not effective. A single flower can put out seventeen hundred seed. It cares not about the soil, thriving where others won't grow. The seed left by just a few flowers will quickly turn into a massive crop. One source claims to have documented seed surviving in the soil for fifty years. Seedlings mature rapidly, producing several life cycles in a season. Like me, this annual is most happy in the springtime. It loves it when you disturb the soil to expose more seed for germinating. Here in the valley it croaks in summer dry heat. However, groundsel will flower nearly year round if irrigated. Don't include this in your salads. A steady diet or huge feast of it can cause liver damage or failure. In Colorado it makes the noxious weed list. The only real way to control an infestation is to get ahead of the seed. Manually remove or mow new growth before flower. Within other plants this can become a huge chore, reason to take charge right away. If not, the seed will hitch right on to your gardening equipment, your shoes and trousers or drift around on a breeze. As with any undesirable, blocking seed from germination may have some effect. Use of mulch to block light will slow it up until the soil is disturbed. Trust me, the best action is prevention! *Senecio vulgaris*, common groundsel, it's bugging me.



This column is intended to discuss current nuisance and problems happening in the home garden. If you find it helpful (or not) let me know. If you have a problem (not personal) you would like to address here let me know. No promises, but try is might. Keep your knees dirty



Clematis x durandii

Herbaceous/Integrifolia Group (1870 Durand) – Deep indigo-blue, 4-in. semi-nodding flowers. An older variety but still unsurpassed. Flowers summer to autumn. Height: 4-6 feet, Prune hard (group 3), Zones: 4-9, Sun/ Part Shade. ‘Durandii’ is Saul and Julie Wiseman’s favorite clematis. This clematis does not attach itself to other plants or structures with its leaf stalks; it will climb thru shrubs and support itself or crawl and weave among the perennials.

Board Meetings

The next two Perennial Plant club Board of Directors meetings will be held May 18th at Barbara Lane-Piert (916-362-5337), and June 8th at Judy Waegell (916-423-1771). As always, board meetings are open to all members. These meetings are a great chance to see how the club is run and where you might like to help. We also get a chance to tour the wonderful gardens of our members before dinner. Friends, gardens, food, and club business. Can't beat that! Meetings begin at 5 PM and start with a potluck dinner – informative *and* delicious. There will be no board meetings in July and August.

Perennial Plant Club

Super Salvias Ellen Zagory

Since I have become interested in watching the creatures that visit my flowers I have realized that members of the genus *Salvia*, or sage, are very popular with both insects and hummingbirds. Right now in my garden at home my culinary sage, *Salvia officinalis*, is blooming beautifully, and a-buzz with honey bees, benefiting these belea- with its nectar. The flowers match beauti- blooming bearded Wolford', with its lavender flowers. variety of this sage, shines year-round pewter foliage and compact form. The clones 'Purpurea' with purplish foliage and 'Icterina' with golden variegated leaves are also available and useful for color in the garden though I have not found them to be as vigorous and durable as the non-colored forms.



honey bees, bene- guered creatures light-lavender fully with my iris, *Iris* 'Edith bicolor cream and Nearby, a dwarf 'Berggarten', with its broader

Another sage that I think belongs in every garden is *Salvia greggii* or one of the very similar *Salvia Xjamensis* cultivars. Available in an amazing variety of colors, deep red, bicolor, peach, yellow or white, I have found the toughest ones so far to be the reds and the pure white forms. Since they tend to be brittle it is important to give them a good pruning once or twice a year to shape the structure of the base and avoid long, dangly stems. Blooming beautifully right now they can be shaped when the spring bloom starts to fade and will come back like gangbusters for a great autumn show. Hence the common name autumn sage. The



bicolor 'Sierra San Antonio' is peach and cream on the same flower and has gotten lots of attention this spring as well as a new (to us) orangey form that was received only as 'Coral'.

For those tough spots try *Salvia microphylla* with flowers like the Gregg's salvia but with a broader form and egg-shaped leaves. A use it in a prob- hot sun in sum- this plant up after it pop back. It is hot pink forms. **Lips**" is reputed has flowers that and change colors with temperature and light exposure. I



very adaptable plant I lematic "shade in winter, mer" spots. Just tidy a cold winter and watch available in both red and The crazy clone "Hot to be of this species. It are bicolor red and white

have heard rumors however that after a while it may just make red flowers.

For long season of bloom and happy honeybees another great plant is *Salvia X sylvestris* both the cultivar 'Mainacht' (May Night) and 'Blauhugel' (Blue Hills). Extremely long blooming these are true her- baceous perennials, that is, they do not form woody stems. Cut them down after bloom- ing and they will overwinter as a small mat. Perfect to use with tiny daffodils, the new growth will cover the drying foliage of the narcissus while the winter growing bulbs will keep you from accidentally digging or stepping on your dormant sages!



For wildlife lovers who want hummingbirds there is no better plant than the native *Salvia spathacea*, aptly named the humming- we received Nursery blooming in strong in on this plant buzzing from smaller leaf,



bird sage. A dwarf form from Cornflower Farms called 'Las Pilitas' started February and is still going May. I see hummingbirds every day, darting and spike to spike. With a and shorter and paler flow- ers, at first I didn't like it as much as the taller, dark- flowered form. But its attractiveness to the hummingbirds (along with the red autumn sages mentioned above) has made me want to plant even more of it.

Other favorite California native sages are the *Salvia cleve- landii* selections both the larger, lavender-flowered clones like 'Allen Chickering' and 'Aromas' and the darker and more compact 'Winifred Gilman'. Woody at the base like the autumn sages these also need thoughtful pruning and shaping once or twice a year. Butterflies like the local pipevine swallowtail have been seen sipping nectar from the flowers.

So here are just a few of my favorite sages, fragrant of fo- liage and beautiful in bloom. But wait, what about the truly drought tolerant *Salvia apiana* with its white foliage? Or the fuzzy purple autumn flowers of the double purple form of the Mexican bush sage, *Salvia leucantha*? Or the deep blue flowers of the shade tolerant *Salvia guaran- itica*?

So many plants so little time.....

Salvia guaranitica
"Black N Blue"
Floresflower.com



Summer Gardening

Bob Hamm

June is the month that straddles spring and summer, with the Summer Solstice (the LONGEST day of the year) starting the summer season on June 21st.

These extremely long days cause plants to grow very rapidly and coupled with warmer temperatures make plants dry out quickly if you are not attentive to watering. The rapid growth also uses up nutrients in the soil and means regular feedings are a big help especially with potted plants where nutrients leach out even faster than in the ground.

Now having said that – let me also say that there are some plants that do all their yearly leaf growth in one or two spurts and then just sit seeming not to grow (although root growth continues) the rest of the year. Examples are Helleborus, which adds leaves in the fall and spring, sitting the rest of the year. Dogwood which often finishes its year's growth by June and just sits the rest of the season. Camellias, many Rhododendrons and Azaleas, Pieris and others often have one big burst of springtime growth. In fact with the exception of Hellebores, all of the above mentioned examples begin to set NEXT years flower buds by early July and should not be pruned after early June or you will cut off the buds for next spring.

Some plants such as the Tradescantia (Spiderwort) may look lanky and worn. If these are cut back hard; they will sprout new foliage and rebloom. Hostas that are badly eaten by snail and look bad, can also be cut to the ground,

fed and will grow fresh new foliage. Several of the large fall bloomers, such as tall asters, perennial sunflowers, etc can be trimmed back now to prevent excessive height. Other plants that can benefit from a July haircut (pruning) include Veronica after it has finished blooming (will often rebloom after trimming), items that may have burned in the hot July weather and fall bloomers such as Pineapple and Mexican Sages to keep them smaller and more compact.

Seeds of fast growing annuals such as cosmos and sunflowers can be planted into the garden in June to provide color in the normally dull August and September period.

Fast maturing vegetables such as zucchini and bush beans only take about 60 days to produce a crop, so they can be seeded through June and well into July. Place a few in empty spots in the flower garden. Seed dill into the garden in July, it will be ready when the late summer cucumbers are ready for picking. DILL grows FAST.

Iris are normally dug and divided in July (with the foliage being cut back and a new burst of growth in late summer establishing them). Another perennial that can be moved or divided in July or early August is Hemerocallis (Daylilies). Again, trim back the foliage and even if it dies back, a whole new set of foliage will emerge, and some varieties may even rebloom in the fall.

Bob's summer Plant Sales at the Gifted Gardener

May 22nd & 23rd , June 5th & 6th, and the 19th & 20th, July 17th & 18th, and August 21st & 22nd. Plant sale from 10:00am to 4:00am. Phone 916-943-6183



SUCCESSFUL SPRING PLANT SALE!

Madeleine Mullins

Many thanks to these members who gave their time to make The Spring Plant Sale such a success, our best sale ever: - Judy O'Toole, Jeanne Claypool, Arlene Ciccarella, Ann Porten, Jane Thompson, Wayne Martinson, Mary Monteiro, Bob Padgett, Kathie McLean, Janice and Bill Sutherland, Jeanne and Chris Christopherson, Pat McKnight, Bobby Frieze, Sharon Patrician, John Bodie and his magic truck, Mae Ferral, Peggy Gerick, Bea Little, Karen Resch, Anne Kempees, Lynn Halsted, Chuck McMullens, Therese Ruth, Noelle Anderson, Margaret Corsey, Daisy Mah, Beverly Shilling, and our president Saul, Julie and Julianne Wiseman. We would have no sale at all without the enormous contribution of Emma Ahart, to whom we are deeply grateful.

Music At The Vendor Sale

A special thank you goes to Kirsten Salomon and her friend Janice Kuykendall for providing the beautiful music at the Vendor Sale. The sound of music added to the fun atmosphere.



Perennial Plant Club

Cutting Hydrangea Blooms Kristin Van Hoose Hydrangeas Plus Nursery

Now that hydrangeas are starting to bloom, we get the 'cutting hydrangea blooms' question often. I asked my friendly cut flower guys (Thanks, Johnthan and Ray) their tricks of the trade and here are their tips.

Don't cut fresh blooms: Be sure that the hydrangeas are at least a few weeks old. The older the bloom, the longer it will last. Color pigments should be fully developed before cutting.

Cut all the leaves off: Leaves take moisture away from the flower head so strip the leaves off before cutting. Long stems are nice for vases but the longer the stem, the less water that reaches the bloom.

Immerse cut blooms immediately in water and soak for two hours: this may require that you weigh the hydrangeas down in the water. Cold water that has been boiled works the best. Some other methods for cuts that eliminate the oxygen bubble in the stem.

Florist gel is expensive and messy; but works. Put the cut ends in boiling water.

Smash the cut end with a hammer right after cutting.

Cut another inch off the stem underwater.

Hydrangeas Plus is a mail order nursery located in Oregon. www.hydrangeasplus.com



Hydrangea Macrophylla: President R. Touchard

Regal color and grace for this popular cut flower selection. Will yield bonus blooms for you all season long. The vivid colors make it a great dried flower as well. President Touchard is a tight and compact growing variety that blooms well from mid season to first frost. Blooms prolifically even as a young plant.

SUMMER MEETINGS

There will be no general meetings in July and August; next meeting is September 23th. Next newsletter will be the September / October issue. Have a wonderful summer and take time to sit down, have a cool drink, and enjoy your garden.



Sacramento Perennial Plant Club Website

We all love to look at gardens, and a nice way of sharing our gardens is by placing pictures of our own gardens on our website. I hope you are taking pictures of your gardens this summer! Send pictures and tell us about your garden, you may want to send a single picture of one of your favorite plants or you may have a garden under construction and want to share your work with us. Get out your cameras and start taking pictures! Send your information to Larry Cooke. clarryl1949@yahoo.com

Carolyn Singer's Propagating Classes

Enjoy a garden class in a garden setting! The propagation class takes some students longer than three hours to complete. There is no rush. Bring a lunch to enjoy during or after class. This will allow you more time in the gardens. Also, dress warmly (in layers) since this class begins in the cool of the morning, and is done in the shade. Remember to bring drinking water!

Two propagation classes have been scheduled for 2010, Wednesday June 19th and Saturday June 26th, from 8:00am to 11:00am. The cost of the three hour class and all material is \$60.00. Students are allowed to take cuttings from any of the large selection of plants in the garden, including rare shrubs, perennials, alpines and vines. Methods for seeding and dividing are also discussed. **Take home triple the cost of this course in plant material for your own garden and to sell at plant sale!** Students may leave their cuttings in Carolyn's cold frame until they are rooted. Plan now for fall landscaping! Call (530) 272-4362 or email at csinger@stardustweb.net

"DEER IN MY GARDEN, Vol. 1: Perennials & Subshrubs" and Vol. 2: "GROUNDCOVERS & EADGERS" are available thru www.gardenwisdompress.com

MY FATHER'S GARDEN
Memories Strengthen Garden Connections
by Carolyn Singer

My father gave me many gifts. Because this next week is the twenty-year anniversary of his death, I have been reflecting even more than I usually do about his wisdom, his deep connections with the natural world, and his love of gardening.

I remember going into the nursery closest to our home a few miles south of Sebastopol in Sonoma County, just my father and me. The nursery was family-owned. It smelled good and felt good. The owners were always available to answer my father's questions. Today that nursery is still in the same family, managed by one of the sons who was a classmate of mine in the local high school.

We lived in a rural area where grasses and wild mustard could be tamed to grow vegetables in the deep, sandy soils. But left unattended, the landscape quickly reverted to the wild native plants my father loved. It's amazing how much bigger a mustard plant gets in an area that has had chicken manure added.

As much as I enjoyed the satisfaction of growing food, it was the wild garden that held the greatest adventure. My brother, sister, and I could make paths wherever we wanted on our three acres. Except, of course, in the vegetable garden. The grasses in the field grew so tall in the spring that it was easy to make hiding places.

We had a few fruit trees too. There was an old white peach right by the back porch, a perfect spot to hang out and enjoy that luscious fruit in season. Several old Gravenstein apple trees provided more than enough fruit for eating, pies, and canning. When these apples were ready my great aunt Jess would arrive with apples from her own trees, and she and my mother would enjoy a canning day. I'm not sure I helped much, but my memories of being part of this late summer activity are strong.

A 'Hachiya' persimmon tree that was at least fifteen feet tall grew about a hundred feet behind the house. When the luscious orange fruit hung on the branches in the fall, it always attracted attention. Strangers would knock on the door asking if they could have the fruit.

These old fruit trees were pruned by my father and brother with *How to Prune* by R. Sanford Martin guiding their efforts. Originally published in 1944, my father's copy was the 1950 printing. Happily, this gem is still in print, instructing today's gardeners in the art and skill of pruning. If readers are looking for an inexpensive and instructive pruning guide, this book is perfect.

My parents had only a few garden books. While the pruning book has changed very little since 1950, the other essential book in their library, "The Western Garden Book", has changed considerably in fifty years of "new" editions. It's fun to compare the latest 2007 edition with the first edition, described as the acknowledgment of "the first period of the coming of age of Western gardening." I think of my father's father who migrated from Holland as a young man, and in the late 1800s helped build the gardens at Stanford University to pay for his education. Gardening and education were both important to him too.

My father encouraged me to garden as a child, but it was never a chore. I delighted in puttering in my mother's flower garden, laying out the tidy rows for the vegetables, and even creating a few special garden areas of my own. When my father was away from home, teaching in Berkeley during the week, I would write letters to him, a chronicle of my garden efforts. I'm glad he saved those letters.

Garden connections are powerful. When my parents lived in Berkeley, my father chose his pediatrician by evaluating his garden. He had three he was considering, and with their home addresses he drove by to check out their gardens. Strong was his conviction that a doctor tending his garden in a nurturing manner would also deliver and care for children with the same gentle connection.

Last summer I met a woman whose father would not let her date a boy until the young man had joined the family in the garden and participated in the harvest. If he could shell lots of peas and enjoy doing it, the boy had passed the test.

Years after graduation from college I considered following a path that was different from the social work I had done for several years. Again it was my father who gently reinforced the interest I had in gardening, this time buying gardening and landscaping books to further my horticultural education. While he had been a math professor, he felt that teaching people about gardening was perhaps the best of all teaching because the students would always be eager to learn. He was right.

Welcome New Members

Welcome to the Sacramento Perennial Plant Club: Carole Taverna, Deborah Renfrew, Bonnie Allinger, Sara Hunt, Judy Robertson, Cheryl McDonald, Shirley Daffin and Karen Martin.

Perennial Plant Club

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Saul Wiseman

Monday night from London. I did not get a chance to write my President's Column before I left; here is a short update.

About the chickens. Yes, they have learned to fly over the fence and are now eating my wife's garden, according to my daughter who is home in Auburn. When we return from London, I will need to either clip their wings or raise the height of the fence.

About being a candidate for president. I have worked with some wonderful individuals in the Sacramento Perennial Plant Club. I hope to be able to continue as president.

Remember, at the May meeting we vote for club officers. Saul Wiseman

Election of Officers

The Election Committee of the Sacramento Perennial Plant Club would like to present the slate of candidates for the election of officers at the **May 27, 2010 meeting**. The list of candidates is as follows.

President:	Saul Wiseman
Vice President:	Sue Mortensen
Secretary:	Barbara Lane-Piert
Treasurer:	Judy Waegell



Janice Sutherland
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