

Garden Clippings

Orange County Master Gardeners' Newsletter

Volume 10 Number 2

February 2004

February Meeting

Saturday, February 7, 2004
510 E. Memory Lane, Santa Ana

Schedule

8:30 – 9:00 a.m. Setup Plants 'n Things
9:00 – 9:30 a.m. Snacks and Socializing
9:30 a.m. General Meeting
10:15 a.m. Plants 'n Things
10:30 a.m. Enrichment Program

Members with last names starting with R-Z, please bring a breakfast snack to share. Other members are also welcome to bring goodies.

Also, remember to bring along any items you wish to contribute to our Plants 'n Things raffle.

Please recycle by bringing seed catalogs to share this month.

Enrichment Workshop—Strawberries!

Who can forget that first bite into a sun-warmed, ripe, succulent berry? The explosion of sweet juice is almost unbearable. Julie Bawden Davis, author of three gardening books and over 500 articles for the Los Angeles Times, will share the secrets of growing these luscious beauties. She will have copies of her book, *The Strawberry Story: How to Grow Great Berries in Southern California*, available for sale (\$7). And, to tie in to last month's program, in 1999, Julie's backyard was certified by the National Wildlife Federation as a Backyard Wildlife Habitat.

Master Gardener Class Schedule

Contact Kathleen Phipps first if you're interested in auditing a class.

Feb. 7: Pruning with Kent Gordon and review

Free Oak Seedlings

Now in its second year, the Acorns to Oaks program has distributed over 1,800 live oak seedlings. Come by the Center for Science and Environmental Education, 155 El Camino Real, Tustin, anytime from 10am to 6pm Monday thru Saturday to pick up a tree.

Editor's note: The seedlings are probably all gone by now, but remember them for next year. And the Center also has a gift shop.

Volunteers! Fulleton Arboretum needs you-- Additional volunteers are needed for the Nursery Moving Sale the 2nd, 3rd and 4th weekends in February. The hours are 10-4 Saturday and Sunday. Contact Jan Youngquist to help.

Recommended reading from Michael Hearst

Landscaping with Nature: using nature's designs to plan your yard by Jeff Cox

The Wildlife Sanctuary Garden by Carol Buchanan

The above books are out of print, request them from your library through inter-library loan.

Natural History of Vacant Lots by Matthew Vessel

Noah's Garden : Restoring the Ecology of Our Own Backyards

Planting Noah's Garden: Further Adventures in Backyard Ecology both by Sara B. Stein

Growing California Native Plants by Marjorie Schmidt

Insects of the Los Angeles Basin by Charles Leonard Hogue

Leaves from the President



After our January meeting, I was sitting in my home looking out the window trying to get inspired to write this column, when a Coopers Hawk flew through the yard. He perched himself on the fence. I thought, talk about Karma. We had just heard Mike Hearst talk about back yard habitats and creating an environment for wild animals to live in and I have the right environment for the Hawk: no cats and lots of birds. My neighbors feed the birds and they hang out in my yard as I have water and lots of places for them to hide. I am a lazy gardener—oops, I should say I am a “natural” gardener. Sometimes we keep our yards too maintained and maybe we need to rethink certain areas of our gardens and make them environmentally friendly to many of the creatures we share the earth with. I must confess I do have a net over my pond because of the Blue Herons that think my Koi are lunch.

I went on the website for Backyard Habitats. It's a good site to visit: www.enature.com/backyardwildlife. The site has the forms you can download to apply for getting your yard certified. They also have photos of gardens that are certified in our area. No matter what style of garden you have, its wonderful when we can observe nature in the comfort of our own home. -- Sharon Neely

Gardening Events

Fullerton Arboretum. Pre-register for all classes by calling 714/278-3579 ext. 0.

February 7: Valentine Dried Flower Workshop with Makiko Goto-Wideman.
10:00-Noon, Oak Hall Classroom- \$35/person

February 21: Drought Tolerant Landscaping- Part I
February 28 Drought Tolerant Landscaping- Part II
10:00-Noon, Oak Hall Classroom. \$40

Camellia Shows: The shows open to "the public" at 1:00pm, but volunteers who "clerk" at the show, can arrive as early as 7:00 am. Contact Theresa Piech to volunteer: working with her camellia group (an approved OCMG venue) allows free entrance to Descanso Gardens.

Feb 7 Casa Del Prado, Balboa Park, San Diego

Feb 14 The Huntington, San Marino

Feb 21 La Verne Community Center, La Verne

Feb 28 Descanso Gardens, La Canada-Flintridge

☎ Contacts

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Submit articles by the 10th of each month via:
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Jackie Brooks, *Vol. Hours*.....

OCMG Website: <http://www.ocmastergardeners.org>

Debris from the Editor

In some ways, January and February are my favorite gardening months. There are very few “must-do” chores, other than pruning roses. I can take the time, instead, to peruse the many garden catalogs that find their way to my mailbox and dream about how my yard could look if I only had the time. Catalogs sell more than plants, they sell lifestyle ideas. They also sow confusion with their varying zone designations and lack of scientific nomenclature that make it possible to correctly identify a plant and ensure it will do well in our climate. I'm wondering if the \$18.00 peony listed in one catalog as hardy to zone 9, will really thrive here. I'd love to hear from anyone who has successfully grown peonies. --Jill

Urban Butterflies (part 1)

Michael Hearst graciously contributed a number of files to share with the membership. They will be included in the newsletter as space permits over the next several issues.

1. Giant Swallowtail (*Papilio cresphontes*):

The largest butterfly in the United States, Native to much of the US, from New England to the southern states west to Texas, this species is a recent arrival in California. It was first recorded in the Imperial and San Joaquin valleys. The larvae are sometimes called "orange dogs" in the south, and are sometimes a pest on citrus.

Larval Foodplants: Several varieties of *Citrus* and Rue (*Ruta graveolens*)

2. Western Tiger Swallowtail (*Papilio rutulus*):

Second largest of the garden candidates. Flies most months, especially during summer. Frequently seen on the U.C. Irvine campus since native sycamore foodplants are extensively planted there. Best enhanced through parkway tree landscaping and grand-scale foodplant introduction in parks, greenbelts, etc. Adults visit thistles (*Cirsium*), *Lantana*, *Dahlia*.

Larval Foodplants: California sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*), Willows (*Salix spp.*), Cottonwood (*Populus spp.*), cherry and relatives (*Prunus spp.*, including *P. emarginata* and *P. virginia* var. *demissa*), Mock-orange (*Syringa vulgaris*).

3. Anise Swallowtail (*Papilio zelicaon*): Most common from April to June, but seen nearly year-round. Not a frequent butterfly garden resident, but planting umbelliferous plants in sunny locations may yield caterpillars once in a while. Adults often nectar at thistle flowers and *Lantana*.

Larval Foodplants: Wild anise (*Foeniculum vulgare*) parsley (*Petroselinum erispum*), and other native and exotic umbellifers. Occasionally utilizes orange and other *Citrus* species.

4. Monarch (*Danaus plexippus*): In Orange County, this famous butterfly is usually seen from September-November and again from January- March, when migratory adults pass through the area. An occasional resident. Locally, adults visit milkweed flowers (*Asclepias spp.*), *Lantana*, and Yerba Santa (*Eriodictyon*).

Larval Foodplants: Almost any milkweed will do (*Asclepias* or *Sarcostemma* species).

5. Cabbage White (*Pieris rapae*):

The most common Orange County urban butterfly, easily attracted and enhanced, present year-round, nearly everywhere. Their caterpillars are the culprits that devour cabbage, radish, kale and broccoli! But they probably will not defoliate the plants, and your garden is not likely to greatly increase the resident population. This is one butterfly for which one can easily locate all life history stages, especially on Nasturtium (*Tropaeolum*). It is a useful species for illustrating butterfly life cycles in classrooms and nature areas.

Larval Foodplants: Almost any crucifer is eaten. While ornamental nasturtium is in a completely different family from the crucifers, it contains similar mustard oils; these are the chemical cues that "tell" Cabbage white adults and caterpillars to lay eggs on or eat leaves (respectively) of a particular plant.

6. Nicippe Sulphur (*Eurema nicippe*) and Cloudless Sulphur (*Phoebis sennae*):

Fifty years ago, both were more common in the Los Angeles Basin. They are now scarce (especially the Cloudless sulphur). This may be due to natural factors (both species occasionally disperse in great numbers from resident desert populations) or to decreased plantings of



caterpillar foods. Both butterflies are mostly seen during summer or fall. The foodplants are not Orange County natives, so local populations are sustained on ornamentals.

Larval Foodplants: Senna (*Cassia tomentosa*, other *Cassia* species), Canary bird bush (*Crotalaria agatiflora*).

7. Gulf Fritillary (*Agraulis vanillae*): A common summer resident of the city, whose

Orange County presence is dependent on ornamental passion vines. May



be locally common if the food plant is planted extensively, although starvation, or parasitism of the caterpillars by tiny wasps (they do not sting) might bring population "crashes". Passion vine defoliation may occur but the plants are rarely killed. It might be best to spread the vines around the yard to make it a more difficult for the wasps to locate the caterpillars.

Larval Foodplants: Ornamental passion vines (*Passiflora* spp., e.g. *P. incarnata*; also *P. caerulea*, *P. lutea*, *P. tenuiloba*, *P. affinis*, *P. laurifolia*, *P. umbrosa*, *P. manicata*, *P. suberosa*, *P. edulis* and others. Some species may be better than others.

8. West Coast Lady (*Cynthia annabella*): A common County inhabitant, seen much of the year, especially near and in vacant lots. Frequently alights on open ground and after disturbance will often return to the same sunny spot, like the Buckeye.

Larval Foodplants: Cheeseweed (*Malva parviflorum*), a common vacant lot weed. Also Garden hollyhock (*Althaea rosea*), and many other members of the mallow family.

9. Painted Lady (*Cynthia cardui*): An unpredictable Orange County city dweller, sometimes with dramatic year-to-year

population fluctuations. More of an attraction candidate than an enhancement possibility. When it is abundant, you might see the adults at thistle blossoms and the caterpillars munching the leaves below.

Larval Foodplants: Thistles (*Cirsium* spp., *Cynara*, *Corduus*), mallows (*Malva* spp.), Garden hollyhock (*Althaea rosea*), Fiddleneck (*Amsinckia* spp.), Sunflower (*Helianthella*, *Helianthus* spp.).

10. Mourning cloak (*Nymphalis antiopa*): One of the more common and noticed Orange County city butterflies. Caterpillar infestations periodically affect Chinese elm. The tree owner too often ends these gatherings with a douse of pesticides, and then wonders where the butterflies have gone. Male mourning cloaks are intriguing to watch, as they perch on a prominent object (sometimes a person's head or outstretched hand!) and dart out after passing butterflies and other insects. Unless the object they encounter is a receptive female, one soon sees them back at or near their original perch site. Being tree-feeders, a longer time investment is required to enhance this species. However, one tree may be enough to guarantee a yearly presence.

Larval Foodplants: Willow (*Salix* spp.) Chinese elm (*Ulmus* sp.), birch (*Betulus*), Poplar and cottonwood (*Populus* spp.)

11. Buckeye (*Precis lavinia*): An exceptionally attractive butterfly usually found in less disturbed areas, including pastures and vacant lots. Often seen on sunny spots of open ground. Untended weedy lawns with open areas are ideal habitats. Fairly new urban neighborhoods are rarely graced by the butterfly, but larval foodplant cultivation might distract a passing female long enough for egg laying.

Larval Foodplants: Garden snapdragon (*Antirrhinum majus*), plantains (*Plantago* spp.), Fog fruit (*Lippia lanceolata*, *L. nodiflora*), Hebe (*Veronica* sp.).

Fruit Facts

MANGO – *Mangifera indica* var. Manila – *Anacardiceae*

Donated by: Fullerton Arboretum and planted in 1997 (r.f.- 07)

Common names: Mango, mangot, manga, manja, mangoro, and mangué



The common mango is native to Eastern India, Burma and Malay. The mango belongs to the family Anacardiaceae, a family related to the poison oak and poison ivy. So it is not surprising that mangoes will cause a rash and reaction for some who consume them or touch the milky juice. Mangoes are of mainly tropical species with few in the temperate species. There are over 1000 varieties, but only 350 are propagated for commercial nurseries. Perhaps some are duplicates by different names.

The tree is an erect tree with a broad canopy. In the tropics the tree grows much larger than it does here, up to 100 feet. The tree is long lived, with some specimens known to be 300 years old. The tree is nearly evergreen, and the new leaves are rosy, bronze in color, turning dark green as they age. Seedling trees live more than 100 years, whereas grafted ones live only 80 years or less.

Mangifera species are grown below an altitude of 1000 feet, but there are some varieties that will grow at up to 2000 feet in altitude. The shape of the tree canopy depends on its ecogeographical location and on the space available for its development. On shallow soils the growth is stunted, and some cultivars have been trained to be creepers.

The mango bark is usually dark grey-brown to black, rather smooth, peeling off in irregular thick pieces. The bark contains resin (78%), gum (15%) and some tannic acid. Temperatures down to 26° F are damaging and often killing for the plant

The flowers, produced by the hundreds, are small, reddish-yellow, borne in a showy pyramidal branched cluster at the tips of the branches.

The fruits may be round, oval or kidney shaped, often with a beak at the apex. The skin is leathery, fairly thick, aromatic, and ranges in color from green to yellow to orange-yellow to dark red to purple. The mango fruit sizes range from 2 to 10 inches in length and they weigh from 4 ounces to 5 lbs. Some have a “turpentine” odor and flavor, while others are pleasant in flavor. The flesh ranges from pale-yellow to deep-orange and essentially peach-like texture.

The fruit has a single stone, pale yellowish-white, somewhat woody, flattened, and either oval or kidney-shaped. Within the stone is the starchy seed that could be monoembryonic (single sprouting) or polyembryonic (more than one sprout).

The root system consists of a long unbranched long tap, 18 to 20 feet long, plus a dense mass of superficial feeder roots. Feeder roots develop at the base of the trunk; these produce anchor roots, and sometimes a group of feeder roots develops above the water table. The fibrous root system extends away from the drip line.

—*Alfredo Chiri*, OC Calif. Rare Fruit Growers liaison to the Fullerton Arboretum.

