Garden Clippings

Orange County Master Gardeners' Newsletter

Volume 10 Number 3 March 2004

March Meeting—Graduation!

Saturday, March 6, 2004
510 E. Memory Lane, Santa Ana

Schedule

8:30 – 9:00 a.m.	Setup Plants 'n Things
9:00 a.m.	**General Meeting**
9:30 a.m.	Graduation
10:00 a.m.	Snacks & Plants 'n Things
10:30 a.m.	Enrichment Program

In honor of the graduates, wonderful refreshments will be provided. Yum!

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—Citrus and Avocado

Tom Spellman, formerly of La Verne Nursery and now the southern California representative for Dave Wilson Nursery has 25 years experience in the production and marketing of fruit trees. For the past 10 years, he has lectured on backyard fruit and has contributed to, among other publications, Sunset Magazine and the Orange County Register. Mr. Spellman believes that everyone has the time and space to grow tree-ripened fruit in their own backyard.

Lost: Steve Williams let someone borrow his pen. It's black and has three functions: ink, pencil and stylus. Please call Steve if you have it: (629)964-1239.

Nomination Committee volunteers needed. Positions open: 1st VP, 2nd VP, Recording Secretary and Corresponding Secretary. If interested in being on the committee or being considered for an office, contact Sharon.

Thinking of you: Best wishes to Shirley Wentworth, our new bionic woman, who is recuperating from knee surgery. Hope to see you in March!

Gardening Events

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

March 6: Award Winning Home Composting Workshop II 10:00-11:30, Bleachers. $7, free to residents of Brea, Buena Park, Fullerton, Orange and Santa Ana with proof of residency.

March 20 & 27: Landscape Watercolor Painting Series Workshop 10:00-1:00, Oak Hall, $75

March 19 – 21: Santa Barbara International Orchid Show. (805) 6870766 or www.sborchidshow.com for information.

Camellia Shows: Contact Theresa Piech to volunteer and for more details on locations. March is the last month for camellias.

March 6 First Christian Church, Bakersfield

San Diego Master Gardeners: Annual Home Gardening seminar is April 3. Call 858/694-2860 for a registration form. Class descriptions at www.mastergardenerssandiego.org.

Cal Poly Workshops: Their Center For Garden-Based Education holds workshops throughout the year focusing on school gardens. Their new website, listing workshops, events, and field trips is: http://www.csupomona.edu/~agriscapes/CGBE.

April 24: Pests In the Garden. An overview of common insects, weeds and diseases that might plague a school garden. 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. $18 includes materials and refreshments. Call Anna at 909/869-6722 to register.

Leaves from the President

Our enrichment speaker this last month was Julie Bawden Davis, who spoke to us on Strawberries. My Grandmother showed me how to grow them when I was first married (many years ago). Her method was to use a coffee can and poke holes around the bottom with a can opener, then fill with soil and put the strawberry plant in it and water. It worked, but I am sure it was beginners luck. Several years ago, I talked to Julie at Green Scene, bought her book and now use her methods. I have been quite successful and often enjoy fresh-picked strawberries from the garden. My favorite is the Alpine but it is a little difficult, I would like to try some of the others she mentioned.

June Gelling and Rita Mangus started redoing the planter in front of the Santiago Club House. Thank you, June and Rita for all your hard work. We will be checking on the progress of the plants, seeing which ones do well, and adding more for color and variety.

This month is graduation so please come to the meeting and meet our newest members.

----Sharon Neely

Flower-Power Could Help Clear Land Mines
By Elinor Schang

COPENHAGEN –Aresa, a Danish biotech company, has developed a genetically modified flowering weed that could help detect land mines and hopes to have a prototype ready for use within a few years. Thale Cress will turn red within 3-6 weeks after being sowed when its roots come in contact with nitrogen-dioxide (NO2) evaporating from explosives buried in soil. The weed is infertile, so the risk of its spreading is minimal. For more information: http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&cid=585&e=1&u=/nm/20040127/sc_nm/arms_denmark_landmines_dc

☎Contacts

Sharon Neely, *President*……
Iris Stuart, *1st Vice Pres*……
Public Education & Outreach
Kathleen Phipps, *2nd Vice Pres*… …
Janet Meade, *Treasurer*……
Fred Snyder, *Plant Clinic*……
Jill Patterson, *Newsletter Editor*
Submit articles by the 10th of each month
Jackie Brooks, *Vol. Hours*

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

Debris from the Editor

I live with an engineer who has decided that the soil around my rose bushes is too high above our house's foundation, thus promoting interior rot and leaks (Though I have noted no evidence for any of this). To keep peace, I agreed that we would dig up the roses, dig out the dirt, and replant everything, keeping the soil below the foundation We set a date (February 8) and when that Sunday arrived, I was so exhausted from a two-week sinus infection, that I decided we would just shovel prune everything and I would buy new roses. When it was too late to salvage a single plant, I learned that Pixie Treasures, my source for miniature roses, closed 6 months ago and Dorothy, founder of the business, unexpectedly died last month after a long illness. Our house is now fronted by a lovely and plantless ditch while I frantically look for other sources for roses. Dorothy's son has recommended Sequoia Nursery, in Visalia. Order a free catalog by calling 559/732-0309, web site is http://www.sequoianursery.biz/ And wish me luck in my search! ----Jill

15th Annual Southern California Spring Garden Show (at South Coast Plaza) will be held April 1-4, opening Thursday at 10:00 a.m., one day early. Sign up sheets will be at the meeting or call Sharon Neely for first choice of hours.

Urban Butterflies (part 2)

12. Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*): Occasionally yet unpredictably present in backyards, year-round. Unlike most Orange County city butterflies (but like the Mourning cloak), it generally overwinters as an adult. During the winter, one might discover a Red admiral closeted under eaves or other sheltered places. On warm winter days, they fly about. The best caterpillar food is stinging nettle and the caterpillars hide themselves in folded "leaf tents". While nettles would not be tolerated in most backyards, it might make an ideal property border for territorial butterfly gardeners! Red admiral males are fairly territorial themselves. Adults visit tree wounds, imbibing the sap, and will nectar at Hebe (*Veronica*) and other blossoms.

Larval Foodplants: Nettle (*Urtica holosericea*), Baby's tears (*Soleirolia soleirolii*), Hops (*Humulus lupulu*s) and other members of the nettle family (Urticaceae), many of which do not possess stinging hairs.

13. Marine Blue (*Leptotes marina*): A common to abundant suburban Orange County resident. Its presence is virtually guaranteed in the vicinity of its larval foods. Most common during summer and fall.

The larvae feed on *Plumbago* during autumn, after the blossoms of *Wisteria* falloff. Wisteria is a beautiful ornamental that ought to be planted more often in yards of the western U.S. Marine blue caterpillars feed principally upon tender buds and flowers of foodplant species.

Larval Foodplants: Leadwort (*Plumbago capensis*), Wisteria (*Wisteria spp*.), Garden pea (*Lathyrus spp*.), Alfalfa (*Medicago sativa*), and many other legumes, native and exotic. *Plumbago* seems to be the most favored in urban situations, a plant characterized by its sticky blue flowers, which are long-tubed.

14. Common Hairstreak (*Strymon melinus*): Another frequent backyard resident, not as common as the Marine blue. Caterpillars are generalists, feeding on plants of many species, genera, even families. *Hibiscus* seems to be used consistently in backyard situations.

Larval Foodplants: Includes native buckwheat (*Eriogonum spp*.), and frequently Garden bean (*Phaseolus spp*.), ornamental hibiscus (*Hibiscus spp*.), mallows (*Malva, Sidalcea spp*.), and other members of the Malvaceae including cotton (on which it is sometimes a minor pest).

15. Fiery Skipper (*Hylephila phyleus*): And

other lawn skippers (*Polites sabuleti, Atalopedes campestris, Paratrytone melane*) These are the common-to-abundant orangish butterflies that rapidly skip over city lawns. Present nearly year-round, but most common in summer and fall. The Fiery is usually the most abundant of local skippers. Umber Skippers (*Paratrytone melane*) prefer less disturbed, shadier sites, including older neighborhoods. Infrequently mowed and fairly well watered lawns, or unmowed yard fringes will promote the neighborhood skipper fauna. Adults love Lantana, Hebe (*Veronica*) and Red Valerian (*Centranthus ruber*) blossoms.

Larval Foodplants: Orange County's common urban skippers all feed on grasses; some may specialize on particular species. Most frequently eaten are Bermuda (*Cynodon dactylon*), St. Augustine (*Stenotaphrum secundatum*), Bent (*Agrostis spp.),* and, for the Umber skipper, the native grass *Deschampsia caespitosa*. Other grass species may be eaten.

16. Checkered Skipper (*Pyrgus albescens*): An occasional-to-common yard visitor that can be helped by those same mallow plantings that sustain Common hairstreak and Painted lady populations seem to have an affinity for rough-leaved members of the mallow family.

Larval Foodplants: Garden hollyhock (*Althaea rosea*), Cheeseweed (*Malva parviflorum*), and other mallows (*Malva, Sidalcea spp*.), also Hibiscus (*Hibiscus spp*.).

Planting for Wildlife: Selected native plants for wildlife habitat enhancement

Part 1 (from Michael Hearst)

Acer macrophyllum -Big Leaf Maple. A large deciduous tree (too large for most home gardens, but ideal for parks or nature centers). The seeds, buds, and flowers are eaten by house finches, goldfinches, black-headed grosbeaks and other seed-eating birds.

Alnus rhombifolia -White Alder. A large, fast - growing deciduous riparian tree. The seeds are eaten by various finches, particularly goldfinches.

Aquilegia formosa var. truncata -Red Columbine. An excellent border plant for a woodland effect. It attracts hummingbirds, which serve as its primary pollinator.

Arctostaphylos spp. -Manzanita. A large variety of short-to-medium-height shrubs are available for a general wildlife cover. The fruit is eaten by birds and mammals. Hummingbirds use its flowers.

Atriplex lentiformis ssp. *breweri* -Coastal Quail Brush. An excellent conservation plant, tolerant of poor soil. The seeds are eaten by small mammals and birds. It also serves as an important cover plant, providing general protection and nest sites for low-nesting birds.

Baccharis pilularis ssp. *consanguinea* -Coyote Brush. An excellent cover plant, with dense foliage.

Ceanothus spp. -Ceanothus. Some of our most attractive cultivated shrubs, providing good general wildlife cover.

Cercocarpus betuloides -Mountain Mahogany and *C. minutiflorus* -San Diego Mountain Mahogany. Two important chaparral plants for good general wildlife cover. The seeds are eaten by birds and small mammals.

Encelia californica -California Encelia. An easy, fast-growing subshrub. Its seeds are eaten by many birds and small mammals.

Epilobium canum (Zauschneria californica) -California Fuchsia. A fine, small-sized accent shrub. It is a profuse bloomer with bright red flowers. A hummingbird favorite.

Eriogonum fasciculatum -California Buckwheat. A good low cover. Its seeds are eaten by birds and small mammals.

Galvezia speciosa -Island Bush Snapdragon. A good low cover or a showy accent in small clumps. Hummingbirds use its red tubular flowers.

Heteromeles arbutifolia -Toyon. An outstanding wildlife plant and slope stabilizer. It provides a general tall shrub cover. The fruits are eaten by many birds, including the California quail, Northern mockingbird, American robin, cedar waxwing, Western bluebird, and black-headed grosbeak.

Isomeris arborea -Bladderpod. Very drought tolerant. It flowers most of the year .The seeds are eaten by finches, sparrows, and doves. Its bright yellow flowers are occasionally visited by hummingbirds.

Keckiella cordifolia -Heart-leaved Penstemon. A vining shrub, good in the shade. Its flashy red flowers are visited by hummingbirds.

Fruit Facts

MANGOSTEEN – Garcinia mangostana – Guttiferae

Donated by: CRFG/Todd Kennedy and planted in 1998 (r.f.-04)

Common names: Mangosteen, Manggis

Mangosteen is indigenous to Malaysia, and it is found growing in Thailand, Burma and the Philippines. Mangosteen is hailed as the "Queen of Fruits." The tree appears to be adapted best to strictly tropical areas and requires abundant moisture. It grows well in a wide range of soils, provided it is well drained. The most common species are Purple Mangosteen and Yellow Mangosteen.

Mangosteen tree is a small broad-leafed evergreen. It has a short upright or pyramidal form, reaching a spread of 20 to 30 feet in diameter. The central trunk is upright and branched symmetrically. The leaves are elliptical in form and vary in size from 6 to 10 inches in length and 3 to 6 inches in width. Leaves are thick and leathery.

Flowers are greenish-white and are borne single or in pairs, usually at the end of the branches.

The fruit has a smooth skin and a thick rind, which encloses as many as 5 to 7 fleshy segments, in which the seeds are imbedded. The fruit is in the form of a small tangerine, flattened a little above and below, and changes from clear green to reddish-purple when completely ripe. The flavor is slightly acidic but sweet. The pulp, the only part consumed, has excellent flavor, proclaimed by many as the best among tropical fruits. The outer skin is up to 3/8 of an inch thick and rich in tannic acid, which makes the fruit insect resistant.

Production normally begins in the eighth year after planting, producing a high yield, and the maximum production is reached in the 24th year of planting. It is a seasonal fruit, producing normally from June to August here in the USA. In the Asians countries it sometime produces two crops, one in the autumn, and one in early summer.

The fruit can be harvested between 13 to 14 weeks after fruit set. The ripening of the Mangosteen is divided into 6 color stages: (1) Green with trace of red, (2) Yellowish-red with trace of red, (3) Fully red, (4) Reddish-brown, (5) Purplish-red, (6) Deep purple. Fruit should be harvested during color stages (3) and (4). For immediate consumption, color stage (5).

Mangosteen grows well on a wide range of soils, provided it is well drained. It prefers clay or sandy loam soil with organic matter content.

Traditionally seeds have propagated Mangosteen, but recently bud grafting has been successful in propagating the plants. There are no identified cultivar clones since the seeds are apomictic. Seeds can be boiled or roasted and eaten.

The fruit is consumed fresh and processed for making jam and juice.

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