

Garden Clippings

Orange County Master Gardeners' Newsletter

Volume 10 Number 8

September 2004

September Meeting

Saturday, **September 11**, 2004

Second Saturday due to Labor Day!

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
10:30 a.m. Plants 'n Things
11:00 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.

Enrichment Workshop—Bats!

Here is a wonderful opportunity to learn about our California Bats. Stephanie Remington, Research Assistant with Orange County Vector Control, a biological consultant, and a field instructor at Starr Ranch Sanctuary's Bat Camp, will share her experiences with and knowledge, discussing the different types of California bats, their affect on the environment, and where they may be seen. We can also ask her if bat houses actually attract and house bats in our area! Note that our workshop begins at 11:00 a.m.

Board Meeting: September 16 at 7:00 p.m.
Home of Phil Loew.

Dues are past due! Please turn in your \$20 in dues at this meeting or mail to our treasurer Phil Loew, 531 W. Hill Ave., Fullerton, 92832. Checks are made out to OCMG. Last call and last newsletter!

OCMG Training Class—FULL!

Classes begin 25 September at Fullerton College with Kent Gordon on soils and fertilizers. Helen Elich is looking for volunteers to help, so contact her if interested or if you want to attend a class. There will be volunteer signups at the September meeting.

Volunteer Opportunity

Nature Guide Training Class

Would you enjoy becoming more familiar with the Fullerton Arboretum, learning about plants, and then sharing your knowledge with the community? If so, then the Fullerton Arboretum Nature Guides has an opportunity for you. This is an approved venue for all Master Gardeners.

Nature Guides provide tours of the Fullerton Arboretum. Most of the tours are with children, but there are some with adults. Tours are usually scheduled for weekday mornings and last about an hour. As a Nature Guide, you will find that most of the students are happy to be out of the classroom and enjoy experiencing nature first hand. For many, their arboretum tour is the first time they are seeing, touching, feeling and hearing nature. You will be inspired by their sense of awe and wonder.

Training for the Nature Guides will begin in late September. The classes are held from 9 a.m.-noon, one day a week for six weeks. The class day is tentatively scheduled for Mondays, depending on trainee availability.

If you would like to sign-up for the training, please call Don Grime at (714) 871-6139.

Leaves from the President



At our August meeting we had a tomato tasting, not many varieties but all the tomatoes were delicious! The over-all winner was Sweet Chelsea and the runner-up was Arkansas Traveler. I must say that the Yellow Brandywine was a beautiful and tasty tomato, and although we couldn't taste the Big Rainbow it made a stunning impression. Lois Daybell brought in tomatoes with problems and many suggestions were given on how and what not to do for the next growing season. We learned from Geri Cilbellis that our soils are naturally deficient in minerals so she adds at the time of planting humic acid, mycorrhiza and compost. Eunice suggests for nematodes to sprinkle in sugar, when planting. I have done this for several years and haven't had a problem with nematodes. Steve Williams and Bob Anspach suggested calcium especially for blossom end rot. I brought in the article on tomatoes from the LA Times that had common tomato problems and the causes, plus suggestions on solutions. As Jill Patterson found out from last year, growing disease resistant tomatoes helps with most problems. I, myself, and several members said that some years are good and others are not. So every year when I plant my tomatoes, I try and add all the right things and hope for lots of sunshine early in the day and pray to the tomato spirits for a good crop.

I wish to thank Janet Meade for making the offer to get the tacos for us. They were delicious.

I also spoke to Patrick Mitchell after the meeting and he was very grateful for our donation of \$300 to help with the Santiago Park restoration program. Thank you all. -- Sharon Neely

☎ Contacts

Sharon Neely, *President*.....
Cindy Polera Burch, *1st Vice Pres.*....
Public Education & Outreach
Helen Elich, *2nd Vice Pres.*...
Phil Loew, *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>

News from our members

Bob Anspach shares an article from the August 7, 2004 Orange County Register: "Nurseryman finds that plain old dirt really pays" by Cindy McNatt.

Gary Matsuoka, a nurseryman from Laguna Hills Nursery in Lake Forest, has long used sand in his pots. In this article, he justifies the use of dirt rather than potting soil: Dirt is an entirely different medium from potting soil, and Matsuoka is on a mission to reintroduce it to the garden community. "When I was growing up around the nursery business, plants were propagated in dirt," said Matsuoka. "Those were healthy plants. Now what I get from the growers look awful. Too much organic matter is rotting the root zones and stunting growth." Matsuoka urges us to plant in unamended soil and use organic matter only as a top dressing. He recommends a sandy loam – a mix of clean sand and garden soil. It is a littler stickier than beach sand; it retains moisture but drains fast. It holds nutrients but is heavy.

The full article is available online through the Newsbank database subscribed to by Orange County Public Library. Use your library card to log into the research database from the www.ocpl.org website or log in at one of the branch libraries.

Jan Youngquist wrote that she has received several requests for this recipe.

Mike's Oatmeal Pie:

¾ cup white sugar
¾ cup brown sugar
2 eggs
1 tsp vanilla
¼ lb butter
1-cup oatmeal

Mix first five ingredients. Then, add oatmeal. Pour into your favorite pie shell. Bake @ 325 for 60 minutes. Let set in oven for 10-15 minutes. Serve with cinnamon ice cream (or your favorite flavor). Great for cooking ahead, warm just before serving.

Mike Maertzweiler

Nancy Otjen sent an article about poisonous plants written by Maureen Gilmer, who discovered the hard way that one of her favorite plants—the morning glory vine—has a poison that is absorbed by the skin, especially skin that is sweating. Symptoms included dizziness, migraine headache, and nausea. Plants that are poisonous and should be handled while wearing gloves and long sleeves include:

Acontium spp: Monkshood
Atropa belladonna: deadly nightshade
Brugmansia spp: angel's trumpet
Conium maculatum: poison hemlock.
Datura spp: devil's weed
Digitalis purpurea: foxglove
Euphorbia spp: spurge
Gelsemium sempervirens: Carolina jessamine
Helleborus foetidus: Christmas rose
Hyocyamus niger: black henbane
Ipomaea violacea: morning glory
Nerium oleander: oleander
Ricinis communis: castor bean

Gardening Events

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

September 18: Plant Bulbs Now Class 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Bleachers, \$7/person/Members free.

Go organic! Find out how to produce a beautiful spring bulb garden the natural way, chemical free! Our expert organic gardener, Geri Cibellis, Master Gardener & member of the O.C. Organic Gardening Club, will teach you how to grow healthy plant now that will produce beautiful blooms in the Spring.

September 25: Compost Workshop 10:00 – 11:30 a.m., Bleachers.

Learn composting techniques from experts, Dr. Bill Roley, president, Applied Ecological Systems and Patrick McNelly, Principal Staff Analyst, O.C. Sanitation District. Fee is \$7 per person, free to members and to residents of sponsoring cities: Brea, Buena Park, Fullerton, Orange and Santa Ana with proof of residency. Space is limited

September 25-26: Native Plant sale 10 – 4 p.m.

The Fullerton Arboretum's Potting Shed will be having a huge California native, Mediterranean and drought tolerant plant sale.

L.A. Arboretum in Arcadia, 301 North Baldwin Avenue, 626-821-3222, \$7.00 admission:

September 4 - 5: Fern and exotic plant show, 9 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. The show will display more than 60 varieties of ferns plus orchids, bromeliads, cacti, cycads, terrarium plants, begonias and tree ferns. A series of free workshops and lectures will be held each day. News Contact: Ralph Fregoso (626) 575-3390.

September 19: Tomato Tasting, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Taste test 100 different tomato varieties grown by Steve Goto of Goto Nursery. Bring your own tomatoes for comparison.

Fruit Facts

PASSION FRUIT – *Passiflora edulis* var. ‘Black Night’ – Passifloraceae

Donated by: CRFG and planted in 1989
(r.f.-05)

Common names: Passion Fruit, Purple Passion fruit, Qarandila, Purple Granadilla, Maracuya, Flor de las Cinco Llagas, Parcha de Culebra, Chinola, Saibey, Po.

The ‘Black Night’ variety is of the type called ‘purple passionfruit’ which is native to southern Brazil, Paraguay, Perú, and parts of northern Argentina where it is known as Maracuya or Granadilla. In



many countries the plant is known as the “Flower of the Five Wounds.” The vine has also become established in Australia, Hawaii and some parts of tropical Asia.

The passion fruit vine is a shallow-rooted, woody perennial, and it climbs by means of tendrils. It has deep green leaves with pale dull underside. The young stems and tendrils are tinged with red or purple.

A single fragrant flower is 2-3 inches wide and is borne at each new node of the vine. The bloom, with 3 large green leaf-like bracts, consists of 5 green-white sepals, 5 white petals, a corona of straight white-tipped rays with a rich purple at the base, and 5 stamens with large anthers. The ovary, with a triple-branched style, sits at the center of the flower.

The fruit is nearly round or ovoid and has a tough outer shell that is smooth and waxy, ranging in hue from dark-purple to purple with light yellow stripes. Adhering to the inside of the

shell is a 1/4 inch layer of white pith, creating a hollow area. Within this cavity there is a mass of double-walled sacs filled with aromatic, orange-colored, pulpy juice and with as many as 300 small, hard, dark-brown or black seeds. The flavor is musky, subacid to acid.

Passion fruit flowers are perfect but self-sterile, requiring a pollinator. It has been found that carpenter bees (*Xylocopa neoxylocopa*) efficiently pollinate the flowers.

Honeybees are less efficient. Wind is ineffective.

Passion fruit vines are grown in many soils, but light to heavy sandy loam is preferred, with a pH between 6.5 to 7.5. Good drainage is essential to prevent collar rot.

There is a legend connected with the name given to this plant. The basis for this story is based on the principle of the “Doctrine of Signatures” that was widely believed by learned men in the 16th and 17th Centuries. By this principle, a plant suitable for treatment of plague would be found in plague areas, and plants for treatment of heart problems would generally resemble a heart, etc. The legend has it that in 1620 a Jesuit priest in Perú came across the plant we know now as passionflower. Enthralled with its beauty, that night he had a vision likening its floral parts to the elements of the Crucifixion or Passion of Christ.

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



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