

# Garden Clippings

Orange County Master Gardeners' Newsletter

Volume 10 Number 11

December 2004

## December Meeting

Saturday, December 4, 2004

510 E. Memory Lane, Santa Ana

### Schedule

8:30 – 9:00 a.m. Setup Plants 'n Things

9:00 – 9:30 a.m. **Lots** of Snacks and Socializing!

9:30 a.m. General Meeting

10:00 a.m. Enrichment Program

This is our annual holiday party and we will welcome our trainees, who are at the halfway point in their classes. We invite everyone to bring goodies, especially main dish foods, to share.

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

Rita Corpin will be collecting holiday cards for her school. She will be very grateful if you would save your cards and bring them to the January meeting.

### **Enrichment Workshop—Wonder Grow**

Sharon Neely swears by this new fertilizer and attests to its efficacy. Wonder Grow is an organic fertilizer made from the Yucca plant. It is non-toxic and safe to use around children and animals. Scott Smith will describe the fertilizer and share the results of his experiments.

**Board Meeting:** None in December.

**January 2005 meeting will be held the *second* Saturday.**

**Speaker contact information:** Last month's speaker on hydroponics, Peyam, can be reached via email at [pbargassa@agrodynamics.com](mailto:pbargassa@agrodynamics.com) and the website is [www.hydroponics101.com](http://www.hydroponics101.com).

### **OCMG Training Class**

Contact Helen Elich to help with the class and before attending a class to confirm space and location.

4 Dec. Holiday party at the Bowling Green

11 Dec. Xeriscape Plants at the Riverside Water District

18 Dec. Tom Spellman on Trees and Shrubs

25 Dec. & 1 Jan. **NO CLASS**

### **Gardening Events**

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

**December 11: Annual Fresh Holiday Wreath Workshop** 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the bleachers-\$45/person .

Learn floral design techniques and be guided by an expert as you create a holiday wreath from fresh greenery and nature's decorations. All materials provided. Bring apron and shears to class. Makiko Goto-Wideman, Floral Designer. Pre-registration required. Class limit: 30.

**December 11 or 12: Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden: Intermediate Field Botany** 10:00 am - 4:00 pm. \$135 (\$160 nonmember). 909/625-8767 *Limit: 15 participants.*

Lorrae Fuentes, Director of Education, RSABG For plant enthusiasts or amateur botanists who want to be able to identify plants in the field. Gain experience using field guides, identification manuals and technical floras. Informal class sessions include dissection and

examination of fresh and dried plant material.  
Completion of Beginning Field Botany

## Leaves from the President



Our meeting this month will be a joint meeting with the new class members. I have had the opportunity to meet and work with many of the new members; it has been rewarding, as their enthusiasm is inspiring. I have never had so many of the new students say to me that by the time they graduate they plan to have their 50 hours completed or near completion. This makes me very happy to hear and Helen Elich is doing a great job in promoting the rewards of volunteering. Those of you who need volunteers for your volunteer endeavors will find our meeting to be the perfect time to network and connect. Sign them up as they are willing and able.

Bad news about our speaker for January: Garry George has informed me that he is unable to speak. Garry will be volunteering with his native plant and wild life project at Baldwin Hills Park. The dates changed because of the early rains this year. I will try and schedule him another time. **We will have another guest speaker.**

I want to thank Yanna for the lovely Autumnal decorations we had for our November meeting, she did a beautiful job.

Have a Happy Holiday! --Sharon Neely

### Members ask:

Michelle Brendel asks: At the July meeting, someone brought some cuttings that resembled a maple, but those who seemed to know identified it as a type of hibiscus. The cuttings were left in a container outside, free for the taking. Would the person who brought these cuttings please identify them.

recommended, but not required.

I can be reached at: [mbrendel@adelphia.net](mailto:mbrendel@adelphia.net) (be sure and put "Master Gardeners" in the subject line or I won't open it). Or I can be reached by phone at 562-431-4095.

Thanks!

### ☎ Contacts

Sharon Neely, *President*.....

Cindy Polera Burch, *1st Vice Pres.*....

Helen Elich, *2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Pres...*

Phil Loew, *Treasurer*.....

Fred Snyder, *Plant Clinic*.....

Jill Patterson, *Newsletter Editor*

Submit articles by the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month via:

Jackie Brooks, *Vol. Hours*

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

**Adios and good luck** to June Gelling. June has moved up to San Luis Obispo and has already joined the Master Gardeners' organization in the area.

### Debris From the Editor

I just returned from a 2-week trip to China, so I apologize for the lateness of this newsletter. I missed our sudden downpour (6 inches in 1 week!) of rain and was delighted to return home to green hills, happy plants, and flooded pots. As far away and exotic a country as China is, gardens include well known plants grown here, and their dahlias were the largest I've ever seen.

## Upcoming Bamboo field trip

February 5, 2005

Theo Smith's home is an average sized lot. The yard is home to over 110 varieties of bamboo. Some of the plants have been in the yard since 1982.

There are both runners and clumpers, both large and small, culms (that's the word for the vertical stems) in height from 1 ft. to 60+ ft.; in diameter from 1/16 inch to 5 inches. Leaves range from solid green to striped in white and cream; culm colors from solid green to green with yellow stripes, to yellow with hand painted looking green stripes, to solid black, to black with green stripes; many in the ground; many in pots.

Theo is member of the American Bamboo Society and I am sure you will be as amazed as I am with the gardens.

Bamboo Gardens  
5325 Peacock Lane  
Riverside, CA

## For Our Wired Members

Clifford Meng sends this link on succulents, including the caudiciforms, which has a wonderful article on "Fat Plants", accompanied by some exquisite photos:

<http://www.hort.wisc.edu/mastergardener/> Then click on Horticulture Info, and then on Fat Plants. Written by Dr. Dan Mahr, Vice President of the Cactus & Succulent Society of America.

Jan Youngquist sends this link on how to make every day "Earth Day" with information on composting, recycling, and hazardous waste disposal:

<http://www.earth911.org/master.asp>

<http://www.ipmalmanac.com/> A website devoted to IPM with articles, tip sheets, a glossary, advice on formulating your own IPM plan. More information about IPM available at the U.C. website <http://axp.ipm.ucdavis.edu/>

## Plant Fall Bulbs Now!

Robert Smaus, one of my favorite garden writers, continues an irregular column in the Los Angeles Times. The October 28 Home section included a list of bulbs and corms that do well in the Southland. Mr. Smaus advises gardeners that bulbs that do well in our area tend to have smaller flowers and don't have the same impact as Dutch bulbs. Consider them on the same scale as wildflowers. Planting depth is critical. \* denotes "can't fail" choices.

Amaryllis (hippeastrum)  
*Amaryllis belladonna*  
Baboon flower (babiana)\*  
Calla lily (zantedeschia)  
*Crocus goulimyi*\*  
Some daffodils and many narcissus  
Dutch Iris  
Freesia  
Homeria\*  
Ixia  
Lachenalia  
Lapeirousia\*  
Moraea\*  
Some grape hyacinth (muscaria)  
Oxalis\* (**NOT** the weed!)  
*Scilla campanulata*  
Sparaxis\*  
Spider lily (Lycoris)  
Tritonia  
Spring star flower (ipheion)\*  
Summer snowflake (*Leucojum aestivum*)\*  
Veltheimia  
Watsonia\*

## AAS 2004 Winners

The All-American Selection's mission is to promote new garden seed varieties with superior garden performance judged in impartial trials in North America. Their purpose is to test new, unsold cultivars; inform gardeners about the AAS Winners;

and earn gardeners' trust in the AAS Winners. Trial grounds are located throughout the U.S. with six locations in California. More information is available at: <http://www.all-americaelections.org>:

**Celosia plumosa 'Fresh Look Red' GOLD MEDAL & Flower Award Winner**

Thrives in the summer heat and humidity with drought or rainy conditions. When grown in the full sun, 'Fresh Look Red' plants mature at 12 to 18 inches tall and spread 12 to 20 inches. The central plume can be 8 to 10 inches tall and 5 inches wide. Like all *Celosia plumosa*, the flowers can be cut and dried for everlasting homemade bouquets.

**Celosia plumosa 'Fresh Look Yellow' Flower Award Winner**

The golden yellow plumes are produced in abundance, at times covering the plant. The central plume can be 9 inches tall and 6 inches wide. 'Fresh Look Yellow' grows numerous side shoots, which cover mature blooms, eliminating the need for deadheading. When grown in a full-sun garden, 'Fresh Look Yellow' attains a height of about 12 to 17 inches and spreads 12 to 15 inches.

**Gypsophila 'Gypsy Deep Rose' Bedding Plant Award Winner**

'Gypsy Deep Rose' is an annual *G. muralis* with dainty, rose-like blooms. The flower form is double and semi-double, is a darker rose color and is a larger size, up to 3/8 of an inch. The plant produces a higher number of blooms over a longer flowering season. 'Gypsy Deep Rose' forms an enchanting mounded plant with a height of 8 to 10 inches, spreading 12 to 14 inches. This diminutive plant prefers full sun and adapts to container culture.

**Hollyhock 'Queeny Purple' Flower Award Winner**

'Queeny Purple' is the shortest *Alcea rosea* and the first purple hollyhock available as a single color not part of a mixture. The frilly edged

blooms are a "powder puff" type having a cushion center. They measure 3 to 4 inches and are produced abundantly. 'Queeny Purple' plants will reach a mature height of 20 to 30 inches and is an annual that will flower prolifically the first year from a February or March sowing.

**Petunia F1 'Limbo Violet' Bedding Plant Award Winner**

'Limbo Violet' differs from all other single grandiflora petunias as a unique combination of large flowers on a compact plant. The habit is restricted. 'Limbo Violet' plants become mounds which, at times, are completely covered with blossoms. The ultimate plant size is only 6 to 7 inches tall, spreading 10 to 12 inches with blooms of 3 inches or larger.

**Melon F1 'Amy' Vegetable Award Winner**

'Amy' exhibited improved qualities such as earliness and higher yield when grown next to similar "canary" type melons. Melons are bright golden yellow with smooth skin; without netting or sutures. There is a small seed cavity surrounded by moist, white flesh noted for its sweet flavor and firm texture. 'Amy' plants will produce melons in 70 to 80 days from transplanting and vines need 6 feet of garden space or they can be trained up a trellis.

**Winter Squash F1 'Sunshine' Vegetable Award Winner**

'Sunshine' is a new squash that outshined other varieties and has a distinctive vibrant orange-red skin. The 3- to 4-pound fruit is a flattened globe shape. The bright orange flesh is sweet, nutty, creamy smooth and completely stringless when baked, steamed or microwaved. 'Sunshine' plants are

adaptable to any growing location as long as the growing season is 80 to 95 days. Expect mature squash in about 95 to 100 days from sowing seed or 80 days from transplants. The short vines need 6 to 8 feet in the full-sun garden.

**Watermelon F1 'Sweet Beauty' Vegetable Award Winner**

'Sweet Beauty' offers consistently sweet flavor and crisp texture and was praised by AAS Judges for its superior eating qualities. 'Sweet Beauty' melons are 5 to 7 pounds, an oblong shape with dark green skin and medium green stripes. 'Sweet Beauty' is a single-serving size. Improved for earliness, 'Sweet Beauty' melons can be harvested in about 77 to 80 days from sowing seed directly into the garden. The vigorous plant spreads vines about 8 to 10 feet.

## Fruit Facts

### **PITOMBA – *Eugenia luschnathiana* – Myrtaceae**

**Donated by:** CRFG and planted in 2003 (r.f.-09)

Common names: Pitomba, Uvalha do Campo, ubaid do Campo, and Uvalheira, and Cherry Pitomba.

The Pitomba, a little-known species native to Brazil, is a medium-sized slow-growing shrub that grows to 20 feet in height and 15 feet in width. The plant has dense foliage. The young leathery leaves have on their underside bronzed-colored hairs. Mature leaves are dark-green above and a lighter green beneath. The trunk is mottled brown and tan and resembles the guava.



The four-petaled white one-inch flowers are borne singly in the leaf axils. Flowers appear in late spring or early summer, and in some warmer areas sometimes there is more than one blooming season per year.

The fruit is broadly obovate, about 1 to 1

1/4 inches long, with the apex containing 4 or 5 green sepals, about 1/2 inch long. The skin is bright orange-yellow. The soft, juicy golden-yellow pulp is apricot-like in texture, aromatic and slightly acid. The fruit contains in the central cavity, one to several irregular, angular seeds, which are tan-colored and 3/8 to 5/8 in diameter, attached to one side of the cavity.

The shrub grows well over a wide variety of soils, and they it withstand temperatures as low as 26°F before sustaining damage as a mature plant. When the plant is well fertilized with a mixture of 20-20-20 and heavily watered, the shrub begins to bear fruits when they are 3 feet high. Pitombas have fairly good salt tolerance,

and they can be planted where they receive some salt spray and still grow well

Pitombas are easily propagated from seeds, but there is a wide variety as to the size of the fruit



produced by seedlings. Superior varieties that produce sweeter fruit that is larger and of better quality can be veneer-grafted. Seedlings will take, in most cases, three to four years before they can reach bearing age.

The Pitomba makes an

excellent hedge. Their rate of growth is about two feet per year, making them container specimens, and they fruit quite well in seven-to-ten gallon size containers.

The Pitomba was at first considered a promising fruit plant for the USA but has made no progress at all. There is a possibility that, in

areas close to the Pacific Ocean, the plant will flourish into a new industry. The fruit can be eaten fresh, and also used for jelly, preserves, and carbonated beverages.

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

