

Garden Clippings

Orange County Master Gardeners' Newsletter

Volume 11 Number 3

October 2005

October Meeting

Saturday, October 1, 2005

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 A- G, 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—Propagation & Cutting Exchange

Steve Williams will lead a workshop on propagation techniques. Steve, who is an instructor at Mt. SAC, has many years of experience in the field through his work at Descanso Gardens and the Huntington Library.

We will also have a late season cutting exchange. Do bring identified cuttings, as long as possible, to maximize the number of nodes for rooting. If possible, cut them early Saturday morning and keep moist. One easy way is to line a gallon pot with a plastic bag and fill with cuttings and a little water.

Board Meeting: October 20, 7:00 p.m. at home of Helen Elich.

Volunteer Hours Contest!

Remember to turn in your volunteer hours this month and be entered in the December contest drawing. Forms are available on the website.

Gardening Events

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

Oct. 15 & 16: Native Plant Sale

The Potting Shed will feature hundreds of natives and drought tolerant plants for sale, 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. Saturday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday. Admission & parking is free.

Oct. 22: Botany 101 for Gardeners, 9-11 a.m. \$7/person, \$5/Member, Oak Hall Classroom. New series of classes to learn to identify the over 4,000 plants at the Arboretum, taught by expert botanist Geoff Smith, Horticulture Instructor at Fullerton College

Donna O'Neill Land Conservancy:

Oct. 1: 8th annual *A Date with Nature*, 2:30-6:00 p.m. Call (949) 489-9778 to register and for directions. Enjoy activities featuring local wildlife, raptors, an insect zoo, butterfly gardening information, and native plants during the annual fundraiser at Campo Amantes, Rancho Mission Viejo.

OCMG TRAINING CLASS

We have 32 students enrolled! Contact Robert Shaw if you would like to sit in on a class to confirm location and space:

Oct. 1: Irrigation and Water Management with Kent Gordon

Oct. 8: Xeriscape Landscaping with Goeff Smith

Oct. 15: Plant Propagation at Mt. SAC with Steve Williams

Oct 22: Roses with Virginia Carlson

Oct. 29: Soils and Fertilizers with Kent Gordon

Share the Memories

Attention members from the first two Master Gardener classes: Do you have any memories or pictures you would like to share from those classes? Please send to Jean Rice to be included in our history memory book.

Plumeria 102 –Fertilizers

Plumerias require consistent fertilizers to continue to produce fragrant, beautiful blooms. Generally, fertilizers contain primary ingredients of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, and secondary nutrients such as calcium, magnesium, and sulfur. To complete the mix, they should also contain micronutrients such as iron, zinc, manganese, copper, molybdenum, boron, and cobalt.

Plumerias like low nitrogen, high phosphorus, and high potassium with all the secondary and micronutrients. Nitrogen promotes growth and foliage development, while phosphorus promotes blooms, reproduction activity, and root development. Potassium helps with overall vigor, branch thickness and resistance to insects and pathogens.

Types of Fertilizers

Fertilizers that are chemically based should be thought of as feeding the plant and not feeding the soil as organic fertilizers do. Repeated application of chemical fertilizers can slowly deplete microbial action in soils. The positive side is that chemical fertilizers are cost effective and results are quick and intense. Organic based fertilizers should be thought of as feeding the soil. The plants get the nutrients from the soil and the results are intense but the negative aspect is that organic fertilizers are not as cost effective.

Chemical fertilizers may be obtained in many forms such as pellets and water-soluble supplements like Epsom salts (magnesium sulfate) Sul-Po-Mag (sulfur, potassium, magnesium) and potassium sulfate (0-0-50). The magnesium in Epsom salt is essential in the

formation of chlorophyll. It should be used monthly as it benefits the roots and flowers. Epsom salts also help protect sunburned leaves on hot summer days. Sul-po-mag and potassium sulfate should be used in May to help strengthen stems for the stress of flowering and again in October for hardening the stems for winter, i.e. winterizing.

Organic fertilizers come in liquid as well as solid/granular forms. Fish emulsion and liquid kelp are excellent forms. Kelp is great for foliar feeding but may stain leaves. Dr. Earth is an excellent granular fertilizer as well as Bud and Bloom Buster for Tropicals (4-10-7). It contains fish bone meal, feather meal, potassium sulfate, alfalfa meal, and kelp meal.

Mycorrhizae are a fungus that has a symbiotic relationship with the plant's roots. It is a link between the plant's roots and the nutrients in the soil. This fungus attaches itself to the tips of plant roots and extends deep into soils and brings nutrients to the host plant.

Feeding Plumerias is a must to develop strong plants. In dormancy, protect your Plumerias: don't water or feed, and they will come back in the spring to grow once again and produce beautiful, fragrant blossoms. For more information regarding care of your plumeria, please contact mikem11@earthlink.net.

--Mike Maertzweiler, MG 2001

(Information collected from Orange County Farm Supply, Orange, California)



Leaves from the President



Our new class has started and I welcome you all to Orange County Master Gardeners. Some of the new members were able to attend our September meeting and go on the tour of Santiago Park. Patrick gave an interesting and informative tour. Santiago Park is one of our many volunteer venues. Several changes are taking place and it would be a wonderful opportunity to get involved at the beginning.

We still need some volunteers to review our current By-laws, it just involves reading the By-laws and making recommendations to the Board members; please contact Cheryl Spencer or Jean Rice if you would like to help. Another volunteer opening is the Speakers Bureau. We have a few months that need speakers for our meetings. Please contact me if you are interested or if you have an idea or name of a speaker.

Remember to turn in your hours so you will be entered in the contest. The drawing will be held in December

Thank you, Nancy Shaw, for the wonderful decorative painting you did on the watering can. It will be a beautiful decorative addition at our various events

Fall is here and I am anxious to move some plants and replant others in my garden, as I am sure you are too, so Happy Gardening

-- Sharon Neely

Update on OCMG grants to local gardening organizations: The Arboretum has requested Plexiglas sign holders for the plant tables and Radio Flyer wagons (they desperately need them). The membership

approved the sign holders, but the wagons are still in debate.

☎ Contacts

Sharon Neely, *President*.....

Gayle Crowe, *1st Vice Pres.*.....

Robert Shaw, *2nd Vice Pres.*.....

Helen Elich, *Treasurer*..... (

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

Jill Patterson, *Newsletter Editor*

Submit articles by the 10th of each month via:
e-mail

Jackie Brooks, *Vol. Hours*..... (

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

Volunteer Opportunities

Fullerton Arboretum Nature Guide Class

Reminder: The new Nature Guide Training class at the Fullerton Arboretum will be starting on Monday, Oct. 3rd from 9 am until noon and will continue for six consecutive Mondays. If there is anyone interested in joining the group, please have them contact me.

Plant Clinic at Fullerton Arboretum

We will have a Plant Clinic table at the Native Plant sale on October 15 and 16.

We need volunteers to staff it on Saturday afternoon and for both shifts on Sunday.

Contact Sharon Neely to volunteer.

Environmental Nature Center Butterfly House

Docents are needed for dates listed below, contact Lori Whalen at 949 645-8489 if you can help. Shifts are either 9 a.m. – noon or noon to 3 p.m.

October 1, 8, 15, and 16 (Fall Faire)

LÚCUMA – *Pouteria lucuma* – Sapotaceae

‘**Lúcuma de seda**’ donated by: CRFG/Silver and planted in 1985 (r.f.-08)

‘**Lúcuma de palo**’ donated by: Alfredo Chiri and planted in 1998(r.f.-08)

Common names: (Lúcuma de seda) Lúcum verde, Rujma, Lúcum, Lucma.

(Lúcuma de palo) Lúcum amarilla, Rucma, Lúcum, mamón.



‘**Lúcuma de seda**’ and the ‘**Lúcuma de palo**’ are the most popular varieties among Peruvian natives. The ‘**Lúcuma de seda**’ has a high content of water and is eaten fresh, while the ‘**Lúcuma de palo**’ is dryer and is used primarily to make ice cream.



The **Lúcuma de palo** fruit is yellow in color and appears to have originated in the Peruvian coastal valleys at the base of the Andes hillsides. The golden color of the fruit is unique to this Peruvian native tree. There are very few cultivars left in Perú that contain this golden characteristic, and they are carefully cared for and guarded by a small select group of Inca descendants. The Inca descendants still consider this fruit to be an important part of their belief in Sun worship, and they believe that the fruit captures the sun's rays at the time of sunrise. The Spanish during the Inca conquest believed that the Indians had found a fruit that contained gold, and the ingestion of the fruit would allow them to carry the gold within their bodies to a distant and secret place, which the Spaniards called "El Dorado."

The **Lúcuma de seda** fruit is green in color and has a bright orange to yellow, dry, mealy pulp. This specie is native to the highlands of southern Perú and Bolivia.

The tree is an evergreen with a straight trunk, up to 30 cm in diameter. The bark is light brown, thick and rough. This attractive tree ranges from 25 to 50 ft (8-15 m) in height, has a dense, rounded crown with drooping branches, and copious milky latex. Growth is slow and resistant to wind and salt air.

The evergreen leaves, clustered at the tips of small branches, are obovate, the tips reaching 2 m from the trunk. Before it flowers, many of the previous year's leaves are shed to make room for new growth. The leaves are alternate, dark green at the margin.



The flowers are unscented, borne singly in the leaf axil or leaf scars with 5 greenish sepals, ovate, outer densely hairy with rusty hairs and 5 whitish petals, fused below to more than half way, forming a barrel-shaped tube.

The fruit is oblate, from 6 to 7.5 cm long, 6.5 cm in diameter, weighing between 90 to 160 grams, with thin, delicate skin. The smooth skin is marked at the base by a persistent calyx and toward the apex by a ring of wrinkled tissue. The fruit at the early stages is green, turning to a brownish-green. Then as the ‘**Lúcuma de palo**’ fruit matures, it becomes bright yellow with an orange tint aging to a dark reddish-brown, while the ‘**Lúcuma de seda**’ stays green with a reddish-brown tint. The mealy pulp is bright yellow, firm, dry-to-juicy, very sweet with the flavor of an apricot-mango combination. The fruit has one seed that is rounded or broad-oval, glossy, dark brown color with a whitish hilum on one flattish side. The seed is contained in a separate loculi. The ball-like endosperm separates easily into two uneven, convex cotyledons.

Mature trees withstand temperatures between 40°F. - 100°F., and prefer open yard sun. Its climatic requirements are roughly comparable to those of lemons. The tree will grow in a wide range of soils and will grow well in areas subjected to occasional dryness. It tolerates

seasonal rains well, but not water logging. The tree best adapts to sandy or rocky sites and needs well-drained soils. It tolerates moderate salinity. However it thrives in soils high in organic matter.

If temperatures are predicted below 40°F, cover with a blanket if the plants are small (under 2 feet). Otherwise they can survive short frosts. Some burning at the tips would appear during the cold winters, but that is normal. The leaves will be replaced with new ones.

No serious diseases are known to be of sufficient importance to require control measures. Trees are very resistant to pests and diseases in the adult stage. Snails and grasshoppers are "nippers" of the leaves in young trees, but as they grow older, the rich latex will discourage them. Heading-back should be used primarily to promote lower branch growth. Tree should be limited to no more than 3 main branches from the base trunk. Cut all secondary branches below 2 feet. Water at least twice a week in sandy soils, weekly in rocky soils and loam soils.

Germination will start about 30 to 60 days after sowing fresh seed. In about one month the seedling attains a height between 3 to 6 inches, which suggests relative slow propagation. Although growth is slow, the lúcuma is reputed to start producing in 6 to 10 years. Experiments in grafting and seed-grafting are ongoing in Perú, but data is not available at this time.

High temperature (100°F+) during harvest time will precipitate dropping of the fruit. High hot winds will burn the leaves' margins on the wind side; there is no damage to the tree. The fruit falls to the ground shortly before fully ripe. It is advisable to pick the fruits to avoid damage. Such care allows the fruit to be stored for up to 10 days.

To date, the flavor of the lúcuma has not been chemically synthesized, thus creating a plus for new cultivars. The high quality of the fruits will depend on the knowledge of pollination agents and process and all details of its cultivation. .

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

Monthly Garden Tips and Tasks

Gardening in Southern California with our Mediterranean-like climate is a joy, but also provides challenges. Plants grow year-round here, not giving us much time out from garden chores, and each season has its specific tasks if we want a beautiful garden we can be proud of. However, it's easy to get behind or realize that what you accomplished could have waited, while you left a very timely task undone.

On Saturday mornings I ask myself, 'what do I want to do in the garden today?' when what I should be asking is 'what do I need to do in the garden today?' What better way to get this answered than at our monthly meetings? We have such a wealth of knowledge and resources among us that this question can be easily answered.

Each meeting we will have a 5-10 minute spot where someone will give a run-down of specific things to do in the garden that month (handouts optional but appreciated). This will range from what to plant or prune, when to fertilize, what to do for lawns, annuals, perennials, etc. It's time to start sharing the wealth! I have already volunteered to do this at the October meeting and will coordinate sign-ups for subsequent meetings. Join with me in providing focus and priorities for the frenzied or overworked gardener! -- Diane Gipson

Debris from the editor

After a disappointing July and August, my tomatoes are suddenly reviving (I'm ready for the test taste now!), my sweet basil is fragrant, and my plumeria are blooming. Plus, my roses are doing well and my grapefruit tree is so overloaded with ripening fruit that I've had to thin it for the first time. Is anyone else experiencing phenomenal citrus fruit production this year? I can't decide if it's due to the record rain amounts or to using Wonder Grow fertilizer. Send me your success story—or your disappointments! We learn so much from each other.