

# Garden Clippings

Orange County Master Gardeners' Newsletter

Volume 11 Number 5

December 2005

## December Meeting

**Saturday, December 3, 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

This is our annual yummy potluck and our opportunity to meet the new OCMG trainees. EVERYONE is invited to bring edible goodies to share.

Also, remember to bring along any items you wish to contribute to our Plants 'n Things raffle. In the spirit of the holidays, gift-type things, plant-related or not, would be welcome.

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. Any greeting card, not just holiday cards, can be used for her project.

## Enrichment Workshop—Volunteer Venues!

Ready to volunteer but not sure where or how? Our members will share their experiences in various venues and help you get started. The gift of your time can make a tremendous difference in our community. Bring your calendars so that you can commit.

Our 2005/2006 Membership Rosters will be available at our December and January Meetings.

**Board Meeting:** None this month!

## Volunteer Hours Contest!

This is the last month to turn in your volunteer hours and be entered in the December contest drawing. Forms are available on the website and must be turned in by November 30.

## Gardening Events

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

**Dec. 3-4: Cactus and Succulent Sale.** 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. The Potting Shed at the Fullerton Arboretum and the Orange County Cactus and Succulent Society present hundreds of unusual and hard-to-find cactus and succulents, plus over 30 varieties of cycads.

**December 10: Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden: Intermediate Field Botany** 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Participants will gain experience using field guides, identification manuals and technical floras. Class sessions are informal and hands-on, with dissection and examination of fresh and dried plant material. Completion of Beginning Field Botany recommended, but not required. \$90.00. For more information, call 909/625-8767 or <http://www.rsabg.org/>.

## OCMG TRAINING CLASS

Contact Robert Shaw if you're interested in attending a class to ensure there is space.

Dec. 3: Holiday party at Santa Ana Bowling Green site/volunteer venues

Dec. 10: Regenerative Studies at Cal Poly, Pomona with Juan Araya

Dec. 17: Contact Robert for details

Dec. 24 & 31: Enjoy the holidays!

# Leaves from the President



Special thanks to Jan Brider for the wonderful talk on Roses. The handouts were a big help and the slides were a good addition. I wish our meeting room allowed us to view them better.

We have been able to have several of our members give informative talks at our meetings. It has been a great benefit to me since I have had no one volunteer to contact speakers for our meetings. **I Need Help!!!** Please, if you can contact speakers or if you have names and phone numbers of anyone who might be a good speaker, let me know ASAP.

We also need someone to take over Plants 'n Things. Two members to share the responsibilities would be perfect but one person can do it with help from everyone.

Our December meeting will have no formal speaker. It will be a holiday party, time to visit with old friends and meet new ones. To all of you, have a Happy Holiday.

--Sharon Neely

November's gardening tips is now on the website. Thanks go to Diane Gipson, who again compiled the list. And, the editor admits *mea culpa* for calling her Debbie in last month's newsletter. Diane encourages other people to sign up and prepare the gardening tips for a month. Please contact her to select your month.

## Wanted!

South County Gardens for our 3<sup>rd</sup> annual garden tour to be held April 1, 2006. New students and current members are encouraged to volunteer. Contact Sharon Neely for more information and or questions. This is a fun event and, after two years in the north, we'd like to offer south county the opportunity to show off their gardens.

## ☎ Contacts

Sharon Neely, *President*.....  
Gayle Crowe, *1st Vice Pres.*.....  
Robert Shaw, *2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Pres.*.....  
Helen Elich, *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>

## Volunteer Opportunities

**School garden:** We have a request for Master Gardeners to assist the AG Minassian School at 5315 West McFadden, Santa Ana 92704 to help set-up Earth Boxes for classes K to 6 grades. The boxes are ready to go. They would like someone to come in and talk to the students about gardening, the correct seeds to start for the season, planting ideas etc. This is wonderful volunteer opportunity for one or more Master Gardeners to act as a consultant for this school. They need help as soon as possible.

Contact:

Ava Malazian (714) 747-3231  
[ava@malazian.com](mailto:ava@malazian.com)

AG Minassian School (714) 839-7831

**Bolsa Chica Land Trust:** The Trust is starting their "Miracles of the Marsh" program in January. This is a docent program taking third grade students on tours of the wetlands. They especially need people willing to talk about native plants of the area. A guidebook is available. Contact Linda Wolfe (714) 846-4588 or Sharon Neely for more information.

## California Natives: Suggested Websites and Reading (part 2)

From: Chris Barnhill Fullerton Arboretum:

Fullerton Arboretum Plant Sales  
1900 Associated Road  
Fullerton, CA 92831  
[www.arboretum.fullerton.edu/plants/plants.asp](http://www.arboretum.fullerton.edu/plants/plants.asp)

Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden  
1500 North College Avenue  
Claremont, CA 91711-3157  
[www.rsabg.org/](http://www.rsabg.org/)

Tree of Life Nursery  
33201 Ortega Highway  
P.O. Box 635  
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92693  
[www.treeoflifenuresery.com/retail/contact.html](http://www.treeoflifenuresery.com/retail/contact.html)

Las Pilatas  
8331 Nelson Way  
Escondido, 92026  
[www.laspilatas.com](http://www.laspilatas.com)

El Nativo Growers  
200 South Peckham Rd.  
Azusa, CA 91702  
[www.elnativogrowers.com/Introduction](http://www.elnativogrowers.com/Introduction)

Greenlee Nursery (Native Grasses)  
257 E. Franklin Ave.  
Pomona, CA 91766  
[www.greenleenursery.com](http://www.greenleenursery.com)

Cornflower Farms  
9811 Sheldon Rd  
Elk Grove, CA 95624  
[www.cornflowerfarms.com](http://www.cornflowerfarms.com)

Matillija Nursery  
825 Waters Road  
Moorpark, CA 93021  
[www.matilijanursery.com](http://www.matilijanursery.com)

Acorn Naturalist  
155 El Camino Real  
Tustin, Ca 92780  
[www.acornaturalist.com/store](http://www.acornaturalist.com/store)

Theodore Payne Foundation  
10459 Tuxford Street  
Sun Valley, CA 91352  
[www.theodorepayne.org](http://www.theodorepayne.org)

Thanks again to Helen Elich, who compiled and sent in this list.

### Debris from the editor

The November 17, 2005 Home section of the Los Angeles Times featured an article on Ceanothus, also known as California Lilac. Native to California, it is one of the few plants to have truly blue flowers. A new book on Ceanothus from Timber Press by David Fross, founder of Native Sons wholesale nursery will be published in spring 2006.

However, I had already jumped the gun and visited Garrison Foothill Nursery in Upland. At first sight, this garden center specializing in native plants seemed unprepossessing, BUT I found virtually every plant on my list and the owners are happy to special order specific plants not in stock. They had three varieties of Palo Verde available, plus several types of manzanita, and ceanothus. They also had Douglas Iris, but told me that it would do better in light shade. I will definitely be back—the owners are knowledgeable and the prices are reasonable. Just wish me luck in getting my trees planted!

**Garrison Foothill Nursery**  
679 E 16th Street  
Upland, CA 91784  
(909)949-9878

**Timber Press:** In the past, we've compiled a group order for this publisher and received a substantial discount. Is there interest in doing so this spring? Check their website and let's talk about it at the December meeting.

## **Ann and Steve Summers' Wildlife Habitat – Part I**

**By Anne Porter**

Ann Summers' birdbath/fountain looks like an inviting, pebbled, beach for small birds. It's at ground level and includes a gravel and rock slope that drops gently down to the shallow pond. She protects the ponds from mosquitoes with "mosquito dunks" made with natural BT and which are non-toxic to anything but the larva. And she has food for the birds right there, too. A little further on, in and around the fruit orchard, are different kinds of hanging feeders with peanuts, suet with berries, Niger (which rarely sprouts), and a wild bird mix. For other species, there are native trees, insects, fruit, and a wide variety of green leaves and stems.

### **Carbon Canyon Habitat**

There are birds everywhere in this sloping, one-acre lot in Carbon Canyon. It was wonderful to sit under huge Alder trees while we talked and listened. Ann described the needs of different birds and the importance of having a variety of trees, tree forks (for special nests), and bushes to provide the kind of environment they need. For example, she told me how important it was to have a "lookout" level in your garden. I immediately started thinking about my backyard and thought of the Ocotillo, which, from its place in the back corner, offers a good view of five different backyards. Now I understand why it's so popular.

Ann's garden is planned with a number of areas moving up the slope that provide the four basics for wildlife: food, water, shelter, and nesting/breeding areas. She has areas that are open and grassy with mature trees like sycamores, alders, and birches as well as typical California chaparral sections. There are areas for salvias, succulents, toyon (home to bluebirds, robins, thrushes, and waxwings who all like berries), flannel bush, milkweed, ceanothus, a fan palm with an oriole nest, vitus californica "Rodgers Red", and the list goes on and on.

According to Ann, it keeps on growing. As she makes changes in the garden, she is on the lookout for the kinds of plantings that will enhance the beautiful wildlife habitat she has built. She mentioned that you no longer have to go to somewhere like the Tree of Life nursery to find great plants for a natural habitat. Today, many nurseries, as well as the Fullerton Arboretum, carry natives and other plants appropriate to our climate.

### **Birds and More**

The garden is not just a home for birds. There's a fallen log covered by a thicket with a wonderful beehive. "I don't have to worry about pollination; and they don't bother anyone when they're foraging". She sees rabbits, gray squirrels, monarch butterflies (a caterpillar was about to start it's chrysalis while we stopped to watch), native wood rats, snakes, and an occasional bobcat.

Ann and Steve Summers' one acre has been a National Wildlife Federation certified Backyard Wildlife Habitat since 2004. She said that the process was simple and stressed that, "they want you to do this. They're looking for a way to lure you in and to help you continue." And you don't need a large area to create a habitat – apartment balconies have been certified.

Next month we'll look at the certification process – I plan to start mine after all the encouragement I got from Ann – how she first got involved, how she maintains her habitat and her views on the importance of maintaining habitats for our native "critters".

### **Special one-day Nursery Clearance Sale at Fullerton College!**

Saturday, December 3, 9:00 – 3:00 for great selection of fine plants selling at 50% to 70% off, at the Horticulture Department at Fullerton College. More information at: [www.horticulture.fullcoll.edu](http://www.horticulture.fullcoll.edu) or 714.992.7381

## WHITE SAPOTE – *Casimiroa edulis* – Rutaceae

**Var. ‘Hybrid’** – donated by: CRFG/Vincent and planted in 1981(r.f.-04)

**Var. ‘McDill’** – donated by: CRFG/Haluza and planted in 1982(r.f.-02)

Common names: White sapote, zapote blanco, ahache, matasano

White sapote is a native to Mexico and Central America and occurs in the wild and cultivated areas. The *Casimiroa edulis* is one of the three species of trees; the other two are woolly-leaved white sapote and the matasano de mico.

White sapote trees range from 15 to 60 feet in height. The trunk has a thick grayish bark with long drooping branches. The leaves are alternated with 3 to 7 lanceolated leaflets that are smooth above, light green, and smooth or hairy on the underside.



The flowers are small and greenish yellow, odorless, and borne in terminal panicles. Flowers are hermaphrodite and occasionally can become unisexual

because of some aborted stigmas. There is a variation as to the amount of pollen produced by the seedlings and the grafted cultivars.

Flowers with sterile pollen and lack of cross-pollination are a primary cause of heavy shedding of immature fruits. Bees will alleviate this problem.

The fruit is round, oval or ovoid, thin-skinned and bruises easily. It is from 2-4 inches in diameter and shaped like an apple, light green when unripe to yellow when ripe. The skin is coated with many



tiny yellow oil glands. The flesh is creamy with a sweet flavor, and its color is yellow or white, containing 1 to 6 hard white seeds.

White sapotes are usually found in elevations between 1500-3500 feet. In California, trees do well near the coast where the mean temperature is about 65° F. but poorly when the mean temperature is down to 57° F.

White sapotes are commonly grown from seeds. Seedlings begin to bear in 7 to 8 years. Grafting is common practice during midsummer. Rootstock that is preferred for grafting is from the seedlings of “Pike,” a sapote variety. Propagation from cutting is difficult to root.

Trees will do very well as long there is a good drainage on sandy loam or clay. Trees are fairly drought resistant. The white sapote is not the most desirable lawn tree in spite of its attractive foliage. It has invasive roots and produces many fruits that fall to the ground and make a ‘mess,’ attracting squirrels, rats, birds, flies and other insects.

When harvesting white sapote fruits, it is recommended to clip the fruit from the branches, leaving a short piece of stem attached. This stub will fall when the fruit becomes eating-ripe. If the fruit is plucked by hand by twisting, soon it will show a soft spot that rapidly will become watery and decayed. The best way to keep the fruit is to freeze it.

**Donated by:** Fullerton Arboretum and planted 2002 (r.f.-07)

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

### Wildflower Lecture

The Acorn Naturalists' Center for Science and Environmental Education offers a free lecture December 14 at 7:00 p.m. on “Wildflowers and the Creatures Who Love Them, the Wacky World of Pollination”. 155 El Camino Real, Tustin. Call 714-838-4888 for more information or visit the website at:

<http://www.acornnaturalists.com/>