

# Garden Clippings

Orange County Master Gardeners' Newsletter

Volume 12 Number 1

January 2006

## January Meeting

**Saturday, January 7, 2006**

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 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..

Please save your holiday cards for Rita Corpin and her school project. Also, feel free to bring garden catalogs to share.

## Enrichment Workshop—Commercial Composting!

Our speakers are Lorrie Loder, Community Relations Manager, and Greg Jackson, Compost Product Sales, both from Synagro Composting Company of CA, Inc. Their presentation will cover:

- Who is Synagro?
- Who are Our Local Partners?
- What Facilities Do We Operate?
- What Markets Does Synagro Serve with its Compost?
- Compost Characteristics
- How Compost is Being Used

**Board Meeting:** January 19, 7:00 p.m. at the home of Helen Elich.

Congratulations to Laura Hall, who won our volunteer hour report contest! And thanks to everyone who turned in their hours!

## Gardening Events

**Fullerton Arboretum.** Pre-register for all classes by calling 714/278-3579 ext. 0. Classes are \$7/\$5 member.

**Jan. 7: Deciduous Fruit Trees.** 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. Bleachers. Frank James of Rare Fruit Growers will teach how to select and care for deciduous fruit trees such as apple, apricot, peach, and plum.

**Jan. 21: Rose Care & Pruning.** 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. Bleachers. Glen Williams, Arboretum Garden Manger will share tips and techniques on how to prune and care for roses to produce both beautiful blooms and a healthy plant.

## OCMG TRAINING CLASS

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

Jan. 7: California Natives with Reggie Durant at the Newport Upper Bay.

Jan. 14: Pruning with Kent Gordon

Jan. 21: Roses with Virginia Carlson

Jan. 28: Citrus & Avocado with Greg Partida at Cal Poly

## New Column—Garden Memories

This month debuts a new column by Helen Elich. If any of you, your family, or friends have memories of special plants that would be a fit for this column, please send in an article to Jill or let Helen know what the plant is, the story behind it and she will be happy to do the research and writing.

# Leaves from the President



I hope your holidays were filled with lots of blessings and happiness, and the New Year brings great abundance in your gardens.

Looking forward to the New Year, we have two business items that need our attention. First is the nominating committee, two members have already volunteered to be on the committee, but we still need three more. Elections are not 'til June, but we should have all the positions of the Board in place before then. This helps the new Board get organized and ready to continue on with OCMG's objectives and goals. Also, it allows the prospective Board the opportunity to work with the outgoing Board, making the transition easier for everyone.

Finally I want to acknowledge Jean Rice, Cheryl Spencer and Diane Gipson for their total involvement and commitment to the revision of our bylaws. The bylaw revisions will be emailed to all of you. Extra copies will be available at the January meeting, for those who don't have email. Please read and review. We will have an open discussion at the January meeting. A vote to accept the changes will be held at our meeting in February.

January is National Thank You Month so thank you all!

--Sharon Neely

## 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 members 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>

## Club Plea

Are you an active member, the kind that would be missed?

Or are you just contented that your name is on a list?

Do you attend the meetings and mingle with the flock?

Or do you stay at home, and criticize and knock?

Do you take an active part to help the work along?

Or do you just sit on the sidelines and belong?

Do you do your work each week without a prod or stick?

Or do you leave the work to just a few, and talk about the clique?

There's quite a program scheduled, that I'm sure you've heard about, and we'll appreciate it, if you come and help us out.

Attend the meetings often, and help with hand and heart,

Don't just be a member, but take an active part.

Think this over. ... You know right from wrong,

Are you an active member, or do you just belong?

--anonymous

## Garden Memories –

### “Seven Sisters Roses”

by Helen Elich

While all of you are busy following up on your “to do “ lists for each month, like good gardeners should, I have spent the last six months researching the restoration and reproduction of American Gardens. But needless to say, your yard probably looks better than mine.

My research and inspiration for this article and column resulted from a conversation I had with my mother, whose family has lived in the Southern California area, (primarily Anaheim), for over 100 years. With the exception of a few years, she has lived in Orange County most of her 83 years.

I think her memory of this flower was prompted by the fact that she comes from a family of seven siblings. She recalls that many yards in Los Angeles as well as Orange County had the “Seven Sisters Roses”. She exclaimed how pretty they are and that they seem to grow all year. Having never heard of them I had to check it out and started my research on the flower and hope to be planting a vine in January.

In the meantime, this is what I have found. Most of my information comes from the Internet, but if you are interested in the restoration and reproduction of American Gardens, I have listed two new texts at the end of this article as well as the research that was referenced on the Internet.

Seven Sisters (*cathayensis platyphylla*, *R. multiflora grevillei*, *R. multiflora platyphylla*, *R. thoryi*), is a legendary and famous rose in the Old South, whose flowers include a range of colors from carmine pink through mauve in a single cluster. The appearance of the many-colored blossoms suggests that multiple types of roses are growing together. Hence, the name “Seven Sisters”.

“Seven Sisters”, is a vigorous once-blooming climbing rose that is frequently found in old

gardens and home sites throughout the southern United States.

“Seven Sisters” is an old oriental rose that is thought to

have been brought from Japan to Europe in 1816. The name may be a translation from the Japanese, but there are usually more than seven blossoms in each cluster. “Seven Sisters” was introduced by Sir Charles Greville in 1817.

The Botanical Group is Synstylae; Group; OGR, Class; H. Mult. It grows in height 15’ to 20’ and is a vigorous climber. The foliage is bright green and wide. It starts blooming in late spring and continues to bloom for 2-3 weeks. The flowers are small and it has a fresh-fruit like fragrance. Good for Zones 5-9. Spring Valley Roses will be ready to ship in January @ \$17.95 for those that are interested. You may find them locally by checking with our Rosarians (Virginia or Jan) or doing your own scouting. Though we are in the Zone range for this plant, an article in Country Gate written by Stephanie Cohen suggests that if you like a plant – plant it and see if it works. After all, she says, the plants do not to read the books and have no idea what zones they are supposed to be in. You may get lucky!

“Seven Sisters” is easily propagated, will tolerate poor soil and some shade but it prefers shelter from wind and is somewhat sensitive to cold.

Apparently, “Seven Sisters” can be found in a painting by the French Painter, Redoute. As an art history major, I will have to check that out. As you can tell by the photo it is a beautiful rose.

Sources:



*Restoring American Gardens: An Encyclopedia of Heirloom Ornamental Plants, 1640-1940* - Denise Wiles Adams

*For Every House a Garden: A Guide for Reproducing Period Gardens* - Rudy J. Favretti

American Rose Society. Modern Roses 10. Shreveport, Louisiana: American Rose Society. 1993, p. 544.

American Rose Society. Modern Roses XI. Shreveport, Louisiana: American Rose Society. 2000, p. 538.

Antique Rose Emporium. The Antique Rose Emporium 1988 Catalog. Independence, Texas: Antique Rose Emporium. 1988, p. 83.

Beales, Peter. *Classic Roses*. New York: Henry Holt & Company. 1997, p. 240, 253.

Druitt, Liz. *The Organic Rose*

## **Lemon Verbena A Great herb for SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

by Kathleen Jones

Lemon Verbena (*Aloysia Triphylla*), as its name suggests, is best known for the strong citrus aroma of its leaves. A Spanish researcher assigned it to the genus *Aloysia* (named for Maria Louisa, wife of King Charles IV of Spain). Those of us who grow Lemon Verbena think it is the Queen of lemon-scented herbs.

When I welcome you to my garden, I will probably walk you right past all the flowers, trees, and vegetables, right to my Lemon Verbena. I fell in love with this wonderful smelling plant a few years ago. In Gone with the Wind, lemon verbena is mentioned as Scarlet O'Hara's mother favorite plant. One whiff of the smell, and I predict you will not want to be without this luscious smelling herb.

Our fenced-in back yard has a circle garden, which is home to a seven-foot tall Lemon

Verbena plant. Lemon Verbena is a deciduous shrub with white or lilac flowers. Mine has white flowers.

Lemon Verbena, as you have guessed, has a strong lemon scent. Just brushing the leaves emits a scent, which reminds me of Lemon Pledge. Lemon Verbena is a native of South American. In Argentina and Chili it is found growing on the roadsides. The Spanish brought it to Europe where it was used in perfume and it arrived in North American in the late 1800's.



I first got my plant in a small 4" pot. Its first home did not get enough sun. I was very concerned about losing it when I moved it. The first summer it was in the circle garden it grew to four feet. It was now getting plenty of sunlight and rich well-drained soil. I found a picture in a magazine that showed Lemon Verbena growing as a small tree and decided that is just what I wanted. Today it is about 7 feet tall. Last year, it did not lose its leaves as all the books say it would do. It seems to have little flowers on it off and on all year long. I cut it back two or three times a year. I give away bundles of branches.

Lemon verbena is great when cooking chicken or fish. Use it in place of more commonly recommended herbs in chicken, fish or lamb marinades. No need to chop the leaves to bring out flavor. Left whole they are sufficiently aromatic.

The leaves also work their magic in cold drinks such as lemonade, iced tea, a cold fresh fruit punch or even a fruit cup.

Use the young tender leaves to make hot tea. There are historical references to lemon

verbena's use as a digestive aid. Today it is also added as a flavorful additive to medicinal teas to make them taste, well less medicinal.

Lemon Verbena's sweet scent was a favorite fragrance of Victorian ladies, and toilet water made from its leaves graced many a dressing table. It holds its scent in both dry and wet potpourri. The leaves lose their bright green color but the scent remains for a very long time. Use the dried leaves in herbal pillows and sachets or an infusion for a final laundry rinse.

You can add Lemon Verbena to fruit salads, jellies and fruit drinks; Lemongrass and Lemon verbena both contain the same primary chemical, citral, which gives them their "citrusy" flavor. Each herb will give the final dish a subtle different flavor.

## COCONA – *Solanum sessiliflorum* – Solanaceae



Common Names: Cocona, Peach tomato, Turkey berry, Orinoco apple, Topiro, Roolláhe, Coconilla, Akui'bedn, Daboca, Kochari, Kukuna, Lulo,

Popó, Popoi, Wakui'bedn

The Cocona is a native of South America where the wild species are found in Perú, Colombia and Ecuador. The plant has been found distributed along the low lands of the Amazonia to 4,000 feet in altitude in the Andean hills. The fruit has a very high genetic diversity (biotypes) as to shape, size, color, flavor and fragrance. In Perú there have been found at least 25 biotypes and in Brazil, 35.

The Cocona plant is a heavily branched herbaceous shrub that can vary between 2 to 6 feet high. From a central thick stem scalloped ovate leaves grow, 18 inches long and 15 inches wide. The leaves are covered densely with white hairs below having prominent veins on their

margins. The color of the leaves will vary from dark green to pale green depending upon the plant variety.

The flowers are borne in clusters of 5 to 9 in the leaf axils. They are bisexuals, 1 inch wide with 5 greenish-yellow petals, 5 yellow stamens and a dark-green 5-pointed calyx.

The fruit may be round, oblate, oblong or conical, with a blunt rounded apex. The fruit size average varies from 1 to 4 inches in length and up to 3 inches wide at the base. The skin is thin, smooth and soft and is covered with peach-like fuzz until the fruit is fully ripe, and then it becomes smooth. Depending on the variety, the fruit will be red, orange or yellow. The thin flesh has a faint flavor of tomato and surrounds the pulp. The pulp varies in thickness, and is juicy, meaty and of color creamy-white to pale yellow. Abundant throughout the central pulp are thin, flat, oval, cream-colored seeds surrounded by gelatin-like membrane with an acid flavor and pleasant aroma.

In Perú the Cocona are classified by their size, color and shape of their fruit. The 4 most prominent types are: Small-size fruit, purple-red; Medium-size fruit, yellow; Round like an apple, yellow; Pear-shaped, yellow. The medium size fruit is utilized mainly for juice.

The Cocona is self-fertile. Fruits mature about 8 weeks after pollination. The Cocona plant life is about two years. The Cocona is primarily propagated from seeds, even though vegetative propagation is possible to perpetuate a particular cultivar. Seeds extracted from the ripe fruits are placed in the shade for 2 days to ferment and break down the gelatin that surrounds them. They are washed and dried briefly out of the direct sun. Then planting is similar to the practice used to plant tomatoes. Plant seedlings 5 to 7 feet apart, depending on the fertility of the soil. Fertilize established plants with 2 to 3 oz. of a 10-8-10 NPK formula every 2 months.

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