

Garden Clippings

Orange County Master Gardeners' Newsletter

Volume 12 Number 3

March 2006

March Meeting: Graduation!

Schedule

Saturday, March 4, 2006

510 E. Memory Lane, Santa Ana

8:00 – 9:00 a.m.	Setup Plants 'n Things
9:00 a.m.	General Meeting
9:30 a.m.	Graduation
10:00 a.m.	Enrichment Program
10:30 a.m.	Snacks & Plants 'n Things

*Note that we are meeting ½ hour earlier so that we have time for our speaker! Also: No parking in the driveway for this meeting as we need to keep it open for various deliveries. **Bill McMurrin is the only exception.** If you need to deliver items, please move your car afterwards.*

In honor of the graduates, wonderful refreshments will be provided. Yum!

Please bring along any items you wish to contribute to our Plants 'n Things raffle, seed catalogs you would like to share and holiday cards for Rita.

We will be having a compost give-away, courtesy of Synagro. Each member will receive *one* ticket to be redeemed for *one* bag of compost. It will be everyone's own responsibility to transport to your own car. Please bring your own dolly or wagon!

Keynote speaker: Mark Costello

Mark is the Manager of the Friends of the Fullerton Arboretum. We'll learn the latest news about the Arboretum and volunteer opportunities.

Board Meeting: March 16, 7:00 p.m. at the home of Helen Elich.

Gardening Events

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

March 4: Home Composting II. 10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Bleachers. Intermediate class for those who already compost.

March 11: Pests in the Garden. 10 a.m. – 11 a.m. Bleachers. Learn the difference between beneficial and destructive critters in the garden.

March 16-19: Monster Tomato Sale. 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Over 150 varieties of tomato plants and 85 varieties of peppers will be offered, including many exotic and unusual varieties. FREE event!

March 18: Growing Tasty Tomatoes. 10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Bleachers. Learn the fundamentals of selecting, planting and growing tomatoes.

The Electronic Connection:

Reginald Durant, last month's speaker, has his own website: www.backtonatives.org

He also recommended this site on natives; normally a subscription fee is required to register, but it is free for 2006 thanks to a grant. It includes images and cultivation information: www.calflora.org

Finally, Google "USGS Butterflies" to find lists of butterflies endemic to Orange County.

Webmaster Scott Carroll suggests that we invest in America's plant heritage and buy from non-profits. This site lists several gardening organizations (such as Seed Savers): http://www.diynetwork.com/diy/gr_general_info/article/0,2029,DIY_13847_4433363,00.html

Cactus-proof gloves can be purchased at: <http://www.safegrasp.com/gardenarmor.html>

Leaves from the President



OCMG members welcome and congratulate our new graduates. You are all on your way to new and exciting volunteer opportunities. We rely on volunteer help to maintain and develop our involvement in our community's garden-related programs. Your commitments help promote an awareness of nature, and the understanding of the importance of habitat, conservation and stewardship. I hope that each of you will enjoy your new volunteer community.

Thank you to Bob Shaw. He did a wonderful job in coordinating the class venues this year. Also thank you to his assistants: Nancy Shaw, Eyal Givon, and Mike Maertzweiler, good job!

Our lives are filled with gardens and next month we be given the opportunity to take the time to look at a few of our OCMG members' gardens. Watch for your April newsletter as details of our garden tour will be in it.

--Sharon Neely

Board Members Needed!

We are looking for volunteers for next years' Board for the following positions: President; 1st VP; 2nd VP, treasurer, and Recording Secretary. Contact committee members Jeannine Lawrie Chair, Don Grime, Helen Wood, or Robin Russell if interested. PLEASE be interested!

Member's Corner

Webmaster Scott Carroll relates that he purchased a 10" x 20" seedling heat mat from eBay and his tomato seeds sprouted in only 3 days! They usually take a week to sprout. He also asks if anyone has a Reed avocado tree that he could get a cutting from. Contact Scott at: i0m@yahoo.com

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Heads Up for June Meeting!

The June meeting will include a plant exchange:

1. Plants must be potted and rooted.
2. If you bring plants, you can choose plants to take with you.
3. ALL plants must have an individual tag with botanical or common name on them. (no provision is being made to mark them at the meeting on 6/3/060).
4. This is a potluck also, so please bring those favorite main dishes, salads, desserts. Don't forget serving utensils too.
5. At the end of the exchange those members who are chair-persons of venues that need plants are welcome to take and any all leftovers beyond the one you exchange for what you brought.

This event is being facilitated by the new class of 2005/06 and hopefully will become an event every year. Your cooperation is appreciated.

Please contact Mike Maertzweiler at 714/524-6539 or email at mikem11@earthlink.net with any questions.

Thanks from the Arboretum:

First of all, Thank you, Thank you, Thank you! For the tables! Please convey our appreciation for these tables to Sharon and all of the O.C. Master Gardeners! The Sat. Staff has said numerous times how much they like the tables and we did get a great bargain. I found 6' light weight durable plastic tables that are adjustable to 3 levels for under \$50 each + tax! So we were able to purchase 6 of them with the club's donation. :) I made some signs and laminated them to place on the tables so all will know that the O.C. Master Gardeners were the donors. Thanks again for your help with this donation! The Arboretum and the Educational Programs will benefit for years to come with this gift from your Club!

Sincerely,

Teresa

Teresa V. Short
Education Director
Fullerton Arboretum

Debris from the Editor

Reginald's lecture last month exploded a number of myths about butterflies and moths. First, what is the difference between the two? They are both in the Lepidoptera family and any common distinguishing element of one can be found in the other. Reginald's final word was that the term "moth" is used to describe the less showy members of the family.

Second, we have all heard of Buddleia, the "butterfly bush", but since it's not native to California, it will not necessarily attract our butterflies. We know that Asclepias are the host plants for our signature Monarch butterflies, but not all Asclepias are created equal. Asclepias curassavica is a non-native variety that, if fed upon by the Monarch, makes it less bitter and therefore tastier to birds. Stick with native forms of Asclepias, as they help protect our Monarchs from becoming bird food. Finally, we have all used perlite and vermiculite in our

potting mixes. Both of these are geologically found in layers above and below asbestos and come with warnings about the dangers of inhalation by people. If ingested by lizards or other reptiles, both products will swell and eventually kill the animal. Reginald suggests the use of pumice, instead.

Wildlife Habitat -- Part III

By Anne Porter

While doing the research on this program, I encountered another certifying organization – the Windstar Wildlife Institute (www.windstar.org) founded by Thomas D. Patrick. Their process includes a course you are required to take that covers, in part, components of a wildlife habitat, maintaining trees and shrubs, handling wildlife problems, creating a butterfly and bird meadow, and ways to watch and photograph wildlife. This is a non-profit group out of Maryland founded in 1986. The focus of information appears to be on southeastern habitats, but there are plenty of ideas and lots of information that would apply to our area.

Their mission is to "assist individuals and families in establishing or enhancing the wildlife habitat on their properties" and their motto is "the voice of the wildlife naturalist". Their certification course is a prerequisite to their [Master Wildlife Habitat Naturalist](#) certification program. They publish *The WindStar Town & Country Naturalist*, and the *WindStar Wildlife Garden Weekly* (an email newsletter) and offer lists of books and other information.

Garden Tours

Two garden tours are coming up for which gardens and participants are needed: Alicia's 7th Annual Tour, which raises thousands of dollars for charity, in north county and the Marylou Heards' Memorial tour. Alicia's tour will take place May 13; contact Alicia at her restaurant at 714/990-4700. Marylou Heards' tour will take place on May 6/7; contact Fran Lebow 714 847-8669 for more information about participating.

Garden Memories by Helen Elich

Going back 50 years, one of the plants I remember in our family landscaping was the split leaf philodendron. Its size and shape intrigued me then, so I thought what a great opportunity to research this plant.



Monstera, Split Leaf Philodendron

Scientific Name: *Monstera deliciosa* Liebm.

Synonym: *Philodendron pertusum*

Family: *Araceae*

This Central American plant has been more widely cultivated as an ornamental than as a fruit plant, but its edible qualities are well known. Monstera is a vigorous, creeping or climbing vine with thick stems and heart shaped leaves often 2 feet wide and 3 feet long (60 by 90 cm) in tropical climates (in Phoenix, 1 foot by 1.5 foot is more usual - 30 by 45 cm). The leaves are both deeply lobed and perforated near the center.

Cultural Practices:

Avoid direct sun and keep it above 30 degrees (which is relatively easy if it is in a sheltered place). The plant suffers below 50 degrees. If protected it will survive Phoenix winters. When growing outside, if the conditions are right, the Monstera might start blooming 3 years after being planted. The edible fruit ripens one year

after blooming. It is important to wait until the fruit is ripe, that is that the green rind knocks off easily, to taste it. Before that the fruit contains enough oxalic acid to be painfully caustic.

Blooming Habits:

The flowers, which are like huge arum lilies, appear on short thick stems during the summer if the humidity conditions are good. The central spadix develops into a cylindrical dark green fruit 8 to 10 inches long (20 to 25 cm) and 2 to 3 inches in diameter (5 to 7.5 cm).

Repotting:

Put in an organic mix. Repot annually until the plant is the size you desire... then just add some fresh soil to the top of the soil annually

Propagation - tip cuttings

Tips:

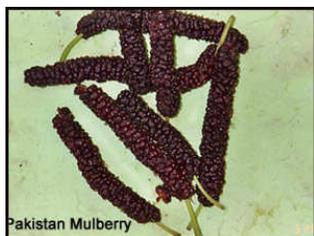
Wash the leaves on a regular basis. Train the aerial roots on a moss pole or other staking device.... or train the aerial roots down into the dirt. Other research indicated that it could be used in a xeriscape garden.

I don't see the plants around as much now as I did in the 50s and 60s, largely in part due to changes in landscaping styles. I think the Arboretum has some and I believe the Regenerative Studies Center at University of Riverside had a couple. As the research indicates, there are edible parts, which surprised me, as I don't remember the fruit or the flowers. Also, that it could survive a Phoenix winter is hard to believe, since I remember the plant seemed large but

fragile. If you enjoy the tropicals, this would certainly be a good start.

This column is open to everyone and qualifies for education hours since you have to read, research and write. The research for this came from various sources on the Internet.

PAKISTAN MULBERRY – *Morus macroura* – moraceae



Donated by:
CRFG/Barkman and
planted in 1999 (r.f.-01)

Common names:
Pakistan Mulberry,
Himalayan Mulberry,
Shatoot

The Pakistan or Himalayan mulberry is a fast-growing, deciduous tree that grows to 20-30 feet high, but can reach 70 feet high, spreading at least as wide. Leaves are toothed and dull green, making a dense shade. The trees are known to be long lived and can fruit for several hundred years.

It is not unusual for a Mulberry tree to produce leaves of different shapes. As a rule, abnormal shaped leaves are produced in stem-shoots, sucker growths and vigorous young branches. The leaves are rather large and heart-shaped at the base. Mulberry trees flower between April and May. The fruit ripens in August to September, is extremely juicy and has a sub-acid, saccharine taste.

Mulberry species have in every part a milky juice, which will coagulate into a sort of rubber, and it is believed that this gives tenacity to the filaments spun by the silkworm. The cultivation of mulberry trees was linked to the breeding of silkworms, which feed on their leaves. The cultivation of Pakistan Mulberry trees to rear silkworms has been proved to be unsuccessful, whereas the White Mulberry is the species where the silkworm flourishes.

The Mulberry tree seems to be native to the Himalayan Mountains in China. It is believed that the name of the Mulberry, *Morus*, was derived from the word *mora* (delay), attributed to the belief that of all cultivated trees the mulberry is the last that buds after a cold winter.

Pakistan Mulberry trees are fairly adaptable, but they prefer a warm, well-drained, loamy soil. They should be grown in full sun, and the trees are hardy to about 18-25 °F. Fertilization is generally unnecessary. The Pakistan Mulberry is fairly similar in growth habits and climatic requirements to the Black Mulberry.

Seeds germinate if given 2-3 months of cold stratification. Sow the seed as soon as it is ripe if possible, otherwise in the winter in a cold frame. The seed usually germinates in the first spring, but sometimes it may take another 12 months. Place the seedlings into individual pots when they are large enough to handle and grow them in a cold frame for their first winter. Plant them in late spring or early summer after the last expected frosts.

Cuttings of the young wood, 10-12 inches long, planted 6-10 inches deep will root slowly.



Mulberries are refreshing and have laxative properties. In former days, they used to be made into various conserves and drinks, and sometimes were used for mixing with cider during fermentation to give a pleasant taste and deep red color. Nowadays, mulberries are used primarily for wine or jams and for the preparation of syrup that is employed to flavor or color medicines.

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