

Garden Clippings

Orange County Master Gardeners' Newsletter

Volume 12 Number 7

August 2006

August Meeting

Saturday, August 5, 2006

510 E. Memory Lane/2615 Valencia, Santa Ana

The order of the Saturday morning meetings is in the process of changing. This is to highlight the importance of the Enrichment Program and enhance our ability to retain good speakers. We are going to move the Enrichment portion to the beginning of the program. It may go through a gradual shifting of times, so please note the schedule in your newsletter to make sure you don't miss anything.

Schedule

8:30 – 9:00 a.m.	Setup Plants 'n Things
9:00 – 9:30 a.m.	Snacks and Socializing
9:30 – 10:30 a.m.	Enrichment Program
10:45 – 11:30 a.m.	General Meeting

Members with last names starting with R - Z, please bring a breakfast snack. 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 program—African Violets!

Karen Stevenson is the president of the Tustana African Violet Society, a member of the African Violet Society of America, the Southern California Judges Council and the Southern California African Violet Council. She has been growing African violets for over 10 years and showing them for 10 years, winning many ribbons. She doesn't have a horticultural degree, but has learned by doing and by talking to other experts. Karen became a student judge last year and will be able to answer any of our questions as she talks about the care, propagation and hybridization of these beauties.

Gardening Events

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

Potting Shed closed until September 8

Rancho Santa Ana Botanical Garden:

Sat, August 26, 2006, 8:30 am – 12:30 pm.

Container Gardening With Native Plants

Learn how to design container gardens using appropriate native plants with eye-catching foliage, flowers, and fruits alive with the colors and textures of California.. \$50.00, pre-register by calling Rachel Kau- Taylor, (909) 625-8767 x224.

Plant Exchange Thanks

We all owe thanks to the OCMG class of 2005-2006 volunteers for hosting the June plant exchange. It was a wonderful success, as those of us who attended can attest to. I'm sure we all brought home plants that we have been planning on acquiring or have been afraid to grow. The class volunteers who worked that day, setting up the potluck table and organizing the plants on the patio, did a great job. Thank you again for contributing to OCMG. We welcome you and hope to see great things coming from such a promising group

Dues are due! If you have not paid the \$20 annual membership, which covers our insurance and newsletter, please bring to meeting or mail to Jetta Miles at:

20915 Timber Ridge Road
Yorba Linda, CA 92886

Leaves from the President



Thank you for the vote of confidence and electing me president of OCMG. I promise to bring all my energy and enthusiasm to bear on this position and take OCMG into another year. A year filled with promise and potential. I hope that as a group and individually, we can revitalize our interest in gardening and take it and ourselves to a new level of commitment and growth. Sharon was a great inspiration and a confident leader. I don't expect to fill her shoes, but rather, follow the path she forged. Thank you, Sharon, for your leadership and your ready laughter that made the meetings such fun. I am grateful that you are staying involved by participating on a committee.

Which brings us to the fact that there are tremendous opportunities in this organization for people to develop new skills or brush up on previously acquired ones. We have many committees that need people with opinions, knowledge and the willingness to contribute to the group as a whole. We each have a unique perspective and distinctive voice. I'm sure we each have asked, 'why don't they do such and such?' If you are on a committee, you can make things happen, things that maybe only you have thought of. So please consider volunteering. If you know what you would like to do but don't know where you would fit in, talk to me and we'll figure it out. We are open to suggestions and new ideas. For that is how growth is accomplished, one light bulb (or is it iris bulb?) at a time.

In closing, I would like to introduce you to the new board members. Some have been involved in other capacities in OCMG but all are new to the board this year.

1st Vice-President: Mike Maertzweiler
2nd Vice-President: Sallie Licata
Treasurer: Jetta Miles

Recording Secretary: Diane Gofferman-Asato
Corresponding Secretary Tonia Morrell

Thank you all for your willingness to serve and welcome to your new positions. I look forward to working with each of you in the coming year. We have a great year ahead. Let's make the most of it, while having great fun at our volunteer locations and in our own gardens.

--Diane Gipson

☎ Contacts

Diane Gipson, *President*.....
Mike Maertzweiler, *1st Vice Pres*
Sallie Licata, *2nd Vice Pres*.....
Jetta Miles, *Treasurer*.....

Fred Snyder, *Plant Clinic*.....
Jill Patterson, *Newsletter Editor*

Submit articles by the 10th of each month via:

Jean Rice, *Vol. Hours*.....

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

Cocoa Mulch Warning

Cocoa Mulch may contain a lethal ingredient called Theobromine. Theobromine is an ingredient used in making all chocolate and is toxic to dogs and cats. Cocoa bean shells contain potentially toxic quantities of theobromine, a xanthine compound similar in effects to caffeine and theophylline. Some manufacturers of cocoa mulch (such as the Cocoa Mulch brand) now proclaim that their products are theobromine-free and pet safe. See

<http://www.snopes.com/critters/crusader/cocoamulch.asp> for the full story.

Volunteer Opportunities

Some organizations have come forward recently, asking if members of OCMG would speak to their members or the public on gardening topics. Some of us are accomplished speakers and others of us would like to become so. If you are interested in representing OCMG and would like to speak individually or on a panel with other OCMG members, please let Diane Gipson know. This is a great opportunity in a low stress situation to talk about gardening and spread some of our well-earned knowledge. I invite each of you to think about this and see if this is for you.

Message from Theresa Piech

Former member and camellia enthusiast Theresa Piech is moving to Alaska. She is hoping to sell her Fountain Valley home, which has been on the Heards Country Garden Tour many times, to a fellow gardener. If interested, contact her at 714/962-3380.

Lavender (part 1)

By Diane Gipson

Lavender is an aromatic, evergreen perennial or shrub from the mint family native to the Mediterranean, Middle East and India. It is prized for its pretty form, subtle coloring and delightful fragrance and has been utilized for its essential oil which is used in perfumes, toiletry items, cleaning products and insect repellent. It is a favorite when placed near walkways or benches so that when brushed, they release their lavender aroma. All parts of these plants contain the scent though the flowers are the part used. In the language of herbs, lavender symbolizes luck, purity, sweetness and undying love. Who wouldn't benefit from these?

History: The word Lavender is derived from the Latin word 'lavare' which means 'to wash' probably because the Greeks, Romans and Arabs used it primarily as a toiletry item, to scent baths and sooth skin. Lavender was used as a strewing herb (to cover the floors and scent homes and

halls) and was burned in bonfires during festivals. Its medicinal and insecticidal properties were noted in the Middle Ages when it was one of the ingredients of Four Thieves Vinegar, which was thought to give immunity from the plague. At King Charles VI's court cushions were stuffed with lavender for its scent and to deter insects. More recently it was used in aromatherapy for burns and then in perfumes. Provence, France was the center of production but now other countries such as Japan, Australia and New Zealand are producing large quantities.

Plants/varieties: The foliage is usually grey-green and blooms, which grow on spiky stems rising above the plant, are traditionally lavender to deep purple, but now include white, pink or yellow-green. I personally like the pink because the color surprises me every time I see it on a lavender plant. Blooms can last most of the year if plants are well tended and deadheaded. There are different varieties for every garden, ranging from 8 inches to those over 3 feet tall and some are more highly scented than others. Their popularity and tendency to cross easily have created many hybrids and cultivars making accurate identification difficult. It seems that everyone has their favorite varieties. I choose mine for their blossom, their growth habit, or their traditional value (e.g. for medicinal purposes). There are 3 important groups of lavenders:

- 1.) *Lavandula angustifolia* (also called *lavandula officinalis*, common lavender or English lavender) which has over 40 different varieties and is one of the most important lavenders for perfumes and medicinal use.
- 2.) *L. x intermedia* which are hybrids of *l. angustifolia* and *l. latifolia* and
- 3.) *L. stoechas* (French or Spanish lavender) – which is considered to have medicinal value.

Of the different varieties, English lavender and *l. x intermedia* have edible flowers while other species may contain harmful chemicals and so should not be eaten.