

Garden Clippings

Orange County Master Gardeners' Newsletter

Volume 13 Number 3

March 2007

March Meeting

Saturday, March 3, 2007

510 E. Memory Lane/2615 Valencia, Santa Ana

Graduation!

Schedule

8:30 – 9:00 a.m.	Setup Plants 'n Things
9:00 – 10:00 a.m.	Graduation
10:00 – 10:30 a.m.	Snacks and Socializing
10:30 – 11:20 a.m.	General Meeting
11:20 – 11:30 a.m.	Plants 'n Things

Snacks to celebrate graduation will be provided.
Welcome our new members!

Please bring along any items you wish to contribute to our Plants 'n Things raffle.

Also, please bring your holiday cards for Rita Corpin's school project and any gardening catalogs or magazines you'd like to share.

Enrichment program—Graduation!

It's that time of year again – a whole class full of new members to welcome to our organization. The more, the merrier. Let's celebrate their completion of the class and make them feel welcome. If you need help at your venue of choice – there may be a new member that would like to try it out, so start recruiting. Or if you would like to meet someone else that appreciates the same peculiar type of plant or garden that you do, there's a new group to canvas. New members, new life, changes ahead! What's not to like?

Board Meeting: Home of Mike Maertzweiler, Tuesday, March 13 at 7 p.m.

For the electronically connected:

Margaret Morrissey's website includes extensive calendar information about gardening events at: www.orangecountygardeners.org.

Gardening Events

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

Sat. Mar 3: Composting II 10:00-11:30 a.m., Bleachers Beyond the basics for those who have been composting and want more knowledge.

Tue. Mar. 6: Basics of Propagation (Part 3) 6-8 pm Chapman Classroom/ Pavilion \$25. Last class in series covers California native plant propagation. Instructor Dylan Hannon, who worked at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden.

Thurs-Sun, Mar. 15-18: Monster Tomato & Pepper Sale 10 am – 4 pm. Free. More than 100 varieties of tomatoes and peppers available.

Fullerton College Horticulture Dept. Call 714/992-7381.

Fri-Sun, Mar. 9 - 11, 10 am – 4 pm. Eighth Annual Tomato Plant Sale. 125 varieties available. Website is: <http://horticulture.fullcoll.edu>.

Orange County Rose Society

Thur. Mar. 1: Orange County Rose Society monthly meeting, 7:30 pm at Westminster Senior Center, 8200 Westminster Blvd.

Dr. Tommy Cairns will speak on growing roses in So. California. Dr. Tommy is the past president of both the American Rose Society and the World Federation of Roses. He is also one of the top exhibitors in the world. Everyone welcome, contact Jan Brider for information.

South Coast Garden Show is April 25 -29. Contact Mike Maertzweiler to volunteer. April meeting will be in a new location—stay tuned!!

Leaves from the President



I'm sure you've all had those days. When out of the blue, everything seems to go wrong. You have a hole in your sock (or your nylons have a run), you are running behind and the car needs gas. Well, I had that kind of day on February 3rd. But it wasn't just my day, but OCMG's morning that was affected. I'm sure the new members want to know what kind of group they're joining – well, read on. Through some mishap, the Lawn Bowling facility didn't have us booked in 'our' room for the morning of February 3rd. When we got them to open it for us (or should I say, when Sharon Neely got them to open it for us), we were informed that another group had reserved the room for 10:30. (Thank you Sharon for being there to take care of this. I am sorry that you had to be the one to do so. After 3 years of it, you are probably asking if it will ever be over.) Hopefully, soon.

Well, never let it be said that we are an inflexible group. We were up for it and planned to meet somewhere outside after the Enrichment program. Before the talk, I asked the speaker to sell her books outside, in the front of the building, while we took down the chairs. But when the talk ended, she was so swamped at the front of the room by our gardeners who wanted a piece of her wisdom, that she didn't have a chance to move. So, imagine this scene: while we were taking down the tables and putting away the chairs, Nora Koenig and Helen Elich were calling out the Plants 'n Things winners and Julia Bawden-Davis was answering questions and selling books (and Mike Maertzweiler was saving us picnic tables). Finally, we were leaving the room as the new group was walking in (and Jill Patterson, thankfully had the will-power to walk away from a group of knitters – I know it was a

temptation, Jill). We adjourned to some picnic tables under the trees and had a very productive general meeting, making some important decisions. It was actually kind of nice under the trees – a very natural place for us gardeners, don't you think? And I apologize to all of you if you felt or were affected by the stress of the situation. So thank you for being you and being flexible and understanding (and not allergic to the outdoors). We all appreciate kindness when things seem to be going differently than expected. Thanks again to everyone who helped to pull it off.

--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:
 e-mail
 Jean Rice, *Vol. Hours*.....
 OCMG Website: <http://www.ocmastergardeners.org>

OCMG Member Updates

Coming next month: An article about Nuccio's Nurseries in Altadena, the premier source for buying camellias in California.

Pickling your Paperwhites

Adapted from an article by
William B. Miller, Cornell University

The paperwhite narcissus is a popular bulb for indoor forcing in the winter months. They are simply planted in pots with soil, or even more commonly, in dishes or bowls with gravel, marbles or other decorative material. With a little water, they rapidly form roots, grow leaves and shoots. The white, fragrant flowers usually open up within 2-3 weeks of planting. A

common problem with paperwhites, however, is that they often grow too tall and flop over. Recent research conducted by the Flowerbulb Research Program at Cornell University has found a simple and effective way to reduce stem and leaf growth of paperwhites. The “secret” is using dilute solutions of

alcohol. Properly used, the result is paperwhites that are 1/3 to 1/2 shorter, with equal sized flowers that last as long as normal.



Untreated on left;
pickled on right.

What to do

We suggest planting your paperwhite bulbs in stones, gravel, marbles, glass beads, etc. as usual. Add water as you normally would, then wait about 1 week until roots are growing, and the shoot is green and growing about 1-2” above the top of the bulb. At this point, pour off the water and replace it with a solution of 4 to 6% alcohol, made from just about any “hard” liquor. You can do the calculations to figure the dilution, but, as an example, to get a 5% solution from a 40% distilled spirit (e.g., gin, vodka, whiskey, rum, tequila), you add 1 part of the booze to 7 parts of water. Then, simply use this solution, instead of water, for further watering of your bulbs. The result will be a plant that is 1/3 shorter, but with flowers just as large, fragrant, and long-lasting as usual. But, the plant will be nicely proportioned and won’t need support stakes to keep it upright. You will see results within just a few days.

A few other thoughts

- Do not use beer or wine, as the sugars in them will cause major problems with the plants
- As with humans, paperwhites can also suffer alcohol overdoses! We suggest 4-6% alcohol as a normal and safe range. If plants are given much more than 10% alcohol, growth problems will start, and 25% alcohol is dramatically toxic. So, moderation is the key!

- It is not strictly necessary pour off the water after the plants are rooted (as we suggest above). You can just as well add your 5% alcohol without pouring the water off. The result, though, will be a lower than optimal alcohol concentration around the roots, and, ultimately, growth will not be reduced as much as you expect. The reason to pour off the water is to simply maximize the alcohol level around the roots.

- If you do not have alcohol for consumption in your household, rubbing

alcohol (isopropyl alcohol) works just as well. Since this is usually 70% alcohol when purchased, a dilution of 1 part rubbing alcohol to 10 or 11 parts water is appropriate.

Last month’s speaker

Julia Bawden-Davis’s talk on Indoor Organic Gardening was very inspiring and enlightening. While she spoke about caring for houseplants, something most of us have done for years, she brought things into the discussion that many of us have not previously considered. I have never thought to add my worm castings to my indoor plants. To me, worms and their products were ‘outdoor’ things. But why, I now wonder. Also, she uses beneficial insects inside. That wouldn’t work for me, because I’d worry too much about their well-being in our indoor environment. However, she made some great points and I realize that there is always something more to learn. And sometimes that only impediment to that is that we think we know it already. Thank you, Julia, for opening our eyes.

Nomination Committee:

Join me in congratulating the members who volunteered to serve on the nominating committee this year. This is a very important task for OCMG. Please help them by filling out and handing in the form that they are distributing in this newsletter. This is the contribution you can make to ensure that OCMG remains the organization you want it to be. So join me in thanking this year's nomination committee: Tonia Morrell, Yvonne Smith, Marlys Sturus, Jean Rice and Helen Elich. We all appreciate your willingness to serve.

Mt. SAC Horticultural Excursions

Led by Steve Williams

Sat, April 28, Lotusland, \$99.00

Enjoy an enchanting 2-hour tour exploring this famous 37-acre estate in the foothills of Montecito in Santa Barbara. Highlights of this excursion will be the spring blooming Japanese Garden, and other themed gardens including succulent, tropical, topiary, etc. Tour is preceded by lunch at the beautiful Santa Barbara FisHouse.

Excursion time is approximately 11 hours.

Transportation will be via luxury charter bus. Please call (909) 594-5611 ext. 4220 for times and registration information.

Sat, March 17, Horticultural L.A. Zoo Tour, 9 am. \$5.00. Sponsored by the L.A. Chapter, California Association of Nursery and Garden Centers. Meet at the Zoo Main Entrance.

Join D.J. Smetana, Senior Zoo Maintenance Manager, for a rare, private tour of the L.A. Zoo, observing the flora for landscape use and animal care. Following the tour, you can enjoy the Zoo for the rest of the day! Due to space limitations, OCMG members only—no friends or family. For more information, contact Steve Williams, 909-594-5611, Ext. 3059 or via email: sowilliams@mtsac.edu

Wed, March 21, Kellogg Products class, noon

A representative from the Kellogg Products will be here at Brea Olinda Nursery for a FREE short informational class on planting mixes, soils and composts. This is a great opportunity to learn first hand from the manufacturer. The class will be valuable for professional landscapers, homeowners and plant lovers in general. To make sure we have enough refreshments to be served at the conclusion of the meeting, please sign up today at 714 993-0760.

Proudly presented as part of the educational program at the new Brea Olinda Nursery -2601 Valencia Av - Brea, CA

Sat, April 7: Woodworking Class with Sam Maloof, 9 a.m. until 3 p.m.

"What if Picasso had been a chair maker and Stravinsky a designer of tables? What would have been the impact of such intense creative talent on twentieth-century furniture? Today there is a man with this quality of profound artistic vision and talent who has devoted his life to making furniture. The class is held at his workshop at 5131 Carnelian Street, Alta Loma, CA 91701. This class is offered through the Extension Department: University of California, Riverside. For information and reservations call: 951-787-4105 or 800-442-4990.

"Doomsday' vault design unveiled"

by Mark Kinver, BBC News

The final design for a "doomsday" vault that will house seeds from all known varieties of food crops has been unveiled by the Norwegian government. The Svalbard International Seed Vault will be built into a mountainside on a remote island near the North Pole. The vault aims to safeguard the world's agriculture from future catastrophes, such as nuclear war, asteroid strikes and climate change. Construction begins in March, and the seed bank is scheduled to open in 2008. The Norwegian government is paying the \$5m (£2.5m) construction costs of the vault, which will have enough space to house three million seed samples.



ORANGE COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
SELF NOMINATION FORM

Please **PRINT** your name: _____ Signature: _____

Phone Number: _____ E-mail Address: _____

BOARD POSITION

Please check the line by the Board position you would like to hold:

____ President

____ First Vice President

____ Second Vice President

____ Secretary

____ Treasurer

Please Return Form to:

Tonia Morrell

321 Malvern Avenue

Fullerton, CA 92832

COMMITTEE PARTICIPATION

Can you serve on a committee? If so, which one(s)?

HAVE ONLY A LITTLE TIME?

I can't serve on a standing committee, but I can help on special projects. I can do the following types of things:

SORRY! CAN'T DO IT THIS YEAR!

Please let the Nominating Committee know if you can't serve in any capacity this year:

_____ I cannot participate in any board position or committee during the 2007-2008 year.