

Garden Clippings

Orange County Independent Master Gardeners' Newsletter

Volume 16 Number 01

January 2010

January Meeting

Saturday, January 9, 2010

Second Saturday!

Field Trip to Tropical Flora

19121 Hawthorne Boulevard
Torrance, CA 90503-1504

Meet at 10 am in the parking lot. We will be touring Tropical Flora in Torrance. Carpooling is recommended and guests are welcome.

Remember to save your holiday cards for Rita Corpin's World History class.

Program: Tropical Flora tour

Rainforest Flora, Inc. offers the greatest variety, the largest number, and the highest quality of *Tillandsia* in North America and the world. RFI is also the oldest *Tillandsia* nursery in America. Other bromeliads, including the sought after *Vriesea imperialis*, can be found at this nursery. Staghorn ferns, neoregelias, palms and cycads are other specialty plants available.

For more information, check out their website at <http://www.rainforestflora.com/>.



Board Meeting: 6:30 pm the Tuesday before general meeting at the home of Robert Shaw.

Gardening Events

Sat. Jan. 9 : "Orange Co. Rose Society Rose Pruning & Winter Care Seminar" 9am – 2 pm
Westminster Senior Center, 8200 Westminster Boulevard (east of Beach Blvd).

Seminar and hands on demonstration, tools sharpened too!

Fullerton Arboretum. Pre-register for all classes by calling 657/278-3407

Sat. Jan. 9 "Worm Composting" 10 – 11:30 am.
Must preregister by Jan. 6.

Join Pat McNelly, Principal Staff Analyst of the OC Sanitation District and learn how to introduce worms in your home composting system.

Sat. Jan. 23 "Water Conservation Gardening Series Class 3: California Friendly Landscape Designs" 1-4pm Pavilion Classrooms, \$40.00

Landscape Architect Rick Fisher offers his expert advice in this class for creating beautiful garden designs requiring little water. Prepaid preregistration by Jan. 20 recommended

Sat. Jan. 23 "Rose Garden Basics" 10 – 11:30 am Oak Hall Classrooms. \$15.00

Learn the basics of rose selection, planting, fertilization, pruning, pest and disease control, and companion planting from our expert, Jan Brider.

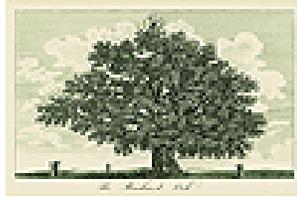
UC Irvine Arboretum Contact 949-824-5833.

Sat. Jan. 23 "Saturday Plant Sale" 9 am-3 pm

A variety of perennials, shrubs, succulents and blooming bulbs are offered. Free admission and free parking. The Arboretum is south of the corner of Campus Drive and Jamboree Rd.

It's bare root planting time for roses, many fruit trees, and asparagus!

Leaves from the President



The new year is staring us in the face and is about to spring, are we ready for the new year? I'm not much into resolutions which are easily forgotten but do offer these thoughts as goals for the next 6 months.

Get the new class started. We now have 17 trainees who have applied.

Settle into a more hospitable location for club meetings.

Help the nomination committee present a great slate of board members in June.

Facilitate an experience exchange amongst OC garden groups

Let me report that we had a really great party in December. Plenty of food and lots of people. We "meeted and greeted and eaten" effectively. Everywhere I looked, we were mixing and having gardening centered conversations and sharing experiences. I could not be more proud of how we hosted and mixed with our guests. We had 5 of our trainees present and heard from 8 of the 50+ OC garden groups. Three of the garden group people have applied to be part of our next training class, another looks like a speaking opportunity for one of us and my wife and I are going to get a loaner beehive this May.

I have been party to 3 recent conversations regarding what it takes to be a successful gardener. Two were on water conservation and the 3rd was about how to fill in information gaps. I found each conversation concluding that what the world needs is more master gardeners!

I look forward to seeing you on the field trip on Saturday, **9 Jan. 2010**.

Robert Shaw, President, Orange County
Independent Master Gardeners

Red Pig Tools

Many of us remember fondly Bob Denman's shop in old town Orange. He moved to Oregon in 2004, leaving an unfilled gap for hand-wrought garden tools. Well, he's gone Web and his tools are now available on line at:

www.redpigtools.com. It's not the same as wandering through the brick-and-mortar store, stumbling on rare finds that suddenly become absolute must-haves, but we can now find that specialty garden tool that no one else has ever heard of.

Sharon Neely sent this article from San Francisco State University Magazine:

“Where have all the bees gone?”

Associate Professor of Biology Gretchen LeBuhn is enlisting the help of thousands of citizen-scientists to find out. Her Great Sunflower Project, the first coast-to-coast study on bee pollination, asks participants to plant a sunflower and monitor the bee activity it attracts.

“We know very little about bee activity in home and community gardens and their surrounding environments,” LeBuhn says, “but we are certain that they are a crucial link in the survival of native habitats and local produce.”

Nearly 80,000 people have signed up to help LeBuhn track bees and determine environmental factors that may be affecting their populations.

“We need to know where bees are doing well and how parks, gardens, natural areas and all sorts of habitats affect our bees. Once we get a good picture of where bees are pollinating poorly, we can start to design ways to help them.”

To participate in The Great Sunflower project, visit: www.greatsunflower.org

Volunteer Opportunities

1. Below is an email from the city of Stanton offering a fun and educational volunteer opportunity. Please contact Mr. Skiles if you're interested in working on this project.

My name is Robert Skiles, Recreation Leader for the City of Stanton Parks and Recreation Services Department. I am emailing your group to see if you would be interested in networking with our department in putting together a planting day for kids at our Stanton Park? If this is a project you might look forward to please feel free to contact me at (714) 379-0129.

Thanks,
Robert Skiles
City of Stanton

2. One of the guests at our December meeting was Ria, who has started the Santa Ana People's Garden behind the First Congregational Church on the corner of Santiago and Virginia (just a few blocks from the Bowling Green). The church has offered the space, but there is no other connection. I visited after the meeting and found the beginnings of a community garden. They have lots of material but are in desperate need of a master gardener to help them design and organize the space. They meet the 1st and 3rd Saturdays from 9:45am – 4pm. Contact Ria at tierramadre8@yahoo.com if you're interested.

Alternative Ant Pesticide from Sharon Neely

Pour two cups of club soda (carbonated water) directly in the center of an ant mound, even fire ants. The carbon dioxide in the water is heavier than air and displaces the oxygen which suffocates the queen and the other ants. The whole colony will be dead within about two days.

Besides eliminating the ants, club soda leaves no poisonous residue, does not contaminate the ground water, and does not indiscriminately kill other insects. It is not harmful to your pets and soaks into the ground. Each mound must be treated individually and a one liter bottle of club soda will kill 2 to 3 mounds.

Debris from the Editor

Our field trip to Tropical Flora is an amazing opportunity to explore the world of bromeliads and specifically learn about tillandsia. Other than one or two common species, there are very few places to buy or enjoy bromeliads. The variety available at Tropical Flora is unprecedented.

I've brought a number of these air plants to the club either as gifts or as part of our spring plant exchange. They are super easy to care for; they generally propagate adventitiously; and the inflorescence tends toward the neon-colored. We started with just a few plants and now have dozens, all self-propagated. Even when not in bloom, the sculptural quality of the plant lends interest. They are an ideal indoor plant as they don't use soil. Many people like to glue the plants to some kind of plant holder or piece of driftwood, but it's not necessary. Mine are all simply placed on a bench, where they are piled in drifts. When they bloom, it is a riot of color!

Care for tillandsia is simplicity itself. They prefer bright light (our California sun is too desiccating) and misting or outright dunking in water with some liquid fertilizer. When the leaves start curling up, you know it's time to water.

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