

Garden Clippings

Orange County Independent Master Gardeners' Newsletter

Volume 16 Number 02

February 2010

February Meeting

Saturday, February 6, 2010

New Location: Santiago Park/Log Cabin

Schedule

8:15 – 9:00 a.m.	Setup Plants 'n Things
9:00 – 9:45 a.m.	Business Meeting
9:45 - 10:00 a.m.	Plants 'n Things
10:00– 11:00 a.m.	Program
11:00	Clean up

Members with last names starting with **A - G**, 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, any gardening catalogs or magazines you'd like to share, and holiday cards for Rita Corpin's World History class.

We are again meeting at the Santiago Park Log Cabin.

Program: Begonias 101

Candace Nakanishi, member of the O.C. Begonia Society, Doug Frost Begonia Society, and Long Beach Begonia Society, will teach us how to propagate these beautiful flowers. Candace has her degree in horticulture from Cal Poly, Pomona and has experience in commercial plant propagation.. She has taught nursery production, landscaping and floral design at several north Orange County ROP programs. She is well-equipped to answer any questions we may have about begonias in general and propagation in particular.

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

Gardening Events

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

Sat. Feb. 20 : Class IV: Irrigating the Low-Water Use Garden 1:00– 3:00 pm

Discover the irrigation solutions to quality garden care with significantly less water. Landscape architect Rick Fisher teaches basic irrigation design and other water management techniques. \$30/members \$35/nonmembers, discount for prepaid preregistration: \$25/members \$30/nonmembers / Preregister by Feb. 17.

UC Irvine Arboretum Contact 949-824-5833.

Sat. Feb. 13 "Saturday Plant Sale" 9 am-3 pm

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

Rancho Santa Ana Botanical Gardens Pre-register for all classes by calling (909) 625-8767 x224

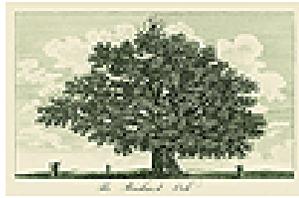
Sat. Feb. 20 "Introduction to Container Gardening" 10:00 - 1:00

Learn the basics of putting together containers with the colors and textures of California using appropriate plants with eye-catching foliage, flowers, and fruits. Participants will compare the different types of containers, learn how to mix a variety of potting soils for planting, and discuss general maintenance of container gardens. \$42.00

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

For many other gardening events, check <http://www.orangecountygardeners.org>

Leaves from the President



Some information a possible new meeting place - I have been on the phone with the Anaheim Hills Community Center as a possible replacement for the Santiago Park site for club meetings. The arrangement would be no cost for the 1st 2 hours, \$20 per hour for longer than that. We would have to have a member living in the Anaheim Hills (zip code 92808) in order to have the use of the room. The Center is located off Roosevelt and Weir Canyon. I will try to go by there before our meeting in February. The free use time limit brings up a question - can we set-up and finish a meeting in 2 hours? Another possibility is the community room at the La Habra Branch Library. This was our alternate meeting place in years past and there is no fee to use the room. We'll try to go over this and vote on February 6 for a move in March.

The board has reviewed our progress for the next training class. We have set a date to start the class in September 2010. This will allow us to have another shot at the Green Scene for sign-ups and provide a definite date for our ad campaign. We wish it could be sooner, but the registration is just not coming in. We'll be working with the list of trainees we have now, invite them to the club meetings, and determine if they are interested enough to wait until September.

I am curious about the viability of a seed exchange within the club or with other garden clubs. I'm thinking that it would be both a conservation effort and maybe an economical way to get some variety into our gardens. As a matter of habit, I know I don't experiment outside my comfort zone. I seem to choose the same old carrot, lettuce, onion each year. It's not much at \$3.95 a seed packet - but it does add up. I never use the entire packet, especially with square foot gardening. Richard Cowles gave us a pumpkin start last year - something I wouldn't have bought myself. It turned out to be a most wonderful

display pumpkin - one which is not available through most seed catalogs. One outcome of growing our own gardens is the ability to choose varieties which do not need to be "market durable" but are perhaps better appealing or have better taste. If one of you happened to really like a particular plant and we had a seed exchange board at the club, we might expand our plant palate. An ultimate goal could be to help conserve the existing seed diversity by harvesting seed, especially for heirloom plants (avoiding patent problems of the hybrids). I'd like some feed back if you have any thoughts to share.

See you at the February meeting.

Robert Shaw, President, Orange County
Independent Master Gardeners

☎ Contacts

Robert Shaw, *President*

Diane Wilkenson, *Treasurer*

Anne Porter, *1st^d Vice Pres*

Jill O'Neill, *2nd Vice Pres.*

Fred Snyder, *Plant Clinic*

Jill Patterson, *Newsletter Editor*

Submit articles by the 10th of each month via:

e-mail at

or snail mail:

Jean Rice, *Vol. Hours*

Website: [http:// www.ocmastergardeners.org](http://www.ocmastergardeners.org)

Is Your Membership Current?

We have updated our membership and the mailing list has been correspondingly corrected. If you have not received your newsletter, but have paid your dues, please contact Diane Wilkinson immediately. If you currently receive the newsletter via snail mail and are ready to make the switch to eco-friendly e-mail, please contact Jill Patterson. Email recipients receive the newsletter much faster AND in color.

Perennial Plant of the Year



Each year, the Perennial Plant Association selects the annual perennial of the year through a membership-wide vote. Nominations are based on the following criteria:

- Suitable for a wide range of climatic conditions
 - Low maintenance
 - Pest and disease resistant
 - Readily available in the year of release
 - Multiple seasons of ornamental interest
- Easily propagated by asexual or seed propagation

This year's plant is *Baptisia australis*, or Blue false indigo. It's an Eastern U.S. native, suitable for zones 3-9. It grows three to four feet tall and three to four feet wide in an upright habit. Often, when first planted, baptisia has only several stems and appears sparse. However, the clump goes from a slow start to really flourishing within three years, when it reaches its full size of a diameter of approximately a four foot shrub. It grows best in full sun, but can survive partial shade. If the plant is grown in shade, staking may be in order to prevent flopping. It is drought tolerant, once established. It should be noted that this perennial has a tap root and should be placed in a permanent location. Some clumps are 20 years old and have not been divided. This low-maintenance quality is another attractive feature.

Newly emerging shoots produce violet-blue, lupine-like flowers in erect 10- to 12-inch racemes atop flower stems extending well above the foliage mound of clover-like, trifoliate, bluish-green leaves. The spring flowers are present for three to four weeks. The flowers give way to inflated ornamental seed pods which turn charcoal black when ripe, which rattle in the autumn breezes, creating a nice sound effect. Check out

<http://www.perennialplant.org/index.asp> for more information and photos.

June Plant Exchange

Start those cuttings and seeds now so you'll be ready for our annual plant exchange at the June meeting. It's a "bring one, take one" exchange of rooted plants. You can bring multiples of the same plant or bring a variety of different plants. If anyone is looking for a specific item, let me know and I'll put it in the next newsletter.

Rainforest Flora Field Trip By Barbara Eaves

OCIMG's new year began with a field trip to Rainforest Flora in Torrance. Upon entering the retail greenhouse, customers are amazed at the size and variety of tillandsias and other bromeliads on display. Tillandsias are native to some parts of the southern U.S., but most come from Latin America. They are epiphytes and true air plants, some species flourishing in mesic (wet) conditions, but most popular species are xeric (dry). They are very adaptable and, after being placed in a good location, can survive long periods of time without any attention.



Wreath of tillandsias

Paul T. Isley III, owner of Rainforest Flora, is a self-taught expert who began selling Tillandsias, bromeliads and related products at the Pasadena flea market in 1974. He has since written two books which are recognized worldwide as the 'go to' book for information on this unusual group of plants.

Check their comprehensive website for further information about their nursery and for links to related products and botanical information:
<http://www.rainforestflora.com/>

Concerns for water conservation and easy care make these plants very attractive to contemporary

gardeners. A trip to Rainforest Flora will delight and amaze, and you will probably leave with a tray full of them just like I did.