

Garden Clippings

Orange County Independent Master Gardeners' Newsletter

Volume 19 Number 8

September 2013

September Meeting

Saturday, September 7, 2013

Rancho Santiago Community College Rm. 107
2323 North Broadway, Santa Ana, CA 92706

Schedule

8:30 – 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. Enrichment Program/Food Swap
11:00 – 11:30 a.m. Clean up

Members with last names starting with **H - Q**, please bring a breakfast snack. Other members are also welcome to bring goodies. Also, please bring along any items you wish to contribute to our Plants 'n Things raffle and any gardening catalogs or magazines you'd like to share.

Enrichment Program: Chrysanthemums

Our speaker this month is Irene Bernal, president of the O.C. Chrysanthemum Society. Irene joined the group in 2010, but didn't become serious about growing 'mums until 2012.

The group, founded in 2000, meets the first Monday of each month at 7pm at St. John's Church, located at 405 N. Dale Street in Anaheim. Their annual show will be held at the Sherman Library & Gardens in Corona del Mar on October 19 (1pm - 4pm) & 20 (10am - 4pm). Irene will be accompanied by Jay Pengra, who has won many blue ribbons at both the local and national level.

We will be holding a food swap during the meeting. See the next page for details!

Gardening Events

Bowers Museum 2002 North Main Street, Santa Ana 714.567.3600

Sep. 10-15: "Bonsai and Viewing Stones: The Living Sculpture". \$8. 10am – 4pm.

28 trees selected from private collections displayed in a traditional manner. The Viewing Stones, or 'found art', are collected from various parts of the United States and Asia.

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

Sat. Sept 14: "Botany Kick Start" 9am – 1pm. Pavilion classroom. \$25/members & \$30/non-members

An overview of plant parts, functions, pollination, and ecology. Bob Allen will show fresh plant material in order to study parts.

Sat. Sept 21: "Adult Bug Safari" 9:30 - 11am. Nature Center and Grounds. : \$5/person.

Adults only are welcome on this fascinating exploration of the world of insects and arthropods.

Upcoming Saturday, October 19:

The OC California Native Plant Society, hosts:

At Home with Natives 2013: Sustaining California with Native Gardens

8:00am – 4:30 pm at Saddleback College in Mission Viejo. \$55 includes gourmet lunch. More information and online registration at: <http://www.occnps.org/#basic-information>

Reminder! Dues are due!

Please pay \$20 at the June meeting or mail by mid-July to:
Diane Wilkinson
2612 Sherwood Ave.
Fullerton, CA 92831

Leaves from the President



People have been trading and bartering goods for as long as we've been people. Now, with the Governor's signing of the California Cottage Food Operations law, the selling and/or trading of "nonpotentially hazardous" homemade food has been legalized.

There is a "food swap network", a non-profit organization that provides resources to people looking to join or start a local food swap. There are more than 125 food swaps around the world. Normally, they're two hour events with less than 35 people attending (so the social context is enhanced). You can bring anything you've grown or made, including breads, pies, cookies, relishes, etc.

I checked out the website: <http://www.foodswapnetwork.com/> to find local swaps. I found links to swaps in Long Beach, Central Orange County, Costa Mesa, and Brentwood. Those were some of the ones closest to us. The site also has information on what a food swap is, how to host one, and how to attend.

There's also information at Pinterest.com (<http://pinterest.com/foodswaps/>) and the LA FoodSwap (<http://lafoodswap.com/>) which is part of the Food Swap Network.

So, we are joining a fine tradition. I'm looking forward to what everyone is bringing.

Anne Porter, President
Orange County Independent Master Gardeners

From the Grapevine

Don Martin, tells me that Orchard Supply Hardware is in the process of closing 7 stores in the area, including the Santa Ana location where he was working. Wish him luck in his upcoming job search.

Food Swap!

Bring produce or flowers from your garden or baked goods to "swap" with your fellow gardeners. Guidelines for our food swap:

- Bring as few or as many items as you want. You can bring many of the same item or bring all sorts of different items.
- Swappers will be examining and picking up your goods, so be sure to package them in a way that protects the food and makes it clear the amounts you want to swap.
- Bring anything that you've made or grown yourselves: homemade bread loaves, empanadas, lavender infused vodka, duck eggs, marmalades and preserves, marshmallows, cookies, canned peaches, bundled fresh herbs, sausages, limoncello, homemade pasta, bags of pecans, pierogies, pies...you name it!
- Do not feel obligated to accept someone's offer if you don't want the item. Conversely, do not take it personally if someone refuses your offer. Many issues impact food choices, including allergies.

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

Saikei: Planting a Tree

By Don Martin

When planting a tree, the first thing you must do is determine which side is the front and back. Trees have many shapes. In selecting the front of the tree we consider three factors: trunk; branches; and roots.

One thing we think about when we put the shikei in a show is judging the front. We disregard shoots, leaves, flowers, and fruit and concentrate on the trunk and branches. Trees also have strengths and weaknesses and knowing this, we can choose a front of the tree. We also look for balance and depth. There are four elements of balance: stability, harmony, unity, and variation in the tree.

You know about bonsai and I have touched on saikei, living miniature landscapes, but there are a couple more art forms bonsai artists have adopted. One is suiseki (water-stone). Suiseki is the abbreviation of a much longer word I know I can't pronounce, but I am told it stands for landscape scene stone. One piece of rock that could make you envision a high mountain or a rugged shore and sometimes faces and even animals, but mainly nature scenes are called a suiseki. There is an old Japanese word, zanshi-jukyo, and it means to look on and live the environment with respect to viewing an exceptional stone. This word connotes seeing in your mind's eye the beauty of nature without being there.

Proposed EU Law Criminalizes Unregistered Plants

On May 6, 2013, a new law was put before the European Commission, which creates new powers to classify and regulate all plant life anywhere in Europe.

The "Plant Reproductive Material Law" regulates all plants. It contains immediate restrictions on vegetables and woodland trees. It also creates powers that can be used to restrict any other plants in the future, but the details of how this will work are unspecified.

Under the new law, it will immediately be illegal to grow, reproduce or trade any vegetable seed or tree that has not been tested and approved by a new "EU Plant Variety Agency", which will make a list of approved plants. Moreover, an **annual fee** must also be paid to the Agency to keep the plants on the list, and if not paid, they cannot be produced.

The proposed law seems to be mostly about the globalised agribusiness seed industry needing new laws to cope with gene patents and plant patents, and to be able to register 'their' industrial varieties or genes safely and securely before selling them in large quantities to industrial farmers, who might otherwise save the seed and sell it or use it themselves without paying a royalty fee.

The needs of the millions of people who grow normal vegetables on a normal scale have been overlooked.

The early drafts of the law were badly written and implied that people couldn't even swap their own saved seeds with their neighbors for free. Following a huge outcry and intense lobbying from consumer groups, small-scale farmers, genebanks, and even some member-state governments, some last-minute changes were made, which have reduced the impact slightly.

The law starts from the premise that **all vegetables, fruit and trees must be officially registered before they can be reproduced or distributed**. This is a major restriction on seed availability, as there are all sorts of costs in both time and money dealing with the bureaucracy of a central Plant Variety Agency. Then, after making that the basic rule, there are some exceptions made in limited cases:

- **Home gardeners** will be permitted to save and swap unregistered seed without breaking the law.
- **Small organisations** can grow and supply unregistered vegetable seed - **but only if they have less than 10 employees**

- **Seedbanks** can grow unregistered seed without breaking the law (**but they cannot give it to the public**)
- There might be easier (in an unspecified way) rules for large producers of seeds suitable for organic agriculture etc, in some (unspecified) future legislation.

The rest of the law is still overly restrictive - there are rules about labeling and sealing packets for example - and in the long run will make it much harder for people to procure good seeds they want to grow at home or for small scale sustainable agriculture.

For years the availability of freely reproducible open-pollinated seed suitable for sustainable agriculture has been shrinking due to the seed laws, and this new law doesn't address the problem. It just considers the needs of the agri-tech industry and makes it easier for them to market their industrial seed on a big scale.

The real problem is having a starting point that all seeds are prohibited unless officially tested and registered, and then adding some small exceptions as an afterthought.

There are also clauses that mean the above concessions could be removed or reduced at any time in the future without coming back to the Parliament for a vote.

This can affect U.S. consumers as many of our seed catalogs sell seeds from European farms.

Taken from the Real Seed Catalogue at: <http://www.realseeds.co.uk/seedlaw.html>

The full text of the draft law is at this site (note that the Summary has NOT been updated and contains information no longer in the draft) http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/pressroom/docs/proposal_aphp_en.pdf

Thanks to Diane Wilkinson for sending the initial links.

Volunteer Opportunity: Nature Guides at the Fullerton Arboretum

Nature Guides provide the opportunity to gain knowledge and an appreciation of the plant world. There are several programs needing Guides:

- **CEEP** - Children's Environmental Educational Program (CEEP) is for students in the third grade to explore with Nature Guides four specific biomes in the arboretum. These tours are scheduled on Thursdays in the morning.

- **General Tours** with school, church, home schools, 4-H, scouts, and other groups are scattered throughout each month. Areas covered, but not limited to are: orchard, farm, tropical fruits, riparian, community gardens, composting, bee keeping, and the biomes covered in CEEP.

- **Adult Tours** are conducted sporadically throughout the month for Red Hats, college students, garden clubs, and others. There is always a monthly "open to the public" tour one Saturday morning each month.

- **JHEEP** - Junior High Environmental Education Program (JHEEP) is new and starts October 2013. This program serves 7th graders and is funded by a grant from the Mysun Foundation.

The goal is to explore science principals in an outdoor setting and create an awareness of conservation issues and sustainable practices.

Students visit once in the fall, focusing on plant adaptations, plant organs and structures, and exploring ancient plants. The second visit is in the spring, focusing on reproduction of plants, genetics, populations and extinction. These tours will be scheduled on Tuesdays in October/November and March/April with morning and afternoon start time.

*"It's difficult to think anything but pleasant thoughts while eating a homegrown tomato."
Lewis Grizzard*