

# Garden Clippings

Orange County Independent Master Gardeners' Newsletter

Volume 20 Number 10

November 2014

## November Meeting

**Saturday, November 1, 2014**

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 – 9:30 a.m. Business Meeting  
9:30 – 10:30 a.m. Enrichment Program  
10:30 – 11:00 a.m. Plants ‘n Things  
11:00 – 11:30 a.m. Clean up

Members with last names starting with **A - G**, 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 along with catalogs you’d like to share.

### Enrichment Program: Planting Bamboo Is Not a Crime with Ralph Evans

Ralph Evans is the owner of Botanical Partners, a nursery in Vista that he opened in 1994. He received his degree in Ornamental Horticulture from California State Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo, CA in 1967. In his 45 years in the nursery industry, he has held senior management positions in national nursery companies, offering sod, bedding plants, trees and shrubs, and plants from tissue culture. He is passionate about bamboo, which he added to his product line in 1998, and is a former president of the American Bamboo Society — Southern California Chapter. Botanical Partners carries unusual palms, cycads, succulents, and cacti. They sell mail order on the Internet at <http://www.botanicalpartners.com>, at the general nursery. There is also a website just for bamboo: <http://www.bamboohq.com>. It includes information about growing bamboo and suggestions for varieties for specific climate zones.

## Gardening Events

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

### **Sat. – Sun. Nov. 15-16: “Native Plant Sale”**

10am – 4pm.

**Roger’s Gardens,** 2301 San Joaquin Hills Rd., Corona Del Mar, CA 92625, tel.949/640-5800

One-hour seminars include edible plants on Nov. 2 at 10 am and alternatives to turf on Nov. 8 at 9:00am.

**Rancho Santa Ana Botanical Gardens** 1500 N. College Ave., Claremont, CA 91711, just off Foothill Blvd. and east of Indian Hill.

<http://www.rsabg.org>. Pre-register for all classes by calling (909) 625-8767 x224.

### **Sat. Nov. 22: “California Native Food Plants”.**

10am – noon. Member price: \$25 / Public: \$32

Production manager Antonio Sanchez explains the basics of native edible plant gardening and how that differs from traditional vegetable gardening. Participants have the opportunity to sample seasonal dishes and discuss how to grow specific plants found in the recipes.

**Tree of Life Nursery** 33201 Ortega Highway, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675. Check website for updated driving directions due to highway work. <http://www.californianativeplants.com/>. Pre-register for all classes by calling (909) 625-8767 x224.

### **Sat. Nov. 8, 15 & 22: “Kill the Lawn series”.**

9:30 – 10:30am.

Nov. 8 explains how to remove turf, Nov. 15 covers garden design; Nov. 22 discusses care and maintenance.

# Debris from the Editor



After last month's inspiring program on native plants by Laura Camp, I drove up to Rancho Santa Ana Botanical Gardens for their native plant sale. It was broiling hot, but my goal was the lecture by Molly Bogh on her journey to replace her 10,000 square feet of lawn with native and drought tolerant plants. She and her landscape contractor wrote and self-published a beautiful full-cover book detailing the steps required. *Life After Lawns: 8 steps from grass to a waterwise garden* is well worth its price and is available on Amazon.com. It is the only book I know of that truly explains the process and steps required.

After that lecture, I stayed for a tour of the garden's seed bank. RSABG is a research center which collects and preserves California native plant seeds. One set of each seed is made available to other research centers and scientists. Another set is sent to the national seed bank in Fort Collins, Colorado. The third set is stored in climate controlled containers. Two containers have common seeds stored in glass vials. The other two containers store rare seeds in packets especially designed to preserve them. Disaster plans procedures are displayed in the room, which has a code lock. I am very impressed with the care and importance RSABG places in the seed they collect. Seed is tested for viability every few years; planting and collecting new seed is done only when viability begins to lessen in order to limit the genetic change that occurs when planting from seed.

I had not known that the United States had a national seed bank. The mission of the National Center for Genetic Resources Preservation (NCGRP) is to "acquire, evaluate, preserve and provide a national collection of genetic resources to secure the biological diversity that underpins a sustainable U.S. agricultural economy through diligent stewardship, research, and communication."

Genebanking began in the 1890s and the National Seed Storage Laboratory (NSSL) was built in 1958 to consolidate plant collections from the Plant Introduction stations created in the previous century, plant collectors, and publicly-funded breeders into a single facility that used state-of-art practices to maintain viability and data associated with sample provenance. In 1977, experiments began to store seeds in liquid nitrogen, and became the standard storage method by 1990.

The Center has core knowledge about genebanking and preservation, access to liquid nitrogen storage facilities, and high security at a renovated facility, which has led to expanding its mission to include an animal genebank. The center now carries the mission of preserving germplasm of all life forms that are important to US agriculture.



The National Center for Genetic Resources Preservation

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## Don Martin's Corner

### How This Mess Got Started

There has been a lot of talk about the decrease in the pollinator populations, especially with bees. The finger is now pointing at the nursery industry and their use of neonicotinoid (or nionic) systemic insecticides, such as Dinotefuran. This mess got started in June 2013 when a landscape crew in Oregon sprayed Linden trees while the trees were in bloom. The trees were sprayed for aphids, but the systemic insecticides are not to be used while trees are in bloom and attracting bees.

This is not just an issue in North America: this past December, the European Union placed a two-year ban on three of the most used neonics. Greenpeace started a consumer petition in the Netherlands to ban these insecticides for good.

As for the landscape crew that sprayed the Linden trees, each one was fined only \$550. No word on whether or not the company itself was fined.

There is some good news. Some of the big box stores have decided to require plant vendors to label any plants treated with neonic pesticides by the end of 2014. This came about due to bad publicity from a press release by an activist group which purchased and tested some plants they bought at the big box stores. The group dubbed the stores as “bee killers”. Home Depot first sided with the EPA in saying that the neonic levels were safe, but due to bad press they changed their minds. Lowes has not yet made a decision.

As an FYI, Minnesota passed a plant labeling bill to include restrictions concerning pollinators. The bill became law July 1, 2014. Part of the bill states: “A person may not label or advertise plants or nursery stock as beneficial to pollinators if the nursery stock has been treated and has a detectable level of system insecticides.” The Greek said “if the bees die, we die”. You know there is a lot more to this than meets the eye.

*Editor's note:* I found several articles on the internet, including this one from <http://www.panna.org/blog/neonic-harms-go-well-beyond-bees>:

“Last week, a researcher out of the University of Stirling in the UK released a [new study](#) examining other ways “neonics” are impacting the environment. It turns out that the harmful effects of these insecticides are widespread — from birds to earthworms, mammals to aquatic insects.

Neonics now comprise about 1/4 of all insecticide use, and are commonly used in the U.S. as a seed coating to protect seeds from pest damage. Professor Dave Goulson's review confirms that neonic dust released during sowing can be harmful to foraging honey bees.

A growing body of scientific evidence clearly shows that while neonics are not the only driver of honey bee decline, they are a key contributing factor.

Goulson highlights evidence that the environmental impacts of neonics go well beyond honey bees, including mortality in birds, mammals and a variety of non-target insects.

The researcher cites a U.S. study from 2012, where soybean test plots planted with neonic seed dressing and untreated seeds were compared. No difference in yield was found during the two-year study, but beneficial natural enemies of the soybean aphid were depressed in the treated plots, which suggests that the seed treatment cost is not recouped — affirming evidence from at least three other studies.”

### Back to Natives Open House

Their native plant sale and open house is November 22, from 10am – 3pm. Their top 5 recommended plants will be available: *Penstemon spectabilis*, or showy penstemon; *Eriophyllum confertiflorum*, or golden yarrow; *Artemisia californica*, or California sagebrush; *Baccharis pilularis*, or coyote brush; and *Salvia apiana* or white sage. Check website for directions to the event at Santiago Park in Santa Ana: <http://www.backtonatives.org/>

Free mini-workshops will also be offered:

- 10:30 Native Butterfly Host and Nectar Plants
- 11:30 Irrigating Natives: Basics for Beginners
- 1:00 Designing a Native Garden
- 2:00 Maintaining your Native Garden