

Garden Clippings

Orange County Independent Master Gardeners' Newsletter

Volume 21 Number 2

February 2015

February Meeting

Saturday, February 7, 2015

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 **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 with Steven Kutcher: Garden Insects & Why Flowers Change Colors

Steven works as a consultant for private industry, government districts, the entertainment industry, and is currently a part-time biology instructor at West Los Angeles College. He received a BS in entomology at U.C. Davis and an MA in biology at CSU Long Beach

He has appeared on many TV and radio programs including The Tonight Show, Late Night With David Letterman, The Garry Shandling Show (nominated for an Emmy), and The Scoop GB (episode won BFTA). In 1990 The National Geographic did a short documentary on his work in education and the film industry.

In 1974, he taught entomology and insect ecology at Long Beach State. Since then he has taught biology for non-majors and other courses at five different community colleges. His website is: <http://bugsaremybusiness.com>

Gardening Events

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

Sat. Feb. 8: "Container Gardening for
Beginners", 10 - 11am

A primer on planting in pots, bowls, or baskets.

Sat. Feb. 14: "World-Class Sweet Peas", 9 -
10am

Horticulturist, Steve Hampson has been grown and trialed sweet pea varieties for 10 years. Steve will cover topics such as seed sowing, soil preparation, insect and disease control, support systems and growing in containers.

Sat.-Sun Feb. 21-22: "Daffodil Show", 9am -
5pm

Second annual Daffodil show, displaying dozens of familiar and unusual California-grown Daffodil varieties. Customers are invited to bring Daffodil and Narcissus stems for entry and display, with the variety name if known, before 11am Saturday.

Armstrong Nurseries: Free morning classes are provided at each location. February classes include: Orchid care on the 14th and 15th; seed starting for edibles on the 21st; and water wise gardening on the 28th. For times and details, see <http://www.armstronggarden.com/pages/classes>

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. Feb. 21: "Habitat Gardening". 10am –
noon \$32/public

Learn about specific host/habitat plants for birds, bees, and butterflies, as well as design tips and maintenance techniques.

New Threat to Monarchs



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When evidence emerged that monarch butterflies were losing the milkweed they depend on due to the spread of herbicide-resistant crops in the United States,

people across the country took action, planting milkweed in their own gardens. But a new paper shows that monarchs are becoming infected with a parasite because people have been planting tropical milkweed (*Asclepias curassavica*) instead of the more difficult to find native species of milkweed.

Tropical milkweed is pretty, easy to grow, and monarchs love it. The problem is that tropical milkweed, when planted in warm environments, doesn't die back in the winter like native milkweed does. When presented with a place to lay their eggs year-round, many monarchs don't bother making the trip to Mexico at all. Worse, tropical milkweed hosts a protozoan parasite called *Ophryocystis elektroscirrha* (OE). As caterpillars, monarchs ingest the parasite along with their normal milkweed meals, and when they hatch from their chrysalises they are covered in spores. Infected monarchs are much weaker than their healthy counterparts and don't live nearly as long. In fact, if an OE-infected monarch tries to migrate, it will probably die long before it arrives in central Mexico.

If everyone could be convince to replace these species with a native milkweed species—or at least cut the plant back every few weeks during the winter—they could quickly put a stop to the destructive winter-breeding trend. Native milkweed isn't always as easy to get as tropical milkweed, but it's starting to become more available online. For the entire article, see: <http://news.sciencemag.org/biology/2015/01/plan-save-monarch-butterflies-backfires> *Link from Cerise Outhier. See next page for sources of native milkweed.*

Condolences

Our sincere sympathies to Linda Pope and her family on the loss of her husband, Jim. He passed away the afternoon of January 23, 2015. He had been ill with what seemed like a cold or flu, but in the end it was a common staph infection that invaded his body. His kidneys and liver failed. Linda said: "Ironically, even though he had a stint and heart disease, they said his heart was very strong. So typical of Jim because he had the biggest heart of anyone I've ever known."

Services were held January 29th and OCIMG members Anne Porter, Susan Theron, and Cerise Outhier attended.

For those who wish to send cards, below is Linda's address:

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1632 Valencia Ave
Placentia, CA 92870

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Ideas for a Thirsty California

Italian designer Arturo Vittori invented the Warka Water Tower, 30 feet high and weighing 130 pounds. The rigid outer housing of each tower is comprised of lightweight and elastic juncus stalks, (bamboo has also been used) woven in a pattern that offers stability in the face of strong wind gusts while still allowing air to flow through. A



mesh net made of nylon or polypropylene, hangs inside, collecting droplets of dew that form along the surface. As cold air condenses, the droplets roll down into a container at the bottom



of the tower. The water in the container then passes through a tube that functions as a faucet, carrying the water to those waiting on the ground. Each tower can collect 25 gallons of water a day.

Fog is comprised of clean water, but is too dispersed to be of use. However, the Namib Beetle, native to the Namib Desert in Africa, gets its drinking water from fog by collecting water droplets on its bumpy back, then letting the moisture roll down into its mouth.

Fog-harvesting devices, such as the one below in Lima, Peru (which receives an average of ½ inch of water a year), use a mesh rather than a solid

surface like a beetle's shell. Early experiments showed that a completely impermeable object creates wind currents that divert water droplets away from it. In field tests, the device captured one liter of water per square meter of mesh over the course of a day.



Read more at:

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/innovation/this-tower-pulls-drinking-water-out-of-thin-air-180950399/#hj8fbmOVIYofFkJy.99>

California Native Milkweed varieties

The following are native Milkweeds: *Asclepias albicans*, *Asclepias asperula*, *Asclepias californica*, *Asclepias cordifolia* **Heartleaf Milkweed***, *Asclepias cryptoceras*, *Asclepias eriocarpa* **Woollypod Milkweed**, *Asclepias erosa*, *Asclepias fascicularis* **Narrow-leaved Milkweed*****, *Asclepias latifolia*, *Asclepias nyctaginifolia*, *Asclepias solanoana*, *Asclepias speciosa* **Showy Milkweed*****, *Asclepias subulata*, *Asclepias vestita*

*available from Hedgerow Farms, CA, (530) 662-6847, <http://www.hedgerowfarms.com/> and Sierra Seed Supply, CA, (530) 284-7926, <http://www.sierraseedsupply.com>

** available from Hedgerow Farms

***available from Theodore Payne Nursery Store, CA, (818) 768-1802, <http://www.theodorepayne.org>

For more sources of * species, see <http://www.xerces.org/milkweed-seed-finder/#search>. Other species do not have sources listed where they can be bought.