



THE MEDITERRANEAN GARDEN SOCIETY

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BRANCH

An international forum devoted to furthering knowledge and appreciation of plants and gardens suited to the mediterranean climate regions of the world

Number 43
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UPCOMING EVENTS

Ted Talks: Victor Reiter's Garden

Saturday, February 7

We're excited to offer a new Ted Talk by our own Ted Kipping, who wants to share with us Victor Reiter's last garden: a very successful winter wet/summer dry Mediterranean rock garden. Victor Reiter was a collector, hybridizer, and propagator of interesting plants (consider the long list of plant cultivars named for him in the trade, from *Armeria maritima* 'Victor Reiter' to *Thymus* 'Victor Reiter'). He also had a fine eye for combining plants in a garden.

The talk's location is Merritt College's Landscape Horticulture Center in Oakland. To sign up for the talk, please send email to me at mgs_nc@yahoo.com. I will confirm and send you directions then. Guests are welcome.

In addition to Ted's talk, we are planning a slide show from the October 2014 Annual Meeting in Menton, France. We had a record fifteen members from Northern California attend this year's event.

— Bracey Tiede



photo by Victor Reiter



BRANCH DATEBOOK

Other events of interest to our members:

- Jan. 14 **New Plants from Near and Far**
Sean Hogan
7:30 PM
Los Altos
- Jan. 19 **So Much Beauty with So Little Water**
Wendy Proud
7:15 PM
San Francisco

The UC Botanical Garden at Berkeley is hosting a major art exhibition of 44 artworks by early American botanists **John and William Bartram**. John Bartram was one of the first practicing Linnaean botanists in North America, and through him many North American plants were introduced to European gardens. His introductions include the Franklin Tree, *Franklinia alatamaha*, and the Venus Flytrap, *Dionaea muscipulia*. John's son William became a famous botanist in his own right, noted for his drawings of plants and birds.

The artworks will be on display at the newly opened Julia Morgan

Hall. The Botanical Garden will also present two lectures about the Bartrams:

- Dec. 19 **The Bartram Legacy**
10–11:30 AM
Carol Woodin, ASBA Exhibitions Director
- Jan. 31 **Fathers and Sons:**
1–3 PM
A Journey with the Bartrams, Hookers and other Famous Families in Western Botanical Science, Art and Exploration,
Dr. Peggy Fiedler

Registration for the lectures is free with garden admission. Register online or by calling 510-643-2755 or emailing gardenprograms@berkeley.edu.

— Cheryl Renshaw

Stay up-to-date with our upcoming events at:
<http://sites.google.com/site/mgsnorcal/upcoming-events/>

More Northern California garden events are listed on the [Pacific Horticulture](#) website.



photo by Richard Tiede



photo by Gail Klein

Sonoma In September

Last September 28, a small number of branch members traveled up to Sonoma County for a day of touring. We visited Western Hills, Paradise Ridge Winery, and finished off at California Flora Nursery.

When we arrived at Western Hills, owner Tim Szybalski was there to show us around with the help of an array of garden cats. For most of us, this was a return visit to the garden and the first chance we'd had to see it since Tim and his wife Christine bought the property. He told us stories of neighbors helping to keep the place watered while it was empty, and of having to reclaim the paths from the plants when they took possession. We walked the rebuilt paths and bridges and saw many old floral friends.

From Western Hills, we drove down the hill to the Union Hotel in Occidental, where we had a delicious lunch. After lunch, a few of us drove to the Paradise Ridge Winery, which was hosting its annual sculpture exhibit on the winery grounds. We explored around (and sometimes inside) sculptures placed in the midst of native oak groves and meadows.

We finished the day at California Flora Nursery, shopping for native plants. We returned home with a car full of new plants and minds full of ideas.

— Cheryl Renshaw



photo by Richard Tiede

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING NOTES

AGM October 2014 in Menton, France

The Languedoc Branch initiated a pre-gathering garden tour, especially planned for members coming from abroad. We started in Montpellier, France and moved on to Avignon, journeying to wonderful private gardens in the South of France that feature drought tolerant plants and are dedicated to the taming and terracing of steep hillsides. The Northern California branch had fifteen members attend this year's meeting and surrounding events.

The official Program commenced Thursday evening, October 16, with a lavish cocktail buffet at **Villa Maria Serena**, a traditional Belle Époque villa with an extensive palmerie close to the Italian border. Old MGS connections were rekindled and new friends made.

The next two days offered a variety of gardens in and around Menton and Monaco. We visited the **Hanbury Botanic Garden—La Mortola**, which is situated on a promontory, sweeping dramatically down to the sea and managed by the University of Genoa. **Serre de la Madone** is a quiet garden full of exotic plants with 1930s era landscaping. We found an artist there painting everything she could find and full of questions about the plants. What better crowd to ask? Who could compete with the house and gardens of the **Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild**? The villa is a pink and white confection of the Belle Époque and the themed gardens are well maintained. A marvelous effect is the playing fountains that dance every twenty minutes keeping time with the recorded music broadcast throughout the garden. Possibly the most impressive garden we visited by virtue of its location was the **Jardin Exotique** in Monaco. A collection of more than 2000 succulent plants from around the world, grown impeccably to most impressive size and hanging from the perpendicular cliffs of Le Gran Corniche. Fabulous!

The General Assembly took place in the Forte dell'Annunziata in Ventimiglia, Italy, which was only a stone's throw away from Menton. The meeting differed greatly from prior years. The Administrative Committee allowed more discussion of non-Greek branch concerns than has been permitted before. This offers hope that the Society is willing to consider matters that will lead to positive change. The Northern California Executive Committee encourages you to review the minutes and communicate any of your concerns with us. The minutes of the AGM can be found at <http://www.mediterraneangardensociety.org/admin.html>.

— Nancy Swearingen and Bracey Tiede



Leucadendron 'Ebony'

photo by Cheryl Renshaw

PLANT PROFILE: *Leucadendron*

Conebushes are South African shrubs, many of which are proving to be well adapted for California gardens if their requirements for well-draining, phosphorus-poor soil can be met. They are among the stars of the UCSC Arboretum, where they tolerate wind and coastal influence with aplomb. The hybridizers have been busy recently, and many of the new cultivars now available have striking foliage colors and come in smaller sizes than the older varieties like 'Safari Sunset' (a lovely shrub, but at 8 ft. tall and wide a little difficult to fit into small gardens). Some species are difficult to grow in our richer soils; *Leucadendron argenteum*, the striking Silver Tree, is particularly susceptible to phosphorus poisoning. *Leucadendron salignum* varieties and hybrids that include *L. salignum* seem to be more flexible, and include:

- *L. 'Ebony'* is a brand new compact variety (3-4 ft. tall, 3-6 ft. wide) with lustrous deep maroon foliage and burgundy flower bracts in winter and spring.
- *L. 'Jester'* (aka 'Safari Sunshine'), a variegated form that grows to 3-4 ft. tall and wide, with green leaves edged in creamy white, which tints to coral pink in cooler weather. Flowering bracts begin as deep red, then fade to blond tones.
- *L. salignum 'Blush'* is a compact shrub that grows to 3-5 ft. tall, 4-6 ft. wide. It is similar to 'Safari Sunset' in coloring, but grows more compactly and has more dramatic coloring. New flower bracts are bright red with burgundy tones; these fade to strawberry blond and ivory as the flower head matures.
- *L. salignum 'Chief'* is an upright growing larger variety (6-8 ft. tall and wide) that can be pruned into a small tree if desired. It has narrow, willowy green leaves tipped with dark red. Male flowers have bright yellow stamens and are surrounded the narrow, yellow bracts throughout winter into early spring. New growth is maroon. Probably the easiest leucadendron to grow.
- *L. salignum 'Winter Red'* and 'Summer Red' are small shrubs to 3-4 ft. tall and up to 6 ft. wide. In winter, the entire shrub turns deep maroon with cool weather, highlighting bright red flower bracts. 'Summer Red' blooms in winter with the rest of the cone bushes, but it has bright red new foliage in summer.



Leucadendron salignum 'Winter Red'

photo by Cheryl Renshaw

- *L. 'Wilson's Wonder'* grows to 3-4 ft. tall, 5-6 ft. wide, and sports large blond yellow bracts around yellow flower clusters. The bracts often flush with strawberry pink around the edges in cool weather.

Plant leucadendrons in the ground or in containers in the sun or part shade, keep them on the dry side in summer, don't fertilize them, and enjoy!

— Cheryl Renshaw

Persimmon Bread (Fruitcake)

2 cups Hachiya persimmon pulp
(about 4 large persimmons)
2 cups sugar
2 Tbs. oil
2 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. salt
2 tsp. cinnamon
¼ tsp. ground cloves
1 cup milk
3 cups flour
2 cups walnuts
2 cups raisins
additional dried or candied fruit,
as desired (see note).

Preheat oven to 325° F. Mix ingredients together in approximately the order listed. Grease and flour loaf baking pans (non-stick is best). Pour in batter and fill pans about two-thirds full. Bake bread until inserted toothpick comes out clean; start checking at 30 minutes for small loaves. Cool, then remove from pans.

Note: This bread makes a delicious fruitcake with the addition of more fruit to the batter. I add dried cherries, dried pears, dried peaches, and dried apricots, but if your tastes run more to glacéed cherries and candied citrus peel, that works too. Add as much as you want.

— Cheryl Renshaw



photo by Cheryl Renshaw

Always allow Hachiya-type persimmons to soften on a windowsill before using. They are very astringent when unripe!

Online MGS Forums

The international MGS website at <http://mediterraneangardensociety.org/> has two online forums. The Mediterranean Gardening and Plants forum is open to anyone interested. The MGS Members Forum is only open to MGS members, and is a place for members to discuss any topic of MGS interest, apart from gardening.

So, if you want to talk about your garden or your favorite mediterranean climate plant, go to the first forum at:

<http://www.mgsforum.org/smf/index.php>

If you are interested in talking about issues related to the society itself with your fellow MGS members, sign in to the Members Forum at:

<http://www.mgsmembersforum.org/smf/>

— Cheryl Renshaw

Mediterranean Garden Workdays

The Mediterranean Garden at Lakeside Park in Oakland needs you! We have a workday on the first Saturday of the month from 9:00 AM to noon. The City charges for parking, but the parking fee will be waived if you tell the attendant you're there to work at the Mediterranean Garden. Please call Nancy Swearengen (510.547.2548) for more information.

— Nancy Swearengen

Upcoming workdays:

Jan. 3
Feb. 7
Mar. 7
Apr. 4



photo by Seán O'Hara

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Payment of dues for the Mediterranean Garden Society includes you in this Branch if you specify branch inclusion directly on the membership form. You can join at any of our events or send your application separately. For a membership form, visit the MGS web site:

www.MediterraneanGardenSociety.org

This newsletter is published in the FALL, WINTER, & SPRING (dormant in SUMMER!) to announce the events and news of the Northern California Branch of the MGS.

Important Mediterranean Garden Society News

The January issue of the journal will contain a sheet that asks for your vote to allow for voting by non-attendees at the annual meetings. This change is very important for updating the Society and creating a more responsive way to address the Society's issues without the recent problems we've endured.

When you receive your issue, please read the sheet carefully and respond to the secretary in Greece right away. It is important!

— Bracey Tiede



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