



# 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 45  
Autumn 2015

### UPCOMING EVENTS

*Up on the Roof at  
Facebook!*

Saturday, August 22  
10:00 AM  
Menlo Park



Map data: © 2015 Google

We are going to see the recently installed 9 acre rooftop garden designed by CMG of San Francisco, built on the Frank Gehry designed offices in Menlo Park. Our tour will be led by principal landscape architect, Chris Guillard.

This garden is very special given the use of full sized trees, thousands of native plants and the thoughtfulness used in creating both a walking garden as well as outdoor work spaces for the staff.

The tour starts at 10:00 AM on August 22 and limited reservations are now being taken by Bracey Tiede at [braceytd@gmail.com](mailto:braceytd@gmail.com). Directions will be sent as we get closer to the date.

Our talented newsletter editor and her husband, Cheryl and Wayne Renshaw, will be doing their street painting art at the Palo Alto Festival of the Arts on that day too, and would be thrilled to see you drop by and say hello!

— Bracey Tiede

### BRANCH DATEBOOK

Other events of interest to our members:

- Sept. 27 UC Botanical Garden Fall Plant Sale  
10 AM - 3 PM  
Berkeley
- Oct. 3 Martial Cottle Park Grand Opening  
San Jose
- Oct. 23 Defining a New Northern California Landscape  
Pacific Horticulture Seminar  
The Gardens at Lake Merritt, Oakland
- Oct. 22-25 MGS Annual General Meeting  
Ischia, Italy

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.

### *Palo Alto Public Gardens*

Sunday, September 20  
10:00 AM

This fall, return to Palo Alto for a visit to the Master Gardeners' Palo Alto Demonstration Garden and the Elizabeth F. Gamble Garden Mediterranean Beds. Both gardens highlight mediterranean and waterwise gardening, teaching Palo Alto residents how to think beyond lawns and other inefficient landscape choices.

We'll meet at the Master Gardeners Demonstration Garden for a tour, followed by a brown bag lunch in the garden (we'll provide drinks and dessert). After lunch al fresco, we'll move to Gamble Garden to see how the garden has fared with water rationing and how the Mediterranean Beds have settled in, two years after they were re-installed.



photo by Cheryl Renshaw

Email Bracey at [braceytd@gmail.com](mailto:braceytd@gmail.com) to let know you're joining us.

— Cheryl Renshaw

### *Hold the Date for Bart*

Bart O'Brien  
Tilden Regional Parks Botanic Garden  
Sunday, Jan. 17  
10:30 AM to 2:00 PM (or so)

Bart O'Brien, former head of Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, has returned to northern California to Tilden. He will share with us from his vast stores of knowledge of native plants and lead us on a walkabout, weather permitting.

This event will only be cancelled in case of heavy downpours. Bring a bag lunch and \$10 donation for the park.

— Cheryl Renshaw

## Alameda Garden Tour Review

Our branch got a taste of the island life on June 7 with a garden tour in lovely Alameda. We visited branch advisor Anthony Garza at his home and artist/designer Shirley Watts at hers, ate a delicious meal of Italian appetizers at Trabocco, then returned to the gardens with visits to two gardens by garden designer Mary Fisher, ending with a relaxing visit to her own garden, sipping wine and nibbling on noshes to fill in any gaps left from the tasty lunch. It was a day full of laughter and visits with good friends, brightened by copious sunshine and interesting plants to inspire us in our own gardens.

— Cheryl Renshaw



photos  
by Cheryl  
Renshaw

## Sieneese Almond Cookies (Ricciarelli)

Prep time: 1 hour 30 mins + 1 hour rest time

Cook time: 20 mins

Total time: 2 hour 50 mins

Ricciarelli are Sieneese almond paste cookies dating back to the 14th century. They were most often served with dessert wine but who says you can't have them with tea or coffee? Buy almond paste or make your own:

### Almond Paste Ingredients:

1½ cup (168g) finely ground almonds  
1 cup (120g) powdered sugar  
2 egg whites (large eggs)  
1 teaspoon almond extract  
pinch kosher salt

In the bowl of a stand mixer, stir together ground almonds, sugar, salt, egg whites and almond extract. Makes 14 oz. almond paste.

### Cookie Ingredients:

14 oz. almond paste  
1 cup (112g) ground almonds  
1 egg white  
½ teaspoon baking powder  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
Flour or powdered sugar for rolling dough (use sugar for gluten-free cookies)  
Powdered sugar to sprinkle over cookies before baking



Using a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, combine the almond paste with ground almonds (or almond meal) using the low setting. Add the egg white and mix again until well blended. Finally add the baking powder and vanilla extract and process until blended again. The dough will be very sticky. If it looks too wet, add an additional ¼–½ cup of ground almonds.

Generously spread flour or powdered sugar on your work surface and scoop out the dough from the mixing bowl onto the counter. You might need to sprinkle additional flour or sugar on top of the dough so you can work with it. Divide dough in two pieces. Roll each piece into a thin log, roughly ¾ - 1 inch in diameter. Cut the log in 1-inch pieces, flatten the top of each piece and form into a diamond shape. Repeat with the second piece of dough. Transfer the shaped pieces of dough to parchment-lined baking sheets. Leave to rest for a minimum of one hour to overnight.

To bake: Preheat your oven to 300°F. Bake the cookies for 20 mins, rotating the baking sheets halfway through the cooking time. Don't let the cookies get too brown or crisp--the idea is to keep them soft. Cool on a rack before serving.

— Cheryl Renshaw

## PLANT PROFILE: *Anigozanthos*

"Hello, my name is Anigozanthos. You killed my kangaroo. Prepare to die."

— with apologies to William Goldman, writer of *The Princess Bride*

Anigozanthos is probably the best known genus within the Bloodroot or Haemodoraceae family. The common name of Kangaroo Paw comes from the shape of the closed flower bud, which resembles a furry paw. There are about ten species, all from the south-western corner of Western Australia. Leaves are similar to a bearded iris, but stiffer, narrower, and darker green. Flowers are borne at the ends of upright stalks that vary in height from 1 to 6 feet. Tubular, claw-tipped flowers appear in clusters during spring and summer. Flower color depends on two things: the color of the flower bud itself, and the color of the hairs growing on the bud and, often, flower stalk. The hairs can be a contrasting color from the flower itself, creating a shimmering visual effect. The flowers are pollinated by birds in the wild, and here in California hummingbirds are happy to fill in for their missing Australian counterparts.



*Anigozanthos* 'Harmony'  
photo by Cheryl Renshaw



*A. 'Tequila Sunrise'*  
photo by Cheryl Renshaw

I have killed two lovely specimens of this plant, and I know of others who have lost them too. However, what I've recently learned is that *Anigozanthos* requires really good drainage. Two of designer [Mary Fisher's](#) gardens that were featured on our recent Alameda garden tour contained specimens of *Anigozanthos* 'Harmony', a yellow *Anigozanthos* cultivar, probably *A. flavidus*. On our tour she told me that she pays particular attention to the soil, and only uses this cultivar, since it is less likely to die.

Ink spot or ink disease is a major disease for these plants. It is caused by a fungus, and as with many fungal diseases, plants are most susceptible in cool, moist conditions and when they are not growing vigorously. Many species go dormant over winter and are particularly affected by wet, heavy soils at that time. The Australian National Botanic Gardens recommend planting kangaroo paws in full sun with well-drained soils rich in organic matter. They also suggest that gardeners consider the plants to be short-lived, with an expected lifespan of 3-5 years. The Botanic Gardens cuts back their plants to about 6" in late winter to remove diseased and frost-damaged leaves.



photo by Judy Thomas

I love this accent plant in the garden, with its spectacular flowers. It evokes the "Mediterranean Mystique" with the color and splendor of plants from our Mediterranean climates. It is my opinion that, in our lives, we sometimes have to "live dangerously," and try a plant just for the experience of it. I would plant one next to a large pot, or with groundcovers that have blue-gray foliage, or as a foundation plant in front of a plain wall, where the flowers can be most appreciated.

— Judy Thomas



photo by Seán O'Hara

## 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 Swarengen** (510.547.2548) for more information.

— Nancy Swarengen

### Upcoming workdays:

Aug. 1	Nov. 7
Sep. 12*	Dec. 5
Oct. 3	Jan. 9*

\*September's workday is delayed one week due to Labor Day, and January's is delayed due to New Year's Day.

## UPDATE: MGS CHARTER

In January, the MGS Administrative Committee included a proposal for a change to the MGS charter with the January 2015 Journal. The proposed change was to allow for MGS voting to occur either by mail or electronically (both are not allowed under the current charter). The proposal included a form asking members whether we supported the proposed change; we were asked to return this form by mail or electronically.

In order to effect a change in the charter, at least 50% of the membership needed to respond in the affirmative. The actual response of members backing the proposal has been only 25%, an impressive number for a voluntary vote such as this, but too low to result in any charter changes. Voting in person or by proxy remains the only form of voting in the MGS.

Other charter change ideas were also solicited by the Administrative Committee and subsequently proposed to the membership in April, but none of those additional changes received more than 10% support. Due to the low positive response to all charter change proposals, the AC is not including the charter change proposal in the agenda for this fall's General Assembly, and views this chapter of the MGS to be closed. Discussion of the charter and these proposed changes continues in the MGS members forum online (see below).

— Cheryl Renshaw

### 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

### BRANCH OFFICERS

<b>CHAIR</b>	<b>ADVISORY BOARD</b>
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Nancy Swarengen	Chris Jacobson
Judy Thomas	Seán O'Hara
Bracey Tiede	Warren Roberts
Richard Tiede	Bernard Trainor
	Richard Turner

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](http://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.



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