



SANTA BARBARA COUNTY HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER
Post Office Box 31029
Santa Barbara, CA 93130-1029

January 2018

Website: www.sbchs.org

Contact: sbcountyhorticulturalsociety@gmail.com

The Santa Barbara County
Horticultural Society
**Annual Potluck, Installation of Officers
and the Bouquet of the Year Award**
will be held on January 3rd, **6:30pm**
at the Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
on the corner of Foothill and La Cumbre Road

Speaker: Paul Mills:
*“Building Botanical Bridges-
The Fascinating Flora of Cuba”*

Cuba is known as the land of warm people, vintage cars, lively music and dance, but beyond all of that it is a biodiversity hotspot that has a very rich flora comprised of many endemic plants. I had the opportunity to visit this largest of the Caribbean islands twice in 2017.

The island is 720 miles long with an average of 50 miles wide and has a variety of landscapes from valleys with rich, deep soils to dome shaped limestone outcrops known as *mogotes*. Only 19% of the country remains forested, down from 90% at the time of Spanish colonization with much of the land initially being cleared for sugar cane plantations. Cuba has approximately 6000 species of plants with more than half being endemic – found nowhere else.

A huge variety of plants are found there, from cacti and succulents to palms and cycads, but it's the palms that dominate the landscape. There are close to 100 different taxa in 16 genera with an extremely high rate of endemism – 90%. The royal palm (*Roystonea regia*) is ubiquitous in Cuba (there's a nice example in the 700 block of State Street) and is the national tree.



One of my priorities was to visit *Microcycas calocoma*, a critically endangered cycad that is only found in western Cuba. It grows alongside such diverse plants as palms, agaves, epiphytic cacti, orchids and burseras. The site was within a national park and was also being used for floristic studies - one could only enter with a guide.

Every province in Cuba has a botanic garden and I visited three including the National Botanic Garden in Havana and the Cienfuegos Botanic Garden which is the oldest in Cuba and began as a collaboration with Harvard University. A highlight of the trip was a personal tour of the palmetum at Cienfuegos Botanic Garden with their staff palm expert, Hermes Rodriguez, who has been working there for 36 years. To be able to admire what some of the Cuban palms in the Lotusland palmetum will turn into was breathtaking. Mature plants of *Copernicia baileyana* and *C. macroglossa* were grouped among the myriad palms as were *Coccothrinax miraguama* and *C. crinita*.

Thanks to an invitation by the Cienfuegos Botanic Garden, I was invited to return to Cuba to represent Lotusland at an international conference where I gave a presentation on plant collections management and the role of botanic gardens in plant conservation. The overriding theme for the conference was “building botanical bridges.”

Please join us for the Society's Annual Potluck.

Come out to see old friends and come out to meet new ones. Doors open at 6:00pm, so please come early and help with the setup. Be sure to wear your name tag so everyone will know your name.

Bring your favorite dish to share for 6-8! Plates, utensils, napkins, and coffee will be provided. Please provide your own serving utensil for your dish and your own non-alcoholic beverage. Labels are helpful to let everyone know what they're eating. (Great for people with food allergies too.)

Our speaker Paul Mills has more than 25 years of experience working with and studying plants.

Starting in 1990 he took a job at Abbey Garden

Cactus and Succulent Nursery in Carpinteria, working there for five years while finishing up studies in biogeography at UCSB.

During that time he had the

opportunity to work in the field in Mexico with Charlie Glass, then of CANTE, and Ted Anderson of Desert Botanical Garden, Phoenix. In 1995 he started working at Lotusland as a cactus and succulent specialist and four years later took a year off to study plant conservation at the Royal Botanic



A massive Kapok tree (*Ceiba pentandra*) in Vinales Valley, western Cuba.



Tocororo, the national bird of Cuba alongside some epiphytic bromeliads.

Gardens, Kew in London and to travel and continue studying in Europe and South America. Upon returning he was

contracted by Lotusland to

spearhead the Dunlap cactus project. At the end of the project Paul was hired back as full time staff at Lotusland in a supervisory role and a few years later moved into the position of assistant curator. Early this year, he was promoted to the position of curator of the living collections.

Paul has served as president of the Santa Barbara Cactus and Succulent Society and was the recipient of the 2014 Bouquet of the Year.

Voting for new Officers and Board Members:

Due to the Thomas Fire and the cancellation of the December meeting, we will be accepting nominations, voting, and installing the Society's Board and Officers for this coming year all at this meeting. The society is always looking for members interested in participating. Open positions are:

- *Programs*
- *Hospitality*
- *Plant Sale – Carol Terry is in need of some assistance for this activity.*

Dues for 2018 are payable now. Please bring a

check - \$20/year for a family membership can be paid at the meeting or sent to the address on the back of this newsletter (POB 31029, Santa Barbara) for one year or multiple years. If you receive the Newsletter by postal mail, please consider an additional donation to cover printing and mailing.

The **Thomas Fire** affected many throughout Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties. Of horticultural impact, the Ventura Botanical Gardens suffered major damage. Their president, Barbara Brown, several of the board, advisory board, donors, and volunteers lost homes.. Also in Ventura, Jo O'Connell and Byron Cox of Australian Native Plants, lost their home, office and several buildings/structures. Shown below are links to donate to recovery efforts.

<http://venturabotanicalgardens.com/donate.html>

<https://www.gofundme.com/AustralianNativePlantsFireFund>

Our members and other community individuals have contributed some information on ash and safe cleanup. Here are those links:

<https://www.cityoforange.org/DocumentCenter/View/5231>

<http://articles.latimes.com/2007/dec/05/local/me-ash5>

Upcoming Meetings

February	Joan Bolton
March	Antonio Sanchez. <i>Inviting California to Dinner: Bringing California native plant foods into your life and the future of native plant agriculture</i>
April	Mike Tully
May	Joe Cahill – Ventura Botanical Gardens

Other Plant Society Meetings and Events:

SBC Rose Society meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month (except July, August and December) at Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church. Refreshments and display begin at 7:00pm. The meeting and program begin at 7:30pm and are free and open to the public.

The Santa Barbara Little Gardens Club meets at the Community of Christ Church, 4675 Via Los Santos, Santa Barbara 93111, at 2:00pm on the third Tuesday of the month.

Orchid Society of Santa Barbara meets the third Wednesday of the month at the Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church at 7:30pm.



Christmas cactus, also known as holiday cactus (*Schlumbergera* sp.) blooms from about Thanksgiving through the new year in red, pinks, and white. They do well in part shade in the garden, just don't let the soil completely dry out. Photo credit : S. Chamberlin

Santa Barbara/Ventura Chapter of the California Rare Fruit Growers - Anyone can be added to an email list and notified of upcoming meetings by sending their email address to lindabuzzell@gmail.com

Santa Barbara Cactus & Succulent Society meets Friday, January 5th. Gary Duke will discuss

"What Kind of Cactus Is It?"

Gary Duke believes that anyone interested in cacti ought to be able to determine what genus a cactus plant belongs in just by examining it and looking for a few telltale signs. What do you look for? Come, learn and find out. If you know the genus, then you have a clue to the growth characteristics and flowers a plant will have. You will know if someone switched the name tags at your favorite box store. This is a tutorial on many of the small globular cacti families and their identifying characteristics – will it be tall or short and squat? Will it have big or small flowers? Is it from North America or South America? If you don't like cacti, well he has lots of pictures of pretty cactus flowers to look at. Come and



learn -- Gary says we can all identify cacti to this level after this one presentation! (He will have hand-outs too.)

Gary Duke has been collecting cacti and succulents since he was 10 years old. He has been President of the South Coast Cactus and Succulent Society and the Long Beach Club in the southern California area. He was recently elected to the Board of Directors to the Cactus and Succulent Society of America. Following his military career, he worked as a program manager for Boeing for 16 years. He's an avid collector of cacti and also collects Tylecodons and Dudleyas. He has over 1000 different species in his private collection and enjoys propagating them. He frequently gives slide presentations throughout Southern California.

Gary will be bringing plants for sale.



**SANTA BARBARA COUNTY
HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY**

PO BOX 31029
SANTA BARBARA, CA 93130-1029

Officers:

Co-Presidents and Secretary:

Debby Lipp

Ernie Pfadenhauer

Vice President: Carol Terry

(805) 684-5725

Treasurer: Gretchen Ingmanson

Directors:

Donna Blakemore

Diane Dunhill

Marian Kauffman

Carolyn Koegler

Dorothy Warnock

Committee Heads:

Garden Tours: Helen Wong

Newsletter: Ernie Pfadenhauer

Bulletin Distribution: Larry Disharoon

Plant Sale: Carol Terry

Refreshments: Elisa Reich

Scholarships: Dorothy Warnock

Membership: Duke McPherson

Programs: Open

A word on the "Freebies Area":

People who bring plant materials or pots, etc. to share please remember to:

1. Bring clean, viable plant material contained in bags or boxes (please no dirt)
2. Label plants if possible
3. Please gather and take your leftovers home after the meeting; there is no dumpster at the site.
4. Help keep the porch area clean

Botanic Name:

Common Name:

Exhibitor:

Additional Details:

THANK YOU

This sheet to be cut out or copied for Plant Display Information