

THE GARDEN SPRINKLER

Fall 2010

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER PUBLICATION BY THE WATER CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Water Smart Gardening Festival

By Elizabeth Ramos

Where can you buy plants, get gardening advice and entertain the kids at the same time? At the **Water Smart Gardening Festival** on **Saturday, November 13**, from 9am-3pm, of course! An exposition on drought tolerant gardening and so much more, everyone from the most selective gardener to the hard-to-please child will find satisfaction here.

As we head in to the fire season, festival-goers will appreciate the event's special focus on fire in the landscape with guest speaker Rick Halsey, naturalist, fire ecologist, and author of *Fire, Chaparral, and Survival in Southern California* (2005, Sunbelt). A lifelong educator, Halsey is passionate about California's chaparral environment and has studied the effects of fire on native plant populations, as well as how human impact on the southern California landscape influences wildfires. His informative and engaging presentation will leave you with new insights about fire in southern California. At the Garden's Fire-Wise Landscaping Exhibit, the San Miguel Fire District will offer information to help gardeners create fire resistant landscape zones around a home, and provide general fire safety tips.

An annual highlight of the Water Smart Gardening Festival is the big plant sale. A bounty of water-smart plants will be on sale to help residents create beautiful landscapes that thrive in our arid climate. The ongoing water shortage doesn't have to result in dreary home landscapes, as the beauty of the drought tolerant plants on sale will demonstrate. Perennials, shrubs, ornamental grasses, and trees will love being planted in our mild fall climate, rewarding their growers with strong root systems that allow them to put on their best show in the spring.

For the children, Ms. Smarty Plants™, the Garden's own educational mascot, will entertain with her Magic of Water Show, and Penelope the Clown will transform innocent faces into lions, butterflies, and dragons with magic strokes of her brush. The Rad Hatter will be the creative director for paper bag hat making for all ages, and surprise animal guests will delight everyone.

(cont. on page 2)



Orange Bulbine, *Bulbine frutescens*

New at the Garden:

Favorite Plants for Sale

By Brenda Martin, Nursery Manager,
Department of Ornamental Horticulture
& Friends of the WCG Board Member

As visitors tour the Water Conservation Garden, they never fail to find plants they want to include in their home gardens. This October, finding favorite plants will be a snap as the Garden introduces its own Nursery. We've noted the many varieties of plants that appeal to our visitors, and will offer a few popular plants for sale in their very own nursery space. The first group of plants will include grasses, salvias and trees especially selected for their popularity with Garden visitors.

In partnership with the Ornamental Horticulture Department of Cuyamaca College, headed by Brad Monroe, and with the participation of Paul Redeker and David Yetz of The Garden, Nursery Liaison Louise Parks, Head Grower Nicole Schott, and the OH Department staff are growing plants for sale to the public. The campus of Cuyamaca College offers a beautiful setting for the OH Department to grow plants for its own year-round Nursery, and a new Nursery at the Garden allows us to highlight the collaboration between the two great horticultural groups that share the campus.

Come by the Garden this October and pick up a drought-tolerant beauty for your home landscape!



Executive Director's Report

by Marty Eberhardt

Saving water is NOT like losing weight – the last several gallons per day don't have to be a painful experience.

San Diegans have done a good job of taking the first steps to save water. There was a lot of low-hanging fruit--fixing all of those broken sprinklers and cutting out daily watering were easy (and important) changes to make.

However, there is a state mandate to save 20% by 2020. So there's more to do. And the Garden not only shows you how to do it – we show you that you can have fun and create something of beauty as well. Buy plants and learn tips at the November 13th "Water Smart Gardening Festival", attend our monthly "Ask the Horticulturist" tour, or take a docent-led tour on Saturday mornings at 10:30 or by appointment. All of our tours and classes are listed in our classes and events brochure, and on our website.

It's really not like losing weight. You can add to your life and your landscape, not subtract from it, while conserving San Diego's precious resources.

Water Smart Gardening Festival

(cont. from p. 1) There will be music and delicious food as well, so plan to make a day of it.

Visitors with questions about water smart landscape design, plant care, composting, and other gardening mysteries will find answers when they "Ask the Experts". Landscape designers will offer private, 20-minute consultations about home landscapes; Master Composters will reveal the secrets of making compost; and Master Gardeners will help you with whatever "bugs" your garden. Plus, mini-lectures will be offered throughout the day on various gardening topics. Please schedule appointments for landscape design consultations in advance by calling 619-660-0614 ext. 10.

We look forward to seeing you and your family at the Water Smart Gardening Festival. General admission is just \$3 (Garden Members and kids 12 and under get in free), and there is free parking. Please check our website, www.thegarden.org, for complete program details.

The Power of Volunteering

by May L. Harris, J.D., Director of Development

You might think the only way to support the Water Conservation Garden is to donate financially. While financial contributions are vital to the health of the Garden, they are not the only way to support the Garden's very important mission.

You can volunteer your time.

In 2009, over 64 million individuals in the United States volunteered their time on behalf of nonprofit organizations. That's almost 27% of our nation's population, giving over 8 billion hours of service, worth an astounding \$169 billion to America's communities.

The Water Conservation Garden has benefited greatly from the passionate dedication of the many individuals who volunteer their time at the Garden. In addition to our docents and volunteers, this year we started a Teen Corps program for 13- to 17- year olds. Because of these dedicated volunteers, the Garden's exhibits are lovingly cultivated, visitors to the Garden receive friendly and knowledgeable docent tours, and homeowners are given the tools they need to reduce their water consumption.

The staff of the Water Conservation Garden will recognize the Garden's volunteers and docents at an appreciation dinner on September 24th, 2010. This is our way of recognizing the many hours of service, tours, classes and outreach our volunteers provide on behalf of the Garden, and thanking the individuals who give their time and efforts.

The next time you visit the Garden, we invite you to take a moment to thank any volunteers or docents that you meet (docents are in the distinctive purple shirts). The Garden blooms because of their hard work and dedication, and the Garden simply couldn't function without them.

To learn more about volunteer opportunities at the Garden, please contact the office at (619) 660-0614 ext. 13, or via email at info@thegarden.org.

The Garden's **Classes and Events Calendar** is now printed separately. Become a Member to get a copy in your mailbox, or view the calendar online at <http://thegarden.org/calendar/index/php>. Free copies are also available when you visit the Garden.

The Garden Sprinkler is a quarterly publication of The Joint Powers Authority (the City of San Diego, Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District, Helix Water District, Otay Water District, San Diego County Water Authority, Sweetwater Authority, and Conservation Champions) for **The Water Conservation Garden**, 12122 Cuyamaca College Drive West, El Cajon, CA 92019 (619) 660-0614 www.thegarden.org



Garden Staff

Marty Eberhardt, Executive Director
Paul Redeker, Horticulture Manager
Daniel Mayorga, Landscape Technician
David Yetz, Landscape Technician
Laurie Furry, Education Director
May Harris, Development Director
Elizabeth Ramos, Events & Marketing
Heather Carlton, Office Assistant
Pam Meisner, Programs Assistant
Kay McGrath, Bookkeeper



Plumbago auriculata, *P. capensis*

Focus on a Species: Cape Plumbago *Plumbago auriculata* (*P. capensis*)

by Paul Redeker

Beautiful from a distance, but sticky to the touch, the South African Cape Plumbago brings some interesting qualities to the landscape. True pale blue flowers adorn this large evergreen shrub and if you rub up against it you will no doubt find the flowers and seed capsules all over you. This plant has retained a stickiness on the flower calyx which can cling to your hair and clothes. It is thought that this stickiness helps disperse the seeds by attaching themselves to animals. Its peak blooming period is during the summer, however here in San Diego you can find this plant in bloom almost all year round. It prefers the full sun to maximize its many flower clusters but will also tolerate part shade. The flowers are also available in a deeper blue hue known as ‘Royal Cape’ as well as a white variety known as *Plumbago auriculata* var. ‘alba’. The flowers attract many butterflies to the landscape and the pale green branches and leaves create a habitat alluring to birds.

If using the Cape Plumbago in a landscape design, it is important to understand its growth habit. Left to grow on its own, it will reach out its arching branches up to 7’ tall and 9’ wide, or even more with support. With this kind of size potential it is best used in large-scale landscapes as a wide screen, foundation planting, or in mass as a ground cover. It can also be planted on trellises, cascading over walls, and in containers.

Cape Plumbago has pretty basic growing needs. It adapts well to most soil conditions, however it appreciates a soil rich in organic matter, so adding compost will help it thrive. Established plants have the capacity to withstand drought, neglect, and poor alkaline soils which make them a valuable landscaping shrub. Cape Plumbago loves the heat, but is sensitive to cold, so it is not a good choice in areas where winter temperatures drop below 28°F. Propagation can be done from seed or cuttings, or just by removing rooted suckers from the mother plant.

Docent Corner:

Thom Bates and Diane Krell-Bates

By Marty Eberhardt

Thom and Diane are enjoying retirement at the Garden--together. They weren't avid gardeners when they came to the docent program, but they're committed environmentalists, and were interested in making their own landscape more in-tune with our arid climate. They took a few classes, then a few more, and finally enrolled in the docent program. They've always like growing vegetables, so it's not surprising that they ended up in the Veggie Garden after they graduated from the docent program in 2008.

But their help doesn't stop there. "There are lots of ways to contribute here," said Thom, fixing one of our tables as he spoke. The son of a mechanic, he learned how to fix things throughout his youth, although he took on social work for a career. He can be seen working on any number of projects around here, from the Veggie Garden "critter cages", to the broken brochure rack.

Diane, a former computer programmer, loves how she keeps learning at the Garden. "The best part is all the people we get to work with--the docents and the staff," she says. She and Thom mentioned that they especially enjoyed working on the installation of the Dorcas Utter Memorial Sensory Garden.

It's our good fortune that this charming and talented pair decided to spend some of their retirement hours making the Garden a better spot for our visitors!



Thom and Diane in the veggie garden

Celebrate the Season with 'Holiday in the Garden'

We invite you to enter a land of enchantment and wonder this holiday season as the Water Conservation Garden lights up for the holidays on December 3rd and 4th, from 5:30 to 8:00pm. As part of the season's merriment, our exhibits will glow with thousands of colorful holiday lights, and fun will be found at each turn of the Garden's paths.

The majestic Father Nature returns for picture taking with the family, and the Holiday Marketplace will feature one-of-a-kind gifts from local artisans. Listen to music while you feast on seasonal tamales, and stroll the grounds as you sip the Garden's signature-recipe warm holiday punch. Children can make crafts, decorate cookies, and have their faces painted.

We look forward to celebrating the season with you--Garden style!

\$3 Admission, Garden Members and children ages 12 and under free. Kids' activities \$1 each.



The Garden ready for Holiday festivities

Rent the Garden for Your Holiday Party

Great people, entertainment, and food are key ingredients to any spectacular party. Add a terrific venue and you have the recipe for a truly memorable occasion. Beginning mid-November, the Garden will become a California winter wonderland, adorned with the sparkle of thousands of holiday lights, and is available for your corporate or private holiday party.

Book our unique venue and enjoy holiday ambience amidst the freshness of the Garden for an event that will surprise and dazzle your guests. For more information and to reserve a date, please call 619-660-0614 ext. 10.



Butterfly Gaura, *Gaura lindheimeri*

Fall Bloomers

Mexican Sage, *Salvia leucantha*
 Oleander, *Nerium oleander*
 Gaura, *Gaura lindheimeri*
 Autumn Sage, *Salvia gregii*
 Bougainvillea
 Cape Honeysuckle, *Tecomaria capensis*
 Yellow oleander, *Thevetia peruviana*
 Grevillea 'superb'
 Grevillea 'robin gordon'

New Members

June-August

Student

Annette Jeneson
 Kathleen A McLaughlin

Basic

Tracy Allen
 Kristin E Andrewson
 Sondra Boddy
 Mary & David Cuzick
 Dimple D Ferguson
 Diane Foote
 Randy & Laurie Furry
 Cassandra Griego
 D. Hines
 Florence Koga
 Sharon Lawson
 Kathy Lonergan
 Kathleen Mazur
 Elsa Montoya-Mark
 Leslee Newton-Reed
 Jackie Parfet
 Sandra Perez

Basic, cont.

Monique Rice
 Robin Slominski
 Diane Svenson
 The Simeon Family
 Margaret Tyler
 Lysa Woodall
 Ed Woodruff & Peggy Dalby

Supporting

Bonnie Duff
 William Halladay
 Kimberly Hamilton
 Arthur & Marilyn Neumann
 Barbara Whelan

Sustaining

Innovative Growing Solutions

Conservationist Circle Members

Damon Esparza &
 Danielle Poenessa
 Robert & Jo Ann Parrott
 John & Deanna Weeks