

HEART AND SOUL BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE NURSERY

By Mary Ellen Hannibal

It's 12:30 on a Wednesday, and things have (momentarily) quieted at the nursery. Approximately 12 volunteers have gathered around an informal table for lunch, sharing some communal potato chips, and digging into a tray of chocolate cake provided by Margaret Paloukas. "We always have a few volunteers in their nineties," says Don Mahoney, and Margaret is in this category. She commutes to the Garden twice a week from Pittsburgh, and on Wednesdays, she always brings the most amazing chocolate cake. As most of us know, Don is Curator of Horticulture at SFBG; the title doesn't begin to express his role. For the 70-plus volunteers who spend one or two days a week helping propagate and nurture the Garden's plant life, he is the ideal manager and a guiding light. At the lunch table, it doesn't take long for the

"THIS IS ONE OF THE BEST PLACES IN THE WORLD.
WE'RE ALL HERE TO LEARN AND TO PROMOTE
PLANTS. WHAT COULD BE BETTER?" —Patsy Kobe

conversation level to work back up to a pitch—Don is hosting a potluck at his home on the coming weekend, just following a Saturday plant sale. Having regaled his volunteers with many a tale regarding his menagerie of pets, including several giant tortoises, people are looking forward to greeting them in person to say nothing of viewing Don's own home garden.

All the volunteers at SFBG have stories to tell, how they came to the Garden, what they do here, and why they love plants. Nani Fitzpatrick has been volunteering twice a week for two years and oversees the propagation of ferns. A former modern-dancer, her "aha" moment with plants came when she was working at a preschool and brought a magnolia plant home. "At that time I was the kind of person who says, 'good luck, plant,' and keeps her fingers crossed. But we had our floors sanded and the magnolia was covered in dust. I felt sorry for it, so I watered it and rinsed

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



AMARYLLIS BRASILIENSIS

Introduced in 1798, this bulbous, spring-flowering perennial of the amaryllis family (Amaryllidaceae) is a striking species from Brazil. Originally named *Amaryllis brasiliensis*, this species is no longer considered a true amaryllis, as most showy red and orange species now belong to the genus *Hippeastrum*. The only true amaryllis today is the pink-flowered *Amaryllis belladonna*, commonly named "naked ladies." This illustration is reproduced from volume 5 of *The Botanists Repository: Comprising Colour'd Engravings of New and Rare Plants Only, with Botanical Descriptions in Latin and English After the Linnæan System*, written by Henry Andrews and published in London in 1797. It is part of a six-volume work in the rare book collection of the Helen Crocker Russell Library of Horticulture.



DAVID KRUSEPICKER

Passiflora 'Pink Panther' *parritae* x *mollissima*

AT THE NURSERY NEW PASSIFLORA HYBRIDS

By Don Mahoney, Curator

Work continues at our current nursery location while plans for the new nursery center continue to unfold. An example of how our nursery benefits the horticultural community can be seen in the creation of two new hybrids of *Passiflora parritae*, a rare vine from Columbia with showy large orange flowers. The vine is hard to grow outside the Bay Area. For many years the Garden had the only clone known in cultivation and it did not set seed. However, hand pollination from *P. antioquiensis* onto *P. parritae* has resulted in spectacular plants with nearly-red flowers up to 7-inches across. Named *P.* 'Mission Dolores' by Carlos Rendon, who hybridized the plant near his home in San Francisco's Mission District, this vigorous bloomer has had flowers every month of the year. Another cross resulted from pollinating *P. parritae* with pollen from *P. trifoliata* var. *mollissima*. The first plant bloomed this summer; its brilliant neon pink bloom earning it the name *P.* 'Pink Panther.' We hope this plant will have the tough hardiness of the male parent, which is very adaptable and easy to grow. Both of these hybrids are being produced for future plant sales and demonstrate the continued value of our nursery to the horticulture trade.

SAN FRANCISCO BOTANICAL GARDEN SOCIETY *Established in 1955*

San Francisco Botanical Garden at Strybing Arboretum, Golden Gate Park
1199 Ninth Avenue at Lincoln Way, San Francisco, CA 94122
415.661.1316 www.sfbotanicalgarden.org

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ART AT THE HELEN CROCKER RUSSELL LIBRARY

NATURE OBSERVED: FINDING RICHNESS AND BEAUTY IN SIMPLE THINGS

Watercolors by Thomas P. Rohlen

JANUARY – APRIL 2010

After retiring from teaching at Stanford in 2001, I returned to an early interest in art, and discovered the deep satisfactions of watercolor illustration. Observed closely, the details of nature are remarkably beautiful and wondrous. This art form requires careful observation and patient development of what is just there before us. In submitting to the intimacy of nature's details, we gain access to a timeless relationship with pattern, color, and light. I find a particular delight in this art form because it reveals the glory of simple things. I admit to a restless disposition, so for me this work is a mild form of meditation. Another benefit has been the rediscovery of plants I thought I knew well from a long life of gardening. Now, thanks to actually focusing on a particular plant, I am learning how much more there is to appreciate from close observation. For the same reason, I have recently added other objects to my repertoire, such as fossils, insects, and shells. When it is the natural object that is the central focus, rather than "self-expression" or "creativity," one is introduced to the profound depths of the world around us, a world outside ourselves, but right there, all the same. Satisfaction in honest rendering is a reward within reach for me—one that never fails to give back more than this artist can hope to contribute.



Join the reception
for the artist in the
Library on Thursday,
date TK

Polystichum munitum western sword fern by Thomas P. Rohlen

PATH TO PERFECTION

By Taylor Campion, Executive Assistant

One afternoon I ventured forth on a mission to find the perfect bench on which to enjoy my lunch at SFBG. I wanted seclusion, but also to be surrounded by fragrant flowers and sunlight. Since there is a large selection of benches throughout the Garden, I thought I would find my bench quickly. However, it took me almost two months. Basically, my selection criteria changed.

Grabbing my bagged lunch and book, on most of my searches I ventured off to the pathways winding throughout the Garden. I observed many visitors: joggers; caregivers pushing children in strollers; workers finding sanctuary during an afternoon break; elderly visitors walking or being wheeled through the garden by their friends; and many others. When I left the paved pathways and sat down on a sunny bench, hidden along some small dirt path, my seclusion also deprived me of an important element of the garden: the visitors.

So my bench criteria changed. Once I knew what I really wanted I found my perfect bench quickly, along a newly improved pathway. The benefits of the pathways project have become abundantly clear to me. When completed, the pathways project will turn 8,600 square feet of old pavement into garden, and allow SFBG to be a meeting point for garden lovers with diverse physical and mobility needs. The smooth new paths make navigating strollers, wheelchairs, and walkers easier. My perfect bench is not what I originally envisioned. It is still full of sun and fragrance, but when I glance up from the pages of my book I can take in all the people who enjoy the Garden as much as I do.



HEIDI WOHLWEND

Michael McKechnie

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
SAN FRANCISCO BOTANICAL GARDEN SOCIETY

Growing the Next Generation

The San Francisco Botanical Garden grows far more than plants. We also have honed our ability to grow new generations of caretakers of the natural world. With more than 10,000 K-5 public school students participating in our Youth Education Program each year, we still reach only about one third of the San Francisco students in this age cohort annually.

To multiply our efforts, four years ago we began providing a five-session teacher training workshop in conjunction with the Green Schoolyard Alliance. Called "Ecology of the School Garden," the series is designed to deepen classroom teachers' understanding of the ecological and scientific principles at work in the outdoor classroom.

Teachers tell us that this training inspires and empowers them to more effectively use their own school gardens to enrich their students' learning. Some of these young people will grow up to enjoy and care for the very trees we are now planting, and which literally support the Garden itself

Brent Dennis

DIRECTOR
SAN FRANCISCO BOTANICAL GARDEN

Planting the Seeds for the Future

None of us would embark on a long journey without clear and thoughtful planning. Accordingly, many of us have been developing a disciplined and inclusive plan for the future growth of SFBG, the 55 acres of which we are stewards. In the months ahead, you will hear much more about the seeds we are thus developing. A "Tree Succession Master Plan" is underway, involving an array of horticulturists, arborists, garden designers, landscape architects, and our own garden and curatorial staff. Many historically significant and original over-story and canopy trees have aged to the point where they will soon need to be replaced. Many opportunities will be created for individuals, groups, organizations, businesses, and community foundations to contribute to the realization of the future canopy. Together, we are continuing our efforts to help assure a vital and sustainable arboretum of the future.

YOUTH EDUCATION

By Annette Huddle, Associate Director of Youth Education

WILSONS TO THE RESCUE

When docent Gordon Wilson and his wife Alida learned that our summer program, "From Acorn to Oak" was due for significant staffing cuts in the summer of 2009, they asked what would be needed to help us maintain the quality of the program for the greatest number of children. Thanks to their generous donation, we were able to bring high school student Joanna Bustamante back for a second year as a summer intern in the Children's Garden. Joanna's enthusiasm, energy, and experience were critical to the success of the summer program. Her fellow interns, the children who visited, and the garden itself all benefited tremendously from the Wilson's generosity!



SUSAN BECKSTEAD



JULIA LAU

We love Joanna Bustamante's amazing energy and enthusiasm, and so do the kids. In addition to her work at the Garden, she maintains a high GPA at Lowell High School, where she also participates in sports and band.

SAVE THE DATE!

San Francisco Botanical Garden Society's 11th Annual LUNAR NEW YEAR FLOWER MARKET

Saturday, February 13, 2010
10 am – 2 pm, Free Admission

County Fair Building Gallery
9th Avenue at Lincoln Way in Golden Gate Park

traditional flowers and plants for sale
dance troupes
books & gifts from the Bookstore
children's performance & story reading
docent-led tours of the Garden
...and more

Celebrate the year of the Tiger

2010 Plant Sales

Saturdays, 10 AM – 1 PM

SFBG Nursery near the California Native Plants Garden. All sales include a general selection of plants in addition to featured plants.

- February 6 - General Sale
- March 6 - General Sale
- April 3 - General Sale
- 43rd ANNUAL SPRING SALE
- April 30 - Members Only Sale
- May 1 - Public Sale
- June 12 - Perennials
- July 10 - Salvias & Shrubs
- August 14 - Shade Plants
- September 11 - Native Plants & Succulents
- October 9 - Trees, Ferns, & Rhododendrons
- November 13 - End-of-the-Season Sale

For more details, call 415.661.3090

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

CLASSES AT SFBGS

Education Department Winter 2010 Calendar

For more information and to register for classes, contact Education Coordinator Kitty Fisher: 415.661.1316, ext. 400, kfisher@sfbotanicalgarden.org.

HORTICULTURE

FEATURED EVENT Sustainable Gardening Seminar EMBRACING SUSTAINABILITY: A 21ST CENTURY APPROACH

Saturday, January 30, 9:00 am – 4:00 pm

Members \$85 / Nonmembers \$95

Glenn Keator, PhD and Don Mahoney, Ph D will lead this one-day seminar focusing on insects and other life in the garden; water-use; and cultivating healthy soils. Coffee and lunch included.

ATTRACTING NATIVE BEES TO YOUR YARD

Saturday, January 16, 10:00 am – 12:30 pm

Members \$20 / Nonmembers \$25

Professor and research entomologist at UC Berkeley, Dr. Gordon Frankie will speak on native bees and the plants with which they co-exist.

BEAUTIFUL PALMS FOR BAY AREA GARDENS

Saturday, January 23, 9:00 am – noon

Members \$25 / Nonmembers \$30

Jason Dewees, palm expert at Flora Grubb Gardens and a long-time SFBC volunteer, discusses unusual palms that can bring beauty to your garden.

Special Presentation

ENCOMPASSING THE AMAZON

Saturday, February 18, 7:00 – 8:30 pm

Members \$35 / Nonmembers \$45

Dr. Susana Bustos and author Robert Tindall introduce healing ways from this region, combining narrative, music, slides, and discussion.



Agave colorata and *Mirabilis multiflora*

DESIGN YOUR OWN SPRING VICTORY GARDEN

Saturday, March 27, 9:00 am – 12:30 pm

Members \$25 / Nonmembers \$35

SFBC Curator of Horticulture Don Mahoney will show us how to follow Michelle Obama's lead in planning, planting, and maintaining your own Victory Garden.

CHINESE PLANTS FOR FOOD AND MEDICINE

Saturday, April 3, noon – 3:30 pm

Members \$20 / Nonmembers \$25

Join noted ethnobotanist and City College professor Thomas Wang, who will share his knowledge of Chinese plants for both culinary and medicinal purposes.

GROWING PROTEAS IN BAY AREA GARDENS

Saturday, April 24, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm

Members \$55 / Nonmembers \$65

Add exotic flavor upon the advice of Jeff Rosendale, owner of Sierra Azul and Rosendale Nurseries in Watsonville.

TOURS

LATE WINTER SUSTAINABLE GARDEN TOUR

Saturday, March 13, 10:00 am – 1:30 pm

Members \$65 / Nonmembers \$75

Join Karen Bones on our second annual trip to Kenwood Permaculture for a garden tour and lecture.

SPRING WILDFLOWERS OF PINNACLES NATIONAL MONUMENT

Saturday and Sunday, April 17 and 18

Members \$85 / Nonmembers \$95 (Hotel not included.)

Glenn Keator leads a tour of spectacular and rugged scenery among ancient rock pinnacles. We'll meet in Hollister Saturday morning at 8:30 am and finish at the Pinnacles on Sunday at 2:00 pm.

BOTANICAL ART

WREATH MAKING WORKSHOP with Marjorie Dunbar

Saturday, December 5, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm

\$20/\$30/\$40 depending on size of frame. Family drop-ins welcome!

BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATION with Mary Harden

Tuesdays, January 19 through March 9, 10:00 am – 1 pm

Members \$150 / Nonmembers \$175

This pencil course will provide an exploration into drawing with accuracy and beauty. This is a class for the absolute beginner.

CHINESE BRUSH PAINTING with Feng Chen

Wednesdays, January 20 through March 10, 6:30 – 8:30 pm

Members \$130 / Nonmembers \$150

Create beautiful botanical brush paintings. All skill levels welcome.

GARDEN WALKS

MAGNIFICENT MAGNOLIAS WALK

Sunday, February 14, 1:30 – 3:00 pm

\$10 / Open to the public

Join Dr. Joseph Barbaccia for a stroll through one of the finest collections of deciduous magnolias in the United States.

it off. The next day, one of the buds bloomed. It sounds obvious but the experience forged a connection for me between gardening and plants." She hasn't looked back since. Nani describes how gardening "opens doors to beauty, and it feels so good—the experience unfolds as you're growing them." Cultivating from spores, Nani and (NAME TK), another volunteer Nani credits with a magic touch, nurture the rich frond-life of ferns from its very inception. That sounds like touching the magic of life at its pulse.

That most of the volunteers at SFBG are motivated by greenery is evident; so is the easy, enjoyable camaraderie among so many. Monica Martin and Boo Whitridge share a casual rapport as they oversee native plant propagation. "We do a lot from cuttings," Boo explains. "You cut below a node, from new growth that is semi-hard. We want healthy tip cuttings. We use a root hormone and plant the cutting in an absorbent material until it roots." Boo explains that they also gather seeds from the Garden itself, and from other gardens as well. "Some you put in the fridge for a while and others get the warm water treatment. Then there are those you plunk in the soil, and they just grow!" As the gardening public becomes more aware of sustainability issues, interest in native plants has greatly magnified in the ten years Boo has been volunteering.

Boo is aided and abetted by Monica Martin, who for four years has straddled various areas of life at the SFBG. She's co-chair of the annual plant sale, sometimes works with perennials, and is also a member of the board. "I moved to San Francisco from Marin," says Monica, of her eventual conversion to a stalwart Garden-lover, "and I didn't know what would grow in my shady garden. A friend suggested I volunteer here, and learn." While many nursery volunteers are in fact experts in their field, donating their time from a deep connection to all things green, there are also many stories like Monica's. They begin: "I wanted to learn, so I volunteered." Just chatting with a random sampling of SFBG nursery volunteers is enough to motivate anyone to put on some coveralls and pick



RICHARD MOGENSTEIN

Patsy Kobe has been cultivating perennials here for 20 years.



RICHARD MOGENSTEIN

Easy camaraderie is one of the hallmarks of nursery volunteering.

up a trowel. "I spent my career talking," Monica says. "I wanted to 'do' in my retirement. I love getting my hands in the dirt. I love watching the plant grow." Patsy Kobe, who has been leading the perennials charge for almost 20 years, puts it this way: "I love it all."

Patsy deserves special credit with Pat Wipf for assiduous tending of the Zellerbach Garden, along with staff gardeners, of course—right now, they are lucky enough to be working alongside Bob Fiorello. "The Zellerbach got started with original funding in the sixties," explains Patsy. "Jenny Zellerbach picked the plants, and wanted a successional display." Although unique among the SFBG's various gardens, a continuous show of beautiful blooms, of course, is what many botanic gardens in the U.S. are all about. By 2000, the garden wasn't looking so hot. The Zellerbach family donated funds to revive it, and Patsy and Pat set about restoring some of Jenny's original intentions—an emphasis on pastel blossoms, for example—and enhancing the inevitable fallow periods of the year with various shrubs and trees that look good no matter the season. "It's been a fascinating educational project," says Patsy. Propagating perennials is a matter of seeds, cuttings, and divisions. "To propagate from the gardens is part of our mission," she explains. Along with the multiform efforts of all the volunteers, her work is partly directed to providing wares for the monthly plant sales that raise necessary funds to keep the Garden going.

"One wonderful thing about working here is that you can really find your niche," Patsy remarks, and this sentiment is echoed by many other volunteers. Credit devolves back to Don Mahoney. "When people come in, we work on finding the best place for them. What will they love doing, and how can we best serve the Garden. Sometimes we move people around before they get settled. Other times, they are clear from the beginning what they want to do, and we let them."

All around the nursery, an amazingly vibrant and gorgeous Garden grows. These volunteers make it happen. Perhaps it is an inevitable association, but it would seem that Don grows people as well as he grows plants.

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN

The end of the year is a good time to review financial matters and make charitable tax-deductible gifts. Friends of the Garden often make cash gifts, but there are a number of other ways you can give that benefit both you and the Garden. These gifts include:

- Appreciated securities (stocks, bonds, mutual fund shares)
- Insurance policies
- Charitable remainder trusts
- Real estate
- Retirement funds (IRAs - Individual Retirement accounts)

There may be no better time than the present to plan a charitable IRA distribution. The extension of Pension Protection Act allows individuals, 70½ years and older, to make gifts to their favorite charities by using direct transfers from their traditional IRAs without paying taxes on the distributions. For more information on tax-free IRA distributions, please contact your IRA plan administrator, or Judy Prokupek at 415.661.1316, ext.302, or jprokupek@sfbotanicalgarden.org, if we can be of assistance.

The opportunity to make tax-free IRA distributions (up to a maximum of \$100,000) to the San Francisco Botanical Garden Society ends on December 31, 2009.

g a r d e n f e a s t

Thank you to our sponsors:



A FEAST TO SUPPORT THE GARDEN

On Wednesday September 23, SFBGS hosted Garden Feast, our annual gala luncheon, silent auction, and fundraiser. Guests enjoyed a superb luncheon on the Botanical Garden's Great Meadow catered by Dan McCall Associates and complemented by Bonterra Vineyards' organic wines.

Mayor Gavin Newsom was the recipient of the SFBGS' 2009 Green Champion Award. Phil Ginsberg, the new General Manager of SF Recreation & Parks, accepted on his behalf.

Nell Newman, co-founder and president of Newman's Own® Organics: The Second Generation®, gave the keynote address. Ms. Newman encouraged all to be socially responsible, politically involved, and philanthropic.

SFBGS would like to thank everyone involved in making Garden Feast 2009 our biggest fundraiser of the year!



Above: Nell Newman, keynote speaker, and Michael McKechnie, SFBGS executive director; Honey Johnson, SFBGS trustee and Garden Feast co-chair, and Kathy Jaunich. Below (from L-R): Don Baldocchi, SFBGS trustee, Jim Marshall of Suncrest Nursery, Arden Bucklin-Spore, trustee and co-chair of Garden Feast, and Wendy Tonkin, board chair.





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415.661.1316 ext. 408 bookstore@sfbotanicalgarden.org

HOLIDAY GIVING

Give the tax-deductible gift of membership to a friend, loved one, or colleague. They'll be grateful all year long!

Membership levels begin at \$60. Order on-line at www.sfbotanicalgarden.org/membership, by phone at 415.661.1316, ext. 303, or by e-mail: jestey@sfbotanicalgarden.org.

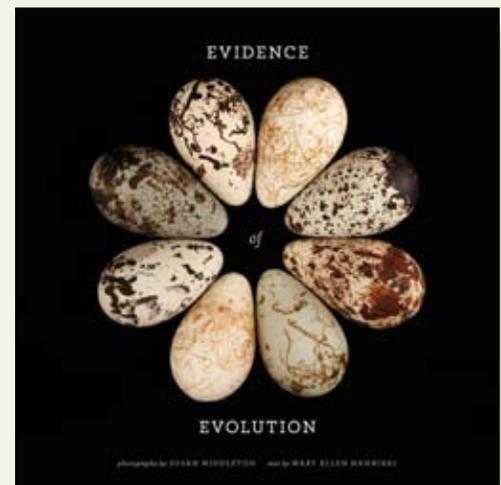
MEMBERSHIP NEWS

O next Quarterly Members' Event will take place on Thursday, December 10, from 6 to 8 pm (*note the change of date!*). We'll be in the San Francisco County Fair Building. Besides our traditional offerings of food and drink, we'll enjoy live music, a variety of handicrafts and art quite suited to holiday gift-giving, a presentation and book-signing, and the conviviality of our fellow members. As always, please RSVP by phone or by email, it helps us and the caterer in our planning.

Remember to stop by the Bookstore the next time you're in the Garden. There's a new set of **CozmoCards** (restaurant discounts worth hundreds of dollars) and they're free to members. You'll also find lots of potential gifts—for someone else or for yourself. And while you're exercising your member's discount benefit, remember that the gift of a membership is tax-deductible.

There's a lot going on in the coming months for members of the San Francisco Botanical Garden Society; you'll want to stay informed. If we have your email address, we'll send you a monthly eNewsletter to keep you apprised of any late-breaking news.

Questions? You can get any membership help you need by visiting our website (www.sfbotanicalgarden.org), by sending us an email, or by calling Jay Estey, Membership Manager, at (415) 661-1316, ext 303.



The authors will give a special presentation and booksigning at the December 10th members event.