



# Bulletin of the California Horticultural Society

*Passionate about plants, the places they grow  
and the people who grow them*

Founded in 1933

February 2024

[www.calhortsociety.org](http://www.calhortsociety.org)

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## ANNUAL SEED EXCHANGE

### It's Not Too Late to Request Seeds!



You can choose from 201 different plant seeds—many not available through regular commercial sources! The list includes pollinator plants, unusual perennials, cutting flowers, carnivorous plants, and more. All are from plants that have been doing well in the greater Bay Area and as far east as Sacramento.

You can find the list and request form in the January Bulletin or [download a copy](https://tinyurl.com/2024-Seed-List) (tinyurl.com/2024-Seed-List) from the website. 🌱

### Cal Hort Meeting, Monday, February 19, 6:30 p.m.

*via Zoom or by phone*

### Plant Diversity in Oaxaca, Mexico

with **Troy Stevens**, *Plant grower, collector, and enthusiast*



There isn't another place in North America with a higher rate of biodiversity and density of ecotypes than Oaxaca, Mexico. With everything from summer monsoonal desert basins, to cool and moist cloud forest, Oaxaca is full of almost any kind of plant you can imagine: from palms and cycads, to ferns and aroids, and of course cacti and succulents. Troy got the opportunity to explore the northern part of the state and observe a selection of the peculiar plants that grow there. His presentation will be from the perspective of someone getting into the field for the first time.

Troy is a plant grower, collector, and enthusiast from Alameda, California, who has been growing succulents and other plants for "some time now." He is a manager/plant buyer at the Grand Lake Ace Garden Center in Oakland, a perennial volunteer at the Gardens at Lake Merritt, and one of the Board

*continued on back page*

## Cal Hort Online

**Please visit our website** (<https://calhortsociety.org>) for news, updates, articles, and resources.

**Videos** of our featured speakers and Plant Forum discussions can be found on our **YouTube channel** ([youtube.com/c/HorticulturalSociety](https://youtube.com/c/HorticulturalSociety))

Join us for conversations on **Facebook** (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/friendswholikecalhort>)

### Plant Forum

To share in the Plant Forum send images and any text to Ellen Frank, [ellenfrank@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ellenfrank@sbcglobal.net), by Sunday prior to the monthly meeting. For full details along with the slide shows visit the **Plant Forums page** (<https://calhortsociety.org/about/monthly-meetings/plant-forum>).

### Did You Know?

Cal Hort is a member of **Mediterranean Gardening International (MGI)** an international group of like-minded horticultural groups. You can find links to the other member organizations on our **Links of Interest** page (<https://calhortsociety.org/links-of-interest>). 🌱

## Our Newest Council Members

With most of our meetings taking place over Zoom, many of you will not have had chance to meet our most recent additions to the Cal Hort Council. Heather and Carolyn stepped up last year when we put out that urgent call, and Jeff this year. If you are interested in getting more involved, contact any of the Council members or write to us at [CalHortInfo@gmail.com](mailto:CalHortInfo@gmail.com)

### Heather Gorawski



“I originated in the woods of New Hampshire and eventually meandered my way out west to pursue a Landscape Design/Horticulture career in the East Bay. In the interim I completed an undergraduate degree in Marketing and Communications, and traveled overseas to work and live on farms and aid environmental organizations. Currently I am enrolled in the Merritt College Horticultural Program, as well as run a business offering garden health and design services. I have finally put down roots in this area and am thrilled to continue to learn and embrace our special growing culture and community here.”

### Carolyn McNiven



Carolyn Fitzhugh McNiven is a Berkeley native. Her Berkeley garden was designed in the 1920s by Mabel Symmes, a pioneering female landscape designer who designed Blake Garden, a UC owned property in Kensington. When not working in her garden, Carolyn works as a white-collar criminal defense attorney at a large San Francisco law firm.

### Jeff Harter



“I’m a San Francisco resident who, after ripping out a 500-square-foot lawn, suddenly became a gardener in 2012. As I knew nothing (still don’t!), I joined various societies, starting with begonias, then adding succulents and carnivorous plants, until finally going all-in and joining Cal Hort. After retiring last June, I figured it was time to step up and get more deeply involved with one of the seven plant societies to which I belonged (recent additions are the Bromeliad Society, the Pacific Bulb Society, and NARGS).

I dawdled for a few months, but then, at the holiday party in November, Ellen Frank suggested that I join the Cal Hort Council. Reader, I said yes! I look forward to making a contribution to Cal Hort and getting to know you all.”

*[Editor’s note: In case you missed the January meeting, check out our video of the Plant Forum. In it Jeff details his guerrilla gardening project to rejuvenate and improve the landscaping around a pedestrian ramp near his home.]*



## Cal Hort 2024 Programs

**March 18 - online**  
**The Calochortus of California**  
with Kipp McMichael

**April 15 - online**  
**Cultivating Place**  
with Jennifer Jewel

**May 20 - in person**  
**Ethnobotany and psychotropic properties of plants**

**June 17 - online**  
**Year Round Food Gardening**  
with Pamela Pierce

**July 15 - in person**  
**Rose Loveall, Morningsun Herb Farm**  
Plus a plant sale

**August 19**  
**The Hidden Gem: San Bruno Mountain**

**September 16 - online**  
**Climate Change & Adapting Plants for the Garden**  
with Emily Griswold

**October 21 - in person**  
**Garden Walk, Potluck, Social and plant exchange**


**November 18**  
with Glenn Phillips

## Western Hort

Free to WH and CH members  
\$10 each for guests  
For full details visit  
[Western Hort's website](http://www.westernhort.org/speakers-events)  
([www.westernhort.org/speakers-events](http://www.westernhort.org/speakers-events))

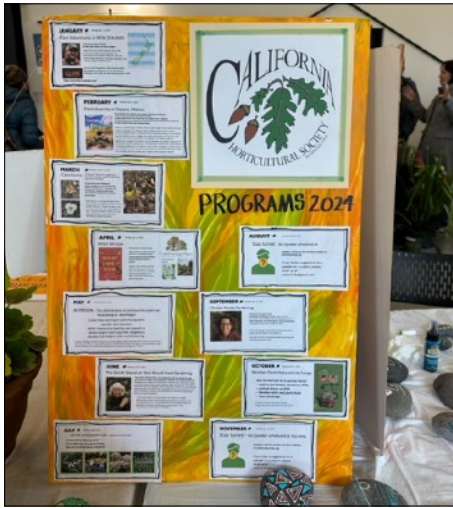
**Wednesday**  
**March 13, 7:30 p.m.**  
*Zoom only*

**Water in Your Garden: Taking Control**  
with Lori Palmquist

Irrigation and water-efficiency expert Lori Palmquist will detail a veritable buffet of strategies for lowering water use in the landscape. 

# Making Connections

By Ellen Frank



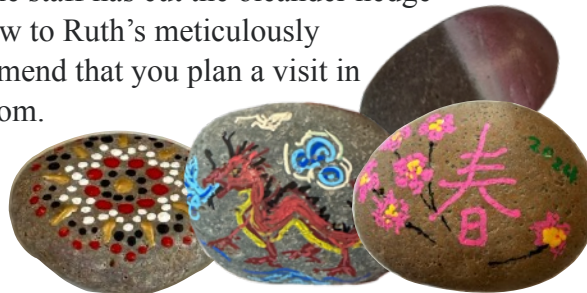
Jeff Harter and I staffed the Cal Hort membership table and rock painting station at the February 3 Seeds of Connection event, hosted by the Ruth Bancroft Garden. The hall was packed with all sorts of interesting plant enthusiasts and organizations. There were local garden clubs, the S.F. Succulent and Cactus Society, the Bromeliad Society, the Herb Society, Roger's Ranch, the Orchid Society, the California Native Plant Society, U.C. Master Gardeners, the American Iris Society, and Bay Area Basket Makers. It was great to see a lot of familiar faces and meet new friends as well. When horticulturally-minded people get together, there is always something to talk about. There were so many great organizations, each focusing on one aspect of the plant world—something for everyone.

It was a well attended event and we were quite fortunate to be allowed two tables—in the middle of the hall, a prime spot—to display our materials and offer rock painting. Jeff and his wife Judy created a new outreach brochure for the occasion which we handed out.

While chatting with us about Cal Hort, folks created many really lovely and interesting rocks. One couple showed me how to paint the Chinese characters for “good luck” and “Spring”. They also inspired a few folks to paint dragons in honor of the Year of the Dragon, and they even left a drawing that people could copy.

We were lucky that the event landed between storms, since I think more people visited, and it made the garden a joy to walk after the event. It was just beautiful, as usual, with lots of Aloes in bloom right now including a vibrant *Aloe marlothii*. A spectacular *Templetonia retusa*, a shrub with which I was unfamiliar, was full of tomato-red pea-like flowers. On the east side of the garden I made another surprising discovery—Ruth Bancroft's personal iris collection is currently in full view. The staff has cut the oleander hedge down to knee-height, clearing the view to Ruth's meticulously documented collection. I fully recommend that you plan a visit in April when they should be in full bloom.

Overall, the day went well, we had a great time, met new people, and made some good connections. 🌱



*Templetonia retusa*



*Aloe marlothii*



California Horticultural Society  
San Francisco County Fair Building  
1199 9th Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94122

### February Cal Hort Speaker *continued from front page*

Members of the San Francisco Cactus and Succulent Society. Aloes, cycads, bulbs, and *caudiciform* succulents represent a significant portion of what he likes to propagate, grow, and collect, but like many of us, he likes to grow a bit of everything. 🌿

### Cal Hort Meeting, Monday, March 18, 6:30 p.m.

*via Zoom or by phone*

### The Calochortus of California

with **Kipp McMichael**, active contributor of the *Pacific Bulb Society*, hortiphile, software developer



The Bay Area is the center of diversity for the genus Calochortus, and California is home to the lion's share of species in this group of "beautiful grasses." These members of the lily tribe grow

throughout the state, from alpine meadows to seaside bluffs and from the desert to the temperate rain forest. Kipp will orient Calochortus in the larger scheme of plant taxonomy, discuss the biogeography of the genus, present a photo tour of species starting with Bay Area taxa and moving north, east, and south, based on his photos and observations from years of calochorting about the state in search of these entrancing beauties. He will talk about more far-flung members of the genus outside California and the U.S. and conclude with a discussion of the cultivation of this genus, many of whose members are surprisingly easy to grow.

Kipp McMichael is a software developer and hortiphile who makes his home and garden in Berkeley, where he resides with husbands Patrick and Jean-Claude, as well as far too many succulents, cacti, and geophytes. Kipp has a lifelong interest in all kinds of natural history and has relished the biological and geological richness of the California landscape since he moved here in 2000. He has grown most of the Calochortus species native to California from seed and loves to cultivate appreciation of this cult-worthy genus. 🌿

## Don't Miss Out Renew Your Membership Today!

Visit our [Join or Renew](http://www.calhortsociety.org/about/join-or-renew) page (www.calhortsociety.org/about/join-or-renew).

You can pay online or by check. See the website for details.

### Questions?

Contact:

Charlotte Masson,  
*Membership Chair*

[CalHortInfo@gmail.com](mailto:CalHortInfo@gmail.com)



### California Horticultural Society

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