March in Conejo Valley Botanic Garden

CORK OAK TREE
(Quercus suber)

As early as 3000 BC, cork was used as fishing tackle in China, Egypt, Babylon and Persia. In Pompeii, the Roman city destroyed by the brutal eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 AD, wine amphoras sealed with cork were discovered by archaeologists.

During the Age of Discoveries, the builders of the Portuguese ships and caravels that set sail in search of new worlds, used cork oak wood for the parts that were most exposed to bad weather. They claimed that the “sôvaro”, as it was called then, was the best wood for masts. Besides being exceptionally strong, it never rotted.

In France, the monk Dom Pierre Pérignon (1638-1715) treasurer and cellar master of the Benedictine Abbey in Hautvillers, pioneered a number of winemaking techniques, including the introduction of corks (instead of wood), which were fastened to bottles with hemp string soaked in oil in order to keep the wines fresh and sparkling.

Today, approximately 6.6 million acres of Mediterranean cork forest extend across Portugal, Spain, Algeria, Morocco, Italy, Tunisia and France. These oak forests support one of the world’s highest levels of forest biodiversity, second only to the Amazonian Rainforest.

During cork harvest, the tree remains standing while large sections of its outer bark are cut and peeled from the tree, leaving a brick red tree trunk. Cork oak is unique in its ability to regenerate its outer bark by the next decade.

Take a walk up the service road about half way, then turn right at the Scarlet Oak tree near the bench. About ten paces beyond is a Cork Oak tree, the only one in the garden. Feel the spongy cork just under the surface of the knobby dark grey bark.

-Sandy Krutilek-
What’s in a Name-Scent?

by Diane Conejo

Dost thou know where the aforementioned title originated?

“What’s in a name? That which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet...” -from Juliet’s speech to Romeo from the play by William Shakespeare.

Speaking of smell, (and I would like to) here are two shrubs whose names hint at the pleasures to be had when you add them to your landscaping.

The first plant’s genus name comes from the Greek root, osme, which means odor or fragrance; this paired with anthos, refers to its flowers. The species portion tells you, in case you weren’t paying attention... fragrans x 2. Osmanthus fragrans makes a lovely evergreen hedge, or you may find that you have to place it near an entry or window so that you can enjoy its fragrant flowers. The scent is very clean and light, not cloyingly sweet. Some afternoon shade will keep it happy when it gets warmer.

The first time I saw an Elaeagnus, I was concerned. The leaves and branches are covered with silvery, transparent scales that rub off when you touch them. The flowers and the undersides of the leaves are speckled; the fruit, an oval, red berry is also coated with silver and is a favorite of birds. The scales serve to reflect the sunlight and help this plant to sparkle. The name comes from the Greek elaia (olive), and agnos (pure) referring to the fruit. Pungens is from the Latin word pungere meaning prickling or sharp, and this refers to its spiny branches. The flower’s smell is sweet and it is said to travel or waft through a neighborhood when in bloom. It is very drought-tolerant once established.

Both plants have flowers that would be considered ‘inconspicuous’ as far as looks go, but each makes a pleasing backdrop for other plants and adds the gift of scent to your garden.
PLANT SALE SPECIALS

Red Hot Pokers, 3 for $12 and Canary Island Sage are still on sale. Plant sales are held every Sunday at the CVBG from 10:30-2:30 in the area next to the Kids' Adventure Garden, located at 350 W. Gainsborough Rd. California natives, hardy, water wise perennials, shrubs, trees and succulents, reasonably priced are available. CVBG volunteers will be happy to help you with selections and share their expertise.

Irene Benyoung is willing, by special appointment only, to meet customers at the Plant Sale area on Wednesdays. Please contact her by e-mail to make an appointment. ibenyoung@yahoo.com

BIRTHDAY PARTIES

The birthday parties held at the KAG on Saturdays have become very popular. So popular that Betty needs more volunteers to give her some help. It is fun and not too much work. Sometimes the kids come in costumes, depending on what the ‘theme’ of the party may be. Adults set up and take down tables and chairs. There is a donation to use the garden. You help by keeping your eyes on the kids as they get excited about having a party at the KAG. If you are willing to help by giving a few hours of your time, give Betty a call at 1-818-889-0560.

Birthday Parties are now available 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. on SUNDAYS. Please call Jim Cyr at 805-373-6106 to volunteer to help him. Volunteer hours are 2:30-5:30 p.m

LEARN FLOWER DESIGN

Learn Flower Design in the Sogetsu Style. Develop creative self-expression through flower arrangement and learn the beauty of line and space. Keiko (Camille) Van Ast holds a First Teacher’s degree from the Sogetsu School of Ikebana in Tokyo, Japan. She has studied Ikebana for more than 25 years.

For Registration call Camille at 805-498-7421

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Seen Around the Garden
Photos by Joseph Scarpine and Jim Cyr
Knifeleaf Acacia, Purple Iceplant and Chasmanthe,
Classes will meet the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month
9:00-11:30 a.m. in the
Kids’ Adventure Garden
Classes are ongoing
A one time fee of $20 for a textbook is required.
Class fee of $25 per class includes the flower fee of $10

Want to Help us Grow?
Do you love Conejo Valley Botanic Garden and would like to help, but just don't have the time to volunteer? Even though much of the work you see going on in the garden is done by volunteers, we still have expenses for planting, heavy pruning and new improvements. These projects are funded through grants and donations from the community. If you would like to help us grow, tax deductible donations are always welcome and may be made out and sent to Conejo Valley Botanic Garden, PO Box 6614, Thousand Oaks, CA 91359. Thanks for all your support!

Conejo Valley Botanic Garden Needs You!
The Garden is managed and maintained by community volunteers. Without your help, the garden cannot thrive. None of the volunteer positions at CVBG has a minimum number of volunteer hours attached. If you can help for a few hours a month, great! For more information on any of our volunteer opportunities, please go to our web site at www.conejogarden.org and click “Volunteers.”

WE CURRENTLY NEED VOLUNTEERS FOR THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS:
Adopt A Garden: We have an ongoing need for volunteers to join the teams working in our theme gardens. Days and hours are flexible so give us a call.
Garden Nursery: There is no better way to learn about California native and water wise plants than to join the teams working in the propagation and sales nurseries.
The Kids Adventure Garden: KAG is open from 11:00 to 3:00 each Sunday. Docents welcome families to the garden, answer questions and ensure everyone is safe and has fun. You will train with an experienced Docent. You can sign up for one shift a month or as many as you want.
Email: conejogarden1623@hotmail.com.

For information and directions to the garden, visit our web site at www.conejogarden.org.

March 2013