

Suncrest Nurseries Inc.

Underappreciated Plants

Whenever life at Suncrest gets a little harried, we try to remind ourselves of the joys of working with a continual parade of new and beautiful plants. There are always new risks to keep things exciting, new cultural problems to work out, and the suspense of presenting something different to the gardening public. There is also a downside, of course. In the midst of this same parade, it is hard for any one to focus clearly on every new or unfamiliar plant. Some outstanding species and cultivars never quite receive the attention they deserve.

The pages that follow are devoted to a few of these underappreciated plants. We hope you'll take the time to look them over and, if something strikes your fancy, give it a try. You won't be sorry.

MNS and GH

Exotic Trees and Shrubs

CHIMONANTHUS praecox. Winter sweet. China. It is always surprising to find a plant which flowers regularly in the depths of winter. To find one this beautiful is a real joy. Though ignored in California for many years, it now seems to be finding an appreciative audience once again. This is a well-branched shrub, growing as much as 15' high and wide but usually about half that size. It has attractive pale bark, hidden during the growing season by glossy lance-shaped leaves, 4-8" long. Small, clustered buds appear along the stems as the leaves yellow and drop in late fall, then develop into cupped, waxy, wonderfully fragrant blossoms on bare stems. The first selection we tried was received as '**Grandiflorus**' but seems more likely to be '**Luteo-grandiflorus**'. It has intensely fragrant, light yellow flowers with tiny purple dots, nearly an inch across ('Grandiflorus' generally answers this description but should be less fragrant and show some clear purple striping, which this does not). '**Concolor**' has uniformly yellow flowers of similar size. I am tempted to say that every garden deserves one of these lovely shrubs, except that I would hate to see them as common as photinias. Sun or light shade, most soils, moderate to regular watering. Hardy to 0-10°F.

CRINODENDRON. Chile, Argentina. This is a genus of only two shrub-trees, both of them highly ornamental and unusual in their features. Both are upright in their main axis, with widely spreading branches closely lined by narrow, leathery leaves. The flowers are long-lasting, and their succession lasts for many weeks. They nod gracefully along the stems, holding their waxy petals closely together. These are beautiful plants for coastal gardens but need shading and protection against hot, dry winds in the interior. They also require well drained, preferably acid soil and constant moisture (though they actually use only modest quantities of water for their size). They are hardy to around 15°F.

hookerianum. Lantern tree. Chile. It is hard to fathom why this beautiful tree has been nearly absent from California gardens. It grows at a moderate pace to 10-30' tall. The sturdy branches are neatly lined by narrow, shining, very dark green leaves, about 3" long in this selection, and rolled down along the margins. Long-stalked, pendant flower buds appear all along the stems in fall, gradually developing into dark red 1" lanterns, each lasting several weeks. This is a choice plant for containers, as well as for featured, if somewhat protected, spots in the open landscape.

patagua Lily of the valley tree. This species is described in some texts as a smaller tree than the last, though it is clearly more vigorous and presumably larger here. The current selection has a strong, straight main trunk and nearly horizontal branches. The leaves are roughly oval in form, dark green and shiny above, grey-green beneath. White 1" bells hang on stalks of equal length, all along the younger branches, through the summer months. I can not think of a similar display in the world of woody plants.

EDGEWORTHIA. Himalaya, China. Shrubby *Daphne* allies with a variety of unusual and endearing features. They have relatively few, thick trunks and branches, covered with papy bark which, in one species (*E. papyrifera*) is actually used in the manufacture of art papers. Clustered mostly near the ends of the branches are large narrow-oval to lance-shaped leaves. Tight, nodding bud clusters develop at the mature shoot tips in fall, the buds expanding in succession into silky, tubular flowers which open just at the tips. The flowers are delightfully fragrant, though of a different blend than the daphnes. These are forest plants. Though they thrive in full sun near the coast, they should have both afternoon shade and protection from hot, dry winds inland. They require well drained, acid soil and constant moisture, though they do not actually use large quantities of water. Hardy to around 10°F.

chrysantha. This is the species most often grown. It is a stout plant, with several widely branched trunks from the base, growing 3-6' high. The leaves are up to 6" long and rather narrow. They are colored deep green above, grey-green below. The flowers have intriguing silvery hairs along the tubes. The "face" is typically bright yellow. '**Gold Rush**' (COPF) is a beautiful selection with exceptionally long, tropical-looking leaves and the typical gold-faced flowers. '**Rubra**' is even more unusual with its smaller, darker leaves and bright orange red tips on the flowers.

HEPTACODIUM miconioides. China. An interesting small tree of the honey suckle family. It holds its branches nearly erect, forming a narrow canopy. Lining the younger stems are pointed-oval, conspicuously three-veined leaves up to 6" long. In summer it produces paired clusters of small white fragrant flowers at the shoot tips. The sepals persist and become purplish red and showy as the small seed capsules develop. Sun or light shade, well drained non-alkaline soil, constant moisture. Hardy to below 0°F.

HYPERICUM 'Hidcote'. Plants in the genus *Hypericum* have fallen from favor in recent times, but the adaptable nature of 'Hidcote' makes it a valuable shrub in many situations. It is able to compete with tree roots, and willing to put out glossy 3" bright yellow flowers in late spring, with scattered flowers through the summer, performing well in sun or partial shade. A neat appearance is maintained in all seasons, and it is hardy to at least 10°F.

INDIGOFERA. Wide spread, mainly in the tropics and subtropics. This is an immense group of the pea family, totaling about 700 species and including plants from annuals to trees. Those of interest here are shrubs from more temperate regions. They have divided leaves, like many other peas, and clusters of small, rather typical pea-flowers, often showy en masse. The following thrive with sun or light shade, reasonably well drained soil, and moderate watering. They should be hardy to 15°F. or less, except as noted.

australis. Australia. A graceful, arching shrub, growing 3' to occasionally 10' high. The stems may be bright green or tinged with red. Spaced along them are feathery leaves up to 4" long. Borne in their axils in summer and fall are narrow clusters of beautiful 1/2" flowers, varying from light pink to reddish purple in color. Probably 20°F. or less.

heterantha. This is a deciduous shrub, probably growing 6-8' high and wide in the current form. It is well-branched, with rather stiff stems and airy grey-green leaves. Through the summer and well into fall, the plants are dotted with short, dense clusters of 1/2" flowers, deep purplish pink in this unnamed selection.

LONICERA syringantha 'Grandiflora'. A shrubby species, growing around 6' tall, with greater spread. Closely set along the stems are pairs of small bluish green leaves. In summer intensely fragrant, rose pink blossoms are paired all along the younger stems. Probably 0°F.

LYONIA lucida (x mariana?). Eastern U.S. This was received as *L. mariana* but seems to have features of both species. It is a graceful relative of *Pieris* and *Gaultheria*, making a fountain of arching branches up to 5' high. Closely lining them are leathery evergreen dark green, pointed-oval leaves 1" to nearly 3" long. The new growth is painted in bronze to scarlet. In spring many arching, leafy clusters of pieris-like blossoms decorate the plant. They vary in color from nearly white with a pinkish base to bright pink with darker markings. This is a beautiful shrub, thriving in the conditions provided for azaleas—sun or shade near the coast, light shade inland, acid well drained soil and moderate to regular watering. Hardy to 0°F. or less.

MICHELIA. South and Southeast Asia. Evergreen magnolia allies with attractive, often shiny foliage and fragrant white to yellow flowers, nestled among the leaves. They include some of the most ornamental of all flowering trees. The following should have reasonably well drained, fertile and non-alkaline soil and constant moisture. Away from the coast, they should be protected from hot, dry winds. Hardy as described below.

maudiae. This is simply one of the most beautiful trees I have ever seen. It grows perhaps 20-30' high in cultivation, varying in form from bushy and upright-oval to more spreading and open. The leaves are broadly oval, up to 6" long and beautifully colored—usually dark bluish green above and a striking chalky blue beneath. The flowers are quite variable in size, but in the better forms (which, naturally, we are reselecting from seedling batches as they bloom), they are up to 6" broad (8" in one case here) and breathtaking in their beauty. The wide, tapered petals are snow-white, sometimes with pink shading at the base. As if this were not enough, the flowers can be deliciously fragrant, suggesting wintergreen and other fruits and spices. This species thrives in full sun near the coast but should have afternoon shading in the interior. It is hardy to 20°F. or less, possibly much less.

yunnanensis A few years ago I was pleased to receive a batch of seedlings of this *Michelia* from Roger Warner. However, I was not quite prepared for the results. This is an extremely variable large shrub or small tree, with habit ranging from strongly upright through dome-shaped to prostrate, even in this one seedling batch. The leaves are like a broader, thicker and darker variant of those of the banana shrub, *M. figo*, and almost equally glossy. The flowers, however, are quite distinct. They are broadly cupped to wide-open and range from a little over an inch to three inches broad, with a variable number of segments. Color ranges from cream to snow-white. Their sweet fragrance is also distinct, perhaps more like gardenias than the lemon-and-banana mix of *M. figo*. They are also borne at every node along the younger stems. The main show arrives in mid-spring, and a scattering persists over much of the season. I have already made selections from the initial batch, including one with wonderful broad-petaled 3" blossoms. These plants are clearly hardier than currently cultivated forms of *M. figo*, and not prone to that species' sudden defoliation after the first blast of winter.

MITRARIA coccinea Shade is the preferred habitat of this scrambling shrub from southern Argentina and Chile. It sends out long stems with widely spaced dark green, somewhat glossy leaves. Stems can reach more than 6', and bright red "gold fish" style flowers appear along the branches in summer. Fertile, somewhat acid soil is best for good growth, with regular to moderate watering. Hardy to 15°F. or less.

ZENOBIA pulverulenta Eastern U. S. A stocky shrub of the heath family, growing about 3' high and at least 4' broad. Closely set around the stems are broad, 1-3" leaves with a striking, chalky grey-green surface. These are evergreen in mild climates, deciduous after really hard frosts. In summer and early fall, it displays small clusters of pure white, lantern-shaped flowers, much larger than those of *Pieris* and *Gaultheria*. This is a fine little shrub for lighting up drab corners of the garden. It thrives in sun or light shade near the coast, perhaps part shade in land, with reasonably well drained, acid soil as for the less fussy azaleas, and moderate watering. It is hardy to 0-5°F.

California Native Shrubs

ATRIPLEX lentiformis ssp. lentiformis (formerly *ssp. breweri*). Big saltbush. The saltbushes are a group of rugged shrubs in habit (as you might guess from the common name) some unusual habitats, like salt and alkali flats. Some are too plain or scruffy to entice most gardeners. However some, like this one, are genuinely ornamental and undemanding plants. Big saltbush is a substantial shrub, often 6-8' high and of even wider spread. It has sturdy, closely branched trunks, the stems neatly set with broad grey-green leaves, ½" - 2" long. The petal-less flowers are inconspicuous. Big saltbush is particularly useful as a background shrub, filling large areas with pleasing grey foliage and making an attractive foil for smaller, darker-leaved shrubs and flowering perennials. Sun (though it tolerates light shade), most soils, moderate to occasional watering. Hardy to 10°F. or less.

CERCOCARPUS betuloides Mountain mahogany. A shrub or small tree of the rose family, growing six feet to over twenty feet high. The trunks are well-branched, often with silvery bark. Spaced along them are dark, more or less evergreen leaves, oval to nearly round in outline and up to 1½" long. Small petal-less flowers are clustered in the leaf axils; though inconspicuous, they are followed by seed capsules with glistering silky "tails". A fine "character shrub" for sunny spots with reasonably well-drained soil. Drought-tolerant and hardy, in our material, to 10°F or less.

HOLODISCUS Cream bush. Western U. S. to South America. A group of slender-stemmed shrubs of the rose family, with several ornamental features. Those listed here are California natives, varying considerably in habit and scale. Both have picturesque trunks and attractive grey-brown bark. Both have toothed, deeply and neatly veined leaves, deep to bright green during the growing season and coloring beautifully before dropping in fall. Drooping clusters of tiny white flowers are carried at the shoot tips in late spring and summer. They take on attractive rusty hues after the flowers fade and hang on until late fall. These are attractive both for naturalizing and as specimen shrubs. They have year-round interest, which includes their twiggy framework in winter. Both thrive in sun or light shade and well drained soils, with moderate to occasional watering once they are established. Their hardiness varies.

discolor. Ocean spray. This species is a frequent sight in the hills and canyons of coastal California, though its range extends also to British Columbia and Mexico. It grows generally upright, to about 8' in our material, with graceful, slightly contorted branches. The leaves are broadly oval to nearly round in outline and 1-3" long. The flower clusters extend to as much as 10". This is a substantial shrub but one easily pruned and shaped as desired. Hardy to 10°F. or less.

microphyllus. Rock spiraea. This is a high mountain native, spreading to nearly matting in habit. The furry leaves are from under 1/4" to about an inch long, the flower clusters up to 3" and quite dense. Both the old clusters and leaves make a striking sight in fall. This is one for banks and other exposed spots with excellent soil drainage. It is small and pretty enough for larger rock gardens. Hardy to well below 0°F.

MALACOTHAMNUS. California, both Alta and Baja. Native shrubs of the mallow family, interesting for both foliage and flowers. Several make sizeable thickets from underground stems and roots. Individual shoots are usually erect and well branched. The leaves, like those of so many mallows, are usually lobed and more or less maple-like in outline. Both leaves and stems may be hairy, giving the plants a pleasant greyish cast. Five petalled flowers of the typical mallow form, with central tubes and brushes of stamens, are presented in clusters, mostly in summer. Common colors are white and pink. These are tough, adaptable plants, especially useful on banks and other exposed sites. Their chief drawback is a tendency to pop up uninvited in nearby plantings (they are easily rogued out). Sun, most soils, moderate to occasional watering. Hardiness varies.

fasciculatus 'Casitas'. This is a plant I encountered near Lake Casitas, in Ventura County, making ghostly grey puffs in the chaparral. It grows strongly erect, with grey-hairy stems and sharply lobed grey leaves up to 4" long. In late summer and fall, long stalks with well-separated bud clusters extend from the shoot tips. Each bud unfolds into a cupped, upfacing 1-1½" blossom of exquisite silvery pink. Probably hardy to 15°F. or less.

fremontii. A widely ranging, highly variable plant. The current unnamed selection is bushy and upright-oval in form, each main shoot growing 4-6' high and 3-4' broad. Before long, new shoots appear from the ground, and eventually a broad colony is formed. The individual branches are rather slender and arching, with grey-felted 2-3" leaves. From July to October it carries loose wands of beautiful cupped, upfacing, silvery pink flowers, each about 1½" broad, at the branch tips. Hardy to 10°F. or less, resprouting easily after damage to the tops.

palmeri. Santa Lucia bush mallow. This is the least shrubby of the group in California. Each plant produces several heavy stems from the base, forming a dome up to 8' high. The leaves may be nearly smooth or hairy on the upper surface, hairy and paler beneath, and up to 3" broad. The 1½" flowers are borne in broad clusters from April to July. Flower color is typically rose pink, though it varies to pure white. We offer both forms.

Santa Lucia bush mallow lacks some of the grace of other species. However, it makes a good mass of foliage overall, and the flowers are undeniably lovely. It has been fairly easy to grow, with a little more water than is required by species of the interior.

RHAMNUS. Buckthorn. Wide spread. A large group of trees and shrubs, many of them with spine-tipped twigs. Most have pointed-oval to lance-shaped leaves, often quite decorative. Flowers are small and generally inconspicuous, borne in small clusters in the leaf-axils. However, the berries which follow can be quite showy. Most are rugged and easily grown, and have a variety of uses. Sun or light shade, reasonably well drained soil, occasional watering when established. Hardy to 10°F. or less.

tomentella. This species includes a variety of entities once placed under *R. californica* and similar in overall appearance. The plants grow as much as 15' tall, though usually half that figure, and are upright-arching to widely spreading in habit. The young stems are often red-dish, developing attractive grey bark as they mature. They are lined by broadly to narrowly oval leaves, up to 4" long, often rolled under at the margins. Their color is deep green to blue green above in the typical form, grey with a dense coat of small hairs beneath. The flowers are small and greenish, like those of *R. californica*, and the berries are quite similar. The **var. tomentella** is simply the typical form. I recently stumbled on some particularly nice, bushy plants with exceptionally showy berries, jet-black when mature; reselections from their seedlings are forthcoming. The **var. crassifolia** is a very different plant, at least in its outward features. Though of typical size, it is more openly branched than *tomentella*, with fewer and usually larger leaves. These are densely felted with grey hairs on both surfaces, giving the plant an almost ghostly appearance. The berries in the current material pass through a beautiful, bright red phase before turning typically black. 10°F. or less.

Vines

BOMAREA frondea. Colombia. Odd but beautiful, this could be roughly described as a twining *Alstroemeria*. It has the same clusters of fleshy roots, from which rise slender, vining stems richly clad with

dark green, tapered 2-4" leaves. The stems continue to grow for several months before producing large clusters of narrowly bell-shaped brownish red and yellow blossoms at their tips, mostly in fall and winter. Though the plant is reasonably hardy, hard frosts may ruin the buds before they open, so it is best grown in a protected spot. Light to medium shade, reasonably well drained, preferably rich soil, moderate watering. Ultimately hardy to 20 °F or below.

Other *Bomarea* that will be offered in 2004 are species with showy clusters of red flowers that appear in late summer and fall, and one with clusters of bright orange and yellow flowers.

CLEMATIS. World wide, temperate regions. These range from rampant vines with huge, flat blossoms to tidy bell flowered perennials. Most have 3 to 5 (or more) parted, long-stalked leaves with roughly oval, pointed and often toothed leaflets. The flowers have petal-like sepals in place of true petals, and a distinctive brush of stamens at their centers. In interesting puffs of silky-tailed seeds develop as the flowers wither. Sun or light shade (generally the roots should be shaded, if only by the plant itself, to keep root temperatures down), well drained fertile soil, and moderate watering suit most species and hybrids. Hardy to 0 °F. or below.

tangutica Golden clematis. A relatively small (10'), slender stemmed vine with intricately divided grey green leaves. It produces an abundance of 2" bell shaped, golden-yellow blossoms in summer and fall. The seed heads are quite ornamental.

viticella. One of the more delicate in appearance, with slender 6-12' stems and three-parted leaves, the leaflets attractively lobed and bronze-tinted. The flowers are 2-3" in diameter and borne in open clusters. '**Alba Luxurians**' has cupped white blossoms with greenish tips on the segments. Those of '**Madame Julia Correvon**' are also cupped and colored deep, velvety red. Several modern hybrids extend the palette of this species. '**Blue Belle**' has deep blue-violet blossoms about 3" broad. '**Etoile Violette**' is similar, with bright yellow centers. '**Polish Spirit**', a more recent hybrid, is noted for both its deep purple color and its abundance of flowers. '**Purpurea Plena Elegans**' has fully double violet "pompons" with petaloid stamens at their centers. '**Venosa Violacea**' has nearly white flowers with purple veining.

DREGEA (Wattakaka) sinensis China. An odd deciduous vine of the milkweed family, growing about 10' high. It has somewhat grey-green, nearly heart shaped leaves up to 4" long, densely furry beneath. In summer umbrella-shaped clusters of 3/4" flowers are carried along the stems. The flowers are pink to white in color and pleasantly fragrant. Grow it in sun or light shade near the coast, light shade inland, in well drained soil with moderate watering. Hardy to 20°F. or less.

VITIS. Grape. Northern Hemisphere, especially North America. These are the most familiar of all vines in California, since commercial selections are grown on a vast scale here for wine and table. They often grow quite large, covering trees and anything else in their path with massive leafy curtains and showing their shredding bark in winter. The leaves are usually large, toothed and sometimes lobed. Opposite them at each node are tendrils which wrap tightly around every possible object as a means of support (Don't turn your back on them). The flowers are small and inconspicuous but borne in generous branched clusters. The grapes are, of course, the part we prize most for consumption and sometimes for ornament. In many species, fall color of the foliage is dazzling. The chief argument against having them in the garden is sheer size and vigor; I can't think of any others. Sun or—if you don't mind sacrificing production of the fruit—light shade, reasonably well drained soil, moderate watering in most cases (native species are genuinely drought tolerant).

amurensis. East Asia. A robust vine, sometimes growing as high as 50' (let us hope, not in the current material). The leaves are remarkable. They are up to 10" long, broad in outline, and usually lobed. Their upper surface is a deep, glossy green, changing in fall to purple and fiery red shades. The grapes are small and nearly black—showy but usually too bitter to eat. Below 0°F.

californica 'Walker Ridge'. California grape. This species is often seen along streams in northern California, clambering over willows and alders and making massive curtains of foliage during the summer months. This selection was part of a maverick population found growing in serpentine soil, fully exposed, and considerably smaller and more colorful than normal. Maximum height and breadth should be around 10'. It has nearly round 3-4" leaves, light green with a greyish cast during the growing season and taking on the reds and oranges of some of the wine grapes in fall. Useful both as a vine and for ground cover, particularly on banks. 10 °F. or less.

girdiana. Our southern native, this species is quite similar in most respects to *V. californica*, and has the same uses. However, the stems and undersides of the leaves are more densely coated with small hairs,

giving the whole plant a distinctly grey cast. Fall color in this form is golden yellow. Probably hardy to 10°F. or less.

Herbaceous Perennials (Including Bulbous, Cormous and Tuberous Species)

AGASTACHE A small group of sage allies, native primarily to the Southwest and Mexico. They form compact basal clumps with toothed, of ten aromatic leaves. Their slender stems rise in summer and fall, displaying many sage-like blossoms in interrupted spikes. The flowers open in succession, often extending the show over many weeks. These are rugged, easily grown perennials, useful in borders and informal mixed plantings. They delight in full sun, well drained soil, and moderate to infrequent watering when established. They tend to be short-lived in heavier soils, but they often self-seed, with interesting and often beautiful results. Hardiness varies, though all of the following should endure short bouts of 15°F. or less.

cana. This recent addition is a southwestern native, suckering at the base and producing many 2' stems. The leaves are dark, narrow, toothed and pleasantly aromatic. Many narrowly tubular flowers, reddish purple in the current form received from Plants of the Southwest, are carried on slender stems in summer and fall.

rupestris This Southwestern native has long been one of my favorites. It is one of the smaller agastaches, usually 2' or less in height and well branched. Both stems and leaves are slender and quite grey. Smallish clusters of reddish or orange blossoms develop at the shoot tips throughout the summer months. It needs particularly well drained soil but is an ideal perennial for neglected banks.

ANEMONE. Windflower. Widespread, mostly Northern Hemisphere. Nearly every gardener is familiar with these buttercup relatives by way of *A. coronaria*, whose hybrids are widely available in the fall bulb market. Yet their number includes many other showy perennials with beautiful leaves and flowers.

magellanica. Chile and Argentina. A little-known but charming anemone. It is under 1' in height and has dark, softly shiny 3-5 lobed leaves. The flowers are borne for several weeks in summer and early fall. They measure about an inch across and are colored a soft, creamy yellow like that of our native cream cups (*Platystemon*).

rivularis Himalaya. This species makes compact clumps from a woody rootstock, with stems rising 1½-3'. The basal leaves are long-stalked and three-parted, with sharp, narrow lobes. Their surface is attractively dark and glossy. In late spring and much of the summer it carries abundant 1" flowers above the leaves in broad, branched sprays. They are snow-white within, tinged with blue on their outer surface. This species needs plenty of moisture and some shading away from the coast. It is hardy to 10°F. or less.

ASPHODELINE lutea. King's spear. Sicily. This is a tough perennial of the lily family, most unusual in appearance. It travels slowly by underground rhizomes, eventually forming broad thickets. The shoots appear in fall, first as fountains of nearly thread-like 8-12" bluish green leaves, lengthening in spring to 2-3' and topped by wands of fragrant pale yellow, star-shaped blossoms. The plants die down in summer and are perfectly drought tolerant. Sun or light shade, most soils, little or no summer watering. Hardy to 10°F. or less.

CYCLAMEN. Europe, the Middle East and Africa. I have enjoyed the company of the hardy cyclamens for many years at home but found it difficult to offer regular crops of them due to the difficulty of timing collection of seeds (they are gobbled up by mice and other animals almost as soon as the pods are ripe). Now, thanks to the kindness of Wayne Roderick, we can at least offer small numbers of them for a while. These are perennial plants of the primrose family, growing from long-lived tubers. They have crowns of usually long-stalked, round to heart-shaped basal leaves. These are often patterned with white or silver on the upper surface and tinged with red or purple beneath. The flowering stems are produced separately from the tubers, each carrying one beautiful nodding, often fragrant blossom with five broad, swept-back petals. The flowers of some species are delightfully fragrant. Some will tolerate full sun near the coast. However all are most at home in light shade, where they will self-seed and naturalize over time. They are also fine subjects for large pots. It is best, and in some cases essential, to let them go dry when dormant—which is nearly always in summer, making it possible to plant them under oaks and in other untended spots. They need well drained soil and moisture during the growing season, which usually coincides with our rains. Their hardiness varies widely.

graecum. Greece and Turkey. This became my favorite of the group on first acquaintance, a few years ago. It has broad leaves, with angled lobes in this form, held close to the ground. They are beautifully and quite variably patterned with silver-grey on the upper surface. The flowers are about 1" long, pink to white with darker base and delightfully fragrant. It is one of the more tender species but should still take bouts of around 20°F.

persicum. Iran to northern Africa. This is the ancestor of the florist's cyclamen. Sadly some of its best features have been lost in the process of creating larger, more vividly colored flowers and more controllable growth. In this material, which includes collections from northern Africa, the plants are of quite variable size, though usually 8" or less in height. The leaves are large and heart-shaped, with a wonderful variety of markings; some are silver nearly throughout. The flowers are up to 2" long, in this material mostly white or light pink with purplish red centers, and delightfully fragrant. Its only drawback is its tenderness to cold. These plants should be protected at temperatures below 25°F., though they will endure a little less.

DAHLIA. Mexico to Colombia. Tuberos-rooted perennial daisies known almost exclusively from the thousands of hybrids now available worldwide. We offer seedling strains of

D. coccinea hybrids These are bushy, slender stemmed plants of 2-4', with large, dark green, twice-divided leaves. Stems can be from green to near black. The 2½" single to semi-double flowerheads come in a wide range of colors, from vivid oranges, reds and yellows to rich magentas, purples, light pinks and near white. Bicolored flowers also occur, some in wild combinations. These are plants of easy culture but will grow and bloom best in a sunny to partially shaded site with rich, reasonably well drained soil and regular watering while in growth and bloom. Bloom begins in early summer and can continue through fall. Roots can be left in the ground in most areas over winter. Root hardy to 15°F.

DIERAMA. Fairy wand. Central and southern Africa. The iris family is one of several which literally exploded in southern Africa, resulting in nearly endless variety for the adventurous gardener. The dieramas are among the most elegant of the lot. These are cormous perennials, making tight, usually evergreen clumps with grass-like leaves. Above these, mostly in spring and summer, rise slender, often gracefully arching stalks. These carry nodding, usually bell-shaped blossoms on nearly thread-like branches. Flower colors in the commonly cultivated species range from snow-white to crimson or purple. Often the flowers appear to be hand-painted, with glistening surfaces and subtle shadings. These are elegant and durable perennials for the garden, either as individual plants (they make substantial clumps in time) or in groups. The following thrive in either sun or light shade, with reasonably well drained soil and regular watering. Hardy to 10°F. or less.

jucundum. This species forms broad clumps with narrow 1-2' leaves and 2-3', gracefully arching stems. The flowers are around an inch long, broadly bell-shaped and colored a variety of interesting shades. Those in our material range from lavender-pink to coral.

pendulum var. robustum (now more properly *D. robustum*, if our material is correctly identified). We offer both the typical pink-flowered form and one with pure white blossoms, both blooming in mid- to late spring.

pulcherrimum. Fairy wand. The best-known species, and certainly one of the showiest. It makes thick clumps with erect to arching, grass-like 2' leaves. In summer, its 3-6' stems may arch over nearly to the ground, each carrying dozens of pendant, bell-shaped 1-2" blossoms. They vary in color from purplish-rose to white, light to medium pink being the commonest shades. 'Silver Dawn', received from Steve Campbell, has blush pink blossoms. After losing a beautiful dark-flowered selection from Wintergreen days, I was pleased to receive seeds of an even more stunning strain, derived from the **Slieve Donard Strain**. These have rose-colored to nearly violet blossoms, often in vivid brush-stroke combinations. We are raising further seedling generations of these and reselecting for qualities which strike our fancy of the moment.

DRACOCEPHALUM Scattered around the Northern Hemisphere, mostly in Europe. A genus of mostly perennial mints, often with showy flowers resembling those of some salvias, borne over several weeks in summer. Their culture varies, but the following will thrive in a sunny spot, with reasonably well drained soil and moderate watering. Hardy to below 0°F.

rupestre (cultivated as *D. grandiflorum*). Western China. This species makes attractive clumps with crowns of large, nearly heart-shaped, deep green leaves with scalloped margins. From these emerge 6-12"

stems which carry dense whorled clusters of two-lipped flowers, hooded above, each up to 2" long. The flowers are vivid blue-violet in color. This is a really striking perennial which deserves greater notice.

HABRANTHUS. Southern U.S. to South America. These are close relatives of the zephyr lilies (*Zephyranthes*). The plants are bulbous, with mostly strap-shaped leaves, and they bear trumpet-shaped blossoms in a wide range of colors. All are easily grown, in sun or light shade and reasonably well drained soil, given either moderate watering or periodic drought. They are excellent container and rock garden subjects, and several naturalize well in neglected parts of the garden.

texasus. A Texas native, as its name implies, and probably one of the toughest bulbs we grow. It has narrow leaves up to 8" long. In late summer, it makes a beautiful display of 1½" yellow trumpets, centered in this form with red. Hardy to 15°F. or less.

IRIS unguicularis Winter iris. Greece and Crete. This lovely iris brings the gardener a bit of spring cheer in the depths of winter, blooming with the daffodils. It makes dense evergreen thickets with dark, shiny narrow leaves up to 2' high. Nestled among them on short stems but elevated on long tubes are fragrant lavender-blue flowers with white markings, up to 3" broad. The segments are held erect for half their length, then spread abruptly.

ORBEXILUM pedunculatum. Texas. This has become, in a short time, one of my favorite perennial peas, though I would not expect it to join the Top Ten in nursery sales. It clumps profusely at the base and spreads from short rhizomes, eventually forming a broad mat. The stems are slender and prostrate, and they carry dark, lustrous leaves with triplicates of 1" leaflets. In summer it produces many short clusters of violet pea-flowers at the shoot tips. This is a fine plant for sunny banks and other spots where a small-scale ground cover is needed. Its only drawback, in my garden experience, is that it is irresistible to gophers and rabbits. Sun, reasonably well drained soil, moderate to occasional watering. Probably hardy to 0-10°F.

ORTHROSANTHUS. These are Southern Hemisphere cousins of our sisyrinchiums, quite similar in appearance. They are clumping perennials with grasslike, dark green leaves. During their blooming season, which varies according to species, they carry many showy 6-parted blossoms, mostly in blue to lavender shades, in bracted clusters along erect stems. They are beautiful subjects for sunny banks, rock gardens and containers. Sun, well drained soil, moderate watering. The following should be hardy to 20°F. or less.

chimboracensis ssp. centroamericanus. Material of this plant was generously provided by the U.C. Botanic Garden in Berkeley. It is one of the most beautiful of all the irids. The plant grows 1-1½' tall, making impressive clumps. It blooms for several weeks each year beginning in early summer, with many pale blue flowers, 1½" or more broad opening in succession.

multiflorus. An Australian species, growing about 1' tall. It blooms, at least for us, in late fall and winter, making a stunning show of bright, true blue blossoms.

PENSTEMON. Beard-tongue. Mostly North America, Mexico. A large and fascinating group of perennials and shrubs placed until recently in the snapdragon family, now a subject of hot taxonomic debate. Some grow narrowly erect, others are relatively broad and bushy, while still others are ground-hugging mats. The leaves are also quite variable in size, shape, color and texture. Flowers are usually large relative to the plants and are often presented in dense spikes. They are tubular to bell shaped and brightly colored, usually in shades of red, blue or purple to white. The odd common name comes from the brush of hairs lining one of the stamens in flowers of many species. Sun, well drained soil, watering requirements vary considerably, though most are drought tolerant. Hardy to 0°F. or below, except as noted.

campanulatus. A bushy Mexican species, making many leafy stems up to 2½' high. The leaves are lance-shaped with sawtooth margins and dark green on their upper surface. 1" trumpet-shaped flowers are presented in long, loose clusters in summer and fall. Those of the current strain are rosy lavender, with white central markings. Probably 15°F.

cardinalis. A robust native of the Southwest, forming sizable clumps. It has crowns of narrow-oval greyish green leaves up to 8" long. Wandlike flower stems rise to 3' or more in summer, each bearing dozens of 1" bright red, tubular flowers. Easy and tough.

centranthifolius. Scarlet bugler. A common plant of dry places in central and southern California; this material is from the Santa Lucia Mountains. It produces several sturdy, upsweeping stems from a narrow base. Paired along these are broad, tapered leaves up to 4" long, clasping the stems. The leaves are strikingly colored, sometimes ashy grey, sometimes bright blue-green. Loosely spaced on long stalks above the

foliage are narrowly tubular, bright red blossoms. It needs particularly good drainage and full exposure and is often short-lived in the garden. However, new plants are readily started from seeds. 10°F. or less.

glaber. A very hardy penstemon; our material was collected by Steve Bell in the Black Hills of South Dakota. Several low, thick leafy stems radiate from the base. The leaves are stalkless, up to 4" long and bright blue-green in color. At their tips are generous one-sided clusters of large true-blue flowers with lighter tubes. This is one of the easiest of the dryland penstemons to grow, and hardy to far below 0°F.

neomexicanus An extremely showy native of New Mexico. Several stems ascend 1-2' from a common base, each thickly cloaked in smooth deep green leaves. Long one-sided clusters of vivid bluish purple flowers, each up to 1½" long, decorate the plants in middle to late summer. Full exposure, well-drained soil, moderate to occasional watering. Hardy to 0°F. or less.

PUYA Costa Rica to Chile. This is one of those plant groups which simply stand apart from the rest of our experience. Its members are terrestrial bromeliads, like the pineapple, but far more dramatic. They form tight—though of ten extensive—colonies of shoots, each of which lasts for many years. Each presents a crown of long, downcurved, pointed leaves reminiscent of the yucas (though not so succulent). They have of ten viciously spiny margins. At some point, which may vary from a couple of years to thirty or more, a given crown will produce a flowering stem which first suggests a giant asparagus, often later widely branched, along which several to hundreds of showy, tubular to flaring blossoms unfurl in succession. Their colors include some incredible turquoise and aqua shades, as well as reds, pinks, yellows and whites, often in interesting combinations. These are dramatic specimens for featured spots in the garden, though they combine well with yucas, agaves and cacti. They are also good candidates for large tubs (though handling them at repotting time is an exercise in bloodletting). They thrive in sun or light shade and well drained soil, with moderate to infrequent watering. Their hardiness varies, but several perform well near the coast.

alpestris Chile. The best-known of the puyas, with densely clustered crowns of silvery green 2' leaves. The crowns branch freely to form broad clumps. In spring and summer older plants produce thick 3-6' stems bearing huge clusters of triangular blossoms up to 2" broad. These are painted deep bluish green, with orange anthers. Hardy to 15-20°F.

mirabilis This species is widely sold as *P. alpestris* (in fact, this is how we received the seeds), but it is quite distinct. There are many more leaves per crown, and they are quite narrow. Their soft marginal spines should be a relief to those of you who have bloodied your selves with other puyas. Many plants flower in their third year (most unusual for a puya). The flower stems are erect and up to 5' high. Instead of the broad, branched clusters of *P. alpestris*, the flowers are arranged along the main axis. However, they are quite long—3-4"—flaring out at the tips, and colored a beautiful sea-green, with a silky surface.

RHODOPHIALA bifida (*Hippeastrum advenum*). Chile. A charming small bulb closely allied to *Amaryllis*. The rather stout bulbs produce impressive clumps. The leaves are 8-12" long, strap shaped and dark green. It is summer blooming, bearing 2" blossoms in umbrella shaped clusters. The typical color is deep, glowing red. In the variety **miniatum** the flowers are pale pink, veined with red. Fine pot plants, but equally adaptable to the open garden. Sun or part shade, moderate watering. Hardy to 15°F. or less.

SALVIA Sage. World wide. This is a huge and diverse group of mint allies, grown both for ornament and for herbal qualities. Those listed below are undemanding perennials and shrubs with usually rough-textured, aromatic leaves. Some form broad rosettes of basal leaves; others have branched, leafy stems. Usually the leaves are paired along the stems. Irregular 2-lipped flowers are borne in dense heads, whorls or spikes above the foliage. They come in nearly every floral shade, including near-black. Culture and hardiness vary widely, though most prefer a sunny spot with well drained soil. Many, particularly natives of California and the South west, are drought tolerant.

aethiopsis Southern Europe. A short-lived perennial making rosettes of broad, furry basal leaves up to 8" long. From these come erect, sturdy branched stems in summer, displaying whorled clusters of cream-colored flowers, each a little over ½" long. It is particularly effective when grouped, for the grey tones of the leaves and stems. Hardy to 0°F. or less.

glechomifolia. This is a pleasant little plant, never making quite the spectacle of some salvias but always neat and pretty. It makes a slowly spreading mat from underground rhizomes, with erect, leafy shoots up to 1' high. The leaves are bright green and softly shiny. Small violet flowers with white markings are borne in interrupted clusters above the foliage, throughout the summer and well into fall. This

sal via thrives in a protected spot and will even bloom well in part shade. Its hardiness is not well tested; probably 20°F. or less.

jurisicii. Another one of the “petite” salvias, this one has several endearing features. It is a bushy, slender-stemmed perennial, 1-2' high and wide at maturity. The leaves are finely cut and contrast nicely with pale, hairy stems. In summer and fall it carries many ½” flowers, presented upside-down in interrupted clusters. The flowers are violet to pink or white in color and conspicuously hairy. Hardy to around 0°F. Our thanks to Bill Gallo.

melissodora. Grape-scented sage. I was grateful to receive this shrubby sage from Pat McNeal, and more so once it reached full size. It should become one of the popular garden salvias. The plant is upright but bushy in habit, with many slender twigs. These are closely lined with bright green 1" leaves, furry beneath. It seems to bloom most of the year, with many short stalks carrying interrupted clusters of fragrant flowers, each combining shades of lavender and darker purple. It is easily grown, though hardy only to about 25°F, or a little less.

moorcroftiana. Himalaya. A rosette-forming perennial with broad basal leaves up to 10" long. The leaves are fuzzy and blue-green above, of ten white-woolly below. In spring, whorled clusters of light blue flowers are spaced along branched stalks up to 3' high. Hardy to around 10°F.

nubicola. This was one of my instant favorites of the genus. It is a herbaceous perennial with erect, densely clustered stems, as much as 3' high. The leaves are arrow-shaped and up to 6" long, apple-green in color. It flowers through the summer and into the fall, with extended clusters of 1" blossoms. These are an unusual soft yellow in color over all, shaded and spotted with coral. Shade-tolerant and hardy to 0°F. or less.

viscosa. A sturdy perennial with clustered rosettes of long-stalked basal leaves. The leaf blades are nearly heart-shaped, with wavy margins, dark green and deeply textured above and paler beneath. Erect, branched flowering stems arise from the clumps from late spring to fall, each bearing many small but vivid, red dish purple flowers. One of the more shade-tolerant salvias, and hardy to 15°F. or less.

SCUTELLARIA. Skull cap. Nearly world wide. A large group of mostly herbaceous perennials of the mint family, of ten showy in bloom but lacking the aromatic chemistry of many mints. They have leafy stems and neatly paired, nearly round to needle-like leaves. The flowers are small, tubular and 2-lipped, sometimes resembling those of the snapdragons more than the mints. These are delightful plants for rock gardens, low borders and banks. Their culture and hardiness vary considerably. The following will thrive in sun or light shade, planted in well drained, non-alkaline soil.

alpina. Mediterranean region to Siberia. A lush, low mat, with dark, oval 1" leaves. In late spring and early summer, the trailing stems turn up at their tips to display dense clusters of 1" blossoms. These range from purple to white in color, of ten in various combinations. It needs abundant moisture and is hardy to below 0°F.

orientalis. Also Mediterranean region to Siberia. A delightful matting, semishrubby perennial, received several years ago from Allen Robinson in England. It has crowded, soft greyish green leaves and summer clusters of 1" blossoms, light yellow over all and variously marked with white or brown. Moderate watering. 0°F. or less.

pontica. A dense hummock growing 6-10" high. The leaves are shiny, deeply veined and up to 1" long. Dense clusters of deep purplish pink flowers decorate the plants in middle to late summer. 0° or less.

suffrutescens. This is one of my favorite mints. It is both shrubby and matting, the stems short and closely packed with short, broad, grey-green leaves. It carries many large, deep pink flowers just above the foliage in summer and fall. Probably 10°F. or less.

STACHYS. Wide spread, mostly in temperate regions. An odd assortment of mint relatives, widely scattered around the globe. They have mostly square stems, paired, often strangely scented leaves, and spikes of small flowers resembling those of *Salvia* in form. The following are rugged perennials, useful on banks and in dry borders. Sun, well drained soil, only occasional watering when established. Hardiness varies.

citrina Low mounding perennial from Turkey and Greece has oval, lightly hairy leaves with creamy grey cast. Lax stems carry short spikes of soft lemon yellow flowers in spring and summer. A neat, dense habit makes this useful in mixed plantings and rock gardens. Best in sun with moderate watering. 0°F. or less.

thirkei. Furry light green leaves form a very dense, low, widely spreading mat. Spikes of bright mauve flowers rise in spring. The form and habit of this species is very similar to lamb's ears, though it is somewhat smaller in leaf. It is more evergreen and tidy in winter, and presents pretty flowers in spring. Hardy to 10°F, or less.

TEUCRIUM. Germander. Wide spread, but especially Mediterranean. This is a diverse group of shrubby and semishrubby mints. Size, habit and details of the leaves vary widely, though all have irregular, two-lipped flowers. According to these features, they are useful as free-standing shrubs, for borders, or for ground cover. Sun, well drained soil, moderate to little watering. The following are hardy to around 0°F.

flavum. A bushy, erect, slender-stemmed shrub, growing 1-2' high. It presents a crisp contrast between pale furry stems and dark, shiny 1" leaves. In summer it carries small clusters of pale yellow flowers spaced on slender stalks above the foliage.

pyrenaicum. Rounded, lightly furry green leaves appear pleated and create a flat carpet of spreading stems. Clusters of creamy flowers appear among the leaves in summer. Not showy in bloom, but charming in its tightly knit habit.