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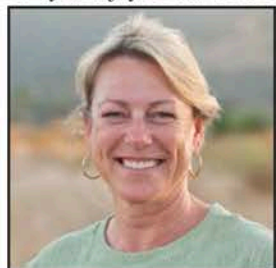


Photo by Derek Glas Mistletoe, See Page 3

FROM THE HELM
A few words of appreciation

By Eva Powers
President, SYV Botanic Garden

The Santa Ynez Valley Botanic Garden Foundation's calling is to encourage children to explore, adults to learn, and individuals of all ages to discover the beauty, serenity and joy of our diverse natural environment and its significance in our lives.



Eva Powers

We have come a long way since 2006, when a 2½ acre City of Buellton property was used for the last time as a Caltrans dumpsite. A non-profit organization was formed

by a handful of dedicated local citizens who proceeded to present their idea of a botanic garden to the City officials. The idea grew roots, receiving the City's blessing. Soon thereafter, SYV Botanic Garden became the 'little sister' Botanic Garden in Santa Barbara County, focusing on plants native to Santa Barbara County.

At that time I was acutely aware that I had little knowledge of native flora. The group of volunteers did not mind. What I did have to offer the organization was a backpack full of energy, patience and a willingness and desire to learn and teach. I became a SYV Botanic Garden volunteer a year after the non-profit foundation was established.

Fast-forward twelve years to the winter of 2018/2019. Outdoor pre-schools such as Acorn Village Forest School can be seen in the Garden come rain or

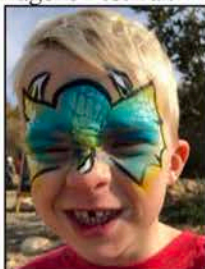
FROM THE HELM CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Faeries, Dragons festival brings magic to the Garden

By Flora & Fauna Staff

There was definitely some magic in the Garden on Sunday, Nov. 18 at the Faeries & Dragons Festival.

People of all ages gathered in the Santa Ynez Valley Botanic Garden for a beautiful day full of fun activities. Mini Gardens with faeries and dragons were created with an array of plants and miniature accessories. After selecting the perfect branch cutting from the Garden, attendees crafted and customized their very own faerie or dragon taming wands.



At another station, wings of all shapes, colors and sizes were constructed with recycled materials, leaves and many other objects to make each set of wings unique.

There was an assortment of pottery from For Modern Makers for painting and mini faerie horses and animals came to join the fun as children (and adults) petted, brushed and decorated them.



Photos by Eva Powers

LOLO Face Painting beautifully painted many faces, and the amphitheater filled up as stories were told by Karen Palmer, The Queen of Kindness, and Dominic Keen of the Buellton Library.

It was a wonderful day seeing all the happy faces exploring throughout the willow maze and the entire garden and just enjoying nature.

Thank you all who participated and volunteered making this a magical, fun day for all.



Christmas tree dates back to Germany in the 1500s

By Helga George

Could any Christmas tradition seem more prototypically American than a Christmas tree? However, this symbol of the holiday beloved by young and old alike is a fairly new tradition in this country.

The Puritans, in particular, frowned on what they conceived to be frivolous activities at a time as sacred as Christmas. Any observance of Christmas other than a church service was deemed immoral, and hanging decorations was made a crime in 1659.

The use of evergreen trees at Christmas dates to Germany in the

1500s, and German immigrants to this country had been decorating Christmas trees since the late 1700s. However, the tradition did not spread until 1846. That was the year that Queen Victoria and her family surrounding a Christmas tree were sketched in the London News. With her popularity, the English and East Coast Americans became enamored of Christmas trees, and they became American fixtures.

Why such resistance to Christmas trees? Some of it dates to the use of evergreens in ancient pagan religions. Many such religions used evergreens around the winter solstice (Dec. 21 or 22) as harbingers

of regrowth and spring – and in the case of many ancient people, the recovery of the sun (a god) from his winter illness. Beliefs that evergreens hung at doors and windows could ward off ghosts, witches, evil spirits and illness were common throughout the ancient world.

Although some religions still frown on Christmas trees, the American tradition is now well established. Christmas trees grow in all 50 states, and the gigantic Rockefeller Center Christmas tree is emblazoned with more than 25,000 lights. Families throughout the world take joy in ushering in Christmas day with a beautifully decorated tree.



Photo by Reinhart Design

ORNAMENTAL GRASSES

Accentuate your garden, landscape

By Flora & Fauna Staff

Ornamental grasses are a wonderful addition to any garden or landscape, whether serving as a delightful, singular ‘punch’ in a small garden or as large drifts catching the afternoon light on a sloping hillside. As fall approaches, one of our native grasses stands out for its continual visual appeal, despite hot days and desiccating winds. *Muhlenbergia rigens* or Deer Grass is a warm season perennial bunch grass that grows to be about 3 feet in diameter and height with seed heads reaching to 4 to 5 feet. In California, it grows primarily in the coast ranges of central and southern California, the Sierra and Cascade foothills, and the eastern part of the North Coast range.

It is an excellent choice for south and west facing slopes in the Santa Ynez Valley. It can actually flourish with no summer watering.

What is the difference between warm and cool season grasses?

Getting down to basic biology, cool season grasses fix carbon dioxide more efficiently in cooler weather and warm season



Deer Grass

grasses thrive as the temperatures climb. Examples of warm season ornamental native grasses are *Muhlenbergia rigens*/Deer Grass and *Aristida purpurea*/Purple Three-Awn.

Festuca californica/NCN and *Helictotrichon sempervirens*/Blue Oat Grass are examples of cool season grasses that work well in the Santa Ynez Valley.

When to prune? Try to resist pruning warm season grasses too early; wait until the spring weather heats up a bit and the grass shows signs of new growth before reaching for the shears. Do not be afraid to cut back hard. Cool season grasses don't need to be cut back as often but the same rule applies; prune just before the growing season. All ornamental grasses look better with a ‘comb out’ from time to time.

ALERT: *Stipa tenuissima* or Mexican Feather Grass is a beautiful bunch grass that is sold in many nurseries and is seen

GRASSES CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

SANTA YNEZ VALLEY
BOTANIC GARDEN

SAYS



Many thanks to

FOR
modern
makers

CREATE + PLAY

for their generosity and creative crafting
at our Faeries and Dragon Festival
last month.



WEAR YOUR SUPPORT
HATS AND VISORS NOW AVAILABLE

at our events or contact us on how to get your own to support the SYVBG.
\$20 Visors, \$25 Hats. Also we have t-shirts available on the website.

www.santaynezvalleybotanicgarden.org



PLANT OF THE MONTH: *Mistletoe: Myth and Minutia*

By Steve Schulz

Mistletoe is a member of the Santalaceae plant family. There are nearly 500 species in 46 genera worldwide and 26 species native to North America. Santa Barbara County is home to 10 species in 2 genera. The genus *Arceuthobium* consists of 5 species of dwarf mistletoe and the genus *Phoradendron* also has 5 species. All of the members of the Santalaceae family are parasitic plants, with a majority of them being poisonous perennials growing on the roots and branches of trees and shrubs. The name Mistletoe comes from Very old English and means "Bird dung on a twig".

DESCRIPTION:

Mistletoe is found in forests of the world from the tropics to the arctic. Mistletoe is a flowering shrub ranging in size from 6 inches to 5 feet in height. The plant is considered a hemi-parasite because it is capable of photosynthesis for primary growth. Mistletoe does share some of the nutrients it produces with the host but the amount is negligible. The root system of mistletoe invades the vascular tissue and uses the water and nutrients being transported within the phloem and xylem of the host plant.

The members of the genus *Arceuthobium*; Dwarf Mistletoe, grow only on coniferous trees and shrubs. The leaves are small and scale-like triangular or rectangular in shape, with rounded corners, ranging in size from less than 1/8 inch to 1/2 inch long. The leaf color varies from lime green to yellow, orange and rust red. Flowers occur in early spring, are white to pale yellow, inconspicuous and unisexual. The flowers are pollinated primarily by bees and form a single seeded



Photo by Derek Glas

opalescent berry ranging in color from white to yellow, orange or red.

The genus *Phoradendron* consists of 5 species, three of which parasitize conifers, *P. villosum*; which only grows on Oaks and *P. macrophyllum*; which is found throughout North America and prefers deciduous trees. The green leathery leaves are arranged opposite along the stem, are typically ovate, with parallel venation. The flowers appear in early spring, are small, cream colored and unisexual. A single seed is formed inside a layer of sticky gelatin wrapped in the pea sized pearlescent skin of ripe berries. Seeds are dispersed by two methods. In the late fall and winter migrating birds consume the berries along their flight path and infect new hosts. The berries not consumed by birds, remain on the stem and continue to be filled with the sticky gel until the berry skin ruptures and the seed is ejected at speeds of up to fifty miles per hour.

TOXICITY and MEDICINAL USE:

Mistletoe produces several substances toxic to most insect and animal species. The toxins are divided into two groups, Viscotoxins and Phoratoxins. Viscotoxins are found in the European species of mistletoe in the genus *Viscum*

and contain alkaloids and lectins. Phoratoxins contain thionins and lectins; which are proteins that readily bond with sugar molecules. In High concentrations the toxins disrupt the ability of cells to absorb nutrients and can temporarily depolarize cell membranes.

Mistletoe has been used as a medicine for a long time. The Chinese use their native species as a pain reliever for joints and muscles, for long or difficult labor and help heal wounds. In Europe; mistletoe tea made from the genus *Viscum*, was a panacea for ailments too long to list and in excess is fatal. Native Americans also made a tea of many of the mistletoe species to treat pain, heal wounds and induce menstruation.

MYTHOLOGY:

Mistletoe has been used for millennia as a sacred plant capable of bringing good luck and prosperity to its worshippers.

The Greek and Roman cultures used mistletoe in ceremonies to communicate with dead ancestors and show visions of the future. The Story of Aeneas and the Golden Bough, from Greek mythology is one of the most famous of the tales of Mistletoe.

Norse mythology has the story of Baldr the Beautiful who was

killed with a dart or arrow made of a Mistletoe stem. Baldr was the son of the goddess Frigg and was given the gift of foresight. One of his visions showed his own death by the use of a plant. Frigg made a contract with all of the plants that grow in the soil and seas to not harm her son Baldr. Unfortunately Loki the god of mischief found a loophole in the contract with mistletoe. Being a parasitic plant it does not grow in soil and was not included in the contract with Frigg. Baldr died from the mistletoe wound and was mourned by all the other gods of the AEsir. Frigg's tears became the pearlescent berries and she decreed that mistletoe would become a symbol of peace and friendship.

The Druids and Gaelic culture of the British Isles worshipped mistletoe as a sacred plant, primarily because it grew on their sacred oak trees. Mistletoe was hung over doorways and in the interior of rooms to ward off evil spirits.

The Kissing tradition of mistletoe is the remnant of ancient fertility ceremonies and winter solstice celebrations. The interest in Druid culture reborn in the 18th century England is the start of the Kissing tradition. It started as a local custom of kissing anyone who entered a room where mistletoe was hung. The local custom soon spread throughout England and the British colonies and is now a worldwide phenomenon. The most obvious fertility aspect of mistletoe is that it is evergreen growth found on deciduous host plants and represents the continuing life-force and the return of spring. European mistletoe; *Viscum album* has leaves that are arranged in opposite pairs along the stems and have flowers and berries that form at the leaf nodes and appear to look like human anatomy.

FROM THE HELM FROM PAGE 1

shine. The Boy Scouts, Hidden Wings, Nature Track, the Girl Scouts, local elementary and high schools, Teen Court and Buellton and Solvang Parks and Rec are just a few schools and youth groups who use the Garden and have come to consider it their own.

The SYV Botanic Garden is appreciative of an ever-growing number of financial supporters and volunteers of all ages. Another milestone has been

reached this year, with a record number of members! Thanks to our members' continued and valued support, today the Garden is a truly beautiful place full of energy and excitement as we watch it grow healthy roots. It is open to the public and is free to visit and explore, available seven days a week, between sunrise and sunset.

An impressive number of garden members and visitors are taking advantage of a growing list of exciting education and outreach opportunities such as events, workshops, lectures,

fieldtrips and membership perks/discounts.

Be sure to take a peek at the garden's exciting 2019 calendar of events in this newsletter, and keep it handy for the coming year. We guarantee there is something for everyone – exciting classes, workshops and outreach programs that fill up quickly. Read and learn the history of celebratory Christmas trees (Page 2) and Mistletoe (above).

I have seen visitors take a nap, enjoy a yoga session, read a book, take

a photography class, count birds, children pretending to be coyotes or hiding in the willow maze while grandparents are laughing, remembering when they were young children and care free.

The Santa Ynez Valley Botanic Garden has become a popular destination, thanks to your continued support. The Board of Trustees and I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your loved ones Happy and bright Holidays, filled with joy.

Holiday Cones: Powers Family holiday craft

By Eva Powers



craft project for all ages! Making our own Christmas tree ornaments is a favorite holiday tradition the family always looks forward to in anticipation of the Holidays. It's a project for all ages to enjoy together.

Holiday Cones are made of paper and can be filled with tasty treats as we do, or you can create your own tradition.

Happy holidays.

Materials:
Paper, glue, scissors and a stapler

Instructions:
Gather paper of any kind: newspaper, Christmas wrapping paper, paper bags, ribbons, etc. Thicker paper is ideal.

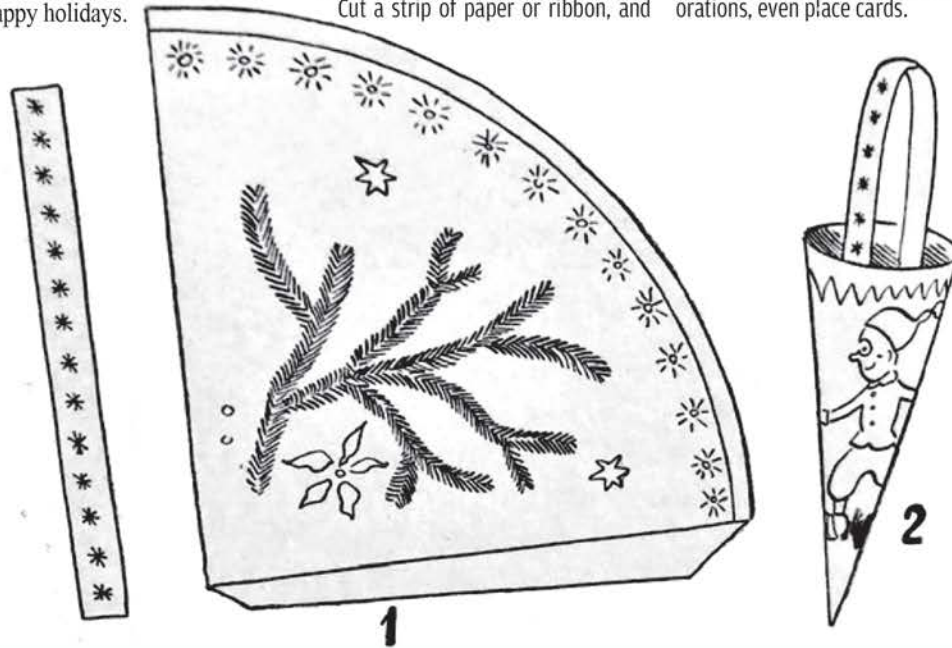
Cut the shape of a triangle with the long side slightly curved as seen in image (1). Leave a small tab as shown. Fold the tab edge to be glued or stapled and attach the two straight sides.

Cut a strip of paper or ribbon, and

attach the handle to the opening, using glue or a stapler, as seen in image (2). Add your personal touch to the cones by using leaves; stickers of Santa Claus, angels, or reindeer; family photos; buttons; glitter ... use your imagination! Magazines and newspapers are great sources of materials.

Fill the cones with your favorite holiday treats.

Adorn your tree with the cones or hang them on garland across a mantlepiece. The cones are ideal table decorations, even place cards.



GRASSES FROM PAGE 2

in many gardens and landscapes in the valley. "It has a Plant Risk Evaluator (PRE) score that indicates a high risk of invasiveness in California, and has been added to the list of Watch plants on the California Invasive Plant Council (Cal-IPC) Inventory. Mexican feathergrass often self-sows abundantly and may spread out of its designated place in the garden, giving gardeners more work and possibly giving your neighbors plants they don't want. It forms dense stands that thrive in dry areas, increasing the fire hazard. Fire simply enhances seeding and does not get rid of the plant." – Plant Right is a project of Sustainable Conservation, a California based environmental nonprofit. Although appealing, please avoid planting, your neighbors will thank you.



Mexican Feather Grass

SYV Botanic Garden's 2019 Calendar of Events

January

27 - Living Fence Workshop (tentative)

February

10 - Brick Barn Winery Valentine Wreath Class

23 - Gourd Class (birdhouses, baskets, etc.)

March

2 - SYVBG Member Appreciation BBQ & Auction (postponed from 9-2018)

17 - Mulch Madness & Beekeepers

23 - All Things Birds in the Garden

31 - Plant Propagation Workshop

April

6 - Spring Succulent Workshop

13 - Gypsy Studios Nature in Watercolors Painting Class

14 - Spring Photographic Workshop (tentative)

24 - Wabi Sabi Workshop (origami)

April con't

27 - Field Trip to Ventura Botanic Garden (with Parks & Rec)

28 - Propagation Workshop

May

4 - Basket Weaving Class

5 - Pooch-A-Palooza

11 - National Public Garden Day Celebration (bouquets for Mother's Day)

June

11 - Driftwood & Succulents Workshop (tentative)

15 - Nature Craft Day for Kids in the Garden

August

11 - Astronomical Night in the Garden (tentative)

October

5 - 2nd Annual SYVBG Member

Oct. con't

Appreciation

BBQ & Auction

13 - Arbor Day in the Garden

20 - Fall Succulent Pumpkin Workshop

27 - Terrarium & Moss Workshop

November

2 - Fall Photography Workshop (tentative)

17 - Faerie & Dragon Festival

December

8 - Marshmallow Roast and Holiday Crafts Event (weather permitting)

14 - Winter Wreath Making Workshop

Dates subject to change.

Consult website for up-to-date information.

www.santaynezvalleybotanicgarden.org

Why do we irrigate native plants?

By Flora & Fauna Staff

When first working with natives in our gardens, the thought nearly always pops up: Why am I irrigating native plants? They've been here for so long, and did just fine- why bother? Then, one has to wonder, if I do irrigate them, how should it be done?

Both questions are good ones. Let's tackle the first one first. Yes, natives have been here for, well, a whole lot longer than we have. And obviously they are well adapted for the climate. Leaving aside any discussion of Climate Change, let's ask ourselves one simple question: does the garden have the same appearance (leaf litter, density of plants, etc.) and climate conditions as Figueroa Mountain? If not, then it's almost certain those native plants that are doing so well on the mountain, in order to adapt to garden conditions and desired appearance, will need a bit more care. And that means supplemental irrigation.

However, there is always the dreaded "exception."

But let's back up a bit and talk about generalities. Generally speaking "a bit more care" involves some maintenance such as light pruning, a bit of supplemental water, and even some amendments and proper installation. Since this is a discussion about whether to apply supplemental water, and not general garden care, we'll only note that when planting natives the depth of the root crown (especially not too low) is important, and natives in ornamental landscapes usually benefit from light pruning to keep them fitting in with surrounding plants and for form and function.

Two situations need to exist to make supplemental watering successful for natives. Assuming the following two conditions prevail, sup-



Photo by Reinhart Design

plemental watering of natives should produce good results:

■ 1. Each zone (think a single valve in your garden) has plants with similar and matching water use requirements, and the plants share a similar microclimate (think all in slight shade, or full sun, and sheltered from wind.)

■ 2. The natives do not receive too much water (think my gardenia I popped in with the *Ceanothus* is looking sad, I'll just run the valve a bit longer) or soil enrichment (think I really want my blooms to be large this year- I'm going to feed my *Ceanothus* and manzanita standard fertilizer.) Run off is a consideration too. Planting *Ceanothus* downhill from a lawn is going to be a challenge and it will shorten the life of the *Ceanothus*.

Overwatering is the number one enemy of most plants! This is doubly true with natives. With the drought conditions the Santa Ynez Valley and Santa Barbara County have experienced for many years, over watering should be an enemy of pocket-books and conservation too. Irrigation of natives, when monitored and adjusted for weather conditions and time of year is a wonderful thing and will help everyone's garden to prosper.

The exceptions are native bog or riparian plants that require moisture year-round. In our area these are a rarity, in the garden and outside of it. There are some natives that want only very minimal water, and only at certain times of the year. These are more prevalent. Most *Ceanothus*, and several manzanitas, can be water sensitive where supplemental water

at the wrong time can lead to shorter life span and poorer looks. And then there are oaks. Irrigating around or under established oaks, especially the Coast Live Oak, is a very tricky business and should be avoided except in times of extended or severe drought or during the rainy season.

Keep a few factors in mind, and supplemental irrigation of natives produces a lovely garden landscape. Be sure to plan ahead when installing native plants, ensuring they are grouped together with other native and ornamental plants with similar watering requirements, provide as needed light pruning for form, and adjust the schedule for annual requirements, and you are all set!

If you have questions about irrigation, email it to us at contact@syvbotanicgarden.org. We'd love to hear from you!

NEED TO CONTACT US?

PO Box 1623 • Buellton, CA 93427

Located in the West End of River View Park • 151 Sycamore Drive • Buellton, California 93427

contact@syvbotanicgarden.org

www.santaynezvalleybotanicgarden.org

www.facebook.com/SantaYnezValleyBotanicGarden

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The Garden SCRAPBOOK



Herbalist Workshop, December 2018



Photo in Nature Workshop, November 2018



Arbor Day, October 2018



Fall Succulent Workshop, November 2018



Los Olivos Rotary Visits the Garden, November 2018

Yes! I want to support the Santa Ynez Valley Botanic Garden

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Santa Ynez Valley Botanic Garden
 P.O. Box 1623, Buellton, CA 93427

All members receive our newsletter, calendar of events, special discounts and more.

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- Adult Education
- Newsletter
- Garden Plant Information and Database
- Art in the Garden
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I would like to make a tax-deductible contribution at the following level for the year 2019.

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- \$100 Propagator
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