



SAN MATEO ARBORETUM SOCIETY

101 NINTH AVENUE, SAN MATEO, CALIFORNIA

94401 (650) 579-0536

www.SanMateoArboretum.org

Come grow with us...

MEMBER NEWSLETTER

October - December 2022

President's Message

Summer activities

Nursery. Our nursery sales were strong throughout the summer. Thanks to many new volunteers, we were able to maintain our inventory and keep the shelves stocked with new and interesting plants for returning customers.

Rose Garden. The rose garden looked beautiful this summer. The early September heat wave took the bloom off some roses but, for the most part, they survived with little damage.

Education. The July seminar (Rose Pruning) and September seminar (Houseplant Basics) were hybrid, i.e., presented both in-person and via Zoom. Hybrid seminars are more challenging, technically and logistically, but will become the norm as people like to attend seminars in person. The education team has three new members which will be a big help making this transition.

The Arboretum Society now has a YouTube channel with recordings of recent seminars. Please check it out at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFAuey003IqMa9GczsX9TNQ> or do a web search "San Mateo Arboretum Society YouTube Channel"

Annual meeting. The Arboretum Society annual meeting was held the afternoon of September 10. A huge thanks to Carol Callison for organizing the event and to her helpers, Irv Agard, Gene Fleet, Cherie Hulihee, Cathleen Mckinney, Cathy Steffen, for making it happen.

The official purpose of the meeting was to approve the board of directors. They were. The unofficial purpose was to see old friends we haven't seen for long time. The meeting was well attended, about 90 members and volunteers, and everyone had a fine time.

In past annual meetings, a single volunteer of the year was recognized for extraordinary contributions during the year. During this pandemic year, we were short-staffed and many volunteers put in extra effort. So, it was hard to single out one person. The board decided to recognize many ... too numerous to list here but thanks to all. Each was awarded a pin and a sun hat.



Sue Carder conducts the Member Party raffle

But there was one individual the board had to single out. Sue Carder was awarded a lifetime membership for her sustained and significant contributions to the Arboretum Society. Sue coordinates the Rose Garden volunteers, leads the education committee, edits both the monthly email messages and the quarterly newsletter and has served as president. In her spare time, she also monitors nesting boxes throughout Central Park. When Sue goes on vacation, the Board panics. Thanks, Sue for all you do.

Finally, we could not let Carol Callison get away without thanking her for her service as SMAS president during a particularly challenging time for the Arboretum Society. Carmen Mahood presented her with a beautiful bouquet. She was not just our fearless leader, she was a flawless leader.



Autumn activities

A priority for the next year is installing the arbors for climbing roses at the Rose Garden. A fund-raising committee is being formed and a new donation brochure is being designed. You may find it soon in your mailbox. Also, the arbor design is being simplified to reduce construction cost. It would be great to have it installed in time for spring planting.

Winter is coming! Last year, a group of volunteers had fun decorating mini-pumpkins with succulents and creating mini-wreaths for the holidays. They were available for sale at the nursery and they proved to be both popular and profitable. We will do that again this year so look for them on sale later this year.

NEWS FROM THE NURSERY FLOOR by Julie Thoman

As we head into the last few months of 2022, we get very busy. These months seem to contain a holiday for everyone. As our plants begin to slow down for the coming winter, we are busy creating mini-pumpkin succulent arrangements and our tiny 3-inch holiday wreaths. We host a grapevine wreath workshop in October and a holiday wreath workshop in and December. Remember our houseplants and orchids make attractive gifts. And the tiny pumpkin arrangements make especially nice, small gifts.



Pat

Now let's learn about a few of our faithful volunteers

Pat has been here for many years. She is our master organizer and a volunteer of many skills. She is always cleaning and rearranging to make life easier for us. She even gets in our supplies before we run out. It seems she is on every committee and can fill in on every job. Her favorite tools are a saw and a leaf blower! Get out of her way.!

Ed is another old timer. He is the designer of the Hummingbird-Butterfly Garden and the new north gate native garden. The Hummingbird-Butterfly Garden is especially lovely this time of year and deserves a walk to enjoy it. He is especially good at growing plants from seed. Our spring tomato plant sales are his work. He has also done extensive work on natives and salvias.

Sarah came to us from New Zealand and Australia. Many of our plants come from her part of the world. Sarah took over the herbs where sales were almost nonexistent and changed it into a major sales section. Like Ed, Sarah also works with seeds. Last fall, she was accepted into the highly competitive Master Gardener program for San Mateo and San Francisco counties. So, we now have an in-house Master Gardener.

Jan comes to us from 15 years at Filoli. She has a key eye for design and handles our shelf display and arrangement. Filoli trained her well on merchandizing and our new entry shelves show it. They are our new show windows. She is also one of the many who work to keep the selling shelves looking their best.



Hummingbird-Butterfly Garden

Come by and meet our faithful workers. We are open on weekends from 11 to 2. We would love to meet you.

Central Park Centennial Exhibit

To commemorate the 100th anniversary of the founding of Central Park, the Arboretum Society is hosting an exhibit to showcase the park's history. The exhibit runs through October 30 at the Kohl Pumphouse. It was developed by SMAS volunteers with input from the San Mateo Historical Association, the City of San Mateo and the San Mateo Library. Thanks to the exhibit creators: Irv Agard, Carol Callison, Virginia Soletti, Kevin Wilkinson. This article summarizes the exhibit but SMAS members are encouraged to view the exhibit in person.

In the mid-19th century, C.B. Polhemus purchased a large tract of land (about 200 acres) in what would later become San Mateo. He was a railroad magnate who developed the San Francisco-San Jose line. Over time, the tract was subdivided and portions sold and developed.

In 1874, Captain William Kohl purchased 16 of those acres for an estate that would eventually become Central Park. Kohl made his fortune in the Alaska-California shipping industry. The property included a mansion at the corner of 5th and Laurel Ave. Kohl had the estate landscaped with exotic trees, an orchard, vineyard and pathways to easily traverse the property.

In 1921 the Kohl's last surviving heir died. The City of San Mateo voted to acquire the estate for a city park and issued \$80,000 in bonds for the purchase which was completed in 1922. It was the first municipal park in San Mateo county.

Due to its excellent landscaping, minimal changes were needed to convert the estate to a city park. The orchard and vineyard were removed and replaced by a ballfield. In 1923, the first memorial plaque was installed honoring WW I veterans, In 1924, the park became the home field for the semi-pro baseball team, the San Mateo Blues.

In 1923, the San Mateo Junior College moved to the new park. They used the Kohl mansion as the campus for the 40 students. But enrollment grew quickly. Tents were needed to hold classes. The college moved to a new location in 1927 and in 1928, the beautiful but unused mansion was razed.

The park saw few changes in its first few decades. In the 1940s, a playground was added and a miniature train was installed on a 500 foot circular track. There were several attempts to raise funds to improve the park, either through bonds, parcel taxes and such. These were all voted down. There was a serious proposal to build a new library in the park but it was also voted down.

In the 1960's bonds were finally approved for improvements to city parks. Central Park saw major enhancement during this decade. The recreation center was designed and built. Tennis courts and the underground parking structure were installed along 5th Avenue. Playground improvements were made.

San Mateo Central Park's 100th Anniversary Exhibit 1922 to 2022



Explore the past,
present & future of
SAN MATEO'S
CENTRAL PARK

September 15 to
October 30, 2022*

(Exhibit Closed
Sept. 24 & Oct. 2)

HOURS: THURSDAYS
from 4 to 6 PM and

SATURDAYS and SUNDAYS
from 12 to 4 PM

* weather permitting

Arboretum Pumphouse
(opposite the Rose Garden)
SAN MATEO CENTRAL PARK

Presented by the
SAN MATEO
ARBORETUM SOCIETY



Come Grow With Us!

101 9th Avenue, San Mateo, CA, 94401
650.579.0536

www.SanMateoArboretum.org

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But the most significant addition to Central Park during this time was the Japanese Garden. The San Mateo Gardeners Association, mostly Japanese-Americans, proposed the garden “to let people know that the friendship between our peoples is strong ...” They formed an organization to raise funds and hired Nagao Sakurai, a leading landscape architect, to design it. The city allocated an acre for the garden and provided equipment for its construction which was mostly done by volunteers. San Mateo’s sister city, Toyonaka, Japan, donated a five-story pagoda for the garden. The Japanese Garden attracts visitors to Central Park from all over the world.

In 1975, the San Mateo Arboretum Society was founded thanks to the efforts of Marion Panaretos. An original objective was to promote and grow Central Park as a true arboretum, thus the name. The Kohl Pumphouse became the Arboretum Society headquarters after Marion heard rumors that it was to be demolished and replaced by a bocci ball court. She appealed to the City and was granted use of it. The Arboretum Society upgraded the pumphouse to an attractive and usable space.

Over time, the Arboretum Society made significant contributions to Central Park. A beautiful Victorian Garden was installed in front of the Pumphouse. With an ornate iron gate entrance and a three-tier fountain, it is a quiet and restful space that is popular with park goers. A nursery for plant sales was added along with two greenhouses donated by the City. A jewel of Central Park is undoubtedly the Rose Garden, planted in 1993 and since maintained all by Arboretum Society volunteers.

Central Park has been the venue for many events and celebrations throughout the years. One of the largest was Victorian Days in the Park which was a celebration of San Mateo history sponsored by the San Mateo County Historical Association. Held on a weekend every summer from 1979-2002 it attracted upwards of 50,000 visitors. It included a fashion show of vintage garments, antique automobiles, live music and craft and historical booths. In recent years, popular events include the ice-skating rink on the baseball field, the holiday lights festival, the spring Eggstravaganza, the July 4th festival and, not to forget, the Music in the Park series in the summer.

Major changes are coming for Central Park. The new Master Plan approved in 2018 will be implemented in several phases. The first phase is a major renovation of the playground and installation of the Fallen Heroes Memorial. A later phase will relocate the tennis courts to the southwest quadrant of the park. The space currently occupied by the tennis courts will be replaced by a new plaza. A new community building will replace the existing one.

Central Park has its mysteries. Perhaps you can solve one of them.

Who built the Kohl mansion? The mansion already existed when Kohl bought his estate. But it was not built by Polhemus. The property changed hands several times between the two and it is not known who built the elaborate mansion.

Who landscaped the Kohl estate? The design has been variously attributed John McLauren, William O’Farrell and Jesse Penton.

Who planted the Moreton Bay fig? This enormous tree near the playground is estimated to be about 225 years old. It is native to eastern Australia, nowhere near California. So, how did it get to Central Park?

Where is the second dog? The Kohl estate once had two bronze dog statues. Today only the one remains, the one “guarding” the Rose Garden. Nobody knows what happened to its companion.

Help Birds During the Drought!

Fresh, clean water is vital to the birds especially during the hot days of this drought. They need it to stay hydrated and for clean feathers to fly. Even if you are not presently offering bird seed or suet, you can still enjoy birds at your bird bath. You may also attract non-seed eating birds like Robins and Wrens!



Selecting a Bird Bath

Bird baths come in different types, (pedestal, ground and hanging), sizes and materials such as concrete, glass, ceramics, resin, wood or metal with plastics inserts. A good bird bath is easy to clean with a ridge for birds to grasp while drinking. A shallow basin is preferred but you can fill a deep bath with less water or add river rocks.

Get the Water Moving!!

Still (non-moving) water in a bird bath is just that to a bird - still water. It appears to be a reflective surface which has no interest to the birds. Using a water mover brings interest and birds to your bird bath. Just add a water wiggler, dripper, mister or bubbler.

Care and Maintenance of a Bird Bath

Bird baths need to be kept clean and is easy to do with just running water from your hose and a clean sponge or soft bristle brush every couple of days. Mosquitoes are not an issue in a clean bird bath as the water doesn't stand long enough and the birds will eat the larvae before they mature. Avoid chemicals and bleach which can harm the surface using white vinegar instead. A birdbath in your yard not only supports the birds, but enhances your landscaping beautifully!

*Birder's
& Garden*

926 El Camino Real
San Carlos, CA 94070
[650-595-0300](tel:650-595-0300)
BirdersGarden.com

Store Hours:
Tuesday - Saturday:
10:00 am - 4:00 pm
Sunday: Closed

15% off All in-stock Bird Baths & Related Accessories
Offer expires Saturday 10/01/2022

A huge Thank You to Bonnie at Birder's Garden for her ongoing support of the San Mateo Arboretum Society!

San Mateo Arboretum Society

Seminars, Nursery, Plant Clinic and More!

All Sunday Garden seminars and workshops are web-based using Zoom and will be recorded and viewable by all those registered even if you miss the live presentation.

Questions: education@sanmateoarboretum.org or call 650-579-0536 x3.

SAN MATEO CENTRAL PARK'S 100th ANNIVERSARY EXHIBIT. FREE!

September 15 - October 30: Thursdays, 4 - 6pm; Weekends, 12 - 4pm. Closed for a special event on October 2.

Explore the past, present, and future of San Mateo's Central Park!

Location: Arboretum Pumphouse, San Mateo Central Park, opposite Rose Garden.

GRAPEVINE SUCCULENT WREATH WORKSHOP via Zoom and small in-person group.

Sunday, October 2, 2022, 1:00-2:00 p.m.

FEE: SMAS Member - \$25/wreath, Non Member - \$35/wreath

Reservations required: SanMateoArboretum.org / call 650-579-0536 x 3.

Celebrate the beginning of fall by crafting a fall grapevine wreath that will last through the holidays! We will supply you with a 14 inch grapevine wreath, a variety of succulents, natural materials, and glue to create a beautiful wreath to display in your home or garden.

SEEDS GROW INTO WONDER, Children's Program. FREE!

Saturday, October 15, 10 to 10:45 am

Children ages 4 and older will enjoy stories and songs about seeds in English and Spanish, learn about seeds and do a small craft.

Each child who attends will receive a small surprise to take home!

Location: San Mateo Arboretum Society in Central Park. Enter through the white gates. Bring a blanket and adult to sit with.

QUICK INTRODUCTION TO IKEBANA DESIGN with Nancy "Sorin" Locke via Zoom and small in-person group. FREE!

Sunday, November 6, 2022, 1:00-2:30 p.m

Reservations required: SanMateoArboretum.org / call 650-579-0536 x 3.

From this short course, you will get an overview of basic ikebana design principles and techniques.

MASTER GARDENER PLANT CLINICS. FREE!

Sunday, October 2, November 6. Come anytime between 11 - 2pm.

Come to the Arboretum for this walk-in plant clinic. [The Master Gardeners](#) will be available to answer your questions from general information to advice about specific problems. Bring samples of your problem plants or insects for better diagnosis. Use a Ziploc or similar bag to carry your sample.

<https://ucanr.edu/sites/MGsSMSF/>

WREATH MAKING WORKSHOP via Zoom and small in-person group.

Sunday, December 4, 11 am - noon

Reservations required: sanmateoarboretum.org/classes--events or call 650-579-0536 x3.

Fee: SMAS members: \$30/wreath; nonmembers: \$40/wreath.

NURSERY PLANT SALES

OPEN WEEKENDS: 11am to 2pm.

Visit our demonstration gardens and to purchase a wide variety of outdoor, including some natives, indoor, orchids and more! We try to maintain these hours, but since we are staffed by volunteers, we may occasionally be closed, so call 579-0536 x2 before coming. Payment is by credit, debit card or Apple/Google Pay. No cash is accepted.

**Location: San Mateo Central Park, Kohl Pumphouse,
101 Ninth Ave, San Mateo. Enter at Ninth Ave. & Palm Ave.
www.SanMateoArboretum.org; (650) 579-0536**



SAN MATEO ARBORETUM SOCIETY
101 Ninth Avenue
San Mateo, CA 94401

FIRST CLASS



SAN MATEO CENTRAL PARK'S 100th ANNIVERSARY EXHIBIT

Explore the past, present, and future of San Mateo's Central Park!

September 15 - October 30
(Closed Oct 2 for a special event)

Thursdays, 4 - 6pm; Weekends, 12 - 4pm.

Location: Arboretum Pumphouse, San Mateo Central Park, opposite Rose Garden

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While any advice or article in this newsletter is believed to be true and accurate, neither the authors or editor can accept any responsibility for errors or omissions that may have been made.
