

WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE

by Mary Ellen Hannibal

"We're living in an unprecedented time," Dr. Frank Almeda told me recently. Almeda is a trustee of San Francisco Botanical Garden Society (SFBCS) and Curator of Botany at the California Academy of Sciences across the way in Golden Gate Park. "In our lifetimes we're witnessing the deterioration of the natural world in a way people before us never imagined. I look at botanical gardens as living museums. Twenty-five years ago our institutions did not think about being centers for biodiversity but that's what we've become."

Many botanical gardens are valued as showplaces, highlighting cultivars and hybrids that can't reproduce on their own. These displays are not only beautiful, they also highlight the power of human-directed selection, or breeding. In essence, we create domestic versions of wild plant life. But the exigencies of today's world present botanical gardens with a new challenge: to provide a home for plants that are threatened with extinction in the

IT IS ESTIMATED THAT APPROXIMATELY 100,000 PLANTS, MORE THAN A THIRD OF THE WORLD'S PLANT BIODIVERSITY, ARE THREATENED OR FACE EXTINCTION IN THE WILD.

wild. Rather than tease out possibilities for new color combinations or bigger blooms, our task in these cases is to preserve wild plants, albeit in a protected environment. "We can always make new dahlias, roses, camellias," Almeda says. "But a species that nature made for us—we cannot make that again."

The Garden as Ark

While we have our share of carefully cultivated exotics at SFBG, we also nurture endangered flora that can grow here because of our special climate. Going forward into the uncertain future of climate change, the Garden will be even more important as a refugium. In addition to plant extinctions due to outright landscape destruction, many plants in the wild are having their



Passiflora Kermesina Lemichieziana

PASSIFLORA KERMESINA 'LEMICHEZIANA'

This illustration is reproduced from Volume 14 of *Paxton's Magazine of Botany, and Register of Flowering Plants*, edited by Sir Joseph Paxton and published in London in 1847. It is part of a fifteen-volume work in the rare book collection of the Helen Crocker Russell Library of Horticulture.

P. kermesina originated in the coastal forest of Brazil, and the cultivar depicted was likely raised in Paris in the 1800s. Despite numerous attempts to reintroduce this striking specimen, it probably no longer exists in the wild.

habitats pulled out from under them. Some vegetation will be able to adjust to changing precipitation and temperature patterns,

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WENDY TAI

GROWING A COMMUNITY OF GARDEN LOVERS

In the past year, what were formerly called "volunteer services" and "adult education" were combined in a new Community Engagement Department. According to director Carol Laughlin (who is assisted by program coordinator Andrew Sieving), "our first task was to redesign programming, including classes and events," and by all accounts, their efforts are a huge success. Long-time Garden traditions like Lunar New Year and the Summer Gardening Fair enjoyed an infusion of fresh energy—and increased attendance. With the help of expert volunteers, Carol is busy implementing a comprehensive volunteer management software program, Volgistics, which will allow us to strengthen volunteer recruitment, organization, and communication. The people who contribute so much of their time and energy to our Garden remain steadfast. More than 450 volunteers contributed nearly 40,000 hours to the Garden last year. To join them, please contact us at 415.661.1316 ext. 412 or at volunteer@sfbg.org.

What's not to like about getting your hands dirty, in both the nursery and the garden, where Alexandra Tomaselli volunteers?

Sue Ann Schiff

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
SAN FRANCISCO BOTANICAL GARDEN SOCIETY

THE TIME IS NOW

We all know it moves too fast. Whether by way of our daily calendars, by seasonal holidays or by birthdays, weddings, and funerals, the marking of time is a profoundly human

activity. Here at the Garden we watch time in a special way.

As evidenced on our website and in our promotional materials, San Francisco Botanical Garden Society invites our citizenry to enjoy the cycles of blooming and growth so gorgeously heralded by winter's magnolia blossoms, followed by rhododendrons and camellias. Wildflowers in our Garden of Native California Plants reach their peak in May. All year round, with a particular emphasis in the fall, visitors can experience the delicate beauties of our cloud forest collections, representing some of the most threatened biomes on the planet. For timelessness itself, there is our year-round, majestic redwood grove.

As Mary Ellen Hannibal explains in our cover story, the role of botanical gardens has changed much over time. Today, our mission goes well beyond displaying some of nature's most beautiful productions, to preserving them. Botanical gardens like ours have a unique relationship with wilderness. Curator Don Mahoney details some of the many plants we grow here that are endangered or thought to be extinct in the wild. As Mary Ellen says, we are not only a showcase for nature here; we are its source.

The very critical role botanical gardens play in safeguarding nature today necessitates a repositioning of the Garden among the important institutions that anchor our city. We have always been a place where people come to restore and renew. As our Garden Feast speaker, author Richard Louv, explained, gardens are healing places. He also pointed out that in today's world, a garden such as ours is the very heart of a circulatory system of nature that ideally should pulse throughout all of San Francisco.

At the Garden, we are up to the challenge of educating our children (and their parents) about biodiversity, how it works, and

what it takes to save it. We are working hard to fund and build the Nursery: Center for Sustainable Gardening (CSG). This critically important facility will replace the inadequate nursery in which stalwart volunteers and devoted gardeners do so much to propagate and nurture the Garden's treasures. The CSG will augment the tremendous work that Director of Youth Education Annette Huddle (and others) do to bring children into the Garden and beguile them with the fun and fascination of nature. Here in Golden Gate Park, world-class buildings house the California Academy of Sciences and the de Young Museum. Art and science are twin achievements of our civilization. But without nature, none of what these venerable institutions celebrate would be possible. The CSG will help elevate the public's understanding of how central biodiversity is to every aspect of our lives, and it will enable the better protection of nature's threatened and endangered plants.

Another way we honor time is through the milestones that shape our future. I'm very pleased to note that with significant community support, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors approved a new lease and management agreement with SFBGS that establishes the framework for shared operation and management of the Garden for the next 30 years. The Society functions in close collaboration with the Recreation and Park Department, and we are grateful for this productive partnership. The Board of Supervisors also approved the continuation of the nonresident fee for visiting the Garden. As a result, under our new agreement, in addition to funding three city gardener positions, a portion of the fee revenue will be allocated to supporting SFBGS programs, and as fee revenue increases, a portion also will be paid into a new Botanical Garden Improvement Fund. We are thrilled that the City understands, as we do, that public enthusiasm for our amazing Garden should directly support its care and development. Botanical gardens are a snapshot in time, of what is growing now, but they also critically connect the past to the future. Let our future be green. 🍷

Sue Ann Schiff, Executive Director



RICHARD MORGENSTEIN

SAN FRANCISCO BOTANICAL GARDEN SOCIETY *Established in 1955*

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WORKING TOGETHER SINCE 1932

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MONA BOURELL

Deppea splendens

SAFE HARBOR FOR THREATENED PLANTS

by Don Mahoney, Curator

The art and science of botany is resolutely place-based. The vast majority of plants don't grow just anywhere, but are deeply associated with distinctive soils, with ranges of temperatures and patterns of precipitation. Following the plants, insect life is another piece of the unfolding puzzle of a place, and so are the birds, the small mammals, and the large animals that you find in a given terrain. The individuality and character of distinct places on Earth are currently under terrific assault. Habitat loss is making it impossible for many species to live in the wild places where they originated.

Over the past 50 years, plants that have become exceedingly rare in the wild have been cultivated at San Francisco Botanical Garden. Two years ago, construction on the new Doyle Drive revealed a plant thought to be extinct in the wild—the Franciscan manzanita, *Arctostaphylos hookeri* ssp. *franciscana*—located about 100 meters from the south end of the Golden Gate Bridge. This manzanita is about as local as you can get. The plant previously grew on serpentine outcroppings in the Laurel Hill Cemetery around Geary and Masonic Streets before development destroyed its habitat in the 1940s. We received cuttings from the

rediscovered plant before Caltrans successfully moved it out of harm's way. We have now planted more than 25 representatives of the Franciscan manzanita in the Garden, where they are thriving, and have nearly 100 more plants on reserve as backup for the National Park Service.

Another rare native, the Antioch Dunes evening primrose (*Oenothera deltoides* ssp. *howellii*) has been in cultivation in the Garden for more than 50 years. It is a short-lived perennial with large showy white flowers and survives through reseeding. We routinely save seeds as backup. This plant was featured on a set of four postage stamps to commemorate the passage of the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

A poster child of endangered plants is *Deppea splendens* from Chiapas, Mexico. When Dr. Dennis Breedlove (who passed away in 2012) discovered this plant, he found only a few specimens. When he went back on a later trip, the area had been cleared for agriculture and the plant has not been found in the wild since. *Deppea splendens* attracts attention because it is very showy, with fuchsia-like yellow and orange flowers that dangle in large clusters all over the plant. We have numerous specimens of *Deppea* established in the Garden and have successfully raised and flowered seedlings.

Deppea is not our only rare plant from Chiapas. A species of *Abelia* only recently named *Abelia mexicana* has been growing here for 25 years. Recent efforts to find the plant in the wild have been fruitless and it may be extinct. The few areas where



MONA BOURELL

Oenothera deltoides ssp. *howellii*

it was originally found have been destroyed by fires or have been converted into agricultural fields. This *Abelia* is very beautiful, with large clear purple flowers all over the plant, and a very strong, sweet fragrance. Another plant that hails from Chiapas is *Solenophora obliqua*, a showy shrub in the gesneriad or African violet family. It has large, translucent, yellow, waxy flowers and showy large leaves.

The largest rare and endangered plant in the garden is a Mexican fir, *Abies guatemalensis* var. *jaliscana*, formerly called *Abies flinckii*. Our plant is nearly 70 feet tall, with multiple large, upright branches. It sets viable seeds, but since there are other species of fir close by, the seedlings may be hybrids. In the wild, it is restricted to just a few dozen mature trees. Grazing goats prevent regeneration, and cutting for charcoal production is still a threat. Our plant may be the only one in cultivation.

The genus *Fuchsia* includes 100 or more species. While a few species are still common and widespread in the foothills and slopes of the Andes, many are becoming rare due to habitat fragmentation and grazing. San Francisco Botanical Garden is one of only a few gardens that can successfully grow most fuschias outdoors and we currently grow more than 30 species.

The genus *Passiflora* is large with over 900 species, mostly from the tropical lowlands. However, in the section *Tacsonia* there are many cloud forest species that grow from Mexico to Ecuador and Peru and these are the showiest passion vines in the genus. Perhaps our rarest *Passiflora* is *P. parritae*, a spectacular species with bright orange flowers from Colombia. The buds swell to look like little pumpkins hanging from the vine. After several days, the bud opens for a single day to reveal a 5-inch clear orange flower hanging by a long thread-like peduncle. Our plant was received from a Colombian researcher via the Missouri Botanical Garden in the



DAVID KRUSEPICKLER

Solenophora obliqua

1980s. For a time, ours was thought to be the only surviving plant, but recently a few more were discovered and are being propagated in a Colombian botanical garden. We are currently establishing an Andean cloud forest passiflora collection which includes a dozen more species from this threatened biome.

Other collections in the Garden that include plants either rare in the wild or in cultivation are our magnolia collection, our Andean palm collection in the genera *Ceroxylon* and *Parajubaea*, and our collection of subtropical rhododendrons in the section *Vireya*. Many of our plants do not grow outside the fog belt. Our mild climate gives us the opportunity to showcase these beautiful, little-known plants. The privilege also carries a responsibility to safeguard these plants for future generations. 🍷

upcoming Plant Sales

Saturdays, 10 AM – 1 PM

San Francisco Botanical Garden Nursery near the Arthur L. Menzies Garden of Native California Plants or at the Arbor next to the Garden Bookstore

December 7, 2013	Two-for-One Sale
March 8, 2014	Magnolias & Magnolia Companion Plants
April 5, 2014	Spring Bloomers
May 2, 2014	Members-Only Sale (SF County Fair Building)
May 3, 2014	Annual Sale (SF County Fair Building)
June 14, 2014	Perennials
July 12, 2014	Salvias, Shrubs and Fuschias
August 2, 2014	Summer Gardening Fair / Shade Plants

September 13, 2014 California Native Plants and Succulents
October 11, 2014 Trees, Ferns and Rhododendrons
November 8, 2014 End-of-Season Sale

All sales include a general selection of plants in addition to featured plants.
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10–4 daily except major holidays.

For more information, please visit: SFBotanicalGarden.org/plant-sales

ask a Master Gardener

Second Saturdays, 11:30 AM – 2:30 PM

Bring plant and garden questions and challenges to the Arbor on the second Saturday of each month for expert advice.



TAKING ROOT

THE NURSERY: CENTER FOR SUSTAINABLE GARDENING

With climatic conditions found in few other botanical gardens in the world, San Francisco Botanical Garden is uniquely positioned as a protector of the planet's biodiversity. This important work starts in the nursery, the Garden's cradle, often from a few seeds collected in the wild.

The Nursery: Center for Sustainable Gardening (CSG) will provide the Garden its first permanent nursery (to replace temporary facilities built over 45 years ago). But the CSG has a larger purpose—to serve as a model of sustainable design and as a facility to learn from. Not only will it vastly improve the Garden's nursery operations, it will become a focal point for the Garden's more than 250,000 annual visitors and will greatly enhance the visitor experience.

The CSG's state-of-the-art growing facilities will offer a new dimension for learning for visitors of all ages, with interpretive displays and an outdoor Learning Court for demonstrations, lectures and classes about plant propagation and conservation, sustainable design, and best practices for use at home. Our city's children will be special beneficiaries. To be located on a sunny plateau near the Children's Garden, the project offers enriching opportunities for the Garden's youth education program, now serving more than 11,000 children a year, most from San Francisco public schools, and many from the city's most underserved neighborhoods.

The CSG has received the necessary environmental, Recreation and Park Commission and Board of Supervisors approvals and is now awaiting the building permit. Funded by private donations, the new facility will be given to the City and County of San Francisco as a gift upon its completion. Construction will begin once the requisite funding is in place.

For more information, please contact Lillian Archer, Director of Development, at 415.661.1316 ext. 305 or larcher@sfbg.org.

WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

but many will not. Because of San Francisco's unique topography and resulting frequency of fog, the city itself is likely to be buffered from some climatic forces that are already affecting the weather in central and southern California. The Garden has in effect become a Noah's Ark, and we are undertaking our mission more seriously than ever. Nature depends on us. We are working hard not only to provide a home for plants that are threatened or extinct in the wild, but also to educate people about how nature works, and about its role in our well-being.

Re-envisioning the Garden

Today it is estimated that approximately 100,000 plants, more than a third of the world's plant biodiversity, are threatened or face extinction in the wild. Extinction is in many ways a difficult concept to grasp. Yes, we understand that when a species of flowering plant has "gone extinct," it will never come again. We can register that as sad and unfortunate, but perhaps, like the inevitable passing away of everything that lives, it's just life. Indeed there is a normal "background" rate of extinction by which life forms do pass out of existence according to a natural cadence. For many species, the rate of survival is 5 to 10 million years. Extinction is fundamental to evolution, because without it, there would be no room for new life forms. The problem today is that species are going extinct at a rate about 100 times faster than the historical background rate.

Species that are going extinct way ahead of schedule are taking with them genetic repositories, the very source of new life forms. Take Almeda's study subject for example. Currently working on a phylogeny of *Melastomataceae*, or Princess flowers, in Brazil and Colombia, some of Almeda's questions about this "megadiverse" family include whether its presence indicates biodiversity hotspots and thus should inform conservation decisions. Almeda tells me that every time he visits his study sites, he finds new Princess flower species. Why so many? "Nobody really knows," he says. "It could be that the species hasn't found its identity yet." Almeda's answer touches on the magic of nature, the process by which new life comes into being. Some species settle into a few forms that work particularly well, while others proliferate in multitudinous versions as if hedging their bets against challenging environmental eventualities.

Another thing happens every time Almeda visits a study site. He finds that more of the Princess flower's habitat has been plowed, paved, or bulldozed. Potentially, species he hasn't yet gotten to have been rendered obsolete before anyone has documented them. In expressing itself in so many species, the Princess flower may be trying all sorts of different strategies to maximize its chances of survival going forward. The best strategies may be eliminated by human impacts before the plant even has a chance to try them out.

The Goldilocks Syndrome

Along with destruction of habitat and replacement of native species by invasives, climate change presents another extinction challenge. A fundamental concept in ecology is the "niche," which in sum describes how particular species are acculturated to specific temperature and precipitation ranges. While there are species with fairly flexible responses to deal with changing temperatures—like the birds and butterflies that seasonally fly to warmer climes, for example—many more sedentary types are finely tuned and have strict requirements around heat and cold. They are similarly adapted to a fairly predictable range of precipitation—think of desert plants, which can do without much rain. The niche concept, in fact, is why SFBG is such an important haven for many plants that are threatened in the wild. Even when representatives from a region are saved, they can't just grow anywhere. Because of our mediterranean climate, which, as Goldilocks would like it, gets neither too hot nor too cold, plants accustomed to a vast range of native habitat, from cloud forests on mountain tops to deserts, can, with care, thrive here. In a world where the ecological niche itself is shifting too quickly for many plants, SFBG provides them a comfort zone.

Climate change, of course, is torquing our weather systems, bringing us bigger storms, more severe droughts, dramatic flooding. But the biggest impact climate change may really be having on biodiversity has to do with the niche concept. For more than ten years, scientists have documented species on the move in response to a shifting climate. Seeking to keep pace as they are dogged by hotter temperatures, species are moving poleward. Among the tremendous repercussions of species-in-flight from climate disruption is its potential for "uncoupling" ecological processes. Prompted by warmer temperatures, small mammals

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For more reading on many of the subjects touched on in this issue, visit our very own Helen Crocker Russell Library of Horticulture!

Louv, Richard. *Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder* (Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2005)*

Louv, Richard. *The Nature Principle: Human Restoration and the End of Nature-Deficit Disorder* (Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2012)*

Ott Whealy, Diane. *Gathering: Memoir of a Seed Saver* (Seed Savers Exchange, 2011)

Silvertown, Jonathan. *Demons in Eden: the Paradox of Plant Diversity* (University of Chicago Press, 2005)

Precious Heritage: the Status of Biodiversity in the United States (Oxford University Press, 2000)

Morgan, Brian J. "Geographic Information Systems for the Plant Sciences" *Arnoldia*. v. 69, no. 1 (2011), p. [14]-22.

On-line resources include: Botanic Gardens Conservation International: www.bgci.org and Millennium Seed Bank of Kew Gardens: www.kew.org.

* Available for purchase in the Garden bookstore.

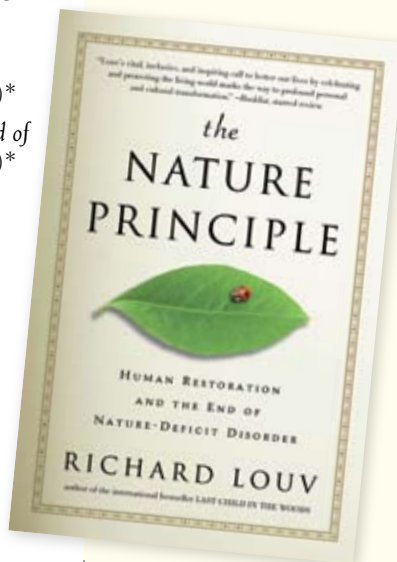
FORCE OF NATURE

Among American journalists, Richard Louv is in rarefied company. Like Bill McKibben and Michael Pollan, Louv has moved far beyond the written word to influence grassroots change in the way we live. Louv is the author, most famously, of *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*. He is also co-founder and chairman of the Children & Nature Network, which supports global efforts to connect children with the natural world. And his latest book, *The Nature Principle: Human Restoration and the End of Nature-Deficit Disorder*, encourages all of us to immerse our lives in nature.

Last Spring, Louv spoke at San Francisco Botanical Garden Society's annual gala, Garden Feast. We often think of the Garden as a green gem in the heart of San Francisco. Louv suggested we see ourselves as something larger. Looking ahead to the "transformation of our cities," he suggested the city of the future "not only contains a botanical garden; it becomes one." In this vision, the Garden functions as a literal heart does in a body, from which a network of green veins and arteries extends outward, connecting the whole city.

Louv's mind is as fertile as an ideal urban landscape. He suggests botanical gardens like ours launch a "Nature Smart" campaign aimed at the general public, inviting the populace to not just learn about nature but to learn *in* nature. Such a campaign would include a health element to teach people about the healing qualities of time spent in nature. Not only would our citizens connect with biodiversity in a Nature Smart campaign, but our city's parks and open spaces would likewise be connected in a green embrace around and through our built infrastructure. Living roofs, butterfly migration habitat, pocket parks, and community gardens would function as spokes of a wheel anchored at the

center by the Garden. Louv calls this a "De-Central Park." His suggestions may sound ideal, but they are, in fact, practical. The way for all of nature to thrive is through connection. His ideas support the imperative that a Center for Sustainable Gardening come to grow here, that we all might grow along with it. — MEH



Richard Louv is an activist, but he is also an excellent writer. His eloquence on the subject of getting outside will make you want to do so, right now. (Come to the Garden!)

STARTING EARLY: GROWING THE FUTURE STEWARDS OF OUR PLANET

The Garden grows in many ways, of course, but one of our very special connections here is to the youth of the Bay Area. Under the expert guidance of Youth Education Director Annette Huddle, with help from School Walks Coordinator Laura Luzzi, and Children's Garden Educator Gretchen Norrell, the Garden brought more than 11,000 children closer to nature last year, and we expect similar numbers this year. Interns funded by the S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation joined in to support volunteer and staff-led programs. Our summer Acorn to Oak program, providing camp and daycare groups a day in the Children's Garden, celebrated its 25th year! Some of the Bay Area's most venerable institutions joined our efforts:

- Mayor's Youth Employment and Education Program teens worked with us to create and staff over 20 weekend family programs, serving hundreds of families in new and exciting ways.
- San Francisco Opera – Together we developed a "Secret Garden" map and treasure hunt for more than 150 participants to coincide with the Opera's world premiere production of *The Secret Garden*.



ANNETTE HUDDLE

SFUSD teachers participating in the Ecoliteracy Institute explore plant diversity in the lawn at SFBG.



CAROL VAZIRI

Amazing what can grow in the fog! Garden Educator Gretchen Norrell explores an ear of corn with children participating in a Family Fun Day.

- With San Francisco Unified School District, California Academy of Sciences, the Lawrence Hall of Science, Education Outside, and the Bay Area Science Project, we produced a week-long Ecoliteracy Institute for K-2 teachers.

These fantastic collaborations would not have been possible without the participation of our corps of volunteer guides trained to work with children. Our on-going program expansion includes docent training in the spring and fall. If you are interested in joining us, please contact the Volunteer Department at 415.661.1316 ext. 412, or check out our website at www.SFBotanicalGarden.org

Our junior and senior summer interns were given the challenge of creating a mural about insect habitats on the new Children's Garden shed. Kyle Dasso, Amethyst Zhang, Tiffany O'Neill, Allison Ho, Skyler Tian, Enrique Miguel.



ANNETTE HUDDLE

CUTTING EDGE TOOL IN A TRADITIONAL GARDEN

Visitors who are curious about exactly what they are looking at and exactly where in the Garden have a new ally: a mobile app. Strolling in the Garden with a smartphone, visitors are now able to locate a plant that interests them on their device and pull up dynamic information about our Mesoamerican Cloud Forest collection. Get started at <http://www.SFBotanicalGarden.org/garden/cloud-forest-featured.html>. The new app is only the beginning. Eventually other collections will be virtually accessible as well.

The Garden app is the work of Steve Gensler, our Geographic Information System (GIS) manager, often seen stalking the beds with funny equipment in his hands. Gensler is aided and abetted here by the Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI), which was founded in 1969 to help land managers make development decisions by visualizing landscapes divided up into geographical features, using points,



lines, polygons and so forth to indicate attributes and qualities, and wrestling all this information with a database system. The computing boom helped the cause along and now virtually all city, county, state, and federal land analyses depend on ESRI technology. ESRI's founder, Jack Dangermond, early on understood what use his tool could be put to for conservation, and the company continues to generously disseminate software for nonprofit environmental causes. Today, ESRI provides Gensler with tech support that makes his job much more efficient and easier.

Our mobile apps will be purposed to help the curatorial and gardening staff as well. They will be able to access the GIS layers of information in the Garden to update bed markers and to surmise whether a plant might be better off in another location—and plant collections staff will be able to make changes without the long paper trail that has heretofore been necessary. Gensler and his crew are on track to complete mapping the Garden by July 2014. He's got a skilled field coordinator, Mark Miller, and a vibrant intern and volunteer program helping to translate the Garden's sensuous experience into data points that will vastly increase visitor interaction and inquiry. And if actually doing any of this yourself sounds too daunting—Gensler is happy to demonstrate! Give him a call at 415.661.1316 ext. 410, or email him at sgensler@sfbg.org 🗨️

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waking up from hibernation earlier than historically documented, for example, may find nothing to eat since they may be rousing ahead of spring's bloom. Migrating pollinators can similarly miss the dinner bell if they arrive sooner or later than their usual food source is blooming or fruiting. This drama of missed connection leads to further extinctions.

The End of Birth

Michael Soulé, the renowned "father" of conservation biology, has remarked that the true consequence of the extinction crisis now is not about death, "it's about the end of birth." As the ranks of species are thinned, so the potential for new ones is simultaneously diminishing. In nature the old begets the new. Species that are now extinct are yet the distant ancestors of current day species that evolved from them. Today, species are exiting the stage before any modified life form can arise from them. This will lead us to an Earth on which we may have lots of plants, but they will all be similar. Such a reduction of diversity has, of course, already

occurred all over the globe. This is one imperative reason why it is so important that we use the Garden to nurture species that are threatened or extinct in the wild. It's not just a pretty flower we are preserving; a rare plant embodies a life history with potential to inform a better future.

Working Together

Saving the Earth's precious plant diversity is something SFBG does together with our peers around the world. The Garden is a member of Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI), an organization whose mission is to ensure the world-wide conservation of threatened plants. In recognition of the critical role of our Garden, BGCI has ranked our magnolia collection fourth most important in the world for conservation purposes (and the most important outside China, where the majority of magnolia species are found). The North American Plant Collections Consortium (NAPCC), a network of botanical gardens and arboreta dedicated to plant conservation and high standards of collection management, has recognized both our magnolia and Mesoamerican cloud forest collections. We do a lot for biodiversity here; we are committed to doing more. 🗨️

CONES AND CONIFERS BY G. LEE BOERGER: 20+ YEARS OF SCIENCE AND ART

SEPTEMBER – DECEMBER 2013

"...whereas art and science are basically different in execution, they are convergent in what they might eventually disclose about human nature."

— E.O. Wilson, *Biophilia*

The artist Chuck Close speaks of "altering the variables," or using an image, a color, or a medium to pursue endless possibilities. Lee Boerger has done exactly this with cones as her subject. Printmaking, acrylic paint on canvas and panels, and colored pencils are her media for exploring the form. Her work on display in the library includes images from approximately 30 conifers. "As I experimented with backgrounds and foregrounds, the cone image took on a separate life," she reports. "The layered colors can add an unexpected dimension and interpretation, often a major pleasure of print-making. Even suspended in space or shown in a rainbow of colors, I have found both mathematical symmetry and abstraction." Boerger's professional work includes signage at the Garden and illustrations for *The Trees of Golden Gate Park and San Francisco*, by Elizabeth McClintock. She points out that the Garden has acquired and propagated many conifers, and that the "database here for these families now lists approximately 56 genera in six families." She counsels exploring more about conifers in the Helen Crocker Russell Library of Horticulture. What a very good idea.



Japanese black pine, by Lee Boerger



Foglift, by Stephen Kane

TREES LOVE LIGHT: PHOTOGRAPHY AND PHOTO ART FROM SFBG, GOLDEN GATE PARK AND BEYOND

BY STEPHEN KANE

JANUARY – APRIL 2014

Arbor-focused images from photographer Stephen Kane include landscapes and close-ups, in both realistic and almost-abstract styles, to celebrate trees in all stages of the life cycle. Kane's work explores how light reveals their color, texture, gesture, symmetry and disorder, to capture the sense of trees as both daily friends and as the stuff of metaphor and dreams. An Inner Sunset resident, Kane finds rich subject matter in the Botanical Garden and Golden Gate Park. The exhibit and accompanying prints will include many scenes familiar to those who call the Park their "backyard."

DONOR SPOTLIGHT: MARY PITTS

When Mary Pitts is asked where her love for the Garden begins, she pauses. Eventually she laughs. "Well, at the beginning of time," she says. Mary has been a member here for more years than she has counted, and a docent since 1998. In recent years, she's become a trustee, and she is a steadfast donor as well. Mary is enthusiastic about all aspects of the Garden but especially beguiled by the Ancient Plant Garden. "There's something about the time-scale of plants," she says. "I have a deep admiration for how they have changed the planet, and what they've done for us." After all, she reminds me, without plant life, Earth would be as it was a billion years ago, just rock and water. "There was nothing living," she says. "And then there was the first cyanobacteria. There's some debate about exactly when, of course, but over millions of years they began to create an atmosphere with oxygen. The plants formed, got to the edge of the water, then out of the water. The whole phenomenon of photosynthesis is amazing—with chlorophyll, plants create carbohydrates and oxygen. That's life."

"When you look at one plant, and how that works," she says, "and then at how all the plants and animals work together—well, there are many ways to describe how the Earth works but let's just say one thing for sure: it's a miracle." Mary's deep interest and enthusiasm are infectious, and as I listen to her, I can practically feel the pulse of the planet. "Everything that is basic

gets back to plants," she says. "Without them we would not have food or medicine. They are beautiful. They can communicate in a forest with each other. You can learn about them for the rest of your life."

Mary Pitts' recurring theme about plant life is regeneration. Not just theirs, but ours; not just regarding our physical selves, but our emotional selves as well. As eloquent as she is about plants, Mary is equally strong on the practical aspects of running the Garden. Over the years she has helped fellow trustee, docent, donor Helen McKenna Ridley and, more recently, Carol Laughlin, Director of Community Engagement, deepen the docent program here. "We have more than 40 walks a month," she says. "We have fact sheets for the docents, to help inform the public about what's found in each part of the Garden." Mary, of course, contributed to the research and informational material about the Ancient Plant Garden. "The Garden becomes better the more you know about it," she says. "It's nurturing for the soul. It's healing and refreshing. It's good for your health. People look at me like I'm crazy or over the top about the Garden, but I just say, come with me on a walk. You'll see." — MEH 



Mary Pitts shares her appreciation for the magic of plant life with her granddaughter, in the Garden.



ETCHINGS OF EDEN

BY STEPHANIE MARTIN

MAY – AUGUST 2014

"I have long appreciated wild places and creatures," says Santa Cruz artist Stephanie Martin. "But my art work has given me even greater regard for the design and diversity of nature." Martin's intaglio prints are made using copper plates and traditional etching techniques.

Her medium of etching is perfect for rendering the fine details of plants and their lovely design and architecture. The exhibit will feature botanical portraits of subjects such as the douglas iris, wild ginger, sweet peas and pomegranates, as well as images integrating California flora and birds.

Top left: Persimmons; bottom: Wild Ginger, *Asarum caudatum*, by Stephanie Martin

(Detail) Camellia 'Notre Dame' by D. Boate; from *Treasures*, available in our bookstore.

SAN FRANCISCO BOTANICAL GARDEN SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT

2012 - 2013

YEAR IN REVIEW: BY THE NUMBERS

July 1, 2012 – June 30, 2013

\$633,805 Total admissions revenue, from fees paid by nonresident visitors and collected by SFBGS for the City and County of San Francisco/ Recreation and Park Department

251,437 Visitors to the Garden, a 20 percent increase since 2010

39,966 Hours contributed by volunteers to the Garden

27,864 Volumes plus 369 current plant and garden periodicals in the Helen Crocker Russell Library of Horticulture, Northern California's most comprehensive horticultural collection*

25,000 Plant propagations (estimated) by staff and volunteers, with many of these plants available to the public for purchase

11,776 Children served by SFBGS school-year and summer programs, representing double-digit growth over the past several years

8,440 Different kinds of plants in the Garden, including 5,694 species, of which 30 percent were wild-collected and more than 300 are rare and endangered*

2,858 Households, representing individuals, couples and families from San Francisco, the Bay Area and beyond who are members of SFBGS

520 Free daily docent-led tours, along with 181 docent-staffed weekend interpretation stations, where visitors can learn more about particular collections

450 Regular volunteers participating throughout the year

300 Corporate, school and service-organization volunteers doing one-time group projects

227 Beds mapped by our GIS (Geographic Information System) team, using GPS technology, representing two-thirds of the Garden's plant collections, which are to be fully mapped by mid-2014*

* Count as of June 30, 2013

The Botanical Garden Society's mission is to build communities of support for the Garden and to cultivate the bond between people and plants. Your generosity and commitment has helped us make significant progress on many fronts.

Visitation has increased, the number of member households is strong and growing stronger as we revitalize our membership program, and we have made investments to better each and every experience in the Garden. Our steadfast volunteers continue to tend to the nuts and bolts of what makes every step in the Garden special.

With new street banners and signage, a fresh look at our entry gates, a revamped monthly online newsletter, other promotional efforts, and a significantly increased presence in traditional and social media, we have been able to reach an ever-larger audience with our message to protect and enjoy nature's wonders. Our youth education program grew its traditional school year and summer programs and embarked on new family programming, incorporating the extensive children's collection and other resources of the Helen Crocker Russell Library of Horticulture into all of its efforts. We launched events and classes to attract new audiences, and enriched our docent-led walks and on-site interpretation stations. We have made the Garden even more deserving of the hard-won nonresident admission fee, and can report that revenues from the fee will help make the Garden even better than ever.

These are just some of the highlights. As the Garden is ever changing, there is always more work to do and always a better future to strive and plan for. Funding and building the Nursery: Center for Sustainable Gardening is our single most significant investment in the Garden's future. The project can be completed successfully only if the long-term sustainability of the Garden's ongoing operations and programs is assured, which is why your continuing support is so critical and so appreciated.

We look forward to working with you to help the Garden grow in the years ahead. On behalf of the Board of Trustees and Staff of San Francisco Botanical Garden Society, we cannot thank you enough for your interest and support.

With great appreciation,

Donald R. Baldocchi
Chair, Board of Trustees

Sue Ann L. Schiff
Executive Director

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As of June 30, 2012

ASSETS

Cash and investments	5,892,607
Accounts and pledges receivable	1,363,472
Property and equipment	669,998
Other	37,908
Total assets	7,963,985

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current liabilities	301,629
Net assets	7,662,356
Total liabilities and net assets	7,963,985

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

April 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012

SUPPORT AND REVENUE

Contributed income	1,865,324
Earned income	386,276
Investment income	(14,372)
Other	13,564
Total support and revenue	2,250,792

EXPENSES

Program services	2,690,231
Management and general	515,866
Fundraising and development	453,616
Total expenses	3,659,713

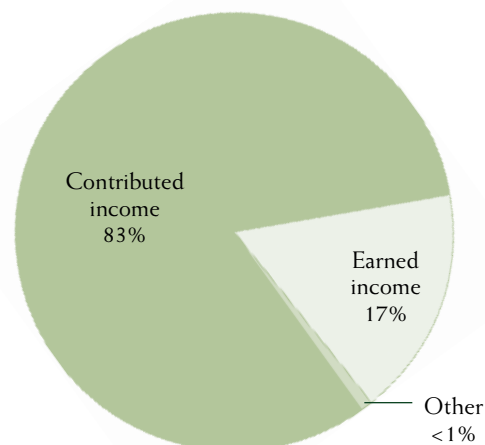
Change in net assets **(1,408,921)**

*Source: Audited Financial Statements for the 15 months ended June 30, 2012.
Fiscal year changed to July 1 in 2012. Audited Financial Statements for the year ended June 30, 2013 are not yet available.*

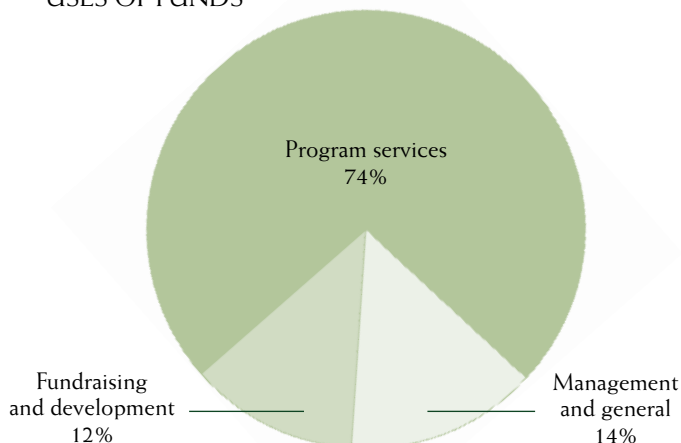
SOURCES AND USES OF FUNDS

15 months ended June 30, 2012

SOURCES OF FUNDS



USES OF FUNDS



Contributed income: memberships, grants, contributions, bequests, net revenue from fundraising events and in-kind gifts

Earned income: plant and bookstore sales and program fees

Program services: plant collections management, nursery, gardens, youth education, classes and public programs, library, bookstore, volunteer program, visitor services and other program-related activities

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

San Francisco Botanical Garden Society gratefully acknowledges the generosity of its donors whose gifts support the care and maintenance of the Garden's plant collections and its outreach and education programs for people of all ages.

We want to thank the following donors for their generous support to operating funds from April 2012 to June 2013. Donation levels represent each donor's total giving to the Annual Campaign, Paver and Bench Tributes, Garden Feast and/or Membership.



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San Francisco, CA 94122
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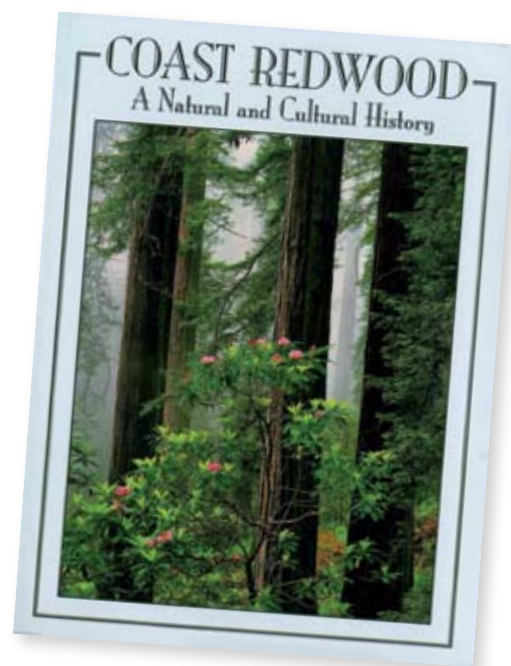
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Inside the Main Gate, open daily (except major holidays) 10AM–4PM

Books for the Casual Gardener
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Old Growth – and New

There is nothing like redwood trees to telescope past, present, and future—contemporary concerns melt into the long time frame these magnificent trees represent. Visitors to the Garden who find restoration in our redwood grove may want to delve deeper into the whys and wherefores of this very special ecosystem, one of the rare and singular treasures our local climate sustains. Lavishly illustrated.



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