

# The Bulb Garden



~Gardening with Bulbs~

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**The PBS Directory:** Jane McGary, editor

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## Amateur Bulb Adventures

*Tony Peterson*

*Tony Peterson is an amateur gardener living in Seattle, Washington (USDA Zone 7b—mediterranean climate with very wet fall/winter/spring and dry summers). When he isn't puttering in his small greenhouse, he's working full time as CFO of a multistate nonprofit, playing tennis, or training for his first (and likely last) marathon. He shares his bulb-growing space with his artist partner of twenty-four years and two Lhasa Apso dogs.—Ed.*

### Running Man

There's nothing like exploring the neighborhood on foot to discover what people are growing and get ideas for the

hood, I've revisited that opinion. So many of the yards that I pass are just the usual mix of lawn grass and common shrubs—and lots and lots of thick green moss this fall and winter—and no bulbs in sight! Back in November, though, I was stunned to find a nice, well-planted garden that had dozens of *Nerine bowdenii* in full bloom, spread in natural groups throughout the garden. I almost crashed into a telephone pole when I caught sight of these bright beauties! I've never seen them in a garden here in my life, though I've certainly read about them. They were stunning, and long-lasting. A month later, on another run, there were still some fresh flowers among the nerines—right around Christmas! I'll be adding these to my garden this year, for sure! I've watched winter end and spring unfold through my runs,



*Nerine bowdenii* and *Galanthus* often greeted Tony during his run. Photos by Nhu Nguyen and David Pilling.

garden. I used to think of Seattle and the surrounding area as being a fairly horticulturally-forward area. Unfortunately, on training runs around my neighbor-

and bulbs are the main indicator that the winter is passing. Sadly, bulb plantings are so rare around my neighborhood  
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## Amateur Bulb Adventures (cont'd)

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that the few bulbs I do see really stand out—I get pretty excited when I find them. I found a few stands of snowdrops (*Galanthus*) popping up in January and they were in full bloom in February this year. It's obvious they grow well here, but they seem unknown and rarely used. I recently stumbled on a few bunches of crocus plantings as well. One yard had a single crocus flower coming up in the lawn. I'm sure the current owners probably didn't even know it was there (maybe a squirrel planted it), but it certainly stood out, bright violet in a sea of green. In another garden it seemed likely that a bed had been planted with crocus bulbs several years ago. Since then, the lawn grass had crept back into the bed. The effect was actually quite attractive.

Since I still have lawn grass myself, having crocus planted in the lawn might be a fun way to welcome spring.

The one bulb that Seattleites appear to know and love is the traditional daffodil. I'm seeing lots of these coming up in yards, gardens, and public plantings. I've personally always had an aversion to the standard yellow daffodil that one sees so frequently in parks and gardens (*Narcissus* 'King Alfred'). I much prefer the white or multicolored smaller-flowered hybrids and certainly the species that are so delicate and interesting. My favorite is *Narcissus poeticus* and its hybrids.

I've decided that my own garden should become a model for motivating bulb planting among the neighbors. I have a long way to go. Currently, only a small clump of snowdrops lives near my driveway, cheering me with its perseverance and hardiness. I have a few good stands of crocus that reappear every year and some narcissi here and there. A few tulips reappear every year and I plant some new ones each



Yellow trumpet daffodils like *Narcissus* 'King Alfred' (above, photo by David Pilling) often greet Tony on his runs. He is especially happy to encounter *Narcissus poeticus* and its hybrids like *recurvus* (right, photo by Meneerke bloem (Mr. Flower, Reginald Hulhoven).



year just to see which ones might become perennial in my challenging, low-maintenance garden. Some grape hyacinths and bluebells come up in the flower beds every year as well. If I want to lead the charge for bulbs in all gardens, it is obvious my own garden needs some work! Only then can I model my life after Johnny Appleseed and become "Tony Crocus Corm."

### Hope Springs

I have lived in Seattle my entire life. You'd think that after fifty years of Seattle winters I'd be used to them by now. The truth is that I hate them more every year. And every year I'm looking for new ways to make the winter shorter. One of my favorite ways is to force bulbs. My absolute favorites are hyacinths and mixed reticulate irises. Some years I wait until the bulbs go on sale and really stock up. This gives me more bulbs but later flowers. Last fall I ordered a reasonable amount of bulbs online and got an earlier start. To ensure success, I plant the proven hyacinths and irises, but then I try some other bulbs just for fun. The fun bulbs this year were crocus and species tulips.

I don't worry too much about what I plant the bulbs in—I used a cactus mix this year and that seemed to be very successful. I wet the mix so it is reasonably moist before planting. I pot the bulbs in whatever containers I have handy—clay for the hyacinths and taller bulbs and plastic for the smaller bulbs. Once the bulbs are planted, I place the pots in plastic bags and slide them into a drawer in the refrigerator or put them outside

on a sheltered shelf. After eight weeks I bring the pots a few at a time into the light—either in the greenhouse or on a cool windowsill. Then it is just a matter of time before I get some flowers and my early spring begins.

The irises, usually a mix of various blue/purple hybrids, develop quickly and the flowers seem to

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## Amateur Bulb Adventures (cont'd)

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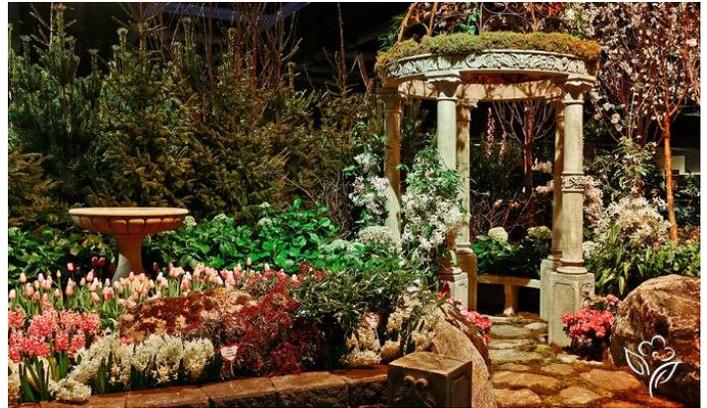
appear magically. They are so beautiful and intricate, and some have a wonderful, sweet scent. What better way to offset the fifty shades of Seattle grey? The hyacinths take longer and I grow them on slowly to make sure they stay tighter. Too much warmth seems to make them stretch and then they can be tough to support. I was delighted with the delicate species tulips, though I found it impossible to grow them on a window sill. They kept leaning for light and finally I moved them to the greenhouse where they straightened up and started to bloom; then I brought them back in the house to enjoy. All of these bulbs make wonderful gifts, as well, for anyone sick of the rain.

### Flower and Garden Show

The Northwest Flower and Garden Show that comes to Seattle in mid-February each year is another excellent way to expedite spring. Bulbs play a major role in the demonstration gardens that are a popular part of this show. Forced narcissus, hyacinths, and tulips are the main color highlights throughout the gardens. This year I was surprised to see the flowers of *Veltheimia bracteata* mixed in with some of the more common spring bulbs in the show gardens.

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PBS members who find themselves in Seattle in early February should make sure to check out the Northwest Flower and Garden Show! Below and to the right are photos of show gardens from 2013 and 2012.



## The Theodore Payne Foundation for Wild Flowers & Native Plants

John Wickham

John manages the bulb collection at the Theodore Payne Foundation as a volunteer. In his garden in Los Angeles he grows South African bulbs and California native plants. He is Vice President of the Pacific Bulb Society.—Ed.

The Theodore Payne Foundation for Wild Flowers & Native Plants, Inc.

([www.theodorepayne.org](http://www.theodorepayne.org)), is a nonprofit organization based in the Sun Valley community of the City of Los Angeles. Tucked into a quiet canyon, the Foundation seeks to promote the use and understanding of California's diverse and beautiful native flora and operates an extensive native plant nursery and education program. Over the last few years, special

efforts have been made to include our native geophytes in our public nursery and demonstration gardens.

From the earliest European exploration and settlement of

California, geophytes native to the region have caught the attention of botanists, horticulturists, and gardeners. Native peoples and early pioneers found them to be an important food source.

The nearly 300 species and subspecies of bulbs (depending on how you count) are some of the showiest wild flowers to be found. Few things are more surprising on a hike through the local mountains than running across a field of Mariposa tulips (*Calochortus* species) floating above the grasses in a breeze or a canyon stream bank filled with Humboldt lilies (*Lilium*

*humboldtii*), their vivid orange Turk's cap flowers seeming more appropriate in a distant, exotic locale than a California oak and chaparral-filled canyon.

The California flora includes geophytes from about thirty-four genera (again, depending on how you count), with *Allium* accounting for the most diversity followed by *Calochortus*. Many are endemic to California, including *Odontostomum hartwegii*, most of the *Calochortus* and *Chlorogalum* species, and several *Lilium* species. Such diver-



Left: Theodore Payne with a matilija poppy; image provided by The Theodore Payne Foundation for Wild Flowers & Native Plants. Right: Payne's nursery; image provided by experiencela.com.



sity is not surprising considering the wide range of ecosystems and the more than 450 vegetative assemblies in California, ranging from Death Valley to Mt. Whitney, from the Anza-Borrego desert to the redwood forests. Of the nearly 6,000 plant taxa found in California, one third are endemic and one quarter are threatened or endangered. California native bulbs are a notable part of these last two categories.

Of course, British horticulturists were immediately engaged with the California flora following David Douglas's return from Cali-

formia in 1833. W.W. Robinson's "Wild Gardens" provides descriptions of *Brodiaea*, *Calochortus*, and *Lilium*, among other California wild flowers, ensuring a desire for California bulbs that horticulturist Carl Purdy was well positioned to satisfy.

Purdy, a contributor to Robinson's "The Garden," collected California native bulbs from the northern sections of California, taking annual trips from his home at the coast in Mendocino across the state

to the Sierra Nevada and back. His practices became quite controversial because he eventually collected hundreds of thousands of wild bulbs that were sold around the world. One report is that they were often sold as giveaways in Post Toasties

boxes.

Also stepping in to meet the demand was Theodore Payne. At the conclusion of his training at J. Cheal and Sons in London in 1893, Payne moved to Los Angeles where he eventually opened a general nursery that included a strong focus on California native plants and wild flowers. Both the seeds and plants of California bulbs were among his earliest offerings. In 1915 he planted *Allium*, *Brodiaea*, *Calochortus*, and *Trillium* with the dozens of other trees, shrubs, and annuals in Los Angeles's Exposition. (continued to next page)

## The Theodore Payne Foundation (cont'd)

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tion Park Wild Garden, the first public garden dedicated to the California flora. For fifty years, nursery-grown California bulbs were regular offerings in the Payne catalogs.

The western lilies, nearly all of which can be found in California, received some attention in the 1950s and 1960s as a subject for growers. Hybrids of *Lilium pardalinum*, *L. humboldtii*, *L. parryi*, and others resulted in well over forty named introductions, the most well-known being the Bellingham hybrids. They did not, however, find much favor in eastern gardens, as they were prone to rot. California lilies, especially interesting color forms, are now more difficult to find.

California native bulbs have largely remained the product of specialty growers, from Purdy and Payne to Chuck Baccus and the Robbinettes. Most recently, Far West Bulb Farm and Telos Rare Bulbs have been excellent sources for



On the grounds of The Theodore Payne Foundation; image provided by experiencela.com.

these beauties, though Far West has announced it will close up shop in 2013. A surprising assortment of California bulbs can be found in the catalogs of Dutch bulb growers, who have developed a number of *Triteleia* selections. These tend to be the most garden-tolerant selections, more accepting of water than most of the Californians.

The Payne Foundation has offered bulbs from time to time since its founding in 1960. In the 1990s avid bulb horticulturist Fred Smith worked to grow California bulbs for the Payne nursery. Smith was particularly fond of the Mariposa lilies, though he preferred to call them tulips. But such efforts as his are difficult to sustain absent dedicated resources and, when Smith moved on to other projects, the Foundation's bulb program languished. In 2004 efforts began anew to create a focused bulb program. The Payne Foundation designated a growing area just for the bulb

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## Amateur Bulb Adventures (cont'd)

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My favorite part of this show is the vendor booths, since many of the vendors have newly available and rare plants and bulbs for sale. This year, as a registered Bulbophile, I kept my eye out for bulbs that I don't have and rarely see. What I found was *Pleione formosana*, and I'm excited to give this terrestrial orchid a try. It satisfies my love of orchids and bulbs in a single plant, and it will do well in my cool greenhouse—what could be better?

### Spring in the Mountains

One of the sad parts of living in an urban landscape is that I rarely see any native geophytes growing in their natural

habitat. It sometimes feels as if there are just no native bulbs to take interest or pride in locally. To help satisfy

my love of nature, I bought a little vacation property in the north-central Washington city of Tonasket. Much of the area is forested or ranchland, so

there are still quite a few of the native wildflowers. The cabin is at about 3,000 ft. (914.4 m) elevation, so spring lands there later than here on the coast. One of the few bulbs that I've seen in the wild there is the beautiful blue *Triteleia grandiflora*. Tall stems of this wildflower wave in the wind and attract insects in the grasslands between the ponderosa pine trees. I look forward to heading over there later in the year to see these beauties in bloom—they'll keep my spring going for another month or so.

Among my favorite signs of spring to hit my little greenhouse in February are the clivia flower spikes poking through the leaves! Enjoy your spring wherever you are, everyone!



Above: *Pleione formosana* growing in Tony's greenhouse. Right: *Triteleia grandiflora* thriving near his cabin. Photos by Tony Peterson.



## The Theodore Payne Foundation (cont'd)

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collection, and staff became more involved in its care along with volunteer leaders. Sadly, that same year Fred Smith passed away. The Foundation named this new growing yard the Fred Smith Bulb House in his honor.

Some very difficult lessons have been learned over the last few years. The earliest and most tragic involved the devious and voracious California ground squirrel (*Otospermophilus beecheyi*). Following the first growing season, ground squirrels awoke from their winter hibernation to find a buffet of *Brodiaea*, *Calochortus*, *Lilium*, and others set out for their gustatory pleasure. They even ate the death camas (*Zigadenus* sp.), one of their first choices!

After several attempts at creating barriers, we enclosed the entire (top, bottom, and sides) of the Bulb House in ¼" (.6 cm) hardware mesh, tightly wired shut all gaps at ½" (1.25 cm) intervals (the squirrels were using their heads to pry open larger gaps in the seams in the mesh), and installed a solid door. We are now five years squirrel-free.

The Fred Smith Bulb House currently hosts 135 taxa, including species, subspecies, and cultivars. This number comprises a few selections of different color forms made by Foundation volunteers. For example, seed-grown *Brodiaea californica* have resulted in various shades of lavender, including a very nice dark form. We've selected several of these and are monitoring their habits with hopes for future introduction.

One of the more interesting selections is a long-ray form of *Dichelostemma capitatum* found in the local Verdugo Mountains. Imagine the firecracker flower (*Dichelostemma ida-maia*), but instead of red blooms dangling on the end of drooping rays, the

long rays are stiff and upright, holding light lavender blooms. The form is very interesting, but a few flaws in the umbel form are likely to hold this back as more of a novelty.

Volunteers and staff keep a constant vigil for new cultivars, as well as heritage selections that have dropped out of general circulation. We're still hopeful to find some of those western lily hybrids introduced in the 1950s and 1960s. An important part of the

Payne Foundation's bulb program is to locate and preserve these heritage selections.

Nearly all bulbs in the Payne collection are potted up in 1'x1' (30 cm x 30 cm) bins made of redwood fence boards. Potting soil for bulbs is the same standard mix used for all of the Foundation's plants, from trees and shrubs to annuals. This mix includes compost, coir, perlite, and a good deal of sand. It is a very light, fast-draining mix favored by most California native plants, and the bulbs have performed quite well in it. Liquid fertilizer is applied periodically throughout the growing season. In addition to maintaining a potted bulb collection, the Foundation also grows bulbs from seed, some fifty to sixty taxa sown in any given year.

Most bulb growers are familiar with the planting and growing cycle of these bulbs and would find no surprises here. Bulbs are potted in the fall, carefully grown through winter and spring, and sifted out of the soil once dormant in the summer. We cut the flow-

ers as soon as reasonable, as there are too many issues with allowing the plants to go to seed. But that's a benefit to the Foundation's bookstore and nursery, which periodically receive a beautiful bouquet to liven up their counters.

What may be a little more unusual in our practice  
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Top: Our own John Wickham (light blue shirt), in his role as President of The Theodore Payne Foundation, joins other celebrants at the Fall Festival as they examine budding *Calochortus*. Thanks to The Theodore Payne Foundation for Wild Flowers & Native Plants for the photo. Bottom: The TPF hopes to have success cultivating the "white whale" of California horticulture: *Hesperocallis undulata*. Photo by Nhu Nguyen.

## The Theodore Payne Foundation (cont'd)

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is that we collect data during each phase of the growing season. We document the total number of bulbs planted in each bin; we record when foliage emerges, when blooms open, and when the bulbs go dormant; and we again document the number of bulbs found in a bin once sifted. Other observations related to their growth habits are made as well. We are attempting to quantify the survival rates, as well as the vegetative reproductive traits, of each taxon.

After several years of collecting data, we've been able to more systematically manage the horticultural decisions for the collection. For example, *Bloomeria* species have yet to form a single offset, requiring that all propagation of this species be done from seed. Some species of *Dichelostemma*, on the other hand, profusely generate cormlets. Individuals of *D. ida-maia* and *D. multiflorum* have produced upwards of twenty cormlets in a single season.

The holy grail of California native bulb horticulture, though, is to successfully grow *Hesperocalis undulata*, the Desert Lily. As has been discussed on the PBS List, it seems impossible to grow. In the 1950s Percy Everett at RSABG (Rancho Santa Ana

Botanic Garden) documented successful germination of seed but complete failure after just a few years. When we began our efforts at the Payne Foundation, we experienced similar results. But each year we try new techniques and hope to have some success to report at a later date.

Bulbs are offered for sale dry in the fall, particularly at the Foundation's annual Fall Festival in October. Dry bulbs and bulb seeds are sometimes sold at the Foundation's online store. In addition, bulbs are potted up for sale in the nursery each year in winter and spring.

Cautious efforts are now underway to incorporate more bulbs into the Foundation's gardens. Remember those ground squirrels? We're testing different options to protect bulbs planted in the ground from those ravenous monsters. And, in time, we hope our gardens provide a beautiful and diverse display of California's exceptional geophytes.



Visitors to the TPF's grounds might see *Lilium humboldtii* (top, photo by Nhu Nguyen), *Dichelostemma capitatum* (left, photo by Bob Rutemoeller), and *Brodiaea californica* (right, photo by Mary Sue Ittner).



## The Garden Pot

Robin Hansen

*Robin Hansen gardens in North Bend, Oregon, just east of the Pacific Ocean on a property sheltered by dunes and conifers (slightly colder and hotter than USDA zone 9). She grows and sells cyclamen, tiny bulbs, and other Oregon native plants, mostly bulbs. Contact her at [robin@hansennursery.com](mailto:robin@hansennursery.com).—Ed.*

It was a new clay pot and it did not survive the winter—flakes were falling off the rim. Granted,

to be some beautiful and quite large glazed pots, also on sale—for what would be approximately a 15-gallon to 20-gallon or larger pot, each had a so-called drain hole barely an inch in diameter.

There has been a fair amount of discussion at times on the Pacific Bulb Society Internet discussion group, but not a lot of detail, about what makes some clay pots better than others. Glazed pots, which are fired at higher temperatures than unglazed pots, last the longest, and

called terra cotta), such as cast stone (concrete), which is much heavier (think sidewalks and curbs), and there are the tufa troughs many of us make for tiny alpines and bulbs in need of perfect drainage.

To me, there's nothing better than a "real" pot, that is non-plastic. Nearly twenty years ago I was given some terra cotta pots of between 3 and 5 gallons (13 to 22 liters) that are still looking good and have shown no signs of disintegrating. I have a glazed pot I leave outside



From left to right, two pots made by Stan Gibson, a cheap machine-made pot, and a tufa trough. Photo by Robin Hansen.

it had been left unprotected outside, but the lowest temperature this winter has been about 28°F (-2.2°C), and we haven't had our usual amount of rain here on the southwest coast of Oregon. About what you would expect, I suppose, from a clay pot on sale at season's end in a nursery. I hadn't been impressed by what appeared

it is the temperature at which a pot of any kind is fired that gives it durability—the higher the temperature, the harder the pot, and the less permeable it becomes. The less permeable it is, the less the pot is affected by cracking from cold temperatures.

There are also pots other than those made of unglazed clay (also

year-round that was received as a gift seven years ago; it looks terrific. My tufa troughs, some of which are now eight or ten years old, are also doing very well. It's some of the more recently purchased pots that have brought me much grief.

What's best about the unglazed terra cotta pots? Because they're  
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## Board of Directors Meetings, July & November 2013

Since minutes were last published, your board of directors has had two meetings, the first on July 13 and the second on November 13. These minutes reflect decisions made at both meetings at which all officers and directors were present.

In addition to the basics (voting to accept the previous minutes and the treasurer's report, for example) we are happy to report that, thanks to the hard work of Vice President John Wickham, we have finally completed our incorporation application!

We agreed to ask Kathleen Sayce and Nhu Nguyen to lead our Nominating Committee. They produced a slate of candidates that was unanimously accepted by the board at the November meeting. The following individuals will run unopposed for these positions:

Nhu Nguyen, President  
John Wickham, Vice President  
Arnold Trachtenberg, Treasurer  
Kathryn Andersen, Secretary

PBS is doing well financially, due largely to the BX, book sales, and a rise in the equity market. However, the Membership Directory is a significant expense, and we have decided to discontinue the practice of providing it in printed form. We discussed alternative ways to make sure members still had access to that information, including a password-protected Google list, hosting it on the wiki (again with password required), or use of services like Mail Chimp or ConstantContact. We also discussed ways to make sure that our members who prefer to avoid the internet continue to have access.

As of July, we had 329 members; by November our membership had increased to 368, of which approximately 30% are international. All members should have received a copy of the Membership Directory with the last issue of *The Bulb Garden*. We voted to extend a free membership to Jane Merryman as long as she serves as *TBG* editor and to David Pilling for his hard work as list administrator.

The BX, wiki, and listserv continue to operate smoothly thanks to our team of dedicated volunteers. The cost of shipping materials has increased and will be reflected in shipping charges for BX orders. Customs requirements for international shipments continue to cause a few problems. We discussed the creation of a pdf form that ordering members would fill out; this would remove the onus of multiple orders from the BX Director. Our wiki team suggested an alteration to the site so that viewers could make comments. The board raised a few minor concerns before approving the experiment under the supervision of Mike Mace, who has posted a posting policy to our site.

Finally, Nhu Nguyen reported that he now has copies of all issues of *TBG* and he will soon be scanning them in so that we will have an electronic archive.



## Treasurer's Report, Year End 2013

<b>BALANCE</b>	<b>\$26,076.50</b>
<b>U.S. Members</b>	<b>\$3,640.00</b>
<b>Overseas Members</b>	<b>\$2,700.00</b>
<b>Contributions</b>	<b>\$35.00</b>
<b>BX Receipts</b>	<b>\$12,061.29</b>
<b>Investment results</b>	<b>\$2,666.18</b>
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$21,102.47</b>
<b>BX/SX Postage</b>	<b>(\$3,226.31)</b>
<b>BX/SX Supplies</b>	<b>(492.39)</b>
<b>BX/SX Support Staff</b>	<b>(\$130.07)</b>
<b>Board Conference Calls</b>	<b>(\$218.04)</b>
<b>Computer Support</b>	<b>(1,090.00)</b>
<b>Treasurer's Supplies</b>	<b>(\$123.00)</b>
<b>Total Publications</b>	<b>(\$5,685.00)</b>
<b>PayPal Expense</b>	<b>(\$813.27)</b>
<b>Postage</b>	<b>(\$2,006.34)</b>
<b>IBIBLIO Contribution</b>	<b>(\$250.00)</b>
<b>Mary Sue Ittner Grant</b>	<b>(\$500.00)</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>(\$14,534.42)</b>
<b>NET CHANGE in account</b>	<b>\$6,568.05</b>
<b>BALANCE</b>	<b>\$32,644.55</b>



### It's time to renew !

**We appreciate your support—  
we would hate to lose you!**

Renewing is easy. You can renew **ONLINE** (\$20 U.S., \$25 international) via PayPal. Just use the button on our

membership page, <http://www.pacificbulbsociety.org/membership.html>.

**You can also mail in your renewal.** Please direct it to Arnold Trachtenberg, 140 Lakeview Avenue, Leonia NJ 07605

Whether renewing online or by mail, please contact Jane McGary ([janemcgary@earthlink.net](mailto:janemcgary@earthlink.net)) if of your contact information has changed.

**Thanks again for your continued support of  
the Pacific Bulb Society!**

## The Garden Pot (cont'd)

*(continued from page eight)*

porous, it's harder to overwater—very important with many mediterranean plants, alpines, and others that need excellent drainage. They also retain heat better (like rocks), which encourages better growth. Terra cotta is organically at home in any garden, something that can't be said for most plastic pots. When I visit a garden or walk through my own where I have a few plastic pots, I always notice these pots and think how much better and happier the plants would be in clay.

The downside to clay is cost and weight, and it seems that not only are some types of clay better for pots, but how the pots are made is also significant. The higher the temperature at which they are fired, the harder and less porous they are, giving them a much longer life span.

Most terra cotta and glazed pots are made in just a handful of countries. When buying pots, look for thicker sides and more weight. I don't usually opt for very large ones because I move them around every year. The higher the firing, the more likely you are to hear a clearer, sharper tone when tapping the sides, and the more likely the pots will survive a long time. Which is not to say that terra cotta shouldn't be protected in colder climates—you must, if for no other reason than to save yourself devastating disappointment when spring comes.

Pots from Stan Gibson at Longview, Washington, and Nathan Miller of Thistillium Pottery in Newberg, Oregon, have been great. Both these potters throw quality terra cotta and glazed pots, as well as tall narrow pots (also called long toms), wider shallower ones on the order of bulb pans, and some resembling troughs with several drainage holes (Stan Gibson's). I have a glazed pot with several drainage holes waiting to be planted. While it has thinner walls than a tufa

trough, which it resembles, the fact that it's glazed and has multiple drainage holes will compensate when I plant small alpines in it.

Over time, of course, minerals and salts travel through the porous clay, building up on the outside of the pots, so eventually they will need cleaning with a stiff brush to retain their porosity. Algae and moss, while they might be considered unsightly, do not affect the performance of the pots. A bleach solution might be recommended for eliminating the greeny growth, but I'm wary of using it, not only because I'm

very sensitive to the fumes, but because this solution can weaken or "melt" whatever it touches if used too often. My choice would be Murphy's Oil Soap and a stiff brushing, followed by a thorough rinsing.

This is just a brief over-

view of my favorite type of pot. There is further information on the Internet, and one blog I particularly enjoy with a strong aesthetic viewpoint is [www.deborahsilver.com/blog/tag/terra-cotta-pots/](http://www.deborahsilver.com/blog/tag/terra-cotta-pots/). Deborah owns Detroit Garden Works in Michigan and finds great challenges with terra cotta in such a severe climate. For me, playing with pots is a garden game with few losers—the challenge is to achieve the best combination of pot and plant in the best location.



This Stan Gibson pot has nice depth and multiple drainage holes. Photo by Robin Hansen.

**Has Robin's article left you feeling a bit of pot-envy? Don't despair! Contact Stan Gibson, Gibson Pottery, at [gibsonpottery@hotmail.com](mailto:gibsonpottery@hotmail.com). You could also visit him at his Longview, WA store or at one of the many shows he attends in the Pacific Northwest. Nathan Miller can be reached at [www.thistillium.com](http://www.thistillium.com) or (971) 570-2750.**

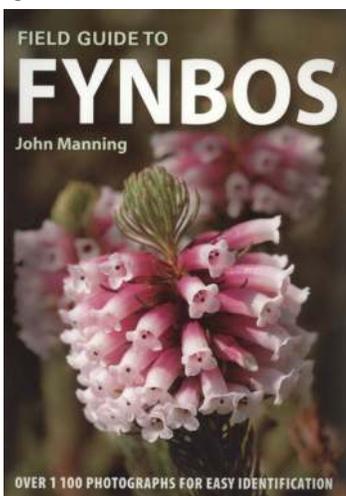
## Book Review: *Field Guide to Fynbos*

Emilie Pulver

*Emilie is a theological librarian at work and an urban botanist at play. She lives on the third floor of an older apartment building and grows most of her plants under lights. Among her many interests are carnivorous plants, ant plants, succulent bulbs mostly from South Africa, aroids, aquarium plants, and scented geraniums.—Ed.*

*Field Guide to Fynbos* by John Manning; photographs by Colin Paterson-Jones and John Manning. Cape Town, S.A.: Struik Publ., 2007. 507 p.

John Manning's *Field Guide to Fynbos* is described as the first field guide for nonbotanists to the rich and



complex plant life of the fynbos community in the southwestern Cape of South Africa. Fynbos, the most

prevalent vegetation type of the Cape Floristic Region and the smallest of the six floral kingdoms of the world, is defined as a hard-leaved, evergreen, relatively open shrubland, with virtually no true trees, occurring on nutrient-poor acid soils, especially those derived from heavily leached sandstone and limestone. While found in the mediterranean climate region of the southwestern Cape, it is not confined to regions of winter rainfall. Manning emphasizes that the main predicator of fynbos is the existence of nutrient-poor soils. Fynbos is also a fire-adapted plant community.

The fynbos plant community has been called one of the most diverse vegetation types in the world, averag-

ing 150 to 170 species per 1,000 square kilometers (621 sq. miles). What distinguishes fynbos diversity is not so much the absolute number of plant species at any one site but the fact that fynbos contains high numbers of localized species, those restricted to a very small area, some to less than one square kilometer (.62 sq. mi.), so that two locations very near each other have large proportions of different species. This makes the identification of individual species in the fynbos a challenge, for which Manning has prepared this field guide.

Out of the almost 7,000 flowering plant species found in the fynbos, Manning has selected 1,150 of the most common and conspicuous species. To aid in identification, he has created eight artificial groups of plant families that have certain characteristics in common. To identify a particular species, the reader is instructed to first identify the right group of plant families to which the species belongs by using a simple one-page key. Once the group is identified, the reader looks at a photographic guide to the family groups and then turns to a written description of the fynbos plant families. This leads to the page numbers covering the relevant family in the descriptions of individual species. The field guide describes sixty-one plant families found in fynbos. Keys under the family name lead the reader to the appropriate genus. Each genus is then described with critical identifying characteristics emphasized and under each genus the species descriptions are found.

The species descriptions are organized on a two-page spread, with the right-hand page reserved for full-color photographs of each species and the left-hand page for descriptions. Each species is given a detailed physical description, a distribution map, and a calendar of flowering months. In some cases similar species are described under a species description to help differentiate between them. All species are listed with their

botanical names, former botanical names if the species has been reclassified, and vernacular names, if any, in English, Afrikaans, and Khoisan. To assist with the botanical terms used in the descriptions, inside the front cover is an illustrated glossary of botanical terms and inside the back cover are definitions of terms.

Many of the additional features of this field guide make for fascinating reading in and of themselves. Manning begins with an introduction to "The world of fynbos." This includes the history of the botanical term, a definition of what is meant by fynbos; a vegetation map of the southwestern Cape, mapping the areas of fynbos and other associated vegetation types; a discussion of the climate, soils, and the role of fire; and descriptions of the adaptations plants have made to this environment (leaves, flowers, seeds). Most fascinating for me was the section on the evolutionary origin of the fynbos. I only wished that a short bibliography could have been included to assist in following up some of these subjects.

As I read through the species descriptions themselves, I appreciated the inclusion of the vernacular names; they, as Manning writes, "represent rich cultural heritage that deserves to prosper" (p. 23). *Masonias* are known as hedgehog lilies; *lachenalias* are called *violtjie* from the squeaking sound produced when the stems are drawn across one another; and *drimias* are known as poison squill because the bulbs of several species are highly poisonous.

The field guide is a well-made book built for use in the field. It is a paperback of sturdy covers with individual gatherings of pages sewn together and then well glued to the binding; the book opens flat easily and stays flat without breaking the spine. The photographs are clear and detailed. I can imagine no better accompaniment on a trip to the fynbos.

This book is available from Arnold Trachenberg of PBS.



## Gardening with Bulbs



In this issue, John Wickham introduces us to The Theodore Payne Foundation for Wild Flowers & Native Plants, where we might see *Allium unifolium* and *Odontostomum hartwegii*. Photo by Mary Sue Ittner.

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