

# The Bulb Garden



~Gardening with Bulbs ~

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[janemcgary@earthlink.net](mailto:janemcgary@earthlink.net)

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[Farmerquys@clearwire.net](mailto:Farmerquys@clearwire.net)

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**The PBS Directory:** Pat Colville, editor

**Publications Distribution:** Arnold Trachtenberg

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## A Daffy Case of Triskaidekaphobia\* (Part 1)

Art Wolk

*Art Wolk is an award-winning writer, speaker, photographer, and two-time winner of the Philadelphia Flower Show Grand Sweepstakes Award. His first book, Garden Lunacy: A Growing Concern received universal praise from critics (see [www.gardenlunacy.com/others.htm](http://www.gardenlunacy.com/others.htm)). Art's booklet, "The Little Blue Book of Bulb Forcing," is in its third printing. Both books are available at [www.gardenlunacy.com](http://www.gardenlunacy.com) and [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com). Part 2 of this story will appear in the spring edition.*

I admit it: bulb forcing for major flower shows like the one in Philadelphia is tailor-made for horticultural obsessive-compulsives like me. I reached the height of my neurosis in 1995 when I entered no less than 140 pots to win my first Philly Flower Show Grand Sweepstakes Award.

It was a miracle that I survived, because during every odd year

in the 1990s I was bedeviled with botanical disasters. They included slashing a finger open while grooming pots, getting into an accident at the show's unloading dock, and my favorite: a judge's clerk who fell and sat on my tulips while they were being judged.

I tempted fate by planning a *Narcissus* display of all twelve daffodil divisions for the 1999 Show. By November 1998, I had enough potted bulbs to achieve my goal. In addition, Lee

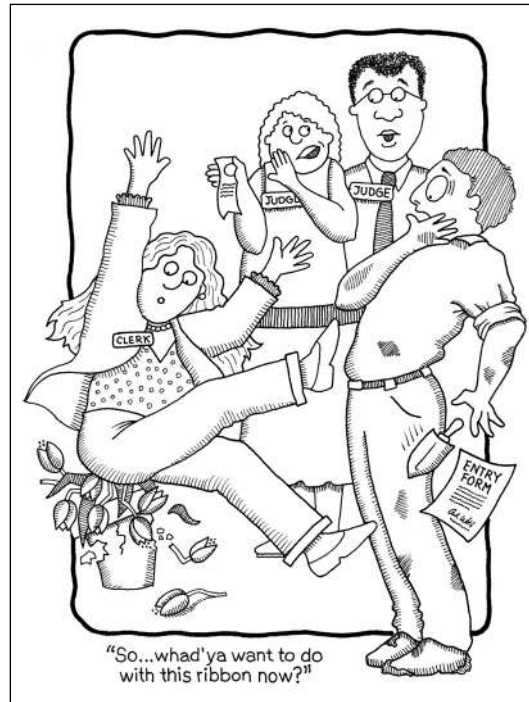
Raden, a former President of the American Rock Garden Society, added one daffodil species pot of *Narcissus bulbocodium tenuifolius*.

Then my "Curse" hit.

I had never been superstitious about walking under ladders, breaking mirrors, or opening umbrellas in the house. Then everything changed.

In late November, I learned that a new thirteenth daffodil division had

just been created, namely  
*(continued on page three)*



Drawing by Laurie Baxendell ©2004.

\* Triskaidekaphobia is fear of the number thirteen.

## Growing *Zephyranthes* in the Land of the Long White Cloud

Ina Crossley

*Ina Crossley began gardening at age 12 in Holland. Now she lives in Auckland, the largest city in New Zealand. Auckland is situated over volcanoes, so the soil in her garden is volcanic and, she says, "lovely for gardening." With the Tasman Sea on the West and the harbor into the Pacific on the East, one's climate depends greatly on one's location: mild frost to the south, almost tropical to the north. Ina has a garden full of semi-dwarf fruit trees, including apples, pears, mandarin oranges, and plums. She grows veggies and a few roses. She built a fishpond and enjoys sitting on her garden bench and watching the many goldfish swim around. — Ed.*

For some years I have had *Zephyranthes* growing by my front gate, and whenever they flowered visitors have commented on how nice they were. Then there was the day I actually "saw" them. I looked them up on the Internet and saw all these gorgeous colours and I was hooked.

With beginner's luck I looked them up with Google (NZ) and found a website diary of the Juries, in which was described a copper coloured one. Soon I had planted many seeds of these tantalizing treats. So far they are grass-like sprigs. They are still tiny. At this point I would not know if they are the copper ones or one of the other rain lilies.

I sent more emails to various likely nurseries, only to find that New Zealand had a dearth of rain lilies. Sometimes they had grown *Z. citrina* and lost it, etc. Very frustrating! Meanwhile the copper ones

were growing and I put one little pot of the grassy sprigs on Trademe (the NZ equivalent of eBay) hoping to make an exchange. I excitedly got two more varieties from Invercargill in the deep South, where the climate is cold indeed — snow and all that sort of thing. The other grower was most surprised when I mentioned that *Zephyranthes* are mostly tropical or near tropical. And one of his *Z. smallii* must have thought it was spring as it promptly flowered, a lovely golden yellow flower.



Above: *Z. smallii* – photo by Ina Crossley  
Below: *Z. grandiflora* – photo by Jay Yourch



I also requested some coloured *Zephyranthes* from a gardening magazine. They sent some seed and bulbs of an orange one. The seed wasn't viable, but the bulbs are fine. Slowly, like solving a puzzle, I found a bit here and had no luck there. Then I saw a nursery which had bulbs for sale, so I asked if they would send me some seed. They were happy to do so, but they were in Texas! That was a bit of a shock.

Next I phoned MAF (the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries); they are very bio-security conscious and most plant material is not allowed into the country. Joy of joy, I was directed to their bio-security website, where I could type in the name. Voila, I could bring quite a lot of seed into the country! So my collection is growing.

As the seed grows, it needs potting up, and pots take up space, so on

Trademe I have been buying shelves, painting them, and spreading them around the place. My spare room and front porch are given over to *Zephyranthes*. Now I am setting up shelving against the house; more

(continued next page)

## A Daffy Case of Triskaidekaphobia\* (cont'd)

(continued from page one)

*Narcissus bulbocodium* hybrids.

So, once again, the horticultural gods had sent a black cloud to dampen my hopes for flower show glory. It was late autumn and the bulb dealers in my area had sold all of their daffodils bulbs in the new division. In desperation, I called Raden.

When I asked if he had a *Narcissus bulbocodium* hybrid, he said “no,” but suggested that I call a friend of his in Great Britain... who said, “no,” but suggested I call Brent and Becky Heath in Virginia... who said, “no,” but suggested I call Kathryn Anderson in Delaware... who said, “no,” but remembered that she saw a pot of *Narcissus bulbocodium* ‘Atlas Gold’ owned by Raden!...

who said, “Oh yeah, that’s right! I do have them, and I’ll force them for our exhibit.”

About three weeks before the Show, I started getting up an hour early every morning to water and evaluate forty pots of daffodils. Some went outside to be held back (if it was above 32°F), some were placed on the floor of my glass-to-ground greenhouse, some went on the warmer greenhouse bench, and one was put under fluorescent lights indoors to push it ahead.

All the effort paid off: I had 36 pots that were peaking perfectly. It looked as if this would be my best year ever for bulb forcing.

Then my “Flower Show Curse” hit again.

At 5am on the day of staging and

judging, my wife, Arlene, heard ghastly news: the bridge we usually used to cross the Delaware River was closed because of a fire! Obviously, even bridges weren’t safe if I was exhibiting in an odd year in the 1990s.

The closure meant that we’d get to the Show much later than I’d planned. Suddenly, the nine-o’clock deadline for entry didn’t seem four hours away, but forty minutes...

**This is an excerpt from Art’s book *Bulb Forcing for Beginners and the Seriously Smitten*, which will be published in early 2009.**

## Growing *Zephyranthes* in the Land of the Long White Cloud (cont'd)

(continued from previous page)

painting. It just grows, and I haven’t even started seeing the flowers yet!

But what do I know about these bulbs? On the advice of my contact, I now own *Garden Bulbs for the South* by Scott Ogden. Scott has very kindly answered my email asking for more advice.

I read all I can, and there is mention of funny numbers of chromosomes. Chromosomes??? I think I am clever knowing what apomictic\* means...

Fascinating are the contacts one develops through sheer interest in one field. I asked advice from Tony Palmer (retired head gardener of the Botanical Gardens) when I got my first Texas seed, since I had no idea what to do with it. I also sent some seed to him when the poor guy had the flu and couldn’t do anything with it for a while. Eventually, I learned

about the floatation method of growing. Then someone else in America was horrified at that, declaring that healthy, strong plants could only get started in pots!

It is winter here, but the seedlings don’t know that. They are

growing apace. Rarely do we get a frost in my part of Auckland, but of course this winter we had frosts three mornings running. So much for global warming! It doesn’t seem to have bothered the seedlings.

As for growing in the garden, the

*Z. candida* and *Z. grandiflora* have been flowering for some years now, and small clumps of the copper ones in various spots around the garden seem perfectly happy. Once the copper and the orange *Zephs* flower, someone will know what variety they are....



*Z. candida* – photo by Bob Rutemoeller

\* Apomictic - characterized by apomixis. Apomixis – reproduction in which union of sexual cells or organs does not occur.

## Gardening with *Oxalis* Species

Claude Sweet

### Introduction

Over the years I have downsized my horticultural efforts, which had become a 45-acre ranch planted in avocado, kiwifruit, and other subtropical fruits, plus two 30 x 100 feet propagation greenhouses and outside shade houses.

As the first president of the California Rare Fruit Growers, I guided our affiliation with the arboretum at California State University at Fullerton.

I co-authored the Ortho Book *All About Citrus and Subtropical Fruit*

In 1985. A completely revised edition was published in 2008. For several years, I taught extension classes in subtropical horticulture production and marketing for the University of California at Riverside.

While teaching horticulture at Mira-Costa College in Oceanside, CA, I became involved in advocating the use of computer technology in the classroom. Before retiring, I headed a three-year grant to train our faculty in using Macintosh and Windows operating systems in cross platform software – Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, and Adobe Page-Maker.

My wife and I still reside in the house in San Diego we bought new 40 years ago. It is a challenge to collect and grow plants on a small, urban lot. Rapidly increasing costs of water and sewer are making it more difficult to grow non drought resistant plants in lower rainfall California coastal regions that enjoy a Mediterranean climate.

### Landscaping our tract home

When we bought our home, I purchased 300 cubic yards of topsoil and built raised planter boxes around our front and back patios. I planted fruiting trees in the

mounds of soil and they rewarded me by thriving. My wife enjoys flowers so I planted flowers in the open space.

Eventually the tree roots protruded where I had planted flowers directly in the ground, so I covered the ground with several layers of weed mat and then placed 18 x 18-inch concrete pavers on top. This has prevented the roots from growing through their containers into the soil. Some other time I will recount my horror story that involves vigorous upright blackberries escaping from the containers and sending their canes two stories high in the trees where they yielded heavy crops of fruit.

Several small areas around the property contain a mixture of bulbs and other flowering plants. I have added shepherd's hooks to hang baskets, extending the available space. For several years, I had two small greenhouses on the second floor decks. I discontinued these when they needed replacement because I lacked the space to continue growing seedlings and cuttings to maturity. Six 4-tiered plant carts with florescent lights in my garage have also been discontinued because of the continuing increases in our power rates.

Roof rats are a major problem in our area.

They harvest my macadamia nuts and love the cherimoya, apples, and passionfruit. They leave the black sapote, mango, and banana alone, but birds peck holes in the apples, nectarines, persimmons, and white sapote fruit.

The growing cost and need to reduce water consumption forces me to reduce the number of plants I grow. As I prioritize what I keep, ornamental flowering oxalis has become a

prized plant in my garden.

### Some *Oxalis* species

*Oxalis* is a flowering plant that I enjoy growing; I highly recommend it as an outdoor plant based on my  
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Above: *Oxalis stricta* is a common weed often found as an unwanted hitchhiker in nursery containers. Right: *Oxalis regnellii*. Photos by Claude Sweet.



## Gardening with *Oxalis* Species (cont'd)

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experience in a mild winter climate. Unfortunately, if I mention growing oxalis at social gatherings, most people immediately want to share a very negative story about their experiences getting rid of it from their lawn, flowerbeds, and/or container plants. They generally are referring to *Oxalis stricta*, a prolific seed producing, fibrous species that has spread wherever agricultural and horticultural activities occur (see photo, previous page). I hope your experiences with this weedy species of oxalis will not stop you from exploring other ornamental oxalis species.

Nurseries plant 4 and 6-inch pots with rhizomes of *Oxalis regnellii* and market it as “Shamrocks” because of the clover-like leaves to celebrate Saint Patrick’s Day (see photo, previous page).



Left: *Oxalis* ‘Silver and Gold’ is sensitive to the cold, but the foliage makes it well worth the effort! Photo by Sue Walsh. See her article about *Oxalis* at [http://houseplants.suite101.com/article.cfm/oxalithe\\_st\\_patricks\\_day\\_plant](http://houseplants.suite101.com/article.cfm/oxalithe_st_patricks_day_plant). Below: Compare the foliage on *O. siliquosa* ‘copper velvet’, grown and photographed by Claude Sweet, and *O. siliquosa* ‘zinfandel’, grown and photographed by Ron Vanderhoff.

In USDA Hardiness zone 9 or higher, there are many very attractive, well-behaved oxalis



species that can be grown as ground covers, bedding, in hanging baskets, or as container plants. The literature even mentions one species that is grown for its edible tubers, but oxalis flowers and leaves contain oxalic acid and are not recommended as part of your kitchen garden harvest.

There are hundreds of oxalis species, mostly originating from North, Central, and South American, and South Africa. Relatively few have found their way into mail order catalogs. I recommend visiting a web site for oxalis enthusiasts hosted by Andrew Broome: <http://www.oxalis.50megs.com>

The oxalis species mentioned in this article are either summer or winter dormant. They are propagated from bulbs, rhizomes, or thickened fleshy roots. The evergreen

species with fibrous root systems are propagated from stem cuttings and are especially suited for containers.

Oxalis tolerance to cold temperatures ranges from hardy to very tropical. *Oxalis hedysaroides* ‘Rubra’ and *Oxalis* ‘Silver & Gold’ are very sensitive to cool temperatures and are best grown as a warm houseplant (night temperatures above 65 degrees F). Lower temperatures can cause chilling injury and death.

Winter growing oxalis enjoy cool night temperatures that can drop into the low 40’s and occasionally dip into the upper 30 degree F. ranges. High daytime temperatures (80 degrees F. or more) and very high levels of light intensity seem to stress these plants and cause them to go dormant prematurely. Growing them cooler during the day under moderate to high levels of light tends to



make the plants shorter and more compact, and extends their growing cycle. Many oxalis species

have the tendency to close their flowers during cloudy weather and some even fold up their leaves. Not all oxalis have clover-like leaves. The range in leaflet sizes and shapes varies widely and provides interest when the plants are not in flower.

*O. siliquosa* (*vulcanicola*) ‘copper velvet’ is a fibrous rooted species with attractive leaf coloration. There also is a green leaved form and occasionally the colored selections will revert back for no reason. *O. siliquosa* must be propagated by stem cuttings. It grows year round in a sunroom or warm greenhouse, and makes a nice outdoor plant in the summer. *Oxalis corymbosa* ‘Aureo-reticulata’ has a very attractive variegated leaf, but in my experience it is unstable, frequently reverting back to a solid green leaf.

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## Gardening with *Oxalis* Species (cont'd)

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There is considerable genetic variability when some *Oxalis obtusa* is grown from seed. Diana Chapman, of Telos Rare Bulbs, has been able to expand the color selections of *O. obtusa* to nine other colors besides the commonly available pink flowering form (see photos, facing page).

I have encountered only one double flowering oxalis. *Oxalis pes-caprae* is commonly found as a single, yellow flowering form. Unexpectedly I discovered a double form in my garden. A double form is listed in a South African nursery catalogue and possibly it is a naturally occurring sport. This oxalis has naturalized in many coastal areas of Southern California. It spreads freely from seed and produces loads of bulblets.



*O. pes-caprae* (single) – photo by Claude Sweet



*O. purpurea* 'Cherry' – photo by Ron Vanderhoff

*O. purpurea* is also available in different foliage and flower colors. There is a *purpurea* hybrid offered as 'Grand Duchess' that has larger leaves and flowers. This form is available primarily in white, occasionally in a bright pink, and rarely as a soft lavender. *Oxalis carnososa* has a carrot like root. It has small fleshy leaves and yellow flowers. In my mild climate it is evergreen and floriferous. It does seed itself and could become a pest in ideal growing circumstances. It is excellent in a planter box.

Most winter flowering oxalis begins to flower within two months of emerging in the fall. One exception is *O. brasiliensis* which grows vegetation all winter and flowers in the spring.

I have had good success growing several species in hanging baskets. *O. hirta* will flower for several weeks in the fall when the plants are about 10 inches tall. The ferny leafed plants continue to grow all win-



*O. carnososa* – photo by Ron Vanderhoff



*O. brasiliensis* – photo by Claude Sweet

ter and the stems trail attractively over the sides of the container.

My special favorite for a hanging basket is *O. incarnata*, a bulbous type that is evergreen when provided warm conditions and not allowed to dry out. It forms bulbils in the leaf axis, which will fall and become new plants outdoors or in greenhouses.

### Oxalis culture

Oxalis prefers good drainage but does not tolerate extreme drying out, especially when grown in pots. I use SuperSoil for larger containers (one gallon or more) and hanging baskets (10 inches or more) and a good peat mix for potting plants in four- and six-inch pots. Most oxalis will do fine in the shorter bulb pots if you have them available.



*O. hirta* – photo by Bill Dijk



*O. incarnata* – photo by Bob Rutemoeller

Many of the hard to find oxalis species are expensive (\$3 and up per bulb). I grow new acquisitions in four-inch pots that fit into a tray especially designed to hold them, which prevents tipping. I make nametags with a *Casio Label It* machine and attach the self-adhesive 3/8-inch clear tape with black lettering to the plastic labels.

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Facing page: many color varieties of *O. obtusa*, grown and photographed by Diana Chapman of Telos Rare Bulbs. These color variations and many more can be seen on her website: <http://www.telosrarebulbs.com/Oxobtusa.html>

Diana has given each color variation its own name. They are:

Top row, L-R: Coral, Buttercup, Peach

Middle, L-R: Large Form, Amber, Polished Copper

Bottom left: Raspberry sits above Wheat. Bottom right: Sunset



## Different Microclimates Lead to Changes in Culture

Robin Hansen

Robin 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 and a few other Oregon native plants. To ask questions or request her plant list, send an E-mail to [robin@hansennursery.com](mailto:robin@hansennursery.com). — Ed.

If you grow cyclamen and have not yet read Richie Steffen's article in the October issue of *Pacific Horticulture*, please do so. His comments on the necessity for some summer moisture for pot-grown cyclamen are very important. Since I moved the nursery three years ago to its present location two miles north of the old place (from 2 ½ to 1 ½ miles distance from the ocean), I have been humbled by the great difference in microclimates. *Cyclamen rohlfsianum* and I have always had a love-hate relationship, but we have reached new heights of conflict. The conclusion: this site is much wetter, higher in humidity, as cold but not as warm, with more shade, and yes, I have more dead *C. rohlfsianum*. (Most, in fact.)

I find myself adding more and more pumice to the soil mix I use for all plants. Culturally speaking, those of you further south in the lower half of California, will need more shade (but as much light as possible) than you would in Northern California and on up the coast. I would recommend planting under evergreen trees and shrubs rather than under deciduous trees and shrubs in the

warmest areas, and you may find occasional summer watering beneficial in the most desert-like areas. Suggestions from several sources that *C. graecum* can tolerate full sun often fail to mention the fact that its roots are long and thick for a reason. It still needs some moisture and those roots provide it by going deep. Also, the protection of large rocks cannot be underestimated, for they conserve moisture, provide shade and insulation.

For those of you on the more northern coasts, you will find that cyclamen will do well with more sun, and *C. graecum* should be in

tal if their needs are not met. Those of you with climate most resembling their native habitat will have the fewest problems. *C. purpurascens* is a mountain-dweller where there is snow pack and a cooler summer. I find *C. alpinum* problematic. So far, I haven't done anything that encourages more than a bloom or two and a few seeds every few years. *C. libanoticum* and *C. balearicum* have done fairly well but could do better, based on my observations here. They need better drainage, with regular, if light, watering and a goodly amount of light without being in direct sun.

My best advice is to pay keen attention to the basics: light, shade, water, drainage, and temperature. Fertilizer should be used regularly but sparingly during growth. Bone meal is always good and it is impossible to use too much. Rick Lupp uses Osmacote, if I remember correctly, but in tiny doses. Osmacote and the other slow-release fertilizers are fine, if you live in warm summer areas where the fertilizer releases as it was designed. I use a product by Lily Miller made for cool northwest summers, a 10-10-10 fertilizer with some organics that the label claims is four- to six-week release.

It works well for me, but dosage must be carefully managed and used only after plants have established themselves in their pots. Otherwise, even a careful dose can burn tender plants if given too soon.

There is much I could add to the brief comments I've made. Don't hesitate to contact me privately if you have questions or are suffering from frustration. If nothing else, we can commiserate!

\* \* \* \* \*



Robin writes, "*Cyclamen rohlfsianum* and I have always had a love-hate relationship, but we have reached new heights of conflict."

Above you can see the outcome she's been striving for!

Photo by John Lonsdale.

full sun up here. My *graecum* flowered for the first time in three years — they were left in the poly house, and no shade cloth was used this year. *C. creticum* bloomed wonderfully in the poly house because they had more moisture and light, but not the higher temperatures with less watering of previous years. Will I ever get it right?

Cyclamen can be temperamen-



## Board of Directors Meeting, Sept. 21, 2008

Dear PBS Members,

Your officers and directors had a busy Fall 2008 and are ready to meet again shortly with our new slate of officers led by incoming President Jane McGary. Welcome, Jane! We all look forward to working with you and are pleased to have your leadership.

At our last meeting, Jennifer Hildebrand was appointed our new Director of Publications at the suggestion of Dell Sherk. Jen has contributed countless hours to PBS as Secretary-Treasurer as well as working tirelessly on *The Bulb Garden* and other publication projects. Recently, she designed and printed the PBS membership gift certificates to be used as prizes at upcoming NARGS Study Weekends. Thanks from all of us, Jen!

You will be pleased to know that last September, we transferred all PBS funds out of securities investments and into a money market account. Treasurer Arnold Trachtenberg informed us that we lost no assets and made the move while we were "still ahead."

In other financial business, the board made it policy to have "two officers as signatories on its bank and other accounts it maintains for the purpose of conducting business and that these officers be President and Treasurer." We also arranged for a contingency should either or both of these officers leave the board.

Due to high publication costs, look for the membership directory every other year instead of annually. We are all unhappy that a few of you didn't make it into the last one and are working hard to resolve the problem so no one slips through the cracks. If you were not included, and have not already done so, please contact our membership chair, Patty Colville, at [pat.colville@jhresearchusa.com](mailto:pat.colville@jhresearchusa.com).

We plan to make every effort to reduce publication costs for *The Bulb Garden* without sacrificing quality. Interestingly, BX sales for just one month last summer paid for the entire cost of printing!

We look forward to a productive and positive 2009!

Pamela Slate, PBS Secretary

### PBS Elections

Thanks to all of you who emailed your votes. Your new board of directors appreciates your support. They are all ready to serve!

**President: Jane McGary**

**Vice President: Paul Machado**

**Treasurer: Arnold Trachtenberg**

**Secretary: Pam Slate**

PBS's directors also attend board meetings and vote, but they are selected by the board rather than the membership. Your directors are:

**Dell Sherk, BX**

**Patty Colville, Membership**

**Jennifer Hildebrand, Publications**

We want PBS to be your ideal gardening association. Please let us know if you have comments or suggestions. Our email addresses are all on the front page!

## Treasurer's Report

BALANCE 12/31/07 \$ 26,150.65

### INCOME

U.S. Members \$ 2,980.00

Overseas Members \$ 650.00

Contributions \$ 63.30

BX Receipts \$ 7,561.39

**TOTAL INCOME \$ 11,254.69**

### EXPENSES

BX/SX Expense \$ (1,963.00)

### PUBLICATIONS

#### Newsletter Vol. 6 #1

Postage \$ (105.87)

Printing supplies \$ (632.89)

Book review \$ (50.00)

Labor expense \$ (290.00)

*Subtotal* \$ (1,078.76)

#### Newsletter Vol. 7 #1

Printing \$ (680.00)

Postage \$ (115.90)

Contributors' Stipends

\$ (80.00)

*Subtotal* \$ ( 875.90)

#### Newsletter Vol. 7 #2

Printing \$ (925.00)

Postage \$ (114.00)

Contributors' Stipends

\$ (95.00)

*Subtotal* \$ (1,134.00)

#### Membership Directory

Printing \$ (1,425.00)

(shipped w/ newsletter)

#### Newsletter Vol. 7 #3

Printing \$ (925.00)

Ship'g & Handl'g \$ (320.00)\*

Postage \$ (398.58)\*

\*(higher because of directory)

*Subtotal* \$ (3,068.58)

### Total Publications

**\$ (6,157.24)**

### TOTAL EXPENSES

\$ (8,120.24)

Investment results \$ (4,098.76)

Total Reductions \$ (12,219.00)

Balance before adjustment \$ 25,186.34

Adjustment \$ (41.87)

**BALANCE 9/30/08**

**\$ 25,144.47**

## Gardening with *Oxalis* Species (cont'd)

(continued from page six)

They last for several years outdoors in mild San Diego.

Rodents have proven to be my biggest problem. They seem to love the taste of my oxalis bulbs. Next year I am going to construct wire mesh tops to cover the containers. The shoots will be able to grow through the openings, but block the mice and roof rats from dining on the bulbs. This should not be a problem unless you grow summer flowering types outdoors.

I would recommend cultivating summer growing oxalis outdoors as container plants. Start the dormant bulbs inside as soon as they become available from your supplier, usually in mid-April. Transfer them outside by gradually acclimating the plants to full sun and outdoor temperatures during the day. Don't rush the oxalis outside permanently until the weather is above 50 degrees F. at night and daytime temperatures are regularly above 65 degrees F.

Store dormant bulbs in their containers if room allows. The fleshy types can be damaged by dehydration and should be checked every 6-8 weeks during dormancy. If you remove the bulbs from the soil, place them in plastic bags with vermiculite. Peat moss often makes it difficult to locate some of the species with very small bulbs. Keeping them properly labeled is important. It is impossible to tell the flower color of a species and sometimes difficult to even identify different species that have similar size and shape of bulbs.

Propagation is easily accomplished by breaking the larger rhizomatous bulbs into 1-inch pieces prior to replanting. Plant these flat in the container and cover with an inch of planting mix. Most oxalis

bulbs have a pointed top and flat bottom. This makes them easy to plant, as the pointed end is the vegetative growing end. However, others have sharp points on both ends. Plant these flat. They'll do just fine - they know which end is up even if we are confused.

### Sources

I have personally dealt with and found reliable the following commercial sources:

Telos Rare Bulbs  
P.O. Box 4147  
Arcata, CA 95518  
<http://www.telosrarebulbs.com/>

Odyssey Bulbs  
8984 Meadow Lane  
Berrien Springs, Michigan 49103  
Phone & Fax (269) 471-4642  
[mail@odysseybulbs.com](mailto:mail@odysseybulbs.com)  
<http://www.odysseybulbs.com>

Jim Duggan  
South African Bulbs  
1452 Santa Fe Drive  
Encinitas, CA 92024  
(760) 943-1658  
<http://www.thebulbman.com/>

Collectors Nursery  
16804 NE 102nd Ave.  
Battle Ground, WA 98604  
(360) 574-3832  
<http://www.collectorsnursery.com>

bulbmeister.com  
4407 Town Vu Road  
Bentonville, AR 72712  
(479) 366-4968  
<http://www.bulbmeister.com/>

Plant Delights Nursery, Inc.  
9241 Sauls Road  
Raleigh, NC 27603  
Phone: (919) 772-4794  
Fax: (919) 662-0370  
<http://www.plantdelights.com/>

### There can be significant variation among *Oxalis purpurea*.



Clockwise from top left: *O. purpurea* 'Double White', 'Lavender and White', ex. ULI, and 'Grand Duchess Pink'

## Getting to Know You: Pamela Slate, PBS Secretary

Originally from the Midwest, I migrated to Page, Arizona, and then to Carefree in 1985. It didn't take long to realize that "Arizona gardening" meant erasing all of my previous conceptions! So, I became a Master Gardener eight years ago and have been studying and gardening obsessively ever since.

My most recent position was Botanic Coordinator for Wallace Desert Gardens, a North Scottsdale non-profit 11-acre collection facilitated by H.B. Wallace, son of Vice President H.A. Wallace. I was its first administrator and am pleased to have brought it greater recognition, including the attention of The Garden Conservancy. Following H.B.'s death in 2005, I became convinced I needed to move along and resigned just over a year ago.

Making dirt has been the most time-consuming aspect of gardening in Arizona. My husband Joe built a large enclosed garden with 12 concrete block planters that are 25 inches high, 50 inches wide, and 12 feet long on average. After ten years,



the manufactured "dirt" is pretty much all wormy compost, mixed with pumice for great drainage. Since the entire structure is framed and covered with hardware cloth, we are free from the rodents and javelina that freely roam and plunder these properties routinely.

Obviously I grow a lot of food and herbs but also find it perfect for the ever-forgiving bulbs that, thanks to PBS, I



A selection of plants fortunate enough to be grown in Pam's garden! Clockwise from top left: Hippeastrum 'Aphrodite' among aeoniums, echeveria and Oxalis brailiensis; Allium schubertii; Ferraria crispa

am learning more about. This is done mostly in fall through spring, and I am one of those people who find summers here too inhospitable for comfortable vegetable gardening. I look forward to experimenting with more bulbs outside my "shade" house.

I'm a member of the Cactus and Succulent Society of America and its Tucson Chapter, the

International Society of Arboriculture and its Western Chapter, Maricopa County Master Gardeners and PBS. For years I've been involved with Carefree's municipal garden and continue to serve on the Collections Committee at Boyce Thompson Arboretum and on the Advisory Board of the Desert Legume Program of the University of Arizona, Tucson.

I look forward to assisting PBS however I can! As I see it, it is one fantastic organization!



~Gardening with Bulbs~

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

Renewing is easy. For those of you who would like to pay your dues **ONLINE** (\$20 U.S., \$25 international), send your payment via PayPal to our Treasurer, Arnold Trachtenberg, at [Arnold@nj.rr.com](mailto:Arnold@nj.rr.com). Please include "membership renewal" in the subject line and send a copy of the receipt to Patty Colville, our Membership Chair, at [pat.colville@jhresearchusa.com](mailto:pat.colville@jhresearchusa.com). **IMPORTANT:** if your contact information has changed in any way, please tell Patty!

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

## Gardening with Bulbs



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Editor: Marguerite English, [meenglis@cts.com](mailto:meenglis@cts.com); Co-Editor: Jennifer Hildebrand

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**Pat Colville – Memberships**  
1555 Washburn Road  
Pasadena, CA., 91105

[www.pacificbulbsociety.org](http://www.pacificbulbsociety.org)