



~Gardening with Bulbs~

The Bulb Garden

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Oxalis - Not your ordinary geophytes by Robin Hansen

Oxalis – weed or well-loved flower? What comes to mind for many of us is “weed”, but most of the nearly 300 species of oxalis are wonderful, small, mostly easily grown and very colorful geophytes, well worth even new bulb growers’ attempts to grow. The bulk of oxalis are native to Southern Africa and South America with a few scattered species in North America and elsewhere. There are so many to choose from, with a wide range of leaf shapes and flower colors that once you try growing these geophytes, it will be very hard to stop. Oxalis are all relatively small and easily grown in pots. Unfortunately, only a few are hardy enough to grow out in the garden unless you live in USDA Zones 8-10. Flowers are five-petaled and present an overall round shape and vary from white with dark lines on each petal to intense hot pink, yellow and even red and white stripes. Although oxalis may not be particularly hardy they often bloom at times when other bulbs are resting and if grown in greenhouses or garden windows, you may have flowers the year round if you have a variety of species.

An oxalis that I recently received from the Bulb Exchange has just be-

gun to bloom for me. It is *Oxalis engleriana* with quite a nice soft pink flower, but rather peculiar tiny, skinny leaves that aren’t particularly



noticeable, at least not yet, although I have hopes it will fill out and put on a small

show! It is not hardy beyond Zone 9 so it will reside in my west-facing garden window; for other growers, basements or garages with grow lights or greenhouses will work equally well.



Above: *Oxalis engleriana*, Below: *Oxalis flava lupinifolia*. Photos: PBS

When I received the tuber of *Oxalis engleriana*, it looked like nothing much at all, more like a hairball coughed up by the cat. Which is when I discovered there is a very wide variety of forms of underground storage organs so don’t assume as I did

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Oxalis - cont'd

that the donor made a mistake and sent a dead bit of something.

I was quite surprised to discover *Oxalis engleriana* blooming in early October, having for-



Oxalis engleriana. Photo: Mary Sue Ittner.

gotten I had it. I'll wait judgement on whether it will turn out to be a special plant or not. However, I've learned one thing and that is to grow new and unfamiliar plants in pots for awhile (especially oxalis) to determine how invasive they might be. The following is not a fool-proof method, but any plant that in one growing season fills the pot is giving some warning that it needs to be watched.

The PBS website has a number of areas full of information; for example, there is an excellent page with an extensive collection of photographs of the various types of geophytic storage organs, most in recognizable form and several as odd-looking as *O. engleriana* (Choose Photographs, Oxalis, Oxalis storage.). If you choose Wiki at the top of the page on the website, you will find an encyclopedia compiled by member contributors on all sorts of topics, including photos, culture, sources, and discussions from the PBS List among other choices. If you choose Photographs, you will be overwhelmed by the list of species, photographs and comments com-

plied by members. If you choose Bulb Exchange, scroll to the bottom where you can look at some of the Seed and Bulb Exchange offerings which will give you an idea of the oxalis species that are offered from time to time.

There is even an excellent article on pots found under the Wiki; choose Container, which gives a good explanation of sizing of pots and volumes with some techniques for using them as well as other links to articles and discussions. Oxalis should do well in tufa troughs and pots, but will probably need to be repotted every few years to cope with the offsets. This is certainly the case with other small bulbs such as *Rhodohypoxis*, the tiny *Scillas*, etc.

Some oxalis can have quite explosive seed capsules so when first growing species in this



Oxalis corniculata. Photo: Stefan.Iefnaer, Wikimedia Commons. If you've wondered what the name of this truly obnoxious weed is, now you know. You may also see it with green leaves rather than the purple leaves shown. The seed pods resemble bullets and just touching them will cause the pods to explode in all directions, including into your eyes, so be careful.

genera, an eye should be kept on potential weediness. If attempting to save seeds (not that there will be many), little paper bags or cloth bags (actually organza or tulle available in fabric stores or premade on the internet) covering the capsules can cover the sin of tardiness in collecting or Mother Nature's determination to reproduce. Many oxalis are also known for producing generous offsets so that old saying about one man's weed being another man's flower is reliably true everywhere. You know your own gar-

Importing Seed - Small Lots of Seed Permits

Author Robin Hansen with Lee Poulsen. Ed: All seeds imported into the United States from other countries must now (and have since 2006) be accompanied by a Small Lots of Seed Permit and a green and yellow official label containing the importer's license number and the address of the U.S. Port of Entry. Following is a detailed explanation of the steps need to acquire a free permit and further information to assist in successful transactions.

Lee Poulson, a member of the PBS discussion list, recently experienced a problem while importing seeds and that experience provided an example of how much most of us, even though we may have seed import permits (known as Small Lots of Seed permits) issued by USDA, still don't know about our options when we have difficulties importing seed. In addition, overseas seed sources may not know about US requirements for shipping seed internationally. The following article will hopefully provide new information and options to consider and should improve our ability to successfully import seeds we cannot buy or even find here in the United States.

If you're not in the habit of sending your Small Lots of Seed permit with your overseas seed orders, you need to include it. Whether the vendor asks for it or not, it's required by our laws. Rather than have an order destroyed, having a permit will give you the leverage to prevent destruction as is noted in Lee Poulsen's contribution. Be sure also to send the green and yellow permit label with the Port of Entry address provided by USDA where the seed will come into the US. Once it is inspected, it will be forwarded without charge to the recipient. Both items, permit and address sticker, are required and must be included.

Some businesses, and plant organizations such as the Cyclamen Society and the Scottish Rock Garden Club, among others are very knowledgeable about USDA requirements in indicating prohibited species in their seed lists, and in providing the necessary lists of plant names when they ship as well as requesting and including the Small Lots of Seeds permits and labels. The United Kingdom, in particular, seems to have come up to speed with USDA requirements quickly after the Small Lots of Seed permit system was implemented in 2006.

The following is a description of the procedure you must follow to obtain a permit. It is possible to

go through the online permit process, eAuthentication, which requires a personal appearance at the closest USDA Service Center. Depending where you live, this could be difficult to almost impossible; it is also cumbersome as you have to set up an online account. Therefore it's much simpler (and nearly as quick) to fill out the PDF form provided online, then print and either mail it or fax it. Be sure to save a copy of your application. Your permit will be emailed to you and you must email a request separately to obtain the green and yellow inspection labels which you should download and save in a file you won't forget about. If a particular Port of Entry proves problematic, you may request new green and yellow stickers with a different Port of Entry. The busiest POEs are likely to be Los Angeles, New York or Miami, so choosing another one besides these might be better. A number of correspondents have indicated that over time the Seattle POE has proven reliable although I've noticed a bit of a slow-down the last couple years.

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/library/forms/pdf/PPQ587.pdf> This is the address where you can access Form PPQ587 for your Small Lots of Seed permit. You can fill this PDF out and save, then print and mail or fax to the following address:

USDA-APHIS-PPQ, Permit Unit, 4700 River Road, Unit 133, Riverdale, MD 20737-1236. The fax number is (301) 734-5786.

Fill out all sections 1-7, beginning with your name, address, phone number and email address, plus a mailing address if different from the street address. Under Section 2, Country of Origin, write "Various approved countries". Under Scientific Names, use the phrase "Eligible taxa". Under Plant Parts, insert the word "Seeds". For US Port of Arrival, you will need to choose your port of entry, and those are listed at this address: https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/planthealth/import-information/pis/ct_plant_inspection_stations There are sixteen of these stations located across the country, usually near major international airports; phone and fax numbers are included. Section 3, Intended use: Check box titled "Small lots of seed". Section 4, Means of importation: Check box that says Mail or Express courier.

Oxalis - *cont'd*

den conditions best but fellow gardeners can also help you with this concern in your local area, unless you live in the wilds of Southwestern Oregon as I do, where petunias are king and queen and commoner alike.

Just for the record, at least in the Pacific Northwest: *Oxalis corniculata* is a pernicious weed with sunny yellow flowers and every effort should be made to eliminate it. If you can't get to it right way, at least break off flowers or seed capsules to slow it down until you can eliminate it. Throw them in the garbage; do not put them in your compost pile. It's also very likely that this species is on your local State Department of Agriculture Noxious Weed List. Consistency is the key to ridding your garden of this plant, just as it is with another nasty little creature, the annual mustard. Two other oxalis to keep an eye on are *O. pes-caprae* (in some parts of the country) and possibly *O. oregana*, a native of the western U.S. *Oxalis oregana* is rhizomatous and while some consider it a pest because just little bits of the rhizomes can regrow, it can't compare to *O. corniculata*!

Generally, the South African species provide the most extensive and varied forms and colors. They should be grown in pots as most are not hardy in much of the United States; and they will need as much light as possible to prevent etiolation. Keep them thoroughly dry when dormant, then give a good soaking in late summer or early fall, followed by watering as needed. Soil mixes should be well-drained and fertilizing should be lightly done, preferably with a low ratio of nitrogen to phosphorus and potassium (the NPK numbers on a fertilizer package). Be cautious about growing in the garden unless you are sure they will not take over. A review of the PBS website and contributions over the years to the List will hopefully give some indication of which Oxalis can be a problem in some situations.

Perhaps more familiar to many people are the South American species which grow in more alpine regions and are relatively hardy in the garden. The most frequently available species are *Oxalis adenophylla*, *O. enneaphylla* and *O. laciniata*. Seed of these species and other species

may occasionally be available from the Flores and Watson seed lists, but according to Nhu Nguyen, most seed is extremely short-lived. The more northern species – such as our native oxalis – aren't well-known and may only be available occasionally from specialist growers.

Robin Atrill has noted that there is little available literature on oxalis and what there is out-of-date. The Pacific Bulb Society website is probably the most easily accessible source of photos and names, and nomenclature is kept as current as possible. Other sources of information and plants are Telos Rare Bulbs (California) and Cape Seed and Bulb (South Africa). Seed is not often available, due to limited viability and/or difficulty in collecting seed (exploding seed heads being difficult to control).

Dr. Leanne Dreyer (<http://biointeractionslab.com/prof.-leanne-dreyer.html>) is a lecturer in plant systematics at Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch, South Africa, and is deeply involved in research on the genus *Oxalis*. She has a long list of publications listed on the website that may be of interest to those searching for more detailed information.

The late Michael Vassar, Curator of Floristic Gardens at Huntington Botanical Garden was a botanist and collector whose generous distribution of a wide variety of South African oxalis to botanical gardens and individuals led to wider exposure and popularity of these geophytes. Pleasingly, many of these have been reported as easy to grow. Some PBS members were the fortunate recipients of these plants and have since contributed offspring on occasion to the bulb exchange of PBS.

Following are some suggested species to try. This list is by no means comprehensive, but will give those unfamiliar with this genus a starting point. Oxalis are often available through the PBS Bulb and Seed Exchange and as members, this is a very inexpensive way to try them. Often it's the only source as well.

Jim Waddick, a long-time PBS member when asked for a list of ten favorites, found he couldn't limit himself to just ten and listed fourteen! Jim gardens in Zone 5 and his list follows.

Continued on next page

Oxalis - cont'd

***Oxalis anomala*:** A very clean, medium sized white flower with yellow throat, but lots of them over a long period on a loose, sprawling and attractive plant.

***Oxalis fabaefolia*:** Such an easy plant to grow. When the sulfur yellow flowers are at their peak of bloom they will be a solid mass of color, so bright it's almost hard to look at. One of the most intense yellows in the bulb kingdom.

***Oxalis flava*:** There are so many forms that this is a collector's favorite. Flower color varies from yellows, similar to *O. fabaefolia*, to white and shades of pink. The attractive leaves also vary widely, always palmate and ranging from bright green narrow leaflets to blue green broad leaflets, sometimes with undulating margins.

***Oxalis gracilis*:** The wiry, thin and airy habit of this unusual species is a break from what one might expect from an oxalis. The soft orange flowers are quite pretty sitting on top of the foliage.

***Oxalis inaequalis*:** The flower size doesn't seem right for this diminutive species. The very small, somewhat succulent leaves easily fit into a very small pot. But the 1-inch wide showy, bright coppery-orange flowers with yellow throats seem oversized for the plant. This species does form loads of crown bulbils, so be careful with it in mild climates.



***Oxalis gracilis*.** Photo: Mary Sue Ittner.

Oxalis perdicaria

(syn. *O. lobata*): I'm a sucker for small, bright yellow flowers against deep green foliage. This one originates from Chile and is the only one on my list not of South African descent. Don't confuse this with *O. perdicaria*, which is South African, usually a creamy white and also a nice species to grow.

***Oxalis luteola*:** The many forms make this another collector's favorite. Most forms have varying degrees of burgundy red on the undersides of the fat, attractive leaves. Others have irregular splashes of



***Oxalis massoniana*.** Photo: Bob Rutemoeller.

the same color on the upper surface of the leaf. This low, mat-forming plant has large soft yellow flowers over a very long period - usually four months for me.

***Oxalis massoniana*:**

This one is in bloom right now for me. The small, bright orange flowers with yellow centers are so numerous that there is no foliage to see. A nice compact plant as well.

***Oxalis meisneri*:** Another with brilliant yellow flowers and very deep, dark green foliage. But this time the foliage is thin and grassy appearing. Really quite pretty.



***Oxalis obtusa*.** Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

***Oxalis obtusa*:** The dozens of flower colors and ease of growing make this and *O. purpurea* the most popular of all African Oxalis - deservedly so.

***Oxalis palmifrons*:** Nice to grow if just for the attractive foliage. Just as well, because you may never see a flower. But still worth growing.

***Oxalis pardalis*:** There are some very pretty forms of this species with a bushy habit and narrow leaflets. The best forms have burgundy-red foliage and soft violet-pink flowers over a three month period.

Importing Seed *con't d*

No extra postage is needed for forwarding by mail, but you will be charged for Express courier and must make those arrangements ahead of time. In Sections 5, 6, and 7 do not forget to sign and print your name and date the document.

You will receive your permit by email and will then make an email request for your green and yellow labels. The request must come from your email address. Be prepared to give your new permit number. greenandyellowplantslabelrequest@aphis.usda.gov. Also, be sure to request the number of labels you think you'll need for the three-year period the permit covers. Don't, as I have done, save the label document and just reprint, which means the same numbers will get used more than once. Each label is numbered.

While everyone involved in the process of shipping seeds into or out of the United States should be aware of these requirements, many are not, so it behooves all of us to educate those vendors we use who appear not to be compliant. Doing so benefits everyone. For further information on the genera and species that are on the CITES¹ Appendices, see this website: <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/app/2017/E-Appendices-2017-10-04.pdf> Some plant societies, such as the Scottish Rock Garden Club, indicate in their yearly seed lists those genera and or species that cannot be shipped to the United States.

Tips for Importing Seed

There are a number of situations that may arise when placing orders for seeds from overseas sources. It appears that in the last year or so, the USDA Port of Entry Plant Inspection Stations have become more diligent in their inspections of incoming seed orders arriving under the Small Lots of Seed permit regulations. In the process of resolving some issues that have occurred, PBS member Lee Poulsen has done considerable research into documents published by the USDA that they have available but inspectors may not be familiar with. These publications give detailed guidance on handling shipments where the seeds may be on a quarantine list or be

a species for which all kinds of additional requirements or restrictions are listed, in addition to forbidding some seed from being imported.

First of all, it appears that a number of overseas seed vendors are still not aware of or compliant with USDA Small Lots of Seed regulations and this can create problems for recipients in the U.S. As far as I'm able to determine the previous allowances for up to 12 packets of seed being allowed across borders has been superceded by the requirement that either a phytosanitary certificate be issued before crossing the border into the U.S. or the person bringing the seed into the U.S. must have a Small Lots of Seed Permit, even for just a few packets.

Based on prior experience up to this year, I have received packets of seed or even two or three bulbs packaged in an envelope directly addressed to me without any indication of contents. These did not go through Ports of Entry but came directly to me. Another PBS member who has been ordering seed from a particular vendor in England for about 15 years noted the vendor had never made any reference to import permits and he hasn't broached the subject with them. The seed always arrives at his post office box in a brown envelope direct from the seller.

While the major seed exchanges run by the Alpine Garden Society, North American Rock Garden Society and Scottish Rock Garden Club, to name a few, are fully informed of U.S. import requirements and notify their overseas members with each distribution, there are still organizations and vendors who seem completely unaware of the requirements. Always send a copy of your Small Lots of Seed permit and your green and yellow shipping label with every seed order to another country and request that these documents always be included in your shipments.

Even though some seeds may be listed in CITES Appendices I or II, they will be allowed without difficulty provided they are labeled, pest and disease-free, from domestic seed and meet any other requirements stated. Cyclamen seed is a good example: cyclamen, except cultivated seed (florists' cultivars, CITES Appendices footnote 11) are listed on the CITES Appendix II

Tips for Importing Seed *cont'd*

list but falls under CITES exemption #4 which allows export of seed.² One member had a shipment of 50 packets of cyclamen seeds confiscated and destroyed this spring at the Newark, New Jersey Port of Entry, with no reason given. Assuming this order of seed came with the necessary documents, it would be interesting to find out why this destruction happened.

Lee Poulsen's orders were all for *Lathyrus* seed this year but comments that as he was attempting to resolve issues with importation that none of his vendors knew about seed import permits. He had ordered sweet pea seeds from three sources in England and one in New Zealand. The websites he ordered from are fully automated and accept the usual payment options so you don't really interact with a person unless you receive an email directly from someone. He didn't even have a chance to send his permit to them, so he assumed there was little to no checking of small packets from first world countries.

With the most recent set of orders a few months ago, the first two packages arrived from England without problems. However, the third order from England and the order from New Zealand were destroyed at entry. So he reordered and discovered that the vendors were receiving emails from other American customers who had seed orders intercepted and destroyed. The recipients didn't seem to know they needed a permit.

Then, his permitted orders arrived at the Los Angeles, California Port of Entry and he received phone calls telling him he needed to have the *Lathyrus* seeds fumigated with methyl bromide before being sent to the U.S. unless they came from Mexico or Central America. USDA's Plants for Planting https://www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/plants/manuals/ports/downloads/plants_for_planting.pdf manual references the specific type of treatment required, with an index number which links to an entry in another manual you can download from their website called the Treatment Manual https://www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/plants/manuals/ports/downloads/treatment.pdf. However, Lee really wanted these seeds so he began research and discovered by accident the section on seed

treatments. Before the first treatment type listed there was a blue box, and in the blue box was the following 'NOTICE'.

NOTICE: Seeds for Propagation. Precautionary treatment for small lots of seeds (1 lb. or less) is not required if you (the APHIS inspector) can inspect 100 percent of the seeds and you do not find any pests.

At this point Lee called the inspection station and though resistant, the inspector agreed the above stipulation was correct and his seed did not need fumigation. According to Lee, the Notice is generic, so it applies to any seeds that require some kind of fumigation treatment in order to be allowed in. He received his seeds.

There was concern regarding "treatment manuals that were probably written in the dark cubicles of bureaucratic enclaves of the 1950s". However, according to the USDA APHIS website, the latest edition was updated in 2016.

One final comment based on my experience and that of others, always include your phone number, preferably a cell number, on your orders and request that your vendor include it when shipping the seeds. If there is a problem and a USDA inspector is able to reach you directly, it's quite likely any problems can be resolved promptly. As much as we are frustrated by rules and regulations, it is increasingly important to do our part to prevent weedy plants, destructive pests and diseases from entering this country.

¹Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species is an international agreement between governments governing trade in flora and fauna.

²CITES <https://cites.org/eng/app/appendices.php> These numbers 11 and #4 will be found in the Flora (Plants) section under Primulaceae, *Cyclamen* spp. This table covers all genera and is up to date as of 2017. It's easy to search and clicking on the reference numbers will take you to footnotes that are specific to each genera and/or species.

(Ed.: Back when the Small Lots of Seed permit regulations were being formulated, Joyce Fingerut at the North American Rock Garden Society played a major role in helping to make these regulations more reasonable and functional. Her efforts are ongoing.)

Oxalis cont'd

Oxalis purpurea: Like *O. obtusa* the huge variety of flower and foliage forms make this a hugely popular species. As a garden plant this might be even better than *O. obtusa*, although it will travel around a bit.

Oxalis versicolor: Most Oxalis exhibit photonastic flower movements (the flowers open and close in response to light). For me, the best view of *O. versicolor* is on a cool overcast day, when the petals are closed and the candy-cane red margins are in full display. Hard to resist.

Not far behind these choices would be *Oxalis annae*, *cathara*, *glabra* and *stellata*.

The South American Oxalis that are hardy enough for outdoor planting and are probably best grown in rock gardens are easily obtained from the larger bulb suppliers such as McClure and Zimmerman. Far Reaches Farm sells the hybrid 'Ione Hecker', and others may be available from sources mentioned here. As with other Oxalis, they need to be completely dry in summer as they will begin growth in late fall or winter and flower in spring to early summer. The following have delightfully narrowly pleated leaves, usual gray, and none are large plants.

Oxalis adenophylla: White to pink flowers with dark lines. This one is hardy and commonly available, probably the most common. From the Andes in Chile and Argentina.

Oxalis enneaphylla: Fragrant single flowers, white to pale magenta with darker lines. A few named cultivars may be available but will be hard to find. Most often available is the species.

Oxalis laciniata: Probably not hardy in colder zones and best kept in a cool, frost-free greenhouse or sheltered site. Flowers solitary and fragrant varying from lilac-blue, crimson to pink or white. Argentina (Patagonia) up to

200 meters 650 feet).

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Top: *Oxalis purpureae*. Photo: igene Arbeit, selbst fotografiert, Wikimedia Commons. Above: *O. versicolor*. Photo: Rondebosch_Common. Left: *O. enneaphylla*. 'Lady Elizabeth'. Photo: Bob Rutemoeller. Below: *O. adenophylla*. Photo: Bob Rutemoeller.



Announcements - Reports

ATTENTION PBS Members

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS FOR THE 2020 MARY SUE ITTNER GRANT FOR BULB STUDIES

These grants are available to support any PBS member interested in learning more about bulbs. They may be used to support any type of research, including fieldwork, and education. They are available to paid PBS members world-wide, and you may apply for membership when you submit your application. An article for publication is expected as a condition of receiving the grant.

Last year one grant was awarded for the study of the Mexican Rain Lilies. You will find the reports of these studies in future issues of *The Bulb Garden*. For more information, visit the link to the grant page below.

Award amounts vary and the Board of the Pacific Bulb Society has \$1,500 available for grants at this time. The deadline is usually in early spring and will be announced in the next issue of *The Bulb Garden*. The deadline for this coming year is tentatively March 15, 2020.

The complete announcement, conditions, and additional information are found here:

<http://www.pacificbulbsociety.org/grant.html>



Above: *Colchicum atropurpurea* from Illahee Rare Bulbs, four inches in diameter.

Right: *Lilium parryi*.
Photos by the Editor.



Treasurer's Report for Fiscal Year 2019

| | 2nd Quarter |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Balance Jan. 1 2019 | \$ 38,506.67 |
| U.S. Members | \$ 500.00 |
| Overseas Members | \$ 300.00 |
| BX Receipts | \$ 1,209.30 |
| Investment results | \$ 925.05 |
| INCOME | \$ 2,934.35 |
| BX/SX Postage Domestic | \$ (157.06) |
| BX/SX Postage International | \$ (202.64) |
| BX/SX Supplies | \$ - |
| BX Helper | \$ - |
| Board Conference call | \$ (48.47) |
| Treasurer's Supplies | \$ (247.01) |
| Publications | \$ (2,115.00) |
| Accountants fee | \$ (500.00) |
| Publication postage | \$ (552.64) |
| PayPal expense | \$ (75.65) |
| Membership Directory editing | \$ - |
| Bulb Garden editing | \$ - |
| EXPENSES | \$ (3,898.47) |
| Balance End of Quarters | \$ 37,542.55 |

ATTENTION for those interested in the Genus *Lilium*

The **North American Lily Society** seeks serious research with grants through their Research Trust Fund. The grants are required to focus only on projects involving the genus *Lilium* and the avenues of inquiry can be quite varied from pure science to conservation, hybridizing methods and general garden culture among others. The projects must expand the knowledge of the genus and benefit the Society's membership.

Most grants have gone to researchers at university level and require some expertise in designing a useful study with results to be summarized in a publishable article for the Lily Society's quarterly bulletin. It does not however rule out studies done by amateur gardeners who have a keen appreciation for the scientific method and can write engagingly for the gardening public.

Grants can average between \$5,000 and \$10,000, but the Society sometimes partners with other donors to help finance larger and longer duration studies. For further information on the process and guidelines as well as information on studies previously supported, contact Arthur Evans at afoyeans@gmail.com

Minutes of Board Meeting

July 21, 2019
PACIFIC BULB SOCIETY
Conference Call Board Meeting

Present: President Nhu Nguyen, Vice President John Wickham, Secretary Kathryn Andersen, Treasurer Arnold Trachtenberg, Director Jane McGary, Director and Co- Editor Jennifer Hildebrand and Editor Robin Hansen. Absent: Director Albert Stella

President Nguyen called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m. EDT.

Minutes of April 14, 2019 Meeting: Hildebrand moved to accept the minutes as sent out. Second by Trachtenberg. Motion carried.

Membership: McGary said that 302 people have paid so far for 2019. Membership is usually low at this time of year and should pick up in the fall.

Hippeastrum Project: Nguyen will write to the author and indicate that we are ready to publish and ask if that is all right with him. We will send 5 or 10 copies to him. Hildebrand will work with Trachtenberg in deciding what the book should look like.

Treasurer's Report: Trachtenberg reported a UBS balance of \$36,628 with no outstanding liabilities. Using Stamps.com we get a preferential cost for postage. Paypal offers lower rates because of our non-profit status. He has many checks to deposit – BX payments to reconcile. The payments sent to the BS.Treasury@aol.com come directly from PayPal. Trachtenberg said the bookmark supply is low, and he will have more printed.

The Bulb Garden: Hansen tries to cover subjects not often covered. Papers from the Mary Sue Ittner award recipients have been welcomed.

Mary Sue Ittner Award: Nguyen received no applications. Christian Omar Valdes who studied rain lilies in Mexico will submit another proposal. Nguyen feels that people do best in their native areas. Valdes will work on wording and supply pictures. He is an undergraduate majoring in botany. This project could form the basis for a Master's degree. Nguyen moved that he be awarded \$500, second by Trachtenberg. Motion carried.

Electronic Report: There was a glitch at the beginning of the month. The website is on David Pilling's site. He wants no money. He is going to move to a new server and this one will be inside the U.S. The article on Calochortus is now on the site. All should have access. We now have the first 12 years of *The Bulb Garden*. Should we sell them or provide free

access? Nguyen moved that issues more than 2 years old should be free to everyone on the webpage. More recent issues could be sold on a thumb drive after payment through Paypal. Second by Trachtenberg, motion passed.

Policies: Nguyen stated that we need a policy dealing with the way in which Directors spend money and seek reimbursement. Expenditures over \$250 should be pre-approved by the Board. Documentation is necessary for reimbursement of all expenditures. Hansen recommended that the Board seek a liability policy. Trachtenberg will look into such a policy and suggested that bonding the treasurer might be sufficient.

New Business: McGary has received some rare seeds. If they go through the BX, a special contribution should be made. They are to be sown in the fall and kept frost free.

The North American Lily Society has funds available for research related to the genus *Lilium*. Hansen offered to make this information available.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:25 p.m. EDT. The next meeting was set for 1:00 p.m. EDT. October 13, 2019

Respectfully submitted,
Kathryn S. Andersen,
PBS Secretary

Small Showy Alliums by Robin Hansen

When we think of ornamental onions, often we picture the drumstick thugs that stand out like sore thumbs or the chives that have overpowered the vegetable garden boundaries. Better to consider the dozens of beautiful, far less rampant, even dainty, small onions in a rainbow of colors suited to troughs or pots or rock gardens. I ignored even the small ones for years until I was at a rock garden nursery's annual plant sale and realized I'd been missing some incredibly diminutive but showy ornamentals whose flowers often morph into attractive long-lasting balls of subtle colors and whose foliage might be a long-lasting bright green or various shades of gray and silver.

One of my very favorites is *Allium carinatum* sp. *pulchellum*, both the white and lavender or-

Alliums - cont'd

chid colors whose flowers resemble Fourth of July shooting stars that retain a soft color and form for weeks after bloom is finished. They seed around a



Allium carinatum ssp. *pulchellum*. Photo: Robin Hansen.

ed in summer.

Allium flavum ssp. *tauricum* is a lovely clear solid yellow and its flowers are similar to *A. carinatum*'s. The plants are sometimes as much as eight to ten inches but grown hard are shorter. *Allium moly* and its selection 'Jeannine' which does have somewhat larger good yellow flowers are probably more easily available and take the same full sun and good drainage as those previously mentioned.

Another favorite is *Allium sikkimense*, blue to purple in urn-shaped bells similar to *A. cernuum*, one of our smaller native onions. *Allium sikkimense* is about eight to ten inches tall at most and clumps up nicely, probably too much for all but larger troughs. Seed of this allium is usually available from various seed exchanges as are the others mentioned and come easily from seed, flowering two to three years after sowing. Not much of a wait when compared to a number of other bulbs grown from seed.

And lastly, a small cutie I acquired for the first time last year, *Allium kurtzianum*, about four inches (10 cm) with tight clusters of pink to purple downward-facing flowers. This one is perfect for troughs or rock gardens. Not at all common, it comes from Turkey and is starting to show up in the seed lists. Wrightman Alpines lists this one in its catalog.

Ignore the pretty mail order catalogs, break away from the mundane and try some new bulbs that are easy to grow but won't overtake your garden or cre-

ate those nighttime nightmares that leave you tossing and turning. ☺☺☺



Left: *Allium sikkimense*. Photo: Robin Hansen.

Below: *Allium flavum*. Photo: Mary Sue Ittner. *Allium flavum* ssp. *tauricum* is smaller, but very similar.



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