

THE MEDITERRANEAN GARDEN SOCIETY

- NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BRANCH

An international forum devoted to furthering knowledge and appreciation of plants and gardens suited to the mediterranean climate regions of the world

Number 24
Fall 2007

Eriobotrya japonica Lindl.

Rosaceae, subfamily Maloideae

synonymy *Mespilus japonica*, *Photinia japonica*

Loquat, Japanese medlar

AFRIKAANS Lukwart

ARABIC نابايلا رورعز

CATALAN nesprrer del Japó, nesprrer, nesprrera

CHINESE 枇杷 (Pi ba)

FRENCH Bibasse/Bibassier (fruit/tree),
Néfle/Néflier du Japon (fruit/tree)

GREEK Ιαπωνικά μούσμουλα,
Μεσπιλέα η ιαπωνική,
Μουσμουλιά η κοινή

ITALIAN Nespola del Giappone,
Nespolo del Giappone

JAPANESE ビワ, びわ, Biwa

PORTUGUESE Nêsperas do Japão, Nespereira (tree).

SPANISH Nispero de España, Nispero del Japón,
Nispola del Japón, Nispolero

A small, evergreen tree native to southeastern China found in many California gardens. It was introduced into Japan over 1,000 years ago, where it became an important fruit. From there, it was brought to Europe in the 18th century. It has been grown in California since 1870. This easily grown tree prefers a subtropical to warm-temperate climate. It is tolerant of a variety of soils but actually does very well on clay loams (which we have in abundance in our state).

Distinctive among garden trees, the loquat is recognizable with its large, dark green leaves, with creamy-brown to rust felted undersides, which give it a 'tropical' look for which it is favored in temperate climates. New leaves emerge in unique upright clusters, new leaves arching gracefully outward in a whorl surrounding the shoot tip. In addition, the creamy white flowers are also very showy, and appear in winter when they are very welcome.

Though often regarded locally as an ornamental tree, it is grown as a crop extensively in the Western Mediterranean and elsewhere - Spain is the world's largest producer (40,000 tons) and exporter of loquats, followed by Algeria (22,000 tons), Japan (18,000 tons), China, and Brazil. The flesh of the fruit is high in vitamin A and many important minerals, and is eaten fresh, dried, or made into jams or preserves. The fruit, ripening in spring, are borne in large clusters, and may be yellow-orange to creamy-white, commonly round to oval, or even pear-shaped, and up to 2¾ inches (7cm) in length in selected cultivars (self-sow volunteer tree are usually just over half that size).



Stamps from Monaco depicting *Les Quatre Saisons du Bibassier*, 1985

The flesh surrounds a large cluster of hard, mahogany-colored seeds which can be used to make a liqueur (see recipe inside) and are sometimes roasted and eaten. If you are growing loquats for good fruit, find a grafted, selected cultivar. In Spain, with its extensive orchards, a delicate honey is made from the flowers - Miel de Nispero (a favorite of honey connoisseur & well known French MGS member, nurseryman & author Olivier Filippi). Fruit and flowers are damaged by temperatures at about 26 to 28°F (-3.3 to -2.2°C).

In the northeast Alicante province region on the Mediterranean coast of Spain a "Designation of Origin" growing region for nisperos has been created called Callosa d'en Sarrià. It is centered on the Baixa Marina, covering villages such as Callosa d'En Sarrià, Altea and Villajoyosa.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Oct 27 – Wildly Successful Plants, Pam Peirce

Nov 12 – 2007 MGS Annual General Meeting, Athens

(see UPCOMING EVENTS inside for the details)

The International Annual General meeting of the MGS will be in Northern California next year!!! We'd love to have your help. There are all kinds of jobs that need to be done, once the groundwork is laid, so get your name on the list right away! Contact Nancy Swearengen (nswearengen@hotmail.com) or Seán O'Hara (sean@gimcw.org)!

New Mediterranean Garden in the Gardens at Lakeside Park in Oakland

A project that is not exactly new to the Branch, but whose time had not yet come when we last considered it, has been adopted by the newly formed Design Review Committee of the Gardens at Lakeside Park! With a new coalition of supporters from the Oakland-East Bay Garden Center (OEBGC), the Palm Society, the Mediterranean Garden Society, and the Parks and Recreation and Public Works departments of the City of Oakland, plans from the earlier project have been resuscitated, and funding is being sought! Landscape architect Tricia Christopher has adapted the original plan, OEBGC Board member Bruce Cobble Dick has created a brochure, several generous individual contributions have been received, and the project is moving forward.

The centerpiece of this new garden is the historic carved Italian marble "Easterbrook Wellhead" fountain (see box on next page) which must be completely re-plumbed, but we feel we have the very best advice and technology at hand in the person of Paul Cowley of Potomac WaterWorks. Refurbishing the fountain is, unfortunately the first step in creating the garden, and also the most expensive. The project coalition has requested various grants and, as mentioned above, several generous donations. We are looking for additional sources of funding, so if you have any ideas on this subject, or would like to help us raise money for this project, please contact me right away!

We're VERY excited about the prospect of a real Mediterranean demonstration garden at this fabulous site. Considering that the Gardens at Lakeside Park occupy a prime piece of acreage in the middle of the City, our garden may well become a draw for visitors from other Mediterranean regions as well as introduce the local public to our mission. The opportunity to add to Oakland's civic beauty is also unparalleled and very exciting.

If YOU are interested in being involved in this some phase of this project, please let me know. Financial donations are welcome, of course, but we are also looking forward to creating a hub for MGS volunteers who would like to help with the installation and the maintenance. Let us hear from YOU!

Branch Co-chair

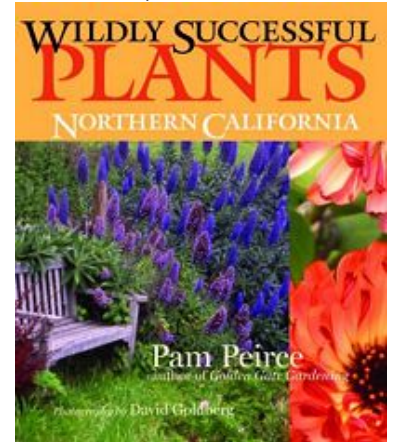
Nancy Swearingen

nswearingen@hotmail.com.

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 27th (Saturday) 1:30pm Orinda

WILDLY SUCCESSFUL PLANTS- We are very fortunate to have local MGS member, Pam Peirce, speaking for our Branch. A well-known author (*Golden Gate Gardening*) and environmental horticulture instructor at San Francisco City College, Pam will base her talk upon her latest book *Wildly Successful Plants: Northern California*. This wonderful book explores 50 plants that survive with little or no care in regional gardens. Many are devalued by sophisticated gardeners, but Pam maintains that these common, easy plants are truly regional garden treasures. They offer drought tolerance, deer resistance, year-round bloom, and other choice features. Her



book tells how to care for them and reclaim them for use in fine garden design. She also includes information on how to get the same easy-care features from some of their less common varieties and related species.

It is no surprise that many of these plants came from mediterranean climate areas, but the origins of some of them are truly surprises. Pam also recovered many unexpected pieces of horticultural history in tracing how these plants came to be in so many of our gardens. Finally, unlike many books dealing with plants that are a bit vigorous, Pam tackles head-on the issues of management, removal, and preventing wildland invasion.

If you secretly admire some rather common Bay Area flowers, or just wonder where they came from and how to use them in fresh ways, come and hear Pam's presentation. After her talk, we will have light refreshments and an opportunity to meet the speaker as well as other MGS members.

Orinda Library, 24 Orinda Way, Orinda. A \$10 donation is requested. Copies of our Garden Resource Guide for Northern California will also be available for an additional donation.

November 12th (Monday) Athens, Greece

INTERNATIONAL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE MGS - All current members are invited to the General Assembly of the MGS which will take place at the Gaia Centre of the Goulandris Natural History Museum in Kifissia, Athens, Greece. During this meeting elections will be held for the Society's officers, details of which will appear in the July issue of this journal and on the MGS website.

If you plan to attend but have not already registered for other AGM events, please inform the event organizer:

Katie Papadimitriou, Symvoli Ltd, mgs2007@symvoli.gr.

RECIPES

(Loquat juice stains; wear rubber gloves as you work)

Loquat Chutney

(© 1993 Sunset Publishing Corp; ©2004 Gale Group)

10 pounds (about 1 gal.) loquats, rinsed well and drained
3½ cups firmly packed brown sugar
2 cups cider or distilled white vinegar
2 tablespoons minced fresh ginger
2 tablespoons grated orange peel

Cut loquats in half. Discard stems, seeds, and whitish inner membranes. Coarsely chop fruit; it will darken.

In a 10- to 12-quart pan, combine loquats, sugar, vinegar, ginger, and peel. Bring to a boil over high heat. Boil gently, uncovered, until mixture is thick and syrupy, about 45 minutes; stir occasionally—more often as mixture thickens to prevent scorching. Serve warm or cool.

When chutney is cool, package airtight and chill up to 2 weeks; or seal in 1- to 2-cup freezer containers and freeze up to 1 year. Makes about 11 cups.

Per tablespoon: 24 cal. (0 percent from fat); 0.1 g protein; 0 g fat; 6.3 g carbo.; 1.5 mg sodium; 0 mg chol.

Loquat Wine

(Winemaking Home Page - winemaking.jackkeller.net)

4 lbs fresh loquats	1 crushed Campden tablet
2 lbs granulated sugar	1/2 tsp pectic enzyme
1 tsp acid blend	1/2 tsp grape tannin
1 gallon water	wine yeast and nutrient

Wash fruit and remove seeds. Chop the fruit finely or roughly in a blender. Pour fruit over half the sugar, crushed Campden tablet, tannin, yeast nutrient, and enough water to total one gallon in primary, stirring well to dissolve the sugar. Cover with cloth.

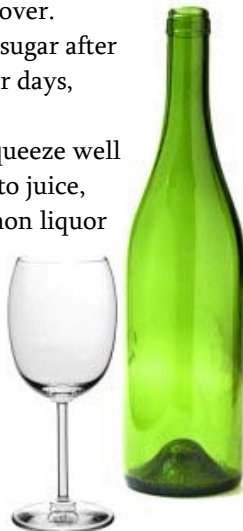
After 12 hours, add pectic enzyme and recover. After another 12 hours, add wine yeast and recover.

Stir daily, adding half the remaining sugar after three days. Ferment on pulp another four days, stirring daily.

Strain through nylon jelly bag and squeeze well to extract juice. Pour remaining sugar into juice, juice into secondary, and fit airlock. Siphon liquor off sediments into clean secondary after 30 days, topping up as needed.

Repeat racking every 30 days until wine clears (3-4 additional rackings). Rack once more and taste. If satisfied With sweetness, bottle the wine.

Can be drunk young, but improves considerably if left in bottles one year.



Italian Loquat Seed Liqueur

(from Alessandra Vinciguerra to the Medit-Plants forum in Spring 2001*)

200g loquat seeds	300g water
400g grain alcohol (such as Everclear)	lemon rind
	vanilla bean
300g sugar	

Dry loquat seeds in sun for a week. Put in a bottle with grain alcohol, a piece of lemon rind and a split vanilla bean. Keep covered in sun for 1 month, shaking it occasionally.

Prepare syrup of the sugar and water. Boil, then when cool mix with spirit, filter and bottle.

Keep to season at least 2-6 months before drinking - it will mellow to a flavor reminiscent of Amaretto.

* Alessandra Vinciguerra is a landscape designer living/working in Italy (Rome & Naples area). She has been a frequent participant in the Medit-Plants e-mail forum (see gimcw.org/forum/ for forum information).



The Easterbrook Wellhead in Lakeside Park

This historic landmark was completely unknown to the various City of Oakland landmark groups and offices when we made inquiries in 1999. Ultimately, through continued research, a single article (*Random Rambles in the Eastbay*, by E.G.Fitzhamon, May 15th 1927, Oakland Tribune) was uncovered in Oakland Tribune archives by the staff of the Oakland History Room. The MGS made copies of this article were made available to each City of Oakland office previously queried.

"Most bountiful and kindest of all landmarks and objects set up in Oakland's delightfully sylvan little park adjacent to Lake Merritt is the pleasing bird-fountain donated by Mrs. Daniel E. Easterbrook in 1914" states E.G.Fitzhamon in his article. "This attractive work in high relief, credited to Petrelli, distinguished sculptor at Florence, said to have been carved from pure white Carrara marble." He continues on about the Easterbrooks, their contributions to the community, their art collections, then concludes with "She loves her Oakland and Eastbay. But she loves birds, too. It was to them that she gave the beautiful marble fountain rather than to the city of Oakland, she declares."

MGS Elections 2007

During the General Assembly to be held on November 12th in Athens, Greece, the new MGS Administrative Committee will be elected, as well as the three-member Auditing Committee. The AC has five voting members, President, Vice President, General Secretary, Treasurer and Councillor, and three reserve members who take an active part in the work of the Society. All regular paid-up members of the Society are eligible to vote including all Joint Members.

As of this year, members may appoint another member to **vote in proxy** for them at the General Assembly, to a total of 5 proxies carried by one member. To secure this, you must:

- send a letter to the proxy holder making the appointment
- send to the General Secretary (mgssec@hol.gr) a separate letter or email simply informing the AC that you appointed a proxy holder and who that proxy holder is.

This is the first year for proxy voting, so sudden changes may be expected. The list of candidates is scheduled to be published in the October Journal. If you are registered for the 2007 AGM and would consider carrying proxies, or if you'd like to assign a proxy to vote for you, please contact Branch Co-chair Seán O'Hara (sean@gimcw.org).

Wanted by the Nor-Cal Branch Executive Committee:

An energetic person (or people) who would enjoy being in charge of program planning and production. It's a fun job, not terribly time-consuming, and you get to hang out with all kinds of interesting people! If you're interested, please contact Nancy (nswearngen@hotmail.com) or Seán (sean@gimcw.org).

We invite you to join

The Mediterranean Garden Society to learn more about gardening in our unique and desirable climate.

Annual memberships are Jan-Dec, and includes the quarterly journal, *The Mediterranean Garden*, containing articles written by members worldwide.

If you join mid-year, you'll receive all 4 journal issues for that year.

membership dues:

Annual - \$45 Life - \$450

Joint annual - \$75

Joint life - \$750

Send your personal check or credit card information to:

The MGS Secretary
Sparoza, P.O.Box 14
GR-190 02 Peania, GREECE
(International letter postage rate is 84¢)
tel/fax: 011 30 1 664 3089
(+ 10 hours)
email: mgssec@hol.gr

Payment of dues for the Mediterranean Garden Society includes you in this Branch if your address is within our range or if you specify branch inclusion directly on the membership form. You can join at any of our events or send your application separately.

For a membership form, contact Sue Ann Manners, (925) 254-0226, or visit the MGS web site:

www.MediterraneanGardenSociety.org

This newsletter is published in the FALL, WINTER, & SPRING (dormant in SUMMER!) to announce the events and news of the Northern California Branch of the MGS.

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THE MEDITERRANEAN GARDEN SOCIETY
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