

# 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 25  
Winter-Spring 2008



## 2008 Annual General Meeting

All members are invited to the 14th Annual General Meeting of the Mediterranean Garden Society which will take place in **Monterey, October 9-12, 2008**. The program will include a mini-symposium co-sponsored with *Pacific Horticulture* magazine, which is also open to the public (Saturday, October 11). The event will feature noted local garden authorities, garden visits arranged by a group of eminent landscape designers, and excursions to important local natural history sites. The General Assembly will be held on Sunday, October 12. Two days of optional visits are planned for October 13 & 14. More details and information on how to register will be in the April issue of the MGS journal and on the MGS web site.

### *You Can Get Involved!*

The new Mediterranean Garden in Oakland's Lakeside Park is finally taking shape. Volunteers will be needed for planting, and maintaining! Contact Nancy Swarengen if you would like more information.

We are expecting a number of European visitors for the Annual General Meeting. Some of them may be interested in extending their visits to Northern California, especially if they can stay with local mediterranean gardeners. Please contact Nancy or Sean if you are interested in hosting a visitor or two this fall!

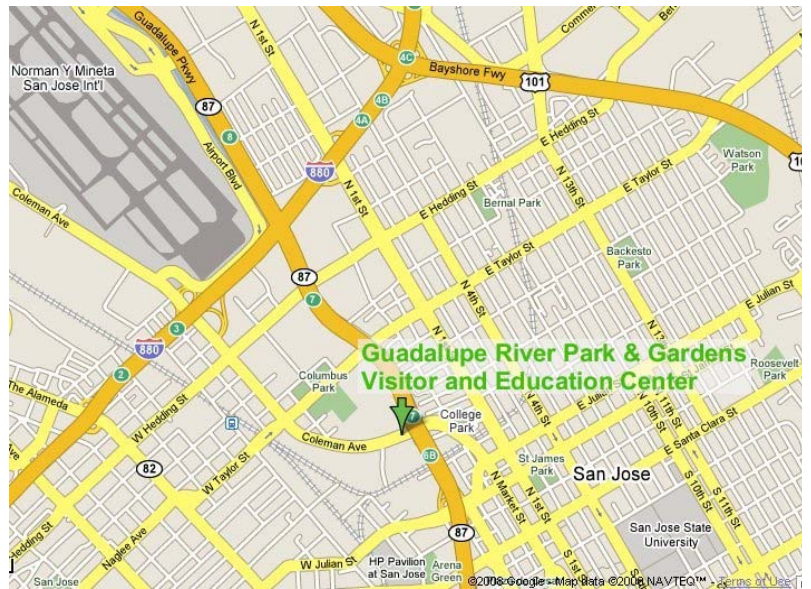
Seán O'Hara – gimcw.org

Nancy Swarengen – nswarengen@hotmail.com

## UPCOMING EVENTS

April 5<sup>th</sup> (Saturday) 1-4pm San Jose

**THE HISTORY OF CITRUS IN CA: FROM FARMS TO YARDS** – with Aaron Dillon, of Four Winds Growers (see a brief history on the next page), whose talk will cover citrus in our state from its Spanish beginnings up to today, including the development of dwarf citrus and some of the exciting new varieties available in recent years; Guadalupe River Park & Gardens, 438 Coleman Avenue (see map below). A \$10 donation is requested. Our *Garden Resource Guide for Northern California* will also be available for an additional donation.



There is limited parking at the GRPG Visitor and Education Center itself, but it is possible to park in the mall lot across Coleman Avenue, connected by a cross-walk with a traffic stop light.

April 20<sup>th</sup> (Sunday) South Bay & Peninsula

**GOING NATIVE GARDEN TOUR** – A free, self-guided tour of South Bay and Peninsula gardens featuring native plants; for information & registration, visit [www.goingnativegardentour.org](http://www.goingnativegardentour.org).

April 27<sup>th</sup> (Sunday) Alameda County

**BAY FRIENDLY GARDEN TOUR** – A free, self-guided tour of Alameda County gardens featuring low resource consumption and appropriate plant selection; for information & registration, visit [www.stopwaste.org](http://www.stopwaste.org).

May 4<sup>th</sup> (Sunday) East Bay

**BRINGING BACK THE NATIVES GARDEN TOUR** – A free, self-guided tour of East Bay gardens featuring native plants; for information & registration, visit [www.bringingbackthenatives.net](http://www.bringingbackthenatives.net).

(UPCOMING EVENTS is continued inside)

# Meyer Lemon Facts

The Meyer lemon has enjoyed a recent resurgence of interest of late, but it was introduced to the United States in the early 1900s from China by Frank Meyer, a Dutch plant explorer. Thought by some to be a cross between an acidic lemon and a mandarin, this thin-skinned fruit was originally treated as an ornamental oddity, grown mainly in frost-free areas. Anyone living outside the citrus belt never saw this new lemon because its thin, delicate skin made commercial distribution unfeasible.

Around the same time, Floyd Dillon had moved to Northern California to try his hand at the dwarf plant wholesale nursery business, establishing Four Winds Growers in Fremont. A woman from nearby Brentwood contacted him about a beautiful Meyer lemon tree that she had growing in her yard. With buds from this tree, Dillon propagated the Meyer for several years. Floyd Dillon was the great-grandfather of our April 5<sup>th</sup> speaker, Aaron Dillon.

In the 1960s, tristeza virus threatened the commercial citrus industry and endangered Meyers as well as other citrus varieties. Fortunately, the California Department of Agriculture screening concluded that Four Winds Growers had the only virus-free selections, which became the stock for the Improved Meyer.

Four Winds is a leader in the sale and propagating of dwarf Improved Meyer lemon trees. The Improved Meyer's ease of growing and unique flavor, have contributed to its popularity.

As Improved Meyer lemons typically don't exceed 8 feet, it's a great tree to grow in a large urn or espaliered against a south-facing fence or wall. Improved Meyers have a compact growing habit and don't require pruning. Suckers growing from below the bud union (non-Meyer) should be removed so that the tree can remain healthy and produce superior fruit.

Meyers typically produce a large quantity of fruit, which keep well on the tree. Ripening can take up to a year and the fruit will continue to mature and turn a deep yellow-orange color until picked. The unusual flavor of this lemon, sweeter and with a very fragrant rind, can be used alone or combined with other types of lemons, depending upon the recipe and tartness desired (Meyers will reduce the tartness). Adding Meyer juice to regular limes can approximate a Key Lime flavor.

A healthy potted specimen will often bear flowers and fruit at the same time, making a marvelous patio tree, where its distinctive fragrance can be enjoyed close at hand.

Seán O'Hara

## Gâteau à le Citron Meyer et au Gingembre (*flourless Meyer lemon and ginger cake*)

adapted from Clotilde Dusoulier's blog ([ChocolateAndZucchini.com](http://ChocolateAndZucchini.com))

3-4 Meyer lemons	a thumb-sized knob of fresh ginger, peeled & grated
6 eggs	
1 cup sugar	¼ cup candied ginger, diced small
2½ cup almond flour or meal	1 tsp of baking powder

frosting	
the zest & juice of one lemon	2 oz thick sugar crystals

Clean and scrub the lemons well. Cover with water in a medium saucepan. Over medium heat, bring to a boil and simmer for two hours, adding a little hot water when the level gets too low (the smell of boiling citrus has nothing to do with the smell or taste of the finished product). Drain, and cool. Cut in quarters and puree in the food processor.

Preheat oven to 375°F. Grease a 24 cm (8-inch) springform cake pan.

In a large mixing bowl, beat the eggs with a fork. Whisk in the lemon puree, the sugar, the almonds, the baking powder, the fresh ginger, until well blended. Fold in the bits of candied ginger.

Pour the batter in the cake pan, and bake for about an hour, until puffy and golden. Let cool for a few minutes on a rack. Run a knife around the cake to loosen it, and remove the sides of the pan.

Put sugar crystals in a small bowl with the lemon juice and zest. Spoon this evenly onto the top of the cake. Cool completely before serving. Can be made a day ahead, wrapped in plastic and stored in the refrigerator.

## Meyer Lemon Aioli

2 garlic clove	1 Meyer lemon, zested and juiced
½ tsp salt	1 cup olive oil
1 egg yolk	

In a mortar, pound the garlic and salt to form a paste. Stir in the egg yolk, lemon zest, and juice until integrated. Add the olive oil in a slow trickle to the side of the mortar until completely combined.

## Preserved Meyer Lemons

2½ to 3lb Meyer lemons (10 to 12)	¼ cup olive oil
¾ cup coarse salt	6-cup jar with tight-fitting lid

Blanch 6 lemons in boiling water 5 minutes. When cool enough to handle, cut into 8 wedges each and discard seeds. Toss with salt in a bowl and pack into jar. Squeeze enough juice from remaining lemons to measure 1 cup. Add juice to cover lemons and cover jar with lid. Let stand at room temperature, shaking gently once a day, 5 days. Add oil and chill. Preserved lemons keep, chilled, up to 1 year.

*Their mild sweetness and lush fragrance (which intensify at the peak of the season, in January and February) make them a natural in desserts, but they're also great in savory dishes where you don't want astringency, just brightness. Roasted with carrots and parsnips (see recipe), Meyers add a sweet-tart punctuation — and because they have very little bitter pith, the caramelized slices are delicious. Unlike regular lemons, Meyers don't so much compete with herbs and spices as blend with them, their own floral fragrance adding an alluring complexity.*

Monica Parcell, *Bon Appétit*, February 2005

## How our Society Operates

Perhaps in response to last year's Society elections, there have been a large number of questions to the Branch which seem to indicate that a simple primer of MGS operations might be in order. The following is an attempt to cover a few of the common questions/misunderstandings that have arisen, but if there are ever any questions that you wish answered, please feel free to contact the Branch co-chairs or a member of our executive committee.

The MGS has official non-profit status in Greece and legally operates as a Greek organization. MGS Branches operate independently and may or may not file non-profit status in their home country/state. The Northern California Branch does not currently have official non-profit status, though we continue to consider its potential value to our group.

Your annual MGS membership dues go directly to the Society operations in Greece. They pay for the general overhead of the Society and the publication and mailing of the quarterly Journal, *The Mediterranean Garden*. Dues for Californians have recently risen because of the falling US dollar as compared to the Euro. When you pay your dues by credit card, the current Euro equivalent is charged – in this way, the Society does not have to deal with figuring out the world's changing money markets. Branches do not receive any portion of your dues nor do they receive any other subsidy. They are charged with being self-sustaining. Our Branch operates on donations received at various events and from our Resource Guide (see last page).

The MGS does not specifically mandate Branch activities but it does require that we operate within the bounds of the Society charter. Some Branches have routine events and functions, others have very few. Some serve compact, discreet districts (e.g. the Catalonia Branch on the Mediterranean coast of western France and eastern Spain); others try to encompass large regions or even whole countries! (e.g. the Italian Branch). The Northern California Branch works to serve the various parts of the Greater Bay Area by holding events in different places

Inexpensive venues for small non-profits are more and more difficult to find. If you have suggestions, we'd love to hear about them. Events also take organizers. If you, or a group of you, have an idea and are willing to put together a single event in your area, it would greatly expand our ability to serve all our members!

In hosting the 2008 Annual General Meeting, the Northern California Branch is charged with creating an event that covers its own costs (though the Society has agreed to provide some deposits up front). Any surplus (or deficit) of funds is settled with the Society headquarters in Greece (i.e. we receive no funds from this event).

If you have further questions or questions about the above, please let us know.

Seán O'Hara – gimcw.org

Nancy Swearngen – nswearngen@hotmail.com

## UPCOMING EVENTS continued

April-June 10am-4pm daily San Francisco

A PASSION FOR PLANTS - An exhibition of botanical paintings by **Catherine M Watters** and her students; San Francisco Botanical Garden Society at Strybing Arboretum, Helen Crocker Russell Library of Horticulture, 9th Ave./Lincoln Way, (415) 661-1316, [www.sfbotanicalgarden.org](http://www.sfbotanicalgarden.org).

May 14<sup>th</sup> (Wednesday) 7pm Los Altos

PLANTS, PEOPLE, AND ART IN A CALIFORNIA GARDEN - lecture with **Jeff Rosendale**, nurseryman & longtime MGS member; Western Horticultural Society; 205 Covington Road; for information visit [www.westernhort.org](http://www.westernhort.org), or call 408 867-9428.

June 16<sup>th</sup> (Monday) 7:15pm San Francisco

DESIGN WITH PALMS – presented by Jason Dewees & Flora Grubb; California Horticultural Society, Ninth Avenue at Lincoln Way, for more info, call 415/566-5222, or visit [www.calhortsociety.org](http://www.calhortsociety.org); admission \$5

June 22<sup>nd</sup> (Sunday) 11am Woodside

A PICNIC IN THE GARDEN OF BETSY CLEBSCH – We will walk with the author/plantswoman (*A Book of Salvias* & *The New Book of Salvias: Sages for Every Garden*) through her delightful garden on a mountain ridge overlooking scenic Mindogo Hill. Attendees will bring their own bag lunches and folding chairs or blankets, for a picnic under the oaks. This free event is open only to a limited number of members so you must reserve by contacting Susan Bouchez, [susanbouchez@gmail.com](mailto:susanbouchez@gmail.com) or 650-949-3447. Driving instructions will be sent. After lunch you'll have the opportunity to visit Yerba Buena Nursery, ([www.yerbabuenanursery.com](http://www.yerbabuenanursery.com)) native plant specialists.

September 4<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) 7:30pm San Francisco

PLANTING NATIVES FOR POLLINATORS – presented by Don Mahoney; California Native Plant Society, Yerba Buena Chapter, Recreation Room, County Fair Bldg., 9th Ave./Lincoln Way, (415) 282-5066, [www.cnps-yerbabuena.org](http://www.cnps-yerbabuena.org)

September 19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> (Fri-Sun) Napa

THE LATE SHOW - Come celebrate art, food and wine while experiencing a contemporary horticultural palette focused on renewable resources and the challenges of gardening during global climate change. There has never been a show like this! It is an unparalleled opportunity for world class minds to come together in one place and discuss ideas that may help to improve our impact on the world. For more information, visit [thelateshowgardens.org](http://thelateshowgardens.org).

October 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> (Thu-Sun) Monterey

2008 MGS INTERNATIONAL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – (see information featured on the front page)

**THE GARDEN RESOURCE GUIDE  
FOR  
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA'S  
MEDITERRANEAN CLIMATE**



 THE MEDITERRANEAN GARDEN SOCIETY  
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BRANCH

**The Garden Resource Guide  
for  
Northern California's  
Mediterranean Climate**

Published in 2004, our publication continues to be a popular addition to horticulture bookshelves throughout our area. Handsomely spiral bound and with a clear plastic cover for durability, it contains 60+ pages of resources for gardening, visiting, shopping, joining, reading, learning, and more.

To order, please send a \$10 donation (which covers postage & handling) along with mailing address & contact information to

**The Mediterranean Garden Society,  
Northern California Branch  
PO Box 542, Lafayette, CA 94549**

**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](http://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.

EDITOR: Seán O'Hara, sean@gimcw.org



**THE MEDITERRANEAN GARDEN SOCIETY**  
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BRANCH  
P.O.Box 542  
Lafayette, CA 94549

**Co-chairs**

Seán O'Hara

Nancy Swearngen

**Executive Committee**

Susan Bouchez

Stitch Boyle

Sue Ann Manners

Nancy Mead

Seán O'Hara

Nancy Swearngen

Judy Thomas

Bracey Tiede

**Advisory Board**

Russ Beatty

Betsy Clebsch

Anthony Garza

Bill Grant

Katherine Greenberg

Chris Jacobsen

Warren Roberts

Bernard Trainor

Richard Turner

Phil Van Soelen