

Geraniamania

Planting Since 1972



A Publication of the San Diego Geranium Society
The San Diego Geranium Society meets the Second
Tuesday of the month, 7 p.m., in Room 101 of the
Casa Del Prado in Balboa Park.
Meetings are Free! All Welcome!

Presidents Message

As I am writing this I look out my window and see a wonderful gentle rain and our geraniums are loving it. Even though it is raining, water potted plants on a regular schedule. The foliage may cover the pot's surface, and the soil may not get wet. Allow excess water to drain away. Keep potted plants out of prolonged rain. Continue feeding potted geraniums with a water soluble fertilizer and keep up a pest control and disease prevention program.

Top pinch any plants that were previously cut back, and when the stems start to leaf out cut them back to one-half the stem length. Rotate potted plants to keep them well shaped. This is per our geranium expert Jim Zemcik.

I will have my drill if you have any pots that need a drain hole. Don't forget to share your plants with show-and-tell and also bring cuttings. This is a great way to increase your collection. When you get the cutting home, trim to six inches or less, and strip off the lower leaves. Put it in water overnight and into Perlite the next day. Be sure to label it with the date and the name, if you have it.

Jack Ohmstede/President



Geranium Conference Meeting

We will have our second Geranium Conference meeting on Thursday, February 11th at 7:00 pm. The meeting will be held at Sharon Pearce's home (3541 Marathon Dr - 92123 - 858-560-5336). Please let her know if you will be attending! Those who came to our meeting in January came with great ideas! We're making good progress, but we could still use your help!

REMINDER: The Geranium Conference will be held on Saturday, April 2nd at The San Diego Botanic Garden! Be sure it's on your calendar! It will cost \$25 to attend - so start saving up now!

**Next Meeting:
February 9, 2016**

Valentine's Day Potluck!

We'll be starting early - 6:30pm
If you can come early to help set up,
that would be greatly appreciated!
ALSO please bring enough to feed at least 8 people

Don't forget to -
Bring Cuttings from your Garden -
Bring a plant for "Show and Tell"

We will be doing a super easy craft project -
something for us -
and something for the Conference!
PLEASE bring scissors, and any scraps of
narrow ribbon you may have! We'll provide
everything else!

Membership Roster

Many of you have expressed a desire for a Membership Roster - and we're listening! We'd like to put together a roster that includes photos - so please come prepared to be photographed at this meeting!

SDGS Officers/General Contact

President - Jack Ohmstede
Vice President - Gloria Barry
Treasurer - Brenda Archer
Secretary - Cathy Miller
Newsletter Editor
sharonpearce2005@yahoo.com

Scented Geraniums Were Stars in Victorian Valentine Bouquets

Barbara Crookshanks

http://www.librarypoint.org/scented_geraniums

Scented geraniums' modest flowers are almost invisible among the big blossoms of their flamboyant cousins...but their fragrant leaves made them the secret stars of Victorian Valentine bouquets.

"Once no bouquet was deemed complete without a bit of this fragrant foliage," wrote Louise Beebe Wilder in her 1932 classic, *The Fragrant Path*. She suggested using the leaves as "a delightful frill" for a bunch of sweet peas or stocks, or combining rose geraniums and nasturtiums for a stimulating nosegay.

Scented geraniums' aromas range from sweet rose to pungent cinnamon. They had an honored place in Kate Greenaway's *The Language of Flowers* with the rose geranium meaning "preference;" the lemon, "unexpected meeting;" the nutmeg, "expected meeting."

In their 19th-century heyday, scented geraniums (pelargonium) were grown in hundreds of varieties. Their scents included rose, lemon, lime, orange, filbert, nutmeg, almond, apple, anise, pine, musk, violet, lavender, balm, oak, and peppermint.

They sailed to England about 1795 from the Cape of Good Hope via the British fleet. England fell in love with them both for their rainbow of fragrances and their practical uses. The rose geranium could mimic the costly attar of roses' famed scent.

Scented geraniums starred in horticultural shows and were ideal to scent sachets and potpourri. The leaves floated gracefully in crystal finger bowls.

The plants were -- and are -- easy to grow. Contentment for scented geraniums means fertile, well drained soil, fairly cool temperature, and full sun. They propagate easily from cuttings. Pinch them back during their growing seasons. Found today in specialty nurseries and catalogs, they become house plants during winter months.

The little plants with the sweet leaves soon arrived in the United States and were highly popular well into the early 20th century. In his 780-page *Household Discoveries: An Encyclopaedia of Practical Recipes and Processes*, published in 1908, Sidney Morse advises good housekeepers to use bags of "odorous leaves," including those of scented geraniums, to assist in preserving linens from the attacks of insects.

The "sweet leaves" added delightful and inexpensive flavors to cookery on both sides of the Atlantic. Virginia ladies placed a scented rose geranium leaf in each jelly glass before pouring in the boiling syrup. They also made several flavors of sugar by placing scented geranium leaves in their sugar jars.

As years passed, scented geraniums gradually became as out of style as the pompadour and the wasp waist. Louise Beebe Wilder credited their downfall to the popularity of their large and colorful cousins, the bedding geraniums which filled flower beds with "solid blocks of red and pink and white."

However, she predicted that her favorite little plants would take their places in the sun again. Her prediction slowly seems to be coming true.

