

# NEWSLETTER



ARBORETA & BOTANIC GARDENS

prepared by the public services division

December 10, 1973

## RESEARCH DIVISION

Part of the new research by Wayne Loescher involves development of new techniques for propagating plants which have resisted propagation in spite of repeated attempts by nurserymen and horticulturists. These difficult-to-root plants include nearly all species of Eucalyptus and most species of pines and oaks. The relatively new technique of tissue culture is being used to propagate these plants. For this, callus cultures from small pieces of tissue from Eucalyptus ficifolia and Eucalyptus globulus have been established. Experiments are currently underway to determine the requirements for best callus growth and also for best root development. Our results now show that the callus cultures can be grown on a mixture of inorganic salts, sucrose, vitamins, and a combination of two plant growth regulators, 2, 4-D and kinetin. Results also show that roots can be initiated in cultures of E. ficifolia. The requirements for root initiation are different from those required for callus growth since naphthalene acetic acid replaces 2,4-D and no added kinetin is necessary. Additional experiments are being conducted to determine requirements for shoot initiation. The goal is to induce both root and shoot formation in these cultures. Any plantlets so obtained would be similar in function to rooted cuttings, serving as a source of new plants identical to the parent plant from which the cultures or the cuttings were initially taken.

## ARBORETUM DIVISION

The Division Heads, California Arboretum Foundation, Inc., and other supporting organizations are sponsoring a luncheon on December 21, 1973, at 12 noon to honor the many department retirees. Valued employees of long time service are leaving in number due to forced retirement at the end of this year. We hope all employees will join with us in wishing our fellow workers and friends a happy retirement. If you have any questions about the party, check with your supervisor. The retirees are: Joyce Day, Glenn Hiatt, Mark Anthony, Jess Tomory, Gertrude Woods, Henry Noerdlinger, Carl Roth, and Ruth Taylor.

Other retirees who have already left county service are expected to be in attendance and we will once again have a chance to wish Francis Raitt and Al Bardelli continued enjoyment in their new life.

Most recent news about Ross Goodrich is that he is in fair condition and is keeping up good spirits.

## SOUTH COAST DIVISION

We will have a special Christmas exhibit, "Holidays in the Garden," on display from December 16-26. A reception from 2-4 p.m. on December 16 will open the event. Exhibitors are members of various garden clubs and plant societies in the South Bay area.

A retirement party for Henry Noerdlinger is being planned by the staff for a date in December. We and many of the garden's regular visitors will certainly miss Henry.

The remodeling of our southeast visitors' rest area (Leisure Circle) has now been completed. Visitors are invited to relax and enjoy the new surroundings.

Fall has brought us 2.04 inches of rain, season to date. We have twice recently recorded low temperatures of 38° and there were six days when the mercury failed to reach 60°. In spite of the rain and cold, we have had a number of volunteers helping out in the propagation project. We especially want to thank Bonnie Finnegan, Daniel Scott, Sandra Remoaldo, and Susan Nunamaker.

The Audubon Society will hold their annual Christmas tally in the Information Center at 7:30 p.m. December 22. We have been told to keep our eyes open for a big red bird with white chin and crest and black feet, also identifiable by its distinctive "Hohoho!" call.

Speaking of birds, these were observed during the November walks: common raven, scrub jay, red-shafted flicker, rock dove, California quail, house wren, loggerhead shrike, white-throated sparrows, Brewer's blackbird, Audubon's and black-throated gray warblers. Not seen lately are quite a number of our mallard residents. Perhaps they went home with someone for Thanksgiving dinner?

## EDUCATION DIVISION

Last October we started a new school horticultural program in the south bay area in cooperation with the Los Angeles School District area office and science center. The program consists of lecture-demonstrations in gardening at the schools for 4th, 5th, and 6th grades. They are conducted outdoors or in the classroom, depending on the facilities available. Ron Call, Education assistant at South Coast, has been the trailblazer in this program and has been so successful that we now have a long waiting list of teachers wanting to participate. A similar program is being organized for school districts in and near Arcadia.

## DESCANSO GARDENS DIVISION

The last week of November everyone was busily involved in the preparation of the annual Christmas exhibit. The show opened Saturday, December 1. Although it was raining most of the day, several hundred people braved the weather and came to see it. It is a beautiful exhibit this year as always. Over 7,000 persons have attended so far. On opening day, Channel 4 televised a portion of the show on Focus at 3:30 p.m. Miss Penrose narrated while Guild members made wreaths and other table decorations.

The timely early rains and cool nights are causing many of the camellias to bloom. The camellia bushes covered with flowers of the winter annual will very soon turn Descanso into a floral carpet.

The entire Grand Jury of Los Angeles County visited the Christmas exhibit and took a tour of the grounds Monday, December 3.

The lake has been filled with large flocks of wild ducks these days. They are migrating south and often they will stop to visit for a day or so. The annual visitor, the Great Blue Heron, has returned to the lake for the winter months.

## ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DIVISION

Reduced hallway and office lighting, lowered thermostats, turned off display fountains, and reduced County vehicle mileage are among the ways this Department is responding to the County-wide effort to conserve energy. You no doubt are doing similar things at home, not only to save energy but also to save money. Whether or not the County will have to impose severe restrictions on all departments depends mostly, of course, on conditions beyond our control. Meanwhile, we can each help the situation by practising what this Department, in particular, stands for - conservation!

We wish to add our welcome to Roy Ito, our new assistant director as of December 1. Mr. Ito comes to us from the Chief Administration Office where he has had long experience in personnel and administration. Roy is looking forward to meeting everyone at our Christmas luncheon, December 21st.

Christmas paychecks will be handed out at the December 21 luncheon.

## PUBLIC SERVICES DIVISION

The fuel shortage has affected our school field trip program and tram tours. The Los Angeles School District has cancelled all of its field journeys resulting in a near wash-out of field trips at South Coast, about a 75% drop at Descanso, and about a 20% drop at the Arboretum. Other school districts are filling the gap at the Arboretum, less so at the other gardens. The fine skills of our volunteer field leaders are being redirected toward visits to schools (where feasible), and toward adult walking tours.

As for our tram tours, there was a time when a tram would leave as scheduled even with only five or six passengers aboard. Now we will not operate any of our trams unless they are at least one-third full.

Lasca Leaves and our revised fire-retardant-plants brochure will be off the press and available next week.