

NEWSLETTER



ARBORETA & BOTANIC GARDENS

lib prepared by the public services division

October 10, 1974

EDUCATION DIVISION

Jeffery Hook is the new Education Assistant at South Coast. A graduate of the University of California at Santa Barbara where he earned a degree in Natural Resources, Jeff's specialty is Plant Taxonomy. Jeff's responsibility includes the afternoon and Saturday morning Youth Education Workshops and school visitations.

Volunteer school field leader training sessions began the week of September 23. Forty volunteers are attending at LASCA, 30 at Descanso, and 20 at South Coast. Our thanks to staff members from the Maintenance, Research, and Public Services divisions at all three facilities who are participating in the program as discussion leaders.

SOUTH COAST DIVISION

With the new school year, the school field leader volunteers are back in action. Training sessions for new members began September 23. Adult Education classes convened in September, and we look forward to the start of Youth Education classes next month. We wish success to Dean Gump (Summer As-needed GMM) as he returns to studies at Cal Poly, Pomona, and good fortune to Tom Peters as he enters a business venture in Tahoe.

The most asked question at South Coast--when are you going to fix the lake?--was answered this month as the Sanitation Districts' trucks and machinery rolled to the site and dug in to the project. The question now is: How soon until they finish?

PUBLIC SERVICES DIVISION

New tour guides Glenn Dodd and Ray Robinson are learning how to operate our Multilith off-set press. Having the advantage of a broad background in art, Ray will be the number one operator with Glenn coming off the bench as needed.

Dave Fields opened this year's volunteer school field leader training sessions with a presentation on the importance of plants to man. For the 4th session later this month, Ray Robinson will give a lecture hall and field presentation on the subject of plant and animal adaptations. At Descanso, Don Graf will speak on native and Chaparral plants, and Bob Vargas on plant science. At South Coast, Eric Brooks is serving as a coordinator of the volunteer training program.

We wish to welcome Kathleen Stone to the Public Services as-needed tour guide staff at South Coast. Ms. Stone is an English major at Cal State, Long Beach, who has acquired considerable plant knowledge through work in a plant boutique in Rolling Hills.

RESEARCH DIVISION

Approximately 15 seeds of a plant known botanically as Dioscoreophyllum cumminsii were received from the Botany Department of the University of Ghana, West Africa yesterday. The plant does not have much ornamental value but should prove popular to the Arboretum "weight watchers" since it contains a sugar substitute approximately 3,000 times as sweet as sugar itself. Two-thousandths of an ounce of this substance equals only two-hundredths of a calorie. The sweetener, chemically a protein (amino acid), was discovered from the berries of this plant in tropical West Africa in 1972 by investigators of the University of Pennsylvania who named it

"monellin" after the Monell Chemical Senses Center, where the analytical work was performed. Monellin is the sweetest natural product known and has potential for widespread use in low-sugar diets, in dental programs, and as a food additive. The sensation of sweetness after placing two or three drops of less than 1/10 of 1 percent solution of monellin on the tongue lasted, in experiments, through a cup of hot black unsweetened coffee, a mentholated cigarette, a 20-minute walk in cold air and into the first bite of a roast beef sandwich with horse-radish and mustard.

DESCANSO DIVISION

The Bonsai show at the gardens Sept. 21 and 22 attracted 3500 people.

Our new office secretary is Marilyn Henry, a Business Administration major at Cal State in Northridge.

Fran Raitt, who worked in the gatehouse at Descanso for many years, recently underwent surgery. She is recuperating at home and doing very well.

Mark Anthony, former Superintendent, paid a visit to the gardens last Friday. Mark is hearty and doing fine.

With the end of summer, the gardeners are taking out the old summer annuals and preparing the beds for new plants. The crape myrtle foliage, along with the sweet gum, is taking on fall colors. The camellia sasanquas are beginning to bloom also.

Docents training classes have begun with fifteen new members registered. The classes are coordinated by Tak Niiya and are being taught by Leo Legere, Don Graf, Patricia Warren, Bobby Vargas and George

Lewis.

Birds spotted at the gardens were the two great blue herons, several kingfisher, and a flock of towhee.