

## Around the Grounds

### Autumn Color at the Arboretum

This year, the **Silk Floss Tree**, *Chorisia speciosa*, started its spectacular progression of large, rose-pink flowers in August, earlier than usual. Individual trees of this species are quite variable in their period of bloom, which stretches the collective blooming period of these trees from late summer to early winter. Also, look for the white flowers of the bottle shaped **White Silk Floss Tree**, *Chorisia insignis*.

The **Red Powderpuff**, *Calliandra haematocephala*, a large shrub whose flowers are showy bundles of silky red stamens, will be in bloom through fall, winter, and early spring.

The **Sweet Olive**, *Osmanthus fragrans*, one of our most delightfully scented fragrant plants, is currently in bloom. It will remain so until spring. The white flowers of this large evergreen shrub are small and insignificant, but the fragrance is robust and carries long distances if the breeze is right.

Look for the warm colored flower spikes of the **Aloes** toward the end of autumn.

The **Marri Red Gum**, *Eucalyptus calophylla*, one of the showiest of the small tree eucalyptus, will continue its summer display of deep pink flowers well into autumn. As the weather cools down, many other eucalyptus will also come into flower.

With the onset of fall, many **Salvia** varieties will add their colorful and abundant flowers to the display of those which have been blooming so dependably through the summer.

Make sure to visit the **Kallam Perennial Garden** to observe a garden with great variety and year-round appeal undergo its dramatic seasonal changes.

The **Tropical Greenhouse** always has an ongoing display of blooming orchids and other tropical plants.

Well into fall, many of our deciduous trees start to change color. The foliage of the **Sweetgum**, or *Liquidambar*, ranges from bright red to a mixture of red, orange, yellow, and purple. The **Chinese Tallow Tree**, *Sapium*

*sebiferum*, turns a brilliant scarlet. The leaves of the **Ginkgo Tree**, *Ginkgo biloba*, resemble translucent yellow tissue paper as they change color and fall to the ground. The autumn foliage of the **Red Maple**, *Acer rubrum*, ranges from dull purple, to red, to yellow, to a yellow which appears to be brushed with red. The fall foliage of the **Sycamore** is a withered brown, but the leaves give off a wonderfully evocative scent that is strongly reminiscent of an eastern fall.



### Rain Forest Project

Staff members at the Los Angeles Arboretum are busy working on one of the most exciting new exhibits to appear in a Los Angeles museum setting – a three acre Rain Forest!

Located adjacent to an aquatic habitat (Baldwin Lake - a naturally fed spring lake) the Rain Forest will simulate the general structure of a tropical rain forest, displaying lush foliage and colorful flowers commonly found in this type of habitat.

The Rain Forest will be a showcase for plants of economic, biological, and cultural importance.

Educational elements of the Rain Forest exhibit are being developed in tandem with the landscape component. Fundamental concepts of the Rain Forest will be interpreted for the public through the use of displays, signs and interactive features. Science teachers and administrators from local school districts are meeting with the Arboretum designers to develop a formal unit of course work which would utilize the Rain Forest exhibit explicitly as an outdoor classroom.

The Rain Forest will also serve as a testing area for subtropical and tropical plants which are not presently in cultivation in the Southern California landscape. It will also provide a site for the conservation of rain forest species whose natural habitats are currently endangered.

The Arboretum has served as a bird sanctuary since it was established in 1947. It is recognized as an important preserve not only because of its resident bird population, but also because it is one of the last intact regional wetland stopovers for thousands of migratory birds which travel north and south on the Pacific coast flyway. The Rain Forest is being designed in a manner to provide a special attraction for birds. Plants which provide food and cover for birds will be promoted along the lake edge. Viewing stations will be constructed to allow enjoyment of watching birds without disrupting them.

Rain forests serve as the "lungs" of our planet, helping to cleanse the atmosphere of civilization's by-product, carbon dioxide. Vast potential also exists for development of commercial drugs and other commodities that are yet to be discovered within the exciting layers of the rain forest!







1992. "Rain forest project." *The Arboretum Newsletter* 1992:winter, 5.

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