
Arboreta and Botanic Gardens

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Colorful, thrifty

WATER CONSERVATION GARDEN

Late spring rains this year changed drought from crisis to chronic for Southern California's gardeners. Threatened water rationing, it seems, will not occur in 1989. With the luxury of water available for at least another season, wise gardeners can now begin adapting their landscapes to conserve water, avoiding the risk of losing their entire landscape to a future drought.

The new Henry C. Soto Water Conservation Garden, dedicated at the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum last fall, is a model for the sensible adaptation that will work in a typical garden. It is not xerophytic, a completely dry landscape of

tough plants that can survive with absolutely no artificial irrigation. Instead, this colorful mix of perennials, trees and shrubs uses many of the same plants that grace California gardens, because a surprising number of garden favorites actually thrive with less water than solicitous gardeners usually give them.

What makes this a conservation-conscious garden is both the choice of plants and the manner in which water is applied.

(Conservation continues on page 2)



(Conservation continued from page 1)

The plant list is not static, instead it evolves as plants are tested for how well they adapt to water conservation practices. Agapanthus and coral bells grow here as well as the floss silk tree and succulents that would be expected in a dry garden.

State of the art irrigation equipment includes drip emitters and timers that can be manually overridden. Water is applied until it penetrates to a depth of 18 inches. The objective is to determine how

long the garden can go between waterings with the goal of stretching the interval to 30 days during the hot season rather than regular weekly application.

To encourage gardeners to act on the inspiration and ideas they see in the garden, the Arboretum offers free publications on water conservation in the Visitors Center. Brochures from organizations such as Sunset Magazine, Metropolitan Water District and Los Angeles Department of Water and Power will guide gardeners in adapting their own landscapes to prepare for water shortages in the future.

FRANCIS CHING HONORED FOR LIFETIME OF HORTICULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Francis Ching, Director of the Los Angeles County Department of Arboreta and Botanic Gardens, was recently named the 1989 recipient of the Arthur Hoyt Scott Garden and Horticulture Award. Established in 1929 at Swarthmore College, the award each year honors an individual who has made outstanding national contributions to the science and art of gardening. Mr. Ching's selection for this prestigious honor was based on his many contributions and achievements during the 19 years he has served as Director of this four-garden department in Los Angeles County.

Southern Californians have benefited most from his successes in expanding the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum's original mission of introducing new plants into the Southern California landscape. Under his direction, 54 new plants have been introduced from among the thousands field tested at the Arboretum. Several introductions have become familiar fixtures along California freeways, landscapes and private gardens. Caltrans has planted a variation of the white *Osteospermum fruticosum*, now simply called the "freeway daisy," as well as hundreds of named cultivars of floss silk trees (*Chorisia speciosa*) and other introductions along Southland freeways where they punctuate the fall landscape with flowing masses of color.

Each year, 700 to 1,000 schools participate in the Arboretum's Arbor Day Program, planting a tree supplied by the Department. Through the program, started 10 years ago, hundreds of thousands of children have learned about the value of trees in their environment through resource information supplied by the Department as a part of the Arbor Day program. This has also been an effective means of introducing new Arboretum plant

introductions to the landscape and as a community outreach program.

Mr. Ching's contributions to the gardening profession are numerous and varied. While serving as president of the American Association of Botanic Gardens and Arboreta (AABGA), he was instrumental in establishing a certification



David Fraser, (left) Swarthmore College President, congratulates Francis Ching, Claremont, after presenting him with the Arthur Hoyt Scott Garden and Horticulture Award. Mr. Ching, Director of the Los Angeles County Department of Arboreta and Botanic Gardens, is the first Californian to win the award in its 60 year history.

program for professional gardeners. He was active on the AABGA's Plant Collections Committee, which published the *Preliminary Directory of Living Plant Collections in North America*, a widely used resource by botanists and scientists. Other publications under his direction include numerous gardening brochures, as well as two widely received books, *Color in the Landscape* and *Exceptional Trees of Los Angeles*, published with the support of the California Arboretum Foundation.

In 1980, aided by a grant from the Institute



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