

and chavicine, a resin. Piperine is tasteless at first but has a burning after-taste. Chavicine is responsible for the pungency and is most abundant in the mesocarp (fleshy pulp of the berry). Consequently, black peppers are more pungent than white peppers.

If there ever has been a cure-all remedy in folk medicine, it is the pepper. It has been used not only as a cure for everything from toothache to epilepsy, but also as a preventive drug for typhus, cholera, scarlet fever, smallpox, leprosy and

the bubonic plague.

In addition to the true pepper, there are a number of other plants which are the source of various kinds of peppers. Among these, perhaps the best known is Melegueta pepper (*Aframomum melegueta*) from tropical West Africa. It is an herbaceous plant of the ginger family (*Zingiberaceae*). Its seeds, often called grains of Paradise, exceed even black pepper in pungency and piquancy, and at one time were in great demand in Europe. Today, however, their use is almost entirely

limited to Ghana and Nigeria whose inhabitants use them for seasoning. The section of West Africa once known as the "Grain Coast" owed its name to this spice.

Green, sweet, bell, red, cayenne and chili peppers, sometimes grown in vegetable gardens, belong to the nightshade family (*Solanaceae*) and are not related to the true pepper.

*Dr. Enari is a senior biologist at the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum.*

## Plants For a Contained Atmosphere

John Provine

*Equisetum scirpoides* and *Ficus pumila* cv. 'Quercifolia' can be grown in the same contained atmosphere as specimens. Together they seem complementary.

*Equisetum scirpoides*, commonly known as dwarf horsetail, grows upright and open; *Ficus pumila* cv. 'Quercifolia' hugs the soil and acts as a ground cover. Both like moist, cool conditions, which is the reason for growing them in a contained atmosphere in Southern California.

*E. scirpoides* is an evergreen perennial that grows three to six inches high. It is found in moist wooded banks from Labrador to Alaska, and as far south as British Columbia, Pennsylvania, and Illinois. It is also found in Europe and Asia.

*F. pumila* cv. 'Quercifolia' is a German cultivar developed about 40 years ago. It is dark green with lobed leaves which resemble oak leaves, thus giving it its cultivar name. It creeps and hugs the ground, rocks, and trees. In a contained atmosphere, it will cling to the sides of the container. It is necessary to keep it pruned to keep it attractive.

When pruning your ficus, save



Photo by William Aplin

the trimming or cuttings and re-plant. They grow very easily. The cuttings should be two inches long and they should be pinned flat to the surface of the soil mix with a hairpin rather than imbedding them into the soil.

Both these plants require the same growing conditions. To grow

them in a contained atmosphere, the following steps should be taken:

1. Select a clear glass or plastic bowl with a large opening which will enable you to work with the ficus.
2. Clean the bowl thoroughly with detergent and rinse with bottled water.
3. Cover the bottom of the container

with chips of charcoal to allow for drainage.

4. Add moist growing mix. The Arboretum prefers a soilless mix of one-half peat moss and one half perlite. This is a light growing mix and will allow for correct moisture and oxygen balance.
5. Water the plant with distilled water. A cooking baster should be used by pointing the open end against the glass so that water will run down the inside of the container, thereby preventing

splashing the soil on the sides of the container. Let the water stand so that the growing mix can soak up the water, then tilt the container slightly and take the baster and pull off the excess water.

6. You can cover your container with a lid or saran-type wrap but it is not necessary. A cover just helps in keeping the plants moist.
7. Selecting a place in the home or office is very important. Both plants like soft light and a cool

temperature. Do not grow in direct sunlight.

*Equisetum scirpoides* is easily started from divisions. The one source in this area is Tropic World, Inc., Escondido, California.

*Ficus pumila* cv. 'Quercifolia' is available at the Arboretum Gift Shop.

Mr. Provine is superintendent of the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum and a specialist in container plantings.

## LOS ANGELES STATE AND COUNTY ARBORETUM, Arcadia

### MAY 6 — 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Baldwin Bonanza Preview Party (For Foundation members and their guests)

### MAY 7 — 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Baldwin Bonanza  
Presented by California Arboretum Foundation

### MAY 21 — noon to 5 p.m.

Epiphyllum Show  
Presented by Epiphyllum Society of America

### MAY 27, 28, 29 — 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Bonsai Show  
Presented by Santa Anita Bonsai Society

### JUNE 3, 4 — 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Satsuki and Azalea Show  
Presented by Valley Satsuki and Azalea Society

### JUNE 10, 11 — 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Spring Extravaganza  
Presented by California Arboretum Foundation

### JUNE 18 — 10 a.m.

Sunday Morning Walk  
Historical Buildings  
Sandy Snider, Arboretum historian

### JUNE 24, 25 — 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Hemerocallis Show  
Presented by Southern California Hemerocallis and Amaryllis Society

### JUNE 30, JULY 1, 2 — 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Cactus and Succulent Show  
Presented by Cactus and Succulent Society of America

### JULY 21, 22, 23 — 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Fern Show  
Presented by Los Angeles International Fern Society

### JULY 23 — 10 a.m.

Sunday Morning Walk  
Australian Section  
Dr. Gary Wallace, Arboretum biologist

## CALENDAR

MAY, JUNE, JULY

### DESCANSO GARDENS, La Canada

#### MAY 18 — 10 a.m.

Paseo por Descanso  
(Includes luncheon; reservation deadline, May 10)  
Presented by Descanso Gardens Guild

#### May 27 — 2:00 p.m.

Square Dancing on the Green for Everyone  
Hosts: The Swangers  
Presented by Descanso Gardens Guild

#### May 28 — 2:00 p.m.

Presented by Descanso Gardens Guild  
"Join Us on the Green"  
Folk Dancing Around the World  
Presented by Descanso Gardens Guild

#### June 3 — 2:30 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.

Mayfield Senior School Glee Club  
Presented by Descanso Gardens Guild

#### June 4 — 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Arts and Crafts Festival  
12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
Palm Crest Glee Club  
2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Tournament of Roses Band  
Ron Hoar, Director  
Presented by Descanso Gardens Guild

#### June 10 — 2:00 p.m.

Foothill Youth Orchestra  
Myron Sandler, Director  
Presented by Descanso Gardens Guild

#### June 11 — 2:30 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.

Excerpts from "South Pacific"  
Glendale College Civic Music Theatre  
Milton Young, Director  
Presented by Descanso Gardens Guild

#### June 17 — 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Variety Show  
"Kaleidoscope in Motion"  
Kathy Dunn, Director  
Presented by Descanso Gardens Guild

#### June 18 — 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Los Angeles Sheriff's Rhythm Posse  
Captain Ross McCollum, Director  
Presented by Descanso Gardens Guild

#### June 25 — 2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Concert on the Lawn  
Corla Pandit, Organist  
Presented by Descanso Gardens Guild

#### July 2 — 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Adult Swing Band of Pasadena City College  
Paul Killian, Director  
Presented by Descanso Gardens Guild

#### JULY 9 — 10 a.m.

Sunday Morning Walk  
Rose Gardens  
George Lewis, superintendent

#### JULY 15, 16 — 3 p.m.

La Canada Players  
Presented by Descanso Gardens Guild

## SOUTH COAST BOTANIC GARDEN, Palos Verdes Peninsula

#### MAY 7 — 2 p.m.

Flower Arrangement Demonstration  
Presented by South Coast Botanic Garden Foundation

#### MAY 7 — 2 p.m.

Japanese Gardens in Containers  
Edna Schoenbaum, president Ikebana International, presented by South Coast Botanic Garden Foundation

#### MAY 20, 21 — 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Fiesta de Flores  
Presented by South Coast Botanic Garden Foundation

#### MAY 27, 28, 29 — 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Cactus and Succulent Show  
Presented by South Coast Cactus and Succulent Society

#### JUNE 4 — 2 p.m.

Sunday Afternoon Talk  
"Outdoor Container Gardening"  
Ed Hartnagel, assistant superintendent



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