



LOTUSLAND NEWSLETTER

Volume 4 No. 2  Summer 1995

Hoped-for Changes on the Horizon

WE WANT to let our members know that Lotusland is planning to return to the Santa Barbara County Planning and Development office this fall to ask for revisions to our Conditional Use Permit. Lotusland has successfully completed two years of operations without a single complaint from neighbors. The only complaints we hear are from garden enthusiasts who are frustrated by lack of access to the garden and the complications of our reservation system. The most important change we wish to make, or lack of change, is to keep the vehicle limits the same as they are now, but to eliminate the need to restrict the number of visitors in the cars as well. It's the number of vehicles coming to the neighborhood that should be restricted, not the number of people in those vehicles. We will need the support of our members to spread the word that we are, indeed, good and considerate neighbors and an asset to the community. Look for further details in the September *Lotusland Newsletter*.



Spanish moss curtains an array of bromeliads. Aechmea ornata var. nationalis featured.

SPANISH MOSS

SO, WHAT IS SPANISH MOSS? The easy answer is *Tillandsia usneoides*, but that is much harder to say and remember, and also begs the question. The plant we in the United States know as Spanish moss, seen hanging like draperies from the branches of live oaks by early Spanish explorers, evokes images of the deep South, antebellum mansions and humid summer days. It takes a close inspection to find that nearly hidden among the felty gray leaves are tiny, chartreuse flowers or the slender seed capsules they produce, giving away Spanish moss's true identity as a flowering plant. It takes a much stronger leap of faith to believe that it is actually a member of the pineapple family, Bromeliaceae.

Many of us associate pineapples

with Hawaii, never realizing that, although a very important fruit crop in those islands, they are in fact native to the New World, as are all but one of the approximately 2,000 species of bromeliads.

The only exception is the West African species *Pitcairnia feliciana*. The pineapple, *Ananas comosus*, originated in Brazil and was being cultivated in the West Indies when Columbus encountered it on his second voyage to the New World in 1493. By 1549 it was producing fruit in India and it is now widely cultivated around the world in tropical and sub-

tropical regions.

Spanish moss is the smallest and most widespread of the bromeliads. Its leafy stem is only a millimeter in diameter, al-

Spanish Moss—continued on page 2

**It's not a
moss and
it's not
from
Spain**

Spanish Moss—member of the pineapple family!

continued from page 1

though it can hang in clusters up to eight meters long. It ranges from eastern Virginia along the coast to Florida and Texas and on to central Argentina and Chile. It can be found from sea level up to 3,300 meters in elevation. Like a majority of the bromeliads, Spanish moss is an epiphyte, growing without soil on branches of trees, rock cliffs or even buildings and electrical wires.

One Burst of Bloom

The largest member of the pineapple family is *Puya raimondii*, a terrestrial species growing at 3,800 to 4,300 meters in the Peruvian and Bolivian Andes. Its stout flowering stalk can extend six meters above a rosette of stiff, one to two meter long leaves atop a thick stem up to five meters tall, producing a plant that can exceed 12 meters in overall height. *P. raimondii* can take up to 150 years to flower, producing as many as 8,000 flowers in a single inflorescence before it dies. Unlike most bromeliads, *P. raimondii* does not produce vegetative offsets, but depends upon one burst of bloom to perpetuate itself.

2,000 Species

Having covered the extremes of the Bromeliaceae, let's take a look at the rest of the family in broader terms. The 2,000 species are divided into nearly 50 genera in three subfamilies. Lotusland's collection contains members of 24 of the genera, with some outstanding specimens such as *Puya alpestris*, *P. chilensis*, *Vriesea imperialis*, *V. hieroglyphica*, and *Ochagavia carnea* as well as a number of interesting cultivars of *Aechmea*, *Billbergia*, *Neoregelia* and other genera. The collection is featured in two bromeliad gardens, one near the pavilion where Mme. Walska lived and the other between the outdoor theatre and the main lawn.

The epiphytic members of the pineapple family have special adaptations al-

lowing them to survive a soil-free existence. The roots are reduced in function to securing a foothold on the bark of trees or rocky surfaces, or are even absent in some species. This means that the typical functions of the root in water and nutrient intake must be handled in some other fashion.

Many of the epiphytic bromeliads have their leaves in a tight rosette that opens upward, forming a tank that holds rainwater and decaying insects, leaves and other debris that become trapped there. More extreme adaptations are seen in those *Tillandsia* species that do not form tanks, especially ones growing in high light habitats in the canopy of trees or on bare rock. Their leaves are covered with a dense layer of silvery hairs, or trichomes, modified for rapid adsorption of any moisture and nutrients car-

ried to the plant in the passing breeze.

If this brief introduction into the pineapple family has whetted your appetite for more information, why not sign up for the bromeliad class for members announced on page seven?

David H. Benzing's *The Biology of the Bromeliads*, Mad River Press, is an excellent presentation of plant biology and natural history as they relate to this most interesting family. *Tillandsia* by Paul T. Isley III, Botanical Press, covers this single, remarkable genus in a coffee table book format with outstanding color plates, scanning electron micrographs of the myriad trichome forms that can be appreciated as much from an artistic standpoint as from the biological, and text that includes cultivation and landscaping ideas.

—Steven Timbrook



William Paylen amidst the plants he arranged around the pavilion in the upper bromeliad garden.



A path through the lower bromeliad garden emerges onto the "Berkeley" cactus collection bordering the main lawn at its entrance.

placed in and around the pavilion plants. They now filled in this lower area with a large variety of bromeliads, mostly taken from the expanding plants above and eventually the epiphyllums were moved to the tropical glen where they can now be found.

Grounds staff member John Lafleur took care of the bromeliads under Charlie's direction and later Mike Furner, whose strong personal interest in bromeliads was inspired by his work at Lotusland, assumed responsibility for the care of the lower bromeliad plantings. Mike recalls that when Mme. Walska was alive, she would become very upset if, when he was watering the potted bromeliads on the porch outside her bedroom, the bricks would get wet. He would have to quickly move the hose from cup to cup in order to avert a catastrophe.

William Paylen, an esteemed horticulturist and landscape designer who had created the fern garden for Mme. Walska in 1969 and later refurbished and expanded it for the Lotusland Foundation (see *Lotusland Newsletter* Volume 3, No. 2), was also invited to refurbish the bromeliad plantings in the late 1980s. Bill "tackled" the bromeliads, which were quite overgrown, by thinning, culling and spreading plants around. Working within the original designs of Kubisch and Glass, he cleaned up, rearranged and expanded the plantings as they exist today. A love for these fascinating plants dates back to 1964 when Bill's enthusiasm led him to charter a flight with 25 others to the mouth of the Amazon, where he

Bromeliads—continued on page 4

Bromeliads at Lotusland

THE ORIGINAL PLANTINGS of bromeliads at Lotusland were done by Fritz Kubisch, who was invited by Ganna Walska to create a bromeliad garden around her pavilion in 1967. Kubisch was one of many well-known horticulturalists who worked with Mme. Walska on designing and planting her gardens. She even financed his expeditions to Mexico and Central America to collect bromeliads, many of which ended up in her garden. Because Mme. Walska refused to throw plants away, excess growth of the bromeliads was given by the truckload to the Santa Barbara Zoo and a neighboring estate. The rest was moved to an area just below and across the lawn and above the theatre garden which contained palms, cycads, and epiphyllums. Paths dating from the Gavit

era (1916-1938) meandered through this small section which eventually became known as "the jungle" due to the density of plant material there. A long-established grotto with bronze roosters atop it which had become overgrown with plants was only rediscovered when renovation took place years later!

When Charles Glass, Mme. Walska's Garden Director from 1974-84, decided to move the cycads to their own garden at the southeast corner of the property, several *Phoenix robelinii* palms were moved in to take their place. Perhaps it was at Charlie's suggestion that the bromeliad plantings were expanded and featured here. He and Robert Foster had made changes to Kubisch's plantings by adding rocks from Mexico with small pools in them,

Bromeliads, continued

then embarked on a 2,300 mile trip up the river in order to collect bromeliads. On subsequent expeditions to Central and South America, Jamaica and Puerto Rico in search of bromeliads and orchids, a license obtained from the USDA enabled him to bring collected plants back to the U.S. Impressed with his knowledge of plants, Mme. Walska asked Bill to consider taking over the direction of the garden. Though flattered, he graciously declined because such a position of responsibility would restrict his ability to travel the world in search of new plant material.

During his quarterly visits to Lotusland, Bill works with veteran Marge Kelly and new grounds staff member Robert Carrillo as a consultant on maintaining, caring for and occasionally expanding the bromeliad gardens. For three years Marge has learned from Bill's expertise and through avid study on her own has come to love her work with bromeliads. Working with these plants consists mainly of removing excess litter from the cups and making sure that the pools of water do not become stagnant in winter or dry out in summer. To perform the necessary thin-



Happy to be here: Marge Kelly works with the plants she knows and loves in the lower bromeliad garden.

ning, culling and removing she must wear protective canvas cuffs from her wrist to her elbow to avoid being cut by the plants' spines. Despite this hazard, she finds these plants easy to care for and a constant delight because something is blooming all year round and often with spectacular color. Thanks to the efforts of Bill, Marge and Robert the myriad shapes and sizes of the numerous bromeliads at Lotusland continue to delight visitors as they once did Mme. Walska.

—Janet M. Eastman

Welcome to Newest Board Member, Mrs. Frank Pesenti

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES of the Ganna Walska Lotusland Foundation is pleased to announce the addition of its newest member, Mrs. Frank (Pamela) Pesenti. Mrs. Pesenti brings a wealth of museum governance experience and a strong interest in educational outreach to the current board. For six years she served on the Board of Trustees of Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History and was particularly interested in outreach to schools, the astronomy program and the Sea Center. Mrs. Pesenti has been a member of the Santa Barbara Garden Club since 1984 and has a garden of her own. Mrs. Pesenti also has served as a trustee on the board of the

California Institute of Technology since 1984 and is on their Investment, Jet Propulsion Laboratory and Building & Grounds committees.

A fourth generation Californian, Mrs. Pesenti lived in Pasadena before moving to Santa Barbara 15 years ago when her husband, a naval aviator, retired from the international engineering firm, C. F. Braun & Company. The Pesentis have three grown children. Both Mr. and Mrs. Pesenti are pilots and find themselves traveling frequently in their Piper twin-engine Mojave to visit family or their cabin on June Lake. The staff and trustees are pleased to welcome Mrs. Pesenti to Lotusland.

Northern Trust Bank Sponsors July Event

LOTUSLAND is delighted to announce that Northern Trust Bank of California is sponsoring "Lotusland Celebrates: Twilight With Madama Butterfly" with a generous grant.

We are also honored to have the following as Patrons of Lotusland Celebrates:

Mrs. Edward L. Bakewell, Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. Donald L. Balch
Mrs. Richard Bergen
Charles Bloom Foundation
Mrs. John Braun
Mr. and Mrs. Robert H. Carpenter
Dr. and Mrs. Vernon I. Cheadle
Mr. and Mrs. Alvin W. Friedman
Mr. and Mrs. James Wes Gallagher
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Mrs. J. Fred Schoellkopf
Hania P. Tallmadge
Jeanne C. Thayer
Mr. and Mrs. Michael Towbes
Carol L. Valentine
Laura Lee Woods

Additional donations were made by:

Mr. & Mrs. George D. Eagleton
Frances D. Larkin
Mrs. William H. Wilson
Sanford Winery
J&S Graphix

The July 16 event will feature musical presentations in the garden and dinner served on the main lawn by the Four Seasons Biltmore. Invitations will be mailed to all Friends of Lotusland at the end of May.

*ARTWORK TOP OF PAGE 5:
Drawing of Yama, a Sino-Tibetan
figure of gilded bronze circa 1750
from Mme. Walska's collection.
By Gail Lucas.*



Tibetan Art:
Drs. Kamansky and Timbrook admire a Tibetan ritual object from the Pacific Asia Museum similar to one in Mme. Walska's collection.

Kamansky Lectures on Madame Walska's Tibetan Art Collection

DR. DAVID KAMANSKY, Director of the Pacific Asia Museum, gave a slide presentation to upper level members of Friends of Lotusland on April 18. The lecture encompassed views of Tibet and the Lamaist sites where much of the Tibetan art now found in western collections originated. In addition to showing many images from the Pacific Asia Museum's collection, Dr. Kamansky showed 150 images of Tibetan, Sino-Tibetan, and Nepalese art from the collection of Madame Ganna Walska, which he restored and photographed in 1985.

Mme. Walska acquired her first pieces of Tibetan art from her third husband, Alexander Smith Cochran. An interest in eastern philosophies and religions may have fueled her desire to expand this core collection of Tibetan Lamaistic ritual objects, ceremonial jewelry, *thang-kas* (sacred Buddhist paintings) and Tantric figures. She bought a number of pieces from Grace Nicholson, founder of the Pacific Asia Museum, and purchased pieces from collectors aware of her interest. An insurance appraisal done in 1944 valued the collection at \$32,610 while a later one of unknown date increased that to

\$397,965. In 1955 several important *thang-kas*, statues, ritual objects and Tibetan books were loaned to Santa Barbara Museum of Art to be included in an exhibition on Tibetan art. At the time of her death, there were over 800 objects in storage or on display in the pavilion and main house at Lotusland.

At the encouragement of a local devotee, Madame Walska bequeathed her collection of Tibetan art to a Buddhist organization in Boulder, Colorado, along with \$20,000 for expenses in transporting the collection and placing it in its new home. After her death in 1984, Dr. Kamansky came to Lotusland and, by agreement with the Vajradhatu Foundation, recipients of the collection, chose 200 of the best pieces to restore for an exhibition at the Pacific Asia Museum. It was at that time he was able to take the few photographs he now has of these important pieces. Unfortunately, the exhibit never took place because Vajradhatu requested the pieces be returned. Today the collection is stored in the Halifax, Nova Scotia, international headquarters of Vajradhatu, awaiting funding for a possible future exhibition.

Color This Pink

IN RESPONSE to the challenge grant by the Harold Simmons Foundation to restore its famous pink walls, Lotusland has so far received \$8,450 toward the \$25,000 we must raise in order to match the grant. We would like to thank the following people for their generous contributions:

Mrs. John G. Braun
 Mr. & Mrs. Jamie Constance
 Mr. & Mrs. George D. Eagleton
 Mrs. Margo Osherenko
 Mr. & Mrs. Richard L. Schall
 Mr. & Mrs. Robert Straus

To help us "get in the pink," please send your tax deductible contribution to Lotusland, 695 Ashley Rd., Santa Barbara, CA 93108. For more information contact Anne Dewey at (805) 969-3767.

Fall Docent Training

LOTUSLAND will offer in-depth docent training encompassing the botany and horticulture of the living collection as well as the history of the estate and its founder, including architects and landscape designers who created what you see today.

Staff and guest lecturers will present information on 16 weekday mornings from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Most classes involve a study portion in the garden. Upon completion of the training, participants must pass an evaluation and then make a two-year commitment to Lotusland as a docent. If you are interested, call Janet Eastman, Volunteer Coordinator, at (805) 969-3767.

A tea on the geranium terrace behind the main house followed the talk, and the 40 upper level members who attended were invited to stroll through Lotusland's gardens before departing for the afternoon. Dr. Kamansky's invaluable photographic documentation of this important collection will be added to the Archives of Madame Ganna Walska and made available to serious researchers by appointment.

FRIENDS OF LOTUSLAND

We welcome new members who joined in February, March, April 1995

Level I

Edward A. Aasted
Richard & Sybil Alkema
Carla Amussen & George Shattuck
William & Carol Anders
Dr. Evelyn Baran
Barbara Mann Bauer
Helene & Jerry Beaver
Robert & Sally Beckham
Jonene Brining
Jeanne M. Brown
Timothy John Bukovszky
Bob & Madelynn Burton
Eleanor Carlton
Herbert & Shelley Cole
Stephen & Karla Cool
Geoffrey & Kimberly Crane
Helen R. Eck
Bruce Evans
Etta Frink
Delbert & Marjorie Fuller
Meralee Goldman
Charles Gordon
Janice Hartoch Gross & Lawrence Gross
Nancy Henderson
Carolyn & Peter Husting
Stuart & Gretchen Jacobson
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Margarit Schnuck
Mr. & Mrs. Edward F. Selby
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Rosalie Swedlin-Cort
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Mitchell Vance
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Vivienne Leebosh & Ralph Thomas
Lawrence Reed Moline
Juliana Thornburg
John & Mimi Waugh

Level IV

Bart & Daphne Araujo
Mr. Thomas Crawford
Dan Murphy Foundation
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Ridley-Tree
Mary Staton

*Members who have increased
their level of support in
February, March, April 1995*

Level II

Mrs. Edward L. Bakewell, Jr.
Peter & Marsha L. Campiglio
Ruth & Richard Goldstein
Pat & Sue Montgomery
Annabelle & Otto Pedersen
Ms. Jo M. Wagner

Donation in Memory of
Mario Franceschini:
Mrs. Patricia A. Brooks & Family

*Volunteers are a valued asset
at Lotusland all year round,
not only during April, Na-
tional Volunteer Month.
Volunteers diversify and ex-
pand the services Lotusland
has to offer the community,
and, in turn, by their dedica-
tion, enthusiasm and pro-
fessionalism show how much
community support there is
for Lotusland's operation as a
public garden.*



New Volunteers


Lily Bastug—Garden Shop
Madelynn Burton—Garden Shop
Ligia Cocolo—Garden Shop
Lee Francis—Grounds Maintenance


Vinal "Bud" Francis—Grounds
Maintenance
Dee Gronbeck—Garden Shop
Patricia Harris Johnston—Garden Shop
Evelyn Zoetewey—Garden Shop

Horticultural Happenings

With MIKE IVEN

Lotusland Grounds Superintendent

 **CARE AND FEEDING:** Because healthy plants have built-in resistance to pests and disease, determining the proper type and amount of fertilizer, including micro-nutrients, is a key part of Lotusland's Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program. It starts with annual soil and plant tissue samples taken in February and March for analysis by an independent laboratory. The horticultural staff reviews test results, then determines specific soil treatment and fertilization schedules for granular, soluble or liquid fertilizer and for micro-nutrient foliar sprays. After following this program for the last several years, it is evident that the time taken to determine customized fertilization requirements results in healthier, more vigorous plants that need less treatment for diseases and pests.

 **IPM COORDINATOR** John Lafleur celebrated 25 years of employment in April. Hired by Mme. Walska in 1970, he has worked in several areas around the garden. Since the late 1980s he has been responsible for plant health care at Lotusland.



 **SUMMER INTERN:** On May 22, David Hamada, a senior horticulture student at Texas A& M University, began a 10-week summer internship at Lotusland. David will work with grounds staff, assisting with maintenance and landscaping. The intern program is de-

Palms Around Town: A photo tour of palm species in Santa Barbara forms half of an educational display designed by Lotusland staff. The traveling exhibit also shows palm products and features a guide to the parts of a palm. The display intrigued spectators at Santa Barbara Botanic Garden's Wildflower Festival, the 25th Earth Day celebration at SBCC, and the Santa Barbara Fair & Expo, where it won first place in the educational display division. Look for it at Montecito Beautification Day this fall.

signed to familiarize students with the specific plants grown at Lotusland and the cultural care of the plant collections. David was chosen from among 15 applicants nationwide. This year's internship is funded by Mr. and Mrs. Paul Ridley-Tree.

Bromeliads from A(bromeitiella) to W(ittrockia)

WANT TO KNOW MORE about those brightly colored bromeliads that look as if Dr. Seuss designed them? Come listen and learn as Director Steven Timbrook and Curator Virginia Hayes discuss the biology and ecology of these fascinating plants. Included will be a "hands-on" demonstration of their propagation and a close look at bromeliads in the garden.

Classes will be held Thursday, Au-

gust 10, and Saturday, August 12, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Class fee is \$8.00. Classes are limited to 25 members each day. To reserve space please fill in the coupon below and return it with your payment. Reservations will be made in the order coupons are received. Class fees are not refundable if reservation is canceled less than one week before the class meets.

Ganna Walska Lotusland Registration Form

Summer Class: Bromeliads from A(bromeitiella) to W(ittrockia) — August 10 & 12, 1995

Check one: _____ Thursday, August 10, 10:00 A.M. to 12:30 P.M.
_____ Saturday, August 12, 10:00 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. _____ Number attending, \$8.00 per person \$ _____

Mail to Ganna Walska Lotusland, Attn: Member Events, 695 Ashley Rd., Santa Barbara, CA 93108

PAYMENT METHOD

☐ Check Enclosed (payable to Ganna Walska Lotusland)
☐ VISA ☐ Mastercard Expiration Date _____

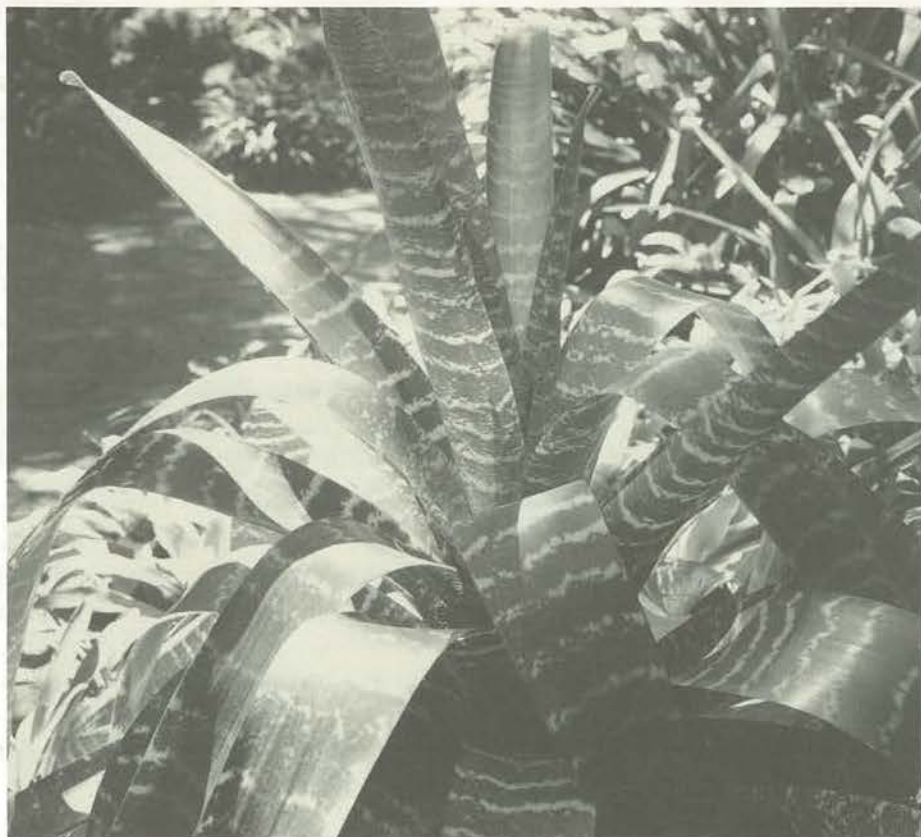
Card Number _____

Signature _____

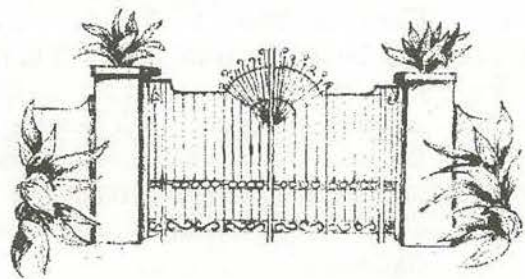
Member Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____



Tiger-striped *VRIESIA FOSTERIANA* basks in dappled shade of the bromeliad garden at Lotusland. Stories on pages one and three, plus bromeliad class info, page seven.



Ganna Walska Lotusland Foundation

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Montecito, CA 93108

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