

# Western Region Cuttings

Summer 2012

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## Get Ready for the Western Region Annual Meeting

### A DIVERSE VENTURE IN VENTURA

The 2012 Conference Committee and co-chairs **Dave Lannom** and **Jim Conner** invite you to join them for a “diverse” array of talks and tours at the 53<sup>rd</sup> Western Region Annual Meeting of the International Plant Propagation Society. This will be held at the **Four Points Sheraton Ventura** at the Ventura Harbor, California, **September 19<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup>**. This area of California has a long horticultural and diverse heritage. You will be visiting some of the area’s most innovative producers in Santa Barbara County, Ventura County, and the Santa Paula Valley. Our sessions will include propagation techniques, new plant development, new transplanting and planting strategies, organic production, quality control, insect and diseases,



determining plants’ market value and much more. For the Pre-Conference Tour we will visit **LaVerne Nursery, Norman’s Nursery, Valley Crest Tree Company, Do Right’s Plant Growers** with a barbeque lunch at the **Limoneira Packing Plant**. Thursday and Friday afternoon tours include **Lotusland, San Marcos Growers,**



Nicholas Staddon of Monrovia

**Por La Mar Nursery, Colorama and PanAmerican Seed**. We will feature a **Poster Exhibit** and “**Nuggets of Knowledge**” plus a unique talk show format for **New Plant Introductions** hosted by **Nicholas Staddon of Monrovia**. Don’t forget all the treasures to be found at the **Silent Auction**.



### In this issue...

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**Editor's Note:** Embedded hyperlinks work for web and email addresses.

## NEW SECOND VICE PRESIDENT

**Valerie Sikkema** of Van Belle Nursery in Abbotsford, BC has been nominated to become Second Vice President for the Western Region. Valerie has a B.Sc. in Agriculture and is the staff Horticulturist at Van Belle's. Valerie grew up at a garden centre in Orangeville, Ontario, working with her Dad since she was five. She graduated with a B.Sc.(Agr.) in horticulture from the University of Guelph and a B.Ed. in science teaching from the University of Western Ontario. She has been at Van Belle Nursery for 6 years as their Staff Horticulturist, taking care of plant health, government certification, plant buying, and helping out with production planning. Before starting at Van Belle, she taught high school science and math and ran chemistry labs while also maintaining an academic greenhouse at an Iowa college. She and her husband, Arnold, have 3 teenagers and they love to garden, hike, canoe, and otherwise enjoy the outdoors in beautiful British Columbia. Valerie is a seasoned nursery professional who will be a great asset to the Western Region.



Valerie Sikkema - 2<sup>nd</sup> VP Nominee

## UPCOMING AREA MEETINGS

### *Washington & British Columbia Area Meeting*

***Wednesday October 24, 11:00am to 4:00 pm***

The Northwest area meeting for 2012 will be on October 24, and will include a tour of two container and greenhouse growers in the Fraser Valley. The day will start at Van Belle Wholesale Nursery & Propagation in Abbotsford B.C. at 11:00am for a tour of their facility. Bill Van Belle is a long-time IPPS member. His operation is a model of innovation, using lean management practices and was recently featured in Nursery Management magazine ([www.vanbelle.com](http://www.vanbelle.com)). Following the tour we will gather for a sack lunch and presentation by Bruce McTavish of McTavish Resource & Management Consultants. Bruce will provide a current overview of the B.C. Nursery risk management for *Phytophthora ramorum*. We will also have a brief discussion and update on future IPPS activities and membership.

Following the meeting we will car pool to Dorvanda Nurseries ([www.Darvonda.com](http://www.Darvonda.com)), an annual, poinsettia and mum grower in Langley B.C., for a tour of their 10-acre greenhouse and 15-acre outdoor growing facility. Dorvanda is conveniently located about 25 minutes from the US border and junction of I-5, for Washington members wishing to leave from there. The tour will conclude around 4:00pm. Please bring friends and any questions or ideas you'd like to discuss and we'll hope for good weather. The price for the sack lunch is \$15.00 or you may bring your own. Please RSVP at [todd@fourthcornernurseries.com](mailto:todd@fourthcornernurseries.com) or call (360) 592-2250.

**Hope to see you all in October.**

Best regards,  
Todd Jones



## COMPLETED AREA MEETINGS

### *Northern California Area Tour 2012*

On June 8 twenty people joined the Northern California Area Tour for IPPS Western Region. With a nod to the current enthusiasm for food-related horticulture, the tour concentrated on nurseries that produced edibles in the Watsonville area. Our first stop was Far West Fungi. For 25 years the Garrone family has been growing gourmet and exotic mushrooms at the site of an old mushroom farm in Moss Landing. Kyle Garrone took us through the entire process from sterilizing the wood shavings to harvesting oyster, shitake, and other unusual mushrooms. Some of these are destined for the Far West Fungi booth at the San Francisco Ferry Building and some are sold to wholesalers. Kyle explained that mushrooms, in addition to being delicious, are used medicinally by many people.



Mushrooms growing at Far West Fungi

Our second stop was the new home of Four Winds Growers, the citrus nursery that is run by three generations of the Dillon family. We were most gratified to be welcomed by four generations, from Don Sr., a founding member of the Western Region of IPPS, to Don his son, Aaron and Lexa his grandchildren, plus two of Don's great grandchildren. The new quarantine requirements brought about by the spread of Citrus Greening Disease



New greenhouse at Four Winds Growers

prompted the move to Watsonville and the construction of a state-of-the-art enclosed greenhouse to maintain mother stock that is virus-free for propagation. We learned about the disease, its spread, and its impact on the citrus industry. Four Winds has expanded their offerings to include other edibles such as blueberries and avocados. Aaron talked about the difficulty of growing avocado rootstock from cuttings and the novel technique of grafting into split seeds. A bowl of delicious blueberries was set out for us to sample.

After lunch we continued on to Sun Land Garden Products, manufacturer of high-quality bulk and bagged potting and growing media. Mike Hennequin, Vice President of Sales and Marketing, met us

with a dazzling array of French pastry, an unexpected treat. Enormous piles of redwood sawdust and other raw materials surrounded a computerized conveyor system for accurately mixing a wide array of media. Each batch (60 or more cubic yards) is tested and a sample kept with the results. Sunland supplies organic and conventional media in bulk for many vegetable seedling and ornamental growers. Their bagged mixes are sold in retail garden centers throughout California. At the conclusion of the tour we were invited to help ourselves to a bag of media courtesy of Sunland. As one participant put it "The hosts were all so welcoming, and the free swag was fab! I never thought that I'd get so excited about free soil "



Sun Land Garden Products aerial walkway over conveyor system.

Our last stop was the Cabrillo College Environmental Horticulture Department in Aptos. Students are encouraged to develop financially profitable enterprises at the state-of-the-art facility that opened in 2003. Facilities manager Ernie Wasson and lab assistant Andrew Wall gave us a tour and explained the intricacies of aquaponics. Row upon row of perfect butter lettuce heads awaited harvest, their roots bathed in a carefully monitored fertilizer solution created from the water used to raise the fish. The produce is sold locally and the



Aquaponic facility at Cabrillo College



Hydroponic lettuce at Cabrillo College

proceeds recycled back into the program. Ernie then took us on a tour of the extensive Salvia collection maintained at the site, one of the largest in the state. The annual Cabrillo Plant Sale sells a variety of Salvias found nowhere else, plus an enormous array of unusual edible perennials from around the world.

## IN MEMORIAM

### Andrew Twohy Leiser

Andrew Twohy Leiser died May 16, 2011 at his home in Davis at the age of 88. Dr. Leiser was Professor Emeritus in Plant Sciences (formerly Environmental Horticulture) at UC Davis and was known internationally for his published works, research and consulting for numerous governmental and private agencies. He was a past president of the IPPS-Western Region.



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