



A bear and a *madroño* (strawberry tree) are the symbol of Madrid, Spain

Strawberry Tree (*Arbutus unedo*)

February in Conejo Valley Botanic Garden

STRAWBERRY TREE (*Arbutus unedo*)

Many visitors have seen the popular Strawberry Tree in the Kids' Adventure Garden and have requested more information about this lovely tree with the sumptuous looking fruit. Yes, they are edible, but few enjoy the taste. Instead, the ripened fruit are used in jams, beverages and liqueurs such as the Portuguese medronho, a type of strong brandy. In folk medicine, the plant has been used for antiseptic, rheumatism and tonic purposes.

Originating in the Mediterranean, the Strawberry Tree has several legends attached to its usage. In Ancient Rome, Strawberry Trees were used during festivals honoring the pastoral goddess Pallas. Another custom was to place branches of the plant on coffins.

The tree makes up part of the Coat of Arms of Madrid (El oso y el madroño, The Bear and the Strawberry Tree) of the city of Madrid, Spain. In the center of the city (Puerta del Sol) there is a statue of a bear eating the fruit of the Madroño tree. The image appears on city crests, taxi cabs and other city infrastructure.

The first signs of its importation into northern European gardens was to 16th-century England from Ireland. In 1586, a correspondent in Ireland sent plants to several courtiers, including Sir Robert Dudley, Queen Elizabeth's "*favorite*." It then spread to the New World.

-Sandy Krutilek-

What's in a Name?

by Diane Conejo

Have you ever noticed plant names with an 'x' in them and wondered what that meant? There are interesting pairings going on in the horticultural world, and by blending two genus or species, the botanist hopes to get a hybrid of the two. We are used to hearing the word 'hybrid' used in connection with automobiles; likewise in botany, two parent plants are often combined to create a plant with the best characteristics of each.

Sometimes, the name (without the 'x') gives us a clue as to the parentage of the plant in question. For example: ***xChitalpa tashkentensis*** refers to the tree that was formed from the union of *Chilopsis linearis* and *Catalpa bignonioides*. Note that parts of both genus names were utilized in creating the new name. (***Chi-***lopsis and Ca ***-talpa.***) When the 'x' is before the genus name, it indicates that the new plant is a cross between two genera, or an ***intergeneric hybrid***.



Chilopsis linearis - Desert Willow



Catalpa bignonioides - Southern Catalpa



xChitalpa tashkentensis - Chitalpa

xChitalpa tashkentensis is both drought-tolerant, like its parent, the Desert Willow and fast-growing like the Southern Catalpa.



PLANT SALE SPECIALS

Red Hot Pokers and Canary Island Sage are on sale, along with Lions Tails, blooming Chasmanthe corms, and bromeliads. Succulents & lavender are also on sale.

Plant sales are held every Sunday at the CVBG from 10:30-2:30 in the area next to the Kids' Adventure Garden, located at 350 W. Gainsborough Rd. California natives, hardy, water wise perennials, shrubs, trees and succulents, reasonably priced are available. CVBG volunteers will be happy to help you with selections and share their expertise.

SPECIAL PLANT SALE ANNOUNCEMENT

Irene Benyoung is willing, by special appointment only, to meet customers at the Plant Sale area on Wednesdays. Please contact her by e-mail to make an appointment.

ibenyoung@yahoo.com

BIRTHDAY PARTIES

The birthday parties held at the KAG on Saturdays have become very popular. So popular that Betty needs more volunteers to give her some help. It is a lot of fun and not too much work. Sometimes the kids come in costumes, depending on what the 'theme' of the party may be. The adults set up and take down the tables and chairs. There is a donation to use the garden. You help by keeping your eyes on the kids as they get excited about having a party at the KAG. Sometimes you even get a piece of birthday cake. If you are willing to help by giving a few hours of your time, give Betty a call at 1-818-889-0560.



LEARN FLOWER DESIGN

Learn Flower Design in the Sogetsu Style. Develop creative self-expression through flower arrangement and learn the beauty of line and space. Keiko (Camille) Van Ast holds a First Teacher's degree from the Sogetsu School of Ikebana in Tokyo, Japan. She has studied Ikebana for more than 25 years.

For Registration call Camille at 805-498-7421

Classes will meet the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month

9:00-11:30 a.m. in the

Kids' Adventure Garden

Classes are ongoing

A one time fee of \$20 for a textbook is required.

Class fee of \$25 per class includes the flower fee of \$10

Want to Help us Grow?

Do you love Conejo Valley Botanic Garden and would like to help, but just don't have the time to volunteer? Even though much of the work you see going on in the garden is done by volunteers, we still have expenses for planting, heavy pruning and new improvements. These projects are funded through grants and donations from the community. If you would like to help us grow, tax deductible donations are always welcome and may be made out and sent to Conejo Valley Botanic Garden, PO Box 6614, Thousand Oaks, CA 91359. Thanks for all your support!

Conejo Valley Botanic Garden Needs You!

The Garden is managed and maintained by community volunteers. Without your help, the garden cannot thrive.

None of the volunteer positions at CVBG has a minimum number of volunteer hours attached. If you can help for a few hours a month, great! For more information on any of our volunteer opportunities, please go to our web site at www.conejogarden.org and click "Volunteers."

WE CURRENTLY NEED VOLUNTEERS FOR THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS:

Adopt A Garden: We have an ongoing need for volunteers to join the teams working in our theme gardens. Days and hours are flexible so give us a call.

Garden Nursery: There is no better way to learn about California native and water wise plants than to join the teams working in the propagation and sales nurseries.

The Kids Adventure Garden: KAG is open from 11:00 to 3:00 each Sunday. Docents welcome families to the garden, answer questions and ensure everyone is safe and has fun. You will train with an experienced Docent. You can sign up for one shift a month or as many as you want.

Email: conejogarden1623@hotmail.com .

For information and directions to the garden, visit our web site at www.conejogarden.org.

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