

LASCA Leaves



Los Angeles County Department of Arboreta and Botanic Gardens

INTERNATIONAL GUAYULE CONFERENCE

THE THIRD International Conference on Guayule April 27 through May 1 will bring scientists and specialists from all over the world to southern California for an exchange of knowledge about this "new" source of rubber.

Research on guayule has been accelerating at such a rapid rate that conference organizers, Drs. George Hanson, Indira Mehta, and Himayat H. Naqvi from the Arboretum Research Division, have had to keep plans for the conference quite flexible. Registration may total 100 persons or, as happened at a recent jojoba oil conference, five times the expected number may attend. So far, guayule specialists from Mexico, Israel, Africa, India, Australia, and the U.S. have shown interest in the conference to be held at the Huntington Sheraton Hotel in Pasadena.

Interest in the silvery-leaved desert shrub has fluctuated widely since the rubber from guayule (*Parthenium argentatum*) was first used by the Aztecs of Mexico more than 1,500 years ago. The rubber tree, (*Hevea brasiliensis*) which yields a latex very similar to that of guayule, was the primary source of rubber until World War II interrupted shipments from Southeast Asia. A brief period



Karen Toukdarian checks the maturity of flowers for the guayule hybridization project.

of intense work with guayule in America ended abruptly when hevea and petroleum-based synthetic rubber became available after the war ended. Now, political instability in rubber producing areas and rising petroleum prices have combined with increased demand for natural rubber to draw attention once more to guayule as a source of rubber.

The natural adaptation of guayule to hot regions has made it particularly attractive to nations containing areas of marginal agricultural land with soils too poor or dry for other crops.

Mexico, with its large tracts of dry land covered by native stands of guayule, has pioneered in the practical application of guayule research. The world's only existing guayule latex extraction plant is now operating at Saltillo in the state of Coahuila, Mexico, under the direction of Dr. Enrique Campos Lopez.

Dr. Campos Lopez will be one of the speakers on the opening day of the conference. His countryman, Carlos Vergara Arratia, will also relate his experiences as a member of the Mexican National Commission of Arid Zones.

Other speakers include two University of Arizona, Tucson, staff members: Dr. Kenneth Foster from the Office of Arid Land Studies and Dr. David Rubis of the Department of Plant Sciences. Edward Flynn, publisher of the *Guayule Newsletter*, and Dr. Dan Bragg from Texas A & M are also included in the preliminary list of opening day speakers.

An open forum during the second and third days will give conference participants an opportunity to exchange information. Presentations

will be translated simultaneously into English and Spanish.

On the last day devoted to guayule studies, researchers will be able to get out of the conference rooms and into the field to see what is

happening with guayule in southern California. One of the three planned field trips will feature a visit to the guayule research greenhouses at the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum.

Photos by William Aplin



Different USDA strains of guayule plants grow in separate rows in the test plots near the Depot at the Arboretum.

FIESTA DE FLORES

SOUTH COAST Botanic's 18th annual Fiesta de Flores will be held on the weekend of May 17 and 18, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Plumerias, Mermaid roses, *Platycerium grande* (staghorn ferns) and a cactus and succulent collection will be among the thousands of plants for sale.

Horticultural demonstrations on bonsai, ferns, bromeliads, roses, and herbs are scheduled throughout the weekend. A plant clinic will also be available. A raffle will be held on both Saturday and Sunday with dozens of valuable prizes including a tile mural by Gemma valued at \$1,500, a 19-inch television set, and a greenhouse.

The Gift Shop will be stocked with garden related items, many handcrafted by volunteers from natural materials gathered in the garden.

A preview party for Foundation members and their guests will be held at 6 p.m. May 16. Proceeds from the party and the benefit sale help underwrite further development in the garden.

Cindy Peters, a member of the Foundation's board of trustees, is chairman of the event.

Arboretum Weather Summary October 1, 1978 to September 30, 1979

| | Oct. | Nov. | Dec. | Jan. | Feb. | Mar. | Apr. | May | June | July | Aug. | Sept. |
|------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-----|------|------|------|-------|
| Average maximum temperature | 87.1 | 71 | 65.9 | 62.2 | 78 | 71 | 79 | 81 | 91 | 92 | 90 | 96 |
| Average minimum temperature | 57.2 | 45.3 | 39.4 | 41.6 | 34 | 47 | 49 | 55 | 58 | 61 | 62 | 63 |
| Highest temperature | 98 | 90 | 77 | 70 | 78 | 89 | 87 | 102 | 109 | 102 | 100 | 109 |
| Lowest temperature | 50 | 36 | 27 | 27 | 34 | 34 | 43 | 46 | 52 | 53 | 57 | 58 |
| Number of clear days | 14 | 17 | 21 | 15 | 17 | 12 | 21 | 15 | 16 | 22 | 12 | 23 |
| Number of partly cloudy days | 5 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 7 | 7 | 13 | 12 | 18 | 19 | 7 |
| Number of cloudy days | 12 | 12 | 7 | 15 | 10 | 8 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Rain each month | .11 | 1.92 | 2.95 | 6.50 | 3.68 | 6.23 | tr | .03 | .04 | 0 | 0 | .02 |

Lat. 34 deg. 08' 48" N., Long. 118 deg. 02' 59" W., Elevation 571.28 ft.



1980. "International guayule conference." *Garden* 4(2), 1-2.

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