

by volunteers headed by Marleen Quandt, the festivities on a balmy evening were enjoyed by everyone and were to serve as an indication of what was to happen the next day.

The next morning a light rain was falling in the early hours, giving rise to fears of a repeat of last year's rainy Bonanza. But twenty minutes before the nine o'clock opening the rain stopped and the sun began to break through. Shortly thereafter, the crowd surged through the gates and headed for the approximately quarter-acre, saran-covered sale site west of the Garden For All Seasons. Within a few hours five hundred miniature roses and a thousand blue hibiscus, an Arboretum introduction, disappeared along with hundreds of gallon cans of asparagus and artichokes. In two hours, five thousand pelargoniums were sold out. Orchids were particularly popular this year, including bouquets of cut cymbidium flower spikes. By the end of the day there was little left—ferns, cycads, palms, shade and fruit trees, all were carried off by as enthusiastic a crowd of plant

lovers as one might ever hope to see. Everyone who had worked to make the event a success was pleased, none more than Mrs. David Malafrente, Bonanza chairman, Mrs. Leland E. Larson, president of the Foundation, Mrs. John Llewellyn, president of Las Voluntarias, and the 280 members of Las Voluntarias who helped with the yearlong preparation and the selling.

Dolls at South Coast

ON THE EVENING of last June 3rd, a preview of an unusual Japanese doll and bonsai exhibit was held in the Hall of Horticulture at South Coast Botanic Garden. Present were distinguished representatives of the South Bay Japanese community, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, city and state officials, and the Department of Arboreta and Botanic Gardens. The focus of the event was the display of some 300 Kime Komi dolls reflecting various aspects of ancient Japanese culture, and a collection of prize bonsai trees.

The preview was coordinated by Mr. Kay Iizuka, member of the Arboreta Board of Governors. The program began with an introduction by Mr. Iizuka, followed by welcoming remarks by Mrs. Hirofumi Uyesugi, instructor in the doll art; Francis Ching, Arboreta director; Mr. Eugene Hillman, president of the South Coast Botanic Garden Foundation; and Mrs. Randell Stoke representing the Board of Governors.

Special guests included Mrs. Ayako Ito, Vice Consul of Cultural Affairs of Japan, Los Angeles County Supervisors Kenneth Hahn and James A. Hayes and their wives. The Supervisors presented scrolls to Mrs. Uyesugi and Mr. Mikado Takehara, chairman of the bonsai exhibit. Mrs. Hahn and Mrs. Hayes were each presented with gifts of a Kime Komi doll.

Rubber Research Grant

LAST MARCH, the California Arboretum Foundation received a grant from the National Science Foundation for a research project aimed at increasing the yield of the rubber-bearing shrub, guayule, the work to be done at the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum. The project will be under the direction of George P. Hanson, Arboretum senior biologist and plant breeder. Dr. Hanson will serve as principal investigator assisted by other members of the Arboretum research staff plus four full-time technicians.

The grant is for \$97,600 for the first year with support for an additional two years planned. The money is provided by the NSF's Research Applied to National Needs (RANN) program, in this case reflecting government recognition of natural rubber as a strategic commodity in the U.S. economy and the desirability of developing a domestic alternative to the current and



Kay Iizuka, Mrs. Hirofumi Uyesugi, William Gerber and Supervisor Kenneth Hahn review the Kime Komi doll preview exhibit.

only source of natural rubber supply in Southeast Asia.

Guayule (*Parthenium argentatum*) is a semidesert shrub native to the drylands of Texas and north-central Mexico. It has been long familiar to the inhabitants of those areas who extracted rubber from the plant by chewing the leaves and branches and then made balls for games. Before and during World War II, guayule was grown and commercially harvested for its rubber content in various parts of the American Southwest; large acreages were grown in California during the 1940's. After the war, guayule culture was abandoned in favor of synthetic rubber made from petroleum which was easier to produce in large quantities. The new interest in guayule arises from economic, environmental, and practical considerations of considerable urgency today. Cited as the most important are 1) the growing demand for natural rubber for truck and aircraft tires and for the relatively recent radial tires which require substantially more natural rubber than older types; 2) the uncertainty of the current source. At present, natural rubber comes only from *Hevea brasiliensis*, a tree native to Brazil but largely wiped out in that region because of disease. It is now growing in Malaysia and Indonesia, areas subject to political manipulation by foreign nations; 3) synthetic rubber is made from petroleum, a product in increasingly short supply and potentially rising cost; 4) synthetic rubber is produced in factories using energy from fossil fuels that produce smog as a by-product; 5) guayule grows on arid land not usable for agriculture. There are thousands of acres of arid land lying idle in the American Southwest. Whether this acreage will be used for growing guayule will depend on how successful research projects are in breeding varieties that will increase the rubber yield.

The project will be divided into five main tasks: seed collection to provide a wide variety of germplasm; hybridization or crossing of existing strains to give new plant varieties; selection among the new varieties for yield potential; horticultural studies to determine cultural conditions for optimum rubber yield; and maintenance of breeding and test stock.

As a member and past president of the California Arboretum Foundation, the late Dr. Arie J. Haagen-Smit recommended that the Arboretum become involved in guayule research which led to the research grant by the National Science Foundation.

To help direct and assist in the project, an advisory committee made up of distinguished American scientists has been organized. Most of the committee members have experience with guayule dating back to the 1940's; others have been working with the plant over the past two years.

Spring Extravaganza

THE ANNUAL SPRING EXTRAVAGANZA, a field day designed especially for homeowners, was held at the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum last May 21 and 22. As in past years sixteen horticultural organizations participated, displaying their particular plant specialties including camellias, ferns, palms, iris, amaryllis, day lilies, roses, bonsai, epiphyllum, begonias, orchids, and ivy.

Horticultural demonstrations included talks on herbs, vegetable gardening, house plants, roses, water conservation and plant propagation. A plant clinic composed of eight plant specialists solved visitors' plant questions and problems.

Displays included the Arboretum tropical and begonia greenhouses, plant science library, research laboratory and all-volunteer garden.

The Southern California chapter of the Herb Society of America attracted interest with over twenty lectures and demonstrations involving herbs including herb facials and herbal liqueurs. Other herb demonstrations included perfume making, herbal soaps, candying of edible herbs, and herbs in French cuisine.

All in all, some 10,000 visitors took advantage of the plant information offered, gaining a greater awareness of their surroundings.



Horticultural exhibits at the Spring Extravaganza.

Annual Meeting

THE CALIFORNIA ARBORETUM FOUNDATION held its annual membership meeting June 21 on the lawn adjoining the Garden For All Seasons. Members gathered at 6 p.m. for a picnic supper that was followed by a short business meeting to elect officers and members of the Board of Trustees for the coming year. Mrs. Leland E. Larson was elected for a second term as president of the California Arboretum Foundation. Tours of the grounds were enjoyed by the 350 members along with guided tours of the Prehistoric and Jungle Garden and the Tropical Greenhouse, two recently developed features largely supported by the California Arboretum Foundation. The evening ended with the customary plant distribution which this year offered members a choice



1977. "Rubber research grant." *Garden* 1(4), 2–3.

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