

## *Vintage irises will bloom at Robinson Gardens this spring*

More than 70 varieties of iris including heritage and historic cultivars from the 1920s and '30s are now growing at the Virginia Robinson Gardens. Planted last fall in front of the house in the perennial beds and near the pool pavilion, the irises should be established in time for the peak blooming period of March and April.

The irises, a favorite flower of Mrs. Robinson, are the start of a historical garden that will feature perennials and other flowers popular during the Robinson era. Other heirloom cultivars of iris, started by John Copeland, supervisor of the Robinson Gardens, will also be part of the collection which is a "great addition and appropriate to the period," he said.

Most of the irises were donated by Jim Puckett of Blooming Fields Farm in Riverside. He also helped Mr. Copeland plant the irises. By displaying the mass of cultivars in such an appropriate setting, Mr. Puckett

hopes to revitalize the popularity of this nostalgic garden favorite. "This is a significant donation, and I'm very grateful for his help in planting," said Mr. Copeland.

Mr. Puckett opened Blooming Fields Farm about 2 1/2 years ago, when he moved from Colorado where he had been a grower for 10 years. He works to arouse interest in the iris through displays at garden centers, plant sales and flower shows.

"Nothing will happen if I just print a catalog and sit back and wait," he said. His displays at Roger's Gardens in Corona del Mar, The Crystal Court in South Coast Plaza and the Green Scene Plant Sale at the Fullerton Arboretum for the past two springs allow visitors to see the many different color combinations and flower shapes available.

Mr. Puckett will also participate in Descanso Gardens' Spring Festival of Flowers show in March where he will plant a 12 by 14 foot display of tall bearded irises.

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## **Anoakia statue donated to Arboretum**

A 7-foot tall, white marble statue commissioned by Anita Baldwin has been moved to the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum. A crane lifted the statue, valued

at about \$100,000, into the new sculpture garden west of the waterfall on Nov. 22.

Lowry B. McCaslin donated the white marble figure in memory of his friend Richard A. Grant Sr., father of the president of the California Arboretum Foundation Board of Trustees, Richard A. Grant Jr. Included in his gift was a check for \$3,000 to help defray the cost of moving the sculpture to the Arboretum from the Anoakia estate grounds.

The sculpture by French artist Louis Aim'e Lejeune is titled *Je N'Oublierai Pas*. The phrase, which translates as "I will not forget," appears on the Baldwin family crest carved on the pillar supporting the urn beside the female figure.

The acorns also depicted on the crest symbolize an important part of Baldwin family lore. The oak grove on Tallac Knoll at



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*Workers remove protective wraps from statue.*



the Arboretum still stands because E.J. Baldwin would not allow the trees to be cut. According to Julian Fisher, who grew up on the ranch, there were only three ways to be fired at the Baldwin Ranch. One way was to mistreat a horse, the second was to kill a peacock, and the third was to cut down an oak tree.

As a tribute to her father, Anita not only incorporated "oak" into the name of her estate, Anoakia, but also mandated protection for the trees when she subdivided the

property many years later.

Mr. Lejeune's work was greatly appreciated by his contemporaries and was collected by the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Brooklyn Museum. In 1926 he traveled to California to complete a portrait bust commissioned by Horace Huntington. Anita Baldwin, known as a patroness of the arts, commissioned Mr. Lejeune to do the Arboretum's statue in 1930. The year before he had cast the bronze fountain still at the entrance to Anoakia.

## *Springtime tours offered at South Coast*

After several years of planning and planting, South Coast Botanic Garden has developed a spring display of flowering fruit trees throughout the 67-acre grounds.

"Springtime comes early at South Coast," says Takao Niiya, supervisor of the garden, "and we finally have a real show this season after years of effort."

Flowering fruit trees like cherry, peach and crabapple with their billows of delicate petals will all be blooming in March. 'Pink Cloud', a cultivar of the Japanese flowering cherry,

produces single, medium-sized flowers without winter chilling. The flowering nectarine 'Alma Stultz' will also be displaying clouds of fragrant, rosy-white flowers. Another feature will be 2,000 'King Alfred' daffodils spreading a carpet of golden flowers on the main lawn.

Weekday tram tours are available for groups during the peak spring blooming season in March. Reservations must be made in advance and will be cancelled in case of bad weather. Call (310) 544-6815.

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## **Winds force Arboretum and Descanso to close for a day**

*At right, plant propagator Mary Abney straightens cans in the nursery tumbled by winds on Nov. 30. Although both Descanso Gardens and the Arboretum suffered only minor damage, the gardens were closed on the Saturday following Thanksgiving to protect visitors from flying debris. Both gardens reopened the next day, although cleanup efforts continued through the next week.*



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