

Department notes

AABGA MEETING

ALTHOUGH no poll was taken, there seemed to be a consensus among the 100 registered delegates from the United States and Canada that it was one of the busiest and most tightly organized meetings the American Association of Botanic Gardens and Arboreta had ever held, and though the timing, April 16 through April 19, was not the most convenient for those conferees thinking about planting back home, it did afford an opportunity to see a number of Southern California botanic gardens at the height of their spring season. For those who arrived ahead of schedule, there was a special all-day field trip on Sunday to selected areas within a 90-mile radius of Los Angeles to see fields of lupin, coreopsis, and other California wild flowers that were particularly magnificent this year owing to the heavy rains.

The proceedings began Monday with an early morning trip — 5 a.m. — to the Los Angeles Flower Market where Frank Kuwahara, general manager and a delightful host, served his visitors fresh orange juice, sweet rolls and coffee while telling them they were in the midst of a \$40 million a year business supplied mainly by growers in California, Oregon, and Washington, but also from as far away as the Netherlands — tulips, of course — and Latin America. After about an hour of seeing superb specimens of cut flowers — Easter lilies, azaleas, caladiums, lilies-of-the-valley, everyone was bused to the Huntington Botanical Gardens for a sit-down breakfast followed by a brief his-

tory of the gardens presented by curator Myron Kimnach and botanist Fred Boutin. These gentlemen then each led a half of the group on a tour of this magnificent, beautifully cared-for garden.

After the Huntington, the conferees were bused to Descanso Gardens where they had lunch under the oaks followed by a tour of the grounds led by Mark Anthony, superintendent, and George Lewis, assistant superintendent. In the afternoon, Dr. Mildred Mathias, director of the botanical garden and herbarium at the University of California, Los Angeles, presided over a lively symposium on plants of Southern California with landscape architects Philip Chandler and Fred Lang, former South Coast Botanic Garden superintendent Don Woolley, Arboretum botanical consultant George Spalding, rare plant collector Paul Hutchison, native plant specialist Dave Verity, and botanist Fred Boutin showing and discussing specimens representing their special interests. That evening, something new was tried at the dinner in the Ramada Inn Banquet Room. Conferees were seated according to their interest in research, public relations, education, and maintenance, and were asked by chairman Myron Kimnach to zero in on one or two aspects of their chosen topic and be prepared to have a selected spokesman make a five-minute report following dessert. Considering the absence of parliamentary procedures and a tendency to socialize rather than take up serious matters, the rap session, as it was called, produced some interesting viewpoints. Perhaps most important it provided a forum for delegates to speak their mind.

The next day began with a tour of Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Gardens, preceded by coffee and cookies and a short, welcoming address by Dr. Lee Lenz, the director, and then on to a tour of Monrovia Nursery comprising 350 acres of plants in containers, the largest nursery



Seeing Arboretum plants.



After-dinner rap session.



Time out for inlanders to view the Pacific.



At Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Gardens.

of its kind in the world. Following a fine outdoor luncheon, at which host Martin Usery, president, moved from table to table greeting his guests, buses were boarded again for a return to respective motels and a two-hour symposium on future directions of the AABGA. Joseph Oppe, director of the Arthur Hoyt Scott Horticultural Foundation at Swarthmore College was the chairman for this discussion led by panelists Angus Heeps of the Henry Foundation for Botanical Research at Gladwyne, Pennsylvania; Glenn Park, horticulturist from the Chicago Botanic Gardens; Dr. Richard Lighty, coordinator of the Longwood Program at the University of Delaware; and Carl Totemeir, director of the Bayard-Cutting Arboretum. The busy day ended with the AABGA annual banquet at which Dr. Arie J. Haagen-Smit, California's renowned expert on air pollution, spoke on "Smog, Plants, and People." Calling attention

to the stringent and increasingly well-enforced automobile exhaust emission standards set by the California Air Resources Board which he serves as chairman, Dr. Haagen-Smit noted that in the long run people will just have to give up big cars if they truly want clean air.

The evening ended with the presentation of AABGA awards of merit. Among the recipients were departing AABGA president, Joseph Witt, of the University of Washington Arboretum, Seattle, who was presented with a plaque consisting of a board and gavel, the presentation made by Dr. Louis Martin of the Chicago Horticultural Society. On behalf of the California Arboretum Foundation, Mrs. Peter Douglas, president, received an award for her organization's outstanding example of a citizen support group. Awards were given to Dr. Samuel Ayres, Jr. and Dr. Henry Skinner for their many contributions to the world of horticulture;

Dorothy Hansell, for 17 years contributing editor and then editor in chief of the AABGA Quarterly Bulletin; and to Douglas Ritchie, an Ohio State student, for his outstanding scholarship in horticulture. Finally, Dr. Richard A. Howard of the Arnold Arboretum and new president of AABGA, presented Francis Ching, director of the Los Angeles County Department of Arboreta and Botanic Gardens, a specially potted imperial bonsai, *Chamaecyparis obtusa*, a cypress-like evergreen, for "our deep appreciation of a wonderful time at the meeting."

The next day, which still was only the third day of the meeting, was spent at the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum in Arcadia, and included a brief description of the functions of the Department by Francis Ching and four of his division heads, followed by a tour of the grounds and luncheon in the Demonstration Home Gardens with the California Arboretum Foundation serving as host. An afternoon symposium on education programs at arboreta and botanic gardens was chaired by Dr. Lee Lenz, director of Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden. The panelists were Jacqueline Broughton of Santa Barbara Botanic Garden who spoke on "The Role of the Botanic Garden in Youth Education"; Dr. Roy L. Taylor, director of the Botanic Garden of the University of British Columbia, who spoke on "The Role of the Botanic Garden in Graduate Education"; Elizabeth Scholtz, director of the Brooklyn Botanic Gardens, who spoke on "The Role of the Botanic Garden in Adult Education"; and Dr. Richard W. Lighty, coordinator of the Longwood Program at the University of Delaware, who spoke on "The Role of the Botanic Garden in Horticultural Education."

The final day was spent on a tour of Santa Barbara Botanic Garden under the guidance of D. Katherine Muller, director. After lunch, conferees wandered

about on their own, then boarded the bus for the trip back, first stopping off for a look at the historic Santa Barbara Mission, some unusual plants at Orpet Park, and a pause long enough for some of the inlanders to dip their feet in the Pacific Ocean.

For the duration of the meeting, conferees, when they had the chance, could look at educational exhibits set up by eight of the participating gardens.

It was, as we said at the beginning, a busy four days, and if the conferees were a bit weary at the end they knew their time had not been wasted and they would return to their own gardens with memories of sights and discussions they would mull over in the weeks to come.

DESCANSO TRAM

The Clark tractor that draws the tram at Descanso Gardens has been overhauled and its carburetion system converted to the burning of propane instead of gasoline. This makes the second Department tram that has switched from gasoline as a fuel, one Arboretum tram having been converted early in 1969. Propane, or more properly, liquefied petroleum gas, is a mixture of several gases, principally propane and butane, with propane the main ingredient. It is transformed under compression into a liquid to facilitate transporting and storage. It becomes a vapor when used in internal combustion engines. It offers several advantages over gasoline, notably less pollution of the air. The almost complete combustion of LPG, or propane, results in lower exhaust fumes and less carbon monoxide than that coming from gasoline-powered vehicles. In addition to introducing less pollution into the air, better combustion causes engines to last longer and require less maintenance.



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