

Heath and Heather

by Stuart Walzer, MG '96

Because I have *Erica* growing in my garden, the original subject of this article was to be the plant group known as "Erica". My research revealed the vastness of the Ericaceae plant family, and I decided to limit myself to a smaller group in that family, heaths and heathers. Again, I was overwhelmed by the wide scope of the heath family so I decided to focus on one particular heath that grows in my garden, *Erica canaliculata*.

We have the romantic notion that, with certain exceptions, heaths and heathers are picturesque inhabitants of the moors of England and Scotland. But this is neither their geographic limit nor their place of origin. Heaths and heathers are natives of Western Europe from the Mediterranean littoral north to Scotland and the Hebrides. And, as we shall see, South Africa is the place of origin of both familiar and unfamiliar members of this family.

We tend to think of heath and heather as two varieties of plants with different characteristics. The distinction between heaths and heathers is not firmly established. Botanical experts state that the leaf structure of heath and heather differ slightly. Many experts categorize *Calluna vulgaris* (Scottish heather) as

the only true heather. Yet, some heaths are called "heather" without any regard to leaf structure. Heaths and heathers are so similar in appearance that even experts have difficulty telling them apart.

The heather family is more cold hardy than the heath, (better able to withstand cold temperatures). This is not a consideration for gardeners in the Monterey Bay area, which is an excellent habitat for these colorful plants. Heaths and heathers are uniquely suited to a seaside climate.

Erica canaliculata, which I bought as a heath with visions of Scotland dancing in my head, exemplifies the confusion surrounding heath and heather. My three plants bloom around Christmas and put out whorls of pale pink flowers at the ends of their branches. It is a marvelous and unusual winter blooming landscape plant.

While researching this article, I didn't know the botanical name of my three heaths. Heaths are usually measured in inches in height rather than feet. My three heaths grow to six feet tall. And, while heaths are supposed to grow and flower only in full sun, my plants grew and flowered in partial shade. This was a puzzle I felt necessary to resolve. So I went out in the garden to see if I could better identify my heaths.

The visible nametags had, of course, long since disappeared. But on close inspection I did find a nametag on one. The lettering was smudged and virtually illegible. I removed the tag, got out my magnifying glass, and made out the plant name, *Erica canaliculata*.



And, much to my surprise, my research revealed it to be native to South Africa commonly called Christmas bells heather or black-eyed heather. My three heaths were now heathers, and my "Scottish" plants had become South African.

Erica canaliculata is the tallest and most floriferous of the South African *Erica*. It is bushy and spreading but with a general spired effect. It has an open growth pattern and dark green leaves above, white beneath, in whorls of three. The massed bell-shaped flowers vary from pale pink, sold as 'Rosea'. A rose-purple variety is sold as 'Rubra'.

Why would Monterey Bay nurseries carry this upright tree heath but rarely carry its small cousin, the prostrate or

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(*Heath and Heather continued from page 1*) spreading groundcover? I think it is because the smaller European varieties are suitable for dry, open, rolling landscapes, but get lost in a small urban garden.

All heaths, and particularly South African varieties, grow on infertile, slightly acidic scree. Little or no fertilization is required. Occasional light applications of sulfur will help. Mature specimens are drought resistant, but do require some water.

Pruning

According to the head gardener at Huntington Gardens, the evergreen *Erica canaliculata* does not need to be pruned. In late spring, just beat or shake the dead flowers off and trim away the dead wood. Then shape the plant as necessary since it leans and twists as it grows. Sometimes, if it gets too much water when it is young and just becoming established, it will take on a leggy look. It will then need trimming in order to develop the desired shape. It

cannot tolerate hard pruning down to just the wood. Pruning this severely will kill the plant.

Shakespeare mentions heath/heathers in his plays. One such reference is from *The Tempest*, where Gonzalo is drowning:

Gonzalo: *"Now would I give a thousand furlongs of sea for an acre of barren ground, long heath, brown furze, anything. The wills above be done! But I would fain die a dry death."* END

Garden Faire Update: the Financial Model

by Tom Karwin, MG '99 and Sheryl McEwan, MG '03

The Smart Gardening Faire could become an annual event for the Monterey Bay area, a major project of the Monterey Bay Master Gardeners, and a significant addition to its educational program. The experience of the initial 2006 offering of the Faire will be very helpful in decisions to refine and continue the Faire in future years, or to discontinue it.

Some members of the board have expressed interest in this year's approach to the Faire's finances, and suggested specifically that we should charge vendors a percentage of their revenues. This note is intended to explain why we decided on a different approach for this year.

First, we believe there has never been an event like the Smart Gardening Faire in the Monterey Bay area. It has some elements in common with the Home & Garden Show, the County Fair and Earth Day, but it's more like a small-scale version of the Sunset Celebration.

Novelty has appeal for some people, but track record is more important in the long run. Some people will attend the 2006 Faire out of curiosity, but in future years, attendance and community support will reflect the quality of experiences that people have had with the Faire.

Our goal for this year is to provide a positive experience at low cost, as a foundation for future Faires. So far,

we've been able to recruit experts in gardening and landscaping to speak without a fee. (We'll provide a few speakers with exhibit booths.) Selected food vendors will participate, hoping for a crowd large enough to make it worthwhile. We'll pay reasonable fees to musicians and other entertainers who will add to the ambience of a pleasant day in the sun.

That brings us to the exhibitors. These will include non-profit groups, some of which will sell plants or other items to raise funds for their organizations, and for-profit businesses. We need them to add to the Faire experience, so we want to have a good mix of high-quality, theme-oriented exhibitors who are willing to take a chance with this first-time event.

We've been recruiting exhibitors with a co-op approach: we're asking them to contribute \$50 toward the Faire's expenses for signage and publicity; meet their own expenses for tents, tables chairs, etc.; share their knowledge as part of the Faire's educational theme; and publicize the Faire through their newsletters and other contacts. This is not a "free ride" for them, but it will be less costly in most cases than a fee based on a percentage of sales.

Exhibitors have responded very well to this approach, which gives garden clubs a low-cost opportunity to pursue their own educational missions and

recruit members. At the same time, they will help to make the Faire a "must" for the region's gardeners. Everybody wins!

The Monterey Bay Master Gardeners' support of the Faire advances its own educational purpose, provides leadership for the region's garden-oriented non-profits and demonstrates a financial commitment that is essential for generating support from other sources. We already have in-kind contributions and sponsorships that exceed the MBMG's support and we expect to have much more in the form of grants.

We could modify this model for future Faires. For example, once we have real-world experience with the Faire's expenses, we could ask exhibitors to contribute more toward those expenses. We also could charge a fee based on revenues from sales. We can discuss these and other options after the Faire. Our long-term goal, however, should not be to eliminate the MBMG's financial commitment, but rather to establish the Faire as a key part of its educational program.

For the very latest information on the Faire's speakers, exhibitors and sponsors, visit smartgardening.org. END



Garden Society Meetings Offer Advanced Training Opportunities

by Mary Koch, MG '00

For those looking for additional ways to obtain advanced training, attending one of the many plant club and society meetings provides an opportunity to expand one's gardening knowledge by learning more about a specific plant.

Plant club lectures and field trips, as well as classes offered by Monterey Peninsula College, Cabrillo College, and the UCSC arboretum or Farm and Garden count toward advanced training hours. In addition, helping with the set up or organizing any of these classes may also count toward MG volunteer hours.

Plant society meetings typically offer a speaker, and may include a plant swap/raffle. Some meetings offer a potluck dinner prior to the meeting, offering a place to socialize and do one of the things gardeners like to do best, discuss plants!

California Native Plant Society

Santa Cruz County Chapter. Meets the second Mon. of odd months, 7:30 pm, Natural History Museum, 1305 East Cliff Dr., Santa Cruz. Native plant propagation group meets the third Sun. of each month, 9:00 am, Suncrest Nursery (east of Watsonville). Contact Mike Luther, 831-688-3897 or Denise Polk, 831-685-3235 for information, www.cruzcnps.org

Monterey Chapter. Meets the third Thurs. of the month, Sept. through June; social half hour 7:00, meeting 7:30. Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History, Forest and Central Avenue, Pacific Grove. Contact Brian LeNeve, email: leneve@redshift.com

Carmel Orchid Society

Meets the first Mon. of the month (except Sept. and Dec.), 7:30 pm, First Presbyterian Church, 501 El Dorado, Monterey. Contact Ida Hale, 831-646-8724 (email: imaryhale.com). www.carmelorchidsociety.org

Monterey Bay Orchid Society

Meets the second Thurs. of the month,

6:30 pm, Via Verde Medical Group, 1332 Natividad Road, Suite C, Salinas. Aaron Yaras, 831-663-3953; for more information call 831-375-6871.

Santa Cruz Orchid Society

Meets the first Fri. of the month, 7:30 pm, Live Oak Grange, 1900 17th Ave., Santa Cruz. Contact Richard Borden: santacruzorchids@yahoo.net

Monterey Bay Cactus and Succulent Society

Meets the third Sun. of the month, 12:30 pm; potluck lunch followed by presentation. VFW Building, 1960 Freedom Blvd., Watsonville. Call 831-449-2002 or 831-722-1446 for more information.

Monterey Bay Iris Society

Meets the third Fri. of the month (regular meetings not held in July and Dec.; as the Society holds a picnic in July and a dinner in Dec.), 7:30 pm, Native Son's Hall, 239 High Street, Santa Cruz. Contact Diane Samson, 831-728-1339 (email: debsamson@baymoon.com). www.montereybayiris.org

Monterey Bonsai Club

Meets the first Tues. of the month, 6:30-9:00 pm, Hilltop School (corner of David Ave. and Jesse St. in Monterey). Contact Tim Shea, 831-663-4780 (email: ladyredshea@yahoo.com). www.gsbf-bonsai.org/MontereyBonsai/

Watsonville Bonsai Club

Meets the second and fourth Mon. of the month, 6:30pm, Kizuki Hall, 150 Blackburn Street, Watsonville (across from the Watsonville High School tennis courts). Call 831-724-9283 or 831-663-5044 for more information.

Santa Cruz Bonsai Kai

Meets the third Sat. of the month, 9:00 am, Live Oak Grange, 1900 17th Ave., Santa Cruz. Contact Jim Carlson, 831-761-3531. www.gsbf-bonsai.org/santacruzbonsaikai/

Salinas Bonsai Club

Meets the fourth Tues. of the month, 7:00 pm, Firehouse Recreation Center,

1330 Alisal St., Salinas. Also meets first Sat. of the month, 1-3 pm, Lincoln Avenue Presbyterian Church, 526 Lincoln Ave., Salinas. Contact Clair Binder, 831-422-5436.

Monterey Bay Rhododendron Society

Monterey Bay Chapter. Meets the third Tues. of the month, 7:00 pm, Live Oak Senior Center, Santa Cruz.

Monterey Bay Rose Society

Meets the fourth Fri. of the month (except June and July), 7:00 pm, Aptos Grange Hall, 2555 Mar Vista Drive. Contact Otto Lund, 831-426-0824, email: jtlund@sbcglobal.net. www.montereybayrosesociety.org

Central Coast Heritage Rose Group

Meets twice a year in Jan. and Sept.; also a spring garden party or tour. Membership dues (to be on mailing list): \$1.00. Contact Central Coast Heritage Rose Group, 829 32nd Ave., Santa Cruz, CA 95062; Jill Perry: 831-462-4916, email: perry@calcentral.com, <http://members.cruzio.com/~perry>

Monterey Bay Dahlia Society

Meets the second Fri. of each month, 7:00 pm (potluck dinner), 7:30 pm meeting. Simpkins Family Swim Center, Community Room, 979 17th Ave., Santa Cruz. Contact Kevin Larkin, 831-722-9952, email: kevin@cgdahlias.com

American Begonia Society

Monterey Bay Branch. Meets the fourth Wed. of the month, 7:30 pm, Crossroads Community Room, Carmel. Contact Fred Crummey, 831-624-4154, email: kcrum@aol.com

California Rare Fruit Growers

Monterey Bay Chapter. Meeting times and dates vary. Contact Chuck Rusk, 831-728-6515, www.monterey_bay@crfg.org

Gardeners' Club

Meets at 7 pm on the second Thurs. of the month at Aptos Grange Hall, 2555 Mar Vista Drive, Aptos. Contact 831-662-1395, sirleen@hotmail.com END

2006 San Francisco Flower and Garden Show Photo Collage

March 15-19, 2006

by Kari Olsen, MG '06



Make your own hypertufa trough!
This handcrafted planter with the look of weathered stone can be completed in a weekend. The rough, natural look makes it a perfect container for succulents or alpine plants.



As in past years, Sunset Magazine sponsored the garden show seminar series which featured over 70 demonstrations and presentations by leading horticultural and design experts. The practical hands-on demonstration classes were especially well attended including a session from Monrovia about designing with four season foliage.



Dave Stockdale (Center for Urban Education about Sustainable Agriculture) presents a seminar on container design basics. Considering elements of form, texture, color, and scale also applies when working with container plant combinations.



As always, the highlight for many was the wonderfully varied display gardens installed on the Cow Palace main floor. These well-staged designs are proof that in the garden, anything is possible.

Like most years, the 2006 displays featured everything from the sublime to the bizarre – not everyone's gardening tastes are similar! The best time to enjoy the display gardens is after 4:00 PM during the show weekdays; they are virtually empty. Forget about it on the weekends – it's packed.



Michelle Swanson, MG '96 of CLTV8 design, captured a People's Choice Award and a Gold Medal for her Art Deco Moroccan masterpiece.

Photo courtesy Cheri Callis



This display garden waterfall cascaded from a huge overhanging rock formation creating a walk-through rock tunnel lined with moss and ferns. Lush, tropical-looking plants completed the garden appropriately titled “Tropical Wonderland” (Goulart Designs and French’s Waterscapes). Silver Award.



“Wabi in the Wilderness” (Windsmith Designs) used hardscape to create water-flow through a design featuring dramatic structural rock elements and drought tolerant plants. Silver Award.



The “Feng Shui Garden” (American Institute of Floral Design) applied traditional Feng Shui principles to hardscape and floral arrangements to create a garden illustrating the five elements found in nature: water, wood, fire, earth and metal. Bronze Award.




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A Fountain for Your Garden

When I bought my house two years ago, there were two fountains installed. One was a jug with water bubbling over the top – very pretty – lots of compliments from friends. The other is a big stone one that I am not even going to discuss here.

I was not satisfied with this fountain because the water hardly showed above the top of the jug, and there was no water sound. When there was debris in the water tub under the fountain preventing the pump from working, I had to take it apart. That was when I learned how fountains work. I bought a larger pump and when I installed it (attached it to the flexible tube), the water bubbled higher and there was a little water sound if I really listened. Added bonus, I frequently see hummingbirds sipping and dipping in this fountain. Project complete.

This fountain is in front of my house, not in the garden patio area that I use for relaxing and entertaining. So I began my attempt to bring the relaxing **sound** of water into my garden without a major investment. I had an extra small pump. I found a bamboo waterspout at a garden store. All I needed was a container that holds water.

All you need are these three basic items:



Water jug fountain

1. Fountain pump available at any garden/hardware store and an electrical outlet – they come with long cords;
2. Water spout – bamboo is inexpensive and durable;
3. Container without a hole that is large enough to support the spout.



Pump and water spout

The pump goes on the bottom of the container, as it must stay submerged. There are only a couple of maintenance chores:

1. Check the water level on a regular basis, as evaporation will occur in the warm weather.
2. Clean out debris (leaves, pine needles) as needed.

The pump is easy to open and clean if it stops working.



Here is a picture of a fountain from <http://www.kineticfountains.com/>. They sell a kit that includes the pump and the waterspout.

attract birds. This simple fountain can be enhanced with rocks, ornaments and plants if you get carried away by such projects the way I do. Here is what my fountain looked like when I was done. The container is one of the lightweight fiberglass ones. If you add rocks, decide where to put the fountain before you load it up unless you can lift heavy objects.




My cat thought I made him a drinking fountain!

(Yes, I wanted to move mine after I got it all done.) I supported the waterspout with rocks so that the stream would be more visible and the water would have a longer distance to flow down.

I prefer watching the way the water falls on the rocks, but the sound is best when it flows from the spout into water below. Some grasses are happy sitting in water. I used a *Juncus patens* (California rush).

A small fountain can make a big difference in a garden. It will focus your attention away from less pleasant sounds (traffic, neighbors) and let you enjoy the time there even more. Now that you know how easy it is, what are you waiting for?

END



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Al's Corner Pass Along Gardening Solutions

by Al Derrick, MG '95

My Rosarian friend and Sonoma County Master Gardener, Jim Lang told me a couple of ways to improve my way of doing gardening chores that I would like to pass along. The first is a Makita cordless reciprocating saw, so small it becomes part of your hand. No tool dealer in this area knew they made such a tool. The purpose the manufacturer had in mind for this tool is unknown, but it was never intended for us gardeners or it would be available through gardening sources. I was able to find it at Makita on the Internet and with a model number and list of dealers.

The best price was from a dealer in Nebraska. Because I already have Makita tools using the 9.6-volt battery, I did not need a battery or charger and my price was \$69. Because of its small size and thin, stiff blade, it is able to get into a very small space. The suggested use for this saw, with the operating directions, was metal or lumber but certainly not growing trees or shrubs.

Jim's other helpful hint was the use of stakes for rose or other shrubs. Sometimes a newly planted tree or shrub just resists growing vertically, especially here in Calistoga where very little of the garden is near level. Instead of using those green plastic coated metal stakes available at all garden outlets, which are easily bent and difficult to drive into my rocky soil, Jim uses ½ inch steel electrical conduit. It is available everywhere in 10-foot lengths, galvanized and long lasting in the garden. It is easily cut to the desired length with a hacksaw or my new Makita with the included hacksaw blade. The best part for us poor gardeners is a 10-foot, ½ inch steel electrical conduit that sells for \$2.39 at both Home Depot and Yardbirds in Santa Rosa and very little more at the local Calistoga hardware store. *END*

Makita pruner



Makita hacksaw



Advanced Training, Volunteer Opportunities and Other Events

by Sharon Ettinger, MG '00 & Sharon Tyler, MG '04

Sat., May 6, 9:30-4:15, Integrated Pest Management with Sean Swezey, UCCE classroom, Watsonville.

Sun., May 7, 12:30 pm, Controlling Gophers, Moles & Voles Without Poisons. Thomas Wittman, well-known gopher catcher and owner of Gophers Limited will give a hands-on workshop. Class size limited to 45. Call 831-427-2998 to register. UCSC Arboretum. \$20 members/\$25 non-members.

Sat., May 13, 10-1, Solar Applications in the Garden, Thomas Wittman discusses ways to incorporate solar-powered lights, pumps, and more into your garden or farm. Louise Cain Gatehouse, UCSC Farm. \$15 members/\$20 non-members.

Sat., May 20, 9:30-12:30, Berries with Mark Bolda, **1:15-4:15, Plant Families Presentation from 2006 class,** UCCE classroom, Watsonville.

May 20, 1-3, Wormshop, Grey Bears Recycling Facility, 2710 Chanticleer, Santa Cruz, \$15 materials fee for worms and bin, Call to reserve. 831-427-3452.

Thurs., May 25, 1:30 pm, Native Plant ID Workshop. Learn to key out native plants using the Jepson Manual. Bring book if you have it, and 7x or 10x hand lens. No experience necessary. Classes run each 4th Thursday of the month, Jan. through Oct., UCSC Arboretum, Free.

Volunteer Opportunities

Sat., May 20, 9-1, Cooper Historic Garden Plant Sale, Cooper-Molera Adobe, Monterey. Come volunteer and help tell others about the Master Gardener program. Contact Judy Falkner, MG '00.

Sat., May 27, MBMG Tour Gardens Workday. Mark your calendar

now. Details will follow via email for our first scheduled workday. See you there!

Other Garden Events

Sat., May 6, 10-3, Sun., May 6, 10-2, UCSC Farm & Garden Spring Plant Sale. Organically grown flower, herb and vegetable starts, perennials, roses, grasses, and other landscape plants. (Members have pre-entry priority from 9-10 am on Sat., May 6. Memberships and renewals are available the morning of the sale, beginning at 8:30). Barn Theater parking lot, corner of Bay & High streets, 831-459-3240.

Sun., May 7, 10-5, Bringing Back the Natives Tour. A free tour of showcase native plant gardens in the East Bay. Registration is required in order to receive a guidebook and directions. <http://www.bringingbackthenatives.net/>

Sat., May 13, 9-5 & Sun., May 14, 9-3, Cabrillo College Spring Plant Sale, (pre-sale Fri., May 12, 3-7 for members, \$25 memberships available at the gate). Over 1000 different annuals, bedding plants, culinary & medicinal herbs, cut flowers, natives, perennials, salvias, species & hybrid fuchsias, succulents and vines, Horticulture Center, (top of campus) 831-477-5671, http://www.cabrillo.edu/academics/horticulture/plant_sale/plantsale.html

Sat., May 20 & Sun., May 21, Home, Garden & Gourmet Show, Bonfante Gardens Family Theme Park. This wonderful show takes place throughout the park and is free with park admission. For more information visit <http://www.svshows.com/>.

Sat., June 10, 11-1, Class of 2006 Graduation!, UCCE Classroom, Watsonville.



For 12 issues, send \$15 to:

Master Gardeners Newsletter

1432 Freedom Blvd.

Watsonville, CA 95076

<http://montereybaymg.ucdavis.edu>

Hotline: 831-763-8007

Ad rates: \$25 per month from gardening oriented businesses.

Address change: contact Robin Sanders at 726-1942 or robinsanders@redshift.com.

Editor: Joan McLeod Mertz

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Special Thanks Cheri Callis