Summer Newsletter 2008

Wildlife at Quarryhill

Although the intent of your summer visit to Quarryhill is most likely our lilies, maples or dogwoods, you may be unexpectedly rewarded with a glimpse of some other life forms that frequent the garden. Whether their destination is the flowers, ponds, vegetation or simply that they were in this area long before us, we are fortunate to host a healthy selection of wildlife.

Quarryhill’s property is a daily thoroughfare for wild turkeys. Introduced into our area of California, turkeys have become well established. Currently the adults can be seen with their young traveling through the garden in packs of forty or fifty. Their size and number make them quite a spectacle. Serving its specific purpose well, the deer fence surrounding the garden poses no problem for the turkeys. They simply line up single file, walk up to the fence and one by one fly right over. Turkeys nest in dry, tall grassy areas in the garden perimeter where they are difficult to see. These turkeys are very protective of their nests and stand their ground when approached.

Coyotes also travel through the garden regularly. They might be looking for an early Thanksgiving dinner, but we have yet to see them successful. Recently, we found a coyote crossing the vineyard, passing close to the shade house in the nursery and heading up the hill toward the garden. More frequently we see them walking through the open field on the south side of the property toward the Director’s house. In fact, one morning a coyote decided to take an ash bath in Bill’s backyard fire pit. With Bill and Blue, the cat, looking through the window, the euphoric coyote rolled around, walked out, shook off and returned for a second go.

Coyotes are very curious animals, with large ears and thick tails that appear slightly out of proportion with the rest of their body. The coyotes that visit Quarryhill appear to have no interest in us, instead seeming to ignore us completely and continue on their jog.

Raccoons have been spotted in the nursery. We think they might be responsible for upturning a large area of damp ground outside the office while looking for food. In late June, these two kits were found in the shade house without a mother in

Quarryhill Donates for Earthquake Relief in China

Quarryhill Botanical Garden’s Annual Spring Celebration, held last May in the garden, was a tremendous success. This was made possible by the dedication and hard work of Quarryhill’s staff and volunteers and especially the leadership of committee chair Marilyn Smith. More than three hundred people from throughout the Bay Area were here to enjoy the many plants in flower, a plant sale, a silent auction of rare plants, great wines, beautiful botanical art, and a delicious lunch served in the garden. John Simmons, past Curator of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, traveled from England for Quarryhill’s celebration to share stories of his time at Kew and his many travels to China and elsewhere in search of plants. With dogwoods, irises, and roses in full bloom, water lilies gracing the ponds, large oaks, magnolias, and maples providing shade, it was hard to imagine a more perfect spring day. Quarryhill, a garden of East Asian plants, many of which are from Sichuan, China, has donated 10% of the proceeds from the event to Sichuan University in Chengdu, Sichuan for their earthquake relief program. Funds raised for their program are being used to provide professional support, health and educational services for the disaster stricken areas. This includes emergency relief and post-earthquake reconstruction, counseling for grieving families and adoption assistance for orphaned children. Just 60 miles from the epicenter, Sichuan University is China’s top university in western China.
Sight. We coaxed them up a Monterey pine while we called a local wildlife rescue organization. Raccoons make the oddest sounds. At one point the kit on the right climbed out of the tree and up toward the shade house while the other remained behind. As I approached the adventurous one to offer it a water bowl, the other kit began to communicate with it using sounds that brought to mind the clacking of a crow. As soon as it started talking, the one near me turned and walked quickly back and climbed up the tree. Though they appeared too young to be on their own, a representative assured us that, based on their size, they could survive. They soon climbed down and began to forage in the grass.

Both Acorn and Pileated Woodpeckers reside in the garden. Acorn Woodpeckers, with their red heads (female) or caps (male), love to peck at the sprinklers. Their target appears to be a small red plastic piece involved in emitting water. Outside of the family groups in which these woodpeckers live, they are considered territorial and their bodies are roughly the same size as the sprinkler heads. Is their attack a case of mistaken identity? Maybe the red plastic just looks tasty? Acorn Woodpeckers are thus named due to their habit of boring holes in our native oaks and inserting acorns for use during the winter. Pileated Woodpeckers are slightly larger than a crow and typically wreak havoc on our telephone poles and fallen oak branches. Their loud tapping can be heard throughout the garden as they look for insects that inhabit dead or dying wood.

Hummingbirds love the flowers at Quarryhill. In late June, I received a visit from a brave fellow in the nursery’s shade house. While taking a picture of the very fragrant Lilium duchartrei for identification purposes, a hummingbird decided to test the flower I was shooting. The resulting picture is quite interesting and includes a hand poised holding both the flower and plant tag and a clear head and beak buried in the tepals of the lily. Of course, the wings are a complete blur. Spectacular in color, the picture’s detail is lost when changed to grayscale. These delicate birds have also been spotted searching for nectar from other lilies, Rhododendron, Incarvilia, Weigela, Hemerocallis and Buddleja.

Every spring in late March or early April, we are fortunate to host several pair of Canada Geese. Usually they take up residence in the lower pond where they build nests on the large island. When approached, the goose sitting on the nest will lower its head and neck to the ground in an attempt to blend in with their surroundings. When they are mature enough to learn to swim, the goslings jump off the tall island and hit the water. Canada Geese are mostly are seen eating grass, water plants and scratching the ground on shore for food. By October, the juveniles are ready to fly and the families migrate away, likely to Mexico, Florida or the Gulf Coast.

Other interesting wildlife that may be enjoyed at Quarryhill includes colorful butterflies and dragonflies, cottontails and jackrabbits, Mallard and Wood Ducks, Ospreys, kingfishers, beautiful banded California King-snakes, Western Skinks, bass, bluegill and even a Bald Eagle. Be certain to bring your camera on your next visit and be ready for a surprise! - Corey Barnes—Salvador Calderon

Visit www.quarryhillbg.org for more articles, pictures and upcoming events at the garden.
Staff and Volunteers at our Spring Celebration

Volunteering at Quarryhill

Looking for something fun and interesting to do? Consider joining Quarryhill’s growing group of volunteers. Become a propagation volunteer and help Quarryhill Nursery Manager Corey Barnes sow seeds and transplant seedlings. Or, become a tour docent and learn to lead tours of Quarryhill. Of course, you could do both if you like. Quarryhill is a special and magical place not only because of the beautiful plants and unique setting, but also because of the dedication and enthusiasm of its volunteers. Should you be interested in becoming a Quarryhill volunteer, please contact Mary at 707-996-3166 or info@quarryhillbg.org.

New Faces at Quarryhill!

We are happy to introduce our new Administrative Assistant to the Quarryhill family. Meet Mary Carr. Mary has fit in nicely both with her computer skills and her friendly demeanor with visitors, staff and volunteers. Mary takes over the front desk duties and coordinates the volunteer program. She is also the events and workshops coordinator. So, if you would like to sign up for any upcoming events, call and say HI!

Mary Carr on the left and Carol Brant

Searching to Save Energy

Quarryhill volunteer Steven Hightower and Tim Holmes of Kenwood Energy and Energy Consulting Services have teamed up to search for ways Quarryhill can lower its energy use. Initial analysis suggests that significant savings will be possible by changing some of the current rate schedules and making small changes in how and when we use energy. They are also looking into the possibility of a solar voltaic system to provide some of our electricity. Both Steven and Tim are offering their services pro-bono. We thank them for this very generous donation of their time and expertise.

Frog’s New Home

A Special Thank You to Carol Brant

Thanks to volunteer Carol Brant, Quarryhill now has a wonderful new postcard garden, outside the main office. Carol, a long time Quarryhill tour docent and propagation volunteer, has brought her creativity, gardening and design skills together to improve our “Frog” garden. Next time you visit Quarryhill, please stop in to see Carol’s handiwork. Carol, seen sitting with Mary, lovingly maintains a beautiful garden at her home in Sebastopol. THANK YOU Carol. Well done!

Joining Our Crew

Guillermo Calderon, the newest member of our gardening crew, joined Quarryhill last May. Under the careful direction of Garden Supervisor Salvador Calderon, he will be in charge of the Northwest section of the garden. With his many years as a gardener and landscaper in Napa Valley, we look forward to Guillermo’s contribution and extend a big welcome to him.
August 16th, Full Moon Walk. Bill McNamara, Director of Quarryhill, will be guiding a moonlit summer walk through the garden. 9-10 pm, $25 Non members/ $22.50 Members.

August 16th, September 9th and October 18th are the final three Docent Led Walks. Join a group tour led by one of our fun & knowledgeable docents. 10 am until noon, $10 regular fee, $5 Seniors/Students, Members Free.

Announcing a Lecture on Chinese Art and Garden Culture

We are pleased to announce a slide show presentation “Chinese Art and Garden Culture” by Andy Ferguson on Saturday, September 6th at 7 pm in our conference room. This talk explores the use and symbolism of plants, flowers and fruit in Chinese art and garden culture. The symbolic use of certain flowers was often used to amplify a hidden meaning in a Chinese work of art. Flowers and plants are also widely used in Chinese folklore to convey auspicious ideas. Chinese gardens not only display flowers and plants but often try to recreate a small natural vista with mountains, rivers and many separate “landscapes.” These “viewscape” of Chinese gardens create an environment of studied relaxation and enjoyment.

Andy Ferguson is a frequent lecturer at the Society for Asian Art of San Francisco and many other groups, covering Chinese culture, art, tea, history and many other topics. He frequently leads special China tours that explore some of the most important, if lesser known, historical sites. Andy’s book “Zen’s Chinese Heritage” is a well known and widely used account of the development and teachings of Zen Buddhism. September 6th at 7 pm. Cost is $25.00 for non-members and $22.50 for members. Refreshments will be served.

Consider sharing the gift of Quarryhill with your friends and family. Fill out a Membership Form and we’ll do the rest.

Quarryhill Membership & Donation Form

BENEFITS
♦ Free admission Mon-Sat, 9am-4pm (garden is closed Sundays & holidays)
♦ Semi-annual newsletter
♦ 10% Discount for events & workshops
♦ 10% Discount at participating nurseries

CATEGORIES
☐ Individual $35 +  ☐ Family $60 +
The following categories receive invitations to special events and recognition in the newsletter:
☐ Contributor $100 +  ☐ Sustainer $500 +
☐ Patron $1,000 +  ☐ Expedition Circle $2,500 +
I do not wish to become a member at this time, but please accept my contribution of $_____.

Name: __________________________________________
Address: ______________________________________ City: _________________________ State: _____ Zip: ________
Email: _________________________________________ Phone: ________________________ GIFT MEMBERSHIP? Y / N

Enclosed is my check to Quarryhill Botanical Garden in the amount of $_______. Contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

Send this form and checks to: Quarryhill Botanical Garden, PO Box 232, Glen Ellen, CA 95442.

Visit www.quarryhillbg.org for more articles, pictures and upcoming events at the garden.
Quarryhill’s New Bridge

No longer will visitors to the garden precariously ford the stream between the two ponds on stepping-stones. A new bridge arches over the water providing spectacular views of the ponds with their water lilies, and the surrounding hills. Built in memory of Quarryhill volunteer Sam Douglas, the bridge also offers a dramatic view of the large waterfall from above as it spills into the pond below. With a design similar to the other bridges in the garden, the new bridge is a wonderful and fitting tribute to Sam that will bring delight to all who visit Quarryhill.

The Quarryhill Botanical Garden Fund has recently been created with Community Foundation Sonoma County. The careful stewardship of this fund at the Community Foundation will produce a steady flow of earnings income for the Garden well into the future. We are committed to advancing the conservation, study and cultivation of the temperate Flora of Asia for many generations to come and this endowment fund allows us to take the long view regarding our work and our very important mission.

Many Thanks to the Following Members & Donors: (Continued from back)

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The Mission of Quarryhill Botanical Garden is to Advance the Conservation, Study and Cultivation of the Flora of Asia

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