

Nerium News

NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL OLEANDER SOCIETY



August 2024 Newsletter

INTERNATIONAL OLEANDER SOCIETY

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*Newsletter:
Heidi Coggeshall
- email if you
have an article*

Dear Members,

Exciting things have been happening for us this year! Our membership continues to increase and more members are getting involved and participating in meetings, garden maintenance, propagating, outreach and events!

We invite you to our Potluck in the Park on Wed Sept 18th at 6 pm. Bring a friend, BYOB, BYOChair and a dish to share.

Our Annual Luncheon is Wed Oct 30th in the Viewfinders Room at Moody Gardens. Watch your email for an invitation around mid-September! We will have a delicious buffet at a cost of \$30 per person, door prizes and a silent auction. We will only be taking payments in advance and there are two ways to pay: Zeffy or snail mail. You will get the Zeffy link in your email with the invitation. Current members attending the luncheon will vote on the 2025 Officers as well as the 2025 Budget.

A BIG thank you to Marcia Moloy, Lydia Miller and Mike Bailey for presenting at OLLI the topic "Oleanders Past and Present"! Sharing our knowledge across the island. They will be our guest speakers at the luncheon as well.

In an effort to encourage more input and involvement from our members, we are inviting all current members to attend some of our monthly Board meetings. There will be more opportunities in 2025 to attend the meetings as our 2024 year ends in October.

Have a great Summer! Please plant an Oleander (we still have some for sale)!

Peace Love & Oleanders,

Amber J



Volunteer Board Member Spotlight – Van Phipps

Van joined us after walking by the Park and asking 'what group are you?' And now Van is the Garden Chairperson!

Van is a Houston area native who graduated from Texas A&M (Finance) and TCU (MBA). Van returned to the Houston area after 30 years of moving around the country. He has 2 children, a boy (24) and a girl (21). Van is a compliance officer for an investment firm and works mostly from home. He chose to live in Galveston for its sense of community and its walkability/bikeability.

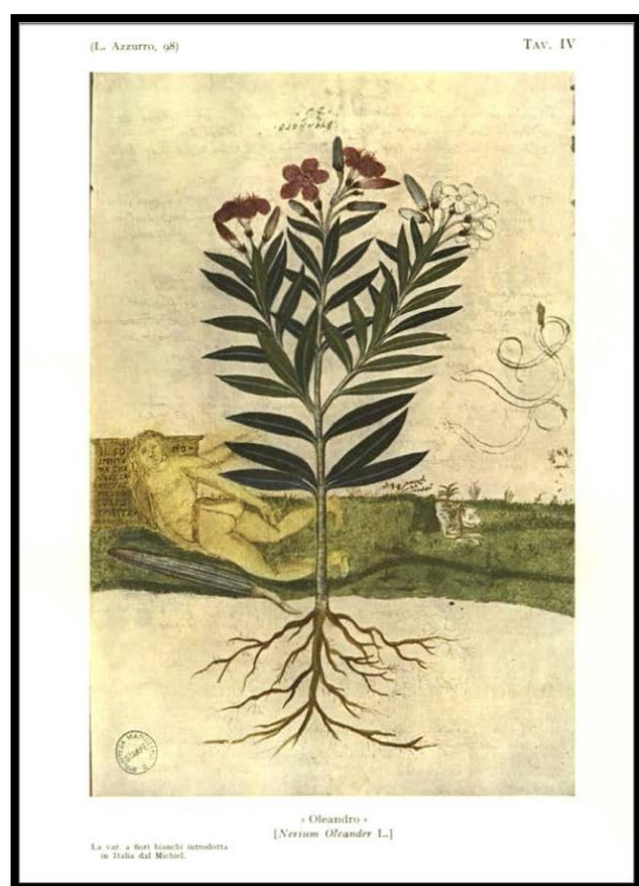
"I am very grateful to be able to look upon such a pretty garden from my living room. I have a vested interest in keeping it there!"

The WILD OLEANDER With Pink Blossoms

This is an excerpt (Part 3) from an article written January 2019 by Irmtraud Gotsis with translation by James Nicholas and located in the Oleanderhaus website. (We will continue to add to the story each Newsletter):

“As recorded, the white oleander was brought by Pietro Antonio Michiel to Venice, where it was planted and propagated. By the end of the century, it was blooming in London as well.

In 1740 a “Grosses vollständiges UNIVERSAL LEXICON Aller Wissenschaften und Künste” (Great Comprehensive UNIVERSAL LEXICON of All Sciences and Arts) , published in Leipzig and Halle, reported the following: “Oleander - DEMON PLANT, as the plant is a harmful one which kills people and livestock, and therefore not friendly to man or beast. Rose tree, Rose laurel, Laurel rose, as the blossoms occur in the same colors as roses, but the leaves resemble those of the laurel . . . it almost looks the same as the laurel tree . . .” What is described here is the pink-blooming Nerium oleander, which occurs in the wild all around the Mediterranean and is used for medicinal purposes. A white-blooming type is also mentioned.



In 1753 Carl von Linné, the father and pioneer of botany, created a classification system in which all animals and plants received their place in “Species Plantarum”. The system is valid even today and enables international comprehension. The oleander was assigned to the plant family Apocynaceae and placed in the genus Nerium. There is only one species, with the name “OLEANDER”.

In 1774, the “Onomatologia Botanica Completa”, the most comprehensive botanical dictionary, was published. In it, the following appears: „Nerium candidis floribus in montibus idea convalibus” – An oleander with white blossoms grew in the Ida mountains – for BELONIUS this means a variant of the common oleander which has white flowers; the same pertains to C. Bauhin „Nerium floribus albis”.

In 1818, Gaetano SAVI in Italy reported: “A variety with white flowers is grown; it was growing spontaneously in Crete on Mount Ida near Camerachi (Bellonio I., chapter. 16) and was brought to Italy in 1547. (Mattioli loc. Cit.) It retains its color even when propagated from seed, and I have never yet seen, nor do I know of anyone else who has seen white-flowered plants originate from the seeds of the usual Mazza von San Giuseppe.” (Staff of St, Joseph, = Mediterranean oleander).

Unfortunately, one can’t find any statement today regarding the natural occurrence of this white oleander variety, but it is certainly mentioned in old records as a garden plant.

In 1817 – about 270 years after BELON – the nature researcher/physician Franz Wilhelm Sieber travelled around the island of Crete and made a great scientific contribution with his botanical postings and illustrations (‘Reise nach der Insel Kreta . . .’ – “Journey to the Island of Crete...”). He assisted in the role of a physician on his journey and described the life of the people, who, previously ruled by the Venetians, now had to live under the Turkish powers. During his explorations, he mentioned some of the settlements which he passed on the way to the location where the white oleander was discovered. They are in eastern Crete, between Ágios Nikólaos (St. Nicholas) and Sitía. These villages can still be found today! The beach which he mentioned can perhaps be connected with the fishing village of Móchlos – presuming a bit of imagination.

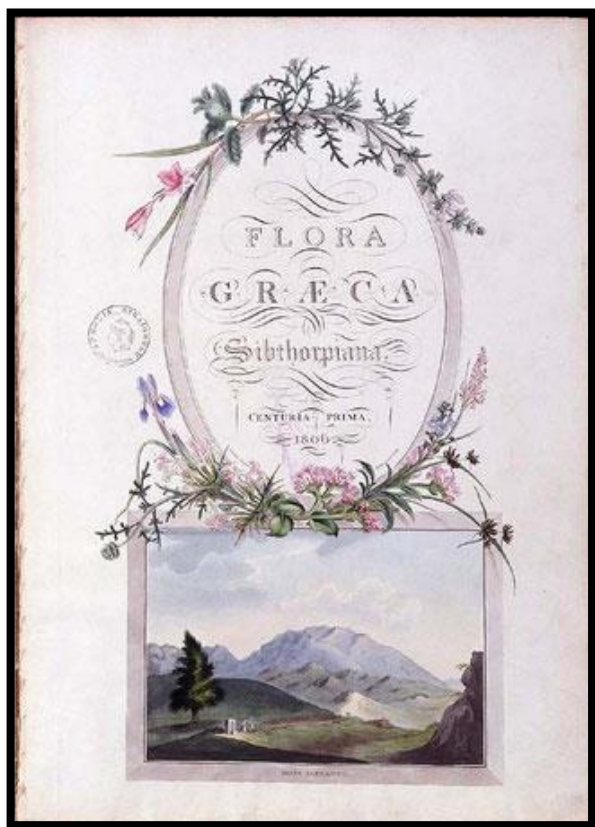
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In his book, Sieber writes that the people there called this plant “Galanosphaca” the “milk-white” oleander. If this is the case, it would have to be called “Galaktosphaca” – an auditory error or a slip of the pen on the part of the author. We cannot find any account of a milk-white blossom. Does this perhaps refer to the poisonous milky sap which oozes from a cut?

In 1583, a Venetian census mentioned a village in this area with 244 inhabitants. The little town was named after the oleander - SFAKA. Today, this “Oleander Village” lies along E-route 75, which runs all the way from Norway to Sitia.

Thus we learn that the oleander, in the West just as in the East, was a “fixed star” in the huge forests of Crete, as:

In 1888. A Greek book told of the history of SFAKIA (SFAKIA, A history of the region . .). There, where the foothills of the White Mountains drop steeply into the Libyan Sea, lies one part of the region, and the other part of Chora Sfakia is nestled among the rocks at breezy heights. The oleander blooms abundantly here, and people call the plant “Sphaca”. It is possible that the region of Sfakia received its name that way. Hikers report that in the gorges of Aradena, one can still see tall oleanders, as well as vultures and eagles.



The flora and fauna of the Mediterranean landscape stir the interest of researchers, especially with regard to eastern Greece. The physician and botanist John Sibthorp of Oxford began his great research journey toward the end of the 18th century. This was the first comprehensive description of Greek plant life. 1.000 drawings were transformed into precisely colored illustrations of flowers through the exceptionally gifted hand of the Viennese botanical illustrator Ferdinand Bauer. They have survived the centuries in the 10 volumes of FLORA GRAECA.

With the advent of ocean voyages, a new era began. It led to a success story for the oleander which could hardly be more exciting . . . (STAY TUNED FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER FOR CONTINUATION - THE FULL ARTICLE IS POSTED IN OLEANDERHAUS).

Chopin Oleander



Chopin – my favorite growing in the Park (well as of today – my favorites rotate!)

Chopin Triple corollas, a mix of salmon, cream-yellow, pink, and fuchsia. Origin: Ravenholt Nursery, Denmark

Jim Nicholas commented: “Rather unusual that it came from a Danish nursery, as Denmark's climate is definitely not one that oleanders would enjoy!!!”

Denmark has a temperate climate with four distinct seasons, and its weather is influenced by the Gulf Stream and its proximity to the sea and continent: Spring - is the mildest season. Summer - is the hottest season, with an average temperature of (about 62 degrees F). Summers are mild and cloudy, with occasional sunny days. Autumn - is usually rainy and overcast. Winter - is usually cold, with frost and snow. The average temperature in Jan and Feb is around 1°C.



Aggies – Fall Cleanup of the Park!

Come join us and bring a friend to Potluck in the Park on Wed Sept 18th at 6 pm. BYOB, BYOChair and a dish to share. All are welcome!

Thanks again to the Aggies who came out for the start of school service day! They are always so helpful!





WWW.OLEANDER.ORG

Visit our website to learn more about us and the flower!

And follow us on Facebook: International
Oleander Society



Any questions: international.oleander@yahoo.com

To Join, You May:

1. Venmo: @Amber-Jinkins (we do not have our own Venmo account).
2. Email International.oleander@yahoo.com with your phone number and we will call you for credit card information.
3. Send a check made out to "International Oleander Society" to:

International Oleander Society
PO Box 3431
Galveston, TX. 777552

Please advise your membership choice below and include your name, address, phone number and email.

Renewable Annually

- | | |
|---------------|-------|
| 1. Individual | \$20 |
| 2. Family | \$30 |
| 3. Business | \$100 |
| 4. Lifetime | \$300 |

