

Nerium News

NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL OLEANDER SOCIETY



September 2023 Newsletter

INTERNATIONAL OLEANDER SOCIETY

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Newsletter:
Heidi Coggeshall
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have an article

Greetings Fellow Members,

It has definitely been a hot dry Summer! Everything in my yard is dead, including the grass, EXCEPT for my 21 Oleanders! This is a true testament to the survival of the beautiful Oleander in our sub-tropical climate. This is why we are so passionate about the mission of the International Oleander Society and why we continue to encourage people to plant these green flowering Neriums all over the Island and beyond.

We are busy planning the Fall Luncheon, preparing the 2024 Annual Budget and nominating new officers. Please plan on attending the luncheon at Moody Gardens on October 25th. We will have a delicious lunch, a silent auction, door prizes and an interesting talk from Kathleen Maca on Floral Symbolism in Victorian Era Cemeteries. All members and non-members are welcome to attend. We need the members there to approve the budget and vote on the slate of new officers for next year. If you would like to nominate someone for a board position, please let me know.

We have had a very successful 2023 year! The goals we set at the beginning of the year were specifically focused on the Betty Head Oleander Garden Park. With the help and direction of some very dedicated members and volunteers, we were able to lay sod in all the flower beds which will cut down on the amount of weeding, making the work more manageable for the Nerium Nippers. We also tore down the dilapidated greenhouse and replaced it with a small secure wood building, the "Little Oleander Schoolhouse." We managed to host a very successful Oleander Festival luncheon and the April Festival, in spite of bad weather that day and our Nerium Nippers propagated all of the Oleanders we sold! In an effort to promote the Park and in the interest of community outreach, we held "Yoga in the Park." This was a successful event that we will continue to offer next year.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the Board, the Nerium Nippers, Moody Gardens, Mary Moody Northen Endowment and the Galveston Aggies for all the hard work and dedication they provided to IOS and Betty's Garden Park in 2023! I would also like to thank our members for supporting our projects and fundraisers. And finally, we want to thank those who donated in memory of Betty Head to our organization. With the blessing of the family, we used the funds to purchase sod making the Park more maintainable and sustainable going forward

The October Luncheon will be our last meeting for 2023 so I wish you all a very happy holiday season and a Happy New Year!

Peace love and Oleanders,

Amber

Dr. Don Wilkerson Presentation

Dr. Don C. Wilkerson, Professor Emeritus from the Department of Horticultural Sciences at Texas A&M University, College Station, TX presented “Oleanders – Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow” at our Spring Luncheon. We thank him for his time and interesting presentation!



Source: Dr. Don Wilkerson presentation



Dr. Don Wilkerson received a BS Degree from Arkansas State University, MS from the University of Arkansas and PhD from Louisiana State University. In 1982 he joined the faculty in the Department of Horticultural Sciences at Texas A&M University in College Station, TX, where he focused on applied research and outreach programs for the commercial nursery/greenhouse industries. Don was also the founder of the TAMU Horticultural Gardens and has authored numerous publications on adapted plants for Texas Landscapes. Dr. Wilkerson was named Professor Emeritus following his retirement in 2010. He also received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Texas Nursery and Landscape Association. Don and his wife Sharon came to Galveston in June of 2008. He immediately became involved in Hurricane Ike recovery efforts and has worked with the local horticultural community, including the Oleander Society, on a number of projects across the Island.

Dr. Wilkerson reviewed the history of the oleanders to Galveston including that the first Oleanders came to Galveston in 1841. Joseph Osterman, a prominent merchant, brought them aboard his sailing ship from Jamaica to his wife and sister-in-law, Mrs. Isador Dyer. After IKE, the WPHA was created with an agenda: “To promote the health of Galveston and the cleanliness of the city ...; and to promote the beauty of the city of Galveston by encouraging the planting of trees, shrubbery, flowers and otherwise.”

He discussed how oleander popularity is on the decline due to contributing factors of climate change, emerging pests and changing trends. The challenges of climate change include frequent freezes, storms and rising level. Emerging pests are the Oleander Leaf Scorch. The glossy-winged sharpshooter transmits the leaf scorch bacterium – *Xylella fastidiosa*.

He discussed the changing landscape trends in both plants and design: Plants including a movement from annuals, wildflowers and ornamental grasses in the 1990s, to Xeiscaping, heirloom plants and perennials in the 2000's and today with organic, native plants pollinators and other future unknown trends.

Changing landscape trends in design include: smaller scale, less lawn and more eco-friendly: including being water efficient, using low/no pesticides and promoting habit and surroundings for birds/butterflies/and bees.



Source: Don Wilkerson



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Dr. Wilkerson then gave us five suggestions for the future:

- Continued breeding and selection: including a search for freeze survivors, cold hardiness, insect tolerance and dwarf/medium sizes
- Re-brand oleanders as sustainable: highlighting they are heat tolerant, drought tolerant, salt tolerant, pest tolerant, with no specific soil requirements and no specific fertilizer requirements.
- Re-brand the Oleander Garden Park: including focusing on Galveston's oleander history, and creating more static displays and having less emphasis on display garden.
- Continue demonstration education: including maintenance practices, culture/care, new and existing cultivars and finally toxicity explained.
- Continue to support the oleander society: including volunteering, spreading the word and donating.

It was a very interesting and educational presentation with much lively discussion on how to move the oleanders and Park forward!



The Park (above) (right: oleander variety but not in Park)

Memories

Sometimes when you grieve and you or your family member is a gardener, a flower reminds you of them and their love of the beauty of nature. This month we would like to highlight the Mrs. Runge oleander which was a favorite of Daniel Ruiz, partner and companion to our historian Barry Landry for thirty-two years. Barry said 'our favorite for both of us is the weird and wonderful variegated Mrs. Runge. Daniel and I propagated many cuttings of her from local shrubs. Daniel and I donated the specimen in the Park and planted it ourselves when the original specimen was lost in the bad freeze'.

I was amused when he mentioned how one day they were driving around town and pulled over when they saw some Mrs. Runge's clippings in the trash. One person's trash is another person's treasure!!

Our condolences to Barry and the family.

Mrs. Runge (= Splendens Foliis Variegatis) (double pink flowers, fragrant, leaves variegated with green and cream-yellow). Old European variety mentioned by Julius W. F. Bosse in his Handbuch der Blumengärtnerei, 1854.



*One
person's
trash is
another
person's
treasure!*

*Clippings
in the
street
become
oleanders
in the
Park!*



Betty Head Oleander Garden Park



Phase 1 of replacing our dilapidated greenhouse took place this summer. We have a new more secure shed which we will also use for educational outreach. The main shed is in and now for Phase 2. Stay tuned for our Learning Center update! The shed was made possible by a grant from the Magnolia Willis Sealy Foundation and we thank them again for their support.

We also want to thank our Aggies again this summer for placing down four pallets of sod! A big difference for the Park maintenance as we work to grow the oleanders. Below are some current photos of the Park.



The new Learning Center (left)



Taking down the old shed (right)



Thank you Aggies for the service! (left)



Continued growth of the oleanders and sod in the Park (right)



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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) Sign up on our website www.oleander.org via PayPal
- 2) Venmo to @internationalOleander-Society
- 3) PayPal: International.oleander@yahoo.com
- 4) Email us at International.oleander@yahoo.com with your phone.
We will call you back to get your credit card number.
- 5) Mail your membership or donation to the address below:

International Oleander Society
P.O. Box 3431
Galveston, TX 77552-0431

Please indicate the membership of your choice and include both your mailing address, email address and phone.

Renewable Annually

- | | | |
|----------------|----------|--|
| (1) Individual | \$20.00 | |
| (2) Family | \$30.00 | |
| (3) Lifetime | \$300.00 | |
| (4) Business | \$100.00 | (Business members will receive a certificate to display in their business, listing in our newsletter and on our website) |

____ Or donation of any amount is appreciated.

THANK YOU