



# GARDEN GAZETTE

*The San Francisco Garden Club*

Winter  
2023



SFGC  
*Holiday Luncheon*  
*December 14*

*Program  
will feature  
Steven Brown*

*Presidio Golf  
& Concordia  
Club*

## Calendar

### December

**Tuesday, December 5**

Filoli Tour \* 10:00 am

**Saturday, December 9**

CCSF Wreath Workshop

**Thursday, December 14**

SFGC Holiday Luncheon

Presidio Golf & Concordia Club

### January

**Thursday, January 18**

SFGC Meeting/Luncheon

Presidio Golf & Concordia Club

### February

**Thursday, February 15**

SFGC Meeting/Luncheon

Presidio Golf & Concordia Club

### March

**Thursday, March 21**

Floral Fête

=Location TBD

### April

**Thursday, April 18**

SFGC Meeting/Luncheon

Presidio Golf & Concordia Club

### May

**Thursday, May 16**

SFGC Annual Meeting Luncheon

Mark your Calendars

**Holiday Luncheon**

**December 14**

Presidio Golf &  
Concordia Club

# President's Letter



*Dear SFGC Members,*

The year is passing quickly. We've accomplished so much together and there are many more fun activities ahead of us. I hope you have signed up for our beautiful Filoli Tour on December 5th. Wasn't it exciting to see President Biden and Xi Jinping walking the grounds and holding a summit there?

Next up is Steven Brown's Wreath Making class on December 9th. This class is said to be the best one in San Francisco. It will be followed closely by our Christmas Luncheon on December 14th. Be sure to sign up early, it's already filling up and our Vice President Lisa Harris has a special treat for all who attend.

As we approach the end of the year, this is a good time to take advantage of our 501(c)3 status and make a tax deductible donation to the club. We have a few funds for you to choose from. One under-served program is our Civic Participation Fund. This is where we go out into the community to support local gardens. Donna Coit, Gail McCollom and Courtney Clarkson look for truly inspiring garden groups in San Francisco that can use our financial help. We also have the City College Horticulture/Alice Eastwood Program. A fund near and dear to so many of our members. Finally, we have our General Fund. This supports different entities including the Fine Arts Museum Auxiliary (FAMA), the Gardens of the Golden Gate Park and the lecture programs at our lunches. Please, join me in giving back to our beloved city in whichever manner you choose.

*Bonnie*

A decorative border featuring pink flowers and red berries, framing the central text.

*SFGC*  
***Holiday Luncheon***  
**Thursday, December 14**  
***Presidio Golf & Concordia Club***  
Program will feature  
**Steven Brown AFID & Students**  
**CCSF Horticulture Department**  
**Menu: Asian Chicken Salad or Mediterranean Salad (VG)**  
**Cost: \$69.00**  
**RSVP by December 4 - \$10 late fee**  
Pay through Zelle,  
the SFGC website: [sfgardenclub.com](http://sfgardenclub.com)  
or check sent to the  
SFGC Office: 640 Sutter Street, #4M  
San Francisco, 94102

# January Program

## Jim Brown, January Program Speaker

January 18, 2024

### The Silk Road

#### *Globalization in the Ancient World*



**Jim Brown** is a docent at San Francisco's Asian Art Museum, where he gives virtual talks on a variety of subjects for the museum's community outreach program.

Prior to retiring and becoming a museum docent, Jim built his own Executive Search firm specializing in the placement of marketing communications professionals for the healthcare industry.

He also has extensive travel experience. Before getting into executive search, Jim was National Group Sales Manager for both French Line and Royal Viking. He has visited more than 55 countries throughout the world.

A graduate of Columbia University, Jim was Chapter President of the Business School's American Marketing Association and headed up their speaker's bureau. In December he will talk about "*The Silk Road: Globalization in the Ancient World.*"

### SFGC January Meeting/Luncheon

*Location: Presidio & Concordia Club*

Menu: Avocado Turkey Salad or Fennel Orange Salad (VG)

Cost: \$69 each

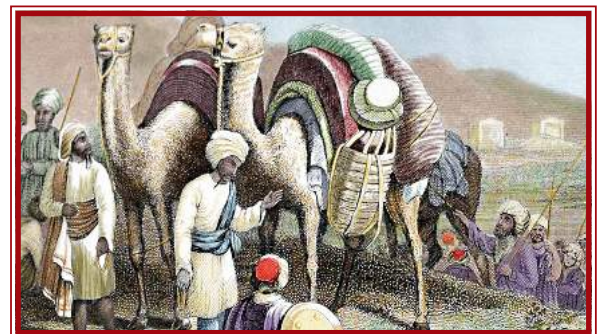
RSVP by January 8 - \$10 late fee

Pay through Zelle or through the SFGC website: [sfgardenclub.com](http://sfgardenclub.com)  
or a check sent to the SFGG Office: 640 Sutter St. #4M, San Francisco 94102



**T**he Silk Road was a network of trade routes connecting China and the Far East with the Middle East and Europe. Established when the Han Dynasty in China officially opened trade with the West in 130 B.C., the Silk Road routes remained in use until A.D. 1453, when the Ottoman Empire boycotted trade with China and closed them. Although it's been nearly 600 years since the Silk Road has been used for international trade, the routes had a lasting impact on commerce, culture and history that resonates even today.

The Silk Road routes included a large network of strategically located trading posts, markets and thoroughfares designed to streamline the transport, exchange, distribution and storage of goods. Routes extended from the Greco-Roman metropolis of Antioch across the Syrian Desert via Palmyra to Ctesiphon (the Parthian capital) and Seleucia on the Tigris River, a Mesopotamian city in modern-day Iraq. From Seleucia, routes passed eastward over the Zagros Mountains to the cities of Ecbatana (Iran) and Merv (Turkmenistan), from which additional routes traversed to modern-day Afghanistan and eastward into Mongolia and China. Silk Road routes also led to ports on the Persian Gulf, where goods were then transported up the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Routes from these cities also connected to ports along the Mediterranean Sea, from which goods were shipped to cities throughout the Roman Empire and into Europe.



# November Meeting/Luncheon



*Program Speaker  
Peggy Mathers*



*SFGC President  
Bonnie Demergasso*



*Gail McCollom*



*Kathleen Richards, Beverley Hayes,  
Rosanne Ramierz*



*Joanne Lindeke*



*Lynn Norris, Anne Katz*



*Moira Conzelman*



*Tish Brown, Martha Woollomes*



*Sally Ketchum, Linda Miller*



*Maureen Fox*



*Betty Voris, Janet Cushing*



*Sandra Swanson, Jane Scurich*



*Boo Whiteidge, Tish Brown*



*Jane Scurich, Peggy Mathers*



*Anne Katz, Toni Heineman*



*Bonnie Demergasso, Peggy Mathers*

# The Shane Event

## The Shane Event

by Lisa Harris



As soon as I heard that Shane Connolly was coming to Seattle this past September to stage a floral event over a long weekend, I was in!

Shane of course is the wildly talented, internationally renowned floral designer. The same man whose company last spring created all things flora for the coronation of Britain's King Charles and Queen Camilla. He's also the author of six books, including his latest, "A Year in Flowers" a visual feast for the eyes of spending one year, season by season working with locally sourced flowers, plants, and trees. Since he began his stellar career, Shane has always emphasized seasonality and sustainability in his designs.

The event was presented by Slow Flowers Society and its founder Debra Prinzing, a Seattle-based writer and tireless advocate for local and domestic flowers. She has helped inspire a movement that has stimulated an important conversation about the floral and plant materials one buys and disposes of.

On Friday afternoon about 300 of us gathered at St. Mark's Cathedral to watch as Shane created large-scale arrangements in front of the altar. They were at once stunningly beautiful and beautifully simple. He had us rapt for close to three hours. Once he was finished, we were allowed to approach the pieces, mill around, and chat with him.

That weekend Shane held two floral workshops at the student-run 1.5-acre Botanic Garden at the University of Washington. First though, we were given a very special tour of the farm by Shane and a co-director of UWBG.

The floral workshops were hands-on classes made up of groups of 15 of us. We watched as Shane created a few pieces and listened as he spoke about what he was doing. He answered our questions in a relaxed intimate setting. Then he set us free to make our own.

The room was lined with buckets chock full of brilliantly colored branches and flowers in season for all of us to choose from. Shane circled the room as we began and gave each of us encouragement as we worked on our arrangements. Each arrangement was wholly unique. I found an overlooked, maligned, somewhat diseased branch in a bucket off on its own. Intrigued, I pulled its spotty, dried leaves off and brought them to my piece deciding to tuck them in here and there. I was a little nervous, not sure it was coming together until Shane exclaimed exuberantly: "Lisa, that makes your piece!" That was all I needed! It made my day.



Shane offered us these words and concepts to keep in mind: *"Put nature first, the abundance of less, the ethos of nature and let each season be your guide."*



## The Beautiful Poinsettia

*by Dr. Judith M. Taylor*

**T**he beautiful poinsettia, known for its scarlet bracts, comes to us encrusted with myth and legend as befits a royal plant of the Aztecs. The Nahua people in Mexico called it *cuetlaxochitl*; *xochitl* is ancient Nahua for an ornamental flower. This plant did not flourish in their high altitude capital, Tenochtitlan (now Mexico City), but every winter the rulers imported thousands of the plants from deserts in the warmer regions. Extracts of the plant were used to dye cloth and its milky sap, or latex, was used for medicinal purposes.



The Spanish missionaries attempted to erase all evidence of the preceding pagan Aztec religion but records have survived showing that the plants were used for religious ceremonies in the winter. Once the Spanish friars took over and realized they could not eradicate the practice they adopted the brilliant red plant as part of the Christmas ritual. The Spanish-speaking Mexicans named it *flore de nochebuena*, the flower of the Holy Night (Christmas Eve). In its natural state the species plant can reach eight feet and is not very adaptable.

In the early years of the nineteenth century a modified version of the plant reached Philadelphia. The American ambassador to Mexico at the time was Joel Poinsett, 1779 – 1851, a well educated gentleman from Charleston, South Carolina with a great interest in natural history. The plant was named *poinsettia* in his honor but its correct scientific name is *Euphorbia pulcherrima*. Unfortunately his connection with the plant reaching the United States was tangential at best.

The Mexican specimen created a sensation in Philadelphia in 1829 and samples quickly reached Berlin where Professor Willdenow named it. Taming its size and unwieldiness occupied many of the best horticultural minds over the next century.

One major center was the Ecke Ranch in Encinitas, California. Other nurseries and universities invested in improving the poinsettia. They could all see its commercial potential.

The discovery of plant photoperiodism in the 1920s started the truly modern path to make the leaves and bracts last more than a few days. The actual flower is that tiny yellow ring in the center of the bracts. Shortening the amount of time the plant was exposed to light changed its behavior. Other discoveries like plant hormones helped in dwarfing it. Finally in recent years plant breeders have been corralled to reflect consumer taste and create new colors to fit with peoples' interior décor. You want burgundy or apricot bracts? The breeders will give them to you. Poinsettia plants are sold in the hundreds of thousands.

A very distinguished horticultural expert once told me that in his opinion poinsettia was no longer a plant but a commodity. Sad commentary on modern life.

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### Poinsettia Symbolism

**T**he poinsettia is a flower that symbolizes the Christmas season and the miracles it celebrates. The poinsettia is also a symbol of love, purity, renewal, good luck, and prosperity. Its red color represents the blood of Jesus Christ and the Star of Bethlehem, while its white petals represent his divinity. Additionally, the poinsettia can symbolize hope, joy, and cheer.

# Chicago Trip

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## A Trip to Chicago

*by Bonnie Demergasso*



Last month I took a short trip to Chicago. As an avid traveller with The Frank Lloyd Wright Trust Travel group, it was about time. I started my visit at the Rookery, with a tour titled, “Wright around Chicago.” On cue, a light snow started falling, and my experience became magical. Some favorite buildings included the Rookery, the Unity Church, the studio at Wrights first home in Oak Park and the Robie House, situated at the University of Chicago campus.

Ironically, we were able meet our friends Mike & Eva Monroe for a fantastic dinner at Jose Andrea’s Bazaar Meats. His signature restaurant was perched a few floors up from the river with views of some of the most fantastic buildings in the city.

It was recommended we take in a Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) performance. The program was Brahms, Schumann and Holtz “The Planets” with a late-night supper at the Gage.

No trip to Chicago is complete without a tour of the Chicago Art Institute where I especially enjoyed the Asian Art Department.

After walking along Michigan Avenue, we jumped on a River Boat Tour of the city and completed the Chicago experience.



## A Little Bit About Chicago

Chicago is the third-most populous city in the United States after New York City and Los Angeles. It is located on the shore of Lake Michigan, and was incorporated as a city in 1837 near a portage between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River watershed. It grew rapidly in the mid-19th century. In 1871, the Great Chicago Fire destroyed several square miles and left more than 100,000 homeless. The City was rebuilt and its population continued to grow.

Chicago is home to the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the Lyric Opera of Chicago, and the Art Institute of Chicago provides an influential visual arts museum and art school. The Chicago area also hosts the University of Chicago, Northwestern University, and the University of Illinois Chicago, among other institutions of learning. Chicago has professional sports teams in each of the major professional leagues, including two Major League Baseball teams.

The Chicago Botanic Garden is visited by more than one million people each year. Within the Garden there is a Japanese Garden, an English Walled Garden and a Bonsai collection, just to name a few. Additionally, there are several gardens dedicated to plants indigenous to Illinois and the Midwest. Real plant enthusiasts can also check out the Lenhardt Library, home to one of the country’s largest collections of rare botanical books.

# Health Warning

## Health Concerns Spur California Toward limits on Artificial Turf

*By Patti Spezzaferro, President Atherton Garden Guild*



The following text summarizes a Mercury News article entitled “Health worries spur California toward limits on fake turf” by Shreya Agrawal, published on Monday, November 6th, 2023. To read the complete article, please go to Calmatters.

Synthetic turf is an artificial, non-living turfgrass replacement and is popular because it requires no water or maintenance. The grass blades are made of nylon or plastic fibers, while the base is typically a crumb of rubber made of tires, plastic pellets, or sand. Research is making it clear that artificial turf poses toxic hazards.

On October 8th, Governor Gavin Newsom signed legislative Senate Bill No. 676, which permits local governments, including cities and counties, to ban synthetic grass in neighborhoods due to potential health concerns. Milbrae in San Mateo County and San Marino in Los Angeles County are moving to prohibit fake lawns.

Democrats in the Legislature are proposing bills that would further discourage synthetic turf. They're worried about health risks created by the chemicals present in these lawns, including perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, also known as PFAS chemicals. Some chemicals in the crumb rubber base of synthetic turf, such as bisphenol A, commonly known as BPA, can leach out during extreme heat. These chemicals are known to cause cell death in humans. In addition, these chemicals have been linked to various chronic diseases, including cancers, diabetes, and neurological impairments.



Homeowners and public spaces have options. There are many drought-friendly plants, including warm-season grasses such as Bermuda grass and Buffalo grass, or doing away with grass altogether and planting trees or drought-resilient plant varieties indigenous to California. Janet Hartin, a horticulture expert at UC Extension in Los Angeles County, says, “While plants require water and maintenance, their cooling benefits and ecosystem benefits go far beyond the water savings one could get from synthetic turf.” I agree with Hartin. We have choices, so let us use them, and let's lead by putting our values of protecting our health and the health of our planet first.

## Experience the Holiday Magic of Filoli

*Share in its festive spirit during San Francisco Garden Club's special holiday tour*

**December 5<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am**

*Included*

*A private group welcome • Filoli tote  
Filoli House & Garden Visitors Guide Book  
House and Gardens exploration*



**For information & reservations contact Betty Voris: [bpvoris@comcast.net](mailto:bpvoris@comcast.net)**

**Pay through Zelle, or through the SFGC Website: [sfgardenclub.com](http://sfgardenclub.com)  
or a check sent to: SFGC office: 640 Sutter St, #4M - San Francisco 94102**

**GUESTS WELCOME**



# Flower Mart Badge

## SIGN UP NOW FOR 2024 Flower Market Badges



- If you purchased a badge in 2023 and still have your Proximity Card (which opens the gate), the cost is \$35.00 for your 2024 badge
- If you did not purchase a badge and Proximity Card and want to purchase the set for 2024, the cost is \$65.00.
- If you lost your Proximity Card and want another, you must purchase the entire package for renewal. Total cost is \$65.00.

**Deadline for renewal is January 20, 2024**

You may pay through either Zelle or on the website at [sfgclub@att.net](mailto:sfgclub@att.net). You also can mail your check to the office. Checks should be made out to the San Francisco Garden Club. NO payment will be honored after January 20, 2024.

Cards will be available at the February and March luncheons. For an extra fee of \$5, they can be mailed to you in late February. However, cards which are mailed and not received will not be the responsibility of the Garden Club.

For information or questions, contact Betty Voris@ [bpvoris@comcast.net](mailto:bpvoris@comcast.net)

### Wholesale Hours

Monday: Closed  
Tuesday: 4 am - 11 am  
Wednesday: 4 am - 11 am  
Thursday: 6 am - 11 am  
Friday: 5 am - 11 am  
Saturday: 7 am - 12 pm  
Sunday: Closed

### General Public Hours

Monday: Closed  
Tuesday: Closed  
Wednesday: 8 am - 1 pm  
Thursday: 8 am - 1 pm  
Friday: 8 am - 1 pm  
Saturday: 8 am - 1 pm  
Sunday: Closed



*Happy Holidays*  
*SFGC Family and Friends*

## Holiday Wreath Workshop

**Saturday, December 9<sup>th</sup>**

**10:00 am - 1:00 pm**

**With Steven Brown AIFD**

**Location: CCSF Horticulture Department**

*Instructions & materials included*  
*Bring shears & gloves • Snacks provided*



Learn Tricks of the Trade and enjoy a stimulating/fun learning experience with fellow SFGC members • Guests are welcome

**Cost: \$75 per person**

RSVP by Thursday, November 30<sup>th</sup>  
with Zelle, or through the SFGC website: [sfgardenclub.com](http://sfgardenclub.com)  
or check sent to the SFGC Office  
640 Sutter Street, #4M • San Francisco, CA 94102

San Francisco Garden Club  
640 Sutter Street 4M  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
Phone: (415) 771-0282  
Email: sfgclub@att.net

# *Garden Gazette*

## *Winter 2023/2024*

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Martha Woollomes

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Bonnie Demergasso  
Eva Monroe, Jane Scurich,  
Betty Voris

### OFFICERS

President: Bonnie Demergasso  
Vice President: Lisa Harris  
Recording Secretary: Verona Boucher  
Corresponding Secretary: Beverley Hayes  
Treasurer : Maureen Murray Fox

## UPCOMING EVENTS AND DONATION OPPORTUNITIES

*Lunch/Meetings/Programs: Social 11:30 • Lunch 12:15*

### Tuesday, December 5

Filoli Christmas Tour • 10:00 am  
Cost: \$29  
For information and reservations contact  
Betty Voris: bpvoris@comcast.net

### Saturday December 9

Holiday Wreath Workshop  
10:00 am - 1:00 pm  
with Steven Brown  
Cost: \$75 • RSVP by Nov. 30

### Thursday, December 14

SFGC Holiday Meeting/Luncheon  
Presidio & Concordia Club  
Menu: Asian Chicken Salad  
or Mediterranean Salad (VG)  
Cost: \$69 each  
RSVP by December 4 - \$10 late fee

### Thursday, January 18

SFGC Meeting/Luncheon  
Presidio & Concordia Club  
Menu: Avocado Turkey Salad or  
Fennel Orange Salad (VG)  
Cost: \$69 each  
RSVP by January 8- \$10 late fee

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

### Ways to Pay

- Check sent to the SFGC Office
- On the SFGC website: sfgardenclub.com
- Through Zelle

### Donations

\_\_\_\_\_ The San Francisco Garden Club General Fund  
\_\_\_\_\_ The Alice Eastwood Fund  
\_\_\_\_\_ Civic Participation Fund  
\_\_\_\_\_ In memory of \_\_\_\_\_

### GRAND TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

### SFGC OFFICE

640 Sutter Street 4M  
San Francisco, 94102  
Phone: 415-771- 0282 • Email: sfgclub@att.net

### PLEASE INFORM THE

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY Beverley Hayes  
by email of SFGC members' births, illness, or death,  
so that the appropriate acknowledgment can be sent.  
Email: beverleyhayes@sbcglobal.net

*The San Francisco Garden Club is a 501c3 organization*