

Nerium News

NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL OLEANDER SOCIETY



February 2022 Newsletter

INTERNATIONAL OLEANDER SOCIETY

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Newsletter:
Heidi Coggeshall
(please email
international.
oleander@
yahoo.com) if you
have an article

Dear Members,

Thank you for your continued support of the International Oleander Society! What a fantastic and spring-like luncheon held in January after being delayed twice due to the pandemic. We thank Mary Lou Kelso for volunteering to chair and manage the event!

Thank you to our guest speakers Michael Smith and Laura Elder from the Galveston Daily News, again showing the importance of local journalism, and Kimberly Gaido with her memories of her grandmother, Kewpie, and the Society.

We thank Coast Magazine, Dreyfus Printing and Moody Gardens (Patty, Richard, Leon, Donita and Nick). And finally, thank you to our Silent Auction Donors that helped us raise funds for our plans for maintenance and improvements at the Betty Head Oleander Garden Park: Kandy Arena of Kandy's Treasures, Jerry Buckner, Heidi Coggeshall, Knapp Flower Shop, Amber Jinkins, Lydia Miller, Marcy Moloy, Carolyn Sayre and Jay Smith, and Martie Terry.

We continue to look for more volunteers and Board members if you are interested in helping us. If you are interested in helping, please send us an email indicating your area of interest.

We welcome Sara Hawkes who volunteered to be our new Secretary. We recently met Sara after she won an oleander plant and oleander tour we donated to the Artist's Boat silent auction. We are excited for her to join the group.

Finally, we hope you will renew your membership for 2022 for only \$20. The funds are critical for our monthly maintenance costs and ability to preserve our oleander varieties. The membership form is on the last page.

Peace, love & oleanders

Amber Jinkins

175 Years of Oleanders

Hiroshima – Japan – Flower of Peace

Mrs. Irmtraud Gotsis provided us information via Jim Nicholas and her “The Oleander’s Journey Through Time” research with the help of:

Dr. Takayuki TANAKA
 Professor Emeritus, Tokai University
 Director of the International Camellia Society
 President of the Traditional Horticulture Society
 Tatsuda 7 - 19 - 25, Kita-ku, Kumamoto City,
 861-8006, Japan

*Photo is of the **Hiroshima Peace Memorial** in Hiroshima, Japan and was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1996. The building was one of the few left standing near the bomb’s hypocenter.*



The oleander was established in 1973 as the flower of Hiroshima City because it was one of the first flowers to bloom in Hiroshima after the atomic bombing and became a familiar symbol of the city's recovery. For Japan, the oleander became a symbol of hope and peace. Source: Oleander – Dictionary of the Language of Flowers

“Let us reflect here on the atomic inferno in Hiroshima, which took place on a warm August morning 60 years ago:

It was said that no tree would ever grow again here for 75 years, but the oleander bloomed just one year later, and we survivors regained our courage. ”So spoke the mayor of Hiroshima, a survivor of the attack, 34 years later. Today, the oleander is the official flower of Hiroshima.

From Nagasaki, it was reported that “of the first flowers to bloom from the radioactive rubble 3 months later, a white oleander flower, amidst full and proud green leaves, sent forth a vision of hope, a message of peace.” (peacewalker.com)”

From: The Oleander’s Journey Through Time

“Native to India, it is one of the representative flowering trees of summer, suited to strong sunlight and clear skies. It is used for greening factories and highways where there is a lot of traffic, because it is tolerant of air pollution and is expected to have a soundproofing effect. It is also often used in schoolyards and parks because it is hardy and easy to grow. It was introduced to Japan via China in the 18th century, during the Edo period.” – Dr. Tanaka

Jim noted that the Japanese name is not a native one, but rather a corrupted version of the Chinese one. Richard Eggenberger said that the Chinese name means “bamboo-peach blossom–mix”.

“Scientific name:

In Chinese characters, it is written as "oleander" [sic - the characters would be bamboo - peach blossom - mix - Ed.], which was originally a name in China. Its name comes from the fact that its flowers resemble peaches and its leaves resemble bamboo. Oleander is also called oleander or common oleander in English. It is also known as Rose Bay because its flowers resemble roses and its leaves resemble bay [the laurel or bay leaf tree, Laurus nobilis - Ed.].” – Dr. Tanaka

To commemorate 50 years of Norinchukin Bank in March 1974, a tree planting fund of three million yen was donated to the City of Hiroshima. In October of the previous year, the Nerium oleander was designated by popular vote as Hiroshima City's official flower. The fund was used to buy *Nerium oleander* trees, Mediterranean plants not often seen in Japan. According to newspaper reports at the time, almost two thousand trees of 26 varieties were planted along both banks of the Honkawa River to the west of Peace Memorial Park. – City of Hiroshima



Scenes from the banks of the Honkawa River in Hiroshima and a commemorative stone marker.

(from the website of the City of Hiroshima)

Magnolia Willis Sealy = Mont Blanc = Madoni Grandiflorum?

Jim Nicholas provided us the following information on the highly fragrant oleander:

“‘Mont Blanc’, a very robust cultivar bearing highly fragrant white blossoms with superimposed corollas, is a well-known variety which can be seen in many locations around the globe. In Galveston, it is called ‘Magnolia Willis Sealy’ and was named after the wife of George Sealy, a remarkably dynamic woman who housed hundreds of survivors of the 1900 hurricane in her own home, and who worked tirelessly to collect oleanders and other plants and to replace and replant the island’s vegetation after that catastrophe.

Christoph Köchel (in *Oleander*, Verlag Eugen Ulmer, Stuttgart, 2000), wrote:

“The true ‘Mont Blanc’ (usually erroneously called ‘Soeur Agnes’ or ‘Sister Agnes’ in the trade) is the double-flowered counterpart to this single white-flowered cultivar (see ‘Soeur Agnes’). Both varieties are very similar in growth habit and foliage. Without blossoms, they cannot be told apart. ‘Mont Blanc’ was first mentioned in the 1952 catalog of the Baldacci nursery; however, it is possibly considerably older.”

I believe I have found the origin of ‘Mont Blanc’ in Charles Cavallier’s *Le laurier-rose à Montpellier et dans les régions méridionales: rapport sur la collection de nériums de M. Sahut* (1875). On page 22 he writes: N. Madoni, *Grandiflorum*, très belle variété à fleurs blanches semi-doubles, à corolla superposée, obtenue par M. Madon, horticulteur à Aix, en Provence, en 1867, et livrée au commerce en 1869. Le *Nerium Madoni* est un perfectionnement du *Nerium Fonscolumbianum* et un acheminement très-prononcé vers l’obtention si désirée du *Splendens* à fleurs blanches.

(N. Madoni, *Grandiflorum*, very beautiful variety with white semi-double flowers, with superimposed corollas, obtained from Mr. Madon, nurseryman in Aix, en Provence, in 1867, and introduced to the trade in 1869. *Nerium Madoni* is a perfected version of *Nerium Fonscolumbianum* and very closely approaches the goal of a *Splendens* with white flowers which is so desired.)

Very significant: in Australia, ‘Mont Blanc’/‘Magnolia Willis Sealy’ is sold under the name ‘Madoni Grandiflorum’. This suggests that the cultivar reached Australia fairly early and that it retained its original name there. I have also seen it listed under this name by nurseries in Spain.”



And a video on youtube of the Hungarian nurseryman Szabolcs Megyeri (Megyeri Szabolcs in Hungarian) with Mont Blanc:



**Oleander Luncheon
January 26, 2022**



Contact us to Buy a Named Brick! - \$50

Finally! We had our 2020 Luncheon in January 2022. We delayed it twice due to covid. Thank you to Mary Lou Kelso for volunteering to chair the event! And thank you to our guest speakers Michael Smith and Laura Elder from the Galveston Daily News, again showing the importance of local journalism, and Kimberly Gaido with her memories of her grandmother, Kewpie, and the Society.

We thank Coast Magazine, Dreyfus Printing for the invitations and Moody Gardens (Patty, Richard, Leon, Donita and Nick). Donita and Nick provided us with wonderful plants we gave away in a raffle to our guests! And finally, thank you to our Silent Auction Donors that helped us raise funds for our plans for maintenance and improvements at the Betty Head Oleander Garden Park: Kandy Arena of Kandy's Treasures, Jerry Buckner, Heidi Coggeshall, Knapp Flower Shop, Amber Jenkins, Lydia Miller, Marcy Moley, Carolyn Sayre and Jay Smith, and Martie Terry.

I took some photos. And I now understand what they mean by the phrase "lighting is important" – oops! So enjoy what you can see!



Our members enjoying the Lunch



Our silent auction including the Isadore Dyer!



Our speakers: Michael Smith and Laura Elder – see the great view from the Viewfinder's Terrace



Our speaker Kimberly Gaido and our Chair Mary Lou Kelso

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) 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