

## Creating the Bamboo Display Garden at Quail Gardens by Betty Shor

In his early days of bamboo enthusiasm in the 1980s, the founder of the American Bamboo Society Richard Haubrich decided that the west side of Quail Gardens would be a good place for bamboos, so he planted there: *Dendrocalamus giganteus*, *Bambusa bambos*, and *Phyllostachys vivax*. The last one turned into a fine grove, and the first two showed off what big bamboos can do. He planted other species elsewhere in the Gardens, with approval from the administration.

In 1993 Quail Botanical Gardens Foundation took over from San Diego County the responsibility for operating the gardens. Julian Duval became its director in January 1995, moving from Indiana. He said: "I first heard of QBG as a member of ABS [American Bamboo Society] while living in Indianapolis and reading about the gardens in the ABS Newsletter."

So he very soon began advocating a bamboo garden at Quail. He liked that relatively undeveloped western side for more bamboos: "Visitors to the Gardens have long been attracted to the area by the sentinel stand of *Phyllostachys vivax* only to feel uncertain about entering because there were no pathways, let alone a landscaped appearance." [So-Cal Newsletter, July 1996, p. 2] As Duval said later: "Visitors literally had to bushwhack through the mulch to see these plantings. Those that did often wondered if they were some place they shouldn't be." (pers. comm., Dec. 2005) Duval convinced the board of Quail to develop this garden, using plants from the chapter's collection. At its board meeting of May 20, 1995, the ABS SoCal board agreed to participate in this project, and to provide \$6400 from the bamboo fund at Quail. That fund had accumulated from the sale of plants derived from Quail bamboo plants at the semi-annual chapter sales and from plants sold at the Gift Shop, also derived from Quail plants. [ABS-SoCal Newsletter, Sept. 1995, p. 8]

Duval noted: "Having access to divisions from the reference collection of bamboo maintained at QBG by ABS-SoCal is a tremendous asset to the creation of this garden." [ABS SoCal Newsletter, July 1996, p. 2-3] Michael Richter, then Director of Horticulture at Quail, and Bill Teague, very knowledgeable on plants and landscaping and a member of ABS-SoCal, were chiefly responsible for the design of the one-half-acre bamboo garden, "with appropriate aesthetics and function." This included a pond and berms and roaming paths.

A sculpture by noted San Diego County artist James Hubbell was proposed at Quail. Duval said that "Edna Pulver, a good friend of Quail Botanical Gardens, graciously offered to sponsor" this artwork. Hubbell inspected the gardens and announced that he wanted to place his sculpture in the developing Bamboo Display Garden, near the pond. He helped find the stone for the hardscape. The result, "Asian Shadows," includes the bronze sculpture, the stones, the water-course, and the room effect created by the grove of *Bambusa textilis*.

Considerable construction went into the garden, some of it by volunteers. Members of ABS-SoCal installed barrier material for the energetic *P. vivax* and *P. makinoi*, removed rhizomes outside the barriers, and planted many of the new plants [ABS-SoCal Newsletter, Sept. 1996, p. 1]. A few commercial organizations donated materials. Quail Gardens installed the watering system. Everyone was aware of a deadline, because ABS-SoCal was scheduled to host the ABS national meeting in October 1996, and people wanted the Bamboo Display Garden completed by then. Enough was done to make a good show.

"On August 31, the watering system was nearly complete, the grading done, the pond lined, rocks in place, the site for the sculpture ready, etc., and a group of SoCal members started planting bamboo. On that first work day, the following dedicated members showed up for work: Bill Teague, Richard Neufeld, George Shor, Robert Dimattia, Scott Heid, Dean Hwang, Albert Hwang, Jon Updike, and Julian Duval. We dug holes, made 2'x2'x2' hardware cloth cages to protect rhizomes from gopher attack, moved plants, divided plants, planted and watered plants. Ten bamboos were installed and additional holes were prepared for later plantings. On subsequent Tuesdays and Saturdays more plants were put in (about 10 each time) with Bill Teague acting as coordinator, choosing which bamboo should go where. There are now [ABS Newsletter, Nov. 1996, p. 3] 48 different kinds of bamboos there, about 70 individual plants. The garden now looks fairly complete."

To help finish it, George Shor provided the definitive text for the interpretive signs throughout that area.

Such were the beginnings of the Bamboo Display Garden. In 2005 Quail curator Dave Ehrlinger said that it contains about 110 bamboo taxa. Julian Duval noted in 2005: "I know from hearing it from so many visitors over the years that the QBG Bamboo Display Garden clearly ranks amongst the favorite places in the Gardens."