

A Little Known Flower Grown In Santa Cruz

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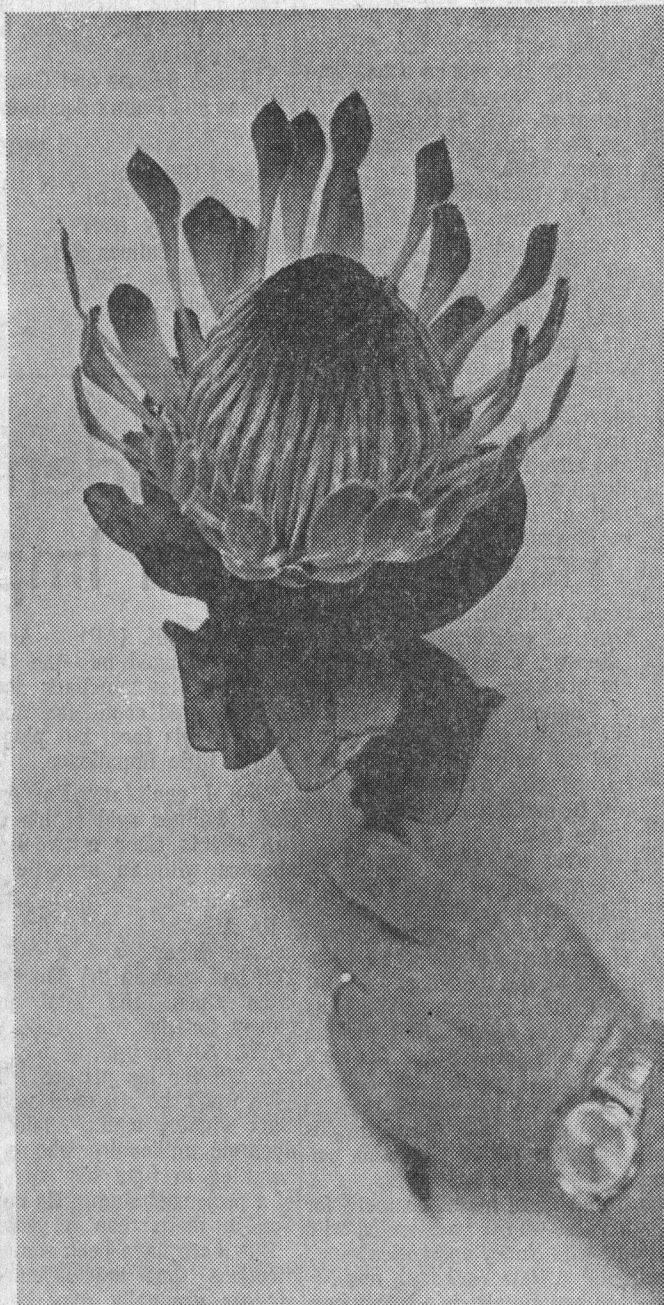
The least known of the flowers grown commercially in the Santa Cruz area are the protea and related genera raised by Ray Miller. Protea are an evergreen shrub growing from three to 10 feet tall and can be as large around, depending on species. They are primarily natives of South Africa, with many near relatives native to Australia.

Most species of protea produce a bold colorful flower highly prized by modern flower arrangers. The form is sometimes described as resembling a fully-opened artichoke. Actually they are flowers surrounded by a bract.

The bract surrounding Protea Latifolia looks like it is made up of pink feathers. The flower is about the size and shape of a turkey egg with a maroon tip blending to light green at the base. This species blooms over a six-month period. Some are in bloom at this time.

Protea Barbigeria is similar in form with pink bracts and a white or black center. It normally blooms in spring. The flowers of King Protea (cynaroides) are larger and flatter. The bracts are pale pink to crimson and the six to 10-inch flower is white. The plants are now in bud, and the buds look like very large silver rhododendron buds.

Protea Pink Mink (nerifolia) is a long, cupped flower resembling a very long tulip. The bracts are salmon-colored with furry black tips. The light pink flower can be seen only by looking down inside the bract. Protea Longiflora has pink feathery bracts. The flowers are a matching pink, long and tubular like a toothpick. Each segment appears to be a petal of a single flower, but actually each is a complete flower in itself. They are longer than the bract and



Protea Latifolia

lay back against them to form a cup-shape with an empty center.

The foliage of many protea resembles broad leaved eucalyptus. The foliage of *P. nerifolia* resembles oleander.

Leucadendron and leucospermum are part of the same plant family as protea. The best known member of the leucadendron family is the silver tree (*L. argenteum*). They are compact with upright branches densely covered with silver leaves. The new growth at the tips of the branches sparkles in the sunlight like shining white balls. The trees bear an insignificant flower. They also produce both bracts and cones. Silver trees will grow rapidly eight to 15 feet from seed in about five years.

Leucadendron grandiflora is a handsome, compact plant with unique apple-green foliage. The foliage circles the stem and the pointed leaves curve outward and upward like the fingers of a hand holding a ball. A cup-shaped bract grows at the ends of the branches. The cup is the same color as the foliage except in the center where it is bright red. A bright red cone-shaped flower develops in the center of the bract. As the flower ages it looks like a small pine cone.

Leucospermum Nutans has foliage which resembles pointed dollar eucalyptus. The branches grow upright from the crown giving an attractive mound-shaped evergreen shrub. The flowers resemble medium-sized spider mums, but are quite stiff. They are pink to red in color with yellow tips. The shrub can reach a 12-foot spread in three to four years and is quite free blooming.

Leucospermum Catherinae is similar in size to *L. Nutans* with a wheel-shaped yellow flower with bright pink edging. The foliage is silver-grey. Leucospermum Attenuatum produces yellow flowers. Both foliage and flowers are slightly smaller than *L. Nutans*.

Protea and related species are maverick plants not yet sufficiently domesticated for reliable growing rules. They are found in South Africa from the ocean to snow line, and from rain belts through areas that are seasonally wet and dry, to

ed from South Africa is not classified as to natural growing conditions. These plants present a number of other growing problems. Seed may have a low germination. Seedlings are subject to damp-off and older plants to several varieties of water molds. Botrytis is also a problem in coastal or humid regions.

The plants require about three years to reach blooming size. They must have good drainage and full sun. They are borderline hardy in this area. Miller, who has been growing protea in this area for six years, lost 75 per cent of his plants in a severe frost a couple of years ago.

The plants do not transplant well. They are best sown from seed in the place they are to grow. Second choice is to set them out as small seedlings. They seldom root as cuttings,

Watsonville Has Ikebana Art Show

The Watsonville Buddhist Temple presented an Ikebana art show Sunday.

Professor Masato Uyetsuhara, a master from the Ikenobo school of Ikebana, presented the program. He has just arrived from Japan for a demonstration tour of the American Ikenobo chapters. He presented several variations of the Rikka and Shoka styles of arranging. Colorful fall materials were used in handsome modern ceramic containers.

Professor Uyetauhara was assisted by Mrs. Yoshino Matano. Mrs. Aiko Yamamoto interpreted his instructions and comments in English.

One side of the hall presented a fine collection of bonsai plants. The other side displayed excellent arrangements by students of Mrs. Matano. A very handsome example of the Rikka style of arranging by Mrs. Matano greeted the visitor at the entry. It contained evergreen branches, driftwood, biras of paradise and hydrangea, and soared to a height of over seven feet.

Protea both grow and bloom at the same time. New growth comes out in a circle at the base of the flower in a manner similar to rhododendron. Unless the flowers are cut with ample stems, the multiplying growths become weaker and shorter stemmed. Some types produce several hundred blooms a year, while others such as King Protea produce only a few very large blossoms.

If a gardener is determined to try members of the South African protea family in spite of the difficulty, Miller recommends Protea Longiflora, silver tree, or Leucospermum Attenuatum for starters. If these are successful, you would be likely to be successful with more exotic ones.

Protea seedlings and those of some of the other related genera can be obtained from one or two specialists in the San Diego area. Seed can be obtained from Walter Middleman, Barosma, Barnbeck Ave., Newlands, Cape Province, South Africa.

Cut protea are being shipped by wholesale florists throughout the United States and can be special-ordered through local florists.

Garden CHECK-LIST

1. Top dress rhododendrons, camellias and azaleas with an acid plant-type mulch recommended by a nurseryman.
2. Use pots of blooming Chrysanthemums to brighten the porch or patio and to bring festive fall colors indoors.
3. Top quality lily bulbs are available this month at nurseries. These modern hybrids perform beautifully in pots or in the ground. Give them a well-drained soil in partial sun or filtered shade.
4. When shopping for daffodils be sure to include some of the novelty types with two-tone cups or double, ruffled flowers.
5. Remove fallen leaves and other debris from the garden. They serve as breeding places for garden pests and diseases.

Valley Floral