



California Native Plant Society
Santa Clara Valley Chapter

THE BLAZING STAR

January-February 2015

MEMBERS' NIGHT AND GENERAL MEETING

**Friday, January 30th at 7:30 PM
Los Altos Library Program Room
13 So. San Antonio Road, Los Altos**

**Topic: Members' Night Slide Show -
Native Plants and Places in 2014**

Even though 2014 was a very dry year, plenty of our native plant species are well adapted to thrive in these tough conditions. Did you find and photograph any examples of native plants doing well this past year? Or perhaps you took a few nice pictures of scenery, places, or interesting animals?

Share the interesting and beautiful pictures you took in 2014 with others at the always popular Members' Night meeting. Photos (or other media) of anything, any place, or anyone related to native plants in 2014 are welcome.

If you'd like to share photos or other materials, please **RSVP by Sunday, January 25** by emailing Kevin Bryant at mtngreen17@gmail.com or calling (408) 348-9470, and let him know how many photos/what type of materials, and approximately how many minutes you'd like. Time allotted per person will depend on how many participants RSVP. Whether you have photos to share or not, join us for a fun mid-winter celebration of native plants.

Directions: From Foothill Expy., travel ½ mile on San Antonio Rd. towards the Bay, cross Hillview and turn right into the driveway; library is on the left. From El Camino, travel towards the hills on San Antonio Rd., cross Edith and turn left into the unmarked driveway just before Hillview. The sign on San Antonio Rd. reads "Civic Center, Library and History Museum." Enter through the lobby of the main entrance.

CNPS General Meetings are free and open to the public. For more information, contact Chapter President Stephen Rosenthal at sailinsteve@sbcglobal.net or the Chapter phone at (650) 260-3450.

CNPS Conservation Conference

Our Chapter is thrilled that the statewide Conservation Conference will be held in San Jose from January 15-17, 2015, with many exciting workshops and field trips on January 13 and 14. This is a valuable opportunity for all Chapter members to celebrate the progress made in conservation throughout the past 50 years, and contribute to goals and research for the future of California native plants. Volunteer and sponsorship opportunities are still available. More information can be found at cnps.org/cnps/conservation/conference/2015/. We hope to see you all there!

CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Native Plant Nursery at Hidden Villa

Come help propagate plants for restoration projects and our spring plant sale by volunteering at one of our nursery work sessions, every **Wednesday and Thursday, from Noon to 3pm**. Bring garden gloves, sunhat, clippers, liquids and your lunch if you like. Other tools will be provided at the nursery. Knowledge of plants is not necessary; your willingness to help is all that's required.

For more information, contact Melanie Cross at (650) 847-1350 or melanie@pcross.com; or Ray Deutsch at (650) 365-6136 or ray.deutsch@yahoo.ca.

Directions: Hidden Villa is located on Moody Road west of Foothill College. From Hwy. 280 in Los Altos Hills, take the Moody Road exit and head west. Two miles west of Foothill College, look for the Hidden Villa sign and driveway on the left. Proceed over the bridge and park in the visitor center parking lot to your right. The Nursery is at the greenhouse just beyond the visitor center.

Gardening with Natives

Gardening with Natives (GWN), a special interest group within the Chapter, includes a mix of landscape architects, designers, seasoned native plant gardeners and beginners. GWN offers talks throughout the year, which are free and open to all.

This year's themes are *How I Did It* and *Maintaining Your Native Garden*. The monthly speakers will share tips on how they created their native garden or on a specific garden maintenance task. For more information, visit www.cnps-scvc.org/index.php/gardening/gardening-with-natives.

These programs are made possible by the co-sponsoring libraries and our volunteers who help with program logistics. If you would like to help organize similar programming at a library near you, contact arvind.kumar@cnps.org.

Planning a Native Rain Garden, a talk by Alan Hackler

**Tuesday, January 27, 7:00-8:30 PM, Saratoga Library,
13650 Saratoga Ave., Saratoga (408) 867-6126**

The season's first rains are pouring down, running off your roof, down your driveway and into the streets, storm drains, creeks and ultimately to the bay and ocean. What if you could capture that runoff instead and use it for your garden, with the excess percolating downward to recharge our local aquifers and purify the water as it passes through the soil? Learn how rain gardens keep water on site, how to construct them, and which California native plants are best suited for them.

Alan Hackler is the owner of Bay Maples, a design-build firm and native plant nursery in the South Bay. His own rain garden was on the Going Native Garden Tour and he has built many rain gardens for clients. Alan studied permaculture and environmental studies, and is a Build-It Green member with LEED and Graywater accreditations.

How I Did It: Creating a Native Garden in a Parking Strip, a talk by Carrie Jensen

**Thu., Feb. 19, 7:00-8:30 PM, Mountain View Library,
585 Franklin St, Mountain View (650) 903-6337**

Come learn how you can take your grass- or concrete-filled parking strip and turn it into a haven for California native plants, plus the butterflies and birds that depend on them. You'll see how to remove your lawn, concrete or water-

hogging plants in order to create space for a native habitat with color and texture year round. Whether you have a full sun exposure or the dappled shade of a street tree, you'll find plenty of plant combinations that will work for your garden. This is an easy project for anyone who wants to try their hand at growing native plants for the first time.

Carrie Jensen is a landscape designer with H.T. Harvey and Associates who specializes in native plants and habitat restoration. She is also an active member of the Santa Clara Basin Watershed Management Initiative - Land Use Subgroup and is currently collaborating on a county-wide "Grey2Green Program" with Our City Forest, a San Jose-based urban forestry non-profit.

Replacing your Lawn with Drought-tolerant Native Plants, a talk by Deva Luna

**Wednesday, Feb. 25, 7:00-8:30 PM, Campbell Library,
77 Harrison Ave., Campbell, (408) 866-1991**

You stopped watering your lawn because of the drought and because you wanted something new, but now the "lawn" is full of weeds. What do you do? Come to this talk and be inspired to create a beautiful, water-wise garden! See a variety of no-lawn landscaping styles and ideas. Get professional tips on removing that weed-filled patch called a lawn, learn to choose climate-adapted native plants, and find out how you can qualify for landscape rebates. You'll see how to have a lush landscape without water-hogging grass.

Deva Luna is a sustainable and Bay Friendly-certified landscape designer who has been teaching and speaking about horticulture for 16 years. She has a degree in "Plants and Art" from U.C. Davis and works for EarthCare Landscaping (www.earthcareland.com) in Cupertino.

Keying with Natives

Join us as we learn and practice methods of identifying the native plants of our region (aka keying). From beginners to more advanced, there are challenges for all. Bring in plant samples if you have some or just come and work with the materials provided. We discuss the various plant books and practice keying with them. Microscopes are also available.

The upcoming dates are **Fridays, January 23rd and February 27th, from 6:30pm - 8:30pm**. We meet at the Peninsula Conservation Center (PCC), 3921 E. Bayshore Road in Palo Alto. For more information, please contact Dave "Tex" Houston at 350co2now@gmail.com or (650) 303-2777; or Sally Casey at (408) 377-0989.

To join the KWN mailing list, send email to Joe Cernac at joecernac@sbcglobal.net.

Directions to PCC: From Hwy. 101 take the San Antonio Rd. exit and head north. Take your next left onto East Bayshore, which will curve left then right. Take your next right onto Corporation Way and immediately left into the PCC parking lot. The meeting rooms are on the first floor.

LIVECoRPs

Our conservation committee, LIVECoRPs, meets the 3rd **Thursday** of the month at the PCC. Our next meetings will be **January 15 and February 19 at 7pm**. Please join us! For questions, comments or concerns, please contact LIVECoRPs Chair Linda Ruthruff at ldrruff@hotmail.com. For **directions** to the PCC, please see the previous Keying with Natives article.

Native Plants and Burrowing Owls

By Phil Higgins, Chapter member and Biologist for the City of Mountain View. philip_higgins@hotmail.com
Written November, 2013

The Western Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*) has been declining significantly throughout its range due to loss of grassland habitat. Nowhere has this decline been more apparent than Santa Clara County, which has lost vast areas of its grassland ecosystems. What remains for the burrowing owls in Santa Clara County are a very few small isolated and fragmented habitats crisscrossed by roads, parking lots and buildings, where non-native grasses and other invasive plant species dominate the landscape.

Burrowing owls have only a few ecological requirements: a burrow for nesting, short vegetation surrounding the burrow so they can see approaching predators and, finally, quality prey, including rodents and invertebrates. Although these prey species can be found in short vegetation, rodents for the most part are usually more abundant in taller vegetation. Taller vegetation provides a safe refuge and also a source of food: green grass during the rainy season and seeds during the dry season. An analysis of over 3,000 pellets of burrowing owls at several locations in Santa Clara County during 2004 and 2005 found that 96% of the diet of burrowing owls at these sites contained predominantly of earwigs, beetles and grasshoppers, with the rest of the diet comprising voles, house mice and gophers.

Rodents provide a better source of protein for burrowing owls, especially during the breeding season, and the lack of a high quality diet is probably impacting the reproductive success of burrowing owls in Santa Clara County. Burrowing owls can potentially have up to 12 chicks,

however in this area they are more likely to have three to four chicks.

One way to increase the quality prey for burrowing owls is to attract more rodents by planting native groundcover plants that will provide both a refuge and also an additional food source. Low growing *Ceanothus*, *Salvia*, *Eriogonum* and other species provide the ideal conditions for attracting rodents.

Our Chapter of CNPS has been working with local burrowing owl biologists to provide suitable plants at two prime locations for burrowing owls: Shoreline Park in Mountain View and the San José-Santa Clara Regional Wastewater Facility in Alviso. Over the past few years our Chapter's native plant nursery donated native plants that were planted in groups to form islands of vegetation at several locations near burrowing owl nesting habitats at Shoreline and Alviso.

Observational studies have already confirmed the presence of rodents and insects in high quantities in some of these vegetated islands that were planted just two years ago. Native fauna co-evolved with our native flora. The timing of flower and seed production often coincides with certain activity patterns of animals, especially the breeding season. Conserving burrowing owls in Santa Clara County not only requires saving the last few remaining grasslands, but also increasing the owls' reproductive success. One of the best ways to do this is by planting California native plants to attract prime prey species.

Cal-IPC Symposium Report: Wildland Weeds and Water

By Don Thomas, Chapter Member

The theme of this year's California Invasive Plant Council Symposium was "Wildland Weeds and Water." Following are a few highlights from the conference.

- Several new biological control agents have been or may soon be released to help combat invasive plants. These include a scale insect and a gall wasp for *Arundo donax* and a stem boring moth and a stem gall fly for Cape ivy.
- A naturally occurring gall mite was discovered in Oregon that causes stunting and mortality of Scotch broom plants
- We need to be on the alert for several new invasive plants. Among these is a woody perennial relative of stinkwort, false yellowhead (*Dittrichia viscosa*), which was found in Solano County.

- New online and mobile weed mapping and data management tools are being developed by Calflora (www.calflora.org). These include the WHIPPET weed prioritization tool (whippet.cal-ipc.org), the Observer Pro mobile app and the Weed Manager database (www.calflora.org/entry/applications2.html).

For more about the conference visit www.cal-ipc.org/symposia/. Don may be reached at don_e_thomas@yahoo.com or (408) 828-4044.



www.lechphoto.com

Arundo Puller Extraordinary: Cal-IPC Photo Contest Winner

After an initial attack by Shelterbelt Builders, volunteer efforts have helped to reduce and remove *Arundo donax* resprouts from an important serpentine seep in San Mateo Co. Here, Ken Himes is featured with the prize excavation. Upon removal of arundo biomass, a rare Asteraceae has moved back into the high quality seep habitat (from adjacent areas where arundo had not spread) with no further encouragement.

CHAPTER SERVICE OUTINGS

Edgewood Weed Warriors

Our 26-year volunteer restoration program strives to make Edgewood Park and Natural Preserve an inspirational showcase of all CNPS stands for. Come share the beauty of Edgewood with us, learn a ton, and help keep Edgewood native! Our **9am Friday** sessions run year round; **5:30pm Wednesday** sessions will resume when Daylight Savings Time returns next spring.

For Edgewood Weed Warrior (EWW) schedules, meeting places, and other details visit eww.cnps-sc.v.org; contact Paul Heiple (650) 854-7125, pheiple@gmail.com or John Allen (jackwa@earthlink.net) for Friday info; or contact EWW program chair Drew Shell (nature@dshell.oddotter.org) for Wednesday/Saturday info.

Green Friday: Weeding at Edgewood

By Carol Mattsson, Blazing Star Newsletter Editor

I got up early the day after Thanksgiving to go weed at Edgewood Park on “Green Friday,” November 28 -- It was every bit as good as going for a hike --I had a great time and learned a lot!

I met the crew and was given a pair of gloves and a “hori hori” weeding knife. I then set off with Paul Heiple and three other beginning weeders to our first weeding site. On the way I learned that weeding Italian thistle at Edgewood is down to hunting for tiny pairs of cotelydons (seed leaves) with a tiny thistly shaped leaf between them, and slicing it from the ground with a tool such as my hori hori. Yellow star-thistle is also greatly reduced in number since the weeding program started. Now the Edgewood weeders are concentrating on other invasive species that are practical to treat. There is also an effort to identify rare plants and unusual habitats and give them extra weeding care.

We arrived at our first weeding site, a steep hillside with several railroad ties across it to slow down erosion. Paul said that before Edgewood was saved as a preserve, this spot was popular with off-road vehicles, and we could still see the vehicle tracks in the meadow below. Paul showed us how to recognize rock rose (*Cistus creticus*), so we could pull it, but not pull similar looking native plants.

We learned that we could simply pull the rockrose out of the soil to kill the individual plant, no need to get the roots. We also learned that to effectively weed a relative of dandelion, *Crepis vesicaria* ssp. *taraxacifolia*, we needed to get at least four inches of root. Edgewood weeders are studying which weeding techniques are most practical and work best for each target species.

We walked to our second weeding site of the day, a sloped meadow where the target weed was plantain, *Plantago lanceolata*. The morning fog had lifted and the day had become sunny. The dozen other volunteer weeders of the day were spread out over the hill: some hunting for plantain, some sitting within a patch of plantain, all working to slice plantain off at soil level, which for this species was deemed sufficient to kill it.

At noon I sat at the top of the hill near some oak trees for a short lunch, watching the other weeders finish up. After that I found Drew Shell and Paul, turned in my equipment, and discussed with them the need for weeders willing to occasionally lead weeding sessions, and thanked them for all the plant stories and a fine volunteer experience.

CHAPTER FIELD TRIPS

Chapter field trips are free and generally open to the public. They are oriented to conservation, protection and enjoyment of California native plants and wildlife, and we adhere to all rules and guidelines for the lands on which we are visiting.

In our region it is very important to be prepared for hiking on rugged and steep terrain, wide temperature ranges and rapidly changing conditions at any time of year. All participants should wear sturdy footwear and carry sufficient water, sun protection, food, clothing layers, personal first aid and other supplies you may need. If you have any questions about your ability to participate in a particular field trip, please contact the trip leader in advance.

Mon Jan 5 7-9pm Field Trip Planning Meeting PCC, 3921 East Bayshore Road, Palo Alto

Join our new Field Trip Chair, Dee Wong, in a lively planning session of spring and summer trips. We'll discuss great places to visit, and talk about away/camping trips for the year. The meeting is open to all members; come share your ideas of where you want to go in 2015. For more information contact Dee at dee4CNPS@gmail.com or call (650) 670-7797 (eves).

Sat Feb 7 10am – 1pm Eaton Park (San Carlos)

Join Don Thomas on a visit to Eaton Park in San Carlos, where we will see a population of *Dirca occidentalis*, the Western leatherwood.

After seeing leatherwood, we will walk up the trail for some great views. (There are some steep sections.) We should be finished by about lunch time, but it is suggested that you bring lunch and water. There is an optional additional hike afterwards in the adjacent Big Canyon Park. For more information contact Don Thomas at (408) 828-4044 or don_e_thomas@yahoo.com.

A description of the park can be found in the *Peninsula Trails* book by Jean Rusmore. A description of the trail and a plant list can be found at bit.ly/IIDE1VP.

Directions: Meet at **10am** at the Eaton Ave. entrance to Eaton Park at the very end of Eaton Ave. in San Carlos. Eaton Ave. can be reached by way of El Camino Real or Alameda de las Pulgas, between Edgewood Rd. and Brittan Ave. Heavy rain cancels.

Sun Feb 22 10am – 2pm Montara Mt., San Pedro Valley County Park (Pacifica)

Join co-leaders Ken Himes and Dee Wong on an early spring outing at San Pedro Valley County Park. We expect to see some early blooms: Montara manzanita (*Arctostaphylos montaraensis*), pink-flowering currant (*Ribes sanguineum glutinosum*), Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja affinis*), and others.

The trip will be a moderate 4-5-mile loop hike through coastal scrub and chaparral plus some riparian woodland. It will include an elevation gain and loss of about 600 feet and is expected to last until **2pm**. For more information contact Dee Wong at dee4CNPS@gmail.com or Ken Himes at (650) 591-8560.

Directions: The Park is located at 600 Oddstad Blvd. in Pacifica. From the South Bay, take I-280 North then merge onto Skyline Blvd./CA-35 via exit 41 toward Pacifica. After 3.5 mi. turn left onto Sharp Park Rd. down towards the coast. Follow the signs for Cabrillo Hwy./CA-1 South toward Santa Cruz. Go for 2.5 mi. then turn left at Linda Mar Blvd., go for 2 more miles to where the road ends at Oddstad. Turn right and then immediately left into the park. The County Park day use fee is \$6 per vehicle.

We'll meet at **10am** in front of the Visitor Center. Bring water and a lunch. Heavy rain cancels.

CHAPTER OFFICERS FOR 2015

Carolyn Dorsch has agreed to **become our new Treasurer**. **Dee Wong**, our former Treasurer, has agreed to fill the **Field Trip Chair** position vacated by Carolyn. Thank you to Carolyn and Dee for your service and we welcome to your new positions!

Title	Name	Phone	Email
President	Stephen Rosenthal	(408) 923-6562	sailinsteve@sbcglobal.net
Vice President	Madeline Morrow	(408) 741-1150	madelinemorrow@earthlink.net
Recording Secretary	Radhika Thekkath	(650) 473-1537	rthekkath@yahoo.com
Treasurer	Carolyn Dorsch	(650) 804-6162	cdorsch1@aol.com
Past President	Arvind Kumar	(408) 715-7020	arvind.kumar@cnps.org

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT *BLAZING STAR*

Saturday, February 7, 2015

Email: mattsson@surfpix.net

Phone: (408) 255-3767

Santa Clara Valley Chapter California Native Plant Society
3921 East Bayshore Road
Palo Alto, CA 94303



Join CNPS Today!

Members receive the *Fremontia*, the *Bulletin*, and the Chapter newsletter, and other benefits listed at www.cnps.org/membership

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Membership level (check one):

- \$45 Individual
 \$75 Family
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 \$300 Patron
 \$600 Benefactor
 \$1500 Mariposa Lily
 \$25 Student/Limited Income

Areas of interest:

- Advocacy
 Botany
 Conservation
 Education
 Field Trips
 Gardening
 Plant ID

Donations above the membership level are gratefully accepted.

Dues and donations are tax-deductible. Make your check payable to "CNPS" and mail it with this form to:

CNPS Membership, 2707 K Street Suite 1, Sacramento, CA 95816 • 916-447-2677 • fax 916-447-2727

FIRST-CLASS

CALENDAR OF EVENTS (page # in parentheses)

Jan 5 Mon Field trip planning meeting (5)

Jan 13-17 CNPS Conservation Conference (1)

Jan 15 Thu LIVECoRPs (conservation) meeting (3)

Jan 23 Fri Keying with Natives (2)

Jan 27 Tue GWN – Rain Garden – Hackler (2)

Jan 30 Fri Member's Night (1)

Feb 7 Wed Eaton Park field trip (5)

Feb 7 Sat Newsletter submittal deadline (5)

Feb 19 Thu GWN – Parking Strip – Jensen (2)

Feb 19 Thu LIVECoRPs (conservation) meeting (3)

Feb 22 Sun San Pedro Valley Park field trip (5)

Feb 25 Wed GWN – Replacing Lawn – Luna (2)

Feb 26 Thu Newsletter Mailing Party - 10am PCC

Feb 27 Fri Keying with Natives (2)

Wed & Thu Noon-3pm Nursery work sessions (1)

Fri 9am Edgewood Weed Warriors (4)

The next Chapter Board meeting will be **Thu., February 12 at 7:00pm** at the PCC, 3921 E. Bayshore Road in Palo Alto.

Chapter Board meetings are open to all Chapter members and their guests.

For more information contact Stephen Rosenthal at sailinsteve@sbcglobal.net.

The California Native Plant Society is a statewide non-profit organization of amateurs and professionals with a common interest in California's native plants. The Society, working with its local chapters, seeks to increase understanding and to preserve the rich heritage of the native flora for future generations. Membership is open to all. Individual memberships are \$45.00 per year. If you have questions about your newsletter subscription, please contact membership@cnps-scv.org. Address changes may be submitted to cnps@cnps.org and please put "member address change" in the subject line.

The *Blazing Star* web address: www.cnps-scv.org. Acknowledgement: Anne Warren for the *Blazing Star* logo. Printed on recycled paper.