



California Native Plant Society
Santa Clara Valley Chapter

THE BLAZING STAR

May-June 2012

GENERAL MEETING AND PROGRAM

Friday, May 18, 7:30 PM
Los Altos Library Program Room
13 So. San Antonio Road, Los Altos

**Topic: Fire, Chaparral, and Grizzly Bears:
Living With Instead of Against Nature**
Speaker: Richard W. Halsey
Director, California Chaparral Institute

Once home to the California grizzly bear and the California condor's last refuge, the chaparral remains one of the most misunderstood and underappreciated ecosystems on earth.

Threatened by fire and habitat fragmentation, chaparral represents one of our last opportunities to preserve biodiversity and wildness in the state. Join us as we explore the chaparral's unique natural history, discuss how we can live with wildland fire, and reveal some of the major misconceptions that many hold about California's most characteristic ecosystem.



The chaparral ecosystem supports wildlife and is shaped by fire

Richard W. Halsey is the director of the California Chaparral Institute, a non-profit, research and educational organization focusing on the ecology of California's chaparral ecosystems, the dynamics of wildland fire in both natural and human communities, and the promotion of nature education in a way that encourages communities to better connect with their surrounding, natural environment.

Mr. Halsey also works with the San Diego Museum of Natural History, publishes *The Chaparralian*, a quarterly newsletter focusing on chaparral and wildfire issues, and continues to teach natural history throughout the state. He has worked as a consultant on wildfire issues and has given more than 300 presentations about the chaparral ecosystem and wildfire over the past five years.

The second edition of his book, *Fire, Chaparral, and Survival in Southern California*, was published in 2008. Mr. Halsey was also trained as a Type II wildland firefighter long past the age most would consider prudent.

Directions: From Foothill Expy., travel ½ mile on San Antonio Rd. towards the Bay, cross Hillview and turn right into the driveway; the library is on the left. **From El Camino Real**, 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, leave a message on our Chapter phone at (408) 260-3450 and someone will return your call, or send an email to cnps_scv@yahoo.com.

CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Native Plant Nursery at Hidden Villa

As this newsletter goes to press, the plants at the nursery have one more week to look their best for our Spring Native plant sale, to be held on **Saturday, April 21**.

To help the nursery recover after the sale, and to propagate plants for our **Fall Native Plant Sale on October 20**, consider volunteering at one of our nursery work sessions. They take place every **Wednesday**, from **noon to 3pm**. Bring garden gloves, sunhat, clippers, 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.

Plants may be purchased during the nursery workdays through the end of May. Please plan to pay by check. For more information, contact Jean Struthers at (650) 941-2586 or JeanStruthers@att.net; 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. The group offers many talks throughout the year which are free and open to all.

This year's theme is *Designing Your Native Plant Garden*. We have divided the design work into 12 tasks, each covered by one lecture per month. The lectures start with planning and end with maintenance. **Seven talks are scheduled during May and June**, so please spread the word. For more information, visit www.GardeningWithNatives.com.

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

Missed a GWN talk? Many past presentations are recorded as video at the Chapter website, www.cnps-scv.org. Go to Education on the main menu, then Presentations.

Tuesday, May 1 7:00 PM, Saratoga Library

**Good Bones for Your Garden –
Choosing Native Trees and Shrubs,
a talk by Chris Todd**

This lecture is the fifth in our 12-part *Designing Your Native Plant Garden* series. You've already created a conceptual plan and have learned about adding food, shelter and water for wild garden visitors. Now you'll start adding some structure to your design.

Native perennials and annuals add color to the garden, but often need a green backdrop to look their best. Learn how larger shrubs & trees provide all-year interest, nesting sites, and protection from the hot summer sun. Their form and foliage, berries and colorful stems outlast the blossoms of smaller plants, providing multi-seasonal beauty. See how some basic design concepts can help you choose the right plants for the right purpose to make attractive and functional outdoor "garden rooms."

Chris Todd of Garden Escapes by Chris Todd has been designing sustainable, drought-tolerant, and native gardens since 2000, and has a degree in horticulture and landscape design. Using native plants and educating clients on managing their environments in a healthier way are a major focus of her water-efficient landscapes.

Saratoga Library, 13650 Saratoga Ave., Saratoga,
(408) 867-6126.

Wed., May 9 6:30 PM, Almaden Branch Library

**Year-Round Interest with California Native Plants,
a talk by Cayce Hill**

California's breathtaking native plant diversity means that with careful planning, a garden can have something in flower or fruit every month of every year. Come to this talk to learn about which plants perform well in which season, and how to create and maintain a garden that is attractive all year long.

Cayce Hill has been growing California natives since she and her husband moved to San Jose in March 2008. She is the head gardener for Sons & Daughters restaurant of San Francisco, garden and programs manager for the Delphi Foundation, and the Treasurer for the Friends of Master Gardeners of Santa Clara County.

Note early start time, 6:30pm Almaden Branch Library,
6445 Camden Avenue, San Jose, (408) 808-3040.

Tuesday, May 15 7:00 PM, Sanchez Library, Pacifica

**Biodiversity and the Native Plant Gardener,
a talk by Arvind Kumar**

What makes California a world hotspot of biodiversity? Learn about the critical role native plants play in a healthy environment, how human pressures are driving them to the brink of extinction, and what you as a home gardener can do to save and celebrate them. Learn how to provide habitat for wildlife, conserve natural resources, save effort and money, and give your garden a sense of place — by using native plants. Plant lists will be available.

Arvind Kumar has been gardening with native plants for over 10 years and is our Chapter president.

Sanchez Library, 1111 Terra Nova Boulevard, Pacifica, (650) 359-3397.

Wednesday, May 23 7:00 PM, Millbrae Library

**Native Plant Gardening for Year-Round Interest,
a talk by Radhika Thekkath**

Something is happening throughout the year in native plants gardens — not just in the spring! Learn how to select and group plants with varying bloom times so your garden is never without color. See how to choose different plant forms and include beautiful bark, berry, and seed producing species for maximum interest all year long.

Radhika Thekkath has been a passionate gardener since childhood and is a native plant designer and a strong advocate for using native plants in the home garden. She is our Chapter's recording secretary and is on the GWN steering committee.

Millbrae Library, 1 Library Ave., Millbrae, (650) 697-7607.

Thursday, June 7 7:00 PM, San Carlos Library

**Choosing Perennials and Ground Covers –
Color in the Native Garden,
a talk by Stephanie Curtis**

Join us for the sixth part in our 2012 Designing Your Native Plant Garden series — we're halfway through the year! In part five, you heard about including larger trees and shrubs. In this lecture, you will learn about easy-to-grow California native plants that provide color and interest in the garden, as well as curb appeal. You'll hear about the features of various plants and how they can be used in your garden for best results.

Stephanie Curtis' early passion for gardening and the environment led to her formal study of Horticulture and

Landscape Architecture. She enjoys working outdoors and promoting landscape practices that are based on ecological principles. Stephanie has a BS in Environmental Horticulture from UC Davis and has completed the Landscape Architecture program at UC Berkeley Extension. She is a licensed Landscape Architect and an ISA Certified Arborist.

San Carlos Library, 610 Elm Street, San Carlos, (650) 591-0341 x237.

Tuesday, June 12 7:00 PM, Fremont Main Library

**California Native Plant Restoration Lessons
to Apply to Your Garden,
a talk by David Thomson**

If you are one of the many native plant gardeners interested in restoring a portion of your garden to be similar to that of a local wild area, this lecture is for you. The Don Edwards Refuge was the first urban refuge created by the US Fish & Wildlife Service, and is surrounded by one of the largest urban areas in the West! Learn how the refuge carefully chooses local collection sites for native plant species in order to preserve their unique genetic makeup and how you can, too. Learn how the non-native and native plant choices you make in your garden can have a direct effect on the health of wild areas, such as the Refuge.

David Thomson has been doing habitat restoration research for the Refuge for five years, developing a plant community for sites adjacent to the bay and methods for restoring these degraded areas. He has been working in the San Francisco Bay area for over a decade, focusing on the estuary's tidal marshes. Prior to this, he did graduate work in the Mississippi River's Deltaic wetlands, and undergraduate work in biology at Seattle University.

Fremont Main Library, 2400 Stevenson Blvd., Fremont, (510) 745-1401.

Wednesday, Jun 20 7:00 PM, Campbell Library

**Using Native Trees in a Home Garden,
a talk by Barrie Coate**

While some of our trees, such as Redwoods, are too large to fit well in a typical home landscape, other trees, such as Catalina ironwood, cohabitate and enhance residential gardens extremely well. Learn about a variety of local native trees from an expert arborist so you can select the best choice for your garden conditions.

Barrie Coate is an ISA Certified Arborist, a Registered Arborist with the American Society of Consulting Arborists, and winner of two Merit Awards from the American Society of Landscape Architects. He is the author of several booklets regarding California native plants and water conserving plants, as well as more than thirty articles in professional publications.

Campbell Library, 77 Harrison Ave., Campbell, (408) 866-1991.

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, May 25 and June 29, 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.

Directions to PCC: From Highway 101, take the "San Antonio North" exit, get immediately into the left-hand turn lane, and turn LEFT onto East Bayshore. This will curve around to the left, then right. Turn right on Corporation Way. Then turn into the first driveway on your left, which leads to the PCC parking lot. The meeting rooms are on the first floor.

LiveCorps Lives!

LiveCorps, our Chapter conservation committee, is up, running and involved. If you are interested in native habitat restoration, saving rare and endangered plants or affecting how major developments impact the environment, please join us! We need people interested in monitoring local native plants, attending government meetings to speak on behalf of the environment, joining our Chapter Service Outings (see page 5), and helping us strategize at meetings.

We meet on the **third Tuesday of the month at 7pm** at the PCC. Our next meetings will be **May 15th and June 19th**. Please join our energetic and involved group of volunteers! To join the LiveCorps mailing list, or if you have questions, ideas or concerns, please contact the chair: Linda Ruthruff at ldruff@hotmail.com. For **directions** to the PCC, please see the previous article.

Rare Plant Surveys 2012 – Training for Volunteers

We had a very successful March training with eleven attendees documenting *Fritillaria agrestis* (stinkbells). Our Chapter's Rare Plant committee will have three more trainings in 2012. The purpose of these sessions is to **teach volunteers how document rare plant populations**.

Attendees will learn how to fill out a California Native Species Field Survey Form, map the rare plant to delineate the population boundaries using a GPS, count or estimate the number of individuals, describe the habitat and list the associated species within each population.

For more information about the CNPS Rare Plant Program visit www.cnps.org/cnps/rareplants/.

Rare Plant Survey Training Dates (Saturdays):	
May 12	South San Jose
September 22	San Mateo County
October 13	Santa Clara County

To sign up for one of these sessions contact Toni Corelli at corelli@coastside.net or (650) 726-0689.

Only ten people will be at each training session. Each training will be from **10am – 2pm**. Location information will be given once you sign up. Approximate locations are given for the dates indicated. Bring lunch and after the training we can walk the trails of the area surveyed.

Chapter Treasurer Needed

Our Chapter is looking for a Treasurer to serve on our Chapter's finance committee. The volunteer position includes writing six reports per year and writing checks to reimburse members for their expenditures to support Chapter activities. Finance committee members will advise and support our new treasurer.

To learn more about this important way you can help the Chapter, contact Arvind Kumar at president@cnps-scv.org.

CHAPTER SERVICE OUTINGS

Habitat Restoration at Edgewood Park

Spring is in full swing, and with the late spring rains the weeds are in full swing too, so it's time to kick our efforts into high gear!

Our **9am Friday** sessions run year round; **5:30pm Wednesday** sessions continue through Daylight Savings Time; and monthly **9am Saturday** sessions are on the **3rd Saturday March thru July**, plus National Public Lands Day in September:

Date	Meet At	Event Theme
May 19	West Kiosk	Endangered Species Day and International Day for Biodiversity
Jun 16	West Kiosk	World Environment Day
Jul 21	West Kiosk	CA Weeds Awareness Week
Sep 29	West Kiosk	National Public Lands Day

For schedules, meeting places, and other details visit our Weed Warriors website (edgewood.thinkersrus.net), contact Paul Heiple (650) 854-7125 or pheiple@gmail.com, or email John Allen at jcakwa@earthlink.net.

New! Alum Rock Park Walk-and-Weed

Chapter members Arvind Kumar and Steve Rosenthal have started a **monthly weeding party** at Alum Rock Park. Workdays are the **3rd Saturday** of the month. The next workdays will be **Saturdays, May 19 and June 16, from 8am until noon**, at Inspiration Point.

Directions & Instructions: From I-680 South towards San Jose, take the Berryessa Rd. exit and cloverleaf around to the left onto Berryessa Rd. heading east towards the hills. Soon thereafter, turn right onto North Capitol Ave. Go about 0.2 miles and turn left onto Penitencia Rd. Follow the signs to Alum Rock Park. Travel about 2 miles along Penitencia Rd. to the Park Entrance.

At the park entrance, identify yourself as a weeding volunteer, and your entrance fee will be waived.

Drive up to the last/farthest parking lot. There park at the first bridge (across from the Log Cabin). Walk across the bridge, past the Log Cabin, and **meet at the Maintenance Building at 8am**.

After a 10-minute orientation, we will walk up to Inspiration Point, weed there for 2-3 hours, and then walk back down to the parking lot. It's best to be on time, but if you are late, come up and find us near Inspiration Point.

Dress in layers, appropriately for the weather. Wear hiking boots and a cap or hat. Bring water, sun block, sturdy weeding gloves, and a weeding tool. Rain cancels.

Please RSVP to arvind.kumar@cnps.org if you are planning to come. For more information contact Arvind at

arvind.kumar@cnps.org or (408) 715-7020; or contact Steve at sailinsteve@sbcglobal.net or (408) 923-6562.

Join our egroup to be notified of future workdays: groups.yahoo.com/group/AlumRockParkVolunteers. Join us and make a difference as we protect, promote, and enjoy the natural beauty of Alum Rock Park.

Fountain Thistle Work Party in San Mateo Saturday, June 9, 10am - Noon

Join leaders Ken Himes and Jake Sigg, of Santa Clara Valley and Yerba Buena Chapters, on the return to our ongoing restoration work at this site, **the intersection of I-280 and Hwy 92**.

This will be our sixth visit, and the rewards for our work continue to be visible. One of the challenges will be to find any pampas grass seedlings, which should be few — or absent! Australian tea tree, *Leptospermum laevigatum*, remains an ongoing problem. Whereas pampas grass seeds are exceedingly short-lived, the tea tree has a longer-lived seed bank whose longevity is unknown to us.

The site is steep and, in parts, slippery. Wear appropriate footwear. Bring water and sun protection.

Parking: We will NOT park on the freeway where we have in the past, along the shoulder of the 92/280 North off ramp. Instead, we will park on Lessingia Court in San Mateo, to the northeast of the work site. Visit www.g.co/maps/e5nd2 for the Google map showing Lessingia Court.

An RSVP is not necessary but appreciated so we'll know how many tools to bring: RSVP to Jake at jakesigg@earthlink.net, (415) 731-3028.

CHAPTER FIELD TRIPS

Chapter field trips are generally free and 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 & 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.

Sat – Tues May 5 - 8 Carrizo Plain to Cuyama Valley (San Luis Obispo County)

Join Ken Himes and Kenny Hickman in an exploration of the transition zones from California's Central Coast Range to the San Joaquin Desert, with botanical visits to the La Panza Range, Calientes, Sierra Madres, and Carrizo Plain. We'll sample multiple elevations, including the 5,000' Caliente Peak, and pay a visit to the 30,000 acre Chimineas Ranch, a limited-access preserve managed by the Dept. of Fish & Game and home to 18 CNPS listed species.

Flora will be season-dependent, but we hope to see a broad variety of annuals and perennials, including several Calochortus, such as the CNPS List 1B.3 *Calochortus simulans*, the tricky near-twin to *C. venustus*, that even the sharp-eyed botanist David Douglas didn't spot.

We'll probably camp in two-three different places. The trip is limited to 20 people. To **reserve a spot**, or for more information, contact Kenny Hickman at ken@meer.net or Ken Himes at (650) 591-8560.

Sun May 6 Coyote Lake (Gilroy) 10am - 3pm

Join Stephen Rosenthal on this spring hike to Coyote Lake County Park. Located east of Gilroy and south of Coyote Ridge, like Coyote Ridge the park features a beautiful serpentine area that is rich in wildflowers. On a recent trip there were lots of buttercups, cream cups, allium, red maids, tidy tips, butter & eggs and more.

The walk will be about 3 miles long with about 600 feet of elevation gain. Bring plenty of water as temperatures could be warm, and snacks/lunch.

The trip is limited to 20 participants. To **reserve your spot** and receive directions by email, contact Stephen at sailinsteve@sbcglobal.net or (408) 923-6562.

Sun May 13 The Wildflowers of Cascade Field (North of Año Nuevo–Hwy 1) 10am-3pm

This area is a richly diverse flower field that has been managed by State Parks with controlled burns for the last several years. Some of the plants we will see include - *Clarkia davyi* (Davy's fairyfan), *Hosackia gracilis* (harlequin lotus), *Trifolium grayi* (Gray's clover), and *Triphysaria versicolor* ssp. *versicolor* (yellowbeak owl's-clover).

Directions: Meet at the yellow gate on the ocean side of Hwy. 1, two miles north of the Año Nuevo main entrance, (about 25 miles south of the Hwy. 1/Hwy. 92 intersection).

This is an easy, level, walk with no elevation change. Bring lunch, water and wear layers. For more information, contact Toni Corelli at (650) 464-1289 or corelli@coastside.net.

Sat May 19 Big Basin Redwoods State Park 10am – 4pm

Join Ken Himes on an exploratory hike from China Grade downhill to Park Headquarters. We hope to see Flannel bush, *Fremontodendron californicum* in flower along the China Grade portion of the Skyline-to-Sea-Trail. We will also see stands of knobcone pine and other chaparral plants before descending into old-growth redwood forest.

We will meet at the Park Headquarters parking lot at **10am** and will shuttle up to China Grade in as few vehicles as possible. Note: the Park is undergoing some construction around the headquarters area, so please provide for extra time for any delays/detours. The hike will be approximately 4 miles long, mostly downhill. We will take our time and explore.

Bring lunch, water, and sturdy hiking shoes. The State Park day use fee is \$10 per vehicle. For more information call Ken at (650) 591-8560.

Sun May 20 Palassou Ridge OSP (Gilroy) 9am – 3pm (Postponed from April 8)

Join Judy Fenerty for an exploratory hike to Palassou Ridge Open Space Preserve in Santa Clara County. This preserve, which is owned and managed by the Santa Clara County Open Space Authority, covers several thousand acres in the Diablo Foothills east of Gilroy, on the ridge between Henry Coe State Park and Harvey Bear/Coyote Lake County Park. The preserve contains a variety of habitats, including oak woodlands, riparian corridors, chaparral, and wildflower meadows.

The hike may be moderately strenuous, and the trails are not well developed.

Space will be limited, as the preserve is not open to the public. This hike is **for CNPS members only** — new or renewing memberships will be accepted at the meeting place. For more information or **to sign up**, contact Judy at judy@fenerty.com, or (408) 655-3493.

Sat Jun 2 Grass Walk at Los Trancos OSP (Los Altos) 10am – 2:30pm

Join botanist Sally Casey to explore the native grasses at Los Trancos Open Space Preserve. See many species of grasses in sunny and shady conditions. Bring a hand lens if you have one available.

The hike distance will be about 2 miles with minimal elevation gain. We will stop for lunch along the trail.

The trip is limited to 18 participants. To **reserve a spot**, contact Sally Casey at (408) 377-0989 (evenings best) or email Carolyn Dorsch at cdorsch1@aol.com.

Wed -Thu Jun 27 - Jul 5 Mineral King Backpack (Southern Sierra Nevada)

Join Joe Cernac and Bob Groff for an easy strolling backpack in the early season of this southern part of the Sierras. The route is still tentative, and dependent on the all important snowpack, but as of now the plan is to start at Mineral King and walk west thru Hockett Meadow to the South Fork Kaweah trailhead.

We will plan camps at daily distances of about six miles. We expect to see early season flora with even a chance of fawn lilies if the rain and snow continues, plus we'll enjoy the beauty of Sequoia groves.

The trip is limited to 15 people. For more information or to **reserve your spot**, contact Joe at (408) 292 5465 or joecernac@sbcglobal.net.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

News and Activities from Other Organizations

Santa Clara County Open Space Authority

Check out the wildflower hikes and other activities offered by the Santa Clara County OSA. Some hikes explore preserves not yet open to the public. Visit www.openspaceauthority.org/activities and click on "Things to Do."

Docent Opportunity – Living Classroom in Los Altos

Editor's Note: *The Living Classroom program does a fantastic job of educating youngsters about nature and native plants. Their founder Vicki Moore was an invited speaker at our May 2011 general meeting.*

The Living Classroom Program of the Los Altos School District is searching for volunteers who enjoy working

directly with students and love nature. This program includes hands-on education about science, history, and math, and reaches all grade levels within the district. Training is available to acquaint docents with the lesson content, plus all materials are provided. Lessons are directed by a docent and often an assistant docent plus one or two volunteer parents inside or outside the classroom.

If you wish to share your love of nature in an active, fun-filled, exciting manner with eager students, please consider becoming a docent. Contact Program Director Mike Sanderson at 947-1103 or msanderson@lasdschools.com.

CHAPTER OFFICERS FOR 2012

To learn more about volunteering with the Chapter, to ask questions or to give suggestions, please contact any of the officers listed below.

Title	Name	Phone	Email
President	Arvind Kumar	(408) 715-7020	arvind.kumar@cnps.org
Vice President	Toni Gregorio-Bunch	(408) 373-4497	tonig@flash.net
Recording Secretary	Radhika Thekkath	(650) 473-1537	rthekath@yahoo.com
Treasurer	OPEN		
Past President	Kevin Bryant	(408) 348-9470	mtngreen17@verizon.net

To join our Chapter email list please use the signup link at the bottom of our Chapter home page at www.cnps-scvc.org.

Save a Tree!

CNPS members can log in to support.cnps.org and edit their profile to receive this newsletter by email only. Look for "Chapter Newsletter" at the bottom of "My Profile."

The latest Blazing Star newsletter is always online at www.cnps-scvc.org/phocadownload/current-newsletter.pdf. To view other issues, visit the Chapter website's newsletter page.

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT *BLAZING STAR*

Saturday, June 9, 2012

**Email: mattsson@surfpix.net
Phone: (408) 255-3767**