



California Native Plant Society  
Santa Clara Valley Chapter

# ***THE BLAZING STAR***

*September-October 2011*

## **GENERAL MEETING & PROGRAM**

**Friday, September 23, 7:30 PM**  
**Los Altos Library Program Room**  
**13 S. San Antonio Road, Los Altos**

**Botanical Research at the Cal Academy**  
**Frank Almeda, Ph.D.**  
Chairman and Senior Curator of Botany  
California Academy of Sciences

Please join us for a program describing the botanical research currently in progress at the California Academy of Sciences (CAS).

The Botany Department at the Academy was founded in 1853, and its herbarium has the largest collection of vascular plants in the western U.S. Working with the Herbarium of the University of California at Berkeley (UC), the Academy has made the San Francisco Bay Area into a National Resource Center for systematic botany. By avoiding duplication, the collections provide botanists with a rich and varied resource for research.

More than 95% of the CAS collection of approximately 2 million plant specimens are vascular seed plants, with the rest a growing collection of ferns and bryophytes. CAS botanists continue to do research around the world to expand the collection, with recent expeditions to the Phillippines, China, and Guatemala.

Dr. Frank Almeda is currently Chairman and Senior Curator of Botany at the CAS, where he has worked since 1978. His interests include: using flowering plants to address questions about plant biodiversity, biogeography, and evolution; investigating why some families of flowering plants are so species-rich; and examining the factors that have promoted this diversification. His research has always had a strong focus on the tropics,

where he has organized dozens of field expeditions to Mexico, Central and South America, and Madagascar. Closer to home, he has consistently worked to teach about our local flora, and published a new *Flora of Marin County* in 2007 with two colleagues from CNPS.

**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, 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.

## **Save the Date!**

Our November Chapter General Meeting will include our **annual potluck dinner and Chapter elections**. It will be held on **Saturday, November 12** at the Shoup Garden House in Los Altos.

## **CHAPTER ACTIVITIES**

### **Fall Native Plant Sale October 15** **Calling All Gardeners To Volunteer**

**Saturday, October 15** will be the date for our next native plant sale at Hidden Villa, so save your purchasing for our Chapter's sale, **from 10am to 3pm**.

Our spring and fall sales are major fundraisers for the Chapter, helping us to pay for student scholarships, informative brochures, our office rent at the PCC, mailing of this newsletter and more. The plant prices include state sales tax and 10% for Hidden Villa, a non-profit organization which supports multicultural children's camps

as well as farm tours for schools. Hidden Villa also runs a youth hostel, the first in California, and an organic farm.

So do come and enjoy the day and buy native plants for your garden. Remember that fall is the best time for establishing plants, just before the winter rains start. Most California native plants do their growing in the winter, unlike plants from non-Mediterranean areas.

Our plant sales rely on **volunteers** to make them happen, so once again we're asking everyone who can to come and help with the sale. Most of the jobs listed below don't require expert knowledge of plants, and **you can choose to work one or two hours** or all day.

Before the sale, you can help during our **Wednesday** work sessions at the nursery from **noon to 3pm** (note the workday switch to **winter hours** starting in September).

Special nursery workdays will be held before the sale to help prepare the nursery and label plants. We'll work from **noon to 3pm** on **Wednesday through Friday, October 12, 13 and 14**.

On the day of the sale, we will need people to:

- Help set up before the sale (starting at **8am**)
- Help with parking
- Answer customers' questions about the plants and help them decide which plants to purchase
- Write up the sales tags before customers go to the cashiers to pay for their plants
- Work as cashiers
- Help customers take their purchases to their cars and bring back the wagons and carts to the nursery
- Help clean up after the sale (**3-4pm**)

The plant sales are always lots of fun to work at, and we provide **lunch** to volunteers. To sign up, please contact one of the coordinators below, depending on your interest:

**Horticultural consultation and miscellaneous:**

Ann Harding (408) 260-2271, Ann.Harding@att.net  
Ray Deutsch (650) 365-6136, ray.deutsch@yahoo.ca  
Jean Struthers (650) 941-2586.

**Writing sales tags and/or cashiering:**

Georgia Stigall (650) 941-1068,  
GeorgiaStigall@yahoo.com

**Parking (directing customers in the lot):**

Stephen Buckhout (408) 255-6233, yscottie@pacbell.net

**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. The parking monitors will direct you to a parking location. The Native Plant Nursery is at the greenhouse just beyond the visitor center.

When you come to the sale to purchase plants, please bring boxes or other containers in which to carry home your purchases.

**Gardening with Natives, Sep - Oct**

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

A total of four talks are scheduled during September and October throughout our Chapter area – from Cupertino and Los Altos to Milpitas and Fremont. Please spread the word far and wide to your friends, neighbors, and loved ones.

For more information, visit

**[www.GardeningWithNatives.com](http://www.GardeningWithNatives.com)**.

These programs are made possible by volunteers who help with program logistics and by cosponsoring libraries. If you would like to help organize similar programming at a library near you, contact [arvind.kumar@cnps.org](mailto:arvind.kumar@cnps.org).

Tuesday, Sep 6, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

**Care and Maintenance of California Native Gardens, a talk by Dee Wong**

Come learn the secrets of how to groom, prune, and rejuvenate some of the trickiest California native plants, such as manzanita and redbud. Lecturer Dee Wong will draw from her field experience and the 'must have' manual *Care & Maintenance of Southern California Native Plant Gardens* written by Bart O'Brien, Betsey Landis, and Ellen Mackey in order to show you how she guides her team of gardeners to care for and maintain beautiful native plant gardens.

Dee graduated from Foothill College with an A.S. degree in Environmental Horticulture and has a passionate interest in using sustainable landscape management practices and California native plants. Dee manages the maintenance division at The Village Gardener and is also an avid wild plant and flower photographer, hiking all over the Bay Area and learning from Mother Nature's classroom.

Saratoga Library in the Reading Room, 13650 Saratoga Ave., Saratoga. (408) 867-6126.

Thursday, October 6, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

### **Replacing your Lawn with Native Plants, a talk by Deva Luna**

Tired of watering, mowing and weeding your lawn but don't know what to put in instead? Replacing your lawn with drought-tolerant native plants reduces water and maintenance costs, encourages habitat for birds and butterflies and does not contribute to global warming. Our speaker Deva Luna combines her passion for plants with a desire to enhance the environment.

Deva is a Master Gardener and has been teaching and speaking about horticulture for 14 years. She has a degree in "Plants and Art," and she works as a sustainable landscape designer for EarthCare Landscaping in Cupertino. Her passions include California native plants, greywater, edible landscaping, herbs and quirky yard art.

San Carlos Library, 610 Elm Street, San Carlos. (650) 591-0341 x237. Made possible by Friends of the San Carlos Library.

Thursday, October 13, 6:00-8:30 p.m.

### **Do-It-Yourself Native Plant Gardening Part 1, a talk by Deva Luna**

In October we present a special two-part design series. If you have a typical suburban home with a lawn and you want switch to drought-tolerant natives, but don't know how, this is the series for you!

The first class is called "**Design-It-Yourself Native Garden.**" In it, you will get a crash course in design, covering how to transition to a native garden, how to choose plants, which existing plants to keep, and how to plan for each plant's water requirements. The **follow-up class** is on Thursday, October 20. **Please note the early start time of 6pm** and expanded class time.

See Deva Luna's biography above. Campbell Library, 77 Harrison Ave., Campbell. (408) 866-1991.

Thursday, October 20, 6:00-8:30 p.m.

### **Do-It-Yourself Native Plant Gardening Part 2, a talk by Deva Luna**

This is the second, yet stand-alone, class following the previous week's class and is called "**Install-It-Yourself**

**Native Garden.**" It will cover the nuts and bolts of lawn removal, sheet mulching, percolation testing, transitioning to drip irrigation, plant acquisition and planting techniques. Note: these classes comprise a survey course which covers a lot of material in a short time and are designed for the layperson -- they are not professional training. **Please note the early start time of 6pm** and expanded class time.

See Deva Luna's biography above. 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, for further examination of the intricate details of the specimens.

We usually meet on the last Friday of each month, from **6:30pm - 8:30pm**. The upcoming dates are **Fridays, September 30 and October 28**. We meet at the Peninsula Conservation Center (PCC), 3921 E. Bayshore Road in Palo Alto. For more information, please contact Dave "Tex" Houston at tex009@sbcglobal.net or (650) 303-2777; or Sally Casey at (408) 377-0989.

**Directions to PCC:** (Peninsula Conservation Center), 3921 E. Bayshore Road, Palo Alto. 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.

## **CONSERVATION NEWS**

### **East Bay Chapter Files Lawsuit**

*By Don Mayall, Rare Plants, Santa Clara County*

On July 21st the East Bay Chapter of CNPS and the Friends of Knowland Park filed a suit against the City of Oakland and Knowland Park charging a violation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The City of Oakland and the Oakland Zoo intend to move forward to develop 57 acres of wildlands without a full Environmental Impact Report (EIR). This area is home to a Valley Needlegrass Grassland plant community, the Oakland star tulip, three

other special status plants and the federally protected Alameda whipsnake.

Laura Baker, East Bay Chapter conservation chair, said that they had good documentation of the plant treasures in the foothills of south Oakland because of the research carried on by the Chapter as part of the Botanical Priority Protection Areas of the East Bay project. This project was described at our general meeting on July 15th.

It is unusual for a Chapter to take on the responsibility and risks of suing a public agency. The state office of CNPS makes the final decision to enter into lawsuits, but a great deal of preparation on the part of the Chapter is required, and the Chapter must find the funds to pay the necessary legal fees. The East Bay Chapter has engaged in legal action before. In 1983, the East Bay Chapter challenged the EIR for a golf course at Edgewood Park. The successful resolution of this suit in our favor provided the impetus for our campaign to save Edgewood Park. This was at a time when our own Chapter lacked the resources to take this step, and we have long been grateful to them for taking this step.

Legal representation is being provided by Shute, Mihaly, and Weinberger, LLP, a specialist in California natural resource protection and environmental law. They helped the Santa Clara Valley Chapter in resolving its lawsuit over the development on serpentine habitat of Dow Drive in San Jose.

You can learn more about the East Bay lawsuit from their press release on the state CNPS website, at [www.cnps.org/cnps/press/20110721\\_cnps-oaklandzoo.pdf](http://www.cnps.org/cnps/press/20110721_cnps-oaklandzoo.pdf).

## IN MEMORIAM

### **Sonja Wilcomer**

Long time Chapter member Sonja Wilcomer passed away last July 12, a few days after she fell and broke her hip.

Sonja was a mainstay of our Chapter for a long time. Members will remember her wildflower cards for sale at the Wildflower Show, containing her lovely photos of California native flowers and scenes in nature. For many years Sonja was chair of the Chapter's photo group, each month arranging for a speaker and slide show program (remember carousels of slides?) often punctuated by the audience calling out plant names trying to identify the plant depicted in the image. Under her leadership the group put on a native plant photo exhibit at the nature center in the

Don Edwards San Francisco Bay Wildlife Refuge and the group produced a wildflower calendar. Up until a few years ago Sonja was a newsletter mailing party "regular."

Sonja enjoyed playing the recorder, and played in a consort called the Crones. She enjoyed attending the San Francisco Early Music Concerts in Palo Alto with her son Neal. She will be missed.

## CHAPTER SERVICE OUTINGS

### **Habitat Restoration at Edgewood Park**

Join us as we restore sensitive habitats at Edgewood Park and enjoy late season wildflowers. Weeding sessions take place at the following times:

- **Friday mornings** throughout the year, starting at **9am**
- **Wednesday evenings** during daylight savings time starting at **5:30pm**. **We'll meet at the West Kiosk** through November 2. Since DST ends November 6 for 2011, our last Wednesday session will be **Nov. 2**.

Our last **Saturday** session for the season will be on **September 24 at 9am**. We will meet at the West Kiosk.

For details, contact Paul Heiple at (650) 854-7125 or [pheiple@gmail.com](mailto:pheiple@gmail.com), or email John Allen at [jcakwa@comcast.net](mailto:jcakwa@comcast.net).

## 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 Sep 10 Bean Hollow State Beach (Hwy 1)  
10am - Noon**

Join Dee Wong in an exploration of the late summer blooms along the beautiful California coastline. Enjoy beautiful vistas of the coastal bluffs, while expecting to see several botanical beauties on this easy, level 2 mile up-and-back trail. We also may see sea lions, seals, and many bird species, so bring binoculars. Afterward some may want to enjoy a picnic lunch on the beach.

The trip is limited to 20 people. **To reserve a spot** or for additional information, contact Dee Wong at [dee@thevillagegardener.com](mailto:dee@thevillagegardener.com) or (650) 670-7797.

### Sat Oct 8 Hidden Villa (Los Altos) 10am-12:30pm

Join Dee Wong and Carolyn Dorsch on this early fall walk along the shaded Adobe Creek. We'll look for fruiting bodies on the various perennial shrubs we find along the way. Our Chapter Plant Sale is the following weekend, so this is an excellent opportunity to see many different native plants in their natural woodland habitat, with discussion of their suitability for urban gardens. We expect to see a good variety of plants as there are several different plant communities on this short hike.

The pace on this 2.5-3 mile hike will be moderate. There is about a 550 foot elevation change with one stretch that is a little steep, but we'll go slowly.

Bring water and a snack, and good hiking shoes. We recommend bringing a walking stick. You may bring lunch for an optional picnic afterward.

The trip is limited to 20 people. **To reserve a spot** or for more information contact Dee Wong at [dee@thevillagegardener.com](mailto:dee@thevillagegardener.com) or (650) 670-7797; or contact Carolyn Dorsch at [cdorsch1@aol.com](mailto:cdorsch1@aol.com) or (650) 804-6162 (eves).

### Sat Oct 29 Castle Rock Fall Hike (Skyline - Santa Cruz Mountains) 10am-3pm

Join Ken Himes on this fall hike along Skyline Ridge. Several plant communities, including Broadleaf-Evergreen and Chaparral will be observed along this 4-5 mile moderate walk. We'll look for fall colors from black oak and bigleaf maple trees, and we'll see if we can find late season blooms of Orchid family member rattlesnake plantain (*Goodyera oblongifolia*). We'll also look for redwood penstemon (*Keckiella corymbosa*) still in bloom.

We'll stop for lunch. Wear sturdy shoes, as part of the path crosses over sandstone outcroppings. **To reserve a spot** or for more info., call Ken at (650) 591-8560 or email Carolyn Dorsch at [cdorsch1@aol.com](mailto:cdorsch1@aol.com).

### Carson Pass Field Trip Report

By Jean Struthers, trip leader

Editor's Note: Jean is describing the Chapter's July 29-31 field trip to Carson Pass on Hwy. 88 in the Sierra.

While the trip seemed jinxed at the start by late snow, dynamiting by Caltrans and a campground closure we actually had a great time. With a small group we were able to use two cabins for housing and had fun group cooking for Friday and Saturday nights' potlucks.



Stephen Rosenthal

Fun in the Snow at Carson Pass, July 2011

The flowers were magnificent on both days. There were an incredible number of species blooming. The first day we hiked the pass to Frog Lake where we saw *Iris missouriensis* (Western blue flag), *Sedum obtusatum* (Sierra stonecrop) and *Mimulus* and many others. Then on to Winnemucca Lake, which still had ice, and over snow to see the marsh marigold (*Caltha* sp.) which is always at the spillway. Snow covered the slopes of Roundtop so the Sierra primrose (*Primula suffrutescens*) was not visible.

On Saturday we parked at the pass again, but hiked north up to the saddle leading to Meiss Meadow. There we found *Dicentra uniflora* (steer's head) at the base of a snow bank. The group had fun sliding on a black plastic bag down a huge snow patch and then hiked up a slope to look for a *Townsendia* sp. (Townsend daisy) which had been seen on a trip years ago. Too early for that, but not for thousands of *Calochortus leichtlinii* (Leichtlin's mariposa lily). Everywhere there were big patches of yellow *Wyethia* (mule ears) and *Balsamorhiza* (balsamroot) and lupines galore, a multi-colored wonderland. The pass should be florific for weeks so do try to see it soon.

### DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT *BLAZING STAR*

**Saturday, October 8**

**Email: [mattsson@surfpix.net](mailto:mattsson@surfpix.net)**

**Phone: (408) 255-3767**

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

(page # in parentheses)

- Sep 6 Tue GWN - Care of Gardens - Wong (2)
- Sep 10 Sat Bean Hollow field trip (4)
- Sep 23 Fri **General Meeting** (1)
- Sep 24 Sat Edgewood weeding 3rd Saturday (4)
- Sep 30 Fri Keying with Natives (3)
- Oct 6 Thu GWN - Replacing Lawns - Luna (3)
- Oct 8 Sat Hidden Villa field trip (5)
- Oct 8 Sat **Newsletter submittal deadline** (6)

- Oct 13 Thu GWN - Do-It-Yourself - Luna (3)
- Oct 13 Thu **Chapter Board meeting**
- Oct 15 Sat Fall Native Plant Sale (1)
- Oct 20 Thu GWN - Do-It-Yourself - Luna (3)
- Oct 28 Fri Keying with Natives (3)
- Oct 29 Sat Castle Rock Fall hike (5)
- Wed afts Nursery work sessions (2)
- Weds eves, Fri morns Edgewood Park weeding (4)

The next Chapter **Board meeting** will be **Thursday, October 13 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.

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 concerning a new membership, renewal of a current membership, or if you wish to report a **change of address**, please contact the Membership Chairperson, CNPS, 3921 East Bayshore Road, Palo Alto, CA 94303 or email [ray.deutsch@yahoo.ca](mailto:ray.deutsch@yahoo.ca).

The *Blazing Star* web address: [www.cnps-scv.org](http://www.cnps-scv.org).  
 Acknowledgement: Anne Warren for the *Blazing Star* logo. Printed on recycled paper.

**Join CNPS Today!**



Members receive the *Fremontia*, the Bulletin, and the Chapter newsletter, and other benefits listed at [www.cnps.org/membership](http://www.cnps.org/membership)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Chapter \_\_\_\_\_

Membership level (check one):

- \$45 Individual
- \$75 Family
- \$100 Plant Lover
- \$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:  
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