



California Native Plant Society  
Santa Clara Valley Chapter

# ***THE BLAZING STAR***

*May-June 2021*

## **NATIVE PLANT LECTURE SERIES**

The CNPS SCV Native Plant Lecture Series has something for everyone – whether you're curious about native plants, an experienced or aspiring native plant gardener or a professional botanist, you will find something to interest and educate you in our offerings. From gardening to plant science to conservation to tours of botanical hot spots, if you're interested in California's native plants, there's something here for you.

**How to attend:** Most of our lectures take place **Wednesday evening at 7:30pm**. Our talks are live-streamed simultaneously to Zoom and YouTube. To view talks, watch our YouTube channel at [www.youtube.com/c/CNPSSantaClaraValley](http://www.youtube.com/c/CNPSSantaClaraValley) (**no registration needed**) or **join on Zoom** by registering at the Zoom link provided in each lecture's description.

Recordings of past talks can also be viewed on our YouTube channel.

**From Trails to Gardens:  
Celebrating Local Native Plants  
A talk by Stephanie Morris  
Wednesday, May 5 7:30 - 9:00 PM**

**Zoom registration:** [bit.ly/cnpsscvcv-20210505](http://bit.ly/cnpsscvcv-20210505)

For many of us, hiking has activated an interest in gardening with California native plants. This talk explores many of our locally native plants in Santa Clara Valley through hiking photos and compares native plants in our wildlands with their counterparts in gardens.

What unusual plants are growing closer to us than we think and where can we see them? What do we learn about how to grow natives from seeing them in their natural setting? Do plants look different or respond in unexpected ways when grown under garden conditions?

A plant list of California natives seen on local trails that also thrive when grown in gardens will be shared, along with many inspirational home garden and wildland trail photos.



Stephanie Morris has been working in the field of Landscape Architecture for 25 years. She enjoys creating designs that respond to aesthetics, functionality, and ecology – with emphasis on

California native plants, healthy soil, water-conservation, and environmentally-conscious materials.

**The Penney Garden: A Transformation  
Story, a talk by Janine Penney  
Wednesday, May 12 7:30 - 9:00 PM**

**Zoom registration:** [bit.ly/cnpsscvcv-20210512](http://bit.ly/cnpsscvcv-20210512)

Many years ago, the Penneys stopped watering their lawn and caring for the soil. Most of the established non-native plants did well on only rainwater, but the rest of the yard became compacted and overgrown with Bermuda grass.

Janine Penney will walk us through the one-year process that has transformed the compacted dirt yard to a young native garden. She designed the garden with wildlife in mind, with foundation plants that mature to different levels to provide food, shelter and nesting areas. Visitors can't help but notice the two raised vegetable beds among the native plants, which provide vegetables and edible (non-native) flowers. There is also a small pond with native bog plants.

This talk is part of the 2021 Going Native Garden Tour, which is providing virtual tours throughout the year.

Register for the tour at [gngt.org](http://gngt.org) to get updates on upcoming tour activities.

**Janine Penney** has over 20 years of experience in K-12 education and amateur gardening. She became obsessed with California native gardening over the last few years.



Stephanie Morris

Explore trails local to you! Heintz Open Space near Belgatos Park in Los Gatos. Top inset: houndstongue (*Cynoglossum grande*) from a trail local to Stephanie Morris and bottom: *Arctostaphylos manzanita* 'Dr. Hurd' from her garden.

**Wildflowers of the Bay Area,  
a talk by Andrea Williams  
Wednesday, May 19 7:30 - 9:00 PM**

Zoom registration: [bit.ly/cnpsscvc-20210519](http://bit.ly/cnpsscvc-20210519)

Wildflower season in the Bay Area is upon us, but even seasoned hikers and naturalists can get confused by the diversity of beautiful flowers we have in our area. To help you progress in your native wildflower knowledge, Andrea Williams, CNPS' Director of Biodiversity Initiatives, will provide an overview of the most common wildflowers in our area during this webinar. She'll go over how to identify these flowers and share interesting natural history details about each. We'll also share about some of the community science work CNPS is leading to protect our state's amazing plant biodiversity.

**Andrea Williams** has two decades of experience in science-based public lands management: monitoring rare plants and plant communities, carrying out project compliance surveys, mapping and removing invasive plants

and responding to landscape-level threats. She has worked in partnership to design indicators, metrics, status and trends for land health; lead volunteers in botanical inventories; improve the quality and quantity of data submitted to California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB); and teach plant identification, field methods and invasive plant management planning.

**Fire Resilient Landscaping with Native  
Plants, a talk by Nikki Hanson  
Wednesday, June 2 7:30 - 9:00 PM**

Zoom registration: [bit.ly/cnpsscvc-20210602](http://bit.ly/cnpsscvc-20210602)

With increasing drought and fire risk, gardening and land management in the wildland urban interface (WUI) can seem daunting. In this talk, Nikki will address six elements of firesafe landscaping to consider when trying to tackle this hot topic. We will have lots of time for questions as we break down the pieces to creating a landscape that is beautiful, resilient, and habitat friendly.

**Nikki Hanson** brings a breadth of experience to her landscaping and land management approach. With 17 years working in native plant nurseries, and 12+ years working as an educator in various capacities, she hopes to help home gardeners and rural residents be more equipped to foster a fire resilient landscape. Nikki has a B.S. in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology from UC Santa Cruz. She has experience in plant science, including her own graduate research on native milkweed production at the University of Idaho.



**Going Native Garden Tour: A Visit to a  
Native Plant Garden  
Wednesday, June 9 7:30 - 9:00 PM**

Zoom registration: [bit.ly/cnpsscvc-20210609](http://bit.ly/cnpsscvc-20210609)

This talk will feature an in-depth visit to one of the gardens on the 2021 Going Native Garden Tour, including a question and answer session with the garden owner.

This talk is part of the 2021 Going Native Garden Tour, which started in April, and is providing virtual tours throughout the year. Register for the tour at [ngt.org](http://ngt.org) to get updates on upcoming tour activities.

**Bay Area Rare Plants – A nine-county photo tour, a talk by David Greenberger  
Wednesday, June 16 7:30 - 9:00 PM**

**Zoom registration:** [bit.ly/cnpssc-20210616](https://bit.ly/cnpssc-20210616)

This talk will take viewers on a whirlwind trip around the Bay, presenting photography and commentary on rare species ranging from the iconic to the very obscure. The nine counties that touch San Francisco Bay will each have time in the spotlight, with several plants featured for each.

**David Greenberger** is fortunate to work as a botanist and conservationist on Mt. Tamalpais, a small coastal peak in Marin County whose watersheds cradle a flora of over 1,000 species. He's spent the last six+ years with the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy and has also done stints with the Marin Municipal Water District and Point Blue Conservation Science. He serves as Rare Plant Chair for CNPS Marin Chapter. His plant expertise centers in the San Francisco Bay Area, but he's obsessed with biodiversity, novelty, and rarity across the state and beyond.

We hope you enjoy and learn from our Native Plant Lecture Series. As a reminder, past talks may be viewed at our Chapter's YouTube channel, at [www.youtube.com/c/CNPSSantaClaraValley](https://www.youtube.com/c/CNPSSantaClaraValley).

Want more talks? CNPS events from around the state are often listed here: [www.cnps.org/events](http://www.cnps.org/events).

## **CHAPTER ACTIVITIES**

### **CNPS SCV Nursery at Hidden Villa**

The nursery continues to raise funds for the Chapter through sales from its online store at [california-native-plant-society-santa-clara-valley-chapter.square.site](http://california-native-plant-society-santa-clara-valley-chapter.square.site). Sales have been booming with a record pace of plants sold!

Due to restrictions as a result of COVID-19, we are not able to have regularly scheduled work sessions or accommodate drop-in volunteers. A core crew of volunteers has continued to care for the plants at the nursery since the start of the pandemic. These volunteers are doing their best to

keep up with demand and grow plants ready for their forever homes. The online store is always open for browsing, but ordering is periodically unavailable while we take a break and update inventory.

In addition to plants, the nursery's online store includes Going Native Garden Tour T-shirts, books and plant signs. Orders can be delivered between Belmont and San Jose or scheduled for pick up at the nursery. Hidden Villa will be closed to the public from June 11 through August 14 for summer camp, so there will be no pick-up sales during that time. Limited delivery sales may be available. Please visit the online store for more information.

Proceeds from plant sales are the major source of funding for Chapter activities and scholarships.

### **Photography Group**

Our Photography Group is a great place to meet other native plant enthusiasts while improving your photographic skills and learning more about our native plants. It is open to all. The group has monthly meetings and an active email list.

The group has an ongoing **#MyPhotoOfTheWeek** activity on the email list for group members to share their favorite shots with the group on a weekly basis. Here is a recent **#MyPhotoOfTheWeek** from photo group member Steve Rosenthal:



*Steve Rosenthal*

Anna's hummingbird (*Calypte anna*) taking a bath in Steve's East San Jose backyard fountain April 2021

The photo group also hosts a monthly meeting on Zoom on **the fourth Friday of each month**, for members to share photos and more – everything from photography tips to organizational ideas to plant hot spots. The next meetings will be **Fridays, May 28 and June 25 at 7:00pm**. You can learn more and join the email group at: [www.groups.io/g/cnps-scv-photography](https://www.groups.io/g/cnps-scv-photography).

Anyone who has pictures of their adventures that they would like to share is welcome to participate. Please sign up for a time slot if you would like to show pictures. You don't have to share pictures to attend the meeting. More information is available on Meetup at

[www.meetup.com/California-Native-Plant-Society-Santa-Clara-Valley-Chapter](http://www.meetup.com/California-Native-Plant-Society-Santa-Clara-Valley-Chapter) and through the group's email list.

## **2020 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS**

*By Karen Cotter, Scholarships Chair*

Our Chapter awarded one \$1,000 undergraduate research scholarship and three \$1,500 graduate research scholarships in December 2020. This is the 21st year our Chapter has supported California native plant research by students. Two scholarships are in honor of Chapter Fellows: the Sally Casey Shooting Stars Scholarship and the Don Mayall Conservation Scholarship. Two other scholarships were awarded for general research.

The recipients of these 2020 student scholarships, and their projects, are:

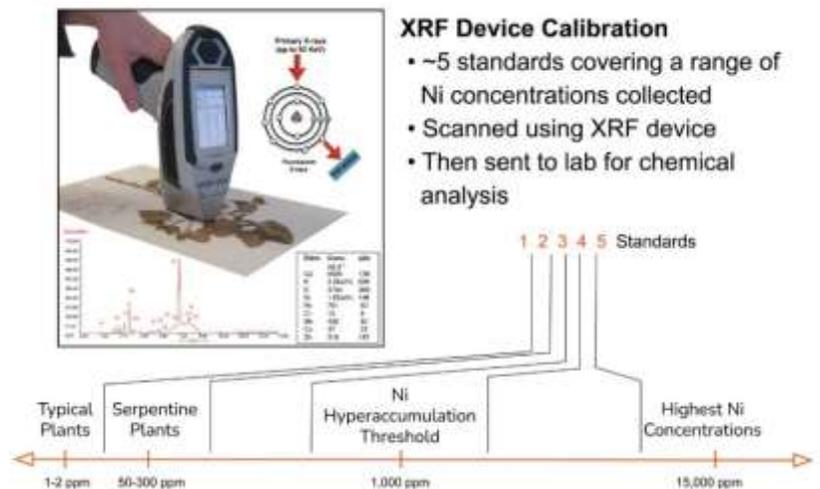
**Thomas Samojedny Jr.**, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo (Undergraduate Student Scholarship)



*Nishanta Rajakaruna*

T.J. Samojedny preparing a specimen in Cal Poly's Hoover Herbarium. Using the XRF device, specimens like this one will be scanned to calculate their nickel content.

To better understand serpentine-tolerant nickel hyperaccumulators, Thomas will scan herbarium specimens of California serpentine-tolerant species with an X-ray Fluorescence (XRF) device to measure foliar Ni concentration. This technique is unique in that herbaria specimens can be examined without destroying them; it is also cheaper and faster than older chemical analysis methods.



*Diagram- T.J. Samojedny*

*Upper left image: Antony van der Ent*

The above diagram shows the calibration process for the XRF device, seen in upper left.

Since XRF is typically used on soil/rock, a correction factor must be created for herbarium specimens. To do this, T.J. will scan about five herbarium specimens covering a range of nickel concentrations. Then, foliage samples from each will be sent to a lab for chemical analysis. The XRF output and chemical concentrations will be compared and a correction factor will be calculated.

The researchers hope that the XRF device will result in the discovery of new California nickel hyperaccumulators and raise awareness of serpentine landscapes as repositories of unique plants.

**Martin Purdy**, Claremont Graduate School / California Botanical Garden (Donald Mayall Conservation Graduate Research Scholarship)



Martin Purdy

Field of Inyo meadow lupine (*Lupinus pratensis*) with a snow-covered Coyote Ridge in the background

For the past year, Martin has been exploring the flora of Coyote Ridge area, a 50 square mile alpine site located in northwest Inyo County.

This year, he will continue to document the diversity and distribution of vascular and nonvascular plant species, publish a voucher-based checklist of plants occurring there, and provide this information to the Inyo National Forest and California Natural Diversity Database. The primary recipient of his plant vouchers will be the California Botanic Garden Herbarium with duplicate sets sent to other regional herbaria.



Erin Berkowitz

Martin Purdy at work in his study area on Coyote Flat, near Baker Creek, within the Inyo National Forest, summer 2020

**Brook Constantz**, University of California, Santa Cruz (Graduate Research Scholarship)

Brook will be comparing the native grasses, understory, and woody species of older restored riparian forests with nearby remnant forests along the Upper Sacramento River. Few restoration sites are monitored five years after planting, but Brook will be surveying 19 forests that are 17-31 years old. His work will help document how riparian forests are recovering long-term relative to remnant forests, which may help guide future restoration projects.

Riparian forests support their plant communities in ways illustrated by Brook's two photos. To the upper right, when the Sacramento River migrates, the old river channel left behind will have fertile conditions that support a unique and dense plant community. Below, woody plants are useful even after death, providing meaningful insect and fish habitat both in place and after they recruit into the stream.



James Armas

Brook Constantz in an abandoned river channel climbing through non-native common fig (*Ficus carica*) towards a forest survey plot. Pine Creek Unit, March 2021



James Armas

Brook Constantz standing in front of large woody debris in a Sacramento River Wildlife Area remnant forest. Pine Creek Unit, March 2021.

**Emma R, Fryer**, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo (Sally Casey Shooting Stars Graduate Research Scholarship)

Emma is researching a group of annual wildflowers endemic to vertic clay soils in the San Joaquin Desert. Her study species are adapted to soils frequently high in sodium and gypsum, with high shrink-swell that make the soils extremely high-stress for plants. Her pot studies currently underway are examining the effects of different soil chemistry and textures as well as competition from the invasive annual grass *Bromus madritensis* on 12 different species from the San Joaquin Desert.



Ryan O'Dell

April 2017 superbloom at Carrizo Plain. Vertic clay flora: *Phacelia ciliata* (purple), *Monolopia stricta* (yellow), *Caulanthus anceps* (pink). The species "patches" at Emma's field sites in Cantua Creek and Carrizo Plain reflect patches of different soil types.

Through a combination of pot studies and fieldwork, she will be determining how the combination of these abiotic and biotic factors shape the community and contribute to the **vibrant patchwork patterns of color** that these species form during superblooms.



Alenya Joy

Emma Fryer working on her scholarship project,  
March 2021

Congratulations Thomas, Martin, Book and Emma! Karen Cotter may be reached at blueiris114@gmail.com.

## CONSERVATION CORNER

### Conservation Committee

Our Chapter's conservation committee will meet on **Tuesdays, May 11 and June 8**. Both meetings will be via Zoom, from **7:00 to 9:00pm**.

Please join us in our important work! Meeting details will be sent to committee members. If you are not on the committee but are interested in attending the Zoom meeting, email [cdorsch@cnps-scv.org](mailto:cdorsch@cnps-scv.org) for the meeting link.

For questions, comments or concerns, contact Conservation Committee Chair Carolyn Dorsch at [cdorsch@cnps-scv.org](mailto:cdorsch@cnps-scv.org) or (650) 804-6162.

### Have You Seen Me?

#### Early Detection and Rapid Response Weeds in Santa Clara County

By Jennifer Mo,

*Vegetation Program Specialist at Valley Water*

Invasive plants are a major threat to California's native plant diversity. Once established, they can transform entire landscapes. Many of these noxious weeds, like yellow star-thistle and French broom, are now too widespread to be eradicated. However, for species just getting started in California, acting now can prevent the next wave of super weeds.

Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR) programs target new weed species before they blow up into star-thistle-sized problems. New invasions start as single plants or small, isolated populations. At that stage, they're easy to control but very hard to spot. That's where avid hikers and native plant enthusiasts can help. The California Invasive Plant Council recently released a list of early detection species to target in Santa Clara County. None of these species are common yet, but there are almost certainly populations that have escaped detection. If you see any of these species, please report them on Calflora or iNaturalist so that local land managers can take action.

All photographs by Jennifer Mo unless otherwise credited.

***Asparagus asparagoides* - bridal creeper**



- Wiry perennial vine that swamps shrubs, trees, fences
- Leaves are curly and shiny with parallel veins; fruits are orange to red
- Large underground storage tubers
- Fruits in spring, drops leaves, and remains leafless until winter
- Spotty distribution throughout Santa Clara County – bird dispersed?
- Spreading in both urban and wildland areas

- Shiny leaves with hairy edges and nodes; droopy leaves and flowers
- Spreads by seed
- Fire resistant
- Only recorded at Saratoga Gap in Santa Clara County, but may be spreading down Stevens Creek

***Carthamus lanatus* - woolly distaff thistle**



*Eric Wrubel*

- Spiny, glandular, yellow-flowered composite
- Cobwebby or woolly look from sticky, matted hairs
- Grows up to 1m tall
- Forms dense, impenetrable mats in overgrazed areas
- Late season annual; blooms June - September
- Recorded in Almaden Quicksilver County Park and Palo Alto Foothills Park

***Brachypodium sylvaticum* - slender false brome**



*Scott Loring*

- Shade-loving perennial bunchgrass
- Forms dense monoculture under redwood canopy

***Centaurea stoebe* - spotted knapweed**



*Matt Lavin*

- Perennial or biennial composite with many-branched stems and open clusters of pink to purple flowers

- Phyllaries have dark, parallel veins
- Leaves are small, gray-green, and stiffly hairy
- Winged fruit are wind-dispersed; whole plant can also act as a tumbleweed
- Major infestations in the Eastern Sierras
- Only recorded for Sierra Azul OSP in Santa Clara County

- Aggressive woody vine that looks very similar to native Clematis species (*C. ligusticifolia* and *lasiantha*)
- Distinguish from natives by bisexual flowers, heart-shaped leaflets, wrist-thick woody stems
- Overall habit is more vigorous; swamps tall trees and forms thickets
- Recorded for Picchetti Ranch, suspected at Rancho San Antonio OSP

### *Chondrilla juncea* - skeleton weed



Pjt56 / Wikimedia Commons / CC BY-SA 4.0

- Branchy, sparsely leaved composite with small yellow flowers
- Fruits are winged for wind dispersal
- Perennial herb with deep taproot
- Grows up to 1.5m tall
- Recorded by railroad tracks in San Martin and Palo Alto
- Problematic in Africa, Australia and the Americas

### *Clematis vitalba* - old man's beard



Amadej Trnkoczy

### *Helianthus tuberosus* - Jerusalem artichoke or sunchoke



- Very tall (2m+) bristly-hairy perennial sunflower
- Forms starchy underground tubers (sunchoke)
- Looks a little like stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica*) from a distance, but leaves are darker green and alternating.
- Flowers in the fall (Aug-Sept)
- One recorded population on Matadero Creek near Highway 101 in Palo Alto

***Euphorbia helioscopia* - sunwort**

- Annual herb with yellow-green, five-sided symmetrical inflorescences, and toxic milky sap
- Stems are often reddish
- Germinates early in spring and blooms Mar - June
- Forms dense monotypic carpets
- Recorded at Lake Cunningham by the Native Plant Garden and near the Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant in the Baylands

- Blooms spring (SoCal) thru early summer (NorCal)
- One known location on Stevens Creek at Crittenden near large construction site; introduced through contaminated materials or equipment

***Onopordum illyricum* - Illyrian thistle**

- Very tall (2m) gray-green thistle with large magenta to purple flowers
- Blooms June - July
  - Leaves are deeply pinnately lobed with 8-10 pairs of lobes (not pinnately compound like artichoke thistle)
  - Recorded in Almaden Quicksilver near English Town

***Oncosiphon pilulifer* - stinknet or globe chamomile**

- Turpentine-scented chamomile relative
- Globe-shaped heads distinguish stinknet from other chamomile-like plants
- Extremely invasive in SoCal

Photo credit: JJ Dellow NSW Department of Primary Industries

***Rhaponticum (Acroptilon) repens* - Russian knapweed**

Diana Wing

- Perennial composite with pink to purple flowers and extensive rhizomes
- Pale stems, abrupt transition to dark roots
- Deep, interconnected underground parts - cannot be effectively hand-pulled
- Spreads by rhizomes, rarely by seed
- Recorded for Lake Cunningham in the Native Plant Garden and Hellyer County Park

### ***Paspalum vaginatum* - seashore paspalum**



Ron Vanderhoff

- Creeping perennial grass in brackish or salt marsh areas
- Forms a dense, tufted thatch
- Inflorescence has two branches and looks somewhat like native *P. distichum*; distinguish from the native by its hairless spikelets
- Grows below the saltgrass line on muddy slopes or flats that would normally be bare mud or pickleweed
- Recorded for Don Edwards National Wildlife Reserve
- Has not been fully mapped in the Baylands

For more photos of these invasive species and others, see Calflora's Bay Area Regionally Rare Weeds list, at [www.calflora.org/app/ipl?list\\_id=px2024](http://www.calflora.org/app/ipl?list_id=px2024).

If you see any of these invasive species as you venture out to enjoy spring wildflowers, please remember to report them on Calflora or iNaturalist. Jennifer Mo may be reached at [jmo@valleywater.org](mailto:jmo@valleywater.org).

### **The Status of *Dirca occidentalis* at Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve**

By Rare Plant Co-Chair Don Thomas

*Dirca occidentalis*, or simply dirca, is a rare plant endemic to the Bay Area and our only member of the family *Thymelidaceae*. It is also known as Western leatherwood, because of its flexible stems. It is one of our earliest blooming plants, flowering in winter before most other

### ***Paspalum urvillei* - Vasey's grass**



Tom Cochrane

- Tall, coarse, perennial bunchgrass
- Inflorescences have 10-30 branches
- Leaves are up to 1" wide with rippled, sharp edges
- Can invade grassland, wetland, shrubland, and coastal areas
- Two known locations: Rancho San Antonio OSP and Stevens Creek near 101

plants. It has been a Chapter tradition to have a field trip to see dirca in bloom as one of our first field trips of the year.

For the past several years I have been leading a field trip to various parks to view dirca. Last year I decided to return to Ranch San Antonio Open Space Preserve to see it. We had not been there for many years because the park is so popular that it is almost impossible to find a parking spot, especially on weekends. The last visit recorded in the Blazing Star was a field trip led by Stella Yang in the year 2000 ([www.cnps-scuv.org/images/BlazingStar/bs0300.pdf](http://www.cnps-scuv.org/images/BlazingStar/bs0300.pdf))



Doreen L. Smith

Dirca occidentalis 2005

Last year on my pre-field trip scouting hikes I failed to find dirca in any of the places I remembered seeing it in the past. Stella generously provided me with 14 GPS points where she had recorded the presence of dirca in the year 2000 at Rancho. These points are distributed widely across the park along the Coyote Trail, the Wildcat Loop Trail, the Upper Wildcat Canyon Trail and the Stephen E. Abbors (PG&E) Trail. Last year and again this year I went to all of these locations but failed to find dirca at any of these places. I did find one individual plant along the Farm Bypass Trail and a small population of about a dozen plants near the junction of the Wildcat Loop and Upper Wildcat Canyon Trails.

At least two significant environmental changes have occurred at Rancho between the year 2000 and the present time. One is the five-year mega-drought from 2012-2017. Another is the impact of sudden oak death disease, which has resulted in the demise of many mature coast live oak trees, the opening of the tree canopy and establishment of many bay trees in these gaps. Bay trees cast dense shade and provide poor habitat for dirca. The lone dirca plant along the Bypass Trail is now surrounded by bay trees and is being overgrown by poison oak. Young bay trees are now also encroaching into the dirca habitat along the Loop Trail and threatening to shade out the dirca plants. Removal of these bay trees might improve the prospects for

survival of this dirca colony. Also, the planting of dirca plants in the riparian zone near the trail junction (where dirca is currently growing) would supplement the Wildcat population and might confer resilience during future droughts.

What does the disappearance of dirca at Rancho San Antonio portend for *Dirca occidentalis* in the future? Was it caused by the mega-drought or climate change? If a plant like this can disappear in plain sight in one of the most popular and heavily visited parks in the Bay Area, is there decline of other rare plants that is escaping notice? With rapid climate change, it appears that what is needed is a more comprehensive and systematic monitoring program for rare plants, such as dirca.

### Fountain Thistle Work Party (San Mateo) Sat June 5 10am – 12 noon

Join Ken Himes and Don Thomas for an in-person conservation project. In keeping with our 10-year tradition of working with Jake Sigg and the CNPS Yerba Buena Chapter, we are going to continue our spring fountain thistle restoration project. Fountain thistle (*Cirsium fontinale* var. *fontinale*) is a rare federally endangered plant that grows in an unusual specialized habitat, serpentine seeps, and is found only in a few locations on the Peninsula.

Our work at this site is a restoration success story. Once almost completely displaced by jubatagrass (Andean pampas grass), the fountain thistle has largely recovered, as a result of the work done by CNPS volunteers. However, fountain thistle is still under threat from jubatagrass and other non-native plants, such as yellow star-thistle, sow thistle and wallaby grass (*Rhynchospora caespitosum*). Woody plants are also trying to convert the area to shrubland or woodland.



Copyright Alice Abela

Jubatagrass-infested habitat in Santa Barbara County

With increasing vaccinations among CNPS members, COVID-19 social distancing safety measures are being relaxed. However, we are, for now, still observing these basic guidelines:

- Physical distancing of workers at least 6 feet apart. Where workers work together, they should maintain this physical distance.
- Wearing of face mask or other face covering while working. Face masks must be put on when coming within 30 feet of another worker and be worn the entire time workers are within this distance.
- Encourage workers to bring their own tools.
- No exchange of tools or other objects unless they are thoroughly disinfected first.
- Encourage workers to wear disposable gloves and disinfect gloves at regular intervals.
- Group size to be 10 or fewer people.

Though disposable gloves will be provided, sturdy gloves are also recommended; you might also want to bring sunscreen, water, a hat, layered clothing and wear long sleeves/pants. If you cannot bring your own tools, tools will be provided, along with appropriate decontamination procedures. Contact Don at [don\\_e\\_thomas@yahoo.com](mailto:don_e_thomas@yahoo.com) to **reserve your spot** and for **direction to the meeting place**.



*Vivian Neou*

Vicki Silvas-Young, Sherri Osaka, Penny Pollock posing in May of 2019 with their look-alike GNGT T-shirts designed by Myra Saylor. Learn more about Myra on page 13.

## CHAPTER SERVICE OUTINGS

### **Alum Rock Park Restoration**

Come help us weed out invasive plants at this natural gem of San Jose. Our habitat restoration efforts allow the native plants to “come to light.”

On **third Saturdays**, volunteers work on the Inspiration Point project. On **Mondays**, volunteers usually work on the Todd Quick restoration project.

All volunteers must wear masks at all times and social distance, except within families/households. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, we can't accept drop-in volunteers at this time. For more information contact Stephen Rosenthal at [sailinsteve@sbcglobal.net](mailto:sailinsteve@sbcglobal.net) or (650) 260-3450.

### **Lake Cunningham Native Garden**

The California Native Garden project in Lake Cunningham Regional Park controls invasive plants in a 1.5-acre area and beautifies it with California native wildflowers, perennials, shrubs and trees.

Workdays continue on **Saturdays from 8:00 to 10:00am**. New volunteers are welcome; City-issued guidelines and COVID-19 best practices are followed. For complete details and directions and to RSVP, see our meetup page at [www.meetup.com/California-Native-Plant-Society-Santa-Clara-Valley-Chapter](http://www.meetup.com/California-Native-Plant-Society-Santa-Clara-Valley-Chapter).

We follow City of San Jose guidelines for volunteering during the pandemic: face covering, social distancing, no tool sharing. The work is mainly weeding and mulching. Bring your own bucket and a weeding mattock (and knee pad, if you prefer that). Wear a face covering, hat, gloves and sturdy garden shoes. Bring plenty of fluids and hydrate often. We start with a 10-minute orientation, then walk to the site, so please be on time.

First-timers: bring a signed waiver form, available at [lakecunninghamnativegarden.files.wordpress.com/2020/05/2020-volunteer-status-and-waiver-of-liability.pdf](http://lakecunninghamnativegarden.files.wordpress.com/2020/05/2020-volunteer-status-and-waiver-of-liability.pdf).

First timers: please follow directions on the project's Meetup page to get to the native garden. Lake Cunningham is a very large park (200 acres) with two entrances. You'll want to head to the Google map pin for “Lake Cunningham Native Garden.”

Workdays are sometimes rescheduled or canceled. Always **RSVP to confirm** and check the latest updates Friday night. If you can't make it, please change your RSVP so we know.

### **Edgewood Restoration**

Our long-term habitat restoration work at Edgewood Park and Natural Preserve continues in person even during the pandemic. As with our other projects, we follow government guidelines and COVID-19 best practices.

For now, the project is not looking for new volunteers; only experienced “regulars” are attending workdays. Project leader Paul Heiple may be contacted at [pheiple@gmail.com](mailto:pheiple@gmail.com) or (650) 854-7125.

## **IN MEMORIAM**

### **Thank-you tribute to Richard and Bracey Tiede**

Our Chapter recently received a very generous donation from the estate of long-time members Richard and Bracey Tiede. We would like to recognize them for their financial contribution as well as their commitment to native plants, sustainable garden practices and protecting the environment in general.



*Arvind Kumar*

Richard and Bracey Tiede in their back garden 2005

The Tiedes were both active in many local plant related organizations, including CNPS. Members may remember them from their help at our native plant sales and Going Native Garden Tours. They were also active in the Master Gardeners of Santa Clara County, Pacific Horticultural Society, Western Horticultural Society, Mediterranean Garden Society and Guadalupe River Park Conservancy. In addition to CNPS they contributed to several environmental, arts and humanitarian causes.

Bracey passed away in February 2018 and Richard last July. Their warmth, energy and enthusiasm are missed by all who knew them. We are very appreciative of their generous support!

### **In Memory of GNGT's Myra Saylor**

From 2005 until her passing in March of 2021, Myra Saylor created the wonderful plant-themed designs for the T-shirts worn by the Going Native Garden Tour (GNGT) greeters and docents. She will be missed.

Myra Randolph Saylor was born in Texas, spent most of her life in California and settled in retirement in Yuma, Arizona. She was a registered nurse, wife for more than 50 years, mother, and grandmother. A lifelong artist, she created beautiful quilts, painted gourds, large 3-D mosaics and wildlife drawings – mainly of plants. Her home in Yuma serves as a bird sanctuary and monarch butterfly habitat.



Her artwork decorates the entire wall of the visitor center at Imperial Wildlife Refuge and she created the large Lizard mosaic at the Moody gardens in Yuma.

She started making the artwork for the GNGT in 2005 and created a new design every year until now. It gave her great joy to draw California natives for the tour shirt and donate her work for the tour. You can find her signature within the design in the caterpillar somewhere on the plant.



Myra Saylor's GNGT artwork on T-shirt and mug

To learn more about Myra and see more of her GNGT artwork, visit her memorial page at [gngt.org/GNGT/MyraSaylor.php](http://gngt.org/GNGT/MyraSaylor.php).

## CHAPTER OFFICERS FOR 2021

Title	Name	Email	Phone
<b>President</b>	Vivian Neou	president@cnps-scv.org	(650) 260-3450
<b>Vice President</b>	Priya Pharate	priya@cnps-scv.org	
<b>Recording Secretary</b>	Priya Pharate	priya@cnps-scv.org	
<b>Treasurer</b>	Janet Hoffmann	janet@cnps-scv.org	(408) 374-0435
<b>Past President</b>	Madeline Morrow	pastpresident@cnps-scv.org	(408) 741-1150
<b>Chapter Council Delegate</b>	Vivian Neou	president@cnps-scv.org	(650) 260-3450



*Hannah Ger*

Fieldwork in the alpine fellfields of Coyote Ridge, Inyo County, from Scholarship winner Martin Purdy. Read about all the 2020 student scholarship winners starting on page 4.

## Stay in Touch!

The Chapter has gone virtual with all of our events until further notice. Please visit [www.cnps-scv.org/stay-in-touch](http://www.cnps-scv.org/stay-in-touch) for information on how you can continue to receive email to stay informed.



*Martin Purdy*

Curiously short statured giant blazingstar (*Mentzelia laevicaulis*) growing on a marble slope at 11,000 ft. in Inyo County.

This Blazing Star newsletter continues to be published only online, at: [www.cnps-scv.org/blazing-star-newsletter](http://www.cnps-scv.org/blazing-star-newsletter).

**Printed newsletters** are available if you are unable to read the newsletter online. Email us at [newsletter@cnps-scv.org](mailto:newsletter@cnps-scv.org) or send a letter to our office at the address on the last page of this newsletter to request a printed copy.

## DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT *BLAZING STAR*

**Saturday, June 12**

**[carol.mattsson@gmail.com](mailto:carol.mattsson@gmail.com) or (408) 255-3767**

Santa Clara Valley Chapter California Native Plant Society  
 3921 East Bayshore Road, Suite #205  
 Palo Alto, CA 94303-4326



## Join CNPS Today!

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

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City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Membership level (check one):</b>	<b>Areas of interest:</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Individual	<input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy
<input type="checkbox"/> \$120 Plant Lover	<input type="checkbox"/> Botany
<input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Supporter	<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation
<input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000 Patron	<input type="checkbox"/> Education
<input type="checkbox"/> \$2,500 Benefactor	<input type="checkbox"/> Field Trips
<input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Student or Fixed Income	<input type="checkbox"/> Gardening
<input type="checkbox"/> \$75 Library	<input type="checkbox"/> 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  
 95816-5130 • [membership@cnps.org](mailto:membership@cnps.org) • (916) 447-2677 ext. 200*

**FIRST-CLASS**

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS** (page # in parentheses)

- |                   |   |                            |   |
|-------------------|---|----------------------------|---|
| <b>May 5 Wed</b>  | Trails to Gardens talk – Morris (1)     | <b>Jun 8 Tue</b>           | Conservation Committee meeting (6)      |
| <b>May 11 Tue</b> | Conservation Committee meeting (6)      | <b>Jun 9 Wed</b>           | GNGT virtual garden visit (2)           |
| <b>May 12 Wed</b> | Garden Transformation talk – Penney (1) | <b>Jun 12 Sat</b>          | <b>Newsletter submittal deadline</b>    |
| <b>May 19 Wed</b> | Area Wildflowers talk – Williams (2)    | <b>Jun 16 Wed</b>          | Area Rare Plants talk – Greenberger (3) |
| <b>May 28 Fri</b> | Photo Group photo sharing (3)           | <b>Jun 25 Fri</b>          | Photo Group photo sharing (3)           |
| <b>Jun 2 Wed</b>  | Fire Landscaping talk – Hanson (2)      | <b>Mons &amp; 3rd Sats</b> | Alum Rock workdays (12)                 |
| <b>Jun 5 Sat</b>  | Fountain thistle work party (11)        | <b>Saturdays</b>           | Lake Cunningham workdays (12)           |

The next Chapter board meetings will be **Thursdays, May 20 and June 17 at 7:00pm** over Zoom.

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

For more information contact Vivian Neou at [president@cnps-scv.org](mailto:president@cnps-scv.org).

(Reminder: all the events in this calendar are **virtual**, that is, held over live teleconference such as Zoom, except for habitat restoration workdays.)

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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 \$50.00 per year. If you have questions about your newsletter subscription, please contact **[membership@cnps-scv.org](mailto:membership@cnps-scv.org)**. Address changes may be submitted to **[cnps@cnps.org](mailto:cnps@cnps.org)**; please put “member address change” in the subject line.

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