



THE BLAZING STAR

May-June 2024

What's Inside this Issue? Highlights:

Chapter Election Page 1

Chapter Activities Page 3

Chapter Service Outings Page 7

Field Trips Page 8

A listing of each event, including date and page number, appears on the Calendar on the last page.

Chapter Election – Vote by May 15

May is election month for the officers who will lead our Chapter from June 1 of this year through the end of May next year. **Elections will occur online**, with each Chapter member entitled to one vote per position. On or about **May 8 each Chapter member will receive a notice** sent to the email address currently on file with the State CNPS office.

Please **check your CNPS email address before May 1** to be sure that you receive a ballot. You can do that by logging in to the membership portal on [cnps.org](https://secure2.convio.net/cnps/site/UserLogin) at <https://secure2.convio.net/cnps/site/UserLogin>.

How to Vote

Polls will open when the email announcing the start of voting is distributed. That email will contain a link which will take members to a site listing all candidates for each position along with their statements. Each Chapter member may cast one vote per officer position. **Polls will close on Wednesday, May 15.** Results of the election will be announced the last week in May and in the July-August issue of the *Blazing Star* newsletter.

Chapter members lacking a valid email address can obtain a **paper ballot** by contacting the Leadership Development Committee Chair, Stephen Buckhout, stephen@yscottie.com or (408) 255-6233, and may return it to the Chapter office postmarked on or prior to May 15 for receipt **no later than Friday, May 24.**

Candidates running for office and their statements are as follows.



Priya Pharate, Co-President: “I have been serving as the Vice President of the Santa Clara Valley Chapter since January 2021. Along with my responsibilities as Vice President, I organize talks at libraries in the South Bay and handle outreach and publicity for the Chapter. I joined the board in

May 2017 as Recording Secretary and since then, have been actively serving on the board and the Chapter’s various committees.”



Vivian Neou, Co-President: “I started as a volunteer at our nursery in 2015 and joined the board in January 2016 as Technology Chair. I manage the Chapter’s nursery and am currently one of the Co-Presidents and Chapter Council Delegate. I’d like to continue supporting the Chapter in these roles.”



Toni Gregorio-Bunch, Vice President: “I recently rejoined the board of the Santa Clara Valley Chapter. I have volunteered with the Chapter in a variety of positions for many years and would like to continue contributing to the Chapter’s development.”

Vivian Neou, Chapter Council Delegate: See above candidate statement.



Brett Tucker, Treasurer: “I have been treasurer of the Chapter for the last two years. It has been a great experience which has allowed me to befriend dedicated people, support their work and learn more about California native plants. I would like to continue to serve as treasurer for another year.”

Sudarshan Srinivasan, Recording Secretary: “I joined the CNPS SCV Chapter board because I was inspired by



the organization’s mission and the passion and commitment of its volunteers. Attending board meetings in the past few months has given me an appreciation for the breadth of activities that the Chapter is engaged in. I would love to serve the Chapter as the Recording Secretary in the coming year. This role gives me an opportunity to

contribute to the organization’s success by capturing and maintaining accurate records of our board meetings and activities.”

Radhika Thekkath, Past President: “I have been the President of the Chapter for two years and I would like to continue on the executive board as Past President. I hope to support the current Co-Presidents as well as continue to work on Chapter projects to support the CNPS mission.”



All the above candidates were identified by the Chapter’s Leadership Development Committee. No self-nominated candidate applications were received prior to the *Blazing Star’s* press deadline.

Questions concerning the voting procedure should be directed to Stephen Buckhout, at stephen@yscottie.com or (408) 255-6233.

Chapter Guidelines Update Passes

At the March board meeting, our Chapter’s board voted to adopt updates to the Chapter guidelines. These updates were shared with Chapter members two weeks prior to the meeting. Highlights include allowing for Co-President roles, formation of a new Finance Committee and allowing

the President to appoint Chairs of Chapter activities. For the complete new guidelines, please visit www.cnps-scv.org/about-us/chapter-guidelines.

Greetings from Chapter Co-President Radhika Thekkath

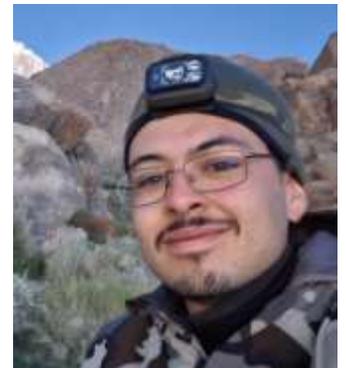
Wow, here we are again, just past the most exciting and busy month of April for most native plant enthusiasts, which included the Growing Natives Garden Tour, Native Plant week, many exciting talks and the wonderful Wildflower Show. At the end of this month, as I am stepping down from my 2.5-year tenure as President of the Santa Clara Valley Chapter, I am a bit sad but so glad to have been part of this Chapter’s journey for the past years.

I am amazed and grateful to the hundreds of our volunteers who make this Chapter’s activities fly, and to the friendships forged in delightful corners and flower-filled meadows. I will continue to be around here and on the Chapter Board while I engage more deeply in some projects that I have always been passionate about and never had adequate time to bring to fruition.

So keep in touch! As always, my email is cnpsradhika@gmail.com.

Donovan Belardes joins the Chapter Board!

Our Chapter Board is happy to announce a new board member, Donovan Belardes, who is currently a student at West Valley College (WVC). At WVC Donovan is taking classes that deepen his understanding of the ecology of California with the intent to transfer to the Forestry Program at Cal Poly Humboldt. He has a love for all aspects of the natural world including birds, marine life and mammals, although his main interests are forest ecosystems and plants.



Currently, Donovan is one of two interns at West Valley who maintain the Moon Garden, a native landscape for nighttime pollinators. Community outreach events are important to Donovan, and he has volunteered for events such as the Spring Wildflower Show at WVC and the Fall Plant Sale with our Chapter. He became interested in joining the board to help reach out to the community and students and share his love for native plants. A big welcome to Donovan, as we are excited to have a college student on our Board!

CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Cutting and Seed Exchange + Plant Sale Pickup Saturday, May 18

Why is this event name different this time? Propagation is a year-round activity, and as we move into summer, propagation of native plants shifts to starting new plants from cuttings rather than seeds. You're still welcome to bring seeds to exchange, but we encourage folks to bring cuttings too. Join us on **Saturday, May 18 from 1:00pm to 3:00pm** at the Peninsula Conservation Center (PCC), 3921 E. Bayshore Road in Palo Alto.

This free event provides an opportunity to share and receive both cuttings and seeds of native plants. Browse the diverse offerings, ranging from easy-to-grow to hard-to-find, and go home with cuttings and seeds of new native plants! We will provide coin envelopes for seeds but bring containers in which to carry cuttings home.

If you have native plant material from your own garden to share, we encourage you to bring it. Label your cuttings to make them easy to browse – some gardeners attach helpful hints about growing; others display photos of plants in bloom. You may find it convenient to use www.calscape.org for this – there is a link on each plant's information page to make a printable sign for most native species and cultivars.

If you bring cuttings, keep them cool and moist in a bucket of water. Don't have native plant material to share? No problem, as there is usually enough for all.

Several popular gardening books will be available for sale during the event, including *Seed Propagation of Native California Plants* (2021 ed.), by Dara E. Emery; *California Native Plants for the Garden* by Carol Bornstein, David Fross, and Bart O'Brien; and *California Native Gardening, A Month-by-Month Guide*, by Helen Popper.

Our Wildflower Ambassadors will be giving out free seed packets and information as well.

Limited Online Plant Sale

There will be an online plant sale at california-native-plant-society-santa-clara-valley-chapter.square.site, **starting on Sunday, May 12**. The store will close when we reach our pickup capacity. In addition to plants, the nursery's online store includes Chapter T-shirts, books, labels and plant signs.

Orders from this sale will only be available for pickup before and during our Seed Exchange at the Peninsula

Conservation Center on Saturday, May 18. **We will not have nursery pickup or delivery, and there is a minimum order of \$40.**

Call for Volunteers

We need help with setup, answering questions and cleanup.

The tasks don't require expert knowledge of plants, and the shifts are set up to spend time at the event in addition to volunteering. You can sign up here: www.cnps-scvc.org/seed-cutting-help.

Directions to the PCC: (3921 E. Bayshore Road, Palo Alto) From Hwy. 101 take the San Antonio Rd. exit and head north. Take the next left onto East Bayshore, which will curve left then right. Take the first right onto Corporation Way, and an immediate left into the PCC parking lot. The meeting rooms are on the first floor.



Grassroots Ecology

Grassroots Ecology volunteers surround plants with cages as they plant, to protect the young plants from hungry critters.

Native Plant Talks

Join us for our native plant talks, in-person at local libraries and online via Zoom and YouTube. Whether you're curious about native plants, an experienced or aspiring native plant gardener, a professional botanist or beginning naturalist, you will find something to interest and educate you in our offerings. From gardening to plant science to climate change to tours of botanical hot spots, there's something here for you.

Our virtual talks are livestreamed simultaneously to Zoom and YouTube. View talks on our YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/@CNPSSantaClaraValley (no registration needed) or join on Zoom by registering at the

Zoom link provided in each lecture's description. Most of our upcoming talks are listed below. We occasionally schedule additional talks – for the current list of upcoming talks please see our website (cnps-scv.org) or join our Chapter's News email group for a weekly update on upcoming activities.

Recordings of our virtual talks and some of our library talks may be viewed on our YouTube channel.

The organizing committee has periodic meetings on Zoom and welcomes new volunteers. If you have ideas for future talks or are interested in helping set up upcoming talks, please send a message to Priya Pharate at priya4cnps@gmail.com to receive notifications of upcoming meetings.



Grassroots Ecology
Native perennials at McClellan Ranch Preserve dripping with flowers after only two years!

engagement. All three are Bay Area natives, just like their favorite plants!

Grassroots Ecology is a nonprofit organization dedicated to caring for public lands and waters across Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties. In collaboration with public landowners, governments, schools, corporations and other nonprofits, each year we engage thousands of people in hands-on education and service that improves our local environment. Our core programs are Habitat Restoration, Community Science, Urban Ecology, Environmental Education and our Native Plant Nursery.

**Bringing Beauty and Biodiversity
to an Urban Preserve,
a talk by Stephanie Saffouri
(with Laura Powers and Petra Boester)**

Thursday, May 2 7:00 - 8:30 PM, Cupertino Library Community Room (2nd Floor), 10800 Torre Ave., Cupertino

McClellan Ranch Preserve is part of a 60-acre open space and recreational area owned by the City of Cupertino. Harnessing the power of volunteers, youth stewards and neighbors, Grassroots Ecology has helped transform this previously-degraded habitat into a lush and biodiverse meadow. We will reflect on the successes and challenges of this 10-year restoration project and provide strategies for gardeners interested in revitalizing or adding to their own projects.

Stephanie Saffouri is the project lead in charge of habitat restoration at McClellan Ranch Preserve in Cupertino. She studied plant ecology and loves to teach people about the amazing nature right under their noses. Laura and Petra are placed at McClellan as Corpsmembers in the Watershed Stewards Program. They are learning all they can about California ecology, restoration and community

**Propagating Native Plants at Home,
a talk by Stanley Gu**

Thursday, May 16 7:00 - 8:30 PM, Los Altos Library Orchard Room, 13 S. San Antonio Rd., Los Altos

Growing native plants from seeds and cuttings is a great way to bring biodiversity to your garden, while saving money and connecting more deeply with nature. We will share a few methods used to propagate plants at the Grassroots Ecology nursery for our restoration projects, such as at [Redwood Grove Nature Preserve](#) (in Los Altos, just south of Shoup Park). The talk will also cover ways to adapt these techniques for your home.

Growing up in the East Bay, **Stanley Gu** developed an obsession with plants while observing the native and non-native flora of his neighborhood. He is now an Ecologist at Grassroots Ecology and has worked under the guidance of Nursery Director Deanna Giuliano for two years. His passions include growing native plants and sharing his love of botany with others.



For more about **Grassroots Ecology** see the bio for the previous talk.



Grassroots Ecology

Ecologist Siena Watson and California Climate Action Corps Fellow Serena Myjer examine seed flats at the Grassroots Ecology Native Plant Nursery

Drought-Tolerant Gardening for Native Bees, a talk by John Kehoe

Tuesday, June 18, 7-8:30 PM, Saratoga Library Community Room, 13650 Saratoga Ave., Saratoga

We all know about the European honey bee, but what about the native bees that live here in the Santa Clara Valley? These local insects help pollinate our ornamental and edible plants too! Once you know what to look for, you'll see over a dozen bee species that live in our urban setting – especially among locally-growing native plants. Find out how planting even a few select natives can enrich your garden, save water and attract even more native (and honey) bees.

John Kehoe is a longtime member of CNPS, iNaturalist and The Xerces Society and is a certified California Naturalist. He is a regular volunteer at assorted Grassroots Ecology and Keep Coyote Creek Beautiful BioBlitz events as well as at various CNPS functions. His research interests include studying biodiversity, especially native bee ecology. He shares these interests by way of his photography on iNaturalist and Flickr.



John Kehoe

Male valley carpenter bee, *Xylocopa sonorina*, feeding on narrow-leaf milkweed, *Asclepias fascicularis*. Male bees don't consume pollen, but as they walk over the blossoms of milkweed, they pluck the milkweed's pollen clumps and can cross pollinate the plants. July 2015.

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.



Susan Hinton

Curled white fibers decorate the leaves of this Banana yucca (*Yucca baccata*) in a local garden. In California this plant is found primarily in northeastern San Bernardino County.

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. Photo Group member Susan Hinton sent us the above **#MyPhotoOfTheWeek** taken at her home garden. She took a few pictures when a few Western yellowjackets visited the banana yuccas.

The photo group's meetings take place over Zoom, for members to share photos and more – everything from photography tips to organizational ideas to plant hot spots.

The next meetings will be on **Fridays, May 24 and June 28 at 7:00pm**. You can learn more and join the email group at: www.groups.io/g/cnps-scv-photography.

Native Plant ID

Our Native Plant ID group meets once a month to work together to learn plant identification using botanical keys and other resources. Join us as we look at plant samples collected from local gardens and practice methods of identifying the native plants of our region. Bring in plant samples if you have some (from property where you have permission to collect) or just come and work with the materials provided.

We will use a variety of plant books and online resources as we endeavor to improve our understanding of botanical terms used in plant identification. The Chapter has 10x hand lenses and dissecting microscopes that we can use to look at small plant parts or bring your own lens. Bring along your favorite plant ID reference books.



Vivian Neou

Examining plants at last February's Native Plant ID meeting

Native Plant ID meets the fourth Tuesday of the month at the Peninsula Conservation Center, 3921 E Bayshore Road,

Palo Alto. Our next meetings will be on **Tuesdays, May 28 and June 25, at 7:00pm**. For details, contact Janet Hoffmann at janet@cnps-scv.org.

Wildflower Ambassadors

The new Wildflower Ambassador (WFA) program is going strong and is expanding. WFAs prepare packets of wildflower seeds then host tables at local events such as our in-person library talks, where they share the seed packets and information on growing native plants.



Recently the Wildflower Ambassadors gave out seeds and answered questions about habitat gardening during the six-week "whirlwind tour" of *eleven* Native Plant Talks at San Mateo County Libraries.

The WFAs now take the lead in organizing our Chapter's popular Seed and Cutting Exchanges, with the next one scheduled on **May 18** (learn more on page 3).

Want to become a Wildflower Ambassador? Everyone is welcome and you can learn more about the program here: www.cnps-scv.org/WFA. Then sign up at cnps-scv-groups.groups.io/g/WFA.

CONSERVATION CORNER

Conservation Committee

Our Chapter's next Conservation Committee meetings will be held via Zoom on **Tuesdays, May 14 and June 11, from 7:00 to 8:30pm**.

This committee covers many issues affecting native plants: conservation, advocacy, legislation, habitat restoration and rare plants. The committee meets once a month to provide information and support for these conservation issues and efforts. Members of our committee work on projects throughout the Chapter area, coordinating with our state CNPS program staff and other conservation organizations.

Please join us in our important work! For questions, comments or concerns, contact Committee Chair Carolyn Dorsch at cdorsch@cnps-scv.org or (650) 804-6162, or Conservation Chair Judy Fenerty at judy@fenerty.com. If you are interested in joining our committee meetings on Zoom, please email Carolyn for the link.

CHAPTER SERVICE OUTINGS

Fountain Thistle Work Party May 25

Join Ken Himes and Don Thomas of the Santa Clara Valley Chapter and members of the Yerba Buena Chapter for our spring fountain thistle habitat restoration work party **near the intersection of I-280 and Hwy. 92**. We'll meet on **Saturday, May 25 and work from 10am to noon**.

Fountain thistle (*Cirsium fontinale* var. *fontinale*) is a federally endangered plant species that grows in an unusual specialized habitat, serpentine seeps, and is only found at our work location and in few other nearby locations on the Peninsula.

Its recovery here is a restoration success story. Once almost completely displaced by jubatagrass (Andean pampas grass), it has largely recovered here, as a result of the work done by CNPS volunteers. However, fountain thistle is still under threat from invasion by new jubatagrass seedlings, by other non-native plants and by woody plants threatening to convert the area to shrubland or woodland.

In addition, the bordering dry serpentine zone is habitat to another rare plant, Crystal Springs lessingia (*Lessingia arachnoidea*), which is threatened by invasion of yellow star-thistle, fennel, tufted wallaby grass (*Rytidosperma caespitosum*) and other non-native plants. During our work, we expect to observe some late-flowering spring wildflowers.

Sturdy gloves are recommended; you might also want to bring sunscreen, water, a hat, layered clothing and wear long sleeves/pants. If you have them, bring tools, such as trowels, spades and shovels. Some tools will also be provided.

We'll meet at the end of Lessingia Court in San Mateo. For more information, contact Don at donethomasd@gmail.com.

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."

Our workdays take place every **Monday and Wednesday, from 8:30am to about noon**. Sometimes we have special extra workdays.

No experience is necessary. All tools and instruction will be provided. Please bring a filled water bottle and snacks; wear closed toe shoes and long pants. Note that Alum

Rock Park is now open for public use: all parking lots are now open, though several trails are still closed.

Forms and **reservations** are required to volunteer. For more information, including meeting location, contact Stephen Rosenthal at 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 2-acre area and beautifies it with California native wildflowers, perennials, shrubs and trees.

Workdays take place on **Saturdays from 8:00 to 10:00am**. New volunteers are welcome; City-issued guidelines are followed. The work depends on the season, mainly weeding and mulching year-round, but some planting in winter. For **details, directions and to RSVP**, see our Chapter's Meetup group at www.meetup.com/California-Native-Plant-Society-Santa-Clara-Valley-Chapter.

Edgewood Restoration

Help restore habitat at Edgewood Park and Natural Preserve, known for fabulous wildflowers and amazing diversity near Redwood City. Weeders see far more than weeds: we get to be up close to the native plants, some of which are seen **only** by weeders.



Vivian Neou

Ken Himes and Paul Heiple, left, in Edgewood Park, starting their Edgewood Weed Ecology talk March 9

Sturdy gloves are recommended; you might also want to bring sunscreen, water, a hat, layered clothing and wear long sleeves/pants.

We weed year-round **every Friday at 9:00am and Wednesdays at 5:30pm**. For an overview, please visit www.cnps-scv.org/restoration/edgewood-park.

To participate, join the email list and sign the electronic volunteer agreement, by sending an email to weed-warriors-coord@friendsofgedgewood.org.

Please check the email list for each weeding session's meeting place. If you still have questions about Wednesday sessions, contact Alf Fengler at afengler@pacbell.net. Or for questions about Friday sessions, contact Paul Heiple at pheiple@gmail.com or (650) 854-7125.

Cataldi Park Native Garden

Join us to restore habitat in San Jose's Cataldi Park. We mulch, plant, weed, water and otherwise care for the native plants we've planted in this newly created native garden. Wear a hat and garden shoes and bring water to stay hydrated. Work gloves will be provided.

Workdays are usually held at **9:00am on Saturdays**. If you're interested in volunteering, check the dates and sign up at our Chapter's Meetup group, at www.meetup.com/california-native-plant-society-santa-clara-valley-chapter/.

First-timers: Please bring a signed waiver form available at lakecunninghamnativegarden.files.wordpress.com/2022/01/2021-volunteer-service-agreement-adoptapark-version.pdf.

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 and wait-listers get a chance.

Kirk Park Pollinator Garden

Community volunteers regularly care for this native plant garden at Kirk Park in San Jose. We are always happy to have help at the garden! **We meet regularly on Saturday mornings from 9:00 to 11:00am**, weather permitting, for light maintenance such as weeding and watering and occasionally we have plants or seeds to plant.

As you probably know, milkweed is the only plant monarch caterpillars can eat. As of early April, the garden's milkweed patch was coming out of its winter dormancy and we have seen many monarch caterpillars! Also as of April, many of the wildflowers were showing their colors, attracting numerous pollinators.

The park is open every day, so please come visit! The garden is located along the north edge of the park. If you would like to help out, please let us know by sending email to KirkParkGardens@gmail.com. If we know you are coming, we can be sure to have tools available for you to use. We can also notify you if, for some reason, we will

not be meeting. New volunteers will need to fill out a form for the City.

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.

Cell service is mainly restricted to cities and major highways. To find your way to an outing, please do not rely solely on your phone.

Check our field trips page www.cnps-scv.org/activities/field-trips for changes and cancellations, as well as information about newly added field trips.

For field trips listed here that require **reservations**, please visit our Chapter's **Meetup group**, here: www.meetup.com/California-Native-Plant-Society-Santa-Clara-Valley-Chapter/. **We open the RSVPs one week before the event.** Find your event within the group and tap/click the "Attend" button to reserve your spot.

Sun May 5 10:00am – 2:00pm Calero Park Native Plant Hike (South San Jose)

Enjoy the pristine trails of Calero County Park with Tom Lee and Arvind Kumar. We will hike through serpentine grasslands, chaparral and oak woodlands. Some flowers seen in past years at this season include Ithuriel's spear, lupine, fiddleneck and iris along with red-winged blackbirds.

This hike will be about 3 miles long with an elevation gain of 500 feet. The trail starts with some climb, and wraps around the Calero Reservoir.

Wear sturdy shoes or hiking boots. Wear appropriate layering and a hat. Bring snacks, a sack lunch, and liquids for the day. Dress in layers. Heavy rain cancels.



Tom Lee

The silky white scales of blow wives (*Achyraea mollis*) catch the wind to disperse their single-seeded fruits. Before the seeds form, the flowers are small and yellow. Calero County Park May 2023.

RSVP is required to join the hike. No drop-ins please and space is limited. See the instructions at the beginning of this Field Trips section to **RSVP on Meetup**.

Driving directions and parking tips are provided on [our Chapter's Meetup group](#). We will meet at **10:00am** at the main parking area of Calero Park, at 23205 McKean Rd, San Jose, CA 95120.

Sun May 12 10:30am – 1:30pm Plant ID Walk at Alum Rock Park (East San Jose)

On this **beginner and family friendly** native plant walk, join California Naturalist Divya Shenoy, assisted by Arvind Kumar, to explore the creekside and shrubland habitats of Alum Rock County Park. We will walk along the beautiful Penitencia Creek Trail, Mineral Springs loop and other hillside trails. We will also stop by the Youth Science Institute Nature Center, which has live animals and an extraordinary taxidermy display!

We will see native plants such as the coast live oak, California bay laurel, toyon, buckeye and maidenhair ferns! We may see birds, such as Steller's jays and acorn woodpeckers, butterflies and small mammals. We will also see historical mineral spring structures and discuss the ways Ohlone Native Americans utilized native plants.

The walk will be about 3 miles in length. The pace will be a stroll with water breaks, pauses to view plants, and a 15-minute snack break in the middle. There are some sections of trails with moderate inclines and declines, so hiking poles are recommended for those who need additional stability and support.

Please wear comfortable walking shoes, sunscreen, a hat and bring plenty of water. Optionally, you can bring a snack, plant and bird identification guides and lists and binoculars.

RSVP is required to join the hike. No drop-ins please and space is limited. See the instructions at the beginning of this Field Trips section to **RSVP on Meetup**.

Driving directions and parking tips are provided on [our Chapter's Meetup group](#). Drive past the first parking lot at the park entrance, past the ticket booth and past the next two lots. Park in any of the last group of three parking lots at the end of the park. One of the lots has a \$6 parking fee and two are free. We will meet at **10:30am** at the bridge nearest to the playground, which is next to a picnic table and bathroom. [Alum Rock Park's website](#) includes a link to a park map.

RSVP is required to join the hike. No drop-ins please and space is limited. See the instructions at the beginning of this Field Trips section to **RSVP on Meetup**.



Divya Shenoy

Mineral rock deposits at Alum Rock County Park

Sun June 16 10:00am – 12:30pm Plant ID & Beach Adventure at Wilder Ranch State Park & Fern Grotto Beach (Santa Cruz County)

Join California Naturalist Divya Shenoy to explore the coastal bluffs of Wilder Ranch and enjoy the beautiful Fern Grotto Beach. On this beginner native plant walk, we will walk along the Old Landing Cove Trail loop and stop by Fern Grotto Beach to take a lunch break and explore!

At the end, you can join us as we visit the Wilder Ranch Interpretive Center & Park Store to learn about the park's farming history. This field trip is a **family friendly event** and no advanced hiking ability or plant identification experience is required.

We will see unique coastal plants, including seaside daisy, golden yarrow, and various fern species. We may also see sea lions, butterflies, whales, sea otters and birds such as cormorants, pelicans, and gulls.

Our walk will be about 3 miles long. The pace will be a stroll with water breaks, pauses to view plants, and a 30-minute snack break and exploration at the beach. There is a short dirt trail that is moderately steep, to get to the beach, so hiking poles are recommended for those who need additional stability and support.

Please wear comfortable walking shoes, sunscreen and a hat. Bring a snack or early lunch and plenty of water. Optionally, you can bring plant and bird identification guides and lists, binoculars and extra sandals for the beach.

RSVP is required to join the hike. No drop-ins please and space is limited. See the instructions at the beginning of this Field Trips section to **RSVP on Meetup**.

Driving directions and parking tips are provided on [our Chapter's Meetup group](#). We will park and meet at **10:00am** in the "Wilder Ranch Day Use" parking lot, which has a restroom close by. ([Here's a link to a map to the parking lot.](#))

Sun Jun 23 9:00am – 12:00pm Bird and Plant ID Walk at Lake Cunningham Park (San Jose)

With the onset of summer, join us for a beginner's bird and plant identification walk through Lake Cunningham Park. This lake is a major destination for waterfowl and

migratory birds and its native garden draws many birds due to its habitat value. On this walk, Vicki Silvas-Young will show you how to identify the common birds of our area, while Arvind Kumar will identify the native plants that they depend on for food and shelter.

The distance is 2 miles round-trip on a level path. Bring a hat, water, your bird and plant lists, and binoculars. Wear comfortable walking shoes. The parking fee is \$6, to be purchased with either exact cash or credit card at a machine.

RSVP is required to join the hike. No drop-ins please and space is limited. See the instructions at the beginning of this Field Trips section to **RSVP on Meetup**.

Driving directions and parking tips are provided on [our](#)

[Chapter's Meetup group](#). We will meet at Parking Lot A on the east side of the park. The park's main entrance is located at 2305 S. White Road, San Jose. ([In Google Maps, search for 37.337451, -121.804069, to be directed to Parking Lot A.](#))

This event is cosponsored by CNPS, Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society and Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority.



Divya Shenoy

Seaside daisy overlooking the Pacific Ocean at Wilder Ranch State Park

Saturdays, May 25 and June 22

**Discover the Vernal Pools
in Your Own Backyard**

A Series of Wildflower Tours in Fremont



Richard Mooi

Floral carpet edging a vernal pool, located within the Warm Springs Unit of the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge. May 2019.

Vernal Pool Wildflower Tours in Fremont

Come and experience the last piece of lowland vernal pool grassland in the South Bay. The Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge is inviting CNPS members to guided tours in the Warm Springs Unit, a site with limited public access. These tours are being offered at different times to capture the temporal and spatial diversity of this unique site, home to many listed, rare and unusual species.

If you are interested joining a tour, please contact Aidona Kakouros at aidona_kakouros@fws.gov to register. Please indicate in your email 1) which of the tours you are interested in, 2) how many guests you are bringing, and 3) preferred email to send directions and any other notifications related to the event you are interested in. **Directions** to the meeting site will be provided nearer to the event date. Space is limited.

“Seas of Downingias” Tour, Saturday, May 25, 10:00am to 1:00pm: The wet winter this year is promising a spectacular display of calico flowers (*Downingia pulchella*). Come and experience the beauty of this flower and its allies. Treat your senses with a mini super bloom!

“Power to the Pollinators” Summer Native Plant Community Tour, Saturday, June 22, 9:00am to 12:30pm: At this time of year, the dry pools are dotted with saline tolerant, warm-season perennials such as alkali heliotrope (*Heliotropium curassavicum*), alkali mallow (*Malvella leprosa*) and alkali weed (*Cressa truxillensis*). Super bloomers like common spikeweed (*Centromadia pungens*) and alkali heath (*Frankenia salina*) display

masses of flowers, providing important sources of nectar to pollinators. We’ll also seek out rare or unusual plants including Congdon’s tarplant (*Centromadia parryi* ssp. *congdonii*), San Joaquin spearscale (*Extriplex joaquinana*) and *Atriplex* species.

NEWSLETTER, ETC.

Stay in Touch!

Some late-breaking events don’t make it into the newsletter and are announced electronically. Stay informed by making sure that your contact information is correct. Please visit www.cnps-scv.org/stay-in-touch for information on how you can continue to receive email to stay informed.

This *Blazing Star* newsletter is published **mostly** online only, at: www.cnps-scv.org/blazing-star-newsletter. This May-June 2024 issue is being distributed by paper/mail **and** online. Our next issue will be distributed online only.

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP FOR 2023-2024

Title	Name	Email
Co-President	Radhika Thekkath	cnpsradhika@gmail.com
Co-President	Vivian Neou	techchair@cnps-scv.org
Vice President	Priya Pharate	priya4cnps@gmail.com
Recording Secretary	Patricia Lang	secretary@cnps-scv.org
Treasurer	Brett Tucker	treasurer@cnps-scv.org
Chapter Council Delegate	Vivian Neou	techchair@cnps-scv.org

To see the full list of Chapter officers and chairs, please visit www.cnps-scv.org/leadership.

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT *BLAZING STAR*

Saturday, June 15

carol.mattsson@gmail.com or (408) 309-8314

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 *Artemisia* and *Flora* magazines, the Chapter newsletter and other benefits listed at www.cnps.org/membership.

I wish to affiliate with the Santa Clara Valley Chapter

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Phone _____ New Renew

Suggested Membership Amounts

\$50 \$75 \$120 \$500 \$1,000 Other (\$25 min.)

Send Membership Application to:
California Native Plant Society

Attn: Membership

2702 K Street, Suite 1, Sacramento, CA 95816-5130

For memberships for organizations or to become a Perennial monthly sustainer, contact www.cnps.org.

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
CAMPBELL, CA
PERMIT NO. 66

CALENDAR OF EVENTS (page # in parentheses)

- | | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------------|
| May 2 Thu | McClellan Ranch restoration talk (4) | Jun 15 Sat | Newsletter submittal deadline |
| May 5 Sun | Calero Park native plant hike (8) | Jun 16 Sun | Wilder Ranch plant ID walk (10) |
| May 12 Sun | Plant Sale online store opens (3) | Jun 18 Tue | Gardening for Native Bees – J. Kehoe (5) |
| May 12 Sun | Alum Rock Park plant ID walk (9) | Jun 22 Sat | Vernal Pool wildflower walk (10) |
| May 14 Tue | Conservation Committee meeting (6) | Jun 23 Sun | L. Cunningham bird/plant ID walk (10) |
| May 15 Wed | Chapter election voting deadline (1) | Jun 25 Tue | Native Plant ID meeting (6) |
| May 16 Thu | Propagating Native Plants – Gu (4) | Jun 28 Fri | Photo Group photo sharing (5) |
| May 18 Sat | Cutting and Seed Exchange + pickup (3) | Mon & Wed | Alum Rock workdays (7) |
| May 24 Fri | Photo Group photo sharing (5) | Wed & Fri | Edgewood workdays (7) |
| May 25 Sat | Vernal Pool wildflower walk (10) | Saturdays | Lake Cunningham workdays (7) |
| May 25 Sat | Fountain Thistle work party (7) | Saturdays | Cataldi Native Garden workdays (8) |
| May 28 Tue | Native Plant ID meeting (6) | Saturdays | Kirk Pollinator Garden workdays (8) |
| Jun 11 Tue | Conservation Committee meeting (6) | | |

The next Chapter board meetings will be **Thursdays, May 23 and June 20 at 7:00pm** over Zoom.

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

For more information contact Radhika Thekkath at cnpsradhika@gmail.com or Vivian Neou at techchair@cnps-scv.org.

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 start at \$50.00 per year. If you have questions about your newsletter subscription, please contact info@cnps-scv.org. Address changes may be submitted to membership@cnps.org. Please put "address change" in the subject line.

The *Blazing Star* web address: www.cnps-scv.org. Please print on recycled paper.