



THE BLAZING STAR

March-April 2001

GENERAL MEETING

Speaker : Dr. Rod Myatt

Topic : Flower Types & Breeding Systems

Friday, March 23, 2001

Saratoga Library Community Room 7:30 P.M.

Rod Myatt is Professor of Botany at San Jose State University and teaches Plant Taxonomy and Plant Communities classes. His interests include the oaks of California (particularly the intermediate oaks and their relationships) and plants of the Ione Formation (Sierra Nevada foothills) and the Santa Cruz Sand hills; particularly the endemic *Eriogonum* species. He is interested in the reproductive biology of these rare species. Rod's presentation (including slides) will focus on the various forms of flowers and how these relate to breeding systems and reproductive biology.

Our general meetings are also an opportunity to meet other members, peruse our books and become familiar with various issues. Our chapter is involved with a wide variety of activities, as you can see in this issue of the *Blazing Star*.

New members: please feel free to introduce yourself to one (or more!) of us, and let us know what your interests are.

DIRECTIONS: Exit Highway 85 on Saratoga Avenue. Head southwest, towards the mountains, and take the first driveway on the left after Fruitvale into the library parking lot.

For more information, or if you need help with the directions, contact Georgia Stigall at gstigall@aol.com or 650-941-1068.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Spring is here. Wildflowers are starting to appear on our hillsides. But development is slowly encroaching on many of our wild areas. All too often, I go to a spot where rare wildflowers were rumored to be growing only to find the flowers gone. In the place of the wildflowers, there is a new housing development, a new industrial complex or a new road. Our chapter's region has amazing wild areas with rare plants. But many of these areas are in the process of being "developed." Communication Hill and Silver Creek, local serpentine areas with rare and endangered plants, are the sites of new housing developments. At the State CNPS level, concern is expressed. But the real work of conservation needs to start at the chapter level. There is much we can do. There is a wonderful population of Western Leatherwood (*Dirca occidentalis*) in Portola Valley. Much of this population is now at risk because the brush in which the *Dirca* grows is being thinned as part of the fire management for the new Blue Oak housing development. There is a population of the rare *Centromadia* (formerly *Hemizonia*) *parryi* ssp. *congdonii* at the site of a Cisco development off Highway 237. The development plan includes a proposal for saving this population. Of the many hundreds of *Dudleya setchellii* planted two years ago at the Dow Drive site to mitigate for the *Dudleya* destroyed by the construction, fewer than 200 of the plants survive. Many of the surviving plants are severely stressed and probably will die within the next few years. Our CNPS chapter must monitor these populations and all local populations of rare and endangered plants to ensure their ultimate survival and to report on the effectiveness of mitigation. To be of any value, such monitoring must be done on a consistent and regular basis. If you are interested in preserving what we all love, contact our Rare Plant Chair, Don Mayall. Our chapter's conservation efforts are only as strong as the individuals who work with us to help preserve our wild areas.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to last year's volunteers for all their hard work and effort. Much was accomplished in the year 2000. Due largely to Don Mayall's unwavering focus, we completed a brochure on the Coyote Ridge area in South San Jose which will assist CNPS in its efforts to preserve this area. We had a wonderful Wildflower Show & Sale last spring coordinated by Carolyn Curtis and Jean Struthers. We have the Edgewood weeding program tirelessly coordinated by Ken Himes. Georgia Stigall has quietly but effectively used her expertise to help things run smoothly. And there are other tireless and faithful volunteers including Paul Heiple, David Chapman, Ray Deutsch, Ellie Gioumousis, Stephen Buckhout, Sally Casey and many others. But it is a new year. We have much to accomplish in 2001 and will face many new challenges not only in conservation of rare plants, but also in many other areas. Our Chapter is presently without anyone to coordinate the Wildflower Show this year. We still need someone to help set up and coordinate Field Trips and to be our Book Sales Chair. I am asking each of you for your help to meet these challenges. I am looking forward to working with all of you in the coming year and I hope that many of you will come forward to help our Chapter face its many new challenges and help preserve our local wild areas which we love. ~*Mary Simpson*

CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Gardening with Natives

Contact Stephanie Mangels at stephmangels@hotmail.com or 408-629-8004 to be added to the newsletter mailing list, provide input, or receive more information. New members are always welcome!

Our normal first Thursday meeting will be held at the DeAnza ESA on March 1 at 7:30 pm. The meeting will be a focused discussion of gardening by native plant community. We will combine our resources to develop a list of the local plant communities and the plant species that might be found in each community (along with wildlife, soils, and any other identifying features of each community). Please bring any references, plant lists and knowledge of plant communities with you to this meeting.

The De Anza ESA is located at the corner of McClellan and Stelling within the DeAnza College Campus in Cupertino. A map is at <http://www.deanza.fhda.edu>, or contact Stephanie.

On Saturday, March 17, we will have the opportunity to visit two local residential gardens from 10 am to noon. Directions will be sent in the Gardening with Natives newsletter.

Edgewood Non Native Plant Removal

With daylight savings time starting soon, it is time once again to get after the weeds at Edgewood in the evenings. Join Ken Himes on Wednesday Evenings at 5:30 for the removal of some of your favorite exotic plants; the meeting locations are given below. Call Ken at (650) 591-8560 if you need more information.

April 4 - Sylvan Loop Trail- Southern branch uphill of the *Dirca* (western leatherwood) population. Meet in the day camp parking lot.

April 11 - Edgewood Trail - Eastern portion as far as the bush mallow population. Meet in the day camp parking lot.

April 18 - Edgewood Trail - Western portion as far as the bush mallow population. Meet at the west kiosk, park along Edgewood Rd. west of I 280.

April 25 - Edgewood Trail - Same as on April 18.

May 2 & 9 - Serpentine Loop Trail - South east from the west kiosk. Meeting and parking the same as April 18.

Edgewood Monitors Needed: If you would like to help with plant monitoring at Edgewood (dates to be determined), contact Ken Himes at 650-591-8560.

Photography group

Our next meetings will be Monday March 5; Monday April 2 and Monday May 7. All are at 7:30PM at the Peninsula Conservation Center in Palo Alto. To get more details or to join the group please call Sonja Wilcomer at 650-494-0104.

Restoration Days in Foothills Park

We're continuing our broom removal efforts at Foothills Park in Palo Alto. If you have a free day come out and enjoy the peace of the woods, views, wildlife and plants. You will be helping to restore this beautiful area to its full glory. We would love to have you join us.

Saturday, March 3: 9 am Orchard Glen picnic area.

Saturday, March 17, 9am Page Mill Park & Ride

Contact Ellie Gioumousis, 650-494-6276 or ellieg@ispchannel.com (The e-mail address may change soon, so if it bounces call to get the new address.)

Ulistac Habitat Restoration

Planting continues at Ulistac Natural Area during the months of February and March at the city of Santa Clara's dedicated 40 acre open space on east side of Lick Mill Blvd. between Hope Drive and Tasman Drive. Meet at the south end, inside park by butterfly/bird garden. Work sessions are every Saturday from 10-2. Only heavy rain cancels. Tools provided and sometimes bagels. CNPS members are also needed for ongoing plant surveys for website. Dress for the weather; bring hat, sunscreen, lunch and liquid. To reach Ulistac from 101 take the Montague Expressway north past the Agnews site to Lick Mill Blvd. Turn left on Lick Mill; go past the stop sign at Hope St. Ulistac is on your right; enter through the metal gate. You can also get there on the light rail line. Contact Chris and Jeanne Salander at (408) 293-6885 or salander@batnet.com for more details.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Book Sales Chair Needed

Now that Paul Heiple is our chapter Treasurer, we need someone to be the new Book Sales chair. Please contact Paul at 650-854-7125 or email LOGH30@AOL.COM if you can help!

Spring Wildflower Show & Plant Sale

Enclosed is the flyer for our show & sale April 28 & 29. Please help us publicize our major fundraising event by posting flyers at work, local businesses and anywhere else you can. Help is also needed as follows:

Plant Sale: Help is needed prior to and during the plant sale, scheduled for April 28-29. We work hard and have fun, to make our sale as successful as possible. We have a list of tasks, covering a wide variety of duties. A critical need is for a truck to move our plants from our nursery to Hidden Villa (and return unsold plants on Sunday). Also, if you have a van, truck or car with which you can help us move plants, please let us know! Contact Jean Struthers at 650-941-2586 or JeanStruthers@aol.com

Wildflower Show: For the next Wildflower show April 28-29, 2001 we still need one or more volunteers to coordinate the wildflower show to ensure that it runs smoothly. This is our big outreach event of the year, an excellent botanical learning opportunity, and a stellar social occasion. You and a buddy or two can take turns ("shifts"). Specifically:

- Someone to direct incoming (esp. new) volunteers during setup, Friday April 27, starting in the afternoon and continuing till 9 or 10pm. This is a delightful time to work at the show.

- Someone to be in charge of opening Saturday April 28 at 8am (you go to the police station up in the patio and ask a cop to open the door), let volunteers in, keep the public out until 10am and generally direct traffic as necessary during the day; lock up at 4pm.

- Someone to be in charge of opening Sunday April 28 at 10am (ask a cop upstairs) & generally direct traffic as necessary during the day; start the takedown process shortly before 4pm; lock up at 5pm. Call Carolyn Curtis 650-856-2636 or email ccurtis@ix.netcom.com for details.

CNPS Chapter 2001-2002 Scholarship

The Santa Clara Valley Chapter of the California Native Plant Society is making available two \$1,250 scholarships for graduate students doing research on plant systematics, plant ecology, plant physiology, or other related botanical studies of plants that grow in habitats in Central and Northern California. Students studying the effects of air quality and nitrogen deposition on natural communities are encouraged to apply.

Applicants should be enrolled in a graduate program in an accredited College or University and undertaking botanical research related to plants or native plant communities in Central or Northern California.

An electronic version of the scholarship application is available upon request. Send request to nmonette@aol.com or call Nora Monette at (408) 244-5153. **Applications must be postmarked by March 20, 2001.**

Field Trip Chair Needed

If you want the "inside scoop" on the best places to see and experience botanical treasures in all seasons, please volunteer for this position. This person will be responsible for soliciting volunteers to lead field trips, coordinate the schedule in cooperation with the field trip leaders and remind the leaders to submit their trips to the Blazing Star. The field trip chair is not responsible for organizing individual trips or planning trip logistics. Contact Mary Simpson at

408-370-2177 or marysimpson@earthlink.net; or Georgia Stigall at 650-941-1068 or gstigall@aol.com for more information or to volunteer.

Thank you & welcome – *Blazing Star*

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Cynthia Gilbert in her role as *Blazing Star* editor. Her efforts are very much appreciated! Starting with our next issue, Margriet Wetherwax will be the editor. She can be reached at: (H) 510-568-6929; (W) 510-643-7008, or margriet@uclink4.berkeley.edu.

Environmental Forum – Coyote Ridge

Wednesday, March 14, 7pm; Peninsula Conservation Center; 3921 E. Bayshore, Palo Alto, CA

Coyote Ridge, the range just to the east of US 101 from Silver Creek to Anderson Reservoir is a hot spot of native plant diversity and the largest healthy population of the threatened Bay checkerspot butterfly. With intensive industrial and urban development being proposed for the agricultural lands south of the urbanized part of San Jose, it is critical that Coyote Ridge be preserved. Come to this forum & learn about this unique ecosystem & the steps that are necessary to protect it. The presentation will include slides of rare species and habitats and a discussion of the ecology of the area and the threats to it. Co-sponsored by the Santa Clara Valley Chapter of CNPS, BAA-PCCF & Coyote Ridge Committee. If you can help, please call Don Mayall at 650-856-7579.

Environmental Forum – Coyote Valley

The Battle for COYOTE VALLEY: Environmental Perspectives on Open Space and Suburban Sprawl. A community panel discussion. Thursday, March 22nd 7:15 - 9:00 pm at Mission Community College, Hospitality Management Meeting Facility, 3000 Mission College Blvd., Santa Clara (Great America Parkway exit off 101).

Co-sponsored by CNPS, Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter, BAA-PCCF, PLAN, Environmental Awareness Association (Student club at Mission Community), Committee for Green Foothills and Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society. Free & open to the public. For more information call 650-962-9876 or 650-390-8411. NOTE: Come early at 6:30 pm to partake in refreshments and hear about the Burrowing Owl controversy at Mission Community College.

Edgewood Interpretive Center Update

Chapter members donated \$2,000 to the San Mateo County Parks & Recreation Foundation to help fund the first phase of the project to build an interpretive center at Edgewood Park & Preserve. This generous support was more than that needed for the \$1,250 match from the chapter. For more information: Julia Bott at 650-321-5812, julia@supportparks.org or SMCPRF, 215 Bay Road, Menlo Park, CA 94025.

Edgewood Wildflower Walks 2001

By Dianne Hunt, Docent Coordinator, Edgewood County Park & Preserve: Our walk schedule is inserted in this issue of the *Blazing Star*. Watch for AAA's VIA Magazine calendar section for our walks listed in their March/April issue. Our free Docent-led walks will be every Saturday and Sunday, leaving at 10:00am and returning at 1:00pm beginning March 3 through June 17. All March & June walks begin at the Old Stage Day Camp entrance and all April & May walks begin at the 280/Edgewood Road Park and Ride. If your group is interested in a Docent-led walk during the week, please call me for reservations at (650) 261-1935. For more information and updates on what's blooming visit www.friendsofedgewood.org.

First Native Bees of the Year

Osmia ribifloris, the blueberry bee, has become active at the Heiple nest boxes. This is a metallic green bee that looks and acts a lot like a fly. It specializes in members of the Heath Family with the closed bell shaped flowers such as *Arctostaphylos*, *Arbutus* and *Vaccinium*. It is no surprise that they are active now - the plants it likes are in flower now! (*Ed. note: Thanks to Paul Heiple and Bill Prince for making & donating bee nest boxes to our chapter – the information provided by Paul and the boxes are met with enthusiasm at our sales & displays*)

International Broom Initiative

The International Broom Initiative (IBI), of which **CNPS** is a founding member, is moving forward with plans for an international consortium to conduct a program of biological control on the group of woody leguminous pest plants that includes the brooms (approx 6-7 species in several genera) and gorse. There is great advantage to tackling all of these closely-related plants at once, because there may be some overlap in natural predators; an additional efficiency is provided by pooling several nations' funds for the overseas portion of the research. The United States' share of the multi-year program is \$265,000 annually. The IBI is asking Senator Barbara Boxer and Congressman Mike Thompson of the north coast to introduce a bill to fund this research program. It is important that legislators know there is broad support for the program. Please write to them, even if you are not in Thompson's district, expressing support for this program and cc your representative. Additional information about the IBI can be found on the CalEPPC website: www.caleppc.org, or you can contact me. It would also be helpful to have county Boards of Supervisors pass resolutions of support for IBI, as that gives the issue cachet and greater visibility, and it will help motivate legislators. Please contact me for sample wording for such a resolution: Jake Sigg 338 Ortega St, San Francisco CA 94122, 415-731-3028, jsigg@slip.net

Restoration Conference – Friday, April 6

Our chapter is co-sponsoring the third annual Peninsula-South Bay restoration conference with BAA-PCCF, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District & Native Habitats. Location is coastal areas between Half Moon Bay and Ano Nuevo. When details are finalized an email message will be sent to chapter members. Those without email may contact Georgia Stigall at 650-941-1068 (17287 Skyline Blvd #102, Woodside, CA 94062) OR Don Mayall at 650-856-7579.

CHAPTER FIELD TRIPS

March 10, 10 AM - San Bruno Mountain County Park: Ken Himes and Mary Simpson lead this early spring trip through one of the last intact remnants of the Franciscan flora on the Peninsula. The endemic San Bruno Mountain manzanita, coast rock cress, Franciscan wallflower, and footsteps of spring will be in flower. Take 101 N, exit Brisbane. Proceed on Old Bayshore and pass Brisbane. Turn left onto Guadalupe Parkway to park entrance and meet in the parking lot just beyond the park entrance station. For details call Ken Himes, 650-591-8560.

March 11, 10 AM - Pulgas Ridge mosses & liverworts with Dan Norris: From interstate 280, take the Edgewood Road exit. Travel 0.75 miles northeast on Edgewood Road toward San Carlos and Redwood City. Turn left (north) on Crestview Drive, and then immediately turn left on Edmonds Road. Limited roadside parking is available along Crestview Drive and Edmonds Road. There are no water or restroom facilities available. The trail starts out through a blue oak woodland at the bottom of a canyon. There is a moderate elevation gain. The trail, about three miles round trip, goes through a chaparral area at the top of the ridge, then turns back down and ends in mixed oak woodland.

March 11, 10 AM - Coal Mine Ridge: Early spring flowers, nice views, 4 mile hike. Meet at Alpine Rd & Willowbrook Dr. in Portola Valley. From 280 take Alpine Rd. west about 4 miles. Park on Willowbrook. For more info contact **Tom Cochrane** at trailtraveller@webtv.net or 650-969-3181.

March 19-24 - Anza-Borrego Desert Trip: I have only nine reservations taken so far for the twenty-five campsites. The web site reports that the rainfall has been below average. But at this time the bloom appears to be on track for an average year due to lower evaporation resulting from cooler than average temperatures. Call **Paul Heiple** at 650-854-7125 for your reservation.

March 24 - Rare Plants of the Serpentine Grasslands: Toni Corelli has permission to visit several locations in the San Francisco Watershed to see the rare plants that grow there. Six spaces remain open for this rare opportunity and a waiting list will be maintained when those slots are filled. Call Ken Himes (650) 591-8560 to make or cancel reservations and for directions.

March 25 - Mt. Tamalpais : The focus of the Mt. Tamalpais trip will be to see *Calypso bulbosa*, the fairy slipper orchid. We are near the southern limit of this orchid and Mt. Tamalpais is the closest place I know of with large stands of these plants. Several color varieties grow on the mountain, we should see several of them. We will also visit a very interesting serpentine area on the mountain. Sargent Cypress (*Cupressus sargentii*), musk bush (*Ceanothus jepsonii*) and Tamalpais manzanita (*Arctostaphylos hookeri ssp. montana*) will be some of the species to look for along with many old favorites found on the mountain. I am still waiting for calls on this trip. Call **Paul Heiple** at 650-854-7125 for details.

March 31, 10 AM - Stile Ranch: Jim Sugai and Dick Gehrler will co-lead a wildflower hike to Stile's Ranch, through serpentine grasslands and chaparral. With the cooperation of the seasons, expect to see *Claytonia gysophiloides*, *Allium*, *Linanthus*, *Gilia*, Goldfields, Morning Glory, Leather Oak and Black Sage. Directions: From Highway 85 south, exit Almaden Expressway south. Proceed to end, turn right onto Harry Road (traffic light). Left on McKean Road, Continue about 1 mile. Left on Fortini. Go to end, turn left on San Vicente. Parking lot on right about 300 feet. Jim 408/356-6003 / Dick 408/268-6922.

April 7 & 8, 10 AM - The Flora Across the Fault: Two linked field trips to explore the flora and geology in two county parks less than a mile from one another. Join **Ken Himes and Paul Heiple** as we examine the plants and rocks, which are in many respects very different. See *Collinsia multicolor*, *Quercus douglasii*, *Layia platyglossa* and *Castilleja densiflora* at Edgewood; and *Anemone oregana*, *Viola ocellata*, *Trillium ovatum* and *Whipplea modesta* at Huddart. Meet April 7 at 10 AM in the Day Camp Parking lot, one mile east of I 280 on Edgewood Road. Meet April 8 at 10 AM in the Huddart Park lot just inside the Kings Mountain Road entrance station. Bring water and a lunch for both hikes.

April 7 & 14, Coyote Ridge: A good time to see this remarkable area is in spring, after the rains stop, the Bay checkerspot butterfly emerges and the sheets of wildflowers are there. The best way to experience it is to volunteer your skills in photography, plant identification, vegetation surveying or other help with planned research. We expect to have two public walks, tentatively scheduled for April 7 and 14. This is a research facility, managed by Stanford University, and access to this fragile area is strictly controlled. There is a limit on the number of people and cars. We feel that public awareness of this unique ecological area is essential to its preservation, and will make every effort to accommodate serious visitors willing to follow the rules necessary to protect the habitat and help in our conservation effort. You may reserve a space by calling **Don Mayall** 650-856-7579 after March 4, 2001. Last year's conditions were such that a three mile walk, with 600 foot elevation gain was necessary for participants. By state CNPS policy we cannot arrange car pooling. We will need your phone number to re-confirm. Rain affects conditions and the trips will not be finalized until the day before.

April 21, 10 AM- St. Joseph Hill/ Lexington: Join **Jim Sugai and Dick Gehrler** for a beautiful hike on the same trail that the native Americans used many years ago. St. Joseph's Hill is at the 1,250 foot level which will give us some nice views as we wander in our search for wildflowers. Directions: meet at the Lexington Dam boat launch parking lot. From southbound Highway 17, take the Bear Creek Road exit, cross over the highway and go 0.4 miles north on Highway 17 to Alma Bridge Road. Follow Alma Bridge Road over the top of the dam. Continue beyond the dam to the parking lot on the right. Jim 408/356-6003 / Dick 408/268-6922.

May 5, 10 AM - Woods Road/Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve: Join Jim Sugai and Dick Gehrler for a beautiful walk with nice views of the valley. Along the way, there will be Oak, Madrone, Calif. Nutmeg, *Ceanothus*, *Holodiscus* and many spring wildflowers. Directions: From Highway 85 south, exit Almaden Expressway south. Proceed 4 miles, Turn right onto Almaden Road (traffic light). Proceed 3 miles, through the town of New Almaden. Pull into Almaden Quicksilver County Park parking lot on right, just after leaving town. Jim 408/356-6003 / Dick 408/268-6922.

May 6, 10 AM - Eagle Rock: Discover this little known parkland in Santa Cruz Co. We will be hiking through Redwood, Chaparral, and Knobcone Pine communities. Plants of interest are: Santa Cruz Cypress (endemic), Santa Cruz Manzanita (endemic), Redwood Penstemon, Calif Milkwort, and more. The trail is about 4 miles round trip with 1000 ft. elev. gain. Some parts are slippery, rocky, and with tree obstacles. Great views too! Limit 20 people. E-mail **Tom Cochrane** at trailtraveller@webtv.net or call 650-969-3181 for reservations. Directions: from downtown Saratoga take Hwy Nine 22 miles to downtown Boulder Creek, turn right on Hwy. 236, go 6.4 miles to Little Basin Road, turn left at the H-P sign. Trailhead is 1.2 miles down, to left of the H-P gate. Parking will be on pullouts on the sides of the road.

May 12, 10 AM - Pescadero Marsh, Beach and Bean Hollow: **Toni Corelli** will lead a walk in the coastal scrub and marsh communities. Meet in the Pescadero Beach Parking lot just south of the Pescadero Creek Bridge. The trip lasts until 4 PM so bring food and water. Call Ken Himes (650) 591-8560 for information.

May 18-20, CNPS Trip to Pine Hill, El Dorado County: On Saturday we will visit a 40 acre private ranch which has been carefully restored, and return to **Joanne Geggatt's** for a potluck dinner in the evening. On Sunday we will visit the Pine Hill Botanical Reserve in the morning and then be free to leave for home in the early afternoon. Camping for those who are self contained can be arranged at the Geggatt's or there are a few motels nearby. To reserve a space on this trip call **Jean Struthers** at 650-941-2586. Limit of 16.

Deadline for the next *Blazing Star*: Friday, April 13, 2001

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