



California Native Plant Society
Santa Clara Valley Chapter

THE BLAZING STAR

September-October 2015

GENERAL MEETING & PROGRAM

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

The Distribution and Ecology of Vernal Pools, A talk by Carol Witham

“Those who submissively allow themselves to be packed and brined down in the seats of a stage-coach, who are hurled into Yosemite by ‘favorite routes,’ are not aware that they are crossing a grander Yosemite than that to which they are going...” John Muir, referring to the “great central plain of California.”

From the cracked mud and seemingly barren plains comes an eruption of color on the alluvial terraces of the Great Valley of California. A succession of rainbows of color in concentric rings around the drying vernal pools – small, rain-filled depressions with an impermeable layer of clay, hardpan or volcanic material that prevents the water from percolating downward – vernal pools support a flora and fauna found nowhere else on the face of this planet. Vernal pools were once widespread in the Great Valley, as were the wildflowers that characterize these unique habitats; about 90% of the state’s vernal pools are now gone.

Enjoy a program on this fascinating habitat by one of the state’s authorities on the subject. Carol Witham, editor of *Ecology, Conservation, and Management of Vernal Pool Ecosystems*, will present a slideshow on the distribution, ecology, and unique flowers and aquatic organisms of vernal pools.

Carol Witham is a botanical and biological consultant. She is regarded as an expert in vernal pools and their rare, threatened and endangered plants and animals. In 2013, Carol received an Environmental Achievement Award from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for her work on vernal pool education and advocacy. As a volunteer with CNPS, Carol leads its campaign to preserve vernal pools and their associated grasslands. She owns and maintains the website www.vernalpools.org.

Directions: From Foothill Expy., travel ½ mile on San Antonio Rd. towards the Bay, cross Hillview and turn right into the driveway; the library is on the left. From El Camino, travel towards the hills on San Antonio Rd., cross Edith and turn left into the unmarked driveway just before Hillview. The sign on San Antonio Rd. reads “Civic Center, Library and History Museum.” Enter through the lobby of the main entrance.



Greg Kareofelas

Carol Witham standing in a vernal pool

CNPS general meetings are free and open to the public. For more information, contact Chapter President Stephen Rosenthal at sailinsteve@sbcglobal.net or the Chapter phone at (650) 260-3450.

Save the Date!

Our November General Meeting will include our **annual potluck dinner and Chapter elections**. It will be held on **Saturday, November 7** at the Shoup Garden House.

Chapter Nursery Introduces Monthly Member Sale Days

See page 2

Chapter Fall Native Plant Sale, October 17

See enclosed poster for details, and page 2 to volunteer

CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Monthly Sales at Native Plant Nursery

Have you wished the Chapter Nursery was open more often than just twice a year (for the Spring and Fall Plant Sales)? We have some exciting news to share with Chapter members: the nursery will now open once a month every month to make it convenient for you to browse and buy plants at any time of year.

The Monthly Member Sale days will coincide with nursery workday hours when volunteers will be available to assist you. Due to limited resources, the Monthly Member Sale days are open to CNPS members only; you can join or renew your membership on the day of the sale itself. Proceeds from nursery plant sales are the major source of funding for all Chapter activities.

By the time you read this, our first Monthly Member Sale may already have taken place, on Wednesday, August 26, 10am - 1pm. The September Monthly Sale will take place on **Wednesday, September 30, 10am - 1pm**.

The **Fall Sale is scheduled for Saturday October 17, from 10am - 3pm**, and will be open to the general public.

The Monthly Member Sales will resume on **November 4** and continue on the **first Wednesdays** of the month during winter workday hours, **noon - 3pm**. In May 2016, the nursery switches back to summer hours, **10am - 1pm**. Volunteers are welcome to attend regular nursery workdays, every Wednesday and Thursday during these hours.

The nursery will maintain a current inventory of sale plants on the Chapter website (www.cnps-scv.org) so you can check if the plants you are looking for are available. Sale dates are posted under "Events" on the website.

We are very pleased to be able to offer this opportunity to CNPS members, and look forward to seeing you at Hidden Villa on the new Monthly Member Sale days. Park in the Dana Center lot and bring a box to take your plants home.

If you have any questions about the new Monthly Member Sale days, please contact Chapter Nursery Manager Melanie Cross, at melanie@pcross.com or (650) 847-1350.

Directions: Hidden Villa is located on 26870 Moody Road west of Foothill College. From I-280 in Los Altos Hills, take the Moody Road exit and head west. Two miles west of Foothill College, look for the Hidden Villa sign and

driveway on the left. Proceed over the bridge, and drive about ¼ mile to the large parking lot on the right. The Native Plant Nursery is at the greenhouse just beyond the Dana Center. On the day of the plant sale, parking volunteers will direct you where to park.

**Native Plant Sale – Sat., October 17
10am – 3pm**

Free Talk 1 - 2pm: Must-Have Native Plants for Bay Area Gardens

With over 6,000 California native plants to choose from, how can you decide which ones to grow in your home garden? Come to this talk to learn about a short list of plants that are easy to grow, beautiful to look at, and attract beneficial insects and birds to your garden year round.

GWN Table, All Day: Help in Choosing the Goals and Right Plants for Your Garden Site

Bring an accurate scaled drawing of your garden, along with *printed* pictures, and your garden's sun exposure and views. We'll give you suggestions on which plants would do best in your garden. Many of these plants will be available for sale that day.

We'll also have sample garden plans gathered from various sources that you can use as a template for your own garden design. You can also let us know about other factors, such as whether you have deer, gophers, extremely heavy clay or rocky soil, how much you want to water, and any creatures you'd like to attract. We'll have four garden designers available to help you with your plant selection.

Native Plant Sale - Call for Volunteers

Our Fall Native Plant Sale will be held on Saturday, October 17, from **10am to 3pm** at our Hidden Villa nursery in Los Altos Hills. Once again we're asking everyone who can to come and help with the sale. Most of the jobs listed below don't require expert knowledge of plants, and **you can choose to work one or two hours** or all day.

Before the sale, you may help prepare the nursery at three special **nursery workdays**, including labeling plants and weeding the garden outside the nursery. We'll work from **10am - 1pm on Wednesday - Friday, October 14 - 16**. On the day of the sale, we will need people to:

- Help set up before the sale (**starting at 8am**)
- Help with parking
- Answer customers' questions about the plants and help them decide which plants to purchase

- Write up the sales tags before customers go to the cashiers to pay for their plants
- Help customers take their purchases to their cars and bring back the wagons and carts to the nursery
- Help clean up after the sale (3 - 4pm)

The plant sales are always lots of fun to work at, and we provide **lunch** to volunteers. To volunteer on sale day please contact:

Horticultural consultation: Ray Deutsch (650) 365-6136, ray.deutsch@yahoo.ca

Writing sales tags: Georgia Stigall (650) 941-1068, georgiastigall@yahoo.com

Parking director: Carolyn Dorsch (650) 804-6162 (evenings) or cdorsch1@aol.com

Miscellaneous: Melanie Cross (650) 847-1350 or Melanie@pcross.com



David King

California Vernal Pool

Gardening with Natives

Gardening with Natives (GWN), a special interest group within the Chapter, includes beginning and seasoned native plant gardeners, along with landscape architects and designers. GWN offers over 30 talks at public libraries throughout the year, which are free and open to all.

This year's themes are *How I Did It* and *Maintaining Your Native Garden*. The monthly speakers will share tips on how they created their native garden or on a specific garden maintenance task. For more information, visit www.cnps-scw.org/index.php/gardening/gardening-with-natives.

These programs are made possible by the co-sponsoring libraries and our volunteers who help with program logistics. If you would like to help organize similar programming at a library near you, contact sdosaka@sustainable-landscape.com.

How I Did It: Creating a Bee-Friendly Garden, a talk by Jamie Pawelek

Wednesday, Sept 2, 6-7:30 PM, Pacifica Sharp Park Library, 104 Hilton Way, Pacifica, (650) 355-5196

Come hear about the benefits of native bee habitat gardening. Learn about the biology and ecology of native bees and their important role in our ecosystems. The presenter will describe the most common bees found in urban areas and how homeowners can use native plants to attract these valuable pollinators to their own gardens.

Jaime Pawelek is the project manager for the California Statewide Urban Bee Survey in the Urban Bee Lab at UC Berkeley. Her work includes identifying the lab's collections of Californian and Costa Rican bees, managing the experimental bee garden on campus, updating the website and Facebook page, and giving talks and garden tours throughout the state. She also designs bee-friendly habitat gardens with her business, Wild Bee Garden Design. Look for the lab's new book, *California Bees & Blooms: A Guide for Gardeners and Naturalists*, available now through Heyday Books.

No Mow Native Lawns: How to Select, Install & Care for Them, a talk by Jodie Sheffield

Tuesday, September 15, 7:00-8:30 PM, Saratoga Library, 13650 Saratoga Ave., Saratoga (408) 867-6126

Learn about the variety of native lawns which are available and can save you water. See photos of many installations that illustrate how these meadow-like sods create beautiful and natural spaces. Hear how to manage these water-wise plants and establish your native sod to give it the best start possible. Understand the best management options for mowing and caring for these sturdy native grasses.

Jodie Sheffield is a Seed Specialist in charge of Research and Development for Delta Bluegrass Company located in Stockton, California. With over 25 years of experience in the turf-grass industry, Jodie has worked with plant breeders, seed producers and research facilities throughout California and the Pacific Northwest developing premium, quality turf-grass sod.

Easy-to-Grow and Drought-Tolerant Native Plants, two dates and locations

Are you new to growing drought-tolerant native plants? Do you want to include them in your garden for beauty, habitat

and sustainability, but don't know where to begin? Come to these talks and learn about the many easy-to-grow native trees, shrubs, perennials, and annuals for the home garden. Include these in your garden now for low-water use next summer!

Tuesday, Sep. 29, 7:00-8:30 PM, Morgan Hill Library, 660 West Main Ave., Morgan Hill (408) 779-3196

Arvind Kumar has been gardening with native plants for over 13 years and is a past president of our Chapter of CNPS. A true advocate of the environment, he helped start the Going Native Garden Tour in 2003, has worked on native plant restoration projects at Lake Cunningham in San Jose, and received the Water Champion award from the Silicon Valley Water Conservation Coalition in 2013.

Wednesday, Oct. 14, 7:00-8:30 PM, Los Altos Library, 13 S. San Antonio Road, Los Altos (650) 948-7683

Nancy McClenny has exchanged growing bacteria and fungi in Petri dishes for exploring the science, beauty, and survival strategies of California native plants. After taking courses in California native flora from Foothill and Merritt Colleges, and having volunteer experiences with CNPS Gamble Garden, the East Bay's Regional Parks Botanic Garden and Acterra, Nancy delights in digging in the dirt and sharing her garden experiences with others. Her Palo Alto garden has appeared on the Going Native Garden Tour for three years.

Replace your Lawn with Drought-tolerant Native Plants, a talk by Annaloy Nickum

Wed., Oct. 7, 7:00-8:30 PM, Redwood City Library, 1044 Middlefield Road, Redwood City (650) 780-7018

You stopped watering your lawn because of the drought and because you wanted something new, but now the "lawn" is full of weeds. What do you do? Come to this talk and be inspired to create a beautiful, water-wise garden! See a variety of no-lawn landscaping styles and ideas. Get professional tips on removing that weed-filled patch called a lawn, learn to choose climate-adapted native plants, and find out how you can qualify for landscape rebates. You'll see how to have a lush landscape without that water-hogging grass.

Annaloy Nickum formed Wildscapes Garden Design in 1998 to re-introduce California native plants into homeowners' gardens. She mixes these locals with

compatible non-natives and provides year-round interest to her clientele. She has been a garden design consultant for Yerba Buena Native Plant Nursery in Half Moon Bay since 2000, and has created gardens along the foggy coast, in the dry chaparral foothills of east San Jose, in the windy hills of Daly City, in the Redwood climates of Boulder Creek, and with many oak woodlands in between.

Using Graywater with Your Native Plants, a talk by Christina Berteza

Wed., Oct. 21, 7:00-8:30 PM, Redwood City Library, 1044 Middlefield Road, Redwood City (650) 780-7018

We are in our fourth year of drought and it is imperative that we conserve every precious drop of water. Graywater is a great way to re-use water from inside the house for landscape irrigation outside of the house. Come learn how you can install a simple laundry-to-landscape system and which native plants are best suited for this type of irrigation.

Christina Berteza served a four-year apprenticeship in Local 159, Plumbers and Steamfitters and was the first woman admitted into the program. She became a contractor in 1996 and has plumbed quite a few "alternative" houses, including straw bale and rammed earth. She is also interested in the spiritual aspects of water, and creates fountains and water features.

Replace your Lawn with Plantas Nativas de California, a talk in Spanish & English by Pete Veilleux

Wednesday, October 28, 7:00-8:30 PM, Campbell Library, 77 Harrison Ave., Campbell (408) 866-1991

Come to this special presentation in Spanish and English designed especially for Hispanic gardeners. Hear about the benefits of replacing a dry, brown lawn with a garden full of native flowers and life. You'll lower your water bill, while attracting butterflies, bees and birds.

Pete Veilleux is a master designer, nurseryman and photographer. Pete creates gardens using native plants for long-lasting, self-sustaining landscapes which help people get the maximum use and pleasure from their patch of earth. He is the owner and propagator of East Bay Wilds Native Plant Nursery (www.eastbaywilds.com) in Oakland and is a tireless advocate of native gardening.

Keying with Natives

Join us as we learn and practice methods of identifying the native plants of our region (aka keying). From beginners to more advanced, there are challenges for all. Bring in plant samples if you have some or just come and work with the materials provided. We discuss the various plant books and practice keying with them. Microscopes are also available.

The upcoming dates are **Fridays, September 25 and October 30 from 6:30 - 8:30pm**. We meet at the Peninsula Conservation Center (PCC), 3921 E. Bayshore Road in Palo Alto. For more information, please contact Joe Cernac at joecernac@sbcglobal.net or (408) 292-5465; or Sally Casey at (408) 377-0989.

Directions to the PCC: From Hwy. 101 take the San Antonio Rd. exit and head north. Take your next left onto East Bayshore, which will curve left then right. Take your next right onto Corporation Way. Your next left is the entrance to the PCC parking lot. The meeting rooms are on the first floor.

CONSERVATION CORNER

Conservation (Formerly LIVECoRPs)

Our Chapter's conservation committee meets on the **first Thursday** of the month. The next meetings will be on **Thursdays, September 3 and October 1 at 7pm** at the PCC in Palo Alto. Please join us in our important work. For questions, comments or concerns, please contact Conservation Chair Linda Ruthruff at ldruff@hotmail.com. For **directions** to the PCC, please see the previous Keying with Natives article.

Weed Control Strategies

By Stephen Rosenthal, Alum Rock Restoration Project

All gardeners have to deal with weeds, but efficiency is extra important when restoring several acres at a time. In addition, at Alum Rock and many other restoration sites, we are not allowed to use herbicides, so most of our efforts are focused on weeding by hand.



Stephen Rosenthal
Monoculture of weeds, likely topping a rich seed bank

One of the most important tools is knowledge. Once we know what the weed is, we can go to one of several sources of information on how to best control the weed. But first, how do you identify the weed? There are several possibilities:

1. **UC Davis** has a weed ID tool, weedid.wisc.edu/ca/weedid.php.
2. **Calflora.org** offers a section entitled **What Grows Here?** In the status dropdown select non-native, then move the map and zoom in to the general area where you are working. If you know if it's an annual select that as well. Click search and you'll get a list of plants with photos. It's likely to be a long list, but the tool is easy to use and free.
3. **The Jepson Manual** lists many weeds; you can key out your weed there.
4. **XID Services** makes a Windows PC weed ID program as well as an Android app. There are also other programs that will identify weeds and native plants from Flora ID Northwest. Visit XIDservices.com.

Once you have a general idea of what the weed is, you can use these sources to find out how to control it:

1. The "bible" is the two volume set *Weeds of California and the Western States* by Joseph De Tomaso.
2. **UC Davis** has an online "Weed Research & Information Center" at wric.ucdavis.edu.
3. **Cal-IPC** has a book, *The Weed Workers Handbook* that lists strategies for about 30 of the worst weeds in the state. The book itself is available online here: Cal-IPC.org/ip/management/wwh/pdf/18601.pdf.

In areas that have been infested for years, there is likely to be a huge seed bank. One strategy is to scrape the soil with a McLeod, which is sort of a hoe and a rake on steroids. Scraping the soil takes up much of the seed bank, and makes weed control easier. It's important to dispose of the scrapings, which will contain many seeds, in a way that they won't become a problem again. This is not a strategy that you will want to repeat, as you will be removing mulch and other material that would normally break down and enrich the soil. But in heavily infested areas, like at the top of Alum Rock Park's Todd Quick Trail, scraping also removes all the old weed skeletons which makes it easier to find weeds when they are young and easy to remove.

A small hand tool that we often use is a Hori Hori knife. It's great for digging up the bulblets of oxalis. It's narrow so it can disturb only a small area of the soil. It has a sharp blade on one side and a serrated edge on the other. It's also really good for transplanting, if you need to get into a crowded area without disturbing other plants.

Where we can, we pick up weeds and remove them from the area. That way, seeds can't reinfest the area. We remove weed material whenever it's feasible, and especially when the plants are in flower or fruit. But sometimes, in a park, the area is a mile or more away from a road. In this case, we end up making a REALLY big weed pile. The base of the big pile stays wet, so most seeds just rot. Those that do germinate don't get light, so they die.

We work to restore the rare, federally endangered fountain thistle (*Cirsium fontinale* var. *fontinale*) by removing brush and trees that would like to take over this herbaceous community.

We meet at the end of Lessingia Court in San Mateo. If you can't locate it on Google or Mapquest, email jakesigg@earthlink.net, or (415) 731-3028. Optional camaraderie over Greek pizza afterwards.



Stephen Rosenthal

Solarization can be used to kill off the seed bank. Here, at the top the Todd Quick Trail, you can see we've laid down 2000 sq. ft. of plastic solarization.

CHAPTER FIELD TRIPS

No field trips for September - October

Stay tuned for a Bryophyte hike to be announced in the next Blazing Star, plus consider volunteering at a habitat restoration project to get your dose of nature. See the list of restoration projects at the end of this newsletter.

CHAPTER OFFICERS FOR 2015

Consider "upgrading" your Chapter participation by chairing or co chairing one of our many activities or becoming a Chapter officer. For more information, contact Stephan Buckhout at yscottie@pacbell.net or (408) 255-6233; or contact any of the Chapter officers listed below.

CHAPTER SERVICE OUTINGS

Habitat Restoration at Edgewood Park

Our 26-year volunteer restoration program strives to make Edgewood Park and Natural Preserve an inspirational showcase of all CNPS stands for. Come share the beauty of Edgewood with us and help keep Edgewood native!

Our **9am Friday** sessions run year round; **5:30pm Wednesday** sessions continue through Daylight Savings Time (DST). Since DST ends November 1, our last Wednesday session will be **October 28**.

For Edgewood Weed Warrior (EWW) information, schedules, and meeting places visit www.cnps-scvc.org or phone Friday session leader Paul Heiple at (650) 854-7125.

Sat Oct 31 10am - Noon Fountain Thistle Work Party (San Mateo)

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

Title	Name	Phone	Email
President	Stephen Rosenthal	(408) 923-6562	sailinsteve@sbcglobal.net
Vice President	Madeline Morrow	(408) 741-1150	madelinemorrow@earthlink.net
Recording Secretary	Radhika Thekkath	(650) 473-1537	rthekkath@yahoo.com
Treasurer	Carolyn Dorsch	(650) 804-6162	cdorschl@aol.com
Past President	Arvind Kumar	(408) 715-7020	arvind.kumar@cnps.org

To join our Chapter news email list please visit www.cnps-scvc.org/index.php/contact-us/sign-up.

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT *BLAZING STAR*

Saturday, October 3, 2015

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

Santa Clara Valley Chapter California Native Plant Society
3921 East Bayshore Road
Palo Alto, CA 94303



Join CNPS Today!

Members receive the *Fremontia*, the *Bulletin*, and the Chapter newsletter, and other benefits listed at www.cnps.org/membership

Name _____

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Chapter _____

Membership level (check one):

- \$45 Individual
 \$75 Family
 \$100 Plant Lover
 \$300 Patron
 \$600 Benefactor
 \$1500 Mariposa Lily
 \$25 Student/Limited Income

Areas of interest:

- Advocacy
 Botany
 Conservation
 Education
 Field Trips
 Gardening
 Plant ID

Donations above the membership level are gratefully accepted.

Dues and donations are tax-deductible. Make your check payable to "CNPS" and mail it with this form to:

CNPS Membership, 2707 K Street Suite 1, Sacramento, CA 95816 • 916-447-2677 • fax 916-447-2727

FIRST-CLASS

CALENDAR OF EVENTS (page # in parentheses)

Sep 2 Wed GWN – Bee-Friendly Garden - Pawelek (3)
Sep 3 Thu Conservation Committee meeting (5)
Sep 15 Tue GWN – No Mow Lawns – Sheffield (3)
Sep 18 Fri **General Meeting – Witham** (1)
Sep 25 Fri Keying with Natives (5)
Sep 29 Tue GWN – Drought-Tolerant – Kumar (4)
Sep 30 Wed Monthly Member native plant sale (2)
Oct 1 Thu Conservation Committee meeting (5)
Oct 3 Sat **Newsletter submittal deadline** (6)
Oct 7 Wed GWN – Replace Your Lawn – Nickum (4)
Oct 14 Wed Pre-sale nursery workday (2)
Oct 14 Wed GWN – Drought-Tolerant – McClenny (4)

Oct 15 Thu Pre-sale nursery workday (2)
Oct 16 Fri Pre-sale nursery workday (2)
Oct 17 Sat Fall Native Plant Sale (2)
Oct 21 Wed GWN – Greywater – Berteau (4)
Oct 22 Thu **Newsletter Mailing Party - 10am PCC**
Oct 28 Wed Last Edgewood weeding during DST (6)
Oct 28 Wed GWN – Plantas Nativas – Veilleux (4)
Oct 30 Fri Keying with Natives (5)
Oct 31 Sat Fountain thistle work party (6)
Wed & Thu Nursery workdays (2)
3rd Sat 8am Alum Rock Park Restoration (7)
Wed 5:30pm, Fri 9am Edgewood Weed Warriors (6)

The next Chapter Board meeting will be **Thu., October 8 at 7:00pm** at the PCC, 3921 E. Bayshore Road in Palo Alto.

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

For more information contact Stephen Rosenthal at sailinsteve@sbcglobal.net.

The California Native Plant Society is a statewide non-profit organization of amateurs and professionals with a common interest in California's native plants. The Society, working with its local chapters, seeks to increase understanding and to preserve the rich heritage of the native flora for future generations. Membership is open to all. Individual memberships are \$45.00 per year. If you have questions about your newsletter subscription, please contact membership@cnps-scvc.org. Address changes may be submitted to cnps@cnps.org and please put "member address change" in the subject line.