



California Native Plant Society  
Santa Clara Valley Chapter

# ***THE BLAZING STAR***

January-February 2009

## **MEMBERS' NIGHT AND GENERAL MEETING**

**Friday, January 23rd at 7:30 pm**  
**Los Altos Library Program Room**  
**13 So. San Antonio Road, Los Altos**

**Topic: Members' Slide Show – Special Plants, Places and Times of 2008**

California has many habitats and many plants, and each of us has a unique interpretation of its scenes. Low rainfall in 2007-08 meant that the flower displays weren't as numerous, but nature's beauty is there to be found if we only look for it. Share what you found with your fellow members, by presenting your favorite slides from 2008. Photos of anything, any place, or anyone related to native plants in 2008 are welcome. There will also be space for displaying prints, drawings and other plant-related material.

If you'd like to share photos or other materials, please RSVP to Kevin Bryant by **Sunday, January 18th** at [mtngreen17@verizon.net](mailto:mtngreen17@verizon.net) or (408) 353-8824, and let him know how many photos/what type of materials, and approximately how many minutes you'd like. Time allotted per person will depend on how many participants RSVP.

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

CNPS general meetings are free and open to the public. For additional information, contact Chapter President Kevin Bryant at [mtngreen17@verizon.net](mailto:mtngreen17@verizon.net) or (408) 353-8824.

## **CHAPTER ACTIVITIES**

### **Native Plant Nursery**

Our native plant nursery work sessions take place every **Wednesday, from 12noon to 3pm**. Bring garden gloves, sunhat, clippers, and your lunch if you like. Other tools will be provided at the nursery. Knowledge of plants is not necessary: your willingness to help is all that's required.

Save the dates! Our **Spring Native Plant Sale** will be held at the Nursery on **Saturday, April 4th, 2009**. Our annual **Wildflower Show** will be held **April 25th and 26th**, at Mission College in Santa Clara.

For more information, contact Jean Struthers at (650) 941-2586 or [JeanStruthers@att.net](mailto:JeanStruthers@att.net); or Ray Deutsch at (650) 365-6136 or [henrymarsh@yahoo.com](mailto:henrymarsh@yahoo.com).

**Directions:** Hidden Villa is located on Moody Road west of Foothill College. From Hwy 280 in Los Altos Hills, take the Moody Road exit and head west. Two miles west of Foothill College, look for the Hidden Villa sign and driveway on the left. Proceed over the bridge, and park in the visitor center lot to your right. The Native Plant Nursery is at the greenhouse just beyond the visitor center.

### **Gardening with Natives**

Gardening with Natives (GWN) is a special interest group within the Chapter which usually meets on the first **Thursday** of each month. The group is open to all, and includes a mix of seasoned native plant gardeners as well as beginners. Newcomers are always welcome.

### **Native Grasses for the Garden**

A talk and slide show by **David Amme**, President, California Native Grasslands Association

**Friday, January 9, 7-8:30 pm**

Los Altos Library Community Room, 13 S. San Antonio Road, Los Altos (408) 715-7020 (650) 948-7683  
[www.santaclaracountylib.org/losaltos](http://www.santaclaracountylib.org/losaltos)

Did you know that California native grasses are deep-rooted and long-lived, making them easy to grow and excellent for erosion control? Learn remarkable facts about these under-utilized plants from a foremost expert. David Amme is the incoming president of the California Native Grasslands Association, and regularly teaches a two-day identification class on grasses. The talk will cover outstanding California native grasses and how to incorporate them in your garden, including up-to-date information on how to design and develop your own meadow.

See **directions** to the Los Altos Library on page 1.

### **How to Remove Your Lawn**

A talk by **Deva Luna**, Sustainable Landscape Designer

**Thursday, February 5, 7:00pm**

Milpitas Library, 160 N Main Street, Milpitas  
(408) 715-7020 (408) 262-1171 x3616

**Made possible by the Friends of Milpitas Library**

So, you're considering removing your lawn and planting water-conserving, California native plants. Wonderful! Now what? Local landscape designer Deva Luna will present a talk covering the pros and cons of different lawn removal tactics, including sheet mulching, sod cutting, and rototilling. Deva spoke to our group last March and showed us many inspiring photos of lawn alternatives. This time, she will cover the specifics of how to physically remove the lawn, using photos and discussing what she has learned from experience over the years. Deva will also introduce a new lawn removal and replacement program called 'Natural Front Yards' that she has helped develop.

**Directions:** From Hwy 237 heading east from its intersection with I-880, go about 1-1/2 miles to the signal light at Milpitas Blvd. Turn left and the library entrance will be one of the first driveways on your right, just past City Hall. The Community Room is on your right, off the lobby just after you enter the library's main entrance.

For more information on the Gardening with Natives group, visit its website at [www.GardeningWithNatives.com](http://www.GardeningWithNatives.com). GWN maintains a Yahoo group with over 500 members, a true resource for native plant gardeners in this area. To join the Yahoo group, visit [groups.yahoo.com/group/GardeningWithNatives](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/GardeningWithNatives). To contact the GWN Steering Committee, email [GardeningWithNatives@yahoo.com](mailto:GardeningWithNatives@yahoo.com) or call Arvind Kumar at (408) 715-7020.

### **Native Hill Garden at Foothill College**

We have started pruning the garden in earnest, except for plants in seed such as Saint Catherine's lace which quail relish, and gum plant which provides an abundance of seed for finches. California fuchsia and Coulter's matilija poppy have been pruned back hard along with some of the coyote brush, all of which benefit from a hard pruning. We have started planting annual seeds of baby blue eyes, yarrow and tidy-tips in bare ground areas, while clarkia and California poppy seeds have been placed in the mulched areas.

At the request of the college we have started to plant more shrubs in high visibility areas that provide year-round foliage or color, such as coffeeberry, lemonadeberry, manzanitas and some sages.

An important role of the garden is education about the diversity of California's flora and the fauna it attracts. Moreover, our garden's location in a public area of the campus may help to change the public's visual perspective of how a garden should look: one viewpoint is that of a manicured, labor intensive, high pesticide and high water use landscape. Our garden illustrates a habitat garden that is more often "natural" in appearance but rich in biodiversity with low water and maintenance requirements.

As always, if you would like to volunteer at the garden or be added to the email list to be notified of upcoming workdays, contact Phil Higgins at [phidor@juno.com](mailto:phidor@juno.com) or (650) 941-4752.

### **Photo Group**

No meetings are scheduled for our Chapter Photo Group, and we are recruiting a chair or co-chairs to develop programs, invite speakers, and host the meetings. If you would like to help, please contact one of our Chapter officers and chairs listed at the end of this newsletter.

### **Keying with Natives**

Join other native plant enthusiasts in a fun and educational atmosphere as we hone our skills at plant identification (aka "keying"). We meet **6:30pm-8:30pm on the last Friday of each month, and one hour before** Chapter general meetings. Beginners are always welcome. We can show a way to identify most plants down to their families, and then discuss further ways to distinguish them.

If you have a mystery plant growing in your yard, bring in a sample and we can try to figure it out. It's also helpful to note the size of the plant, what conditions it is growing in, e.g., shade, sun, on a slope, along a creek, other associated

plants, etc. If there are nuts, fruits, leaves, etc., those are very important too in helping with the identification.

Upcoming meetings are **Fridays, January 30th and February 27th** at the PCC (Peninsula Conservation Center) building in Palo Alto, and before the Chapter General Meeting in January (see page 1). For details, contact David "Tex" Houston at [tex009@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tex009@sbcglobal.net) or (650) 303-2777; or Sally Casey at (408) 377-0989.

**Directions to the PCC:** PCC (Peninsula Conservation Center), 3921 E. Bayshore Road, Palo Alto. From Highway 101, take the "San Antonio North" exit, get immediately into the left-hand turn lane, and turn LEFT onto East Bayshore. This will curve around to the left, then right. Turn right on Corporation Way. Then turn into the first driveway on your left, which leads to the PCC parking lot.



**Western Hound's Tongue (*Cynoglossum grande*)**

## **CHAPTER SERVICE OUTINGS**

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

Join us as we remove invasive exotic plants and protect Edgewood's sensitive habitats. **Friday weeding sessions, starting at 9am**, occur year-round. Wednesday evening and special Saturday morning sessions will resume next spring.

For details, including schedules and meeting places, see our Weed Warriors website at [edgewood.thinkersrus.net](http://edgewood.thinkersrus.net),

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

## **CHAPTER FIELD TRIPS**

Chapter field trips are free and open to the public. They are oriented to conservation, protection and enjoyment of California native plants and wildlife, and we adhere to all rules and guidelines for the lands on which we are visiting.

**In our region it is very important to be prepared for hiking on rugged & steep terrain, wide temperature ranges and rapidly changing conditions at any time of year. All participants should wear sturdy footwear and carry sufficient water, sun protection, food, clothing layers, personal first aid and other supplies you may need. If you have any questions about your ability to participate in a particular field trip, please contact the trip leader in advance.**

### **Tue Feb 3 7pm Field Trip Planning Meeting**

Our Chapter has a rich history of exploring California's incredible flora through the first hand experience of field trips. Be a part of this tradition by contributing ideas for future field trip locations. Do you have a favorite place that you'd like to take the Chapter to see? Or maybe there's a hike where there are a few mystery plants you'd like identified?

We will meet at the Peninsula Conservation Center, located at 3921 E. Bayshore Road in Palo Alto. You don't need to be a field trip leader to contribute: simply bring your ideas and a sense of adventure. Or, if you are unable to attend, email Kevin Bryant ([mtngreen17@verizon.net](mailto:mtngreen17@verizon.net)) with your comments prior to the meeting.

The Yerba Buena Chapter of CNPS invites our members to attend the following field trip, led by Jake Sigg and Doug Allshouse. Space is limited, so please contact the leaders to reserve your spot.

### **Sat Feb 28 Fire-follower Walk at Owl and Buckeye Canyons (San Mateo County) 1-4 pm**

The fire that raged through San Bruno Mountain's Owl Canyon and spilled over into Buckeye Canyon in June 2008 was very hot deep in the canyon draws. Years of fire suppression built up a heavy fuel load, and the ensuing fire created upslope drafts that intensified the heat. As a result, those involved in the health of the mountain's biological (continued on page 5)

## ONGOING HABITAT RESTORATION PROJECTS

Join local volunteers at your favorite parks to help restore habitat for native flora and fauna. Projects include planting California natives, trail maintenance and of course, plenty of pulling weeds! Contact the listed organizers for details.

### **Arastradero Preserve in Palo Alto**

Remove invasive exotics and install native plants.  
2nd and 4th Saturdays year-round 9am - 1pm  
Wednesday evenings May through September  
Contact [arastradero@acterra.org](mailto:arastradero@acterra.org)  
[www.acterra.org/arastradero/volunteer.html](http://www.acterra.org/arastradero/volunteer.html)

### **CNPS Native Nursery Workdays**

Propagating and growing native plants  
Hidden Villa near Los Altos Hills  
Every Wednesday noon - 3pm  
Jean Struthers (650) 941-2586  
[JeanStruthers@att.net](mailto:JeanStruthers@att.net)  
Ray Deutsch (650) 365-6136  
[henrymarsh@yahoo.com](mailto:henrymarsh@yahoo.com)

### **Edgewood County Park and Natural Preserve**

Invasive species removal  
Fridays 9am, Wednesdays 5:30pm  
(during Daylight Savings Time)  
Occasional summer Saturdays 9am.  
Paul Heiple (650) 854-7125  
[pheiple@gmail.com](mailto:pheiple@gmail.com)  
John Allen [jcakwa@earthlink.net](mailto:jcakwa@earthlink.net)  
[edgewood.thinkersrus.net](http://edgewood.thinkersrus.net)

### **Edgewood Adopt-A-Highway**

I-280 at Edgewood Road Park & Ride  
1st Saturday of even numbered months 8:30am  
1st Sunday of odd numbered months 8:30am  
Ken Seydel (650) 369-2222 [kbseydel@gmail.com](mailto:kbseydel@gmail.com)  
[friendsofedgewood.org/adopt\\_highway/adopt-a-.htm](http://friendsofedgewood.org/adopt_highway/adopt-a-.htm)

### **Don Edwards SF Bay National Wildlife Refuge Environmental Education Center in Alviso**

Upland habitat restoration: remove invasives from area above salt marsh, planting CA natives.  
Tuesdays 9:30am - 2pm Genie Moore,  
[Genie\\_Moore@fws.gov](mailto:Genie_Moore@fws.gov) (408) 262-5513 x100

Garden workdays offered twice a quarter on Saturdays. Planting, pruning, weeding, etc. Visit [www.fws.gov/desfbay/Tideline/Activity.htm](http://www.fws.gov/desfbay/Tideline/Activity.htm) and look for "Community Service" or contact Lindy Nice at (408) 262-5513 ext 102.

### **Foothills Park in Palo Alto**

Broom and Thistle Eradication - Sundays 9am - noon  
Call or join email list for meeting location  
Jean Olmsted [jwo@svpal.org](mailto:jwo@svpal.org) (650) 493-3468  
[www.friendsoffoothillspark.org/volunteer.htm](http://www.friendsoffoothillspark.org/volunteer.htm)

### **Lake Cunningham Park's Native Garden**

2305 S. White Road, San Jose - Saturdays 9-11am  
Arvind Kumar (408) 715-7020  
[chhaprahiya@yahoo.com](mailto:chhaprahiya@yahoo.com)  
[groups.yahoo.com/group/lakecunninghamvolunteers](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/lakecunninghamvolunteers)



Wrenching Broom at Foothills Park  
*Franklin Olmsted*

### **Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District**

Projects include tending newly planted vegetation, trail maintenance, fence reconstruction, and weeding.  
[volunteer@openspace.org](mailto:volunteer@openspace.org). See the website for calendar:  
[www.openspace.org/volunteer/outdoor\\_service\\_projects.asp](http://www.openspace.org/volunteer/outdoor_service_projects.asp)

### **Native Hill at Foothill College**

12345 El Monte Road, Los Altos Hills  
Some Saturdays and Sundays 9am - noon. Join elist for dates. Phil Higgins [phidor@juno.com](mailto:phidor@juno.com) (650) 941-4752

### **Santa Clara County Open Space Authority**

Activities include habitat improvement.  
(408) 224-7476 [info@openspaceauthority.org](mailto:info@openspaceauthority.org)  
[www.openspaceauthority.org/volunteer](http://www.openspaceauthority.org/volunteer)

### **Santa Clara County Parks**

Activities include trail maintenance and invasives removal. Click on "Volunteer Opportunities" at [www.sccgov.org/portal/site/parks](http://www.sccgov.org/portal/site/parks)

### **Ulistac Natural Area Restoration Workdays**

Lick Mill Blvd. between Hope Dr. and Tasman Dr. in Santa Clara. Watering, weeding, mulching, planting oaks and native plants.  
1st Saturday and 3rd Sunday mornings each month  
[ulistac@scu.edu](mailto:ulistac@scu.edu) (408) 554-5555  
[scu.edu/cas/environmentalstudies/ulistac/volunteer](http://scu.edu/cas/environmentalstudies/ulistac/volunteer)

(continued from page 3)

communities feared that not only the shrubs but the deep-rooted bunchgrasses and forbs might have been root-killed.

If this should be the case it would be bad news indeed, as native perennials no longer establish as easily as they did before the advent of invasive plants in massive numbers. Now, fires are perhaps equally--or perhaps more--advantageous to weeds as native plants, and killing established native perennials would be an irremediable loss.

On the leaders' scouting trip in September, preliminary indications are that this has not happened. Even in this very dry year there was a good deal of stump-sprouting of trees and shrubs, an indication that the heat may not have been prolonged enough to kill roots.

So we expect an interesting field trip. Be prepared for rough terrain, including steep pitches, and going through dense patches of unburned shrubbery. Although February could be a tad early for wildflowers on this north-facing slope, it's likely we'll see plenty. And, regardless, the trip would be interesting even if there weren't any flowers. Bring water.

Contact Jake at (415) 731-3028 or jakesigg@earthlink.net or Doug (415) 584-5114 or dougsr@rcn.com for information on the meeting place and to **reserve your spot**. **Heavy rain cancels** the trip. If so, the trip will be postponed to **Sunday, March 1**.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*News and Activities from Other Organizations*

### **Edgewood Docent Training Begins Jan 28**

Friends of Edgewood Natural Preserve will offer docent training in January for our spring Wildflower Walks. Edgewood is a wonderful resource containing several plant communities in addition to the serpentine grasslands that are the highlight of our Wildflower Walks. Docents are vital to our ability to attract and educate the public about preservation and restoration projects as well as the bright serpentine flowers they see as they drive past on Highway 280.

Our training provides **Wednesday evening** presentations (in Redwood City) by very knowledgeable speakers, **Saturday hikes** through Edgewood led by these speakers, and a binder full of facts about the Natural Preserve. The training materials cost \$25.

To register or for more information, please email Mary Wilson at docent-trainer@friendsofedgewood.org or leave a phone message at 1(866) GO EDGEWOOD.

## **CHAPTER OFFICERS FOR 2009**

At our November general meeting, we elected our officers for 2009 (see table below).

The Chapter acknowledged and thanked outgoing officer Georgia Stigall, for her 10 years on the Chapter Executive Committee. She will remain on the Chapter Board as New Member Outreach chair.

The Chapter also appreciates Drew Shell for serving as Chapter Vice President in 2008. He will continue in his Board role as Conservation Chair, San Mateo County.

Contact information for all officers and chairs is on the Chapter website at [www.cnps-scv.org](http://www.cnps-scv.org). Click on "Officers & Chairs" in the left column of the home page.

We are looking for someone to help out with publicity since our publicity chair is taking on additional responsibilities as Chapter Vice President. To learn more about volunteering with the Chapter, to ask any other questions or to give suggestions, please contact one of our officers listed below.

Title	Name	Phone	Email
<b>President</b>	Kevin Bryant	(408) 353-8824	mtngreen17@ verizon.net
<b>Vice President</b>	Arvind Kumar	(408) 715-7020	chhaphrahiya@ yahoo.com
<b>Recording Secretary</b>	Leighton Nakata	(650) 947-9989	LeightonNakata @yahoo.com
<b>Treasurer</b>	Paul Heiple	(650) 854-7125	pheiple@ gmail.com
<b>Past President</b>	Judy Fenerty	(408) 655-3493	judy@ fenerty.com

To join our Chapter email list please send your request to [judy@fenerty.com](mailto:judy@fenerty.com).

## **DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT *BLAZING STAR***

**Saturday, February 7, 2009**

**Email: [mattsson@surfpix.net](mailto:mattsson@surfpix.net)  
Phone: (408) 255-3767**

---

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS****(page # in parentheses)****Jan 9 Fri** Gardening with Natives (1)**Jan 23 Fri** **Members' Night meeting** (1)**Jan 30 Fri** Keying with Natives (2)**Feb 3 Tue** Field trip planning meeting (3)**Feb 5 Thu** Gardening with Natives (2)**Feb 7 Sat** **Jan-Feb Newsletter Deadline** (5)**Feb 12 Thu** **Chapter Board meeting****Feb 27 Fri** Keying with Natives (2)**Feb 28 Sat** Fire Follower Walk (3)**Wed afts** Nursery work sessions (1)**Fri morns** Edgewood Park weeding (3)**Via Email List** Native Hill work sessions (2)

The next Chapter Board meeting will be **Thursday, February 12 at 7:00 pm**  
at the Peninsula Conservation Center, 3921 E. Bayshore Road in Palo Alto

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

---

The California Native Plant Society is a statewide non-profit organization of amateurs and professionals with a common interest in California's native plants. The Society, working with its local chapters, seeks to increase understanding and to preserve the rich heritage of the native flora for future generations. Membership is open to all. Individual memberships are \$45.00 per year. If you have questions concerning a new membership, renewal of a current membership, or if you wish to report a **change of address**, please contact the Membership Chairperson, CNPS, 3921 East Bayshore Road, Palo Alto, CA 94303 or email **henrymarsh@yahoo.com**.

---

The *Blazing Star* web address: [www.cnps-scv.org](http://www.cnps-scv.org)

Acknowledgement: Anne Warren for the *Blazing Star* logo. Printed on recycled paper.

---