MEMBERS’ NIGHT AND GENERAL MEETING

In this annual tradition, Chapter members share photos of notable plants and places they have visited in 2020. This was a unique year – the pandemic and travel restrictions made our wildflower forays more challenging and precious. Whether you captured a spring wildflower display or photographed native plants in your favorite spots later on in the year, please consider showing your images and/or stories with others at this fun event. Even if you don’t have any photos to share, join us for a midwinter celebration of the beauty and tenacity of native plants and their habitats.

If you’d like to display your photos, please sign up for a slot by Tuesday, January 19 at bit.ly/MembersNight2021.

How to attend: Via Zoom (preregistration required). The Zoom link takes you to a meeting registration form at Zoom’s website.

CNPS General Meetings are free and open to the public. For more information, contact Madeline Morrow at pastpresident@cnps-scv.org or the Chapter phone at (650) 260-3450.

NATIVE PLANT LECTURE SERIES

Join us for a virtual tour of the Renzel Ponds in Palo Alto, a freshwater human-made habitat adjacent to the Baylands that attracts diverse birdlife.

Bob Siegel has been exploring and photographing the wildlife of this area for many years. In pre-pandemic times, he led walks at Jasper Ridge and Año Nuevo. We were fortunate to have him present at the Photography Group meeting this past August, and realized that 15 minutes was not nearly enough. Prepare to be educated and amazed in this full program.

In his other life, Bob is a Professor in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology at Stanford. You can view his Renzel Ponds photos at web.stanford.edu/~siegelr/baylands/renzel.html and view more about him, including more of his photos, at web.stanford.edu/~siegelr/.

Robert Siegel
Marsh wren at Renzel Ponds, Palo Alto

Charley Pow
A bouquet of white buds and light green leaves of the Dr. Hurd manzanita (Arctostaphylos manzanita ‘Dr. Hurd’) is nicely set off by the red-brown bark of its many branches.
Manzanita! The word conjures visions of curvy reddish limbs reaching upward and outward into the sky, a feast for the fingers as well as the eyes. But there is much more to this plant than its striking beauty, including its talent for thriving in tough conditions. Have you ever wondered how 193 species and subspecies have managed to emerge since manzanita first appeared on the central California coast 37 million years ago?

Kate Marianchild is the author of *Secrets of the Oak Woodlands: Plants and Animals among California’s Oaks*. This award-winning bestseller is an engaging and beautifully illustrated romp through California’s most widespread habitat. With humor, affection, and scientific accuracy, Marianchild profiles the behaviors, social structures, anatomical marvels and co-evolutionary relationships of 22 plants and animals found in California’s oak woodlands.

Marianchild lives in a yurt near Ukiah surrounded by acorn woodpeckers, woodrats, newts and five kinds of oaks. When she is not giving talks, guiding walks or observing nature, she swims, sings and advocates for the preservation of native plants and the food webs that depend on them. More information, as well as the opportunity to purchase signed copies of her book, close-focus binoculars and oak identification guides may be found at [www.katemarianchild.com](http://www.katemarianchild.com).

**How to attend:** [via Zoom (preregistration required)](http://www.cnps-scv.org)

Or watch live or later on our YouTube channel at: [www.youtube.com/c/CNPSSantaClaraValley](http://www.youtube.com/c/CNPSSantaClaraValley).

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In January, when manzanitas of all shapes and sizes will be glowing with small white or pink flowers, author and naturalist Kate Marianchild will explain some of manzanita’s “mojo” – its profound partnerships with fungi and bumblebees; its super-thin skin that both helps and hinders it; and its waxy leaves that follow the sun from dawn to dusk. She’ll tell stories about pollination in middle C; unscrupulous “nectar thieves,” and bark that peels around summer solstice. She’ll also emphasize manzanita’s vital role in the lives of animals – from ants and silk moths to birds and bears.

**The Amazing Manzanita and All Her Relations**

*A talk by Kate Marianchild*  
*Wednesday, January 13 7:30 PM*

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**Gardening for Biodiversity with Native Plants, a talk by Shelkie Tao**  
*Wednesday, February 3, 7:30 PM*

Join us for another talk in our Native Plant Lecture Series. See our [Native Plant Lecture Series web page](http://www.cnps-scv.org) for details.

**How to attend:** [via Zoom (preregistration required)](http://www.cnps-scv.org)

Or watch live or later on our YouTube channel at: [www.youtube.com/c/CNPSSantaClaraValley](http://www.youtube.com/c/CNPSSantaClaraValley).
San Bruno Mountain is possibly the best undiscovered natural area in the greater San Francisco Bay Area. Thirteen rare and endangered plants, including six endemics, call the mountain their home. Four federally-threatened or endangered butterflies live and breed here, the only place on Earth where they all co-exist. All told, there are 42 species of butterflies, 200 species of birds, 16 mammals, 13 reptiles and 6 amphibians.

David Nelson is an orthopedic hand surgeon who has long been a student of nature. He took a CNPS tour of San Bruno Mountain led by Doug Allshouse in 2013 and was hooked by the beauty of the mountain and Doug’s talent for explaining nature. When he proposed doing a book on the mountain to Doug, he discovered that Doug was already working on one and welcomed his participation.

Doug Allhouse lives on San Bruno Mountain, 100 feet below the Saddle Trail, and has been exploring, studying, and recording their natural history since 1981. He was a founder and officer of Friends of San Bruno Mountain, beginning in 1996, as well as of the original Mission Blue Nursery in 2001. He has been working on a seven-year project with David Nelson writing an updated flora, The Natural History of the San Bruno Mountains.

How to attend: via Zoom (preregistration required)

Or watch live or later on our YouTube channel at: www.youtube.com/c/CNPSSantaClaraValley.

Plant identification in the field can be challenging, and capturing clear pictures of the parts of a plant that you’ll need for later identification can be a frustrating exercise. Dee Himes will show you how to take quality close-ups with an iPhone and òlloclip® lens adapter, and help understand what features of plants are needed to identify a plant from pictures. You’ll never have to return home and be disappointed that your pictures are missing features or are too fuzzy to use.

Dee has been a CNPS member since the early 2000s, and served as our Chapter treasurer (2012-2014) as well as field trip chair (2014-2016). She’s currently serving on both the state CNPS and our Chapter’s board of directors. Dee has a passion for horticulture and photography and combines this love by photographing plants in their natural environment.

How to attend: via Zoom (preregistration required)

Or watch live or later on our YouTube channel at: www.youtube.com/c/CNPSSantaClaraValley.
CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Volunteer Recognition
The CNPS Santa Clara Valley Chapter is fortunate to have many outstanding volunteers who contribute to the success and vibrancy of our Chapter. Indeed, this has been a hallmark of our Chapter since its inception. The Chapter gives out annual awards at our annual meeting in November that are intended to recognize volunteers who have gone above and beyond in their contributions to the Chapter. At our meeting last November, we posthumously recognized our 2019 and 2020 Garden Ambassador Award winners as well as our 2020 Outstanding Award winner.

The 2019 Garden Ambassador Award went to Patrick Pizzo for his contributions to promoting native plants in this area. A San Jose native, he had a long academic career at San Jose State University. After retirement, he threw himself into native planting projects around the valley, including Capitancillos Drive, Fontana Park, and the Hellyer Park Interpretive Center. He engaged with the Chapter, Our City Forest, County Parks and community members to advocate for native plants in everyday landscapes like streets, local parks, and schools. He had a vision and was constantly engaged in implementing it with passion, persistence, and good cheer.

In 2020, the Chapter honored Sherri Osaka with its Garden Ambassador Award for her numerous contributions to the chapter to promote native plant landscaping and sustainable living. An electrical engineer by training, she switched to landscape design in mid-career. Her gardens were featured on the Going Native Garden Tour for many years. She led the Gardening with Natives (GWN) committee of the Chapter, arranging over 30 public talks annually throughout two counties, touching the lives of over a thousand attendees each year. She was a passionate advocate for living lightly on this earth and giving back.

Krzysztof Kozminski received the Outstanding Volunteer Award at the annual Chapter general meeting on November 14. He has been a Chapter member and volunteer for over 20 years. He has a beautiful and mature collector’s garden which contains over 41 species and cultivars of Ceanothus alone, and has conducted many public and private tours of his garden. He has served on the Going Native Garden Tour committee continuously since 2002.

His position as webmaster belies the enormous responsibility and effort involved: keep the website running 24/7/365, handle registrations, update garden pages, send timely notifications, and more. This year, despite the pandemic, the Tour was able to continue virtually thanks to Krzysz’ many innovations and features. Nella Henninger calls him “the backbone of the tour.”

If you would like to nominate someone for one of these awards, we invite you to submit candidates for this award at any time of the year.

You may submit your nominations at www.cnps-scv.org/vr-nomination. If you have questions or need help with the nomination process, please contact any Chapter board member or send email to president@cnps-scv.org.
Election Results
Congratulations to our 2021 Chapter officers, who were elected unanimously at our November annual meeting. We’re grateful for your leadership and commitment!

President: Vivian Neou
Vice President: Priya Pharate
Treasurer: Janet Hoffmann
Past President: Madeline Morrow
Chapter Council Delegate: Vivian Neou

Many thanks to our outgoing Vice President, Johanna Kwan. She’s been actively supporting the chapter in this role since she stepped up in 2019. Johanna is always willing to jump in when there is a need and she’s been a big part of the success of our virtual programs this year. We are grateful for her many contributions.

With no paid staff, Chapter accomplishments are the result of the work of volunteers. This includes our officers, chairs and coordinators, who are all volunteers. As an all-volunteer group, we rely on members to take on leadership roles – as a chair, board member or as an officer.

Would you like to help? If you’re interested, please contact the chair of our Leadership Development Committee, Stephen Buckhout, at stephen@yscottage.com or (408) 255-6233.

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 periodic meetings, photography outings and an active email list.

The group has an on-going #MyPhotoOfTheWeek activity on the email list for group members to share their favorite shots with the group on a weekly basis. There is also a monthly virtual meeting on Zoom on the second Wednesday of each month, for members to share photos and more – everything from photography tips to organizational ideas to plant hot spots.

You can learn more and join the email group at: www.groups.io/g/cnps-scv-photography.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, February 10 at 7:00pm. Anyone who has pictures of their adventures that they would like to share is welcome to participate. Please sign up for a time slot if you would like to show pictures (join the email list to get the signup link for the next meeting). You don’t have to share pictures to attend the meeting. More information is available on Meetup at www.meetup.com/California-Native-Plant-Society-Santa-Clara-Valley-Chapter and through the group’s email list.

CONSERVATION CORNER

Conservation Committee
Our Chapter’s conservation committee will meet on Tuesdays, January 12 and February 9. Both meetings will be via Zoom, from 7:00 to 9:00pm.

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

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

Report on Cal-IPC Symposium
By Don Thomas

2020’s annual California Invasive Plant Council Symposium (www.cal-ipc.org/resources/symposium/), held last October, provided many new insights into native plant conservation and invasive plant management. Among the topics covered were the following:

Dan Simberloff of the University of Tennessee, one of the premier authorities on invasive species ecology, gave the keynote talk.
presentation, entitled “Invasive Species Denialism and the Future of Invasion Management.” He convincingly argued that the growing denialism of non-native invasive species impacts is equivalent to climate change denialism in its rejection of peer-reviewed science.

Rachel Meyer, Executive Director of the UC Conservation Genomics Consortium, gave a presentation on the use of eDNA (environmental DNA) sampling to detect the full range of biodiversity, including invasive species, present at a site. The Consortium has established a citizen science program in which anyone can sign up to submit a soil or sediment sample to be analyzed for biodiversity. (See: www.ucDNA.com/ and www.ucDNA.com/become-a-community-scientist/).

Aimee Hurt gave a presentation on her organization, Working Dogs for Conservation. Dogs can be trained to detect individual invasive plant species through their individual scent. They can also be trained to detect rare endangered native species. (See: www.wd4c.org/our-work/biosecurity-invasives/).

Jon Keeley with the U.S. Geological Survey gave a presentation entitled “Fire Management Treatments Leading to Non-Native Plant Invasions.” He pointed out that fuel breaks do not affect fire spread but only enhance fire access. They do, however, act as non-native plant invasion corridors. Read Jon’s research abstract at academic.oup.com/bioscience/article/54/7/677/223532.


We have weeding sessions every Monday morning and an Inspiration Point Walk-and-Weed Day the third Saturday morning of each month. Please visit groups.io/g/AlumRockParkVolunteers to check the schedules or join the email list. You may also visit www.cnps-scv.org/restoration/alum-rock-park to learn what to bring and get directions to the usual meeting places.

All volunteers must wear masks at all times and social distance, except within families/households. For more information contact Stephen at sailinsteve@sbcglobal.net or (650) 260-3450.

Ashok Jethanandani

Socially distanced habitat restoration volunteers at Lake Cunningham thank everyone for their support during this pandemic year

Lake Cunningham Native Garden

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

Lead volunteer Arvind Kumar sends us this report for 2020. Accomplishments include:

- 815 volunteer hours, including mulching, hand weeding, pruning and watering.
- Eagle Scout Daniel Lau installed two well-built benches within the garden, making the garden more inviting.
- During July-September stinkwort (Dittrichia graveolens) removal continued to steadily diminish the presence of this invasive and noxious weed.
- Volunteers were able to expand beyond the native garden and weed throughout the entire 200-acre park.

CHAPTER SERVICE OUTINGS

Alum Rock Park Volunteers

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.”
For 2021 the project’s priorities include installing irrigation in the meadow, planting small shrubs and perennials in open spaces, and continuing hand watering, weeding and mulching. We’ll continue stinkwort removal and monitor knapweed and pepperweed and request spraying if needed.

We thank our individual volunteers and two volunteer groups who provided participants this year, CNPS and Silicon Valley Volunteers. We also thank park staff for their great support, including fixing water leaks, making mulch piles available where and when needed, and making tools readily available for us.

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

Edgewood Restoration

Our long-term habitat restoration work at Edgewood Park and Natural Preserve continues in person even during the pandemic.

Due to the Covid-19 restrictions, we worked through most of this year with groups of four: our leader Paul Heiple and three other volunteers. To keep the pressure on the weeds, Paul held as many as three sessions a week. By the end of August, we ran out of the usual weeds to pull. Paul has our weeder pulling hedgehog dogtail grass now. Yes, we have pulled nearly all the yellow star-thistle in the park, so it is very difficult to find a plant we missed now. Edgewood is looking good!

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

IN MEMORIAM

Elaine Margaret Levine
Chapter Volunteer & Master Gardener

Longtime Chapter member Elaine Levine died November 17 of congestive heart failure. She was 91. Volunteers at our annual plant sales may remember Elaine as a tag writer at nearly every sale until just a few years ago, but she was involved in so much more. Her daughter, Deva Luna, shared these fond memories of Elaine:

My mother was an avid gardener, as well as writer and editor. She edited a reference book published by Western Horticultural Society, Successful Vines for the Peninsula. She also wrote two volumes of Milpitas history and she loved to do research and worked diligently on the Master Gardeners Hotline for more than a decade.

At home she had an outdoor propagation area, as well as raising seedlings in her basement. (A heat mat was the source of a small home fire one day!) She loved growing the unusual, ignoring the common, easily grown plants. All four of her daughters are also avid gardeners. (Both her sister Mae Schrank and I followed her in becoming Master Gardeners in 1997.) We were all recipients of her propagation successes. I have numerous Euphorbia lambii (these look like Martian plants!) and other jewels from her.

She gardened in difficult circumstances, on a large historical property in Saratoga; over more than 40 years, battling drought, clay, gophers, deer and rabbits, on steep hillsides, wrestled it into beauty! She often said the list of dead and missing plants was far longer than the list of survivors.

She took me to my first Western Hort meeting, and that Topher Delaney talk inspired me to go back to school and become a landscape designer, a career from which I have just retired.

Elaine replaced her lawn with native plants and had some magnificent Dr. Hurd manzanitas. She dedicated a hillside to Australian plants. Together with her husband Morton, they loved to travel and saw nearly all of the world’s finest gardens.

The following information was extracted from the Midpen article published here: www.openspace.org/CGI-BIN/press_releases/130306_HouseToursPR.pdf.

After Midpen purchased the Fremont Older property in 1975, the deteriorating “Woodhills” home was scheduled for demolition. Elaine and Mort wanted to see the journalistic legacy of Fremont Older and “Woodhills” preserved. The District Board gave the couple a long-term
leue, and Elaine and Mort lovingly restored the home to its early 20th century splendor. Elaine supervised the restoration of the gardens, redesigning the grounds with impressive drought-tolerant and native landscaping.


Elaine will be sorely missed by all who knew her.

Due to COVID 19 restrictions there will be no memorial service but donations may be made in Elaine’s honor to the Master Gardeners of Santa Clara County or the Milpitas Historical Society c/o the Milpitas Library, 160 S. Main St. Milpitas, CA 95035.

FROM EDGEWOOD EXPLORER

The March of the Coyote Brush
By Bruce Homer-Smith, Chapter member

Plant habitats are not stable. Over many years, plant colonies extend into areas previously held by other plants. There is a natural order to how these invasions happen, called succession. Although we can’t watch the whole show, we can see succession in progress.

Bruce Homer-Smith recently published an article in the Edgewood Explorer about how coyote brush can invade grasslands. Coyote brush seeds, floating through the air in the winter, sometimes land on bare spots in grasslands. If the soil and water conditions are right, a coyote brush seedling quickly takes hold. Once established, coyote brush will not be overrun by grasses. Small herbivores shelter under the coyote brush and clear the ground underneath it, where coffeeberry, elderberry and blue witch seedlings can develop in the partial shade. These grow up to create a shrubland.

Sometimes, shrublands will transition to oak woodlands. If enough organic matter builds up and conditions are wet enough and cool enough for oak seedlings to thrive, they’ll start growing and eventually create a new habitat.


Want more on coyote brush? Bruce also co-authored an article on coyote brush “scurry zones” (created by small herbivores creeping out to nibble on sun-loving plants). See www.friendsofedgewood.org/trail-tales-scurry-zones.

For a photo essay on coyote brush, see Bruce’s description at PlantID.net: www.PlantID.net/?TaxonRpt=Baccharis+pilularis.

CHAPTER OFFICERS FOR 2021

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<tr>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
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<td>(650) 260-3450</td>
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Chapter Website Getting a Facelift

Our Chapter website, at www.cnps-scv.org, will soon have a new look. It will have the same news, reports, how-tos and photos, but the layout will adjust itself better to different-sized viewing devices – including yours!

We expect the new look to be launched in early January. Please send website comments to Vivian Neou at president@cnps-scv.org; or Carol Mattsson at carol.mattsson@gmail.com or (408) 255-3767.
Stay in Touch!
The Chapter has gone virtual with all of our events until further notice. Please visit www.cnps-scv.org/stay-in-touch for information on how you can continue to receive email to stay informed.

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

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

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT BLAZING STAR
Saturday, February 13
carol.mattsson@gmail.com or (408) 255-3767
Join CNPS Today!

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

Name ____________________________
Address __________________________
City __________ State ______ Zip ______
Telephone _________________________
Email ____________________________
Chapter __________________________

Membership level (check one): □ $50 Individual □ $120 Plant Lover
□ $500 Supporter □ $1,000 Patron
□ $2,500 Benefactor □ $25 Student or Fixed Income
□ $75 Library

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
95816-5130 • membership@cnps.org • (916) 447-2677 ext. 200

CALENDAR OF EVENTS (page # in parentheses)

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<td>Renzel Ponds talk – Siegel (1)</td>
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<td>Jan 12 Tue</td>
<td>Conservation Committee meeting (5)</td>
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<td>Jan 13 Wed</td>
<td>Manzanita talk – Marianchild (2)</td>
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<td>Jan 20 Wed</td>
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<td>Feb 3 Wed</td>
<td>Supporting Biodiversity talk – Tao (2)</td>
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<td>Feb 9 Tue</td>
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<td>Feb 13 Sat</td>
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<td>Feb 17 Wed</td>
<td>Mt. San Bruno – Nelson &amp; Allshouse (3)</td>
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<td>Feb 24 Wed</td>
<td>Plant ID Photography – Himes (3)</td>
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<td>Mons &amp; 3rd Sat</td>
<td>Alum Rock workdays (6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturdays</td>
<td>Lake Cunningham workdays (6)</td>
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The next Chapter board meetings will be Thursdays, January 21 and February 18 at 7:00pm over Zoom. Board meetings are open to all Chapter members and their guests. For more information contact Vivian Neou at president@cnps-scv.org.

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

The California Native Plant Society is a statewide non-profit organization of amateurs and professionals with a common interest in California’s native plants. The Society, working with its local chapters, seeks to increase understanding and to preserve the rich heritage of the native flora for future generations. Membership is open to all. Individual memberships are $50.00 per year. If you have questions about your newsletter subscription, please contact membership@cnps-scv.org. Address changes may be submitted to cnps@cnps.org; please put “member address change” in the subject line.