



California Native Plant Society
Santa Clara Valley Chapter

THE BLAZING STAR

July-August 2025

What's Inside this Issue? Highlights:

Seed/Cutting Exchange/Sale – Page 1

Native Plant Talks – Page 2

Co-Presidents' Message – Page 6

Chapter Service Outings – Page 8

**Ongoing Habitat Restoration and Native
Garden Projects – Page 13**

A listing of all events, including date and page
number, appears on the Calendar
on the last page

CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Seed and Cutting Exchange + Plant Sale

Online Plant Sale: Monday, August 4

**Seed and Cutting Exchange at the PCC:
Saturday, August 9 from 1:00 – 3:00 PM**

Seed and Cutting Exchange: Saturday, August 9

The Peninsula Conservation Center (PCC) is located at
[3921 E. Bayshore Road in Palo Alto](#). The meeting rooms
are on the first floor.

Save the Dates!

Our Chapter's Fall **Potluck** will be held at Shoup Garden
House in Los Altos on **Saturday, November 1**.

Our Chapter's Fall **Native Plant Sale** will be held at
Hidden Villa in Los Altos Hills on **Saturday, October 18**.



Vivian Neou

Participants view the native plant offerings at May's Seed
and Cutting Exchange

This free event provides an opportunity to share and receive
cuttings and seeds of native plants. Discover the diverse
offerings, ranging from easy-to-grow varieties to rare finds,
and leave with new native plant cuttings and seeds! We
will supply coin envelopes for seeds but please bring your
own containers for transporting cuttings home.

If you have native plant material from your garden that you
would like to share, please bring it along. Be sure to label
your contributions for easy browsing – helpful growing tips
and photos of the plants in bloom are appreciated. You
may find it useful to use [Calscape.org](https://www.calscape.org) for this purpose;
there is a link on the plant's information page that allows
you to create a printable sign for most native species and
cultivars. If you bring cuttings, please ensure they remain
cool and moist in a bucket of water. **It is not necessary to
bring anything if you do not have native material to
share**, as there is typically an abundance for everyone.

Several well-known native plant books will be available for
purchase at the event, including *Wildflowers of California*
from CNPS, *Seed Propagation of Native California Plants*
(2021 edition) by Dara E. Emery and *California Native
Plants for the Garden* by Carol Bornstein, David Fross, and
Bart O'Brien. Our Wildflower Ambassadors will also be
distributing free seed packets and information.

Online Plant Sale

The CNPS SCV Nursery will conduct an online plant sale (california-native-plant-society-santa-clara-valley-chapter.square.site) **starting Monday, August 4**. You can shop from the comfort of your home and your plants will be ready for you at the Exchange. The store will close when either the pickup capacity is reached or at the end of the day on August 4 – whichever occurs first.

The **mud planting technique** (www.cnps-scv.org/mud-planting) outlined by Krzysztof Kozminski is a method that is effective throughout the year, but it is particularly beneficial for ensuring successful planting during the summer season.

Native Plant Talks

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

Recordings of our virtual talks and some of our library talks may be viewed on our YouTube channel, at www.youtube.com/@CNPSSantaClaraValley.

We occasionally schedule additional talks. You can learn about these talks by subscribing to our Chapter News email list. To subscribe, see "Stay in Touch" on page 12.

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

If you've wanted to learn how to maintain native plants, this talk is for you! Come get inspired and learn how to do it yourself. The talk will include pruning guidelines for native plants, information on the time of year to prune, strategies for weed control, an overview of basic irrigation scheduling and a few favorite tools used in maintenance.

This is the third talk in a three-part series. The previous two talks are available on the Chapter's YouTube channel. The first was in March and covered design basics and the second was in May and covered installation basics.



Priya Pharate

Stephanie Morris speaking at the Cupertino Library, May 2025

Stephanie Morris has been designing California native plant gardens since 1999 in the Bay Area. Her goal is to design creative, beautiful landscapes that are ecologically oriented and practical. Areas of particular focus include suggesting plants for pollinators, converting lawns to drought tolerant plants, incorporating California native plants within existing gardens and combining edible plants with native plant gardens.

Get Inspired!
Maintain a Native Plant Garden
A Talk by Stephanie Morris
(In Person Only)

Transgenerational Justice for Native Plants, Animals and People
A Talk by Christopher Telomen
(In Person or Virtual TBD)

Thursday July 24 7:00 - 8:30 PM, Cupertino Library Community Room (Second Floor), 10800 Torre Ave., Cupertino

Thursday August 7 7:00 - 8:30 PM, Sunnyvale Library Program Room, 665 W. Olive Ave., Sunnyvale

Note: This talk may be presented in person or on Zoom (TBD). Check the Chapter weekly email news for updates.

Please visit www.cnps-scv.org/stay-in-touch for how to subscribe.

Native plants, animals and people deserve to live their lives in dignity and health on the land where they belong, with familiar care and in transgenerational community. Focusing on straight-species, locally-native plants and material support for indigenous people, we will explore how each/all of us can take accountability for the history of native plants, animals and people in so-called California, and build on our current conditions to create more opportunities for habitat and community in the future.

Throughout the talk, photos and lessons will be drawn from recently-installed native gardens and projects. We will end with a walkthrough of how to design, install and maintain your own beginner-friendly, locally-native, straight-species habitat garden.

Educational handouts, resources and a list of helpful local organizations will be provided and a brief Q&A will follow.



Christopher Telomen discusses native habitat care with a friend off-camera, surrounded by native bunchgrasses and holly-leaf cherry

Christopher Telomen (*they/any*) is a white, queer, trans/NB, chronically ill, and ADHD California native habitat care worker. They design, install and maintain native gardens around the so-called San Francisco Bay Area on stolen indigenous land. Their work is necessarily intersectional, incorporating frameworks of pollinator relationships, sustainable material sourcing, invasive plant management, white supremacy, disability, settler-colonialism, land back, climate change, immigration and poverty. They center indigenous people, plants, and animals in their work and they provide sliding scale services for people who need them.



California native poppies, blue-eyed grass, rush and fescue take center stage in a sea of native foliage in front of a private home

Photography Group

Our Photography Group is a great place to meet other native plant enthusiasts, improve photographic skills and learn more about our native plants and best places to view them. Discussions range from photography tips to organizational ideas to plant hotspots. The group is open to all and has an active email list.

The photo group's meetings usually take place over Zoom on the last Friday of the month. Our next meetings will be on **Fridays, June 27, July 25 and August 22 at 7:00pm.**

You can learn more and join the email group at:

www.groups.io/g/cnps-scv-photography.

The group has an ongoing #MyPhotoOfTheWeek activity on the email list for group members to share their favorite shots with the group on a weekly basis. Photo Group member Nathan Davis sent us the stream orchids #MyPhotoOfTheWeek that you can see on page 6.

Native Plant ID

Join other native plant enthusiasts in a fun and educational atmosphere as we hone our skills at plant identification (aka "keying"). We are **looking for speakers for our next meetings, Tuesdays, July 22 and August 26.**

Native Plant ID was originally Keying with Natives and met once a month to work with botanical keys to identify samples brought in by various participants. With the increasing improvement of photo identification apps, interest in using keys seems to be waning. Over the past year, we have had a variety of presentations related to identification of specific plant groups including oaks,

conifers, the chicory tribe, manzanitas, lupines and salvias. We also had a presentation on Latin plant names and their meanings.



Vivian Neou

Attendees learn about lupines from Bruce Homer-Smith at April's Native Plant ID meeting

This format seems to be popular, but it requires finding people with expertise to speak on these topics. If you or someone you know would like to **make a presentation for Native Plant ID**, please contact Janet Hoffmann at janet@cnps-scv.org.

Native Plant ID meets the **fourth Tuesday** of the month at **7:00pm** at the Peninsula Conservation Center, at 3921 E. Bayshore Road in Palo Alto. The meeting rooms are on the first floor. For details on upcoming meetings, contact Janet at above email address.

Chapter Election Results

Thanks to all who voted in our recent Chapter election. Newly elected officers and leaders began serving their terms on June 1 and will continue to serve through May 31 2026:

Co-President – Priya Pharate
Co-President – Vivian Neou
Vice President – Toni Gregorio-Bunch
Recording Secretary – Janet Hoffmann
Treasurer – Paul Markley
Past President – Radhika Thekkath
Chapter Council Delegate – Vivian Neou

The Leadership Development Committee thanks and *appreciates* all officers and leaders who served for 2024-2025 and those who will be serving in 2025-2026. Our Chapter continues to show itself as vibrant and resilient,

due to the hard and intelligent work of so many talented people since our inception in 1972.

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

Welcome New Treasurer Paul Markley

Paul Markley, a Stanford Graduate student working on his Ph.D. in plant biology, has agreed to become our new Chapter Treasurer! Paul is a plant enthusiast who was a student member of CNPS when he was an undergraduate at UC Riverside. His current research is on Arctic plants. He wants to help the Chapter and get more familiar with California native plants.

Paul writes "I am honored to serve as Treasurer for the upcoming year. I just recently joined the Chapter and I'm looking forward to serving the community."

We look forward to working with Paul in the coming year. To facilitate a smooth transition and to help with certain administrative tasks, **outgoing Treasurer Brett Tucker** has been appointed Assistant Treasurer. Brett's term will last until May 31, 2026.



Appreciating Past Treasurer Brett Tucker

The role of Chapter Treasurer is one of the most vital positions in our Chapter and we are fortunate that outgoing Treasurer Brett Tucker stepped up to take on this responsibility. His diligence and attention to the numerous duties associated with the role have allowed our chapter to operate smoothly. From the Chapter Annual Financial Report to the quarterly tax reports, as well as the various reimbursement requests and bill payments, Brett has performed exceptionally well.

We are thankful for all he has accomplished. We are also lucky that Brett will continue serving on the Board of Directors and Finance Committee and will be joining the Leadership Development Committee. Thank you for everything you do, Brett!

Welcome Bookkeeper Karen Horwitz

Not only does our Chapter have a new Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer, Karen Horwitz has agreed to be our Bookkeeper. The Bookkeeper maintains the Chapter's accounting records in QuickBooks, including matching transactions to the approved categories in the Chapter budget.



Karen Horwitz, helping to demonstrate the growth rate of a rimu tree (*Dacrydium cupressinum*), an endemic New Zealand tree in the *Podocarpaceae* family

Karen grew up among the forest preserves and beautiful botanic garden near Chicago. She has been active in CNPS since January 2024. She enjoys hiking, birding and nature photography and was excited to present her year-long photographic study of the California buckeye at the Chapter's 2025 Year in Pictures.

After careers in tech and teaching, Karen used her time during the pandemic to study anti-financial crime. She is a Certified Anti-Money Laundering Specialist and is working on becoming a Certified Fraud Examiner. During her studies, she developed an interest in accounting and is thrilled to have the opportunity to contribute her skills as bookkeeper.

50th Wildflower Show Report

In April, we celebrated our 50th Wildflower Show at West Valley College. This event attracted over 1,000 attendees, making it the most well-attended single-day show in our

Chapter's history. Our collaboration with the Biology Department at West Valley College has been a significant factor in elevating the show to new heights.

The West Valley Biology Department agreed to host the show starting in 2016. Since then, our partnership has enriched the event. The department has incorporated the show into its Environmental Sciences curriculum, allowing students to prepare and present posters, assist in collecting specimens for the floral displays, lead tours and volunteer in various aspects of the show. Their involvement has infused new life and energy into the event.

In addition to stunning plant community based floral displays, the event featured talks by John Muir Laws, Jun Bando and Kate Marianchild, along with various workshops, tours, a BioBlitz, live music and more. The Biology Department's themed native plant gardens are also popular attractions at the show. The Moon Garden serves as an outdoor classroom designed to showcase nocturnal species and promote sustainable landscaping with native plants that support biodiversity and wildlife. Other gardens at the college highlight locally native plants and diverse habitats.

We express our gratitude to the numerous volunteers, West Valley College and especially to **Leticia Gallardo**, Co-Chair of the Biology Department and a member of the CNPS SCV Board, for their efforts in making the show a reality. We can't wait to see you at our **next show on April 26, 2026**. Mark your calendars!



Vivian Neou

West Valley College Moon Garden gets a rain shower at 50th Annual Wildflower Show, April 2025

Co-Presidents' Message

From Vivian Neou and Priya Pharate

Our inaugural year as Chapter Co-Presidents has gone by quickly. Reflecting on our journey, we are truly impressed by our Chapter's numerous achievements. It is a privilege to collaborate with so many passionate native plant enthusiasts. With a membership exceeding 1,300, our Chapter has reached a record high, making it one of the largest CNPS chapters. The improvements we have made to the Peninsula Conservation Center (PCC) to better support our educational initiatives have enabled us to broaden our program offerings. Some of the Chapter highlights during our first term include:

- **Seed and Cutting Exchanges** were held bi-monthly at the PCC with support from our Wildflower Ambassadors. These gatherings have garnered popularity among our members and have also attracted newcomers to the world of native plants.
- **Online Plant Sales** were conducted alongside the Seed and Cutting Exchanges, providing an excellent opportunity for individuals to acquire both ready-to-plant specimens and complimentary seeds and cuttings to enhance their gardens.
- The **Native Plant ID group**, a Chapter initiative focused on native plant identification, met monthly at the PCC. The sessions combined informative talks with hands-on practice in identifying the native plants of our region.
- **Field Trips** continued to be a popular Chapter activity. We organized 17 day trips and three multi-day camping trips, introducing several new field trip leaders in the process.
- The **Photo Group** met online each month to share photos of plants, wildlife, and their habitats. The "Year in Pictures" program, held at the Los Altos library,

celebrated the beauty and diversity of native plants, wildlife and their habitats, as captured by our members.

- In April, we celebrated our **50th Wildflower Show** at West Valley College. Alongside stunning floral displays, the event featured talks by John Muir Laws, Jun Bando and Kate Marianchild, as well as various workshops, tours, live music and more. This event attracted over 1,000 attendees, marking it as the most well-attended show in our Chapter's history.
- The **Growing Natives Garden Tour** remains one of the Chapter's most popular activities. This year, there were over 5,900 visits to the 55 gardens featured on the tour.

- The Chapter supported **weekly workdays at public native plant gardens** located at Lake Cunningham, Kirk Park and Cataldi Park, along with **restoration efforts** at Edgewood Park and Natural Preserve and Alum Rock Park. Additionally, we conducted a **biannual work party focused on fountain thistle habitat restoration** in collaboration with the Yerba Buena Chapter. (See p. 8 for a report on the latter.)

- Our **Native Plant Talks** educate the public about the benefits of native plants and their habitats. We held 13 in-person talks at local libraries and two virtual talks. All of our virtual talks and a few of our in-person talks are available on our [Chapter's YouTube channel](#).

- The **Fall Plant Sale** was one of the Chapter's

larger events, bringing in around 300 people. It featured two plant sales (one from our Chapter's nursery and another from the Grassroots Ecology Nursery) in addition to talks, demos, vendors and tables from local environmental organizations.



Nathan Davis

Photo Group member Nathan Davis sent us this #MyPhotoOfTheWeek. He wrote, "I spotted stream orchids (*Epipactis gigantea*) in the Ventana Wilderness ... along the Big Sur River and Ventana Creek. These beautiful flowers along the pristine river were an awesome sight to see." June 2025

- Our **Research Scholarship Program** awarded \$12,140 to five graduate students and two undergraduate students who are studying native plants and their habitats. Furthermore, our newly launched **Community College Scholarship** granted \$1,500 to a community college student aiming for a career centered on California native plants.
- The Chapter received a **commendation from the City of San Jose** to recognize the work we have done to conserve local native plant species and their habitats, and to provide exceptional educational outreach and opportunities for the community to learn about native plants, ecological stewardship and conservation. It was presented by Matt Mahan, San Jose's Mayor at the first City Council meeting in 2025.

We are looking forward to the coming year as we continue to enhance our programs and broaden our impact. Our mission to safeguard California's native plants and biodiversity is more crucial than ever and each of you plays a vital role in our achievements. We look forward to collaborating with you in the upcoming year. Please don't hesitate to contact us with your ideas and questions. You can reach us at president@cnps-scv.org.



Hayley Nguyen

Chapter representatives receiving commendation from the City of San Jose. They are standing with San Jose City Councilmember Domingo Candelas (leftmost) and Mayor Matt Mahan (rightmost). January 28, 2025.

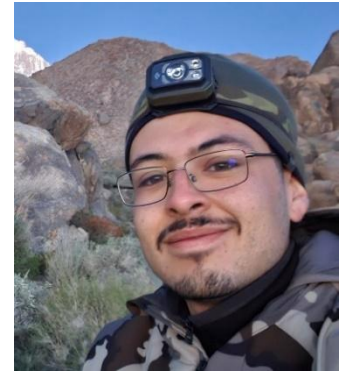
SCHOLARSHIPS

Community College Scholarship Recipient

The CNPS Santa Clara Valley Chapter 2025 Community College Scholarship was awarded to **Donovan Belardes**. Donovan is a student in the Park Management and Biology programs at West Valley College and plans to continue his

studies at Humboldt State University with a goal of working in native habitat restoration.

While at West Valley College Donovan has shown a remarkable commitment to native plant education and outreach. He has been helping with the development and maintenance of their native plant gardens and has participated in many community outreach events including our Chapter's Wildflower Show and Growing Natives Garden Tour. He also volunteers as a student member of our Chapter's board of directors.



Donovan has helped with campus events such as the STEAM fest, insect surveys and campus tours designed to raise awareness about their native plant gardens and to advocate for conservation-based gardening and landscaping. He is currently working on an on-campus research project, where he is comparing wildflower seed recruitment in mulched and non-mulched sites, to better understand the effectiveness of different horticulture techniques for native plant restoration.

Congratulations Donovan!

CONSERVATION CORNER

Conservation Committee

Our Chapter's next Conservation Committee meeting will be held via Zoom on **Monday August 4**, from **7:00 to 8:30pm**. (There will be no meeting in July.)

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

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

May Fountain Thistle Work Party Report

On May 31, the Santa Clara Valley Chapter, in partnership with the Yerba Buena Chapter of CNPS, had another successful fountain thistle habitat restoration session.

Fountain thistle, *Cirsium fontinale* var. *fontinale*, is a rare native thistle rated 1B.1 by CNPS (CRPR)*, found only in San Mateo County. Our biannual work party is conducted in the spring and in the fall on Caltrans land near the intersection of I-280 and Hwy. 92, to remove invasive plants, such as jubatagrass (*Cortaderia jubata*), invading the unique serpentine seep habitat of fountain thistle. This project was initiated over 10 years ago by Jake Sigg of the Yerba Buena Chapter. Jake attended this spring's session, which was held on the day before his 98th birthday.

This spring's session was gratifying in a number of ways. First, for the first time in many years, we found no new invading jubatagrass seedlings in the seeps. At one time jubatagrass had almost entirely displaced fountain thistle, which had been reduced to fewer than 100 plants. Now fountain thistle plants have completely repopulated the seeps. Second, the dry serpentine area between the seeps, habitat for the rare Crystal Springs lessingia (*Lessingia arachnoidea*), is usually full of non-native invasive plants. This year we noticed a surprisingly extensive cover of native bunchgrasses there, which had not been conspicuous in the past. In addition, the large infestation of yellow star-thistle encroaching into the Caltrans land from the bordering City of San Francisco Watershed was almost absent this year.

This project continues to be a good example of a partnership of two CNPS chapters working cooperatively at the interface of their two regions. You can help! Watch for this fall's Fountain Thistle work party to be announced in an upcoming issue of the *Blazing Star* newsletter.



Vivian Neou

Fountain thistle, *Cirsium fontinale* var. *fontinale*, within the CNPS restoration area, May 2024

* About *Cirsium fontinale* var. *fontinale* being ranked CNPS 1B.1: a CNPS rare plant ranking (CRPR) of **1B** means rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere. The **0.1** means a "threat rank" of **seriously threatened** in California. The CNPS ranking is noted in the CNPS rare plant list, which is a continually updated list of sensitive rare plant species that assesses the current conservation status of our state's rare, threatened and endangered plants. Learn more at www.cnps.org/rare-plants/california-rare-plant-ranks.

CHAPTER SERVICE OUTINGS

Alum Rock Park Restoration

Come help us weed non-native, invasive plants at this natural gem of San Jose. Our habitat restoration efforts allow the native plants to "come to light."

Our workdays take place every **Monday and Wednesday at 8:30 am**, and on the **second Saturday morning** of each month. No experience is necessary. All tools and instruction will be provided. Please bring a filled water bottle, snacks, sunscreen, sunhat and insect repellent if you need it; wear trail/off-trail footwear, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt.



Don Thomas

A volunteer packs out a bag of non-native material weeded from Caltrans land during May's fountain thistle work party. The green areas in the foreground consist mainly of restored fountain thistles.

Lately we have been clearing weeds that grew extra tall as a result of last spring's abundant rainfall. We have also started some pruning for fire mitigation. The City of San Jose cannot fully staff their parks even to keep the trails clear of non-native thistles, so there is plenty of work for project volunteers. New volunteers are welcome!

Forms and **reservations** are required to volunteer. Start by visiting the City's volunteer opportunities page at www.sanjoseca.gov/your-government/departments-offices/parks-recreation-neighborhood-services/get-involved/volunteer-with-us. You will see Alum Rock Park Trail Crew as one of the options. The next **Saturday** workday is **July 12, from 8:45 am to 12 noon**.

For the Monday/Wednesday workdays, our actual meeting spot can vary and on rare occasions we may cancel due to weather or dangerous conditions. **Please contact Todd Hayes at ultratoddh@gmail.com before you attend**, for more information and instructions on where to park.

We are indebted to departing Alum Rock Project Leader Stephen Rosenthal, who started this project many years ago. Stephen worked with the City of San Jose to obtain tools and a place at the workday meeting spot to store them. He led the workdays multiple times per month to clear large areas of grassy weeds and compost the weeds in large piles. As a result, native plants have returned to these areas, especially narrow-leaf milkweed, allowing the threatened monarch butterflies to return to that area. Stephen has made a huge impact on the park, especially in the area of the Todd Quick trail. As a tribute to Stephen, the loyal volunteer crew that he developed continues his work.

Lake Cunningham Native Garden

The California Native Garden project in Lake Cunningham Regional Park controls invasive plants in a 2-acre area and beautifies it with California native wildflowers, perennials, shrubs and trees.

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

Edgewood Restoration

Help restore habitat at Edgewood Park and Natural Preserve, near Redwood City, known for fabulous

wildflowers and amazing diversity. Weeders see far more than weeds: they get to be up close to the native plants, some of which are seen **only** by weeders.

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

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

To participate, join the email list and sign the electronic volunteer agreement, by sending an email to weed-warriors-coord@friendsofedgewood.org. Please check the email list for each weeding session's meeting place. For questions about Friday sessions, contact Paul Heiple at pheiple@gmail.com or (650) 854-7125. For questions about Wednesday sessions, contact Alf Fengler at afengler@pacbell.net.

Cataldi Park Native Garden

Join us to restore habitat in San Jose's Cataldi Park. Wear a hat and garden shoes and bring water to stay hydrated. Work gloves will be provided.

Activities this spring included weeding, watering, and mulching. We uprooted curly dock and mustard plants from throughout the mulched area. We removed and cleared annual grasses from the area of sage plants. In May we noted that the phacelia were in full bloom and attracting lots of bees. The phacelia are well established and now spreading to adjacent areas.



Tilak

Manually watering showy penstemon in May, once the park turned the irrigation water back on for the summer

How to Volunteer

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

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

Workdays are sometimes rescheduled or canceled. Always RSVP to confirm and check the latest updates Friday night. If you can't make it, please change your RSVP so we know and wait-listers get a chance.



Tilak

Ceanothus in bloom and attracting bees in Cataldi Park Native Garden, March 2025

Kirk Park Pollinator Garden

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

The park is open every day, so please come visit! The garden is located along the north edge of the park. If you would like to help out, please sign up for our **Saturday** workdays on the [CNPS-SCV Meetup page](#). If we know you are coming, we can be sure to have tools available for you to use. We can also notify you if, for some reason, we will not be meeting. New volunteers will need to fill out a form for the City.

FIELD TRIPS

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

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

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

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

Jul 3 - 7 Thu - Mon Ebbetts Pass and Calaveras Big Trees State Park (Arnold)

Fred and Patricia Evans invite you to join them at their cabin in Arnold for three days of wildflower hikes over the July 4 weekend.

Arrive July 3, hike July 4-6 and travel home on July 7. Housecleaning cost (about \$250) will be divided among participants.

Attendees will explore Calaveras Big Trees State Park, the Pacific Crest Trail at Ebbetts Pass and one other location TBD (three elevations from 4,000' to 8,736'). It will be spring at Ebbetts Pass and the wildflowers will be amazing! This itinerary is subject to change, depending on weather and conditions.

The cabin sleeps 11 in beds (with seven in a dorm) and there are two futons, room for tents on the porch or in the yard, and two small RVs or vans can hook to electricity in the driveway. We will carpool each day to hike. Dinners will be potluck every night, breakfast and lunch on your own and popcorn is provided.

This trip is open to **CNPS members only**. For more information or to **reserve your spot**, contact Patricia at paevans@stanfordalumni.org or (650) 949-2801.



Fred Evans

CNPS hikers pausing to admire the flowers, on the way to Noble Lake on the Pacific Crest Trail, which passes through Ebbett's Pass, July 2012

Field Trip Report: April 12 Mommy and Me Wildflower Walk at Sunol

By Katie Gallagher, new Chapter field trip leader

I chose a stunning spring morning in Sunol Regional Wilderness near Fremont to host my "Mommy and Me" walk. The turnout was excellent, and we had uncountable requests to schedule more walks for those in my social media moms' groups that couldn't make this one.



Katie Gallagher

Families in April's "Mommy and Me" field trip take a break along the trail in Sunol Regional Wilderness

My goal was to help alleviate parents' anxiety from letting their little ones run amok in nature. "But what if my child eats a poisonous plant???" I taught them that the vast

majority of plants are not only safe but encouraged for children to eat! We nibbled on willow leaves, mustard flowers and pineapple weed.

Now these parents can let their children enjoy themselves in outdoor free play which will help grow a new generation with love for our California native plants. Joe Cernac was very helpful as the hike sweep because he was adept at corralling all the speedy little legs so they could keep up, and even played some music while we dipped our feet in Alameda Creek. A lovely day!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

News and Activities from Other Organizations

As you've just read, this issue of the Blazing Star includes only one field trip. For more field trip-like activities, consider attending a local BioBlitz, Moth Night with MROSD or helping with habitat restoration or native plant gardens. For the latter, turn to the habitat restoration listings on page 13. For the former, read on.

Local BioBlitz Events

A BioBlitz is an event that focuses on finding and identifying as many species as possible in a specific area over a limited period of time. Community-driven BioBlitz events collect scientifically-significant data and are usually open to the public.

The website www.bioblitz.club lists local BioBlitz events that are family-friendly, guided by expert docents or naturalists, and provide a short training on using the free smartphone app iNaturalist.

Sun Jul 13 9:00am - 11:30am Summer BioBlitz at Coyote Creek Visitor Center (Morgan Hill)

Walk down to Coyote Creek and find out who lives there. We will walk in the meadow and the old orchard by the creek and document plants, birds, insects and everything else. Even on a hot day, there's plenty of shade here!

Collect real data using the free smartphone app iNaturalist. Free event. Reservations required. For location and more info visit: www.bioblitz.club/event-info/summer-bioblitz-at-coyote-creek-visitor-center-3.

Sat Aug 23 9:00am - 11:30am Hellyer Park Summer 2025 BioBlitz (San Jose)

We keep coming back to Hellyer Park, as it has interesting habitats to explore: Cottonwood Lake, Coyote Creek with its riparian vegetation and many trees scattered around the

park. The diverse native vegetation attracts many insects and birds, as well as mammals, reptiles and amphibians.

We will explore the park in small groups and document every living thing using iNaturalist. Free event. Reservations required. For location and more info visit: bioblitz.club/event-info/hellyer-park-summer-2025-Bioblitz

Moth Night with MROSD

Sat Jul 26 8:30pm - 11:55pm Moth Night at Monte Bello Preserve



Vivian Neou
Elegant sphinx moth on scrub oak, July 2021

See for yourself that moths are much more than little brown things that eat your clothing! Docent Naturalists include our own Vivian Neou and Ray Curiel. They will use special lights to attract the moths to sheets so you can observe how beautiful and interesting these winged creatures are.

You'll also have the opportunity to be a community scientist by photographing and submitting your observations to iNaturalist. Free event. Reservations required.

Hosted by Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD). To learn more, including what to bring and where to meet, visit www.openspace.org/events/guided-activities/moth-night-3. Moth Night is part of Moth Week activities.

NEWSLETTER, ETC.

Stay in Touch!

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

This *Blazing Star* newsletter is published **mostly** online only, at: www.cnps-scv.org/blazing-star-newsletter. Our next paper version will be the May-June 2026 issue.

Did You Know?

Summer is a good time to plan your California native garden. Unlike other regions of the country, where planning is best done in the winter and planting is done in spring, a California native garden is best planted in the winter, as the weather cools and winter rains are imminent. You can design and choose plants yourself with tools such as Calscape (calscape.org) or the Calscape Garden Planner (calscape.org/garden-planner).

Alternately, did you know that **there are great landscape professionals** who live and work in our Chapter area, who specialize in California native plant design, installation and maintenance? It is no longer difficult to hire a professional who can lead your garden gently on a path towards great ecological beauty and a habitat heaven. Find a professional who specializes in native plants on our website at this link: www.cnps-scv.org/native-plant-professionals.

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP FOR 2025-2026

Title	Name	Email
Co-President	Priya Pharate	priya4cnps@gmail.com
Co-President	Vivian Neou	techchair@cnps-scv.org
Vice President	Toni Gregorio-Bunch	tidytip.lp@gmail.com
Recording Secretary	Janet Hoffmann	janet@cnps-scv.org
Treasurer	Paul Markley	palmsist@gmail.com
Chapter Council Delegate	Vivian Neou	techchair@cnps-scv.org
Past President	Radhika Thekkath	cnpsradhika@gmail.com

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

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT *BLAZING STAR*

Saturday, August 16

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

ONGOING HABITAT RESTORATION AND NATIVE PLANT GARDEN PROJECTS

Join volunteers at your favorite parks to work on projects that help restore or create habitat for native fauna. Projects include planting California natives, trail maintenance and of course, plenty of weed pulling! Contact the listed organizations for details. "CNPS SCV" indicates a project of the Santa Clara Valley Chapter of CNPS.

Alum Rock Park (CNPS SCV) – San Jose

Monday, Wednesday and some Saturday mornings. See article on page 4 for details.

Cataldi Park Native Garden (CNPS SCV) – San Jose

Saturday mornings.
See article on page 9
for details.

Edgewood County Park (CNPS SCV) –Redwood City

Wednesday evenings
and Friday mornings.
See article on page 9
for details.

Grassroots

Ecology

Volunteer with us to
improve local
ecosystems at our habitat restoration projects in San
Mateo and Santa Clara Counties. Visit
www.grassrootsecology.org/volunteer to choose an
event from the calendar then register to volunteer.
volunteer@grassrootsecology.org or (650) 419-9880.

Keep Coyote Creek Beautiful – San Jose

Help restore Coyote Creek by joining us to remove trash
and non-native plants, plant native plants and advocate
for a healthy Coyote Creek. Choose an event from
www.KeepCoyoteCreekBeautiful.org/events1. Jessica
Ruppert, jessica@keepcoyotecreekbeautiful.org or
(408) 755-6159.

Kirk Park Native Pollinator Garden (CNPS SCV) – San Jose

Saturday mornings. See article on page 10 for details.

Lake Cunningham Park Native Garden (CNPS SCV) – San Jose

Saturday mornings. See article on page 9 for details.

Magic – Planting for the Second Hundred Years

Plant and care for oaks and other California natives in
local open space and at Magic's Palo Alto facility.
Saturday mornings and Tuesday afternoons. For details

and to sign up,
contact oaks@ecomagic.org.
www.ecomagic.org/projects.

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

Projects include
invasive plant
removal, planting
native vegetation,
trail maintenance
and fence repairs.
Visit Midpen's
Land Steward
page at



Ellen Gartside

Midpen habitat restoration volunteers pose during a workday at Cherry
Springs Pond in Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve, April 2025

www.volunteer.openspace.org/agency/detail/?agency_id=121115 to learn more, choose an event and register for
it. Ellen Gartside at egartside@openspace.org or
(650) 772-3724.

San Bruno Mountain Watch

Restore remarkable ecosystems on San Bruno Mountain
and nearby. Weeding, planting, collect seeds and
cuttings for the nursery: Check volunteer events web
page for workday details and to sign up:
www.mountainwatch.org/upcomingevents.
info@mountainwatch.org (415) 467-6631.

Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority

Land Steward volunteers assist Authority staff with trail
maintenance, habitat restoration, fencing and cleanup
projects. Learn more at
www.openspaceauthority.galaxydigital.com or contact
Kat Hill at khill@openspaceauthority.org or
(408) 838-4291.

Santa Clara Valley Chapter California Native Plant Society
3921 East Bayshore Road, Suite #205
Palo Alto, CA 94303-4326



Join CNPS Today!

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

I wish to affiliate with the Santa Clara Valley Chapter

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Phone _____ ☐ New ☐ Renew

Suggested Membership Amounts

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

Send Membership Application to:

California Native Plant Society

Attn: Membership

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

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

First-Class Mail

CALENDAR OF EVENTS (page # in parentheses)

Jun 27 Fri Photo Group photo sharing (3)
Jul 3-7 Thu-Mon Ebbetts Pass Away Trip (10)
Jul 22 Tue Native Plant ID meeting (3)
Jul 24 Thu Garden Maintenance – Morris (2)
Jul 25 Fri Photo Group photo sharing (3)
Aug 4 Mon Plant Sale online store opens (2)
Aug 4 Mon Conservation Committee meeting (7)
Aug 7 Thu Transgenerational Justice – Telomen (2)
Aug 9 Sat Cutting and Seed Exchange (1)

Aug 16 Sat Newsletter submittal deadline (12)
Aug 22 Fri Photo Group photo sharing (3)
Aug 26 Tue Native Plant ID meeting (3)
Mon Wed Sat Alum Rock workdays (8)
Wed & Fri Edgewood restoration workdays (9)
Saturdays Lake Cunningham Garden workdays (9)
Saturdays Cataldi Park Garden workdays (9)
Saturdays Kirk Pollinator Garden workdays (10)

The next Chapter board meetings will be **Thursdays, July 17 and August 21 at 7:00pm** over Zoom.

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

For more information contact Priya Pharate at priya4cnps@gmail.com or Vivian Neou at techchair@cnps-scv.org.

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

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