



California Native Plant Society
Santa Clara Valley Chapter

THE BLAZING STAR

September-October 2009

GENERAL MEETING AND PROGRAMS

Besides our General Meeting at the Saratoga Library on September 17, our September Gardening With Natives presentation will also be our annual Brenda Butner Memorial Lecture. See page 2 for our October GWN presentation. All three meetings are free and open to the public.

Wild Things: New Plants from the California Outback

By M. Nevin Smith

Thursday, September 3, 7-8:30 PM
Los Altos Youth Center,
1 S. San Antonio Road, Los Altos
Cosponsored by Los Altos Library

The annual Brenda Butner Memorial Lecture honors an influential Chapter president who touched many lives and whose presence is felt to this day in many Chapter activities.

This year's lecture is by one of the foremost native plant horticulturists in the state, M. Nevin Smith. He is the Director of Horticulture at Suncrest Nurseries in Watsonville, and the author of the well-received book, *Native Treasures: Gardening With the Plants of California*. Suncrest grows a wide selection of native plants and supplies all Bay Area nurseries.

Join us for a lighthearted account of Mr. Smith's attempts to bring promising plants from the wild to the gardens of California. It will include a look at some of his "most favorite" native plants, with comments on what went right – and wrong – along the way.

Directions to Los Altos Youth Center:

From I-280, take El Monte Road exit towards Los Altos, turn left at Foothill Expy., turn right on San Antonio Rd.

After 0.6 mile, turn right into the Civic Center complex. Go past library and turn left. Youth Center will be on your left.

Landscaping for Fire Safety

A presentation by Suzanne Schettler

Thursday, September 17, 7:30-9:30 PM
Saratoga Library, 13650 Saratoga Ave., Saratoga
Cosponsored by the Saratoga Library

For our September **General Meeting...**

This year's fire season has started in earnest with the spectacular Bonny Doon fire. Three years of drought have seen ever larger and more devastating fires with major impacts on dwellings located in urban/wild interface areas. In July we heard from Dr. Winslow Briggs about the Lick Fire at Coe Park and how well plants are recovering. The September general meeting focuses on homeowners and what they can do to protect themselves from the risk of fire.

Fire is a natural part of California's environment, but we need to reconcile that with the need for physical safety for human lives and dwellings. Is it possible to be fire-safe without degrading the environment? At this general meeting, we hear from Suzanne Schettler, a landscape contractor specializing in the use of California native plants. She has many years of experience in the Central Coast Region and is a member of the Santa Cruz chapter of CNPS.

Literature from the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council will be available, and volunteers will be on hand to answer questions.

Is it a Native?

Come early for our **plant ID clinic**. Experts will be available starting at **7pm**, to help you identify naturalized plants (those growing without human care) that have been collected with proper permit or landowner permission.

Directions: From Highway 85 (North and South): take the Saratoga exit. At the light, turn on Saratoga Avenue (northbound travelers turn left on Saratoga Ave; southbound travelers turn right on Saratoga Ave). Go past the light at Fruitvale. The library will be on your left.

CNPS general meetings are free and open to the public. For additional information, visit www.cnps-scv.org, or contact Chapter President Kevin Bryant at mtngreen17@verizon.net or (408) 353-8824.

Save the Date!

Our November Chapter General Meeting will include our **annual potluck dinner and Chapter elections**. It will be held on **Saturday, November 14** at the Shoup Garden House in Los Altos.

CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Fall Native Plant Sale October 17

Call for Volunteers

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

Before the sale, you can help during our **Wednesday** work sessions at the nursery from **noon to 3pm**. Special nursery work days will also be held before the sale to help prepare the nursery and label plants. We'll work from **noon to 3pm** on **Wednesday through Friday, October 14, 15, and 16**.

On the day of the sale, we will need people to:

- Help set up before the sale (starting at **8am**)
- Help with parking
- Answer customers' questions about the plants and help them decide which plants to purchase
- Write up the sales tags before customers go to the cashiers to pay for their plants
- Work as cashiers
- Help customers take their purchases to their cars and bring back the wagons and carts to the nursery
- Help clean up after the sale (**3-4pm**)

The plant sales are always lots of fun to work at, and we provide **lunch** to volunteers. Please sign up with the following coordinator(s) depending on your interest:

Horticultural consultation and miscellaneous:

Ann Harding (408) 260-2271, Ann.Harding@att.net
Ray Deutsch (650) 365-6136, henrymarsh@yahoo.com

Writing sales tags and/or cashiering:

Georgia Stigall (650) 941-1068,
GeorgiaStigall@yahoo.com

Parking (directing customers in the lot):

Stephen Buckhout (408) 255-6233, yscottie@pacbell.net

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. Follow the directions of the parking monitors as to where to park. The Native Plant Nursery is at the greenhouse just beyond the visitor center.

For those coming to the sale to purchase plants, please bring boxes and/or reusable shopping bags in which to carry home your purchases.

Gardening with Natives

Gardening with Natives (GWN) is a special interest group within the Chapter, and includes a mix of seasoned native plant gardeners as well as beginners. The group is open to all, and newcomers are always welcome. For the **September** GWN presentation please see page 1.

From Lawns to Meadows

By Alexandra Von Feldt

Thursday, October 1, 2009, 7-8:30 PM
Milpitas Library, 160 N Main Street, Milpitas
Cosponsored by Milpitas Library

Want to conserve water and convert your lawn into a more sustainable native meadow? In our third drought year, many people are looking for ways to use less water and energy in their gardens. Come to this presentation to see examples of meadows that have replaced traditional lawns and discuss what plant combinations work for different situations.

Alexandra Von Feldt is a resident of Portola Valley and has been a native gardener for six years. Her garden has been featured on the Going Native Garden Tour. She is the co-chair of the Friends of Sausal Creek, and has worked on the Portola Valley Town Center native landscaping and creek restoration.

Directions to Milpitas Library:

From Highway 680 (North and South): Take the Calaveras Boulevard (237) exit WEST. Make a right turn at the Main Street off-ramp. The library is at the end of the off ramp.

From Highway 880 (17) (North and South): Take the Calaveras Boulevard (237) exit EAST. Make a left turn at Abel Street then a right turn on to Weller Lane. The library is at the end of Weller on Main Street on the right.

For more information on the Gardening with Natives group, visit its website at www.GardeningWithNatives.com.

GWN maintains a Yahoo group with over 700 members, a true resource for native plant gardeners in our area. To join the Yahoo group, visit groups.yahoo.com/group/GardeningWithNatives. To contact the GWN Steering Committee, email GardeningWithNatives@yahoo.com or call Arvind Kumar at (408) 715-7020.

Native Hill Garden at Foothill College

Our Chapter maintains a large California native plant garden called Native Hill at Foothill College in Los Altos Hills. Volunteers plant, weed, mulch and prune the plants on occasional Saturday and Sunday morning workdays.

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 or (650) 941-4752.

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** usually on the **last Friday** of each month.

Upcoming meetings are **September 25** and **October 30** at the PCC building in Palo Alto. For details, contact David "Tex" Houston at tex009@sbcglobal.net or Sally Casey at (408) 377-0989.

Chapter Member Seeks Plant Photos

Editor's note: Helen Popper is a long-time Chapter member, and she is seeking our help for her native gardening calendar project.

She writes: I'm mainly looking for beautiful, high-resolution photos of plants in garden settings, but I'd also love photos from the wild that do a good job showing off plants' garden worthy attributes. In addition, I could use some shots of various plant communities at their best – shots that say "I am chaparral," or "This is oak woodland!" etc.

Other ideal photos would be garden-setting shots of plants selected from a single-plant-community. I'm in need of photos from all areas of the state.

Photographers can either email me photos or a link to where I can view them. It would also be helpful to have the plant or community name; location; and time of year. My email address is: native.garden.calendar@gmail.com.

BAEDN -- A New Strategy for Invasives

By Don Mayall, Chair, Rare Plants, Santa Clara County

In 1984, a member of our Chapter discovered an unknown tarweed-like plant along the railroad tracks near Alviso in Santa Clara County. It was not even in the Jepson Manual. It was identified as stinkwort, (*Dittrichia graveolens*), an invasive nonnative from Europe. Little attention was paid to it by land managers, although it had been a pest plant in Australia for the past 150 years. It subsequently spread rapidly in the county forming a dense monoculture in wetlands, vacant fields, and along trails. It is now a serious problem to the Santa Clara Valley Water District and the County Parks and Recreation Department.

In 2004 a grass was noted growing under the redwoods at Thornewood Open Space Preserve in San Mateo County. A perennial bunchgrass, it seemed a lot like native grasses, but was checked out and discovered to be slender false brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*), a nonnative from Europe that had already spread through 10,000 acres in Oregon. Because of quick work by the Open Space District and the County Department of Agriculture, this infestation is being brought under control before it spreads widely.

The moral of these stories is that if an invasive plant is detected, its potential to become invasive is recognized, and responsible authorities are notified early enough, widespread environmental damage and costly control programs can be avoided. The California Invasive Weed Action Plan identifies early detection and rapid response as the single most important element for coping with pest plant invasion.

A new effort, the **Bay Area Early Detection Network (BAEDN)**, has just been launched in the nine-county area around San Francisco Bay. This project has received funding from several sources, including the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Food and Agriculture. BAEDN provides a system for easily reporting sightings of invasive plants and getting them into the Calflora Database.

Chapter members are encouraged to report detections by going to the project's website, www.BAEDN.org. Occurrences reported by us and others can be analyzed and resources made available for quick eradication of the most dangerous infestations before they spread.

You can learn more by going to www.BAEDN.org.

CHAPTER SERVICE OUTINGS

Habitat Restoration at Edgewood Park

Join us as we restore sensitive habitats at Edgewood Park and enjoy late season wildflowers. Weeding sessions take place at the following times:

- **Friday mornings** throughout the year, starting at **9am**
- **Wednesday evenings** during daylight savings time starting at **5:30pm**. Since DST ends November 1 for 2009, our last Wednesday session will be **October 28**.

Our last spring/summer Saturday session for the season will be on **Saturday, September 26 at 9am**. This will be a special outing for National Public Lands Day.

For details, including schedules and meeting places, see our Weed Warriors website at edgewood.thinkersrus.net, contact Paul Heiple at (650) 854-7125 or pheiple@gmail.com, or email John Allen at jcakwa@earthlink.net.

Fountain Thistle Restoration October 24

As part of the GGNRA Endangered Species 2008 Big Year, the Santa Clara Valley and Yerba Buena Chapters of CNPS committed to eliminate pampas grass that was displacing the federal- and state-listed endangered species fountain thistle, *Cirsium fontinale* var. *fontinale* from the serpentine seep at the junction of Interstate 280 and Highway 92.

We had many volunteers from both chapters for two highly successful work parties in May and October 2008. Caltrans has done a good job holding up its end of the partnership and we need at least one more bash before giving the pampas grass the *coup de grâce*. Beyond that we'd like to restore other components of the ecosystem, an ongoing task.

Please join co-leaders Jake Sigg and Ken Himes and other volunteers from our two chapters on this energizing event, **Saturday, October 24 from 9am to Noon**. Contact Jake at jakesigg@earthlink.net or (415) 731-3028 to **register** and receive detailed location and parking instructions.

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.

Sun Sep 20 Bonny Doon Ecological Preserve

Join Kevin Bryant on a hike through this local botanical hotspot, which burned in the intense 520 acre Martin Fire of 2008. The preserve was strongly impacted, with nearly all vegetation burned. Although we may not see many species in bloom at this time of year, we will witness the regeneration and rebirth of endemic species like the silver-leaf manzanita (*Arctostaphylos silvcola*), heart-leaf manzanita (*Arctostaphylos andersonii*), Santa Cruz cypress (*Callitropsis abramsiana*), and Ben Lomond wallflower (*Erysimum teretifolium*). We will also see fire-followers and more common species in great profusion.

We'll meet at **11am**, and the hike is expected to last until **3pm**, and will be approximately 3 to 4 miles, with less than 300 ft. elevation gain.

Due to the sensitive habitat here, attendance will be limited to 15 people. Please contact Kevin Bryant to **reserve your space** and receive further details about the trip, at mtngreen17@verizon.net, or (408) 348-9470.

Sun Oct 4 Purisima Creek Redwoods Preserve

Join us for an early fall hike under the tall redwoods and hardwoods of this beautiful Open Space Preserve near Woodside. We will car shuttle (no-host) from the north ridge end and hike about 6 miles, ending along Purisima Creek.

We expect to see a variety of plants along this west side of the Santa Cruz Mountains. The hike is moderate to strenuous, so please be sure to wear good hiking shoes and bring plenty of water. Pack a lunch too, as we will stop midway.

We will have an **early start, meeting at 8:30am** at one of the trailheads. We will work out a no-host car shuttle a few miles up the road, so we can actually start hiking at 9am. We expect to be back at the cars **by 4pm**. The trip is limited to 15 people.

Please contact trip leaders Carolyn Dorsch at cdorsch1@aol.com or (650) 804-6162; or Michael Yantos at yantosarchitect@att.net or (650) 743-2807, to **reserve your space**, and to receive a detailed trip description.

Sun Oct 25 Fall Creek Unit of Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park

Join leaders Ken Himes and Joe Cernac on a 9.3 mile loop to see Big Ben Tree, a large redwood on a beautiful forested ridge. Besides upland habitat, we can expect to see a variety of ferns along Fall Creek and maybe some fall color.

Expect a steady hiking pace as this loop is longer than most CNPS hikes. We'll **meet at 10am**; allow **six hours** to complete the loop. The elevation gain and loss is about 1,000 Feet. Bring a lunch and plenty of water, and layered clothing is recommended.

Directions: From downtown Felton, the parking lot is less than one mile northwest of Hwy. 9 on Felton-Empire Road. For more information contact Ken at (650) 591-8560 or Joe at (408) 292-5465.

NEWSLETTER CORRECTION

By Agi Kehoe, Chapter Member

In the previous *Blazing Star*, Toni Gregorio-Bunch's name was accidentally left out from the credits under the page 2 photo at the section discussing the volunteers at the Redwood City's World Environment Day Fiesta. As mentioned, she took the published photo, but it was she and Rose Rockwood who set up the entire booth before Georgia Stigall and Agi Kehoe arrived, recruited me, and was there helping during the whole time.

And, among other things, with her iPhone, we were able to look up the habitat/community of one of the displayed plants. Am I forgetting anything? So, Toni deserves much credit -- despite her modesty.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

News and Activities from Other Organizations

Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society Wildlife Education Day October 24

Families are invited to join SCVAS and over a dozen other environmental organizations, including our Chapter of CNPS, to celebrate nature and wildlife. There will be live animals, educational presentations, a poster contest, and many hands-on activities, including nestbox and bird feeder building.

Saturday, October 24, 10am - 2pm

McClellan Ranch Park in Cupertino

Park at Monta Vista High School, 21840 McClellan Road

Free Shuttle and Parking

(408) 252-3740 - www.scvas.org

Shorebird Walk at Charleston Slough (Oct. 24)

For "early birds," the event includes a guided shorebird walk at the Charleston Slough in Mountain View's Baylands at **8am**. Following the walk, participants will caravan to Wildlife Education Day festivities in Cupertino. RSVP is required for the walk only.

CHAPTER OFFICERS FOR 2009

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

To join our Chapter email list please send your request to judy@fenerty.com.

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT *BLAZING STAR*

Saturday, October 3, 2009

Email: mattsson@surfpix.net

Phone: (408) 255-3767

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

(page # in parentheses)

Sep 3 Thu GWN - Nevin Smith - Los Altos (1)
Sep 17 Thu **General Meeting** - Saratoga (1)
Sep 20 Sun Bonny Doon Field Trip (4)
Sep 25 Fri Keying with Natives (3)
Sep 26 Sat Edgewood Saturday Weeding (4)
Oct 1 Thu GWN - Von Feldt - Milpitas (2)
Oct 3 Sat **Newsletter Deadline** (5)
Oct 4 Sun Purisima Creek Redwoods Field Trip (4)
Oct 8 Thu **Chapter Board meeting**
Oct 14 Wed Special Nursery Workday #1 (2)

Oct 15 Thu Special Nursery Workday #2 (2)
Oct 16 Fri Special Nursery Workday #3 (2)
Oct 17 Sat **Fall Native Plant Sale** (2)
Oct 24 Sat Fountain Thistle Work Party (4)
Oct 25 Sun Henry Cowell Fall Creek Field Trip (5)
Oct 30 Fri Keying with Natives (3)
Wed afts Nursery work sessions (2)
Wed & Fri Edgewood Park weeding (4)
Via Email List Native Hill work sessions (3)

The next Chapter Board meeting will be **Thursday, October 8 at 7:00pm**
 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

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