



The newest CNPS Fellow Jean Struthers (right) on site with the late Sally Casey (left), also a CNPS Fellow, at the nursery that Jean and her husband David founded. [Photographs by Vivian Neou]

Jean Struthers planted herself in the Los Altos Hills more than 50 years ago and has since helped thousands of native gardens bloom. In June, CNPS awarded Jean its highest honor, naming her a CNPS Fellow in recognition of nearly 40 years of service as a leader of the CNPS Santa Clara Valley Chapter and champion for the California landscape.

From her protection of local wildlands, to the creation of the chapter's productive native plant nursery, Jean's history demonstrates her remarkable sense of place and stewardship. A third generation Californian, Jean grew up in the Bay Area and spent summers at her family's forest service cabin at Kirkwood. Her father was a plantsman and gardener, perhaps explaining Jean's talents in plant propagation and selection.

Jean attended Pomona College and UC Berkeley, where she received a BA and MA in fine and studio art. Jean drew artistic inspiration from the natural world, often focusing on botanical drawings and scenes from the Bay Area and the Sierra Nevada. An artist with many local gallery exhibits, she donated her artistic talents to help create interpretive materials, chapter posters, and the logo for a campaign to preserve and restore Edgewood Park – a ruby chalice clarkia (*Clarkia rubicunda*).

Jean joined the Santa Clara Valley Chapter in 1985, and today she continues to volunteer with the chapter's nursery and conservation activities. Her service includes two terms as the chapter president, field trip chair, co-chair of the wildflower show, plant sale co-chair, and management of the chapter's nursery. Jean founded the chapter's nursery in 1995, overseeing

CNPS FELLOW Jean Struthers

its construction with her husband, David, and managing it for 20 years. Under her leadership, the nursery grew into the chapter's top source of funding, providing support for scholarships and other chapter services.

Jean's knowledge of native plants made it possible for the chapter to sell plants that were not easy to find elsewhere, note her chapter colleagues in their nomination letter: "Jean is always on the lookout for plants that would make good garden specimens." The *Ribes malvaceum* 'Monterey Wine' cultivar was one of Jean's finds during a CNPS field trip on the Monterey Peninsula.

She is perhaps most admired for her mentorship, "tireless support," and enthusiasm, whether training volunteers at the nursery or recruiting new leaders for the chapter. Chapter member Georgia Stigall recalls Jean once speaking to the topic of chapter leadership: "Jean said, 'We agreed that if we all just take a turn, then it's covered.' She stated it so clearly, so simply, and so congenially. I have quoted Jean on this many times over the years, in hopes of having potential leaders feel the same level of inclusiveness and teamwork."

—Liv O'Keeffe, with contributions from Vivian Neou and Carolyn Dorsch



Jean and David in action, repairing a greenhouse roof at the nursery.