



California Native Plant Society
Santa Clara Valley Chapter

THE BLAZING STAR

January-February 2024

The Year in Pictures: Your Best Photos of 2023

Friday, January 12
Social Hour 6-7 PM Program 7-9 PM
Los Altos Library, Orchard Room,
13 S. San Antonio Road, Los Altos

Our CNPS Chapter has an annual tradition: a winter celebration of the beauty and diversity of native plant habitats and their denizens, as captured in photographs by you. This year, we will meet in person on **Friday, January 12** to view photos of notable plant and nature excursions during the previous year. All are welcome.



Bill Lundgren

Poppies bloom along Stile Ranch Trail
in Santa Teresa County Park, April 2023

Join us early for our **social hour, 6-7pm**, to mingle with like-minded nature enthusiasts. The **main program starts at 7pm**.

If you have memorable photos to share – whether of wildflower displays in the spring or native flora/fauna later in the year – **sign up for a slot** at the following link by **Friday, January 7:**

www.signupgenius.com/go/4090F49A9A729AAFD0-46925254-theyear#

Slots are 15 minutes each, so please plan your picture count and commentary accordingly. Presenters will receive a “one minute remaining” alert. Presenters will be asked to submit their photos/PowerPoint slides ahead of time via cloud storage. Slides will be downloaded to the presentation laptop in advance of the meeting.

This in-person meeting replaces the regular Friday Zoom meeting of our Chapter’s Photography Group. Learn more about this group on page 4.

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

**Seed & Cutting Exchange
+ Plant Sale Pickup
Sunday, January 21**

Seed and Cutting Exchange

Our Seed and Cutting Exchange last November was so popular, we decided to have another one in January. It will be held from **noon – 2pm at the Peninsula Conservation Center (PCC)**, 3921 E. Bayshore Road in Palo Alto. Browse the diverse offerings, ranging from easy-to-grow to hard-to-find, and go home with seeds and cuttings of new native plants – for free! We will provide coin envelopes for seeds but bring containers to carry cuttings home.

Bring native plant material from your own garden to share. Label it to make it easy to browse; some gardeners attach helpful hints about growing; others display photos of plants in bloom. Keep cuttings cool and moist in a bucket of water. You will have a chance to show and tell what you brought. Don't have native material to share? No problem, as there is usually enough for all.



Vivian Neou

Attendees looking over seeds and cuttings at the November 2023 seed & cutting exchange event, Cupertino Library

Several popular gardening books will be available for sale during the event, including *Seed Propagation of Native California Plants* (2021 ed.), by Dara E. Emery; and *California Native Plants for the Garden* by Carol Bornstein, David Fross, and Bart O'Brien. Our Wildflower Ambassadors will be giving out free seed packets and information as well.

Online Plant Sale

There will be an online plant sale at california-native-plant-society-santa-clara-valley-chapter.square.site, starting at **9:00am on Monday, January 15**. The store will close when we reach our pickup capacity. In addition to plants, the nursery's online store includes Growing Natives Garden Tour and Chapter T-shirts, books, labels and plant signs.

Unlike our previous plant sales, **orders from this sale will only be available for pickup before and during our Seed Exchange at the Peninsula Conservation Center on January 21**. We will not have nursery pickup or delivery, and there is a minimum order of \$100.

Call for Volunteers

We need help with setup, answering questions and cleanup. The tasks don't require expert knowledge of plants, and the shifts are set up to spend time at the event in addition to volunteering. You can sign up here:

www.signupgenius.com/go/4090F49A9A729AAFD0-46904115-seed#

Directions to the PCC: From Hwy. 101 take the San Antonio Rd. exit and head north. Take the next left onto East Bayshore, which will curve left then right. Take the first right onto Corporation Way, and an immediate left into the PCC parking lot. The meeting rooms are on the first floor.

Volunteer Spotlight Award: Tilak

The Santa Clara Valley Chapter is pleased to present its Volunteer Spotlight Award to Tilak.

Tilak is a Chapter member who has been growing native plants in his garden for many years. His garden has been featured on the Growing Natives Garden Tour several times.

Tilak's involvement with the Chapter deepened when he attended the "First Day of Summer Bird & Plant Identification Walk" at Lake Cunningham many years ago. He noticed that the sunny Inner Lake Path had no shade-giving trees, so he readily volunteered to lead a native tree planting project. He created a detailed plan to plant nearly 100 native trees along the Inner Lake Path from the native garden to the Marina. With input and support from then Park Supervisor Steve Ryan and park staff, the project was implemented in phases over three years. With his experience as a Tree Amigo with Our City Forest, Tilak was the lead trainer and supervisor of up to 30 volunteers at a time.



Arvind Kumar

Tilak receiving the Chapter's Volunteer Spotlight Award from Chapter Co-President Radhika Thekkath at our October 2023 plant sale at Hidden Villa.

More recently, Tilak has initiated a native garden project at Cataldi Park in the Berryessa neighborhood of San Jose. He has received grants from BeautifySJ and the Xerces Society to plant 600 native plants to create a pollinator habitat garden. **Workdays are Saturdays 9-11am**, and are announced on the [Chapter's Meetup page](#). **Learn more** about our Cataldi Park project on page 8.

Tilak is passionate about sustainability and his house is a living example: compost bins, a kitchen garden, native plant landscaping, grey water recycling, solar panels and more. His day job in the renewable energy industry and duties as a first-time dad keep him busy, but he still makes time for native plants and the environment.

CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Native Plant Lecture Series

Join us for our native plant lecture series, in-person at local libraries and online via Zoom and YouTube. **We have one library talk and one online talk to announce:**

**Beautiful California Biodiversity:
Understanding and Protecting It
a talk by Lynne Trulio, Ph.D.**

Thursday, January 25 7:00 - 8:30 PM, Cupertino Library Program Room (2nd floor), 10800 Torre Ave., Cupertino

We share the Earth with millions of other species. But our planet is experiencing a biodiversity crisis, in which a significant portion of these species are in danger of extinction in the coming decades. This loss of species – which is caused by human activities – is a tragedy for the Earth's ecology and non-human inhabitants, but will also have significant impacts on human societies.

In this talk, we will discuss the causes of the current biodiversity crisis, with a focus on California biodiversity. We will discuss which species are most endangered, what we can do to try to limit the loss of species, and efforts underway in our region to preserve our local biodiversity, especially endangered plants, invertebrates and animal species.



Dr. Lynne Trulio is a professor and former chair of the Department of Environmental Studies at San José State University. Her research investigates human impacts to species and habitats, especially public access impacts to wildlife and the ecology and preservation of the western burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*) in California.

In addition to her professorship, she was chair of Environmental Studies for 15 years and the Associate Dean of the College of Social Sciences for two years. Dr. Trulio was the Lead Scientist for the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project from 2003-2008 and 2016-2018, directing the Project's science program. She received her Ph.D. in Ecology from the University of California, Davis and her undergraduate degree in Biology from Goucher College in Towson, MD.



Lynne Trulio
Human-caused species extinction affects even the seemingly endless variety of wildflowers we see blooming here in Antelope Valley, April 2005

Directions: From I-280 take the Southbound De Anza Blvd. Exit. Travel south on De Anza Blvd. for 1.2 mi. then turn left onto Rodrigues Ave. Continue for about 0.3 mi., then turn right just after Torre Ave. into the Cupertino City Hall parking lot. Find parking there or continue south in the parking lot, past the Community Hall, to find more parking and the Cupertino Library on the left. Enter the library through the main entrance on the north side of the building, then go straight upstairs to the 2nd floor and look for the Program Room.

**50th Anniversary of the
CNPS Rare Plant Inventory
a talk by Aaron Sims
Thursday, February 8, 7:00 – 9:00 PM**

Zoom registration: www.cnps-scv.org/npls-20240208

Celebrate the 50th Anniversary of rare plant ranking in California and the CNPS Rare Plant Inventory! CNPS maintains an inventory of California's rare and endangered plants. This data is used to fight extinction, engage citizen scientists and inform land use decisions statewide. Aaron Sims, the CNPS Rare Plant Program Director, will take us on an expedition through the history of the program. You'll see the tremendous impact it's made in plant conservation in California and learn about some of the rare plants in our Chapter.



You can visit the CNPS Rare Plant Inventory online at rareplants.cnps.org.

Aaron Sims is responsible for overseeing and managing the status review process for additions and changes to the CNPS Rare Plant Inventory (RPI), updating and maintaining the RPI, and supporting and monitoring the Rare Plant Treasure Hunt, California Plant Rescue, and Special Projects programs of CNPS. He received a degree in Ecology and Systematic Biology with an emphasis in Botany from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. In addition to his enthusiasm for field botany and California floristics, Aaron enjoys being a dad and appreciates many hobbies, including snowboarding, photography, travel, tap dancing, ceramics and woodworking.

Our native plant lectures on Zoom are livestreamed simultaneously to Zoom and YouTube. You can view such talks on our **YouTube** channel at www.youtube.com/c/CNPSSantaClaraValley (no

registration needed) or **join on Zoom** by registering using the Zoom link provided in the above talk's description.

For the current list of upcoming native plant lectures visit www.cnps-scv.org/native-plant-lecture-series or join our Chapter's News email group (see page 13) for a weekly update on upcoming activities.

Help Needed!

This year, our Chapter has re-started the in-person talks that were suspended during the pandemic. **The Committee is looking for people to help with both library and online talks.** If you can host these talks at a library near you, are interested in volunteering during a talk, or have ideas for speakers, we would love to hear from you. Please email Priya at priya4cnps@gmail.com.

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 photo group's meetings usually take place over Zoom. Our January meeting will be replaced by the special in-person "Year in Pictures" meeting, on **Friday, January 12**, as described on page 1. Our next Zoom meeting will be on **Friday, February 23 at 7pm**.

The group has an active email list with an ongoing **#MyPhotoOfTheWeek** activity for members to share their favorite shots throughout the year. Learn more by joining the email group at: <https://www.groups.io/g/cnps-scv-photography>, visiting the Chapter Meetup page at www.meetup.com/California-Native-Plant-Society-Santa-Clara-Valley-Chapter/ or contacting Bill Lundgren at lundwh@yahoo.com.

Introduction to Native Plant ID January 30

Some of you may recall our monthly Keying with Natives programs, which went on a long hiatus due to COVID. We would like to start a similar program which will be known by the less intimidating name of Native Plant ID.

The initial meeting will be on **Tuesday, January 30 at 7:00pm** in the Raptor suite at the back of the newly refreshed Peninsula Conservation Center (PCC), 3921 E. Bayshore Road in Palo Alto. See driving directions on page 2.

At this meeting we will discuss various books and resources for identifying native plants. We will also show you the tools that we use for looking at native plants and explain why taking a closer look is important to figuring out what plant you are looking at. Finally, we will walk you through some basic botanical features that are important to know in order to identify native plants.

Janet Hoffmann will lead the discussion. Please join us for this new program, to deepen your knowledge of our native flora. For more information, contact Janet at janet@cnps-scvc.org.



Vivian Neou

Studying gray pine, *Pinus sabiniana*, at Keying with Natives meeting in the PCC library, February 2020

Sudarshan Srinivasan Joins our Board

We are very happy to announce that our CNPS Chapter has a new Board member; Sudarshan (Suda) Srinivasan was voted in on December 14. We are very excited to have Suda join us. He brings fresh energy to the group and high enthusiasm for native plants and habitats. Welcome to the Board Suda!



Suda is a seasoned technology executive with experience in software engineering, product management and marketing. Suda grew up in India with a love for nature inspired by his grandparents, and now lives in San Jose with his wife and son. A serendipitous bird and plant ID walk organized by

CNPS pulled him into the world of native plants and the active local community. Suda has volunteered at Lake Cunningham and attended several CNPS field trips and he is looking forward to contributing to the Chapter. You can email Suda at suda.m.srinivasan@gmail.com.

Outstanding Volunteer Award: Penny Pollock

The recipient of this year's Outstanding Volunteer Award is Penny Pollock. Arvind Kumar presented the award to Penny at our Chapter potluck on November 4.

Penny has been involved with the Growing Natives Garden Tour since 2009. She has helped out at packing parties, put her own garden on the Tour many times, and eventually stepped into the Committee Chair role in 2012. She has served in that capacity continuously for 12 years, including two years of the pandemic.

The Growing Natives Garden Tour is a joint project of the Chapter and Master Gardeners of Santa Clara County. The Tour aims to introduce the wider community to the many benefits of growing native plants in home gardens and public areas. The Tour is free and open to the public. In 2023 it showcased 41 gardens and recorded nearly 5,700 visits. You can see that organizing this Tour is an immense task – all done by volunteers!



Vivian Neou

Left: Penny Pollock wearing her GNGT volunteer T-shirt at the start of her involvement in the GNGT in 2009; **Right:** Penny at the 2023 GNGT packing party, carrying prepared bags of native garden literature and handouts out to cars, for delivery to Tour gardens.

As chair of the Tour committee, Penny has been responsible for conducting the monthly meetings, preparing agendas, tracking action items, and following through – all this with her usual calm demeanor and a smile. In the words of a colleague, she is “personable, friendly, dedicated, knowledgeable.” In addition, Penny took on the

Tour's fundraising task, soliciting support from local agencies and businesses.

Penny is one of the key volunteers in the Alum Rock Park Restoration effort, led by past Chapter President Steve Rosenthal. She helps propagate locally collected plants in the greenhouse at the park. When ready, these plants find forever homes at revegetation sites that were once overrun with invasive non-native plants. Through her efforts, she is helping to bring nature back to the park.

Penny has also been volunteering at the Chapter nursery at Hidden Villa in Los Altos Hills. She is part of the propagation team that grows plants for sale and makes them available to the public. Funds from these sales support the Chapter's many activities such as scholarships and habitat restoration.

Penny leads by example and inspires others with her dedication and commitment. The Chapter expresses its deep appreciation for her many contributions to the community and to the environment. Please join us in congratulating her for this well-deserved recognition.

Blazing Star Mailing Party February 29

The Chapter's newsletter, the Blazing Star, is sent electronically to all its members every two months. These days, the Chapter does not usually send out paper copies. But when we do, we need all the help we can get to prepare them for mailing.



Vivian Neou

A few of the volunteers at the February 2023 newsletter mailing party, making good progress during the wafer mailing seal phase.

Our next paper copy is going to be the March-April 2024 newsletter. We'll work together, with setup starting at **9am and we'll finish by 2:30pm, on Thursday, February 29.** Help is required to label and stamp the copies, as well as to

set up and clean up the room. Please sign up for a task by using the SignUpGenius link below. Snacks, drinks and tales of our own CNPS adventures will be provided.

www.signupgenius.com/go/4090F49A9A729AAFD0-46821178-blazing

The mailing party will be held in the Raptor suite meeting room downstairs at the Peninsula Conservation Center (PCC), located at 3921 E. Bayshore Road in Palo Alto. For driving directions see page 2.

SCHOLARSHIPS

New Joint Horticulture Scholarship

Our Chapter has teamed up with the Western Horticultural Society to offer a \$1,500 native horticulture scholarship this year. The new scholarship is named the Richard and Bracey Tiede Horticulture Scholarship, to honor these two late members of both CNPS and Western Hort. The Tiedes lived in the east San Jose hills and had a large garden with many native plants. They helped to start the Chapter's garden tour, participated in various other Chapter activities over the years and were generous donors to the Chapter. You can read more about the Tiedes at www.westernhort.org/founders-award.

This scholarship is meant to further studies leading to a career in native plant landscape design, installation or maintenance or native plant restoration work. Students must have a primary residence in our Chapter area and attend a school in California. **Applications are due by February 15, 2024.** If you or someone whom you know is interested, the application and more information is available at: www.cnps-scv.org/hort-scholarship.

GROWING NATIVES GARDEN TOUR

Call for GNGT Volunteers April 13 & 14

The Growing Natives Garden Tour is seeking volunteers for our 2024 tour, which will take place on **Saturday, April 13** (northern gardens) and **Sunday, April 14** (southern gardens). The tour hours are **10am to 4pm** each day.

As a volunteer you will help to educate garden visitors about the pleasures and benefits of gardening with California native plants. Volunteers also receive a custom designed T-shirt featuring a



California native plant and are invited to attend GNGT garden previews throughout the year. We ask volunteers to select a minimum of one half-day shift. Knowledge of native plants is not required, as we have shifts for both greeters and docents.

There will be a virtual pretour orientation in March, with more details to be provided to registered volunteers. There



will be about 50 gardens to select from. To volunteer for the 2024 tour, please complete the volunteer registration form at: www.gngt.org/volunteerForm.php.

Help spread the word! Print or post the GNGT call for volunteers flyer from here: www.cnps-scv.org/images/flyers/gngt-call-for-volunteers2024.pdf.

CONSERVATION CORNER

Conservation Committee

Our Chapter's next Conservation Committee meetings will be held via Zoom on **Tuesdays, January 16 and February 13, from 7:00 to 8:30pm.**

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.

CHAPTER SERVICE OUTINGS

Alum Rock Park Restoration

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."

Our workdays take place every **Monday and Wednesday, from 8:30am to about noon.** Sometimes we have special extra workdays.

No experience is necessary. All tools and instruction will be provided. Please bring a filled water bottle and snacks; wear closed toe shoes and long pants. Note that Alum Rock Park is now open for public use, though parking is limited and several trails are still closed.

Forms and **reservations** are required to volunteer. For more information, including meeting location, contact Stephen Rosenthal at sailinsteve@sbcglobal.net or (650) 260-3450.

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 8am to 10am.** 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 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, known for fabulous wildflowers and amazing diversity near Redwood City. Weeders see far more than weeds: we 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.

Our **5:30pm Wednesday sessions** will resume after Daylight Savings Time returns on March 10. We also weed year-round **every Friday at 9:00am.** 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. If you still have questions about Wednesday sessions, contact Alf Fengler at afengler@pacbell.net. Or

for questions about Friday sessions, contact Paul Heiple at heiple@gmail.com or (650) 854-7125.

Cataldi Park Native Garden

Join us to restore habitat in Cataldi Park. We will be planting native plants in a mulched area of the park.

By the end of November, volunteers completed planting a total of 600 “plugs” from the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation grassland kit, including 120 narrow-leaf milkweed and 60 California aster plants. Starting in mid-December volunteers will take up planting of another 25 one-gallon plants obtained through a BeautifySJ grant.

Wear a hat and garden shoes and bring plenty of water to stay hydrated. Work gloves will be provided.

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



Cataldi Park Native Plant Garden volunteers prepare to plant the native plant “plugs” in the tray they are holding, November 2023

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/.

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.

Kirk Park Pollinator Garden

Community volunteers regularly care for this native plant garden at Kirk Park in San Jose. The **volunteers meet on Wednesday and Saturday mornings at 9am**. Learn more about volunteering at the end of this article and read on for the latest happenings at this one and a half year-old garden.

Two New Garden Areas at Kirk Park!

In October and November volunteers at Kirk Park in San Jose added two new native plant garden areas and seeded a new wildflower patch. In the northwest corner of the park, we planted an extensive new habitat garden with many locally native plants. In the northeast corner of the park, near Briarwood Drive, we planted a smaller garden with showy native pollinator plants. And along the walkway between the gardens, we sowed seeds for a new wildflower patch. (Seeds from last year's wildflower patch are already starting to pop up, so we hope to have many wildflowers in the spring!)

Thank you to all who came out to help and give us encouragement! And thank you to those individuals and organizations who supplied plants, funding and support!

In October and November:

- 44 volunteers helped plant, water and weed nearly 200 new plants.
- Of the 44 volunteers, 20 are students in grades pre-K to 12.
- The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation supplied us with a Monarch and Pollinator Habitat Kit that includes 72 high quality California native habitat plants.
- Volunteers planted the Habitat Kit plus approximately 128 additional native plants funded by a BeautifySJ grant, CNPS SCV and community donations.
- We have received support from the City of San Jose's Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Department, the Master Gardeners of Santa Clara County and countless community members.

Xerces Monarch Pollinator Habitat Kits

The Xerces Society has an ongoing program to provide free native plant pollinator plants to qualified organizations to be planted at schools, public parks, tribal lands and farms. The kits are not available for planting at private homes. The application is due in early spring and the plants are available for pickup in time for the fall planting season. More information can be found at xerces.org/pollinator-conservation/habitat-kits/california. If you have questions

about our experience using the program, please feel free to email KirkParkGardens@gmail.com.

Flowers and Pollinators in the Kirk Park Native Plant Pollinator Garden December 2023



Monarch on Delta Sunflower
12/12/2023



Western Honey Bee on Delta Sunflower
12/12/2023



Winter Ant on Red-flowered Buckwheat
12/03/2023



Micro Bee Fly on California Phacelia
12/03/2023
(in new habitat garden)

Insect identification from iNaturalist

FREE Wildflower Seeds!

Late fall through early winter is the best time to plant native wildflower seeds! We gathered seeds from our spring wildflower patch and we would like to share them with the community. We also have packets of three kinds of wildflower seed mixes courtesy of the Wildflower Ambassadors at CNPS SCV (www.cnps-scv.org/wfa). If you would like some free seeds to plant in your home garden, please stop by during one of our work sessions listed below.

Community Workdays at Kirk Park

We are always happy to have help at the garden! We meet regularly on Wednesday and Saturday mornings from 9 – 11am, weather permitting, for light maintenance such as weeding and watering. We are also continuing to remove invasive weeds near the garden. If you would like to help out, please let us know by sending email to KirkParkGardens@gmail.com. Occasionally, a workday is canceled, so please be sure to email before coming by.

As we write this, we still have many flowers blooming. The garden is always open. Come out and see what you can find in the garden!

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.

For field trips listed here that require **reservations**, please visit our Chapter's **Meetup page**, here: www.meetup.com/California-Native-Plant-Society-Santa-Clara-Valley-Chapter/. Find your event within the page and tap/click the "Attend" button to reserve your spot.

Field Trip Training

For all aspiring, current and past trip leaders, we will be holding a two-part training program. The first part will take place in the classroom and the second part will take place in the field. We encourage everyone who is interested in being a leader or co-leader as well as those with leading expertise to join us. We'll cover topics such as the rewards of leading, how to plan and lead trips, safety, trail skills and more.

Thu Feb 1 7:00 - 9:30pm Part 1: Field Trip Training Meeting at the PCC (Zoom & In-person)

This first meeting will be a hybrid format. Participants are welcome to attend in person or via Zoom. For those attending in person, we will meet in the Raptor suite at the

Peninsula Conservation Center (PCC), 3921 E Bayshore Road in Palo Alto. Driving directions are on page 2.

To attend by Zoom, please register at [us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAqfu6upzMrE9BwboFF0OtZHO1NapyoRVG7](https://us02web.zoom.us/join/joinMeeting?meetingRef=us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAqfu6upzMrE9BwboFF0OtZHO1NapyoRVG7).

All CNPS members are welcome to attend. Please RSVP to Nabeel Al-Shamma via email at nabeel4cnps@gmail.com.

Sat Feb 3 10:00am – 4:00pm Part 2: Field Trip Training at Edgewood Park

This is part two of the training program. We will meet in person at Edgewood Park to put our learnings into practice, to reinforce and expand on the topics covered in part 1 and to share our experiences.

We will meet at Edgewood Park & Natural Preserve, 10 Old Stage Coach Road in Redwood City at 10:00 am. Please bring water, snacks, lunch and appropriate clothing.

All CNPS members are welcome to attend. Please RSVP to Nabeel Al-Shamma via email at nabeel4cnps@gmail.com.



Ashok Jethanandani

Arvind Kumar leading "Berries for Birds" field trip at Rancho Canada del Oro, November 2023

Field Trips and Planning Meeting

Mon Jan 1 10:00am – 2:00pm New Year's walk to Franklin Point, part of Año Nuevo State Park (Hwy 1 coast, southern San Mateo County)

Join CNPS members as we celebrate a Chapter tradition of welcoming the New Year with a walk to and BYO picnic at

Franklin Point, which is part of the Año Nuevo State Park on the San Mateo County coast.

To see the full description of this field trip, please visit page 9 of our [Nov-Dec Blazing Star newsletter](#), our website's field trip page at <https://www.cnps-scv.org/activities/field-trips>, or our Chapter's **Meetup page**. Signup is required to attend.

Thu Jan 4 7:00 – 9:00pm Field Trip Planning Meeting (Zoom & In-person)

Field trip enthusiasts and leaders, please join us to help schedule our spring and summer field trips, plus any field trips we may want to have for the rest of the year. With more knowledge of the winter weather patterns, we may also make plans for away trips.

The meeting will be a hybrid format. Folks are welcome to attend in person or via Zoom. For those attending in person, we will meet in the Raptor suite at the Peninsula Conservation Center (PCC), 3921 E. Bayshore Road in Palo Alto. See page 2 for driving directions.

To attend by Zoom, please register at [us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMoc-uqqTkvEterPKyPx8VrQ66Xx79xFlo](https://us02web.zoom.us/join/joinMeeting?meetingRef=us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMoc-uqqTkvEterPKyPx8VrQ66Xx79xFlo).

All members are welcome to join in the discussion. For further information email Nabeel Al-Shamma at nabeel4cnps@gmail.com.

Fri Jan 12 10:00am – 1:30pm Winter Walk at Hidden Villa (Los Altos Hills)

Many of you have visited our CNPS SCV nursery during plant sales and events, but have you hiked the beautiful trails nearby? Join Stella Yang and Judy Fenerty on a hike at Hidden Villa to see lovely streamside vegetation, mature chaparral, and heritage oak woodlands along the Ewing Hill trail. The hike will be about 4 miles in distance and up to 850 feet elevation gain. We should see silk tassel in bloom, numerous fern species emerging, and perhaps even early spring milkmaids.

We welcome newbies who are interested in learning more about the common plants typically seen in our area. See the trail map here: www.hiddenvilla.org/visit/hiking-trails/.

Please dress in layers, bring a lunch, water and be aware that ticks are already present. As always, please clean your boots and poles and remove seeds and mud at home before the hike.



Judy Fenerty

Toyon shrub full of red berries on Hidden Villa trails, December 2023

RSVP is required to join us for the walk. Space is limited. No drop-ins please. To register, please visit the [Chapter's Meetup page](#).

Parking at Hidden Villa costs \$10 per car. The address is 26870 Moody Rd, Los Altos Hills. CNPS will match the amount paid in parking fees as a donation to Hidden Villa. Please park in the main lot near the hostel.

To register, please visit the [Chapter's Meetup page](#). We'll meet at the Orchard Glen parking lot. Driving directions and parking tips are provided on the Meetup page.

Sun Feb 4 9:00am – 2:00pm Bug & Plant Identification Walk at Sierra Azul OSP

Plants and insects are at the very bottom of the food chain – many higher forms of life depend on them for survival. An intact native plant habitat supports a diverse insect population, which in turn feeds amphibians, reptiles, birds, small mammals and other animals. Learn to identify the common native plants and insects of our area with California naturalists Karan Gathani and Arvind Kumar on a guided walk through Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve, the largest and southernmost preserve in the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District.

We will hike the Woods Trail with spectacular views of Mt. Hamilton and the valley floor. Expect to see coast live oak, madrone, California bay, bigleaf maple, buckeye, big berry manzanita, toyon, coffeeberry, cream bush, chamise, mountain mahogany, and sticky monkeyflower. We may encounter butterflies, bees, beetles, grasshoppers, flies, spiders and ants.

The elevation gain is 600 ft; the distance covered is 5.4 miles round trip.

All interested in plant and insect identification are welcome; prior knowledge of botany or entomology is helpful but not required.

Wear good walking/hiking shoes. Bring a sack lunch and plenty of fluids. Drinking water is not available in the preserve. We also suggest bringing a hat, sunscreen; and optionally, a hand lens and smartphone camera. We expect to **return to the parking lot by 2:00pm**.

RSVP is required to join us for the hike. Space is limited. No drop-ins please. To register, please visit the [Chapter's Meetup page](#). We'll meet at the Woods Trail trailhead – search for Google pin: "Sierra Azul Parking Lot at Jacques Ridge." Driving directions and parking tips are provided on the Meetup page.

Sun Jan 14 10:00am – 2:00pm Winter Frolic with Ferns (Palo Alto Foothills Nature Preserve)

Join Deanna Giuliano for a moderately strenuous hike to visit ferns in Foothills Nature Preserve. We will hike the Los Trancos trail to the Costanoan trail to the Fern loop for approximately 3.5 miles in distance and 600 feet of elevation gain. We will see at least three to five species of ferns and possibly some fungi, mosses and lichens, along with other woodland species.

Deanna Giuliano is a Certified Botanist with CNPS and is the Nursery Director/Botanical Consultant for Grassroots Ecology. Deanna has been botanizing, hiking and running the Santa Cruz Mountains for the last 25 years.

The park does charge an entrance fee of \$6 per car. We encourage carpooling. You can check out the [Foothills Nature Preserve website](#) for more information.

Bring warm layers, raingear, water and snacks. Heavy rain cancels.

RSVP is required to join us for the hike. Space is limited. No drop-ins please.



Deanna Giuliano

On this January hike, we expect to see fern species such as this coastal wood fern (*Dryopteris arguta*), pictured in the Santa Cruz Mountains, March 2020



Arvind Kumar

Naturalist Karan Gathani helps identify insects along the Woods Trail in Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve

Sat Feb 10 10:00am – 2:00pm *Dirca* Walk at San Francisco Peninsula Watershed (San Mateo County)

Join Chapter Rare Plant Chair Don Thomas to see the rare Western leatherwood (*Dirca occidentalis*) in the Crystal Springs Watershed along the Sawyer Camp Trail. This will be an easy slow-paced walk of about four miles round-trip, starting at the trailhead on Hillcrest and Highway 280, with a stop for lunch.

Dirca is one of the first plants to bloom each year, revealing its bright yellow hanging flowers from its bare winter branches. We will also have a chance to see other early blooming plants, such as hound's tongue (*Adelina grandis*) and trillium (*Trillium chloropetalum*).

Dirca is a rare paleoendemic plant native only to the San Francisco Bay Area, ranked by CNPS as 1B.2. (Read more about CNPS rare plant ranks at www.cnps.org/rare-plants/california-rare-plant-ranks.)

An optional additional short walk along the Sawyer Camp Trail will be to the Jepson Laurel. This was at one time the largest bay tree in California, but it has been declining for many years. Many large branches have died and broken off the tree over time, so it has been dethroned as the largest in the state.

Wear warm clothes and bring water and lunch.

Space is limited. No drop-ins please. **To complete the required RSVP**, please visit our [Chapter's Meetup page](#). Driving directions and parking tips are provided on the Meetup page.

Fri Feb 16 10:00am – 1:00pm *Dirca* Walk at Jasper Ridge (Woodside)

Join Vivian Neou for another chance to see the rare Western leatherwood (*Dirca occidentalis*), this time at Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve (JRBP). This will be a slow-paced walk of about four miles to also see other plants that may be blooming.

JRBP is home to some of the largest stands of *Dirca* in the area. Participants will have an opportunity to see several stands of *Dirca*, as well as to learn about ongoing research on *Dirca*.

JRBP is a private preserve and is not open to the public. The trip is **limited to CNPS members only** and eight participants. No drop-ins please. **To complete the required RSVP**, please visit our [Chapter's Meetup page](#). Details will be sent to registered participants.



Dee Shea Himes

Western leatherwood (*Dirca occidentalis*) found in San Mateo County, January 2021

Save the Dates!
Joshua Tree National Park
Sunday March 31 - Friday April 5

Join Patricia Evans and Joe Cernac at Joshua Tree National Park for four days of exploration/five nights of camping. We hope wet weather will bring carpets of flowers but in any event expect to see the usual suspects: goldfields, blazing stars, and *Phacelias* (both bells and the usual perennials and annuals), along with regional perennial specialties like purple bush (*Tetracoccus hallii*), *Menodora spinescens*, *Krameria* sp., and many others. And as a bonus, or if the rain fails us, the interesting geology of the Little San Bernadino Mountains.

We will camp at the Cottonwood Group Campground, which gives us good access to the lower and upper Sonoran Desert as well as the Mojave Desert floristic provinces. Campground creature comforts include picnic tables, sun shades, flat areas for tents, fire pits, toilets and potable water. Group site fees (\$200) will be split among attendees, and there may be additional park entrance fees. Weather is expected to be warm days and chilly nights.

Before signing on this trip, commit yourself to attending so no one else loses a spot on the list. Singles should consider if you are willing to carpool (only 11 cars allowed for up to 20 people, no overflow parking).

This trip is for **CNPS members only** (please ensure your membership is up to date or join). Space is limited. No drop-ins. To reserve your spot and for additional trip information, please contact:

- Registration: Sarah Wang at (408) 348-5857 or wang_whi@yahoo.com
- Trip info: Patricia Evans at (650) 949-2801 or paevans@stanfordalumni.org
- Botany info: Joe Cernac at (408) 499-2515 or joecernac@sbcglobal.net

ANNOUNCEMENTS

News and Activities from Other Organizations

Volunteer Opportunities at Hidden Villa

Our CNPS SCV native plant nursery at Hidden Villa is still not at a point where we can host drop-in volunteers at our workdays, but there are a several volunteer opportunities available with Hidden Villa that might be of interest to Chapter members.

Hidden Villa is particularly interested in having volunteers with native plant experience to help them with the gardens. Opportunities include caring for their Education Garden or other landscapes around their facilities, trail maintenance and helping to weed in the organic farm.

For details, visit the Hidden Villa November 2023 newsletter at www.hiddenvilla.org/monthly-newsletter/ and scroll down to “Volunteer Opportunities.” If any of the activities look interesting to you, email Hidden Villa at volunteers@hiddenvilla.org to inquire.

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 online **and** paper version will be the 2024 March-April issue.

Please help us to mail out that issue by attending our **mailing party on Thursday, February 29 at 10:00am**. For details, see the mailing party article on page 6.

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP FOR 2023-2024

Title	Name	Email
Co-President	Radhika Thekkath	cnpsradhika@gmail.com
Co-President	Vivian Neou	techchair@cnps-scv.org
Vice President	Priya Pharate	priya4cnps@gmail.com
Recording Secretary	Patricia Lang	secretary@cnps-scv.org
Treasurer	Brett Tucker	treasurer@cnps-scv.org
Chapter Council Delegate	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, February 10

carol.mattsson@gmail.com or (408) 255-3767

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

CALENDAR OF EVENTS (page # in parentheses)

Jan 1 Mon	Año Nuevo field trip (10)	Feb 8 Thu	CNPS Rare Plant Inventory – Sims (4)
Jan 4 Thu	Field trip planning meeting (10)	Feb 10 Sat	<i>Dirca</i> walk at SF Pen. Watershed (12)
Jan 12 Fri	Hidden Villa field trip (10)	Feb 10 Sat	Newsletter submittal deadline
Jan 12 Fri	Year in Pictures – Program (1)	Feb 13 Tue	Conservation Committee meeting (7)
Jan 14 Sun	Fern Frolic field trip (11)	Feb 15 Thu	Horticulture Scholarship deadline (6)
Jan 15 Mon	Plant Sale online store opens (2)	Feb 16 Fri	<i>Dirca</i> walk at Jasper Ridge (12)
Jan 16 Tue	Conservation Committee meeting (7)	Feb 23 Fri	Photo Group photo sharing (4)
Jan 21 Sun	Seed & Cutting Exch. + Plant Sale (1)	Feb 29 Thu	Newsletter mailing party (6)
Jan 25 Thu	Protecting Biodiversity – Trulio (3)	Mon & Wed	Alum Rock workdays (7)
Jan 30 Tue	Introduction to Native Plant ID (4)	Fridays	Edgewood workdays (7)
Feb 1 Thu	Field trip leader training part 1 of 2 (9)	Saturdays	Lake Cunningham workdays (7)
Feb 3 Sat	Field trip leader training part 2 of 2 (10)	Saturdays	Cataldi Native Garden workdays (8)
Feb 4 Sun	Bug & Plant ID at Sierra Azul OSP (11)	Wed & Sat	Kirk Pollinator Garden workdays (8)

The next Chapter board meetings will be **Thursdays, January 18 and February 15 at 7:00pm** over Zoom.

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

For more information contact Radhika Thekkath at cnpsradhika@gmail.com.

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-scvc.org. Address changes may be submitted to membership@cnps.org. Please put "address change" in the subject line.

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