



California Native Plant Society  
Santa Clara Valley Chapter

# ***THE BLAZING STAR***

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*July-August 2006*

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## GENERAL MEETING AND PROGRAM

**Friday, July 14th at 7:30 pm**  
**Moreland-West Community Center**  
**1850 Fallbrook Avenue, San José**  
*Note new location!*

### **Images from Santa Cruz's North Coast** **Dylan Neubauer & Randy Morgan**

Join us for a mid-summer look at a gorgeous array of flowers seen up close from the North Coast of Santa Cruz County. The show will emphasize the many special plants and landscapes of the Scott Creek Watershed, known for its botanical diversity. Accompanied by music, we'll take a journey through a variety of plant communities through the macro-photography of Dylan Neubauer. After the presentation we'll have a discussion with Santa Cruz botanist extraordinaire, Randy Morgan.

**About the presenters:** Dylan Neubauer is a graphic designer and photographer with a long-standing interest in California native plants. Randy Morgan is a CNPS fellow and discoverer of seven new plant species. He is currently involved in an in-depth study of the genus *Trifolium*.

**Directions:** The Moreland-West Community Center is best approached from Hwy. 85. From Hwy. 85, take the Saratoga Ave. exit and head north. Turn right on Campbell Ave., follow Campbell Ave. to Fallbrook Ave., turn left onto Fallbrook. The Community Center parking lot is on the right, at 1850 Fallbrook Ave.

If coming from Hwy. 280, take the Saratoga Ave. exit south to Campbell Ave, turn left, and follow the directions as above.

CNPS general meetings are free and open to the public. For additional information, contact Chapter Vice President Kevin Bryant, at [mtngreen17@verizon.net](mailto:mtngreen17@verizon.net) or (408)353-8824.

## CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

### **Native Plant Nursery**

Thanks to all the volunteers that helped to make our Spring Native Plant Sale a success! Mark your calendars (and make space in your gardens) for our **fall sale**, which will be held on **Saturday Oct. 14th** at Hidden Villa.

Healthy, vibrant plants are a key element of a successful sale, and we **need more volunteers** to make this a reality. You can help by coming to one of our nursery work sessions at Hidden Villa, which take place every **Wednesday** from **12noon to 3pm**. Bring garden gloves, sunhat, clippers, and your lunch if you like. Other tools will be provided at the nursery. Knowledge of plants is not necessary: your willingness to help is all that's required.

For more information, contact Jean Struthers at (650)941-2586 or [JeanStruthers@aol.com](mailto:JeanStruthers@aol.com), or Ray Deutsch at (650)365-6136 or [henrymarsh@yahoo.com](mailto:henrymarsh@yahoo.com). Through early August, call Jean or Ray before you come to the nursery, since the gate at Hidden Villa may be locked for summer camp.

**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. Proceed over the bridge, and park in the visitor center parking lot to your right. The Native Plant Nursery is at the greenhouse just beyond the visitor center.

### **Gardening with Natives**

Gardening with Natives (GWN) is a special interest group within the Chapter which meets on the first Thursday of each month, usually at the Peninsula Conservation Center (PCC) in Palo Alto (directions below). The group is open to all, and includes a mix of seasoned native plant gardeners as well as beginners. Newcomers are always welcome.

**Tuesday, July 18, 7-9pm**, at PCC, Palo Alto  
**Birds and Native Plant Habitat**, a talk by **Josiah Clark**. Ecologist, birder, and photographer Josiah Clark explains how improved habitat, of which native plants are a critical component, sustains bird populations. He has worked in San Francisco's parks over the last decade with the goal of maximizing biodiversity and productivity for wildlife.

**Thursday, August 3, 7-9pm**, at PCC, Palo Alto  
**Converting a Lawn to a Native Plant Garden**, a talk by **Annaloy Nickum**.

Since 1999, Annaloy Nickum's business, Wildscapes Garden Design, has specialized in California natives combined with compatible non-natives. Gardens designed by her have been featured in the Going Native Garden Tour. As the garden design consultant with Yerba Buena Nursery, she has traveled throughout the South Bay to advise residents on how to introduce California natives into their gardens.

**Directions to the PCC:** PCC (Peninsula Conservation Center), 3921 E. Bayshore Road, Palo Alto. From Highway 101, take the "San Antonio North" exit, get immediately into the left-hand turn lane, and turn LEFT onto East Bayshore. This will curve around to the left, then right. Turn right on Corporation Way. Then turn into the first driveway on your left, which leads to the PCC parking lot. The meeting is in the **Raptor Suite on the first floor**.

For more information on the Gardening with Natives group, visit its website at **www.GardeningWithNatives.com**. GWN maintains a Yahoo group with over 300 members, a true resource for native plant gardeners in this area. To join the Yahoo group, visit **groups.yahoo.com/group/GardeningWithNatives**. To contact the GWN Steering Committee, email [GardeningWithNatives@yahoo.com](mailto:GardeningWithNatives@yahoo.com) or call Arvind Kumar at (408)274-6965.

## Wildflower Show - Thanks to All!

Thanks to all of you who helped with the Wildflower Show on April 21-23, which the Chapter has presented annually since 1973. The show this year displayed 511 different plant species in 75 families. Twenty-six species were new to our show, and 18 of these were native to California. Our attendance was significantly increased over last year, in part due to a timely article in the San José Mercury News and the attendance of Mission College students and faculty.

It's always wonderful to see so many folks turn up to volunteer; everyone knows their jobs so well! Special thanks to our new coordinator David Chapman, who was assisted by Stephen Buckhout and Stella Yang, outgoing

coordinators. Thanks also to everyone else who helped with hospitality, set-up, take-down, keying, book and poster sales, surveys, the greeter table, flower collecting, publicity, displays, garden clean-up, and specimen presentation. We also very much appreciate our vendors, and much gratitude also goes to Judy Mason and Arvind Kumar, who presented very popular classes on wildflower identification and gardening. We have also been fortunate for the past four years to hold the show at Mission College, which has been a very accommodating venue and has shown us much hospitality and support.

The Wildflower Show continues to be an important education and outreach event for our Chapter, and we hope you can all join us again as volunteers or visitors at next year's 35th edition!

## Native Hill - Weeds vs. Natives

The extra rains this year have encouraged a profusion of weeds that have outcompeted the native plants at some locations at Native Hill this past spring.

Large areas of the garden were set aside for spring annuals such as California poppies, lupines and clarkia. However, the lupines and clarkia are in short supply this year and the poppies although present are not abundant. It has been an uphill battle to remove the non-natives this year, and our plan for the fall is to plant more perennials, especially ground covers such as *Salvia sonomensis* and *Grindelia stricta* var. *platyphylla*, to reduce the area available for non-natives and eventually reduce the workload involved in weeding.

Our biggest success this year was a native grassland planting with several perennials and numerous annuals. At the beginning of June the Fremontias, sages and especially the woolly bluecurls provided an unforgettable sight with their rich hues and collections of bees and hummingbirds in their never ending search for nectar.

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](mailto:phidor@juno.com) or (650)941-4752.

## Keying with Natives

Join us on the last **Friday** of every month, from **6:30pm - 8:30pm**, in a fun gathering to meet with other native plant enthusiasts to sharpen your keying skills. We meet at the PCC building in Palo Alto. The next meetings will be Fridays, **June 30, July 28** and **August 25**. Contact David "Tex" Houston for more details, (650)303-2777 or [tex009@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tex009@sbcglobal.net).

## Habitat Restoration at Edgewood Park

Join us as we restore sensitive habitats at Edgewood and enjoy summer wildflower displays. Weeding sessions take place **Friday mornings at 8:30am, Wednesday evenings at 5:30pm**, and on occasional **Saturdays at 9am** throughout the year. Our next Saturday outings are planned for **July 15 and July 29**.

Work sites vary depending on the season and size of the group. Sometimes nature times a wildflower display to coincide with the group's visit to a work site. For details including meeting places, please see the schedule at the Edgewood Weed Warriors website, at [edgewood.thinkersrus.net](http://edgewood.thinkersrus.net), or call Ken Himes at (650)591-8560. For the Friday sessions call Ken or contact John Allen at [jcakwa@earthlink.net](mailto:jcakwa@earthlink.net). John can also add you to the Friday sessions email list at your request.

## Broom and Thistle Eradicators

First Time Weeding in Foothills Park

*By Carol Mattsson, Chapter Newsletter Editor*

In late May I joined a weeding session to remove Italian thistle with the Friends of Foothills Park. It was a mild, sunny day with pretty clouds in the sky. At the Foothills Park entrance the two rangers brightened up when they heard I was there to weed, and enthusiastically directed me to the Orchard Glen parking area.

There I met Jean and Franklin Olmsted and was introduced to several other volunteers, some new, some regulars. Jean handed out large, white, sturdy garbage bags, weeding tools, and gloves and explained that we were going to look for Italian thistle, pull up the plants, but pull off the flower (later seed) heads and put only them in the garbage bags. In the past the weeders had bagged the entire thistle, but new park budget restrictions required them to reduce the amount of garbage they generated.

It was very important to dispose of the flower and seed heads properly because, even unattached to the plant, they can produce mature, viable seeds.

The leaders also made sure everyone knew how to recognize poison oak so we could avoid it.

On the half mile walk to our weeding site, on both sides of the trail, we saw large patches of Italian thistle. It was tempting to stop and pull these obvious large weeds. Jean explained that it's quite satisfying for a group to clear an area of visible weeds, but it is not effective because plants that come up from the seed bank the next year can quickly

reclaim the area. It takes persistent work in the same area to get it cleared and keep it cleared.

When we came to our weeding spot, Jean helped us to recognize Italian thistle plants, and demonstrated effective techniques for stripping the seed heads and blossoms from the plant (deadheading). She also explained that it was best to gather the pulled plants into piles, whereas if they are left on the spot, others may waste time later by seeing the plant and thinking it needs to be pulled.

As we spread out and started weeding, I learned to recognize the thistles by their attractive purple blossoms. I also found several other kinds of weeds and asked why we weren't pulling those as well, since we were here. Franklin explained that, besides the obvious answer of limited volunteer hours, some weeds were more invasive and aggressive than others, which in fact leads to the Cal-IPC ratings CNPS members have heard about. Our group focuses on the most invasive weeds, which means at Foothill Park, depending on the season, they weed Italian thistle, French broom, and yellow star-thistle.

While we weeded in the grassy, green shade next to a stream, we enjoyed pleasant conversation. We observed how cleaning out a check dam downstream can cause erosion by increasing the stream gradient upstream; and the difference between hedge parsley and bur chervil. One weeder startled us by suddenly dashing away from his weeding spot and hopping up and down. We didn't know what to think until he explained, "Ants!" Another weeder unintentionally confirmed his finding a half hour later. One of the volunteers found an upside down old birdhouse in a tree across the stream. He cleaned it out, adjusted a wire to reorient it, and thus restored the house to a viable bird habitat, complete with a tiny chimney.

At noon we finished our weeding session, and took our bags of "precious" seed and flower heads back to the parking lot. We savored the thought of the day's efforts preventing thousands, perhaps millions, of new Italian thistle plants from growing. Most of the weeders went home for lunch, but I stayed in the park and by taking the group's advice on prime hilltop lunch spots nearby, enjoyed a pleasant lunch with a great view before heading for home.

I had a wonderful time, was treated like a celebrity, and enjoyed feeling that my time had been effectively spent improving a natural habitat. I encourage other newcomers to try a weeding session with the Foothills Park Broom and Thistle Eradicators.

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For page 4, see file "habitatPage.doc, " Ongoing Habitat  
Restoration Projects

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**Foothills Park Weeding**, continued from p. 3

Jean invites everyone to come help with the weeding. The group meets at **9am every Sunday** morning usually at the Orchard Glen parking area but occasionally at the Page Mill/280 Park and Ride lot. Non-Palo Alto residents enter as the group's guests. For meeting location, please call Jean Olmsted at (650)493-3468 or send an email message to [jwo@svpal.org](mailto:jwo@svpal.org) to get on the notice list. The Friends' website is at: [www.FriendsOffoothillsPark.org](http://www.FriendsOffoothillsPark.org).

**Legislation, Invasives, Conservation, and Rare Plant (LIVECoRP) Committee**

Our small but active **LIVECoRP** Committee (notice the fancy new name) is seeking people who wish to get involved with preserving, protecting, and understanding native species and plant communities throughout our Chapter's area. No experience is necessary, only a desire to help retain what remains of our natural heritage. We will be discussing starting a "locally rare" program and formulating a rare plant monitoring program, as well as addressing several specific conservation efforts that are ongoing in our area.

If you would like to get involved, our next meeting will be **Thursday, July 27th at 6pm** at the PCC. We'll supply the pizza! For more information, contact Kevin Bryant at [mtngreen17@verizon.net](mailto:mtngreen17@verizon.net) or (408)353-8824.

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

*By Judy Fenerty, Chapter President*

Four times per year, representatives from the 32 CNPS chapters, along with the State staff and Board of Directors meet for a weekend at different locations around the state. These Chapter Council meetings are a wonderful opportunity for representatives to share ideas and successes. The creativity and dedication of our Society's members is truly inspiring.

Although we have so many talented and hard-working members around the state, we continue to face numerous challenges in our efforts to protect native plants and their habitats. As I'm sure you are aware, invasive species, illegal off-road use, urban sprawl, and logging can all cause extreme pressures on our wonderful California natives.

In this issue of the *Blazing Star*, we have listed a few of the restoration and invasive plant eradication efforts going on within our Chapter boundaries – there are many more that we did not have space to list. I invite you to “act locally” by joining one of these work parties. In addition, please

“think California,” and consider volunteering at the state level. There are many State-level committees looking for volunteers, as well as open elected positions on the State Board. I have had a wonderful time attending these meetings and working with other delegates, and I would encourage any of you interested in working on state-level policy and initiatives to consider it. For more information, please contact me at [judy@fenerty.com](mailto:judy@fenerty.com) or (408)378-6272, or check the state CNPS website at [www.cnps.org](http://www.cnps.org).

**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.**

**Fri-Sun July 21-23 Sugar Lake Backpack**

Join Joe Cernac and Ken Himes for a botanical backpack trip to Sugar Lake in the Russian Peak Wilderness of the Klamath National Forest. The Klamath Mountains are renowned for their incredible conifer diversity, with at least 22 species to be found. A staggering 19 species of conifer are found in the square mile surrounding our Sugar Lake destination, including Engelmann spruce and sub-alpine fir.

Our hike in to the lake on Friday will be in an easy and relatively flat 2 miles.

Saturday will feature a longer day hike with possible substantial elevation gain. Contact Joe at (408)292-5465 or Ken at (650)591-8560 for further details, or to **reserve your spot**. Reservations can also be made by emailing Kevin Bryant at [mtngreen17@verizon.net](mailto:mtngreen17@verizon.net).

**DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT *BLAZING STAR***

**Saturday, August 5, 2006**

**Email: [mattsson@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mattsson@sbcglobal.net)**

**Phone: (408)255-3767**