



California Native Plant Society
Santa Clara Valley Chapter

THE BLAZING STAR

July-August 2015

GENERAL MEETING & PROGRAM

Friday, July 24 at 7:30 PM
Los Altos Library Program Room
13 So. San Antonio Road, Los Altos

The Monterey Pine Forest
A talk by **Nikki Nedeff**

Want to be a Pine Nut? Please join us for a talk about a celebrity plant community: the Monterey Pine Forest. The story isn't about the trees, which seem to be everywhere in our local landscape and grow around the world in vast plantations — the story is about the natural forests of the Central Coast and the biological, inspirational and economic values these natural communities sustain.

Nikki is a Central Coast native who will share the fascinating story of pine forest ecology and how a group of environmentally-inclined citizens came together more than 20 years ago to advocate for the conservation and management of Monterey Pine Forests. Their volunteer work includes a recent book dedicated to the living legacy of our emblematic native pine forest habitats. Besides being a "Pine Nut," Nikki teaches plant ecology and introductory plant taxonomy at California State University, Monterey Bay and maintains an ecological consulting



Nikki Nedeff

Pinus radiata cones from each of the Monterey Pine Forest populations (Cedros, Guadalupe, Monterey, Swanton and Cambria), and a penny

business. She has worked for three land trusts and two public agencies dedicated to the conservation and stewardship of California's special places.

The book *The Monterey Pine Forest – Coastal California's Living Legacy* will be available for purchase as a tax-deductible donation: \$22.00 in cash or check.

Directions: 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.

CNPS general meetings are free and open to the public. For more information, contact Chapter President Stephen Rosenthal at sailinsteve@sbcglobal.net or the Chapter phone at (650) 260-3450.

CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Native Plant Nursery at Hidden Villa

Come help propagate plants for restoration projects and our **October 17 fall plant sale** by volunteering at our nursery work sessions, every **Wednesday and Thursday**, from **10am to 1pm**. Bring garden gloves, sunhat, clippers, liquids 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.

To volunteer or for more information, **contact** Melanie Cross at (650) 847-1350 or melanie@pcross.com; or Ray Deutsch at (650) 365-6136 or ray.deutsch@yahoo.ca.

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 Nursery is at the greenhouse just beyond the visitor center.

Gardening with Natives

Gardening with Natives (GWN), a special interest group within the Chapter, includes beginning and seasoned native plant gardeners, along with landscape architects and designers. GWN offers over 30 talks at public libraries throughout the year, which are free and open to all.

This year's themes are *How I Did It* and *Maintaining Your Native Garden*. The monthly speakers will share tips on how they created their native garden or on a specific garden maintenance task. For more information, visit www.cnps-scv.org/index.php/gardening/gardening-with-natives.

These programs are made possible by the co-sponsoring libraries and our volunteers who help with program logistics. If you would like to help organize similar programming at a library near you, contact sdosaka@sustainable-landscape.com.

Soil Health to Drought-Proof Your California Native Garden, a talk by Theresa Lyngso

Wednesday, July 8, 7:00-8:30 PM, Los Altos Library, 13 So. San Antonio Rd., Los Altos (650) 948-7683

Plants that grow in healthy living soil are more able to cope with stress, including droughts. California native plants have evolved in

relationship with life in the soil. Learn about the diversity of life in the soil, the relationships between the plants and the soil life and how to encourage and grow life in your soil. Theresa will share her experience of turning an annual weed patch into a thriving native garden that uses very little irrigation water.

Theresa Lyngso is President of Lyngso Garden Materials, Inc., a 60-year-old family business. Theresa is a Master Composter and Master Gardener. She and her husband Joe grow California natives, roses, apples, pears, herbs and annual vegetables in their garden in Loma Mar.

**Replace your Lawn
with California Native Plants
Three different dates and locations**



Photos by Carol Mattsson



Thanks to all our wonderful volunteers, customers and visitors, our spring plant sale, wildflower show and Going Native Garden Tour were very successful!

Photo by Kris Kozminski

You stopped watering your lawn because of the drought and because you wanted something new, but now the “lawn” is full of weeds. What do you do? Come to this talk and be inspired to create a beautiful, water-wise garden! See a variety of no-lawn landscaping styles and ideas. Get professional tips on removing that weed-filled patch called a lawn, learn to choose climate-adapted native plants and find out how you can qualify for landscape rebates. You’ll see how to have a lush landscape without that water-hogging grass.

Thursday, July 16, 7:00-8:30 PM, Cupertino Community Hall, 10350 Torre Ave., Cupertino (408) 446-1677 -- A talk by Stephanie Morris

Stephanie Morris has worked in the field of landscape architecture for 19 years and specializes in ecologically-oriented residential design. She enjoys creating landscapes that reduce water use, require less maintenance, and provide a connection to the natural world. In addition to tending her own California native garden in the Bay Area, she appreciates collaborating with other native plant gardeners and design professionals, in order to further everyone’s knowledge.

Monday, July 20, 7:00-8:30 PM, Belmont Library, 1110 Alameda de Las Pulgas, Belmont (650) 591-8286 -- A talk by Julie Montanari

Monday, August 10, 6:00-7:30 PM, Sanchez Library, 1111 Terra Nova Blvd., Pacifica (650) 359-3397 -- A talk by Julie Montanari

Note the Pacifica talk’s earlier start time, 6:00pm.

Julie Montanari is a landscape designer with a passion for naturalistic designs which incorporate California natives and other low-water plants to create beautiful, healthy, water-wise gardens. As a Master Gardener, she educates home gardeners about the beauty of low-water plants and the use of sustainable gardening practices. Her home garden has been featured on several garden tours and she has a certificate in Environmental Horticulture from Foothill College.

Ulistac Natural Area: A California Native Gem, a talk by Dennis Dowling

Monday, August 3, 7:00-8:30 PM, Milpitas Library, 160 N. Main Street, Milpitas (408) 262-1171

Ulistac Natural Area is the only dedicated natural open space in the City of Santa Clara, and a regional and cultural resource for all of us. Ulistac contains the last 40 acres of

natural, undeveloped land in the city along the Guadalupe River, a major migratory flyway for birds. Volunteers remove invasive species and plant California native trees, shrubs, grasses and wildflowers. Butterflies reappear, birds nest and breed, and migrating birds spend the winter. Come hear the history of this open space area and how volunteers are bringing it back to life.

Dennis Dowling is the CEO of the Ulistac Natural Area Restoration and Education Project. Passionate and knowledgeable about the preservation of California’s natural history, he is a great teacher and storyteller.

How I Did It: Creating a Bird-Friendly Garden, a talk by James Howard

Thursday, August 20, 7:00-8:30 PM, Mountain View Library, 585 Franklin St., Mountain View (650) 903-6337

Convert your yard into a beautiful native wildlife habitat and watch how quickly the birds make it their favorite spot! It’s easy and inexpensive to create food, water, and shelter for native birds, butterflies and bees. This presentation is another in our “How I Did It” series, shows great photos of a local backyard restoration project and shares some important lessons for the beginning habitat gardener.

James Howard is the District Conservationist for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in San Mateo County. He has degrees in Environmental Management and Forest Management.

Using Graywater for California Native Plants, a talk by Lois Simonds

Monday, Aug 24, 7:00-8:30 PM, Belmont Library, 1110 Alameda de Las Pulgas, Belmont (650) 591-8286

We are in our fourth year of drought and it is imperative that we conserve every precious drop of water. Graywater is a great way to re-use water from inside the house for landscape irrigation outside of the house. Come learn how you can install a simple laundry-to-landscape system and which native plants are best suited for this type of irrigation.

Lois Simonds has been landscaping professionally for 25 years. She is a licensed landscape contractor and is certified in permaculture. She focuses on an organic, ecological approach to landscaping – protecting and improving the soil while bringing natives and drought tolerant plants into the garden.

Keying with Natives

Join us as we learn and practice methods of identifying the native plants of our region (aka keying). From beginners to more advanced, there are challenges for all. Bring in plant samples if you have some or just come and work with the materials provided. We discuss the various plant books and practice keying with them. Microscopes are also available.

The upcoming dates are **Fridays, July 31 and August 28 from 6:30pm - 8:30pm**. We meet at the Peninsula Conservation Center (PCC), 3921 E. Bayshore Road in Palo Alto. For more information, please contact Joe Cernac at joecernac@sbcglobal.net or (408) 292-5465; or Sally Casey at (408) 377-0989.



Joe Cernac (standing) and John Bradley (left) leading the May KWN class, keying out parts of a seep monkeyflower. Photo by Toni Gregorio-Bunch.

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

CONSERVATION CORNER

A Short History of Restoration Efforts at Alum Rock Park

By Stephen Rosenthal, Alum Rock Restoration Project Lead

In 2011 Arvind Kumar and I requested permission to start a restoration project at Alum Rock Park. We chose Inspiration Point because water was available there and

because it gets a lot of foot traffic due to an old, closed roadway.



Yellow star-thistle ready for removal at Alum Rock Park in August 2011

The area has quite a few native plants, including coast live oak, valley oak and blue oak. Other trees include buckeye and blue elderberry. Shrubs include sticky monkeyflower, blue witch, deerweed and sagebrush. Flowers include Ithuriel's spear, fiesta flower, blue-eyed grass, soap lily, yarrow and blue dicks.

But the area had significant yellow star-thistle as well as Italian thistle and milk thistle. These plants had crowded out many of the native plants, which led to low native populations. After a couple years of work on the site, we had reduced the weed populations to manageable levels and started to look for other areas which might benefit from restoration efforts.

In 2013 we started work on an area that we now call the Fire Meadow. It's a couple hundred yards uphill from Inspiration Point and was the site of a fire a couple years ago.

Volunteers are essential to the success of our restoration projects. Many volunteers joined us after speaking with us

during our work sessions and asking questions. The City of San Jose has also referred people to us as well as provided equipment to assist in our efforts.

With plenty of volunteer labor, we have cleared this newer restoration area, and are now seeing the return of natives to the area. We now have large populations of hedge nettle, soap lily, Pacific sanicle and Ithuriel's spear which are growing under several heritage-sized oaks.



Volunteers clearing weeds in the Fire Meadow, September 2013

In 2014 Central Coast Wilds nursery donated 60 trees to our project, and 56 of those trees have been planted at the two restoration sites as well as a new site at the top of the Todd Quick Trail. To protect the trees from browsing by deer, we have installed a number of plant cages. We have propagated several hundred other natives from seed gathered at the park, including various grasses, flowers and shrubs.



Plant cages installed to protect buckeye and hollyleaf cherry at the fire meadow

The Todd Quick site (started in 2014) has several issues that make it more difficult. It is one half mile from the nearest road, which means that tools and plants need to be brought up by foot. The site is infested with poison hemlock and black mustard, the stems of which are up to 1" in diameter. While we have planted a number of trees there, we have not yet installed plant cages there as carrying in the posts and cage material will be quite a bit of work.



Volunteers at the Todd Quick site, in front of several weed piles that will be composted on site

The photo above shows one of several weed piles that will be composted on site. The location of the site and huge amounts of weed material on several acres of land prevents us from removing the weeds from the site.

Alum Rock restoration project workdays generally take place on the **third Saturdays of the month, 8am to noon**. New volunteers are always welcome! For more info., including new **Monday 9am** workdays, please visit groups.yahoo.com/group/alumrockparkvolunteers.

Photo credit for all photos in this article Stephen Rosenthal.

Conservation (Formerly LIVECoRPs)

Our Chapter's conservation committee has changed its meetings times to now be on the **first Thursday** of the month. The next meetings will be on **Thursdays, July 2 and August 6 at 7pm** at the PCC in Palo Alto. Please join us in our important work. For questions, comments or concerns, please contact Conservation Chair Linda Ruthruff at ldruff@hotmail.com. For **directions** to the PCC, please see the previous Keying with Natives article.

EDUCATION NEWS

2015-2016 Chapter Scholarships Awarded

By Nora Monette, Scholarship Chair

The Chapter selected three recipients for \$1,500 graduate student research scholarships and one recipient for a \$1,000 undergraduate research team scholarship in May 2015. This is the 16th year our Chapter has supported student California native plant research. One of the graduate students, Prahlada Papper, was able to attend the May General Meeting to receive his award. We look forward to the other recipients attending our July General Meeting and saying a few words about their research.

The recipients of the 2015 student scholarships are:

Prahlada Papper, University of California, Berkeley [Conservation Scholarship]. Prahlada is studying the movement of genetic characteristics through wind-borne pollen hybridization, focusing on blue oak and Oregon white oak. One of the purposes of this research is to better understand the potential responses of oak species to climate change in coming years. Oaks are often identified as a keystone species in native habitats and species distribution models predict major shifts in suitable habitat for most oak species in the coming years. Understanding the degree of gene flow between these species is an important step towards an understanding of their potential responses, as well as management implications.

A first year Ph.D. student, Prahlada is planning to use a multi-faceted approach to investigate the current and potential roles of hybridization in population structure. His work involves field and laboratory work as well as a component of "citizen science": volunteer-based projects to

monitor oak trees through their leaf out, flowering, and acorn ripening phenological stages.

Kyle Christie, University of California, Davis. Kyle's studies are designed to improve the understanding of the taxonomy and species delineation of the *Streptanthus breweri* complex of jewelflowers. Both plant and leaf size can vary greatly in this species complex and Kyle proposes to use an integrative taxonomic approach to clarify biodiversity patterns, such as geographic clusters and distinctive climates or serpentine substrates. One of the purposes of understanding the diversity and taxonomy of this complex is to inform conservation and management in the future.

Julia Michaels, University of California, Davis [Conservation Scholarship]. Julia's work involves a study of plant diversity in vernal pools. California vernal pools are host to hundreds of native plant species, many of which are endemic to these ecosystems and habitats. Vernal pools have been threatened for many years by conversion to agricultural or urban uses.

Her studies will be looking at the effects of grazing on vernal pool plant diversity on an 1,132 acre site in Sacramento County; specifically whether grazing has a homogenizing effect on beta diversity (i.e., the species diversity along an environmental gradient within a site/between pools) and whether pool characteristics affect these patterns. The study is intended to fill a gap in the literature and understanding of the use of grazing as a management tool to control exotic plants in vernal pool habitat.

Our undergraduate student scholarship will be awarded to undergraduate Jannah Wren at University of California, Davis. The purpose of her research is to evaluate the effect of root nodule symbiosis (nitrogen fixation) in native, non-legume (actinorhizal) plants. In California, actinorhizal plants include threatened species such as *Ceanothus ferrisiae* and *C. ophiochilus*. Her work will include sampling at Anderson Reservoir near Morgan Hill, McLaughlin Natural Reserve and Sagehen Creek Field Station.

We look forward to hearing more from the scholarship recipients in the future at our July meeting and newsletters. Congratulations to Prahlada, Kyle, Julia, and Jannah!!



Kyle Christie

Scan showing variation in cauline leaf sizes within mature plants of the *Streptanthus breweri* complex of jewelflowers.

CHAPTER SERVICE OUTINGS

Habitat Restoration at Edgewood Park

Our 26-year volunteer restoration program strives to make Edgewood Park and Natural Preserve an inspirational showcase of all CNPS stands for. Come share the beauty of Edgewood with us, learn a ton, and help keep Edgewood native!

Our **Friday 9am** sessions run year round and **Wednesday 5:30pm** sessions continue through Daylight Savings Time. Monthly **Saturday 9am** sessions take place the **third Saturday** March thru July, including:

Date	Meet At	Event Theme
July 18	West Kiosk	California Weeds Awareness Week

For EWW info., schedules, and meeting places you can visit eww.cnps-scvc.org; email program chair Drew Shell, et al., at ewwinfo@friendsofedgeswood.org; or phone Friday session leader Paul Heiple at (650) 854-7125.

CHAPTER 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.

Sat Aug 8 9am - 2:30pm Stile Ranch Hike #3

Join Dee Wong, Stella Yang and Ken Himes for a 3-4 mile summer wildflower hike to Stile Ranch in Santa Teresa County Park, through serpentine grasslands and chaparral. This will be a great trip for those who are interested in plants and flowers that are endemic to the serpentine soil profile and seeps, and also **for those who attended the hikes in March and/or May.**

This hike is part three in a series of three hikes to see different blooming flowers over the course of spring, late spring, and late summer. We expect to see in bloom common jewelflower, wiry snapdragon, serpentine sunflower, serpentine columbine and hopefully more.

The hike will be moderate in intensity and it will most likely be hot. We are starting earlier in the day to beat the heat, as there is no overhead shade until we get to the Fortini Trail. Bring extra water, snacks, a bag lunch, a wide brim hat and walking stick(s). Limited to 20 people due to narrow trails, so reservations are needed. **To reserve your spot** and to get directions, a plant list and other trail information, please contact Dee at dee4cnps@gmail.com or (650) 670-7797.

CHAPTER OFFICERS FOR 2015

Title	Name	Phone	Email
President	Stephen Rosenthal	(408) 923-6562	sailinsteve@sbcglobal.net
Vice President	Madeline Morrow	(408) 741-1150	madelinemorrow@earthlink.net
Recording Secretary	Radhika Thekkath	(650) 473-1537	rthekkath@yahoo.com
Treasurer	Carolyn Dorsch	(650) 804-6162	cdorsch1@aol.com
Past President	Arvind Kumar	(408) 715-7020	arvind.kumar@cnps.org

To join our Chapter news email list please visit www.cnps-scvc.org/index.php/contact-us/sign-up.

Save a Tree!

CNPS members can log in to support.cnps.org and edit their profile to receive this newsletter by email only. Look for "Chapter Newsletter" at the bottom of "My Profile."

Current and past Blazing Star newsletters are always online at the Chapter website's newsletter page: www.cnps-scvc.org/index.php/blazing-star-newsletter.

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT *BLAZING STAR*

Saturday, August 8, 2015

**Email: mattsson@surfpix.net
Phone: (408) 255-3767**

Santa Clara Valley Chapter California Native Plant Society
3921 East Bayshore Road
Palo Alto, CA 94303



Join CNPS Today!

Members receive the *Fremontia*, the *Bulletin*, and the Chapter newsletter, and other benefits listed at www.cnps.org/membership

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Membership level (check one):

- \$45 Individual
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- Advocacy
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 Field Trips
 Gardening
 Plant ID

Donations above the membership level are gratefully accepted. Dues and donations are tax-deductible. Make your check payable to "CNPS" and mail it with this form to:

CNPS Membership, 2707 K Street Suite 1, Sacramento, CA 95816 • 916-447-2677 • fax 916-447-2727

FIRST-CLASS

CALENDAR OF EVENTS (page # in parentheses)

- Jul 2 Thu** Conservation Committee meeting (5)
Jul 8 Wed GWN – Soil Health - Lyngso (2)
Jul 16 Thu GWN – Lawn Replacement - Morris (2)
Jul 18 Sat Edgewood Saturday weeding (7)
Jul 20 Mon GWN – Lawn Replacement - Montanari (2)
Jul 24 Fri **General Meeting - Nedeff** (1)
Jul 31 Fri Keying with Natives (4)
Aug 3 Mon GWN – Ulistac - Dowling (3)
Aug 6 Thu Conservation Committee meeting (5)
Aug 8 Sat Stile Ranch field trip #3 (7)

- Aug 8 Sat** **Newsletter submittal deadline** (7)
Aug 10 Mon GWN – Lawn Replace - Montanari (2)
Aug 20 Thu GWN – Bird-Friendly - Howard (3)
Aug 24 Mon GWN – Greywater - Simonds (3)
Aug 27 Thu **Newsletter Mailing Party - 10am PCC**
Aug 28 Fri Keying with Natives (4)
Wed & Thu Nursery workdays (1)
3rd Sat 8am Alum Rock Park Restoration (5)
Wed 5:30pm, Fri 9am Edgewood Weed Warriors (7)

The next Chapter Board meeting will be **Thu., August 13 at 7:00pm** at the PCC, 3921 E. Bayshore Road in Palo Alto.

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

For more information contact Stephen Rosenthal at sailinsteve@sbcglobal.net.

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 about your newsletter subscription, please contact membership@cnps-scvc.org. Address changes may be submitted to cnps@cnps.org and please put "member address change" in the subject line.