

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY San Diego Chapter Newsletter

No Chapter Meeting in August

Enjoy the summer!



Above: During a recent visit to San Felipe Valley, member Jürgen Schrenk captured this photo of the giant eriastrum (*Eriastrum densifolium* ssp. *elongatum*) in the Polemoniaceae (Phlox family). Below: Near Idyllwild, he found western columbine (*Aquilegia formosa*) in the Ranunculaceae (Buttercup family).



Fall Native Gardening Workshop

California Native Plant Society-San Diego Chapter presents:

Creating a California Native Garden: Ready-Set-Go!

September 8, 2018; 9:00 am – 3:30 pm UCSD-Scripps Sumner Auditorium, La Jolla, CA

Mark your calendar for an epic, full-day comprehensive workshop on designing and installing a California Native Plant Garden with the industry experts.

Early Bird Registration through August 9: \$45
General Registration beginning August 10: \$55

To be added to mailing list, contact us at specialevents@cnpssd.org. Tickets, speaker schedule and more details are available at: https://www.cnpssd.org/events/2018/9/8/fall-native-gardening-workshop.

Fall Native Plant Sale October 13

BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, August 1, 6:30 – 9:00 p.m. 4010 Morena Blvd, Suite 100, San Diego (Thomas Guide 1248 C4). CNPS-SD Executive Board meetings are always the first Wednesday of the month, except when the 1st Wednesday falls on a holiday. Members are welcome to attend as observers. To add an issue to the agenda, please email president@cnpssd.org.

FIELD TRIPS

Tecolote Canyon Natural Park

August 11, 8 am – noon. Meet in the shade at

the entrance to the Nature Center. TRAIL Difficulty: EASY +/- 1 mile

PLANT KNOWLEDGE: Beginner to Intermediate

This high summer walk will be an in depth look at a wide number of native and non-native species in one of our urban natural parks: Tecolote Canyon. This canyon has a long history of development and recreational use, and is home to many endangered species of birds and plants like the coastal barrel cactus (*Ferocactus viridescens*), white coast ceanothus (*Ceanothus verrucosus*), and Nuttall's scrub oak (*Quercus dumosa*). This area is near and dear to many in this group and San Diego CNPS because it is where we have been independently assisting in restoration, education, and volunteering for the City of San Diego parks for a few years now.

This walk will examine low cost restoration efforts and techniques, summer deciduous plants and bloomers, and nursery methods for summer plant survival and it will introduce the Tecolote Nature Center and its many community programs. Since this summer is already proving to be brutal with heat and humidity, the walk will be short, along the Eloise Battle Trail and back along the main trail, examining different restoration areas along the way. We'll return to the Nature Center where I'll introduce everyone to the native plant nursery and where cold water and restrooms will be available. Stay to check out the exhibits inside and get acquainted with the staff and volunteers with Friends of Tecolote.

Come out if this would be your first time with us and don't know a native plant from any other, you're thinking about landscaping with San Diego native plants and want ideas, or if you would like to examine our low to no cost methods of on-site propagation, weed control, and planting for your own projects. Perhaps you might be wondering how you can help out a small slice of our community next fall and spring? Join this amazing group of people with keeping this canyon a place everyone in San Diego can enjoy!

Carpool will be available at the Fashion Valley Transit Station. Meet there by 7:45 am. Please message me if you plan to do this, so that I will for sure be there to offer transportation. Parking is ample at the park, but may be tough if there are events at the ballpark.

Directions: Tecolote Canyon Nature Center, 5180 Tecolote Rd · San Diego, CA. From I-5, exit Sea World Dr / Tecolote Rd from either direction and turn east. Drive straight through the light and head on to Tecolote Canyon Natural Park. Parking is available near the Nature Center or (maybe) ball fields.

There may be other field trips in August. Visit https://www.meetup.com/San-Diego-County-Native-Plant-Discoverers-Meetup/ for information.

~ Justin Daniel, Field Trip Chair

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to our newest members!

Hannah Berggren Sonia Burns Katy Chappaz Vanessa Claudio Paige Decino Emma Engel Spenser Epperson Toby Guinto Elizabeth Hazard Michael Hearst
Debi lannizzotto
Kathleen Marshall
Jacobsen Palouda
Nicole Park
Saniya Parray
Nicholas Swetlin
Dorothy Thorpe
Rick Wisner

GARDENING WITH NATIVES

Native Gardening Committee Meeting

August 8. The Native Gardening Committee meets the 2nd Wednesday of each month at various locations. Contact gardening@cnpssd.org for location and time.

Seed Sorting Party Sunday, August 5 9 am – noon at Tecalote Nature Center

Help sort and label seed for the Chapter to sell at the October Plant Sale. No experience necessary. Come join the fun and meet fellow CNPS members while bagging, labeling and cleaning seeds. If you have seeds to donate, please let me know and bring them with you or arrange to drop them off ahead of time. Mark your calendars!

~ Cindy Hazuka, Seeds & Bulbs Committee Chair

Native Plant Landscape in Old Town State Historic Park

Old Town Native Plant Landscape Needs YOU!

August 11, Saturday; 9:30 a.m. to noon. Bring your own gloves and hand tools or share ours. Bring water and sun protection. After we hit the noon hour, some of us will go for a no-host lunch. The landscape is at the corner of Congress and Taylor Streets. Park for free in the lot off Calhoun Street, past the green dumpsters. Questions? Contact Kay or Peter at OldTownLandscape@cnpssd.org.

~ Kay Stewart

CONSERVATION

Conservation Committee

Contact **Frank Landis** at conservation@cnpssd.org for details about August's meeting.

Into the Hot Part of the Year

Yes, I'm aware that the worst San Diego heat-waves are typically in June and July, and hopefully we're done with that. All we have to worry about are the fall fires. And politics. And the politics and science of fires.

By the time you read this, I suspect that the County Supervisors will have approved their first General Plan Amendment Bundle (GPA), since they're hearing it on July 25. This one bundles Harmony Grove Village South, Valiano, and Otay Village 250. The first two appear to be the most controversial, primarily because of fire issues.

Unfortunately, the County seems hell-bent on ignoring its general plan and bargains made with communities about where to put dense growth and where not to grow. Instead, they appear to be following the old political aphorism that you shouldn't let a good crisis go to waste when it comes to making money.

The current crisis is a lack of affordable housing. There are arguments about the causes, but they include (in no order) gentrification replacing affordable apartments with condominiums, short-term systems like AirBnB displacing rentals with investment properties, out-oftown investors buying properties and pushing up property values, community activists campaigning

Fall Plant Sale

Saturday, October 13, 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Save the date - the Fall Native Plant Sale will take place on October 13 at the Casa del Prado courtyard in Balboa Park (across from the west entrance to the Natural History Museum and next to the Junior Little Theater).

Our steering committee is **looking for volunteers**. There are opportunities to work the week before the sale -- tagging plants and taking inventory at our native plant nurseries. Lots of hands to help are needed on Friday, October 12 (to get set up the day before the sale) and for the plant sale on October 13!

If you would like to help, please let the Plant Sale Committee know by sending an email to plantsale@cnpssd.org.

Pre-ordering Plants: CNPS members will be able to pre-order plants and have them waiting for you on Friday afternoon, October 12. Details and information will be communicated by email and posted on the Chapter's website no later than September 1. **Pre-orders will close on Monday, September 17.**

against high density housing for various reasons, middle-class and higher economic migrants from other parts of the U.S. moving here for jobs and pushing up housing prices, and, perhaps, CEQA and the whole complex process of getting developments started.

The County response (and to some degree the Cities of San Diego and Escondido responses) have been to push for more developments, projects like Valiano, Harmony Grove Village South, Lilac Hills Ranch, Safari Highlands, and so on. While this superficially sounds like the solution, when you actually look at the projects, there is precious little affordable housing in any of them. Most of them are devoted to high-end homes, priced above a half million dollars and out of the reach of median income families in San Diego.

Why do developers do this? If you believe them (a questionable choice), it's all they can afford to build, unless (wink, wink, nudge, nudge) California gets rid of CEQA. Others in the real estate industry sharply dispute this analysis, saying that it's simply a rationalization of prejudices, partly for the goal of making money, but more because it's what they know how to do, never mind that the high-end market is becoming saturated. Perhaps there's a bubble blowing in the high-end market, perhaps not.

As for the other causes, they're all true, except that bit about CEQA. It's not the law itself that is the problem, it's the games people play with it.

Some communities do try to do the right thing by allowing denser and affordable housing to be built in them. That's what Elfin Forest did. Years ago, their planning group was told by the County that, despite their rural lifestyle, they needed to take more homes because the County's population was going to grow. Their local planning group decided that Harmony Grove Village was where they would put the high density development, and they let it get built. They thought they had an agreement with the County, but the County is now pushing for two more high density developments (Valliano and Harmony Grove Village South) that would add thousands of people to the Elfin Forest fire evacuation route without widening the road. planning group bitterly opposes these additional developments, and they feel that the County betrayed them. Perhaps Elfin Forest will seek to become their own city, as Encinitas and others have done, simply to be done with County planning. The warning is there, unfortunately—if the County cannot be trusted to keep the faith in deals it makes, what can you do with them? This poisons planning efforts, like the North County MSCP, which seek to create long term programs to guide growth into less dangerous areas.

This political mess combines with fire dangers. As you know, we're getting to the climate-changed norm of year-round fires, with threats especially on the "shoulders of the season" which used to be in November but have moved into December. As we all know, the problem is that anything flammable will burn if it's dry enough, and heavy rains one winter are no guarantee that the rest of the year won't turn them into tinder for the following December, as happened in 2017.

But that's only half the story. Santa Ana winds may be capricious, but only in timing, not in location. There's increasing evidence, from historical fire maps, that California is composed of different fire landscapes. Some burn frequently, some do not. The 2017 Tubbs fire up in the Wine Country burned almost exactly the same area that had burned in the 1950s. It was so much more damaging than the older fire because there were so many more homes in the area. Areas that have burned in the past will burn in the future, but when they burn is up to the weather.

This is a problem for many of the new developments. The land under Valiano and part of Harmony Grove Village South burned in 2015, Lilac Hills Ranch is across the road from the 2017 Lilac Fire, Safari Highlands Ranch has burned four times in the last 100 years, and Otay Ranch Village 14 is no better. It's easy to guess that every single one of these will burn again.

Why do the Supervisors allow these houses to be built? It's complicated and somewhat cringeworthy. For one thing, they won't pick up the tab, or likely even the blame (due to term limits) for approving houses that later burn. Insurance companies and the federal government typically handle disaster relief, while the state may help with the firefighting costs. This is a problem throughout the state, as communities permit people to live in harm's way. The people doing the permitting are not held responsible for their actions, even when the results are predictable. For example, supposedly they're busy rebuilding homes in the footprint of the Tubbs fire. These homes will aspire to be more fireproof, but we'll see what happens next time.

There is a backlash to this problem from insurance companies. Their business model doesn't allow them to lose billions of dollars in other people's predictable disasters, so they're starting to work on what they can do to stop the disasters from happening. One thing they are considering is rating municipalities based on how many people they are putting in harm's way to things like fire, with the goal of lowering their municipal bond ratings and charging them more money to build infrastructure. This will take years to take effect, but the result would be that the County couldn't afford to borrow as much money for infrastructure repair, so roads would fall apart, even as housing in fire areas increased. If the charges are not wisely applied, the County may be perversely incentivized to approve more homes, just to charge the fees to pay for maintaining existing roads, if they can no longer afford to borrow money for repairs. While I'm glad the investors are stepping up, I hope their efforts work as intended.

It's not easy to make politicians responsible for putting people in harm's way, even when they're still in office. The NPR radio show Reveal had a piece on how Houston allowed homes to be built inside the normally-dry flood control reservoir that had been built to protect Houston. Those homes were destroyed by hurricane Harvey, yet the officials who signed the permits on buildings deny wrongdoing those (https://www.revealnews.org/episodes/the-tide-ishigh/). We have similar problems in fire country, and

they are exacerbated by fires taking decades to cause their predictable destruction.

The only solution we've got is to try to persuade politicians to not build homes in dangerous areas, and for groups affected to sue to stop the projects. It would be nice if there was a governmental mechanism to stop this kind of development, but so far there is not.

Speaking of which, Lilac Hills Ranch is headed to the Board of Supervisors. If you haven't called your supervisor yet to ask them to vote against it, here's what you need to do:

1. Go to:

https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/general
/bos.html

- 2. Click on the link to your supervisor, and when you get to their homepage, click on the "Contact" link.
- 3. Either call or email and tell them politely that you are one of their constituents, that you are troubled by the new proposed Lilac Hills Ranch Project, that this is effectively the same project that was rejected 64%-36% by a bipartisan majority of the County voters in 2016, and that you expect them to respect the will of the voters and to not approve this project when it comes before them. Ask for updates from their office on this project and thank them for their attention to this issue and the time they've spent on it.

Thank you for helping!

~ Frank Landis, Conservation Chair

RARE PLANTS

Rare Plant Hunting in a Dry Year

You've probably noticed this. It is a dry year, a very dry year. According to the National Weather Service, the rainfall between October 1, 2017 and July 6, 2017 at Oceanside, my hometown, was 5.54 inches (141 mm), only about 55 percent of the yearly average of 9.90 inches (250 mm). Nearly three inches (75 mm) of that fell in a single day in January. Other places in Southern California saw even lower totals during the season. Alpine, for example has only seen 45 percent of normal rainfall. So yes, indeed, this is a dry year.

There are only two ways to deal with a year like this. Stay home and hope for better next year or look harder. Job necessity required I do the later for project surveying rare plants over the 8,600-acre Canyon and

Canyon 2 burn. The two fires swept through the Anaheim Hills and northwestern Santa Ana Mountains last September.

Typically following fire, we see a spectacular bloom. Hillsides dressed in color: orange, magenta, blue, and white. Not so in 2018. The steep hillsides were largely open blackened earth with charred branches reaching for the sky. Color was scattered and patchy at best. At the north end of this, a place called Coal Canyon, we saw only rare shrubs and perennials. Rare annuals were largely absent. By mid-April conditions were so dry we thought our surveys would be over in a month.

A few miles to the south of Coal Canyon, at Weir Canyon, we were confronted by an entirely different condition. For much of April and early May it was actually green. Carpets of flowers were still absent but we saw more diversity and higher numbers among rare plants (again nearly all shrubs and perennials and hardly any annuals). A hallmark of this rainy season was wide variability in precipitation from one place to the next. This kept us busy for the rest of the spring. It would have been easy to dismiss surveys over much of the burn this year because of dry conditions but it was well worth looking.

Overall, San Diego County was drier then Orange County. Again, it was tempting to just put off any rare plant investigations until next year. Looking out at the dry hills along the coast was not inspiring. That in combination with my work in Orange County largely kept me from visiting San Diego sites until May.

In late May, I made the drive to Ramona where I met with Jim Theide of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Meredith Osborne of the Department of Fish and Wildlife. We were hunting for Parish's brittlescale (Atriplex parishii).



Parish's brittlescale (*Atriplex parishii*). Photo by Fred Roberts.

This small and obscure annual, characterized by imbricate, sessile, and gray-green leaves with a

somewhat triangular outline, is one of the rarest plants in San Diego County and southern California as a whole. In San Diego county Parish's brittlescale is known to occur only at the Ramona Grasslands Preserve.

Munz's mariposa lily (*Calochortus palmeri* var. *munzii*). Photo by Fred Roberts.

Beyond San Diego County, it has only been seen at one other location in recent years, the seasonally flooded



alkali plains west of Hemet in Riverside County.

Our ranger escort let us through the western gate near the park headquarters. What greeted us was a pale golden-brown sea of spent grass. To the eye, nothing appeared green. It might as well have been October. Our prospects for finding the brittle scale seemed pretty dim. Yet not only did we find Parish's brittlescale, we also found the related Coulter's saltbush (*Atriplex coulteri*), a close relative, also quite rare in San Diego County. Looking at those dry fields, I would not have guessed that either of these rare saltbushes would be in good shape this year. You just can't tell without taking a look.

In early June, Jenny Moore, the Cleveland National Forest botanist, sent me a mariposa lily (*Calochortus* sp.) photo from south of I-8. The photo was of Munz's mariposa lily (*C. palmeri* var. *munzii*), marked by yellow somewhat club-shaped hairs at the base of the petal vs. the white linear hairs of splendid mariposa lily (*C. splendens*), the species it is most often confused with. She only found one plant but it was a great find.

Until recently, Munz's mariposa lily was considered an endemic of Riverside County's San Jacinto Mountains. Thanks to Jon Rebman of the San Diego Natural History Museum herbarium, we now know the species occurs in eastern San Diego County and Baja California as well. Almost no one has actually seen a San Diego specimen live in the field. Most of the records are based on redeterminations of herbarium specimens collected prior to Jon catching the ID error.

Jenny couldn't return to the site right away so I went after Munz's mariposa lily at Warner Springs and the Chihuahua Valley. These places are where other collections have been made, one as recently as 2010. I'd searched these locations each spring over the last five years without finding it. The trips had more or less mostly benefited Pippin, who usually got to splash in the creek. This year, these areas were bone dry and there were almost no flowers of any kind to be found.

Sometimes you are skunked by drought.

Jenny and I finally made it back to her site in early. After seeing the north county sites and knowing that we were getting out a month after Jenny first found the plants, we had few illusions about actually finding the plant.

On that hot day, just ahead of the first true heat wave for the year, even the chaparral looked a bit crisp. From a distance it had a brownish cast. We found no flower, stem, or fruit where Jenny first saw the plant. Perhaps there were others. After poking around in Great Basin sage and Wright's buckwheat dominated scrub for a while, Jenny found not one diminutive plant topped with a flower, but two.

So the moral of this story is even in the driest of years, there will still be rare plants around. Somewhere. Clearly not as many as there could be and probably species will be missing, especially annuals, but it is worth taking a look.

Still let's hope we get more rain next year.

~ Fred Roberts, Rare Plant Botanist

RESTORATION

A Small Milestone

I noted the following in Bob Byrnes' weekly restoration committee email: "Last week we noticed for the first time a large area of goldenbush (Isocoma mensiezii, I believe) and California sagebrush (Artemisia californica) interspersed with the endless artichoke thistle (Cynara cardunculus to us nerds) that I often mention in these emails. We treated the artichoke last week, leaving the natives to continue to thrive and spread. This is yet another encouraging sign that recruitment following the disastrous fire of four years ago is proceeding nicely."

For those that haven't been involved, it may be hard to see how important a milestone this is. Why get excited by a few common native plants? First, just consider the weeds that needed to be removed. In this area the artichoke alone number 8,000 per acre. Now artichoke plants are fairly large and easy to see, except for the seedlings under the *Bromus* thatch or the 6-inch shoots pushing up in through the 12-inch grass. Impossible to see are the myriad seeds yet in the soil. Yet all have to be treated. This involves going back many times over a few years.

These repeated efforts are also important to deal with

plants that are more resistant to treatment or that were simply missed. With each return visit new things have emerged. Bob and his team must distinguish which are undesirable and remove those as well, without harming the desirable ones. Not so easy when they are equally distributed, and each may be no larger than a quarter. But this persistent group of volunteers returns as often as it takes. This can be weeks, months or years.

Superhuman – perhaps. Bob is the reigning San Diego County COX Conservation Hero. He is a committee chair, lead trainer and a chapter board member. And he volunteers elsewhere. But perhaps not so superhuman. The team is made up of individuals that are trained or training. Each learns by hands on doing. They all do what they can when they can. With a just a little knowledge and patience along with some persistence they accomplish little milestones. They treat the infestation so mother nature can heal the wound.

Bob has the experience to see what this will become. Next year and the year after that, this patch will fill in with more bushes and forbs while expanding to join with another. With these little succession milestones the group has already restored over a thousand acres. And they have at least that many more on the mend.

You too can share his excitement. Arrange to visit or volunteer. Bob is a great teacher and the team consists of great people. There is no commitment required beyond doing what you can when you can. Mother nature takes care of the rest.

Contact us at habitatrestoration@cnpssd.org.

~ Arne Johanson, Restoration Committee

Related Activities Become a Plant Propagator!

Amy Huie, long time CNPS member, will be teaching a propagation class (OH 121: Plant Propagation) at Cuyamaca College this fall. The 3 unit class will begin August 23. Lectures teach the fundamentals of plant propagation and labs provide hands-on opportunities to practice each technique. Topics to be covered:

Cutting Propagation Tissue Culture
Division Grafting
Seed Propagation Layering

Lectures: Thursday 5 – 7:05 pm, 8/23 - 12/8/2018. **Labs:** Saturday 8 am – 3:45 pm, 9/1, 9/15, 9/29, 10/13,

10/27, 11/17, and 12/8/2018. **Final Exam:** Thursday, 12/14/2018.

To register, visit http://www.cuyamaca.edu and use WebAdvisor. Please **email questions** to Amy Huie at akahuie@gmail.com.

La Jolla Canyons: Place, Diversity, Connections Through September 2,



780 Prospect Street, La Jolla, CA 92037

Open Noon to 4 pm | Wednesday – Sunday



The canyons of La Jolla are the microcosm of San Diego historic, ecologic, and social factors. This exhibit examines issues of geography, geology, wildlife habitation, plant habitation, watershed, fire, and social history as interrelated aspects of the canyons within the context of the urban environment. This context presents the opportunity to assess the natural environment's role in social paradigms, consider the natural landscape's influence on urban planning and public policy, and understand how daily acts like driving and water use are related to this unique environment. By exploring the relationship of canyons to the urban environment, this project aspires to stimulate public dialogue about these important features of the landscape.

~ Curated by Susan Krzywicki, CNPS Member

The CNPS-SD Newsletter is generally published 12 times a year. The newsletter is not peer reviewed and any opinions expressed are those of the author identified at the end of each notice or article. The newsletter editor may edit the submittal to improve accuracy, improve readability, shorten articles to fit the space, and reduce the potential for legal challenges against CNPS. If an article, as edited, is not satisfactory to the author, the author can appeal to the board. The author has the final say on whether the article, as edited, is printed in the newsletter. Submissions are due by the 10th of the month preceding the newsletter; that is, July 10 for the August newsletter, etc. Please submit items to newsletter@cnpssd.org

CNPS-SD Activities Calendar August 2018

8/1: Board Meeting, p.18/5: Seed Sorting Party, p.28/8: Garden Committee Mtg, p. 2

8/11: Field Trip - Tecolote Canyon Natural Park, p.2

8/11: Old Town Landscape Workday, p.6
9/8: Native Gardening Workshop, p.1

	MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION
	_Student or Limited Income \$25;Individual \$45;Family \$75
Plant L	over \$100;Patron \$300;Benefactor \$600;Mariposa Lily \$1,500
Name(s):	
Address:	
Phone:	e-mail:
Mail check payable	e to "CNPS" and send to: CNPS, 2707 K Street, Ste 1, Sacramento, CA 95816-5113.

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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August 2018 Newsletter

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