

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

San Diego Chapter Newsletter

Wildflower Show

Craig Denson, the moderator for the CNPS San Diego Discuss email group, wrote: "Recently, I took a morning walk in the high desert near Jacumba, where only bored maskless U.S. border patrol agents were around. It was a great day, one day before the temperatures started skyrocketing.

I was looking for Hoover's buckwheat (*Eriogonum clavatum*), which I didn't find, but I did find many other interesting species, and many first sightings of plant species for me."



Red-gland spurge (*Euphorbia melanadenia*).



Engelmann's hedgehog cactus (*Echinocereus engelmannii*) were blooming in profusion. (Below: rock wren)



What a treat this was! Intermediate larkspur, aka oceanblue larkspur, (*Delphinium parishii* ssp. *subglossum*); note the green anthers (left), and the fruit (below).



(Above) Anderson thornbush (*Lycium andersonii*) in fruit.



(Left) White pincushion (*Chaenactis artemisiifolia*) with white and pink flowers, and needle goldfields (*Lasthenia gracilis*) with yellow flowers.

(Right) Rosy apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua* var. *rosacea*), light to dark pink.

(Below left) Fringed spineflower (*Chorizanthe fimbriata*).

(Below right) Chick lupine (*Lupinus microcarpus*).



Here is a brief bio Craig sent: "I was born in San Diego, growing up on Crown Point when there were still horny toads crawling around on vacant lots, and then in Encinitas where I spent many days crawling around in coastal sage scrub. Those experiences led me later in life to a better appreciation of our local flora, so, just before I retired from embedded software development,

I took Mike Simpson's Field Botany class. I've also gotten involved with the rangers at Tecolote Canyon in propagating locally source plants for their restoration efforts. I like photographing and entering plant observations on iNaturalist, although I'm still a rookie at that, too."



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hang in there, San Diego CNPS. The Covid19 crisis continues and we've begun to lose members here and across the state. That's too many, so please don't take any unnecessary risks as the State and Country begin to open up. The virus is very likely here to stay, at least for the next year or more. Because of this, our events will continue to take extra precautions including keeping most activities closed to personal interaction for the time being and following strict safety protocols for those that are slowly starting up again. Some of our social media platforms and email groups have never been more active, so join in there to get the latest updates as they happen. There is a lot of exciting talk about state parks possibly opening, new program platforms, big fall events, rare plant surveys, field and camping trips, and conservation initiatives happening behind the scenes right now, but I can only tease on these topics until it's time to get involved in the best ways possible. In the meantime, please stay healthy, hydrated, and active!

~ Justin Daniel, President CNPSSD

BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, June 3, 6:30 – 9:00ish p.m. The meeting will be via Zoom. To add an issue to the agenda, please email president@cnpsd.org.

May 6 Board Meeting Summary

To conform to the directive from the CNPS office, this meeting was held via Zoom. The Chapter Board voted to approve the following items:

- The yearend Treasurer's report to CNPS Staff in Sacramento. (The CNPS's fiscal year is Apr 1 – Mar 31.)
- Award of a \$500 mini-grant to buy plants for the Paradise Hills Community Native Plant Garden.

Other discussions that did not require votes included preparation of the Chapter's annual report due to CNPS Staff by May 31, 2020; refunding of tickets that had been sold for the Garden Tour that had to be cancelled; exploring alternatives to the physical meeting format; possible formats

for Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 plant sales; and training of a new chapter treasurer. In addition, the board members agreed not to accept the emergency subvention offered by CNPS Staff; this item was tabled until the July board meeting when Justin and Frank can present more information that they will receive at the on-line Chapter Council meeting in June.

New chapter committee appointments are **Bonnie Nichol** as Membership Chair, **Leon Scales** for Plant Sales, and, beginning July 1, **Andrea Rae** as Treasurer. **Leon** and **Justin** will attend meetings of the San Diego Botanical Garden Foundation where Balboa Park facilities for horticultural groups are coordinated. **Connie** will continue caring for the storeroom since it is close to her house.

Upcoming activities:

- Earth Day in Balboa Park - October 15
- Fall plant sale - October 30-31
- Spring plant sale - April 10

~ **Bobbie Stephenson**
Chapter Secretary/Newsletter Editor

GARDENING WITH NATIVES

Gardening Committee Meeting June 10, 6:30 pm

This will be an online Garden Committee Meeting. Interested persons should email gardening@cnpsd.org to request the link.

Mail Order Seeds from our New On-line Store & Website

www.canativeseeds.com

or, to find out more,

contact **Cindy Hazuka** at seedsandbulbs@cnpsd.org.

California Fuchsia (*Epilobium canum*)

California fuchsia (*Epilobium canum*).
Photo by Bobbie Stephenson.



For flowers during the summer, the California fuchsia can't be beat. California fuchsias are perennial subshrubs native to California and Baja California foothills and coastal areas where they grow on dry slopes and ridges below 6,900 feet. They depend on hummingbirds for pollination. In native habitat, and often in the garden, they

provide one of hummingbirds' principal nectar sources during the summer months when few other species bloom.

The bright orange-red flowers contrast brightly with the gray-green to light gray foliage.

California fuchsia is in the family Onagraceae, which is the willowherb or evening primrose family; *Epilobium* is the willowherb genus and *Oenothera* is the evening primrose genus, and 20 other genera are in the family. Also in the Onagraceae, the common hanging-basket fuchsias (genus *Fuchsia*) are native to the tropical Americas; no *Fuchsia* species are native to the California Floristic Province. *E. canum* was formerly known as *Zauschneria californicum* and *E. canum* ssp. *canum* was *Z. cana*. There are a few subspecies that intergrade in Southern California, and some cultivars are offered by native plant nurseries.

Easy to grow California fuchsias should be planted in full sun or, where it is extremely hot and dry, they can be planted in lightly shaded areas. Near the coast they will likely not need supplemental water after they are established, but in hotter drier inland areas they may need supplemental water about once per month during the dry summer and fall months. They can also be planted near a wet area to reduce the need for summer water.

The plants self-seed and also spread by rhizomes. To keep the plants healthy once they are established and to prevent them from becoming lanky, cut them back almost to the ground as soon as flowering ends. California fuchsia is on several fire resistant plant lists, including County of San Diego.

~ **Bobbie Stephenson**
Chapter Secretary/Newsletter Editor

Send Garden Photos

There's nothing a gardener likes better than to show off their work. If you grow California native plants in your garden and want to share them with our online followers, please EMAIL <mailto:media@cnpsd.org>. We'll instruct you how to send over up to 10 photos or a video tour/walk-around of your garden. We look forward in the coming weeks to sharing your gardens on our Facebook page and website!

FIELD TRIPS

Field Trips will resume once the CNPS Executive Director gives the go ahead for such activities. Please check <https://www.meetup.com/San-Diego-County-Native-Plant-Discoverers-Meetup/> for news. That doesn't mean that you shouldn't plan to get out on the trails this month and next! The Meetup page will list suggestions for great trails. Always double check on access, safety concerns, fees, and rules. Feel free to reach out to me for information at president@cnpsd.org and info@cnpsd.org. While seeking out that perfect picture, always keep an eye out for snakes and loose footing!

~ **Justin Daniel**, Chapter President/Field Trip Chair

Seed Collection: A “Hindsight is 2020” Series

ARTICLE TWO: Proper Cleaning and Storage

There's a very detailed process to saving seeds for a seed bank such as the Svalbard Seed Vault. Glimpse this world by browsing some excellent articles at:

<https://academy.saveplants.org/best-practices/cleaning-processing-drying-and-storing-orthodox-seeds>

This series of articles on seed collecting is for those of us who are saving the diversity of San Diego County at generally less than a dozen plant species at a time. To accomplish this admirable feat, it still takes time, practice, and trial and error. Rookie mistakes are great learning experiences, especially when it's someone else that makes the mistake first. Opening up a bag of recently collected fruit to find a moldy mess is easily avoidable by prioritizing cleaning and sterilization of fruits immediately following collection, or by allowing the decay process but with occasional actions to stymie fungal growth. Quick freezing and near freezing stratification helps preserve those species that are tolerant of the low temperatures. Opening up a packet of seeds only to find empty husks and some very fat and happy larvae in the place of the endosperm is avoided with a thorough cleaning and screening (described below) followed by quick drying using desiccation (i.e., dehydrator; silica gel/bead packets) or a drying rack. Also, as an aside, it's best not to let those larvae escape, only to be found by a startled family member who is now on the warpath in the living room, swatting at curtains and light fixtures and vacuuming every surface at 2 am. (That's a purely hypothetical scenario, I assure you!)

So, picture yourself sitting down at a desk or table, dusty and weary from a few hours in the hot sun collecting fleshy fruit, dry pods, fluff covered achenes, and stony nutlets, and with

a bag or two of an always miserable spiky/hairy/sticky/stinking/stinging/spider-infested mess with seeds presumably hiding inside. (If you've ever collected a variety of *Phacelia* species, you know what I'm referring to). First things first, grab your drink of choice and put on some music because the next steps are going to take a little while. If you have more important distractions at this point, at least open the bags to circulate air and loosely place the moister plant material into a paper bag or spread out it out on trays or racks (with a label) to dry until you can get to them. Keep wet berries in a sealed bag and place them into the sun to decay a little in the UV.

An excellent 2008 article by Matt Teel on seed collection is at: <https://www.cnps.org/gardening/california-native-plant-propagation-4014>

When ready to process the seeds, provide at least two large, lightweight hard trays per species. Have a bin ready for the chaff. Wear shoes, eye protection, and a dust mask (at least) while doing this. Have gloves or an old pair of rubber soled sandals at the ready, too. **FLESHY FRUIT:** Soak the fruit in warm water using a screen or colander and large bowl. When properly mushy, most seeds break away from the fruit with a gentle massage. Allowing the fruit to decay for a few days does wonders for separating fruit pulp from seeds, too. Adding vinegar (acetic acid) can help dissolve stubborn tissue, and with increasing concentrations, the acid removes layers of thick seed coats. Seeds ought to fall to the bottom of the sieve or float to the top, depending on the species and maturity of the seed. Drying the seed and the pulp together is fine, and then it can be manipulated to separate the seed and dried pulp for easy screening.. Screening and 'blowing' (described below) the dry seed later will separate the seed from the pulp well enough. **DRY PODS:** If you're lucky,

the seeds will fall out if you tip the open pods over, or keep the pods in a dry place until they pop and release the seeds. If you've decided to go for those tougher ones, the processing is best done with tools. Harder to crack pods, like *Keckiella* or *Penstemon*, need to be rolled with a rolling pin against a hard surface, crushed lightly in a mortar and pestle. Crushing them between sandal soles works pretty well, too. Don't let anyone see you do this, but that is up to you and whomever is now watching you gyrate with sandals on your hands as seeds fall out between them, loudly hitting a tray below. Screening and blowing comes next. **FLUFF COVERED SEEDS:** Chances are a slight breeze is going to blow some of the fluff into your face - fair warning. Grab some fluff and use the stereotypical villain's hand wringing technique to make the seeds drop out. For asters with long, easily bent and breakable seed, and for most grasses, gentle pulling will separate the pappus or lemma & palea away from the seed. Then, screen and blow. **STONY NUTLETS:** Manzanita fruit and others with dry, tough fruit with a stone inside can be crushed wet or dry. Dry stones can be split with pliers, or treated for germination without this process. Occasionally, tough fruits are sold and planted intact. **THE MISERABLE REST:** For those seeds that present a challenge, the processing is as novel as the problem. Protective gear and basic tools found in the shed or kitchen are chief among the solutions. Sticky seeds can be neutralized a bit with an agitated wash with water and a few drops of liquid detergent, then rinsed in hot water. Have a vacuum, lint roller, and paper towels handy for cleaning up. Experimentation with fire (done safely, please!) can help burn away parts of the fruit while treating the seed for germination, which I usually reserve for fire followers.

Screening and blowing can be done independently of each other or in turn, but the idea is to get the seeds

mostly or fully free of any chaff, sticks, leaves, dust, etc. Stacked screens of different mesh size really help to quickly separate a loose mix of materials based on size. Blowing can be done mechanically with an adjustable blower machine, or be done manually using a wide plastic tray. By placing all of the seeds and material at the top of an inclined tray, you can “tap” the tray with an old credit card or similar device to cause the dry mixture to separate. Round seeds fall away quickly, and with a little effort, the results are 95%+ seeds. Try rubbing the seeds and chaff at different heights in a calm breeze, or simply lightly crushing the mixture together to further differentiate seeds from the rest. Your results should be similar to the seed photos of Southern California native plants by John MacDonald

at: <http://www.hazmac.biz/seedphotoslistgenus.html>.

Disinfect the seeds with a quick wash of diluted peroxide if the seeds have a hard coat. A light spray of 1 part bleach to 10 parts clear water; OR light spray of white vinegar protects seeds from fungus. Allow every type of seed to dry completely. Silica gel packets do this well by adding one or more packets to the seeds in an air tight container. There are different methods for doing this, but ensuring the moisture content is very, very low is important for stable seed storage and for preventing insects and pathogens from destroying your seeds (and the time / money you spent collecting). For species that grow in areas with a freezing cycle, place the seeds into a freezer for about forty minutes to an hour to be sure any insect eggs or larvae have been neutralized.

More info for treating seed is available at: https://www.roguenativeplants.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Processing_Seed_California_Native_Plants_Rancho_Santa_Ana_BC_2009.pdf

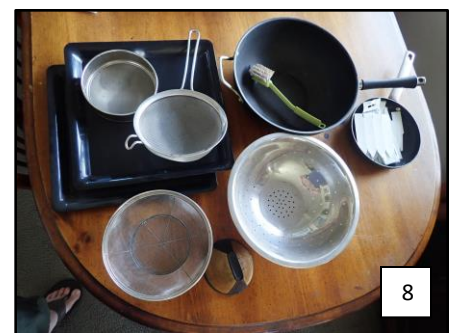
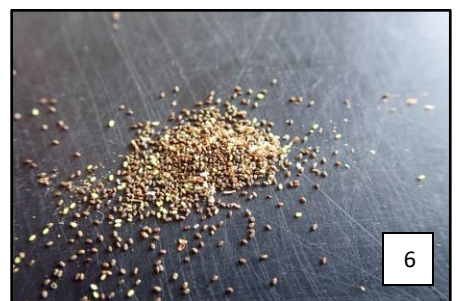
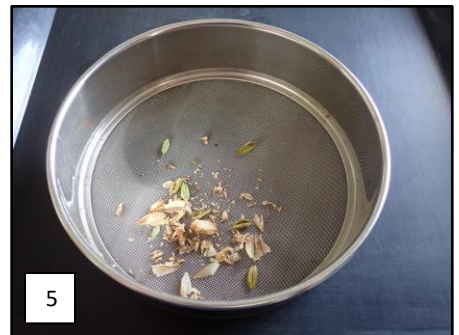
Seeds should always be stored in a cool to cold, dry environment in

packets labeled with times and location(s) of collection, species, and collector. Additional information can be a reference number for filed pictures of the mother plant or GPS data, etc. Review the provided links and when/if seed sorting parties are possible again, come out and meet people who have their own techniques. The accomplishment of making a clean, dry packet of seeds ready for growing or further treatment or sharing with friends is something that’s really grown on me and I hope you as well.

~ Justin Daniel, Grower, Collector, Field Trips Chair, President 2019-20



Seed collecting process:
 Photo 1: Collect the seed bearing parts of the plant.
 Photo 2: Use a tray to contain the plant material.
 Photo 3: The seed pods separated from the plant.
 Photo 4: Crush the pods to release the seeds.
 Photo 5: Sift the material to separate seeds from other parts.
 Photo 6: Only the seeds remain.
 Photos 7 & 8: Tools for seed collection.



NEXT ARTICLE: Targeting Genera



Conservation Committee Mtg

Contact conservation@cnpsd.org for information.

Conservation Column

Three Views of Conservation during a Lockdown

Things are staying busy on the conservation front because projects and organizations are responding to the pandemic. Some are adapting, some are pretending that everything will go back to normal soon (for varying notions of soon), and some are trying to take advantage of the crisis.

In the long-term adaptation corner, I'll place most of the conservation groups, including CNPS. What's driving us isn't just the pandemic, it's climate change. As everyone reading this is aware, climate change has been a known problem for over 50 years. I was learning about it in college in the 80s, and there have been continual, unsuccessful efforts to "bend the curve" on greenhouse gas emissions since the 1990s.

There's a lot of hope in the environmental community that the Covid-19 crisis, which has decreased greenhouse gas emissions a surprisingly large amount, will lead to societal changes that will help us deal with the larger, more intractable, and more dangerous problem of bending the curve on climate change. There is some action on that hope, too.

CNPS is one of those groups that inadvertently acted. At the organizational level, the CNPS chapter council has been considering whether to adopt a pledge for the organization to become carbon neutral by 2030 or so, and we'll vote on it at our June meeting. One of the big questions was whether we could even meet such a pledge if we made it. What the lock down has proved is that yes, we very much can keep CNPS going with few or no carbon emissions as we all work from home.

Now, I'm not suggesting that what's going on now is a lasting solution, but we have answered the question: yes we can do it. The questions we have to answer going forward are whether we want to keep trying to be carbon neutral, and how we do more CNPS activities like field trips and meetings while keeping our emissions down as low as they are now.

Across San Diego County, there's been a similar realization that we can cut commuting far more than we thought we could, that it might be easier for people to telecommute rather than buy an electric car, ride a bus or a bike, or carpool to work. This appears to be playing into planning from SANDAG about the future of highways and transit. Obviously it's not a simple or even necessarily a pleasant choice, but many people may prefer working from home more and commuting less. That simple decision cuts greenhouse gas emissions. What's the tradeoff between Zooming and being stuck in a traffic jam? How many hours of one is worth an hour of the other?

Of course, working from home is not a panacea. Our region, especially the City of San Diego, is highly dependent on conventions, sporting events, and tourism for revenue. Those sectors, along with our previously thriving restaurant, brewery, hospitality, and personal service sectors, have all taken huge hits, resulting in lost jobs, lost businesses, lost livelihoods, and lost taxes. This has naturally created a strong push to try to open up and regain the old normal as fast as possible. Adapting to a socially distanced San Diego is going to close many businesses and drastically change a lot of lives. Obviously, a lot of people want to regain the lives and livelihoods they had a few months ago. I think all feel the tug, even those who realize that our former stance of speeding into a climate crisis was no more sustainable than what we're doing now.

I'm seeing this reflected in development projects, where there's a strong push to see what's going on now as a temporary crisis rather than a permanent change. As a result, they're steaming ahead with plans that are decades in the making. Examples of this thought process include developments like Otay Ranch Villages 13 and 14 (both now headed to the Board of Supervisors) and the City of San Diego's Park Master Plan. They are marching forward on the hope that everything will go back to the way it was in the Teens. Eventually anyway. Hopefully sooner rather than later.

The developments are all predicated on the assumption that people will spend on homes like it was 2018, even as opportunities for people to earn the money to pay for these homes are currently dwindling. That's true for the Otay Village developments. It also appears true for Merge 56. That development broke ground this February, but it is grinding to a halt in the middle of grading due to the crisis. I got to listen in as the Merge 56 developer talked to a local planning board about obtaining a public money loan to build part of the project. That loan will be repaid, with interest, from fees on the homes if they're ever built, so the homes will be even more expensive than they were before. But the planning board went forward on the hope that housing demand would return to what it was in the Teens.

The City update of its Parks Master Plan has been in the works for some time. Rather than rework it for the crisis, it is sailing ahead on the assumption that it will still be relevant in coming years. Since it is primarily focused on how many human services each park can provide, and rather less focused on conservation, I hope it can be updated to deal with our new reality. Perhaps it can help bend the curve on climate change too? We can hope.

And finally, there are those who are taking advantage of the crisis to try to strip environmental protections, primarily at the federal level. In previous months, these have been attacks on NEPA and clean water, and we can assume others will come. It's despicable but predictable. Mass action is the best response to those trying to take advantage of the pandemic to roll back protections and rules. If you see requests to submit comments on such things, the best thing you can do is to submit them, because numerous voices raised in unified

opposition count far more to this administration than does any expert opinion, as we've seen repeatedly during the pandemic.

As for the future, it is all very much in the air. Obviously, I hope that we can build a more resilient society out of this current mess, that we can find the means and the will to bend the curve on climate change. But I know, from experience, that it's hard to change the habits of a lifetime. All I'll say is that it may be hard, but it certainly is possible.

Stay safe.

~ Frank Landis, Conservation Chair

HABITAT RESTORATION

The Committee's Recent Work

The Habitat Restoration Committee is working under quarantine restrictions imposed on the population by government at all levels. We certainly take this situation very seriously, realizing the potential harm to ourselves and to the broader community. Here are our reasons for doing so.

The first is that fire mitigation is an exempted, essential activity in Governor Newsom's order (<https://covid19.ca.gov/img/EssentialCriticalInfrastructureWorkers.pdf>). The statement heading that section of this document is quite clear:

"The Emergency Services Sector (ESS) is a community of highly-skilled, trained personnel, along with the physical and cyber resources, that provide a wide range of prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery services during both day-to-day operations and incident response. The ESS includes geographically distributed facilities and equipment in both paid and volunteer capacities (emphasis added) organized primarily at the federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial levels of government..."

All our current projects have the dual purpose of habitat recovery along with fire prevention and mitigation. We are working in the same areas where we have worked for several years, using the Bradley method. We remove invasive plants and encourage native plants in their place. Many or most of these invasive plants contribute to wildfire propagation. They are being replaced by plants that are often less woody, shorter, and considerably more resistant to flames and to generation of airborne embers.

Second, here is a quote from **Justin Daniel**, our chapter president, summarizing the position of the CNPS: "Certain types of activities are still capable of happening as long as they are independent. No event with public engagement should be occurring at all."

Very few members of the Habitat Restoration Committee are meeting at any one time. We work in isolated areas. We work independently. The nature of our tasks has us working in a common area yet separate. We do not engage the public. Even when we talk to one another we keep our

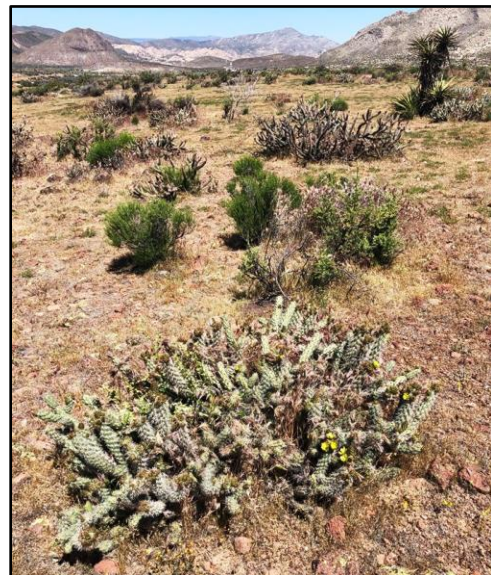
distance. We share supplies and equipment. We have implemented the practice of sanitizing these with alcohol before and after each handling. Any member who shows signs of illness or who has been exposed to anyone who is ill is prohibited from working.

With all this said, we have been enjoying the usual colors and sounds of springtime in San Diego during these otherwise trying times. Here is a photo of a California wild rose (*Rosa californica*) I took recently at our work site.



~ Bob Byrnes and Arne Johanson,
Habitat Restoration Committee Chairs

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, June 10 for the July newsletter, etc. Please submit items to newsletter@cnpsd.org



Jacumba Hot Springs area. Photo by Craig Denson.

CNPS-SD Activities Calendar June 2020

6/3: Board Meeting via Zoom, p.2

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

<https://www.cnps.org/membership>

___ Student/Limited Income \$25; ___ Individual \$50; ___ Plant Lover \$120; ___ Supporter \$500; ___ Patron \$1,000;
___ Benefactor \$2,500; ___ Perennial Monthly Sustainer Memberships starting at \$5/mo provide much needed predictable
income for our programs. Your indicated gift will be automatically repeated each month. Pls see
<https://www.cnps.org/membership> to sign up for this membership level.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ e-mail: _____

Mail check payable to "CNPS" and send to: CNPS, 2707 K Street, Ste 1, Sacramento, CA 95816-5113.

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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San Diego, CA 92112-1390



June 2020 Newsletter

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