

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

San Diego Chapter Newsletter

NATIVE PLANT WEEK NEWS

Large Turnout Online for San Diego Native Plant Week in April 2021

With outdoor events only slowly beginning to open up, most of the activities for our largest Native Plant Week celebration were held online, giving many more people the chance to attend and participate. The 9-day week hosted webinars, a live video, a committee meeting presentation, a vegetation walk, a contest, and interactive garden tours. We even caught the attention of the San Diego Union Tribune:

<https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/lifestyle/home-and-garden/story/2021-04-17/san-diego-chapter-queues-up-events-for-california-native-plant-week>. In all, ALMOST 1,200 PEOPLE attended and interacted with the events. Because most events were recorded and available on our website and social media, thousands more will continue to enjoy Native Plant Week-CNPS-San Diego 2021 in the upcoming months.

Chapter *Dudleya* Naming Contest

A small creative team was formed from those registering for this April 19 Zoom meeting event. Background information and videos on *Dudleya pulverulenta* (chalky dudleya) were presented, and the team named the dudleya mascot that CNPS Engagement Director **David Bryant** designed. We then gave it a slogan. Prizes were awarded to all participating.

Dudleya Do Right



“Do right by the Dudleya”

The *Dudleya* mascots assigned to each chapter are part of a campaign to raise awareness of legislation to prevent *Dudleya* spp. from being poached in California’s natural areas:

<https://www.cnps.org/conservation/dudleya-protection>



Banner **Carol Gross** garden. Photo by **Christine Hoey**.

Tree of Life Nursery

THANK YOU to Tree of Life Nursery for their contribution to CNPSSD based on their sales to CNPSSD members during Native Plant Week!

CNPS-SD BOARD NEWS

June Board Meeting

Wednesday, June 2, 6:30 – 9:00ish p.m. The meeting will be via Zoom. To add an issue to the agenda, or to get the link to the meeting, please email president@cnpsd.org.

May Board Meeting Summary

The board approved that Native Plant Week, with multiple events similar to this year, will be a yearly chapter Special Event. A mini-grant request was presented to the board: three CNPSSD members will visit the site and report back to the board next month. Other items discussed by the board included: information for the chapter's annual activities report that is sent to CNPS Staff in Sacramento; how to share committee reports submitted to the board with other committees; the Fall Plant Sale and possible Fall Workshop; revisions to the chapter's bylaws and board handbook; and holding a special board meeting in June to discuss special events for the next year.

~ Bobbie Stephenson, Chapter Secretary

NATIVE GARDENING COMMITTEE

The CNPS-SD 360° Native Garden Tour 2021 Is Available for Viewing!

<https://www.cnpssd.org/360-tours>

Members of the NGC worked to prepare these enjoyable, interactive tours of beautiful California native gardens in San Diego County. Project lead and photographer **Christine Hoey**, **Louise Russell**, and additional photographer volunteers bring these gardens to your phones and living rooms.

As a viewer, you can click on areas of the gardens to see introductory videos, learn about the plants, see before/after photos, landscape plans, and more.

June 2021 NGC Announcements

We hope you enjoyed our May meeting presentation featuring *Shawn Maestretti* and *Leigh Adams* with Studio Petrichor in Los Angeles. If you were unable to attend, the presentation was recorded and posted on our [CNPS San Diego YouTube channel](#).



To view our other native gardening presentations, select "Playlists" and look under the heading "California Native Gardening."

Left: Matilija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*). Photo credit: **Christine Hoey**

It looks like this will be another significant drought year for California with possible state and

local water restrictions. Now is a great time to convert your lawn to water wise California natives. Funding is still available for the **SoCal Water Smart lawn rebate** at this link: [Turf Replacement Rebates](#). But you **have to apply first** before removing your lawn.



The rebate offers \$2+ per sq ft for up to 5,000 sq ft of turf replacement until their funding runs out. For example, I completed the **Turf Replacement Estimate** for 5,000 sq ft of lawn (front & back), and the estimated rebate amount was **\$16,250 or \$3.25 per square foot** for my zip code. Wow! Think of all the native plants you could buy for your water wise garden! While you are on their website, look for the other rebates on rain barrels, irrigation, water efficient washers, etc.

Solarizing or cardboard mulching your lawn over the summer will kill grass, weeds and some weed seeds in preparation for installing your fall native plants. For more information on how to do this, go to the CNPS-San Diego YouTube Channel and watch [Lawn to California Native Garden](#) with **Maya Argaman**, CNPS Horticulture Outreach Coordinator.

June in the Native Garden

Watering during the summer will be important for natives that were just planted this spring. About once weekly, water around the root ball and surrounding soil for about 2-4 minutes over the summer. Water your established natives deeply about every 3 weeks in the morning when it is cool. Brief overhead hand watering will wash off the dust on the leaves and your natives will thank you! Check you mulch and replace as needed. A mulch layer 3-4" deep will keep weeds at bay and keep your soil from drying out too quickly.



Above: **Judie Lincer's** Native Garden. Photo credit: **Christine Hoey**

Would you still like to add native plants to your landscape during the summer? According to **Greg Rubin**, owner of California's Own Landscape Design, natives can be planted in the coastal zone year-round. For inland locations, consider either using desert native plants or planting natives in containers in part shade/shade locations.

Bird Park Update

Adopt-A-Plot Landscape Design plans have been submitted to Balboa Park for review and we are waiting on approval. We want to thank everyone who has already signed up for the **Bird Park Workgroup** and if you are interested in working on this public garden, please sign up [here](#). Novices to experienced native gardeners are welcome!

We Need You!

The Native Garden Committee is always looking for diverse, talented and creative volunteers with good leadership skills to help with the newsletter, planning engaging native gardening activities and recruiting speakers for our group. If you are interested in joining, please contact us at nativegardening@cnpsd.org.

The Native Garden Committee will be taking a break from Zoom presentations over the summer but will resume in September. Keep your eyes open for upcoming announcements in this newsletter.

Enjoy your summer and stay natively cool!
Christine Hoey, Nancy Levine & Judie Lincer

Designing a Biodiverse Food Garden By Christine Hoey



Vegetable Garden
Sunflower. Photo credit:
Christine Hoey

Summertime is fast approaching, and you may be wondering how to make your vegetable and fruit garden more productive. Hands down, the answer is to create a California native habitat nearby. Native plants and trees attract pollinators such as bees, birds, butterflies, hoverflies, wasps and more, which in turn pollinate your fruit trees and vegetables. Research shows that a biodiverse native habitat next to a food garden, can increase crop production by 18 to 71% depending on the crop (Bartomeus et al., 2014). This means more than enough fresh produce for you with extra to share!

Create Native Habitat and They Will Come

Attracting pollinators and pest predators to your food garden is not hard to do as long as you provide shelter, food (nectar & pollen) and water. According to the Xerces Society, planting native trees, shrubs, perennials, and annuals for season-long bloom (March - October) provides all the above. Trees and shrubs give birds a place to shelter and nest, whereas solitary native bees prefer nesting in tree cavities, hollow plant stems or even burrowing underground. Leave a patch of bare soil for underground dwellers or hang a simple 'Bee Hotel' facing east to give native bees a place to call home.

Vegetable gardens and fruit trees are also a good source of pollen and nectar for your pollinators. Allowing leafy vegetables to bolt (like lettuce) supplies an additional food source for bees.

Water source: Birds appreciate bird baths for bathing and drinking. The above photo shows a creative way to provide fresh water using a dripper system. Birds have even been seen drinking directly from the dripper! Bees prefer a shallow bowl filled with pebbles to rest on while sipping water. Butterflies,



moths, and bumblebees are also attracted to moist soil and mud puddles for their daily minerals to stay healthy.

Left: Leo Hernandez installed this Drip Bird Bath at the Afshar Photo Bath at the Afshar Photo
Credit: Leo Hernandez.

Pollinator Stars and the Food Plants They Pollinate

Bees: According to biologist and native bee expert James Hung, Ph.D., over 600 native bee species are in San Diego County. Native bees are mostly generalist pollinators, but a few can be very particular, like squash bees (*Peponapis pruinosa*) that are only attracted to melons, squash, and pumpkin blooms.

Right: Yellow-faced Bumble Bee (*Bombus vosnesenskii*) on *Salvia munzii* (Munz's sage). Photo credit: Jim Julius



Some bees are better than others at pollinating food gardens. For instance, the California Bumble Bee (*Bombus californicus*) and Yellow-faced Bumble Bee (*Bombus vosnesenskii*) are very effective at pollinating tomatoes & eggplant by vibrating the pollen loose. **Native bees are attracted to** peppers, squashes, gourds, watermelons, cucumbers, strawberries, blackberries, blueberries, apples, beans, cane berries, fruit trees including apples, pears, stone fruits, almonds, avocados, artichokes, and persimmons.



Left: Monarch Butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) nectaring on an orange tree blossom. Photo credit: Christine Hoey

Butterflies and Moths: Calscape lists 142 butterflies and moths that call San Diego home, such as the Monarch (*Danaus plexippus*), Smith's Blue Butterfly (*Euphilotes enoptes smithi*), Pale Tiger Swallowtail (*Papilio eurymedon*), Common Checkered-skipper (*Pyrgus communis*), and Dotted Blue butterflies (*Euphilotes enoptes*). They prefer open areas and large stones around the food garden where they can rest and catch a little sun. Less efficient at pollinating than bees, butterflies and moths passively pass pollen from flower to flower as they feed on nectar. **They are attracted to** flowers that are brightly colored and large enough to perch while dining on nectar.

Beneficial Flies: Hoverflies not only pollinate the garden, but their larvae will feed on aphids, leafhoppers, and other garden pests. **They are attracted to** avocados, peppers, strawberries,



cane berries, grapes, peaches, almonds, pears, apples, cashew, fennel, caraway, beets, carrots, and celery.

Left: Oblique Streaktail Hover Fly (*Allorgrapta obliqua*) on a Sea Dahlia (*Leptosyne maritima*). Photo credit: **Bonnie Nickel**

Birds: Hummingbirds are the main pollinators in the avian world. They are very efficient in drawing nectar from tubular flowers but will visit any flower with nectar. They also eat larvae, insect eggs, spiders, mosquitoes, gnats, aphids, and other small insects.

They are attracted to groupings of colorful flowers such as California Fuchsia (*Epilobium canum*) and Chaparral Currant (*Ribes malvaceum*). They don't depend on drinking water but appreciate birdbaths and sheltered perches for resting.



Above: Anna's hummingbird (*Calypte anna*) feeding on flowering sweet basil. Photo credit: Creative Commons via Wikimedia.

Designing Your Food Garden in Zones

Think of your food garden as the center of your design plan, then plant outward with native plant zones grouped according to water needs. For example, *water tolerant* natives should be planted closest to the garden. As the zones move away from the center of your plan, native plants should be planted according to decreasing water needs.

Calscape will help with your search by typing in your zip code or address. This will create a list of California natives indigenous to your area. The "Advanced Search" button lets you select the desired plant characteristics you are interested in. The native plant list below is an example of using the Calscape advanced search option for San Diego. My search options included 'bee, bird, butterfly, hummingbird gardens and butterfly host plants.' Water requirements were adjusted according to the zone number in Diagram 1 at left.

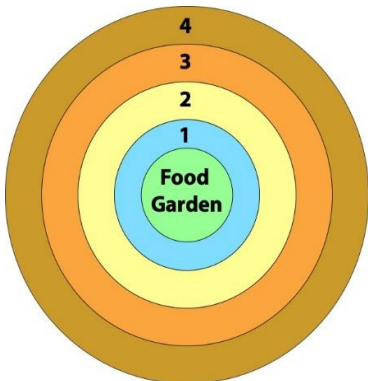


Diagram 1: Food Garden Native Plant Zone Map

Zone 1: Closest to the garden beds along the outside edge of pathways surrounding the food garden, plant more sun and water tolerant native plants like **California Grape** (*Vitis californica*), **California Wild Rose** (*Rosa californica*), **Western False Indigo** (*Amorpha fruticosa*), **Yerba Mansa** (*Anemopsis californica*), **Scarlet Monkeyflower** (*Erythranthe cardinalis*), **Western Columbine** (*Aquilegia formosa*), **California Buttercup** (*Ranunculus californicus*), **Alkali Heath** (*Frankenia salina*), **Narrow Leaf Milkweed** (*Asclepias fascicularis*), **Pacific Blackberry** (*Rubus ursinus*), and **Douglas' Sagewort** (*Artemisia douglasiana*).

Zone 2: Next to the water tolerant natives or "transition plants" go **Spice Bush** (*Calycanthus occidentalis*), **Douglas Iris** (*Iris douglasiana*), **Common Yarrow** (*Achillea millefolium*), **Bush Anemone** (*Carpenteria californica*), **California Fuchsia** (*Epilobium canum*), **California Honeysuckle** (*Lonicera hispidula*) and **Bladderpod** (*Peritoma arborea*).

Zone 3: In this zone, choose from drought tolerant natives such as **Sages** (*Salvia* spp.), **Buckwheats** (*Eriogonum* spp.), **Sawtooth Goldenbush** (*Hazardia squarrosa*), **Dwarf Coyote Brush** (*Baccharis pilularis* 'Pigeon Point'), **San Diego County Viguiera** (*Bahiopsis laciniata*), **Showy Penstemon** (*Penstemon spectabilis*), and **White Flowering Currant** (*Ribes indecorum*).

Zone 4: And last, place the most drought tolerant natives like **Manzanitas** (*Arctostaphylos* spp.), **Scrub Oak** (*Quercus berberidifolia*), **Wild Lilacs** (*Ceanothus* spp.), **Lemonade Berry** (*Rhus integrifolia*), **Spiny Redberry** (*Rhamnus crocea*), **Catalina Cherry** (*Prunus ilicifolia*), and **Toyon** (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*) in Zone 4.



Left: California Annual Wildflowers. Photo credit: **Christine Hoey**

Don't forget to add annual wildflowers such as **Clarkia** (*Clarkia unguiculata*), **California Poppy** (*Eschscholzia californica*), **Lupines** (*Lupinus* spp.) and **Tidy Tips** (*Layia platyglossa*) as additional food sources for pollinators and to add a pop of color in your garden. Creating a biodiverse native habitat around your vegetable garden and fruit trees provides so many benefits for your garden and for your garden "helpers" too - just remember they need shelter, food, and water just like we do!

Christine Hoey is co-chair of the Native Garden Committee and a native plant enthusiast.

Resources & References:

- <https://crownbees.com/> - For more information on purchasing native bees and bee homes for your garden.
- Pollinator Network [Selecting Plants for Pollinators](#) A detailed guide for the California coastal, chaparral forest and shrub.
- [Xerces Society resource](#) on native plants that attract beneficial pollinators for our region.

- [Calscape](#) - CNPS website with a comprehensive catalog of California native plants, where they grow and where to purchase plants for your landscape.
- Tree of Life Nursery PDF Guides you may be interested in:
 - “Planting Guide” for natives PDF: [Planting Guide](#)
 - [Creating and Caring for Your Native Garden](#)
 - Native plant options to replace traditional ornamental plants PDF [Plant Respecifier](#)
- “*Fantastic Fungi: The Magic Beneath Us*” - documentary film directed by Louie Schwartzberg takes you on a “journey of mycorrhizal network that can heal and save our planet.” Available for rent on Apple TV, Amazon Prime, Google Play and <https://fantasticfungi.com/>
- Bartomeus, I., Potts, S., Steffan-Dewenter, I., Vaissière, B., et al., 2014. Contribution of insect pollinators to crop yield and quality varies with agricultural intensification. *PeerJ* 2, e328 (10.7717/peerj.328).

NATIVE SPECIES STORIES

The Common Sunflower Can be Uncommonly Fun

By Sue Jackson

While driving down the road in the summer months, one can see common sunflowers (*Helianthus annuus*) growing in waste areas, typically in a drainage ditch. They always look like they are having fun, blowing and growing every which way. During the fall, a few years back, we stopped along the road and gathered some dried flowerheads. The following year, in early spring, I planted the seeds. A spot was selected where the rain drains from the driveway — conditions similar to the ditch along the road.

Later that summer we were rewarded with very tall, prolific flowering plants. They were watered close to the ground only



Above: Common sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*) growing along Sue’s driveway.

a few times after the initial planting to avoid mildew growth. Besides being a nice cut flower, the whole bed was a real “WOW!” coming down the driveway. Guests stopped to take their picture next to them.

The fun continued as the flowers formed seeds. A favorite pass time became watching all the goldfinches who perched on the heavy seed heads, bent over, and pulled out the seeds. As the summer went on, these annuals got kind of scruffy looking. The flower stems were cut to make a dried bouquet that was hung outside the window. And so, the entertaining goldfinch show

continued on the dried flower bouquet. What remained on the

bottoms of the plants was pulled out, and it went in the green waste bin.

Lots of fun for little effort!

Sue lives in Fallbrook near the Santa Margarita River Preserve. The trails through the valley serve as her inspiration in planning a native chaparral garden that blends into the wild.

CONSERVATION

Conservation Committee Meeting

Contact conservation@cnpsd.org for information regarding the June meeting.

The Problems with “Locally Native”

Or as my 80-something mother and CNPS Fellow **Betsey Landis** said when I told her, “not that again.”

Yes, that again. Right now, we’ve got some people who are pushing to get hyper-locally focused on native plants. What this means is that they want only plant seed sourced in particular parks or watersheds planted in those locations. The notion is that these plants have evolved in that location over evolutionary time spans, so if you move them they won’t do so well, so you need to grow the seeds near where you harvested them, and, and...

And breathe. First off, consider that there are 7,000-odd plant species in California. Some of them are very odd indeed, and some are not. While there is some evidence that some rare plants are worse off if moved, that’s definitely not true for all species, and it’s not clear that it’s even true for most species.

For example, California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*, <https://www.invasiveplantatlas.org/subject.html?sub=5614>) has a native range from Washington to Nevada to Baja. And it is a weed in Alaska, Hawai’i, Utah, Idaho, Wyoming, Nebraska, Texas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, Michigan, Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, both Carolinas, Delaware, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and 31 countries (<https://www.gbif.org/species/2888380>) outside the U.S. I’m not worried about the local genetics of California poppies, because it’s not clear they’re even locally native around here. Rather, I’m worried about people dumping pounds of poppy seeds to “beautify” open spaces. This is why it’s a mistake to assume a native plant growing in an open space is locally adapted only to that space. Sometimes it’s true, sometimes it’s not true, and it can be very hard to tell the difference.

The next thing to do is to break the binary either-or. I’m not advocating planting whatever you want, nor am I advocating planting hyper-local, origin-certified plants. Instead, I’m going to propose an approach that partakes of both. My goal here is to protect native plant species from impacts of habitat loss, invasive species, and climate change, and I’m pretty sure that the best course is somewhere between not fussing about origin and fussing too much.

First, let's look at the locally native problem, in terms of CNPS history: in restoration (not gardening, **restoration**), in the 1990s and even now, we get a few people who think that they can plant whatever they want, claim it's native, and go prancing off. My pet example comes from my least favorite and now extremely ex-boss, who planted a stand of redwoods in the Los Angeles Basin as native plants. After all, they now grow in California and used to grow in the LA Basin back during the ice ages, so they're native, said he. He and I had quite a set-to about it, and neither he nor I are working for that employer any more. There used to be a lot of that kind of thinking going around, and so CNPS enacted a number of policies supporting the use of locally native plants in restoration. That's fairly reasonable.

Where we're struggling now is to define what 'locally native' means, to deal with climate change making it hard for species to survive where they've grown for at least the last few centuries, and to figure out what to put in the landscaping. If the answer isn't pounds of poppy seed, what is it?

On the less objectionable end, we have the notion that restoration should use a plant palette taken from the immediate surrounding area. Most agree that's a good idea. But even this isn't followed, particularly by firms that have things like standard "Diegan Sage Scrub" palettes that they plant, whether those species are all found on the site or not. This, incidentally, is plant community thinking running mildly amok, if you read last month's newsletter.

More responsible planters try to collect seed from the site, grow it out, and plant it. That's great when it's doable. This works much better on big projects, where the areas impacted are known, where there's time to collect seed, and someone to contract to grow out the seed and plant the plants. This is normal business for native plant nurseries. What's less clear is what you're supposed to do about any surplus. Do destroy them or sell them?

The problems start when you move from restoration to community landscaping and individual gardens. Landscaping has the advantage of scale, so you can contract-grow the plants you want. The problem with landscaping is that it may have to meet needs that restoration does not, and if the site is in the built environment, it may not have a native analog. Needs, in this case, are things like fire protection and lack of dangerous plants, while site issues might be compacted soil from the building process, shade from large buildings, or worst, old industrial sites and landfills.

Unfortunately, when we think about things like putting native plants in underserved areas, sometimes the available open spaces are former industrial sites with messed-up soil. If the soil is contaminated with something like lead, cadmium, or asbestos, probably this isn't a good place for a vegetable garden. But it might be okay for a native plant landscape, if that helps immobilize the soil so that dust stops poisoning the neighborhood and people have a place to walk and enjoy some flowers without being poisoned.

Where we really get into real difficulties is when we start trying to get locally native plants into people's landscapes. It's tricky to

grow plants from a particular place and make sure they are only sold within a defined area around that place.

In San Diego, one huge problem is seed availability, because you can't take seeds from an open space and sell them commercially. Assuming you get seed, how are the plants going to get sold to the right people? Who checks to see if that the plants are going to the right place, and are those people competent? What happens to the surplus plants no local person wants? Finally, of course, there's price: how do you keep the price of locally-sourced plants competitive with non-local big box store plants?

Then there's the double standard. Weeds travel freely in San Diego, as do horticultural plants from all over the world. People even plant them in parks, although they're not supposed to. But to promote native plants, even poppies, we're supposed to be hyper-picky about where the seeds are harvested, how they're grown, and who they're sold to? That's one hell of a double standard. No one asks if non-native plants will thrive sufficiently well in a random garden, but we're proposing such limits on the spread of natives, under some rubric of local purity. It's almost as if we're trying to confine the natives to their open space ghettos and punishing them if they live in the wrong neighborhood. That just makes it easier to sell weeds and non-natives.

I'd suggest, instead, that we level the horticultural playing field for native plants, and give them a normal place in people's gardens. That means making them more available, not less. A simple way to do this is to mandate using plants native to San Diego County and adjacent Baja. Why should a redwood from northern California be easier to plant here than a Baja endemic that grows in our climate? For people's gardens, balconies, and patios, native to the County and surrounding areas is doable and probably good enough. Remember, the goal is to help the species and make it easier for them to live in gardens, not harder. That, in itself, is enough of a challenge.

~ Frank Landis, Conservation Chair & Rare Plant Survey Chair

INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES

Volutaria (desert knapweed)

Volutaria (desert knapweed) is from North Africa and has been found at three small sites on the coast in San Diego County and Orange County, and a major infestation has been found in Borrego Springs. Unfortunately, this spring some plants were found in Imperial County. It is being referred to as just *Volutaria*, because the flowers of the plants in California are not close matches to the flowers of either *V. tubiliflora* or *V. canariensis*, which it was at first thought to be. Work is ongoing to try to pin down whether they are indeed one of those two species, whether they are some other *Volutaria* species, or if they are a hybrid between several species.

The sites along the coast are being controlled, but in the desert, *Volutaria* has the potential to overrun desert habitats at the

expense of native wildflowers and wildlife, similar to what Saharan mustard (*Brassica tourneforti*) is doing. However, unlike Saharan mustard, *Volutaria* is at the beginning of its invasion and there may still be time to stop it before it spreads across the southwest U.S. and northern Mexico, as modeling shows it will.

Volutaria is an annual in the family Asteraceae; it has no ray flowers, just disk flowers. Each plant produces roughly 2,500 seeds, allowing it to expand its population at a very high rate. Eradicating *Volutaria* is essential to the preservation of Southern California desert and coastal ecosystems.

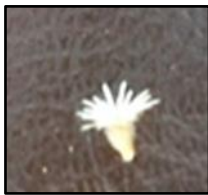


Flower photos by Tom Chester.



Leaves photo by Ron Vanderhoff.

Mature seeds on flower head and a single seed. Photos by Frank Harris.



Volutaria can get large, as shown in this photo (left) by Frank Harris.

For a flyer on how to stop the spread of *Volutaria*, see:

<https://anzaborrego.ucnrs.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Volutaria-Threats-and-Management-UCCE-McDonald.pdf>

If you can help contain/eradicate *Volutaria*, please sign up for the newsletter here that will list volunteer opportunities:

<https://www.cal-ipc.org/resources/volunteers/>

Since there are some expenses for wages for a few people dedicated to searching for and mapping *Volutaria* and planning the work parties, and for supplies, donations are greatly appreciated! If you can donate to help this fight to protect the desert ecosystems from *Volutaria*, go to: https://www.cal-ipc.org/join_renew_donate/

IN THE FIELD

The Mount Laguna Surprise By Tom Oberbauer

Back in December 2020, when hopes were high that we could have a decent precipitation season, I was able to visit the north end of Laguna Meadow (below) the morning after a snow storm.



The reports had been that five inches of snow fell, but I hiked through snow that was at least ten inches deep. The meadow was pure white and the tall *Pinus jeffreyi* (Jeffrey pine) trees that line the meadow edge were quickly dropping snow and ice from their needles and branches.

Clouds were racing across the sky, leaving fast moving shadows over the white surface.

Fast forward to April 2021, and since our area received much lower levels of rainfall than normal (less than 50 percent for Mount Laguna with a reported just under 10 inches), the prospects of any flower displays, especially annuals, appeared dim. It is true that most of the precipitation in the higher mountains fell as snow, so that Mount Laguna has probably had a seasonal total of between 45" and 55" of snow in more than three major events. It is also true that there were some pleasing displays of *Ceanothus* earlier in the spring, but such a low amount of precipitation usually does not bode well for annual wildflower displays.

With that in mind, I was stunned when **Jonathan Dunn** sent me a short video of a display of *Platystemon californica* (Cream cups) from the north end of Laguna Meadow. I had seen the meadow in full flower years ago following an exceptionally wet season, and it was full of Cream cups and other flowers, but

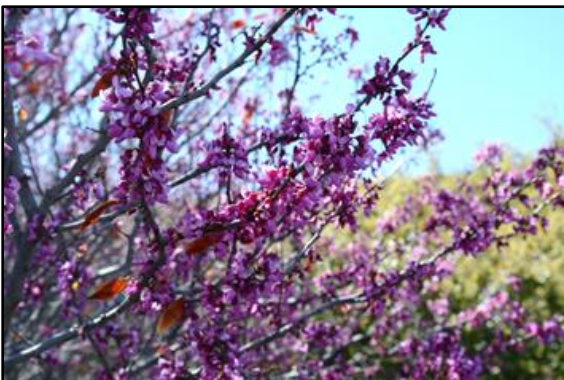
nothing would have led me to expect that this year would have more than a few flowers.

The next week, I drove up and hiked to the location I visited in December and sure enough, the display of *Platystemon californica* (right) was pretty amazing. Sheets of



color extended across the slopes leading into the center of the meadow. I spent some time attempting to photograph and create video of the breeze gently shaking the small flowers. From this location, the view of the meadow ranges across its full length, extending more than three miles in the distance to the south. Laguna Lake also contained a good level of water reflecting the blue sky, apparently left over from the previous two good rainfall seasons. I attempted to capture the view of the flowers with the lake and end of the meadow in the distance. The breeze and the movement of the flowers in this manner always reminds me of when I was a child and my family visited Estes Park in Colorado and we observed alpine wildflowers.

As the days of the week wore on, I decided to hike into the meadow from the south, just to feel the ambiance of the meadow and the columns of tall pines that bordered its narrow sides. I drove on the Sunrise Highway from the north, past the area east of Cuyamaca Lake where *Lasthenia gracilis* (Gold fields) were beginning to flower and creating small patches of yellow on both sides of the highway. I saw a small patch of the white *Limnanthes gracilis* ssp. *parishii* (Parish's slender meadowfoam), which is only found there and at a few locations on Laguna and Palomar Mountains, an area in the lower San Jacinto Mountains, and Santa Rosa Plateau in Riverside County. Following heavy precipitation seasons, it can be quite extensive on the east side of Cuyamaca Lake, but it was nice to see it this year. As I drove south on the Sunrise Highway, I also saw the *Cercis occidentalis* (Western redbud) beginning to bloom (below). I was familiar with this location because my father would stop there to see it on Sunday drives when I was a child. The small trees are striking patches of pinkish-red on the



chaparral slopes along the road. The flowers appear on the bare branches before the new growth of foliage, so they are particularly colorful.

Cercis occidentalis has an interesting natural distribution that extends from the northern Sierras and Coast Ranges of California to the Clark Mountains and a few mountains in southwestern Utah and scattered peaks in Arizona. It was originally thought not to occur naturally in many of the other Southern California counties, but skipping to San Diego County, however, it is so widely planted now as an ornamental that its natural distribution in other counties is not so clear. I pulled off the road and approached one that was a little farther along in flowering, and as a member of the legume family, its small pea flower shaped blossoms were buzzing with a mass of honeybees. The white flowered *Ceanothus perplexans* (Cupped leaf ceanothus) was also in flower nearby and I could detect its odor that reminds me of warm whipped cream.

I drove through the village of Mount Laguna and stopped at the trail head for the southern end of Laguna Meadow. My plan was to walk a short distance and then enjoy the vanilla scent of the Jeffrey pines and listen to the breeze through the needles of the trees. As I walked, the ground in general was dry, but beneath all of the trees, the ground was moist from condensation of fog. The coastal areas of San Diego County received small amounts of misty drizzle the day and night before, mostly in terms of a few to several hundredths of an inch, but Mount Laguna did not record any actual precipitation. However, the fog drip was a welcome addition to moisten the soil. The sun was clear and a slight breeze drifted through the area in the surprisingly pleasant temperature. As I walked, I spotted patches of *Platystemon californica* in the narrow arm that extends southward in the southern part of the meadow. As I came out to the edge of the larger heart of the meadow, I could see significant patches of *Platystemon californica* extending all the way northward. The patches in the north were more deeply colored and larger than they were the week before. In addition, yellow flowers were beginning to grow in patches near the northern end as well. At that moment I decided to walk the length of the meadow and revisit the northern end once again to see how the flowers had progressed.

As I walked along, I passed patches of *Phacelia curvipes* (Washoe phacelia; right). It is a nearly prostrate plant with clusters of small flowers that have purple edges and white centers. It was common in areas that were somewhat open as well as in locations where some pine needle duff existed.





It was near patches of *Nemophila menziesii* var. *menziesii* (Menzies' baby blue eyes) that were scattered about. I heard the mew like calls of Pygmy

Nuthatches, I saw Mountain Chickadees and observed and heard the loud clamoring clack-clack calls of Stellar's Jays as I walked. The trail took a long loop around a bulge on the west side of the meadow and passed an oxbow shaped pond that contained water, *Schoenoplectus acutus* (Common tule), and calling Redwing Blackbirds. The red and yellow on their shoulder patches were very bright against their black bodies. American Robins were singing with their flutey warbling song and Blackheaded Grosbeaks flew by. All along, the wacka-wacka-wacka calls of Acorn Woodpeckers could be heard in the forest and many of the *Pinus jeffreyi* trees had hundreds of holes drilled in their bark for storing acorns.

Most of the meadow area still had a tinge of dried grass coloration with the new green growth of herbaceous plants still subdued. Fluffy, bushy clumps of *Muhlenbergia rigens* (Deergrass) were scattered throughout the area.

On the edge of the trail, in the openings between the trees, *Viola purpurea* ssp. *quercetorum* (Oak yellow violet) grew in little clusters. In the shaded areas, tiny *Collinsia parviflora* (Blue eyed Mary) could be detected. In the open areas, it was apparent that the snow had stood for a while because on the surface in some places, long earthen cores of gopher paths that were constructed beneath the snow were visible.

The trail continued north on the west side of the meadow, mostly among the trees but occasionally into the open. It passed along the west side of the Laguna Lake. The lake has an earthen berm that holds back the water so it has been enhanced, but it was constructed in a portion of the meadow that would have had a natural lake due to the high water table. In fact, the water only touches a small portion of the dam this year. With a heavy rainfall season, the lake would have been higher and would have backed up behind the dam, but this season, the dam is not contributing greatly to the lake. It is interesting that in 2016, the lake was completely dry. At this time, the lake is nearly a half mile long even though the precipitation has been low but three of the previous four seasons have been above or near normal and have contributed to the water level.

A number of types of waterfowl were present. In addition to the ever-present Coots, two pairs of Greater Scaup with their large blue-gray bills, big heads, and white patches on their sides were present. Brightly colored pairs of Rudy Ducks were present as

well, occasionally practicing their paddle across the surface technique for moving quickly across the water.

Farther up, north of the lake, the *Platystemon* was in more dense large patches, uniform cream color on the surface, but



when observed closer to the ground with a horizontal view (above), their forms and extent become more striking (below).



Layia platyglossa (Tidy tips) were also beginning to flower and there were many buds to open in the future.

A week later, I was perusing the HPWren web site that has remote webcams from various locations around the County when something caught my eye from the Cuyamaca Peak webcam northeastern view. A

dense patch of orange/yellow was east of Cuyamaca Lake. I had already decided that I would try to visit the Laguna Meadow one more time, but I would also check to see if it was worth stopping at Cuyamaca Meadow.

The weather had cooled very sharply from a few days before to the point that the high temperatures in the mountains might not have been warm enough for the flowers to be open. However, I planned on going anyway. It was misting heavily as I left my house in Point Loma and actual rain was falling near Mission Bay and driving east near Miramar. It misted off and on all the way up through Ramona and into Santa Ysabel where I had to stop for Dudley's Cherry Cheese Pockets and a couple of pieces of cherry pie at the Julian Pie shop for later. It misted through Julian but the clouds melted as they passed to the east over the desert edge. Still, they were rolling into the gap between Middle and North Peak of the Cuyamaca Mountains and partially obscured Cuyamaca Peak. The wind was blowing and it was a cool 52°F but the flowers were putting on an impressive display for this season. Meadowlarks' high whistling calls could be heard all across the area as I rushed over to the main floral mass. It was apparent that some of the *Lasthenia gracilis* (Goldfields), had already withered from a few days before, probably the result of the two-day heat wave we had.

However, over to the edge of the display, the *Layia* was going strong, the floral stalks moving with the wind gusts. The clouds and fog drifted with the wind across at times, shadowing the sun, but mostly moving quickly leaving sun and shadow patterns on the bright cream, yellow and yellow orange color of the *Layia*, *Lasthenia* and some *Platystemon*. The air was cold and the view invigorating.

I then quickly walked back to my car and headed for Mount Laguna again from the north. The *Cercis occidentalis* had more flowers than the previous week.

As I drove up to Mount Laguna, the car's thermometer actually climbed as well until it was over 60 degrees, passing above the inversion layer which is where the cold fog and clouds lay. The sky was clear and gentle breezes could be felt and heard through the pines as I walked on the trail toward the north end of Laguna meadow. *Leptosiphon parviflorus* (Coast baby star) which is bright yellow in San Diego County was observed in patches and clusters along the sides of the trail. *Pentachaeta aurea* (Golden ray pentachaeta; below) was growing in larger numbers now with the flower heads that contain varying numbers of ray flowers, generating a diversity of appearances of flowers.



As I approached the meadow, it did appear that some patches of the *Platystemon* were denser than the weeks before. On the western portion, *Layia platyglossa* was now flowering in good numbers and the *Lasthenia gracilis* was also flowering in dense patches so that some areas seemed to support continuous patches of the flowers with the cream then yellow and then orange yellow of the flowers in the foreground and the entire Laguna Meadow stretching to the south and past the skyblue lake. I aimed low to capture the photos and listened to the breeze and watched the small flowers flicker and sway as the air moved by. I could have sat there all day.

As I walked back to my car, the scent of pines in the air, I was thinking about how fortunate we are to have these resources and how especially fortunate we are to have any sort of wildflower display on a year with half the normal precipitation.

RELATED ACTIVITIES

Landscaping with California Native Plants Livestream

by Susan Krzywicki

MiraCosta College, Class ID: 55557

June 5 and 12, 9 am to noon

Create a sense of place and habitat using California's own heritage that will ultimately benefit your purse, your home and the planet. We will focus on 20 native California plant species, their uses, care and maintenance without chemicals or additives. Students will design a landscape and supplemental irrigation system through lecture and hands-on design sessions. View class description at: <http://bit.ly/LWCNP6-5-21>.

Fee: \$59.00; Registration closes on June 4, 2021 @ 11:59 pm. Register at <https://miracosta.augusoft.net/> - use the Class ID number in the upper right corner search box.

San Diego Weed Management Area Annual Meeting

June 4; 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

(Registration opens at 8:30)

The meeting is free and we will apply for at least 4 hours of CE credit through CA DPR (1 hour of laws and regs.; 3 hours other).

The meeting will be held at the San Diego County Operations Center, 5520 Overland Ave., San Diego Ca 92123. We will be meeting in the Public Hearing Chambers. Lunch will not be provided; however, there is a cafe next door to our building where you can purchase food. There are also restaurants nearby and a patio dining area on site where you can eat food that you bring. For more info and to register, visit:

<https://ucanr.edu/survey/survey.cfm?surveynumber=21106>

California Native Grasslands Association (CNGA)

14th Annual Field Day at Hedgerow Farms

Zoom Webinar

Friday, June 11, 2021 - 8:30 am to 3:30 pm

Sowing the Seeds of Grassland Restoration: CNGA's 30th Anniversary Celebration

CNGA and Hedgerow Farms are partnering for the 14th year to offer this opportunity to look back and look forward at grassland restoration and practice in California's spectacular native grasslands. They'll take you through the restoration process: from wildland seed collection through farm production to tours of restored field site.

Learn about new perspectives on grassland restoration, current research, and best practices. [Download a Flyer Here](#). If you have questions contact CNGA at admin@cnga.org

The Water Conservation Garden Butterfly Releases are Back! Saturdays in June

It's butterfly season again! Visit the beautiful outdoor Dorcas E. Utter Butterfly Pavilion and native Habitat Garden on Saturdays in June to release your very own butterfly to nectar on nearby flowers. You can expect safe, physical-distancing and magical butterfly releases to create memories and instill a growing love for these incredible insects and their habitat. The whole family can release butterflies with a Family Butterfly Bundle and enjoy the benefit of continued Garden Membership. Buy tickets at: <https://thegarden.org/product/butterfly-experience/>.

Free Day: Second Friday of the Month Friday, June 12; 9 am – 4 pm

We all need something to look forward to... Enjoy a FREE DAY at The Garden the 2nd Friday of each month!

Using Greywater: Part I Thursday, June 10; 11:00 am – noon No cost.

Create an abundant landscape using greywater. In this part one workshop, Brook Sarson of Catching H2O will walk you through the design of simple, cost effective, Laundry Greywater and Shower Greywater systems. Sponsored by the IRWM. See: <https://thegarden.org/seasonal-workshops/>

Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon

Several hikes and activities are scheduled for June. See <https://www.penasquitos.org/hikes-events>.

California Wildlands Grassroots Fund Applications

The California Wildlands Grassroots Fund was established to support the efforts of activists working to preserve California's wildlands. The fund focuses on small nonprofit organizations and individual activists who show a demonstrated ability and commitment to conserve California's natural landscapes.

Application Deadlines are quarterly: next is August 15. Learn more at: <https://rosefdn.org/calwildlands>

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

ESA 2021 Vital Connections in Ecology August 1-6, Long Beach, California

For information visit www.esa.org/longbeach

Cal-IPC 30-Year Anniversary Symposium (online) October 26-29, 2021



Celebrate 30 years of learning with Cal-IPC, Oct. 26-29, 2021. Join session talks, discussion groups, and posters covering a wide range of topics related to invasive plant

biology and management. Chat with sponsors/exhibitors, engage during discussion groups, talk to poster presenters, and meet with friends and colleagues.

Call for Abstracts now open – Deadline June 15.
Register now! Early bird rates end August 20.
<https://www.cal-ipc.org/resources/symposium/>

San Diego Management & Monitoring Program End-of-Year Meeting (Virtual)



December 08, 2021
9:30am 11:30am

Join the SDMMP for an annual end-of-year meeting to hear presentations from different partners sharing a management or monitoring project that they worked on in 2020. Normal monthly meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of every month, except for the combined November/December meeting. To learn more closer to the date of the meeting, visit:

<https://sdmmp.com/event.php?id=2205>

CNPS-SD Activities Calendar June 2021

6/2: Board Meeting via Zoom, p.

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

San Diego Chapter
C/o San Diego Natural History Museum
P. O. Box 121390
San Diego, CA 92112-1390



June 2021 Newsletter

Dedicated to the preservation of the California native flora
CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY – SAN DIEGO

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Two OPEN positions on the board.

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To join, email: CNPSSanDiegoDiscuss+subscribe@groups.io

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