



California Native Plant Society
Santa Clara Valley Chapter

THE BLAZING STAR

January-February 2004

MEMBER'S NIGHT AND GENERAL MEETING

Friday, January 16, 2004 at 7:30 pm
Los Altos Library Program Room
13 So. San Antonio Road, Los Altos

Topic: Member's slide show – special plants, places and times of 2003

This is the time to bring your favorite slides of the last year, including special plants, special places and special times. Anyone with one or more photos is welcome. We do have to limit everyone to five minutes so all can participate, so please plan your photos accordingly. If you're bringing photos please arrive early. If you have a carousel slide tray, bring it loaded. Otherwise, bring your slides sorted in order and we'll provide tray space. If you have digital photos you would like to show, please e-mail them in advance to judy@fenerty.com or burn them on a CD to bring to the meeting.

There will also be space for displaying prints, drawings and other plant-related material. If you plan to participate in displaying photos or other items, please RSVP to Judy Fenerty at judy@fenerty.com or (408)378-6272 by January 12, so we can organize the logistics in advance.

Directions: From Foothill Expy., travel ½ mile on San Antonio Road towards the Bay, cross Hillview and turn right into the driveway; library is on the left. From El Camino, travel towards the hills on San Antonio Road, cross Edith and turn left into the unmarked driveway just before Hillview. The sign on San Antonio Road reads "Civic Center, Library and History Museum." Enter through the lobby of the main entrance. If the library lot is full, proceed to the adjoining lot for Hillview Community Center.

CNPS general meetings are free and open to the public. For additional information, contact Chapter Vice President Judy Fenerty at judy@fenerty.com or (408)378-6272.

Save the Dates!

Our next program meeting will be **Friday, March 19** at the Saratoga Library.

Our **Spring Wildflower Show** will be **Saturday and Sunday, April 24 and 25, 2004** at Mission College, just a week after the **Going Native Garden Tour** to be held **Sunday, April 18.**

Finally, our Chapter **Plant Sale** will be held at Hidden Villa on **Saturday, May 8.**

CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Wildflower Show Planning Meeting

There will be a Wildflower Show Planning Meeting on **Wednesday, February 18 at 7pm.** Everyone is welcome. It will be held at the Peninsula Conservation Center.

Directions: the PCC is located at 3921 E. Bayshore Road in Palo Alto. From Hwy 101: Take the "San Antonio North" exit, get immediately into the left-hand turn lane, and turn onto East Bayshore. This will curve around to the left, then right. The first street on your right is Corporation Way, turn right. Then turn into the first driveway on your left, which is the PCC parking lot.

Native Plant Nursery

Jean Struthers, nursery manager, reports that we can use cuttings from shrubs and perennials that have proved attractive in member's gardens. Seeds are welcome too.

Contact Jean about such donations, or bring them to the regular nursery work sessions. They are held every **Wednesday** afternoon, from **Noon to 3pm**, until the sun sinks over the hills of Hidden Villa and makes it quite chilly.

We are looking for a regular helper to attend the work sessions, who understands something about horticulture. But even volunteers with no horticultural experience are always welcome. For more information, contact Jean

Struthers at (650)941-2586 or JeanStruthers@aol.com, or Ray Deutsch at (650)365-6136 or rdeutsch@stanford.edu.

Directions: Hidden Villa is located on Moody Road west of Foothill College. From Hwy 280 in Los Altos Hills, take the Moody Road exit and head west. Two miles west of Foothill College, look for the Hidden Villa sign and driveway on the left. Proceed over the bridge, and park in the visitor center parking lot to your right. The Native Plant Nursery is at the greenhouse just beyond the visitor center.

Native Hill News

By Ellie Gioumousis

The purple needle grass and narrow-leaved milkweed are finally beginning to establish themselves in a little meadow area. Several of the milkweeds bloomed this year and I expect more next year. Extra water seemed to help both of them. A few coffeeberries volunteered at the back of the area as well. We are hoping that the monarch butterflies that used to come to the back campus area will discover them and lay their eggs there.

We also have a new wetland plant area thanks to volunteers Jay Trautman and his son Eric. They dug a little depression and also built a retaining border of large logs at the edge of the parking lot. Now we need wetland plants. There are milkweeds and *Oenothera hookeri*, blue-eyed grass and yarrow growing nearby and there is one iris leaved rush. Any suggestions, leads for collecting some, or donations of plants would be very welcome.

A madrone tree has grown on the back side of the hill. It could be from seed that was scattered years ago or possibly from a bird. However it is worth trying more seeds: if you have some locally collected seeds of trees, shrubs or herbaceous plants bring them and we can plant them.

Native Hill is maintained by Chapter volunteers, and newcomers are always welcome. Upcoming workdays, **9am to Noon**, are:

Saturday, January 3
Sunday, January 11
Saturday, January 17
Sunday, February 15
Saturday, February 21

There is a lot of pruning and trimming to do. Bring hand pruners or loppers if you have them. Also seeds! Gloves are useful also.

Ellie invites anyone to send her an email if they want to be included on the Native Hill mailing list for workdays and general news. She may be reached at elliegms@uf.znet.com or (650)494-6276.

Directions: Native Hill is located on the Foothill College Campus. Take the El Monte/Moody exit from Highway 280, and follow signs to the campus. Follow the one way perimeter road all the way around to the horticulture unit. You will notice the native plantings on your left hand side. Turn into the first lot after the Native Hill area. We are allowed to park in the 'Faculty Only' lot on weekends so you can park right next to the garden.

Keying With Natives

KWN is a self-help plant keying workshop. We usually meet on the fourth Friday of the month. The next meetings will be **Fridays, January 23 and February 27, from 6:30 to 8:30pm**, at the PCC at 3921 E. Bayshore Road in Palo Alto. Everyone interested in practicing their keying skills is encouraged attend. For more information, please contact Kuni at kita_k@yahoo.com or (408)247-9043 (evening only).

Photography Group

Did you take pictures on one of the Chapter field trips? Do you have a passion for a particular plant and a touch of the shutter bug? Thinking about going digital and want to get some advice? Perhaps you just want to enjoy some beautiful images? Whatever the case may be, you are invited to join us.

The Chapter photography group meets regularly on the second Monday of each month. The next meetings will be **Mondays, January 12 and February 9, from 7-9pm** in the Kestrel Room at the PCC, 3921 E. Bayshore Road in Palo Alto. Digital and slide projectors are available, or you can bring in your prints.

If you would like to be added to the email or phone lists, contact Jerry Welch at (408)353-8352 or jdwelch@yahoo.com.

Gardening With Natives

Gardening with Natives is a special interest group of our Chapter. We generally meet on the first Thursday of every month. Meetings are free and everyone is always welcome!

Our next meetings are on **Thursdays, January 8 and February 5, at 7:30 pm** at the Peninsula Conservation Center. Our January meeting will be a planning/decision making event.

Contact Stephanie Morris at StephLMorris@hotmail.com or (408)629-8004 to be added to the newsletter email list, provide input, or receive more information.

Update on Invasive Plant Removal at Edgewood Park and Natural Preserve

As of December 12, volunteers from CNPS and other groups have contributed 2213 hours toward the control of invasive plants at Edgewood in 2003. This amount surpasses last year's high of 2129 hours. Ken thanks all of those Chapter members who helped during 2003.

We are now about a month ahead of schedule and should complete a sweep of various French broom sites by early January 2004. We continue to work **Friday mornings at 8:30am** throughout the year, only heavy rain cancels.

For information and meeting locations, call Ken Himes at (650)591-8560 or e-mail John Allen at jcakwa@aol.com.

President's Message

By Georgia Stigall

Volunteer Hours Reports Needed

As we wrap up 2003, one of my responsibilities on behalf of our Chapter is to prepare a Chapter Activity Report, as is done by all CNPS chapters. This report is very useful in documenting our Chapter activities in all areas, as well as for the state CNPS office's use in support for our non-profit status, demonstrating our commitment to conservation of native plants, and so forth.

If you volunteered for our Chapter at **any** level or on **any** topic during 2003, please send me your estimate of the number of volunteer hours. The only exceptions to this, is to **not** include hours spent volunteering for 1) Spring Wildflower Show, 2) Spring or Fall Plant Sales, 3) Edgewood weeding or 4) Nursery volunteering. These hours are already accounted for.

Whether you volunteered for one or one hundred hours in 2003, and whether your contribution was obvious or "behind-the-scenes", we need the amount of time spent. Everything that we as volunteers do is important to our Chapter's effectiveness, and we want to account for all of it.

Again, I just need a reasonable estimate and it does not need to be broken down by activity as long as you exclude those listed above. We'll need this information every year, so please keep track in 2004 in whatever way is easiest for you.

If you wish to include more detail that's fine too, and it would become part of our chapter's records.

I must submit our activity report soon after you receive this newsletter, so please don't delay sending in your hours. Thank you! If you would like to have a copy of the 2003 Activity Report, just let me know.

Chapter Conservation Meeting January 7

On another critical topic-- as you all know our Chapter covers a very large and diverse area, both ecologically and politically.

As such, there are numerous opportunities-- indeed, an urgent requirement-- for conservation efforts. While excellent conservation work is already being done in our Chapter, several of us agree that we need to prioritize and strategize for the purpose of expanding our efforts and effectiveness.

Whether your conservation interest is removing invasive plants, preserving rare species, teaching others about the critical need to preserve native plants in their habitats, reviewing environmental documents or any element of conservation, your input is very valuable to us!

Please join us at our first Chapter **Conservation meeting on January 7 at 7pm** at the PCC Library at 3921 E. Bayshore Road in Palo Alto. If you are not able to attend, send me your input ahead of time. Send to gstigall@aol.com, (650)941-1068 or via postal mail to our Chapter office at: CNPS, 3921 E. Bayshore Blvd., Palo Alto, CA 94303.

Happy Winter to all. Spring field trips will be upon us soon!

COMMITTEE NEWS AND REPORTS

Workshop on Invasive Plants

Don Mayall will lead a hands-on workshop on how to research local invasive pest plants. The workshop will be at the Peninsula Conservation Center, 3921 E. Bayshore, in Palo Alto, at **7pm on Wednesday, January 14, 2004**. This is not a workshop on how to key pest plants, though information will be provided on sources of quick and reliable identification of suspect plants.

Rather, the workshop will focus on information resources about the biology and ecology of invasive species of concern, the nature of the threat, and control strategies. We will explore published materials as well as on-line databases, including the new Cal-IPC weed listing program.

Don is CNPS Rare Plant Coordinator for Santa Clara County. He has also served on the steering committees of

the San Mateo County Weed management Area, is currently representing CNPS on the Santa Clara County Weed Management Area. He has noted that there are great similarities in management issues for protecting rare plants and controlling invasives. Anyone engaged in restoration, gardening, or conservation advocacy may find something of use here.

For more information, contact Don at (650)856-7579 or seleve@ix.netcom.com

San Luis Low Point Project Status

By Libby Lucas, Conservation Chair South

San Luis Reservoir Low-Point algae growth has become a water quality concern for Santa Clara County, particularly in the late summer and early fall when the water is needed. This news may not alarm us Santa Clara Valley residents but it is a wake-up call, of sorts, that California's massive water delivery system needs constant vigilance.

As you travel over Pacheco Pass on Route 152 you will find San Luis Reservoir on the Los Baños side of the hill. With a capacity of more than 2 million acre feet, it is the largest off-stream reservoir in the world.

This is Delta water appropriated for the Central Valley Project and points south, with a last minute Pacheco Tunnel included in the 1960 authorization bill to serve Santa Clara, San Benito, Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties.

President John Kennedy and Governor Pat Brown detonated the explosives to break ground, neither having any idea of the extent of the spectacle, though Kennedy did say, "It is a pleasure for me to come out here and help blow up this valley".

San Luis Reservoir is a key component of the state's water supply system. Water from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta is delivered via the California Aqueduct and Delta-Mendota Canal in the rainy season and released to State Water Project and Central Valley Project contractors in dry months.

It is the west-side users that are affected by the late summer-early fall low-point algae growth, a thirty foot deep algae cap to the reservoir that renders the upper intake pipe inoperable and the water quality of the lower intake almost untreatable. (Other users have an eastern intake pipe 40 feet lower at bottom of reservoir). This critical condition occurs when the 2 million acre feet is down to 300 acre feet.

The alternative solutions to this problem will be analyzed in a draft environmental impact report to be released in the fall of 2004. These include a southerly bypass, algae harvesting, or expansion of County reservoirs such as Anderson, Calaveras, Chesboro and Pacheco A or B. The intake valve could also be lowered and extended east in the reservoir. The Water District has only recently removed from consideration, the option of creating a new reservoir in Coe Park.

Alternate water sources such as desalination in San Francisco and Monterey Bays or expansion of Los Vaqueros Reservoir in Contra Costa County will be reviewed. In March, Contra Costa will ask for an advisory vote on this expansion of Los Vaqueros reservoir from 100,000 acre feet to 500,000 acre feet and would seek federal funding for it.

Chapter members are encouraged to look for the draft EIR in the fall and give their comments. Look for it at the Santa Clara Valley Water District web site, watervalley.org. Or go on a hike: the Pacheco Pass and Coe State Park terrain would be appealing for spring CNPS hikes.

Chapter Volunteers Needed

You can help support native plants by serving in one of the volunteer positions currently available in the Chapter:

- Publicity Committee
- Conservation Chair (North)
- Education Chair or Co-Chair
- Donations Committee
- Corresponding Secretary

To obtain more information or indicate your interest, contact Georgia Stigall at (650)941-1068 or GStigall@aol.com.

CHAPTER FIELD TRIPS

Chapter field trips are free and open to the public. They are oriented to conservation, protection and enjoyment of California native plants and wildlife, and we adhere to all rules and guidelines for the lands on which we are visiting.

In our region it is very important to be prepared for hiking on rugged & steep terrain, wide temperature ranges and rapidly changing conditions at any time of year. All participants should wear sturdy footwear and carry sufficient water, sun protection, food, layers, personal first aid and other supplies you may need. If you have any questions about your ability to participate

in a particular field trip, please contact the trip leader in advance.

Jan 22, Thu. 7pm Field Trip Planning Meeting

Join fellow field trip enthusiasts to plan trips to your favorite native plant hot spots during 2003. Bring your ideas for trips to this planning meeting, particularly any that you might like to lead or attend.

Everyone is welcome. Anyone interested in leading or assisting with any Chapter field trips is strongly encouraged to attend. Location is the Peninsula Conservation Center Library, at 3921 E. Bayshore Road in Palo Alto.

Jan 25, Sun. 10:00am Dirca Walk in Rancho San Antonio Park

Join Stella Yang and Paul Heiple for a Dirca walk in Rancho San Antonio Park. *Dirca occidentalis*, or Western leatherwood, is a rare native shrub that we hope to see in bloom. We will be going out the Coyote Trail to Wildcat Trail and loop back on the PG&E Trail. Distance will be approximately 4 miles. The walk should be completed by **1pm**. Elevation gain is minimal.

Weather-permitting, there will be an optional hike to the vista bench at the top of the PG&E Trail, for a total distance of 8 miles with an elevation gain of 1200 feet.

Meet in the equestrian parking lot. Come early because parking is often difficult. E-mail or call Stella for additional information, yscottie@pacbell.net or (408)255-6233.

Directions: Rancho San Antonio County Park is located in Los Altos on Cristo Rey Drive. From Foothill Expressway heading south, cross under Fwy 280 and take a right at the light, onto Cristo Rey Drive. Travel about 1 mile west and turn in to the park entrance on your left (shortly after the roundabout). Stay to your left and park in the equestrian parking at the bottom of the hill.

Feb. 8, Sun. 9am Eagle Rock Hike in Big Basin

Join Tom Cochrane for a hike at a remote piece of Big Basin State Park, off Little Basin Rd., near the town of Boulder Creek. We should see the rare Santa Cruz Manzanita (*Arctostaphylos andersonii*) in bloom, and one of the five occurrences of the endangered Santa Cruz Cypress (*Cupressus abramsiana*).

There will be a 1000 ft. elevation gain in 1 1/2 miles, on an out and back trail, for a total distance of about 3 miles. Be prepared for occasionally steep, rocky and slippery trail conditions. Bring water and lunch.

Meet for a no host carpool at **9am** from the Caltrans Parking lot at the intersection of Hwy. 9 and Skyline Blvd.

For more information contact trip leader Tom Cochrane at (650)969-3181 or trailtraveller@webtv.net.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

News and Activities from Other Organizations

Lichen Walk Jan 17 at McClellan Ranch

The California Lichen Society will hold a lichen walk at McClellan Ranch in Cupertino on **Saturday, January 17 at 10am**. Join leader Judy Robertson to identify some of the common lichens and learn about lichen ecology.

Meet at the McClellan Ranch parking lot off McClellan Road in west Cupertino. This is a great opportunity for anyone interested in lichens because it is close to home. For more information about the field trip, people can contact Judy Robertson at jksrr@aol.com or (707)584-8099.

Field Class in Spring Wildflowers

Chapter member Lee Ellis is offering "A Field Class in Spring Wildflowers" (minimal keying because we'll be overwhelmed with flowers) through the Fremont Adult School, on Wednesday mornings starting in January 2004. The class continues through June 2004.

For more information contact Lee at (510)793-7383 or l.p.ellis@worldnet.att.net.

Wayne Roderick Lecture Series

These popular lectures take place at the Regional Parks Botanic Garden in Tilden Park in Berkeley at **10:30am every Saturday through the end of February**. Topics include wildflowers, soils, and climates throughout California and the world. The lectures are free to the public.

More information including a list of topics and dates may be found at

http://www.nativeplants.org/wayne03ok.html or call (510)841-8732 or write bgarden@ebparks.org.

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT *BLAZING STAR*

Saturday, February 7, 2004

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