



California Native Plant Society  
Santa Clara Valley Chapter

# THE BLAZING STAR

July-August 2021

## NATIVE PLANT LECTURE SERIES

The CNPS SCV Native Plant Lecture Series has something for everyone – whether you're curious about native plants, an experienced or aspiring native plant gardener or a professional botanist, you will find something to interest and educate you in our offerings. From gardening to plant science to conservation to tours of botanical hot spots, if you're interested in California's native plants, there's something here for you.

**How to attend:** Most of our lectures take place **Wednesday evenings at 7:30pm**. Our talks are live-streamed simultaneously to Zoom and YouTube. To view talks, watch our YouTube channel at [www.youtube.com/c/CNPSSantaClaraValley](http://www.youtube.com/c/CNPSSantaClaraValley) (no registration needed) or **join on Zoom** by registering at the Zoom link provided in each lecture's description.

Recordings of past talks can also be viewed on our YouTube channel.

**California Native Gardening—Month by Month, a talk by Helen Popper**  
**Wednesday, July 7 7:30 - 9:00 PM**

**Zoom registration:** [bit.ly/cnpsscvcv-20210707](https://bit.ly/cnpsscvcv-20210707)

A year in the California garden is different from a year gardening anywhere else. In this talk, Helen Popper will explain the keys to California's garden rhythms and discuss approaches to maintaining your native garden.



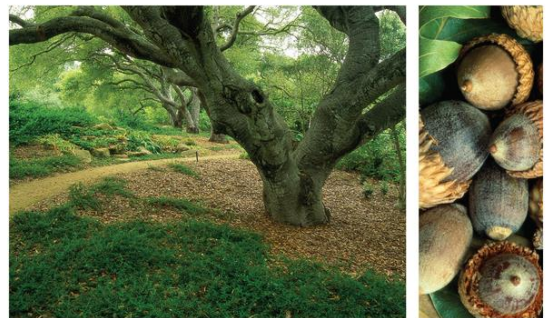
Helen Popper is the author of *California Native Gardening, A Month-by-Month Guide*. She has been honored as one of the ten best garden authors of California by Live Outside. Having

collected the insights of dozens of dedicated professional and amateur native gardeners, she's delighted to pass them along.



## California Native Gardening

A MONTH-BY-MONTH GUIDE HELEN POPPER



**Paintbrushes in Peril:**  
**Rare *Castilleja* Species of North America**  
**A talk by Mark Egger**  
**Wednesday, August 18 7:30 - 9:00 PM**

**Zoom registration:** [bit.ly/cnpsscvcv-20210818](https://bit.ly/cnpsscvcv-20210818)

Of the approximately 200 species of the genus *Castilleja*, many are common, widespread and often conspicuous components of our native flora. However, there are also



Mark Egger  
*Castilleja zempoaltepetlensis*

many species in the genus that are rare and declining due to a variety of causes, as well as many others that are extremely range-limited due to their stringent habitat requirements. Many of these species are seriously threatened with extinction from a variety of mostly human-caused factors, including global warming and resultant climate changes.

Fortunately, there are also some remarkable success stories, including the strong recovery of several species that were nearly extinct but recovered once the sources of their decline were eliminated. The program will include photos from Mark's 37 years of field work studying paintbrushes and their relatives.



**Mark Egger** is a retired science educator, a research associate at the WTU Herbarium in Seattle (Washington Territory University), and a member of CNPS, WNPS (Washington Native Plant Society), and NPSO (Native Plant Society of Oregon). He has published numerous papers and flora treatments for the genus *Castilleja*, including a number of new species and varieties, and he is the lead author for *Castilleja* in the recently-published *Vol. 17 of the Flora of North America*. He also maintains a Flickr site with over 56,000 images of his botanical photos collected from travels over the last 37 years, centered around *Castilleja* and related genera.

Please see [www.cnps-scv.org/native-plant-lecture-series](http://www.cnps-scv.org/native-plant-lecture-series) for additional talks in July and August.

Want more talks? CNPS events from around the state are often listed here: [www.cnps.org/events](http://www.cnps.org/events).

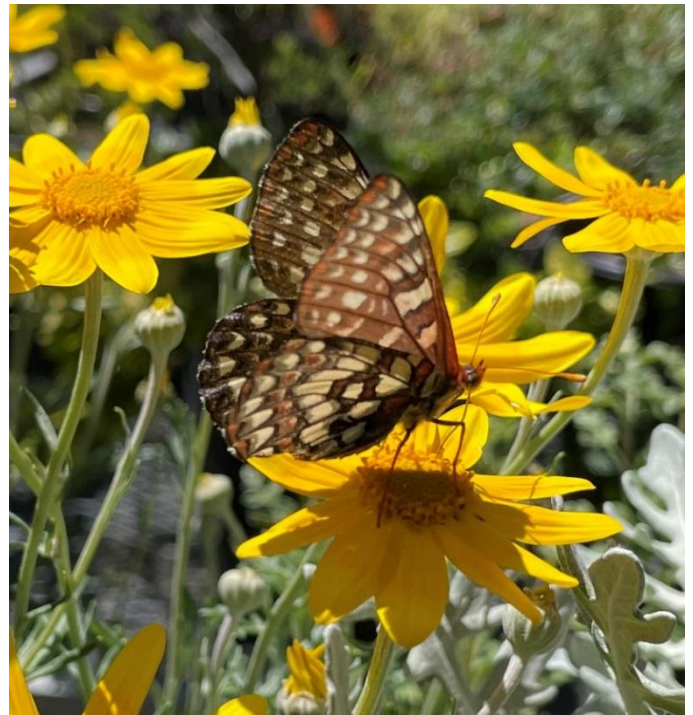
## CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

### **CNPS SCV Nursery at Hidden Villa**

Hidden Villa, where our nursery is located, is closed to the public over the summer. The nursery will not be able to accommodate drop-in volunteers until Hidden Villa opens to the public sometime in August. If you're interested in volunteering at the nursery, please subscribe to the Chapter Newsletter to receive a notification when open work sessions resume. A core crew of volunteers will care for the plants at the nursery over the summer.

The nursery continues to raise funds for the Chapter through sales from its online store at [california-native-plant-society-santa-clara-valley-chapter.square.site](http://california-native-plant-society-santa-clara-valley-chapter.square.site). In addition to plants, the nursery's online store includes Going Native Garden Tour T-shirts, books and Native Plants Live Here signs. Over the summer, the nursery is only accepting orders of \$250 or more with free delivery between Belmont and San Jose. Pick-up sales will not be available. Please visit the online store for more information.

Proceeds from plant sales are the primary source of funding for Chapter activities.



Vivian Neou  
Variable checkerspot on woolly sunflower (*Eriophyllum lanatum*) at the CNPS-SCV nursery in May

## New Volunteer Recognition Awards

As an all-volunteer organization, our Chapter is fortunate to be supported by a wealth of outstanding individuals who have contributed their time, energy and creativity to the Chapter's success. From leading field trips to potting up plants in the nursery to working on conservation issues to doing restoration work, it takes a tremendous amount of time to make our Chapter run. Without the generous support of our many volunteers, our Chapter would not exist, much less flourish. We are **expanding our current volunteer recognition program** to provide a way to acknowledge the extent of the efforts our volunteers contribute to the important work done by our Chapter.



Vivian Neou

Chapter volunteers at newsletter mailing party  
February 27, 2020

In addition to our current annual Outstanding Volunteer award, our volunteer recognition program will include an **annual service award** for volunteers who contribute at least 10 hours during the reporting year (our year runs from April through March). Every year, all volunteers who qualify for this award will receive a service pin.

To allow us to recognize those volunteers who go above and beyond, the **Chapter Volunteer Spotlight Award** will be granted throughout the year, and is intended to honor volunteers who have made significant contributions.

We are also participating in the **President's Volunteer Service Award** ([www.presidentserviceawards.gov/](http://www.presidentserviceawards.gov/)), a federal program that offers a variety of award levels based on the number of hours of work performed by the volunteer. Details on eligibility can be found at [www.presidentserviceawards.gov/eligibility](http://www.presidentserviceawards.gov/eligibility). Participation for awards through this program will be through self-nomination.

More information about how to participate and nominate people for these awards will be provided as the programs are set up.

## Help Wanted: Volunteer Recognition Program Coordinator

The Chapter is looking for a volunteer to serve in the newly created role of **Volunteer Recognition Program Coordinator**. This individual will administer our newly expanded **Volunteer Recognition Program**. (See the previous article.)

As the Coordinator, this person will be responsible for answering questions from members and the general public about the volunteer recognition program, monitoring self-reported volunteer hours, monitoring and vetting nominations for the various award programs and bringing them to the Leadership Development Committee (LDC) for review and approval, and coordinating award articles for the *Blazing Star* and distribution of awards.

As the first person to fill this position, this volunteer will have a significant impact on how the role is structured. The Volunteer Recognition Program Coordinator will provide regular reports to the LDC.

For additional information or to apply, contact the Leadership Development Committee Chair, Stephen Buckhout, [stephen@yscottie.com](mailto:stephen@yscottie.com) or (408) 255-6233.



Stephen Rosenthal

Stephen Rosenthal

Anna's hummingbird visiting a cobweb thistle flower (*Cirsium occidentale*) in Stephen Rosenthal's East San Jose garden, June 2021

## Photography Group

Our Photography Group is a great place to meet other native plant enthusiasts while improving your photographic skills and learning more about our native plants. It is open to all. The group has monthly meetings and an active email list.

The group has an ongoing #MyPhotoOfTheWeek activity on the email list for group members to share their favorite shots with the group on a weekly basis.



Stephen Rosenthal

Stephen Rosenthal

**#MyPhotoOfTheWeek:** A bee exploring the blazing red petals of a cobweb thistle flower (*Cirsium occidentale*) in Stephen Rosenthal's East San Jose garden, May 2021.

The photo group also hosts a monthly meeting on Zoom on **the fourth Friday of each month**, for members to share photos and more – everything from photography tips to organizational ideas to plant hot spots. The next meetings will be **Fridays, July 23 and August 27 at 7:00pm**. You can learn more and join the email group at: [www.groups.io/g/cnps-scv-photography](http://www.groups.io/g/cnps-scv-photography).

Anyone who has pictures of their adventures that they would like to share is welcome to participate. Please sign up for a time slot if you would like to show pictures. You don't have to share pictures to attend the meeting. More information is available on Meetup at [www.meetup.com/California-Native-Plant-Society-Santa-Clara-Valley-Chapter](http://www.meetup.com/California-Native-Plant-Society-Santa-Clara-Valley-Chapter) and through the group's email list.

## **CONSERVATION CORNER**

### **Conservation Committee**

Our Chapter's next conservation committee meeting will be on **Tuesday, August 10**, via Zoom, from **7:00 to 9:00pm**. There will be no July meeting, as we will take a summer break then.

Please join us in our important work! Meeting details will be sent to committee members. If you are not on the committee but are interested in attending the Zoom meeting, email [cdorsch@cnps-scv.org](mailto:cdorsch@cnps-scv.org) for the meeting link. For questions, comments or concerns, contact Conservation Committee Chair Carolyn Dorsch at [cdorsch@cnps-scv.org](mailto:cdorsch@cnps-scv.org) or (650) 804-6162.

## **Fountain Thistle Restoration Report**

By Rare Plant Co-Chair Don Thomas

On Saturday June 5 we conducted another successful spring habitat restoration project for the federally endangered fountain thistle (*Cirsium fontinale* var. *fontinale*) on Caltrans land near the junction of Hwy. 92 and I-280. This is a continuation of the combined Yerba Buena Chapter-Santa Clara Valley Chapter effort led by Jake Sigg for over 10 years. Jake was able to attend again this year, along with other members of both Chapters and some new volunteers.



Dee Himes

Fountain thistle in bloom at the Caltrans restoration site.



Dee Himes

Restoration volunteers pose for a photo at the end of their June work session. The bag in the foreground is for taking away weed seed heads.

The fountain thistle grows only in a unique serpentine seep habitat. The greatest threat to fountain thistle is jubatagrass (*Cortaderia jubata*), which previously had invaded the habitat and displaced the fountain thistle, but is now under control with annual spring and fall work parties. A new threat is an invasive Australian bunch grass called tufted wallaby grass (*Rytidosperma caespitosum*). This grass is mostly confined to the GGNRA Sweeney Ridge and the Crystal Springs Watershed, but is now threatening to spread

more widely through the Bay Area along transportation corridors. Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*) is another invasive plant of concern that requires ongoing control.



Joerg Lohse / Calflora /  
CC BY-NC 4.0

Crystal springs lessingia,  
observed at Caltrans fountain  
thistle restoration site October  
2019. California Rare Plant  
Rank 1B.2

In addition to the serpentine seep habitat, the site also hosts dry serpentine habitat for another rare endemic plant, the Crystal Springs lessingia (*Lessingia arachnoidea*), as well as habitat for stands of native bunchgrass. This habitat is being invaded by yellow star-thistle, which has become a new focus for our invasive plant removal work.



Stephen Rosenthal

Frog habitat in Alum Rock Park also supports birds, seep-spring monkeyflower and iris-leaved rush, May 2021

Alum Rock Park is unique in that it has about 25 seeps or springs. Our Chapter does restoration work at this pictured seep as well as a seep just beyond the park boundary into Sierra Vista Open Space Preserve.

Visitors are not allowed off trail in either of the two seep areas, but one can get within 50 ft. or so of the Alum Rock seep. With binoculars, one can often watch birds using the seep.

## CHAPTER SERVICE OUTINGS

### **Alum Rock Park Restoration**

Come help us weed out invasive plants at this natural gem of San Jose. Our habitat restoration efforts allow the native plants to “come to light.”

Our workdays take place every **Monday and Wednesday, from 8:30am to about noon**. Sometimes we have some special extra workdays. For now our workdays are for experienced volunteers only, as we aren’t quite ready to open up to new or drop-in volunteers yet.

All volunteers must wear masks at all times and social distance, except within families/households. For more information contact Stephen Rosenthal at sailinsteve@sbcglobal.net or (650) 260-3450.

The next photo depicts a seep found on the west side of the Todd Quick Trail. Besides providing frog habitat, this seep is also a gathering place for wildlife, as there aren’t that many places for getting water on this south facing slope. One can often see birds gathering at an old bathtub that was probably placed there to water cattle.

### **Lake Cunningham Native Garden**

The California Native Garden project in Lake Cunningham Regional Park controls invasive plants in a 1.5-acre area and beautifies it with California native wildflowers, perennials, shrubs and trees.

Workdays continue on **Saturdays from 8:00 to 10:00am**. New volunteers are welcome; City-issued guidelines and COVID-19 best practices are followed. For complete details and directions and to RSVP, see our meetup page at [www.meetup.com/California-Native-Plant-Society-Santa-Clara-Valley-Chapter](http://www.meetup.com/California-Native-Plant-Society-Santa-Clara-Valley-Chapter).

We follow City of San Jose guidelines for volunteering during the pandemic: face covering, social distancing, no tool sharing. The work is mainly weeding and mulching. Bring your own bucket and a weeding mattock (and knee pad, if you prefer that). Wear a face covering, hat, gloves and sturdy garden shoes. Bring plenty of fluids and hydrate often. We start with a 10-minute orientation, then walk to the site, so please be on time.

First-timers: bring a signed waiver form, available at [lakecunninghamnativegarden.files.wordpress.com/2020/05/2020-volunteer-status-and-waiver-of-liability.pdf](http://lakecunninghamnativegarden.files.wordpress.com/2020/05/2020-volunteer-status-and-waiver-of-liability.pdf).

First timers: please follow directions on the project's Meetup page to get to the native garden. Lake Cunningham is a very large park (200 acres) with two entrances. You'll want to head to the Google map pin for "Lake Cunningham Native Garden."

Workdays are sometimes rescheduled or canceled. Always **RSVP to confirm** and check the latest updates Friday night. If you can't make it, please change your RSVP so we know.

## Edgewood Restoration

Our long-term habitat restoration work at Edgewood Park and Natural Preserve continues in person even during the pandemic. As with our other projects, we follow government guidelines and COVID-19 best practices. For now, the project is not looking for new volunteers; only experienced "regulars" are attending workdays.

This just in: wearing of face coverings and social distancing during the work sessions are now only required for non-vaccinated volunteers. Also the County limit of four weeders per workday has been lifted, so all experienced weeders are welcome to attend any workday.

Check the project emails for the latest news., or contact project leader Paul Heiple at pheiple@gmail.com or (650) 854-7125.

## FIELD TRIPS

### Field Trip Planning Meeting August 2

It's been a while since our Chapter has had any field trips, due to COVID-19 restrictions. Now that California is opening back up, with no more social distancing required and relaxed mask guidance, let's plan some field trips!

Do you have field trip ideas, would you like to lead field trips, perhaps you are thinking of stepping forward to be Chapter field trip chair or co-chair? If you would like to attend, please **join us on Monday, August 2, 7:00 – 8:30pm**, over **Zoom** via the following link: [www.bit.ly/cnpsscvc-20210802](http://www.bit.ly/cnpsscvc-20210802).

**Our Chapter is looking for a field trip chair**, to arrange field trips for our membership and serve as a general public outreach. The chair coordinates with field trip leaders to choose field trip locations and dates, and publicize field trip descriptions.

To learn more or to apply, contact the Leadership Development Committee Chair, Stephen Buckhout, stephen@yscottie.com or (408) 255-6233.



Carol Mattsson

Chapter field trip to Coyote Ridge, April 2017

## Save the Date!

We've already confirmed a **Lake Cunningham Plant and Bird ID Walk for Sunday, September 19**, to be led by Arvind Kumar and Vicki Silvas-Young.

See the next issue of the *Blazing Star* or check our Meetup web page for details and other Chapter events: [www.meetup.com/California-Native-Plant-Society-Santa-Clara-Valley-Chapter](http://www.meetup.com/California-Native-Plant-Society-Santa-Clara-Valley-Chapter)

We also post field trip updates at our Chapter website. Find the field trips page under Activities > Field Trips or visit [www.cnps-scvc.org/activities/field-trips](http://www.cnps-scvc.org/activities/field-trips).

## CHAPTER OFFICERS FOR 2021

Title	Name	Email	Phone
<b>President</b>	Vivian Neou	president@cnps-scvc.org	(650) 260-3450
<b>Vice President</b>	Priya Pharate	priya@cnps-scvc.org	
<b>Recording Secretary</b>	Laurie Moody	secretary@cnps-scvc.org	
<b>Treasurer</b>	Janet Hoffmann	janet@cnps-scvc.org	(408) 374-0435
<b>Past President</b>	Madeline Morrow	pastpresident@cnps-scvc.org	(408) 741-1150
<b>Chapter Council Delegate</b>	Vivian Neou	president@cnps-scvc.org	(650) 260-3450

## Stay in Touch!

The Chapter has gone virtual with all of our events until further notice. Please visit [www.cnps-scv.org/stay-in-touch](http://www.cnps-scv.org/stay-in-touch) for information on how you can continue to receive email to stay informed.

This Blazing Star newsletter will continue to be published **mostly** online only, at: [www.cnps-scv.org/blazing-star-newsletter](http://www.cnps-scv.org/blazing-star-newsletter).

The next newsletter issue, **September-October 2021, will be distributed in print form** as well. It will be our first post-pandemic **annual printed version** and will be mailed to all Chapter members. Follow the instructions at the [Stay in Touch page](#) if you need to update your mailing address with State CNPS.

We've set the **mailing party date for Thursday, August 26**. Watch your Chapter emails for details.



Dee Himes

Jake Sigg scouting for weeds at the Caltrans fountain restoration site during last June's workday. Read the full workday report on page 4.

**DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT *BLAZING STAR***

**Saturday, August 7**

**carol.mattsson@gmail.com or (408) 255-3767**

Santa Clara Valley Chapter California Native Plant Society  
3921 East Bayshore Road, Suite #205  
Palo Alto, CA 94303-4326



## Join CNPS Today!

Members receive the *Fremontia* and *Flora* magazines, the Chapter newsletter and other benefits listed at [www.cnps.org/membership](http://www.cnps.org/membership)

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Chapter \_\_\_\_\_

*Membership level (check one):*

- \$50 Individual  
 \$120 Plant Lover  
 \$500 Supporter  
 \$1,000 Patron  
 \$2,500 Benefactor  
 \$25 Student or Fixed Income  
 \$75 Library

*Areas of interest:*

- Advocacy  
 Botany  
 Conservation  
 Education  
 Field Trips  
 Gardening  
 Plant ID

*Donations above the membership level are gratefully accepted.*

*Dues and donations are tax-deductible. Make your check payable to "CNPS" and mail it with this form to:*

CNPS Membership, 2707 K Street Suite 1, Sacramento, CA  
95816-5130 • [membership@cnps.org](mailto:membership@cnps.org) • (916) 447-2677 ext. 200

**FIRST-CLASS**

### **CALENDAR OF EVENTS** (page # in parentheses)

**Jul 7 Wed** Gardening by Month talk – Popper (1)  
**Jul 23 Fri** Photo Group photo sharing (3)  
**Aug 2 Mon** Field Trip Planning Meeting (6)  
**Aug 7 Sat** **Newsletter submittal deadline**  
**Aug 10 Tue** Conservation Committee meeting (4)

**Aug 18 Wed** Paintbrushes/*Castilleja* talk – Egger (1)  
**Aug 26 Thu** Newsletter mailing party (7)  
**Aug 27 Fri** Photo Group photo sharing (3)  
**Mons & Weds** Alum Rock workdays (5)  
**Saturdays** Lake Cunningham workdays (5)

The next Chapter board meetings will be **Thursdays, July 22 and August 12 at 7:00pm** over Zoom.

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

For more information contact Vivian Neou at [president@cnps-scv.org](mailto:president@cnps-scv.org).

(Reminder: all the events in this calendar are **virtual**, that is, held over live teleconference such as Zoom, except for habitat restoration workdays.)

The California Native Plant Society is a statewide non-profit organization of amateurs and professionals with a common interest in California's native plants. The Society, working with its local chapters, seeks to increase understanding and to preserve the rich heritage of the native flora for future generations. Membership is open to all. Individual memberships are \$50.00 per year. If you have questions about your newsletter subscription, please contact [membership@cnps-scv.org](mailto:membership@cnps-scv.org). Address changes may be submitted to [cnps@cnps.org](mailto:cnps@cnps.org); please put "member address change" in the subject line.

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