



California Native Plant Society
Santa Clara Valley Chapter

THE BLAZING STAR

May-June 2006

GENERAL MEETING AND PROGRAM

Friday, May 26th at 7:30 pm
Saratoga Library Community Room
13650 Saratoga Avenue, Saratoga

Topic: Facing the New Millennium in the California Desert - a multimedia extravaganza
Speaker: Steve Hartman

While leading a "virtual" field trip across the southern California desert, CNPS Fellow Steve Hartman will discuss conservation issues while showing images of his favorite desert locales. He edited the recently published CNPS Press book [The Best Spring Ever – Why El Niño Makes the Desert Bloom](#), and will show images of some of the great wildflower blooms of the past few years.

Learn about the battle against invasive weeds at Joshua Tree National Park, why rare plants have received so much attention on the Algodones Dunes in Imperial County, and why desert plant communities have been the focus of intensive sampling over the past 8 years. Find out how CNPS has influenced recent major desert public lands planning efforts. Other topics covered include heap-leach gold mining, wildlife guzzlers, off-highway vehicle use and wildfires.

Along with many beautiful and interesting images, Steve has created a soundtrack of desert bird sounds played in "surround-sound" to recreate the sensation of being in the desert.

About Steve: Steve Hartman has been a CNPS member for nearly 30 years, served on the CNPS state board as Treasurer for over a decade, and is a long-time activist of the Los Angeles / Santa Monica Mountains chapter. He served on the Bureau of Land Management's California Desert District Advisory Council for 6 years representing CNPS. His local project is the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Area, in the San Fernando Valley, where he has guided

revegetation projects and the largest native landscaping projects implemented by the City of Los Angeles. Steve is a business executive and multimedia artist, and has combined these talents to produce the "Nature Based Multimedia Information" series of wildflower CD-ROMs.

Directions: From Highway 85 take the Saratoga Exit (NOT Sunnyvale-Saratoga Road) and travel southwest towards the Village of Saratoga. Stay in the right lane of Saratoga Avenue. About ½ mile from the highway exit, there will be a two-lane left turn for West Valley College at Fruitvale Avenue. Proceed through this intersection in the right lane, and take the next left turn into the library parking lot. The community room is at the front right of the library building.

CNPS general meetings are free and open to the public. For additional information, contact Chapter Vice President Kevin Bryant at mtngreen17@verizon.net or (408)353-8824.

CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Spring Native Plant Sale May 6

With the much-needed water brought by our long, wet winter, our Spring Native Plant Sale is a great source for beautiful native plants for your garden! The sale will be held on **Saturday, May 6, from 10am to 3pm (please note our new closing time)** at our nursery at Hidden Villa.

Parking is free for the sale, but is limited, so we encourage everyone to carpool. Books, seeds, bulbs, and note cards will also be offered for sale. Please come, and tell your friends and neighbors about it too!

Directions: Hidden Villa is located on Moody Road west of Foothill College. From Hwy 280 in Los Altos Hills, take the El Monte Rd/Moody Rd exit. Go west on Moody Road for 2 miles then look for the Hidden Villa sign and driveway on the left. Proceed over the bridge and follow instructions from the parking volunteers.

Help Needed for Spring Native Plant Sale

Our plant sales are always lots of fun to work at, and we hope you'll come and help! You can choose to work one or two hours or all day. Lunch will be provided to volunteers too. You do not need to sign up in advance – just come to the nursery at the time you'd like to work.

To help prepare the plants and nursery for the sale, we'll have special work sessions at the nursery from **10am to 4pm** on the following days (although we might leave earlier if it's very hot):

Saturday, April 29

Tuesday, May 2 (please note that there is no work day on Monday, May 1, as was reported in the last issue of the Blazing Star)

Friday, May 5

Or if you'd like to help out another time, our regular native plant **nursery work sessions** take place every **Weds.** from **11am to 3pm**.

Bring garden gloves, sunhat, clippers, and your lunch if you like. Other tools will be provided at the nursery. We may need help weeding, cleaning the nursery, making signs, rearranging the pots and generally getting the place ready for the sale. Knowledge of plants is not necessary; your willingness to help is all that's required.

For more information please contact the plant sale co-coordinators: Janet Gomez at (408)978-2984 or janet.gomez@gmail.com; and Kevin Bryant at (408)639-0493 or mtngreen17@verizon.net.

Native Plant Nursery

We have started using the new nursery extension area, and we don't know how we coped before we had it. Most of the stock plants have now been recorded and moved to the new area. We can now find things much more easily and plants needing sun will get it. The outside of the extension has had landscaping plants added to it, both for screening and as demonstration specimens.

The nursery is still in need of clean black or green, one gallon pots. To make a donation, please leave the pots at the nursery gate.

For more information, contact Jean Struthers at (650)941-2586 or JeanStruthers@aol.com, or Ray Deutsch at (650)365-6136 or henrymarsh@yahoo.com.

Gardening with Natives

Gardening with Natives (GWN) is a special interest group within the Chapter which meets on the **first Thursday** of each month, usually at the Peninsula Conservation Center (PCC) in Palo Alto (directions below). The group is open to all, and includes a mix of seasoned native plant gardeners as well as beginners. Newcomers are always welcome.

Thursday, May 4, 7-9pm, at the PCC in Palo Alto: **Native Bees and Native Plants**, a talk by Prof. Gordon W.

Frankie, U.C. Berkeley. A frequent and fascinating visitor to the native garden is the subject of Dr Frankie's research. For 15 years, he has been studying the community organization of solitary bees, documenting bee diversity, seasonality, and host plant preferences at sites in northern California and Costa Rica. This talk may give you a new and fascinating perspective on the garden and its visitors.

Thursday, June 1, 7-9pm, at the PCC in Palo Alto: **Succulents of California: How to grow and care for them**, a talk by Paul Heiple. The genus *Dudleya*, for example, occurs almost entirely in the California Floristic Province, makes a beautiful garden plant, has a long life, and requires little care. Paul Heiple is the treasurer of the Santa Clara Valley Chapter of CNPS, and a geologist by training. His interest in succulent plants goes back 26 years: "Some of the plants I grew from seeds are older than my children."

Directions to the PCC: PCC (Peninsula Conservation Center), 3921 E. Bayshore Road, Palo Alto. From Highway 101, take the "San Antonio North" exit, get immediately into the left-hand turn lane, and turn LEFT onto East Bayshore. This will curve around to the left, then right. Turn right on Corporation Way. Then turn into the first driveway on your left, which leads to the PCC parking lot. **The meeting is in the Raptor Suite on the first floor.**

For more information on the Gardening with Natives group, visit its website at www.GardeningWithNatives.com.

GWN maintains a Yahoo group with over 290 members, which is a true resource for native plant gardeners in our area. To join the Yahoo group, visit groups.yahoo.com/group/GardeningWithNatives. To contact the GWN Steering Committee, email GardeningWithNatives@yahoo.com or call Arvind at (408)274-6965.

Photo Group

Jerry Welch has announced that he is stepping down as our Chapter Photo Group chair, effective immediately. Please join us in thanking Jerry for his time organizing the group,

and for promoting the enjoyment and appreciation of our state's flora through photography. Jerry and the group have contributed to many Members' Night programs and other events.

Please note that until a new Chair is appointed, the Photo Group meetings will be cancelled. If anyone would like to volunteer as Chair, please contact Jerry at (408)353-8352 or jdwelch@yahoo.com; or Judy Fenerty at (408)378-6272 or judy@fenerty.com.

Keying with Natives

Join us on the last **Friday** of every month, from **6:30pm - 8:30pm**, in a fun gathering to meet with other native plant enthusiasts to sharpen your keying skills. We meet at the PCC building in Palo Alto. The next meetings will be **May 19** and **June 30**. Contact David "Tex" Houston for more details, (650)303-2777 or tex009@sbcglobal.net. (Note Tex's new contact info.)

Habitat Restoration at Edgewood Park

Join us as we restore sensitive habitats at Edgewood and enjoy spring and summer wildflowers. Weeding sessions take place **Friday mornings at 8:30am**, **Wednesday evenings at 5:30pm**, and on the 3rd **Saturday** of the month at **9am** from mid spring through early summer. Our next Saturday outings are planned for:

Date	Meeting Time/Place	Work Site
May 20	9am, Old Stage Day Camp Kiosk	Edgewood Trail near Bush Mallow Site
June 17	9am, West Kiosk	TBD
July 15	9am, West Kiosk	TBD
July 29	9am, West Kiosk	TBD

For details, please see our newly updated schedule at the Edgewood Weed Warriors website, at edgewood.thinkersrus.net.

Or call Ken Himes at (650)591-8560. For the Friday sessions call Ken or contact John Allen at jcakwa@earthlink.net.

Conservation Committee

Our small but active Conservation Committee is seeking people who wish to get involved with preserving native species and habitat throughout our Chapter's area. No experience is necessary, only a desire to retain what remains of our natural heritage. We will be discussing starting a "locally rare" program and formulating a rare plant monitoring program, as well as addressing several specific conservation efforts that are ongoing in

our area.

If you would like to get involved, our next meeting will be **Tuesday, May 2nd at 6pm** at the Peninsula Conservation Center. We'll supply the pizza! For more information, contact Kevin Bryant at mtngreen17@verizon.net or (408)353-8824.

Chapter History Online

To learn about the first 20 years of our Chapter, visit this compilation by former Chapter historian Jean Sorenson:

www.stanford.edu/~rawlings/PDF/chapter_history.pdf

GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

By Nora Monette, Chapter Education Chair

The Chapter will be awarding two \$1,500 scholarships to graduate students doing research related to plant ecology in Northern California. In this wet year, it is perhaps appropriate that both students are working in "wet" habitats.

The recipients of the 2006-2007 scholarships are:

Zooey Elsa Diggory, San Francisco State University.

Zooey is studying seed dispersal in tidal marshes. One objective of her research is to evaluate seed dispersal and its contribution to vegetation patterns in four tidal marshes in the Napa River estuary. She will also investigate whether seed dispersal limitations account for observed differences in plant diversity and abundance between a reference wetland and restored wetlands. Her study will compare the dispersal characteristics of plant species that successfully recruit and colonize restored wetlands with those that do not.

Brittany Huntington, San Francisco State University.

Brittany is studying the ecological consequences of a macroalgal bloom in seagrass beds in Tomales Bay. Tomales Bay is a site with historically healthy eelgrass (*Zostera marina*) meadows covering 965 acres of the Bay. These plants create a rich nursery habitat for fish and invertebrates, stabilize nearshore sediments, and provide filtration to coastal waters. The purpose of her research is to determine if the alga *Gracilaria sjoestedtii* is threatening or facilitating survival of native eelgrass plants. Her work will consider current nutrient patterns in the bay that could support increased algal growth.

The research scholarships recognize the research plans of these graduate students and the potential of their research to further the understanding of plant ecology and restoration. We hope to hear more about their research in upcoming newsletter articles and at General Meetings.

Congratulations, Zoey and Brittany.



Carmel Creeper Ceanothus

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For a fast-growing, evergreen groundcover, you couldn't go wrong with this lovely ceanothus from California's central coast. Its blue flower clusters attract native bees and butterflies from March through May, and the glossy, veined leaves look good the year round. Left to itself, it takes on a mounding form 3' tall by 10' wide; prune upright branches for a lower profile. Drought tolerant and sun-loving near the coast, it does better inland with afternoon shade and occasional water. Two cultivars are common in the trade: 'Yankee Point' and 'Carmel Creeper,' (*Ceanothus griseus horizontalis*, illustrated). Excellent for slopes. - Arvind Kumar

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.

Sat May 13 10am Toro County Park

Join Stella Yang and Dick Gehrer for a beautiful walk with nice views of the "Lost Valley Wilderness Area." This Monterey County park is known for its vast displays of wildflowers, mainly lupines and owl's clover. Join us as we explore an area that we have never visited before.

This will be a moderate hike with the elevation gain/loss in the 400–600 foot range. Bring your lunch and let's enjoy the surroundings. The trip is expected to last until **3pm**.

Directions: From 101S take exit 326B toward MONTEREY PENINSULA. Turn right onto S Sanborn Rd. S Sanborn Rd becomes E Blanco Rd. Turn left onto S Main St. / CA-68. Take Portola Drive exit, follow signs for Toro Park. Turn into park entrance; follow RT forks past several "Group Areas" to the "Environmental Center" at the road's end. Meet near the restrooms. Note there is a \$6 per vehicle parking fee. For more information contact Dick at (408)268-6922 or mrge@jps.net.

Sun May 14 8:30am Mt. Hamilton Driving Tour

We will make our annual traverse of the mighty Hamilton Range at its high point, enjoying a few stops on the western slopes before heading to walk around and explore the flora at a few locations on the other side of Mt. Hamilton. The flowers should be phenomenal once again this year, and hopefully the weather will cooperate. Come and meet (or say hello once again) to the diverse and dazzling flora of the Hamilton Range. This will be an **all day trip**. Bring lunch, snacks, and plenty of water.

Directions: We will meet at **8:30am** at Orchard Supply Hardware at 3000 Alum Rock Road, and from there we will

caravan to a place where we can park and carpool as needed. No fuel is available after leaving San Jose. Space is limited; please contact Kevin Bryant at mtngreen17@verizon.net or (408)353-8824 for directions and to **reserve your spot**.

May 20-21 Sat-Sun Bear Valley & Walker Ridge

Join Ken Himes and Carolyn Dorsch for a spring exploratory adventure on California's largest serpentine outcropping. On Saturday, we will look for late season wildflower finds going up Bear Valley, and proceed up to Walker Ridge, visiting serpentine meadows, chaparral and scree. On Sunday we will continue exploration south along Walker Ridge. Easy car stops and short hikes. We'll camp Saturday night on BLM land atop Walker Ridge. Motels are about an hour's drive away.

Contact Carolyn Dorsch at cdorsch1@aol.com or (650)322-0955; or Ken Himes at (650)591-8560 to **sign up** and for a trip information sheet.

Jun 10 Sat 10am Grass Walk at Los Trancos

Join Sally Casey to explore the native grasses at Los Trancos Open Space Preserve. Bring a hand lens if you have one available, a sack lunch and water. Meet at **10am** in the Preserve parking lot on Page Mill Road, or meet for a no-host carpool at **9:30am** at the Park and Ride Lot at the intersection of Page Mill Road and Hwy. 280.

The hike distance will be about 2 miles with minimal elevation gain. The walk should be completed by **2pm**. For more information, contact Sally at (408)377-0989.

Directions: Take Page Mill Road west from Hwy. 280. The parking lot is 7 miles west of Hwy. 280 on the right side, just past the entrance to the Monte Bello Open Space Preserve.

Fri-Sun Jun 23-25 Snow Mountain Backpack

Join Ken Himes for a backpack trip to explore the Snow Mountain Wilderness (Mendocino National Forest) in the North Coast Ranges of the Lake, Glen and Colusa tri-county boundary. Snow Mountain, at slightly higher than 7,000 ft, receives regular snow pack and has many plants commonly found across the Central Valley in the Sierra Nevada.

We will have Sat. June 24th to explore the twin summits and surrounding slopes. The actual backpack portion is about 5 miles each way with an elevation gain of about 1,600 ft. Previous backpack experience is desirable, although most people in decent shape should have no problems.

For further details, and to **reserve a spot**, call Ken at (650) 591-8560, or email Kevin Bryant at mtngreen17@verizon.net. Additional information, directions and maps will be sent before the trip date.

Upcoming CNPS Field Trips - Save the Dates

July 21-23	Sugar Lake / Russian Peak Wilderness Backpack
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

News and Activities from Other Organizations

Bringing Back The Natives Garden Tour

If you missed our local Going Native Garden Tour on April 30, you can still volunteer at the Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour, in the East Bay on **Sunday, May 7**. And if you missed "Bringing Back's" April 24 registration deadline, you can still attend by signing in as a walk-in registrant on the day of the tour. For more information see the tour's website at www.BringingBackTheNatives.net.

CHAPTER OFFICERS FOR 2006

To learn more about our Chapter or give suggestions, please contact one of our officers listed below.

Title	Name	Phone	Email
President	Judy Fenerty	(408) 378-6272	judy@fenerty.com
Vice President	Kevin Bryant	(408) 353-8824	mtngreen17@verizon.net
Recording Secretary	Vicki Silvas-Young	(408) 293-7124	mrngwrblr@yahoo.com
Treasurer	Paul Heiple	(650) 854-7125	LogH3o@aol.com
Past President	Georgia Stigall	(650) 941-1068	GeorgiaStigall@yahoo.com

To join our Chapter email list please send your request to judy@fenerty.com or cnps_scv@yahoo.com.

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT *BLAZING STAR*

Saturday, June 3, 2006

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