

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
San Diego Chapter Newsletter

CHAPTER MEETING

Casa del Prado Room 101
Balboa Park

December 19, 2017
Holiday Potluck!

Bring something delicious to share--preferably finger food. Your Hospitality Committee will provide the usual coffee/tea, utensils, cups, napkins and plates. Come and make merry with us!



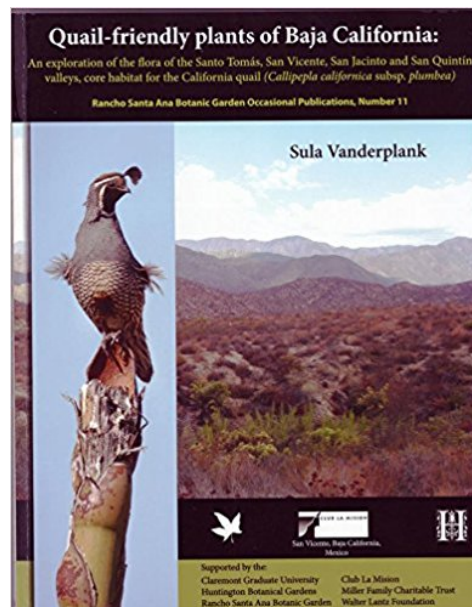
Sula Vanderplank

Presentation: Quail-friendly Plants of Baja California

by Sula Vanderplank

Sula Vanderplank will speak about quail-friendly plants, based on her book entitled "Quail-friendly Plants of Baja California: An Exploration of the Flora of the Santo Tomás, San Vicente, San Jacinto, and San Quintín Valleys, Core Habitat for the California Quail (*Callipepla californica* subsp. *plumbea*)".

Sula Vanderplank is a conservation botanist who works primarily in Baja California. She is adjunct faculty at San Diego State University and CICESE in Ensenada (Centro de Investigación Científica y de Educación Superior de Ensenada), Baja California, and works closely with the San Diego Natural History Museum.



6:30-7:00 pm – Natives for Novices. To be determined.

7:00 pm – refreshments, browsing, & socializing.

7:30 pm – presentation.

Chapter meetings are free and open to the public.

FIELD TRIP

Sunday, December 10, 2017; 9:00 am to 2:00 pm.

Black Mountain Open Space, Miner's Ridge Loop Trailhead

(32.992652°, - 117.116299°)

MODERATE HIKE- 3.5 to 5.0 miles round trip, moderate ascent.

PLANT KNOWLEDGE: Beginner to Advanced.

Black Mountain Open Space is a bastion of native coastal sage scrub and chaparral that is dear to many in CNPS-SD. It is the site of a successful restoration program and contains many rare local native plant species. While winter doesn't logically seem to be best time for flowers, we'll be passing (hopefully) flowering native shrubs and perennials including mission manzanita (*Xylococcus bicolor*), California adolphia (*Adolphia californica*), bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*), and the rare fern-leaved shrub in Rosaceae: southern mountain misery (*Chamaebatia australis*).

The hike will be on the open trails up to Nighthawk Trail from Lilac Canyon Trail, meandering about the northern half of the park and to the peak, with a possible jaunt to Manzanita Loop if time permits. Conditions are moderately challenging, with a lot of climbing, so come prepared with good boots, suitable clothes, and water.

Heavy rain will cancel the trip due to adverse trail conditions.

Directions: Off Carmel Valley Road heading east past Black Mountain Ranch Park, turn to road with signs. Road leads to parking lot. There is plenty of parking at the trailhead lot.

For questions, contact Justin at fieldtrips@cnpsd.org.

~ Justin Daniels, Field Trip Chair

BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, December 6, 6:30 – 9:00 p.m. 4010 Morena Blvd, Suite 100, San Diego (Thomas Guide 1248 C4). CNPS-SD Executive Board meetings are always the first Wednesday of the month, except when the 1st Wednesday falls on a holiday. Members are welcome to attend as observers. To add an issue to the agenda, please email president@cnpsd.org.

PHOTO CONTEST

Native Plant Photo Contest – Show off your native plants, native gardens and your talent as a photographer and win some cool prizes!

CNPS-SD is sponsoring a photo contest to collect native plant/garden photos to be displayed in the Garden Native Tour Booklet, on our website, on Note Cards, etc.

Prizes will be awarded for best plant photos in categories such as: best garden photo, most creative, wildlife in your native garden, and more. Your photos will be displayed and photo credit will be given if your photos are used.

Photos should be a minimum of:

- 600 x 600 pixels/inch to be used for online media. iPhones and other phone pictures meet this pixel/inch standard!
- Or 2000/2000 to be used for print media such as notecards, in our Plant Tour and/or Workshop Brochures.

~ Judie Lincer, Garden Tour Director

CNPS-SD EXECUTIVE BOARD ELECTIONS

CNPS San Diego has eleven (11) members of the Executive Board whose term of service is two (2) years. Six members are elected in the even numbered years; 5 are elected in odd numbered years.

Five people ran for five positions this year. **Bob Byrnes, Justin Daniels, Connie di Girolamo, Al Field and Frank Landis** were elected to the Board.



Garden on the 2017 Garden Native Tour.
Photo by B. Stephenson.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Shannon Bryant
Anne Casey
Mae Chao
Deirdre Encarnacion Slaughter
Mike Frye
Molly Gee
Kevin McKernan
Hilary Mills

Thomas Mulder
Kristine Preston
Wilnelia Recart Gonzalez
Kathy Rulon
Elizabeth Ryan
Nathan Serrato
Lenore Shimkin
Sandy Watt

NATIVE GARDENING

Garden Native Meeting

December 13. Garden Native, the Chapter's native gardening committee, meets the 2nd Wednesday of each month at various locations. Contact gardening@cnpsd.org for location and time.

Garden Native 2018 Tour

Call out for Native Gardens in the North County Region. The general areas include: Escondido, Vista, Rancho Santa Fe, Coastal Areas from Del Mar to Carlsbad. If you have a native garden or know someone (or a business) that has native plants, please send info to director@gardennative.org.



Garden on the 2017 Garden Native Tour.
Photo by Bobbie Stephenson.

Garden Native Workshop

Saturday, Feb 10, 2018
9 am-3:15 pm

Location: San Diego Botanic Garden in Encinitas

Topics will include a Planting Natives Demo-How to dig, plant, mulch your native plants; Propagation by Cutting and Seed; How to Irrigate Natives; and Gopher Control including info on Barn Owl and Kestrel Boxes as well as demos on how to use and install the most effective gopher traps. There will also be guided tour of the Native Plant Preserve including a riparian area with a pond. We will wind up with an Ask the Experts Panel.

Breakfast, Starbucks, Snacks and Lunch will be provided.

Post-Workshop Bonus Tour of the Native Horticultural Planting Area and stroll the gardens with Free Admission, Courtesy of SD Botanic Garden.

Tickets will go on sale in December on our website: <http://www.CNPSSD.org>. Occupancy is limited as this is a small group format. Stay tuned and order your tickets early!

The Native Landscape Renovated at Cabrillo National Monument Visitor Center

The landscape that welcome visitors to Cabrillo National Monument Visitor Center has a beautiful new look. A great team has implemented a landscape plan developed as a collaborative effort to renovate the site. Together, they removed thirty years of non-native and weedy shrubs, and replanted plant species native to Point Loma.



The thirty total participants included **Greg Rubin** and the crew of his company, California's Own Landscapes; **Kay Stewart**, Landscape Architect; **Al Field**, CNPS member and project manager for the renovation; **Lorraine Kelley** and **Joel Kalmonson**, with a team of five volunteers; and **Keith Lombardo**, **Adam Taylor**, **Nicole Ornelas**, and six other co-workers at the Monument.



This big team cleaned out the overgrown beds and planted over 300 plants grown mostly by CNM staff at their own greenhouse and yard. Al and Joel deserve special thanks for their extra volunteer work, prepping the site for two weeks before the 3-day work party.

The planning and landscape contracting services were paid for by a \$5,000 grant from the San Diego Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects under their 2016 Community Outreach program. This program, administered by its chair, landscape architect Jen Webster, invites organizations to work with landscape architects to apply for grants for one-year-long community projects that improve our regional landscape.

For more on this project, see <https://www.nps.gov/cabr/blogs/cabrillofieldnotes.htm>.

~ Kay Stewart (photos by Al Field)

Dedication of the Betsy Cory Native Plant Garden in Chula Vista

About four years ago Betsy Cory, a CNPS-SD Board member, rallied her fellow gardeners in the Chula Vista Garden Club to plant scented California native plants in a courtyard garden in the Chula Vista South Branch Library. In addition, a series of beautiful information panels were installed that explain the garden. They were created two of Betsy's friends.

In October the garden was dedicated to Betsy's memory.

A group of her friends gathered for the dedication. Several in attendance agreed to come for a maintenance party in a few weeks. So, in November a group of five Garden Club members met me at the garden and we spruced it up, and planted twenty more scented plants. The majority of plants were donated by the San Diego Chapter of CNPS.

The library's irrigation tech will keep an eye on the courtyard to be sure the new plants receive the water they need. A member of the garden club will also make a weekly visit to check up on it and to hand-water some lovely large blue pots with plants.

Members of the Garden Club are now working on ideas for how to bring classes to the garden so teachers can use it as part of their classroom curriculum.

~ Kay Stewart



Robin (one of Betsy's children).



During planting (above); after planting (below).



NATIVE PLANT LANDSCAPE IN OLD TOWN STATE HISTORIC PARK

Planting Party

Saturday December 9. 9:30 am to noon.

We will dig holes and plant native grasses and shrubs. Volunteers should be vaccinated against Hepatitis A.

Please RSVP because we plan to bring enough plants for the number of vaccinated volunteers who have RSVP'ed.

Please bring gloves and your favorite digging tool, or borrow ours.

Those who want to will go for a no-host lunch at a nearby restaurant after we finish.

Please contact Kay at oldtownlandscape@cnpssd.org to RSVP or if you have questions.

~ Kay Stewart

CONSERVATION

Conservation Committee

December 5. Usually the first Tuesday evening of each month. Contact **Frank Landis** at conservation@cnpssd.org for details.

Standard Story #1

The Cal Fire Vegetation Treatment Program PEIR (version 4) is out. Comments are due in January, and you are more than welcome to help. I'll be aggregating the comments for our chapter, so if you have any, send them to conservation@cnpssd.org. Since we have had issues with this, I should note that I follow CNPS state policies when I represent CNPSSD, so if you want to publish a comment that contradicts these policies, I'm not going to include it. You can submit such comments under your own name.

Here though, I'm going to talk about the aftermath of the Wine County fires, and the stories blaming chaparral for the fire's impacts. The prime example was High Country News publishing "Shrub-choked wildlands played a role in California fires" on October 24, 2017. This was particularly awkward, as there wasn't that

much chaparral in the area of the Tubbs fire, and a variety of other vegetation burned too, especially close to homes.

Still, this seems to be a standard story. Journalists have a tendency to treat wildfire, forest fire, bush fire, and brush fire as synonymous. They then synonymize brush with chaparral and often make the cognitive leap to blaming chaparral for the loss of homes during wild fires. This ends with the proposition that getting rid of chaparral will get rid of wildfire dangers.

There are a slew of critical questions that aren't asked in this standard story: Can you get rid of "brush" by clearing chaparral, or are the weeds the replace it just as hazardous? Is chaparral even the major problem? How big a fire break is needed to prevent flying embers from reaching a house? Instead, we have what I'm beginning to think of as "Standard Story #1," that, any wildfire is chaparral's fault, and the solution is to kill it.

Why do we have this story?

Let's be honest: I'm a chaparralian, so I'm biased. Still, chaparral is not my most favorite vegetation to walk through. Not on trails, though. That's the problem with chaparral: if you value your skin, clothes, and time, you don't spend your days bushwhacking through dense chaparral. Chaparral isn't human-scaled. It's too tall to step over, too short to walk under, and you typically have to bushwhack either up or down a steep slope. It's also home to rattlesnakes, ticks, poison oak, and a century ago, grizzly bears.

Worst of all, at least to our capitalist sensibilities, chaparral is worthless. We moderns don't see it the way the Indians did, as a source of firewood (chamise) arrow points (chamise), medicines (every plant), tools (mountain mahogany, toyon, laurel sumac, scrub oak) and so on. No, for us it is, at best, biomass to be bulldozed, masticated, and burned in a generator for electricity. In Allan Schoenherr's summary of development in California as "the cow, then the plow, then the bulldozer" (ranching, then farming, then development), chaparral was the vegetation a rancher burned repeatedly to get a bit of grassland to graze his cattle on, until erosion made it worthless. It's seldom worth farming, and even building in chaparral often involves stabilizing slide-prone slopes

This perceived worthlessness makes it easy to blame chaparral for wildfires, and this scapegoating is not new. Just for fun, I hauled out my copy of the 1989 symposium minutes *The California Chaparral: Paradigms Reexamined*. The preface talks about 35

chaparral paradigms from the previous 50 years, all of which were mauled and modified or disproved in that symposium. They included the ideas that chaparral senesced after 30 years, that it was a "born to burn," and so on.

Some media outlet faithfully parrots these discredited paradigms on every major fire. My assumption is that it's a story they know how to tell. No research is required, it's part of a standard formula that includes contact information for charities and stories of heartbreak and miracle survivals. Sound familiar? That's why I call it standard story #1.

So what's the harm of using this formula? Let's go through the unasked questions.

What replaces chaparral if it's cleared? If you clear chaparral thoroughly enough or it burns frequently enough, it gets replaced by weed fields and non-native grasses. These have less biomass to burn, but they are much more ignitable, meaning that fires are more likely to start in them. When grass fires start, the flames move more quickly than they do in chaparral. That, paradoxically, makes them more dangerous, not less. Worse, these annual plants have minimal root systems, so when heavy rains hit grassy hills, there's erosion and mudslides. I'd argue that grass fires and mudslides are worse than a chaparral fire over time, and this doesn't even count the loss of carbon sequestration from replacing long-lived woody plants with annual forbs.

Is chaparral even the problem? In the Tubbs Fire, it's not clear that there was chaparral close to the houses that burned in Santa Rosa. In many other "brush fires," the view from the news camera often shows weeds and landscaping burning, not chaparral. I've learned to not expect reporters to know the difference between eucalyptus, fennel, palms, and chaparral plants. Heck, reporters so frequently grab hunks of grass by the side of the road and claim it's brush that I've given up trying to call them on it. Still, if they want to understand why I don't trust them to be correct about any issue, it's these annual displays of ignorance that put the question in my mind. How many other topics have they not bothered to get informed about?

On a more formal basis, chaparral does tend to burn with massive, stand-replacing fires under conditions of prolonged low humidity and high winds. These conditions, when the Santa Anas howl here, are also when the vast majority of homes get burned (based on research by Alex Sylphard, Jon Keeley, and CJ Fotheringham). The problem is that almost everything burns under such conditions. Worse, it's impossible to

stop wind-driven wildfires, although firefighters can defend some homes.

The majority of fires aren't wind-driven. They spread slowly, are fairly easy to contain, and seldom burn homes. The tactics that work on such fires are utterly inadequate to stop a Santa Ana wind-driven catastrophe. Worse, we simply don't have the resources to support a fire department that could even theoretically fight such a fire. I'm not sure that even if we turned the Defense Department into the Wildland Fire Department and rigged all bombers to drop retardant, whether we could do it even then. And there's no point, because such fires don't happen every year. The only apparent solution is to clear the vegetation in advance.

Or is it? Greg Rubin, in *The California Native Landscape* (p. 331), captioned a picture of the remnants of a burned house as "clearing everything to bare ground around this house only created a perfect bowling alley for embers." This gets to the central point: mere clearance of surrounding vegetation doesn't mean your house and the surrounding trees won't remain the biggest things up in the wind catching embers.

How far can an ember fly and start a fire? So far as I know, the current record is 12 miles, in the Bunyip Ridge Fire, one of the Australian "Black Saturday Bushfires" of February 9, 2009. On that day, winds were over 60 mph, temperatures in nearby Melbourne were over 115°F, and relative humidities were as low as 2 percent.

Do you want to clear 12 miles of land on the windward sides of every single home? That's 141% of the 8.5 mile average commuting distance for San Diegans. If you want that much barren ground around you, the simplest solution is to move to Los Angeles, not to turn California into a wasteland.

Unfortunately, the alternative to the standard story isn't simple. It's understandable why news reporters pick on chaparral, but the standard story won't make people safer. Wholesale chaparral clearance causes other problems.

Making people and homes safer involves a combination of:

- Good urban planning, which means not putting people in dangerous locations.
- Good home design and landscaping, to make places as ember resistant and defensible as possible. We do need defensible spaces around homes, to give firefighters a place to fight fires safely, especially when the Santa Anas are not blowing.

- Public education, so that people understand the real risks and can take appropriate actions to minimize them, more than doing the very American thing of scapegoating and throwing money around after a disaster.

In this, journalists do play a role, and so do we. The stories journalists tell can, to some degree, defuse the scapegoating, highlight planning problems before they're implemented, and educate people about home design, landscaping, and preparing for fire season. Our job is to help them do this.

Perhaps one day there will be a better formula than standard story #1. I can dream, at least.

~ Frank Landis, Conservation Chair

Location: Cuyamaca College, Bldg. H, Rm. 222

Time: Tues/Thurs, 12:30-1:45

Starting Date: January 30, 2018

*Students must register with Cuyamaca College through the WebAdvisor's URL:

<https://wa/gcccd.edu/Cuyamaca.Admissions@gcccd.edu>

or call (619) 660-4275 or fax (619)660-4575.

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

Conservation Conference



February 1-3, 2018
Workshops & Field Trips January 30-31

Los Angeles, CA
Los Angeles Airport Marriott

<https://conference.cnps.org>

Los Angeles Airport Marriott
5855 West Century Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA, 90045

January 30 & 31: Pre-conference field trips and workshops.

February 1-3: Programs and sessions.



Ceanothus spp.



Fremontia.

RELATED ACTIVITIES

CULTURAL ETHNOBOTANY CLASS
SPRING 2018, Cuyamaca College
BIO 134 – 1522*

Cultural Ethnobotany is the study of the relationship between Indigenous Cultures and the plants of their ancestral homeland. This course will focus on the Cultural Ethnobotany of the Kymeyaay/Diegueno people of Southern California and Northern Baja California, with particular attention to how plants were used to sustain, heal, and protect the Kumeyaay Nation. Both traditions and scientific methods will be used to classify plants and identify their historical and modern uses, and local field trips will provide opportunities for working directly with plant materials in their natural habitats.

Instructor: Michelle Garcia (with Guest Speaker Richard Bugbee).

CNPS-SD Activities Calendar December 2017

- 12/6:** Board Meeting, p.2
- 12/5:** Conservation Committee Mtg, p.4
- 12/9:** Old Town Landscape Planting Party, p.4
- 12/13:** Garden Native Mtg, p. 3
- 12/19:** Chapter Meeting, p.1

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

___ Student or Limited Income \$25; ___ Individual \$45; ___ Family \$75
___ Plant Lover \$100; ___ Patron \$300; ___ Benefactor \$600; ___ Mariposa Lily \$1,500
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

Nonprofit Organization
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San Diego, California



December 2017 Newsletter

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

www.cnpssd.org

info@cnpssd.org

BOARD MEMBERS

PRESIDENT: Bobbie Stephenson.....president@cnpssd.org
(619) 269-0055
VICE PRES: Tom Oberbauer.....vicepresident@cnpssd.org
SECRETARY: Michael Evans.....secretary@cnpssd.org
TREASURER: Connie di Girolamo.....treasurer@cnpssd.org
Cindy Burrascano..... (858) 342-5246; booksales@cnpssd.org
Bob Byrnes.....bob.byrnes@cnpssd.org
Frank Landis.....(310) 883-8569; conservation@cnpssd.org
Sue Marchetti.....nativesfor novices@cnpssd.org
Torrey Neel.....programs@cnpssd.org
Joseph Sochor.....webmaster@cnpssd.org

CHAPTER COUNCIL DELEGATE

Frank Landis.....chaptercouncil@cnpssd.org

RARE PLANT BOTANIST

Fred Roberts.....rarebotanist@cnpssd.org
(760) 439-6244

APPOINTED COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

BOOK SALES: Cindy Burrascano.....booksales@cnpssd.org
(858) 342-5246
CONSERVATION: Frank Landis.....conservation@cnpssd.org
(310) 883-8569
EDUCATION: OPEN
FIELD TRIPS: Justin Daniel.....fieldtrips@cnpssd.org
HOSPITALITY: Kye Ok Kim.....hospitality@cnpssd.org

INVASIVE PLANTS: Arne Johanson (858) 759-4769 &
Bob Byrnes.....invasiveplants@cnpssd.org
LEGISLATION: Peter St. Clair.....legislation@cnpssd.org
LIBRARIAN: OPEN
MEMBERSHIP: Connie di Girolamo.....membership@cnpssd.org
NATIVES FOR NOVICES: Sue Marchetti.....
nativesfor novices@cnpssd.org
GARDEN NATIVE: OPEN.....gardening@cnpssd.org
GARDEN TOUR: Judie Lincer... ..tour@cnpssd.org
HABITAT RESTORATION: Arne Johanson..... (858) 759-4769 &
Bob Byrneshabitatrestoration@cnpssd.org
NEWSLETTER: Bobbie Stephenson.....newsletter@cnpssd.org
(619) 269-0055
OLD TOWN NATIVE PLANT LANDSCAPE: Peter St. Clair and
Kay Stewart.....OldTownLandscape@cnpssd.org
PLANT PROPAGATION: Jim Wadman...propagation@cnpssd.org
619-294-7556
PLANT SALE-FALL: Carolyn Martus.....plantsale@cnpssd.org
PLANT SALE-SPR: OPEN.....springplantsale@cnpssd.org
POSTER SALES: OPEN.....postersales@cnpssd.org
PROGRAMS: Torrey Neel.....programs@cnpssd.org
PUBLICITY: OPEN.....publicity@cnpssd.org
PUBLIC OUTREACH: OPENpublicoutreach@cnpssd.org
RARE PLANT SURVEYS: Frank Landis...rarsurvey@cnpssd.org
(310) 883-8569
SEEDS & BULBS: Cindy Hazuka.....seedsandbulbs@cnpssd.org
VEGETATION: OPEN.....vegetation@cnpssd.org
WEBSITE: [Joseph Sochor.....webmaster@cnpssd.org](mailto:Joseph.Sochor@webmaster.cnpssd.org)