

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
San Diego Chapter Newsletter

CHAPTER MEETING
& HOLIDAY POTLUCK

Tuesday, December 16
Room 104, Casa del Prado
Balboa Park
7:00 p.m.

Prez to Produce
Perambulation Pics

...at our Holiday Potluck! Yes, **Tom Oberbauer** is bringing pictures of his adventures among the plants, but you still gotta bring food...because that's what a potluck is! Just bring something delicious--preferably finger food. Your Hospitality Committee will provide the usual coffee/tea, mulled cider, utensils, cups, napkins and plates, all against a background of twinkling, festive, evergreen, more or less native, decor. And yes, the magic will happen at our December meeting, Tuesday, Dec. 16. Come and make merry with us!

~**Betsy Cory**, Hospitality Chair

Presentation: Madeira Island
By Tom Oberbauer

The volcanic Madeira Island, owned by Portugal and located off the northwest coast of Africa, has a number of connections to San Diego. Portuguese fishermen have settled in sea ports around the world following in the footsteps of some of the first explorers who originated from the Magellan School of Navigation in Portugal. Currently, the Point Loma area of San Diego supports a large community of Portuguese who have ties to Madeira Island and the other Portuguese archipelago, the Azores. However, San Diego and Madeira have other linking factors.

The latitude of San Diego at 32 degrees North is the same latitude as Madeira Island, though it is actually closer to Morocco than to mainland Portugal. The climate of Madeira is similar in many ways to that of San Diego since it is positioned on the east side of a large ocean in an area considered Mediterranean; however, because it is located in the ocean and the water is generally warmer than in Southern California, it is a bit wetter, particularly on the north side. In that moist area, remnants of a Tertiary forest, referred to as Laurisilva (laurel forest), grows in the form of a cloud forest.

Biologically, Madeira has a number of factors linking it to San Diego. There is at least one plant, *Achillea millefolium*, that naturally occurs on Madeira Island and in San Diego County, and there are numerous ornamentals from Madeira that are grown in San Diego. Two of the most interesting are the Dragon Tree (*Dracaena draco*) and the Pride of Madeira (*Echium fastuosum*). But, it also has native plants like Olives and Huckleberries. Like San Diego, Madeira has a diverse flora with 1,200 species and supports a large number (66) of endemic species and approximately 120 that are endemic to Madeira and the Canary Islands 270 miles to the south. It also has characteristics that are reminiscent of Guadalupe Island off Baja California, having formed from subsurface volcanic flows in a similar way.

However, one of the most interesting, though somewhat distressing, connections to Madeira is in weeds. A number of weeds that we have in San Diego County originated in Portugal, the Mediterranean area and Madeira, including the Artichoke thistle.

7:00 p.m. – refreshments, browsing, socializing.

7:30 p.m. – presentation.



HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Chapter meetings are free and open to the public. They are held in the Casa del Prado, just west of the San Diego Natural History Museum in Balboa Park.

BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, December 3, 6:30 – 8:30 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 falls on a holiday. Members are welcome to attend as observers. If you wish to discuss an issue, please email president@cnpssd.org to get your issue on the agenda.

their cars.

The plant sale itself was amazing to observe. It moved like clockwork. The plant checkers worked in a professional manner with those purchasing the plants to set up a sales slip with their purchases so that the cashiers could process the sales quickly. The cashiers worked smoothly with input from Connie. Other volunteer experts answered questions on the needs of the plants and what types of conditions or locations the plants require. People sold seeds. **Cindy Burrascano** sold a good number of books and had assistance from other volunteers. Students helped organize the holding area for plants while the purchasers retrieved their cars from the parking lot. It was a major endeavor with help from dozens of volunteers. It was interesting to note how rapidly the inventory of plants dwindled. It all moved very quickly, at least at first, but it was never chaotic.

I would like to personally thank all who participated in the plant sale, especially **Carolyn**, and I know that this also represents the sentiments of the entire Board. We would particularly like to express appreciation for all of the individual people who fulfilled so many different tasks that were vital for making the plant sale such a success. Thank you all so much!

~ **Tom Oberbauer**, Chapter President



CNPS 2015
Conservation Conference

Celebrating 50 Years
of Progress and Promise

If you haven't done so, please register!

<http://www.cnps.org/cnps/conservation/conference/2015/registration.php>

Financial assistance is available for a limited number of students. For more information, visit <http://www.cnps.org/cnps/conservation/conference/2015/students.php>.

RECEIVE YOUR NEWSLETTER ONLINE

To receive your newsletter via email, please contact us at:

enewsletter@cnpssd.org



Prez Sez

It has been an honor to serve as the Chapter President again in 2014. This has been a great year all around with major events including the Garden Tour last spring and the Plant Sale in October. In addition, the propagation committee under **Jim Wadman** has re-established a propagation garden in a new location. If you have attended a recent general meeting, you may have seen that we also instituted some hospitality activities to provide a more welcoming atmosphere. But at this time, I want to thank all who attended the plant sale in October and purchased plants. This has been the most successful plant sale since 2009 according to **Connie di Girolamo**, our treasurer. This is fantastic news. It would not have been possible without the leadership of **Carolyn Martus**. She coordinated the sale during the last weeks of her pregnancy. She arranged for nurseries to supply plants and with gardeners to pre-order their plants. Furthermore, she brought together an army of volunteers who set up the sale, worked with those purchasing the plants, and helped ensure that the people who purchased the plants were able to get the plants to

Save the Date!

CNPS-SD Garden Native Tour

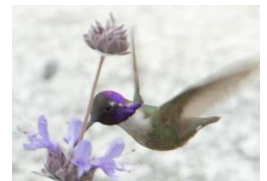
March 28-29, 2015

Remember how much fun we had last March? Well, we're all set to do it again, even better! Our next tour will feature 16 private and public gardens in the mid-county area, from Poway to Clairemont to our beloved Old Town Native Landscape. Details will soon be available at www.GardenNative.org.

Want to volunteer? Contact:

info@gardennative.org.

Looking forward to seeing you out there!!!



Hei-ock Kim

CNPS Special Projects Coordinator

Welcome to New and Renewing Members!

New Members

Karin Poppe
Carol Warner
Morgan Dean
Leonard Smith
Shannon Rankin
Kristin Law
Frances Douglass
Judy Elliott
Laura Hjorth
Debbie Becket
Pricilla Heisel
Candy Womack
Jeanne Brownell
Candace Vanderoff
Joe Guerin
Joan Brooks
Dee Osisek
Wes/Nancy Janssen
Karen Marchetti

Renewed Members

Nancy Tarbell
Jody Ebsen
Scott Jones
Jori Owens
Will Johnson
Nancy Accola
Ellen Caprio
Laura Ball
Mack Callie
Donna Woodka
Virginia Curtiss
Aaron Hebshi
Alissa Aldous
Sue Fouquette
Thea Gurns
Mark Koopman



"Ask me" experts at the CNPS-SD Plant Sale in October 2014.



October 2014 Plant Sale. Photo by Pat Fishtein.

CONSERVATION

Conservation Committee

December 2, 2014. Conservation Committee meeting. Always the first Tuesday of the month. Contact Frank Landis at raresurvey@cnpsd.org for the location.

Botany is Bitchin'!

Yes, that's the official logo of the Southern California Botanists. I'll admit that I don't have their bumper sticker or t-shirt (bright green with white letters). In large part, that's because I feel like I do too much bitching as the Conservation Chair, and that's really, really not what they mean (in this context incidentally, bitchin' means excellent).

Still, it's a sentiment worth remembering and sharing. We've had a tough year, what with the epic drought, the fear of huge fires, a parade of mediocre to craptastic environmental documents, and, until the plant sale, little love shown for native plants by the politicians or the public.

Now, things are looking up a bit. We had a great plant sale. And we're in a modest El Niño, and there's a good chance that we'll get a normal amount of rain, possibly even more than normal.

We'll have flowers again next spring.

In Baja and in the deserts, there are already reports of swaths of green, courtesy of those hurricanes that rolled up and into the deserts a few months ago. It should be a good year for desert wildflowers again.

Beyond that, I'm thinking about how much doubt I've heard in CNPS. It's shown up in the now ubiquitous Facebook CNPS messages that boil down to 'I don't know anything about native plants, what's this?' It's also surfaced in seasoned professionals, people I greatly respect, defending their perception of themselves as second-class professionals who shouldn't bear any professional certification, when we talked about CNPS working out a system to certify botanists to increase the general level of skill among agencies and consulting firms.

We need to stop running ourselves down. Botany is bitchin'. Yes, naming those dinky little flowers is intimidating. Yes, there are thousands of species. Yes, they are the landscape. And yes, there is no end to what

you can learn about them.

But no matter how many years anyone has been working with plants, no matter whether we're self-taught or have botany PhDs, we're all learning, and we all have more to learn than we have learned, no matter how far we've come. That's the green world for you. From our limited human perspective, it's a realm of infinite wonder, worthy of exploration and protection.

We do botany because we love plants. That's what we have to remember. Plants are excellent, and so is everyone who learns about them, works with them, and loves them. Word.

~ Frank Landis, Conservation Chair

NATIVE GARDENING

The Gardening Committee meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month. This month the meeting will be on **December 10**. Contact **Sue Marchetti** at NativesforNovices@cnpsd.org for time and location.

Work Parties

Old Town Native Plant Landscape

Saturday, December 13, Work Party - 1 to 3 p.m.

New Plants for the Old Town Native Plant Landscape

The Old Town Native Plant Landscape illustrates the native plants that were used by the Native Americans who lived in this region for millennia before the arrival of the Spanish in the 18th century. The Native Plant Landscape is looking more complete every year, but plants along some pathways have been trampled and need to be replanted. We'll have to replace some of the large rocks that had marked the path edges to protect plants, because someone stole a bunch of them! Last, we'll be adding some more large evergreen screening plants from the coastal region, since the scrub oaks we planted last year are very slow growing.

Come help us help the plants. Bring a shovel and gloves, if you have them or share ours. Sun protection and bottled water will help if it is a bright, warm day. The Native Plant Landscape is located at the west end of Old Town State Historic Park, at the intersection of Taylor and Congress Streets. If you come by bus, trolley, or train, walk to Taylor Street, cross at the signal, and enter the Park by the Old Town sign. If you drive, please park in the fancy, shady Cal Trans Lot across the street from

the Native Plant Landscape. CalTrans allows free parking on weekends for people coming to Old Town State Park. The entrance to the parking lot is at the signal where Juan Street ends at Taylor Street. After parking there, re-cross Taylor at the signal, and walk south, toward the trolley depot, and enter the park at the sign. You'll find us under the trees.

Questions? Please contact **Kay Stewart** at fieldtrips@cnpsd.org

Point Loma Native Plant Garden

December 6 & 21, 9:00 a.m. – noon. Rain cancels; bring water; no facilities; tools/supplies provided. Usually the first Saturday and third Sunday of each month. Contact: Richard@sandiegoriver.org.

TECOLOTE CANYON NATURAL PARK



December 7; 8 a.m. to noon. Meet at the Tecolote Nature Center on the first Sunday of the month. Wear sun protection and comfortable walking shoes; bring water. Rain at 8 a.m. cancels. Directions: exit I-5 at Seaworld/Tecolote exit. Go east (away from Mission Bay) on Tecolote, past the ball fields, along the driveway to the very end. Free and open to the public.

NON-NATIVES, INVASIVES AND EVOLUTION

The non-native plants we encounter in our area usually have one of two origins: They are either garden escapes or have been accidentally introduced as weeds. Both can lead to one of two results: They barely manage to survive in their new habitat, or they can turn into obnoxious invaders outcompeting and suffocating the native vegetation (*Carpobrotus edulis* is called "Green Death" for a reason). Each of these situations obviously deserves a different response from conservationists and others concerned about our natural environment.

How to handle invaders is of course a no-brainer. If left

unchecked, they will take over and become increasingly difficult to eradicate even with the dedication of an Arne Johanson and his volunteers. It is still possible in limited areas such as nature preserves, but unrealistic to hope that all of Southern California will ever be free of European Mustards or Wild Artichoke again.

On the other hand, escapes that pose no imminent threat to our native plants should be looked at on an individual basis. Frank Landis recently discussed one such case in these pages, *Limonium perezii*, a species threatened by extinction in its native Canary Island habitat. I have yet to see it take over large areas here; it usually grows in small numbers in sparsely vegetated beach locations and looks more like a refugee than an aggressive invader. In the past, this country has offered shelter to human refugees persecuted in their homelands, and it seems appropriate to me to extend this generosity also to plants.

In the same article, Frank muses about the danger of planting an island subspecies, *Prunus ilicifolia* ssp. *lyonii*, as an ornamental on the mainland, home of *P.i.* ssp. *ilicifolia*, where it might “contaminate” the gene pool. Which finally brings me to the main topic, the impact of all these introductions on evolution, as one fact should be clear to all of us: Evolution has happened over billions of years, continues through the negligibly short time of our presence on this planet, and will not be stopped by us even if we tried. So what does this mean with respect to our concern about introduced versus native plants and the preservation of local (sub-)species?

Without getting into the details of the various definitions of what constitutes a species, two commonly accepted characteristics are that it breeds true and does not readily hybridize with others. If those criteria are not met, the human urge to label everything has resulted in taxonomic terms like subspecies, variety, form and others, all of which describe a snapshot in the process of speciation. If geographic, topographic, environmental or other barriers continue to isolate a subspecific entity from the main population, it may eventually evolve into a stable, genetically different enough new species; if not, it may blend back into the main gene pool it originally derived from (There are other avenues towards the development of new species, but in our context this simplification should suffice.) So if you wish to preserve the island subspecies *lyonii* of *Prunus ilicifolia*, don't introduce the subspecies *ilicifolia* on Catalina, as it would probably re-absorb the local endemic, but don't worry too much about the mainland, from which it originally hailed and where it might be “hybridized out of existence”, a frequently voiced objection to mixing

populations. To address this concern, a brief deviation into ornithology can help.

Before it was extirpated, a distinct subspecies of Wild Turkey existed in the western United States. To fill the gap, eastern and Midwestern subspecies were subsequently introduced in the west, and after a limited number of generations, western birds already display clear differences from their eastern ancestors and reminiscent of the extinct western subspecies, which suggests that the full genetic reservoir of the parent species was still present in the eastern subspecies and brought back to light in the western environment – something to think about for purists worried about losses due to hybridization: Not every trait no longer visible on the surface has been permanently lost.

But back to our struggle with unwelcome invasive plants we seem permanently stuck with. If repeated reintroductions could be avoided (not easy in these times of global travel and commerce), chances are that the North American populations of for instance Garland Chrysanthemum or Yellow Star-thistle will over time develop statistically significant differences from those in their home countries, and due to selective pressures or genetic drift give rise to local forms, varieties or subspecies. Again, birds provide an example for such an occurrence. After homesick immigrants introduced European House Sparrows to New Zealand in the mid-1860s, these gregarious birds quickly took over both main islands and are now a common sight everywhere. And already during these past 150 years (a blink in evolutionary time frames), New Zealand House Sparrows developed traits that differentiate them from their European relatives. So some of our irreversible invaders may eventually at least allow us to watch evolution in the making.

None of this should keep us from defending our native species and attempting to restore degraded habitats to their original state, however. In all cases, define “original” though – 200, 1,000 or 10,000 years ago, as fundamental changes have occurred and will continue to happen, even without interferences from us. The science-based Nature Conservancy therefore tries to anticipate some of these changes and already now preserves natural areas as future refuges for plants and animals driven north by predicted climate changes in the southern U.S.

Whether all these efforts will permit North America to retain its present biodiversity without compromise remains to be seen. Other parts of the world have become floristic melting pots, where it is sometimes virtually impossible to decide, if a plant species is native

or has been introduced. Polynesia for instance is a case in point. Over several millennia these islands have experienced waves of human immigrants from Southeast Asia, Australia and Europe, all of whom have brought plants with them, some on purpose, others unwittingly, resulting in a colorful conglomerate of representatives from various continents. In this light, is it worth fighting for a nature preserve to protect a local subspecies of Blue (a tiny butterfly), or Peirson's Milkvetch (*Astragalus magdalenae* var. *peirsonii*), a rare variety of a wide-ranging plant?

By all means, since by defending the last hold-out of even the humblest organism we are also protecting a piece of increasingly rare natural habitat for others. The old adage "Think globally and act locally" is today as true as ever, and while it is late, it is never too late to save what is left. And if you are a hopeless pessimist thinking that we humans are a disastrous disturbance on the surface of this planet, keep in mind – so were the dinosaurs. Nothing an occasional asteroid could not cure...

~ Dr. Jürgen Schrenk, Member

Acer negundo (Box Elder) Revisited

In July of this year, I wrote an article about the occurrences of *Acer negundo* in San Diego County. The populations that I mentioned were at Palomar Mountain, Hot Springs Mountain, Julian and the La Posta area. I also mentioned that it has been widely planted in a number of areas throughout the world, and has even become an invasive species in parts of Europe. However, shortly after the publication of the article, I received E mails from sharp eyed readers indicating that they were aware of additional populations of Box Elder in San Diego County, including one that is quite large.

Following that article, **Ellen Bevier** mentioned that Box Elders were growing near where Fairmont Avenue and Montezuma Road intersect. **Millie Basden** indicated that they are growing at the old Mission Dam parking lot and out across the San Diego River to the east and **Brad Burkhardt** mentioned that they were at Carlton Oaks Country Club in Santee. I performed a little investigation to understand those populations a little better. It turns out that the ones growing along Fairmont Avenue are part of a population of around at least a dozen trees that grow for a distance of about a mile along Montezuma Road from near Collwood Boulevard down to the Fairmont/Montezuma split. They grow in what appears to be mostly natural habitat with some urban runoff and, of course, the occasional palm tree that is ubiquitous in

the San Diego Canyons. There is no clearly defined planted source upstream in a landscaped location so one would tend to think that these are, in fact, native trees.

In the east end of the Mission Dam Parking Lot, one large Box Elder grows. However, at the crossing of West Hills Parkway over a mile to the east, *Acer negundo* is one of the dominant riparian trees. The bridge on West Hills Parkway has Box Elder growing on both sides and it is visible some distance to the east as well as in the space to the west approaching the old dam. It is noteworthy that in early October, they all began to show yellowing as fall approached and their coloration is distinctive in the midst of the other riparian trees (Fremont Cottonwoods [*Populus fremontii*] and willows [*Salix* spp.]). This is quite an extensive population and, due to its size and extent, one would likely conclude that these trees are also native in this location.

Again, San Diego County is full of wonders and sharp-eyed CNPS readers help bring them to light. I would like to thank **Ellen Bevier**, **Millie Basden** and **Brad Burkhardt** for their feedback on the original article.

~ Thomas Oberbauer, Chapter President



Acer negundo (Box Elder) on the San Diego River. Photo by Tom Oberbauer.

On-line Submittals Now Available for CNDDDB

The California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) has a new Online Field Survey Form that allows users to map a point observation of a rare species and submit associated data. The *Online Field Survey Form* can be accessed from the CNDDDB Data Submission webpage: http://www.dfg.ca.gov/biogeodata/cnddb/submitting_data_to_cnddb.asp.

RELATED ACTIVITIES

Winter is a great time to visit Anza-Borrego Desert State Park! Check out the hikes and lectures offered by these organizations:

Anza-Borrego Botany Society

Talks are held at the **Anza-Borrego Desert State Park Visitor Center, 200 Palm Canyon Drive, Borrego Springs, November - April.** The public is invited; FREE. On **December 8** at 10:00- a.m., CNPS-SD Rare Plant Botanist Fred Roberts will talk about San Diego County Oak Trees.

Anza-Borrego Foundation Hikes

The Anza-Borrego Foundation has several hikes scheduled for this month. For info, visit their calendar at: <http://theabf.org/calendar/month/2014-12>.

Anza-Borrego Desert Natural History Association

The Anza-Borrego Desert Natural History Association (ABDNHA) has a lot of winter hikes and lectures. Visit <http://www.abdnha.org/calendar1.htm> for information.

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, March 10 for the April newsletter, etc. Please send submittals to newsletter@cnpsd.org.



CNPS-SD Calendar for December 2014

- 12/2: Conservation Committee Mtg, p. 3
- 12/3: **Board Meeting**, p. 2
- 12/6: Point Loma Native Garden Work Party, p.4
- 12/7: Tecolote Canyon Walk, p. 4
- 12/10: Gardening Committee Mtg, p. 4
- 12/13: Old Town Native Landscape Work Party, p.4
- 12/16: **Chapter Meeting**, p. 1
- 12/21: Point Loma Native Garden Work Party, p.4



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San Jose, CA



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www.cnps.org/2015



CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Photography © Nick Jensen

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
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December 2014 Newsletter

Dedicated to the preservation of the California native flora

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY – SAN DIEGO

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(760) 439-6244

GARDEN NATIVE (Native Garden Tour)

Hei-ock Kimdirector@gardennative.org

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