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CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY  
*San Diego Chapter Newsletter*

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**CHAPTER PRESIDENT'S  
MESSAGE**

**To All Our Members in San Diego and Imperial Counties, and  
quarantining abroad,**

I want to open this letter by saying how important every one of our members is, especially you who are reading this. For every one of us who contributes to the good of our world as members and as very active naturalists, thank you! During this extraordinarily trying time, we at the Chapter Board express our hopes that you are all safe and well. To anyone currently experiencing any illness or other distress, we're rooting for you! Life is resilient and thrives on cooperation and community. Please take solace in the fact that we'll get through this global disaster together... even when we must stay at least six feet apart.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, CNPS functions have been delayed or are otherwise being carried out by very small teams or single person maintenance for the foreseeable future. Our online functions, mailing, restoration, nursery work, plant surveys, and planning for the summer and fall continue. There will be a period of readjustment and weighing necessary assistance to other CNPS chapters who have not been able to weather this shut down as we are able to. Despite the slowdown, we are still growing strong. If you haven't already gotten a refund from / donation to Garden Tour, please do so. We're discussing the next steps currently and don't want you to miss out on the great work already done, or the featured artists.

Our Executive Director at State, **Dan Glusenka**, plans to grow CNPS by expanding our reach and by offering new positions to hire a multitude of staff across California. He expects CNPS to take a large role in protecting California's diversity of flora. The vision is to renew urban habitat through native gardening and landscaping, work closely with other NGOs to protect critical species and sensitive areas, and influence leadership at all levels to have a seat at the table on environmental issues and regional planning. There are many positive actions happening, so read through the FLORA and FREMONTIA and don't miss the next opportunities to participate on state level events as they happen. The

leadership and critical information to fight so many concerns in our modern world is coming out of CNPS and we want to tackle these issues at scale.

As I write this, Governor Newsom has decreed a Stay at Home order. However, that has not restricted people from taking advantage of the trails. Just know that facilities will likely be closed, so check ahead and plan accordingly. If you can, try to get out there and enjoy nature while the weather is cool, the air is clean, and the spring is blooming! The desert has been a wonderful experience this year so far. The window is closing on what's left of the bloom, so get out there before the heat sets in!

~ Justin Daniel, President CNPSSD

**TENTATIVE CHAPTER MEETING**

CNPS-SD will send a MailChimp email message the weekend before April 21 informing members if the meeting will occur.

**APRIL 21, 2020**

**Casa del Prado Room 101, Balboa Park**

**6:30 pm – Premeeting talk: iNaturalist City  
Nature Challenge.**

**7:00 pm – Browsing & Socializing**

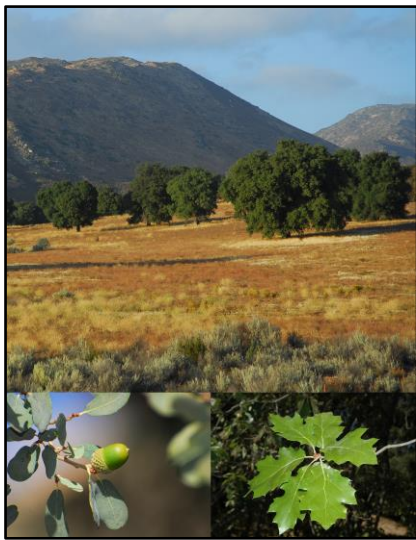
**7:30 pm – Brief Business Meeting**

**7:45 pm – Main Presentation**

**Main Presentation  
The Oaks of San Diego County**

**by Fred Roberts**

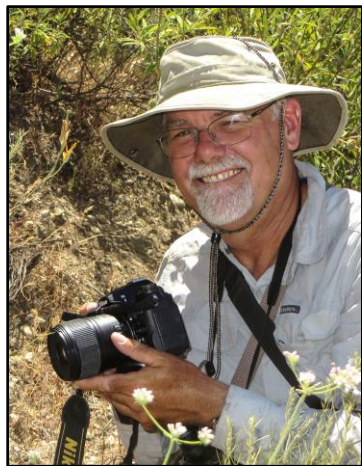
Oaks are an important element of the California landscape. As group, they are one of the most widely recognized plants in southern California. However, with the exception of a few readily recognizable trees, determining individual species can be a challenge. Many are similar in appearance. Within certain groups they are fairly promiscuous, producing many intermediate hybrids blurring the distinctions between otherwise easily recognized species. San Diego County boasts one of the highest diversity of oaks in California with ten known species ranging in form from the intricately and



tangled branched Nuttall's scrub oak (*Quercus dumosa*), a coastal oak that hid in plain sight of botanists for over a hundred years, to California black oak (*Q. kelloggii*), a mountain species with large, bristle-tipped leaves that turn yellow and fall to the ground in the fall. We also boast one of the state's most problematic entities,

Parry's oak (*Quercus Xacutidens*), which has been considered anywhere from a variation of California scrub oak (*Q. berberidifolia*) to a full species worthy of recognition. Fred will introduce us to these oaks and others as we tour our San Diego species, learning about their ecology and how to tell them apart.

**Fred M. Roberts** wrote the now out of print but still popular guide, The Illustrated Guide to the Oaks of the Southern Californian Floristic Province. With over 40-years of botanical experience, Fred has worked as an assistant curator at an herbarium (UC Irvine), a botanist with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and volunteered as a conservationist. Most of those years he has focused on the floristic diversity of Orange County but occasionally has picked up other interests such as understanding oaks, lilies and their relatives, and knows a thing or two about rare plants in southern California. He is currently a consulting botanist focusing on rare plant surveys, serves as rare plant botanist for several CNPS chapters (including ours), and has several book projects in the works. In his spare time he paints and creates botanically themed T-shirts.



Chapter meetings are free and open to the public.

## BOARD MEETING

**Wednesday, April 8, 6:30 – 9:00ish p.m.** To conform to the directive from the state CNPS office, this meeting will be on the second Wednesday of April (April 8) instead of the first Wednesday. The meeting will be via phone. To add an issue to the agenda, please email [president@cnpsd.org](mailto:president@cnpsd.org).

## CALLING ALL SPEAKERS!

### We're Building a Native Plant Speakers Bureau and We Need You!

We're looking for volunteers who can confidently and forcefully promote the benefits of growing natives. Who can encourage lasting enthusiasm for planting and caring for (yes, even propagating) native habitats.

If you have your own PowerPoint or slide show, excellent. If not, we can help. Demonstrations, desirable. Seeds, available. Even texts to compare to, at your request. Durations from short to long (10 to 40 minutes). Topics broad to narrow (designing, selecting, planting, weeding, watering, etc.).

Why? 1. We need to get out the word. 2. Many organizations are asking for the only outfit that exclusively, continuously, sustainably (not to mention, factually) promotes local native plants (that's us!) to speak to their members. 3. Potential donors to CNPS-SD want to know we're doing this. They want to help.

What to do right now? Email [PublicOutreach@cnpsd.org](mailto:PublicOutreach@cnpsd.org). We'll get back to you by return email. And don't worry, we're mum 'til it is safe to speak. Thank you!

~ Leon Scales, Public Outreach Chair

## GARDENING WITH NATIVES

### Gardening Committee Meeting

Contact [gardening@cnpsd.org](mailto:gardening@cnpsd.org) for information.

### Send Garden Photos

There's nothing a gardener likes better than to show off their work. If you grow California native plants in your garden and want to share them in their Spring glory with our online followers, now is a better time than ever. Please EMAIL <mailto:media@cnpsd.org> your interest in sharing. We'll instruct you how to send over up to 10 photos or a video tour/walk-around of your garden. We look forward in the coming weeks to sharing your gardens on our Facebook page and website!

### California Native Garden Tour The Artful California Native Garden Saturday, April 4, 2020 **POSTPONED until Spring 2021**

## FIELD TRIPS

Field Trips will resume once the CNPS Executive Director gives the go ahead for such activities. The tentative deadline is April 7 but may very well last through May. Please check in at <https://www.meetup.com/San-Diego-County-Native-Plant-Discoverers-Meetup/> for news. That doesn't mean that you shouldn't plan to get out on the trails this month and

next! The Meetup page will list suggestions for great trails. Always double check on access, safety concerns, fees, and rules. Feel free to reach out to me for information at [president@cnpssd.org](mailto:president@cnpssd.org) and [info@cnpssd.org](mailto:info@cnpssd.org). While seeking out that perfect picture, always keep an eye out for snakes and loose footing!

~ Justin Daniel, Chapter President/Field Trip Chair

## California Native Plant Week April 11-19, 2020

Did you know that 90 percent of insects can only eat the native plant species with which they've co-evolved? (See the article about spiny redberry and the Hermes Copper butterfly on p. 4.) From monarch caterpillars to desert birds, life depends on native plants. Even we humans need our native plants to support the web of life upon which we depend. Native plants provide important ecosystem services that sustain life and every plant matters, especially here in California.

California's native plants makes it one of the world's biodiversity hotspots. With approximately 6,500 types of plants, we have more plant diversity than any other state in the U.S. A third of our species are found nowhere else on the planet. (Think of what that means for the species that depend on them!) That's why, in 2010, the California State Legislature designated the third week of April to be California Native Plant Week.

## CONSERVATION

### Conservation Committee Mtg

Contact [conservation@cnpssd.org](mailto:conservation@cnpssd.org) for information.

### Conservation Column

#### Remember That March Election?

I'm writing this on March 14, so I have no idea how the whole coronavirus thing will have developed between now and the time you read this. Before I succumb to the inevitable and mention it again, I want to go over a bit of ancient, undead history: results of the March 3 election with Measures A and B.

Unfortunately, I don't quite know those results. As I write this, the latest update from the San Diego Registrar of Voters is that with 60,000 provisional ballots still to count, Measure A is going down 394,398 to 373,356 (No 51.37%, Yes 48.63%). Measure B went down convincingly 58% No to 42% Yes. Probably both measures will go down, but Measure A is so close that no one's conceding until all the votes are counted.

On the presumption that Measure A went down, while a worked example of how Measure A was supposed to stop sprawl—Measure B—succeeded wildly, well, there's been a bit of analysis by the punditry, and I figured I'd give my two bits' worth as well.

The first thing that caught my attention from the registrars' data is that 2,920 more people voted on Measure B than on Measure A. Presumably it was less controversial and easier to decide on? Given that San Diego has a strong NIMBY culture and developments generally get shot down by voters, this isn't surprising.

However, Measure A was supposed to make it easier to stop sprawl, and a few too many people didn't want to do that. Well, about half the people did want to, about half didn't, and then there was a small minority who pushed it into the loss column. My guess is that Measure A was undone by a few things. One is that it was opposed by the Democratic Party, and some people do take that into account. The other is that there's a cadre of voters out there who vote no on initiatives as a matter of personal policy, whatever they are.

With regard to why the San Diego democrats failed by one vote in the central committee to support Measure A, I've heard a fairly detailed version of the events from a friend who was there, but I think that putting it in print might cause issues. Suffice it to say that the environmentalists are not as organized as the labor unions. There were more union representatives speaking out against A than there were environmentalists speaking out for it.

This is a recurring theme in San Diego politics, which often does base decisions on important issues using a combination of public nose count of vociferous individuals and, a more private accounting based on, erm, back room conversations, rather than deciding complex issues based on rational, defensible analyses of what would be best for the community going forward. This is one way to make decisions, but it's rarely an optimal one.

It's also why I keep asking you to stick your nose into local politics. Getting it counted matters.

Going forward, I think the COVID-19 may well have as much to say about development in the next five years as the apparent failure of Measure A. Actually, I can only imagine what you think about talking about that stupid virus anymore, so let's talk about the economic impacts if we have a recession, let alone a depression, as a result of it. From an environmental perspective, it's not all bad.

We're hopefully at the end of the long bull market that was causing all this development. What has been happening with all this leapfrog sprawl is that there was so much money floating around the world looking for investments that companies were investing in bad ideas like Newland Sierra. There basically aren't any good sprawl sites left in San Diego, so until the Big One, we're likely to be stuck with every economic upturn heralding a swarm of investors trying to get projects built and get their profits out before the next disaster hits.

That development was being designed by the Newland Corporation, but the money behind it was from a Japanese developer who had never before tried to build in the US and reportedly had little idea what they were getting into. Assuming that Newland Sierra is currently dead thanks to Measure B (and note, we haven't abandoned the court case

against it yet either), presumably the property will be sold and resold over the next few years until someone decides to try to build something there, hires Newland, and the whole goat dance starts all over again.

Similar things are likely to happen with the other reported six (or is it 30?) sprawl developments under consideration in the County, which is why it's a pity that Measure A didn't pass. Well, maybe it did at the last minute, and I don't know that yet. If so, this part of the column will be an ironic misfire.

### Conservation Over the Next Few Years

Still trying and failing to not talk about the virus, but it may be the pandemic that changes many things. If you're worried that this is the start of the apocalyptic end of civilization, what I'd point out, from my book *Hot Earth Dreams*, is that the crash of civilization isn't really about the crises and disasters, because something's almost always going seriously wrong somewhere. Instead it's about how we respond to each disaster. The only way you'll know that we're in serious trouble is if things fall apart, and new things don't get built from the ruins. We're nowhere near that, and I don't think COVID-19 is going to take down civilization either. That doesn't mean that anyone should be careless about it, but I'd suggest taking this as a wakeup call to make your life more resilient against disasters, rather than a doomsday klaxon.

Even if the developers go away for a few years due to an economic downturn, we've got some other issues to engage on, including the litigation spawned by this last bit of economic exuberance.

One big issue coming down the pike is that the state plans to both implement the VTP to clear vegetation, and simultaneously they're planning on planting huge numbers of native trees to sequester carbon and to plant massive numbers of native plants to decrease landscaping water use. On the one hand, yay, CNPS won! They want natives everywhere! On the other hand, we don't want industrial monocultures of freeway buckwheat to feed the pollinators and Monterey pine plantations sequestering carbon either, although both species are welcome parts of more diverse landscapes. State CNPS is working on this issue from a horticultural end to promote diversity, and we're going to have to deal with it from the political end down here as well, by commenting on landscaping lists and similar. If this becomes an issue on something you are working on, please contact [conservation@cnpsd.org](mailto:conservation@cnpsd.org) and we'll advocate for diversity together.

~ Frank Landis, Conservation Chair

## BOTANY

### Spiny Redberry (*Rhamnus crocea*)

In January 2020, the USFWS announced that it is proposing to list the Hermes Copper butterfly (*Lycaena Hermes*), endemic to San Diego County and northwestern Baja California, as a threatened species under the federal Endangered Species Act. Habitat loss and fragmentation, and the increased

frequency and magnitude of wildfires, is contributing to the butterfly's decline. The USFWS is proposing to designate about 35,000 acres of critical habitat for the butterfly in San Diego County.



(Left) Photo: USFWS

The adult Hermes Copper feed on the nectar of California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*), and lay eggs exclusively on spiny redberry (*Rhamnus crocea*) bushes. The adult butterflies mature, fly, and lay eggs from May through July. Eggs are laid singly on twigs of the host plant and they hibernate until the following spring. The larvae (caterpillars) eat the young leaves of the spiny redberry host plant. Both the California buckwheat and spiny redberry are found in coastal sage scrub and chaparral habitats.



Spiny redberry (*Rhamnus crocea*) flowers. Photo from [www.CalFlora.org](http://www.CalFlora.org), © 2019 Diane Etchison.

Hermes Copper occurs only in populations of spiny redberry but does not inhabit all spiny redberry populations. In California, spiny redberry grows in the foothills of the Pacific Coast Ranges



(Left) Spiny redberry (*Rhamnus crocea*) in fruit. Photo from [www.CalFlora.org](http://www.CalFlora.org), © 2003 Charles E. Jones.

and the western foothills of the Sierra Nevadas, and so surrounds the whole San Joaquin Valley. In Southern California it occurs along the coast and into eastern San Diego County west of the desert. In the U.S., Hermes Copper occurs only in San Diego County. The evergreen spiny redberry is in the Buckthorn family (Rhamnaceae). Spiny redberry typically grows one to two meters high and blooms from January through April. The Rhamnaceae, with 55 genera and 950 species worldwide, also includes our wild lilac (*Ceanothus*) species.

## Western Azalea (*Rhododendron occidentale*)

Tom Oberbauer's article last month described finding western azaleas in San Diego County. A 1993 article by Mike McCullough in The Azalean (the journal of the Azalea Society of America), about hunting azaleas in Southern California and discussing several location in San Diego County, is available at: [https://www.azaleas.org/wp-content/uploads/azalean/15/2/articles/Plant\\_Hunting\\_for\\_Azaleas.pdf](https://www.azaleas.org/wp-content/uploads/azalean/15/2/articles/Plant_Hunting_for_Azaleas.pdf).

**Note:** While looking on the internet for info about western azaleas, I learned there is an Azalea State Natural Preserve ([https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=420](https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=420)) 5 miles north of Arcata in Humboldt County. It might be worth a visit next time you are in Northern California.

~ **Bobbie Stephenson**, Newsletter Editor

## **DESERT WILDFLOWER UPDATES**

This website - <https://www.desertusa.com/wildflo/wildupdates.html> - gives information on where flowers are blooming for most of the desert areas in Southern California and other southwest areas. **On March 20, a note from California State Parks on this website says:** While most of our indoor spaces, including visitor centers and museums are closed, all outdoor State Park spaces remain open and accessible to the public. Call your park in advance of your visit if you need additional details. We hope to see you in the great outdoors. The **National Park Service** has begun closing some facilities and services at parks and monuments across the country. Some campgrounds are also closed.

Flower info for Anza-Borrego is also here: <https://borregowildflowers.com/pages/blooming.html>. This hotline says **the mid-March rain will result in widespread bloom that will extend far into April**; it gives the best locations for finding flowers; and it has photos of some of the flowers you might encounter in the field.

## **OTHER CNPS ACTIVITIES**

### Botanist Certification Exam

**POSTPONED; Date TBD**

The next California Botanist Certification exam scheduled for April 9 in Ventura, CA, has been postponed. Check this website - <https://www.cnps.org/education/botanist-certification> - to find out if a new date has been chosen, or contact Elizabeth at [ekubey@cnps.org](mailto:ekubey@cnps.org) or David at [dmagney@cnps.org](mailto:dmagney@cnps.org).

## **RELATED ACTIVITIES**

### Moosa Creek Nursery

**The talk scheduled for April 18 is cancelled.**

### Tree of Life Nursery

33201 Ortega Highway  
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675

**Info from Tree of Life Nursery's website on March 20:** "We are taking the recommended protective measures to keep our customers and staff safe and healthy. Of course, we are staying up-to-date with current county, state, federal, and CDC guidelines, and will post any changes to our operations."

#### **Hours of Operation**

Our temporary hours are Monday-Friday, 8 am-2 pm, closed Saturday and Sunday. Please call ahead! We will be accepting wholesale and retail orders over the phone and by email, with pickup in our will call area in the parking lot. Please reach out with any questions about your plants or your garden. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation with this process as we encourage healthy social distancing. Please continue to check here:

<https://californianativeplants.com/precautionary-health-measures-coronavirus/> for any updates."

Phone: 949-728-0685

Email: [inquiries@treeoflifeny.com](mailto:inquiries@treeoflifeny.com)

### Native Plant Talk

Susan Krzywicki's native plant gardening talk at the Leo Carrillo Ranch Historic Park stable and corrals in Carlsbad has been **CANCELLED**.

### California Society for Ecological Restoration (SERCAL) Conference

<http://www.sercal.org/>

**POSTPONED to Fall 2020; Date TBD**

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 10<sup>th</sup> of the month preceding the newsletter; that is, January 10 for the February newsletter, etc. Please submit items to [newsletter@cnpsd.org](mailto:newsletter@cnpsd.org)

### **CNPS-SD Activities Calendar April 2020**

**4/8: Board Meeting, p.2**

**4/21: Tentative Chapter Meeting, p.1**

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

<https://www.cnps.org/membership>

\_\_\_ Student/Limited Income \$25; \_\_\_ Individual \$50; \_\_\_ Plant Lover \$120; \_\_\_ Supporter \$500; \_\_\_ Patron \$1,000;  
\_\_\_ Benefactor \$2,500; \_\_\_ Perennial Monthly Sustainer Memberships starting at \$5/mo provide much needed predictable  
income for our programs. Your indicated gift will be automatically repeated each month. Pls see  
<https://www.cnps.org/membership> to sign up for this membership level.

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



April 2020 Newsletter

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### **CHAPTER COUNCIL DELEGATE**

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### **RARE PLANT BOTANIST**

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