

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
San Diego Chapter Newsletter

**April's Beautiful Wildflowers in
East County**

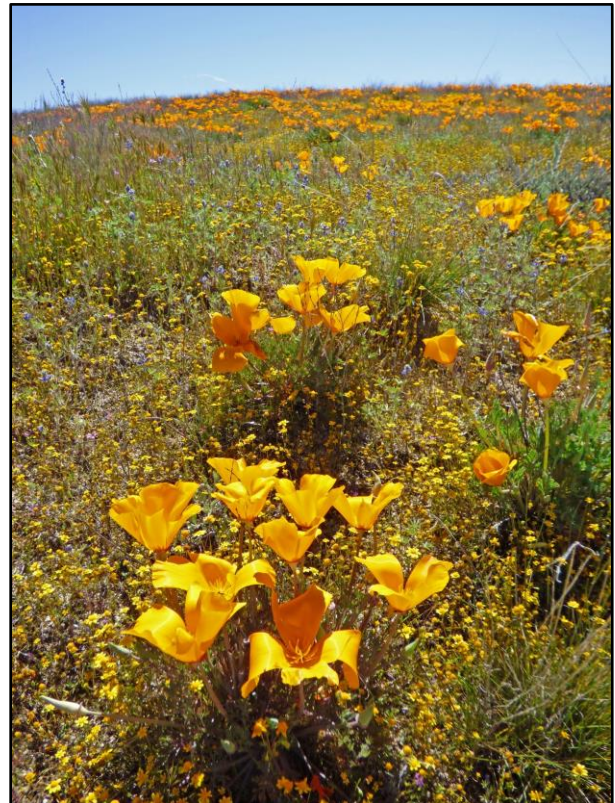
Photos by Jürgen Schrenk, April 2020



Baby blue eyes
(*Nemophila menziesii*)



Near Lake Henshaw



California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*)

(more photos on p. 7)



Cream cups
(*Platystemon californicus*)

NO EVENTS IN MAY

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I hope the continued quarantine is keeping you all safe. We've crossed a peak for hospitalizations (and worse) this week, showing that the physical distancing is working. Let's keep it up for a while longer to make sure this is the last peak and not the first of many. State CNPS is projecting keeping events closed to normal interaction until June. That doesn't mean we're not busy working on many things including brainstorming ideas on how to do Fall and Spring Plant Sales, innovative Workshops, and a return of the Garden Tour in Spring 2021. Our committees continue their vital work and are very much open to your ideas and help so reach out where you'd like to contribute. If you have experience and / or time, everyone who wants to make CNPSSD a great place for learning and sharing is welcome, even remotely. Have any idea for articles, or pictures of your garden? Share them with our social media and join the Groups.io community platform at CNPSSanDiegoDiscuss@groups.io. If you're still hiking by yourself or with your family, keep an eye out for rare plants, and use iNat to document them with the San Diego County Plant Atlas group joined and set as curator.

These recent heavy rains have brought a much needed soaking, which is an advantage for native plants getting ready set seed and surviving a hot summer. I'd like to briefly focus on the trials this brings as well. For everyone who got the Fremontia recently, it shows that CNPS is heavily focused on wildfires in the state and how to deal with them. The science points to a need for regional planning techniques that are responsive and respectful to the native vegetation community types and give the ability for your regional firefighting taskforce to handle preparation for, and response to, wildfire at a large scale. If you are surrounded by vegetation, make sure your structures are clear of built up fuel, your sprinklers tested and ready, and your trees are kept green, to name just a few good practices. Follow the Be Ready campaigns, and always focus on saving yourselves and your animals by knowing when and how to evacuate or shelter in place. These are plans that should already be put into your routine, but if not, need to be prepared now. CALFIRE has halted much of its vegetation reduction programs due to the Covid-19 shut down. While this is good in many ways if you are native flora or fauna, it's setting up a for fire season with constrained preparation times. That means getting prep done for your property done soon. Also remember that more development in the back country means resources are diverted to protecting denser areas, heavier traffic, and more chances for ignition, so tell your County Supervisor what you think of large developments.

Be safe out there, and we'll hopefully see each other sooner rather than later!

~ Justin Daniel, President CNPSSD

NEW E-MAIL DISCUSSION GROUP

The CNPS San Diego Discuss group at Groups.io is the new email discussion group.

The new platform replaces the CNPSSD-L listserv group with a modern and web accessible group. All members of the old listserv were moved to the new group, and it is easy for new members to join. The new platform provides us with the ability to easily search for past topics, upload photos, use the web site to view, reply, and create new topics, as well as several other features we haven't yet taken advantage of. If you want a cordial, private place to discuss native plants, then sign on here:

<https://groups.io/g/CNPSSanDiegoDiscuss> or

<https://www.cnpssd.org/email-listserv> or

Send email to: CNPSSanDiegoDiscuss+subscribe@groups.io

BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, May 6, 6:30 – 9:00ish p.m. To add an issue to the agenda, please email president@cnpssd.org.

April 8 Board Meeting Summary

To conform to the directive from the state CNPS office, this meeting was held via internet. The Chapter Board voted on the following items:

- Approved the Annual Fiscal Budget for fiscal year 2020-2021. (Note: the CNPS fiscal year is April 1 - March 31.)
- Removed the restrictions that were put on \$22,500 of the chapter's funds in 2009 to ensure that the Chapter had a "rainy day" fund if the Annual Plant Sale did not occur during a year or the sale lost money. We now have more fundraising events than just the plant sale and our budget is larger, so it was decided that the restrictions were no longer needed.
- Accepted the Native Garden Tour 2020 Final Report from Christine Hoey and Judie Lincer. The COVID-19 broke out just before the April 4 garden tour so it had to be cancelled just days before it was to occur. The gardens that were to be viewed at this year's tour will be on next year's tour.
- Approved updated mini-grant guidelines that made the application process easier. Guidelines can be found at: <https://www.cnpssd.org/mini-grants>.
- Approved the contract prepared by the Personnel Committee to hire Joseph Sochor for Social Media Administration, Media promotions for listed Special Events, and a 2021 Website Update for the Chapter's 2020-21 fiscal year. Joseph also volunteers time to the chapter.

GARDENING WITH NATIVES

Gardening Committee Meeting

Contact gardening@cnpsd.org for information.

- Reviewed options prepared by Leon Scales for a Fall and a Spring plant sale and approved the intent to have the sales. Dates and options will be decided based on the status of COVID-19 and physical distancing requirements.
- Approved Grievance Guidelines to be added to the Board Handbook (a document that provides guidance on how the Board functions).

Other discussion items that did not require votes included how the COVID-19 will affect our ability to have a Fall workshop, or even a winter workshop, or might they be on-line workshops; preparing the 2019-2020 Annual Activities Report that is due to the state CNPS each year in May; and other revisions that are needed to the Board Handbook.

Several Board members lead committees and gave informal reports to the Board.

~ **Bobbie Stephenson**, Chapter Secretary

2ND CALL FOR SPEAKERS!

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

For the Native Plant Speakers Bureau. We'll provide the soapbox (and logistics, if you like: slides, seeds, handouts, PowerPoint presentations. But you've probably got your own, and better).

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 native habitats. Topics broad (saving the earth) to narrow (What do I plant here?).

Sign up now. When the darkness of pandemic pandemonium lifts, we'll be ready.

We need to do a better job getting the word out.

Civic groups and organizations are asking CNPS - only we in San Diego exclusively, continuously, and sustainably (not to mention, factually) promote local natives - to speak to their members and guests.

Potential sponsors want to know we're doing this, so they can help us. (You might even get a donation or two.)

We've gotten a few volunteers - thank you! - We need more. Show your stuff. Email PublicOutreach@cnpsd.org. We'll get back to you by return email.

~ **Leon Scales**, Public Outreach Chair

Plant profiles with photos, plant descriptions and growing tips are available on our website at: <https://www.cnpsd.org/plantprofiles>.

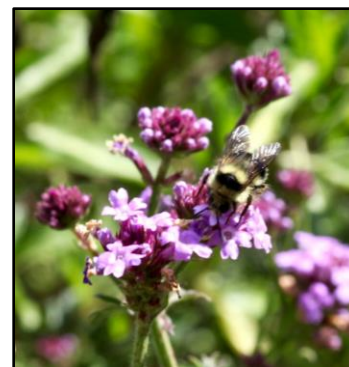
Mail Order Seeds from our New On-line Store and Website: WWW.CANATIVESEEDS.COM

Our Seed and Bulb team has worked hard to build an amazing inventory of San Diego focused California native seeds to sell at store for the seeds that we are happy to announce! Please go to www.canativeseeds.com to see what we have been up to. It now includes photos and descriptions for all of the plants. We would love to get feedback on the new site, include your photos, and fulfill your orders.

The diversity of seeds we offer is in large part due to the generous donations of seed from our chapter members' gardens and properties. and we thank you! For those of you with natives in your garden, please do consider helping by collecting seeds as they mature. We have some that are very hard to get and would love to find a few gardeners to take on bulking up our stock. We won't schedule any seed sorting parties until we know more about COVID. In the meantime we do have seed sorting jobs that you can do at home if you are interested. You can contact **Cindy Hazuka** at seedsandbulbs@cnpsd.org to find out more.

Garden Photos

We asked for your Spring garden photos and videos and you answered! If you have not caught up with them on our social media recently, you can view them all here on the website: <http://cnpsd.org/gardenprofiles-2020>. A BIG thank you to everyone sending in



pictures and descriptions of their garden. It has made all us feel less socially distant, garden-wise.

Pictures too small for you? Click on any of them to enlarge to full-screen.

SEED COLLECTION: A “Hindsight is 2020” Series

Introduction

This is beginning of a series centered on seed collecting of native plants. Over the next few months, articles will focus on Planning and Ethics of Seed Collecting, Targeting Genera, Proper Cleaning and Storage, and Germination and Renewal. Of all the reasons to collect, store, and germinate seeds of native plants in San Diego and Imperial Counties, the one I continually come back to is the excitement when a species I've never been able to grow before sprouts in a pot and survives into a fine, healthy plant. This excitement doesn't come without research, travel, trial, and a whole lot of error. Overcoming frustration is part of the process, and I hope these articles will help the seed collecting novice succeed as well. One of the best things about CNPS is the Society part. When you are looking for info that is nowhere to be found online, our members and the books we offer are a great next step.

ARTICLE ONE: Planning and Ethics of Seed Collecting

About a year ago, a Union Tribune reporter reached out to CNPSSD asking for comment on a controversial chef proudly sourcing his wild forage in protected areas. By the time our response was written a day later, the reporter was long done with the report and the comments were polarized between calling out the illegal practice and lauding the “sustainable” harvest method claimed in the article. The article is still online, with only one comment shown.

<https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/lifestyle/food-and-cooking/story/2019-06-25/chefs-foraging-guidance-leads-the-way-to-tasty-culinary-discoveries>.

To summarize, the chef harvested invasive species and left them to regrow, pulled seaweed from the surf, and picked elderberry (*Sambucus* spp.) in a protected reserve. Left unchecked, this practice leads to severe environmental

degradation and can occasionally make people very sick or at least paying a hefty fine when caught.

Wherever you source your seeds, ensure the proper permissions and permits are applied.

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/cleveland/passes-permits/forestproducts>

Questions should always have clear and reasonable answers. I collect nearly completely on private lands, always with permission from the property owner. Many species are grown in my own backyard from nursery plants. The remainder are under permit, with strict limitations that often turn the seed back over to the land owner or permit holder. Always do your research on any land you intend to collect on beforehand.

The **20 RULE** is simple: for every 20 seeds, take just one. There must be at 20 plants in a population to consider collecting at all. Anything more or less and the collecting may reduce the population needlessly. Technically, you'll be collecting fruits rather than seeds individually, but the idea stands that 5% of the available stock is the most you want to take. Avoid taking from plants that appear to have been previously harvested or otherwise damaged.

<https://www.hazmac.biz/aboutus/Seed%20Collecting%20Guidelines.pdf>

<https://www.cnps.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/collecting-for-education.pdf>

When it comes to rare species, know that San Diego Zoo Global and Botanical Gardens have special permits to collect for their propagation programs and seed banks. California Plant Rescue (CaPR) focuses on the rarest of species in California, the 1B's. Get involved or please leave those plants alone! For the 1B's we sell, the 'mother' plants are grown in nurseries and in private yards so are no longer considered wild. For 2's and below, be absolutely sure of the ID and status of the plant, be able to deduce the sustainability of the plant's population, and only ever apply the “20

RULE” if everything else checks out. If you're unsure about any of those, again, please leave the plants be. Native plant ID is a rewarding practice. Pick up the Jepson and learn to key, then realize the Jepson has flaws on many genera and get to know the Plant Atlas and the various herbaria of San Diego to double check your observations.

<https://www.caplantrescue.org/>

<https://institute.sandiegozoo.org/resources/native-plant-seed-bank>

<https://ucjeps.berkeley.edu/eflora/>

http://www.sdplantatlas.org/SynScanSearch_sdp.aspx

For the purpose of this article, planning is simplified. Find a known population of what you want to collect and get your permits well ahead of time. It may take three or more trips to time the collecting right. For fruits, they must be ripe or past ripe. For pods, they should be dry on the stalk. For fluffy seeds that blow away or explode (dehiscence) or fall away into the gravel when a breeze comes along, you ought collect them before they're gone and dry them out at home. The weather should be dry and warm and the fruits ready and abundant. You may begin some collecting in mid April, most into late May and June. For others, you'll be waiting until September to collect or even early winter for those species that bloom in the fall. The best collecting calendar is a flexible one with an eye on the seasonal cycles and visits to a plant in flower/fruit, and then again when the seeds are ready. Think of native birds and insects not as competition, but as signs that seeds will provide an image of that type of natural habitat elsewhere soon.

For specifics, please do your research and ask questions of any of our experts. Join a committee and we'll be there for each other's collecting and propagating science needs! Next, I'll address some great resources on genera. Stay safe out there and collect in *compos mentis*.

COMMITTEE Highlight:

Check out our revamped Seed and Bulbs website. For years, the seeds programs at CNPSSD offered a few common species, but that all changed with the extraordinary work of **Cindy Hazuka** and her dedicated volunteers. Our sales have expanded and now are a great support for the Chapter. We've just got a new shipment of great bulbs in and I hope this year will produce more variety and bulk of your favorite seeds.

A great deal of thanks to her, and a great thanks to you guys for your purchases and donations! Let her know if you're looking for a particular species that isn't on the website – now is the time to plan on getting them.

<https://www.cnpssd.org/seeds-and-bulbs>

~ **Justin Daniel**, Grower, Collector, Field Trips Chair, President 2019-20



Sage seedling (above) and San Diego sunflower (*Bahiopsis laciniata* (= *Viguiera laciniata*) seedling (below). Photos by the author.



Silver puffs (*Uropappus lindleyi*) ready to blow. Photo by the author.

FIELD TRIPS

Field Trips will resume once the CNPS Executive Director gives the go ahead for such activities. Please check <https://www.meetup.com/San-Diego-County-Native-Plant-Discoverers-Meetup/> for news. Feel free to reach out to me for information at president@cnpssd.org and info@cnpssd.org.

~ **Justin Daniel**, Chapter President/Field Trip Chair

CONSERVATION

Conservation Committee Mtgs

Contact conservation@cnpssd.org for information.

Not in The Teens Anymore

As I'm writing this, everything relates to Covid-19 and we're already tired of reading about it. I suspect it will be the same when this comes out. Hope you're staying safe and sane.

Switching gears, I'm still dealing with conservation issues. One of the frustrating parts of this job is that projects inevitably are sent through at inconvenient times, just to make it harder to oppose them. Thus it is that Otay Ranch Village 13 went to the County Planning Commission on April 17, with notice given and documents posted a few days before Easter. Since I'm writing this April 15, I can only speculate that, despite overwhelming testimony against it, it will pass 5-1 or perhaps 4-2 and head to the Board of Supervisors. Why? Every General Plan

Amendment (GPA) Project in the last few years has followed this pattern.

This one is botanically odious because of the scrub oaks. They want to wipe out 6.2 acres of scrub oak chaparral, an estimated 1,200 scrub oaks. In their original draft EIR they said that they looked like the rare Nuttall's scrub oak (*Quercus dumosa*), but since the Jepson Manual said that species only grows within sight of the ocean, that couldn't be it, it must be the more common *Quercus berberidifolia*. I went online, looked at where Nuttall's scrub oak has been found, and found that no, the project is within the physical range of the Nuttall's scrub oak. In the final EIR I was surprised to find that they agreed with me and changed the designation. However, they labeled it an "atypical population" and declared without further evidence that bulldozing these 1,200 rare oaks without mitigation was therefore an insignificant impact.

Yes, steam came out my ears. Atypical populations are often critical to conservation of a species, not disposable extras. Fortunately there are ample grounds for litigation from the groups that have sued on the last projects, since the FEIR makes the same mistakes on fire and climate change as other GPAs have before it, and they're now losing in court on precisely those grounds. That Otay Ranch Village 13 may push the Quino checkerspot butterfly into an extinction spiral is more reason for environmental groups to fight it.

The project proposes to put a few thousand single family commuter homes just east of Otay Reservoir, along with a resort hotel to overlook the reservoir. It's also in an area that's burned five times in the last 125 years. It's very much a product of its time, which was ten years ago.

Reading the EIR again, I felt like it was 1931, and I was reading a plan from the Roaring 20s that was somehow shambling zombie-like through the approval process after the economy that would have made it viable died. Given how Covid-19 has affected the hospitality industry, who'd want to open a resort overlooking a reservoir with a bathtub ring, within earshot of all the helicopters patrolling around the border?

In a sensible world they'd reject the project and tell the developer to start over again, since the project is so ill-suited to current needs. That's what they did with the previous iteration Newland Sierra after all. It would be even nicer if this miserable crisis we're going through now actually provoked developers and builders to do something decent for a change. Is that too much to hope for? We'll see.

~ Frank Landis, Conservation Chair

BOTANY

Where is the Western Spleenwort?

Jon P. Rebman, Ph.D., Curator of Botany, San Diego Natural History Museum, P.O. Box 121390, San Diego, CA 92112-1390 (jrebman@sdnhm.org)

Western Spleenwort (*Asplenium vespertinum*)

Asplenium vespertinum is a rare native herbaceous perennial fern that typically grows around the base of boulders and overhanging rocks. In our region, it has been found growing on metavolcanic and granitic substrates in chaparral, sage scrub, and oak woodland vegetation at elevations ranging from 270–1080 m. In San Diego County, this species occurs mostly in the foothills in the southwestern portion of the county, with rare occurrences in the northwestern part. Western Spleenwort is often elusive, hidden in rocky areas, so it can be easily overlooked in the field. This species also occurs in five other counties in southwestern California and in extreme northwestern Baja California, Mexico. This is the only species of *Asplenium* that is known to occur in San Diego County.

CNPS Listing Status:

Asplenium vespertinum is listed in the CNPS Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants of California in category 4.2. This rare plant and threat rank status means that this species is of limited distribution in California, and it is moderately threatened. According to the Inventory, Western Spleenwort occurs in six counties in the southwestern part of the state and is threatened because of habitat loss.

Species Factoid:

The type specimen of *A. vespertinum* is from San Miguel Mountain in San Diego County. It was originally collected by Laura Kimball on 1 February 1900 and is deposited in the US National Herbarium (Witham 1972). The SD Herbarium has a sheet of three specimens of *A. vespertinum* from San Miguel

Mountain that were also collected by Laura Kimball and her husband in February and May of 1900.

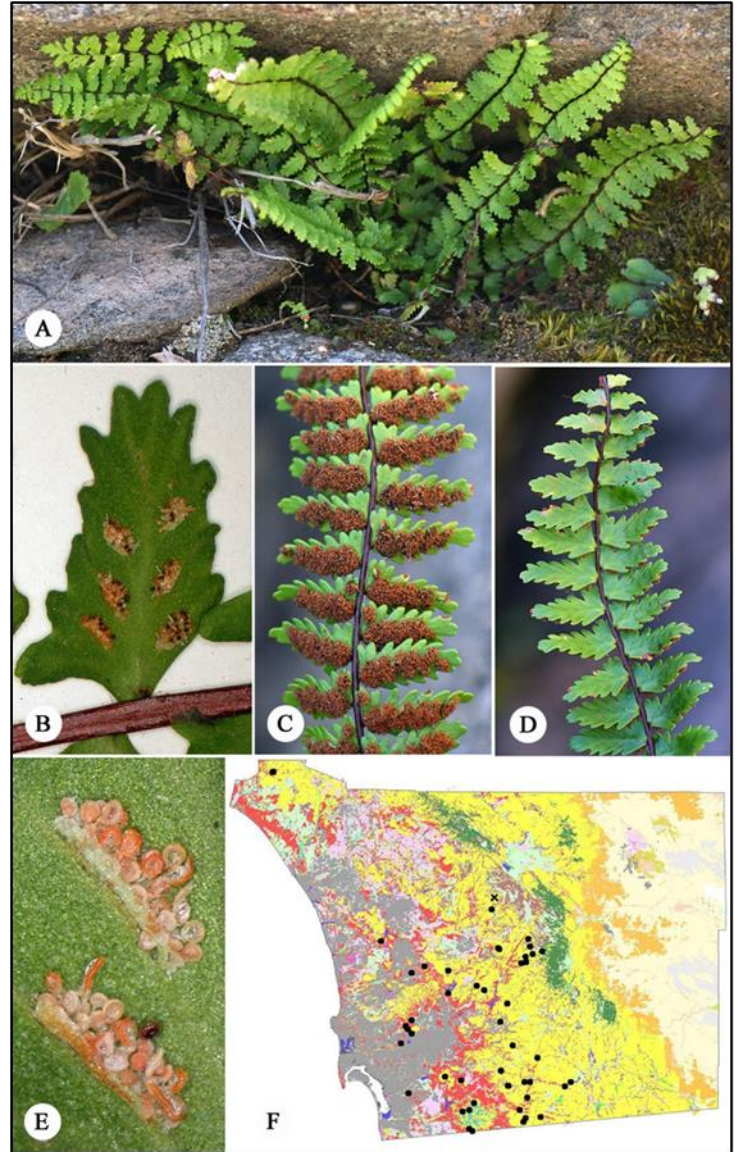


Plate. Western Spleenwort (*Asplenium vespertinum*). A. Growth habit. B. Close-up of pinna, abaxial surface with sori. C. Partial blade, abaxial surface. D. Partial blade, adaxial surface. E. Close-up of sori with indusia. F. Distribution in San Diego County based on specimens deposited in the SD Herbarium and on verified iNaturalist observations.

Name Derivations:

The genus name *Asplenium* is derived from the Greek *splen*, “spleen,” referring to a fern Dioscorides (a Greek physician/botanist) believed to be useful in treating diseases of the spleen (Stewart et al. 1983). The common name spleenwort comes from the Anglo-Saxon *wyrt*, meaning plant or herb (Witham 1972). The specific epithet *vespertinum*, is a Latin adjective for “evening” (Jaeger 1978), and alludes to the species’ western distribution in reference to the sun setting in the west.

The Problem:

Is this rare fern getting even more rare? Based on some recent field surveys and on various attempts to relocate some of the known populations, it appears this fern is becoming

more difficult to find, and when it is found there are often only a few individuals. Is it losing part of its distribution? We really don't know for sure, but we need more data to see what is happening. What we do know is that the SD Herbarium has 52 specimen records of it in San Diego County, but only 7 of those were collected within the last 10 years and 6 of those were collected by me. Every time that I have found it in the field it is quite rare with only a few individuals in the population. I have not seen any robust populations of this species to date. Western Spleenwort also occurs in five other counties of southwestern California, but no recent collections have been made in those counties and local botanists report its notable absence from their areas. In addition, there have been five specimen collections made from northwestern Baja California, but none since 1982. Comparing collection and observation data of Western Spleenwort to another rare species of fern in our region, let's use *Pentagramma rebmanii* (Rebman's Silverback Fern), which is even more rare and restricted in distribution. Rebman's Silverback Fern occurs only in south-central San Diego County and extreme northern Baja California. This species has 47 specimen collections deposited in SD with 10 made in the last 10 years. However, in respect to iNaturalist data there are 25 observations (5 this year already and 14 last year in 2019) versus only 4 iNat observations for the Western Spleenwort (2 made in 2019 and 2 from 2017 all in the upper foothills areas of California).

With the amount of rainfall we are receiving this year in San Diego County, fern species are thriving and easy to spot in the field. If you are able, please get out into the field and try to find extant populations of this fern so that we can obtain better knowledge of its current distribution in our region. If you do locate a population, please use iNaturalist to document the occurrence. I try to verify the observations on this platform and the vetted data is then incorporated into the San Diego County Plant Atlas resources. By the way, if you are using iNaturalist, please join the San Diego County Plant Atlas project and give permission to the curator (me in this case) to get your exact locality coordinates since they are automatically obscured for sensitive species. Good luck and happy hunting!

Literature Cited

- Jaeger, Edmund C. 1978. A source-book of biological names and terms. 3rd. Edition. Charles C. Thomas Publisher. Springfield, IL.
- Stewart, Ralph R., David M. Johnson, & John T. Mickel. 1983. Pteridophyte genera: The meaning of their names. Fiddlehead forum 10:21-36.
- Witham, Helen. 1972. Ferns of San Diego County. John Porter Dexter Memorial Publications. San Diego Society of Natural History, San Diego, CA.

Continued from p. 1



Baby Blue Eyes and of Goldfields (*Lasthenia gracilis vel aff.*)



California Poppies, Goldfields and other wildflowers



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, i.e. May 10 for the June newsletter, etc. Please submit items to newsletter@cnpsd.org

CNPS-SD Activities Calendar May 2020

5/8: Board Meeting, p.2

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

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May 2020 Newsletter

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

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