



# CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

## *San Diego Chapter Newsletter*

### **CHAPTER MEETING: WILDFLOWER SHOW & PROGRAM**

**May 17, 2022**

**In-person**

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

**Wildflower Show & Mtg Set-up: 5:30-6:00 pm**

**Viewing & Judging: 6:00 – 7:15 pm**

**Meeting, Show Results & Presentation: 7:15 pm**

### **Wildflower Show**

Let's celebrate the resumption of CNPS-SD in-person meetings by sharing a few flowers from our favorite native plants in our gardens, so that others can admire them as well. Just for fun, we will have judging and a few prizes. The main objective is to show and share the diversity of spring blooms of our favorite native plant species. Con't on p.2)



### **Presentation**

### **Establishing Local Perennials in your Native Garden By Lee Gordon**



Our local native perennials are among the showiest flowers for our gardens. Lee Gordon, amateur gardener and member of the Native Garden Committee, will present a mix of our local perennials from his garden as well as gardens of friends, and review a little about how these perennials were established and cared for.



Lee will finish by going into more depth about one of his favorites, *Silene laciniata* (Indian pink; left).

### **NATIVE GARDENING COMMITTEE**

### **Native Garden Committee (NGC) Potluck Meeting**

**Tuesday, May 10; 5:30 pm**

By popular vote, the Native Garden Committee's May 10<sup>th</sup> meeting will be an in-person Potluck at the beautiful home of **Judie Lincer** (who was on the recent native garden tour; right) in La Mesa; call 770-714-5462 for the address. Everyone who is interested in native gardening is welcome to attend and bring a dish to share.



Lee Gordon with NGC members on the hillside behind his home.  
Photo: C. Hoey

On April 12, the NGC had its first in-person potluck meeting for 2022 at the home of **Lee and Debbie Gordon**. We had an overwhelming turnout that included a tour of Lee's hillside to see a variety of blooming native plants.

(Con't p.2)

Con't from p.1: Wildflower Show)

Setup will be from 5:30-6:00 pm, with judging for the **People's Choice** award beginning at 6:00 pm. Main judging will begin at 7:00 pm, and results will be announced at the meeting and program at 7:15 pm.

**Rules:** The entries must be a flower from a plant native to California or Northern Baja. Flowers can be garden collected, or private property collected with permission only. Provide one or two stems of each of a few of your favorite flowers. If you have a potted plant that is blooming, it is fine to bring the whole thing for the show.

Some clear glass containers will be provided for cut specimens. You may also use your own container (put your name on the bottom with tape); recycled glass jars are fine.

Check the CNPS-SD plant profile page, <https://www.cnpsd.org/plantprofiles> or go to <https://www.calscape.org>

to see if your specimen has an information sheet that you can print for display alongside your specimen (if not, a 3 x 5 card with scientific and common name will do). Also include where the plant was grown and your name. Categories are:



- Best Cut Flower, Annual
- Best Cut Flower, Perennial
- Best Flower on Potted Plant
- People's Choice
- Best in Show

Tips: Cut the stem and immediately put it into some water. Do not leave cuttings in full sun or a hot car.

**Chapter meetings are free and open to the public**

(Con't from p.1: Native Gardening Committee)



The food was amazing, and we caught up with old members and welcomed new members. The meeting agenda included reviewing last year's NGC projects and plans for this year

Left: California snowdrop (*Styrax redivivus*) in bloom. Photo: C. Hoey

## CNPS-SD 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Native Garden Tour "Circling Back to Nature"

The CNPS native garden tour on April 12<sup>th</sup> was a great success with almost 400 visitors enjoying the gardens! We hope you



went away with great ideas and inspiration for adding California native plants to your own landscapes! For those who attended, keep an eye out on

your inbox for the CNPS garden tour survey, and please let us know what you thought of the tour. **A big Thank you goes to all our garden tour volunteers, Tour Co-directors Christine Hoey & Judie Lincer, and Volunteer Coordinator, Nancy Levine, who helped make this tour a success!**



Garden Tour Photo Credit: Silke Gathmann

## Celebrating Native Plant Week Moosa Creek Nursery "Behind the Scenes" Tour

The tour sold out and attendees were very happy to go home with a variety of native plants they purchased at a 20% discount. Did you know if you are a CNPS member, you receive a 10% discount if you order your plants from Moosa Creek online? Type **CNPS** at checkout to receive your discount.

## Bird Park Update

The new MP rotator irrigation was recently installed by Balboa Park. We were able to remove the caution tape away from the DG paths to allow visitors into the garden to sit on boulders next to the dry streambed and enjoy the garden.

Sometimes, the best way to learn about native plants is to volunteer and get "hands on" experience! We will be forming a design group to begin working on the next "feather" in the wing section. If you are interested in volunteering for Bird Park, sign up at this link: [Bird Park Workgroup](#)



### What's blooming now in Bird Park

*Ceanothus* 'Snow Flurry', seaside daisy (*Erigeron* 'WR' [Wayne Roderick]), desert mallow (*Abutilon palmeri*), woolly bluecurls (*Trichostema lanatum*), monkey flower (*Mimulus* spp.), and more! Come on

over and see how this native garden is growing near Thorne St. and 28<sup>th</sup> St, San Diego, 92104.

### World Bee Day: Japanese Friendship Garden May 21; 10 am - 2 pm



The Japanese Friendship Garden is hosting a World Bee Day celebration on Saturday, May 21. World Bee Day is held in recognition of the role bees play in sustaining a healthy ecosystem, ensuring our food supply and ultimately the future of humanity.

The purpose of our event is to raise awareness of the vital importance of bees and all pollinators, the threats they face and actions every individual can take to protect them.

The JFG will be partnering with other Balboa Park and community organizations including the Air and Space Museum, Natural History Museum, SD Beekeeping Society, SD Youth Symphony, **California Native Plant Society**, Hives for Heroes, and other groups to showcase bees through exhibits, music, interactive demonstrations, microscopic observations, art, and educational hands-on activities. This fun and purposeful community event will be held on Saturday, May 21st, 10:00-2:00 in the Upper Garden area. Our guest stars will be live **HONEY BEES!** Come on down and visit us at our CNPS table!

If you love gardening with California native plants and would like to join the Native Garden Committee (NGC), sign up here: [Join NGC](#). A separate monthly email is sent out to members with meeting announcements, volunteer activities, workshops and early bird sign-ups that don't always make it into the Chapter newsletter. We would love to see you!

*Natively yours,  
Christine Hoey*

## Overlooked Plants for the Native Garden

### Native Plants Don't Need No Stinkin' Fertilizer! By Lee Gordon

*This is part of a short series on some of our local native plants that are superb for our native gardens, but which are largely overlooked.*

One of my favorite places to walk is along the ridge leading to the Ramona Overlook in southeast Poway. This is a lesser-traveled fork of the Iron Mountain Trail, and it traverses some of the most beautiful chaparral you will ever see. It is what I wish my garden could look like. The plants here are diverse, robust, floriferous, and perfectly spaced. And nobody fertilizes them. Obviously, these plants need nutrients just like any other plant, but they get what they need from the native soil. This is the underlying point when we hear that native plants don't need fertilizer, and it is certainly true.

We often find nice stands of native plants, while just a little bit away, the plants are sparse. Why do they grow here, and not there? We cannot see what the roots encounter underground, but uneven nutrient content could certainly be a factor. I explain that the plants in my garden are the ones that are still alive, and the same idea applies to native plants in their habitats. The plants we see are the ones that have suitable growing conditions, including suitable soil nutrition.

Our gardens are different from native habitats because we decide where the plants should grow, not nature. The plants take what they get, and at least in my experience, they don't always get what they need. I am learning that supplemental fertilizer, in addition to supplemental water, makes a big difference.

What first got my attention was growing willowy mints for our habitat restoration project. Without fertilizer, my seedlings were insignificant, unusable, and downright pitiful! After I started watering them with half strength MiracleGro, they grew from seed to vigorous 6" plants in 2" pots in less than 2 months. Once planted, these seedlings just keep growing. Then I tried fertilizing mission manzanita seedlings. In our open spaces, mission manzanitas typically grow to a whopping 3" in 3 years. My fertilized seedlings grew to 6" in a few months. Al Field planted one in the Pt. Loma Native Garden that was 8 months old and 2' tall!

Woolly blue curls has a reputation for being one of our most difficult plants. Everyone wants to grow them and everyone complains they cannot keep them alive. Our problem is that we have been guided by conventional wisdom that is flat wrong. One of my favorite web resources confidently proclaims that fertilizer kills woolly blue curls. Watering kills them too.

My garden has around ten woolly blue curls. Three are beautiful big plants. With monthly water, they bloom heavily in the

spring, and then again, just as heavily, in the fall. Most of the rest of these plants were in various stages of decline.

Last fall, I started fertilizing them, and the results are gratifying. All of the plants, the troubled ones included, are growing better than they ever have. They are putting on lush green foliage, and woolly blue curls' habit is that new foliage soon transforms into intense blue flower stalks.

I have seen similarly encouraging results with other plants in my garden. A heart leaf keckiella that has never done much is rapidly expanding with new foliage. Blue eyed grass surrounding one of my runt woolly blue curls produced a terrific display of blue flowers. Eight years ago, I planted a mission manzanita seedling that has grown barely 18" high, always with sparse leaves. This spring it has already added its second flush of leaves, with leaves larger and prettier than ever. Several two-year old snow drops are in bloom already.

My method consists of walking around the garden with a bucket of GroPower (5-3-1), spreading it just before a rain storm or an irrigation cycle. I throw extra handfuls under large plants (i.e. cherries and scrub oaks I want to grow into trees). I do not fertilize everything; I mark the plants I want to fertilize with flags. I figure that, in time, as plants reach the size I want, I can cut back, or even eliminate fertilizer.

Given what I have seen with my woolly blue curls, I have a theory. My first plants grew well, then died. CalFlora comments that they typically last just a few years. I'll bet that woolly blue curls are heavy users of nitrogen, and that they deplete the soil. When the nitrogen is depleted, they die. Fertilizer solves that problem.

If you have some woolly blue curls that are on the way out, fertilize them and see what happens. What do you have to lose?

Part II of my article on perennials will appear soon.

~ Lee Gordon, Garden Committee

## CNPS-SD BOARD NEWS

### May 2022 Board Meeting

**Wednesday, May 4, 6:30 – 9:00ish p.m.** The meeting will be via Zoom. To add an issue to the agenda, or to get the link to the meeting, please email [president@cnpsd.org](mailto:president@cnpsd.org).

### April Board Meeting Summary

The board approved the following:

- The 2022-23 chapter budget. (The CNPS fiscal year is April 1- March 31.)
- To sponsor the 2022 CNPS Conservation Conference with \$2,000.

Other items discussed by the board included: a scholarship committee to set up parameters for scholarships for students taking the SDSU native plant class; plant sales and festivals; holding an in-person meeting at Balboa Park on May 17; completing the CNPS-SD annual report and submitting it to CNPS staff by May 9; paid contractor positions; City of San Diego Master Right of Entry; the CNPS-SD Garden Tour; Native Plant Week; and a Fall Plant Sale.

The meeting adjourned at 9:43 pm.

~ **Bobbie Stephenson**, Chapter Secretary

## CONSERVATION

### Conservation Committee Meeting

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

### Gardening in the 2020s

Yes, this is still the Conservation Column. Given that we are working on updating County landscaping ordinances, I wanted to talk about what these, and the changing climate, mean for gardens for the next few years. Since I don't know where each of you lives, this is more going to be a discussion of constraints than of vision. This may seem backwards, because so much design seems to be about having a vision, then trying to realize that vision within constraints. Given the huge challenges we'll need to surmount if we want San Diego to survive as a City and County, I'm just going to gently suggest we start looking at the opposite: prioritize function, then get creative with making it look unconventionally good.

You might expect that I'll start with fire, but it's actually down the list. While fire resistant design is important, in the worst case your garden might only burn for a few hours out of the decades of its existence. In contrast, we're in the middle of the worst drought in over 1,000 years, and everybody is affected by that. So, we'll start with water.

We've so far been buffered from the effects of the drought by dumb luck (San Diego is somewhat less affected than is the rest of the state) and by our dependence on imported water, which makes local rainfall less important. Unfortunately, this will not last. The drought in other parts of the state will eventually affect water deliveries. Equally concerning, the Colorado River is drying too, and pretty soon, possibly this year, we'll get less water from the river.

The problem with drought isn't just the dryness, it's that when it does rain, it can pour. Geologists and archaeologists have seen this pattern. It's also built into climate change, as reflected by the mantra that the problem with climate change is that the extremes get more extreme.

How to deal? The cheap way is to plant water-efficient plants. These aren't just succulents, they include many natives, and as you read the rest of this you will find that in many ways, native

species are the more multifunctional choice. In any case, use less water on your landscaping.

A second major strategy is to capture rainwater on your property through everything from cisterns to bioswales. Obviously, you have to be careful to have some place for a surplus to go, to minimize flooding and slides.

Regardless, we want to waste less rain to the storm drains. The storm drains generally drain into creeks. Prior to development, most of our creeks were ephemeral, only running after storms. Now they're perennial, carrying all sorts of urban waste, eroding deep channels into canyon bottoms, and favoring weeds instead of natives. Capturing more rain on our properties, rather than shunting it into the canyons, can (if done properly!) decrease canyon erosion, decrease weeds in the canyons, and increase the amount of water for your garden.

Next up, fire, right? Um, no. Next up is steep slopes and erosion. While some slopes require retaining walls to keep the slope from wiping out a building, as I've pointed out in past columns, there's a good chance that San Diego County is starting to run a little short of sand for concrete. Simultaneously, most municipalities are contemplating infill building sprees to deal with the housing crisis and to make our region less car-dependent. Long story short, I'll be unsurprised if the prices for building materials skyrocket in coming years.

What can you do instead? To some degree, you can use deep-rooted, native trees and large shrubs to anchor a slope. This is where succulents suffer, as they're mostly shallowly rooted. Certainly, it takes years for a plant to get its roots down, but once they do, they sequester a lot of carbon in those roots, and that carbon won't be returned to the air if the rest of the plant burns.

Speaking of which, fire? Not yet. The next consideration is wildlife. This is the realm of Doug Tallamy, something you've undoubtedly heard and read about. Planting natives like deep-rooted oaks, cherries, toyons, and laurel sumacs can provide both habitat and snacking options for birds and other animals. If you've got a perennially wet spot, you can even plant a willow.

Finally, we get to the two kinds of fire and three zones out from the house. The two kinds of fire are crudely, the non-wind-driven kind, which is about 99% of all fires, and the Santa Ana wind-driven kind, which is the other 1% that causes about 90% of the home loss.

Thousands of ordinary fires happen every year, and only a few houses statewide are ever lost from them. The main threat to homes is directly from flames, so having space around homes that firefighters can fight from, and a way to get into the wildlands outside your home if you live on the Interface, are the major design considerations.

For wind-driven fires, it's a different story. These are the fires you normally run from, so the first thing to do for this kind of garden design is to prepare an evacuation plan for your family, pets, and critical belongings (seriously). In these fires, storms of

embers blow in, sometimes from miles away. The landscaping requirements are to keep flammable things away from the house, and to have **Greg Rubinesque** plantings where the embers only smolder, and even if they ignite, the plants are so spread out that it's hard for them to catch another plant or building on fire.

Here are the County requirements to do this. Within five feet of a building, no trees and sparse plantings. This is the realm of your potted white sage, your native milkweeds, low wildflowers, even spring vegetables. From 5-50' out, plants in moderate density, 10 feet between the canopies of trees or shrubs, and woody plants pruned 1/3 of their height or 6', whichever is less. From 50-100', keep pruning up, but have vegetation at 50% cover, which means the plants are patchily spaced so that half the area is bare ground, half is vegetated, ideally with 10' gaps between plants. This is where deep-rooted native plants are handy. If you have wildlands on your property, instead of clearing brush every year, prune and weed. By this I mean prune the trees and shrubs up and apart, and weed out all the annual grasses and non-native forbs that make extremely good tinder. Too few big plants, and you have problems with erosion and weeds. Too many big plants is a fire hazard. Split the difference.

There's more, but this is a primer. The trick is to find plants that meet as many of the requirements as possible, and this is where natives shine. Some can be water efficient, deep rooted, fire resistant when hydrated, and support native animals. That's why native plants are so useful.

~ Frank Landis, Conservation Chair

## IN THE FIELD

### Hiking the Pacific Crest Trail in the Caliente Wilderness Study Area By Tom Oberbauer

Photos by the author except where noted.

The Caliente Wilderness Study Area appears as an L shape on its back, appearing like a leftover piece of land among a Tribal Reservation, a State Park, Bureau of Land Management land and other forest service lands. It is located north of Warner Springs, west of the Los Coyotes Reservation, south of Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and east of the forest service lands near Indian Flats. It appears to be uninspiring when examining it on a map; however, it contains a mountainous series of ridges and valleys that range between 4,000 feet and 5,000 feet. It supports one other very important feature: a significant and isolated stretch of the Pacific Crest Trail.

Investigation on Google Earth shows a chaparral vegetation but with some indicators that appear to be pine trees. When driving by Warner Springs or heading over to Indian Flats Campground, pine trees are visible on the skyline.

Since I am curious about places like this, I conducted a little more research. Jerry Schad, in *Afoot and Afield in San Diego County*, describes it with statements about pines and even deciduous California black oaks. That piqued my interest. However, I also like to go through the Google Earth Aerial Photos over time since they have images that date back to the early to mid-1990s. When viewing the aerials back in the early 2000's, namely 2004, it appears that a significant number of trees in the Caliente Wilderness Study Area are orange, indicating that they had died.

The period from 2000 to 2005 was very dry for the coastal and interior portions of San Diego County, with 2002 being the driest year in more than a century of recorded rainfall history. Only 30% of normal rain fell that season. Examination of the Google Earth aerials from around that time indicated that as many as 50% or more of the trees in the Caliente Wilderness Study Area appeared to be dead.

In this part of San Diego County at the elevation of around 4,500 to over 5,000 feet, there is a battle between chaparral and coniferous forest. *Pinus coulteri* (Coulter pine) trees need upwards of 18 inches of precipitation to survive. Warner Springs has an average of about 17 inches per season, so it doesn't take much more to support *Pinus coulteri*. However, during periods of extended drought, the chaparral seems to be winning and many trees died.

However, the precipitation data for regions of San Diego and the Southwest is disjointed. For example, it is difficult to find records on precipitation for Mount Laguna though there are several stations there. One station that has data available for a couple of decades, though with some gaps, is for the Northern Fire Station. Its data set calculated out to a seasonal mean of only 16 inches for the past 18 years. That seemed very low to me. It may partially be due to some gaps in data from the earlier seasons and the fact that it is located a little closer to the area where vegetation transitions from forest to chaparral than the heart of Mount Laguna. I would have expected the mean would be over 20 inches and closer to 25. Cuyamaca, on the other hand, has a set of data that extends over 100 seasons. For comparison, its mean is approximately 34 inches. For Cuyamaca Lake, I calculated the mean over the last 18 seasons, the same time period as the data from the Mount Laguna Station and it came out to be only 26 inches. This means that the climate has been running a deficit of roughly 25% of normal for the last 18 years, actually longer than that. It is no wonder the oaks are dying in many places in our County and pines are stressed. One should be surprised that mortality is not greater.

With all of that in mind, in August 2021 I decided to try hiking a segment of the Pacific Crest Trail through the Caliente Wilderness Study Area, starting where the trails intercept with the Puerta La Cruz Road that goes to the Indian Flats Campground from near Warner Springs. On some maps it is labeled as Indian Flats Road and on others Lost Valley Road.

The day I chose (August 21, 2021) had good weather for hiking in late August. Driving from San Diego, I needed my windshield

wipers off and on all the way to Warner Springs due to the heavy mist from the deep marine layer. While clearly weather with mist can occur any time of the year in San Diego County west of the mountain crest, it is not so typical of a late August day. As I drove through Warner Springs and then turned on to the road toward Indian Flats, the fog was sitting on the ground creating a lack of visibility on the paved road that held many bumps and uneven surfaces and was mostly only wide enough for a single lane.

As I drove, it became apparent that the *Adenostoma sparsifolium* (Red shank) was in full flower, maybe a few days or a week past its peak. The entire shrubs were covered with lacy,



cream-colored flowers. However, with the level of fog, at first I could not really see the full magnitude of it.

I drove on until I found the spot where a feeder trail would link into the Pacific Crest Trail.

A wooden sign indicated the trail head. I pulled off the road and backed up into a good location to park, and placed the pass I have for National Forest lands in the hanger for the rearview mirror so that it was visible from the outside. It was about 9 am when I began walking.

Since the weather was relatively cool, I walked briskly along. However, the sun, light, vegetation and fog kept distracting me to take photos and shoot video.

At this location, the vegetation was a mix of *Adenostoma sparsifolium* and *Adenostoma fasciculatum* (Chamise) chaparral. Even without flowers, the Red shank was large and very pronounced with its yellow-green and brown color when compared to the Chamise chaparral that was dusty dark brown-green in color. The contrast between the two species is so great that it is difficult to see that they are in the same genus.

The trail cut through what appeared to be schist, a rock with striated and banded layers of compressed sandstones that have been metamorphosed into hard rock. Schist is a grainy, layered rock with little flecks of mica that makes it have a more interesting color and texture. In many places, it appeared that veins of pure quartz were present with white quartz gravel and decomposed sandy material. The soil is generally a sandy mix of material without much clay, or nutrients, for that matter. Here, it is beneath shrubs and trees that organic material has built up, so it had dark color and a loamy texture.

On the dry areas, *Opuntia phaeacantha* (Desert prickly pear) with rounded pads were growing with the large grass *Stipa coronata* (Giant or Foothill stipa); *Ericameria linearifolia* (Interior goldenbush) with green, needle like leaves; and the very widespread *Acmispon glaber* (Deerweed). Other major

shrubs included *Ceanothus perplexans* (Cup-leaf lilac) with small, semi cup shaped leaves with serrated edges, and the flat leaved *Ceanothus tomentosus* (Ramona lilac).

The trail was climbing quite considerably as I walked along. The fog kept pulling in and going out, moving across the trail. To the west was a wall of low clouds between me and the major parts of the valleys that form Valle de San Jose and the valley with Indian Flats Campground. Whisps of fog moved on the hillsides above me as well. It created fresh, moist and cool air that made me want to breathe deeply.



(Left: Pacific Crest Trail in the fog)

The trail kept climbing and, eventually, the fog lifted completely but a wall of clouds still stood toward the west. I could see the ridges above with scattered *Pinus coulteri*. The trail

was leading generally in a northwestern direction as it worked its way up in elevation. Before too long, it was over 5,000 feet and it began to generally lead to the east. The Red shank in this area was exceptionally tall, maybe 15 feet or more, and the shredded bark was hanging loosely and moving in the breeze, the obvious reason that it is sometimes called Ribbonwood. It seemed like walking through a fairy land.

As the trail began to turn eastward, I could see more pine trees nearby, and on the slope that was now north-facing through which the trail passed, I saw younger, scattered individuals and they were close to the trail. There, the effects of prolonged drought of the early 2000's began to be clear. Trunks of grown *Pinus coulteri* up to about a foot in diameter were scattered about, laying on the slopes all around. The few young trees that were growing were the new generation attempting to come back from what was apparently a real coniferous forest, at least in some locations. However, more diverse forest and woodland was also visible on the ridge above, in a gap across the saddle below, and near a gap northeast of the trail. While the logs were an indicator of the loss, the trees that remain appeared to be in great shape as was the chaparral. Some monsoonal rain had fallen, but as mentioned, the vegetation was probably influenced by the above normal and normal rainfall of the three of the last four years, possibly the wettest stretch in the 20-year drought. *Cercocarpus betuloides* (Mountain mahogany) was also growing in a number of locations, quite commonly, and while it did not have flowers to see, it had feathery fruits that glowed white in the morning backlight. Of course, *Hesperoyucca whipplei* (Chaparral yucca), was quite common as was *Rhus ovata* (Sugarbush). On the north slopes, *Rhamnus ilicifolia* (Holly-leaf redberry) grew with its shiny green leaves providing a lushness component to the vegetation. It is notable that *Toxicodendron* (Poison oak) was absent.

Even though it was not a dry location, drier adapted species including *Salvia apiana* (White sage) with its gray, strongly scented leaves, *Hazardia squarrosa* (Sawtooth goldenbush) with its serrate edged leaves, and the yellow flowered *Gutierrezia sarothrae* (Broom matchweed or Snakeweed) with its suitable name since the inflorescences appear like yellow tipped matchsticks, were also quite common along the side of the trail and in open areas. *Eriodictyon crassifolium* (Thick-leave Yerba Santa) with its tall branches and felty, oval, wrinkly leaves, was also growing in the open areas. *Eriogonum fasciculatum* var. *polifolium* (Mountain California buckwheat) was also growing in open or disturbed areas.

*Ceanothus leucodermis* (Chaparral whitethorn) was overgrowing and closing in parts of the trail and, with its spiny stems and grabby branches, it is not something someone needs while walking the Pacific Crest Trail. *Quercus berberidifolia* (Scrub oak) was also growing in with its own scratchy edged leaves and branches. The shrub vegetation was complete and dense with the Red shank patches and covered slopes being the most striking. The cover and structure of that plant is so characteristic its distribution is clearly visible from a distance. The surroundings were exceptional and the temperature was extraordinary for a late August day. It is difficult to explain how fortuitous and special the conditions of the light, the flowering Red shank, the terrain, the young pines on the hillsides and the weather made that morning.

The trail actually cut through several logs that fell from the dead trees. They were mostly between 80 and 120 years old. The younger trees growing now are a new beginning but on some steep north slopes, the logs look like toothpicks among the chaparral.

Dried skeletons of plants were visible even if not in flower. *Tauschia arguta* (Southern tauschia) with the flattened



pinwheel-like inflorescence and *Erysimum capitatum* (Wallflower) skeletons were present. *Corethrogyne filaginifolia* (California sand aster; left) was one plant actually in bloom with its pinkish-lavender flowers. In addition to the *Eriogonum fasciculatum* var. *polifolium*, a whitish form, the low growing *Eriogonum wrightii* (Foothill

buckwheat) with its flowers along a stem rather than in a clump, was also growing in places. Additional plants were *Diplacus longiflorus* (Bush monkey flower), long past flowering, but with the sticky leaves still present.

It appeared that there were three different manzanitas growing along the trail, *Arctostaphylos pringlei* (Pink bract manzanita), which seemed to be the most prevalent one, but also *Arctostaphylos pungens* (Point leaf manzanita) and the largest growing one, *Arctostaphylos glauca* (Big-berry manzanita). All three of these lack the basal burls and only reproduce by seeds.

Being so late in the season, annual plants that were still green were scarce, but *Cordylanthus rigidus* (Stiff-branch bird's beak) with fresh green leaves grew in a few locations.

On the north slope, oak trees dominated by *Quercus agrifolia* (Coast live oak) were growing, but in one stretch, *Quercus chrysolepis* (Canyon live oak) was the dominant one with some good-sized *Pinus coulteri* along the way. The trail alternated between woodland and chaparral, mostly Red shank on the western part, but as it headed eastward, *Ceanothus* and *Quercus berberidifolia* (Scrub oak) were major species. I also came across some interesting semi-herbaceous plants; the green basal leaves and inflorescence skeleton of *Penstemon spectabilis* (Showy penstemon), a very show purple and pink wildflower when in flower, and the purple leaves of the perennial, shade dwelling *Keckiella ternata* (Summer bush penstemon) that has red-orange flowers when they are present. *Clematis lasiantha* (Pipestem virgin's bower) was growing in with and climbing over the shrubs.

Additional plants nearby included *Quercus wisleyenii* (Scrub live oak) shrubs, skeletons of *Frasera parryi* (Deer's ears), an odd herbaceous plant that grows with a central stalk and four petaled flowers, dried up *Castilleja foliosa* (Woolly Indian paintbrush), the fern *Pellea mucronata* (Bird's foot fern), and *Galium andrewsii* (Phlox-leaf bedstraw), the small, green plant with needle like leaves that grows in clumps beneath the shrubs.

The trail passed individuals of younger *Pinus coulteri* and dark chaparral and oak woodland before it switched over to a south facing slope. It was crossing a saddle and headed out into the open with lower growing shrubs. However, it was the top of a deep canyon that fed into a deeper canyon coming off the west side of Hot Springs Mountain. The view was spectacular because the trail was passing around a ridge and moving directly over the canyon's thousand-foot-deep chasm. The drop between the trail and Hot Springs Mountain was almost shocking when it first came into view. It was a totally unexpected dramatic landscape. The north slope of the hill to the south had lines of moderately sized pines growing on top with sun bleached logs on the slope from trees that died in the early 2000's. The pine trees on the ridge above also marked the ridge line with their silhouetted forms clearly visible. The canyon below was filled with oaks and some pines, traipsing upward onto the slope of Hot Springs Mountain that stood to the east like a dark vertical, heavily forested mass above the deep canyon. It appeared as an impossible landscape, impenetrable for anyone due to the density of the vigorous vegetation.

The geology seemed to change while proceeding on the northwest side of the deep canyon. Rock piles existed on hill tops and the slopes had decomposed gravels, but more, the slopes were covered with small boulders of granitic material. Pines were still growing on the ridge above as the trail turned north around a point, and another valley, much more shallow, came into view in the distance. My goal had been to get to that

valley that was described by Jerry Schad as a glen with oaks and pines. It was still a way off. The trail turned around the point and headed slightly northwest at the base of a north facing slope. *Ericameria parishii*, a tall distinctive shrub with yellow flowers at the time, sometimes called the Golden fleece, was growing in some spots along the way. The most notable plant growing along this trail was actually a tree on the south side of the trail, *Quercus kelloggii* (California black oak). It was roughly four meters tall, and consisted of multiple trunks. It was a brighter green than any of the other shrubs and trees in the area. It was like finding an old friend all by itself. The fact was that a good-sized stump, about a foot and a half or more in diameter, was on the ground and the tree that was growing was a set of resprouting stems. The old log portion of the tree lay down in the shrubs on the north side of the trail. The tree must have been a formidable size before it died back as the result of fire.

The Coyote Fire that was caused by lightning burned into this area in July of 2003. However, the western parts of the area on the earlier portion of the trail did not burn in the Coyote Fire and have not burned for a very long time. The Coyote Fire burned the part of the land passed through by the trail from the saddle north eastward with the saddle as the dividing point; generally coinciding with the granitic area. That fire burned the *Quercus kelloggii*, killing the upper part which was cut, probably so it would not fall on the trail.



*Pinus coulteri* with *Quercus kelloggii* in the foreground.

I kept walking where the trail turned northward and it became fully contained in rocky and bouldery granitic

rocks rather than the schist material of the first part of the route. Additional plants of interest that appeared included *Ericameria cuneata* var. *spatulata* (Wedge-leaf goldenbush), a low growing, small shrub with flattened spatula like leaves. It grew right on the rocks in crevices and on gravelly soil. As I proceeded farther, it became clear that Jerry Schad's green glen with oaks and conifers was not as it had been. Besides the fact that this time of the year it was far from green, many oaks appeared dead and conifers were rare there now. Furthermore, its access was down a steep, rocky slope that did not look so fun after walking six miles with six more to go back. I turned back and decided to eat lunch at the *Quercus kelloggii*. Hearing the leaves rustle in the low afternoon breeze was pleasant. The oak was about 5.75 miles from the beginning of the trail. *Solidago velutina* (California goldenrod) grew beneath the tree as well as *Drymocallis glandulosa* (Sticky cinquefoil). The leaves with the multipart leaflets were characteristic of the cinquefoil plant as well as the scent of the leaves, a greasy, minty odor. *Frangula*



[*Rhamnus*] *californica* (California coffeeberry) also grew nearby. *Rhus aromatica* (Basket bush) was also growing in the area. Young pines were growing directly up slope from the oak.



Left: *Solidago velutina* (California goldenrod). Below: *Drymocallis glandulosa* (Sticky cinquefoil). Photos: Calscape.



It was not clear to me that this was the only *Quercus kelloggii* in the area and I thought I saw another off in the distance but I could not verify that it was. Jerry Schad seemed to indicate there were others in the area when he wrote his book in the 1980s, but the one I saw near the trail was the only one I could verify.

I started my way back, retracing my steps on the trail. The temperature remained bearable but I still drank a large amount of water, actually nearly a gallon by the time I got back to the trail head. The large cloud bank was still laying off to the west, but the air felt very dry, much different than earlier in the morning.

This area of San Diego County with the variable terrain and vegetation is really fascinating. While I would have liked to see it with the forests that existed 20 years ago, the trees that are growing there now and the chaparral are truly beautiful and apparently quite healthy.

**Bryophytes are now in Calflora!**

Bryophytes are non-vascular seedless plants that include mosses, liverworts, and hornworts. Bryophyte taxon reports— now available in Calflora!— help users identify the bryophytes they find and increase knowledge and awareness of these fascinating plants.

Search for the bryophyte genus or species that interests you by: [using the name wizard here](#), or [choosing from this list of known bryophyte species in California](#).

**RELATED ACTIVITIES**

**Jewels of the Backcountry  
Julian Women’s Club  
96<sup>th</sup> Annual Wildflower Show  
May 6 & 7**

The Julian Women’s Club will present the 96<sup>th</sup> Annual Wildflower Show at the Clubhouse of the Julian Women’s Club

(2607 C Street, Julian, CA) on Friday & Saturday, May 6 & 7, 2022, from 10 am to 4 pm both days.

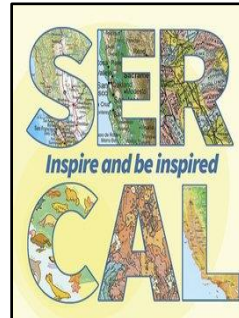


For two days club members collect specimens from the over 850 plant species in the area surrounding Julian. The plant display ranges from desert cacti to high mountain dogwood gathered in a 15-mile radius of the historic old mining town of Julian. Permission to collect is obtained from private property owners.

The show will include public speakers, displays of local school art work and science projects, both related to wildflowers. There will be items for sale, including books, seeds, and plants, plus opportunity to enter our raffle for prizes.

Admission is free, and donations are gladly accepted as the Julian Women’s Club provides scholarships and supports other local non-profit organizations. For further information visit the website at [www.Julianwomensclub.org](http://www.Julianwomensclub.org) or contact Patty Haley at [patriciahaley9@gmail.com](mailto:patriciahaley9@gmail.com).

**California Society for  
Ecological Restoration  
May 11-13, 2022**



The meeting will be held at the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District offices in Carmel-By-The-Sea. For information and registration, visit: [SERCAL 2022 — California Society for Ecological Restoration](http://www.sercal.org/sercal2022) or <https://www.sercal.org/sercal2022>.

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 May 10 for the June newsletter, etc. Please submit items to [newsletter@cnpsd.org](mailto:newsletter@cnpsd.org)

**CNPS-SD Activities Calendar  
May 2022**

5/4: Board Meeting via Zoom, p.3  
5/10: NGC Potluck Meeting, in-person, p.1  
5/17: Chapter Meeting, in-person, p.1

Check the CNPS-SD website for activities and/or events that may have been scheduled after this newsletter was completed:  
<https://www.cnpsd.org/events>

## 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.

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May 2022 Newsletter

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