



YERBA
BUENA
NEWS

THE YERBA BUENA
CHAPTER OF THE
CALIFORNIA
NATIVE PLANT
SOCIETY FOR
SAN FRANCISCO
AND NORTHERN
SAN MATEO COUNTY

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PROGRAMS

Everyone is welcome to attend membership meetings in the Recreation Room of the San Francisco County Fair Building (SFCFB) at 9th Avenue and Lincoln Way in Golden Gate Park. The #71 and #44 buses stop at the building. The N-Judah, #6, #43, and #66 lines stop within 2 blocks.

MARCH 1, THURSDAY

The Great Sunflower Project: Pollinator Conservation by the Public

7:30 pm, Speaker: Gretchen LeBuhn

Data from several places around the world suggests that pollinators are disappearing, which has serious implications for our food supply and ecosystem health. The Great Sunflower Project empowers people from pre-schoolers to scientists to do something about this global crisis by identifying at-risk pollinator communities.

Using sunflowers as standardized thermometers for each site, citizen scientists time how long it takes for five bees to visit their sunflower, effectively creating an index of pollinator service. When managed well, the return on investment for this type of science is potentially huge. The Great Sunflower Project has over 90,000 people signed up to receive seeds--creating the first social network designed to map pollinator service at either a regional or continental scale. This talk will cover the basics of the natural history of bees, the evidence that bee populations are struggling and then introduce the Great Sunflower Project.

Gretchen LeBuhn has been a member of the biology faculty at San Francisco State University since 2001. Four years ago, she founded the Great Sunflower Project, one of the largest citizen science projects in the world with over 100,000 participants. She has done research on vineyards, mountain meadows, hummingbirds in the Andes and urban parks. She is the author of over 30 papers and recently published a book for gardeners called "Attracting native pollinators". She received her PhD from UC Santa Barbara in 1998.

APRIL 5, THURSDAY

What Does the New Jepson Manual Mean for California Floristics?

7:30 pm, Speaker: Bruce Baldwin, Ph.D.

Great advances have been made in the understanding of plant evolution and the relationships among plant groups since publication of The Jepson Manual (1993). This necessitated a total revision of the book, which is now complete. Not merely have species been moved into different--or entirely new--genera, but similar radical shifts have been done at the level of families or orders. This may upset some; others will find the new alignments exciting and stimulating. Bruce Baldwin will review some of the more conspicuous changes affecting our plants and provide some perspective on why these changes

are important steps forward for California botany. He will also talk about new initiatives of the Jepson Flora Project and their effects on the California botanical community. Bruce Baldwin is Curator of the Jepson Herbarium and Professor of Integrative Biology at U.C. Berkeley. He is Convening Editor of the Jepson Flora Project, including *The Jepson Manual: Vascular Plants of California, Second Edition*.

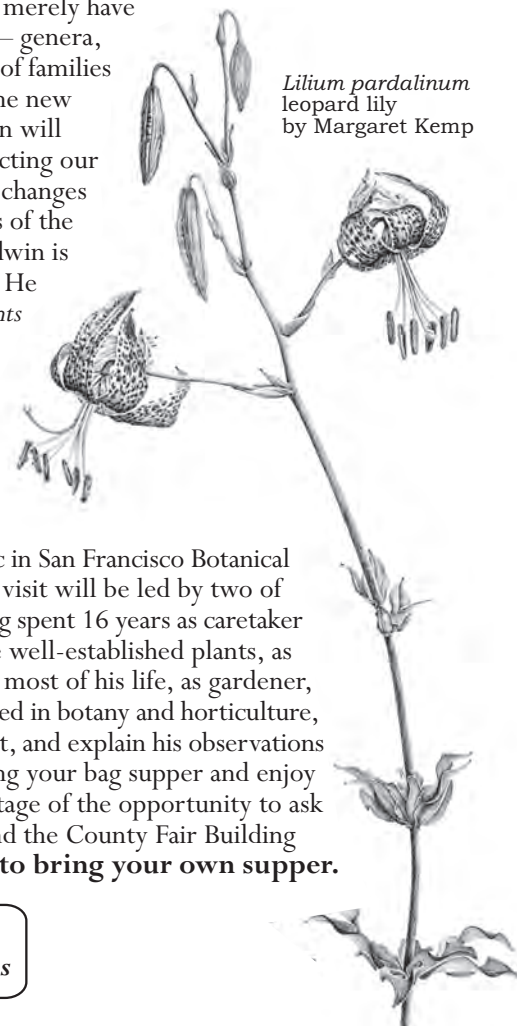
More information at <http://ebcnps.org/index.php/meetings/>.

MAY 3, THURSDAY

A Guided Tour of the Arthur Menzies Garden of California Native Plants in the San Francisco Botanical Garden at Strybing Arboretum

5:30 pm, Leaders: Ted Kipping & Jake Sigg

Every year we try to arrange for one of our programs to be an after-hours stroll and picnic in San Francisco Botanical Garden's award-winning Arthur Menzies Garden of California Native Plants. This year's visit will be led by two of the Garden's expert luminaries. Our chapter conservation chair (and much more) Jake Sigg spent 16 years as caretaker and supervisor of the Menzies Garden. Jake will share with us the history of many of the well-established plants, as well as some wonderful stories from the past. Ted Kipping has been involved with SFBG most of his life, as gardener, treeworker, and always generous volunteer of time and expertise. A trained geologist, skilled in botany and horticulture, Ted's breadth of natural history knowledge is extraordinary, and his ability to see, interpret, and explain his observations is unsurpassed. He will concentrate on the wealth of trees and shrubs in the garden. Bring your bag supper and enjoy a communal dinner in the garden. Enjoy guided walks from our experts, and take advantage of the opportunity to ask them questions. Garden admission is free for all attendees. Meet in the parking lot behind the County Fair Building before 5:30 pm. Please be on time, as we may have to lock the gate behind us. **Be sure to bring your own supper.**



Liliaceae pardalinum
leopard lily
by Margaret Kemp

FUTURE PROGRAM

June 7—Native Orchids of California—Ron Parsons

FIELD TRIPS

Members and non-members are encouraged to attend these FREE walks. Contacts for additional information are listed at the end of each trip description. If rain is forecast, we recommend checking with the contact a couple of hours before the trip. In general, bring lunch and liquids; sunscreen and layered clothing; and a hand lens, notebook, sketchbook, or any other tools/toys that will enhance your exploratory experience.

MARCH 10, SATURDAY, 10 am to noon

Sign Hill

Leaders: Jake Sigg, Loretta Brooks, Chuck Heimstadt

Sign Hill is like a detached piece of San Bruno Mountain (the one that says "South San Francisco The Industrial City"), and its biological communities and species composition are identical but in slightly better shape. San Bruno Mountain is a state and county park managed by San Mateo County. Sign Hill is a city park of South San Francisco. Our chapter has been anxious about the absence of concerned citizens to care for Sign Hill but is encouraged by the recent appearance of Loretta and Chuck, whose back door opens onto it. They are very knowledgeable, they see the problems and possibilities, and they have the energy to defend this native habitat. A prominent feature here is large tracts of hummingbird sage (*Salvia spathacea*) that cover several acres; this is not characteristic in other parts of its range, which extends from here down the coast ranges to southern California. At time of writing there has been a dearth of rain, so it is difficult to predict what we'll see. However, Sign Hill has a cornucopia of native grasses and wildflowers, even if dry conditions cause them to hunker down. Bring warm clothing and a windbreaker, although the strong winds usually hold off until afternoon. Meet at the park entrance: From Hillside Blvd, turn onto Stonegate and keep going up. **Heavy rain postpones to March 31.** Contact: Jake Sigg jakesigg@earthlink.net or 415-731-3028.

MARCH 18, SUNDAY, 10 am to noon

Bayview Hill Wildflowers

Leader: Margo Bors

Bayview Hill is one of San Francisco's least known but best preserved natural areas. Its hilltop grasslands are home to a diversity of wildflowers – hillside pea (*Lathyrus vestitus*), tomcat clover (*Trifolium willdenovii*), checkerbloom (*Sidalcea malviflora*), California buttercup (*Ranunculus californicus*) footsteps of spring (*Sanicula arctopoides*), several lomatiums and lupines, and many more – and we may see some of the only San Francisco collinsia (*C. multicolor*) left in the City. These and beautiful rock outcrops and panoramic views will leave you feeling inspired. Be prepared for breezy conditions. Meet at the end of Key Avenue, two blocks east of Third Street, very near the T streetcar line's LeConte station. **Heavy rain postpones to March 25.** Contact: Margo Bors, 415-824-0471 or mcbors@comcast.net.

APRIL 14, SATURDAY, 10 am to 2 pm

San Bruno Mountain, Buckeye & Owl Canyons

Leader: Doug Allshouse

It has been a while since our last visit and spring's wildflower show on the Mountain should be spectacular in these two canyons. In June 2008 a brutal wildfire transformed them from lush paradises to blackened moonscapes. Owl Canyon was absolutely hammered and suffered massive die-offs of ancient fescue meadows near the top. Many oaks were seriously affected but, on the bright side, the blue blossom community was invigorated. The canyons are very

rich in species including hound's tongue, three paintbrushes, four lupines, three sanicles, and hazelnut. Rarities include centauray (a rare coastal gentian), coast rock cress, San Francisco wallflower, and star lily. We might visit an Ohlone shellmound in lower Buckeye Canyon if time permits. Bring a light lunch since we might stop for a while to enjoy some particular place of our choosing. We'll meet at an industrial parking lot just below Owl Canyon. From Bayshore Blvd in Brisbane, turn onto Valley Drive, proceed to the traffic light, and turn left onto South Hill Drive. Turn left at the Aircraft Technical Publishers sign at 101-111 South Hill and drive to the rear of the parking lot. **Heavy rain postpones to April 21.** Contact Doug at 415-584-5114 or dougsr228@comcast.net.

APRIL 28, SATURDAY, noon to 3 pm

Presidio North Shore and America's Cup Viewpoints

Leaders: Jake Sigg and Ruth Gravanis

On this relatively easy (despite some hills and stairs) three-mile walk we'll observe a variety of vegetative communities that may be impacted if, as some anticipate, spectators flock to the Presidio to watch the America's Cup yacht races later this year and in 2013. We'll consider ways to mitigate the impacts if crowds do come. Coastal bluff vegetation is distinct, and species familiar from other settings appear very different here. We'll enjoy dramatic Bay views and multitudes of wildflowers on the slopes, look for rare thistles along Marine Drive, check out the restored dunes and wetlands at Crissy Field, and admire the highly successful riparian restoration at Thompson's Reach. Meet near the Golden Gate Bridge, at the #28 Muni bus stop just east of the tunnel that passes beneath the toll plaza. The walk will end at the #43 bus stop at the corner of Presidio Boulevard, Letterman Drive, and Lincoln Blvd. **This trip takes place rain or shine, but heavy rain cancels.** Contact: Jake Sigg jakesigg@earthlink.net or 415-731-3028.

MAY 13, Sunday, ferry leaves 9:40 am and returns 5:20 pm

Angel Island Mother's Day Bike Tour

Leader: Casey Allen

Join us for a slow and easy bike ride that's great for kids and others who want to learn about San Francisco's native plants. All skill levels are welcome. Angel Island State Park is car-free and the only way there is via ferryboat. The Blue & Gold Ferry leaves Pier 41 at 9:40 am and arrives at Ayala Cove at 10:05; be early because there's no next one if you miss it. The fare (adults \$17, kids and seniors \$9.50, kids 5 and under free) includes a round trip and park entrance fees. Bring your own bike or rent one on the island. Pack a lunch or pick one up from the cafe there before the ride. Rendezvous with us at 10:30 am by the bathrooms near the ferry landing. We'll travel the paved perimeter road and enjoy amazing views and a variety of plant communities along the way, from shady woodlands to sunny coastal scrub and grasslands. Among many others, we expect to see pipevine, fiddleneck, wild rose, elderberry, hazelnut, madrone, toyon, star lily, western sword fern, goldback fern, and miner's lettuce. We'll have lunch at about 12:30 then visit the beach. The rest of the day is yours to do as you like: hang out at the beach, visit historic sites, or ride the dirt fire road around the island. The return ferry leaves at 4:10, arriving at Pier 41 at 5:20. Contact: Casey Allen, cell 415-572-1144 (bring this number with you). Angel Island info available at parks.ca.gov.

Can you assist the Field Trips Chair in arranging field trips? Contact Mila Stroganoff, 650-359-1642 or milastroganoff@sbcglobal.net

ACTIVITIES

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SALE

April 21, Saturday, 10am to 3pm
Regional Parks Botanic Garden
Tilden Regional Park, Berkeley

California shrubs, trees, perennials. Find many plants that are not available in a commercial nursery. Horticultural advice gladly given! Come and explore the Garden. Buy some plants to take home. Proceeds directly benefit the Garden. Please bring boxes to carry home your treasures and an umbrella if it rains. Refreshments available.

Visit http://ebparks.org/parks/vc/botanic_garden.

JOIN CNPS WEDNESDAY WORK PARTIES

Noon to 3 pm

Locations around San Francisco

Ever since 1989 the Yerba Buena Chapter has conducted weekly work parties to remove aggressive plants invading our native biological communities. Presently we are averaging >1000 volunteer hours annually, working alongside the City's Natural Areas Program gardeners. Participants have found these days to be very pleasurable, and we hate it when we have to miss a day. There is no better way to become acquainted with both the native and nonnative flora, its behavior, its seasonal changes, and to learn to recognize plants in all their various guises. (Yogi Berra: "When you observe you start to see things.") We go to places that no one else does, and workers become acquainted with areas and plants they didn't even know existed. The main purpose is to save native communities; however, what everyone discovers is that they are restoring themselves--the harsh asperities of life seem to recede and a sense of healing is experienced. Not everyone is able to come on Wednesdays, but for the lucky few who can, contact Jake Sigg at jakesigg@earthlink.net, 415-731-3028.

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

The Santa Clara Valley Chapter of the California Native Plant Society is again offering scholarships to graduate students doing research on plant systematics, plant ecology, plant physiology, plant community restoration or other related botanical studies of native plants that grow in habitats in Central and Northern California.

Three \$1,500 scholarships are available for the 2012-2013 academic year, with one of the scholarships (SCV Chapter Conservation Scholarship) specifically reserved for studies related to native plant or native habitat conservation. Applicants must be enrolled in a graduate program in an accredited college or university.

Applications must be postmarked by April 6, 2012. Scholarship recipients will be invited to attend the May Santa Clara Valley Chapter Meeting to receive their scholarship and make a brief presentation on their research. The meeting will be held at the Los Altos Public Library on May 18, 2012 at 7 PM.

For details and an application form, visit: <http://cnps-scv.org>



"To a clear eye the smallest fact is a window through which the infinite may be seen."—Thomas Henry Huxley, biologist and writer

BOOK REVIEW: Attracting Native Pollinators—The Xerces Society Guide to Conserving North American Bees and Butterflies and Their Habitat

Review by George Suter



This colorful and wide-ranging book is available for sale at our Yerba Buena Chapter meetings, and very appropriately so. My interest in the subject originated in seeing certain plants covered by humming bees, yet I could detect no particular attractive scent or even sight (remarkably inconspicuous desert lavender flowers are an example.)

This book has beautiful photographs and accompanying full-page information on many bees we are likely to encounter. Butterflies and native pollen and nectar plants are also described and illustrated in color photographs sufficiently large to do justice to the subjects. Other pollinators are described more generally, but not forgotten: native wasps, hornets, flies, moths, and beetles are given their due. The book is all-inclusive in discussing the overall importance of pollinators, the threats they face, and how they can be protected. The protection mentioned extends from influencing policy to taking active individual steps to help the pollinators. The book describes a local example, the Great Sunflower Project run by Gretchen LeBuhn of San Francisco State (Dr. LeBuhn is the speaker at our upcoming March 1 member meeting - see **page 1**). There is also a section on how to provide nests to attract and help pollinators. This book provides pleasurable casual reading as well as detailed information where desired.



Scoliopus bigelovii
fetid adder's tongue
by Kristin Jakob

8th ANNUAL CNPS YERBA BUENA CHAPTER SPRING TOUR OF NATIVE PLANT GARDENS

Sunday, April 15, 2012 11 am to 3 pm
FREE ADMISSION, NO REGISTRATION REQUIRED

SAVE THE DATE for the Native Plant Garden Tour organized by CNPS Yerba Buena Chapter. The purpose of the tour is to expose gardeners to native plants, their charms in a garden and the benefits and possibilities of their inclusion in an attractive, wildlife-friendly garden. To this end we include an array of private gardens: mature gardens featuring 100% natives (focusing on compatible plantings), mixed gardens, professionally designed and maintained artistic gardens, gardens focusing on habitat for wildlife (for example, the chorus frog), gardens integrating food production with native plantings, gardens in transition to include more natives. We also feature public gardens dedicated to local flora and fauna or similar gardens not usually open to the public. **Check the chapter website in March for more information.**

Further information: **Susan Floore** at sfloore@att.net or 415-285-4692. Also please let Susan know **if you can volunteer** to help by co-hosting at one of the gardens on the day of the tour.

**visit sfnativegardentour.org
for up-to-date information**



Sunday, April 15, 2012

- Visit anytime 11am to 3pm
- No registration required
- Free & self-paced
- For map, garden list & more, visit sfnativegardentour.org or phone 510-759-3179.

CONSERVATION/LEGISLATION CORNER

By Linda Shaffer and Jake Sigg

Welcome to a new quarterly feature highlighting current conservation/legislation issues! It is important for you CNPS-YB chapter members to be informed about such issues. The more informed you are, the better prepared you will be to counter misinformation when you hear it. In addition, calls for action will occasionally go out -- calls for people to attend public hearings, and to speak in support of policies which are good for native plants. Better informed people make better speakers.

So, what do you need to be informed about? Space precludes providing much detail in this inaugural column, but here's an overview to get you started.

Currently, there are TWO huge environmental policy documents making their way through various stages of analysis. Both of them

have important implications for conserving native plants in San Francisco, and both are expected to reach critical hearing stages in spring or summer, 2012. They are:

- 1) The Significant Natural Resource Areas Management Plan's Draft Environmental Impact Review (SNRAMP DEIR), a 20 year plan for managing the Natural Areas in city parks and open spaces;
- 2) a major revision of the Recreation and Open Space Element ("the ROSE") of the City's General Plan, the document which sets official city policy on many issues concerning the quantity and quality of open space in San Francisco.

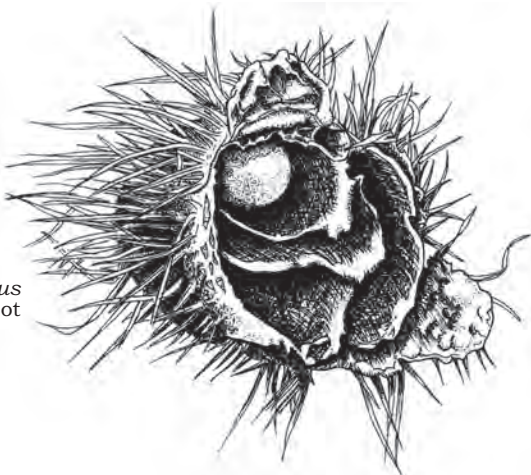
In addition:

- The debate over the fate of the Sharp Park Golf Course in Pacifica goes on;
- The America's Cup EIR has been certified by the City's Board of Supervisors, but discussion will continue about how best to protect sensitive habitat areas from damage by spectators as well as other environmental issues; and
- Protracted negotiations continue over rewriting the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) and the City's Recreation and Parks Dept. (RPD) to settle who will be responsible for what at Lake Merced, where there is a natural area.


WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Learn more about these issues by reading Jake's Nature News blog, or by contacting Jake or Linda (contact info on **page 7**.)
- Join the chapter's Google group to be notified of important upcoming hearings. (Supply your email address at a member meeting, or email Rachel Kesel at greenogwalks@gmail.com.)

Marah fabaceus
manroot



HABITAT RESTORATION

 **Bookmark the daily event calendar at** <http://cnps-yerbabuena.org/calendar>

Alemanys Natives at Alemany Farm.

3rd Sundays, 1 to 4 pm. Contact: alemanynatives@gmail.com

Bayview Hill. 2nd Saturdays of September and November. Contact Terese Lawler tereselawler@gmail.com.

Bernal Hilltop. 3rd Saturdays, 10 am to 12 pm. Work party contact Rachel Kesel rachel.kesel@sfgov.org; Groups contact Joe Grey 415-831-6328.

Buena Vista Park. 1st Saturdays, 9 am to noon. Contact Joe.Grey@sfgov.org or 415-831-6328.

Brooks Park. Contact Joe Grey Joe.Grey@sfgov.org

Candlestick State Park Nursery. 1150 Carroll Street. 1st Saturdays, 10 am to 2 pm. Bay Youth for the Environment. Contact Patrick Rump bye@lejyouth.org.

Castro-Duncan Open Space. Contact Dave Thompson or Gloria Koch-Gonzalez 415-821-7601.

CNPS Native Plant Restoration Team. Every Wednesday, noon to 3 pm. Contact Jake Sigg 415-731-3028 or jakesigg@earthlink.net.

Corona Heights. Last Saturdays, 10 am to noon. Contact Jim Houillion 415-552-3542.

Edgehill Mt. Park. 2nd Saturdays, 1 to 3 pm. Contact Stan Kaufman 415-681-4954 or sekfmm@pacbell.net.

Fort Funston Green Team (Nursery and Stewardship Program). Every Saturday, 9:30 am to 12:30 pm. Contact 415-239-4247 or skato@parksconservancy.org.

GGNRA Habitat Restoration Team. Every Sunday, 9:30 am to 2:30 pm with lunch break. Contact volunteer@parksconservancy.org or 415-331-0732. Locations hotline: 415-561-4747.

GGNRA Site Stewardship Program. Every Saturday, 10 am to 1 pm. Sites vary in Pacifica or Marin Headlands. Contact 415-561-3073 or volunteer@parksconservancy.org

Glen Canyon. Wednesdays & 3rd Saturdays, 9 am to noon. Friends of Glen Canyon. Contact Jean Conner 415-584-8576, Richard Craib 415-648-0862.

Golden Gate Heights Sandy Dunes Native Plant Community Garden. Contact Barbara Kobayashi okim1946@yahoo.com.

Golden Gate Park Oak Woodlands. 2nd Saturdays, 10 am to 12:30 pm.

Contact Rob Bakewell 415-710-9617 or rcbakewell@gmail.com

Green Hairstreak Butterfly Corridor. 2nd Sundays, 10 am to noon, 14th Ave. at Pacheco. Contact Nature in the City at 415-564-4107 or steward@natureinthecity.org

Haight Ashbury Stewards. Contact Nature in the City 415-564-4107.

Half Moon Bay State Beach. 650-726-8801 or hmbrestore@gmail.com

Heron's Head Park. 2nd Saturdays, 9 am to noon. Contact Raynelle Rino 415-282-6840 or raynelle.rino@lejyouth.org.

Lake Merced. 1st Saturdays, 1 to 3:30 pm. Contact Friends of Lake Merced; Craig or Martha Spriggs 415-661-1668.

Lands End Stewardship. Every Thursday & Saturday, 1 to 4 pm. Contact 415-561-4864 or lands_end@parksconservancy.org.

Linda Mar State Beach 4th Sundays, 10 am to noon. Contact 650-451-1130 or 94116bc@gmail.com.

Marin Headlands Native Plant Nursery. Wednesday, 1 to 4 pm & Saturday, 9 am to noon. Contact 415-332-5193 or AShor@parksconservancy.org.

McLaren Park. 2nd Saturdays, 10 am to noon. Contact Joe.Grey@sfgov.org or 415-831-6328.

Mission Creek Bank Restoration. Generally Saturday mornings. Contact Ginny Stearns for times 415-552-4577 or GinnyStearns@gmail.com.

Mt. Davidson. 1st Saturdays, 9 am to noon. Friends of Mt. Davidson: Contact Joe.Grey@sfgov.org or 415-831-6328

Mt. Sutro. 1st Saturdays, 9 am - 1 pm Contact Craig Dawson: craig@natureinthecity.org

Pacifica's Environmental Family. 4th Sundays, 10 am. Contact Shirley Suhrer 650-359-0892.

Pigeon Point Lighthouse. Contact Restoration Coordinator 650-726-8801.

Presidio Native Plant Nursery. Wednesday & Saturday, 1 to 4 pm. Contact 415-561-4826 or ehuerta@parksconservancy.org.

Presidio Park Stewards. Every Wednesday & Saturday, 9 am to noon.

Contact 415-561-3034 x3445 or

PresidioParkStewards@parksconservancy.org.

Presidio Plant Patrol. Every Friday 1 to 4 pm. Contact 415-561-3034 x3445 or

PresidioParkStewards@parksconservancy.org.

Redwood Creek Nursery and Stewards. Wednesday & Saturday, 10 am to 1 pm.

Contact 415-383-4390 or

RedwoodCreek@parksconservancy.org.

San Bruno Mountain. Tuesdays, 10:30 am to 12:30 pm: Earthcare Wetlands Project

Wednesdays, 10 am to 12:30 pm: Greenhouse volunteers-Mission Blue Nursery,

Saturdays, 10 am to 12:30 pm: Weed Rangers Stewardship Outing, Saturdays, 10 am to noon: Bog

Restoration, 1st & 3rd Wednesdays: South San Franciscop Weed Rangers

www.mountainwatch.org, 415-467-6631.

SF Recreation & Parks Department. Natural Areas Program. Joe.Grey@sfgov.org or 415-831-6328.

San Pedro Valley County Park, Pacifica. 3rd Saturdays, 9 am. Contact Carolyn Pankow 650-355-7466.

Save the Bay. Tidal marsh habitats. Saturdays, 9 am to noon. Native Plant Nursery work on the first two Wednesday's of the month. Contact Natalie LaVan 510-452-9261 x109, or www.saveSFbay.org/volunteer.

Shields/Orizaba Rocky Outcrop. Contact Paul Koski at pkoski7@netscape.net.

Tennessee Valley Nursery and Stewards. Every Tuesday, 10 am to noon & 1 to 4 pm.

Contact 415-331-0732 or

lponzini@parksconservancy.org.

White-Crowned Sparrow

3rd Saturdays, 9am - noon

Contact sfrpd.volunteerprogram@sfgov.org

WEED DAY AT THE CAPITOL

The annual Weed Day at the Capitol is March 14, 2012. Legislators have become very aware of invasive plants displacing our biological communities because of the dedication of loyal trouper who keep this issue before them. Participants have found it to be a hugely enjoyable as well as educational experience. If you would like to join us this year, we can likely arrange transportation for you. You'll have a morning training session, and a couple of legislative visits later you'll be an expert and eager for the next experience. Contact Jake Sigg at jakesigg@earthlink.net, 415-731-3028.

NEW VOLUNTEER GROUP FORMING FOR MOUNT DAVIDSON

CNPS is planning to form a new volunteer group to work alongside the City's Natural Areas Program (NAP) gardeners on Mt Davidson. Details are not available at press time, but be thinking about joining us, probably on the first Saturday of the month. Due to NAP staff shortages, the number of volunteers we can accommodate will be limited. Registration in advance will be required. Details in June newsletter.



Erysimum franciscanum
Franciscan wallflower
by Margo Bors

FOCUS ON RARITIES

RUSHES (*Juncus* spp.)

by Michael Wood

As you recall, the flowering vascular plants (the angiosperms [which means “enclosed seed”], Division Magnoliophyta) are divided into two groups, the dicots (plants whose seedlings have two “seed leaves” and flower parts typically in combinations of 4 or 5; Class Magnoliopsida) and the monocots (plants whose seedlings have one “seed leaf” and flower parts typically in combinations of 3; Class Liliopsida). Looking back over the list of species I’ve touched on in this column, I seem to have done a pretty good job of ignoring the monocots. Let’s see...there were articles on the orchids, fragrant fritillary, three on grasses (Pacific reedgrass, purple needlegrass and coastal terrace prairie), yellow mariposa lily, and flowering quillwort. That’s only seven monocots discussed since 1994. And I’ve never introduced any members of



the rush family (*Juncaceae*). In my defense, our objective in starting this column was to promote enthusiasm for our native species. It seemed prudent to focus on the most

charismatic species, those that are exciting to the layperson to discover in the field and relatively easy to identify. Some folks find it hard to develop much appreciation for plants that lack showy flowers or have flower parts with strange names and are difficult to see. And to many people, all these grass-like things look alike (ok, I confess it...to me too!) But is that any reason to ignore such an important group of wetland inhabitants like the rushes? I think not. So, let’s just do it.

Although not fantastically diverse (about 350 species in 9 genera [by comparison, the *Asteraceae* has about 23,000 species in 1,500 genera!]), the rush family is fabulously successful, having spread over six of the seven continents and occurring from the Arctic and temperate regions to tropical mountains. Life forms include diminutive annuals (true “belly plants”) to stout caespitose (growing in dense tufts) or rhizomatous perennials. The stems, or culms, can be round or flat. Leaves can also be round or flat and can be difficult to distinguish from stems; they can arise from the stems or the rootstock (basal) just like the stems. Only two genera occur in North America and California; *Juncus* and *Luzula*. I learned to differentiate between rushes,

sedges and grasses by a little mnemonic device: “sedges have edges and rushes are round” (the part about grasses, referring to their hollow stems, isn’t really fit to print, sorry). The rush genus (*Juncus*) includes some 315 species worldwide, with 95 species included in the Flora of North America. The second edition of *The Jepson Manual* (*TJM2*; Baldwin, *et al.* 2012) lists 56 native species (14 subspecific taxa) and eight non-native species (three subspecific taxa). Our rushes are primarily restricted to soils that are at least moist well into the dry season, occurring in fresh/alkaline/saline marshes, meadows, seeps, springs, creek banks, washes and pools.

Members of the genus can be found throughout the state from the Mexican border to Oregon, from the coast to the interior valleys, Sierra Nevada and Great Basin. The genus is poorly represented in the Mojave and Sonoran deserts.

Based on some revisions to the genus in *TJM2*, our chapter area supports 12 species of *Juncus*. This is a pretty respectable number considering the species’ restriction to moist habitats and wetlands, which haven’t fared well in this urban setting, and the size of our chapter area. By comparison, 15 species each are known from the Santa Cruz Mountains (Thomas 1961), Marin County (Howell, *et al.* 2007), and the East Bay (Ertter 1997). Still, our rush species are limited in distribution to as few as one and as many as eight of the City’s 35 remaining natural areas. And it’s a safe bet that many of the populations are a) very small, b) overrun by invasive species, c) degraded by neglect, maintenance activities, or human encroachment, or d) all of the above.

Identifying members of the genus can be a bit challenging. As with the grasses, there is some new terminology to learn. Also like the grasses, the rushes have pretty small floral parts that defy the usual descriptions. So here is a brief primer on the identification of the rushes of San Francisco.

Flat Stems

One convenient character of rushes is the stem and leaf shape; they are either round or flat. The flat-bladed species might remind you of a smallish iris or gladiolus leaf (implied by the name for the leaf shape, “gladiate”). There aren’t that many species with flat leaves and stems. Only three of our rushes have flat leaves and all are perennial. Two species (brownhead rush - *J. phaeocephalus*, iris-leaved rush *J. xiphioides*) have leaves that are “iris-like”, with the edge of the blade facing the stem. The third species (sickle-leaved rush - *J. falcatius*) has leaves that are “grass-like”, with the flat side of the blade facing the stem.

Round Stems - Annual

Of those with round stems, one of ours is an annual (toad rush - *J. bufonius*). It is one of those “belly plants”, occurring in flat, frequently disturbed, sunny, moist sites. We are host to one native variety (*J.b.* var. *bufonius*)

and one non-native variety (*J.b.* var. *congestus*).
Round Stems, Perennial Creepers
Three of our species spread by creeping rhizomes and appear as individual, closely-spaced stems popping up in patches; these do not form dense tufts or clumps. Wire rush (*J. balticus*) is the most common and widespread of the three. It is distinguished by lacking leaf blades; it sends up only stems.

Mexican rush (*J. mexicanus*), which is only recorded from the Presidio, has well-developed leaf blades on some stems. Salt rush (*J. lescurii* – mistakenly called *J. leseurii*) is distinguished from wire rush by its larger perianth (>6mm).

Round Stems, Perennial Clumpers

The remaining four species in our chapter area are all perennials, forming dense clumps or tufts. The stems of blue rush (*J. patens*) are blue to gray-green, which is quite distinctive from the others; it is found in marshy sites, creeks, and seeps. Green or Pacific bog rush (*J. effusus* var. *pacificus*) has shiny, green stems forming clumps to over a meter tall; distinguishing it from coast rush (*J. hesperius* - previously *J. effusus* var. *brunneus*) isn’t for the faint of heart. Slender rush (*J. tenuis*) and western rush (*J. occidentalis*) are easy to distinguish from the others by their slender and much shorter stems (<60 cm) and their affinity for moist meadows and sunny slopes; unfortunately distinguishing them from each other takes a bit of time and a dissecting scope.

Where to Look for Rushes

Start by looking for damp areas where the soil is kept moist by surface water such as seeps and springs, edges of lakes and marshes, bogs, and moist hillsides, and shallow, seasonal pools. Most rushes are fond of sunny spots. Eleven of the 12 species in our chapter area have been recorded from the Presidio. Seven taxa can be seen at McLaren Park, six at Glen Canyon, and five at Yerba Buena Island. Three species each can be seen at Pine Lake and O’Shaughnessy. See which ones you can find. The Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) has developed a preliminary list of species of local significance for the Presidio (Frey and Stevenson 2010). Western rush is the only species assigned to that list. We have not yet determined which of the rushes to include on our chapter’s list of locally significant species, but it will likely include additional species due to their limited distribution and threats to their populations.

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CHAPTER NEWS

YB NEWS SEEKS EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The current hard-working editor could use some help. We are searching for a volunteer to oversee the whole publication process -- to act as Editor-in-Chief, one of the many jobs Barbara Pitschel used to take on. The chapter is looking for someone who could:

- Establish and publicize clear timelines for each edition; remind people about upcoming and / or missed deadlines for articles.
- Solicit and select good current interest pieces when appropriate; decide, in consultation with the production manager (Kipp McMichael), what material goes where in each edition.
- Edit the newsletter content.
- Ensure that both proofreading and mailing go as planned; make certain that there are backups in place for all jobs.
- Oversee the whole publication process and deal with whatever might come up.
- Be able to attend board meetings on the second Monday of the month at 7:00 pm., except for August and December.

As is clear, the newsletter Editor-in-Chief must be computer literate, a good team player, a highly motivated individual, and a good manager. If you can fill this role, or if you can recommend someone who might be interested, please contact Mila Stroganoff: 650-359-1642 or milastroganoff@sbcglobal.net.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED SAN FRANCISCO FLOWER & GARDEN SHOW

The San Francisco Flower & Garden Show has been the Bay Area's premier garden event for 25 years. Our beautiful booth last year was a great success and we plan to do it again! This year's show will be held March 21-25, 2012. The location is the San Mateo Event Center. We will need people to help design, set up and break down the booth as well as volunteers to staff the booth in 2-1/4 hour shifts. Working a shift includes access to the entire show for the whole day! To volunteer, contact Ellen Edelson at e.edelson@sbcglobal.net or 415-531-2140.

Community Thrift

We sincerely thank all of you who have donated furniture, clothing, books, CDs, and housewares to CT and designated CNPS as the beneficiary. Donating is easy. Simply drop off clean and saleable items at the CT donation door, open from 10 am to 5 pm every day, and **ask them to list CNPS (charity #152) as the beneficiary**. The donation door is located on the south side of the building on Sycamore Alley, parallel to 18th Street and perpendicular to Mission and Valencia Streets. Sycamore runs one way from Mission toward Valencia. Please note that, because of the February 2009 Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act, CT can no longer accept any children's items. CT is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and your donation is tax-deductible. Thank you so much for continuing to benefit our chapter in this way!

Cole Hardware

As a participant in Cole Hardware's Community Assistance Partnership Program with San Francisco schools and nonprofit organizations, our chapter received a credit for \$92.98, representing 10% of our readers' purchases in any one of the four Cole Hardware stores that were credited to CNPS in 2009. All you need to do is **tell the cashier to credit your purchases to *1424**.

BOARD MEETINGS

Board meetings are open to all Chapter members and scheduled for 7:00 pm on the second Monday of every month except August and December. Contact Casey Allen for information (415-572-1144, Casey@SFLandscapes.com).

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!!!

November 7, 2011 through December 31, 2011

Danielle Black, Amalia Borson, Tyler Davenport, Érica Junghans, Nina Ann Milam, Stephen Phillips, Jamie Reese, Thomas Reyes, Haley Smith, Jennifer Rae Sotelo, and Rachel Spangler



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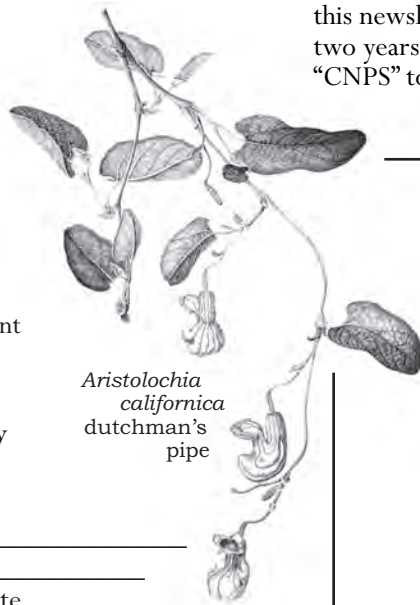
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Articles & general copy – April 15

Time-dependent material – May 1

Late-breaking news – By arrangement

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