



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 7, THURSDAY

#### *The Great Sunflower Project: Pollinator Conservation by the Public*

7:30 pm, Speaker: Gretchen LeBuhn

Data from several places around the world suggest 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 measure 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 on either a continental or local scale. This talk will cover the basics of the natural history of bees and 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 4, THURSDAY

#### *Biodiversity and the Home Gardener*

7:30 pm, Speaker: Arvind Kumar

What makes California a world hotspot of biodiversity? Why should the California home gardener care? Learn about the critical role native plants play in a healthy environment, how human pressures are driving them to the brink of extinction, and what you, as a home gardener, can do to save, celebrate, and promote them. Learn how to provide habitat for wildlife, conserve natural resources, save time and money, and give your yard a sense of place—by using native plants in your garden.

Arvind Kumar served for six years on the board of the California Native Plant Society, and is the past President of its Santa Clara Valley Chapter. He serves on the steering committees of the Going Native Garden Tour (now in its 11<sup>th</sup> year), and the Gardening With Natives subgroup. He writes the Gardening Green column for the *Loma Prieta*, the newsletter of the local Sierra Club chapter. An engineer by training, a lazy gardener by choice, Arvind is an advocate not only for protecting native plants in the wild but also for integrating them in urban and suburban landscapes and our daily lives. He believes in helping the environment one native plant at a time, one garden at a time.

### MAY 2, THURSDAY

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

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

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.**

#### FUTURE PROGRAM

June 6 -- *A Tale of Two City Butterflies*—Liam O'Brien



*Dichelostemma capitatum*  
Blue dicks  
by Kristin Jakob

## 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 before the trip. In general, bring sturdy shoes; lunch and liquids; sunscreen and layered clothing; and a hand lens, camera, sketchbook, or any other tools/toys that will enhance your exploratory experience.

### MARCH 9, SATURDAY, 10 am to noon

#### Sign Hill

**Leaders: Jake Sigg, Chuck Heimstadt, and Loretta Brooks**

Sign Hill's biological communities and species composition are like San Bruno Mountain's, but in slightly better shape, and the land is under separate management: Sign Hill is a city park of South San Francisco, while San Bruno Mountain is a state and county park managed by San Mateo County. Hummingbird sage (*Salvia spathacea*) covers several acres here, which is not typical elsewhere although its range extends down the coastal mountains into San Diego County. We hope to see blooms of coast rock cress (*Arabis blepharophylla*) and coast iris (*Iris longipetala*), 4.3 and 4.2 respectively on the CNPS Watch List, and possibly johnny jump-up (*Viola pedunculata*), host plant for the endangered callippe silverspot butterfly. Sign Hill has a cornucopia of native grasses and wildflowers and there will be lots to see, regardless of how much rainfall materializes prior to our walk. 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 30.** Contact: Jake Sigg, [jakesigg@earthlink.net](mailto:jakesigg@earthlink.net) or 415-731-3028.

### MARCH 17, SUNDAY, 10 am to 1 pm

#### Glen Canyon Spiders

**Leader: Darrell Ubick**

Join California Academy of Sciences arachnologist Darrell Ubick for a springtime trip in search of spiders. They are abundant in the park—probably hundreds of species and hundreds of thousands of individuals altogether. We are sure to see a variety since Darrell knows where to look and how to catch and observe them without harming them. Wait till you see his collecting equipment! We may find some colorful jumping spiders and/or wolf spiders carrying their egg sacs. Spidering is sure to enhance your appreciation of native plants as providers of microhabitats for invertebrates. Meet behind the Glen Park Recreation Center where the lawn stops and the wild part of the canyon starts.

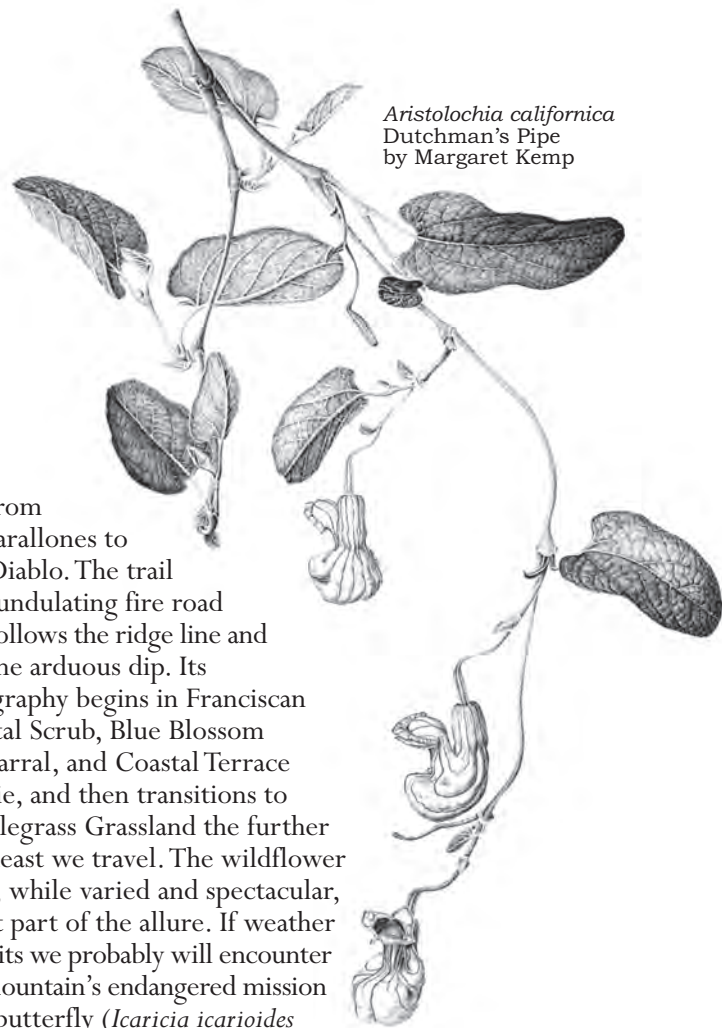
**Wet weather postpones to March 24.** Contact: Darrell Ubick, [DUbick@calacademy.org](mailto:DUbick@calacademy.org).

### APRIL 13, SATURDAY, 10 am to 3 pm

#### San Bruno Mountain: Ridge Trail

**Leader: Doug Allhouse**

As with most of its brethren, San Bruno Mountain is best enjoyed from the top. The Ridge Trail offers a long and interesting menu of plant species including the endemic SBM manzanita (*Arctostaphylos imbricata imbricata*), Franciscan paintbrush (*Castilleja subinclusa franciscana*), Franciscan wallflower (*Erysimum franciscanum*), and coast rock cress (*Arabis blepharophylla*). On a very clear day the vistas extend from Pt. Reyes to the South Bay



*Aristolochia californica*  
Dutchman's Pipe  
by Margaret Kemp

and from the Farallones to Mt. Diablo. The trail is an undulating fire road that follows the ridge line and has one arduous dip. Its topography begins in Franciscan Coastal Scrub, Blue Blossom Chaparral, and Coastal Terrace Prairie, and then transitions to Needlegrass Grassland the further southeast we travel. The wildflower show, while varied and spectacular, is just part of the allure. If weather permits we probably will encounter the mountain's endangered mission blue butterfly (*Icaricia icarioides missionensis*) along with other spectacular species such as anise and pipevine swallowtails (*Papilio zelicaon* and *Battus philenor*) and green hairstreaks (*Callophrys dumetorum viridis*). The entire out-and-back trip is about 5 miles so bring a lunch and water. Pay the \$6 entry fee at the ranger's kiosk, turn right at the stop sign and follow Radio Road up to the summit parking lot. **Heavy rain postpones until April 20.** Contact Doug at [dougsr228@comcast.net](mailto:dougsr228@comcast.net) or 415-584-5114.

### MAY 4, SATURDAY, 11 am to 1:30 pm

#### Sign Hill Butterflies

**Leaders: Liam O'Brien, Chuck Heimstadt, and Loretta Brooks**

We return to this jewel of native habitat (see March 9 trip description), this time to focus on the ecology of butterflies. Many species are instinctively drawn to elevated topographies in order to find mates. Liam is San Francisco's foremost "butterfly guy" and he will give an enthusiastic in-field course in Butterfly 101 while we explore Sign Hill's plant communities in search of some of the first mission blues (*Icaricia icarioides missionensis*, an endangered species) of the season. Join us to learn butterfly behavior, host plants, how to distinguish between mission blues and silvery blues (*Glaucopsyche lygdamus*), and more. Bring lunch; we will take a break and enjoy the view. Meet at the park entrance: from Hillside Blvd, turn onto Stonegate and keep going up. Butterflies only fly when it's sunny, so **overcast skies or stiff breezes will postpone the walk to May 11 and inclement weather on the 11th cancels.** Contact: Chuck Heimstadt and Loretta Brooks, [lorettaandchuck@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lorettaandchuck@sbcglobal.net) or 650-952-6174.

## ACTIVITIES

### 9<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL CNPS YERBA BUENA CHAPTER SPRING TOUR OF NATIVE PLANT GARDENS

**Sunday, April 28, 2013 - 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](mailto: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](http://sfnativegardentour.org)  
for up-to-date information**



Margo Bors

#### **PLANT IDENTIFICATION WORKSHOPS ARE BACK!** **Second Thursdays, starting March 14, 6-7:30pm** **San Francisco State University** **1600 Holloway Avenue**

We are pleased to announce the return of Plant Identification Workshops - in a new and better location. Graduate students in Botany at San Francisco State will help you learn to key plants and increase your plant skills in an informal, relaxed, plant identification workshop. Organized by the Yerba Buena Chapter of the California Native Plant Society. Meet at Hensill Hall, Room 440. Bring a hand lens and a copy of the Jepson Manual. Contact Mila Stroganoff at 650-359-1642 or [milastroganoff@sbcglobal.net](mailto:milastroganoff@sbcglobal.net) for further information.



#### **CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SALE** **April 20, Saturday, 10am to 3pm** **Regional Parks Botanic Garden** **Tilden Regional Park, Berkeley**

The California Native Plant Sale at the Regional Parks Botanic Garden features flowering shrubs, perennials, bulbs, and ornamental grasses, many of which are not available in a commercial nursery. Visitors may explore the Garden and benefit from horticultural advice. Please bring your own boxes. The terrific and tireless Regional Parks Botanic Garden volunteers organize the event, and all proceeds directly benefit the Garden. The Garden is located at the intersection of Wildcat Canyon Road and South Park Drive near the Brazil Building at Tilden Regional Park in Berkeley. Admission is free. Visit [ebparks.org/parks/vc/botanic\\_garden](http://ebparks.org/parks/vc/botanic_garden).

#### **JOIN CNPS 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. 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 and seasonal changes, and to learn to recognize plants in all their various guises. We go to places that no one else does, and workers become acquainted with areas and plants they didn't even know existed. Not everyone is able to come on Wednesdays, but for the lucky few who can, contact Jake Sigg at [jakesigg@earthlink.net](mailto:jakesigg@earthlink.net), 415-731-3028.

#### **NINTH ANUAL BRINGING BACK THE NATIVES GARDEN TOUR**

**Sunday, May 5, 10am to 5pm**

#### **Gardens in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties**

This free, award-winning tour features forty Alameda and Contra Costa county gardens that are pesticide-free, conserve water, provide habitat for wildlife, and contain 60% or more native plants. This self-drive tour showcases a variety of gardens, from large parcels in the hills to small lots in the flats. Native plant sales and talks are offered at select gardens. Space is limited and registration is required. This tour will fill; register early to ensure a place. Volunteers are needed. Please register or volunteer at <http://www.bringingbackthenatives.net/>



# DOUG'S MOUNTAIN JOURNAL

A Chronicle of Natural History on San Bruno Mountain  
by Doug Allshouse

Sometimes things just get out of whack. December decides to be January and January decides to be well...December! This winter December was the wettest on record and January is becoming the coldest month. The next 60 days will determine the fate of possible colossal displays of some of our annuals this spring and summer. I'm hoping for lush carpets of clarkia (*Clarkia rubicunda*), gold fields (*Lastheniacalifornica*), and meadow white (*Cerastium arvense*) like we had in 2011 following two wet winters. Our perennials are not affected as much by rainfall and already there are shots of milkmaids (*Cardaminecalifornica*), buttercups (*Ranunculus californicus*), parsnips (*Lomatium caruifolium*, *L. dasycarpum*, *Heracleum maximum*), and California violet (*Viola pedunculata*).

The appearance of California violet signals the end of diapause for the starving larvae of the endangered Callippe Silverspot butterfly (*Speyeria callippe callippe*). Because their host plant desiccates before egg-laying these sturdy larvae hatched from their eggs last June and July and promptly consumed their eggshells before entering a hibernation lasting at least six months! Now they will feast at night on the foliage, adding weight and girth and accumulating toxins from the plant to discourage predators from devouring this next generation. This is fairly common in larvae of certain species of Lepidoptera and birds have been hard-wired over millennia to avoid eating them, lest they suffer the sometimes deadly consequences.

The edges of most trails are bursting with woodland sanicle/Pacific snakeroot (*Sanicula crassicaulis*) and bee plant (*Scrophularia californica*), which are very easy to grow in your home gardens. Also beginning to appear are the electric yellow-green leaves of footsteps-of-spring (*Sanicula arctopoides*) that have the unusual ability to appear more brightly-colored under overcast skies than sunny skies. Both of the sanicles will sport yellow flowers in a few months.

This time of year brush rabbits (*Sylvilagus bachmani*) begin gnawing on the leaves of soap plant (*Chlorogalum pomeridianum*), an extremely important piece of Ohlone life for thousands of years. The starchy underground bulb contains a saponin—a foaming glucoside—that was so lightly alkaline it could even be used to wash babies. In its raw state the bulb was thrown into small ponds to stun fish for easy food gathering; it was used to seal baskets and, mixed with water, it became the glue for attaching feathers on arrow shafts. Only when it was roasted could it be eaten, and its coarse outer hairs were used for brushes. When you think about it, soap plant was grocery store and hardware store all in one place.

Another monocot that takes more luck than effort to locate is **rein orchid** (*Piperia elegans*), one of the most interesting plants on the mountain which bears watching in two different seasons. During the winter months, mostly two, but up to four large, dark green, basal leaves burst from the ground. These die back in spring and sometimes, but not always, a stalk appears in July or August. The stalk looks like asparagus covered with hundreds of tiny white orchid flowers with an appealing fragrance and it may range from five inches to two feet in length, although 5-8 inches is common. The shriveled brown leaves can be seen at the base of the stalk. The plant is not showy and may require a little effort to locate, but it is a marvelous discovery when seen.



In the past few years there has been increasing interest in the Common Raven (*Corvus corax*) and the American Crow (*C. brachyrhynchos*). This is, no doubt, due to increasing populations of both species in and around San Francisco—and everywhere else for that matter—and how the two interact with each other. This is a relationship that I know a little bit about since crows began wandering farther away from the city confines and began raiding long-established raven territories on the mountain a couple years ago. As an example of who has the upper hand when these species accidentally mingle I offer this glistening example I witnessed a few days ago.



I came upon a dead Striped Skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*), road kill, lying near the park entrance. Six crows were taking turns ripping flesh from the carcass. This went on for about ten minutes, then five ravens flew in from the north and landed in a Monterey cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa*) near the ranger kiosk. In the blink of an eye the crows did their best Duane Kuiper-Giants homerun impression, they were *outta here!* The ravens finished the job, *toute de suite*.

This is the most intriguing time of year when our long-dormant natives awaken and gather energy for the most fascinating time of year—spring. That's when the magic happens and flowers bloom, the days grow long, and our eyes are treated to colorful bliss. Enjoy it.

See you on the mountain.



*Erysimum franciscanum*  
Franciscan wallflower  
by Margo Bors

## 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](mailto:alemanynatives@gmail.com)

**Bayview Hill.** 2nd Saturdays of September and November. Contact Terese Lawler [tereselawler@gmail.com](mailto:tereselawler@gmail.com).

**Bernal Hilltop.** 3rd Saturdays, 10 am to 12 pm. Work party contact Rachel Kesel [rachel.kesel@sfgov.org](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:jakesigg@earthlink.net).

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

**Edgehill Mt. Park.** 2nd Saturdays, 10am to noon. Contact Stan Kaufman 415-681-4954 or [sekfmm@pacbell.net](mailto:sekfmm@pacbell.net).

**Fort Funston Nursery** Saturdays, 9:30 am to 12:30 pm. Contact 415-561-3044 or [volunteer@parksconservancy.org](mailto:volunteer@parksconservancy.org).

**Golden Gate National Recreation Area.** Weekdays and weekends around the Bay Area. Contact [volunteer@parksconservancy.org](mailto:volunteer@parksconservancy.org) or 415-561-3044.

**Glen Canyon.** Wednesdays & 3rd Saturdays, 9 am to noon. Friends of Glen Canyon. Contact [rachel.kesel@sfgov.org](mailto:rachel.kesel@sfgov.org)

**Golden Gate Heights Sandy Dunes Native Plant Community Garden.** Contact Barbara Kobayashi [okim1946@yahoo.com](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:hmbrestore@gmail.com)

**Heron's Head Park.** 2nd Saturdays, 9am to noon. Contact Zoe Burton [hbp.assistant@lejyouth.org](mailto:hbp.assistant@lejyouth.org).

**Lake Merced.** 3rd Saturdays, 10am to noon. Contact Joe Grey [joegrey@sfgov.org](mailto:joegrey@sfgov.org)

**Linda Mar State Beach** 4th Sundays, 10 am to noon. Contact 650-451-1130 or [94116bc@gmail.com](mailto:94116bc@gmail.com).

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

**McKinley Square Hillside.** Last Saturdays, 10 am to noon. [www.McKinleySquare.com](http://www.McKinleySquare.com) or [info@McKinleySquare.com](mailto:info@McKinleySquare.com).

**Mission Creek Bank.** Generally Saturday mornings. Contact Ginny Stearns for times 415-552-4577 or [GinnyStearns@gmail.com](mailto:GinnyStearns@gmail.com).

**Mt. Davidson.** 1st Saturdays, 10 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@sutrostewards.org](mailto:craig@sutrostewards.org)  
**Pacifica's Environmental Family.** 4th Sundays, 10 am. Contact Shirley Suhrer 650-359-0892.

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

**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 Francisco Weed Rangers

[www.mountainwatch.org](http://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 Wednesdays of the month. Contact Natalie

LaVan 510-452-9261 x109, or [www.saveSFbay.org/volunteer](http://www.saveSFbay.org/volunteer).

**Shields/Orizaba Rocky Outcrop.** Contact Paul Koski at [pkoski7@netscape.net](mailto:pkoski7@netscape.net).

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

Contact 415-561-3044 or [volunteer@parksconservancy.org](mailto:volunteer@parksconservancy.org).

**White-Crowned Sparrow**

3rd Saturdays, 9am - noon  
Contact [sfrpd.volunteerprogram@sfgov.org](mailto:sfrpd.volunteerprogram@sfgov.org)

## SUCCESSFUL 18<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL NATIVE PLANT SALE

by Ellen Edelson

Our fall plant sale was a success thanks to *many* volunteers, nice weather, good publicity and great support from local native nurseries. We had over 120 species of *locally native* plants to offer, from little coast onion bulbs to large trees such as red alder and coast live oak. Rare dune tansy and Franciscan wallflower were scooped up along with silver beach lupine, 'Twin Peaks' coyote brush, and giant vetch.

Inside our new t-shirts and totes sold briskly, along with a large selection of books and note cards. Thank you Mila and Adrian. Denise Louie set up a table and educated us about the problems of invasive plants.

Roz Kutler, Margaret Goodale and Susan Floore handled orders and cashiering. Jake Sigg, Ingrid Cabada, Tish Brown, Greg Gaar and Linda Pomerantz helped to guide shoppers. Setup/breakdown was handled by Ed McMillan, Casey Allen (and friends), George Suter, Clark Natwick, Wendy Poinsot, Werner Shumann, Denise Louie (and husband and son), Ingrid, Tish, Roz, and Margaret. Jeanne Koelling helped with hospitality. Margo Bors provided photos. Sylvia and Joel Rubenstein brought a small truckload of carry-out boxes and Roz Kutler and Kleyton Jones created and set up signage directing people to the site. Licia deMeo helped make the plant labels. Joanne Whitney helped arrange the use of the site. Kipp McMichael created fliers and updated our website. Rachel Kesel handled much of the publicity. I am sure I missed a few of

you—please know that your contribution was very important to the success of our plant sale. **Thank each of you very much!**

Many plants were grown by members, but others were provided by our native plant nursery partners: HANC Native Plant Nursery; Literacy for Environmental Justice; Go Native, Inc; Nature's Acres Nursery; and Mission Blue Nursery.

Finally, there is a good variety of plants still available. If you missed the sale, are looking for additional plants or would like to offer help for next year, contact Ellen Edelson, plant sale coordinator, [e.edelson@sbcglobal.net](mailto:e.edelson@sbcglobal.net) or 415-531-2140.

Note: I welcome return of plant containers (especially the tubes) at a program, or to me directly, by arrangement.



*Aesculus californica*  
California buckeye



## FOCUS ON RARITIES

### Fremont Star Lily (*Toxicoscordion fremontii*)

by Michael Wood

If you've never heard of Fremont star lily, you probably won't be bothered by the taxonomic changes it has recently undergone. Known as *Zigadenus fremontii* in the lily family (Liliaceae) in the 1<sup>st</sup> edition of The Jepson Manual (TJM1; Hickman 1993), Fremont star lily is now known as *Toxicoscordion fremontii* and has been placed in the false-hellebore family (Melanthiaceae) in the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of The Jepson Manual (TJM2; Baldwin, *et al.* 2012).

I hardly know where to start to bring you (and me) up to speed on these changes. Of course you recall that the lilies and their associates are monocots (true flowering plants that produce only a single "seed leaf" (cotyledon), typically with parallel leaf veins and flower parts in multiples of three). In TJM2, the lily family in California has been divided into new (or restored) families such as Agavaceae (*Agave*, *Yucca*, *Chlorogalum*, *Camassia*, *et al.*), Alliaceae (*Allium*, *et al.*), Asparagaceae (*Asparagus*), Asphodelaceae (*Aloe*, *et al.*), Melanthiaceae (*Toxicoscordion*, *Trillium*, *Veratrum*, *Xerophyllum*, *et al.*), and Nartheciaceae (*Narthecium*). Remaining in the Liliaceae are *Calochortus*, *Clintonia*, *Erythronium*, *Fritillaria*, *Lilium* (thank goodness for that!), *Prosartes*, *Scoliopus*, *Streptopus* and *Tulipa*. Based on DNA studies published in 2002, it was determined that members of the genus *Zigadenus* properly belong to *Toxicoscordion*, a resurrected name.

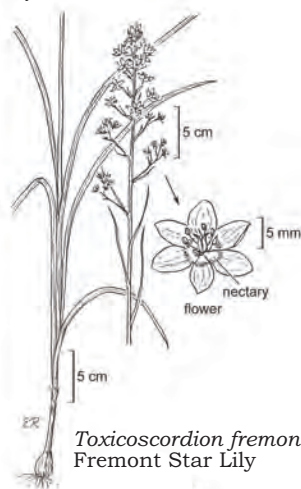
Now that that's out of the way, you're probably asking what makes the star lilies stand apart from true lilies (if you haven't asked yourself that, you may skip to the next paragraph). To answer this, I had to go back to the keys in TJM1. In short, the lilies all have cauline leaves (leaves arising from the above-ground stems), flowers are bisexual (possess both male and female parts) and lack a distinct glandular area on the flower petals. The members of the Melanthiaceae may have cauline or basal leaves (leaves arising from the base of the stem, at or below ground level), flowers are either male or female, and all have distinct glands near the base of the petals. Plus, they look different... it's a *gestalt* sort of thing.

The Melanthiaceae includes some 130 species in ten genera found in the northern hemisphere. The genus includes 18-22 species ranging from North America, Central America, Japan and eastern Siberia. The updated taxonomy for *Zigadenus* is not reflected in The Flora of North America,

which lists 14 species restricted to the western U.S., Baja California and Oregon.

According to TJM2 lists, there are seven species native to California.

Fremont star lily is a perennial geophyte, a term that refers to the plant's underground rhizomes or small odorless onion-like bulbs that function as storage organ. Leaves are linear, folded, curved and reduced as they progress up the stem; they are usually deciduous after one year. Flower petals are yellow to white, in sixes, with greenish-yellow glands near the base. Inflorescences look like an array of stars arranged around the erect stems up to 15 inches tall. The unbranched flower stalks arise in early spring, flowering in March through May. It is thought that the toxicity of this group may extend to the flower nectar, which would represent an ecological filter, limiting the species of insect pollinators that can avail themselves of the plant's food resources. Pollination is thought to be accomplished by a variety of syrphid and stratiomyid flies and solitary andrenid bees.



Some members of the genus are known by the intriguing epithet "death camas". As you might have presumed, these plants are indeed toxic. The plant parts contain alkaloids that are toxic to both humans and livestock. All fresh plant parts (leaves, bulbs and flowers) are toxic; dried plant parts, especially the seeds and capsules are even more toxic. Consuming 2-6% of body weight is a fatal dose. The scientific name of the genus is derived from the Greek for "poison garlic". The term "camas" comes from the Shoshone name for the edible camas root or blue camas flower (*Camassia* spp.), a closely related (and edible) genus in the Agavaceae.

*T. fremontii* has been recorded in 34 of California's 58 counties, stretching between the borders of Baja California to Oregon, and from the coast to the western slopes of the Sierra Nevada below 3500 feet in elevation. Unlike the ever-so-ephemeral fritillaries, Fremont star lily is not quite so

subject to herbivory, although despite its toxicity, the nibbled tops of early inflorescences can be observed. Still, you're more likely to happen upon a colony of Fremont star lily in full flower when surveying our local grasslands and chaparral patches. It is extant in all eight of the Bay Area counties.

Historically, in our chapter area, Fremont star lily was known from the southeastern corner of the county and the Presidio's serpentine grassland. The last collection from the Presidio was made in 1896, although there is a reference to a collection made by Peter Rubtzoff in Howell, *et al.* (1958). Michael Chassé of the National Park Service reports that the species is thought to be extirpated from the Presidio. Fremont star lily can still be found on the eastern side of Bernal Hill where chapter member and Natural Areas Program staffer Rachel Kesel has been keeping track of the population; she counted 72 flower stalks last year. Dr. Michael Vasey reports that the plant can be found in abundance on San Pedro Mountain in Pacifica as well as other ridges of northern San Mateo County, and chapter member Doug Allshouse reports that it is abundant on San Bruno Mtn. in Buckeye and Owl canyons. Chapter records also have it occurring in Glen Canyon (confirmed by Dr. Tom Daniel at Cal Academy) and at McLaren Park (I was not able to confirm this record).

Of the seven California taxa, one (*T. micranthus* var. *fontanus*; now *T. fontanus*) appears on the CNPS *Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants* (available online at <http://rareplants.cnps.org>). Fremont star lily is neither regionally rare nor does San Francisco lie at the edge of its distribution. However, given its highly restricted occurrence in the county and the fact that it has been extirpated from part of its historic range here, it is being considered for addition to the Chapter's list of locally significant plant species.

### Literature Cited

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## CHAPTER NEWS

### HOSPITALITY COORDINATOR NEEDED

Needed: a replacement for Rich Craib, the chapter's Hospitality Chair for the past 2 years (THANKS, Rich!). A loyal crew of volunteers sets out nibbles at member meetings (a tradition started by the late Barbara Pitschel which we want to continue). What we need is someone willing to oversee that crew plus take charge of the setup and breakdown at 10 monthly member meetings per year at the County Fair Building. This can be a board position or not as preferred. For more information, please contact Casey Allen (415-572-1144 or [casey@sflandscapes.com](mailto:casey@sflandscapes.com)), or Linda Shaffer (415-206-1428 or [ljshaffer1@comcast.net](mailto:ljshaffer1@comcast.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 20-24, 2013. 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](mailto: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 Community Thrift 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 receives a credit each year worth 10% of our readers' purchases at any one of the four Cole Hardware stores during that year. 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 ([casey@sflandscapes.com](mailto:casey@sflandscapes.com)).

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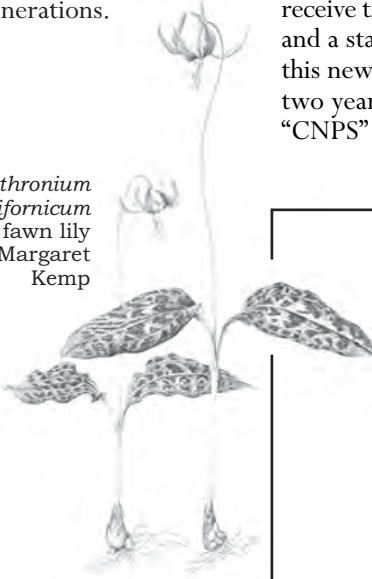
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