

February 2018



The Bay Leaf

California Native Plant Society • East Bay Chapter
Alameda & Contra Costa Counties

www.ebcnps.org

www.nativeherenursery.org

FEBRUARY MEMBERS' MEETING

Cutting Back: Garden Memoir Reading and Pruning Demonstration

Speaker: Leslie Buck

Wednesday, February 28, 7:30 pm

Location: Garden Room, Orinda Public Library (directions below)

Join us for a reading from Leslie Buck's new garden memoir, *Cutting Back: My Apprenticeship in the Gardens of Kyoto*, along with a pruning demonstration for all levels of experience.

Leslie's adventures in the gardens of Kyoto, recounted in her *New York Times*-reviewed book, *Cutting Back*, took her into some of the most beautiful and natural looking (not sheared!) native plant gardens she'd ever seen. She has applied what she learned in Kyoto to her work with California native plants, with beautiful results. Leslie will share information about pruning in general and teach a few basic cuts for creating natural-looking native gardens. To round out the evening, she'll read excerpts from her delightful garden memoir. Copies of Leslie's book will be available for purchase at the meeting (cash or check).



Leslie Buck pruning. Photo by Maya Blum.

Leslie Buck has been a natural garden designer and aesthetic pruner in the San Francisco Bay Area for over two decades. During that time, she has lectured regularly and led many workshops. She holds a fine arts degree from the University of California, Berkeley, attended the School of Fine Arts in Bordeaux, France, and studied horticulture at Merritt College, where she met her mentor Dennis Makishima, a world-renowned pruning instructor and bonsai artist.

Leslie has worked, taught, and volunteered in hundreds of private landscapes as well as dozens of public gardens. In 2000, Leslie studied in Kyoto with Uetoh Zoen, one of the oldest and most highly acclaimed landscape companies in Japan.

East Bay CNPS membership meetings are free of charge and open to everyone. This month's meeting takes place in the Garden Room of the Orinda Public Library at 26 Orinda Way (in Orinda Village). The Garden Room is on the second floor of the building, accessible by stairs or an elevator. The Garden Room opens at 7 pm; the meeting begins at 7:30 pm. Email programs@ebcnps.org or call 510-496-6016 if you have questions.

Directions to Orinda Public Library at 26 Orinda Way

DRIVING: From the west, take Hwy 24 to the Orinda/Moraga exit. At the end of the off ramp, turn left on Camino Pablo (toward Orinda Village), right on Santa Maria Way (the signal after the BART station and freeway entrance), and left on Orinda Way.

From the east, take Hwy 24 to the Orinda exit. Follow the ramp to Orinda Village. Turn right on Santa Maria way (the first signal) and left on Orinda Way.

Once on Orinda Way, go 1 short block to the parking lot on the southeast side of the two-story building on your right. There is additional free parking beneath the building as well as on the street.

VIA BART (4 blocks): Exit the Orinda station, turn right and cross a pedestrian bridge, then cross a second pedestrian bridge on the left. Go 1 short block on the sidewalk to the third pedestrian bridge. Go 2 blocks on Orinda Way to the Orinda Library.

NATIVE HERE NURSERY TRILLIUM TIME, 2/24/18

The series of special focus Saturdays at Native Here for the fall/winter 2017-18 season will end with February 24 Trillium Time from 10 am to 2 pm..

Not only *Trillium*, which are part of the forest understory, but other hard to find plants from a different, open, rocky environment will be featured.

John Danielsen, who coordinates seed and cutting collection as well as propagating many of the special plants, will speak at 11 am about the challenges of growing and caring for them.

There is also a wealth of annuals germinating each week into springtime. Buy them in 4" pots of seedlings, divide and plant. The supply of annuals changes too rapidly to appear on the nursery's inventory posted on the nursery website www.nativeherenursery.org.

CEHI WINS LAWSUIT ON PESTICIDE USE BY CFDA

"The California Environmental Health Initiative (CEHI) is an organization whose goal (quoting from their website, cal-ehi.org) is "to bring citizen advocacy and scientific research to bear on policy decisions that impact the health of Californians. Our focus is expanding awareness that protecting human and environmental health must be the first priority in all food and agricultural decisions." CEHI and several other organizations sued the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) to restrict pesticide spraying in California. The suit was decided in their favor, with the court halting "a state program allowing pesticide spraying at schools, organic farms and backyards across California because of inadequate public disclosure of the chemicals' harms."

You can read CEHI's full press release on their website (cal-ehi.org). CNPS East Bay's own Tom and Jane Kelly, who run the Point Isabel restoration project, are board members of CEHI.

CNPS Conservation Program Director Greg Suba wrote a letter to the CFDA in 2011 outlining CNPS's policy with regard to pesticide use. In it he states that "chemical sprays, like other vegetation treatments, have potential adverse effects. The decision of whether or not to use chemicals in a specific invasive species management project should be based on an evaluation of chemical and alternative treatments. The Notice of Preparation (NOP) states that the draft Pesticide Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) will address discretionary actions including, '(a) methodology for evaluation of en-

Trees, shrubs, perennials, grasses, bulbs - all are available. Some trees and riparian plants are offered at half the usual price. Check the inventory to see what they are.

The nursery remains open for shopping year round on Tuesdays from noon to 3, Fridays from 9 to noon, and Saturdays from 10 to 2. Volunteers are always welcome to help water and care for plants, help with propagation and general tidying of the nursery. There are also some special projects for folks who cannot come to the nursery on a regular basis during open hours. Contact Ruth Ann Pearsons, our volunteer coordinator at rpearsons1@mac.com for more information about volunteer opportunities.

Charli Danielsen, propagation leader

vironmental impacts related to new pests, pest management tactics, and pest prevention and management programs.

"Therefore the draft PEIR must clearly describe what methodology will provide for future input and modifications to current management tactics and programs assessed in the PEIR, whereby advances in effective pest management practices resulting from scientific research, which make them less dependent on potentially harmful chemicals and more sensitive to protecting human and environmental health, are incorporated into the Statewide Program... We urge the CDFA not to trade trust for expediency, and to consider these recommendations for a transparent, science-based approach to developing a Pest PEIR that incorporates a broad spectrum of stakeholder input. In this way, the CDFA can build public trust, avoid challenges to the PEIR, and implement an effective, enforceable Statewide Program. We are concerned that the proposed Pest PEIR is overly broad, and will not be able to adequately address, or even identify, environmental concerns associated with current and future pest management programs. To address this concern, we strongly feel the organization of pest prevention and management information into pest groups, as described in the NOP, should include categories that divide agricultural pests from wildlands pests to further facilitate the use of the PEIR."

See the CNPS website (cnps.org) for more information on CNPS policy on this issue.

RESTORATION PROJECTS

Saturday, February 3, 2018, 9 am-noon Sabercat Creek Habitat Restoration, Site 4. From the trailhead at Quema Drive and Paseo Padre Pkwy, go down the slope to the main trail and turn left (head east). Go through the cattle gate, and you should immediately see a site to your right with cages, before the Paseo Padre Parkway underpass. We will be caring for native trees and shrubs, removing invasives, and sheet mulching. Our work will help stabilize soils and creek banks, filter pollutants, increase native plant diversity, and improve food and shelter for wildlife.

Registration is required. Please visit www.fremont.gov/SabercatRestoration. Click on the "Eventbrite" hyperlink to find the pages for upcoming events. Heavy rain cancels the event. No experience is necessary. All ages are welcome, but children under 12 years must be accompanied by an adult. For more questions or comments, please contact Sabrina Siebert at ssiebert@fremont.gov or call 510-494-4589.

Saturday, February 3, 9-1, broom pull in Redwood Park
Meet at Pinehurst Gate.

Sunday, February 4, 10 am, Northbasin in Eastshore State Park. The North Basin restoration project meets the first Sunday of each month at Eastshore State Park in Berkeley, on the bay shoreline south of Tom Bates soccer fields, to continue clearing radish and other invasives from around the native plants and prepare for next year's plantings. For more information and directions, contact johnkenny54@yahoo.com.

Saturday, February 3 and Saturday, February 17, Point Isabel restoration. Join Greens at Work near the parking lot at the end of Rydin Road, on the side next to the salt marsh. This crew now carries into the afternoon, with a break at noon if you need to leave for Saturday errands.

Wednesdays, 2 pm-5:30 pm and Sundays, 9:30 am-1 pm, Skyline Gardens Project holds workday in the Berkeley/Oakland hills on Skyline Trail and its environs. RSVP Skylinegardens@ebcnps.org if interested. The Skyline Gardens Project is a combination botanical survey and restoration project in the Skyline Trail area of the Oakland-Berkeley Hills. The purpose is to document the native flora and to remove invasive plants to restore the full native diversity of the area. The project is sponsored by the East Bay Chapter of the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) in collaboration with East Bay MUD. We hold workdays twice weekly, Wednesday late afternoons (after work), and Sunday mornings for three and a half hours.

Saturday, February 10, join Janet Gawthrop and other volunteers restoring Huckleberry Regional Botanic Preserve in the Oakland hills. See [http://www.meetup.com/California-Native-Plant-Society-](http://www.meetup.com/California-Native-Plant-Society-East-Bay-Chapter/photos/10662812/226066492/)

[East-Bay-Chapter/photos/10662812/226066492/](http://www.meetup.com/ebcnps/events/dqwtthyxdbnb/)
Please note that you may be exposed to poison oak during this event so if you are sensitive to it you may wish to consider another event. For more information: <https://www.meetup.com/ebcnps/events/dqwtthyxdbnb/>

Sunday, February 11, 9:30-1:30, broom pull in Redwood Regional Park. Meet at the fire station, next door to the Redwood Park entrance on Redwood Road. If you have questions about location call the ranger office at 510-544-3127.

Saturday, February 17, 10 am-noon, Garber Park. We will continue our invasive weed pull in our long-term effort to restore and maintain native plant communities in this beautiful woodland park at the base of Claremont Canyon. This month we will focus on the Harwood Creek Area (Bobs Place) where invasive weeds are threatening to take over. We will look for possible planting sites--and do some planting. Or if you have a favorite place to work, or wish to do some trail maintenance and clearing, we welcome your help. Wear long sleeves, long pants and shoes with good tread. We provide tools, snacks, and water. Please bring a water bottle for refills.

Meet at the Claremont Avenue entrance to Garber Park, 0.4 miles up Claremont from the Tunnel Road/Ashby Avenue intersection. Look for the Garber Park sign at the parking turnout. Maps and directions also can be found at www.garberparkstewards.org or contact Shelagh at garberparkstewards@gmail.com.

Sunday, February 18, 9 am, Sibley Park. For Oakland drivers, I recommend that you just get on Highway 24 and exit at Fish Ranch Road, right after the tunnel. We now meet at the Old Tunnel Road staging area, so a detour to reach Skyline is not helpful. We have loaner gloves and tools, and there will likely be both grey fuzzy buds and staminate flowers on the arroyo willows along the Sibley to Tilden trail.

Saturday, February 24, 9:30-11:30 am, join Friends of Albany Hill for the last Saturday of the month weeding and planting work party. Email for location (address below). Gloves and tools provided but bring a favorite weeding tool if you like. Wear closed-toed shoes with good traction and clothes that can get dirty. Long pants and long sleeves recommended. For more information: friendsofalbanyhill@gmail.com, friendsofalbanyhill.org

Margot Cunningham
Friends of Albany Hill
www.friendsofalbanyhill.org



Trillium chloropetalum

Photo by Janice Bray

**Native Here Nursery
101 Golf Course Drive, Tilden Park
Trillium Time!**

February 24, 2018: 10 am to 2 pm

Trillium are worth waiting for! They take several years of growth, disappearing entirely later in the spring and summer, reappearing in winter before flowering. They are a wonderful color "treat" in the woodland understory, often associated with redwoods. Limit 2 per customer on this day.

Other "treasures" include *Lewisia rediviva*, *Sedum spathulifolium*, and *Boechera brewerii*, denizens of a very different plant community, candidates for rock gardens.

February is still a good time to plant other types of plants, and Native Here has quite a variety on offer. Check the list of available plants posted mid-month on our website

www.nativeherenursery.org

11 am

**John Danielsen, propagator of special plants, will talk
about challenges of growing and caring for them**

POINT ISABEL RESTORATION REPORT: JANUARY 2018

Mushrooms are always a hopeful sign. When they start to appear in the mulch at Pt. Isabel we know that the days will be getting longer and the early flowering plants will soon be in bloom. When that happens we'll begin to see the native bees that roll and tumble in the poppy blooms. We see several species of mushrooms at Pt. Isabel, most of which emerge from the mulch. We don't know much about mycology, so we would appreciate the help of any who does who is willing to help us identify them.

In the absence of significant rain, our crew spent the early part of January irrigating the new plantings. Once we were confident the plants were settling in we turned our attention to carefully removing oat grass shoots from among the carpet of California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) on Steward Nina's site, thereby allowing the little poppy seedlings to benefit from the awaited rains. Then we began our yearly winter task of removing oxalis along the entire stretch of the project and taking out the clumps of oat grass that are encroaching on the new plantings. These tasks were carried out by the Pt. Isabel volunteers, who have come to know the native plants and can easily distinguish between what is to be weeded and what is to be protected.

We planted one more California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*) that we grew from seed collected from one of the buckeyes at the edge of the Hoffman Channel. Every buckeye sapling that we've planted is thriving and the first ones are already producing their own seeds.

We also returned to the Ramblers Club at Miller Knox and found that the French broom we had worked so hard to remove from around the coast live oaks (*Quercus agrifolia*), toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*), and coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) had, not surprisingly, returned. We spent a good part of two days removing it from around the base of all the trees and the shrubs. There's still a bit more to work on so we'll get the rest of the broom before it begins to flower. Special thanks this month to volunteer Richard Seals who works happily and tirelessly weeding around the native plants, saving every tiny poppy seedling that he encounters. Working alongside Richard is a real pleasure. Thanks also to Core Volunteer Rob Kirby for his unswerving work removing all the trash along Rydin Road, the trail itself, and beyond. Our appreciation as always to our great EBRPD Ranger, Bruce Adams.

Jane and Tom Kelly



Above, Tom and Richard clear the oat grass. Below left, Tom near an oak cleared of broom. (Photos by Jane Kelly.) Below right, a mushroom at Point Isabel. Photo by Tom Kelly.



In the last week, we've been out dodging these welcome rains to weed and plant. We had a big group out on Sunday and we rolled back the scattergrass in two areas near the Bay Grove. Welcome to Valerie, Steve, Jazmine, Yoshiya, James, Brandon and Alex.

Conditions look perfect for lots of planting on Sunday. We'll be planting on the Plateau and in the Bay Grove. We'll meet at Siesta Gate at 9:30 - please let me know if you can make it.

In our restoration work on the high ridge meadow areas at Skyline, we've been observing the role of gophers in the local ecology. Our local species of gopher is Botta's Pocket Gopher (*Thomomys bottae*) and they are little miners. They excavate underground homes of tunnels and many chambers: places to sleep, places to store food, places for their waste, and now, even little rooms for Gopher Wi-fi. Each gopher occupies a defined territory; in good soil this can span about 1,000 square feet (or an area about 30 feet square).

Gophers are vegetarians, and in the spots where they feed heavily, the surface is pock-marked with little holes and bumps. That's what their name comes from, for the word "gopher" comes from the French "gaufre" which means 'waffle;' they were named for the waffle-like pattern of their feeding holes.

All this excavation brings a lot of soil to the surface, which we see as gopher mounds. One gopher can move up to several cubic yards of soil each year. Now the soil that gophers bring up to the surface comes from deep in the ground, and it is mineral soil, nearly completely free of any seeds. So a fresh gopher mound becomes the perfect seed bed for new plants. These mounds are crumbly, so nearby seeds fall right into the pits and cracks, and these mounds are the perfect places to sprout with no competition. I have noticed that these gopher mounds are often the best places for annual wildflowers, especially in meadow areas heavily infected with greedy invasive grasses. These are places where our native wildflowers can grow and temporarily thrive with the competition pushed to the edges.

The same dynamic is also true of areas where our native perennials grow very thick. Without gophers, the perennials will simply cover and lock down the whole area and choke out the annual wildflowers. I first saw this years ago when I was exploring a "sea-stack" just barely separated from the Mendocino Coast. While the mainland had a rich display of tidy tips, gold fields, owls clover and such, the sea-stack was completely thatched over with native perennials such as *Phacelia*, angelica, lizard tail, buckwheat, yarrow and such. I couldn't explain why there were no annual wildflowers on the sea-stack full of natives, until I saw that there were no gophers out there to open up seed beds with their mounds of earth. Sure enough, remove the gophers and you remove these wildflowers.

We are finding these same patterns up at Skyline and here are some photos. Let's start with poppies; here's a shot of poppy seedlings on a fresh gopher mound:



You can see that the poppy seedlings are surrounded by the bare, pebbled earth of a gopher mound. Here's a shot of popcorn flower seedlings:



The large rosettes with the pointed leaves are popcorn flowers, two large ones and one small one. At the center right is a *Phacelia* seedling, with deeper vein lines on the leaves. The red stake is to flag these from over zealous vinegar sprayers or weeders. If these survive to make flowers and seeds, this spot will become a little reservoir of wildflower seeds for the next seasons.

Here's a large area of gopher activity surrounded by a ring of fiddleneck seedlings:



SKYLINE RESTORATION REPORT: CONT.

The fiddlenecks are quite well developed, and right here I believe they are growing in last year's gopher mounds. The soil to the left is very fresh, within days because it hasn't yet been rained on, and will provide the seed bed for next year's fiddlenecks.

Here's a medley of native plants coming up in a mound:



At the left is a miner's lettuce seedling. (The round leaves we associate with these will develop later around the flower stalk). In the middle is a buckwheat; a perennial who has survived the recent excavation. In the upper right are two seedlings of silver lupine, the shrubby lupine with the purple flowers. These have a long way to go to complete their life cycle.

Next time you are out, take a moment to look around and see how our little miner friends promote diverse and beautiful meadowlands.

The long spring that began with the first rains in October - over three months ago - is now beginning to blossom forth. The first wildflowers are starting to peek out at Skyline. Here's our lovely yellow ground-hugger, with the frilly leaves:

This is *Lomatium* (probably *L. caruifolium*), sometimes called biscuit root or hog fennel. They are members of the parsley family. Each flower head is about the size of a silver dollar,

and the color is a pure lemon yellow. They have a deep, underground tuber that sustains them in the dry season. By the way, these fine-cut clumps of leaves are devils to spot when we are out spraying vinegar.



And, here is our first Indian paintbrush:



We have lots of these at Skyline, and they just light up the land. It is wonderful, and deeply reassuring, to see them again.

Happy Trails,
Glen Schneider

FEBRUARY FIELD TRIPS

Saturday, February 17, 1:30 pm, field trip to Huckleberry Regional Botanic Preserve. If it's raining on February 17, but not on February 18, then this field trip will take place on February 18 at 1:30 pm. We'll meet in the Huckleberry parking lot and go out to look at maritime chapparal that flowers in winter.

Directors: Go from Highway 13 to Snake to Shepherd Canyon to its end at Skyline and turn left to follow Skyline to Huckleberry Park. The road damage on Snake is still not fixed. The trip leader is Janet Gawthrop.

Sunday, February 25, 2:00 pm, nature walk in Redwood Regional Park A fairly short walk along the East Ridge Trail starting at the Moon Gate entrance to Redwood Regional Park (on Skyline Drive).

The trail has many western leatherwood shrubs, which should all be in bloom, along with other shrubs and flowers. We will walk to the Chabot Observatory, and then some ways into the redwoods groves downslope. Trip led by David Margolies.

CONSERVATION REPORT

Richmond Planning Commission looks at Point Molate planning meetings

On January 18, 2018 the Richmond Planning Commission heard from members of the public about how the City should involve the community in determining land uses at Point Molate. Speaking on behalf of CNPS, I asked that Point Molate's rich botanical resources be represented as they are in the site overview that will be provided for these meetings.

Fortunately maps already exist that show the vegetation communities and special-status species on this approximately 300 acre, City owned shoreline property. We requested that the City share this botanical information in a format would inform the general public of its diversity and beauty.

It is important that Richmond residents be given the opportunity to learn about the unique richness of their city's natural heritage. Many Richmond residents have yet to experience the natural and scenic beauty of Point Molate.

The native flora of Point Molate is described in our chapter's Botanical Priority Protection Area publication (Bartosh et

al, 2012). Plant communities located there include coastal grasslands, coastal bluff scrub, salt marsh, wetlands, and eelgrass beds. Emerging with tall elegant stalks topped with white flowers, the rare Suisun marsh aster (*Symphotrichum lentum*, CNPS Rare Plant Rank 1B.2) has been documented next to brackish marsh there.

In 1996 a group of three esteemed botanists who are CNPS members, accompanied by Bruce Beyaert of Richmond (then representing the Point Molate Blue Ribbon Advisory Committee), ventured to visit a dozen spots on one spring day. Barbara Ertter, Chris Thayer, and our Rare and Unusual Plants Chair Dianne Lake compiled an impressive plant list from that one visit. They documented more than fifty rare, unusual, and significant plants, and submitted this list to the Richmond Planning Department.

After hearing a presentation from staff, the Planning Commissioners heard from several speakers in support of community-centered planning for Point Molate. In addition to CNPS, Citizens for East Shore State Parks and Richmond resident and Audubon member Tony Brake also commented on content they want included in planning meetings deciding Point Molate's destiny. For example, Mr. Brake has witnessed majestic ospreys returning to the peninsula in recent years.

Citizen input into the actual design of the community meetings was approved in a Council-passed proposal by Council members Melvin Willis and Ben Choi in November of 2017. The Planning Commission will return to make a recommendation on this item to Council on Thursday, February 1, 2018, about when and how to conduct the public meetings. The end goal of this planning process is to provide residents with the opportunity to comment on desirable land use designations, or zoning, on the Point Molate peninsula, including Point Molate's role in the big picture of Richmond's overall future.

The first community planning meeting on Point Molate is set for late Spring of 2018. In addition to staying posted for further updates and attending these meetings there are many ways to become involved. Photographs of the natural flora at Point Molate would be a helpful addition to the community meetings. Plant lists from field trips, both professional and amateur, would also contribute further records on Point Molate's exceptional nature. We encourage our members to visit Point Molate Beach Park, and attend the future planning meetings.

Bay Area wide conservation mapping being updated

The Bay Area Open Space Council is renovating its database and mapping tool on land use and conservation values for the San Francisco Bay Area. Called the "Conservation Lands Network" (CLN), it is primarily a database and mapping tool known as the "CLN 2.0 Science Expansion". CNPS partici-



Festuca rubra bunchgrasses on Point Molate hillside. Photo by Jim Hanson.

CONSERVATION REPORT CONT.



Coastal scrub, native grassland, and bird habitat at Point Molate in Richmond. Photo by Jim Hanson.

pated in the development of the original mapping tool and database in 2012. I have been representing East Bay Chapter of CNPS on the project's Vegetation Focus Team since October 2017. The vegetation team has been reviewing methods to represent general vegetation community types within a "coarse filter" by examining how to divide classes of vegeta-

tion without losing important biodiversity data, both known and predicted. Additional teams will focus on finer vegetation and resource mapping approaches later this year.

Karen Whitestone

Edits and pictures by Jim Hanson

JEAN ROBERTSON REMEMBERED

Our beloved Conservation Committee Chair Jean Robertson was a fierce protector of native plants. Since she died last November, friends and admirers have stepped up and made generous gifts to the East Bay Chapter in her memory. Knowing that Jean's heart was first and foremost in conservation, the chapter will use these donated funds for conservation action. As Jean's life partner Claire Wings puts it, "Conservation and Action were two of Jean's defining priorities in life." Jean would be pleased to see her work continue.

If you would like to make a donation in Jean's memory, please send your check to CNPS East Bay Chapter, P.O. Box

5597, Elmwood Station, Berkeley, CA 94705 and note in the memo line that it's in memory of Jean Robertson. Or go to <http://ebcnps.org/about-us/donations>. Choose either the Conservation Analyst fund (top "Donate" button) or the fund that supports East Bay CNPS activities in general (bottom "Donate" button). Make a donation and then send a note to corresponding-secretary@ebcnps.org letting us know your donation is in Jean's memory. It will be used well.

Barbara Leitner

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Officers and Committee Chairs serve on the Board

Committees are formed based on chapter needs and the interests of volunteers. Proposals for committees and projects are welcome and will be considered by the Board

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