

November 2018



The Bay Leaf

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

www.ebcnps.org

www.nativeherenursery.org

MEMBERS' MEETING NOVEMBER

Nature's Gardens: The 2017 Desert Superbloom

Speaker: Saxon Holt

Wednesday, November 28, 7:30 pm

Location: Auditorium, Orinda Public Library (directions below)

After five years of exceptional drought and heat in California deserts, an uncharacteristically rainy fall and winter season created a superbloom of desert wildflowers in the spring of 2017. Saxon Holt was there to record its beauty and learn how nature creates gardens. Starting in Anza Borrego State Park in the early spring, he photographed vast fields of annual wildflowers on the valley floor as well as the mix of perennials, shrubs, and cacti that were also having a superbloom. A few weeks later he photographed the spectacular bloom at the Carrizo Plain National Monument in southern San Luis Obispo County, again learning how nature combines plants to create natural gardens. If you weren't able to see the superbloom, or even if you were, come enjoy it through Saxon's stunning photographs and learn more about gardening from nature's own gardens.

Saxon Holt is an award-winning garden photographer of more than 20 books, is on the Board of Pacific Horticulture Society, and is a Fellow of the Garden Writers Association. He owns PhotoBotanic, a resource for photos, prints, photography workshops, and a series of e-books. His work as a photojournalist increasingly focuses on the relationship between gardens and the land, seeking a sustainable aesthetic that can enhance both gardener and the earth. He is currently working on a new book, *The Summer-Dry Garden*, to be published by Timber Press in 2019.

East Bay CNPS members' meetings are free of charge and open to everyone. This month's meeting takes place in the Auditorium of the Orinda Public Library at 26 Orinda Way (in Orinda Village). The Auditorium is on the second floor of the building, accessible by stairs or an elevator. The Au-

ditorium 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.

Upcoming Programs

December 2018: No meeting—happy holidays!

January 23, 2019: Cynthia Powell—New Calflora Tools for CNPS Users

Directions to Orinda Public Library at 26 Orinda Way, Orinda 94563

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.



Blooming shrubs at Anza Borrego State Park, spring 2017.
Copyright © Saxon Holt/PhotoBotanic

NATIVE HERE NURSERY

A season of many projects

About a year ago state CNPS announced it had money for grants to help chapter nurseries pay for anti-phytophthora (Sudden Oak Death) measures. After a great deal of work on our part – primarily Barbara Leitner and Charli, with help from Beth and me – we sent in our grant application on September 21. We asked for the full \$5000 each chapter was allowed to help pay for a soil sterilizer and metal table tops to make our plant storage and display tables safer.

We've been tracking sources of metal table tops for nearly a year. Charli ordered some which work well, but they don't come in the size we need most of, and we couldn't afford to buy all new anyway. Barbara has prowled Urban Ore and finally found a source of used metal pallet racks in Hayward which are just right. We had them delivered early last month and about seven people (including Dan Gluesenkamp, who visited that morning) unloaded them from the delivery truck into the parking lot.

On September 13 a group of Chevron volunteers brought about twenty of our plant benches up to the new standard, raising them at least a foot off the ground and installing new metal pallet racks for the plants to rest on. Then they replaced the plant cages we've always used to protect our plants from the local wildlife and put the plants back in. One of the Chevron teams rebuilt a row of benches in one of the hoop houses from the ground up; Steve Toby led that effort. It gives us three additional benches of badly needed space for new plants coming along. On October 6, a troop of Boy Scouts did twenty more.

And speaking of new plants, John is back at the nursery regularly and is leading the effort to catch up on sowing seed for the year to come. One week his team did 124 pots! We are now where we need to be.

Our fourth project this fall is tree work – the nursery was getting a bit too shady in spots for the plants to grow well. Penny has that work underway with assistance from Tom Arrington, our usual arborist. We've had a long standing problem with some pine trees in the back of the nursery; EBRPD will remove those next month, but we have to clean out all our accumulated junk before they come.

And finally, after two months, we have received permission from state CNPS to hire a new nursery assistant. This will do a lot to ease the burden on our volunteers, including nursery committee members.

Upcoming Events at NHN

We held our first winter special event on October 20 – our third annual Manzanita Day. Attendance was very good for John's talk, which focused on how to take care of manzanitas in your garden.

We have planned three more events:

- November 17 – Focus on Ferns
- January – subject TBD
- February/March – Flowering Annuals

Lesley Hunt

Nursery Committee Chair



Placing the new metal rack on the raised plant bench.

NATIVE HERE NURSERY EVENT

Focus on Ferns

Saturday, Nov. 17

10 am – 2 pm

11:00am – Talk by John Danielsen

Ferns in Your Garden

Native Here Nursery

101 Golf Course Drive
Tilden Park
Berkeley, CA 94708

Upcoming Events

January – subject TBD
Feb/March – Flowering Annuals

CONSERVATION FUND PROGRESS

Thanks to the following generous donors, the 2019 fund has grown to \$18,193 as of October 22, 2018! We are almost half-way to our goal of \$40,000. We truly appreciate your support!

Donations to the East Bay Chapter's Conservation Program are tax deductible and are used to support a half-time Conservation Analyst position as well as the work of the East Bay Chapter's Conservation Committee. Donations may be made via PayPal at the Chapter's website, www.ebcnps.org, or by check to "CNPS", with "Conservation Fund" as the memo, sent to the Chapter's address: PO Box 5597, Elmwood Station, Berkeley CA 94705.

Ann Adams, John Alcorn, Carl Anderson*, Carol Baumann, Luann Beadle, Carol Bieri, David Biggam and Howard Arendtson, Liz Bittner, Terry Blair, Peter Boffey, Richard Bogaert, Barbara and Robert Brandriff, Margaret Brostrom, Robert Case, Albert Chung, Patricia Coffey, Robert and Carol Coon, Elizabeth Crews, Colette Cussary, Mary Frances Dahlquist, Charli and John Danielsen, William Davis, Mary and Jay Davis, Sally de Becker, Isabelle de Geofroy, Adrienne Debisschop, Gene DeMar, Mark Detterman, John and Lisa Doyen, Sue Duckles, David Edelson and Karen Garrison, Chris Erickson, Marsha Feinland, Andrew Fitanides, Gordon and Jutta Frankie, Clara Gerdes, Krista Glickman, Greenberg Family Trust, Ann Gurbaxani, Miao He, Claudia and Scott

Hein, Peter Hopkinson and Wendy Woolpert, Russell Huddleston, Robin Hunter, Toris Jaeger, Ashok Jethanandani and Arvind Kumar, Nicole Jurjavcic, Jane and Tom Kelly, John Kenny, Caroline Kim, Julie Kinder, Arti Kirch and Cindy Siegel, Gudrun Kleist, Marcia Kolb, Kathy Kramer, Eve Lednicky, Barbara and Phil Leitner, David and Evelyne Lennette, Ed Leong, Vera Lis, Patricia Litton and Peter J. Ralston, David Loeb, Ronald Lutsko, Jr., Joel Lym, Matthew Madison, Thomas McCall, Lisa McCarty, Shirley McPheeters, Christina McWhorter, Jon Merkle, Louise Miller, Caroline Moyer, Steve Mullin, Sheldon Nelson, Linda Newton, Meredith Nielsen, Jana Olson, Sharon and Erik Ordeman, Christine O'Rourke Gaber, Elizabeth O'Shea, Anita Pearson, Stefanie Pruegel, Linda Ramus, Kira Reoutt, Krehe and Katherine Ritter, San Leandro Garden Club, Carol Schneider, Judy Schwartz, Shirleymae and Igor Skaredoff, Doris Sloan, Karen Smith, Dr. and Mrs. Lionel Sorenson, Robert Sorenson, Douglas Stinson and Joy Barnitz, Ruth and Donald Stiver, Emilie Strauss, Aaron Sunshine, Mary Jo Sutton, Chris Tarp, Delia and John Taylor, Iris Tommelein and Jim Lovekin, Laurie Umeh, Michael Vandeman, Jeanne Walpole, Stephen Walsh and Brenda Buxton, Wendy Weikel, Berthold and Risa Weis, Karen Wetherell, Shirley White, Susan Wickham, Steve Wiley, Joe and Doris Willingham, Kelly Woodard, Elaine Worthington-Jackson.

*In loving memory of Margo Hart Anderson

POINT ISABEL RESTORATION IN OCTOBER

Hoffman Marsh is divided in two by a large earth covered pipe that runs from the Bay Trail out into the Marsh almost to I-580. The pipe apparently belongs to Stege Sanitary District. The pipe is supposed to deal with rare “overflow” situations, but we have been out on what we call “the spit” when wastewater had been pumped into the Marsh on clear sunny days. That is a story for another day. What we wanted to report on is our long term efforts along the spit to remove trash (mostly tennis balls from the dog park) and invasive weeds (mostly Russian thistle and Algerian lavender). On October 1st, we removed two large plastic bags (each 3/4 full) of fresh green Russian thistle aka opposite-leaved saltwort (*Salsola soda*), an annual shrub that is said to be native to the Mediterranean Basin. We understand that the ashes of the burnt plant can be refined to create soda ash that is used for making products including glass and soap. It was surprising to find such an invasion of this exotic as Steward Nancy had only recently scoured the entire area and removed what we thought was every last vestige of this plant. We’re left somewhat in admiration regarding the speed at which the plant grows.

11 volunteers came to the October 6 work party where we continued preparing the ground between Lewis’ and Tom’s sites that we will plant this coming winter. We removed weeds and weed piles, and we also spread mulch. Steward Sue Schoening was moving weed piles in the area when she came across a beautiful small Pacific gopher snake (*Pituophis catenifer catenifer*) that she gently covered back up. We know gopher snakes are at Point Isabel, but it has been a while since we’ve had the privilege of encountering one. Once this site is

planted, the project will be connected for a length of 1/3 mile from the intersection of Rydin Road and Central Avenue to just beyond the Hoffman Channel.

We were pleased to welcome Vincent Washington, an engaging new volunteer who is taking environmental classes at CCSF and volunteered with us for his class requirement of 24 hours of restoration type work. Vincent was making notes about our California native bunch grasses and other native plants as we worked along the trail.

We held a special work party on October 13 and planted in a sunny/shady spot 9 of 19 *Melica imperfecta* (small flowered melica) bunch grasses donated to the project by Native Here Nursery. On Sunday, October 14 we went for a brief walk at Point Isabel, but alas our walk was cut short when we spotted masses of Russian thistle growing along the marsh beyond the Hoffman Channel. Even though it was unplanned, it was fun pulling it out before it went to seed.

An enthusiastic crew showed up for the October 20 work party and we removed large patches of invasive mallow as well as stands of fennel. We are gradually replacing the fennel with yampah (*Perideridia kelloggii*) to ensure sufficient habitat for the Anise Swallowtail butterflies.

As always our thanks to all the dedicated volunteers and to the EBRPD for its consistent support.

Jane and Tom Kelly



MORE PICTURES FROM PT. ISABEL



Previous page: Crew on October 6. Above: Vincent and Jeff. Left: *Melica imperfecta*. Left below: Removing the mallow. Above: October 20 crew. All photos by Jane Kelly.

SKYLINE GARDENS REPORT (OCTOBER 23, 2018)

Lots happening in the last two weeks: we installed the new trail sign at Siesta Gate; we've mowed several expansion areas for the coming year; and, we discovered a new plant for our list: jim brush (*Ceanothus oliganthus sorideatus*) which brings us to 277 native species at Skyline Gardens.

Last Saturday, we installed the new trail sign at the Siesta Gate hiking entrance. Here it is:



This completes the work we started at Siesta Gate last year with the new fencing, trail entry and the bench. We were able to re-use the posts from the old sign, and even the bolts. Special thanks to Mark at EBMUD for providing the sign, and to Jim of Take to the Hills for all his help with everything. We're making big plans to expand in the coming year. The first step in claiming new ground is to mow down the invasive thistles and hemlock, so we can get in with the vinegar, once the rains come, and zap the seedlings. Over in the Saddle (on the way to Barberry), we're testing out some new mowing techniques to see if we can simplify the process. Here is the Saddle before (above) and after (below):



The grey-brown patch in the center of the left was a no-man's-land of dead thistle. An hour later, on the right, they're all gone. The good news is that the thistles in that patch were so thick that once they're sprayed, there won't be any weeds underneath, so the natives can move right in.

Over by the Water Tank, we decided to take on the whole swale area below all the way to the armored crossing in the trail. This has been a really nasty spot with hemlock, teasel, milk thistle, spurge, and Italian thistle. Here's a picture after hand cutting the larger stalks and then mowing:



This area will be a challenge because of the mix of invasives, some of which are perennial. And then, there are surprises. While out hand mowing, we found and liberated the best stand of yampah, about thirty plants, in all of Skyline Gardens. The butterflies will love us for that.

On the new plant front, I just found a patch of jim Brush (*Ceanothus oliganthus sorideatus*) in the woods down behind the picnic table. Here's a shot of a small branch:



Shrubs can be ten to fifteen feet tall, with a willowy habit. The leaves are bright green and shiny on top. The stems are reddish in color. The flowers are light blue. Jim brush is found in coastal mountains up and down the state. In our area, they are uncommon, but they grow here and there in woodland

SKYLINE GARDENS REPORT CONTINUED

glades, often on north slopes. There's a number of them down in Huckleberry Regional Botanic Preserve, and also in the Mitchell Canyon area of Mount Diablo. We've been expecting to find this one sooner or later, and now we have. Here's a 20X close up of a seed cluster:



We'll be planting these seeds right away and hopefully have some plants in the spring to tuck in here and there. Ceanothus are larval food plants for the Pale Swallowtail butterflies. I think a grove of these would be really handsome in the swale by Siesta Gate .

This is the 277th native plant species we've found at Skyline Gardens. The rangers at EBMUD think we'll eventually hit 300 species and I think that's realistic. I can think of a number a likely suspects that we should eventually find, not to mention the surprises.

FIELD TRIPS

Friday, November 23 , 2:00 pm, BuyNothing Day hike at Kennedy Grove (El Sobrante)

Janet Gawthrop will lead this beginner level field trip through the Sea Foam and Black Oak loop trails, for about 2 1/2 miles. There is a stream running through this regional park, so we can practice ID of deciduous plants without leaves along the water.

We'll also look for plants in seed, and just maybe some very late autumn flowers. Rain date for this hike is Saturday, November 24, also at 2:00 pm. Be sure to go to the trailhead at the end of Patra Drive, which you reach by turning left on Hillside. Do not go to the EBMUD entrance. Bring water and snacks if you want to come early and picnic. For a far more thorough plant list than any I could prepare go to www.meetup.com/ebcnps/ and find Gregg Weber's list for his

Asters are still blooming by the picnic table; here's a cluster:



Evenings have become really special. We are blessed by the serenade of the crickets, three species of them, everywhere. And right now there are four planets in the sky: Venus, Jupiter, Saturn and Mars.

Here's a shot of the holy mountain in alpenglow:



As far as I can tell, it's all perfect. Now, we just need rain. Happy Trails,

Glen Schneider

past meetup on March 11. Any other questions, e-mail to janetgawthrop47@gmail.com.

Directions: From I-80, exit at San Pablo Dam Road and head east for several miles (beyond Clark Avenue and the turnoff for Wildcat Park) and turn left at Castro Ranch Road. Go more or less uphill several blocks on Castro Ranch and then turn right onto Hillside. Follow Hillside east until you reach Patra Drive. Turn left and look for street parking, which is free and relatively abundant. Car haters with bicycles can take AC Transit #74 from Richmond BART at about 12:30 and get off at the very last stop at Castro Ranch and Sherwood Forest Road. It is a slow bus ride, but a relatively easy bicycle ride on Hillside and you can lock your bike to the fence by the entry.

RESTORATION PROJECTS

Saturday, November 3, 9:30 am, Greens at Work at Pt. 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.

Sunday, November 4, 10 am, John Kenny's crew at North-shore Basin at the mouth of Schoolhouse Creek in north Berkeley. Contact johnkenny54@yahoo.com.

Saturday, November 10, 9 am, Sibley Park, starting from Old Tunnel Road staging area

Sunday, November 11, 9 am, Redwood Park, broom bash starting from Canyon Meadows

Saturday, November 17, 9:30 am, Greens at Work at Pt. 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.

Saturday, November 17, 2018, 10:00 am to 12:00 pm, help restore Garber Park, 7397 Claremont Avenue, Berkeley, meet at the Claremont Avenue entrance to Garber Park



Rebuilding the hoop house benches. The team is leveling the bench supports, which have to be just far enough from truly level for the water to drain out of the channels in the racks.

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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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