

November 2017



The Bay Leaf

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

www.ebcnps.org

www.nativeherenursery.org

MEMBERS' MEETING

Plants, Bugs, and Molecules

Speaker: Greti Séquin

Wednesday, November 15, 7:30 pm

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

Plants and insects communicate in numerous ways, and chemistry plays a key role in these communications. Natural compounds determine whether a plant is consumed by insects or avoided by them, or which insects may pollinate its flowers. Some insects have learned to use plant compounds as their own defenses, and some plants digest insects as nutritional supplements. Plant-insect interactions are vital for our food supply, for pollination of orchards, and for the production of honey and silk. They can also be destructive in insect infestations of crops.



Greti Séquin (shown collecting in the photo above) will introduce the subject of her new book, *The Chemistry of Plants and Insects: Plants, Bugs, and Molecules*. With her enthusiastic and accessible way of connecting chemistry with plants and insects, she presents organic compounds in a motivating, understandable context that captures the interest of people who would like a deeper understanding of the natural world. Her presentation and book are aimed at non-chemists who enjoy observing plants and insects during walks in the outdoors or while visiting botanical gardens and other nature areas. There will be a few copies of *The Chemistry of Plants and Insects: Plants, Bugs, and Molecules* available for purchase after the presentation (\$35, cash or check only).

Greti (Margareta) Séquin has a Ph.D. in organic chemistry, with emphasis on natural products, from the University of Basel, Switzerland. After postdoctoral work at Princeton University she has been teaching organic chemistry, natural products chemistry, and chemistry for non-majors at San Francisco State University for more than 20 years. As a plant enthusiast, with great interest in the insect world as well, she has been a docent at the Regional Parks Botanic Garden in Berkeley, California, for the last 20 years. She has led numerous field seminars at botanical gardens and at nature preserves, teaching about plant chemistry. She is dedicated to making organic chemistry accessible by combining it with the natural world. Greti Séquin is the author of *The Chemistry of Plants: Perfumes, Pigments, and Poisons*, published by RSC (Cambridge, UK) in 2012, and *The Chemistry of Plants and Insects: Plants, Bugs, and Molecules*, (RSC, 2017).

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

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.

From 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.

MEMBERS MEETING (CONT.)

Upcoming Programs:

December: No meeting (happy holidays!)

January 24, 2018, 7:30 pm, Orinda Library Garden Room

Photo Sharing Night

Gardens, landscapes, flora, fauna, plant art, you name it! Come to share your images or just to enjoy the photos that others bring (nonmembers are most welcome to present and/or enjoy). Pro and amateur photographers are all invited and appreciated.

VERY IMPORTANT: Please contact Sue (programs@ebcnps.org or 510-496-6016) by January 22 if you want to show photos. You'll receive a reply with information about photo format (digital images, old-fashioned slides, and prints are all welcome) and how to upload photos prior to the meeting.

HOSPITALITY HELPERS NEEDED

Do you enjoy learning about native plants and seeing beautiful photos of them and their habitats? Meeting friendly, like-minded native plant enthusiasts? Volunteering? Food?

We're looking for a few people to share the all-important volunteer job of bringing refreshments to our East Bay CNPS Members' Meetings. With a few rotating volunteers, each person will only be responsible for refreshments at two or three meetings a year. East Bay CNPS pays for the refreshments and provides the dishes, utensils, etc.

When: Fourth Wednesday of January-May, September, October; third Wednesday of November, 7-9:30 pm

Where: Garden Room, Orinda Public Library (26 Orinda Way)

What's involved:

- shopping for refreshments before meeting
- bringing refreshments to meeting venue at 7 pm (someone else will bring dishes, utensils, tablecloth)
- setting up refreshments
- helping clean up refreshments when meeting ends

If you would like to help, please contact Sue: programs@ebcnps.org or 510-496-6016.

FIELD TRIPS IN NOVEMBER

Sunday, November 12, 9:45 am, Mount Diablo, Back Canyon, end of Regency Drive, 117 Regency Drive, Clayton
You can RSVP and get more information on this field trip at www.meetup.com/ebcnps/.

Family Marsh Trail. If it is raining or the ground is muddy, then we may re-route to the Bay View trail. Birds and maybe butterflies are also fair game on this beginner-level trip, with a view to plant communities and their resident wildlife.

Friday, November 24, 10 am, Buy-Nothing Day trip with Janet Gawthrop to Pt. Pinole Regional Park, 3000 Atlas Road
Join us at the parking lot. If the rain holds off, we will see what late salt marsh plants are still flowering along the Dotson

Directions: From I-80, take the Richmond Parkway exit and follow it to the Giant Highway. Follow the improved signage at the Giant Highway to Pt. Pinole Park, which will guide you to the lot.

There are moments when all anxiety and stated toil are becalmed in the infinite leisure and repose of nature.

Henry David Thoreau

How novel and original must be each new mans view of the universe - for though the world is so old - and so many books have been written - each object appears wholly undescribed to our experience - each field of thought wholly unexplored - The whole.

Henry David Thoreau

We need the tonic of wildness...At the same time that we are earnest to explore and learn all things, we require that all things be mysterious and unexplorable, that land and sea be indefinitely wild, unsurveyed and unfathomed by us because unfathomable. We can never have enough of nature.

Henry David Thoreau

SKYLINE GARDENS REPORT, OCTOBER 2017

Last week was the week of the new benches at Skyline. It was lots of work, involving Berkeley Path Wanderers, Head to the Hills, Skyline Gardens and family. We set the benches in place on Wednesday, finished the platform wall Thursday, and opened them up for use on Saturday. There's a bunch of photos below. And in between we mowed and raked two more sections of Barberry Ridge. Special thanks to carpenter Jim, welder John, photographers Francesca, Steve, and Cynthia, and stonemover Matt.

The Cal Rotaract day on Saturday was cancelled on account of bad air and high winds. Thanks to Bob and Berkeley Rotary for putting it together - we hope to reschedule soon.

We'll be back to regular days this week: Wednesday at 4 pm and Sunday at 9:30 am. Please let me know if you can make it.

Now on to the benches:

We first got permission from EBMUD Watershed to install one bench at Siesta Gate and another at Diablo Bend. Then we started looking for recycled wood. We located some beautiful old growth redwood timbers that we harvested for free. Carpenter Jim took them to his shop in West Berkeley and planed and smoothed them up. He got recycled metal from Urban Ore and got his welder friend John to weld the frames. Then Jim assembled both benches at his shop and brought them up to Skyline in his van on Wednesday. Five other workers met him there.



Here's the first bench going in at Diablo Bend. We dug the post holes with a rock bar and post-hole digger. It was tough going. You can see it's not quite set in this shot. The wood for this bench came from the old sideboards of my daughters' sand box. Soon, we mixed and poured concrete around the posts and braced and all wrapped up in yellow tape. It was so smoky there that we couldn't even see Mt. Diablo but we got the perfect placement anyway!

The next photo shows the proud and happy crew after the first bench was set:



Then we moved down to Siesta Gate where we did the same. The digging here was much easier. We needed a couple more rocks to complete the wall, so we moved them into place and called it a day.

On Thursday I snagged my son-in-law Matt, who was staying with us because he and my daughter were evacuated from their farm in Suisun Valley because of the fire. He's built like a bull and helped move the final two rocks into place (next to the stump) and we re-graded the area.



Here is Matt with that part all done, the bench still braced and taped to let the concrete cure.

This bench is made of old-growth redwood 4x4's that we pulled from a collapsed structure right below the road shoulder on Grizzly Peak where we park our cars. You have to see them up close to admire the tight grain and beautiful sheen. There are about 60 rings of growth in some of them. They even have some old bolt holes here and there; good places for hiding secret notes if you're into that.

SKYLINE GARDEN (CONT.)

So now we go to Saturday, when Cynthia and I removed all the tape and the braces, and opened them up for business.



Here's the view from behind the Siesta bench with good old Mt. Diablo in the distance.



And lookie here, somebody already found a place to sit.



Down the trail, here's the bench at Diablo Bend. We were especially happy with how we were able to set the bench in an existing trail pocket right close to the trail shoulder, so the line of the back rest just aligns with the slope.



If you look towards the right end of the middle back rest, just before the bolt, you might see a couple of yellow hammer dimples. These boards were painted yellow when they were the sandbox. A bit of history is embedded there.



And here's one of the locals enjoying the view.

So to sum up, the redwood for the benches was all recycled and free for the hauling. The metal frames came from Urban Ore at a cost of \$10. The carpentry, welding, and installation were all donated by volunteers. EBMUD provided the concrete. The bolts and hardware cost \$22. So for a total cash outlay of \$32 and many hours of loving work we now have two beautiful benches.

Come on out and try one.

Happy Trails,
Glen Schneider

NATIVE HERE

"When will the Special Sale of plants for creeks and wet spots take place?" The answer is Saturday November 18 at 10 am. Following our special events in September and October, highlighting manzanitas and ferns, there will be discounts on selected riparian and other wet-growing plants on November 18th.

Look for willows (*Salix* spp.), many *Carex* and such creek loving plants as *Physocarpus capitatus*, and *Populus* species with special half price flagging.

Carol Maxwell will talk at 11 am about wetland plants, their uses and needs. Carol has a distinguished background in wetland systems, beginning with daily childhood ventures to the magic of a vernal pool in her backwoods. Carol has over 15 years experience working with clients to develop their artistic garden visions. She serves on the Board of Directors of the Society for Ecological Restoration International and

has developed restoration plans for tidal wetlands, vernal pools, and bogs in various areas of the country. She has traveled to many parts of the world speaking on the overlap of landscape architecture and ecological restoration. She enjoys introducing folks to the endless possibilities of working with plants and will be highlighting some of Native Here's wetland gems in her talk.

Come and bring your lunch to enjoy while listening to Carol's talk, then continue shopping for plants.

If you are not looking for plants for wet spots, we will be offering over 200 species of other local native plants for your delight.

For more information see www.nativeherenursery.org.

Native Here Nursery

RESTORATION PROJECTS

Saturday, November 4 at 9:30 am, Pt. Isabel

Join Tom & Jane Kelly at this regular work date. You do not have to RSVP, but it helps planning if you e-mail to kyotousa@sbcglobal.net.

Saturday, November 4, 9 am, restoration at Redwood Regional Park, Canyon Meadow staging area, sponsored by the East Bay Regional Park District

For more information contact Jeremy Saito jsaito@ebparks.org.

Sunday, November 5 at 10 am, North Basin, mouth of Schoolhouse Creek, at Eastshore State Park

Saturday, November 11 at 9:30 am, Huckleberry Regional Botanic Preserve

Join us at the parking lot, where we will decide on the worksite for the month. To RSVP, and for more information on this botanic preserve, go to www.meetup.com/ebcnps/.

Saturday, November 18 at 10 am, Garber Park Stewards

Meet at the Claremont Avenue trailhead above the Claremont Hotel. This regular monthly crew has its own Meetup page to RSVP and for information, maps, photos, etc.

Sunday, November 19, 9 am Sibley Regional Park

We'll keep meeting at the Old Tunnel Road staging area, but let us know if you'd rather start from the Skyline Gate and hike Sibley-to-Tilden Trail to the wall of broom. It's a nice early walk so long as the trail is not muddy. You do not have to RSVP, but for information or directions you can e-mail janetgawthrop47@gmail.com or sibley@ebparks.org.

Saturday, November 25, 9:30-11:30 am, join Friends of Albany Hill for the last Saturday of the month restoration work party

We'll be weeding invasives and planting natives. Location to be announced. 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. Heavy rain cancels. For more information: friendsofalbanyhill@gmail.com, friendsofalbanyhill.org.

Margot Cunningham

Friends of Albany Hill

www.friendsofalbanyhill.org

CONSERVATION ANALYST'S REPORT

CNPS advocates for protection of botanically-important trails in EBMUD Watershed Plan

For decades the East Bay Municipal Utility District has allowed hiking and equestrian use on only some watershed trails out of concern for protection of the water supply and watershed biodiversity. However, release of a Watershed Master Plan update in June 2016 included draft language to open four trails in the EBMUD watershed to mountain biking: Pinole Valley, the "Eagle's Nest" trail above the San Pablo Reservoir, the Skyline Trail in the Oakland Hills, and a narrow trail link between Redwood Regional Park and the Huckleberry Preserve.

Concerned with impacts to flora and trail use, the East Bay CNPS conservation committee became an active participant in the Safe Trails, Environmental Protection alliance (STEP). In addition to CNPS, the STEP alliance includes the Sierra Club, Audubon, Regional Parks Association, Metropolitan Horseman's Association, and Claremont Canyon Conservancy and is coordinated by former EBMUD Board Member Helen Burke. One of the guiding principles of the alliance is to keep narrow hiking trails in the EBMUD watershed safe and enjoyable for hiking and equestrians.

EBCNPS was concerned with the proposed opening to mountain biking of the narrow, and occasionally steep, serpentine path through the botanically rich Skyline Trail on EBMUD land. It lies between Tilden's Steam Trains and the Caldecott Tunnel (Hwy 24) and is also the location of the Skyline Garden's Project. Glen Schneider of EBCNPS leads restoration weeding workdays in this botanically diverse trail area. They have documented a remarkable 237 native species in the area. Even limited mountain biking from occasional illegal biking was leading to damage to trail edge plants and gullying.

Other EBMUD proposed trail openings of concern included opening a narrow Redwood Park trail link that would take mountain bikes to the entrance of Huckleberry Preserve, as well as a Pinole Valley Trail that would take bikes to the entrance of Sobrante Ridge Preserve. Both preserves have the rare pallid manzanita and narrow walking trails where biking is prohibited. With support from the Bay Ridge Trail Project, the Bicycle Trails Council, and an EBMUD Board member advocate, all four trails would be opened to mountain biking as a "pilot project" over two years upon adoption of the Master Plan.

CNPS members, other STEP organization members, and members of the biking community filled the downtown Oakland EBMUD hearing room in August 2016 to comment on the proposed Master Plan trail changes. Articles appeared in local papers. CNPS and other STEP members spoke at an EBMUD Board Meeting on needed changes to the plan. This summer we joined mountain biking representatives in a EBMUD-sponsored tour to evaluate possible low-impact fire road trail configurations on EBMUD land in the Pinole Valley. Finally, in early October, EBMUD staff returned with a set of trail use recommendations that they will be bringing

to the Board. The recommendations are different from the trail openings first proposed in the draft Watershed Plan over a year ago.

First, EBMUD staff will be recommending long term protection of watershed trails of CNPS and STEP alliance concern. The narrow Skyline Trail where the Skyline Gardens Project is located, a Pinole Valley "apdage" trail going directly to Sobrante Ridge Reserve, and a narrow trail linking Redwood Park to the entrance of the Huckleberry Preserve will remain dedicated to hiking and equestrian use only.

Second, the wording on trail uses in the draft Master Plan has been revised to state that only two watershed trails, Eagles Nest and Pinole Valley, can be opened for biking. Both are wide fire and service roads.

The Eagle's nest trail is a short fire road that connects San Pablo Dam Road (across from the reservoir) with the Nimitz Trail in Tilden Park, a wide and paved trail that is open to both hikers and bikes. The Pinole Valley trail is also a fire road that connects the Crockett Hills Regional Park and Fernandez Ranch to the Castro Ranch Road in Pinole and to San Pablo Dam Road.

Third, EBMUD will be looking into enforcement measures such as: rules of the road posted at the Eagle's Nest and Pinole Valley trailheads, bikes will need to have trail permits just like hikers and equestrians (however the District agreed to look into a more convenient way to sign up for trail access in the watershed), signs should educate users about threatened or endangered species so users can avoid injuring them, and EBMUD will provide a simple online way to file a complaint over inappropriate trail use. The EBMUD Board of Directors can also revoke bicycle access on these trails at any time and for any reason.

One of the positive outcomes from our meetings with District watershed staff has been their growing appreciation of the unique biodiversity of the Skyline Trail. Glen was invited to give native plant talks at the District offices. Also, an amazing and skilled volunteer group called the "Trail Dogs" donated several days this year to repairing sections of the Skyline Trail. Log "water bars" and gravel switchbacks were built for the steep and eroding portions of the trail near the Steam Train entrance.

The revised EBMUD staff recommendations on trail use for the long-range Watershed Plan will go to the Board for approval, likely in the beginning of the new year. Stay tuned.

Jim Hansen
East Bay Chapter Conservation Chair



Hiking path in Huckleberry Regional Botanic Preserve. Photo by Jim Hansen.

PT. ISABEL RESTORATION

The reason we do what we do - at Point Isabel and elsewhere - is because of the overwhelming awe we experience at the beauty and complexity of Nature. That life evolved over billions of years on this tiny planet spinning on the edge of an unremarkable galaxy inspires us to do as much as we can to preserve and support its continued health. Our efforts are modest at best but we do realize the incredible potential we humans have to learn from our mistakes and then work together to overcome the barriers that impede our collective efforts to bring about positive, substantive changes. We believe that current policies are causing changes to the climate which will have deleterious consequences to the environment and life on earth and that those policies should change. We feel everyone must begin working together like we never have before to address these issues. We must stop destroying our forests and natural areas. People do ask "what difference can one person make?" because it is so hard to imagine how small changes can have any meaningful effect. We remind ourselves that the Sahara Desert is made up of grains of sand that have an average diameter of .02mm. It's a big desert. The small project at Pt. Isabel is a grain of sand but we do it knowing from experience that collective action fosters the kinds of changes that we must make.

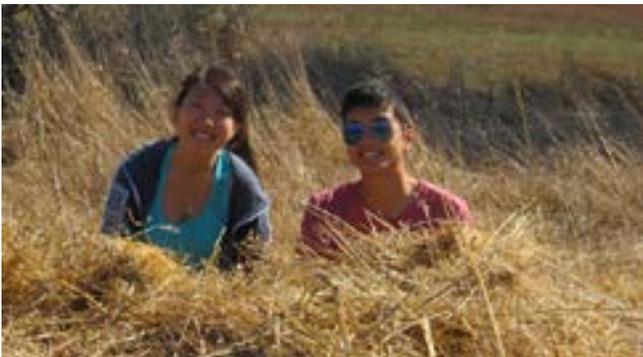
On Sunday, October 1, we held a special work party with six delightful volunteers from Circle K led by Gavin Li. This small crew accomplished the work of a dozen - removing oat grass and fennel and spreading mulch over all of the newly cleared area. Circle K's work inspired us to continue clearing and mulching the adjacent area with the help of ten energetic volunteers who came out to our scheduled October 7 work party. With many thanks to all these stellar volunteers, the connection to the southern part of the restored trail is now in sight.

The toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*) berries are ripening. A Northern Mockingbird showed up to check them out and we expect the flocks of Cedar Waxwings and American Robins to arrive soon to enjoy the repast. A new volunteer, Mayu, a recent Cal grad, took a photo of the mockingbird (page 9).

Thanks to Park Supervisor Scott Possin, Ranger Bruce Adams, and to all Scott's EBRPD crew for their on-going support.

Jane and Tom Kelly

POINT ISABEL RESTORATION PICTURES



The October work party (top); two from the Circle-K group (left middle); Karen nixes bindweed (left bottom); and a job well done (right). Photos by Jane Kelly.



Northern Mockingbird. Photo by Mayu Hanabusa.

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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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