

February 2019



The Bay Leaf

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

www.ebcnps.org

www.nativeherenursery.org

FEBRUARY MEMBERS' MEETING

Local Phenological Monitoring at San Lorenzo High School's Native Plant Garden

Speakers: Joia Fishman, Gladys Valadez, Joleen Freed

Wednesday, February 27, 7:30 pm

Location: Garden Room, Orinda Public Library (location info below)

Phenology is the timing of life cycle events in an organism's life. Birds will time their nesting so that their eggs hatch when the most insects are available to feed their offspring. Flowering times are often affected by seasonal temperatures. Native Americans used phenology to decide when to harvest or hunt certain plants and animals. Farmers use phenology to decide the schedule of planting. Phenology influences the distribution and abundance of organisms, food webs, ecosystem services, and global cycles of water and carbon. Phenology can in turn be altered by changes in temperature and precipitation.

The USA National Phenology Network (USA-NPN) was established to form long-term phenology datasets of a broad variety of species across the United States. There is growing evidence that global climate change is altering the phenology of flowering, breeding, and migration in many organisms. However, these changes are not all occurring at the same rate or in the same direction, resulting in the mistiming of previously synchronous phenological events. The USA-NPN states that critical applications of monitoring phenology include "management of invasive species and forest pests; predictions of human health-related events, such as allergies and mosquito season; optimization of when to plant, fertilize, and harvest crops; understanding the timing of ecosystem processes, such as carbon cycling; and assessment of the vulnerability of species, populations, and ecological communities to ongoing climate change."

Joia Fishman (shown in the photo) first learned of the USA-NPN from a previous supervisor who ran a phenology walk at the UC Santa Cruz Arboretum. Joia attended UC Santa Cruz for four years, where she earned her B.S. in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. Interested in the citizen science aspect of the phenology walk, Joia and her mother, Anita Wah, began talking about the possibilities of bringing phenological monitoring to the Druids, an environmental club

formerly advised by San Lorenzo high school teacher (and Joia's father) Alan Fishman. They thought that this would be a great opportunity for students to get involved in citizen science and contribute to research on a national scale. Anita and Joia took a course from the USA-NPN to become certified local phenology leaders so that they could start a recognized phenology monitoring program at San Lorenzo High School's native plant garden. The phenology monitoring program is now up and running at San Lorenzo High School.



Student leaders Gladys Valadez and Joleen Freed, president and vice president of San Lorenzo High School's Druid Environmental Club, will begin this month's presentation with a description of the innovative programs that occur in the school's one-acre native plant garden and nursery. Next, Joia Fishman will introduce us to phenology and the USA-NPN and also invite CNPS members (and other interested native plant lovers) to learn about phenology first hand at a workshop she and the Druids are offering at San Lorenzo High School this March. Those who attend the workshop will be able to send data to the USA-NPN from observations in their own gardens.

FEBRUARY MEMBERS MEETING (CONTINUED)

East Bay CNPS members' 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, Orinda 94563, a few blocks from the Orinda BART station. 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.

Upcoming Programs:

March 27, 7:30 pm, Orinda Library Garden Room
Ann Riley: Restoring Unlikely Urban Environments

April 24, 7:30 pm, Orinda Library Garden Room
Camille Nowell: The Kaweah River – Botany, Biology and Human Interactions

May 22, 7:30 pm, Orinda Library Garden Room
Michael Uhler: Botanical Gems in the Ruby Mountains



Save the Date!
March 16 ~ 11 am

*Flowering Annuals
and
Associated Plants*
John Danielsen

Native Here Nursery

STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR THE CHAPTER

Strategic planning and East Bay CNPS: your input invited

Like most organizations, the East Bay Chapter of CNPS realized it could not do every worthwhile thing, and its board decided to embark on a formal process of setting priorities. To do this fairly, openly, and objectively, we needed to review our fundamental assumptions: what is our purpose as an organization, what is EBCNPS' contribution to conservation, education and appreciation of native plants, and what we can do to become more effective in our mission. We invite you to be a part of this process.

All healthy organizations need to take stock every so often. If it's done well it is an opportunity to make sure we are all working from the same assumptions, take the time to step back and appreciate what we are doing well as an organization, and identify what we need to do better or differently. It also is a chance to dream a little. When people in an organization take the time to review together, it can be a surprisingly affirming and creative process.

A strategic planning process will take some time and energy, but the Board believes a current plan will be useful and timely. We see this process as an opportunity to affirm our common ground, recognize what we are doing well, and identify what is most important going forward.

Where We are So Far

Seven EBCNPS members have formed a committee to coordinate communications about strategic planning. The board has approved our chapter mission statement – which is identical to that of CNPS as a whole:

To conserve California native plants and their natural habitats, and increase understanding, appreciation, and horticultural use of native plants.

Then the committee gave the board draft vision and values statements. A vision statement is a compelling, vivid picture of what the world will look like in the future if the organization achieves its purpose. It may never come to be exactly, but it's a way of describing what we aim for and sets a yardstick by which to measure our progress. Here is our draft vision statement:

The East Bay Chapter of the California Native Plant Society envisions a future where all people know and value native plants, especially in their native habitats.

A values statement is a summary of the core beliefs of the organization that inspire and guide its choices in the way it operates and deals with people. These are statements that guide our behavior, how we go about our work, and what inspires pride and brings out the best in us. Here is our draft values statement:

The values of the East Bay Chapter of the California Native Plant Society:

1. Science-based

Science-based information about native plants is the basis of good public policy and promotes widespread understanding and support for protecting native plants and their habitats.

2. Inclusive

Membership and leadership are open to all. Realizing that the future of native plants rests with a diverse and growing human population, we aim to facilitate the understanding and appreciation of native plants among all people.

3. Collaborative

We collaborate with individuals and other organizations by freely and mutually sharing information and perspectives to support understanding, protection and enhancement of native plants. We form alliances with others to advance common goals.

4. Ethical

We act with responsibility and integrity within our organization, toward others, and toward the environment.

5. Connected to Nature

We provide opportunities for people to connect with native plants and the wildlife they support—in the wild, in their communities, and around their homes.

Your Thoughts?

We invite you to think deeply about your vision and values for East Bay CNPS, and to share your thoughts with us about the vision and values statements we have drafted. Write to us at planning@ebcnps.org. Please give us your comments by February 10.

Stay tuned! We will keep you up to date on our work with regular reports in the Bay Leaf, at membership meetings, and on our website. We will be working closely with each chapter committee to identify strengths, areas for improvement, and opportunities for EBCNPS to do a better job of achieving its mission. We hope all members will join in making EBCNPS a better, stronger, more effective organization. In alphabetical order, we are:

Sally de Becker, Judith Frank, Lesley Hunt, Barbara Leitner, Sue Rosenthal, Judy Schwartz, Beth Wurzburg

MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR CELIA ZAVATSKY

There will be a memorial service and celebration of Celia Zavatsky, longtime Chapter field trip coordinator and volunteer at both Jepson Prairie and the Regional Parks Botanic Garden. Celia was born October 14, 1940, and was one of the few remaining survivors of the World War II Japanese internment camps. Despite this rough beginning, Celia gave back much to California in her lifelong passion and education work for California flora. The gathering will be at Jepson Prairie on Saturday, March 9, at 11 am. Carpooling is encouraged because of limited parking at the site.

Britt Thorsnes, bthorsnes@gmail.com

I don't recall when I first met Celia, but, eventually, I felt as if I had known her for ages. Both of us passed through ages in our own lives through those many years, linked by the botanic garden, our adoration of wildflowers, an urgent longing to see them and protect them in the field, a powerful desire to see the garden thrive and to secure its long-term future, and, well, just chemistry. She graced the garden. I liked her instantly. Celia was a celebrity for me because she had been interned during WW II, and I have long had a deep interest in that war and its injustices and atrocities. There was a botanic garden connection there, too, as Earl Warren, to whom Jim Roof, the garden's first director, appealed in his (successful) early effort to deal with wrongdoings, was an ardent promoter of rounding up Japanese American citizens (something he later deeply and sincerely regretted). Naturally Celia had a serious interest in this history, and she introduced me to a book just a couple of years ago that opened my eyes to what had happened in California.

Celia Zavatsky was one of the Regional Parks Botanic Garden's earliest, most enduring, and best volunteer docents. She was one of a small core group that could be counted on to show up in a pinch when there was a school group too large to handle or one clamoring for a program on short notice. All of you know how gentle, modest, welcoming, joyful, and enthusiastic she was, and all this translated beautifully when she introduced a group to the garden (or to the Jepson Prairie). Celia was serious about native plants and their protection. She volunteered for the Park District's Stewardship Department, monitoring rare fritillary populations at Diablo Foothills, Contra Loma, and Brushy Peak. Her work, and her concern, helped the Park District to improve its management of these populations and the botanical and range management parts of its stewardship program. She loved this genus and traveled to far flung sites around central California to study it. Consequently, she was always able to provide up-to-date information on what was blooming where. Celia was constantly tipping me off on the best current wildflower displays and on sightings of rare plants that she or others had made. I deeply appreciated this, as administrative work stole so much of my time. Many of the plants and sites to which Celia led me showed up in my presentations at the Wayne Roderick Lectures the same year. Stella Yang was her frequent companion on outings, and I owe both of them a great debt for enriching my botanical life.

Once she discovered the garden, Celia attended nearly every WR lecture during my time as director. She always sat in the front row, and she almost always taped my lectures. Here is where things really get personal for me. I had a lot of experience lecturing, but I continually challenged myself to be better, and I nearly always had a fear I would mess up. Sometimes extreme fear. However, Celia was right there. This gentle, loving lady, who I knew cared about me, was in the front row, usually sitting very close to where I was standing. She was my anchor. I knew, if Celia was there, everything would be OK. And so it was. I just wonder how many people she affected this way.

After I had retired, I would run into Celia walking around the garden — more and more slowly though, as she had a frightful, progressive disease that she knew would be terminal fairly soon. And yet she was cheerful. She was delighted to see me. She was not distracted by her condition but focused on the glory of the garden, the plants, and our conversation. So it was again when I visited her in hospice. Celia was about as brave and steady and solid a person as one could ever know. I would be thankful if I could face the inevitable myself with half her grace.

Steve Edwards

Director emeritus

Regional Parks Botanic Garden

I will never forget the first and only time I heard the expression, "You've been botanized!" At the time, I had been regularly volunteering with Celia at Point Reyes. We were helping the Marin chapter of the California Native Plant Society monitor their county's rare plants at the national seashore. Once again, Celia and I were returning late to the East Bay in the twilight of a Saturday evening; both of us reflecting in awe at the seashore's incredible beauty. Upon expressing amazement at the wild and diverse flora and sharing my urge to return as soon and as often as possible; Celia, beaming with a heart melting smile looked me in the eye and explained that I had been "botanized". I had never heard this saying before, but I knew it was a good thing and that our friendship was bonded. Our love of California's wild places was the start of the most fulfilling friendship.

Celia was also botanized., Come late winter and early spring she was at the garden or e-mailing plans and updates for our next wildflower trip or relaying to me the latest details of California's wildflower viewing hotspots. Celia was devoted to California's wildlands and had an infectious passion for the state's flora, a passion that I am ever so fortunate she shared with me. I am greatly indebted to Celia for sharing her intimate knowledge of when and where to see these floral beauties. Celia was both a mentor and a dear friend, she shared with me everything she knew of our irreplaceable flora, she knew where to go and when and what we were looking at. I was always in for a treat when we traveled to together.

CELIA ZAVATSKY MEMORIAL (CONTINUED)

Not only was Celia selfless in sharing her floral knowledge with me, she also introduced me to all her friends in Marin and elsewhere, who are among the best botanists and conservationists in our golden state. Indeed, Celia was one of the most influential persons in my career at the Regional Parks Botanic Garden; perhaps the most influential. I felt that Celia was in no small way a deputy director of the botanic garden that I work at. As we at the botanic garden are bound by our mission statement to grow and display wild collected plants, Celia felt it incumbent upon her to show me where these plants were in the wild. As a volunteer, a friend and a lover of the botanic garden Celia escorted me to the best wild plant places that we could get to together. No one involved in the garden, either professionally or avocationally, has shared as much time with me as Celia, her commitment to our public garden is a timeless gift to all who enter our hallowed space.

Slowly Celia's intractable illness restricted her movement and eventually forced her to be homebound. It was during this

homebound period that I was asked to help cook for her occasionally as she was unable to do so for herself. As difficult as I thought this would be emotionally, I always left Celia's place feeling uplifted by our time spent together sharing stories and reminiscing the times spent botanizing and exploring our favorite wildflower hotspots. It was during this period that I realized how much I admired and respected Celia. Celia is one of the strongest persons I have ever met and the most generous. At the end of one of my evenings with Celia she gave me her one of a kind heartwarming smiles as I departed. When I close my eyes this permanent image is instantly and vividly recalled as I reflect on my time with Celia and all the wonderful memories of our time spent in the field together.

Celia will always be with me.

Michael Uhler

RESTORATION PROJECTS

On Wednesdays 2 pm to 5:30 pm and Sundays 9:30 am-1 pm, Skyline Gardens Project holds workdays 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 the East Bay Municipal Utility District. We hold workdays twice weekly, Wednesday late afternoon (after work), and Sunday morning for three and a half hours.

Saturday, February 2, 9:30 am and Saturday, February 16, 9:30 am, 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.

Saturday, February 2 at 9:00 am, Redwood Regional Park French broom rip

Join Redwood Park staff at the Pinehurst Gate entrance where we will continue pulling broom and freeing up the oak woodland and coastal prairie for its own flora. Stay tuned to the chapter list-serve in case of any last minute changes. You can reach this entrance by continuing east on Redwood Road past the main entrance until you reach the intersection with Pinehurst Road. Turn left and proceed.

Sunday, February 3, 10:00 am - 1:00 pm, the monthly North

Basin restoration meets at McLaughlin Eastshore State Park in Berkeley, on the bay shoreline south of Tom Bates soccer fields, to remove invasives encroaching on the native plants.

A map of the area can be found at <https://goo.gl/rqdZQW>. For directions to the work site or more information about this project, contact John Kenny (johnkenny54@yahoo.com).

Saturday, February 9 at 9:00 am, Sibley Park French broom rip on the Orinda side, starting from Old Tunnel Road staging area.

We go out in mist or light rain, but heavy rain will cancel, due to concerns about erosion on steep slopes. In case of muddy trails, we will go out, but using the paved fire road to avoid further muddying the storm flow channels through the Bay Ridge trail. Bring gloves and your favorite tool, or you can get loaner tools from Sibley Park staff. For more information, e-mail either janetgawthrop47@gmail.com or sibley@ebparks.org.

Sunday, February 17 at 9:30 am, Huckleberry Regional Botanic Preserve, starting from the main parking lot on Skyline. Click on this link for more information: <https://www.meetup.com/ebcnps/events/dqwtthyzdbmb/>

Saturday, February. 23 at 9:30-11:30 am, TASH (Tending the Ancient Shoreline Hill) work party. Email tashorehill@gmail.com for location.

SKYLINE GARDENS REPORT

To catch up on recent events, thanks to the many people who wrote to the EB Parks board on the Bunchgrass Trail issue; at my count over thirty Skyliners weighed in on that. We won a partial victory there. The possibility of new trails in the Twin Canyons area of Sibley Park was kept in the plan, but the exact placement of the trails and who might use them (hikers, horses, bikes) was downgraded to “undetermined” pending further discussion and formation of a trail users’ group. In short, public concern moved those trails from a ‘definite’ to a ‘possibility’ and that’s a big step in the right direction. This issue will likely take several years to resolve, and we’re confident of a good outcome there.

Since the rains we’ve been focused on two things: controlling invasive seedlings and planting out new natives. We’ve been spraying vinegar on nearly every clear day and have sprayed over 200 gallons so far; purchased two new sprayers (we now have 5) and now have ten people trained to do the spraying. After we spray we weed by hand, and we do that when the weather’s not good for spraying.

In terms of planting, we’ve grown over 600 new native plants from seed we collected at Skyline, to keep the local genetics pure up there. Here’s a photo of some of our new plants, all grown from seed:

At the end of last August these plants were all just little seeds in envelopes in rows in a shoe box. Now look at them! Setting aside the two round pots, which have bulbs for future years, we have, from bottom left, clockwise: red cobweb thistle, wooly mules’ ears, silver lupine, poppies, California phacelia, fleshy lupine, chia, wild rye grass, squirreltail grass, and sticky monkey flower. So far we have planted out over 300 of these at Skyline, so we’re right on track there. The rest will go in over the next month.

One of the big challenges in spraying vinegar and in hand weeding is identifying all the various native and invasive plants in their seedling stage, which is not so easy. So we’ll be featuring baby seedlings in our reports so we can learn them. Let’s start with our state flower, California poppy. These are

quite distinctive. Here’s a three-week old California Poppy: This one is growing in one of our nursery flats; the cell is one inch across for reference. In this shot you can see two very different kinds of poppy leaves. The lowest leaves are the long, forked “snakes’ tongues”, poppy’s seed leaves. The upper leaves, or true leaves, are emerging from the center. The true leaves of nearly all plants are usually quite different from the seed leaves, so that adds to the challenge of knowing them when they are young. In the case of our poppies, the forked, blue-green “snakes’ tongues” are quite distinctive and easy to learn.

If we follow the growth of our poppies in the nursery, in about six weeks, the true leaves become many and the roots take the shape of the container. One of our “poppy cubes” taken out of the nursery flat is shown on the next page,



The poppy here already has a rosette of eight or more leaves and a thick set of roots. This one is ready to plant out. The poppy cube here is one-inch wide and 2 and 1/2 inches deep. When we plant them out we dig a hole just deep enough for the roots, firm the soil around, and give them a shot of water. From then on they’re on their own, and the vast majority do just fine.

The shot on the left on page 7 was taken under a 20x microscope. Looking closely, we can see not only the thread-like poppy roots, but the millions of fuzzy root hairs like fine cotton. These are where the real action is underground, in terms of taking in water and nutrients. If this poppy here were not confined to a nursery flat these roots and root hairs would already be close to a foot deep in the soil. At the bottom of page 7 is a close up of what is depicted on the left.

On the right on page 7 we go above ground again and take a peek into the center of the poppy’s leaf rosette, where new leaves are forming:

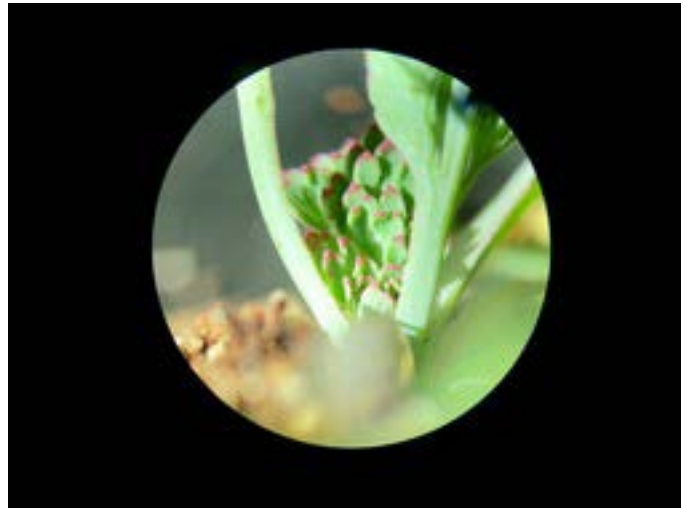




Look at the new leaf with the little ink tips. Honestly, what could be more precious?

Rain; new life emerging; hope arising.

Happy Trails,
Glen Schneider



POINT ISABEL RESTORATION

El Cerrito Recycling Center and Point Isabel, January 2019

It's 2019 and we're stepping out. A friend (Carrie) who works at the El Cerrito Recycling Center (ECRC) asked if we might help remove French broom (*Genista monspessulana*) and other invasive plants on the lower hillside at the Center behind the recycling bins. The area is adjacent to the Hillside Natural Area. Her goal is to establish butterfly and insect habitat and to offer tours of the site demonstrating the value of California native plants. As so often happens when people hear about a worthy project, the outpouring of support has been astounding. In addition to the willingness of so many people to volunteer, Native Here Nursery (NHN) in Tilden kindly offered to donate 60 bunch grasses: purple needle grass (*Stipa pulchra*), foothill needle grass (*Stipa lepida*), and blue wildrye (*Elymus glaucus*) to get the restoration started. NHN's donation was all we needed to determine that we would go forward with this project. We are tending the donated grasses now and preparing them for planting once the site is cleared.

On January 12 nine volunteers came from far and wide to weed wrench a massive thicket of broom, lop towering stands of giant reed (*Arundo donax*), and to collect the seed heads on large pampas grasses while removing the small stands of pampas grass that were trying to take hold. It was a 6-hour work party resulting in filling nearly six dumpsters that the Center unloaded into its large green waste dumpster.

At the end of the day, when Gudrun was pulling down the last of the weed-wrenched broom, she spotted willow trees growing behind the remaining broom on the upper hillside! While we knew there had to be significant water on the lower hillside that was supporting the *Arundo donax*, we were very surprised to see willows growing higher up. A small creek, called Wildwood Creek, runs about ½ mile north of the upper hillside. We wonder if a spring is nurturing the willows or whether it is the extremely steep hillside itself that provides sufficient moisture throughout the year. We are especially excited to finish the broom removal work and reach the willows. We will request help to identify the species and we are already talking about the plants that could thrive with these trees.

We continue our work at Point Isabel and this month we witnessed king tides coupled with strong winds creating waves on Hoffman Marsh. We monitored all the new plantings (that are thriving in the rains) and added one hollyleaf redberry (*Rhamnus ilicifolia*.) Birds were in abundance and brought to mind this wonderful poem written last year by our environmentalist friend and local poet –

Shift

It was just
a small flock.
It lasted five seconds
at most.
But they were flying
low overhead.
And the beat
of their wings
in unison
seemed to shift
the very molecules of
the cold still quiet air
and to shift
the entire day,
a gift.

Lisa Owens Viani
December 2018

Sincere thanks to [Native Here Nursery](#) for the donation of bunch grasses. We also send our thanks to all the fantastic volunteers who work with us and with other groups.

Our next work parties will be held on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays in February and March 2019. Contact tkelly@kyotousa.org

Jane and Tom Kelly

Left: Lewis, Willie, Tom and the Pampas grass. Right: Tom plants *Rhamnus ilicifolia*. Photos by Jane Kelly.



POINT ISABEL JANUARY 2019 PHOTOS



Above: ECRC Work Crew + Carrie, Below: *Arundo donax* towering over volunteers. Photos by Jane Kelly.



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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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