



# The Bay Leaf

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

[www.ebcnps.org](http://www.ebcnps.org)

[www.nativeherennursery.org](http://www.nativeherennursery.org)

## NOVEMBER MEMBERS' MEETING

**Local Indigenous Native American Ethnobotany: Useful, Edible, Medicinal, and Ceremonial Plants**

**Speaker:** James "Doc" Hale

**Date:** Wednesday, November 20, 7:30 pm

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

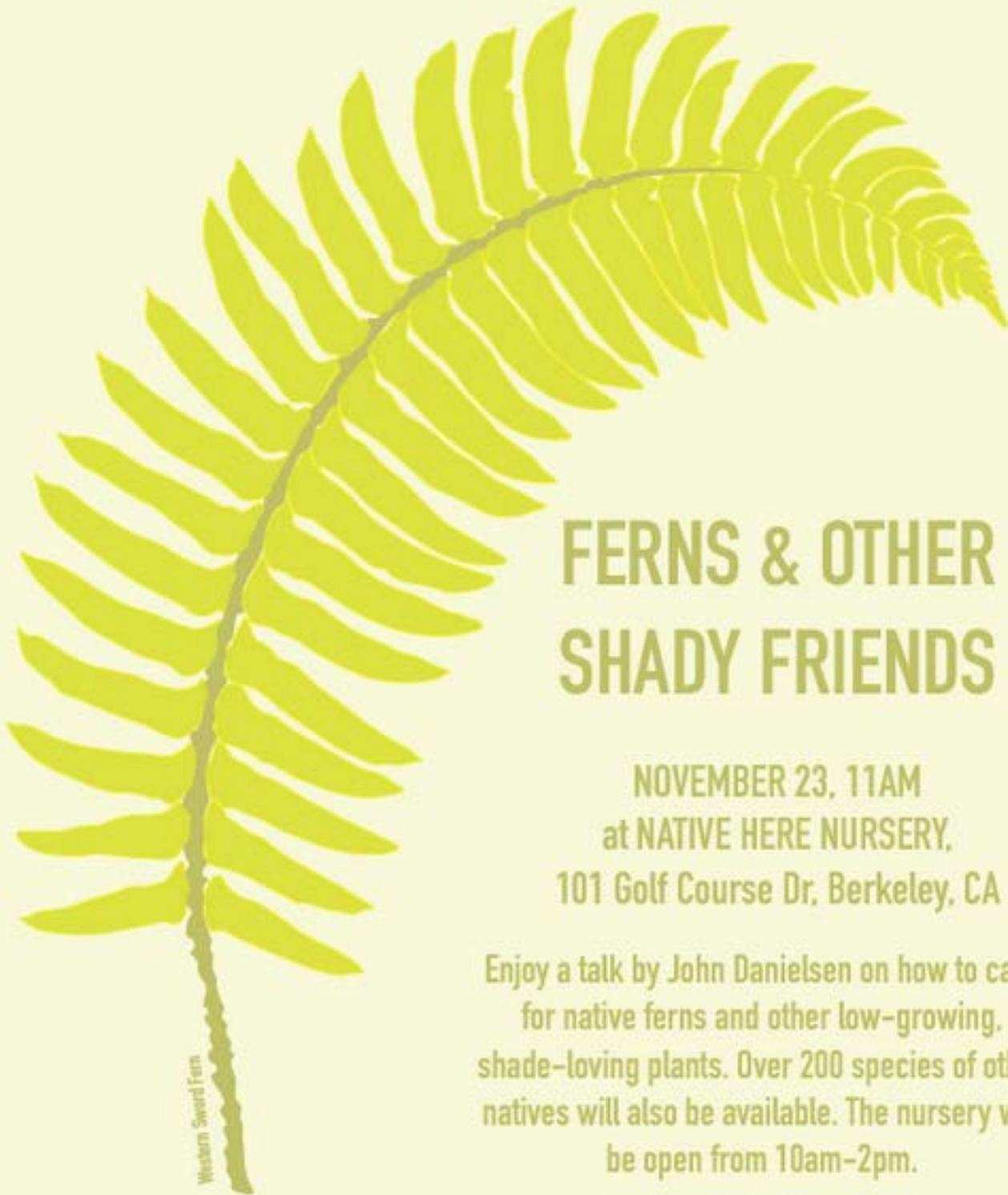
Over 1,000 California native plants have been identified as being used by indigenous Native Californians. Some of the more interesting uses: the silica-filled stems of horsetails (*Equisetum* spp.) have been used to sand and polish bows, arrows, and other objects; the flowers of California lilac (*Ceanothus* spp.) have been used as a skin cleanser and shampoo; and the flower stalks of deergrass (*Muhlenbergia rigens*) are valued for their flexibility, strength, and ability to expand when wet, making this grass species ideal for weaving watertight water jugs. Doc Hale will speak about the many plants that were and still are used for food, for medicinal and religious purposes, for tools and baskets, and as dyes.

James "Doc" M. Hale (photo below) has been a professional vertebrate zoologist, certified wildlife biologist, ethnobiolo-

gist, and ecological consultant for 46 years. He has conducted field research throughout California (as well as other states), is an ecological consultant for various private and public organizations, conducts varied wildlife surveys, and has developed numerous environmental impact reports. He has broad knowledge of the cultural and natural history of California and leads interpretive field trips to cultural sites. His current projects involve analyzing mountain lion ecology in Contra Costa County; researching Native American archaeology; and recording the wildlife, plants, and archaeological sites at Brushy Peak Regional Preserve in Livermore.

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. Email [programs@ebcnps.org](mailto:programs@ebcnps.org) if you have questions.





## FERNS & OTHER SHADY FRIENDS

NOVEMBER 23, 11AM  
at NATIVE HERE NURSERY,  
101 Golf Course Dr, Berkeley, CA

Enjoy a talk by John Danielsen on how to care for native ferns and other low-growing, shade-loving plants. Over 200 species of other natives will also be available. The nursery will be open from 10am-2pm.

**Native Here Nursery is a project of the  
California Native Plant Society, East Bay Chapter**

# CHAPTER BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION

Nominations are open for CNPS East Bay Chapter officers. Here is the process for electing officers to the EBCNPS Board of Directors. Elections are held annually. The officers of the chapter are elected by the membership.

Chapter members in good standing may be nominated or nominate themselves to run for a position on the EBCNPS Board by written petition signed by five (5) or more persons who are also members in good standing, with written consent of the nominee.

There are 5 elected positions:

- **The President** shall preside at all meetings at which he/she is present, appoint committees, install newly elected officers at the beginning of the new term, call special meetings of the Chapter, committees or any other meeting as needed, and develop the agendas and budget for the year reflecting the goals of the Chapter Board. The Chapter President will cause the annual Chapter Report to be prepared and submitted to state CNPS.
- **The Vice President**, in the absence of the President, shall exercise the functions of the President and shall have such powers and discharge such duties as may be assigned by the Chapter Board or the President

- **The Treasurer** shall submit such reports as required by the chapter, including preparation and payment of sales taxes. The Treasurer shall keep and maintain correct accounts of the transactions of the Chapter following standard accounting procedures.
- **The Recording Secretary** shall keep minutes of all business meetings of the Chapter Board and make such minutes available following the meetings, shall give notice of all Chapter Board meetings to the Board members, and shall perform such other duties as are prescribed by the Chapter Board, President, or CNPS, the corporation.
- **The Corresponding Secretary** shall keep files of all correspondence, shall conduct such correspondence as may be directed by the officers, shall forward a record of correspondence to the corporate office of CNPS when requested, and shall perform such other duties as are prescribed by the Chapter Board or President.

The Election will be by paper ballot in the December 2019 *Bay Leaf*. Nominations by petition are due to the Nominating Committee Chairperson by November 15, 2019. Mail to: CNPS East Bay Chapter c/o Delia Taylor, PO Box 5597, Elmwood Station, Berkeley CA 94705

## RESTORATION PROJECTS

**Saturday, November 2 at 9:30 am, Point Isabel restoration.** Join the Kellys and Greens at Work on the San Francisco Bay Trail side of Pt. Isabel, just to the west of the Central Avenue exit from the 580 freeway in El Cerrito. For more information email [tkelly@kyotousa.org](mailto:tkelly@kyotousa.org).

**Sunday, November 3 at 10 am, Northshore Basin.** Seeding and planting may resume if any early rains permit. Weeding will continue, as will the return of salt grass along the shoreline near Schoolhouse Creek. For more information, email [johnkenny54@yahoo.com](mailto:johnkenny54@yahoo.com).

**Sunday, November 17 at 9:30 am, Huckleberry Regional Botanic Preserve:** Meet us at the parking lot, where we will decide on the day's work location and pick up loaner gloves and tools. To RSVP and for more information, go to [www.Meetup.com/ebcnps/](http://www.Meetup.com/ebcnps/) and look in upcoming events on this date. Same e-mail as for the Sibley Park date if you need more information.

**Saturday, November 30, 9:30-11:3 am. Join TASH (Tending the Ancient Shoreline Hill) for habitat restoration on Albany Hill.** More info: [tashorehill@gmail.com](mailto:tashorehill@gmail.com)

## POINT ISABEL IN OCTOBER

We thought we'd have a quiet month out at Pt. Isabel, but it sure didn't turn out that way. At our first work party, our old friends Mark and Lisa appeared. These two are partly responsible for getting us started on this fifteen year long saga at Point Isabel. In the early 2000s, Mark and Lisa rode their bikes with us after work. We spotted ice plant growing on the banks of the south end of Hoffman Marsh. Dropping our bikes at the water's edge, we worked avidly to remove the first batch of ice plant and from that moment a work of love evolved.

At our first work party in October, we spread mulch along the edge of the trail, removed bindweed, oat grass, mallow, dock from around the honeysuckle, and a few remaining Russian thistle from the marsh edge.

On October 3 and 4, forty-two freshmen from Saint Mary's College High School in Albany came out to help remove invasive plant infestations along the Bay next to the Point Isabel dog park. The students pulled out and dug out multiple infestations of ice plant, invasive grasses, Russian thistle, mustard, fennel, one of the non-native geraniums, and asparagus from around the California native shrubs. When the work was done they spent a little time at the shoreline skimming stones, finding little crabs, and enjoying the spectacular views of Mt. Tamalpais and the City. Many thanks to these students and their accompanying teachers for a job well done! And thanks to Steward Nina for helping herd the kittens!

At the second work party on October 19 new volunteer Derrick arrived with his seven year old daughter Adi, who

worked tirelessly digging out invasive mallow and preparing the soil for a California-fuchsia (*Epilobium canum*) plant that had been donated to the project. Adi helped dig the hole and single-handedly added the soil amendment. She helped plant the California-fuchsia, irrigated it and marked it with sticks. It didn't seem as though any task were beyond Adi and we were all very impressed. Adi and we are looking forward to the hummingbirds visiting this plant next year.

Karen and Jane carefully chose sites and tucked in the harvest brodiaea (*Brodiaea elegans*) and one leaf onion (*Allium unifolium*) bulbs that Gudrun had collected in her garden and kindly donated to the project. We can't wait for the rains to arrive and for these beautiful plants to emerge.

Yet another highlight of the second work party was when Steward Nina arrived carting three beautiful buckeye trees (*Aesculus californica*) that she had grown last October from the large orange-brown seeds collected from the buckeye trees we found at Point Isabel when we first began the project. Nina selected the locations for these three trees and settled them into the ground by providing them with a good drink of water. These trees fit perfectly at Point Isabel.

We thank Core Volunteers John Kenny for his untiring removal of pepperweed and Rob Kirby for his continuous trash pickup. Thanks as always to the East Bay Regional Park District and to Ranger Bruce for their support.

*Jane and Tom Kelly*



St. Mary's Crew on October 4. Photo by Tom Kelly

## POINT ISABEL OCTOBER PHOTOS



Above: St. Mary's crew on October 3. Below left: Nina and one of her buckeyes. Below right: students' beach discovery. (Photos by Jane Kelly.)



## POINT ISABEL PHOTOS (CONT.)



Above: October 5 crew and our ranger Bruce. Below: October19 crew members. (Photos by Jane Kelly.)



## POINT ISABEL PHOTOS (CONT.)



Above: Derrick and Adi prepare ground for planting. Below: oat grass crew. (Photos by Jane Kelly.)



# SKYLINE GARDENS

In the last month we've wrapped up the great scattergrass hunt on the south ridge and have now moved up to the Northern Triangle area - the area above Siesta Gate recently cleared as a firebreak. Our Skyline Gardens Alliance is in charge of the restoration there. We spent Sunday there - weeding, seeding, and smoothing up the contours, getting ready for the rains. Speaking of rains, we had a teaser in late September, but it may now be time for a rain dance.

In this report I'd like to share a piece I wrote on "The Seasons of California" (a shorter version appeared in EBMUD's book on gardening in summer dry landscapes). My whole life I have been captivated by the question of what are the seasons of California and what are their names. Here's my answer:

## The Seasons of California

"Immigrants to California from the East or Midwest will often say that they miss the seasons, the colors of fall and the snow, those familiar, dramatic changes that define the natural year. It's true, California is not like that. The four-season model of winter, spring, summer, and fall just doesn't fit here. California is different, with its own seasons, both dramatic and subtle. California is a land all its own.

What if we were to set aside ideas from other parts of the world and look at nature here, on its own terms? What if we ask ourselves, "What are the seasons of California and what are their names?"

At first, we might think there are just two seasons, the rainy season and the dry season. Water is fundamental, and life is defined by its presence or its lack. True, but there is another season. As the weather warms and the rains taper off, from mid-February to mid-June, we have four glorious months when the still-moist land explodes with color and life. We might be tempted to call this time spring, but that would be misleading, for in California, nature has already been springing forth for four months, ever since the first rains. The third season is when nature blossoms forth. It is wild-

flower season, and wildflowers make California a place like no other on Earth.

So we can think of California as having three seasons: the rainy season, the wildflower season, and the dry season. Each spans a third of the year and each is about four months long. They are the rhythms of our land, the framework through which all species must find their way.

Each season is clearly marked. Rainy season begins when the first rains soak the ground in October. From that point forward life starts afresh and the land begins to green. Rainy season ends and wildflower season begins in mid-February with the leafing out of the buckeyes (shown below left).

Wildflower season lasts until mid-June, with the passing of the mariposas and clarkias in the drying grass. The dry season, the time of brown hills and heat, is when life winds down to rest. It lasts until the first rains in October.

## The Rainy Season

There is no calendar date for the start of the rainy season, but its onset each year is clear and precise. It begins with the first big rain, usually in October -- the most dramatic day of the year - the day when the thirsty land drinks again, becomes moist and fragrant, and soon green. For California, it is like New Year's Day and the first day of spring all wrapped up together.

The first seedlings appear within a week, and so do the newts. In the first month, the bulbs and roots are up - soap root, lace plant, buttercups, and chanterelles (photo: James Maughn):

In December, as buckeye balls dangle and fall, the trees and shrubs join the parade: first the pink and white bells of manzanita appear, and then the chartreuse flowers of bay.



The rainy season brackets the winter solstice with four months of cool, wet weather, shorter days, and slanting light. In be-



## SKYLINE GARDENS (CONT.)

tween storms, there are clear days, days of fog, frosts, and the best sunsets.

By New Year's, the catkins of alder and hazelnut appear, as do shoots of elderberry and the pussy willows. The currants then bud and bloom.

By the first of February, the hills are greening. For four months now, new life has been sprouting and growing, and the long spring that spans two seasons is already half over. Buckeyes leaf out, in the rain, heralding the onset of the next season. They are the curtain rising on the second half of the play.

### Wildflower Season

Wildflower season unfolds in three phases: the early, wet phase; the balmy, showy phase; and, the closing, drying phase. The first phase, late February and March, is still wet. The creeks are flowing, the ground is often soggy, and it can flood. But the storms become warmer, farther apart, and are often followed by warm, moist days with puffy white clouds. The woods are first to blossom: as buckeyes unfold their leaves milk maids and trillium blossom in the woods.



Soon come forget-me-nots, and out in the openings, buttercups and shooting Stars. The first bumblebees appear, and with warming nights, tree frogs sound. By the end of March, with the light now stronger, the early bloomers are already making seeds.

The showy phase comes in April, with shirtsleeve days and dwindling rain, and the explosion of the wildflowers. After six months of leafy growth they blossom forth in all those remarkable colors and shapes: poppies, larkspur, lupine, tidy tips, fiddlenecks, owls' clover, mule ears, the whole menagerie (see the next picture).

Wildflower season is the great time of insects: butterflies, bees, and thousands of others, feeding from and pollinating the flowers. It is also the birthing time for mammals, Gopher, Coyote, and Deer. The big, deciduous oaks finally green up and birds are everywhere, singing, mating, and nesting. The



hills are emerald green and it's great to get out and savor the pure joy of just being alive.

But by May, the rains have finished and the land begins to dry. There may be a storm or two, but the ground is getting harder, grasses are seeding, and the noses of the ridges are turning brown. Now come the bulbs -- brodiaea, onions, and mariposas -- more butterflies, and many beetles. Wildflower season comes to a close with them and the clarkias - farewell-to-spring - those elegant pink cups, blooming in the drying grass.



### The Dry Season

The dry season settles in with the relentless spread of hard soil, brown hills, and stickers. During June and July, there is still plenty of plant and animal activity, but things are quieting down. This is when the hardy Californians step forth and

## SKYLINE GARDENS (CONT.)

shine, those tough souls who bloom in the dry heat - soap root, yampah, milkweed, tarweeds, and later on asters and California-fuchsia.



Insects are still active, with the serenade of the crickets on warm summer nights, but on the whole they are more solitary, like Tarantula Hawks on milkweed, and dragonflies cruising far from the creeks.

These bursts of action stand out against the general trend, life ebbing and coming to rest. Seeds ripen and fall, bulbs and roots rest underground, leaves wax and thicken. The creeks



either slow to a trickle or dry up altogether. Most insects and some mammals burrow under to rest.

Nature enters a hot, dry slumber. Buckeyes say it best by browning their leaves. The land becomes still, and a day out in the hills in August will be suffused with quiet, rest, a good baking, and a search for shade. It is the dormant time, in content much like the deep snowy winters of the East and Northern Europe. It is the time when all living things put into play their various water strategies - to rest, or toughen up, or lie low - to survive the heat and the dry.

But by September the heat begins to lose its power. One day that familiar yellowish light is back, signaling change. Over the month maples yellow, rose hips and honeysuckle berries redden, and poison oak turns to pink and violet. Monarchs drift west, to their resting spots on the coast. The sun moves visibly south, its light ever thickening.

The days shorten, but they are still warm. The air is often smooth and dreamy. Some days time just seems to stop, bathed in a balm of sweet, amber sunlight.



By October the nights cool down and the dew becomes heavy. Some leaves fall, too, in the crinkled woods, but this is not the fall of other lands. These are the final days of the year, filled with the bittersweet of endings and the promise of renewal. Soon high in the West, come horsetail clouds - crystals of moisture blown ahead of the storms, now forming out over the sea (photo NWS).

Seeds lie waiting, ready to sprout, and eyes turn towards the sky. Our thoughts turn to green in these final dry days, as we wait, and wait, for rain.

Happy Trails,

*Glen Schneider*

# MARTINEZ HISTORICAL SOCIETY HOME TOUR

For the past several years EBCNPS has been invited to have a table at the annual Martinez Historical Society Home Tour. This year the tour took a bit of a different twist. Along with Friends of Alhambra Creek, we decided to gather informational items from a variety of local ecology groups, including John Muir Land Trust, Contra Costa Resource Conservation District, Martinez Arts Association, Worth A Dam, and a load of interesting information about bees, mulch, Western Pond Turtle etc. from the Mt. View Sanitary District, which has just completed a whole marsh reconstruction for wildlife. The EBCNPS table was just

outside the fence of the Shell Club house. One of our members, Diane Viera, once again created a beautiful native plant display that helped attract visitors to us where they picked up information before getting on the bus. Almost all the handouts were taken and we were able to interact with many people on a variety of subjects always circling around to the many uses of our native flora.

This year's event was on October 12.

Text and photos by Elaine Jackson



Here is a list of projects associated with the Chapter. We give website and contact information when available:

**Albany Hill**  
[www.tendancienthill.org](http://www.tendancienthill.org)  
 Margot Cunningham, leader  
 tashorehill@gmail.com

**Garber Park Stewards**  
 garberparkstewards@gmail.com

**Huckleberry Botanic Regional Preserve**  
 Janet Gawthrop, leader  
 janetgawthrop47@gmail.com

**John Muir NHS (Martinez)**  
 Elaine Jackson, leader  
 925-372-0687  
 elainejx@att.net

**Marsh Creek**  
 Heath Bartosh, leader  
 925-957-0069  
 hbartosh@nomadecology.com

**Point Isabel**  
 El Cerrito Recycling Center  
 Tom and Jane Kelly, leaders  
 510-684-6484 (c)  
 kyotousa@sbcglobal.net

**McLaughlin Eastshore State Park (Berkeley)**  
 John Kenny, leader  
 johnkenny54@yahoo.com

**Sibley Regional Park**  
 Janet Gawthrop, leader  
 janetgawthrop47@gmail.com

**Skyline Gardens**  
[www.skylinegardens.org](http://www.skylinegardens.org)  
 Glen Schneider, leader

**stinkwort (*Dittrichia graveolens*) Removal**  
 Barbara Leitner, leader

**Walnut Creek Open Space**  
 Lesley Hunt, leader

# OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

*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.*

## Officers

### President

Judy Schwartz  
president@ebcnps.org

### Vice President

Sally de Becker  
vice-president@ebcnps.org

### Corresponding Secretary

Clara Gerdes  
corresponding-secretary@ebcnps.org

### Recording Secretary

Robin Mitchell  
recording-secretary@ebcnps.org

### Treasurer

David Margolies  
510-654-0283  
treasurer@ebcnps.com

## Committees

### Bay Leaf Newsletter

Joe Willingham, editor  
510-705-1798  
bayleaf@ebcnps.org

### CNPS State Chapter Council delegate

Beth Wurzburg

### Conservation

Jim Hanson, Chair  
jimhmail@sonic.net

### Field Trips

Janet Gawthrop, Chair  
janetgawthrop47@gmail.com

### Funds Development

Delia Taylor, Chair  
510-527-3912  
funds-development-chair@ebcnps.org

### Membership

Melissa Williams, Chair  
ebcnps-membership@ebcnps.org

### Native Here Nursery

Lesley Hunt, Chair  
ldhunt@astound.net

### Outreach

Lesley Hunt, Chair  
ldhunt@astound.net

### Programs (Lecture Series)

programs@ebcnps.org

### Publicity

Vacant

### Rare Plants

Cynthia Adkisson  
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### Unusual Plants

Dianne Lake, Chair  
510-691-1428  
diannelake@yahoo.com

### Vegetation

Megan Keever, Co-Chair  
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### Nicole Jurjavcic, Co-Chair

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