



California Native Plant Society  
Santa Clara Valley Chapter

# THE BLAZING STAR

November-December 2023

## ANNUAL MEETING AND POTLUCK

**Saturday, November 4 at 6:00 PM**  
**Shoup Garden House**  
**400 University Avenue, Los Altos**

**Wildflower Mimicry**  
a talk by **Barnali Ghosh**  
**Immigrant Artist and**  
**Landscape Architect**

Our favorite get-together of the year returns after a multi-year hiatus due to COVID: the annual potluck dinner followed by our annual Brenda Butner Memorial Lecture. The evening is devoted to native plant appreciation, catching up with fellow CNPS members and delicious food. It's the party of the year – don't miss it!



*Vivian Neou*

Lively conversations at our Chapter's 2017 Annual Potluck at the Shoup Garden House. There are more tables of people to the left, and drinks and desserts at the open windows top center of the photo. The serving tables of food are in the kitchen behind the windows.

The Brenda Butner Memorial Lecture this year will be: **Wildflower Mimicry** by Barnali Ghosh. Beginning as a

pandemic project, Berkeley-based designer Barnali Ghosh started taking photographs of herself dressed as California native flowers. Her work focuses on centering the brown body, showcasing South Asian fabrics and depicting dance forms. The images took the native plant world by storm. Ghosh will share her inspirational backstory on these viral images and how the project helped her find herself in the native plant community and beyond.



**Barnali Ghosh** is an immigrant artist, landscape architect, and co-founder of the award-winning Berkeley South Asian Radical History Walking Tour. Her work attempts to bridge homes and homelands and create spaces for belonging. She's featured [in an article](#) in the Summer 2021 issue of *Flora*. You can find more about Barnali on Instagram at [@berkeleywali](#) and [www.barnalighosh.art](http://www.barnalighosh.art).

**The evening begins at 6pm** with our annual potluck. Bring your favorite dish, whether it be a salad, main dish, dessert, or beverage; it always works out that we have just the right amount of everything! A label identifying your dish will be helpful. Be sure to bring a plate, drinking glass, and eating utensils for yourself, as well as a bag in which to take home unwashed dishes.

If you can help with **setup, please arrive at 5pm** to set up chairs and tables. The potluck feast will begin **at 6pm**, followed by the **program at 7pm**. We appreciate your help with **cleanup at the end of the program**.

We will also have a silent auction of books and other items which will help raise funds for the Chapter. We will only be offering our best donated books for the silent auction, but we would love any other books you would like to donate, which we will sell at our book table. If you have books or other items to donate, please contact Judy Fenerty at [judy@fenerty.com](mailto:judy@fenerty.com) **before Wednesday, November 1 to arrange pickup/dropoff**. We're very grateful to everyone who has donated books in the past!

CNPS general meetings are free and open to the public. For more information, contact one of our Chapter Co-Presidents, Radhika Thekkath at [cnpsradhika@gmail.com](mailto:cnpsradhika@gmail.com) or Vivian Neou at [techchair@cnps-scv.org](mailto:techchair@cnps-scv.org). You may also leave a message on the Chapter phone at (650) 260-3450, and a volunteer will call you back.

**Directions:** From I-280: take the El Monte exit east. Turn left (north) on University Ave., just before Foothill Expy. The Garden House is 0.6 mile ahead on the left (west) side of the street. From Hwy. 101: take the San Antonio exit west/south. Go 3.5 miles. At the 3rd stoplight after crossing El Camino Real (Edith/Main), bear right on to Main St. (not sharp right into Edith). Continue on Main until it crosses Foothill Expy. and turn left immediately on to University Ave. Bear right; the Garden House is 300 feet ahead on the right.

Our Chapter annual election will be held online early in 2024 and is no longer part of the potluck. Our leadership term now runs from June through May.

## **CHAPTER ACTIVITIES**

### **Native Plant Talks**

Join us for native plant talks, at our in-person talks at local libraries and online via our Native Plant Lecture Series.

**We have one library talk to announce:**

**Native Plant Propagation  
a Talk by Ann Finney  
Followed by a Seed & Cutting Exchange**

**Thursday, November 9 7-8:30 PM, Cupertino Library  
Community Room (2nd floor), 10800 Torre Ave.,  
Cupertino**

Are you a gardener on a budget? Do you like growing things from scratch? Come to this talk to learn about easy and effective propagation best practices for California native plants, both from cuttings as well as seeds. The talk will include show-and-tell demos.



The program concludes with the popular **Seed & Cutting Exchange**. Browse the diverse offerings, ranging from easy-to-grow to hard-to-find, and go home with seeds and cuttings of new native plants – for free! We will provide coin envelopes for seeds, but bring containers, such as plastic bags or paper towels, in which to carry cuttings home. Bring native plant material from your own garden to share. Label it to make it easy to browse; some gardeners attach helpful hints about growing; others display photos of plants in bloom. Keep cuttings cool and moist in a bucket of water. You will have a chance to show and tell what you brought. Don't have native material to share? No problem; there is usually enough for all.

**Ann Finney** is a Master Gardener and a long-time member of our Chapter's Growing Natives Garden Tour Committee. She grows a variety of native plants in her home garden in San Jose, and tends the stunning Master Gardener Demonstration Garden at Martial Cottle Park, San Jose.

**Directions:** From I-280 take the Southbound De Anza Blvd. Exit. Travel south on De Anza Blvd. for 1.2 mi. then turn left onto Rodrigues Ave. Continue for about 0.3 mi., then turn right just after Torre Ave. into the Cupertino City Hall parking lot. Find parking there or continue south in the parking lot, past the Community Hall, to find more parking and the Cupertino Library on the left. Enter the library through the main entrance on the north side of the building, then go straight upstairs to the 2nd floor and look for the Community Room.

### **Native Plant Lecture Series on YouTube**

We have no Native Plant Lecture Series talks to announce, but you can learn more about upcoming and past talks by visiting [cnps-scv.org/native-plant-lecture-series](http://cnps-scv.org/native-plant-lecture-series).

Recordings of past talks may be viewed on our YouTube channel, at [www.youtube.com/@CNPSSantaClaraValley](http://www.youtube.com/@CNPSSantaClaraValley).

## President's Message

By Radhika Thekkath, CNPS SCV Chapter President

Dear Chapter members and volunteers, it has been a while since I wrote a message, as it has been a very busy four months for all of us since the start of the new elected term in June. This summer seems to have whizzed by too quickly. The Chapter has been as active as usual with a return of our in-person library talks, thanks to the lead of our Vice-President Priya Pharate. The nursery volunteers have been busier than usual preparing plants for the in-person sale.



Like spring, fall is a busy time for us, as we have our annual plant sale and the in-nursery shopping experience was back again this year. Jennifer Dirking and the Wildflower Ambassadors have been busy at various events, educating the public about the importance of wildflowers and pollinators and handing out free wildflower

seed packets to emphasize this very important message. I would like to shout out a thanks to our Treasurer Brett Tucker, who works quietly behind the scenes keeping our finances in order, paying out receipts, sending quarterly reports to our State CNPS office and otherwise taking care of things so that the rest of us are able to do what we need to do.

Note that our annual member potluck is scheduled for the evening of **Saturday, November 4** in the Shoup Garden House in Los Altos, and we hope you can all join us there for the exciting talk and potluck dinner. (See page 1 for details.)

As we head into late fall and winter, we hope you will have fun in your gardens, getting new plants in, dividing lily patches, moving plants to better locations and collecting seeds! And thank you for volunteering for the cause of native plants, habitats and pollinators! We love to see you in person at our events.

We are seeking new board members, so if you would like to attend a board meeting as a guest to see what this is all about, please drop me a note. As always, my email is open for discussion, at [cnpsradhika@gmail.com](mailto:cnpsradhika@gmail.com).

## Photography Group

Our Photography Group is a great place to meet other native plant enthusiasts while improving your photographic

skills and learning more about our native plants. It is open to all. The group has monthly meetings and an active email list.



Charley Pow  
Common snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*) showing pink flowers at the tips of its drooping stems. The dark background is formed by the ground shaded by a coast live oak. Los Altos, September 2023

The group has an ongoing **#MyPhotoOfTheWeek** activity on the email list for group members to share their favorite shots with the group on a weekly basis. Photo Group member Charley Pow sent us the above **#MyPhotoOfTheWeek** from his home garden.

**The photo group's meetings** take place over Zoom, for members to share photos and more – everything from photography tips to organizational ideas to plant hot spots. The next meetings will be on **Fridays, October 27, November 24 and December 22 at 7:00pm**. You can learn more and join the email group at: [www.groups.io/g/cnps-scv-photography](http://www.groups.io/g/cnps-scv-photography).

## Volunteer Spotlight Award: Karen Cotter

Our Chapter is pleased to recognize Karen Cotter with its Volunteer Spotlight Award. As Chair of the Scholarship Committee, Karen promoted scholarship outreach, reviewed applications, and participated in recipient selection. She has a Master's degree in Conservation Biology from San Francisco State University and worked as Research Director at Acterra before joining Santa Clara County Parks in 2002, until her retirement in 2020.

Karen was a familiar name to many in the Chapter, as someone who was passionate about environmental education and always willing to lend a helping hand. When Nora Monette stepped down from the Scholarship



Committee after many years of service, Karen Cotter enthusiastically stepped into the role in 2019, and worked closely with Paul Heiple to ensure a smooth transition and functioning of the committee.

Karen was involved with all aspects of administering the scholarships, from initial outreach to students and faculty, to sorting applications and sending them to other committee members, evaluating the applications, responding to all the applicants, coordinating with the treasurer to get checks to the student winners, submitting detailed writeups to the *Blazing Star* newsletter and finally organizing presentations by the students. She went over and beyond the call of duty in keeping in touch with scholarship winners and forwarding job openings in the environmental/ecology sector.

Few are aware that coordinating student presentations with the Programs Committee is a process that is often months in the making and involves inevitable scheduling changes. “As the person who was doing the website updates and most of the talk scheduling/publicity, I have to say that Karen was terrific,” says Vivian Neou. “She stayed on top of communication with the students and kept me updated (plus gently nudged me if I didn’t respond).”



Karen Cotter

Karen’s still checking out the wildflowers at her new abode. Here’s yellow stonecrop (*Sedum spathulifolium*), near Shell Beach along the Sonoma Coast.

Karen also served as one of our Rare Plants Chairs from 2020-2021, and participated in the Chapter’s Rare Plant Committee prior to that, including teaming up with Don Mayall to conduct Rare Plant Treasure Hunts in Santa Clara County Parks.

Although Karen moved to Sonoma County in 2021, she continued to lead the Chapter’s Scholarship Committee. Her efforts benefited not only the students and their professors, but also the Chapter at large in highlighting current areas of research and how the Chapter supports those efforts. As Karen steps down from the Scholarship Committee, a grateful Chapter thanks her for her service, and wishes her the best for the future.

## SCHOLARSHIPS

### Patricia Lang is our new Research Scholarship Committee Chair

We are very happy to announce that Patricia Lang, who is the Chapter’s Recording Secretary and has been a member of the Research Scholarship Committee for two years, has accepted the position of Chair of the Committee. Patricia takes over from Karen Cotter. Please join us in thanking her for volunteering to take on this very important position.



The Chapter Research Scholarships given to graduate and undergraduate students is an important education spending effort by the Chapter, and a primary spending of the funds that are raised via plant sales. The Chapter has set aside \$11,000 for student research scholarships in this budget year.

Patricia grew up in Germany and moved to the Bay Area in 2019. She grew up in a plant-loving family, with her grandfather being a head gardener and nursery owner. She spent her childhood playing in and tending to her family’s garden. After studying General Biology in Germany, she obtained a Master of Science in Plant and Forest Biotechnology in Sweden, and a PhD in Plant Molecular Biology. Since then, she has moved on to use herbarium specimens to study plant climate change responses, which she is now doing as a postdoctoral fellow at Stanford and research associate at Cal Academy.

She will continue this work from January 2024 onwards in her own lab as Assistant Professor at the Department of Plant and Microbial Biology at UC Berkeley and in association with the University and Jepson Herbaria. She is excited to keep learning about California’s unique flora.

## GROWING NATIVES GARDEN TOUR

### Garden Submittal Deadline November 7

The 2024 Growing Natives Garden Tour (GNGT) is still looking for new gardens as well as returning gardens for the 2024 Tour. The Tour dates for 2024 are **Saturday, April 13**, for gardens in the northern part of our area and **Sunday, April 14**, for southern gardens.

We have **extended the deadline for garden submission to Tuesday, November 7**. We encourage all home, school and community gardeners to submit their applications.



Madeline Morrow

On a cloudy day the forms of deergrass and dudleya flowers are like starbursts, with California bush anemone blossoms glowing white in the background.  
May 2023 home garden in Saratoga.

Gardens should feature California native plants prominently (i.e., native plants should be at least 70% of the garden and the garden should not include invasive plants). We are looking for attractive gardens that showcase our beautiful native plants and that promote habitat creation, sustainability and water conservation. Designers and/or homeowners must be available as docents or greeters for the garden on their tour day. For more information and to **submit your garden**, please visit [gngt.org](http://gngt.org). The **submittal deadline is Tuesday, November 7, 2023**.

## CONSERVATION CORNER

### Conservation Committee

Our Chapter's next Conservation Committee meetings will be held via Zoom on **Tuesdays, November 14 and December 12**, from **7:00 to 8:30pm**.

This committee covers many issues affecting native plants: conservation, advocacy, legislation, habitat restoration and rare plants. The committee meets once a month to provide information and support for these conservation issues and efforts. Members of our committee work on projects throughout the Chapter area, coordinating with our state CNPS program staff and other conservation organizations.

Please join us in our important work! For questions, comments or concerns, contact Committee Chair Carolyn Dorsch at [cdorsch@cnps-scv.org](mailto:cdorsch@cnps-scv.org) or (650) 804-6162, or Conservation Chair Judy Fenerty at [judy@fenerty.com](mailto:judy@fenerty.com). If you are interested in joining our committee meetings on Zoom, please email Carolyn for the link.

### The Edgewood Fire and *Dirca occidentalis*

Readers may recall the "Solstice" fire that burned part of Edgewood Park and Natural Preserve on June 21, 2022. (See the article on page 5 of the [Sep-Oct 2022 Blazing Star](#).) Volunteers observed that the fire burned into the habitat of one of Edgewood's rare plants, Western leatherwood (*Dirca occidentalis*). A bulldozer line plowed through the center of the population and thus saved half of the *Dirca* colony from burning, but was also very destructive to the plants in its path.



Don Thomas

*Dirca* at Edgewood resprouting after their stems were cut off at ground level by a firefighting bulldozer.  
July 2023, 13 months after the fire.

Members of the Friends of Edgewood organization have assessed the park's recovery from the fire and published an



article about it in the Fall 2023 *Edgewood Explorer*. In particular, they've seen that many leatherwood plants survived and are once again leafing out. The bulldozer tracks are no longer visible. Many of the shrubs and trees that were burned are stump-sprouting. Read the Friends full article here: [friendsofthewood.org/wp-content/uploads/2023-09.pdf](https://friendsofthewood.org/wp-content/uploads/2023-09.pdf).

## **CHAPTER SERVICE OUTINGS**

### **Fountain Thistle Restoration November 11**

Join Ken Himes and Don Thomas of the Santa Clara Valley Chapter and members of the Yerba Buena Chapter for our fall fountain thistle habitat restoration work party, in San Mateo County, near the intersection of I-280 and Hwy. 92.

Fountain thistle (*Cirsium fontinale* var. *fontinale*) is a federally endangered plant that grows in an unusual and specialized habitat – serpentine seeps – and is only found here and in a few other nearby locations on the Peninsula. Its recovery here is a restoration success story. Once almost completely displaced by jubata grass (Andean pampas grass), it has largely recovered at this location, as a result of the work done by CNPS volunteers in a cooperative project between our two chapters. However, fountain thistle is still under threat from invasion by new jubata grass seedlings, by other non-native plants, such as bristly ox-tongue and fennel, and by pioneering woody plants threatening to convert the area to shrubland or woodland.



Dee Himes, left, Joerg Lohse CC-BY-NC 4.0, right  
Left: Fountain thistle flowering head, June 2021. Right: Crystal Springs lessingia September 2019. Yes, those are human fingers holding the tiny lessingia blossoms. Both pictured in the fountain thistle work area on Caltrans property.

At the November work party we may be able to see the last flowering individuals of another rare plant, Crystal Springs lessingia (*Lessingia arachnoidea*), which grows only here and in the nearby Crystal Springs Watershed and which is threatened by invasion of yellow star-thistle.

Sturdy gloves are recommended; you might also want to bring sunscreen, water, a hat, layered clothing and wear long sleeves/pants. If you have them, bring tools, such as trowels, spades and shovels. Some tools will also be provided.

Our work party will take place on **Saturday, November 11, and we'll work from 10 am to 12 noon**. We'll meet at the end of Lessingia Court in San Mateo. For more information, contact Don at: [donethomasd@gmail.com](mailto:donethomasd@gmail.com)

### **Alum Rock Park Restoration**

Come help us weed out invasive plants at this natural gem of San Jose. Our habitat restoration efforts allow the native plants to “come to light.”

Our workdays take place every **Monday and Wednesday, from 8:30am to about noon**. Sometimes we have special extra workdays.

No experience is necessary. All tools and instruction will be provided. Please bring a filled water bottle and snacks; wear closed toe shoes and long pants. Note that Alum Rock Park is now open for public use, though parking is limited and several trails are still closed.

Forms and **reservations** are required to volunteer. For more information, including meeting location, contact Stephen Rosenthal at [sailinsteve@sbcglobal.net](mailto:sailinsteve@sbcglobal.net) or (650) 260-3450.

### **Lake Cunningham Native Garden**

The California Native Garden project in Lake Cunningham Regional Park controls invasive plants in a 2-acre area and beautifies it with California native wildflowers, perennials, shrubs and trees.

Workdays continue on **Saturdays from 8am to 10am**. New volunteers are welcome; City-issued guidelines are followed. In fall now, the work is mainly weeding and mulching. For **details, directions and to RSVP**, see our Chapter's Meetup page at [www.meetup.com/California-Native-Plant-Society-Santa-Clara-Valley-Chapter](https://www.meetup.com/California-Native-Plant-Society-Santa-Clara-Valley-Chapter).

## Edgewood Restoration

Help restore habitat at Edgewood Park and Natural Preserve, known for fabulous wildflowers and amazing diversity near Redwood City. Weeders see far more than weeds: we get to be up close to the native plants, some of which are seen **only** by weeders.

Sturdy gloves are recommended; you might also want to bring sunscreen, water, a hat, layered clothing and wear long sleeves/pants.

Our **5:30pm Wednesday sessions** continue until the end of Daylight Savings Time. We also weed year-round **every Friday at 9am**. For an overview, please visit [www.cnps-scvc.org/restoration/edgewood-park](http://www.cnps-scvc.org/restoration/edgewood-park).

**To participate**, join the email list and sign the electronic volunteer agreement, by sending an email to weed-warriors-coord@friendsofedgeswood.org.

Please check the email list for each weeding session's meeting place. If you still have questions about Wednesday sessions, contact Alf Fengler at afengler@pacbell.net. Or for questions about Friday sessions, contact Paul Heiple at pheiple@gmail.com or (650) 854-7125.

By the way, Friends of Edgewood volunteers also maintain a native garden and grow seeds at "Edgewood Farms." The native garden is at the Education Center, near the main park entrance. Edgewood Farms is a project to make available more seed of species used in restoration sites at Edgewood. The plots are in the Day Camp area near the Education Center.

For more information or to volunteer at Edgewood Farms, contact edgewood-farms-coord@friendsofedgeswood.org.



Carol Mattsson

Edgewood volunteers haul away another load of thatch to an out-of-the-way area to decompose. September 2023.

Mostly, the volunteer weeders remove invasive plants from Edgewood, but we are also keeping grasslands from turning into scrublands. For example, at the Friday morning September 29 workday, volunteers raked away downed non-native grasses and weeds, to allow new native bunchgrass seedlings the light they need to survive. Paul already has two demonstration plots showing how this dethatching has improved bunchgrass seeding growth after one year and after two years.

## Cataldi Park Native Garden

Volunteers continue to work on our Chapter's project to convert an unused, weedy area of Cataldi Park, in the Berryessa neighborhood of San Jose, into a native plant garden.

Since the project kick-off event last March, we have sheet mulched the area, by laying down cardboard. Then to prevent the weeds from coming back, we spread wood chips over the cardboard to a depth of 3-4". As of mid-September, we completed mulching the entire sixth of an acre targeted for this year.



Tilak

Testing the manual irrigation system at Cataldi Park Native Garden Project in San Jose. Note the new temporary fence at the edge of the mulched area. October 2023

Since then, we've installed a temporary fence around the native garden and marked the future planting locations. In mid-October volunteers tested their manual irrigation system. This consisted of assembling a hose reel cart and two 100-foot hoses. They verified the reach of the hose to all areas of the native garden, an essential step to ensure the success of the upcoming planting. The project volunteers plan to pick up 600 plant plugs on October 26, and then to plant them over the next six weeks.



Volunteers usually work on the project on **Saturday mornings**. If you are interested in volunteering, please email Tilak at [tilaknama108@gmail.com](mailto:tilaknama108@gmail.com). Or simply visit our Chapter's **Meetup page**, here:

[www.meetup.com/California-Native-Plant-Society-Santa-Clara-Valley-Chapter/](http://www.meetup.com/California-Native-Plant-Society-Santa-Clara-Valley-Chapter/) to learn more and sign up for the workday of your choice.

The project is supported by our Chapter of CNPS and the City of San Jose's Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Department. The project has also received funding from a BeautifySJ award. For an overview of the project, see the article on page 5 of the [July-August 2023 Blazing Star](#) newsletter.

## Kirk Park Pollinator Garden

*An Expanding Corridor of Biodiversity  
in a Suburban Turf Grass Park*

Inspired by Douglas Tallamy's book *Nature's Best Hope*, a group of community volunteers set out to convert the weedy perimeter of San Jose's Kirk Park into an oasis of biodiversity. Kirk Park is a small neighborhood park on the grounds of a former elementary school. The bulk of the park is comprised of turfgrass areas used for recreational activities.

The garden began in 2022 in a sunny area along the well-used perimeter walkway. With the help of many community volunteers, we removed weeds in the summer and planted native pollinator plants in the fall. Since February 2023, young plants have been blooming heartily throughout the seasons, providing habitat for local pollinators, birds and lizards.

The narrow-leaf milkweed patch has been a particular attraction, both for the monarch butterflies and for park visitors. The butterflies discovered the milkweed shortly after it emerged in the spring and have been visiting regularly ever since. The human visitors, especially the young ones, can scarcely contain their excitement!

This fall, we will be expanding the garden, both to the east and to the west. Plantings in the larger area to the west of the existing garden will focus on locally native habitat plants, including 72 native pollinator plants from the Xerces Society in the form of a Habitat Kit. The smaller planting area to the east of the existing garden, which is closer to the street, will consist of more showy native plants.

We are hoping to include community volunteers in our planting days again this year and we encourage families with children to participate. **If you would like to become part of our community of volunteers**, please email [KirkParkGardens@gmail.com](mailto:KirkParkGardens@gmail.com). Our usual work days are **Wednesdays and Saturdays from 9am to 11am**, weather permitting. We are especially interested in volunteers who would like to help with continuing maintenance, such as weeding and watering and possible future expansion, once this year's planting is complete.



*Kathy Kleinsteinber*

Three stages of monarch butterfly development photographed at the Kirk Park narrow-leaf milkweed patch: female butterfly, caterpillar and chrysalis. The chrysalis is attached to the stem of a red-flowered buckwheat planted next to the milkweed.

The Kirk Park Native Plant Pollinator Gardens are designed, planted and maintained by community volunteers under the auspices of San Jose's Adopt-a-Park program and with generous support from CNPS SCV, Happy Hollow Foundation, BeautifySJ, Xerces Society, a corporate matching grant and community donations.



## FIELD TRIPS

Chapter field trips are free and generally open to the public. They are oriented to conservation, protection and enjoyment of California native plants and wildlife, and we adhere to all rules and guidelines for the lands on which we are visiting.

**In our region it is very important to be prepared for hiking on rugged and steep terrain, wide temperature ranges and rapidly changing conditions at any time of year. All participants should wear sturdy footwear and carry sufficient water, sun protection, food, clothing layers, personal first aid and other supplies you may need. If you have any questions about your ability to participate in a particular field trip, please contact the trip leader in advance.**

Cell service is mainly restricted to cities and major highways. To find your way to an outing, please do not rely solely on your phone.

Check our field trips page [www.cnps-sc.v.org/activities/field-trips](http://www.cnps-sc.v.org/activities/field-trips) for changes, cancellations and additional field trips.

For field trips listed here that require **reservations**, please make them at our Chapter's **Meetup page**, here: [www.meetup.com/California-Native-Plant-Society-Santa-Clara-Valley-Chapter/](http://www.meetup.com/California-Native-Plant-Society-Santa-Clara-Valley-Chapter/). Find your event within the page and tap/click the "Attend" button to reserve your spot.

### **Sat Dec 16 9am - 12noon Bird and Plant ID Walk at Lake Cunningham Park (San Jose)**

With the onset of winter, join us for a **beginner's** bird and plant identification walk through Lake Cunningham Park. This lake is a major destination for waterfowl and migratory birds and its native garden draws many birds due to its habitat value. On this walk, Vicki Silvas-Young will show you how to identify the common birds of our area, while Arvind Kumar will identify the native plants that they depend on for food and shelter.

The distance is 2 miles round-trip on a level path. Bring a hat, water, your bird and plant lists, and binoculars. Wear comfortable walking shoes.

Space is limited. No drop-ins please. **To complete the required RSVP**, please visit our [Chapter's Meetup page](#). Driving directions and parking tips are provided on the Meetup page. We'll meet at the Marina parking lot at **9am**.

This event is cosponsored by CNPS, Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society and Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority.

### **Mon Jan 1 10am - 2pm New Year's walk to Franklin Point, part of Año Nuevo State Preserve (Hwy 1 coast, southern San Mateo County)**

Join CNPS members as we celebrate a Chapter tradition of welcoming the New Year with a walk to and BYO picnic at Franklin Point, which is part of the Año Nuevo State Preserve on the San Mateo County coast.

We will be exploring our surroundings as we casually walk towards Franklin Point, which is the most botanically interesting area of the park. We will be starting from the **North Whitehouse Creek Trailhead**, which is located south of Pescadero on Highway 1, just north of the Santa Cruz County line. We'll enjoy ocean views, California native plants and raptors, songbirds and maybe marine mammals.

Coastal prairie flora we expect to see includes silver bur ragweed (*Ambrosia chamissonis*), California goldenbush (*Ericameria ericoides*), coastal sagewort (*Artemisia pycnocephala*) and Argentina anserina (*Potentilla anserina*).



Nabeel Al-Shamma

Participants on the 2023 Año Nuevo field trip.

Expected dune flora includes yellow sand verbena (*Abronia latifolia*), pink sand verbena (*Abronia umbellata*), sea side heliotrope (*Heliotropium curassavicum*) and American dunegrass (*Elymus mollis*). We also expect to see sea cliff lettuce (*Dudleya farinosa*) and fleshy jaumea (*Jaumea carnosa*). As this is a day to have fun sharing nature at the beach with fellow Chapter members, the end time and depth of botanical or fauna discussion may depend on participants' preferences.

Bring binoculars and layers of clothing for variable coastal conditions including wind, sun, precipitation and fog. We will be walking on sand dunes. Bring a lunch or snacks and fluids. Extreme weather cancels.

Space is limited so please reserve your spot by going to our Chapter's **Meetup page** to sign up. Driving directions and parking tips are provided on the Meetup page.

Before signing up, please read the Año Nuevo State Park restrictions at [www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=523](http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=523).

Note that there are no bathrooms at Franklin Point. Flush toilets are located at the main entrance of Año Nuevo State Park, which may require payment to enter. For more information, contact Nabeel Al-Shamma at [nabeel4cnps@gmail.com](mailto:nabeel4cnps@gmail.com).

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*News and Activities from Other Organizations*

### **Become an Edgewood Docent**

Each year, in early January, just as the green tips of hound's tongues and reddish bracts of warrior's plumes reappear, another class of wildflower docents begins training at Edgewood Preserve. Wildflower docents are Friends of Edgewood volunteers who introduce visitors to Edgewood's extraordinary biodiversity and the work being done to preserve and restore its ecosystems. We need a diverse pool of wildflower docents to do this important and fun job!

To learn more about what it takes to become a wildflower docent, visit [friendsofedgeswood.org/become-a-docent](http://friendsofedgeswood.org/become-a-docent). To add your name to the docent-training waitlist, contact Sandy, the Docent Training Coordinator, at [docent-trainer@friendsofedgeswood.org](mailto:docent-trainer@friendsofedgeswood.org). To keep track of what is blooming at Edgewood each week, visit [friendsofedgeswood.org/edgeswood-wildflower-survey](http://friendsofedgeswood.org/edgeswood-wildflower-survey).

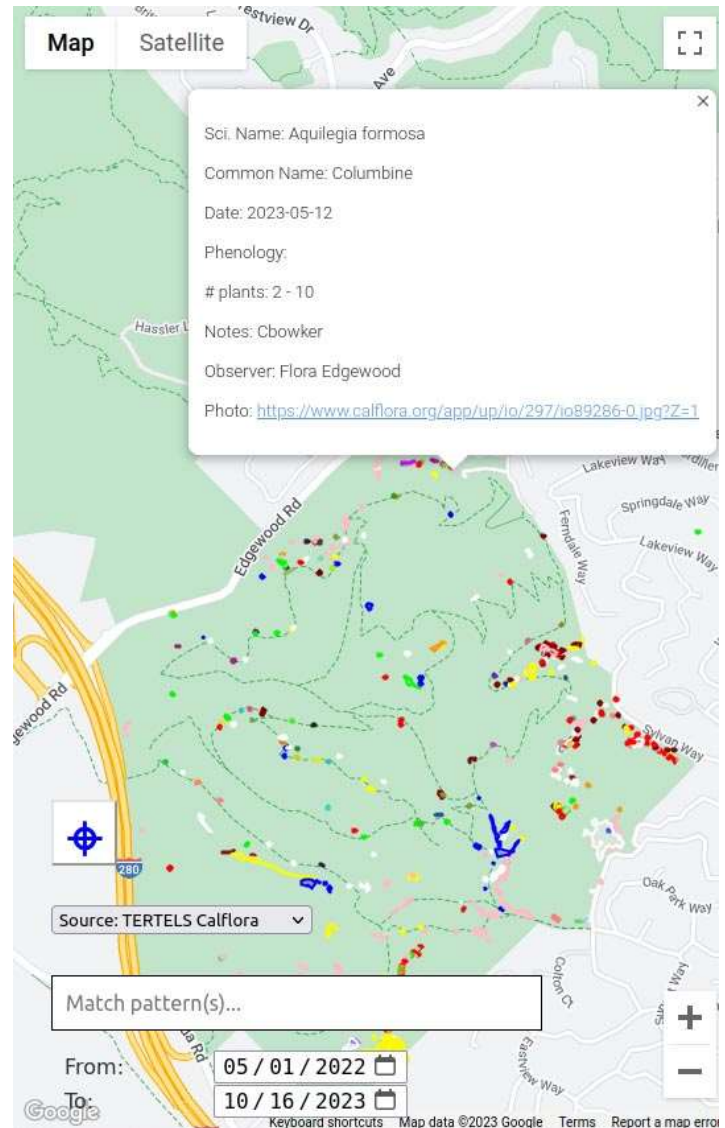
### **Edgewood TERTELS Team Observes and Maps Rare Plant Populations**

There's a team of volunteers at Edgewood Park and Natural Preserve that has created a database of Edgewood plant populations, in order to support conservation efforts for targeted plants.

In mid-2022, a small group of Friends of Edgewood volunteers formed TERTELS: **The Edgewood Rare/Threatened/Endangered and Locally Significant** plant team. They interviewed Paul Heiple and Ken Himes to

record in digital form the extraordinary encyclopedic knowledge of Edgewood plants these two volunteers have developed over decades of habitat restoration work at Edgewood.

The maps created from these interviews and subsequent field work has already been used to inform and monitor plant rescue and recovery projects.



*James Higbie*

A map like this smartphone screenshot, supports Friends of Edgewood and San Mateo County Department of Parks in conserving rare plants found at Edgewood

You may read the full article on page 1 of the Spring 2023 issue of the Edgewood Explorer newsletter, here: [friendsofedgeswood.org/wp-content/uploads/2023-03.pdf](http://friendsofedgeswood.org/wp-content/uploads/2023-03.pdf).



**NEWSLETTER, ETC.****Stay in Touch!**

Some late-breaking events don't make it into the newsletter and are announced electronically. Stay informed by making sure that your contact information is correct. Please visit [www.cnps-scv.org/stay-in-touch](http://www.cnps-scv.org/stay-in-touch) for information on how you can continue to receive email to stay informed.

This *Blazing Star* newsletter is published **mostly** online only, at: [www.cnps-scv.org/blazing-star-newsletter](http://www.cnps-scv.org/blazing-star-newsletter). Our next online **and** paper version will be the 2024 March-April issue.

**CHAPTER LEADERSHIP FOR 2023-2024**

| <b>Title</b>                    | <b>Name</b>      | <b>Email</b>           |
|---------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Co-President</b>             | Radhika Thekkath | cnpsradhika@gmail.com  |
| <b>Co-President</b>             | Vivian Neou      | techchair@cnps-scv.org |
| <b>Vice President</b>           | Priya Pharate    | priya4cnps@gmail.com   |
| <b>Recording Secretary</b>      | Patricia Lang    | secretary@cnps-scv.org |
| <b>Treasurer</b>                | Brett Tucker     | treasurer@cnps-scv.org |
| <b>Chapter Council Delegate</b> | Radhika Thekkath | cnpsradhika@gmail.com  |

To see the full list of Chapter officers and chairs, please visit [www.cnps-scv.org/leadership](http://www.cnps-scv.org/leadership).

**DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT *BLAZING STAR***  
**Saturday, December 9**  
**carol.mattsson@gmail.com or (408) 255-3767**

Santa Clara Valley Chapter California Native Plant Society  
3921 East Bayshore Road, Suite #205  
Palo Alto, CA 94303-4326



## Join CNPS Today!

Members receive the *Artemisia* and *Flora* magazines, the Chapter newsletter and other benefits listed at [www.cnps.org/membership](http://www.cnps.org/membership).

I wish to affiliate with the Santa Clara Valley Chapter

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

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Phone \_\_\_\_\_  New  Renew

### Suggested Membership Amounts

\$50  \$75  \$120  \$500  \$1,000  Other (\$25 min.)

Send Membership Application to:  
**California Native Plant Society**

**Attn: Membership**

**2702 K Street, Suite 1, Sacramento, CA 95816-5130**

For memberships for organizations or to become a Perennial monthly sustainer, contact [www.cnps.org](http://www.cnps.org).

**FIRST-CLASS**

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS (page # in parentheses)

|                   |                                       |                      |                                     |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Oct 27 Fri</b> | Photo Group photo sharing (3)         | <b>Dec 16 Sat</b>    | Lake Cunningham bird & plant ID (9) |
| <b>Nov 4 Sat</b>  | <b>Annual Chapter Potluck (1)</b>     | <b>Dec 22 Fri</b>    | Photo Group photo sharing (3)       |
| <b>Nov 7 Tue</b>  | GNGT Garden Submittals Due (5)        | <b>Jan 1 Mon</b>     | Año Nuevo field trip (9)            |
| <b>Nov 9 Thu</b>  | Native Plant Propagation – Finney (2) | <b>Mon &amp; Wed</b> | Alum Rock workdays (6)              |
| <b>Nov 11 Sat</b> | Fountain Thistle Restoration (6)      | <b>Saturdays</b>     | Lake Cunningham workdays (6)        |
| <b>Nov 14 Tue</b> | Conservation Committee meeting (5)    | <b>Wed &amp; Fri</b> | Edgewood workdays (7)               |
| <b>Nov 24 Fri</b> | Photo Group photo sharing (3)         | <b>Saturdays</b>     | Cataldi Native Garden workdays (7)  |
| <b>Dec 9 Sat</b>  | <b>Newsletter submittal deadline</b>  | <b>Wed &amp; Sat</b> | Kirk Pollinator Garden workdays (8) |
| <b>Dec 12 Tue</b> | Conservation Committee meeting (5)    |                      |                                     |

The next Chapter board meeting will be **Thursday, December 14 at 7:00pm** over Zoom.

There will be no board meeting in November.

Board meetings are open to all Chapter members and their guests.

For more information contact Radhika Thekkath at [cnpsradhika@gmail.com](mailto:cnpsradhika@gmail.com).

The California Native Plant Society is a statewide non-profit organization of amateurs and professionals with a common interest in California's native plants. The Society, working with its local chapters, seeks to increase understanding and to preserve the rich heritage of the native flora for future generations. Membership is open to all. Individual memberships start at \$50.00 per year. If you have questions about your newsletter subscription, please contact [info@cnps-scv.org](mailto:info@cnps-scv.org). Address changes may be submitted to [membership@cnps.org](mailto:membership@cnps.org). Please put "address change" in the subject line.

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