California Native Plant Society
Santa Clara Valley Chapter

THE BLAZING STAR

November-December 2026

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Announcing our Favorite Annual Event:
Potluck Dinner
Saturday, November 7 at 5:45 PM
Setup starts at 4:30 PM
Speaker: **Stuart B. Weiss, Ph.D., Chief Scientist of Creekside Science**,
Topic: **Hands-on Scientific Adventures on the Serpentinite**

Everyone is invited to join us at a social evening to celebrate the Chapter's yearly achievements.

Vivian Neou
Table conversation at 2024 Chapter potluck

As always, this popular dinner potluck will be held at the **Garden House at Shoup Park in Los Altos**. Bring your favorite dish to share or bring beverages, including wine.

Enjoy great conversation and our **fabulous speaker for the night, Dr. Stuart B. Weiss** of Creekside Science. Stu will present some of Creekside Science's restoration work on various imperiled plants of our local serpentine grasslands, including the white-rayed pentachaeta, Tiburon paintbrush, jewelflowers, Santa Clara Valley Dudleya and San Mateo thornmint.

Dr. Stuart B. Weiss, Ph.D. (Stanford University) is Chief Scientist at Creekside Science, which provides scientific and conservation expertise to diverse organizations as they cope with the rapidly changing 21st century environment. He has researched the Bay checkerspot butterfly and serpentine grasslands since 1979 and has authored numerous scientific papers concerning climate/microclimate, population dynamics, nitrogen deposition and conservation ecology.

Creekside Science executes many hands-on restoration projects, including butterfly reintroductions, propagation of endangered plants and habitat monitoring and management. His research and advocacy were instrumental in the development of the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Plan; he is Science Advisor for the Bay Area Conservation Lands Network. For more information see www.creeksidescience.com.

This is a great opportunity to meet other like-minded individuals, Chapter leadership and other volunteers. The evening includes a fun silent auction and shopping for books and other items from the Chapter store. An RSVP is not required, but if you know that you are coming, we would love to hear from you in advance, so we can plan

accordingly. **You can RSVP and sign up** to help with setup or cleanup here: www.cnps-scv.org/potluck-rsvp.

Book and Silent Auction Donations Welcome!
Is it time to clean out your library? Although we are ordering fewer new books for our Chapter sales, we welcome your used books to sell at our potluck and other events. We're looking for native plant field guides, floras, gardening books, hiking guides and natural history books. For the potluck silent auction, we also welcome art, textiles and other nice items. Contact Judy Fenerty at judy@fenerty.com to arrange pick-up/drop-off.

MORE CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

See also **Seed and Cutting Exchange + Online Plant Sale** on page 9, and **Fountain Thistle Work Party** on page 10.

Native Plant Talks

Join us for our native plant talks, in-person at local libraries and online via Zoom and YouTube. Whether you're curious about native plants, an experienced or aspiring native plant gardener, a professional botanist or beginning naturalist, you will find something to interest and educate yourself in our offerings. From gardening to plant science to climate change to tours of botanical hot spots, there's something here for you.

Recordings of our virtual talks and some of our library talks may be viewed on our YouTube channel, at www.youtube.com/@CNPSSantaClaraValley. We occasionally schedule additional talks. You can learn about these talks by subscribing to our Chapter News email list. To subscribe, see "Stay in Touch" on page 11.

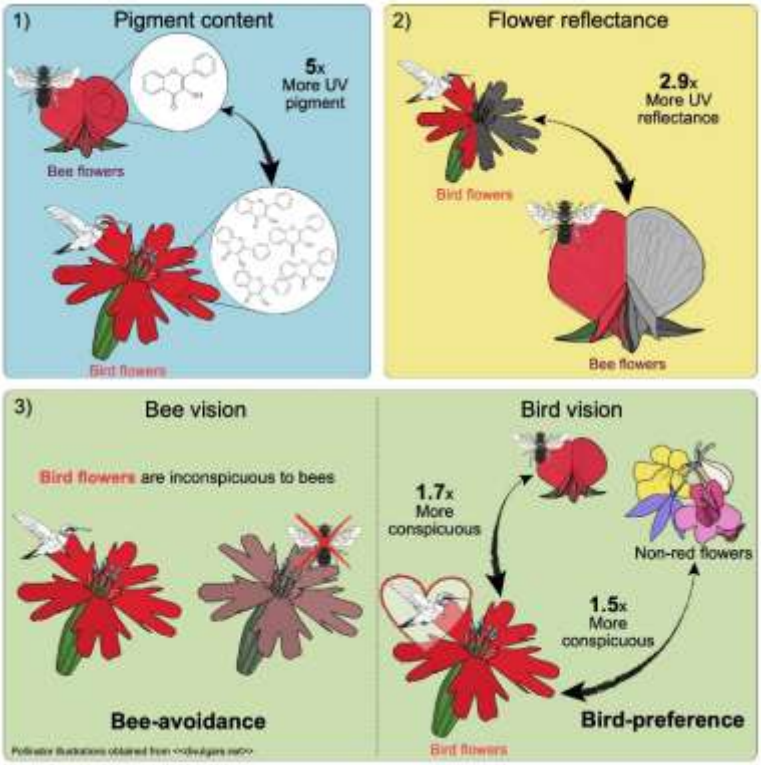
The organizing committee has periodic meetings on Zoom and welcomes new volunteers. If you have ideas for future talks or are interested in helping set up upcoming talks, please send a message to Priya Pharate at priya4cnps@gmail.com to receive notifications of upcoming meetings. The next quarterly program meeting will be **Monday, January 11, at 7:00 to 8:30pm** on Zoom.

The Birds, the Bees and a Magic Trait: The Evolution of Red Hummingbird Flowers in California, a Talk by Professor Justen Whittall

Wednesday, December 9 7:00 - 8:30 PM, Cupertino Library Program Room (2nd Floor), 10800 Torre Ave., Cupertino

Why are so many of California's favorite hummingbird flowers red? From California fuchsia blooming in the fall to Western columbine, scarlet bugler and paintbrush, our native flora is full of brilliant red flowers that hummingbirds love. But is red simply a color that attracts hummingbirds, or does it also help flowers avoid unwanted visits from bees?

Join Santa Clara University biology professor Justen Whittall to explore how hummingbirds and bees see flowers differently, including a hidden world of ultraviolet colors invisible to humans. Drawing on recent research with his students and international collaborators, he'll reveal how these hidden pigments may help explain not only why hummingbird flowers are red, but also how new plant species evolve.



Whittall Lab
UV pigments of red bird-pollinated flowers attract birds and deter bees

Prof. Whittall will bring a UV camera and some flowers so that you can see what they look like to the birds. If you would like to bring your own flowers, you are welcome to do so.

Justen Whittall earned his B.S. in Biology from Santa Clara University, an M.S. from Oregon State University studying monkeyflower conservation genetics and a Ph.D. from UC Santa Barbara investigating the evolution of California columbines. Following postdoctoral research at UC Davis on the evolution of California's serpentine-endemic plants, including blue-eyed Mary, wallflowers and jewelflowers, he returned to SCU in 2007 as a professor of Biology.

Edward Rooks
Justen Whittall

Prof. Whittall works closely with undergraduates to uncover the mysteries of plant ecology and evolution, with research ranging from the conservation of rare Santa Clara County plants – including jewelflowers, columbines, liveforevers and *Hoita* (a small genus of legumes containing three species) – to the evolution of flower color and hummingbird pollination in California's native flora.

Charley Pow
Shining through trees, the morning sun highlights the delicate stems, flowers and buds of a western columbine (*Aquilegia formosa*). The columbines were planted last fall and are flowering nicely. June 2026.

Photography Group

Our Photography Group is a great place to meet other native plant enthusiasts, improve photographic skills and learn more about our native plants and best places to view them. Discussions range from photography tips to organizational ideas to plant hotspots. The group is open to all and has an active email list.

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 following photo of a columbine that he photographed in the front yard of his Los Altos home. Charley writes: The sun-lit subject stands out from the background in shadow, a light-dark technique called **chiaroscuro**.

The photo group's meetings usually take place over Zoom on the fourth Friday of the month. To accommodate the holidays, our next two meetings will be on the third **Fridays, November 20 and December 18, from 7:00 – 9:00pm**. You can learn more and join the email group at: www.groups.io/g/cnps-scv-photography.

Native Plant ID

Our next Native Plant ID meeting will take place **Tuesday, October 27 at 7:00pm** at the Peninsula Conservation Center. Bruce Homer-Smith will give us a presentation about *Nine Trees of the Santa Cruz Mountains*, the subject and title of his latest book, free for all to read here: pubs.plantid.net/9Trees.pdf.

For more about our October meeting, read the Native Plant ID article on page 5 of the September-October *Blazing Star* newsletter.

The Peninsula Conservation Center is located at 3921 E. Bayshore Rd, Palo Alto. We meet in the Raptor Room, downstairs near the rear entrance. Join other native plant enthusiasts in a fun and educational atmosphere, as we hone our skills at plant identification (aka "keying"). Feel free to bring samples of plants that you are trying to identify and any identification resources that you like to use. For more information, contact Janet Hoffmann at janet@cnps-scv.org.

We will try something different for Native Plant ID in **November. On Tuesday, November 24** we will go on a **hike in Alum Rock Park**, to explore the different ecosystems in the park and see some of the trees that Bruce will have discussed in October. We'll also expect to see a

variety of other plants in their fall plumage plus nuts and berries. The hike will be about 4-5 miles along both sides of the creek, with about 600 total feet of elevation gain.

Janet Hoffmann

California buckeye in Alum Rock Park in fall. Note the leaves have already fallen and some sunlit buckeye fruits are visible at the ends of the branches on the upper right, October 2002

We will **meet at the Rustic Lands parking area at 10:00am**. Bring a snack or lunch and dress appropriately for the weather. We should be out 3-4 hours with a break for lunch. Heavy rain cancels the hike. Please **sign up by emailing Janet Hoffmann at janet@cnps-scv.org** so that she knows who to expect and can notify you in the event of a weather cancellation.

We will not be meeting in December. Enjoy your holidays and we will hope to see you back at the PCC in January.

CONSERVATION CORNER

Conservation Committee

Our Chapter's Conservation Committee meetings are held over Zoom on the third Monday of the month. We will hold our regular meeting on **Monday, November 16, from 7:00 to 8:30pm**, take December off and meet again in the new year.

If you are a California voter, one important proposition on the ballot will greatly affect our ability to protect native plants and habitats. Please note that the **California Native Plant Society opposes Proposition 45**, alongside more than 500 California leaders and environmental, community and public health organizations. Please vote No on Prop 45 on Tuesday, November 3 and help spread the word. Learn more here: Six Reasons to Vote No on Prop 45.

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

CHAPTER SERVICE OUTINGS

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 take place on **Saturdays from 8:00 to 10:00am**. New volunteers are welcome; City-issued guidelines are followed. The work depends on the season, mainly weeding and mulching year-round, but some planting in winter. For **details, directions, a waiver for first-timers and to RSVP**, see our Chapter's Meetup page at www.meetup.com/California-Native-Plant-Society-Santa-Clara-Valley-Chapter.

Cataldi Park Native Garden

Join us to restore habitat in San Jose's Cataldi Park. This project aims to remove invasive plants and restore California native plants in a 1/2-acre area on the western end of Cataldi Park in San Jose.

Tilak

Sheet mulching with City-provided mulch, at Cataldi Native Plant Garden, August 2026

Volunteer workdays take place on **Saturdays from 9:00 to 11:00am**. New volunteers are welcome; City-issued guidelines are followed. Wear a hat and garden shoes and bring water to stay hydrated. Work gloves will be provided.

For details, directions, a waiver for first-timers and to RSVP, visit our Chapter's Meetup page at www.meetup.com/California-Native-Plant-Society-Santa-Clara-Valley-Chapter.

Activities depend on the season. We start planting in late fall after the first rain and continue into the winter months as needed. Spring is the time for controlling weeds and taking care of the young saplings. During the summer and early fall, we irrigate/water the plants, prune established plants and sheet mulch adjacent areas in preparation for planting.

Kathy Kleinsteiber

The above image shows a sample of tiny wildlife observed by our Biodiversity in Urban Gardens (BUG) Paired Garden Study Researchers in September. Learn more about the BUG study here: www.cnps.org/landscapes-for-change.

August workdays included sheet mulching, watering, trimming and weeding. **September's** focus was on watering the plants planted last year and weeding and sheet mulching the area to the north of the existing garden. Over the past six months, volunteers have sheet-mulched close to 0.5 acres, to suppress weeds in these areas prior to planting next year. See the blue boundaries in the next photo.

Tilak and Google Maps

Kirk Park Native Plant Pollinator Garden

Come join us as we maintain and enhance this thriving ecosystem in the heart of suburban San Jose. While you work, discover surprising pollinators and learn about the plants that attract them to the garden. This is an educational garden and we strive to provide opportunities for all participants to learn.

As the summer heat subsides and the fall planting season begins, we are preparing to add new perennial shrubs and bunch grasses to the back of our annual wildflower area. We will also be adding several new native oak trees to the park. If you would like to help plant trees, please check out the CNPS-SCV Meetup page for dates.

We meet near the corner of Briarwood Drive and Wawona Drive in San Jose on **Saturdays from 9:00 to 11:00am**, weather permitting. Please see our CNPS SCV Meetup page to RSVP and to find a waiver form for first-time volunteers.

Jay Shuler
Volunteers watering the new native plant garden in Houge Park, San Jose, July 2026

Houge Park Native Garden (New!)

Join us to finish planting and mulching the new Native Plant Garden at Houge Park in Cambrian Park, San Jose. The street address is 3962 Twilight Drive.

November-December activities include planting 170 new plants and spreading a new top coat of mulch. **Volunteer workdays are Sundays from 9:00 – 11:00am**. Bring a water bottle; wear a hat, sunscreen and work gloves if you have them. RSVP to hougenatives@gmail.com.

Jay Shuler
After their first year of growth, patches of flowers in Houge Park Native Garden include California poppies, California buckeye, Dara's Choice salvia, California phacelia and more, February 2026

Alum Rock Park Restoration

Come help us weed non-native, 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 at 8:30am**, with occasional **Saturday workdays starting at 8:45am**. No experience is necessary. All tools and instruction will be provided. Please bring a filled water bottle, snacks, sunscreen, sunhat and insect repellent if you need it; wear trail/off-trail footwear, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt.

Forms and reservations are required to volunteer. Start by filling out the "Volunteer Service Agreement Form" linked from the following web page: www.sanjoseca.gov/your-government/departments-offices/parks-recreation-neighborhood-services/get-involved/volunteer-with-us. Bring your completed form with you at the meeting spot at the beginning of each workday. The workdays **end at noon**.

Jay Shuler
Common buckeye perched on California aster in Houge Park Native Garden, July 2026

To volunteer on a **Saturday, register** through the City of San Jose's Eventbrite page for the date you wish to attend. **The link for the November 7 workday is here**. The link provides event details including where to park. To find sign-up links for future Saturday events, visit www.eventbrite.com and search for "Alum Rock Park" in "San Jose."

If you have trouble finding the form or signing up at the City's website, please contact Todd Hayes at the email address below. The City's Adopt-a-Park program is understaffed and a Saturday event may be cancelled.

For the Monday and Wednesday workdays, the crew is typically made up of long-term volunteers for this project. The meeting spot varies, so to join the crew on one of their workdays, please **contact Todd Hayes at ultratoddh@gmail.com for more information, to register and for directions on where to park.** Note on rare occasions we may cancel due to weather or dangerous conditions. Don't forget to bring your filled-out Volunteer Service Agreement Form for the City of San Jose.

Edgewood Restoration

Help restore habitat at Edgewood Park and Natural Preserve, near Redwood City, known for fabulous wildflowers and amazing diversity. Weeders see far more than weeds: they 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. We weed year-round **every Friday at 9:00am.** Our **5:30pm Wednesday sessions** will resume in March of 2027, after daylight saving time resumes. For an overview, please visit www.cnps-scv.org/restoration/edgewood-park.

We do offer some special **Saturday morning weeding sessions** once per month. Please inquire at weed-warriors-coord@friendsofedgewood.org for the forthcoming dates in November and December.

To participate, join the email list and sign the electronic volunteer agreement, by sending an email to weed-warriors-coord@friendsofedgewood.org. Please check the email list for each weeding session's meeting place.

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-scv.org/activities/field-trips for changes and cancellations, as well as information about newly added field trips.

For field trips listed here that require **reservations**, please visit our Chapter's **Meetup page**, here: www.meetup.com/California-Native-Plant-Society-Santa-Clara-Valley-Chapter/. **We open the RSVPs one week before the event**. Find your event within the page and tap/click the "Attend" button to reserve your spot.

Sat Dec 19 9:00am - Noon 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 this area, while Nathan Davis will identify the native plants that they depend on for food and shelter.

Arvind Kumar

Co-leader Vicki Silvas-Young, center-left, demonstrating a bird activity at last summer's Lake Cunningham Bird and Plant ID walk, September 2026

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.

We'll meet at the **Marina parking lot at 9:00am.** The Marina parking lot is on the western shore of the lake, next to the water park (currently closed), at the opposite side of the park from the main entrance on White Road. **Parking fee is $6**, cash or credit card. In Google Maps, search for "Lake Cunningham Marina" (37.33370 -121.80930) to be directed to the Marina.

RSVP is required to join us for the walk. Space is limited. No drop-ins please. **Register at our Chapter's Meetup page**. Co-sponsored by CNPS, Santa Clara Valley Bird Alliance and Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority.

Emily Berk
Yellow-rumped warbler seen at Lake Cunningham's Inner Lake Path on September 20, 2026, from the day's eBird checklist

Vicki's South Bay Birder's Report

What are the birds' names and what are they doing, while field trip participants pass by? Co-leader Vicki Silvas-Young sent us this report, documenting her observations from the first day of Fall Field Trip to **Lake Cunningham**, September 20, 2026.

See photos and learn more by visiting the eBird.org link at the end of Vicki's report.

On a very nice fall day, 13 "yellow warbler hopeful" attendees from California Native Plant Society and Santa Clara Valley Bird Alliance met in the Marina parking lot of Lake Cunningham to walk the Inner Lake Path to the Native Garden. And we were not disappointed!

Greeting us on the lawn area was a big flock of unshy great-tailed grackles in all sorts of amusing plumage changes, with some males even displaying. Near the boat ramp, as we gazed over the water, the antics of pied-billed grebes and American coots, and a green heron flyby entertained us. In the trees a yellow-rumped warbler with our very first northern yellow warbler excited us! There were no red-breasted sapsuckers in the pepper trees. (But just after passing the pepper trees, we managed to see a silent, stealthy sora do a quick dash in and out of the cattails.)

In the little cove before the Native Garden an adult pied-billed grebe was being trailed by a juvenile screaming to be fed. The adult obliged just to stop the screaming. As we approached the Native Garden the number of birds picked up, with a northern mockingbird singing a greeting song, chestnut-backed chickadees, oak titmice, California towhees, bushtits, house finches singing and feeding, numerous Anna's hummingbirds sucking up as much nectar from the California fuchsias as they could, and again another yellow warbler who brought his pals, a couple of red-breasted nuthatches feeding in the trees. A red-shouldered hawk called in the distance. Nice!

Vicki thanks our trip's co-leaders, Arvind K. and Nathan D., for comments and guidance in native plant identification. A very special thank you to Zainab J. for being an attentive co-leader and helping participants "get on the bird" with their binoculars. The eBird list for this field trip is here: ebird.org/atlascalifornia/checklist/S394764740.

Fri Jan 1 10:00am – 2:00pm New Year's walk to Franklin Point, part of Año Nuevo State Park (Hwy 1 coast, southern San Mateo County)

Join us on a no-host field trip as we celebrate a Chapter tradition of welcoming the New Year with a walk and BYO picnic at Franklin Point, which is part of the Año Nuevo State Park 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.

Vivian Neou
Participants enjoying blufftop views on 2025 Año Nuevo field trip

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.

RSVP is required to join us for the walk. No drop-ins please and space is limited. Visit our Chapter's **Meetup page** to sign up. Before signing up, please read the Año Nuevo State Park restrictions at 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.

Driving directions to the trailhead from the South (Santa Cruz side)
Pass the main entrance to Año Nuevo State Park and continue on about 2.8 miles. You will pass Whitehouse Canyon Rd. on your right. Immediately across from Rossi Rd., you will see a turnout for North Whitehouse Creek Trailhead on the left side of the road. You may park at the trailhead or along Hwy 1.

Driving directions to the trailhead from the North (Half Moon Bay / Pescadero side)
Pass Gazos Creek State Beach on your right and continue about 1.5 miles. The road widens. Just before the road narrows again, you will see the turnout for North Whitehouse Creek Trailhead on the right side of the road. You may park at the trailhead or along Hwy 1.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

News and Activities from Other Organizations

Friends of Edgewood Docent Training

There are just a few spots left in the 2027 Friends of Edgewood docent-training course, which **begins with the new year.** Will one of these spots be yours? Wildflower docents introduce visitors to Edgewood's extraordinary biodiversity and the work being done to preserve and restore its ecosystems. We need a diverse pool of docents to do this important and fun job! We'll teach you what you need to know; you need only bring your enthusiasm and commitment.

Sandy Bernhard

The 2026 Friends of Edgewood docent class, on a showery April day in the Preserve

To learn more about the course visit friendsofedgewood.org/become-a-docent. To inquire about **enrolling**, contact Sandy, the Docent Training Coordinator, at docent-training-coord@friendsofedgewood.org. To keep track of what's blooming at Edgewood each week, visit friendsofedgewood.org/edgewood-wildflower-survey.

TWO MORE CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Seed and Cutting Exchange + Online Plant Sale

Online Sale: Nov 10-11
california-native-plant-society-santa-clara-valley-chapter.square.site

Seed and Cutting Exchange & Plant Pickup:
Sunday, November 15 1:00pm – 3:00pm
Peninsula Conservation Center, 3921 East Bayshore Road, Palo Alto, CA 94303

This free event provides an opportunity to share and receive cuttings and seeds of native plants. Discover the diverse offerings, ranging from easy-to-grow varieties to rare finds, and leave with new native plant cuttings and seeds! We will supply coin envelopes for seeds, but please bring your own containers for transporting cuttings home.

If you have native plant material from your garden that you would like to share, please bring it along. Be sure to label your contributions for easy browsing – helpful growing tips and photos of the plants in bloom are appreciated. You

may find it useful to use Calscape.org for this purpose; there is a link on each plant's information page that allows you to create a printable sign for most native species and cultivars.

Vivian Neou
Visitors browsing cuttings at the January 2026 Seed and Cutting Exchange

If you bring cuttings, please ensure they remain cool and moist in a bucket of water. **It is not necessary to bring anything if you do not have native material to share**, as there is typically an abundance for everyone.

Several well-known native plant books will be available for purchase at the event, including *Wildflowers of California* from CNPS, *Seed Propagation of Native California Plants* (2021 edition) by Dara E. Emery, and *California Native Plants for the Garden* by Carol Bornstein, David Fross, and Bart O'Brien. Our Wildflower Ambassadors will also be distributing free seed packets and information.

Online Plant Sale

The CNPS SCV Nursery will conduct an online plant sale (visit california-native-plant-society-santa-clara-valley-chapter.square.site) **starting Tuesday, Nov 10**. The store will close for pickup sales when either the pickup capacity is reached or at the **end of the day on Nov 11** – whichever occurs first. It will remain open for large ($300+) delivery orders.

Scheduled pickup from the plant sale will be available during the Seed and Cutting Exchange at the PCC on **Sunday, November 15**.

Fountain Thistle Work Party Nov 21

Join Don Thomas along with members of the Santa Clara Valley and Yerba Buena CNPS Chapters for our fall fountain thistle habitat restoration work party **near the intersection of I-280 and Hwy. 92**. We'll meet on **Saturday, November 21 and work from 10:00am to noon.**

Fountain thistle (*Cirsium fontinale* var. *fontinale)* is a federally endangered plant species that grows in an unusual and specialized habitat – serpentine seeps – and is only found at our work location and in a few other nearby locations on the Peninsula.

Fountain thistle's recovery here is a restoration success story. Once almost completely displaced by jubatagrass (Andean pampas grass), it has largely recovered here as a result of the work done by CNPS volunteers. The CNPS project is a cooperative effort of the Santa Clara Valley and Yerba Buena Chapters. However, fountain thistle is still under threat from invasion by new jubata grass seedlings, by other non-native plants and by woody plants threatening to convert the area to shrubland or woodland. In addition, the bordering dry serpentine zone is habitat to another rare plant, Crystal Springs lessingia (*Lessingia arachnoidea*), which is threatened by invasion of yellow star-thistle, fennel, tufted wallaby grass (*Rytidosperma caespitosum*) and other non-native plants.

Carol Mattsson
Two volunteers pause work during the May 2026 Fountain Thistle Work Party

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

trowels, spades and shovels. Some tools will also be provided.

Sign up on the Chapter's **Meetup page**, here: www.meetup.com/California-Native-Plant-Society-Santa-Clara-Valley-Chapter/. **If heavy rain is forecast**, we will move the event to **Saturday, November 28, from 10:00am to noon**.

We'll meet at the end of Lessingia Court in San Mateo. For more information, contact Don at donethomasd@gmail.com.

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 to learn how to receive Chapter announcements by email.

We announce Chapter activities on our Chapter News list, our Facebook page and Meetup.

Note that our Chapter website www.cnps-scv.org was down for a couple of months and has only recently come back online. We are still making updates and appreciate feedback to webmaster@cnps-scv.org if you find problems.

This *Blazing Star* newsletter is published online only, at www.cnps-scv.org/blazing-star-newsletter.

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP FOR 2026-2027

Title	Name	Email
Co-President	Priya Pharate	priya4cnps@gmail.com
Co-President	Vivian Neou	techchair@cnps-scv.org
Vice President	Kim Vrijen	Kim_vrijen@yahoo.com
Recording Secretary	Janet Hoffmann	janet@cnps-scv.org
Interim Treasurer	Brett Tucker	treasurer@cnps-scv.org
Chapter Council Delegate	Vivian Neou	techchair@cnps-scv.org
Past President	Madeline Morrow	madeline@cnps-scv.org

To see the full list of Chapter officers and chairs, please visit www.cnps-scv.org/leadership.

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT *BLAZING STAR*

Saturday, December 5

carol.mattsson@gmail.com or (408) 309-8314

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.

I wish to affiliate with the Santa Clara Valley Chapter

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

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.

First-Class Mail

CALENDAR OF EVENTS (page # in parentheses)

Oct 27 Tue	Native Plant ID meeting (3)
Nov 7 Sat	**Annual Chapter Potluck Dinner** (1)
Nov 7 Sat	Potluck Talk: Serpentinite – Weiss (1)
Nov 10 Tue	Online native plant sale starts (9)
Nov 15 Sun	Seed & Cutting Exchange (9)
Nov 16 Mon	Conservation Committee meeting (4)
Nov 20 Fri	Photo Group photo sharing (3)
Nov 21 Sat	Fountain Thistle Habitat Restoration (10)
Nov 24 Tue	Native Plant ID hike (3)
Dec 5 Sat	**Newsletter submittal deadline**
Dec 9 Wed	Talk: Flower pollination – Whittall (2)
Dec 18 Fri	Photo Group photo sharing (3)
Dec 19 Sat	Lake Cunningham Beginner's walk (7)
Jan 1 Fri	Año Nuevo Field Trip to Franklin Pt. (8)
Sundays	Houge Park Native Garden workdays (6)
Mon & Wed, some Sat	Alum Rock Park workdays (6)
Fri, some Sat	Edgewood restoration workdays (7)
Saturdays	Lake Cunningham Garden workdays (4)
Saturdays	Cataldi Park Native Garden workdays (4)
Saturdays	Kirk Pollinator Garden workdays (5)

The next Chapter board meeting will be **Thursday, December 10** 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 Priya Pharate at priya4cnps@gmail.com or Vivian Neou at techchair@cnps-scv.org.

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**. Address changes may be submitted to **membership@cnps.org**. Please put "address change" in the subject line.

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