Native Gardener’s Corner—Member’s Tips, Tricks, and Techniques

This column is a regular newsletter feature offering chapter members and local experts a chance to briefly share information on many things related to gardening with natives. The question for this edition is: “What’s the biggest “mistake” you have made in your native garden and what would you now do differently?”

Terry LePage: “My mistake was planting a Toyon and a Bay Laurel too close to the house. Other than those two foundation plants, my garden is forgiving. While individual plants may die, that is an opportunity to try something new.”

Laura Curran: “I planted a California Grape and trellised it on the shelf above the windows and it grew vigorously (and yielded many grapes). It had SO much growth that it ended up covering the windows and you could not see outside. Also, it became a climbing wall for critters (raccoons, rats, possums), which is a bit freaky when you’re sitting there at night. I eventually took it down and now I’m trying new grape plants which I will trellis from the ground up.”

Dennis Mudd: “The biggest mistake I made was trying to retrofit my original lawn-focused irrigation for natives. I should have just invested a little more time up front and created irrigated bioswales and rain catch basins right from the beginning.”

Jennifer Beatty: “I have planted Dudleya too close to the walkways. The bloom extends quite a ways and I am sad when someone accidentally breaks it off—no more flowers (or potential seeds)! In the future I will give them more space when planting.”

Tina Cremer: “Hi, my name is Tina and I’m a plant-a-holic. Usually, I have plants sitting in pots waiting for me to move and transplant other plants in my garden to make room for my new favorites. Too frequently, they get root bound or reach their permanent wilting stage and RIP, but not in my garden.”

John Gossett: “Using 3 inches of wood chip mulch when converting my front garden to mostly desert and chaparral plants. I had never used it in my backyard (no-water) garden but since our 65-year-old Washingtonia filifera in the front needed a couple deep waterings per summer, I thought the mulch would help control weeds. It turns out weeds love mulch! It keeps the soil wet longer, which my natives definitely do not need, and makes it much harder to wreak vengeance when attempting to hand weed.”

Mary Arambula: “Biggest mistake I’ve made was spacing—giving a plant sufficient room to grow. On the other hand, sometimes plants are a little too happy and overgrow the “average” by several feet. Case in point, a Cleveland sage which is now 10ft wide!”

Alan Lindsay: “Mistakes? Nothing that happened in my garden was a mistake. I regard my garden as an experiment in the use of plants found on the Northern Channel Islands. Some of my hypotheses proved false. It might have been wishful thinking that I could replicate the island ecosystem in Seal Beach but I tried and learned a lot. And, there is a lot more to learn.”

Dan Songster: “Ignoring the times I have provided too much water (or too little), spacing is my weakness. Sometimes plants simply grow bigger than even the catalog suggests, but often it is my love for native plants that causes the problem. I want so many! Of course they will not all fit, but thankfully, utilizing the Native Garden at Golden West College as my experimental test garden means I can plant a lot of things, but even there on more than an acre, I manage to plant too many plants and often too close together.”

Our Question for the Next Newsletter: “What is your favorite desert plant that you use in your native garden?” Email your responses to Dan Songster at songster@cox.net. Please remember to keep replies brief so we can include most of the responses!
Match these July Flowering Orange County Native Plants with their names:

A. Nemacaulis denudata var. denudata, Bolsa Chica Marsh
B. Nama stenocarpum, Irvine Lake
C. Abronia maritima, Santa Ana River, nr, mouth
D. Calochortus weedii var. intermedius, 20, Coal Canyon Trail

E. Lilium humboldtii ssp. ocellatum, Silverado Cyn, 1.65 rd. mi. past USFS gate
F. Horkelia cuneata var. puberula, San Juan Trail to Chiquita meadow
G. Centromadia parryi ssp. australis, Upper Newport Bay, Big Canyon
H. Lilium humboldtii ssp. ocellatum, Silverado Cyn, 1.65 rd. mi. past USFS gate
I. Euphorbia misera, UCI Ecological Preserve
J. Pickeringia montana, San Juan Trail, Hot Sp. Cyn. to Old Sugarloaf
K. Astragalus brauntonii, Coal Canyon Trail
L. Chloropyron maritimum, North Star Beach, Upper Newport Bay

All photos from Ron Vanderhoff
CNPS-Orange County & CNPS-San Diego

LIVE ONLINE:

The Flora of Caspers Wilderness Park

Orange County and-San Diego CNPS chapters are co-sponsoring an online meeting where team members will present some of their findings. The lineup looks like this:

Thursday, July 16, 2020
7:00 PM
Bob Allen - Introduction, moderation, & wrap-up. With Fred Roberts, Bob is lead author of Wildflowers of Orange County and the Santa Ana Mountains.

To
Elora Camacho - Recording data & pressing plants

8:30 PM
Cem Cizem - Rare & unusual species
Maddy Letterman - Plant communities & lilies
Megan Peukert - Sages
Louis Truong - Live-forevers & Dodders

Two Ways

Zoom: To watch via Zoom you must register in advance. Register now for the best ‘seats’. You don’t need a Zoom account Register Here: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_AKSJHKueQkWaFPn40k5h

YouTube: The presentation will be live streamed to BugBob’s WildWorld YouTube page beginning at 7:00pm. There is no limit to participants viewing the presentation on YouTube.

BugBob’s WildWorld YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCL-amXHbcKhzp9b7L10IGtA

Questions for the presenters will be selected by a moderator from the chat and comment sections of both Zoom and YouTube.

Go to cnpssd.org/events for complete details on the program.
ah its just another leaf you say
   well a bunch of leaves i'll concede
yes but look again and again i say
   new leaf pristine pale green
   perfect backlit rimmed in white
   new fuzz ready for nest building hummer
then mature leaf with deep cut lobes
   but wait chewed by what
and there its only june 22 and a leaf is dressed in its fall colors
   palest of green yellow & brown
ah the wonder of it all
   yes a bunch of leaves back lit
   set off by a baby blue sky &
   whisps of clouds
only a bunch of leaves you say
   i say look again
   ah awe ahhh

Laguna Coast Wilderness Park
James Dilley Preserve
California Sycamore, Aliso
Platanus racemosa

2020 June 10

sentinel of the trail
   you don't see it
   until you do
suddenly appearing
   caught off guard
   there it is
   hissing rattlesnake
   poised to strike
s shaped recoiled to release
   your forward progress frozen
   you slowly retreat
red diamondback rattler revealed
   respected
slowly ever so slowly retreats &
   you resume
   startled recovered relieved

Laguna Coast Wilderness Park
Los Trancos
Red Diamond Rattlesnake
Crotalus ruber

2020 June 10

a distant gray blur
   hops flies swoops perches
old cowboy fence
   barbed wire without the barbs
   serves as a lookout two levels
gray blur switches from upper to lower wire &
   dives to the ground
   ever so intent he pivots left to right
   front to rear
   bugs beware
grey blur
california gnatcatcher is on the hunt

UCI Ecological Preserve
2020 June 09 9:34 a.m.
California Gnatcatcher
Polioptila californica

Poems and photos by chuck Wright
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The chapter newsletter, Flora, and the journal Fremontia
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ANSWERS TO QUIZ

L  K  C
J  G  D
A  F  I
B  E  D