The mission of the California Native Plant Society is to increase understanding of California's native flora and to preserve this rich resource for future generations.

THE CONSERVATION REPORT

SADDLEBACK CANYONS AREA: In 2005 OCCNPS was among the plaintiffs in a successful suit against a development proposal that would have destroyed hundreds of mature oaks and done massive grading along Santiago Canyon Road (Saddle Crest) and along Live Oak Canyon Road (Saddle Creek). Since then, the Saddle Creek site was purchased with M2 funds as mitigation for OC’s ongoing transportation projects.

This spring, the same developer proposed a "new" plan for the Saddle Crest site that is as flawed as the 2005 one. It calls for destroying 151 mature oaks and doing massive grading to form 65 suburb-style lots—all in violation of the governing Foothill/Trabuco Specific Plan. Extensive comments from the Saddleback Canyons Conservancy, the Rural Canyons Conservation Fund, their attorneys and consultants, and many OC enviro groups including OCCNPS have pointed out the plan's inadequacies. See the plan itself at ocplanning.net/SaddleCrest_Project.aspx; for a critique, search for SaddleCrest on voiceofoc.org. It is expected that the OC Planning Commission will consider the proposed plan in July. ACTION NOW, especially if you live in or near the foothill canyons: Contact rtgomez@aol.com to be notified when the Planning Commission will hear the proposal and to find out how you can help keep the canyons rural. Donations to their war chest for possible legal action would be appreciated.

TRABUCO DISTRICT/SANTA ANA MTS: The new proposed Southern California National Forests Land Management Plan Amendment (for the four Southern California National Forests: Angeles, Cleveland, Los Padres, San Bernardino) was published on April 27. The amendment would revise land use zone allocations for select inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs) and amend Land Management Plan monitoring protocols. The Trabuco District (of the Cleveland NF) has three IRAs, which encompass large parts of Ladd, Coldwater and Trabuco Canyons. Background documents are at fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=35130; for a map, click on "CNF - Coldwater, Ladd & Trabuco IRAs Map". The EIS is expected in late Oct, when there is likely to be further opportunity for public comment.

OCCNPS' general position on the Trabuco District is that more sensible fuel-mod methods should be used. Current methods and practices, in our opinion, open all roadsides to invasion by non-native annual grasses and weeds, which dry out quickly in the summer and make corridors of fine flashy fuels leading throughout the mountains. For example, see fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=34142; the map shows the corridors and the documents explain what methods will be used. Similar fuel mod projects are in place for other roadsides throughout the District. OCCNPS has commented on those in the South Main Divide area.

ON FUEL MODIFICATION: An important study has been published: Housing Arrangement, Location Determine Likelihood of Structure Loss Due to Wildfire in Southern California (Syphard, Keeley, Massada, Brennan, and Radeloff); see at plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2FJournal.pone.0033954. Results of the study suggest that not building houses in fire-hazard areas is a better method to reduce fire losses than is the usual method of thinning/removing "brush" for a hundred or more feet around the houses.

—Celia Kutcher, Conservation Chair

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.

This issue’s question was “Which native plant will you “never” plant in your garden and why?” Answers listed in order received.

Alison Shilling: “Leymus triticoides: this is because I have a small yard and want something else besides L. triticoides. It needs a meadow-sized piece of land—it spreads by both runners and seeds.”

Ron Vanderhoff: “A while ago I planted a single 4” pot of Ammobia pumila in a sandy area with some Dudleyas and other coastal plants. It’s a federally endangered little thing with small grey foliage and a tiny stature. It is native to only a couple of spots in San Diego County and since it’s barely holding own in the wild and it’s “pumila”, I expected a mild little edging plant. However, soon after it settled in I found it spreading underground all over, even popping up several feet away. Fortunately, I reacted swiftly. Endangered or not, it’s been extirpated from my garden.”

Mike Evans: “I would never plant Lotus scoparius, because I believe it has a new name that I refuse to learn. I would simply die of embarrassment when my CNPS friends would come to visit... silly me, pointing out the many virtues of my lovely deerweed, and calling it by it's "old" name. I couldn’t bare the shame.”
Laura Camp—“Nassella pulchra (Purple needlegrass) looked pretty the first year, but after that it became the bane of my garden, spreading everywhere, with needle-like awns that covered garden gloves. After six years I have most of it weeded out.”

Ron Jones—“Northern Willow Herb (Epilobium adenacaulon): I received two of these plants as “hitchhikers” in pots from a reputable native plant nursery. I had never seen nor heard of this plant and it was a while before a tiny bloom appeared and made identification possible. Because it was an unusual plant I let it mature and bear tiny-tiny seeds carried by a feathery plume. This spring I had hundreds of Willow Herbs growing everywhere in my sizeable yard. I am working diligently to pull each of these pesky plants to avoid a take-over next season.” (Note from Dan: A survey of the new Jepson shows this plant is no longer considered to be native.)

Bob Allen—“I will never plant a coastal redwood or a giant redwood. Neither perform well in my part of Orange County; it’s just too hot and dry here. Plus, my soil is 100% sand. Many of those that are planted here by others struggle for 10-20 years, develop a split crown, then die a horrible death.”

Mike and Cathie Field—“We would never never plant Ambrosia pumila, San Diego Ragweed, again. It is extremely invasive; we have been trying to get rid of it for about 3 months now. A very poor choice for the home garden.”

Sarah Jayne—“There are a number of native plants that I would not include in my garden for one reason or another, but there is one that I will NEVER plant—again—anywhere: Aster chilensis. I did not know of its evil habits when it went into the school garden that I manage. In 3 years, it has invaded the entire garden, its rhizomes forming dense mats that are really tough to remove. The first year, it was lovely, but now it blooms only sporadically. Where it does bloom, spent flowers sit unattractively for weeks if not sheered off.

Rob Moore—“As far as popular garden plants go, I typically avoid the aggressive spreaders such as Romneya coulteri (Matilija Poppy) and Leymus condensatus ‘Canyon Prince’. An exception (because they are so popular) would be to use them in an enclosed area, or if one has lots of space and is willing to perform regular maintenance to keep them at bay.”

Christiane Shannon—“Sorry, I know of no native plant that I would never plant in my garden. There are a few that are invasive either by roots or seeds but they are manageable…”

Rama Nayeri—“Epilobium (CA Fuchsia). I planted it at a client’s garden in Fountain Valley and because she never took care of her garden it grew like a weed and took over her front yard.”

Celia Kutcher—“Since my native garden is intended to demonstrate that our local Coastal Sage Scrub can be an attractive home landscape, I'll never plant any of the species that grow only in Chaparral or are from more northerly parts of the state.”

Dan Songster—“I am willing to try plants most would shudder at, but one native that is a giant weed comes to mind that I will not plant again—Fremont Poplar. Its aggressive root system heaves concrete, invades drainage and irrigation lines, and out competes everything in the garden. It is wonderful in a desert wash, but in my garden it has become a huge bully that is almost impossible to successfully remove.”

Thanks to all who responded! Next issue’s question: “What native do you grow for fall color?” Email your responses to Dan Songster at songster@cox.net. Please remember to keep replies brief so we can include most of the responses!

FIELD TRIPS—2012

UCI Ecological Preserve—February 26
Elsinore Peak—March 18—cancelled due to snow!
Driving Tour of the Irvine Ranch Conservancy—April 8
Native Plant Lessons on the San Juan Loop Trail—April 14
A Trip Through Beautiful Upper Hot Springs Canyon, Santa Ana Mountains—April 29
SAMNHA Trip: Driving Tour of the Santa Ana Mountains—May 12
Rare Plants of Hobo Canyon, South of Laguna Beach—May 20
Caspers Wilderness Park—May 26
The Unique Plants of San Clemente State Park—June 17

…and one more to come: Fall Color Trip, Trabuco Canyon to Falls Canyon—November 18

What a great field trip season this has been! Many thanks to Ron Vanderhoff for putting together such a rich and varied series of field trips and leading most of them. Thanks also to Rich Schilk for arranging the IRC field trip and to Laura Camp for leading the Caspers trip. Thanks also to the Santa Ana Mountains Historical Association for inviting us along on their trip. Visit www.occnps.org/explore/field-trips.html for more details and pictures. Suggestions for field trip destinations are most welcome. Contact Ron through the website.

…and another wonderful opportunity:

Field-Based Rare Vegetation Sampling/Mapping Workshop
Starr Ranch Sanctuary, Southeastern Orange County July 14-15, 2012

The CNPS Vegetation Program is conducting a field-based rare vegetation sampling/mapping workshop on July 14-15 in southeastern Orange County. This low-cost workshop is being held to train CNPS chapter members to survey and map vegetation types, particularly rare types, in the field. This workshop will focus on techniques to identify and survey natural communities using our CNPS/DFG vegetation protocols. While the deadline for registration was July 3, there may be openings for late registration. Please check the website for all the details.
Chapter Meetings
There are no chapter meetings in July and August. The next meeting will be September 20.

Our June Chapter Celebration was a fine blend of nature walking, good food, silent auction and opportunity drawing, lively and informative speaker, and a slide show of our year’s activities. There are many people to thank for the success of the evening.

Laura Camp calmly and ably masterminded and supervised. Kathy Glendenning applied her considerable talents to running the silent auction and opportunity drawing. Mike and Cathy Field and daughter Chris arrived early to set up all the tables and chairs—and stayed to put them all away (not to mention their donations to the auction). Celia Kutcher put together the great slide show of our year’s activities. Rich Schilk lead a delightful nature walk.

Elizabeth Songster worked her magic in the kitchen. Dan Songster helped with food, but deserves special thanks from all of us for consistently arranging the excellent programs for all our meetings. Ron Vanderhoff was an eager helper and also made significant contributions to the auction. Landscape designer Rob Moore donated a garden consultation to the auction. Dori Ito and Jennifer Beatty provided friendly greetings and nametags at the door. Jennifer Mabley, assisted by Nancy Heuler and Frances Collato kept the purchase lines flowing. Brad Jenkins emceed like a pro. And of course, a big thank you to all who donated such an amazing array of auction items—and to all who purchased those items to help us raise funds to support our grants and other programs. Signed copies of Helen Popper’s lovely and useful book, California Native Gardening: A Month-by-Month Guide, will be available at our September meeting,

Plant of the Month/July-August, 2012

*Eriogonum giganteum*-Saint Catherine’s Lace

**Type:** Evergreen shrub. **Light:** Full sun. **Preferred Soil:** Good draining but adaptable. **Water:** Occasional to rainfall only

A wonderful native from the Channel Islands, *Eriogonum giganteum* is California’s largest buckwheat and if you have the room for this lovely plant (about 5 feet tall and 5 feet wide or even larger) you will not be disappointed! The plant produces giant cream-pink umbels of flowers bigger than a dinner plate that form an umbrella over the grey foliage starting in May (sometimes even April). It is covered in these intricate lacylike clusters of flowers so thick you can barely see the foliage!

Our longest flowering Buckwheat, blooms continue for a few months, during which time the plant will be a magnet for butterflies, bees and the like. (It’s one of the most popular nectar sources for butterflies such as the California Blues & Hairstreaks, which are suffering from dwindling habitats.) Afterwards, the giant umbels fade to a rust color, and seeds form, supplying local birds with food. Even when not in flower it is an attractive plant with soft wooly gray oval leaves and a rounded form, which can be left alone or trimmed to form a small garden tree of 5-6 feet tall. The old and gnarly bark is lovely when exposed in such a manner.

It is very versatile enjoying hot and dry climes as well as gardens close to the coast, and accepting of well-drained soils or clay. It is exceptional on slopes but can be used in many garden situations (size allowing). Just don’t put it somewhere thinking you will be able to prune it to keep it small. Constant shearing will mean no flowers!

Speaking of flowers, they make very nice cut material in both dried and fresh arrangements, often retaining the color at the time of picking— creamy white in May or rusty cinnamon in August. Flowers left to go to seed provide food for birds and also seedlings in the garden, which you can choose to keep, give to neighbors, or pull if unwanted.

Saint Catherine’s Lace requires no summer water once established and only minimal pruning by cutting off old bloom stalks when the blossoms start to fall apart. You can prune a few inches into “end growth” but cutting into old wood is risky since the plant resents such invasions and may not re-sprout from such harsh cuts. Removal of an entire branch to reveal the structure of the plant is fine however. Aphids can arrive to feed but seldom do much damage.

*Note: This article (a reprint from the Golden West College Native Garden Website) was crafted by blending my own experiences with other sources including Cachuma Press’s “California Native Plants for the Garden”.*

—Dan Songster

**MEMBERS’ CORNER**

Welcome to new members Jeff Robson, Jon Decesare, Mike Shukur, Henry DiRocco, Albert Finnerty, Stephen Sims, Michele Musacchio, and Chris Hughes.
CNPS Membership Application

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Affiliate with the Orange County Chapter, which will receive a portion of the dues. Dues and gifts to CNPS are tax deductible. The journal *Fremontia*, the CNPS Bulletin, and the chapter newsletter are included in the cost of membership.

Make check payable to CNPS and mail to:
California Native Plant Society
2707 K Street, Suite 1
Sacramento, CA 95816

OR join online: go to www.cnps.org click on Join CNPS

Name ____________________________________
Address __________________________________
City/State/Zip ______________________________
Phone/E-Mail ________________________________

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President Brad Jenkins 714 730-6023 bradcjenkins@yahoo.com
Vice President Laura Camp 949 370-3033 laurac@treeoflifenuisery.com
Secretary Nancy Heuler 949 559-1757 nhueuler@cox.net
Treasurer Jennifer Mabley 949 855-2112 jenpod@gmail.com

Board 2012-2014:
Sarah Jayne 949 552-0691 sbjayne@cox.net
Rob Moore 714 351-7688 robmoore@dlsextreme.com
Richard Schilk 949 768-0431 birdguy@naturalista.net
Dan Songster 949 768-0431 songster@cox.net
Ron Vanderhoff ronv@rogersgardens.com

Board 2011-2012:
Celia Kutcher 949 496-9689 celia552@cox.net
Cathie Field micafield@cox.net
Mike Field micafield@cox.net

Membership Team:
Team Lead: Laura Camp
Volunteer Coordinator: Diane Wolfenberg
Outreach Coordinator: Jennifer Mabley
Hospitality: Sarah Jayne
Greeting: Dori Ito, Jennifer Beatty
Volunteer Recognition: Dan Songster
Programs: Dan Songster
Audio-Visual: Bob Allen, Rich Schilk, Dan Songster

Horticulture Team (Grow Native OC):
Team Lead: Dan Songster
Plant Sale: Dan Songster
Garden Tour: Sarah Jayne, Rob Moore

Plant Science Team (Research OC):
Team Lead: Bob Allen
Rare Plants: Dave Bramlet, Fred Roberts
Interest Center: Bob Allen, Rich Schilk

Conservation Team (Protect OC):
Team Lead: Celia Kutcher
Invasive Plants: Bill Neill

Explore Team (Explore OC):
Team Lead: Brad Jenkins
Field Trips: Ron Vanderhoff
Field Trip Logistc: Rich Schilk

Communications Team:
Team Lead: Nancy Heuler
Publicity: Nancy Heuler
Newsletter: Sarah Jayne
eNews: Laura Camp
Publications: Rich Schilk
Website: Rich Schilk

Education Team:
Team Lead: Sarah Jayne
Educational Grants: Sarah Jayne
School Gardens: Sarah Jayne

Contact Information and Teams

July/August 2012