2012 June Celebration
In addition to an enjoyable bird walk through the San Joaquin Wildlife Reserve starting at 5 PM, irresistible hors d’oeuvres during social hour, on-screen pictures of the chapter’s members and activities, and an intriguing silent auction, we are excited to have a special treat for you: author Helen Popper who wrote a just-released book on gardening with natives will join us at the Duck Club to take part in our Chapter Celebration on June 21! She will discuss and sign her new book: California Native Gardening: A Month-by-Month Guide, published by UC Press. We could you some assistance with this gala event. Please contact Laura Camp at campsjc@mac.com to volunteer your help or with questions.

THE CONSERVATION REPORT
FOLLOW-UP: TRANSFER OF EL TORO FROM FAA TO FBI
In March, a Draft Environmental Assessment and Draft Finding of No Significant Impact, El Toro Custodianship Transfer was issued by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The document’s purpose was to assess impacts of the FBI’s taking custodianship of 900 acres on the northeasterly corner of the former El Toro Marine Air Base in Irvine. See the conservation alert on occnps.org/conservation for background on this issue, and for how important the 900-acre site is for connectivity between the Central and Coastal parts of the Nature Reserve of Orange County.

The Draft Finding...asserted that “No changes in operations will result from this transfer.” Several conservation groups, including OCCNPS, asserted that the transfer WILL result in deleterious changes to the site’s role in the Nature Reserve, and made extensive comments to that effect. (Many thanks to all OCCNPS-ers who wrote comment letters, despite a short deadline.)

Thanks to Dan Silver of the Endangered Habitats League for updating the situation as of 4/2012: “EHL, other conservation groups, and the City of Irvine submitted extensive comments on the legal inadequacy of the Environmental Assessment and requested a full Environmental Impact Study. Very importantly, though, the City of Irvine also called for a Memorandum of Understanding with the FBI to establish use areas compatible with the NCCP/HCP and for joint management. Thus far, the FBI has rejected this constructive initiative, further breaking with the long-standing federal commitments. EHL fully supports the City in its efforts to protect the NCCP and to reach an accommodation with the FBI.” OCCNPS also supports the City of Irvine’s efforts. ACTION NOW, especially if you live in Irvine: tell the City that you support protecting the NCCP and the City’s commitment to reaching an accommodation with the FBI that furthers that protection.

BANNING RANCH DEVELOPMENT HEARINGS CONTINUE
In March, the Newport Beach Planning Commission voted 4-1 in favor of recommending approval of the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Newport Banning Ranch development. Two more public hearings have been held on whether to recommend approval of the development itself, with another scheduled for May 17. These recommendations will be the basis for the City Council’s decisions on the fate of the Banning Ranch property. ACTION NOW, especially if you live in the Newport Beach area: contact the Banning Ranch Conservancy, banningranchconservancy.org, to find out how you can help with its campaign to preserve the entire site as natural open space. The Conservancy points out that there are two things to keep in mind:

—The hearings are an opportunity for the public to bring forth information that was lacking in the Draft EIR. Public comments made at the hearings (and written comments submitted during the hearing process) become part of the official administrative record.
—It is important to remember that the City of Newport Beach General Plan makes a priority of preserving Banning Ranch as open space. The Conservancy believes that preservation is

Anza Borrego meanderings
March 2012
I. . . up the bajada
up a mountain wrinkle
full of palm promise—
I’m back-flat on
an old stone slab.
What is your story cycle:
winter deluge, oven summer,
rifle-crack quakes
that flick boulders
off varnished dark cliffs?
In this ruin of repose
if I lie here long enough
what else will change?

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 birds are the most enjoyable visitors to your native plants?”
Answers listed in order received.
Ron Vanderhoff—“Western Bluebirds. They are not only beautiful birds and insect eaters, they almost rely on gardeners. With the lack of old or dead trees in our suburban areas (and their natural nesting cavities) bluebird boxes provided by gardeners are critical.”
Dori Itó—“In a word, Hummingbird.”
Christianne Shannon—“Since I began to transform the garden into a ‘bit of nature’, more than 15 years ago, my favorites are the Western Bluebirds, Nuttal’s & Downy Woodpeckers, Orange-crowned & Yellow-rumped Warblers, Hooded Orioles, White-crowned Sparrows, Anna’s &
Allen’s Hummers and House & Bewick’s Wrens, as either residents or regular seasonal visitors. But I have to mention the 3 species of Finches and the California Towhees, not only were they the first species to move in but their constant presence attracts many passing birds to my garden.

**Alison Shilling**—“Bush tits: they come both in spring and in fall to the annual sunflowers—in spring for insects and in fall for the seeds. They form a twittering group debating which plant is best, often hanging upside down.”

**Thea Gavin**—“I love to watch and listen to small flocks of tiny bush tits flitting in and out of the sagebrush (Artemesia californica) fence line thicket in my back yard; their constant contact calls—chipping and twittering—are a welcome counterpoint to the traffic noise from the nearby Orange Crush interchange.”

**Laura Camp**—“Hummingbirds have to be the winner, and as a birder I will pick my favorite hummingbird—Costa's. I love their distinctive whistle, they are small and cute even for a hummer, and the male’s gorget is a beautiful dark violet with a long mustache. There is one showing himself every day this spring at Tree of Life Nursery near the retail store, and I get excited every time.”

**Orchid Black**—“While hummingbirds are probably the favorite overall, I enjoy the Goldfinches and Lesser Goldfinches that use the seed of Encelia, Salvia, and Muhlenbergia rigens in the garden.”

**Celia Ketcher**—“Hummingbirds & bush tits!”

**Bob Hogan**—“Allen’s Hummingbird comes all year to visit Galvesia speciosa and also enjoys CA fuschia in season. For the majority of the year, Orange-crowned Warbler makes repeated visits every day, systematically working its way through Rhus ovata, Galvesia speciosa, and Mound San Bruno coffeeberry which are adjacent to each other and cover the east fence.”

**Stephanie Pacheco**—“Common yellowthroat (because it is uncommon in OC). And Black phoebe and goldfinches. And those occasional migrants.”

**Chuck Wright**—“Ours is a small mixed condo yard and the most important feature for the birds is water. I have a small "pond" on the ground with a dripper that attracts California towhee and a large above ground pedestal birdbath with small pump and automatic daily fresh water that attracts lots and lots of birds from cooper’s hawk to house finches, lesser gold finches, robins, hummers, and many migrating birds. Nearby ground cover is provided by maiden hair, blue eyed grass and herbs.”

**Dan Songster**—“Well, I like Phoebes. Cheerful disposition, acrobatic fliers, and will often sit still for a photo. Although they do not feed on the plants, they sure bring life and movement to the open spaces of a garden while the bush tits are cloaked in vegetation!”

Thanks to all who responded! Next issue’s question: “Which native plant will you “never” plant in your garden and why?” 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 TRIP SCHEDULE – 2012
Most OCNPS field trips are free and open to all, but read the trip outlines to be sure they fit your needs. Bring plenty of water, sunscreen, appropriate trail shoes, a camera, a notepad and lots of enthusiasm. Rain may cancel CNPS trips. For rain cancellation status visit www.ocnps.org/explore/field-trips.html after 8 PM the evening prior or contact Ron Vanderhoff (ronv@rogersgardens.com, 949 337-5462). Remaining in the spring schedule are:

**Sunday, April 29**—A Trip through Beautiful Upper Hot Springs Canyon, Santa Ana Mts.

**Saturday, May 12**—SAMNHA Trip: Driving Tour of the Santa Ana Mountains

**Sunday, May 20**—Rare Plants of Hobo Canyon, South of Laguna Beach

**Saturday, May 26**—Caspers Wilderness Park

**Sunday, June 17**—The Unique Plants of San Clemente State Park

For additional information on these field trips, please visit www.ocnps.org/explore/field-trips.html

### MEMBERS CORNER
The Board of the Orange County Chapter of the California Native Plant Society thanks you for your participation at our Green Scene booth April 14 and 15 (as well as setup on rainy Friday the 13th!) We appreciate your valuable time and efforts in helping to fund the programs that support our mission. We are grateful for the sacrifices you have chosen to make in order to help us further the cause of native plants in California: Laura Camp, Sarah Jayne, Cathie Field, Mike Field, Rob Moore, Jennifer Mabley, Rama Nayeri, Dee Epley, Mary Olander, Dori Ito, Nada Chatwell, John Gossett, Brad Jenkins, Justin Jenkins, Diane Wilkinson, Nancy Heuler.


**What is not growing in a manufactured landscape near you?**
Toe-high monkeyflower*, pink with a modest yellow revelation for those willing to stoop.

**Cholla siblings, cactus cousins—all blonde-haloed, almost glamorous in the low light.**

Then fluffy gets clingy—my shoeless
Chapter Meetings

Unless otherwise noted, chapter meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month at the Duck Club in Irvine. The doors open at 6:45 PM for food, fellowship, interest centers, and more. The program begins at 7:30 PM. No chapter meetings in July and August.

May 17 — Orange County Plants and the Birds That Love Them
Speaker: Trude Hurd

To see certain birds, experienced birders go to specific plants and wait until the birds "magically" appear. Toyon with red berries attracts cedar waxwings, prickly pear cactus is home to cactus wren, mistletoe berries are eaten by plainopala, and sycamores host a large community of wildlife. Join us as Trude Hurd takes us on a naturalist’s journey to observe some of the most important wildlife plants in Orange County’s native habitats and the birds that are associated with them. Trude will share fascinating facts and photographs about birds that utilize algae and kelp on the ocean’s shore, pickleeved and cordgrass in coastal wetlands, bulrush and willow of a freshwater marsh, sycamore in riparian habitat, coast live oak in oak woodland, and laurel sumac, toyon and prickly pear cactus in coastal sage scrub.

Trude Hurd became a nature-lover at an early age in Southern California where she climbed sycamore trees to watch red-tailed hawks. At present, she is Project Director of Education for Sea and Sage Audubon Society. She was Education Tour Director, Administrative Aide and Board member of Amigos de Bolsa Chica for ten years and succeeded in protecting the wetlands from development. For the past 19 years, she has been an environmental educator and biologist at the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary, a 300 acre freshwater marsh in Irvine. She has assisted with numerous local wildlife research projects including bat surveys, butterfly counts, bird counts, coastal cactus wren monitoring, and through her photography, writings, guided walks, and interpretive displays, Trude helps others discover the incredible beauty and complexity of the natural world around us.

June 21 — California Native Gardening: A Month-by-Month Guide
Speaker: Helen Popper

Welcome author Helen Popper to Orange County. She will speak to us about native gardening throughout the year, showing gorgeous images from her new book and providing a taste of her book by talking about June and July garden chores, and answering any questions you may have.

Helen is a delightful speaker and avid gardener from the Bay area who has collected some of the most useful, practical, and inspiring information from years of association with natives experts (including CNPS members!) and has put it all together for us in a most digestible form. She says of herself, “I'm merely an amateur—I hope in the best sense of the word—but an amateur nonetheless. That may not be the best publicity, but it does mean that I bring a rough & ready realism to the endeavor.”

We will have books on hand for sale and Helen has kindly agreed to sign copies purchased that night!

Book information:
Helen Popper provides detailed, calendar-based information for both beginning and experienced native gardeners. Each month’s chapter lists gardening tasks, including repeated tasks and those specific to each season. Popper offers planting and design ideas, and explains core gardening techniques such as pruning, mulching, and propagating. She tells how to use native plants in traditional garden styles, including Japanese, herb, and formal gardens, and recommends places for viewing natives. An essential year-round companion, this beautifully written and illustrated book nurtures the twin delights of seeing wild plants in the garden and garden plants in the wild.

Reviews:
“For anyone interested in gardening, this book is a delightful read. For anyone interested in gardening with California native plants, this book is a must-read. Helen Popper clearly lays out the tasks required to ensure maximum success with growing, propagating, and maintaining a

instep needs tweezers.

VII.

Desert oriole: such a shock of golden notes should earn you more than comparisons to meadowlark—you're here; he's not.

Canyon wren: your hidden spring of waterfall song breaks the dry silence and my heart.

*Mimulus bigelovii

—Thea Gavin
garden in rhythm with the seasons. This book will definitely be included in my reference library.”
Scott Soden, Artscapes Landscape Design

“Helen Popper has created a lovely resource for both experienced and novice native plant gardeners. The gorgeous photographs will inspire readers to see the natural beauty of natives and challenge us to use them in many garden traditions, from a cottage garden to a Japanese garden.”
Leslie Gray, Executive Director, Environmental Studies Institute, Santa Clara University