Native Gardener's Corner—Members’ 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. Answers listed in order received.

Our question for this Newsletter is: "What is your favorite native geophyte (bulbs, corms, tubers, etc)? Oh, and where did you get them?"

Laura Camp—"I really enjoyed the Redskin Onion—Allium haematochiton (purchased at Tree of Life Nursery). It was pretty and grew bigger and was perfectly adapted to my yard with no water - until a gopher came and ate it. Must be delicious, too!"

Thea Gavin—“Dichelostemma capitatum is my favorite! I collected seeds from my sister's property in Murrieta years ago, scattered them throughout my back yard. Now there are lovely purple surprises of "school bells" ringing around my garden every spring. Last fall I dug up a few hundred corms (and cormlets), nibbled on some, and replanted the rest at home and in the Heritage Garden. Besides being easy to grow, this plant was an important food source for Native Americans—I highly recommend it (and will have corms to share later this year)."

Celia Kucher—"I like 'em all! Dichelostemma capitatum, Sisyrinchium bellum, & Bloomeria crocea have all naturalized in my garden, from plantings many years ago. Don't remember where I bought them."

Chuck Wright—"Let's stretch this a little bit and add rhizome, as in Western Blue-eyed grass, Sisyrinchium bellum. This little beauty is so trouble free, it naturalizes nicely and when it gets ratty looking I hack it off almost to the ground and before you know it is looking good again and pops up in places that it likes to be without out being a pest."

John Gossett—"I first saw Calochortus splendens when I was visiting the Santa Rosa Plateau years ago, and I really think splendid mariposa lily underestimates how beautiful it is. Ever since then I have wanted to grow some one day, though I understand it is a bit temperamental, so I have been putting off the risk of failure. I will try it this Fall!"

Orchid Black—“Lilium humboldtii, Humbolt Lily, hard to find but not hard to grow with shade and moisture. Fabulous large tiger-spotted orange lily! Tree of Life is where I have found it more than once.”

Dori Ito—"I've never met a geophyte I didn't like, whether to grow or to eat or to ooh and aah over. But to winnow it down to favorites, I find stream orchids enchanting and surprisingly easy, Calochortus a challenge that occasionally rewards my persistence and soap plants en mass with the undulating elegance of their leaves a revelation. My bulb source is usually Rancho Santa Ana’s annual plant sale where I'm already carried away in the rapture of native plant buying and can easily toss in another bulb bag, or two, or three or..."

Alan Lindsay—“My favorite is Brodiaea kunkienis, San Clemente Island Brodiaea, I obtained the bulbs from RSABG four years ago. They have bloomed every year and doubled in number.”

Dan Songster—“Calochortus of any kind are wonderful but don’t always return the next year in my clay soils, while the little firecracker flower (Dichelostemma ida-maia) gives bright and interesting flowers and does return each year to put on its show. (I usually get both of these in the mail from Brent and Becky’s Bulbs). Whenever Tree of Life has a Leopard lily or Humboldt lily I get those and try them anywhere they fit—they are stupendous! Most native bulbs are also good in pots of various sizes and depths.”

Our Question for the Next Newsletter is: “What strategies are you currently using to save water in this drought (gray water, special irrigation heads, smart controller, etc) and how are those efforts working for you?”

Email your responses to Dan Songster at songster@cox.net. Please remember to keep replies brief.

In Memoriam: Roger Folger Thorne

With the passing of Roger Folger Thorne on March 24, the world lost a giant in the world of plant taxonomy. In addition to his research work, he was Professor Emeritus of Botany (Claremont Graduate University Department of Botany at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden) and curator emeritus of the herbarium at RSABG. He traveled worldwide and collected thousands of plant specimens for the RSABG herbarium. His work garnered numerous awards from local and national organizations.

Along with Dr. Thorne, other superstars in the world of plant taxonomy included Armen Takhtajan, Rolf Dahlgren and members of the Angiosperm Phylogeny Group. As a result of their research, the science of plant taxonomy went beyond a system based on visual similarities among species. Instead, they developed a new one that attempts to mimic the evolutionary descent of plant species. The hand lens has been replaced by the electron microscope, to examine and compare the chemical and genetic structure of plants.

I had the privilege of interviewing this delightful man during the RSABG plant sale in 2005. In addition to a discussion of his professional accomplishments, he shared his proudest memory—the time during World War II when his plane (a B-24 bomber where he served as navigator) was shot down. The crew successfully parachuted to the ground.

Dr. Thorne had his own designated parking space at RSABG, and I thought of him every time I walked by. I am saddened that he is no longer around to park there.

My article, "Interview with the Tax Man," in the March/April 2005 edition of this newsletter, is available online.

An article about Dr. Thorne and his passing appears on the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden website at http://www.rsabg.org/garden-discoveries/1059-bob-thorne.

—Joan Hampton
CONSERVATION

NEW EMERGENT INVASIVE DISCOVERED IN OC: EARLY DETECTION & RAPID RESPONSE IN ACTION!
On March 31, OCCNPS member Barbara Boething discovered Moroccan Knapweed (Volutaria tubuliflora)—one of California’s greatest invasive-plant threats—in the Big Canyon area of Upper Newport Bay. Barbara immediately reported it to our Invasives Committee; within hours Committee members had mapped the colony and sent alerts about it to the 6 agencies that cooperatively manage UNB. Within 12 days the Irvine Ranch Conservancy had removed the colony (3,600 plants); IRC will continue to monitor and manage the site for the next few years.
Local newspapers The Daily Pilot (dailypilot.com/news/tn-dpt-me-0410-invasive-plant-20150409,0,6141938.story) and Newport Beach Independent (newportbeachindy.com/invasive-plant-discovered-in-back-bay/) have covered the action on Moroccan Knapweed, bringing extra attention to the threats posed by invasive plants.

SADDLE CREST
The Appeals Court has reversed the Superior Court’s decision to deny the County’s approvals for the Saddle Crest development. This means that the approvals are reinstated and the development can go forward—and the enviro coalition (CNPS is a member) that opposed the appeal has lost. So has the Saddleback canyons’ and foothills’ natural environment.
The Saddleback Canyons Conservancy and Rural Canyons Conservation Fund, which have long spearheaded the campaign against Saddle Crest, are now considering what further actions they can take to preserve the canyons’ rural, natural environment. See saddlebackcanyons.org for details on the current situation, and past Newsletters for the history of OCCNPS’ part in the issue.

WILDLIFE CORRIDOR
Laguna Greenbelt (lagunagreenbelt.org/index.html) spearheads the campaign to preserve and enhance the (in places, tenuous) wildlife corridor that links the Central and Coastal portions of the Nature Reserve of OC. The corridor is essential to the Reserve’s proper functioning. Laguna Greenbelt reports that, earlier this year, a complex land swap has placed the whole length of the central corridor segment under City of Irvine ownership and zoned it exclusively for use as a wildlife corridor.
But many challenges remain, many interests would like to take “just a nibble,” to develop along the corridor’s route. Each “nibble” bottlenecks the corridor’s functioning a little; collectively, if allowed to proceed, they would in effect close it completely.
Among the “nibbles”: a small segment of corridor, constructed by the County in 2012 as mitigation for the extension of Alton Parkway, connects the FBI property (itself a large segment) to the segment adjacent to the Great Park. A 44-acre County-owned parcel that straddles the small segment is now proposed to be the West Alton Development Project. The project would cram 970 multifamily units (600+ to the west and 330+ to the east of the corridor), requiring buildings up to 5 stories high. See maps and Notice of Preparation: ocgov.com/civicax/filebank/blobload.aspx?BlobID=40888.
ACTION NOW: Especially if you live in the City of Irvine, get on the notification list for this project. Its DEIR is scheduled to be issued this summer, and should be extensively commented on by all nearby residents. At a minimum, the corridor segment must be effectively isolated from the development. The project is: remote from services and totally car dependent; wedged between busy Irvine Blvd, a water district facility and the FBI shooting ranges; Musick jail is the nearest neighbor. ACTION NOW: The 30-day scoping period ends May 17. If there’s anything about the project and/or the sites that you think the FS ought to be aware of and to address in the project plan, now’s the time to tell them. See commenting directions at link above.
—Celia Kutcher, Conservation Chair

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS
Except where noted, field trips are free and open to all. For specific details on these trips and particular conditions at the time of trip, please consult our website at occnps.org.

Sunday, May 3—San Onofre State Beach
With permission from CA State Parks and MSMC Camp Pendleton, this trip will explore coastal bluff-top areas and restoration sites with the guidance of a State Parks biologist. An optional trip extension will check out beach and canyon areas. Details on the website.

Saturday and Sunday, May TBD—Tejon Ranch, Ventura County
This trip has been cancelled.

Sunday, May 24—Modjeska & Santiago Peaks, Santa Ana Mountains
This trip has also been cancelled.

Sunday, June 7—CNPS Rare Plant Treasure Hunt: Santa Ana River Basin
This is a rare plant hunt and survey, not a traditional field trip. Please go to the website (occnps.org) and read the description carefully to see if this trip is right for you.

Our Icon to the East
(a prose poem)
Old Saddleback has never rated a name on maps that always split-bill Orange County’s peripheral cleavage. Once there was Kalawpa; now Santiago Peak’s hideous tower crown brings down the curtain of winter rain. Madame Modjeska thrusts herself stage right, statuesque at 5,481 feet, wearing well her muted shades of chaparral—that tangled mass of stiff and thorny shrubs (scrub oak, manzanita, buckthorn, greasewood) of which Professor William Brewer journaled. January 24, 1861. Following the performances of those who went before (First Ones, deer, cougar, grizzly), Brewer scrawled after a bloody crawl through the scrub, “The view more than repaid us for all we had endured.” Born 98 years late, I endure less on the eight-mile dance up the Holy Jim Trail, but the view still repays (from Pacific shine to the fading San Gabriels) through the haze. When the sun sashays down the ocean aisle, on come houselights for three million, but no grizzly reprise; I rehearse the options for my dark descent from the ancient theater of Chinochinchin.

—Thea Gavin
Chapter Meetings
Chapter meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month, except in July and August. Unless otherwise stated, meetings take place at the Duck Club in Irvine. Doors open at 6:45 pm; the program begins at 7:30.

Thursday, May 21, 2015--Native uses of plants through time
Speaker: Jeannine Pedersen
Archaeology is often associated with the discovery of huge tombs, glorious temples, and impressive palaces. Yet it is in the discovery and examination of smaller things that we learn the most about civilizations past. In fact the recovery, identification, and interpretation of materials left behind by those living here in Orange County can tell us much about their uses of native plants over the years. After all, people have taken from and tended the land in Southern California for more than 12,000 years, and our native plants were used for food, medicine, to make tools, shelter and clothing. Join us for a fast moving lecture exploring the many different uses of local plants by the native Americans of our region, through an examination of the artifacts left behind over decades and centuries.

Jeannine Pederson is the Associate Curator for Archaeology at the Dr. John D. Cooper Archaeological and Paleontological Center while also serving as a part-time faculty member in the Department of Anthropology at California State University Fullerton.

Jeannine received her Bachelors Degree in History and Anthropology from Marquette University and continued her studies at Eastern Illinois University in Charleston, IL where she received a Masters Degree in History and Museum Studies. Jeannine's primary passion is the care, study and interpretation of historical and archaeological artifacts and for the past 18 years she has worked in museums, historical agencies and archaeological repositories. She served as the Curator of the Catalina Island Museum for twelve years and has authored four books and numerous articles for local newspapers and websites.

CHAPTER CELEBRATION
Thursday, June 18, 2015: Orange County's Wildlands in Verse and Image
Speakers: Thea Gavin and Chuck Wright
For our Chapter Celebration, we have a special treat! Poet-naturalists Chuck Wright and Thea Gavin know you don’t have to be in a National Park to be completely awed by surrounding beauty. They have spent many years roaming the sage-scented hills of Orange County, being inspired by the flowers, scents, and creatures, and writing about what they discover. With images sparking ideas for poems (or a poem prompting the need of a photo) both of our authors have also become excellent photographers (as you will see). With this celebration of places, plants, and creatures of our local wildlands, Chuck and Thea hope you will be inspired to get out and fall even more in love with the wild landscapes of Orange County.

Thea Gavin is a native of Orange County, where she continues to hike and write about the wild beauty she encounters on her barefoot adventures. When not wandering the trails, she enjoys teaching writing at Concordia University Irvine. Recently she began restoring a forgotten corner of the campus into an ecosystem garden of fruits, vegetables, and native plants—the Heritage Garden. An active member of our chapter, as well as a volunteer naturalist with the Irvine Ranch Conservancy, Thea is currently working on an anthology of nature writings about Orange County. Her poems and essays about the West have been published in a variety of anthologies and literary journals, and after serving as National Park Service Artist-in-Residence at the Grand Canyon in 2011, she has returned as often as possible to hike and write.

Chuck Wright taught kindergarten and first grade students for 34 years and has been happily retired for 13 years, spending time volunteering in the Laguna Coast Wilderness Park, the Heritage Garden at Concordia University Irvine, and the Friends of the Library at the University Park Library, Irvine. He seeks to inspire others to become active stewards of our natural landscapes.

In addition to our speakers, we’ll offer a nature/bird walk at 6 PM, opportunity drawings and a silent auction, and a potluck hospitality table. For the always-fascinating Review of the Year, Celia Kutcher needs your great photos of 2014-15 chapter activities—oooh-ahh plant shots from field trips, garden tour, people doing things at plant sales, field trips, outreach events, school gardens, etc Please ID event, date, people, plants, and send as plain jgs, 72 dpi, 1MB or less, to celia552@cox.net.

For the potluck, we’ll supply the drinks, utensils, and paper goods. If you’re coming early, bring an appetizer—if late (ie. not for the walk) bring something dessert-ish.

Enjoy with us this special celebration of the year’s achievements.

Directions to the Duck Club
The Duck Club is located in the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary next to the IRWD water treatment facility. Access is off Campus Drive. To get there:
From Jamboree, go south on Michelson to Harvard Avenue. Turn right on Harvard. At University Drive turn right again. At Campus, turn right and stay in the far right lane, which leads to the right turn to the Duck Club.
From Culver, pass Michelson and continue on to University. Turn right and continue to Campus Drive.
When leaving, it’s right turn only onto Campus. See our website for a map & other info.

The Irvine Ranch Water District neither supports nor endorses the cause or activities of organizations that use the District’s facilities.
Roger’s Gardens CA FRIENDLY CONTEST is now in progress and OCCNPS is one of the sponsors. For complete details, go to Rogersgardens.com/ca-friendly-garden-contest
**CNPS Membership Application**

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- ☐ Mariposa Lily: $1500
- ☐ Student/Limited Income: $25

[Organizations, please go to CNPS.ORG]

- ☐ Affiliate with the Orange County Chapter.

The chapter newsletter, CNPS Bulletin, and *Fremontia* are included. Membership is tax deductible, minus $12 for *Fremontia*. Make check payable to CNPS and send to: CNPS, 2707 K Street, Suite 1, Sacramento, CA 95816

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**Contact Information and Teams**

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**Board Members:**

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- Rachel Whitt 714 815-6782 rachelleewhitt@aol.com

**Membership Team**

- Team Leaders: Dori Ito & Jennifer Beatty
- Volunteer Coordinator: Diane Wollenberg
- Outreach Coordinator: Jennifer Mabley
- Hospitality: Sarah Jayne
- Greeters: Dori Ito, Jennifer Beatty
- Volunteer Recognition: Dan Songster
- Programs: Dan Songster
- Audio-Visual: Bob Allen, Dan Songster

**Horticulture Team** (Grow Native OC):

- Team Lead: Dan Songster
- Plant Sale: Dan Songster
- Garden Tour: Mabel Alazard, Jennifer Beatty, Dori Ito, Sarah Jayne, Rama Nayeri

**Plant Science Team** (Research OC):

- Team Lead: Bob Allen
- Rare Plants: Dave Bramlet, Fred Roberts
- Interest Center: Bob Allen

**Conservation Team** (Protect OC):

- Team Lead: Celia Kucher
- Invasive Plants: Henry DiRocco

**Explore Team** (Explore OC):

- Team Lead: Ron Vanderhoff
- Field Trips: Ron Vanderhoff
- Field Trip Logistics: Rich Schilk

**Communications Team**

- Team Lead: open
- Publicity: Bob Huttar
- Newsletter: Sarah Jayne
- eNews: Laura Camp & Rachel Whitt
- Publications: Jennifer Mabley
- Website: Rich Schilk

**Education Team**

- Team Lead: Sarah Jayne
- Educational Grants: Jutta Burger
- School Gardens: Sarah Jayne

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**CNPS: Orange County Chapter**

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May/June 2015

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