Native Gardeners 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. The request for this edition of the newsletter is: “With summer’s heat arriving, what native plants do you have in your landscape that look great despite the expected high temperatures?”

Laura Camp: “Jojoba, Simmondsia chinensis, is my favorite high temp, full sun to part sun shrub. Also, Salvia californica, from Baja, seems to get bigger and prettier as the summer goes on.

Brad Jenkins: “Starting at the top of the list are toyon, California buckwheat, and saw-tooth goldenbush. Bonus... the last two flower during the summer as well.”

Ron Vanderhoff: “How about any of our native milkweeds? I especially like narrow-leaved milkweed (Asclepias fascicularis), which is simple to grow and a native plant right here in Orange County from the coast to the inland hills. Milkweeds are also summer growers, so the hot weather doesn’t faze them too much and of course the Monarch butterflies could not be happier.”

Mark Sugars: “In my yard, Rhus integrifolia (lemonadeberry), Eriogonum fasciculatum var. fasciculatum (California buckwheat) and Vitis girdiana (desert wild grape) do not seem to care how hot it gets.”

Bob Allen: “…manzanitas; lemonade berry; toyon; holly-leaved cherry; desert & California grapes; bladder pod; chaparral yucca; California, gray coast, and Santa Cruz Island buckwheats; California bay laurel; tecate cypress; …..”

Leon Baginski: “Manzanita and Catalina cherry. Both top performers in my yard.”

Celia Kutcher: “Frangula (Rhamnus) ‘Eve case’, Salvia apiana, Eriogonum fasciculatum, Rhus integrifolia, Eriogonum giganteum, Galvesia speciosa, and Heteromeles arbutifolia (which gets extra groundwater from the neighbor’s turf).”

Mike Evans: “All of ‘em if the garden is planned and cared for properly.”

Sarah Jayne: “Perhaps the most appreciated native plant in my landscape during days of intense heat is my sycamore that casts a large pool of deep cool shade.”

Dan Songster: “Again, the Buckwheats stand out with the blossoms aging to a rust color as the summer really gets hot. Great variety in both plant and flower size (and colors) with low growing forms of California buckwheat (and scarlet buckwheat, and Conejo buckwheat) all the way up to the large Saint Catherine’s Lace. It seems like everything in between is also great: ashyleaf buckwheat, Santa Cruz Island buckwheat, etc.”

Our question for the next newsletter is: “These dry fall days make me think of water. Do you use water as a feature in your native garden—if so how?”

Email your responses to Dan Songster at songster@cox.net. Please remember to keep replies brief so we can include most of the responses!

Conservation

CONGRATULATIONS ON A CONSERVATION VICTORY!

Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks recently celebrated the finalization of the Orange County Transportation Authority’s Natural Communities Conservation Plan and Habitat Conservation Plan. A lot of time, energy and commitment by many individuals, elected officials, organizations (including OCCNPS), and agencies made this program so successful. Congratulations to everyone involved! Details of the Plans and how they came to be:

- voiceofoc.org/2017/06/octa-and-wildlife-officials-preserve-1300-acres-of-wilderness/
- www.fhbp.org/resources/documents/m2-environmental-mitigation-program/

CNPS POLICY ON HERBICIDE USE

CNPS has two policies that cover herbicide use as a tool for controlling the spread of non-native plants into and within native wildlands. (CNPS, 2008. Herbicide Policy, Integrated Weed Management Policy, cnps.org) The main concern of both policies is that the control work be done in a manner that avoids injury to any native vegetation, hence to the biodiversity of our native ecosystems. Neither policy addresses the use of herbicides in non-wildlands, i.e. home or public landscaping or agricultural lands.
Conservation—cont.
The policies call for the use of Integrated Weed Management (IWM), which requires:

- Coordination of multiple efforts: prevention, early detection/rapid response, mapping, control, revegetation, and monitoring.
- Site-specific selection of available control methods: mechanical, biological, cultural, and chemical. The choice of methods is based on effectiveness, efficiency, practicality, ecological impact, and safety.

In 2016 the City of Irvine adopted an Integrated Pest Management Program that is essentially IWM broadened to include animal pests. However, the program includes blanket restrictions on the use of synthetic-based herbicides on city lands, including in its natural open space/wildland areas. Other OC cities are considering adopting similar programs, and looking to Irvine’s experience with its program.

A recent report on the results of a year of this regimen in Irvine revealed that the allowed organic-based herbicides are mostly ineffective against tough weeds such as bindweed, nutsedge, artichoke thistle and castor bean. The report comments that significant progress had been made, over the previous 10 years, against proliferation of invasive weeds using the synthetic-based herbicides allowed under the previous regimen. The organic-based herbicides now allowed require more frequent applications to maintain any control of such weeds.

OCCNPS’ position on herbicide use follows CNPS’ Policies:

1. Successful control of weeds in OC’s native open spaces/wildlands depends on the IWM approach. As appropriate, this includes judicious use of synthetic-based herbicide by trained, experienced applicators under supervision of the open space/wildlands’ managers, done according to all applicable laws and regulations.

2. Blanket restrictions on synthetic-based herbicide use severely curtail open space/wildland managers’ ability to combat OC’s aggressive weed populations. OC’s county and city governments—and ultimately, OC’s taxpayers—have, in the past decade or two, made a large investment of time, effort and funds in preserving our native habitats and biodiversity. This investment should be protected by removing the blanket restrictions and allowing full use of synthetic-based herbicides in OC open space/wildlands where such use fulfills IWM criteria.

—Celia Kutcher, Conservation Chair

Nativism

One of the recurring themes in critiques of invasive plant management is that it is driven by “nativism,” a prejudice against that which is not native. In this time when ugly anti-immigrant sentiment is being incited, such a critique associates environmental restorationists with xenophobes. I even heard an upset citizen describe invasive plant removal as “ethnic cleansing” at an Environmental Commission hearing in San Francisco.

This critique is dead wrong. Restorationists work to protect diversity, not to limit it. We work to protect native plant communities because they are rare and precious, and because they are critical to the health of native fauna that evolved with them.

There are those who point out that the addition of naturalized non-native plants to the native flora only increases the number of species, one measure of biological diversity. But the relative handful of non-native plant species we focus on are prioritized specifically because they can spread extensively at the expense of other plants.

These accusations tend to happen near developed areas, where the management of open space is strongly contested. Issues like the management of blue-gum eucalyptus stands and the use of herbicides are understandably divisive—cutting trees and using pesticides cuts against the grain of deeply rooted environmental orthodoxy. As one young women said at the San Francisco hearing, we’ve all read Rachel Carson, right? (And we know about the Lorax fighting deforestation, and Erin Brockovich fighting toxic contamination of communities.)

Though some people are dead-set against habitat restoration and will never be convinced otherwise, in general it’s a good thing that residents want to use caution before cutting trees or applying herbicides. It’s our responsibility to present a clear case for projects based on thorough, science-based evaluation. As we were reminded at the March for Science on Earth Day, science is the systematic reduction of prejudice and bias.

While we work to address the biases of others, we need to check our own biases as well so that charges of nativism—an unwavering confidence in the righteousness of favoring any native plant over any non-native plant in any situation—cannot gain a foothold.

—Doug Johnson, Executive Director California Invasive Plant Council

President’s Note: You may hear or read about particular movements that seek to stop all use of synthetic herbicides in cities. The “Non-Toxic” movement sounds good, but it is one that pushes for a complete removal of the use of all synthetic herbicides in all city lands. This unfortunately includes wildlands and wildland parks.

Using herbicides, yes, even those containing glyphosate, to implement the removal of extremely aggressive non-native plants in the wild, is something that is absolutely needed. In fact we believe it is the only way to keep some of California’s worst invasive plants from taking over entire ecosystems and greatly reducing the diversity we find there.

Although we applaud and endorse the implementation of hand or mechanized removal of wildland weeds, (or biological controls) when possible, we are convinced that the judicious and proper use of specific herbicides in particular wildland situations is an irreplaceable tool against some of the very worst invasive plants.

—Dan Songster
The Return Of The Hydrophiles

Many of you are just finally getting comfortable with including former members of the Hydrophyllaceae under Boraginaceae as it appears in Jepson II (2012). I had already adopted this arrangement in The Vascular Plants of Orange County, California, an Annotated Checklist (2008). Bob Allen and I followed this arrangement in Wildflowers of Orange County and the Santa Ana Mountains (2013). So everyone had good reason to get comfortable and adapt to it. If you never did quite like it, well, you are in luck. It looks like Hydrophyllaceae is a separate family after all.

For the few of you who have the San Diego County checklist (out of print but still available online at the San Diego Natural History Museum herbarium website) you may have noticed that Jon Rebman and Michael Simpson left us a warning. The authors suggested we shouldn’t get too comfortable with the Jepson II arrangement. They state: “Boraginaceae. This family has been expanded significantly and is now inclusive of the former families Boraginaceae s.s., Ehretiaceae, Heliotropaceae, Hydrophyllaceae, and Lennoaceae. However, this lumping is controversial and may be revised in the future.”

The change was in fact controversial and floristic projects in other parts of the world and the Flora North America project continued to recognize Boraginaceae and Hydrophyllaceae as separate families even as California did not. In a recent paper titled “Familial classification of the Boraginales” by Lubert et al. (Taxon 65(3): 505-522, 2016), the authors (and there were 15 of them!) proposed a new classification based on molecular phylogenetic studies, morphological characters, and nomenclatural stability. It looks a bit closer to the traditional treatment but there are a few differences. The Rare Plant Forum discussed the status of these families last winter and has adopted the proposals in the paper for the CNPS Rare Plant Inventory.

It isn’t quite as simple as just recognizing the old traditional Boraginaceae and Hydrophyllaceae in Orange County. While some genera, like cluster flowers (Phacelia) and whispering bells (Emmenanthe penduliflora) get their old seats back, a few other species do not. Salt heliotrope (Heliotropium curassavicum) is placed in the Heliotropaceae while yerba santas (Eriodictyon) and namas (Nama) are placed in a fourth family, the Namaceae. Though not an Orange County plant, some members are well acquainted with Tiquilia (Tiquilia). This genus, long considered a member of Boraginaceae in California floras, also finds a new home in the Ehretiaceae.

Thus the arrangements we should now be following in Orange County are:

**BORAGINACEAE** (Borage Family): Amsinckia (fiddleneck), Cryptantha (cat’s-eye), Echium (pride-of-Madera), Harpagonella (grappling hook), Pectocarya (pectocarya), and Plagiobothrys (popcorn flowers).

**HELIOTROPACEAE** (Heliotrope Family: Heliotropium (heliotrope).

**HYDROPHYLLACEAE** (Waterleaf Family): Emmenathus (whispering bells), Eucrypta (eucrypta), Nemophila (baby-blue eyes), Phacelia (cluster flower), and Pholistoma (fiesta flower).

**NAMACEAE** (Nama Family): Eriodictyon (yerba-santa), Nama (nama), and Wigandia (wigandia).

—Fred Roberts, Co-chair Rare Plants

Reminder: There are no chapter meetings in July and August. The next chapter meeting will take place on
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[Organizations, please go to CNPS.ORG]

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