



NOVEMBER CHAPTER MEETING

Walking the Path of a Restoration Ecologist

Thursday, November 18, 2021

Josie Bennett, Presenter

Aliso Creek, the historical boundary between the Acjachemem and Tongva tribes, is one of the major stream systems in Orange County, running over 19 miles from the foothills of the Santa Ana Mountains to the Pacific Ocean in Laguna Beach. It provides a critical wildlife corridor that connects the mountains to the sea, but with its long history of ranching and rapid urbanization, it is now designated a Federally-impaired waterway due to elevated levels of non-point source pollution, urban runoff, and invasive species. No wonder that for more than 40 years, the public, local land managers, non-profit organizations, as well as state and federal wildlife agencies have advocated for restoration of the degraded Aliso Creek watershed.

And so, the Laguna Canyon Foundation (with Josie Bennett as Restoration Specialist) and its partners stepped in, leading a multi-year effort on 55 acres of Aliso and Wood Canyons Wilderness Park, mapping the critically endangered watershed, removing acres of invasive plants, especially Giant Reed (*Arundo donax*), replanting with site specific natives, and monitoring the area. The results have been an increase in overall drought tolerance, the ecosystem’s capacity for adaptability in the face



of climate change, available nesting and foraging resources for wildlife, and connectivity through this important wildlife movement corridor that connects the mountains to the sea. Perhaps the most visible change is in the amazing recovery of wildlife seen and documented over the last five years.

Josie is a restoration ecologist with over a decade of experience working in every aspect of complex, large-scale restoration projects in Orange County. Prior to joining Laguna Canyon Foundation, she worked for the Irvine Ranch Conservancy, and the Natural Resource Management department of California State Parks in Orange County. Josie received a Bachelor of Science degree in Biological Sciences with an emphasis on Ecology and Environment from Cal-State Long Beach. She is an active member of the Orange County Chapter of CNPS, serving as co-lead of the Emergent Invasives Committee.

Register in advance for this ZOOM meeting at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZltcuCrrz8jHdZ6-slq4BDuknVbXzGxrkrp>

Calendar

- Nov 11 Board Meeting
- Nov 18 Chapter Meeting
- Nov 21 San Juan Hot Springs Field Trip **FULL**
- Dec 2 Board Meeting
- Dec 16 Chapter Meeting

HAPPY NEW YEAR

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 newsletter: **“With cooler, thoughtful months approaching, what is your favorite garden-based reading material? Vintage gardening books? Online blogs or favorite garden/nursery websites? Design magazines? Seed and nursery catalogs? Botanical-themed mysteries? Titles and/or authors, please!”**

Linda Southwell: “Anchors and favorites I always return to: *California Native Plants for the Garden*, by Bornstein, Fross, and O'Brien and *Braiding Sweetgrass*, by Robin Wall Kimmerer. This year I may re-read a book I really enjoyed the first time: *Gardening with a Wild Heart*, by Judith Lerner Lowry.”

Frederique Lavoipierre: “That new book I have been hearing about, *Garden Allies*, of course!” (We must mention that Frederique is the author of *Garden Allies*!)

Ron Vanderhoff: “Too much to mention, but over the past few years I have particularly enjoyed dozens of episodes of the online blog “In Defense of Plants”. These are engaging interviews and conversations with

hundreds of botanists, gardeners, ecologists and just plant lovers from all around the country. There really is something for everyone. If you're a plant junkie, like me, give it a try during a drive—you'll get hooked."

<https://www.indefenseofplants.com/podcast>

Nancy Harris: "As for reading about California Native Plants I enjoy my many copies of FLORA and FREMONTIA (now ARTEMISIA) which can be received with a membership to The California Native Plant Society. Well worth it!"

John Gossett: "My favorite site is Linda Chalker-Scott's "Horticultural Myths", and the linked "Garden Professor's Blog," both associated with Washington State University." <https://puyallup.wsu.edu/lcs/>

Tina Cremer: "Tree of Life Nursery of course and two of the best search engines for plants are Monrovia.com and Calscape.org. For general education: PestTalks <https://www.growertalks.com/Newsletters/View/>, Jain Irrigation <https://jainsusa.com/blog/>, Greenhouse Grower <https://www.greenhousegrower.com>, Plant and soil information: LAGUNA HILLS NURSERY <http://www.lagunahillsnursery.com/SOIL-INFO.html> (Gary Matsuoka is extremely knowledgeable.)

Dan Songster: "Sorry for this long answer! I always have stack of plant and garden-related books (actual books) set aside to read in winter months. Nothing beats rereading the two classics of Lester Rowntree—*Hardy Californians* and *Flowering Shrubs of California*. Of course, biographies of California botanists are a lot of fun such as Lee Lenz's look at *Marcus E. Jones*, as are the time machine tales and diaries of early California exploration such as *Up and Down California in 1860-1864—The journal of William H. Brewer*. Oh, and for something really sweet, I savor the Central Valley mysteries of Rebecca Rothenberg, beginning with *The Bullrush Murders*. She was the President of the CNPS San Gabriel Chapter before her untimely death. In addition, there is the excellent collection of essays by Mike Evans that explain the philosophies behind our very own Tree of Life Nursery while celebrating its 40 year anniversary—<https://californianativeplants.com/blog/40-years-of-tree-of-life/>. Finally, *Wildflowers of Orange County* by Bob Allen and Fred Roberts. It's amazing how much good information is tucked away in that wonderful book!"

Our question for the next newsletter: "**What native plant have you had good success with as a groundcover in your garden, or have seen and can't wait to try?**" Email your responses to Dan Songster at songster@cox.net. Please remember to keep replies brief so we can include most of the responses!

JOIN A MILE SQUARE NATURE AREA CLEAN-UP DAY!

The Mile Square Nature Area is planted with all California native plants and is located in the middle of the park. Join Park staff and volunteers on Sunday, November 21, from 8 to 10 am, for general garden clean-up and maintenance—no experience necessary! Please go to <https://ocparks.com/events/nature-area-clean-day-4> for more information and the required pre-registration.

Gardens are an essential (perhaps *the* essential) component of the built environment at all scales. As we take tentative steps forward towards a future where the next global pandemic likely lurks just around the corner, we must not underestimate the value of our gardens and green spaces. We need not only to protect and cherish them, but also to enlarge and reconfigure them to serve as safe outlets for public recreation, social interaction, and mental health and well-being. The need to connect—to oneself, to others, to the greater outdoors—is fundamental. Self-isolation is not. Whether a balcony of potted plants, a postage-stamp front yard filled with perennials, wildflowers spilling over a trail, or a well-worn dirt track along the bank of an urban river, gardens are fundamental. They nourish our soul, connect us to our communities, and provide safe and healthy places for us to escape confinement and recreate. Gardens let us showcase the best parts of ourselves."

"Gardens are Essential—Especially During a Pandemic"
Haven Kiers, **Pacific Horticulture- June, 2020**

BOARD MEMBERS AND COMMITTEES

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 reviews
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