



California Native Plant Society
Santa Clara Valley Chapter

THE BLAZING STAR

May-June 2020

Canceled Events Due to COVID-19

The Chapter has canceled or gone virtual with all of our events at least through **May**, to support local efforts to limit the spread of COVID-19 and to keep it at levels that our healthcare system can support. For more information, see the article on **page 2**, entitled **Stay in Touch!**

This newsletter issue will be published online-only at the usual spot: www.cnps-scv.org/blazing-star-newsletter. It provides news, events and activities you can continue to enjoy even during the Pandemic. For example, our General Meeting and Program, the Going Native Garden Tour and the Conservation Committee have gone virtual.

Receive updates by joining our Chapter News list. Subscribe by sending an e-mail to: cnps-scv-news+subscribe@googlegroups.com

GENERAL MEETING & PROGRAM

Friday, May 22 at 7:00 PM
Virtual Meeting

**Maintaining California Lichen
Diversity in an Era of Global Change**
A talk by **Jesse Miller, Ph.D.**
Stanford University

Join us for our first General Meeting over Zoom teleconference! We'll hear the latest Chapter announcements, then enjoy a talk by Dr. Jesse Miller.

Lichens surround us and though they are rarely noticed, they are sensitive environmental indicators and play critical ecological roles. California is a continental hotspot for lichen diversity, but its lichen communities are among the most threatened in North America. In this talk, Jesse Miller will discuss his research on the effects of altered wildfire

regimes on California lichen communities, with case studies from low- to mid-elevation conifer forest in the Sierra Nevada and old-growth chaparral in the Coast Range of Napa County. He will also present recent research conducted with an undergraduate class that uses lichens to monitor air pollution in the vicinity of the Stanford campus.



Jesse Miller

Strands of lace lichen (*Ramalina menziesii*) hang from an oak at the Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve. Lace lichen is California's state lichen, and it usually becomes abundant only in places reached by coastal fog.

Jesse Miller has spent many years working as a botanist and lichenologist across California and the Pacific Northwest. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2016, where he studied the effects of habitat connectivity on grassland plant communities. He is currently a lecturer at Stanford, where he teaches several ecology classes, including inquiry-based courses that engage undergraduates in real world ecological research. Jesse's research interests include the effects of global change factors such as altered fire regimes on lichen and

plant communities. Jesse loves sharing his passion for the natural world with others and enjoys contributing to Northern California's growing community of lichen enthusiasts.



Jesse Miller

Lichen community on ponderosa pine branches near the area that burned in the 2002 Blue Fire in Modoc County, California. This was one of Jesse Miller's study areas for his study on the effects of fire-severity on lichen diversity.

How to attend: Due to COVID-19 we'll host and attend this meeting virtually, via teleconference software such as Zoom. Check [our Facebook page](#) or [Meetup](#) for more information and how to register. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

CNPS General Meetings are free and open to the public. For more information, contact Chapter President Vivian Neou at president@cnps-scv.org or the Chapter phone at (650) 260-3450.



Jesse Miller

Post-fire landscape in an area that burned at high severity in the 2002 Blue Fire in Modoc County, California. Few trees had regenerated when this photo was taken in 2017, 15 years after the fire, leaving scarce habitat for epiphytic lichens that previously occupied the forest on this landscape.

CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Stay in Touch!

We are working on scheduling virtual activities while restrictions are in place and will add in-person events and activities when possible. Activities will be announced on our Chapter News list, [our Facebook page](#) and [Meetup](#). Two things you can do to make sure you don't miss anything are:

Join the Chapter news list:

The Santa Clara Valley Chapter emails announcements about upcoming events (talks, hikes, sales, wildflower show, garden tour), alerts, last-minute notices and late-breaking news. Events that are scheduled after the *Blazing Star* is published are announced to this list.

To sign up, please send an e-mail to:



Joerg Lohse

Shooting star *Primula hendersonii* at Rancho Cañada del Oro Open Space Preserve, March 2020.

cnps-scv-news+subscribe@googlegroups.com. This list is open to the general public. **Members are not automatically subscribed to the list, so you need to add yourself if you're not already on it.**

Make sure that your membership contact information is correct:

Members should make sure that contact information is correct by going to cnps.org, and clicking on "My Profile" in the upper right-hand corner of the page. Log in if you have an account set up already, or set an account up if you don't. Check your email address to make sure that it's correct.



Stephen Rosenthal
Painted lady butterfly on
clay onion (*Allium
unifolium*) in Steve
Rosenthal's San Jose
Foothills back yard.
April 2020

Photography Group

Our Photography Group is a great place to meet other native plant enthusiasts while improving your photographic skills and learning more about our native plants. We announce activities to our online discussion group (www.groups.io/g/CNPS-SCV-Photography), so if you'd like to receive updates, please join via the web interface or by email. Learn more by visiting the Photo Group page at our website: www.cnps-scv.org/photography.

Connecting people to nature and California native plants is more important than ever, so selected GNGT gardens located throughout Santa Clara and San Mateo counties will have virtual tours that you can view anytime with lots more photos and some videos. Visit gngt.org to see the virtual tours. Registration isn't required for the virtual tour, but please do register. You'll then receive notifications about any live webcasts and the 2021 Tour.

2019-2020 Chapter Scholarship Recipients

Our Chapter awarded three \$1500 graduate research scholarships in December 2019. This is the 20th year our Chapter has supported California native plant research by students. Two scholarships are in honor of Chapter Fellows: the Sally Casey Shooting Stars Scholarship and the Don Mayall Conservation Scholarship. A third scholarship has been awarded for general research.

The recipients of the 2019-2020 graduate student scholarships are:

Sally Casey Shooting Stars Graduate Research Scholarship

Sarah Gaffney, of UC Davis, is researching plant-soil feedbacks to understand their role in California grassland invasions. Her proposal continues studies on the role of soil health in native grassland restoration. Specifically, how are *Aegilops triuncialis* (goat grass) and *Elymus caput-medusae* (medusahead) changing nutrients, the microbial community and soil moisture. Research on this topic could aid many grassland restorationists in bringing back California native grasslands.



Bryan Boersma

Sarah Gaffney at her experimental grassland field site in Davis, CA (set up by Drs. Valerie Eviner and Carolyn Malstrom in 2007) where she is performing a plant-soil feedback experiment. April 2020.



Going Native Garden Tour Goes Virtual

The 18th annual Going Native Garden Tour (GNGT) previously scheduled for Saturday, May 2 and Sunday, May 3 will be **online only** this year to ensure the health and safety of visitors, garden owners, and volunteers.

Don Mayall Conservation Research Scholarship

Samantha Spurlin attends San Jose State University. Samantha is studying the rapid evolution of a rare, herbaceous wildflower, *Collinsia multicolor* (San Francisco collinsia) and its eco-physiological variation over time: the severe California drought of 2011 to 2015. Seeds obtained in 2013 and 2017/2018 from three populations will be grown out for two years. Plants will be examined for differences in flowering times, an important indicator of when the flowers are open and available for pollination; and stomatal density changes showing how the plant is adapting to a changing climate.



Samantha Spurlin

Photo collage from Samantha Spurlin about her scholarship project: Top left: Jim West and Samantha standing in the rain observing one of the collection sites of *Collinsia multicolor*. (Photographer Brett Hall.) Top right: Close up picture of the *C. multicolor* seedlings at this study site. Bottom left: Setting up and preparing the experiment. Bottom right: One of the first flowering *C. multicolor* of the experiment.

The Graduate Research Scholarship

Lacey Benson also attends San Jose State University. She is examining the desiccation tolerance of Western sword fern (*Polystichum munitum*) gametophytes and their recovery rate and morphology along the coast redwood ecological gradient. The results will help to understand how the longevity of this fern will be affected by climate change.



Martin McKeefery

Lacey Benson at a spore sampling site at Humboldt Redwoods State Park, September 2019.



Martin McKeefery

Scholarship recipient Lacey Benson examining coastal wood fern (*Dryopteris arguta*) at Humboldt Redwoods State Park, February 2019

We look forward to hearing more from the scholarship recipients in our future meetings and newsletters. Congratulations to Sarah, Samantha, and Lacey!

CONSERVATION CORNER

Conservation Committee

Our Chapter's conservation committee will be meeting on **Tuesdays, May 12 and June 9 at 7:00pm** virtually via Zoom teleconference. *Note the earlier start time.*

Please join us in our important work! Meeting details will be sent to committee members. If you are not on the committee but are interested in attending the Zoom meeting, email cdorsch@cnps-scv.org for the Zoom meeting link.

For questions, comments or concerns, contact Conservation Committee Chair Carolyn Dorsch at cdorsch@cnps-scv.org or (650) 804-6162.



Lacey Benson

A sloped grove of Western sword fern (*Polystichum munitum*) at Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park.

IN MEMORIAM

Sherri Osaka

By Chapter Member Stephanie Morris

Sherri Osaka, one of the most enthusiastic and capable advocates of the Santa Clara Valley native plant world, passed away on February 10, 2020 from metastatic breast cancer. Our Chapter has lost an irreplaceable friend and colleague and we will deeply miss her living presence.

As we remember Sherri and grieve this loss together, one thing that lives on in all who knew Sherri is an amazing



Agi Kehoe

Sherri Osaka at native plant sale, Hidden Villa, October 2018

legacy: motivation to make this world a better place. Sherri approached her life with energy, warmth and ideas. She was both a deep thinker and a person who stepped up to get things done. Her time on Earth is over, but Sherri continues to give us so many gifts. The most profound gift is a feeling that we still feel nurtured and supported by her, empowered to define our passions and get involved.

For over a decade, Sherri played a key role in Gardening with Natives. She was instrumental in expanding the Gardening with Natives educational outreach to create a successful speaker series at local libraries throughout the Chapter area. As part of this, she organized personal connections with each library, created handouts for each talk, scheduled greeters for talks and built an ever-expanding group of speakers on a wide variety of plant-related topics. Sherri also found the time to create and give her own native plant presentations multiple times per year. Even as her body was failing her, Sherri was as enthusiastic as ever about education and gave her final talk this past December, less than two months before she passed away.

Our Chapter is so grateful to Sherri for her long-term dedication to CNPS and the Gardening with Natives Group. We will miss Sherri immensely and hope to honor her efforts with our own.

Sherri's husband Glenn and daughters wanted to share with us: Sherri's passion was sustainability and the native plant community provided her such an amazing and rich community of support, providing her with great joy. We're so happy that she had all of these relationships.



Vivian Neou

At Sherri Osaka's Celebration of Life, Sherri's daughters Lauren and Shannon pose with two copies of the Chapter's 2020 Native Plant Ambassador Award, given to Sherri posthumously. Villa Montalvo, March 1, 2020

To learn more about Sherri’s inspiring life and Gardening with Natives, we invite you to read the [eulogy Linda Ruthruff gave at her Celebration of Life](#).

Gardening with Natives is forming a new committee to organize activities for the future. Please contact Stephanie Morris at StepLMorris@gmail.com to be added to the steering committee.

The Gardening with Natives email discussion forum carries on without Sherri, thanks to its moderators. You may subscribe by using the form on the Chapter website’s GWN page, www.cnps-scv.org/gwn.

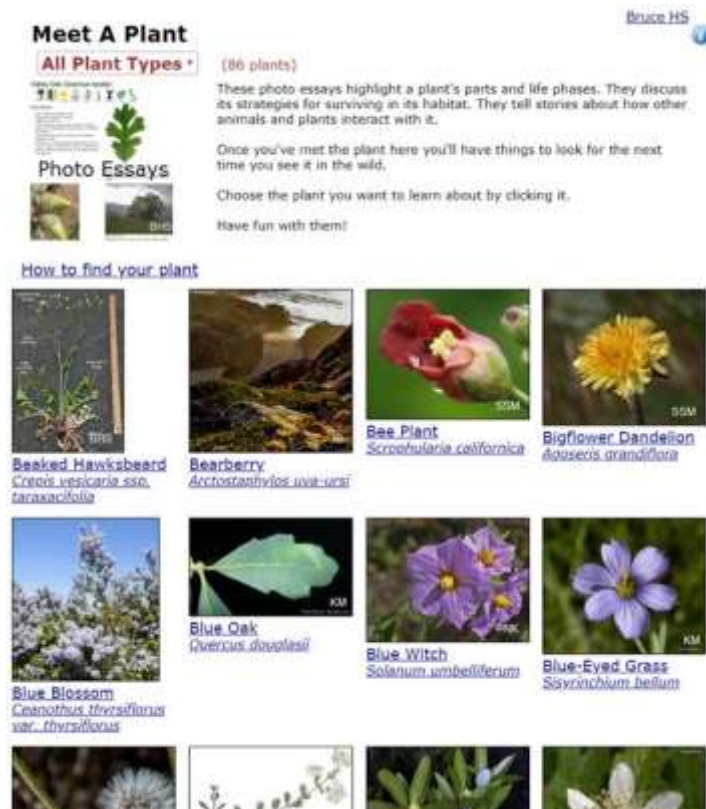
Photo Essays on California Plants

By Chapter member Bruce Homer-Smith

Here’s an indoor way to meet a new plant and to learn something new about old favorites: Meet a Plant, the photo essays by Bruce Homer-Smith on PlantID.net.

These photo essays highlight a plant’s parts and life phases. They discuss its strategies for surviving in its habitat and tell stories about how other animals and plants interact with it. Here’s the link: PlantID.net/?PlantList=Meet+A+Plant.

Have fun with them!



ANNOUNCEMENTS

News and Activities from Other Organizations

Support Local Native Plant Nurseries During COVID-19

County Public Health Orders have temporarily closed non-essential small businesses and organizations that members depend on. As a result, some of our local California native plant nurseries may be danger of going out of business permanently.

We encourage members to support your favorite organizations or businesses, by giving them a donation, buying a gift certificate, buying a product online for no-contact pickup or in other ways. Our Chapter website’s [Gardening Resources page](#) links to a list of some local native plant nurseries.

CNPS Member Wins Canopy Tree Award

Each year, Canopy Tree Awards acknowledges individuals and organizations who have helped to grow and protect the urban forest. The 2020 award goes to Chapter member Judy Schwarz, for sharing the benefits of landscaping with California native plants in her daily work at SummerWinds Nursery in Palo Alto.



Canopy
Judy Schwarz working at SummerWinds nursery in Palo Alto, where she helps customers choose California native plants for their home landscaping projects.

Judy is on the front lines of the movement to green our neighborhoods through planting trees and mostly native landscaping. Every day you can find Judy at SummerWinds talking with local residents about the benefits of using native plants and convincing them to use these plants to landscape their homes. She is a native plant fanatic in the best possible way. Her love of habitat and natural beauty are infectious and her knowledge of local plants is boundless.

Canopy is a Palo Alto based non-profit organization whose mission is to grow the urban tree canopy in Midpeninsula communities for the benefit of all. To learn more, visit their website at www.canopy.org.

CHAPTER OFFICERS FOR 2020

Title	Name	Email	Phone
President	Vivian Neou	president@cnps-scv.org	(650) 260-3450
Vice President	Johanna Kwan	1calnative@gmail.com	
Recording Secretary	Priya Pharate	secretary@cnps-scv.org	
Treasurer	Janet Hoffmann	janet@cnps-scv.org	(408) 374-0435
Past President	Madeline Morrow	madeline.morrow@earthlink.net	(408) 741-1150

Save a Tree!

Blazing Star newsletters are always online at the Chapter website’s newsletter page: www.cnps-scv.org/blazing-star-newsletter. Please contact membership@cnps-scv.org if you would like to receive this newsletter by email only.

Note that this May-June 2020 issue is available only as an online PDF – no paper copy this time. If you’re an email subscriber, you’ll get your usual notification that the newsletter’s been posted.

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Joerg Lohse
Blazing star (*Mentzelia lindleyi*) at Sierra Vista Open Space Preserve, April 2020

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT *BLAZING STAR*

Saturday, June 6

carol.mattsson@gmail.com or (408) 255-3767

Santa Clara Valley Chapter California Native Plant Society
3921 East Bayshore Road
Palo Alto, CA 94303-4326



Join CNPS Today!

Members receive the *Fremontia*, the *Bulletin*, and the Chapter newsletter, and other benefits listed at www.cnps.org/membership

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Membership level (check one):

- \$50 Individual
- \$120 Plant Lover
- \$500 Supporter
- \$1,000 Patron
- \$2,500 Benefactor
- \$25 Student or Fixed Income
- \$75 International or Library

Areas of interest:

- Advocacy
- Botany
- Conservation
- Education
- Field Trips
- Gardening
- Plant ID

Donations above the membership level are gratefully accepted.

Dues and donations are tax-deductible. Make your check payable to "CNPS" and mail it with this form to:

CNPS Membership, 2707 K Street Suite 1, Sacramento, CA 95816-5130 • membership@cnps.org • (916) 447-2677 ext. 200

FIRST-CLASS

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

The Chapter has canceled or gone virtual with all of our events at least through **May**, to support local efforts to limit the spread of COVID-19 and to keep it at levels that our healthcare system can support.

Find your favorite version of our CNPS Chapter calendar online at one of the following places:

Chapter Website www.cnps-scv.org

Facebook: facebook.com/scv.cnps

Meetup: meetup.com/California-Native-Plant-Society-Santa-Clara-Valley-Chapter

The next Chapter board meeting will be **Thursday, June 11 at 7:00pm** via teleconference.

Board meetings are open to all Chapter members and their guests.

For more information or to attend contact Chapter Vice President Johanna Kwan at 1calnative@gmail.com.

The California Native Plant Society is a statewide non-profit organization of amateurs and professionals with a common interest in California's native plants. The Society, working with its local chapters, seeks to increase understanding and to preserve the rich heritage of the native flora for future generations. Membership is open to all. Individual memberships are \$50.00 per year. If you have questions about your newsletter subscription, please contact membership@cnps-scv.org. Address changes may be submitted to cnps@cnps.org; please put "member address change" in the subject line.

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