

THE CYPRESS CONE

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
SANTA CRUZ COUNTY CHAPTER



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Spring/Summer 2021

Making Friends with Nature

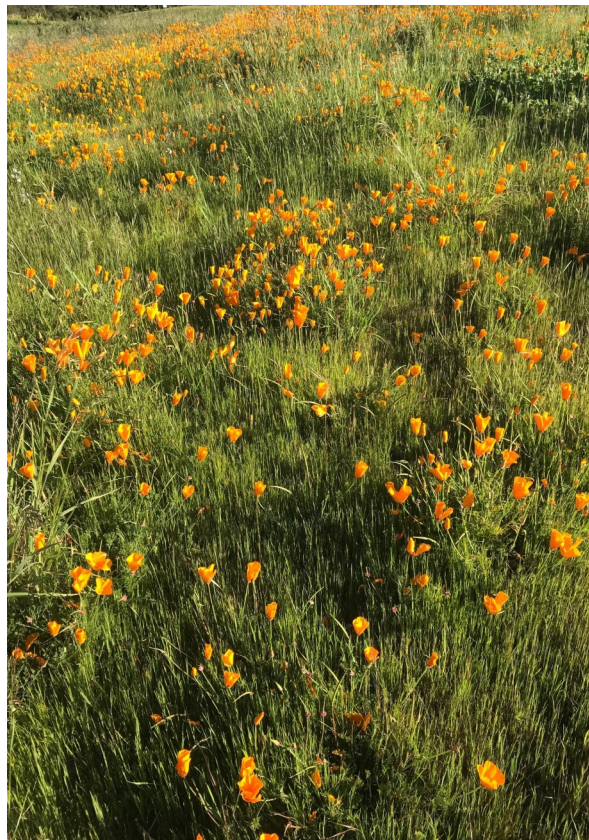
Gardening with Herbaceous Fire Safe Natives

Jackie Pascoe

Last winter, after the devastation of the 2020 wildfires, the roar of the chainsaw often outcompeted bird song throughout the hills and valleys of Santa Cruz County as people removed dry, woody vegetation from their rural properties. Creating a “fire-safe” landscape means removing forty to fifty percent of the woody vegetation within a hundred-yard radius of a rural home, leaving well-pruned islands more than a flame’s distance apart. It’s not a joyful task for people who moved to rural properties for their natural beauty.

However, we can find inspiration in the practices of California’s Indigenous tribes, including our local Amah Mutsun Tribal Band. They used fire to maintain and extend open landscapes in ways we cannot. They also nurtured ecosystems, especially in coastal prairies, by tending plants where they grew: sowing seeds and bulbs, tilling, weeding, and pruning. These practices, arising from what’s now called traditional ecological knowledge, have been shown to increase biodiversity.

Coastal prairie plants are ideal for fire-wise landscaping. Restoration ecologist Grey Hayes’ home was built on a former coastal prairie. He has been working over the years to fill the “lean clean and green” zone around his house with a coastal prairie restoration. “If I have to have a microworld around my house because of fire,” he said, “it’s still super interesting to me.”



California brome and poppy prairie is a rare sub-type of coastal prairie that grows on a shallow-soiled grassy bald. The area was first maintained by Indigenous people using traditional ecological knowledge, then used as farmland. The area is now being restored from the native seed bank by Grey Hayes.

(Cont. on p. 4)

Prez Sez

Linda Brodman

Transitions. They can be tough and full of opportunities—fun and rewarding, maybe a little scary, and out of our comfort zone. Yes, we as a chapter are in one of those transitions.

Over the last year and a half (as you all know too well), we have experienced a pandemic like no other during our life time with physical, social, and mental consequences and challenges. Our lives and routines uprooted; the same can be said for our organization.

One of the biggest changes was with our Chapter Board. We had resignations at the end of 2020, and our current Treasurer is stepping down while continuing with conservation. New faces have joined our team: Joe Bonanno, Webmaster; Kari Olsen, Plant Propagation; Sylvie Childress, Conservation; Janice Kuch, Secretary.

Our spring plant sale was a big success; check out Julia’s overview on page 3. Many thanks to all the volunteers involved, as well as the UCSC Arboretum and Botanical Garden for hosting our pickup site, and Suncrest Nurseries for supporting our the CNPS propagation team.

Sylvie has taken the lead on our conservation input at Arana Gulch and the recovery/management plan for coastal prairie species. Janice heard our plea for secretarial and record keeping help. However, our small team is still wearing multiple hats!

Spring was a little cool this year, and our winter rains were not many.

(Cont. on page 5)

A Thank You Letter

Kari Olsen, Propagation Team Leader

The Year 2020 presented a continuum of challenges, everything from routine tasks becoming arduous and frustrating, to tragic events and devastating losses of family, friends, and community. For our chapter's Propagation Team, the year began fairly predictably, but that sensation did not last long. By our February session we'd dropped to a small number of people due to COVID exposure risk; by the March session, the state was in full lockdown. While it turns out many jobs can be done remotely or collaboratively over Zoom, growing and caring for plants is not one of them! This presented our group with a dilemma and a choice we each needed to make for ourselves and no one took it lightly. At 55, I'm probably the youngster of the group; Mike Luther, our team leader, at 85, had just finished treatment for lymphoma. Mike made it clear from the outset that propagation session attendance was 100% optional; pandemic or no, he had every intention of carrying on despite the closures. A small subset of our group masked up, kept six feet apart, and made it work.

We didn't know it at the time, but that was the easy part. By April we knew there would be no spring plant sale and we began to consider how to proceed and what plants to hold over for a fall sale. That's when Mike broke a hip and had emergency surgery. Knowing he would be out of commission for a while, the team pulled together to strategize how to keep the small group going until Mike's return. We collected the greenhouse key, propagation supplies, and the all-important clipboard from Mike's car and went to work. Because of the nature of our *sub rosa* endeavor during the lockdown, I began calling our little group "The Suncrest Seven," a nod to the "Fukushima 50," the 50 engineers who stayed behind at the nuclear power station in Japan to prevent further catastrophe after the earthquake and tsunami (granted our mission was far less dangerous and essential).

From his recovery bed, Mike directed us to offload plants which wouldn't last until fall. Ann Garside brokered a deal with the City of Santa Cruz which bought us both time and essential bench space for the plants we needed to up-size. We devised a strategy for working safely where there were no more than two people in an area at a time, stayed masked, and made plans for the fall sale.

Everything changed at the beginning of June when we learned Mike wouldn't be returning to lead our group. I wasn't thinking about the fall sale or how to keep going; it became all about making sure Mike knew the plants would be looked after and that we were deeply grateful for his years of dedication. The Chapter Board and the Propagation Team turned out in high numbers to hand-deliver an award of recognition to Mike. It allowed us to say thank you and, sadly, goodbye.

Throughout these difficult times, Suncrest Nurseries continued to support and communicate with us so we could keep working. Returning under the shadow of Mike's death in early July was difficult. Mike had transferred his propagation records to me but there was no road map for this time. Our loss and the second wave of

COVID loomed large. We alternated the times we were at the nursery to minimize our numbers. We held a mini-sale of Iris to clear bench space and test online sales. The success of that sale led us to set our sights on a spring 2021 sale. With so few hands, tasks like the annual Iris division took multiple extra sessions during the December-January surge. Plants were root-pruned to hold them over until spring, more sessions. In December Suncrest gave us a windfall of liners for which we were grateful, all of which needed to be potted up, more extra

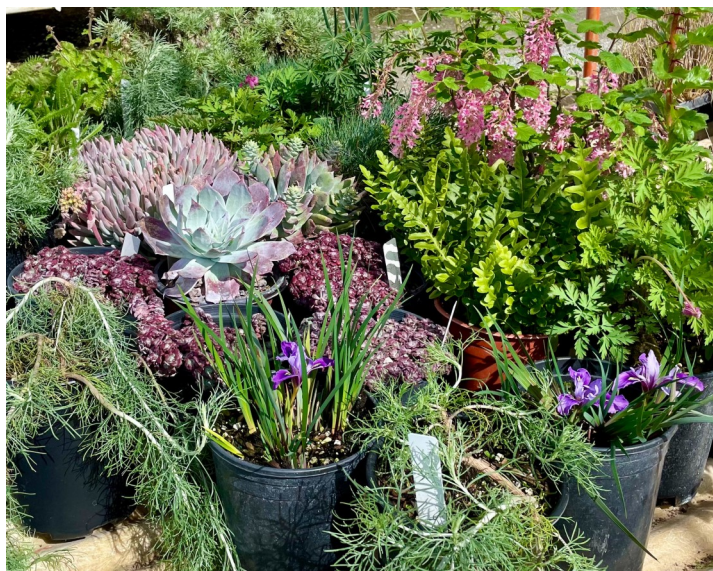
sessions. To hold an online sale, inventory needed to be exact...more sessions and lots of counting and recounting.

The stalwart commitment of the Propagation Team members has never wavered. As their *de facto* leader, the thought of trying to fill Mike's shoes was daunting from the beginning. I initially took the position out of loyalty to Mike's legacy, but the commitment, ongoing support, and encouragement of the team members kept me in that role. They problem solve, they show up, they follow through, and they care. During this year of pandemic and loss, as a team and as individuals, they have maintained our ability to continue to hold plant sales. Had we lost any one of them, I don't think we could have pulled this off. So I hope you will join me in expressing my gratitude and thanks to the Propagation Team for their extraordinary work under changing and difficult circumstances.

The Suncrest Seven: Lise Peterson, Don Peattie, Ann Garside, Paul Chesler, Jamie Rackley-Schiff, Jackie Pascoe, and myself as *de facto* team leader. Ginger Fulton-Bennett joined our ranks in December, and Karen Hildebrand and Karen Laing returned to the team in time to help with preparations for the spring sale.



Recent propagation group: Ann Garside, Karen Hildebrand, Paul Chesler, Jackie Pascoe, Jamie Rackley-Schiff, Ginger Fulton-Bennett, Don Peattie, Kari Olsen. Photo: Lise Peterson



Native plants make for happy gardeners. Blooming plants ready for pickup at the spring sale. Photo: Jackie Pascoe

Spring Plant Sale Online Success

Julia Davenport

Though online sales made it possible, we missed visiting with you all, as the community gathering is often the most memorable part of the sale for us. However, the spring sale held online in late March, with pickup at the Arboretum on April 10 and 11, was a success. It brought slightly over \$5700 into the chapter bank account. Though so successful, we have high hopes that this will be the last totally online plant sale. By fall we may be able to meet and greet all customers and share in person the enthusiasm and love of growing natives in our gardens.

For the most part it went as smoothly as a first-time event could go. Credit is due to chapter members who worked for months propagating plants under the adept leadership of Kari Olsen. Also to our webmaster Joe Bonanno who designed and ran the plant sale site (which other chapters covet). Kudos to the dedicated and energetic plant distribution crew at the Arboretum pickup site. Many thanks go out to all members of our group who participated, whether you purchased a plant, propagated a plant, loaded the truck, sorted a plant for pickup, or wheelbarrowed it to a car.

Everyone took a chance here. If you bought a plant, you went through the online process to purchase plants and then pick them up sight unseen. If you propagated a plant, you spent many Sundays at Suncrest Nurseries throughout pandemic restrictions—imagine the stress there. In April, still in masks and keeping six-foot distance, plants were loaded onto the truck at Suncrest Nurseries, trucked to the Arboretum, and the masked plant sale team organized and loaded plants into waiting cars at the Arboretum. I am thankful and proud of our chapter. We missed the friendly one-on-one nature of our usual sales, as we all love talking about native plants and sharing experiences and tips. We look eagerly to the future.

A big thank you goes to the UCSC Arboretum and Botanic Garden for hosting our plant pickup site. Katie Cordes was responsible for assisting our efforts there during surprisingly busy days at the Arboretum. The Arboretum was in full bloom and it was a delightful venue. You can support the Arboretum by visiting them year 'round. We also gratefully acknowledge Suncrest Nurseries for their openness to keeping things going during the past year. We are thankful for their solid support of our mission.

As we had to limit the number of volunteers to follow social distancing rules, at this year's spring sale just a few people made a huge effort. Many thanks to: Joe Bonanno, Linda Brodman, Debbie Bulger, Steve Davenport, Anna Davenport, Ginger Fulton-Bennett, Ann Garside, Laurie Kiguchi, Melinda Kralji, Todd Luchette, and Richard Stover. As always, many thanks to the Propagation Team who provided the gorgeous plants that brought big smiles.

Field Trips are Back!

Henry Cowell State Park

June 23. 9:30—lunch (bring lunch)

Leader: Andy Werner

We will be exploring different areas of Henry Cowell State Park, concentrating on native plants. Length can vary according to what folks would like to see. Meet at the parking pullout on Graham Hill Road. It's on the park side, between Meyer Drive and Hilltop Drive. Or, on Google maps enter "Graham Hill Pullout". Level of difficulty is moderate—there are some steep areas and some sandy trails. Distance estimate is 5–8 miles at a slow to moderate pace, with many stops for plant ID's and discussion. Not an exercise hike! Trip limited to ten people.

Contact: Andy Werner at apwerner44@gmail.com

Henry Cowell State Park

July 11. 9:30—2:00 (bring lunch)

Leader: Deanna Giuliano

Join Andy and Deanna for a hike along the river and through the majestic redwoods of Henry Cowell. We will check out

riparian plants, such as willows and sedges, possibly stream orchids too. Depending on the route we will hike between 6-8 miles with some steep terrain near the river crossings. We will be able to lounge at some swimming holes along the way. Bring layers, sunscreen, hat, snacks, and water. Meeting time 9:30 am at the bridge at Henry Cowell State Park main entrance on Hwy 9. Free parking along Hwy 9. Trip limited to ten people.

Contact: Deanna Giuliano at drosegiuliano@yahoo.com



California fuchsia
(*Epilobium canum*)
Photo: Jackie Pascoe

Restoration Update

Linda Brodman

Our long-term restoration work continued this year with a very small group of dedicated volunteers at Quail Hollow Ranch County Park. We worked many French broom sites within the park from January onward, while observing best public health practices.

Our restoration season is coming to an end, and will start up again in late fall/early winter. At that time, or sooner if possible, I may be willing to involve new volunteers. I continue to remain optimistic that 2021 will bring the ability to engage others back into our restoration workdays. If you are interested, please let me know. You can reach me at 831.462.4041, redwdrn@pacbell.net.

The 100 Club

Al Keuter

Do you have a computer and wish to travel virtually while sharing your botanical chops and knowledge of obscure collecting locations?

California herbaria are eagerly awaiting your assistance georeferencing their rarest and most important specimens. The "100 Club" is a team of experts (that would include your fellow Santa Cruz CNPSer) trained to georeference herbarium specimens at the CCH2 website (cch2.org). If you're already salivating just reading this, clean the drool off your face and immediately check out this link for more details:

<https://www.capturingcaliforniasflowers.org/blog>

See you there!



Tidy tips, California poppy, and bicolor lupine in a coastal prairie planting with fire-safe mineral mulch. Photo credit: Jackie Pascoe

Making Friends

(cont. from page 1)

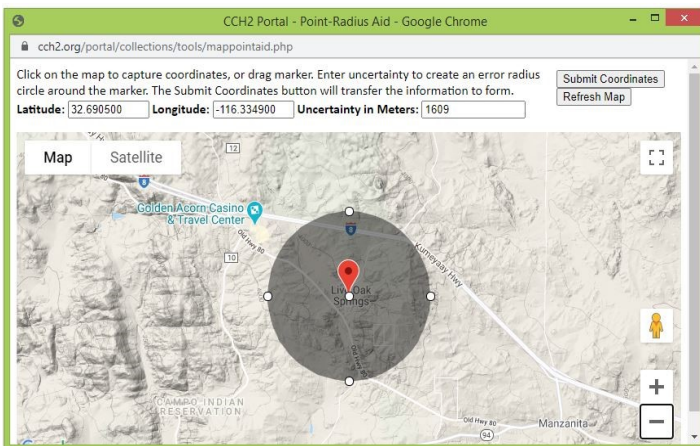
"Over time I'll add to the diversity of the microflora so that I can live here and enjoy the biodiversity and still be fire safe," Grey added.

Coastal prairie plantings add wildlife and garden value in small garden settings. The garden bed beside chapter president Linda Brodman's front door lights up each spring with a froth of pale meadowfoam (*Limnanthes douglasii*), a reseeding coastal prairie annual.

Unlike Midwest prairies, California's prairies are rich in low-growing herbaceous plants whose spring beauty brings people out in admiring droves. Some of the most gorgeous blooms come from geophytes, perennial plants that die back to bulbs, corms, tubers or rhizomes during the summer. These include plants in the *Triteleia*, *Dichelostemma*, *Allium*, and *Brodiaea* genera, whose underground food stores were (and still are) relished by Indigenous Californians. Native *Iris* species, blue eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*) and lupines are also attractive plants found in coastal prairies, as are grasses such as *Danthonia californica*.

When the ancestors of today's Amah Mutsun Tribal Band were the only inhabitants of our region, nature was wherever they lived. Entomologist and native plant advocate Douglas Tallamy encourages us to realize that this is also true today—that nature is where we live, not in a far-off nature preserve. Growing plants from our local ecosystems, whether our garden is an apartment balcony or acreage in the wild, can help us, as well as local birds and other wildlife, feel connected to nature.

For more information on California prairies see *Fremontia* Vol 39 No 2. For local information see our chapter web site: <https://cruzcnp.org/plant-communities/coastal-terrace-prairie/>



From the CCH2 website. Join the club and you, too, can help the effort to georeference herbarium specimens.

CZU Complex Fire Followers

Amy Patten, Rare Plant Treasure Hunt Manager
Photos courtesy of Amy Patten

CNPS staff has been working with State Parks, UCSC, and other local collaborators on conducting post-fire vegetation monitoring and rare plant surveys within the CZU Complex burn areas, primarily within Big Basin Redwoods State Park.

While the dry winter didn't lead to the dazzling carpets of wildflowers often present after wildfires, many patches of the burn area are alive with new growth from native plants. Yerba santa (*Eriodictyon californicum*), Pacific false bindweed (*Calystegia purpurata* subsp. *purpurata*), poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*) and California man-root (*Marah fabacea*) have spread across open understories and bare ground in the chaparral. Sweet-scented phacelia (*Phacelia suaveolens*) is a spectacular fire follower found throughout the burn area. If you get close enough to the bold purple and yellow flowers, you can catch their signature scent of mint and honey. Brewer's calandrinia (*Calandrinia breweri*, CRPR 4.2) is another fire follower appearing in large numbers and exhibits a variety of shapes and sizes, with some rosettes reaching several feet wide!



Fairy lantern or white globe lily
(*Calochortus albus*)

Despite the jarring appearance of their heavily charred trunks, many coast redwoods (*Sequoia sempervirens*) survived in the park thanks to their thick, insulating bark. New growth emerges from roots at the base of the trees as well as epicormic sprouting, where branches grow straight from the trunks of the redwoods, giving them the appearance of a pipe cleaner or bottle brush.

The Monterey pine (*Pinus radiata*, CRPR 1B.1) forest at Rancho del Oso faced a high intensity burn which likely left behind few surviving adult trees; however, fire is a normal and necessary part of the Monterey pine life cycle which will guarantee the health and longevity of the population. Heat from fire opens their serotinous cones to spread seeds across newly cleared understory and seedlings germinate en masse in favorable conditions of post-fire succession.

Wildfire also adds nutrients to the soil, which leads to bizarre growth forms and unusual shapes, and sizes of resprouting plants, such as extra-wide soaproot (*Chlorogalum pomeridianum* var. *pomeridianum*),

oversized clammy clover (*Trifolium obtusiflorum*), and nearly 5-foot-tall star lilies (*Toxicoscordion fremontii*).



Epicormic growth and resprout.

Damage to the apical meristem can cause fasciation; stems and flowers elongate horizontally instead of growing upwards.

One of the most exciting finds so far is arcuate bushmallow (*Malacothamnus arcuatus*). This species was known from an undated record from the chaparral on the north side of the park published in 1937. This fire follower likely emerged after the last major wildfire in 1906 and disappeared as the chaparral grew back in the years following the fire. A small population was refound within the historic occurrence on a rare plant survey in May 2021. *Malacothamnus* seeds are remarkably hardy and can likely remain dormant in the seed bank for 100+ years until post-fire conditions are right and they emerge again.

Although some rare plants and fire followers that were expected and hoped for didn't emerge this year, fire recovery will continue for years to come and there is still ample opportunity for new discoveries! Please note that most of the CZU Complex is still closed for the safety of the public. Only permitted researchers can enter.



Pacific false bindweed (*Calystegia purpurata*) landscape and vining growth habit

Prez Sez (cont. from p. 1)

Springtime has been short and not as floriferous as most years. Yet, as always, spring transforms to summer, flowers to seeds, and the cycle is reborn. After a long hiatus, we are offering field trips, one in June and another in July, with limited group size. Check out Jackie Pascoe's article on gardening with fire safe natives. We all have enormous power to support nature, one little garden patch at a time.

Please consider joining our team. We will greet you with open arms! We need help to achieve our organization's goals, especially in finance, public programs, conservation, and newsletter. Contact me at 831-462-4041.

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Welcome New Members!

Welcome to our more recently joined members:

Tracy Atkinson	Diane Koenig
Renee Bontempi	Hans Landel
Matthew Coale	Janice Lasnier
Jennifer Cross	Yonat Michaelov
Linda Durant	Josie Moss
Alison Elliott	Christina Navarro
Patricia Emmons	Denise Pinard
Naomi Fukuda	Beth Purcell
Dana Gleason	Carolina Ramirez
Katie Hansen	Rob Tidmore
Taylor Holter	Anita Webb
Judy Kessler	Patricia Weill

Join the California Native Plant Society!

Your membership includes: *Fremontia* journal (twice yearly) filled with articles on all aspects of native plants; *Flora* magazine (quarterly) presenting statewide activities and schedules; and Chapter newsletter *The Cypress Cone* (quarterly).

Fill out the form below or visit the state CNPS website (<https://www.cnps.org>) to join or renew your membership online. Be sure to state your chapter affiliation as the Santa Cruz County Chapter.

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Opt for Email

If you would like to receive your newsletter via email only, please contact Ann at anng@calcentral.com or log onto your CNPS account (<https://www.cnps.org>) to make the switch.

CNPS is a 501(c)(3) Non-profit Organization dedicated to the preservation of California native flora

CNPS has thirty-four chapters throughout the state and membership is open to all persons, professional and amateur, with an interest in California's native plants and other activities such as natural history, botany, ecology, conservation, photography, drawing, hiking, and gardening.

Donations are tax-deductible and support special projects such as publication of the County Checklist and conservation activities that preserve important habitats and species in our area. You may earmark gifts for specific areas. Membership is tax deductible, minus \$8 for the journal *Fremontia*, published two times per year. Make checks payable to CNPS and send to: Santa Cruz County Chapter CNPS, P.O. Box 1622, Santa Cruz, CA 95061. <https://www.cruzcnps.org>