

THE CYPRESS CONE

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
SANTA CRUZ COUNTY CHAPTER



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Winter 2025

Seasonal Secrets of Seaweeds

Public Meeting on Monday, December 8, 2025

Speaker: Judith Connor, Ph.D.

Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History
1305 E. Cliff Dr., Santa Cruz
Plant ID 5:30 pm
Presentation 7 pm

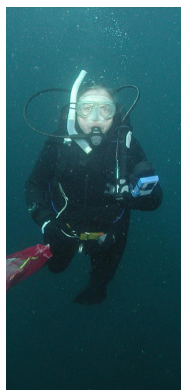


The brown alga in the center is *Laminaria setchellii* (Setchell's kelp), which occurs on the Pacific coast from the Aleutian Islands to Baja California, Mexico in the extreme low intertidal. Photo: Judith Connor

From the endemic plants of the sandhills to seaweed drifting down the submarine canyon offshore, our region has strange and wonderful plants adapted to seasonal changes.

Judith Connor has explored the world ocean on expeditions off the coasts of all continents, even working from an underwater habitat. At the December public meeting, Connor will share images and stories on the seasonal growth and reproduction of beautiful seaweeds, here and abroad.

Connor began her underwater career while conducting research at the Smithsonian Institution. She earned her Ph.D. from UC Berkeley while conducting research on seasonal changes in reefs off the coast of Panama and went on to teach marine botany there and other institutions including UC Berkeley, Stanford University, and Monterey Bay Aquarium. Connor retired from the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute after 26 years of leading a team responsible for intellectual property, education, communications, and data archives.



Judith Connor in her natural habitat. Photo: Freya Sommer

2026 CNPS Conference Feb. 5-7

Riverside, California

Registration is Open!

The 2026 CNPS Conference: Growing the Movement Together for Native Plants will be held this coming February, bringing together botanists, gardeners and landscapers, land use planners, conservation advocates, teachers, and more to learn and share knowledge about native plants.

The Santa Cruz County Chapter is a sponsor of the conference, the statewide scholarship program, and a chapter scholarship program and encourages all members to attend. Take advantage of early bird registration through Nov. 30! Check out the conference website for details at <https://conference.cnps/>



Congratulations to Conference Scholarship Recipients

The chapter's conference scholarship opportunity offered to local college students and recent graduates received high interest. Four applicants were selected from the well-qualified applicant pool based on blind scoring using a quantitative rubric.

The winners are Cecilia Girvin, Jasper Lusson, Fernanda Ortiz, and Max Parsons. We are happy to contribute to their botanical interests and careers, and we look forward to hearing about their experiences. Much appreciation to Jeremy Silberman and Aggie Morrow for their efforts in running this scholarship program for the chapter.

—Laurie Kiguchi

Chapter Happenings

With the changing seasons, gardeners focused on taking advantage of winter rains for planting and flower-seekers fled to high elevations and the coast. The chapter's Fall Plant Sale was a beautiful extravaganza. Huge thanks to the propagation team led by Kari Olsen and the plant sale volunteers led by Laura Parker and Julia Davenport, as well as to Cabrillo Horticulture. The next sale will be April 2026. Plan on being a part of it!

Tales and treats of the northern Sierra were featured in Brett Hall's October talk about the plants of Plumas and Sierra counties. Before the talk, Grace Brieger and Deanna Giuliano warmed up the crowd teaching how to identify members of the Fagaceae or oak family. Big thanks to them as well as to Brett, whose talk followed the keying session. The full house reveled in image after image. Brett shared personal highlights as well, of winter adventures and heart rocks. Peak blooms at high elevations occur in the summer and the showcase of beautiful common and rare taxa inspired dreams of summer botanizing. Maybe we can finagle a future field trip!

Closer to home, field trips to two special coastal areas enticed people to explore plants not seen in drier inland habitats. Much appreciation goes to Emma Yockman who captivated field trippers with stories of Elkhorn Slough and the salt marsh plants that grow there. Her depth of knowledge and enthusiasm held everyone's attention as she introduced the slough habitat, slough inhabitants, slough science, and her favorite plant!



Ryan Diller, CA State Parks, and Bill Henry, Groundswell, leading a field trip highlighting the Pescadero Marsh Restoration and Resilience project. Photo: Laurie Kiguchi

The second field trip was to the Pescadero River Mouth on Nov. 15. Our group of over 30 got a lucky break in the rainy weather and were treated to a lively walk and exploration of Pescadero Beach, Pescadero Marsh, and Pescadero Creek. We learned of the historical uses and water diversions and their impacts on the natural history of the area. It made for a lively discussion of the challenges of conserving and restoring one of California's largest coastal marshes. Many big picture concepts were discussed, including the importance of watching nature take its course. Many thanks to leaders Bill Henry of Groundswell and Ryan Diller of California State Parks for volunteering to lead this enjoyable trip.

—Laurie Kiguchi

Habitat Restoration Projects

We are restoring native habitats in the parks and protected lands of Santa Cruz County.

Upcoming Date: Saturday, Dec. 6 or Sunday, Dec. 7
10 am to 1 pm

Date and location site to be determined; call or email Linda Brodman for information.

The determination of the habitat restoration team really showed through after its leader Linda Brodman broke her wrist. Members Andy Werner and Pat Kittle came to the rescue, stepping up to lead the team and continue the fight against invasive weeds. Many thanks to Andy and Pat for their help!

We are a volunteer group working to restore native habitat in the parks and protected lands in Santa Cruz County. Our program provides an opportunity for people to learn about the natural systems that surround them while helping to restore special and wild places. No prior work experience necessary.

We welcome individual volunteers as well as special group projects. Wear comfortable layered clothing; we work rain or shine. Bring something to drink and lots of enthusiasm! Tools provided; bring gloves. Contact Program Leader Linda Brodman: (831) 334-3858, or redwdrn@pacbell.net



Field trippers on a raised observation platform at Elkhorn Slough examining marsh plants during the October field trip led by Emma Yockman. Photo: Mark Bibbo

Field Trips

The chapter offers field trips to learn and appreciate our local flora and natural areas. Want to learn the names of those flowers you walk by and how to identify them? Trips are open to all, from beginners to experts, youthful to young-at heart. Hikes are kept to a slow pace to best appreciate the plants.

Future field trips are in the works, details are being finalized. Be on the lookout for possible new field trip notifications via email and the website at chapters.cnps.org/santacruz



Kari Olsen in a maze-like Eucalyptus tree at Pescadero Marsh. Photo: Laurie Kiguchi



Fall Plant Sale was abuzz with happy gardeners given a chance to share their native plant passions. Photo: Ramona McCabe

Plant Sale Synergy

On a beautiful sky-blue day in October, the local gardening community turned out en masse for the chapter's annual Fall Plant Sale held at the Cabrillo College Horticulture Center. The line outside the nursery gate formed early and shoppers' enthusiasm was contagious as plants practically jumped into carts, wagons, strollers, boxes, and baskets. In total, an astounding 1231 plants left the nursery bringing beauty, habitat, and enjoyment to local gardeners and landscapes in the community. A fall sale record for our chapter!

The concurrent Cabrillo Horticulture Department Plant Sale gave the day a fall flavor with their Pick Your Own Pumpkin sale in the organic farm, garden ornamentals, native plants, succulents, and vegetable starts.



Blue dicks (*Dichelostemma capitatum*).
Photo: Laurie Kiguchi

A huge thank you to all the amazing volunteers who made the day special: the propagation team responsible for the broad selection of vibrant and healthy plants, the sales team, the set-up and take-down teams, and the coordinating team. They all worked well together, many doing more than one job, creating a synergy we all felt. So many things need to work right for a successful sale; it was a fantastic group effort which made for an extraordinary day.

Many thanks to everyone who came to shop and support our chapter propagation group's mission to bring more California native plants into local gardens. Working and learning together, we can build a more diverse and sustainable environment for native species to thrive.

—Kari Olsen

Coming Up February 8, 2026!

Up and Down California, A Botanist's Life in the Field

Chapter Public Meeting
Monday, February 9, 2025
Speaker: Alex Hubner, UCSC Arboretum
Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History
1305 E. Cliff Dr., Santa Cruz
Plant ID Session 5:30 pm
Presentation 7 pm

Alex Hubner, field botanist, horticulturist, and Garden Steward at the UCSC Arboretum, shares his journeys through California's native habitats, emphasizing the value of good baseline data on the scope and diversity of native plants for conservation planning strategies. Come early and learn how to key out native plants!

Sunset through the oak woodlands, one of California's iconic landscapes Alex Hubner will visit in his talk at our February talk public meeting.
Photo:
Alex Hubner



Chapter Board of Directors 2025-26

We welcome involvement from the membership, whether in a formal or informal role. There are opportunities for Board positions as well as committee participation. If you are interested in becoming more involved, please email the chapter at santacruzcounty@cnps.org. Election of the slate of officers for 2025-26 will be held at the February meeting.

President
Vice President
Treasurer
Corresponding Secretary
Chapter Council Delegate
Conservation/Rare Plants
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California Native Plant Society
Santa Cruz County Chapter
P.O. Box 1622
Santa Cruz, CA 95061

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Hiking • Propagation • Plant Keying • Conservation • Habitat Restoration • Field Trips • Herbarium Work • Talks



Enthusiastic field trip leader and scientist Emma Yockman amongst the Elkhorn Slough marsh plants on our October field trip.

Photo: Mark Bibbo

Recent Chapter Donations

The chapter would like to convey our deep appreciation to Dean and Margaret Lewis as well as Claire Rittenhouse for their recent donations to the chapter. Their support is a valuable contribution to our mission of protecting California's native plants and their natural habitats through science, education, stewardship, gardening, and advocacy. Thank you, thank you!

—Laurie Kiguchi



Visited the Chapter Website Lately?

In addition to chapter announcements, our webmaster Judith Connor shares other news relating to native plants and writes captivating pieces about people, places, and plants. It is a good way to keep on top of what's happening both within the chapter and the larger California native plant world.

Visit our website: chapters.cnps.org/santacruz/
For inquiries email us at: santacruzcounty@cnps.org

CNPS Membership Benefits

Benefits included are *Artemisia* scientific journal filled with articles on all aspects of native plants, *Flora* magazine presenting statewide activities and schedules, and *The Cypress Cone* Santa Cruz County Chapter newsletter (paper and/or digital).

Individual and organizational membership levels are available. Join online at the state website (cnps.org/membership). Select Santa Cruz County Chapter as your affiliated chapter.

Find Us on Facebook

Contribute to our group! Search for "Santa Cruz County Chapter - California Native Plant Society." Ask a question about native plants or post photos of native plants in your yard or on hikes.

Newsletter Preference

When you update your online CNPS profile or renew your membership at cnps.org **the default choice is digital newsletter**. If you prefer a paper newsletter, be sure to check the right box! Or, contact the state office (membership@cnps.org) to change your preference.

Members who choose the paper newsletter receive other chapter announcements (reminders and new events) via email. If members opt out of email communications, they will not receive announcements of new events not included in the newsletter.

California Native Flora Preservation

CNPS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with 35 chapters throughout the state. Donations to the chapter are tax-deductible and may be earmarked for specific areas. Please make donation checks payable to CNPS. Send to: Santa Cruz County Chapter CNPS, P.O. Box 1622, Santa Cruz, CA 95061.