

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY MARIN CHAPTER

November/December 2020 Newsletter

Marin Chapter CNPS is resuming its newsletter in electronic format only. Last April, our newsletter editor retired, and the paper printing and mailing process was made difficult by COVID-19.

This Newsletter will be sent to your inbox monthly. **Add cnps@cnps.org to your email contacts to avoid it going to promotions, spam, or junk.**



Chlorogalum pomeridianum - soap plant seed capsules by Mark Kummel

I hope you enjoy this new format. Please click on "Read more ..." for detailed information on the topic. Contact me to submit articles and ideas for improving this new endeavor.

Ann Elliott, Newsletter Editor annonfire@gmail.com

Marin Chapter Meeting: "Art and Algae" Guest Speaker: Josie Iselin



December 14 @ 7:30 pm via Zoom

Zoom link to attend will be emailed that morning.

The Curious World of Seaweed is Josie Iselin's most recent book. Marine algae are the supreme eco-engineers of life: they oxygenate the oceans, create habitat for countless other organisms, and form the base of a food chain that keeps our planet unique in the universe as we know it. In this beautiful volume Josie Iselin explores both the artistic and the biological presence of sixteen seaweeds and helps that live in the thin region along our Pacific Coast. Historical botanical illustrations and Iselin's signature portraits of each specimen reveal their vibrant colors—whether rosy, "olivaceous," or grass-green—and whimsical shapes. Iselin posits that we can learn not only about the seaweeds but also from them: their resilience, their resourcefulness, their poetry and magic. Josie will describe her path as an artist into the science of seaweed

and share a few seaweed stories, introducing a number of women scientists who were crucial in broadening our understanding of the oceans. Projections of Josie's spectacular imagery of seaweeds—collected from her constant wanderings along our California coastline and beaches—will help explain the science and impart the wonder of this ocean universe.



Josie Iselin is the photographer, author and designer of many books exploring our coastal universe and especially the marine flora of our nearshore oceans. Her newest book, *The Curious World of Seaweed* (Heyday Books, August 2019), is an ambitious combination of essays and historical as well as contemporary imagery that explores the algal world just beyond the beach. It has been shortlisted for both The Northern California Book Awards and The Alice Award, honoring illustrated books.

Josie holds a BA in visual and environmental studies from Harvard and an MFA from San Francisco State University. For over twenty-five years she has used her flatbed scanner and computer for generating imagery. Iselin exhibits large-scale fine art prints at select galleries and museums, advocates for ocean health through education and speaks widely on the confluence of art and science. She teaches in the School of Design at San Francisco State University. Her work is on view at josieiselin.com.

Marin Chapter Elections

The November Marin Chapter Meeting includes the Chapter's Annual Business Meeting for the annual election of board members. **We need a quorum of 10% of Chapter Members for this election.** Please attend the Nov. 9 Zoom meeting (with your favorite beverage) and vote for our dedicated volunteers! Here is the slate of officers nominated for 2021:

- Co-President: Kristin Jakob
- Co-President: David Long
- Treasurer: Kate Wing
- Recording Secretary: Carolyn Losee
- Eva Buxton
- Paul da Silva
- Carolyn Longstreth
- Laura Lovett
- Eddie Robertson
- Charlotte Torgovitsky



Symphyotrichum chilense - California aster
by Vernon Smith

Endangered Contra Costa Goldfields Threatened by Agricultural Practices Endangered Contra Costa Goldfields Vulnerable to Agricultural Practices by Doreen Smith, Marin CNPS Rare Plant Co-Chair, Vernon Smith, Marin CNPS Website, and Ann Elliott, Marin CNPS Newsletter Editor

A population of Contra Costa Goldfields (*Lasthenia conjugens*; CNPS List 1B.1) in a north Marin County pasture was covered with manure slurry this summer. Time will tell whether or not this rare plant population has suffered a significant setback.

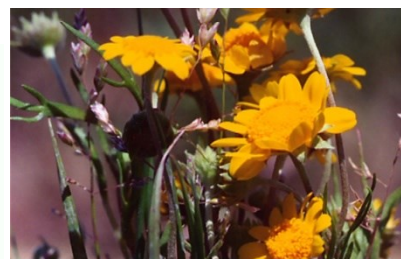
In May 2002, Betty and Jack Guggolz, members of Sonoma County's Milo Baker CNPS Chapter, discovered a large population of Contra Costa goldfields, *Lasthenia conjugens* (CNPS List 1B.1 and Federally Endangered) in a sheep pasture immediately east of Highway 1 in north Marin County bordering Sonoma County at the Estero Americano. The site, a seasonal wetland, floods in wet rainfall years.

Randall Morgan, CNPS Fellow and noted Santa Cruz naturalist, confirmed the population in May 2003. He noted the location correctly and reported the population to Doreen Smith, Marin Chapter Rare Plant Co-Chair. A few days later, Doreen photographed it and, by reaching through the fence, collected a sample for the California Academy of Sciences Herbarium for their collection (see below).

← A carpet of *Lasthenia conjugens* (Contra Costa goldfields) in May 2003.

In July 2020, Doreen happened to be driving along this section of Highway 1 and saw trucks on the site spreading dairy manure slurry across the pasture (see photograph at bottom). Much of the *Lasthenia conjugens* population may not survive this nitrogen-rich slurry or any subsequent disking if the pasture is converted to silage production. The owners of the land may not even know that they had a national treasure in their pasture.

Trucks spreading a manure slurry on top of the site of the *Lasthenia conjugens* on July 24, 2020. →



Lasthenia conjugens - Contra Costa goldfields
by Doreen Smith



Contra Costa Goldfields was listed as Federally Endangered in 1997. In 2006, one area was identified as its Critical Habitat near Hercules north of Richmond. Federally "Endangered" means a species is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range. California Rare Plant Rank 1B indicates that the plant is rare, threatened or endangered in California and elsewhere. Threat Rank 0.1 indicates that it is seriously threatened in California over 80% of occurrences (threatened / high degree and immediacy of threat).



Any development of this pasture requiring county, state, or federal approval would have had to identify any listed species and propose avoidance or mitigation plans. A change in agricultural practice does not require such governmental approval, so the impact of manure slurry on these goldfields is exempt from those mitigation requirements. Time will tell whether or not Contra Costa goldfields has suffered a significant setback.

← Close up of *Lasthenia conjungens* (Contra Costa goldfields) Photos by Doreen Smith

Volunteer Spotlight: Paul Kryloff

CNPS members love native plants and natural spaces, but dedicated, inspiring people are the glue that keeps us together. Paul Kryloff is one of those folks. For nearly 50 years he has been instrumental in mailing the CNPS Marin Chapter newsletter to members each month. Conversely, he was inspired by and values his relationships with the members he served and with whom he volunteered.



Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve
taken by Paul Kryloff using a tripod

You could say that Paul inherited his CNPS membership from his mother Irene Biagi. She joined in the weekly field trips in Marin and beyond organized by Bob Allen, Wilma Follete, and others. Wilma was the inspiration for these trips which inventoried and explored parts of Marin. Her husband Bill, a photographer, documented their efforts and enjoyment. Several times a year they ventured afar. Paul remembers trips to Catalina Island, the Eastern Sierras, Death Valley, and the Olympic Peninsula. He regrets that work commitments caused him to miss many of those weekly excursions around the county and state, as well as a trip to Hawaii. Paul recalls a CNPS trip through Titus Canyon in Death Valley, when doctors in the CNPS Marin group were able to assist a fallen climber.



For decades, Paul was intimately involved in the CNPS Marin newsletter production and mailing. Each month he received the latest membership list from the state office, then formatted and printed mailing labels. At monthly mailing parties, a dedicated set of volunteers met at his house to fold newsletters, stick on the labels, and sort them by zip code. Paul would then deliver the hundreds of sorted newsletters to the Post Office. Paul remembers there was always time pressure as the whole process took close to two weeks before newsletters were delivered. Fortunately, the process became more automated and quicker as technology progressed.

Paul was a constant, with changing newsletter editors, printers, and USPS rules. Paul even served as the newsletter editor for about 5 years around the millennium, after retiring from the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, where he worked the tech help desk – troubleshooting hardware and software issues. He remembers fondly the social hours following newsletter folding parties. It was a time to connect and share stories while nibbling on cookies and sipping a favorite of Paul's mother Irene, Coffee Royale (with a nip of rum).

Paul emphasizes, "I enjoy seeing new places and wonder at each new discovery, even in our back yard." Due to COVID-19, he cancelled his November trip to the Eastern Sierras and Death Valley where he goes annually to experience summer all over again. He now contents himself with caring for his garden and sharing meals with a lady friend until it is safer to travel.

During Paul's long connection to CNPS Marin, he has met wonderful people and marvels at their inspiration and dedication to the CNPS mission. Some of these were the regular newsletter folders: Bob Allen, Ann and Vincent Yoder, Betty Trumbly and her friend Bob, Howard Trumbly, Audrey Miller, Gerd Jakob, Kristin Jacob, Carol Weiske, Telma Arlom, Sue Hosfield, Barbara Prince, Ken Howard, Sandy Dye, Sylvester Biagi, and Irene Biagi. Thank you to all these volunteers (current and passed) and Paul Kryloff for helping to keep us informed and "in the loop."

Native Plant Sales Go Online During COVID-19, by Laura Lovett

During this pandemic year, many of us took pleasure in gardening. Our garden plots got much more attention than they usually receive, and in response they flourished! However, spring came and went without a CNPS Marin Chapter native plant sale due to COVID-19 safety restrictions, so members were not able to fill those empty spots in their gardens or continue their transition to natives. With safety restrictions still in place this fall, we used online sales in September and October to get plants, seeds, and bulbs into gardeners' hands for the fall 2020 planting season.



native plant orders ready for pickup
by Laura Lovett

Although disappointed by the cancellation of the spring plant sale, Charlotte Torgovitsky's team continued to carefully tend hundreds of plants, hoping for a sale opportunity. Having a sale in September and another in October enabled her to divide the plants by how ready they were to be put in the ground.

In addition to plants, Marin Chapter continues to offer seeds that are collected locally and packaged exclusively for our sales. This fall we added fifteen new species to the seed collection. To our surprise seed sales tripled from previous years which coincides with a nationwide 100-year peak of seed sales in 2020. Everyone is gardening! In the October sale, we also sold several species of unusual and hard-to-find native bulbs, ready to put in the ground this fall. We have not offered bulbs in a long time, so customers were happy to obtain these spring beauties for their gardens.

Our wonderful treasurer Kate Wing created and maintained the online sales site. We had a few ordering hiccups, so we appreciated everyone's patience as we learned how to use the online sales system.

After the closure of each week of online sales, the packing team gathered at Charlotte's new nursery site with a list of orders and piles of boxes. Charlotte's crew had pulled and labeled the plants, and I had bagged and labeled the seeds and bulbs. Orders were gathered, boxed, and loaded into cars by our fabulous worker bees: Charlotte, Kate, Kristin Jakob, Carolyn Losee, and me. The following day, Eddie Robertson brought tables and chairs to the designated pick-up spot under the oaks in the Bon Air Shopping Center - Greenbrae. The same crew unloaded the cars and handed out orders to eager customers who drove up to collect them. Altogether, the two fall plant sales were successful and went quite smoothly while working safely by practicing hand sanitation and social distancing. We have missed the opportunity to talk with customers about native plants and their care. However, online sales will work in the interim. Please enjoy your beautiful, flourishing plants and come back for more in the spring.

Gardening in Harmony with Nature, by Charlotte Torgovitsky

"We are well into the fall season as I write this article, and even though my garden is looking just as dry as the surrounding wild lands there are still some beautiful flowers and other resources to support the wildlife..."

California Fuchsias (*Epilobium* species) are in full bloom, and regularly visited by Anna's Hummingbirds. One cultivar that I really like is 'Sierra Salmon' with peach colored flowers and plants that grow in a nice self-contained drift. Some other *Epilobiums*, especially the straight species, tend to wander freely, and are of variable heights depending on which plants they mingle with; sometimes five-foot-tall spires of orangey flowers 'show up' amongst large grasses and in between St. Catherine's Lace.



Epilobium cultivar 'Sierra Salmon'
Pete Veilleux, East Bay Wilds

In the fall I always notice a lot of Skippers; at my place the most common is the Woodland Skipper. They are a small butterfly and prefer small flowers to nectar at; one shrub in particular, a Mexican native (*Salvia mellisadora*), looks as if it is draped in tiny orange flags with all these little creatures skipping from one fragrant lavender flower to the next!

The Northern Flickers are back in Marin for the season. I have been hearing their calls in my woodland for a few weeks now but have yet to actually see the birds. When the rains start they become obvious since they often forage on the ground. Though they are woodpeckers their favored food is ants, and discovering an ant hill would be a real bonanza! White-crowned Sparrows have also just returned; their return is most often in the last week of September. Listen carefully; the juveniles are practicing the adult song, and it takes them a while to get it right. The Chestnut-backed Chickadees are residents here, and many nest in an assortment of nesting boxes hung throughout my oak woodlands. I have noticed a particular Chickadee who is a very regular at my feeder. Instead of a chestnut back and lighter greyish flanks, this little bird has a white back with black markings, white flanks, and a mostly white tail! Perhaps this Chickadee, who sports much more white than usual, was born and bred right here on Cherry Hill.

Although there are still plenty of visitors in the gardens to distract me, I do get a good start on clean-up chores in late August. I often start with the native Salvias. After I have harvested some of the seed (finches take quite a few also), I cut the plants back by about one third. Next, I move on to the sub-shrubs like Coyote Mint (*Monardella villosa*) and trim them back by at least one third. After a hot and dry summer, plants of the chaparral have very few and often very small leaves remaining, so one can really see the structure of the plant. Old salvias can develop interesting gnarly wooden trunks and branches, as well as colonies of colorful lichens on this wood! I incorporate a variety of native bunch grasses in all my various garden areas. In the oak woodlands, natural drifts of *Melica torreyana* bloom very early in the rainy season; then this delicate plant all but disappears until the rains come again. *Melica harfordii* is a much bigger, bolder grass that is also a cool season bloomer, but it remains very apparent with a nice tall structure and flowering stalks that persist all through the year. California Fescue (*Festuca californica*) is probably my favorite; it is more of a mid-season grass, blooming in late spring. This bunch grass appreciates part shade but can take some sun if it also gets additional water. Its flowering stalks can be impressive, reaching well above the plant itself. California Fescue is very beautiful when large drifts form on north-facing slopes, cascading downhill under the tree canopies. That is exactly what I discovered on the north slope of our hillside, and where I collect seeds.

With most of the bunch grasses I rarely do more than cut out the old flowering stalks and remove some of the old thatch with a small hand rake. With the really large specimens I hesitate when cleaning up the thatch, because I've noticed that it provides cozy dry hideouts and nests for small creatures even during a very wet rainy season. We are lucky here on Cherry Hill to have an abundance of Purple Needle Grass (*Nasella pulchra*) in the open sunny meadows between the wooded spaces. It seeds itself readily into my tended garden areas, and mostly I let it grow where it wants to! This is a bunch grass that I do cut back twice a year: once just after the first spring bloom and seed set; and again in the fall. The first trim is high to allow the forbs and wildflowers to grow in with the grasses. The second trim is low to invigorate the plants for the next season. To my delight I have noticed that the needlegrass will set even more flowering stalks after that first high trim!

The late summer grass that fits well into large gardens is Deer Grass (*Muhlenbergia rigens*). Blooming in early fall, it is really impressive when planted in drifts but also effective as a specimen plant. I also just take out the old spent flowering stalks and some of the old thatch that builds up; but I do not cut the whole plant back because it never seems to retain a natural shape after a severe cutting back. I'll trim them sometime in spring after other grasses start to 'green up' again.

Late in November is a good time to divide old established clumps of Douglas Iris and the hybrids. Iris clumps tend to grow outwards from a center, which over time starts to look barren. I dig up the whole plant and carefully pull it apart into smaller clumps, looking for nice pinkish new growth within each clump. I also cut back the old leaves by about half. If you want to hold them a few days before planting out again, put them into a bucket of water; do not let them dry out!

By December it is often time to start cutting back herbaceous perennials like the *Epilobiums*. It is a much easier to do it well before new growth starts again with the lengthening of the daylight hours.

Please visit www.homegroundhabitats.org for more information on habitat garden maintenance and plant propagation.

Marin Rare Plants Gallery

Doreen and Vernon Smith have compiled a photo gallery of over one hundred native plants found in Marin County listed as rare or endangered on the [California Rare Plant Rank \(CRPR\)](#). These fabulous photos can be viewed on the [CNPS Marin Website](#).



Clarkia concinna ssp raichei
by Doreen and Vernon Smith

Monarch Butterflies are in CRISIS...CNPS volunteers needed!

A Monarch Working Group is convening to identify action items, exchange information, and get to work on offering a more hopeful habitat and future for Monarchs right here in Marin. We are seeking a CNPS representative to attend meetings, bring up the value of wild milkweed and nectar plants in our discussions, and work within CNPS to offer volunteer opportunities from education to monitoring to Chapter members and beyond. This is a great chance to really help monarchs and meet like-minded naturalists, community scientists, etc. Contact Mia Monroe (muirmia@comcast.net) to offer your time, or if you have questions both about this position or about monarchs.

Meanwhile, now is the time to walk in coastal communities to view the arrival of the majestic Monarchs, watch them settle in for the winter, and check out what they do on sunny days!



Monarch on milkweed
by Xerces Society / Stephanie McKnight

CNPS Announces Leadership Changes

On November 19, CNPS Board of Directors announced that Board Member Vince Scheidt will be serving as interim executive director while the Board begins its search for a permanent executive director. Dan Gluesenkamp is no longer with the organization.

California Native Plant Society Announces Leadership Changes

November 19, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Liv O'Keeffe

lokeeffe@cnps.org

916-447-2677, ext. 202

Nov. 19, 2020, Sacramento — Today, the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) announced Vince Scheidt as its interim executive director.

Scheidt, a biological consultant and CNPS board member, will temporarily assume the role of former executive director Dan Gluesenkamp who is no longer with the organization.



Vince Scheidt
CNPS Interim Executive Director

Under Scheidt's leadership, CNPS program directors will continue to operate CNPS programs and partnerships without interruption as the non-profit prepares its search for a new executive director.

"We're feeling a lot of positive anticipation and pride as we enter this next chapter for our Society," Scheidt said of the changes. "This is an important opportunity to both recommit to what we do best and stretch into a bright future."

CNPS, whose mission is dedicated to the protection of California native plants and habitats, runs a wide range of projects, including the Important Plant Area initiative, rare plant rescue and ranking, fine-scale vegetation mapping, post-wildfire monitoring, legislative advocacy, and a "Habitat Revolution" campaign for gardening. With its conservation science focus, the organization is also responsible for widely-used resources like the California Inventory of Rare Plants, Calscape.org, and the Online Manual of California Vegetation. Scheidt has been a member of CNPS since 1980, during which time he helped list endangered species, conduct rare plant studies, conserve wildlands, and support the robust native plant sales of his local CNPS San Diego Chapter.

CNPSMarin.org Is Worth Revisiting

- Peruse Marin Chapter's [Field Trip Archive](#) to plan your own socially distant excursions.
- Check out [Plant-ID.net](#) and other great aids to discover and learn about native plants as well as weeds.
- Fall Planting Season is here! Check out these [Native Gardening How-To Sheets](#).

Upcoming Marin Chapter Events

- **Marin Chapter Board Meeting** - Nov. 2 @ 7 pm. Anyone who is not a member of the board and would like to attend please [Contact David Long](#).
- **Marin Chapter Annual Meeting and Program** (See description above.) - Nov. 9 @ 7:30 pm. Zoom link to attend will be emailed that morning.

Statewide Events and Events Sponsored by Other Chapters at [CNPS.org/Events](#)

- [Naturehood](#) - CNPS Resources for the Native Plant Fall Planting Season
- [Dogscaping](#) - Monthly Hort Webinar, Dec. 3 @ 5:30 pm
- [Protect Walker Ridge](#) - Sign the petition to help defend this fragile ecosystem.
- Join or watch the [CNPS Wreath Masters competition](#) - Dec. 18 @ 6 pm
- [Upcoming and recorded Virtual Native Plant Events and Webinars](#)
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California Native Plant Society

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2707 K Street, Suite 1, Sacramento,
CA 95816-5130 | Tel: (916) 447-2677
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