CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
MARIN CHAPTER

Fragaria chiloensis - beach strawberry by Ann Elliott

December 2021 Newsletter

"Edible Native Plants of Marin County"

Vaccinium ovatum - evergreen huckleberry
by Ann Elliott

Guest Speaker: **Susan Karasoff**, Yerba Buena Chapter. **Mon. Dec. 13 @ 7:30 PM**

Register for this Zoom meeting here.

Marin county native plants include many delicious edible native fruits, vegetables, herbs and nuts that are adapted to our local soils and weather. We'll discuss what to plant so that you can grow a year around native edible plant buffet, including shallow rooted plants that thrive in containers. Edible plant recommendations are based on the ethnobotany of which plants are eaten by the Coast Miwok, growing the plants and taste testing the plants.

Susan Karasoff gardens in San Francisco's clay soil. Susan is a member of the California Native Plant Society - Yerba Buena (San Francisco) Chapter. Susan brings an "only the easiest plants survive" approach to gardening. Susan grows a buffet of colorful native edible and pollinator plants, specifically gardening to feed caterpillars, bees, hummingbirds and people.

Chapter Board Elections

We did not have the required quorum at the November Annual Meeting to elect the Chapter Board. We need a quorum of 10% of Chapter members voting at a meeting.

Here are the proposed Board members for 2021:

- Co-President: Kristin Jakob
- Co-President: David Long
- Treasurer: Kate Wing
- Recording Secretary: Woody Elliott
- Eva Buxton
- Paul da Silva
- Ann Elliott
- Carolyn Longstreth
- Laura Lovett
- Nancy Morita
- Eddie Robertson

Rubus parviflorus - thimbleberry
by Vernon Smith

Please attend and vote at the upcoming Chapter Meeting to acknowledge our dedicated volunteers!

Volunteer Spotlight

Kristin Jakob, Botanical Artist and Essential Volunteer

Kristin Jakob photo by Dena Bergstrom

Born and raised in Marin County, Kristin Jakob has been a member of CNPS since she was 12! Influenced by parents and neighbors she "grew up entranced by our region's extraordinary natural history." Encouraged to draw by artistic parents, she began illustrating animals, yet soon shifted her focus to plants. Her inspiration, talent, and dedication have brought her success and the Chapter an invaluable supporter.

Early Influencers

Kristin's father was a chemical engineer by profession, but amongst his hobbies were geology and diatoms embedded in geologic strata, which he illustrated beautifully. Her mother grew up in Norway where she was a wildflower enthusiast. She studied textile design in Switzerland and had a very good eye for graphic design.

Kristin's neighbor, Virginia Stone, was an early member of CNPS, even before the Marin Chapter was formed. She introduced Kristin to plants and took her on botany outings in her early teens.

Inspiration Becomes Art and Action

Since her childhood exploring California wilderness, Kristin has been learning and working with a wide diversity of plants. As an illustrator, she pays homage to her favorite subjects: the native plants, fungi, and lichens of California. To her, accuracy and beauty are equally

important goals. “My art serves as a medium through which my chosen subjects can, themselves, reveal their exquisite characters to the viewer.”

Illustrations by Kristin Jakob

Calypso bulbosa on Mt. Tam
calypso orchid

Garry elliptica
coast silktassel

Scoliopus bigelovii
slink pod

Heteromeles arbutifolia
toyon berries

Eschscholzia californica
California poppy

Essentially self-taught, Kristin honed her technique at London's Royal College of Art, where she was awarded an M.A. in 1981. Kristin has exhibited widely in the United States and in London. She has self-published an ever-expanding line of cards and fine art prints and selectively undertakes private and commercial commissions. Her botanical art has illustrated numerous journals and several books along with gracing packaging designs and educational posters. Published commissions include a series of line drawings for “Wild Lilies, Irises, and Grasses: Gardening with California Monocots” – UC Press 2003, a poster “Wildflowers of the Sierra Nevada” and a set of four placemats/posters depicting grasses, both for CNPS. In 2013, Kristin was awarded a Milley for creative achievement in the visual arts by the Mill Valley Arts Commission, and in 2018 was the invited Featured Artist at the Mill Valley Fall Arts Festival.

Kristin’s art extends beyond paper. She has been a garden consultant since the 1980s, helping homeowners with plant selection and placement. Although she designs with an international plant palette, her most recent garden clients have all wanted only California native plants – a good sign!

Dedication

Upon returning to California after years in France and England, Kristin resumed her participation in CNPS activities, including Wilma Follette’s popular Tuesday Taxonomy Trips and Wednesday Wildflower Walks.

She has served as Marin Chapter Program Chair, Co-Vice President and Plant Sales Co-Chair for many years along with helping her mother with her Poster Chair duties.

Check out Kristin’s website for examples of her beautiful art and give her a high five for her commitment to CNPS when we next get to meet in person.

Planting A Community in the Novato Wetlands

by Stacey Pogorzelski and Tiffany Higgins

A dozen people gather on a levee in the Hamilton wetlands. They walk in pairs down the side of the levee toward a seasonal wetland where shorebirds and ducks feed in water left by the last rain. The volunteers measure off a square meter of earth, mark the corners with flags and sprinkle seeds of California poppies (Eschscholzia californica) and Douglas' mugwort (Artemisia douglasiana), and others. They then walk gently on the area to press the seeds into the soil.

collecting seed of *Rosa Californica*
image by Stacey Pogorzelski

It is late fall, which means planting time at the Hamilton/Bel Marin Keys Wetlands Restoration Project, and these volunteers are some of the many community members, government agencies, and non-profit organizations working to restore this area to native habitat.

This ambitious restoration project is recreating seasonal and tidal wetlands, as well as other habitats surrounding these wetlands, from the former Hamilton Army Airfield. The airfield was built on agricultural fields created by draining (reclaiming) marshlands near Novato over 150 years ago. The 2600-acre project, a partnership between the U.S Army Corps of Engineers and the California State Coastal Conservancy, includes new and improved habitat for birds and other wildlife, as well as completion of part of the Bay Trail. The U.S. Congress authorized the Hamilton Wetland Restoration Project in 1999 and added the Bel Marin Keys (BMK) property to the project in 2007. The BMK wetland restoration area is east and south of the BMK residences.

Christina McWhorter, executive director of the Novato Baylands Stewards, a non-profit organization formed in 2019, has been running the restoration project since 2012. For McWhorter, it's not just about restoring wetlands by planting native plants--it is about creating authentic community. Her collaborative leadership has galvanized and attracted a thriving volunteer restoration group, all working together to create habitat and absorb increased stormwater runoff and higher tides resulting from climate change - and have fun doing it.

When asked how building community has helped the project thrive, McWhorter says, "It is the core of the project. We wouldn't have a restored wetland without the volunteers."

The director explains that the Hamilton/Bel Marin Keys Wetlands Restoration Project is "the concurrent restoration of the land, people's personal connection to nature, and restoration of community."

Seed Pancakes and Seed Egg Rolls

Volunteers have many choices of activities, such as pulling weeds like Russian tumbleweed (Salsola tragus), collecting and planting seeds, watering seedlings in containers, and planting seeds and plants. Other tasks include maintaining the project vehicles, improving the nursery garden, and sheet-mulching invasive species such as bristly ox-tongue (Helminthotheca echioides). On a recent workday, some volunteers and Conservation Corps North Bay crewmembers wove coyote brush (Baccharis sp.) branches through a fence to give it a more natural look, while others dug creeping wild rye (Elymus triticoides) from the planting beds to be outplanted in a seasonal wetland. Staff offer a short group meditation one afternoon a week, and dogs are even welcome at the nursery. Volunteers come on their own or as part of community groups, such as the C Street Village (a Marin co-housing group) and the Wetland Wonders, (a group of families with elementary school age children).

Jeanine, from Novato, has volunteered on the project since 2015. She started with project bird counts, a key way to measure how the newly created wetlands are welcoming more birds. She then switched to the nursery, which she finds “absolutely amazing.” She loves the variety of tasks and “the camaraderie. Everyone feels included, and each one is important and part of the big picture. It's a community effort.”

Jeanine loves that the work they do “is like a science experiment.” For example, we experimented with “seed pancakes and seed egg rolls,” wrapping seeds in rice paper, pasta sheets and covering with burlap to improve germination. “It’s citizen science,” says Jeanine. These new methods of sowing seeds are some of the experimental techniques used in this dynamic project.

Rosa californica - California rose
collecting seeds- image by Stacey Pogorzelski

A Symphony of Wildflowers

The wetlands restoration effort involves different habitats including tidal panne, seasonal wetlands, dry uplands, and tidal wetlands. The seasonal variation in salinity, hydrology management of both tides and stormwater drainage, and the annual fluctuation in rainfall (which is increasing due to climate change) are some of the big challenges for the project. Survival rates of outplanting and germination of seeds have been challenged by ongoing drought. Over the course of the entire project, the project staff, volunteers, and community groups have planted 85,000 to 95,000 plants, with a survival rate ranging from 25 to 70%.

One recent success has been in the Bel Marin Keys project area. To construct homes and lagoons in the 1960’s, earth was removed, leaving “borrow pits" behind. Prior to the restoration, this area already "had a nice band of saltgrass, frankenia, and pickleweed,” McWhorter explains. “Previously, however, these ponds were shaped more like bathtubs” with straight sides. During restoration, the ponds were graded so that the edges sloped more gradually, then in fall 2020, restorers applied a slurry of annual seeds, dirt, and water sprayed on the area. This hydroseeding allowed the coverage of a large amount of land quickly, and

even in the dry winter of 2020-2021 achieved a "substantial annual native cover." In spring 2021, there was a significant bloom of, common fiddleneck (Amsinckia intermedia), and in fall, a great show of hayfield tarweed (Hemizonia congesta lutescens). For McWhorter, the successive waves of plants are like the sections of a musical group synced to come in at different times. “I think of it like an orchestra, the different movements as the next species comes in.”

In 2021-2022, with the fast-growing annuals already onsite, the Bel Marin Keys plantings will now focus on perennials, including creeping wild rye (Elymus triticoides), alkali heath (Frankenia salina), and species of juncus, carex, and eleocharis. McWhorter says these perennials are the slower "tortoises" that will become the backbones of the site.

From an Airstrip to Wetlands: Finding Home

Nancy, a volunteer from Novato, has been volunteering with her husband since 2013. Walking with her husband along the old Hamilton Airfield levee, they watched the land transform from an airport landing strip to wetland.

In the beginning, “There were a lot fewer volunteers, just a handful. Christina [McWhorter] built it slowly over the years,” recalls Nancy. “I started coming Wednesday morning. The Wednesday morning crew slowly grew. Christina started hosting volunteer appreciation parties every fall.”

This work has connected Nancy to California. Previously, she recalls, “I was very disconnected from the land. I moved to California as a teenager from NY. I loved NY, the seasons, the ground, the air.” She missed the wetlands that she remembered which then covered much of Long Island. “I loved the smell of the wetlands. I never felt like this [California] was my home, ever.”

However, that changed when Nancy began “working in the wetlands with the soil, being on my hands and knees, propagating plants in the field, pulling weeds. Quickly it became important to me. I started to feel connected to California. 50 years after moving to California, I feel California is my home.”

As Executive Director McWhorter says, “It’s the beautiful simplicity of being together."

More information about the project can be found at the Novato Baylands Stewards (NBS) website, https://www.novatobaylandsstewards.org/

To volunteer, contact NBS at nbstewards@gmail.com

A nursery/wetlands field trip is being planned for January or February. Check the website in the new year for details about the field trip.

digging out creeping wild rye (*Leymus triticoides*) from nursery beds, to be transplanted into wetlands/uplands

image by Stacey Pogorzelski

Biodiversity Day Celebrated

Quercus kelloggii - California black oak
by Ann Elliott

by Dr. Paul G. da Silva

One of the significant local “firsts” in 2021 was Marin Biodiversity Day, proclaimed by the Marin Board of Supervisors and celebrated on Wednesday, October 27th. This followed by just one week the first session of the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP 15) in Kunming, China.

Marin CNPS was one of the sponsors of a talk held on that day at Dominican University in San Rafael. This was the first public event of the new Marin Biodiversity Corridor Initiative (MBCI). The speaker was Dr. Douglas Tallamy, author of the books *Bringing Nature Home*, *Nature’s Best Hope*, and *The Nature of Oaks*. All of these books highlight the importance of native plants in supporting biodiversity. They also advocate for planting native plants as a key way that all of us can help to meet the challenge of the biodiversity crisis right where we live and work – important activities of our Chapter and MBCI.

Dr. Tallamy’s talk focused on the last book of the series, which he described as “biodiversity lite,” compared to the longer and deeper discussions in the other two. Although his theme was only one genus of native plant species, *Quercus,* Dr. Tallamy presented convincing evidence that wherever they occur, native oaks support a disproportionate share of the total animal species, and that for this reason, they should receive special emphasis in conservation and planting.

Field Trip Report: Turtle Back Trail

By Susan Schlosser
Sunday November 14, 2021

On a foggy and cold morning, we started our field trip at the Turtleback Trailhead in China Camp State Park. Ann and Woody Elliot lead the way. The hillside trail provides excellent views of salt marsh plains and sloughs. On the hillsides at the beginning of the trail, grassy slopes were interspersed with Toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*), Common Manzanita (*Arctostaphylos manzanita* ssp. *manzanita*) , California Fescue (*Festuca californica*), and dry seed heads of Coyote Mint (*Monardella villosa* var. *villosa*), contrasting with all the dry grasses. The tall shrubs or small trees of Common Manzanita had buds and early flowers. Peak flowering is usually in January. Clusters of Coyote Brush (*Baccharis pilularis*) plants, both male and female plants were blooming with creamy colored blossoms.

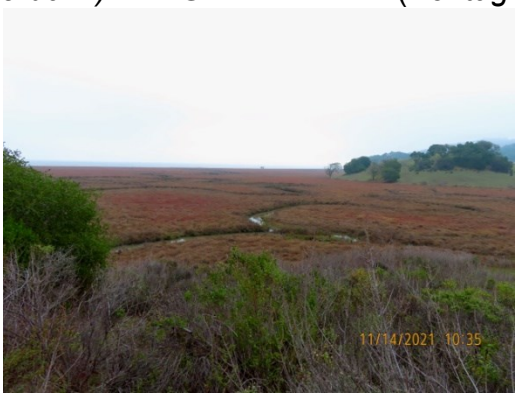
Soon we were examining the small oaks along the trail. The diversity of leaves on many individual trees indicated they were Coast Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*). Later we saw Black Oak (*Q. kelloggi*), Blue Oak (*Q. douglasii),* and Valley Oak (*Q. lobata*).

The trail drops down alongside the salt marsh to a boardwalk. A beautiful tapestry of fall colors was on display: pink, gold, yellow and green. Salt marsh plants we identified were: Salt-marsh Gumplant with flowers (*Grindelia hirsutula* var. *hirsutula*), perennial pickleweed (*Salicoria pacifica*), introduced Australian Goosefoot (*Atriplex semibaccata*, Alkalai Heath (*Frankenia salina*), Salt grass (*Distichlis spictata*), Sea-Lavender or Western Marsh Rosemary (*Limonium californicum*).

The remainder of the trail was generally forested with Oak, Bay, Madrone, and Buckeye trees. We wondered about the reason(s) for large thickets of Madrone, (*Arbutus menziesii*), we saw along the trail. They were about 10-12 feet tall and very dense. Were they found where trees had fallen? Or did plant seedlings come up densely ater a fire?

Dryopteris arguta - wood fern sporangia
Susan Schlosser

Along shady areas of the trail, we saw Short Snowberry (*Symphoricarpus mollis*) with leaves emerging and California Honeysuckle (*Lonicera hispidula*). Fallen trees had very interesting mushrooms. Trail banks were covered with lichens, liverworts, and mosses. Ferns including Common-wood Fern (*Dryopteris arguta*), California Maidenhair (*Adiantum jordanii)* and Goldback Fern (*Pentagramma triangularis*) all had spores.



The California Polypody Fern (*Polypodium calirhiza*) had newly emerging, bright green fronds.

We saw some interesting and exciting wildlife including a bald eagle, egrets, a red breasted sapsucker, a ruby crowned kinglet and trapdoor spiders with fog droplets on their webs. There were fresh tracks of raccoons, egrets and others on the exposed intertidal mud. It was a very enjoyable field trip with wonderful plant enthusiasts.

See all field trip reports here and this full report when it is posted.

Learn How to Share Nature's Secrets with Others

This winter 2022, Sonoma State University offers the Naturalist Educator Series: Become an Osborn Naturalist! Explore the stunning ecosystems of Fairfield Osborn Preserve on Sonoma Mountain with University faculty and other experts. Topics include: plants, human history, amphibians, birds, and ethnobotany. This Series starts January 30, 2022 but registration deadline is Feb. 5, 2022.

Read more. . .

Bloom! California

CNPS partners with local nurseries around the state to promote gardening with California native plants. The program celebrates one category of native plants each week. December focuses on sage, toyon, and yarrow. Explore these plants. Find a participating nursery near you! See promotional video.

CNPS Wreath Masters 2021

Vaccinium ovatum -
Red Stems of Huckleberry
by Ann Elliott

Wreath Masters is back! This festive competition invites you—as well as botanic gardens, nurseries, CNPS Chapters, and other partners—to create and compete with wreaths made with California native plants. You have a few more days to create your wreath of at least 51% native plants from a cultivated source. To compete, submit pictures by Dec. 5. Read more. . .
To view all the wreaths created from native gardens throughout California, register to watch the celebrity judging and award celebration Dec. 16 @ 6:30 PM.

Kids' Corner (for the young at heart)

Bark - a coat for the trees

Sequoia sempervirens - coast redwood
by Ann Elliott

Bark is the outer covering of tree trunks and branches. It protects the tree from sun, weather, disease, and animals that might eat it. Different kinds of trees have different color bark: brown, gray, white, or reddish. Some bark is smooth; some is rough. Many trees in Marin County also have lichen and moss growing on their bark. More about lichen and moss next month.

Check out these videos, resources, and activities. Explore the trees and their bark in your neighborhood.

- Bark Facts for Kids Kiddle
- What is Tree Bark? Nature Education for Kids by Ranger Zak
- Tree Bark Rubbing The Dad Lab
- Tree Bark Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources

Got Moist Soil? Borrow a Weed Wrench!

Continue working on the defensible space around your home. Soil moistened by rain will allow easier clearing of broom and other fire-prone woody plants from your property with a weed wrench.

Borrow up to seven wrenches in three sizes, including one large wrench weighing 16.5 lbs. with a jaw capacity of 2.5 inches. Contact Eva Buxton (Conservation & Invasive Species Chair) evabuxton@sbcglobal.net

Read more. . .

Upcoming Marin Chapter Events - 2021

Arctostaphylos manzanita - common manzanita
by Ann Elliott

12/13 @ 7:30 PM Chapter Meeting **"Edible Native Plants of Marin County"** Guest Speaker: **Susan Karasoff**, Yerba Buena Chapter

Check CNPSMarin.org for upcoming field trips and events as they are scheduled.

Marin Chapter Board Meetings generally occur on the first Monday of each month. To attend, contact co-President David Long sfdlong@ix.netcom.com

Did you miss the Saxon Holt's talk **"Gardening in Summer-Dry Climates"**? The video will be on our YouTube channel **for only a few more days.** Other talks may be viewed there also.

Other CNPS and Related Events

Sequoia sempervirons - coast redwood - Ann Elliott

Participate in CNPS Events - Statewide & Organized by Other Chapters, etc. Peruse the CNPS Calendar of Events. Here are a few:

12/1 @ 7 PM How to Propagate Native Plants Free of Pathogens and Disease, a talk by Zeb Puterbaugh, Owner of Floral Native Nursery for Mount Lassen Chapter

12/2 @ 5:30 PM Naturehood Webinar Native Gardening: Watering 101

12/9 @ 7:30 PM Invasive Spartina Control Project by researchers at Cal Invasive Plant Council (IPC)

12/16 @ 6:30 PM Wreath Masters Celebrity Judging and Awards

Jan. 10-11, 2022 Northern California Botanists will present a two-day symposium: “Tools for a New Decade of Managing Northern California Plant Communities” in a fully virtual format, plus a third day of online workshops. Also included are a poster session and keynote speaker.

Join the fun!

Spread the news about Marin CNPS. Submit ideas, articles, events, photos, art work, literary items to Ann Elliott, Newsletter Editor
annonfire@gmail.com.
Please promote our events and stories on your social media. Thank you!

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by Ann Elliott