

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY MARIN CHAPTER



Ribes malvaceum - chaparral currant, by Vernon Smith

January 2021 Newsletter

Include Native Plants in Your Fire-Smart Landscaping: One Step Toward Adapting to Fire - Laura Lovett

Californians are coming to the realization that while wildfires may threaten many of our neighborhoods, fire also plays a role in our ecosystem. Along with hardening our structures, we must assess our landscaping with the goal of reducing fuels. A yard filled with plants native to the area can form the basis for a fire-smart landscape, as well as provide ecosystem benefits and require less irrigation. As the first step in helping homeowners make their gardens safer in the event of fire, the Marin Chapter has developed a Plant Replacement List for homeowners who are removing fire-prone plants.



Lupinus albifrons - silver bush lupine

There has always been fire; it is an essential component of our environment. Wildland fire provides numerous environmental benefits. Over millennia, many plants have become adapted to fire and may depend upon the effects of fire for growth and reproduction. With wildfire

management focusing on large scale suppression, however, many fire-dependent ecosystems have not been allowed to undergo the natural cyclical processes that revitalize these plant communities.

Understanding the difference between a wildfire that promotes ecological health and one that threatens human communities is essential. Given that we deeply value our natural areas, it is important that they remain that way. That means that we need to learn to live with wildfire by becoming fire-adapted, just as our native plants have. Wildfires can and will occur again, but in a fire-adapted community they don't have to be catastrophic.

Your home's resistance to fire, particularly to flying embers, can be improved by hardening your structures. Extensive information on how to do this is available from FIRESafe Marin. The landscaping around your home also needs attention. With careful planning, you can have an aesthetically pleasing and fire-smart yard. Reduction of plant fuels is a key component, but defensible space doesn't require the removal of all vegetation to be effective. We will not be able to completely eliminate fire, but we can take steps that will alter the behavior of fire in ways that reduce flame length and fire intensity.

Since 2019, the Marin Chapter of CNPS has been in an ongoing dialogue with the Marin County Fire Department and the new Marin Wildfire Protection Agency about ways we can have habitat gardens while also addressing community needs for fire safety. We believe that native plants have an important role to play in fire-smart landscaping because they are a natural and historical part of this ecosystem. The inclusion of natives in our home gardens provides for the rest of the ecosystem, not solely for human needs.

In our eagerness to import all sorts of new species from around the globe for both agricultural and ornamental use, humans have deliberately or accidentally introduced a number of plants that not only thrive but grow excessively well here. Most of these invasive plants are also fire-prone, damaging our landscapes twice over. Plants that belong here help us create an environment in balance, something imported plants cannot. A habitat in balance will be cooler and wetter and have fewer out-of-control fires, but it will still have fire.

Climate scientists predict that we will have hotter and drier weather in coming decades, with less rainfall and more drought years. A landscape of California native plants requires significantly less water in order to thrive. In fact, many plants, once established, do just fine on winter rains. Even plants from other Mediterranean climates require more water to stay healthy than our native flora. Keeping plants hydrated is important for fire resistance. An unhealthy, struggling plant is a fire-prone plant.

Native plants are the base of the food chain. Over millennia, our native pollinators and other creatures have become specifically adapted to our native plants for their food, shelter, and reproductive needs. They cannot make use of imported plants; without natives they starve. Our native trees are particularly important, often supporting hundreds of small mammals, birds, and invertebrates.

For all these reasons, using native plants for your landscaping is the smart thing to do. However, this doesn't mean that you can plant it and forget it—all plants require maintenance! Look for future articles about native plant maintenance.

As a first step in providing information to the community through our work with the fire agencies, we have identified garden-friendly native plants for seven categories of form and use: large trees, small trees, hedging shrubs, medium-height shrubs, ground covers, large grasses, and vines. While there are hundreds of amazing native plants, we have selected ones that are particularly tolerant of garden conditions and that can be obtained through local nurseries. Keep in mind that native plants tend to be available for planting when they are most likely to thrive. This means that plants are healthier when they come to you, but some species may be available only during certain months of the year. *Plan ahead!* The nurseries will do their best to get you what you need, but they may need advance notice. We will also be featuring many of these plants at the Marin Chapter early spring plant sale, scheduled for March 17–24. We expect to have many more shrubs than usual, including many on the fire-smart Plant Replacement List.

If you are facing the deadlines imposed in Mill Valley for removal of specific plants or if the fire inspectors have notified you to remove a plant that is fire-prone, check the recommendations for fire-smart species on our [Plant Replacement List](#) accessed from the “In the Garden” tab under “[Fire Smart Landscaping](#)” on our website <https://cnpsmarin.org/>. The rainy season is the perfect time to start thinking about which parts of your garden need to be addressed for fire safety and what would be on your wish list to create a glorious garden that is not fire-prone.

Marin CNPS Opposes E-bikes on MMWD Lands - Ann Elliott & David Long

As E-bikes rise in popularity, Marin Municipal Water District ([MMWD](#)) is considering allowing Class I E-bikes on the parts of their trail system where bikes are allowed – on fire roads. They have solicited input from the MMWD community with meetings and formed a Community Advisory Committee ([CAC](#)) to address the issue. Marin CNPS has been following these meetings and opposes the use of E-bikes on MMWD lands beyond where other motor vehicles can travel. Public comments by Conservation Chair Eva Buxton and Co-President David Long have pointed out potential E-bike threats to MMWD wildlands.



E-bike - free image on Pixabay by networkerz

MMWD acknowledges there is clear evidence of construction of illegal trails and illegal bicycle usage of single-track trails throughout the Mt. Tamalpais watershed. These activities can impact wildlife, increase erosion and sedimentation of streams, introduce non-native/invasive species, and threaten special status plant and animal species and sensitive habitats. Wherever human powered mountain bikes go, E-bikes will follow. The threats to wildlands would be exacerbated by E-bikes which are heavier than regular bikes, have low-end torque, and can go faster. In addition, E-bikes allow riders to cover more distance on each trip, getting them to areas difficult for rangers to patrol.

The CAC could not reach consensus on allowing E-bikes on the Mt. Tamalpais watershed lands. A majority of the committee members supported E-bike usage with possible options for a trial period, E-bike registration (for funding enforcement and education), increased enforcement and education, the exclusion of rental E-bikes, and access to a limited number of trails. All members supported increased education and enforcement: signs at trailheads clearly stating trail rules, fliers about appropriate etiquette for passing others and all trail use, and increased ranger presence especially during high use times.

When the pandemic hit, the task of attempting to forge an E-bike proposal was given to MMWD staff, which held a series of separate meetings with stakeholders, including the Marin Chapter of CNPS. At that meeting Chapter representatives expressed opposition to giving E-bikes access to MMWD lands.

On December 15, the MMWD board considered the MMWD staff proposal to allow one class of E-bikes on fire roads. That proposal would have authorized Class I E-bikes and prohibited Class II and Class III E-bikes. Class I E-bikes are limited to 20 mph and use a pedal-assist drive system; Class II E-bikes are similarly limited to 20 mph but use a throttle control; Class III E-bikes also use a pedal-assist drive system but are faster to a max of 28 mph.

Marin CNPS Co-president David Long presented both written and oral statements of opposition to this proposal at the MMWD board meeting. Points in opposition to the proposal included:

- This proposal would be virtually impossible to enforce. There is no way to distinguish between E-bike Classes at a distance. All classes of E-bikes have pedals. Class I and Class III E-bikes have pedal-assisted speed controllers; Class II E-bikes have a throttle control but may also have a pedal-assisted option. The technology that distinguishes the three classes of E-bikes is hidden away in bicycle frames and under cowling. In addition, all E-bikes, regardless of their power are virtually silent.
- MMWD is not effectively enforcing existing bicycle regulations; E-bikes will make the situation worse. MMWD has limited ranger resources; enforcement of bicycle use is difficult. Only twenty-five citations were made in 2019 for bicycles using off-limits trails. Without adequate enforcement resources and a successful education campaign to reduce current illegal bicycle uses, MMWD should not add E-bikes into the mix since enforcement of E-bike infractions would be even more challenging.
- Allowing Class I E-bikes on MMWD wildlands would open a Pandora's Box. E-bike technology is in its infancy and rapidly changing. E-bikes will get faster and more powerful. The power is already here; E-bikes are being made that go over 50 mph. The most powerful E-bikes are being made specifically for off-road use (and in some cases off-trail use). The boundaries between E-bikes and gas-powered dirt bikes and motorcycles are already being blurred. These fast and powerful "motorcycles with pedals" will be attractive for hard core mountain bikers and difficult to tell from other E-bikes. Once this box is opened, it will be difficult to close or regulate in the face of rapidly changing, sophisticated, silent, easily concealed, fast and powerful technology that will seriously threaten MMWD land, the plants that grow there, and the people who still use their own feet for transportation.

The MMWD Board, at its December 15 meeting, appeared seriously concerned about the possible damage to MMWD land that could result from the current proposal. It referred the E-bike question to the MMWD Watershed Committee for further research and discussion. The Board wanted more information on collisions, accidents, and complaints involving e-bikes. Board members also requested more clarity on legal questions about compliance with state environmental laws and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Marin Chapter Meeting: "A Botanical Arc - Mt. Eddy to Vinegar Hill" *Guest Speaker: Dick O'Donnell*

January 11 @ 7:30 pm via Zoom
Zoom link to attend will be emailed that morning.

Follow Dick on a transect from Mt. Eddy in NW California, through the Siskiyou Mountains of SW Oregon, and to the Blue Mountains of NE Oregon, sampling a myriad of botanical treasures along the way.



Aphyllon purpureum, Greenhorn Mts., NE Oregon,
by Kristin Jacobs

Many of the areas covered are on serpentine substrates, but there will be delicious diversions.

Dick travels throughout northern California, Oregon, and Arizona every year to learn about their distinctive floras. A retired economist, he has no economic reason to do otherwise, he says. The best course of action, he adds, is to apply himself to the most rewarding undertakings and to share the findings with the botanical world. Dick takes a special interest in the plants that grow on serpentine, in particular the genera *Hesperolinon* (dwarf flax) and *Streptanthus* (jewelflower).



Asarum hartwegii - Hartweg's wild ginger
by Kristin Jakob



Polemonium carneum, near Ashland, Oregon,
by Kristin Jacobs

Volunteer Spotlight: Susan Schlosser

Susan Schlosser's life journey has come full circle, from Marin to around the world and back. For the last few years, she has been Marin Chapter Field Trip Co-Leader with Carolyn Longstreth. Her varied experiences as a marine biology researcher, world cruiser, observer of subsistence agriculture and cuisine, writer, and herbarium volunteer are excellent background for ensuring that Chapter field trips are well planned, botanically interesting, and safe. During a COVID-19 hiatus from her herbarium volunteering and leading field trips, she has been studying the natural history of oaks on Mt. Burdell. She looks forward to getting back to exploring Marin's natural areas with Chapter members and the public, alike.



*Susan Schlosser Mounting Specimens in
College of Marin Herbarium*

College of Marin Inspiration

Susan started at College of Marin in the early 1970's where she was inspired by the late Professor Al Molina, a major force behind the formation of the CNPS Marin Chapter. In Molina's Marine Biology and Field Ecology classes, she learned the importance of taking field notes and making detailed observations during the extensive field trips. She enjoyed the experience of collaborating with fellow students to understand the ecology of California habitats.



Market in Tonga

U.S. Virgin Islands. Though unable to secure a marine biology job there, she enjoyed sailing around the US and British Virgin Islands with friends. During these adventures, she met her first love who shared her desire to sail around the world.

Moving to Texas, they found jobs at a marine lab in Port Aransas. They saved money and found a second-hand yacht in Florida. “We kept the previous owner’s name for the boat, ‘Chrysalis’. The name was perfect – it was our cocoon.”



South Pacific Garden

In love and in their 20s, the two spent four of their eight years together on the sailboat in French Polynesia, Western Samoa, Tonga, New Zealand, Fiji, Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, and Australia. Field guides in hand, they adopted the local pace of life, exploring beaches, tropical forests, and local villages.

Early in their circumnavigation, the warmth of the Caribbean lured them to the St. Vincent Grenadine Islands. While anchored off a beach they spotted a house in the trees. Going ashore in their dingy, they were welcomed by the family living there. Susan learned how to make pumpkin soup, a regional Caribbean specialty. She wrote up the encounter and the recipe on yellow sheets from a legal pad and sent it to Cruising World magazine. To her great surprise, they published the article and paid her!

She learned that others were interested in what people grew, cooked, and ate. With continued publishing success, she eventually squirreled away enough money to buy a typewriter.

“When we reached Western Samoa, we really slowed down, and stayed as long as we could – sometimes up to a year! The South Pacific was an eye-opener: beautiful, wonderful, fascinating. The people and the places had a huge impact on us.” They accepted an invitation to visit the family of a Western Samoan acquaintance. What struck them most upon arrival was both the unanticipated jubilant welcome and the unbelievable hospitality they received.

Susan gravitated toward marine biology at UCSC and became a research diver. While assisting graduate students with their subtidal research, she learned underwater research methods. Her senior thesis was on mollusk species inhabiting giant kelp in the Pacific.

The Cruising Life

Susan’s search for work in marine biology extended to St. Thomas in the

Anchored off the family home and village for two months, they observed the amazing culture. Families managed their gardens to produce food year-round. Susan learned how food was grown in multiple gardens, how canoes were made, and how homes were repaired or built. Two crops were grown for local use as well as export: cocoa and coconuts. Other crops included taro, banana, papaya, sweet potato, citrus, and a variety of vegetables appropriate for season. Life included lots of hard work, but with plenty of time to relax, tell stories, and visit. A



On Board 'Chrysalis' with Samoan Friends

favorite treat for Susan was "Cocoa Samoa," crushed, freshly roasted cocoa seeds mixed with hot water and a little sugar - delicious!

In return for the hospitality, Susan and her partner repaired outboard motors, baked bread and cakes, and made clothing for kids. Aboard Chrysalis, they took their adopted family on numerous fishing trips to the nearby reef. On other South Pacific Island nations and throughout the circumnavigation, they had similar experiences and made lifelong friendships.

Successful Career

Upon return to the U.S., Susan completed graduate school and worked for a private abalone farm. She then enjoyed an academic career with the University of California Sea Grant program in Humboldt and Mendocino Counties. Susan developed an active program of research and extension for over 20 years.

Return to Botany and

After retirement, Susan something different. Marin with her husband, the College of Marin. Paul da Silva's Field class, she met Carolyn field trip co-leader, along members Kate Wing, and John Longstreth.

As a regular part of the learned the procedure of herbarium specimens. Da that there was a gap in



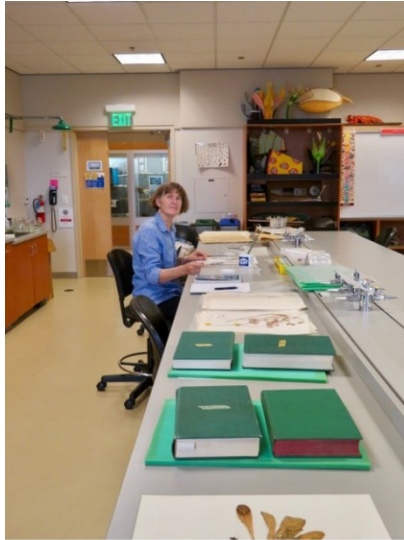
Susan in College of Marin Herbarium

Marin

decided to learn Moving back to she returned to Enrolled in Dr. Botany of Marin Longstreth, her with other CNPS Jane Medley,

class, students making Silva mentioned the herbarium

specimens that corresponded to the Great Depression, and that volunteers would be greatly appreciated to mount the specimens that had been collected but not mounted.



Susan mounting specimens

Susan volunteered to do an Independent Study project the following semester in the herbarium, and she (along with other students) finished all the mounting. Susan's mounted specimens are works of art. She also helped to identify some of previously unidentified plants. She became interested in the collectors and eventually researched some of them. Then she embarked on completing a database of all the specimens in the herbarium, which was near completion prior to COVID-19.

During COVID, Susan has become interested in two oak species that grow on Mt Burdell, near her home. She is following the development of both female and male flowers and the subsequent acorn growth. Susan remains steadfast to discovery, measuring young acorns on steep slopes, trying to develop research questions for 2021, and finding which factors affect acorn growth. Do all the trees have acorns, or only the ones

closest to water? How about the oaks on the ridgeline? Does distance to nearby trees factor into acorn production? She welcomes CNPS members who share an interest in and knowledge of oaks to suggest good ways to study them. You can reach her at Scschlosser52@gmail.com – at least until the herbarium project gets back up to speed....

CNPS Marin Board News/Announcements

The 2021 Marin Chapter Board as elected at our November 2020 membership meeting:



Officers: Kristin Jakob, Co-President; David Long, Co-President; Kate Wing, Treasurer; and Carolyn Losee, Recording Secretary

Board Members: Eva Buxton, Paul da Silva, Carolyn Longstreth, Laura Lovett, Eddie Robertson, and Charlotte Torgovitsky

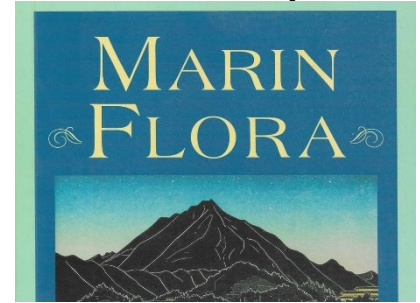
Committee Changes for 2021

The Marin Chapter Board extends heartfelt thanks to **Doreen Smith**, who has stepped down from the role of Rare Plants Coordinator, a position she has very capably held since 1996, prior to which she served as Education Chair. Doreen kept tabs on not only all of Marin's rare and special status plant species, but also invasive species as they entered the county. She maintained plant lists for many locations in Marin, and these can be found on the CNPS Marin website. Doreen contributed a series of articles to the chapter newsletter featuring a species, genus or family and pointing out specific traits. Her boundless knowledge was shared with the various county



agencies and parks, helping their staff better protect the special plants of Marin. Thank you, Doreen! **David Greenberger** will ably follow in Doreen's footsteps.

We also thank **Vivian Mazur** for her many years as the chapter's Historian, storing and augmenting the chapter's paper and photographic archive. Vivian also fulfilled mail orders for [Marin Flora](#) books, a role that will now be filled by **Jane Medley**.



Marin Chapter Plant Sale Needs Volunteer to be Online Store Administrator

Our Chapter is seeking a volunteer(s) to administer our Square e-commerce store. We used the Square platform for online sales of plants and seeds during last September and October plant sales.

We anticipate using it for our two plant sales this spring in March and April and for future online sales. The online site allows us to sell plants to eager gardeners with no in-person meetings and to maintain this revenue stream for our Chapter.



Two species of *Penstemon*
by Kathy Kramer

Job Description: Working with members of the plant sale committee and the state CNPS support staff, the Store Administrator gathers plant images and descriptions; adds items, prices, and quantities to the store; monitors inventory; opens and closes the store; and generates sales reports. Much of the information has been set up already from previous sales. However, new plants will need to be added, as well as current quantities and prices. The bulk of the work precedes the launch of the sale.

If you are interested in volunteering please contact Kate Wing - treasurermarincnps@gmail.com. She will be happy to talk to you about the tasks involved.

Native Plant Replacement List - Ideas for Replacing Fire-Prone Plants

The Marin Chapter has developed a Plant Replacement List to aid homeowners who desire to create a less fire-prone garden or have been noticed to remove specific fire-prone plants. A yard filled with plants native to the area can form the basis for a fire-smart landscape, as well as provide ecosystem benefits and need less irrigation.

The native plants in the list are grouped into seven general plant sizes and functions. Fire-prone plants (which need to be removed) are noted in each category together with our recommendations for replacements. Each replacement plant has a plant profile with information about sun exposure, watering needs, flowers and fruit,

Marin Chapter | California Native Plant Society • www.cnpsmarin.org

Silver Bush Lupine

Lupinus albifrons



medium shrubs

traits

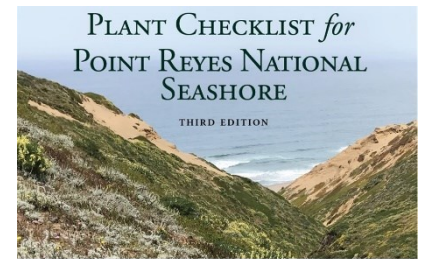
- Evergreen shrub
- Grows 3–4 ft tall by 4 ft wide
- Plant in full sun with excellent drainage
- Little to no summer water once established
- Tall wands of blue-purple flowers from March to June
- Attractive, blue green, feathery foliage
- Good choice for dry slopes
- Host plant for the mission blue butterfly
- Valued by native bees
- Deer resistant
- Fast growing
- Will not persist in heavy soils or clay, or if overwatered
- ALSO: *Lupinus albifrons* var. *douglasii*, gets larger, to 6 ft

deer resistance and more. Most of these plants can be obtained through local nurseries and at Marin CNPS Chapter plant sales.

[Access the Plant Replacement List here.](#)

Plant Checklist for Pt. Reyes Now Available

Marin Chapter has published an updated Plant Checklist for Point Reyes National Seashore. The 44-page booklet includes an introduction, a description and map of seven different plant communities, lists of common native species to be found in each of those plant communities, and the complete list of native and nonnative species organized by family—more than 900 plants.



Cover photo by Marcus Tamura
Design, Layout, and Editing by Laura Lovett

[Purchase one from the chapter website here.](#)

Home Ground Habitats Nursery to be Highlighted on KWMR Radio

On her KWMR radio program "In the Coastal Garden," Susan Hayes will interview Charlotte Torgovitsky regarding Charlotte's non-profit nursery Home Ground Habitats. Hear them **Jan. 14 @ 9 am** [Listening options](#) or [2-week archive](#)



Home Ground Habitats Nursery

Check out CNPSMarin.org

- Peruse Marin Chapter's [Field Trip Archive](#) to plan your own socially distant excursions.
- Planting Season is here! Check out these [Native Gardening How-To Sheets](#).

Upcoming Marin Chapter Events - 2021

- **Board Meeting - Jan. 4 @ 7 pm.** Anyone who is not a member of the board and would like to attend please contact David Long at sfdlong@ix.netcom.com.
- **Chapter Meeting "A Botanical Arc - Mt. Eddy to Vinegar Hill" Guest Speaker: Dick O'Donnell - Jan. 11 @ 7:30 pm.** Zoom link to attend will be emailed that morning. ([See description above.](#))
- **Board Meeting - Feb. 1 @ 7 pm.** Anyone who is not a member of the board and would like to attend please contact David Long at sfdlong@ix.netcom.com
- **Chapter Meeting "Wildfire in California Landscapes" Guest Speaker: Jim Bishop - Feb. 8 @ 7:30 pm.** via Zoom
- **Online Plant Sales**
 - **Sale: March 17 to 24, Pickup date March 27-** We will focus on offering a variety of shrubs to plant before the weather warms up, including many on the [Plant Replacement List](#).

- **Sale: April 14 to 21, Pickup date April 24** - This sale will focus on flowering perennials, bulbs, and annuals for spring and summer color and to support our pollinators.

CNPS Events: Statewide and Sponsored by Other Chapters

- [Urban Gardening | Renters and Small Spaces](#) - Monthly Hort Webinar, Jan. 7 @ 5:30 pm (first Thursdays)
- [Protect Walker Ridge](#) - Sign the petition to help defend this fragile ecosystem.
- [Upcoming and recorded Virtual Native Plant Events and Webinars](#)

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.

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

Ann Elliott, Newsletter Editor

annonfire@gmail.com



[CNPS Statewide Website](#) | [CNPS Marin Chapter Website](#)

[Subscribe](#) | [Email Preferences](#) | [Unsubscribe](#) | [Privacy](#)



2707 K Street, Suite 1, Sacramento, CA 95816-5130 | Tel: (916) 447-2677
California Native Plant Society ©2021 All rights reserved.