

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY MARIN CHAPTER

March 2022 Newsletter

Spring Online Native Plant Sales

We are pleased to announce that we'll be holding two sales this spring: one in early March and one in early April.

Both sales will be offered online with order pickup in Greenbrae the following Saturday.

Thanks to the wet weather this past fall, spring wildflowers are coming along quickly, and we'll be offering a big selection at the March sale. Species we have growing include: madia, sky lupine, globe gilia, ruby clarkia, buttercups, tidy tips, lacy phacelia, desert bluebells, mountain garland, and more. Also available in March will be soap lilies, mixes of brodiaea bulbs, low form lupines, heuchera, some perennial wildflowers, wildflower seed and more.



Erigeron glaucus - seaside daisy
by Ann Elliott

A new feature: we will be giving our members first choice. Be sure your membership is up to date! Details to follow.

March Sale will focus on annual and perennial wildflowers. Some of the offered plants are: Low form Silver Bush Lupine, 6 kinds of Sage, CA Sunflower, Seaside Daisy, Coyote Mint, Foothill Penstemon, Bee Plant, Alumroot, Fringe Cups, Goldenrod, Deer Grass, Soap Lilies, several kinds of annual wildflowers.

- Opens: Thursday **March 3** at 6 pm for CNPS MARIN MEMBERS ONLY, 7 pm for the general public
- Closes: Sunday night **March 6** at 7 pm
- Order Packing: Friday March 11 Volunteers needed.
- Order Pickup at Bon Air Shopping Ctr.: Saturday **March 12** 10:30 am to 1:30 pm

April Sale will focus on later blooming perennials and shrubs, including many different types of salvia, ceanothus, buckwheat and milkweeds.

- Opens: Thursday **March 31**, at 6 pm CNPS MARIN MEMBERS ONLY, 7 pm for the general public
- Closes: Sunday **April 3** at 7 pm
- Order packing: Friday April 8 Volunteers needed; see volunteer article.
- Order pickup at Bon Air Shopping Ctr.: Saturday **April 9** 10:30 am to 1:30 pm

Marin Chapter Meeting

"California Prairie: Our Least Appreciated Major Ecosystem"

Mon. Mar. 14 @ 7:30 pm

Guest Speaker: **Glen Holstein**



California macrophylla - round leaved filaree
by Ellen Dean

California prairie is the least understood and protected widespread ecosystem in our state. It is often dismissed as non-native annual grassland and treated as a priority for development. Instead, it should be appreciated and adequately protected as a major source of California's botanical diversity.



Glen Holstein (PhD Botany UC Davis) is an expert on California prairies and grasslands and active in preservation of Berryessa-Snow Mountain NM and Walker Ridge. Glen is a graduate of Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, with a degree in biology, and transferred from there to botany graduate school at UC Davis. He took a few years off to help found the California Natural Diversity Data Base, participate in creation of the Consumnes, Cold Canyon, Nipomo Dunes, and Carrizo Plain reserves, and to write a chapter on riparian biogeography for Warner & Hendrix's California Riparian Systems. Following that he finished his botany Ph.D. at Davis with a dissertation on climatic influences on plant physiognomy in world biomes. As a botanical consultant he saw much of California and its rare plants. He has been an active conservationist for many years, and retirement has enabled him to devote much more time to Tuleyome, a local conservation group, while also serving on several allied conservation boards. Among his projects have been helping to develop the Yolo Habitat Conservancy, helping to create Berryessa-Snow Mountain National Monument, conserving Woodland Regional Park Preserve, campaigning to protect Walker Ridge, and writing three articles for the 2011 Fremontia issue on California's prairies and grasslands, which he co-edited.

[Register for this Zoom meeting here.](#)

Marin Chapter Field Trips

Field Trip Guidelines:

- **Email Susan Schlosser** at scschlosser52@gmail.com to sign up for a field trip, as we are limiting participants to 15.
- **Electronically sign** the CNPS Liability waiver for the trip (Susan will provide the link.)

Novato Baylands Nursery and Hamilton Wetlands Site Visit

Rescheduled for **Saturday March 5, 2022 - 10 am to 12:30 pm**
Leader: **Stacey Pogorzelski**
A few slots are now open. Contact Susan to register or to be added to wait list.



Novato Baylands Stewards propagation beds
Instagram - novatobaylandstewards

Wetlands and Wildflowers of Mt.

Wednesday, March 16, 2022
Leader: **Susan Schlosser**



Nemophila heterophylla - varied-leaved white nemophila
By Susan Schlosser

Burdell

- 10 am to 2 pm

On this 3.5-mile field trip we'll meander up to Hidden Lake, a vernal pool on Mt. Burdell. We'll pass through oak woodlands, see

a habitat enhancement project designed and planted to create new habitat for frogs and other wildlife, and walk up a hillside trail to Hidden Lake. Possible wildflower blooms include: common water buttercups (*Ranunculus aquatilis*), checker lilies (*Fritillaria affinis* " var. *affinis*"), ground iris (*Iris macrosiphon*), varied-leaved white Nemophila (*Nemophila heterophylla*), and others. The 2-mile easy to moderate uphill portion of this field trip includes a 500 foot elevation gain. The 1.5 -mile return trip winds downhill through oak woodlands and grasslands with poppies and lupines likely to be blooming.

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Meet at the San Andreas Gate on San Andreas Drive, Novato. Rain Cancels

Become a Native Plant Field Trip Reporter!

Marin Chapter is looking for volunteers to attend our field trips and then write up brief trip reports covering the outing for publication in our monthly newsletter and posting on our website. You do not need to have knowledge of native plants, as the trip leader can supply you with that information. Add a photo or two if so inclined. Field trips are generally 2-4 hours long and vary in their degree of difficulty. Select those trips that work for you! Experienced volunteers will help you learn the ropes.



Cirsium andrewsii - Franciscan thistle & *Papilio rutulus* - western tiger swallowtail
By Ann Elliott

Visit our [website](#) to see examples of our current trips.

Please contact us at marincnpsvolunteers@gmail.com for more information.

[Explore more volunteer opportunities here.](#)

Yard Conversion: from Pool to Habitat

by Stacey Pogorzelski

The yard conversion of a multi-generational family home came with many challenges. The removal of a pool and old deck freed space for edibles and native bunchgrasses near the house. Thirsty fruit trees and invasive broom transitioned to native trees, shrubs, and grasses, creating a framework for wildlife habitat. Other factors were reducing fire risk, planting during a drought, and balancing career and family obligations. However, Julie Wittmann and her family are committed to creating an increasingly diverse, yet still locally appropriate, plant community within their yard that complements the surrounding native landscape.



Luke in grandmother oak
by Julie Wittmann

Julie Wittmann, her husband Bret and their 7-year old son Luke moved into Bret's family home in Marin County in October 2020 to help care for Bret's elderly disabled father. The home is in the Marin Highlands, a hilly oak woodland/grassland ecological community in northeast Novato. In front of the two-story home is a huge *Quercus agrifolia* that Bret's father planted as an acorn in 1973 when Bret was born.



<- Backyard being graded in (defunct) pool area. Photo by Stacey Pogorzelski

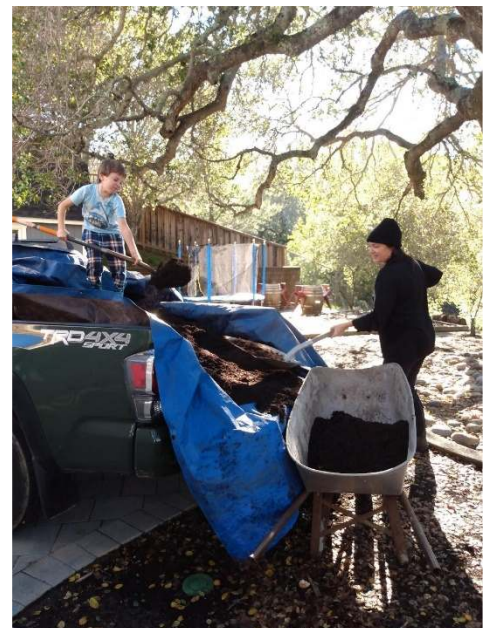
After some debate, in 2021 the family decided to demolish and fill in the defunct pool in the backyard rather than repair it. They also removed the surrounding cement pool walkways and a large, decaying redwood deck with huge concrete pillars. The pool area was filled in, and new hardscaping and planting zones were created. Julie, with some help from

their young son, has been restoring the former pool area and the surrounding oak woodland and grassland on the property by removing invasive species and planting a diversity of native plants.

Luke and Julie adding soil to planting beds. Photo by Stacey Pogorzelski ->

History of the site

Bret's father was the first owner of the home in 1969 and planted numerous fruit trees in the 1970s on the southwest-facing slope





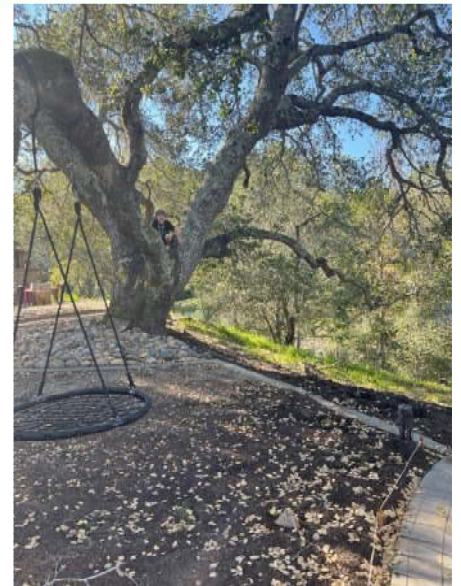
in the backyard; he even used old tires as planters to support them on the slope.

<- Fruit tree growing within tire. Photo by Julie Wittmann

Many of these fruit trees have died in recent years due to lack of watering. Fortunately, many native plant species still thrive in their yard and neighboring areas. The Wittmanns have numerous live oak trees, including one very huge, beautiful 4-foot diameter “grandmother” oak, mid-sized buckeyes (*Aesculus californica*), Luke in large grandmother oak tree in backyard - Photo by Julie Wittmann two toyon, (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*) a young black oak (*Quercus kelloggii*) and some junior madrones (*Arbutus menziesii*). The grassland area sports sun cups (*Taraxia ovata*), soap plant (*Chlorogalum pomeridianum*), honeysuckle (*Lonicera hispidula*) and poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*). Miner's lettuce (*Claytonia perfoliata*) is growing in the front on a shaded north-facing side of the yard.

A New Passion and Supporting Wildlife

Julie’s background is in wildlife biology (she’s a Naturalist Education Specialist for the Center For Environmental Inquiry at Sonoma State University) so plants are a new passion for her. She was inspired by the removal of the pool and by some native seeds which a neighbor shared with her. Julie’s graduate research focused on citizen science and detecting amphibians using coverboards-- thin, flat pieces of wood or other hard material (e.g., plywood) that are used by a diversity of terrestrial amphibians and reptiles. Julie has set these boards up where high-density invasive plant species could easily come back (e.g., her French broom, Italian thistle and Himalayan blackberry areas). They will keep invasive plant species at bay for a while, and in the meantime, support amphibians and other native small animals.



Invasive Removal

The yard had its share of invasive plants including a 1000 square-foot area of French broom. The broom along the fence line was high and lanky, over 15 feet tall. Other broom plants were so large that they were barely able to be removed using a large, 2.5-inch jaw weed wrench. Still remaining are some larger broom plants that unfortunately have a difficult-to-reach taproot due to fallen trees. These remaining broom plants will need extra removal effort since they will require chainsaw and log-rolling effort to access the roots with the weed wrench. Happily, the weed wrench easily removed the Himalayan blackberry plants growing sporadically throughout the yard. The Wittmanns purchased the weed wrench and a chain-saw as part of Novato Fire District’s Wildfire Mitigation and Vegetation Management Rebate Program. Julie also used the weed wrench to begin removing cotoneaster which is abundant throughout the backyard. Julie was also thrilled to have the chainsaw for the removal of six tall (10- to 30-feet) Italian Cypress trees surrounding the house. Non-native vetch and annual grasses run rampant on the slope below the house, but she's leaving those for now. It's a lot to tackle.

Other Challenges

One challenge is time, as Julie is juggling a career and family obligations. Another challenge is this extremely dry year. Julie explains: it’s “extra effort with a shift in phenology (the timing of plant life

cycle events), the window for seed starting, planting, as well as weed removal has been so abbreviated.” She had planned to plant numerous other native annual flowers from seed but now it's too late in the year, as she doesn't want to take on so much watering without winter rains. Julie was also hoping to remove more French broom while the soil was still moist but is concerned that opportunity may have passed this season.

Vision

Julie's garden vision is for some edibles, and natives that are “proportionally correct.” Julie says: “I don't want the natives to look like they were installed.” To this end, she has planted swaths of California fescue, (*Festuca californica*) under existing live oaks, a combination of soap plant (*Chlorogalum pomeridianum*) and wild rye (*Elymus glaucus*) throughout the slope and another swath of purple needle grass (*Stipa pulchra*) in the more open sunny areas of the slope. Julie started most of these plants from seed, and, initially, she “set out seed trays but birds, mainly dark-eyed juncos, kept coming down and pecking away at the seeds in the trays; also, during the few rains we had, the seed trays would get waterlogged.” So, she purchased a greenhouse kit online. Julie estimates she has grown and planted the following number of seedlings as of mid-February 2022:



Swath of California fescue plants with edible planters in background. Photo by Stacey Pogorzelski ->

Latin name	Common name	Seedlings grown	Percent seedlings planted	Seed Source
<i>Stipa pulchra</i>	Purple needlegrass	150	40%	<u>Larner's Seeds</u>
<i>Elymus glaucus</i>	Blue wild rye	70	15%	Larner's Seeds
<i>Festuca californica</i>	California fescue	200	80%	Larner's Seeds & neighbor's garden
<i>Mimulus auranticus</i>	Sticky monkey-flower	50	0%	Larner's Seeds
<i>Chlorogalum pomeridianum</i>	Soap plant	70	50%	Neighbor's "wildland"
<i>Aquilegia formosa</i>	Western columbine	50	20%	Neighbor's garden

Julie used seed starting potting mix in the seedling trays and added approximately three seeds per “cup,” then put them in the greenhouse on cheap, lightweight, buildable racks, typically used for shoes.

Seedlings and trays in greenhouse. Photo by Julie Wittmann ->

She has planted a buckeye in the front yard (and caged it against voracious deer), and penstemon, sage and California fuchsia in between the abundant patches of Miner's lettuce in the front and side yards. In the future, Julie would like to add other forbs and shrubs native to the area such as yarrow, buttercup, iris, and snowberry. She is committed to complementing the existing native plant residents with an increasingly diverse, yet still locally appropriate, plant community.



<- Crimson columbine in pot. Photo by Stacey Pogorzelski

CNPS Workshop - CEQA Impact Assessment



Solar Power Generation Fields in Carrizo Plain
by Ann Elliott

March 9-10, 2022 8:30 am-5:00 pm on Zoom

\$50 Students/Fixed Income | \$100-\$150 General (pay what you can)

Last Day to Register: **March 1, 2022**

In this workshop you will learn how CEQA can be leveraged to give California's plants and lands a voice in the face of development. We'll cover how to read and analyze the biological resources section of an EIR or MND, and how to submit critical, scientifically based comments.

Details and registration for each workshop are available at www.cnps.org/workshops. Contact Alyssa Huante, ahuante@cnps.org, with any questions.

Want monthly updates about CNPS workshops delivered to your inbox? [Subscribe to CNPS workshop announcements!](#)

CNPS 2022 Conference - Rooting Together

Oct. 20-22, 2022 San Jose
Workshops & Field Trips Oct. 18-19

Topics: Plant Science, Conservation, Horticulture, Education
Call for Presentations now through March 31. [Read more. . .](#)



Success! For the Moment

Thanks to the hundreds of conservationists like you, Governor Newsom's office was overwhelmed with calls and emails about the proposed change to funding for rooftop solar that the CPUC is proposing. Thanks to all of you who contacted his office in protest. It worked—for the moment. The proposal was put on hold due to the outcry, and they are revising the wording, which may or may not be an improvement in the direction we want. Stay tuned; more advocacy may be needed in April when we see the new draft.



Still Battling Broom?

Remove broom and other invasive woody plants to create defensible space and improve habitat. Borrow a weed wrench from Marin CNPS. You may 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 about the wrenches. . .](#)



Upcoming Marin Chapter Events - 2022

3/5 @ 10 am to 12:30 pm - Field Trip: [Novato Baylands Nursery and Hamilton Wetlands Site Visit](#)

3/14 @ 7:30 pm - [Chapter Meeting](#) "California Praries" Guest Speaker: **Glen Holstein**

3/16 10 am to 2 pm - Field Trip: [Wetlands and Wildflowers of Mt. Burdell](#)



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 sdflong@ix.netcom.com



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