

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY MARIN CHAPTER

February 2023 Newsletter



Monarch caterpillar on *Asclepias fascicularis* - narrowleaf milkweed

Photo by Christopher Cosma

Marin Chapter February 2023 Meeting

"Prioritizing California Native Plants for Butterfly and Moth Conservation"

Guest Speaker: **Christopher Cosma**, PhD Candidate UCR and developer of web app [The Butterfly Net](#)

Monday, February 13 @ 7:30 pm

The migratory monarch butterfly was recently declared endangered. Hundreds of other Western US butterfly species are also declining and risk extinction. Moth species, which are ten times more diverse than butterflies, are also at risk.

Like the monarch, each threatened butterfly and moth species depends on specific native plant species throughout its life cycle: host plants for caterpillars and nectar plants for adults.

Some "keystone" plant species can stabilize entire insect communities. Those keystone plant species vary across California, complicating the selection of native plants for insect conservation.

Chris Cosma will describe his research and his web application called [The Butterfly Net](#) which lists, by specific location, the keystone native plant species that best support butterfly and moth populations.

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

[Read more...](#)



California Moths

Photos by Christopher Cosma

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 20.
- **Electronically sign** the CNPS Liability waiver for the trip (Susan will provide the link.)

The Bishop Pine Forest of Tomales Bay State Park: Johnstone Trail & Seahaven Shaded Fuel Break, Inverness

Sunday, February 12, 2023 - 10 am to 2 pm

Leader: **Tom Gaman**, Inverness Forester

This hike along the Johnstone Trail from Shell Beach to Pierce Point Road will be an opportunity to see early spring bud break in mixed evergreen and Bishop pine forests. Tom will discuss forest health and the forest restoration project recently proposed by CA State Parks. A short diversion along the way will enable the group to visit the 2021 privately-funded shaded fuel break designed to help protect the Inverness community from possible wildfire originating in the State Park.

[Read more...](#)

South Slopes of Mt. Burdell – early wildflowers of serpentine and grasslands, San Marin Fire Road and Michako Trail

Saturday, February 25 – 10 am to 2 pm

Leader: **Susan Schlosser**

Starting at the San Carlos Gate of Mt. Burdell Open Space, the group will enjoy wildflowers on serpentine exposures near the gate, then walk uphill on the San Marin Fire Road to another serpentine area that intersects with the Michako Trail which will take us back to the San Carlos Fire Road and back to the start. The last part of the field trip passes through grasslands and clumps of oak, bay, and buckeye trees. The total distance of this field trip is 2.5 miles. Lunch will be along the way.

Most years there are many early-blooming wildflowers such as little stick-seed (*Blennosperma nanum* var. *nanum*), star-lily (*Toxicoscordion fremontii*), fragrant fritillary (*Fritillaria liliacea*), butter-and-eggs (*Triphysaria versicolor*), suncups (*Taraxia ovata*), bluedicks (*Dichelostemma capitatum*), purple mouse-ears (*Mimulus douglasii*) and likely many more.

[Read more...](#)



Umbellularia californica - CA bay laurel, stop to smell the sweet flowers Photo by Stacey Pogorzelski



Pinus muricata - Bishop Pine Tomales Bay SP - Photo by Woody Elliott



Mimulus douglasii - purple mouse ears Mt. Burdell Photo by Susan Schlosser

Phyllis Faber - Environmental Activist

The California Native Plant Society and Marin County lost a visionary leader on January 15th with the passing of Phyllis Faber at age 95. Wetlands expert and plant aficionado, she was passionate about protecting the landscapes she loved and instrumental in founding the California Coastal Commission, Environmental Forum of Marin, Marin Chapter CNPS, and Marin Agricultural Land Trust. We will miss our champion and friend.



Phyllis Faber identifying native plants during Wilma Follette's 90th birthday hike - Paul da Silva

In Memoriam

It is with sadness, but also with many fond memories, that we mark the passing of environmental heroine Phyllis Faber on Jan 15 at age 95. The California Native Plant Society and Marin County have lost a visionary leader.

Phyllis grew up in an 11th floor apartment in New York City and came to love wildflowers while at summer camps in Maine. She graduated from Yale with an MA in microbiology, and initially worked in that field, coming to botany later. Phyllis married Ed Faber and settled in Marin County in 1971, where they raised a daughter and two sons.

Phyllis Faber Upon moving to Marin, Phyllis set about learning as much as she could about the Marin flora. She often expressed gratitude to late College of Marin professor Al Molina for guiding her. Further botanical education was received from Herbert Baker and Robert Ornduff, professors and directors of the UC Berkeley Botanical Garden. She turned her interest in botany into a passion for protecting wetlands. Phyllis became an environmental consultant and ultimately a principal with Madrone Associates, specializing in marshland vegetation. As a wetlands biologist, she monitored restoration projects in San Francisco Bay for more than 20 years. She published two books on wetland plants and taught biology classes at both College of Marin and Antioch University.

A key source of knowledge and inspiration to her were Wilma Follette's guided wildflower and taxonomy walks through Marin County's unique biodiversity. Phyllis participated in many of them, and the two women became lifelong friends. In September 1974, a group of dedicated native plant lovers that included both Wilma and Phyllis founded the Marin Chapter of the California Native Plant Society, then a fairly new state organization. Their energy and vision molded our organization advocating on behalf of native flora in Marin County. Phyllis served on the Chapter Board as Legislation Chair and on the Scholarship Committee. Phyllis on Wilma's 90th Birthday Hike As a long-time Chapter Council representative, she recalled that a great advantage of going to Chapter Council meetings were the full-day field trips with other CNPS members all over the state. These helped her become familiar with the native flora of much of California.

In addition to her work for Marin Chapter, Phyllis was a leading contributor to the state CNPS organization. In the 1980s and 90s, she was editor of the CNPS journal *Fremontia*, maintaining the format established by her predecessor Margedant Hayakawa. Starting in 1989, she also served for many years as VP of Publications for CNPS, expanding that role of the organization with its first book, California's Changing Landscapes, following with a series of local floras, and finally producing the celebrated California's Wild Gardens. She served on the state CNPS Development and Membership Committee. Phyllis was named a Fellow of CNPS in 1996, an honor granted to the organization's outstanding contributors and leaders.

Phyllis was also active in environmental advocacy beyond CNPS. UC Press hired her as an editor to completely revise and update their line of natural history guides. Her interests in broader environmental issues and planning led to a campaign in 1972 to create the Coastal Zone Conservation Act, Proposition 20, which established regional planning for coastal benefits. "Proposition 20 changed California," she noted, "and it was a citizen initiative; I'm

really proud of the citizens of this state for having passed it.” After passage, California State Senator Peter Behr appointed her to the regional Coastal Commission, where she served from 1973 to 1979. Her public service also included many years as Chairman of the Advisory Committee to the Signature Natural Areas Program of the CA Department of Fish and Game.

She learned early on that, “to prevail, science has to fit together with policy in a political world.” She co-founded and led classes for the Environmental Forum of Marin, training a cadre of volunteers to be effective and influential workers and speakers in the field of environmental planning. She was quick to recognize opportunities for collaboration, often of creative and novel kinds, and believed that this was essential to effective conservation. With West Marin dairy woman Ellen Straus, she founded the Marin Agricultural Land Trust (MALT), the first land trust in the nation focused on protecting farmland. Phyllis provided training at Audubon Canyon Ranch and served with the League for Coastal Protection and the Planning and Conservation League (PCL). Her efforts even extended overseas, where she helped to produce educational materials about the native plants of Madagascar.



Phyllis will be remembered for her tireless work for the environmental movement in Marin as well as her well-informed and passionate advocacy for the natural world. She did not mince words expressing her opposition to environmental destruction or to people who promoted it or were complicit with it. On the other hand, Phyllis was always approachable and friendly. She warmly encouraged efforts to expand ecological understanding and sustainability, especially for younger people.

Phyllis had a wry sense of humor. When talk turned to the challenges of downsizing in later life, she nonchalantly said, “It was easy for me. My house burned down.” She relocated to a condo overlooking her beloved marshes. Recently feeling the limitations and infirmities of advanced age, she smiled and said, “I’m happy. I live in a beautiful place, I have had a wonderful life, and I am surrounded by marvelous people.”

Phyllis Faber’s many accomplishments changed the face of Marin County, leaving a legacy that benefits us all. We will miss her broad smile and perennially positive outlook!

Marin CNPS filmed an oral history with Phyllis in 2011, which is available for viewing on our YouTube channel CNPS Marin:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0H8G02xr7YI>



Howard-Kohn Memorial Scholarship for 2023-2024

The Marin Chapter is pleased to announce the 2023 Howard-Kohn scholarship competition. All students who will be conducting research on California native plants during the 2023-2024 academic year are invited to apply. The amount of the Howard-Kohn scholarship will be \$3000. There may be additional smaller scholarships offered throughout the year. For more information and application forms, please visit Marin Chapter's [scholarship web page](#). The deadline for the Howard-Kohn Scholarship application is Sunday, March 31, 2023

[Read more...](#)



Heracleum maximum - cow parsnip
Photo by Ann Elliott

Ring Mountain Docent Program Starts Spring 2023!

Become part of the first group of Ring Mountain Preserve Wildflower Docents. Join the Marin Chapter of CNPS and Marin County Parks for this fantastic opportunity to share your love of Ring Mountain's unique ecology, wildflowers, and unusual serpentine grassland habitat with the general public, while also fostering stewardship of this Marin landmark. The program will run weekends from April through mid-June 2023, with training in March. No experience is necessary, but familiarity with native plants is helpful.



Casilleja densiflora - owls clover
Photo by Doreen Smith

Additional details and a formal sign-up will be available soon. For more information and to receive notice of the registration website for the docent program, please contact Stacey Pogorzelski at marincnpsvolunteers@gmail.com

[Read more...](#)

Wildflowers of Point Reyes National Seashore

*"January showers bring March flowers"
(the California version of "April showers bring May flowers")*

Our prolific spring flower season will soon be upon us. Chapter leaders Eva Buxton, Kristin Jakob, and Vernon Smith have expanded and updated the booklet "Wildflowers of Point Reyes National Seashore." It is a color-coded, easy-to-use guide to help you identify flowers on your next excursion to Point Reyes National Seashore and nearby areas.

The booklet is available at our [online store](#) and at the [Point Reyes Visitor Centers](#). Get yours now and consider a spring surprise gift for budding botanists you know.



Marin Chapter Spring Native Plant Sale 2023 - Save the Date!

Online Sale: **April 5 through 10**

Order Pickup: Saturday, **April 15** at Bon Air Center

Look for more details in the March newsletter.



Iris douglasiana - Douglas iris (cream-colored variety) at Bay Model Pollinator Garden - Photo by Laura Lovett

Native Plant Gardening Roundtable

- Are you growing some native plants in your garden?
- Would you like to get your native plant gardening questions answered?
- Want to get advice and tips about native plant selection and best gardening practices?
- Are you willing to share your knowledge of and experience with native plant gardening?
- Would you like to visit gardens that use native plants?



Native Wildflower Garden
Photo by James Brugger

Let us know your interest by filling out this [short questionnaire](#). We look forward to sharing information online and touring some gardens (in person or virtually).

Invasive Plants Threaten Biodiversity

Invasive plants can significantly impact many of the complex relationships in California's beautiful and biodiverse landscape.

California is home to some of the most beautiful and biodiverse areas in the world: oak woodlands to redwood forests; serpentine and valley grasslands to alpine meadows; coastal wetlands to riparian corridors. These communities support an astonishing variety of insects, plants, and other animals in a diverse, interdependent web of life.

Unfortunately, invasive plants can significantly impact many of these complex relationships. Invasive plants such as water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*) blanket waterways; iceplant (*Carpobrotus edulis*) smothers dunes. Weeds like blue gum (*Eucalyptus globulus*) and *Acacia* spp. from Australia, African veldt grass (*Erharta erecta*), French broom (*Genista monspessulana*), pampas grass (*Cortaderia* spp.), and poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*) invade grasslands and forests. Grasslands once comprised of native annual grasses, perennial bunchgrasses, and annual and perennial wildflowers are now dominated by annual grasses and forbs from southern Europe.

Invaders displace native plants and animals. They diminish forage for livestock, native fish, and wildlife. Some invasive plants consume enormous amounts of water; some block natural waterways causing flooding. Many increase wildland fuel loads, making adjacent residential neighborhoods and wild areas more fire-prone. Our warming climate may cause invasive plants to expand into new areas posing an increasing threat to biodiversity.



Erharta erecta - African veldt grass
Photo by Vernon Smith



Carpobrotus edulis - iceplant smothing coastal dune community
Photo by Ann Elliott

How do non-native plant species get here? International travel, shipping containers, and imports of agricultural products can spread propagules (seeds or plant parts that grow into new plants), but the greatest culprit is the horticultural trade. Gardeners find many of these invasive species attractive, providing a market for commercial growers and nurserymen to supply. Property owners and landscapers often lack information about a plant's potential to spread outside landscaped spaces. In the past, even landscape restoration projects used invasive plants such as cordgrass (*Spartina* spp.) and ice plant (*Carpobrotus edulis*) to control erosion quickly.



Carpobrotus edulis - Cape iceplant
Photo by Vernon Smith

Not all non-native species are invasive, but those that are have a competitive edge for several reasons. They often lack natural predators to hold them in check. For example, no insect in sufficient numbers and no browsers in Marin eat French broom, a shrub that continues to invade our wildlands. Many invasive species are strong colonizers, easily dominating damaged or denuded landscapes.

CNPS works with its partners Cal-IPC and Calflora to monitor and map rare and threatened plants and plant communities, identify immediate and potential threats of new invasive plants, promote restoration of native plant ecosystems, and encourage horticulturalists to use California native plants (locally sourced when available). Marin Chapter members have successfully lobbied to require 70% CA native vegetation for new developments in the recently approved update to the Housing Element (see pg. 62) of the Marin Countywide Plan.



Spartium junceum - Spanish broom Photo by Vernon Smith



Genista monspessulana - French broom
Photo by Vernon Smith

Borrow Marin Chapter Weed Wrenches

If you have stands of non-native shrubby plants on your land, now is the time to borrow weed wrenches from Marin Chapter CNPS and remove them roots and all! The Cal-IPC website has good information on identification of alien plants and best practices for removal. Make a dent in this growing threat and take advantage of the soil-softening rain!

Contact Eddie Robertson, bulletinmarincnps@gmail.com, to borrow up to seven wrenches in three sizes, including one large wrench weighing 16.5 lbs. with a jaw capacity of 2.5 inches.

Upcoming Marin Chapter Events

- 2/12 10 am Field Trip: [The Bishop Pine Forest of Tomales Bay SP](#), leader **Tom Gaman**
- 2/13 7:30 pm General Meeting: [Prioritizing California Native Plants for Butterfly and Moth Conservation](#) Guest Speaker: **Christopher Cosma**
- 2/25 10 am Field Trip: [South Slopes of Mt. Burdell](#), leader **Susan Schlosser**
- 3/7 Ring Mountain Docent [Training begins](#)
- 4/5 to 4/10 [Spring Native Plant Sale](#)



Taraxia ovata - suncup
Mt. Burdell Photo by Susan Schlosser

Other Activities of Interest

- 2/2 5:30 pm CNPS Native Gardening 101: [Bringing Birds to Your Garden](#)
- 2/4 9 am - noon [Broom Busters of Old St. Hilary's](#)
- 2/19 9 am - noon [Planting at Hal Brown Park](#)
- 2/21 7:30 pm ["Engaging Families in Nature"](#) Milo Baker CNPS
- 2/25 10 am - 1 pm [Ring Mountain Grassland Restoration](#)
- 2/28 10 am - 2 pm [Early Wildflowers at Chimney Rock](#)



Salix lasiolepis - arroyo willow at Chicken Ranch Beach, Inverness Photo by Ann Elliott

Chapter News Submissions

Send me your spring flower pictures. I'll include them in an upcoming newsletter. Include a location and anecdote. I also look forward to receiving other submissions related to native plants.

Thank you.

Ann Elliott, Newsletter Editor annonfire@gmail.com



Ribes sanguineum - pink-flowering currant
Photo by Ann Elliott

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California Native Plant Society

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