

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY MARIN CHAPTER



February 2024 Newsletter

Marin Chapter Turns 50

As we celebrate our 50 years, we will recount various episodes in our history of native plant conservation and appreciation in Marin County.

The Start of Something Great

Laura Lovett

The roots of CNPS go back to 1938 when Howard McMinn, professor of botany at Mills College in Oakland, conceived of the need for a native plant botanical garden in northern California and headed up the committee that chose the site in Wildcat Canyon in the north Berkeley hills. He also succeeded in bringing on board James Roof, who designed and built that Regional Parks Botanic Garden for California native plants, now Tilden Park.



Bridge across Wildcat Creek, Regional Parks Botanic Garden, in Tilden Park - Berkeley CA Photo by Richard A Walker © Creative Commons 2020

The Regional Parks Botanic Garden for California native plants was built in 1940-42 by the East Bay Regional Park District with the aid of the Works Progress Administration. Starting in 1940, James Roof began the process of designing and laying out the different sections that would eventually be filled with plants from 10 diverse native plant communities of California. Unfortunately, the garden's auspicious beginning was largely undone when Roof was drafted and sent overseas for four years during World War II. In his absence, the garden went untended, and on his return in 1946 he found a tangle of poison oak, head-high grasses, and weedy forests of willow and bay trees. Starting over with only a few helpers, he

cleared the brush with fire and chain saws and returned to the field over a period of years to collect the majority of the garden's plants a second time.

While undoubtedly a brilliant California native plant horticulturist, Roof had no patience for bureaucracy, which led to frequent clashes with his superiors. In 1964, Roof was fired for insubordination yet again and the district began planning a new California native botanic garden in Chabot Regional Park. Roof's supporters lobbied the district's board to abandon those plans, embrace the existing garden, and reinstate him. A Save the Garden Committee was formed, which included Joyce and Dr. Horace Burr, Jenny and Scott Fleming, Susan and August Frugé, Irja and Walter Knight, James Roof, Dr. Leonara and Erwin Strohmaier, and UC Berkeley professor of plant biology Dr. Watson M. Laetsch. UC Berkeley chemistry professor Dr. Leo Brewer headed the group.

The group succeeded in securing the future of the Tilden Botanic garden and James Roof as its Director. In the process, members saw a need for an educational organization to alert the public and public agencies to threats to rare plants, to protect locations of endangered species, to extend the use of natives in landscaping, and to provide information on growing and propagating native species. It was incorporated as the California Native Plant Society in August 1965, with Dr. Watson Laetsch serving as the first President.

Chapters of CNPS could be formed by any local group with elected officers and 15 paid members. Within two months, the Sacramento Valley chapter had been founded, presided over by Dr. G. Ledyard Stebbins of UC Davis. In early 1966, Monterey Bay, Gualala (now Dorothy King Young) and San Luis Obispo Chapters came into being, followed by Sierra-Santa Monica (now Santa Monica). On its first anniversary as an organization, CNPS had almost 800 members.

Along with these 5 established chapters, which remained the only ones until 1970, there was frequent reference in the newsletter to an unofficial SF Bay Area Chapter. With the state offices located in Berkeley along with the founding members, Bay Area members had been very active in the development of the organization from the start, offering frequent field trips and spearheading programs such as the establishment of a Rare Plant Database. The San Francisco Bay Area Chapter became official in May 1973 and was later renamed the East Bay chapter. In 1970, the North Coast Chapter was formed, followed in 1972 by San Diego, Milo Baker, and Santa Clara Valley; then Napa and San Francisco Bay Area in 1973; and Marin in 1974. Bill Bortfeld was Marin Chapter's first president.

Our Chapter, many of whose members were already very active in the organization, immediately set up speakers, field trips and a newsletter. Within 3 months, membership stood at 115. Recognizable names on the list include Al Molina, Ida Geary, Ed Ross, Robert West, Nona Dennis, Wilma Follette, student Kristin Jakob, Senator S.I. Hayakawa, and Kenneth Howard.

By year's end, the Chapter nominated John Thomas Howell, author of our "bible," Marin Flora, to become a CNPS Fellow, a well-deserved award he received the following year. First published in 1949, Marin Flora represents his years of accumulated research on the hills of Marin. Says Howell, "I didn't intend doing a flora, I just made lists of all the plants I'd find along the road to entertain myself."

In spite of all the plants Tom Howell did make note of, he did not come across our rare endemic *Calochortus tiburonensis*, or Tiburon Mariposa Lily. Amateur botanist Dr. Robert West made enquiries about a distinct lily he found in June 1971 on Ring Mountain, and later learned that he had stumbled across a new and unique species. The Marin Chapter chose the Tiburon Mariposa Lily for our logo, and artist Gompers Saijo made the rendering that we still use today.

Marin Chapter February 2024 Meeting

“Coyote brush: the keystone species of coastal scrub”

Guest Speaker: **Allison G. Kidder, PhD**

Monday, February 12 @ 7:30 pm

Allison Green Kidder received her Ph.D. from UC Berkeley studying water relations and community dynamics of different *Baccharis pilularis* morphotypes and age classes in Marin and Sonoma counties.

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



A mosaic of grassland meadows and coyote brush shrublands on the southern slopes of Mt. Tamalpais during summer Photo by Allison Kidder

Join the 50th Anniversary Marin Native Plant Challenge!

As part of our 50th Anniversary festivities, the Marin CNPS Board presents you with the following Challenge: find and photo-document 50 native plants in Marin’s glorious wildlands and be eligible for a drawing at our August 24th Celebration! Prizes may include plant-oriented books, restaurant gift certificates, and more!

The goals of the Challenge are to highlight the beauty and diversity of Marin’s native flora and to focus attention on the habitats where these especially interesting plants thrive. We hope many will enjoy observing these plants in places both familiar and new.

How to Take Part in the Challenge

The Challenge will run from March 1 through July 31, 2024, and only plants documented within this period and within Marin County will qualify. Choose your 50 native plants from this [List](#) of 75 species compiled by our Committee. The List includes habitat information and suggested trails to help you find the plant.

Participants will document their finds in an [iNaturalist Project](#) entitled *Marin CNPS 50th Anniversary Native Plant Challenge*. When you find a plant that is on the List, click on the camera icon on the iNaturalist app to take a photo. Follow the prompts to upload it into the Project.

Committee members are not eligible for the drawing, but will be taking part for fun, monitoring participants' efforts, and cheering them on!

Need Help? Never fear! Our new field trips team is planning hikes geared to the target plants and an iNaturalist orientation to help you get started.



Status

This bioblitz begins in:

31 DAYS 4 HOURS 2 MINS 46 SECS

[About this bioblitz](#)

Project Requirements

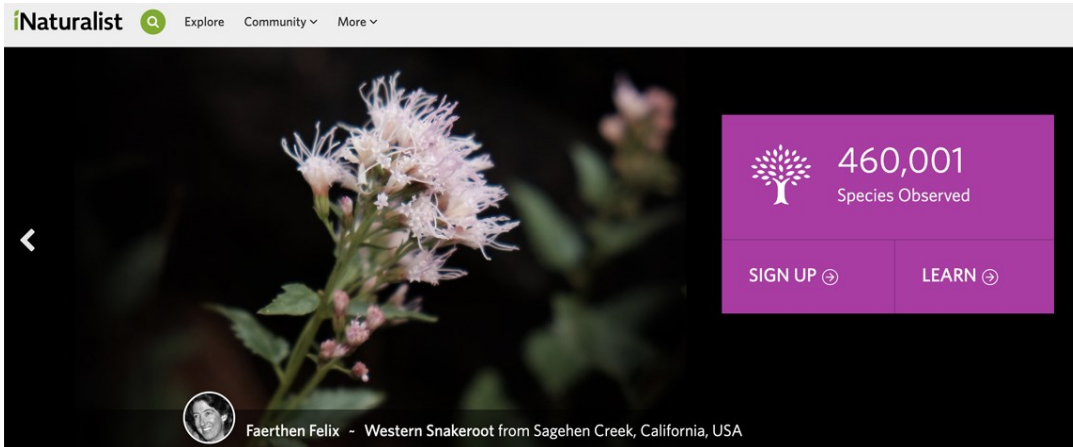
Observations in this project must meet the following criteria:

Taxa	Plants (Kingdom Plantae)
Location	Marin County, CA, US
Users	Project Members Only
Projects	Any
Quality Grade	Research Grade, Needs ID
Media Type	Photo
Date	March 1, 2024 - July 31, 2024
Establishment	Native

You can also use this [PlantID.net illustrated guide](#) to familiarize yourself with the Challenge plants before you hit the trail.

Additional useful sources to find and identify plants include

- [Marin Flora](#)
- [CalFlora](#) website,
- the newly published [Plants of Mount Tamalpais](#) by Robert Steers, and
- plant lists for many trails that are available on the [Marin CNPS website](#).



Getting Started with iNaturalist

- Go to the App Store or Google Play to download the iNaturalist app onto your smartphone.
- Once you have the app, click on “Sign Up” to open an account and follow the prompts.
- Go to the Projects Tab at the bottom of the screen and start typing the name of our project (Marin CNPS 50th Anniversary Native Plant Challenge) into the search bar. Click on “Join this Project;” the project will then appear in the Projects Tab on your screen whenever you open iNaturalist.
- You can view [video tutorials](#) on using iNaturalist.

How to Save an Illustrated PlantID.net Guide on Your Phone to Use Later Without Internet

- On your phone, open a link to the [PlantID.net illustrated guide](#)
- Choose "Reports" from the drop down menu below "View"
- Scroll down and select "Start Report". This will create a PDF.
- Tap the download icon (box with an arrow)
- Select “Options”
- Under Options check “Send as PDF” and “Done”
- Scroll down the list to choose “Save to files”
- Save
- To view the guide, go to the “Files” app on your phone
- Tap on the file name (it might be in a Downloads folder)

Marin Chapter Field Trips

New Signup Process

- Field trip registration will be handled in [Meetup](#) online or with the [app](#). Sign ups to Meetup are free for participants using your Google, Apple, or Facebook account or by using an email address.
- You must also electronically sign the CNPS waiver with WaiverSign. **New!** You only need to sign the waiver for Marin CNPS events once in 2024. [2024 Marin CNPS WaiverSign Link](#)
- We limit the number of participants for each field trip. Please only sign up if you plan to attend.
- Contact the leader(s) with any questions.

Jepson & Johnstone Trail

Lovers Lost - Tomales Bay State Park

Wednesday, **February 14, 2024** - 10 am to 2 pm

Leaders: **Ann & Woody Elliott** 530-521-4402 annofire@gmail.com

Tomales Bay State Park has botanical treasures any time of the year, from the Zen-like environment of the bishop pine forest through mixed hardwoods to ledum swamps and decomposed granite beaches along the bay. Bring your mushroom identification books along too.



Ribes sanguineum - pink flowering currant Photo by Ann Elliott

Be prepared: Recall the plight of the couple who wandered from this trail on Valentine's Day 2020 and were lost for over a week. To avoid their fate, please stock your packs with the essential equipment for any hike:

- navigation (map & cell phone);
- food & water;
- protection from sun, rain, and wind (dress in layers w/sturdy shoes);
- first aid kit;
- emergency whistle;
- helpful extras: shelter (space blanket), headlamp, knife, and fire (matches).

Meet at the small unmarked parking area at the top of the Jepson Trail, which is located just south of the entrance to Tomales Bay State Park on Pierce Point Rd. To get there from central Marin, go out Sir Francis Drake Blvd., several miles past Inverness. At the fork in the road, bear right onto Pierce Point Rd., and go approximately one mile to the parking area. If you see the entrance sign to Tomales Bay State Park (Heart's Desire), you have gone too far, so turn around and go back 200 yards. Heavy rain cancels. Call Ann

[Meetup Registration Link](#)

iNaturalist Training and Practice at San Geronimo Valley Community Center & Commons



Sunday, **February 25, 2024** - 2 pm to 4 ish

Leaders: **Ann Elliott** 530-521-4402 annofire@gmail.com

Let's get ready for the 50th Anniversary Marin Native Plant Challenge!

Download the [iNaturalist](#) and [Seek](#) apps from the [App Store](#) or [Google Play](#) in advance. If that is also a challenge, we can help with the download while in WIFI. Then we will go out into the "wilds" to document some plants. We may venture as far as Roy's Redwoods.

[Meetup Registration Link](#)

Spring Online Plant Sale

Save the dates.

Thurs. April 4 - 6pm
Online sale opens

Mon. April 8 - 6 pm
Online sale closes

Sat. April 13, 10:30am to 1pm
Customer pickup of orders at Bon Air Center



Plants Growing Strong for the April Online Plant Sale
by Laura Lovett

Ring Mountain Wildflower Docents - Spring 2024

Our first Ring Mountain Docent Program, launched last spring, was a great success! Become part of the second 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.



This volunteer opportunity will run weekends from April through mid-June 2024. Participation in virtual and in-person training is required for all new volunteers. Virtual weeknight training will be held Tuesday evenings in March and early April. Two site visits to Ring Mountain for training will be on Saturday 3/23, and Sunday 4/7, from 10 am – 2 pm. A third optional site visit will be offered on 5/18. Some familiarity with native plants is helpful.

For [additional details](#), questions, or to sign up, please contact Amanda Magallanes at Amanda.Magallanes@marincounty.gov.

Planning for Biodiversity in the Urban Corridor

Paul da Silva

Marin County's 1973 General Plan has been considered visionary and largely responsible for saving most of the County from the rampant development that has caused so much damage to the native plants and their ecosystems in California. However, after 50 years a major failing has become evident; although it provided for environmental protection of the coastal recreation corridor and the central agricultural corridor, it neglected the environment of the eastern urbanized corridor.

Now, with increasing pressure to build more housing, especially in eastern Marin, state legislation has restricted the environmental challenges that can be brought against new development. However, new rules may mitigate the environmental harms of development if they include requirements for inclusion of native plantings.

Although many kinds of "subjective" challenges that were brought against developments in the past are now prohibited, localities still have the power to enforce "objective" design standards, and these can include specific requirements for native plants. Marin CNPS members took advantage of this opportunity in the recent update of the county's Housing Element, which included "objective" design standards in its Form-Based Code. Developers who are applying for approval based on the requirements of the Form Based Code are now required to landscape with 70% native plants.

Individual cities and towns in Marin are also updating their General Plans and design standards. The City of Larkspur is in the last stages of its work on both. The Town of San Anselmo has announced its plans to begin updating its General Plan.

Wherever you live in Marin, pay attention to what your local government is doing. Ask for the latest planning documents and check whether they mention native plants. If they do not, try to see where they might fit in, and at the next update, give public input about this.

For the county and those localities that already mention native plants in their General Plans or objective design standards, people can check on the approval processes for any new developments to see that the regulations are being followed. If enough members do this, we may soon see more native plants near in our urban corridors where most Marin residents live and work!



Native plants flourish in the median by the Lark Theater Photo by Laura Lovett

Call for March program presenters on: Botanical Highlights of 2023

Do you have photos from botanical excursions that you would like to share via Zoom at CNPS Marin's **March 11 Chapter Meeting**? With the generous winter rains and subsequent floral displays, we expect that many of you experienced and documented botanical wonders last year! We seek 4 or 5 presenters with about 20 images each - these could be simply a selection of pictures, or even better, PowerPoint programs with captions so viewers can easily see the plants' names.

If you would like to participate, please contact Kristin Jakob by phone or text at 650-608-1274, or via email at akristinjakob@gmail.com **before March 5.**



Hoita macrostachyo -
California hemp
Photo by Robert Katz

Introducing the California Native Seed Strategy

To maintain the diversity of life as we know it, we need a healthy supply of seeds that capture the extraordinary genetic variation of California native plants. That's why CNPS is excited to announce the launch of the first California Native Seed Strategy! It addresses the policy, funding, capacity, collaboration, science, and technology needed to get the right seed in the right place at the right time.

Learn more about the [California Native Seed Strategy](#)



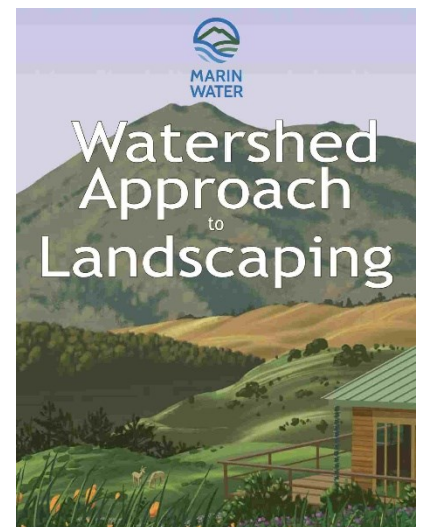
Watershed Approach to Landscaping Winter 2024

Is a green thumb part of your New Year's resolution list? How about finding ways to use less water outdoors while creating a thriving habitat for native plants and pollinators?

Enrollment for the spring sessions of the College of Marin's Watershed Approach to Landscaping course opened Wednesday, Jan. 3. Taking place in person on Saturdays starting Feb. 3, the six-class course series is built on Marin Water's landscaping guidebook, "The Watershed Approach to Landscaping." Go beyond water-wise and sustainable practices by enrolling in one or all of the courses in the series. It will provide a comprehensive continuing education for gardeners of all skill levels.

Register for individual classes for \$69, or the whole series for \$334 (an \$80 savings).

[Read more...](#) [Register now](#)



Upcoming Marin Chapter Events

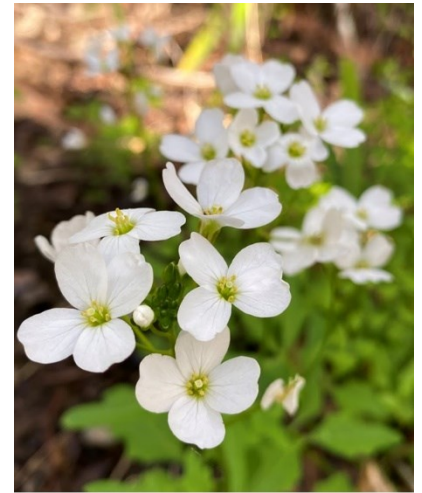
- **2/5 7 pm** CNPS Marin Board meeting. Members wishing to attend, contact David Long sfdlong@ix.netcom.com for Zoom link.
- **2/12 7:30 pm** [Chapter Meeting: "Coyote brush"](#), Guest Speaker: **Allison Kidder**
- **2/14 10 am - 2 pm** [Field Trip: Jepson & Johnstone Trails](#)
- **2/25 2 pm - ?** [iNaturalist Training](#), San Geronimo Valley Community Center
- **3/10 10 am - 2 pm** **Calypso Orchid Hunt** w/ Kristin Jakob & Renee Fittinghoff
- **8/24 CNPS Marin 50th Anniversary Event**



Baccharis pilularis ssp. *consanguinea* - female coyote brush on Mt. Tamalpais by Allison Kidder

Other Activities in Marin and Nearby

- **2/3 9 am - noon** [Broom Busters of Old St. Hilary's](#)
- **2/3 10 am - 3 pm** [Tamarancho Broom Pull](#)
- **2/4 9 am - 2 pm** [Indian Tree Preserve](#) hike
- **2/8 7 pm** [50th Anniversary of the CNPS Rare Plant Inventory](#), Zoom talk Aaron Sims, Santa Clara Valley Chapter CNPS
- **2/8 7:30 pm** [Green Biome](#), Zoom talk by Joanna Garaventa, Yerba Buena Chapter CNPS
- **2/11 10 am - 1 pm** [Family Walk: Indian Tree OSP](#)
- **2/12 7 pm** [California Water Culture](#) Zoom talk by Tina Donnelly, North San Joaquin Valley Chapter CNPS
- **2/13 10 am - 2 pm** [Carson Falls](#) hike
- **2/15 7:30** [Plant Stories Trapped in Tar](#), Zoom talk by Jessie George, Orange County Chapter CNPS
- **2/18 10 am - noon** [Bothin Marsh Cleanup](#)
- **2/20 7:30** [California OakWatch Project](#), Zoom talk by Jose Esparza, Milo Baker Chapter CNPS



Cardamine californica - milkmaids
Photo by Delynne Cullen

- 3/1 to 3/3 CNPS Chapter Council in Rancho Palos Verdes [Zoom Registration Agenda coming soon.](#)
- 3/2 9 am - noon [Broom Busters of Old St. Hilary's](#)
- 3/7 5:30 pm [Naturehood Webinar](#): Introducing the new Calscape
- 3/14 7:30 pm [The building blocks to resilience of California's grasslands to fire and drought](#), Zoom talk by Valerie Eviner, Yerba Buena Chapter CNPS
- 3/16 9 am - noon [Bald Hill Broom Bust](#)
- 3/30 9 am - noon [Horse Hill Broom Bust](#)



Scoliopus bigelovii - fetid adders tongue, slinkpod
Photo by Stacey Pogorzelski

Be sure to periodically check [CNPS.org/events](https://www.cnps.org/events) for interesting talks and field trips sponsored by CNPS Chapters and staff throughout the state.

Native Plant Favorites

A big thank you to several readers who sent me images of their favorite wildflower or native plant. Enjoy their images scattered throughout this newsletter.

Consider sending me images of your favorite or almost favorite plants as we progress through the wildflower season.

I also accept poetry, stories, or articles of interest to our readers.

Ann Elliott, Newsletter Editor annonfire@gmail.com

annonfire@gmail.com



Dipterospermum capitatum - wild hyacinth, bluedicks
Photo by Doreen Smith

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