

THE MEDITERRANEAN GARDEN SOCIETY

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BRANCH

An international forum devoted to furthering knowledge and appreciation of plants and gardens suited to the mediterranean climate regions of the world

issue 19
Spring 2005

Wildflowers Abound

What a grand and glorious spring for wildflowers this promises to be. Rain, rain, rain, in between bursts of warm and sunny days, predicts and promises a rich and abundant season. Already the list of flowers is getting long—milkmaids, hound's tongue, Indian paint brush, red maids, lupines, shooting stars, Indian warriors, as well as the ubiquitous and splendid California poppy. Just reciting the names of the plants compels reminiscences of other spring times and the wonders of those past seasons.

Right now is the time of year to enjoy an amble through parks and open space to see wildflowers in their natural habitats. If you can set aside time for a walk, hopefully many walks, you will find Lester Rowntree's advice on observing plants to be worthy of attention. "But, plants being the living things that they are and not ink on paper nor dried bits in a herbarium, the individuality, the texture, the spirit, of a California wildflower in its own home is something not so easy to put down in words." This attentive and mindful lady has given us a key to a springtime of being out-of-doors, enjoying whatever plants we happen upon in their wild and uncultivated environment.

Betsy Clebsch

Do we have your current e-mail @address?

In our continuing efforts to serve our membership, we are now using e-mail reminders to alert members about specific activities. While this newsletter, published 3 times annually (Fall, Winter, Spring – dormant in Summer) will continue to provide articles and event announcements, timeliness is occasionally an issue. Many MGS Branches are now using e-mail technology, and the Administrative Committee in Greece would also like to have the ability to contact all members through an up-to-date e-mail address. In order to benefit from this type of communication, send an e-mail to MGS_NC@yahoo.com.

You also have the option of receiving e-mail notification of the publication of our newsletter as a web link to a full color PDF format document (instead of the black & white printed version).



View of the Stanford campus, the Bay, and the East Bay hills from Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve

Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve Saturday, April 16 11am-2:30pm

We've been incredibly lucky to have Advisory Board member Betsy Clebsch arrange for a docent-led tour of this incredible biological reserve for THE PRIME SPRING date! We'll not only view the wildflowers, but also preview the fabulous new "green" field station at the preserve.

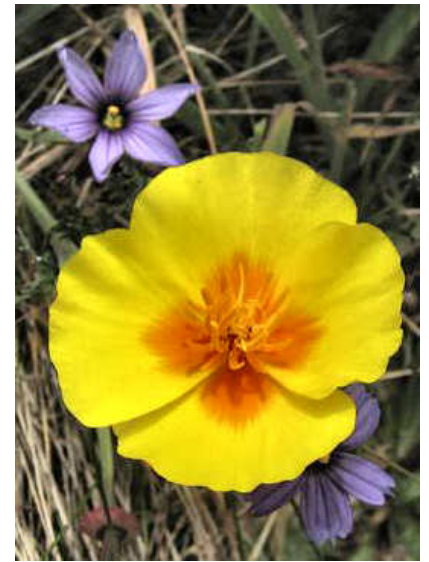
The number of people we can handle is strictly limited, so we urge you to sign up early! Call Sue Ann Manners (925-254-0226) to register!

My Three Wildflowers



Buttercups and blue-eyed grass

After all this winter's rain, and the subsequent excitement about what a great wildflower year this is already becoming, I got to reminiscing about the first ones I met! I am a native of Berkeley, and grew up in the hills adjacent to the Cal campus. There was a huge and steep vacant lot next door to our house, which had been declared "unbuildable" by permitting authorities in those days. Since there was no threat of their being disturbed by builders, my father and another neighbor undertook to plant a few almond trees on the hillside, and the little terraces they created for the trees made wonderful



California poppy and blue-eyed grass

secret retreats for children engaged in who knows what games of imagination. The hillside was spectacular in spring with fresh new grass and my three wildflowers: California poppy, buttercup and blue-eyed grass. I'm not wild about orange, but I never fail to be cheered by the sight of satiny poppies on a sunny day, and I think my fondness for satin textures may directly relate to early delight in the shiny petals of both poppies and buttercups. Blue-eyed grass remains one of my all-time favorite plants, and I can never pass it up when I find it at a nursery or plant sale. All three evoke warm memories, and my hope that our world is not moving so fast that today's children will be deprived of such dainty embellishments to their experience.

Nancy Swearingen

The 2005 Native Wildflower Season is here!

There is a rainbow at the end of our winter rains. Due to the timing of the heavy showers, the wildflower season promises to be the best in years. So, California deserts are in full bloom now. This seasonal event slowly moves northward through California so our local wildflowers should peak here over the next several months. Below are Internet links to information on what is blooming in your area & how to find and join a walk with an expert.

Marin Wildflowers - www.marin.cc.ca.us/cnps/

Scheduled wildflower walks with expert docents. Scroll down to mid-page for local sightings.

Almaden Wildflowers - www.almaden.ibm.com/almaden/environs/wildflowers/

The IBM Almaden site in San Jose is built on land that has a spectacular array of wildflowers.

Friends of Edgewood, Docent Walks - www.friendsofedgeswood.org/docent.htm

A schedule of spring docent-led walks through Edgewood Park, just off Highway 280 in San Carlos.

Regional Parks Botanic Garden in Tilden Park - www.nativeplants.org/seasons.html

A list of which native plants are expected to bloom in which month. This park near UC Berkeley was founded in 1940 and contains many native plants.

Henry Coe State Park, Wildflower Walks - www.coe-park.org/programs.html

A schedule of docent-led walks in this rugged state park of over 87,000 acres of open space.

California Wildflowers - www.calphoto.com/wflower.htm

A wildflower hotsheet with notes and tips on where to view wildflowers in California.

Wildflower Hotline - www.theodorepayne.org/hotline.html

Opening in March, this page is a listing of wildflower sightings around the state.

Bracey Tiede

BayNature.com suggests these locations for wildflower viewing

(by San Francisco Bay Area county, from South to North)

Santa Clara

- ~ Stile Ranch Trail, Santa Teresa County Park
- ~ Almaden Quicksilver County Park south of San Jose
- ~ Henry Coe State Park east of Morgan Hill

San Mateo

- ~ Edgewood County Park and Natural Preserve
- ~ Russian Ridge Open Space off Skyline (Rte 35) in Palo Alto
- ~ San Bruno Mountain near Brisbane

Alameda

- ~ Springtown, fields along Hartford, Lorraine, & Raymond Roads
- ~ Sunol Regional Wilderness near Sunol
- ~ Skyline Serpentine Prairie in Redwood Regional Park, Oakland

Contra Costa

- ~ Long Ridge, Mount Diablo State Park
- ~ Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve near Antioch
- ~ Seaview Trail in Tilden Regional Park

San Francisco

- ~ Tank Hill (north slope of Twin Peaks)
- ~ coastal bluffs of the Presidio (Golden Gate National Recreation Area)
- ~ Garden of California Native Plants at Strybing Arboretum (Golden Gate Park).

Marin

- ~ Chimney Rock, Point Reyes National Seashore
- ~ Ring Mountain Preserve in Tiburon
- ~ Mount Burdell Open Space Preserve near Novato

Sonoma

- ~ False Lake Meadow, Annadel State Park
- ~ Bodega Head near town of Bodega Bay
- ~ Kruse Rhododendron State Reserve, Hwy 1 near Fort Ross

Napa

- ~ Snell Valley
- ~ Knoxville Wildlife Area near Lake Berryessa
- ~ Oat Hill Mine Trail near Calistoga

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

of interest to our membership

April 16th (Saturday), 2pm, Palo Alto *

JASPER RIDGE BIOLOGICAL PRESERVE - a docent-led tour of this incredible biological reserve, during the prime wildflower period! Members and visitors are welcome to attend (see front page for more info).

April 17th (Sunday), 10am-4pm, South Bay

GOING NATIVE GARDEN TOUR – Want to attract more birds and butterflies to your yard? Want a low-water-consumption, low-maintenance garden that also looks attractive? Want to explore alternatives to a lawn? Gardening with California native plants is growing in popularity in the Bay Area. Most of the gardens on the tour were small suburban front yards. Some of them have mature shrubs, or an astounding collection of plants; others are simple and feature common and easily found natives. Many of them have replaced lawns with drought-tolerant natives and Mediterranean plants. For more information, or to register, visit www.goingnativegardentour.com.

May 1st (Sunday), 12-2pm, Berkeley *

Meet Cali Doxiadis, new president of the MGS

- Members of the Northern California Branch are invited to meet Cali Doxiadis, who will be visiting from Corfu, Greece, at the Regional Parks Botanic Garden. Bring a picnic lunch, and we'll meet at the entrance

gate. After a picnic on the deck (behind the visitor center), we'll take a walk through the garden. The garden is located in Tilden Regional Park, at South Park Drive and Wildcat Canyon Road. Free admission. For more information, call 510 531-9300 or see www.NativePlants.org.

May 1st (Sunday), 10am-5pm, East Bay

BRINGING BACK THE NATIVES GARDEN TOUR – Receive a free pass to 56 gardens with a printed garden guide. Garden talks will be scheduled throughout the day. A variety of bird- and butterfly-friendly, pesticide-free, water conserving, low maintenance gardens that contain 30% or more native plants, at various locations throughout Alameda and Contra Costa counties. Admission is free but registration is required at www.BringingBackTheNatives.net. Volunteers are needed. For more information, email Kathy@KathyKramerConsulting.net or call (510) 236-9558 between 9 am and 9 pm.

May 15th (Sunday), 10am-4pm, Alameda County

BAY FRIENDLY GARDEN TOUR – Visit an assortment of home gardens on this FREE self-guided tour. Over 30 private and public gardens will be featured on the tour: including an artist's personal world of sculpture and rare plants nestled in a bamboo thicket, a buzzing habitat for pollinators, a hillside native plant garden and oak woodland, an edible kitchen garden complete with hens — these are just a sampling of what's in store for the day!. Register online by May 2, 2005 (www.stopwaste.org/home/index.asp?page=159) or call 510-444-SOIL for more information.

***MGS sponsored/supported event**

Nemophila menziesii Hook. & Arn.

Baby Blue-Eyes

Hydrophyllaceae, Waterleaf Family

Native to moist flats & slopes below 2500ft in California foothills, Oak woodlands, grasslands, chaparral, coastal sage scrub of the Coast Ranges and the Sierra foothills.

“Impossible not to love this clear blue flower with white centers. Charming addition to annual border. Good companion for Chinese Houses (*Collinsia heterophylla*), Tidy Tips (*Layia platyglossa*), Five Spot (*Nemophila maculata*). Low growing to 10" high. We sow this one regularly throughout the year with excellent results. Sun or part shade.

“Much grown in England. Also marvelous in containers and as bulb cover. Heralds the beginning of wildflower days.”

Larner Seeds



We invite you to join the Mediterranean Garden Society to learn more about gardening in our unique and desirable climate. Memberships are for the calendar year (Jan-Dec), and all members receive the Society journal, *The Mediterranean Garden*, which contains articles written by members worldwide.

If you join mid-year, you will receive all journal issues for that year.

Annual membership is ~~\$35~~

Life membership is ~~\$350~~

Send your personal check or credit card information to:

**The MGS Secretary
Sparoza, P.O.Box 14**

GR-190 02 Peania, GREECE

(International letter postage is ~~80¢~~)

tel/fax: (30 1) 664 3089

email: mgssec@hol.gr

Payment of dues for the Mediterranean Garden Society includes you in this Branch if your address is within our range or if you specify branch inclusion directly on the membership form. You can join at any of our events or send your application separately.

For a membership form, contact Sue Ann Manners, (925) 254-0226, or visit the MGS web site:

www.MediterraneanGardenSociety.org

This newsletter is published in the FALL, WINTER, & SPRING (dormant in SUMMER!) to announce the events and news of the Northern California Branch of the MGS.
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