CHAPTER MEETING

Tuesday, March 17
Casa del Prado, Balboa Park
Room 104, 7:00 p.m.

Diversification of Ceanothus
by Dylan Burge

The genus Ceanothus (California lilac) is highly diverse in California, with more than 50 species known from the State. Diversification of this ecologically and horticulturally significant group of plants is strongly associated with the unusual climates and geology of California, with many extremely rare species limited to small areas with unusual weather conditions and rock strata. This presentation will focus on the interesting story of Ceanothus diversification involving new research findings from several fields, much of it carried out by the presenter Dylan Burge. Many fascinating Ceanothus species found in San Diego County and northern Baja California will be discussed, including their evolutionary history, distribution, and ecology. Photographs of rare Ceanothus species in native habitats around California and San Diego County will be featured.

6:30 p.m. — Natives for Novices. "Why we should choose natives from the same plant community when designing a native garden." Presenter: Sue Marchetti.
7:00 p.m. — refreshments, browsing, socializing.
7:30 p.m. — presentation.

Chapter meetings are free and open to the public. They are held in the Casa del Prado, just west of the San Diego Natural History Museum in Balboa Park.

Membership Appreciation Day!
March 7, 2015, 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Tree of Life Nursery
33201 Ortega Highway, San Juan Capistrano
(949) 728-0685

The San Diego and Orange County Chapters of CNPS team up with Tree of Life Nursery for a special spring Membership Appreciation Day! The public is invited. The day features free talks, and CNPS experts will be on hand to answer your questions about native plants for your garden. Members of CNPS always enjoy 10% off on plant purchases at Tree of Life Nursery’s Casa La Paz retail store, and on Membership day will receive a free plant with any plant purchase! We hope to see you there!

CNPS Garden Native Tour
Saturday & Sunday; March 28-29
9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Tour private and public native plant gardens in the mid-county area the Cities of Poway and San Diego. More details are available at GardenNative.org.

* Adults $25 each, children free
* Sign up for email updates at GardenNative.org
* Want to volunteer? Contact: info@gardennative.org

We look forward to seeing you there!!!

Hei-ock Kim
CNPS Special Projects Coordinator
Chapter meeting presenter Dylan Burge grew up in rural northern California, where he developed a love for biodiversity very early on. He attended UC Davis and Duke University, conducted post-doctoral research in Australia and British Columbia, and performed field work around the world.

In addition to botanical research, Dylan likes to spend time hiking on the Pacific Crest Trail and taking photographs of plants in the wild.

**BOARD MEETING**

**Wednesday, March 4, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.** 4010 Morena Blvd, Suite 100, San Diego (Thomas Guide 1248 C4). CNPS-SD Executive Board meetings are always the first Wednesday of the month, except when the 1st falls on a holiday. Members are welcome to attend as observers. If you wish to discuss an issue, please email president@cnpssd.org to get your issue on the agenda.

**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!**

Judy Basinski  
Sondra Boddy  
and Robert Smith  
Rex Callaway  
Jyllian Smith  
Kendra Miller  
Dennis Mudd  
  
Sharon Nachison  
Sumiko Nagamine  
Bret Newton  
Eric Shepard  
Skye Spencer  
Gay Young

**Fifth Annual California Native Plant Week**  
April 11 - April 19, 2015.  
Celebrate by attending a field trip or other event.  
For more information see:  

**OLD TOWN**

**Native Plant Landscape**

**Saturday, March 14, Work Party - 1 to 3 p.m.**

We need all the wheelbarrows you can bring, and shovels/spades/pickaxes. We'll be moving and setting new rocks to protect sprinkler heads from vehicle wheels, and to replace the 25 that were stolen from the landscape after all our hard work last summer. The new rocks are bigger, to make stealing a lot harder or maybe impossible, and that makes it harder for us to get them to their spots, so wheelbarrows will help a lot. Or a wagon, if a child will loan you one. Shovels and pickaxes are needed to dig the little pits to set the rocks in place.

Or, if you want to trim weavers’ rush, that is not strenuous. You can see what other volunteers have done, and how great the rush clusters look with some tending. Also, it would be excellent if someone wants to be a 3-leaf weed specialist and dig out every bur clover and sweet clover seedling they find. Something for everyone!

~ Kay Stewart, fieldtrips@cnpssd.org

**SUNSET CLIFFS NATIVE GARDEN PROJECT BACK ON HOLD**

We didn’t conduct our planting event on February 15th, as we announced in the last newsletter. We learned that one more step is needed to get a right-of-entry permit from the City – it has to go to the City Attorney and be out for public review for 10 days. So rather than set another date, we are going to wait until we KNOW that we have the permit and then hurry to get the plants in the ground. The Propagation Committee continues to transplant our plants into larger containers, in hopes that they will soon find a home. The best way to keep abreast of our progress (or lack thereof) is to visit our website at [www.sunsetcliffsgarden.org](http://www.sunsetcliffsgarden.org). The site is west of the intersection of (1350) Sunset Cliffs Blvd and Adair Street in Point Loma.

~ Dave Flietner
At Torrey Highlands Park there are tables and restrooms where we will likely eat lunch around 12:30.

Bring lunch, water, and sun protection. Most of the walking should be easy but there is a short stretch of rugged trail at Torrey Highlands Park. Rain in morning cancels trip. For info contact rarebotanist@cnpssd.org.

Saturday, March 21. 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Corte Madera Peak via Espinosa Trail: Pines, Manzanitas, and Sages, OH MY! With Leader: Linda Pardy. The Espinosa Trail to Corte Madera Peak will give us a wide array of vegetation to admire. Starting in the shade of cool oak, it ascends through beautiful chaparral where we hope to see many geophytes, subshrubs and annuals in flower. After a 1.2 mile uphill hike, we’ll reach a fire road and continue to ascend toward Coulter pines. The last leg of the trail continues uphill through boulders to the crest of Corte Madera Peak. We'll look for rock-loving plants in the crevices, eat lunch and enjoy the view from the top. Going down we are guaranteed to see plants we missed on the way up, with the afternoon light illuminating different places.

Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the Buckman Springs Exit (S1) from I-8. (Driving east on I-8, this is the first exit east of the Sunrise Highway turnoff.) Turn right at the bottom of the off-ramp, and pull onto the shoulder until the group has assembled. Some people may want to park in the lot under the freeway and ride-share from here, as parking at the trailhead is limited. Take Buckman Springs south and turn right (west) on Corral Canyon Road just before crossing the major creek that feeds into Lake Morena. Proceed 4.8 miles on narrow pavement that skirts Lake Morena until the road enters a canyon. At a sharp hairpin turn, you will see an unsigned green metal gate (32 degrees 44’ 11.47” N by 116 degrees 33’ 27.42” W) We’ll park off the road near that gate, go around the gate and follow a road that leads to the Espinosa Trailhead.

An Adventure Pass from the USFS is required, and can be purchased at USFS offices, or in Alpine convenience stores. There are no facilities, so we’ll use trail etiquette as needed for the group.

The hike involves about 3.2 miles of ascent and is an out-and-back trail, for a round trip of 6.5 miles, with an elevation gain of around 2,000 ft to the crest at around 5,500 ft. Bring at least two quarts of water and/or a hydrolyte beverage, lunch, and energy snacks. Wear good hiking boots, long pants, and sun protection, and gear appropriate to the weather. We plan to be back to Corral Canyon by 4:00 and return to the I-8/Buckman Springs Road junction at 4:30. Some may want to include
time for a group dinner at the Greek restaurant in Alpine on Tavern Road right off the freeway.

If people want to ride share from central San Diego, meet in the parking lot behind the Denny's on Friar's Road just east of the SR 163 freeway at 7:45 a.m., or at the Severin/Fuerte exit Park'n'Ride on the south side of I-8 at 8:15. For more info contact fieldtrips@cnpssd.org.


Saturday, April 18. 9 a.m. to noon. Celebrate California Native Plant Week and see flowering plants along the Piedras Pintadas Trail in western Rancho Bernardo. See next month’s newsletter for information.

HELP NEEDED: If you want to help plan field trips, please contact fieldtrips@cnpssd.org. The Chapter also needs help with Public Outreach; if you can help, contact publicoutreach@cnpssd.org.

**Locally Rare Plants**

Last week, I was contacted regarding a list of locally rare plants in San Diego County. Had anyone in San Diego compiled such a list? Not that I was aware of, rather a surprising answer considering how many professional botanists are in the county.

This wasn’t an inquiry regarding federal or state listed species, nor was it an inquiry regarding the plants listed in the CNPS Inventory of Rare and Threatened plants. San Diego County is already a well-known leader in diversity for any of those categories and several lists exist for these species. This was a question about another set of rare plants, the ones that are locally scarce here but otherwise common elsewhere. This group frequently falls between the regulatory gaps.

With its diverse flora and geographic scale, California supports many species of plants that may be as common as weeds in part of the state, but only have a few scattered sites in other parts of the state. A classic example is chocolate lily (Fritillaria biflora). Widely considered a rare plant in southern California, chocolate lily is significantly more common in Central California, common enough to rule out a California Rare Plant Rank of 4. Another example would include a species where San Diego County is at the extreme edge or fringe of its range such as hummingbird sage (Salvia spathecia), a plant that finds the southern edge of its range at Camp Pendleton. The plant can be quite abundant further north, such as along the coasts of San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties but almost unknown in our County.

In conversation it is generally recognized that organisms found at the extreme limits of their range may have valuable genetic makeup that could allow that organism to survive dynamic conditions, such as climate change. Thus, it is often considered important not just to conserve core populations, but fringe populations as well. Locally rare plant lists focus on fringe populations.

Whether such lists actually gain traction with local jurisdictions depends on where in the state they are presented, how determined its advocates are, and how detailed the supporting documentation is. A very large list may in fact be a simple reflection of reality in a county with a large diversity of plants. However, a much narrower list focusing only on plants with few known sites and clearly identifiable threats may have a better shot of being considered a conservation tool for jurisdictions and land managers.

With that last goal in mind, I was part of a team of botanists that created a list of locally rare and significant plants for Orange County and western Riverside County. Only about 20 plants are included on either list (with overlap). A good example of a threatened locally rare plant in Orange County is the silver-backed fern (Pentagramma triangularis var. viscosa). This plant is perhaps not all that uncommon in San Diego County (the Consortium of California herbaria lists 95 collections with about one third collected over the last 20 years) but the situation is different in Orange County. Once relatively common in coastal southern portions of Orange County, it has only been documented from a single site in the last 20 years and most of its former habitat has been urbanized.

Ventura County is a bit more progressive than San Diego County when it comes to locally rare plant lists. It adopted a Locally Important Species list that includes about 200 plants, each species with fewer than 5 locations. Many of these plants are included on a broader list of locally rare plants of Ventura County developed by David Magney. Originally started about 2001, the list includes native Ventura County plant species with fewer than 10 known locations. Deiter Wilken compiled a similar list of locally rare plants of Santa Barbara County based on eight or fewer locations. Overall these lists are quite large, as should not be a surprise in regions with very diverse topography and local climates. The lists include hundreds of species. You can see these lists following the links at www.cnps.org/cnps/rareplants/locally_rare.php.
Even if a locally rare plant list doesn't get much jurisdictional recognition, it would still have conservation value. It would encourage monitoring of these plants and it may help identify plants that should be included in the CNPS Inventory of Rare and Threatened species now or in the future. More importantly it might simply give plants recognition where they previously had none. This is often the first true step in conservation.

What would our San Diego list look like? We have a lot of plants with few known sites so my speculation is that the first cut could be large, similar to that seen in Ventura or Santa Barbara Counties. If the next step is taken, identifying a subset with identifiable threats, and discounting plants already in the CNPS Inventory, the list could include fewer than 40 plants. Dr. Burak Pekin of the San Diego Zoo Institute is interested in finding the answer to this question and has begun crafting a list. CNPS has offered assistance. Stay tuned for the results. If you are intrigued or interested in contributing or helping in some way, feel free to contact me (rarebotanist@cnpssd.org).

~ Fred Roberts, Rare Plant Botanist

**CONSERVATION**

**Conservation Committee**

March 3. The Conservation Committee meets the first Tuesday of each month. Contact Frank Landis at raresurvey@cnpssd.org for the location.

**Carbon Neutral Conservation**

Wow. Until this morning, I thought this was just a holdover rant from the January Conservation Conference (which was excellent, thanks to a lot of interesting speakers). Then I heard about the Healthy Soils Initiative in Sacramento. Sigh.

Anyway, as I was listening to a Scientist from an Agency (name and agency withheld, for reasons that will become obvious), I felt the strong urge to shout out "carbon neutral conservation!" But of course they never called on me, so I'm going to put my rant here instead.

Let me explain the problem before I get to what set me off. It's about climate change. As most of you know, I'm working on a book on climate change. I'm not a climatologist, so in this work, I'm relying on a study by the climatologist David Archer. Back in 2005, he ran a model of the fate of the carbon in the atmosphere if we follow what's called the "Business As Usual" model and blow all our fossil fuels into the air as carbon dioxide. His result is consistent with more recent models (like the IPCC5, published last year), and it's something we in CNPS need to think about.

According to his model, average global temperatures will rise 3°C (5°F) by 2100 (or whenever we blow all our fossil fuels), then keep rising for another 200 years after that to top out at 8°C (14°F). After another 1,500 years or so, global average temperatures cool down to 6°C (11°F), cool to 3-5°C(5-9°F) after another 10,000 years, to 2°C (4°F) for the 100,000 years after that, and finally cools back to 20th Century normal after something like 400,000 years.

If we blow all our fossil fuels into the air, it will take up to 400,000 years for the last of the carbon to be sequestered back in soils, rock, and sediments. Based on what we know now, it's very difficult to take a huge amount of excess carbon out of the atmosphere. Basically the oceans saturate (after about 1,500 years), then the ocean sediments saturate (after 10,000 years or more) then erosion takes 100,000-400,000 years to take out the rest through burying things in landslides and marshes and through the oxidation of freshly exposed rock. It's an enormously long legacy for 250 years of fossil fuel use.

Now let's talk about California's native plants and the fate of the California Floristic Province. Based on some paleoclimate models and on fossil data, it's a good bet that if we get 8°C of global warming, California's vegetation will be a mix of rain forest, paratropical forest (like Florida) and desert. Rainforest is projected to grow north to 40°N latitude, or just south of Redding and Eureka. The California deserts will actually remain mostly in place, shifting north somewhat and getting much hotter, so there will be rainforest both north and south of a very dry southern California.

Under this climate change model, most of our native California flora will be gone in 200 years. Certainly some species will hang out in dry refugia on the desert sides of mountains and places like that. However, we can say goodbye to Sierran coniferous forests, coastal sage scrub, most chaparral, oak woodlands, Joshua trees, probably the redwood forests, and most other iconic plants and vegetation.

This is why we need to get very, very serious about climate change. We need to get into carbon neutral conservation, whatever that turns out to be. We need to be part of the movement away from a carbon economy. We need to start figuring out how California native plants can sequester carbon in human landscapes, and to promote whatever we learn.
Getting back to the Conservation Conference, what the Agency Scientist said was that, in response to climate change, his forest agency wanted to do a lot more burning in Sierran conifer forests, to reestablish the old fire regime, prevent future fires, and so forth, because of climate change.

Do I need to point out that it's hard to sequester carbon in a forest if it's burned and thinned regularly?

Apparently I do. That whole argument over the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park (CRSP) general plan is because they plan to a) sequester carbon by planting lots of conifers close together, b) somehow get most of those conifers to live for 100 years as large trees, and c) burn around these dense stands frequently, to keep the understory open and to keep CRSP from burning down. I was hoping that they'd clue into the idea that planting a dog-hair forest and setting a fire in it every year or two was a great way to burn the park down, but they didn't want to hear it. They even gave themselves a special CEQA exemption so that they didn't have to consider the possibility. That's too bad, because now, if CRSP burns as a result of their management (and I really hope it doesn't), it's going to be a scandal in addition to a horrible, and preventable, environmental tragedy. And a loss of sequestered carbon.

I don't know how to get environmental agencies and groups to start thinking in terms of carbon, but we have to. We all have to, CNPS included. We can get carbon out of the air by putting it into soil, into roots (particularly down here in southern California, where the shrubs are far bigger underground), and into aboveground wood. And we need to learn how to do that effectively with native plants.

We also need to get serious about emitting less carbon, whether it's emitted by driving vehicles on long trips to see plants or by sending heavy machinery into the mountains to masticate plants. We need to emit less and sequester more.

Also, we need better carbon accounting. The CRSP project, like most sequestration projects, takes carbon out of the air over 100 years. If the carbon accounting is sloppy, this is regarded as okay, the equivalent of saying that, so long as I repay you within 100 years, I've repaid you in full today. That may sound ridiculous, but that's the kind of carbon accounting that CalFire uses to say that biomass burning for electricity generation is carbon neutral. If you cut down a 100 year-old shrub and burn it to power a generator, that's carbon neutral because some plant will take that carbon back out of the air in another 100 years. Should I point out that, if the global average temperature goes up 3°C in 100 years, most of the trees planted up at CRSP will die? That's an awkward fact, but it's the kind of thing people forget when, as at CRSP, they plant tree species that first sprouted there centuries ago during the Little Ice Age and assume they'll survive the next 100 years. Somehow, they think that, even though the climate is changing, it will stay the same and allow those trees to grow so that they will complete their carbon sequestration contract.

And it does get more complicated. I just heard today about a new Healthy Soils Initiative that's gaining traction in Sacramento. The idea is to compost urban green waste and spread it on agricultural and rangeland fields as a form of carbon sequestration. Now I'm not against using compost to sequester carbon if it's done right. What I am worried about is contamination. Greenwaste bins pretty routinely collect trash as the result of human carelessness. It doesn't take a lot of the wrong kind of trash—medical waste, old batteries, , even the seeds of plants like cheeseweeds that can survive hot composting—to make compost that is inappropriate for food crops and questionable as a rangeland soil amendment.

Contamination is a big problem, and it's one that bedevils the waste industry. If waste was separated into enough different streams, it would be possible to recycle it all. The problem is that it comes all mixed together and cross-contaminated, and that's hard to deal with outside of simply landfilling it. Since I don't know about how the Healthy Soils Initiative will control contamination in its compost, I'm a bit dubious about the proposal. It seems like another Big Idea, like giant solar on the Ivanpah model, CalFire's pro-fire vegetation management ideas, or carbon sequestration in the parks, something that sounds good in theory but is scary in practice. Perhaps it will be better. I hope so.

The key point is that we need to get serious about carbon issues and climate change. We need to get into carbon neutral conservation, even though at this point we don't know what that is. If we don't, the California Floristic Province will be gone in a few hundred years, along with most of the species that it supports. We don't want that to be our legacy, do we?

~ Frank Landis, Conservation Chair

Phacelia spp. at the 2014 Garden Native Tour. Photo by Bobbie Stephenson.
**RELATED ACTIVITIES**

**San Diego River Park Foundation**

**Point Loma Native Plant Garden**

**March 7 & 15, 9 – noon.** Work Party. Rain cancels; bring water; no facilities; tools/supplies provided. Usually the first Saturday and third Sunday of each month. Contact: Richard@sandiegoriver.org for more info.

**Cardiff Elementary School Work Party**

**March 7, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.** Cardiff Elementary School (K – 3), 1888 Montgomery Avenue, Cardiff, CA 92007. Volunteers will plant plants & put down mulch for a waterwise native plant garden along the sidewalk. Park on west side of San Elio Ave. between Mozart Ave. & Montgomery Ave. Bring sturdy, closed-toed shoes, shovel, gloves, sunhat, sunscreen, drinking water. For childcare during the work party or for more info, contact cindy.jensonelliott@cardiffschool.com.

**A-B Botany Society Presentation**

**March 9, 10:00 a.m.** Anza-Borrego Desert State Park Visitor Center, 200 Palm Canyon Drive, Borrego Springs 92004. The public is invited; FREE. A multimedia presentation by Stephen Ingram will explore ‘Cacti, Agaves and Yuccas of California’s Deserts,’ highlighted by those plants in Anza-Borrego.

**Native Plant Day at the Living Coast Discovery Center**

**March 14; 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.** Be part of the Living Coast Discovery Center’s first annual celebration of native plants. Unique among San Diego attractions, the Center landscapes all its grounds with southern California native plants. Greg Rubin will give a talk on using native plants in home landscaping and will sign copies of the book he coauthored, “The California Native Landscape: The Homeowner’s Design Guide to Restoring Its Beauty and Balance”, and Dave Flietner will lead a native plant walk of the estuarial plants that surround the center. Horticulturists at the center will give demonstrations about native landscaping. Native Plant Day is included in paid admission to the Discovery Center. For more info, contact the Center at (619) 409-5900 or visit [http://www.thelivingcoast.org/events-calendar/](http://www.thelivingcoast.org/events-calendar/).

**Circle of Art**

**March 14-15. 9-5 on Saturday; 9-4 on Sunday.** The FREE outdoor 26th Annual Circle of Art Show & Sale is staged at Christmas Circle, in Borrego Springs. More than 60 artists will exhibit their quality work in a variety of media, many depicting the beautiful native plants of the California desert. [www.circle-of-art.org](http://www.circle-of-art.org)

Learn about Ceanothus species at the Chapter meeting and see many of them blooming at the Garden Native Tour this month. Photo, from 2014 Garden Native Tour, by Bobbie Stephenson.

The CNPS-SD Newsletter is generally published 12 times a year. The newsletter is not peer reviewed and any opinions expressed are those of the author identified at the end of each notice or article. The newsletter editor may edit the submittal to improve accuracy, improve readability, shorten articles to fit the space, and reduce the potential for legal challenges against CNPS. If an article, as edited, is not satisfactory to the author, the author can appeal to the board. The author has the final say on whether the article, as edited, is printed in the newsletter. Submissions are due by the 10th of the month preceding the newsletter; that is, March 10 for the April newsletter, etc. Please send submittals to newsletter@cnpssd.org.

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**CNPS-SD Calendar for March 2015**

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- **3/3:** Conservation Committee Mtg, p. 2
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- **3/15:** Point Loma Native Garden Work Party, p.7
- **3/17:** **Chapter Meeting,** p. 1
- **3/21:** Field Trip to Corte Madera Peak, p. 3
- **3/28-29:** Garden Native Tour, p. 1
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

___Student or Limited Income $25; ___Individual $45; ___Family $75
___Plant Lover $100; ___Patron $300; ___Benefactor $600; ___Mariposa Lily $1,500

Name(s): ________________________________________________________________
Address:  _______________________________________________________________
Phone: ________________________ e-mail: ________________________________

Mail check payable to "CNPS" and send to: CNPS, 2707 K Street, Ste 1, Sacramento, CA 95816-5113.

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
San Diego Chapter
C/o San Diego Natural History Museum
P. O. Box 121390
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March 2015 Newsletter

Dedicated to the preservation of the California native flora

www.cnpssd.org

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