The Oaks of San Diego County  
by Fred Roberts  
Tuesday, December 8, 2020  
7:00 - 8:00 pm

Oaks are an important element of the California landscape. As a group, they are one of the most widely recognized plants in Southern California. However, with the exception of a few readily recognizable trees, determining individual species can be a challenge. Many are similar in appearance. Within certain groups they are fairly promiscuous, producing many intermediate hybrids blurring the distinctions between otherwise easily recognized species. San Diego County boasts one of the highest diversity of oaks in California with ten known species ranging in form from the intricately and tangled branched Nuttall’s scrub oak, a coastal oak that hid in plain sight of botanists for over a hundred years, to California black oak, a mountain species with large, bristle-tipped leaves that turn yellow and fall to the ground in the fall. We also boast one of the state’s most problematic entities, Parry’s oak (Quercus X acutidens), which has been considered anywhere from a variation of California scrub oak (Q. berberidifolia) to a full species worth recognition. Our speaker will introduce us to these oaks and others as we tour our San Diego species, learning something of their ecology and how to tell them apart.

Two Ways to Watch

1) Zoom: To watch the presentation on your computer or phone via Zoom you must register in advance. Registration on Zoom has a participation capacity, so register now for the best ‘seats’. You do not need a Zoom account to register or watch the presentation.

Register Here: https://www.cnpssd.org/events/socal-oaks

2) Facebook: If you want to watch the presentation without registering, it will be live streamed to the CNPS-SD Facebook page beginning at 7:00 pm. There is no limit to participants viewing the presentation on Facebook.

CNPS-San Diego Chapter Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/cnpssd

Following Fred’s presentation, questions for the presenter will be selected by a moderator from the chat and comment sections of both Zoom and Facebook.

Fred Roberts is the CNPS-SD Rare Plant Botanist and author of the now out-of-print but popular guide The Illustrated Guide to the Oaks of the Southern Californian Floristic Province (1995) and co-author of Wildflowers of Orange County and the Santa Ana Mountains. With over 40 years of botanical experience, Fred has worked as an assistant curator at the UC, Irvine herbarium, as a botanist with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and volunteered as a conservationist. Most of those years he has focused on the floristic diversity of Orange County but occasionally has picked up other interests such as understanding oaks, lilies and their relatives, and knows a thing or two about rare plants in Southern California. He is currently a consulting botanist focusing on rare plant surveys and has several book projects in the wings. In his spare time, Fred paints...
MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

To all our members, we face a time to finally take a breath to plan for 2021 and also to relax, sow seeds, and heal. It’s the time to cheer on the return of the winter rains and a new planting season. It’s time to reflect on what got us where we are and how to be ready to handle this coming winter and spring. I know from every one of us, it will be with esteem for each other and with a spirited voice that welcomes our new members and supporters and celebrates those who have recently moved on.

We know that patience is wearing thin for some on seeing environmental justice done and the list of actions to protect and preserve imperiled native plants and their companion species is long. Each of us is part of a bigger picture that supports the mission of CNPS, and everyone is appreciated, though it may seem like the tasks are too many or the acknowledgement too little. I’d like to touch on a few things, the first of which is that we’ll be entering into 2021 with fewer Board members than 2020. You might just be the one to help add your voice to the Board. Any CNPS member from San Diego or Imperial County can join the Board meetings via Zoom.

Speaking of Boards, the San Diego County Board of Supervisors will finally be leaning in a way that may support a substantive Climate Action Plan, promoting denser development near existing services versus blindly approving more sprawl, and hopefully will address the long-standing issue of passing into law the North County and perhaps a South County MSCP. The end of 2020 is proving to be a make or break gambit to try and pass plans that are clearly meant for the 1990’s before the ideas and thoughtful considerations of the 2020s catch up to them. The Conservation column (p. 5) is the place to read up on the San Diego Parks Master Plan Update, solar developments, and others. To be fair, I love renewable energy... when it is built near the point of consumption, not over our fragile desert and foothill transition ecosystems. We are the voice for the voiceless, so make yours heard!

The holidays are normally when we come together for a potluck and go home to our families and / or friends in that warmth that they (and a lot of food and cheer) can provide. Our members have been through a lot this year, as have all Americans, as have all the peoples of the world facing the ongoing pandemic, climate weirding, and political upheavals. As I met each of the volunteers and the fantastic kaleidoscope of customers of the online Fall Plant Sale, I can say that our Society is strong and diverse in age and knowledge and backgrounds. Your yards and projects teeming with native plants are the examples to friends and neighbors, and you are the ambassadors to expanding an awareness and love of native plants around Southern California. We had customers from Los Angeles and Orange Counties, the San Jacinto Mountains, and the foothills of the Lagunas. We had locals to North County and South County, and East County too. We are an organization that is meeting adversity well and, with your help, providing answers to protecting lands and getting some habitat back - one yard and garden at a time. To everyone who helps the Chapter thrive - Thank you!

While we must wait a bit longer yet to resume our Society's social gatherings and events, we have a lot to look forward to make the continued wait worthwhile.

Cheers!

~ Justin Daniel, President

BOARD MEETING

December Board Meeting

Wednesday, December 2, 6:30 – 9:00ish p.m. The meeting will be via Zoom. To add an issue to the agenda, or to get the link to the meeting, please email president@cnpssd.org.

November Board Meeting Summary

To conform to the directive from the CNPS office, this meeting was held via Zoom. The Board discussed a revised budget for the remainder of the CNPS fiscal year, sponsorships, a potential spring plant sale, and potential options for a spring garden tour. No motions were proposed and voted on.

~ Bobbie Stephenson, Chapter Secretary/Newsletter Editor

GARDENING WITH NATIVES

Garden Committee (GC)

Zoom Meeting Tuesday January 12, 6:30-7:30 pm

Winter Greetings! Because the holiday season is a busy month for many, there will not be a Garden Committee (GC) Zoom meeting in December. We hope you enjoy Caroline Harrod’s and Christine Hoey’s article on California native flower arrangements below. Take a look at the favorite natives list by season and start planting now for next year’s bouquets!
Meeting Day Change: Did you notice the next meeting date above? The Co-chairs recognized that some members couldn’t join the Zoom meetings due to Wednesday commitments. So, a decision was made to consider changing the Zoom meeting day to the 2nd Tuesday of each month to allow for more members to participate. We will see if this is a good match and decide if it will be a more permanent change. Meetings are open and everyone is welcome!

Garden Member Shout Out: The GC would like to give a big thanks to member and CNPS-SD sponsor Greg Rubin for his presentation on “Fire Resistant Native Landscapes” at the October meeting. The presentation was timely and very well attended by members and non-members. Greg is the President and founder of California’s Own Native Landscape Design, Inc.

Volunteer Opportunities: At this time, no in-person CNPS-SD chapter activities are permitted due to COVID. Other volunteer opportunities are listed below.

COVID friendly remote opportunities with the Gardening Committee

We need volunteers for the following:

- Write short native garden related articles for the newsletter.
- Update and add native garden articles for the CNPS website.
- Bird Park native garden landscape design plan & plant list workgroup.
- Vandal proof native plant sign design ideas for the CA Native Plant Demonstration Garden (Balboa Park).

If you would like to volunteer, drop us a line at gardening@cnpssd.org.

We hope everyone enjoys a healthy, peaceful holiday season!

Christine Hoey, Nancy Levine & Judie Lincer
Garden Committee Co-chairs

“Cut & Go” Floral and Plant Arrangements Using San Diego Native Vegetation by Caroline Harrod

Need to brighten anyone’s day or make a friend? It’s always easy to do with a bunch of fresh flowers! You might be thinking, why would I not use the more common term bouquet? According to MerriamWebster.com, bouquet is just the French word for bunch. On a side note, my husband calls floral arranging “fiddling with flowers.”

To keep floral and plant arranging fun, let’s use the “cut & go” method. Everyone is busy these days, so make this event as effortless as possible and just have fun with the process. Keep yourself moving and creating to complete your task, and to ward off over-thinking. Following are three things to consider:

How to begin
- Walk the yard and select what catches your eye.
- Cut in the morning.
- Cut with a sharp tool.
- Place cuttings in water immediately (consider taking a pail of water with you).
- Select a decorative container for your arrangement, such as a vase, mason jar, pickle jar, beer bottle, pitcher, bucket, drinking glass, etc.

Things to consider when choosing your cuttings
- What evergreen cuttings from bushes or trees would fill out the arrangement?
- What colorful long-stemmed flowers, berries, fruits, or dried foliage do you want to showcase?
- What is thriving in your yard and will last a few days or a week in an arrangement?
- What do you want your arrangement to accomplish?
- What container are you going to place the foliage in?

How to make an arrangement or floral design in less than 5 minutes
- Well….it always takes a bit longer, but can be accomplished! Just have fun!
- Is the arrangement going to be placed inside or outside? Cut long stems and think big for the outside; inside has lots of sizes to choose from, so keep your arrangement in proportion to the space you want to fill.
- Cut the branch or stem on a slant; the plant will absorb water better that way.
- Start at the center and work outward from your container. Just make it as quickly as you can—there are no mistakes!
- From ikebana to the grocery store bouquet, there are all sorts of styles and recommended ways to design—I prefer the bunch from a child’s hand.

Caroline Harrod has been a member of CNPS-SD for more than 10 years and volunteers with Mt. Helix Park’s Habitat Restoration Team. Check out her new YouTube channel, “Growing San Diego”—and when you watch, please remember to hit SUBSCRIBE, give the video a thumbs up, and click on the bell, which will help get the word out about growing native plants in San Diego!

California Natives for Flower Bouquets by Season by Christine Hoey

Plant now for next year’s bouquets! Below are a few California native plant/tree favorites for creating unique flower bouquets by season. “Foundation” natives can be used
year-round and will provide structure as well as color and texture to your arrangements. (Flower bouquets and artwork by Caroline Harrod).

**Foundation** Natives: Coast live oak (Quercus agrifolia), wood fern (Dryopteris arguta), Torrey pine (Pinus torreyana), toyon (Heteromeles arbutifolia), lemonade berry (Rhus integrifolia), basin big sagebrush (Artemisia tridentata), ‘Canyon Prince’ wild rye (Elymus condensatus ‘Canyon Prince’)

(Above) Lemonade Berry (Rhus integrifolia).

(Right) Toyon (Heteromeles arbutifolia) & Bush Sunflower (Encelia californica).

**Spring:** Spring blooming sages (Salvia spp.), Penstemon, San Diego sunflower (Bahiopsis laciniata), bush sunflower (Encelia californica), lupine (Lupinus), Iris species, Clarkia species, Phacelia species, bush mallow (Malacothamnus), sugar bush (Rhus ovata), Chinese houses (Collinsia heterophylla), golden yarrow (Eriophyllum confertiflorum), California poppy (Eschscholzia californica).

(Right) Ceanothus ‘Ray Hartman’. (Below) Showy Penstemon (Penstemon spectabilis).

Summer: Buckwheats (Eriogonum spp.), island snapdragon (Gambelia speciosa), coyote mint (Monardella villosa), Matilija Poppy (Romneya coulteri), summer blooming sages (Salvia spp.), golden yarrow (Eriophyllum confertiflorum), beach aster (Erigeron glaucus), chuparosa (Justicia californica), wood fern (Dryopteris arguta), red Monardella (Monardella macrantha), and monkeyflower (Diplacus/Mimus spp.).

(Left) Matilija poppy (Romneya coulteri) & California poppy (Eschscholzia californica).

**Fall:** Fuchsia (Epilobium spp.), California buckwheat (Eriogonum fasciculatum; dried rust-colored flower heads), Single-leaved skunkbrush (Rhus simplicifolia), Roger’s red grape (Vitis ‘Roger’s Red’), coyote bush (Baccharis), coast goldenbush (Isocoma menziesii), and monkeyflower (Diplacus/Mimus spp.).

(Right) St. Catherine’s lace (Eriogonum giganteum).

**We have ACORNS for Sale!**

On November 18, the CNPS-SD online store began a 2-month sale on freshly harvested local acorns for $1.50 each. Also, a limited supply of Brodiaea and other bulbs is also offered for sale.

Order at: [www.canativeseeds.com](http://www.canativeseeds.com). At the link, search “Quercus” to find the acorns and search “Brodiaea” or “Triteleia” to find the bulb species.

**Acorns available:**
Quercus agrifolia var. agrifolia (coast live oak)
Quercus agrifolia var. oxyadenia (coastal live oak)
Quercus acutidens (Torrey’s hybrid oak)
Quercus cornelius-mulleri (Muller oak)
Quercus engelmannii (Engelmann oak)
Quercus x engelmannii (Hybrid scrub oak w/ mainly engelmannii parentage)

**Bulbs available:**
Brodiaea californica ‘Mixed’ (California Brodiaea) - blue and pink bulbs
Brodiaea californica ‘Pink Form’ (California Brodiaea)
Brodiaea kinkiensis (San Clemente Island Brodiaea)
Dipterostemon capitatus (blue dicks or wild hyacinth)
Triteleia bridgesii (Bridges’ Brodiaea)
Triteleia hyacinthina “Blue Form” (white Brodiaea)
Triteleia laxa (Ithuriel’s spear)
Triteleia peduncularis (long rayed Brodiaea)
**CONSERVATION**

**Conservation Committee Meeting**

Contact conservation@cnpssd.org for information regarding the December meeting.

**2020 Lame Duckery and Looking Forward (?) to 2021**

I’m writing this on November 18, after listening to the Board of Supervisors approve Otay Ranch Village 13 by a 4-1 margin, with Fletcher voting against. Sierra Club is already promising to sue, and they have a very good record against the County. Indeed, that record was part of their testimony, that they’re getting tired of suing the County, and winning, having the County pay their fees, and doing it over again. Supervisor Jacob asked them if there were situations under which they would not sue, and the general answer was that it was entirely possible, if the County followed its own General Plan and did something reasonable about climate change.

CNPS will be considering our options going forward on this case. This project, among other things, plans to bulldoze 1,200-odd Nuttall’s scrub oaks (*Quercus dumosa*, list 1B) across six acres. They originally misidentified the oaks (in the DEIR, the oaks were stated to look like *dumosa*, but they were too far inland for the Jepson Manual description, so they were misidentified). When I pointed out that there are Nuttall’s scrub oaks east of the site, they changed it to “they’re *dumosa*, but it’s a small number, so it’s not significant.”

Today, they claimed they would mitigate the 1,200 oaks in a yet-to-be-written revegetation plan, so there was no significant impact. Sigh.

So why did this pass, aside from the fact that it’s the last big project that Cox and Jacob have been working on off and on since the 1990s? That’s likely one big reason, that and Gaspar leaving the board and toeing the party line. Come the end of January, the number of Republicans on the board is going from 4 to 2, and everyone expects the County to take a political left turn. This project, along with a bunch of other joyless lame duckery, is the usual post-election: finishing up long-term projects and making controversial decisions the outgoing politicians can no longer be punished for.

The County, for instance, is also looking at radically downsizing protections for wetlands in its Resource Protection Ordinance (RPO) and rewriting the Grading Ordinance to make it easier to grade. This apparently will be heard by the Board in December.

This week, I still have one hearing, on Rancho Lilac, which SANDAG decided to hear on the 20th with little advance warning. Thanks to those who put in comments. Hopefully, that will be enough for SANDAG to simply follow the staff advice on Rancho Lilac, rather than listen to the screams of outraged trail riders who are...well, actually, who are asking that property purchased for biological mitigation be turned at County expense into more trails for them. Cheeky, that.

On the City of San Diego side, there’s what happened with the Parks Master Plan Update, which went down 5-4 last week, with outgoing Councilmember Kersey casting the deciding vote and Cate fighting it because it would take money out of his district. These two were the deciding votes, but the dynamic in the environmental community is rather different.

There are multiple layers of problems with the Update, but not what you might expect. None of the environmental groups I’ve talked with are very concerned about the central environmental justice issue driving the Update, which is that the poorer neighborhoods desperately need more and better parks, but have no money, while the newer outlying suburbs have better parks and often unspent funds. Pooling and shifting funds to give poorer people better parks (and to help the local canyons) is not controversial. What got us upset was that City Planning made the update primarily about adding amenities to parks, and they pretty much ignored the MSCP until their verbal pitch to the Council, by which point it was too late. We environmentalists don’t want to see MSCP lands paved for bike commuter paths or more recreational amenities. Conserved means conserved.

The Parks Master Plan Update will get done under Mayor Gloria, I have no doubt. Our challenge is to get the planners working on it to realize that they made a serious mistake treating parks solely as amenity sources for city residents and the MSCP solely as a constraint and CEQA issue. I have some hope that, by meeting with the planners, we can get it through to them that meeting the MSCP is one of their core goals, not an inconvenient constraint. I can hope, anyway.

Looking forward to 2021, might I hope the politics get a little more sane. Yeah, that. I expect San Diego politics to get moderately grim in the next year. It’s not just the pandemic, budget shortfalls, and dealing with all the crises left behind by the departing Trump administration, it’s that having a majority of democrats running the City and County of San Diego does not automatically mean that politics will take a hard left turn and go progressive, with conservation taken seriously.

This isn’t doomsaying, just a reminder of how politics works right now. There are two big wings to the local democratic party: the progressives, with whom we tend to make common cause, and the more moderate business-and-labor types. Both sides profess to care about things like environmental justice and the housing crisis, but unfortunately, they diverge sharply on issues about whether more developments are good (bringing jobs and housing) or bad (killing plants and animals, making climate change harder to mitigate). What has happened is that the big businesses that previously supported Republicans will support pro-business democrats, while the environmental community will continue to work with the progressives and try to stay organized. This is how politics has worked in the City of San Diego in the past, and I hope it continues to.
Diego for the last two years. In general, we can expect more lip service to be paid to CNPS issues at a minimum, and hopefully we’ll see more genuine action.

In the longer term, we will hopefully see the County work on their Climate Action Plan (CAP) and continue working on the North County MSCP. At today’s meeting, in response to a question from Supervisor Jacob, Planning said they could get a new CAP done by the end of 2022, and the NC MSCP will be done by a consultant, probably ICF. So, we (hopefully) have that to look forward to.

On the City of San Diego level, I expect to see a real battle shape up between City Planning and the local neighborhood planning boards. It is likely that the centralizing started by Mayor Faulconer will continue under Mayor Gloria. What this means for us is that things like the Parks Master Plan are more likely to get a coat of lipstick and get sent back to the City Council, rather than getting the major rewrite it needs. Getting more than superficial upgrades is a major task for this spring.

One of the big problems in both City and County planning is that their thinking has become remarkably siloed. What I mean by that is the notion that parks are amenities for people, houses are for living, greenhouse gases have to be mitigated elsewhere, and bikes need to be accommodated on less dangerous paths through parks, because San Diego streets are too dangerous for them, and so forth. Functions are not to be combined, and problem areas are to be ignored if they cannot be solved this way. When I try to point out to them that parks play a role in the MSCP, in greenhouse gas sequestration, and are generally in canyons that flood frequently so that they make lousy transit corridors, I get this blank look of incomprehension. To put it politely, the management culture in the City and County don’t seem to encourage lateral thinking. Instead, they want everything neat, and inconvenient issues ignored as much as possible.

With the County, at least, we have some possibility of major change, with three new supervisors coming on board. I’m concerned about the City, because we have too many complex issues to deal with them so simplistically. This is where the conflict between neighborhoods and the planners becomes so troubling. The local planning groups I know tend to be lateral thinkers, no matter what their political stripe, but they also want their neighborhoods to stay as they are. I’m concerned that City Hall’s effort to silence them will yield more problems than solutions. And as usual, I hope I’m too pessimistic and that things turn out better.

Politics aside, stay safe. December 2020 is going to be a memorable month, probably in multiple ways.

~ Frank Landis, Conservation Chair

Related Activities

WreathMasters!

Imagine California native plants, the Great British Bake Off & holiday wreaths all in one. It’s not a dream— it’s WreathMasters! Follow this epic wreath competition between botanic gardens, nurseries, CNPS & other partners this winter and attend the live event (Webinar) on December 18 to find out the winners! All wreaths have to be made with 51% California native plants, be ethically sourced and submitted through a participating partner (including CNPS). With over 10 competing organizations and a fabulous panel of judges including Maurice Harris, Katie Chirgotis and Jennifer Jewell, Wreath Masters is a celebration of the California native plant community, floral artistry and the seasonal beauty of our flora.

Want to register for the event, submit a wreath or find out more? Visit www.cnps.org/WreathMasters.

Bryophyte Identification

Chris Wagner’s bryophyte identification group has gone virtual! The group meets on Zoom, two Fridays per month, at 6 pm. Dates and topics for the rest of 2020 are:

December 4: Common and rare lichens of So. California.

For more information contact Chris Wagner at mossgeek@yahoo.com.

California Native Grassland Association (CNGA)

The California Native Grassland Association (CNGA) is now accepting applications for the 2021 California Grassland Research Awards for Student Scholarship (GRASS; https://cnga.org/GRASSgrants). CNGA will offer competitive
research funds to promote undergraduate and graduate student research focused on understanding, preserving, and restoring California’s native grassland ecosystems in accordance with the [https://cnga.org/Mission](https://cnga.org/Mission).

**Eligibility**: Students from any accredited college or university doing research within California may apply for a CNGA student research scholarship (home institution may be outside California).

**Awards**: CNGA funds at least four $500 awards per year. These awards are designed to support basic undergraduate and graduate research in native grassland ecosystems. Funds can be used to support fieldwork, small equipment purchases, visits to herbaria, materials and/or books. Students may re-apply and receive a scholarship award for a maximum of two years.

To apply, send an application that includes:

- Title of the project
- Your name and contact information
- Project supervisor/major professor and institution
- Project summary, including the location, objectives and significance (1 page or less)
- Proposed methods
- Expected accomplishments
- Timeline for project completion
- Budget and justification for scholarship funds

Applications should be no longer than 3 pages (PDF format is preferred). Please email all materials (with "CNGA GRASS Grants" in subject line) to [www.grants@cnga.org](mailto:www.grants@cnga.org) by January 31, 2021. Notification of the award recipient will occur via email by March 15, 2021. Grant funds must be used within 12 months of the award, and recipients are asked to submit at least one journal article or research summary to the CNGA publication *Grasslands* within that period. The CNGA GRASS Grant Program should be acknowledged in resulting theses and publications.

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**Salt heliotrope (Heliotropium curassavicum var. ocellatum).** Photo taken at Lake Hodges by Jürgen Schrenk.

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**San Diego goldenbush (Isocoma menziesii var. menziesii) and Cassin’s Kingbird.** Photos taken at Lake Hodges by Jürgen Schrenk.

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**HELP NEEDED: ONLINE PROGRAMS**

Would you like to help develop or host CNPS-SD Live Online Programs? We are looking to expand our crew. Roles include Scheduling, Communications, Technology, Social Hour Host, Presentation Host, and Support. Please contact [programs@cnpssd.org](mailto:programs@cnpssd.org) if you would like to volunteer some time to help the chapter put on great online programs.

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**Newsletter**

Are you receiving a printed newsletter via US Mail, as well as our emailed newsletter via MailChimp? Please [email membership@cnpssd.org](mailto:membership@cnpssd.org) if you would like to stop receiving our printed mailing. This will save valuable resources - both paper as well as Chapter dollars. Know that copies of our newsletter can also found on our website at [www.cnpssd.org/newsletters](http://www.cnpssd.org/newsletters).

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**CNPS-SD Activities Calendar**

**December 2020**

12/2:  Board Meeting via Zoom, p.2
12/8:  Zoom Program – Oaks of Southern California, p.1
1/12:  Garden Committee Meeting via Zoom, p. 2