



FRIENDS OF THE  
**REGIONAL PARKS BOTANIC GARDEN**  
NATIVE PLANTS OF CALIFORNIA



## THE BOTANIC GARDEN MONTHLY

### April 2023 Newsletter

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ABOVE: Wild ginger (*Asarum caudatum*), March 2023, in the Botanic Garden. Photo by David Sherertz.



## Newts On the Move

The Botanic Garden pond is one of the Tilden Park winter breeding habitats for the California newt, *Taricha torosa*. Dr. Obed Hernandez-Gomez of Dominican University and a team of undergraduate students are examining the impact of invasive plant species, notably Eucalyptus, on the skin microbiota of the local newt population. "Amphibians serve as excellent models to evaluate host-pathogen responses to environmental change," Dr. Hernandez-Gomez states in the article. "The amphibian skin harbors diverse microbial communities which provide protection against lethal pathogens. Any environmental disturbances can result in notable alterations to the structure of amphibian skin."

In the [Dominican University article describing the study](#), Dr. Hernandez-Gomez adds: "We plan to use DNA extracted from our swab samples to compare the genetic diversity of salamanders among wildfire impacted and unimpacted sites and throughout their range. This information would allow us to evaluate whether increased fire intensities could result in genetic bottlenecks, especially in the fragmented Bay Area landscape."

With the advent of spring, the newts perform their annual migration back to their original neighborhoods in Tilden Park, and South Park Drive reopened on April 1. A recent [East Bay Times article](#) (subscription required) stated an argument for keeping South Park Drive closed for a longer period when wet, rainy weather extends beyond the five month period ending in March. It's been observed that a lengthening of the newt's migration season is associated with an extended rainy season.



Newt (*Taricha torosa*) crossing the main bridge in the Garden, March 2023.



## Spring 2023 Garden Tours:

### California Native People and Plants School Tours

Garden docents offer a California Native Peoples and Plants (CNPP) program to complement the California Indian unit for 4th graders. Transportation costs are covered by the Friends of the Regional Parks Botanic Garden for schools in Oakland and West Contra Costa School Districts, in which at least 50 percent of the student population qualifies for the Federal School Lunch Program. The CNPP Tour focuses on the indigenous uses of plants native to our area while acknowledging the ancestral territory of the Native Tribes within the Park District.

Currently, seven schools have registered for these tours through the end of this school year. Docents will lead the student groups through stations where they can grind acorns, play the staves game, wash their hands with soap root, and use replicas of stone tools.



TOP: Students on a CNPP tour on a rainy March day. BOTTOM: Acorn grinding station during the March CNPP tour. Photos: Angellina Manno

### Adult Group Tours

In addition to the free [Saturday and Sunday weekend tours](#), docents lead special Adult Group Tours by request. Recently, docents led special tours for Las Positas College Horticulture students, and for Haas Business School Alumni. Additional Adult Group Tours are being scheduled now. [Request a tour by contacting the Garden Office.](#)



Las Positas Horticulture students and Garden docents, March 2023. Photo by Abby Laurencio.

### Pollinators/Polinizadores in the Garden: A Tour for Communities of Color and Allies.

**Sunday, April 16, 10:00-11:30 a.m.**

**Meet at the [Botanic Garden Visitor Center](#)**

**Great for families! Free; no registration needed.**

Join Regional Parks Naturalist Paula Urtecho and friends from the Xerces Society to learn about why pollinators are so important to the lives of many bird and animal species, including humans, and what you can do to help protect our pollinators. We'll explore which pollinators are present in the Botanic Garden and take a closer look at some of them.

#### **Program will be Spanish/English bilingual:**

Únase a Naturalista Paula y amigos de la Sociedad Xerces para aprender por que son tan importantes las abejas y las mariposas para la vida de muchas especies de aves y animales, incluso los humanos, y que podemos hacer para proteger nuestros polinizadores. Exploraremos cuales polinizadores están presentes en el jardín

botánico y examinaremos algunos. No hay registro; programa gratis.

**Our Quarterly Family-Friendly Tour:**  
**Pollination of California Native Plants**

**Sunday, May 7, 2023 2:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m. Free.**

Please join us at the East Bay Regional Parks Botanic Garden for a special docent-led family-friendly tour, [Pollination of California Native Plants](#). On this tour you'll dissect a California poppy, watch pollinators at work, and learn how seeds disperse. Spring flowers are erupting in the Garden, calling all butterflies, birds, beetles and bees. Rain cancels. Meet in front of the [Botanic Garden Visitor Center](#).



Photo by John Rusk.

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**Next Issue of *Manzanita* will be arriving soon!**

The previous issue of [Manzanita](#), recently mailed, featured *Rosaceae*. The next issue, themed Celebration, will be arriving soon! Among other topics you will find details of the 2022 Grand Opening of the Crevice Garden, and of the impressive national and local awards received by the Garden and staff last year.





## 2022—A Year of Celebrations *Susan Wijeyesekera*

**T**HE GARDEN HAD MUCH to celebrate in 2022! Early last spring, Bart O'Brien, the director of the Regional Parks Botanic Garden, was notified that he would be the recipient of the Liberty Hyde Bailey Award of the American Horticultural Society, their highest and most distinguished honor. Then, on May 11, Gardener Michael Uhler was awarded the General Manager's Award of the East Bay Regional Park District for his years of work in bringing the Crevice Garden to fruition. On July 12 the long-running 2020 docent training class finally graduated. And on August 20 the Crevice Garden was officially dedicated in a special ribbon cutting and awards ceremony that celebrated not only Bart's and Michael's awards but also the Garden's receipt of the Francis Cabot Award from the North American Rock Garden Society back in 2020. This award was bestowed in recognition of the new Crevice Garden as well as of the many other rock gardens found in the Botanic Garden.

This issue of *Manzanita* will focus primarily on the all-encompassing August 20 celebration,

documenting this unprecedented event for Garden history. It will also highlight the 2020 docent training class graduation and celebrate the life and passing of longtime Friend and docent Wen Hsu. And, finally, it will introduce you to the new Friends Advocacy Committee and its work to develop a vision for the future of the Botanic Garden. In all of these events, the Friends of the Regional Parks Botanic Garden have played—and will continue to play—a critical role. Your ongoing support helps make our Garden, in the words of the North American Rock Garden Society, "one of the great gardens of the world."

ABOVE RIGHT: Crevice Garden on May 13, 2022. Photo by Allison Kidder. • RIGHT: Crevice Garden on September 8, 2022. Photo by Allison Kidder. • BELOW: Crevice Garden on August 20, 2022. Photo by Doris Kretschmer.



## Join the Friends!

When you become a member of the Friends, you will share in supporting the Garden and its programs. In addition, you will enjoy the many benefits of membership, including:

- A subscription to the Friends quarterly magazine, *Manzanita*, featuring articles about the Regional Parks Botanic Garden and California native plants
- Early admission to annual fall plant sales
- Invitations to special events offered exclusively to Friends members
- Discounts at [selected nurseries](#) offering California native plants

- Membership in the American Horticultural Society Reciprocal Admissions Program, which enables our members to enjoy member benefits at [these participating North American gardens](#).

If you aren't already a member, please consider joining the Friends! Membership information is on the [Garden website](#).

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## Blooming Now









TOP: A six-petal, three-stamen Western wake robin (*Trillium ovatum*). This clump in the Garden exhibits a rare genetic variation. Photo by David Sherertz.

SECOND ROW, left: Purple mouse ears (*Diplacus douglasii*). Photo by Sandy Steinman.

SECOND ROW, right: Adobe lily (*Fritillaria pluriflora*). Photo by Sandy Steinman.

BOTTOM left: Fawn lily (*Erythronium revolutum*). Photo by Roz Hardy.

BOTTOM right: Shasta fawn lily (*Erythronium shastense*). Photo by Roz Hardy.



LEFT: Lupine (*Lupinus albifrons*, pink-flowered form).

RIGHT: the Garden's reddest manzanita cultivar (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* 'Lillian') - an introduction from the Botanic Garden. Photos by Bart O'Brien.

The March storms did cause more havoc in the Garden. The photos below, by Bart O'Brien, show the damage to the large Pygmy cypress (*Hesperocyparis pygmaea*).





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## Garden Plant Sales

Wednesdays Weekly, 10 a.m. to 12 noon  
First Saturdays Monthly, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Featured this month:

**Tiger lily (*Lilium pardalinum*)**

Grows best in damp shade. This perennial plant grows from bulbs and can reach up to 2 meters in height with red-orange flowers blooming in summer. The stalks die back to their bases in the fall to reappear like magic in the spring.

**Meadow rue (*Thalictrum fendleri*)**

A shade loving, fern-like perennial. Mostly goes dormant in summer, but comes back with winter rains. The stalks of small yellow flowers may be up to 6 feet tall but are generally shorter. Can spread up to a foot or two.

Sales are held at the Garden Potting Shed.

See [nativeplants.org](http://nativeplants.org) for an updated plant list.

1550 Wildcat Canyon Road, Tilden Park, Berkeley





LEFT: Tiger lily (*Lilium pardalinum*). RIGHT: Meadow rue (*Thalictrum fendleri*). Photos: [Calscape](#).

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## Free Weekend and Holiday Docent-Led Tours

**Saturdays and Park District Holidays: 2 p.m.**

**Sundays: 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.**

No reservations are needed. Tours are limited to a maximum of 10 people. Meet at the Garden Visitor Center.

Join our knowledgeable docents for free guided tours of the Garden on non-rainy Saturdays, Sundays and [District holidays](#) (the Garden is closed on New Year's Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day). Tours usually last about an hour and are appropriate for both adults and children. You can leave a tour at any time. Rain cancels.

Tour information is on the [Garden website](#).

Join the Friends



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