



SAN MATEO ARBORETUM SOCIETY

101 NINTH AVENUE, SAN MATEO, CALIFORNIA

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www.SanMateoArboretum.org

MEMBER NEWSLETTER

January - March 2022

President's Message

Since I started volunteering at the Arboretum over 11 years ago, the makeup of the greenhouse volunteers has changed dramatically. I'm happy to report that we have lots of new, younger volunteers from a variety of backgrounds and interests. Their enthusiasm and creativity has been fun to witness. In collaborating with our longtime volunteers, they are garnering new skills in gardening and SMAS gains technology know-how. If you haven't been to the nursery lately, you've missed their wonderful creative output. Inspired by our pumpkin workshop in October, our treasurer and greenhouse volunteer Cathy Steffen organized workshops to make succulent topped mini-pumpkins to sell. They were a big hit and helped bring in new customers. After Thanksgiving, Cathy set up mini-wreath workshops. The little wreaths were decorated with tiny succulents and other decorations left over from our wreath workshop.



Speaking of which, our our Education chair, Sue Carder, and her team hosted a wreath making workshop, our first hybrid workshop since the beginning of the pandemic. Seven people made their wreaths in the pumphouse, with an additional 23 zooming in from home. This was an enormous achievement to pull off, so our sincere appreciation to Sue, Pat Paquette, Virginia Soletti and our VP Kevin Wilkinson. One other note of thanks to the City park employees who, every year, cut all the greens for this workshop. As always, they did a phenomenal job!





Another benefit from our remodel and rework of the gardens, we are getting more local companies renting for off-site meetings during the week. One of our recent renters, Backblase, returned for a work party to spread mulch in the formal rose garden. Twelve of their employees volunteered on a recent Wednesday and had the mulch nicely distributed within a few hours. Due to the pandemic, this project had been delayed for over a year, so a big thanks for their help.



Another rental event worth mentioning was a meet-and-greet hosted by the Research Chefs Association. This was notable in two ways. The featured speaker was none other than celebrity chef Martin Yan who gave a fun and entertaining cooking demonstration under the Sally Holmes rose. It was also our first evening rental made possible by our recently installed string lights.

It's winter, so the art exhibit will be closed until February or March. Please check our website for updated information on their reopening.

The nursery winter hours will begin January 8 and extend through the end of

February. Having a point of sale system helps us better determine when we should open, so the new hours will be 12-2 p.m. We hope to see you there.

As you can tell, SMAS is better fulfilling our mission statement by being more diverse and inclusive. We are a reflection of our cities changing demographic. Come join our team and help us grow! www.sanmateoarborum.org/volunteer

"Our mission is horticultural education and our passion is connecting people and plants to enhance the community."

Wishing everyone a happy and healthy 2022!

Carol Callison, President

The Arboretum Nursery

by Carmen Mahood

January seems to be the quietest month in the garden. But much is going on which we cannot see: earthworms are making the soil healthy, rain is giving our gardens nutrients, roots are growing in the wet earth getting ready for spring blooms, and inside we are thumbing through seed catalogues and online ideas for planting our gardens. The arboretum has a large variety of plants in stock to fulfill your garden dreams. Plant now for the noisy, colorful, bee-buzzing, humming-bird zipping days of Spring.

Keep it simple: Jade plants, also known as lucky plants, are in bloom and some of ours are in Italian pots donated to us from a local estate garden. They grow indoors or out. Scented geraniums, also called pelargoniums, are ready for your garden borders or to put in



containers for evergreen beauty and their scent. Pinch a leaf and smell the oil: citrus, rose, chocolate, peppermint or lime. Purple iris bulbs, shrub roses, lavender, penstemon are ready to go home with you - they all like it hot and dry.

Attract the birds and bees: For pollinator gardens we have California natives. Hummingbirds and bees love salvia (sage) plants and we have wide variety in stock. They also love abutilons - or flowering maples as they are commonly called. We have them in yellow and orange, their flowers hanging abundantly like little lanterns. Fuchsias, we have three varieties. They look lovely nestled in with azaleas and ferns, which we also have in supply. You could also tuck New Guinea impatiens in a spot that gets morning sun, afternoon shade and has moist soil. They produce much bigger flowers than regular impatiens and do well in pots, in the ground, indoors or out.

Low Maintenance: Mother Nature went all out with shapes and sizes when it comes to succulents. We have gardens planted for you ready to place on your balcony or patio. A beautiful blooming succulent is the Kalanchoe which flowers happily indoors or out. Just don't overwater them! Spider plants, called so because their offshoots dangle like little spiders, can grow indoors or out. We also have some beautiful and unique cactuses from an artist's collection that, along with aloe and yucca, can make a statement in that very sunny dry spot in your yard.

Fresh green for house or office: Our greenhouse features a wide variety of indoor plants in beautiful pots. We also have tables full of orchids.

One of the many benefits of buying plants at the Arboretum is our unusual variety. Our plants come from donations from yards all over the Bay Area which we propagate, generous nurseries, and plants from the park. We have varieties you will never find in a regular nursery. And because they are all local, they will thrive in your home or yard.



Our January/February hours are Sat/Sun from 12:00-2:00.

Gardening for Butterflies

by Susan Karasoff and Libby Ingalls,
California Native Plant Society - Yerba Buena (San Francisco) Chapter

The monarch butterfly caterpillar is the best known butterfly caterpillar. It has a specialized diet, eating only milkweed leaves. In fact all our Bay Area local butterfly caterpillars are specialists, eating only one or just a few species of leaves. These leaves are from specific native plants the butterfly caterpillars have evolved with. The San Mateo Arboretum has a good example in the Western Tiger Swallowtail and Mournful Duskywing butterflies because of a mature Coast Live Oak, the specific food for the caterpillars. The oak, by the way, is the keystone species in the oak woodland, with oak leaves feeding close to 300 butterfly and moth caterpillar species.

Therefore, to garden for butterflies, it is important to choose local native plants with leaves that feed local butterfly caterpillars. And please remember to keep some leaves on the ground to provide shelter for butterfly cocoons and hide them from hungry birds



Endangered Mission Blue butterfly with a lupine flower (its caterpillar plant).

Photo: Liam O'Brien, www.inaturalist.org/people/13979

Our local butterflies include many beautiful federally endangered, threatened and rare species who can bring color and movement to your garden when you add their caterpillar plants. The following are some local butterflies and their larval food plants:

Mission Blue: *Lupinus albifrons*, *L. formosus*, *L. variicolor*,
Lange's Metalmark: Buckwheat, *Eriogonum nudum* ssp. *psychicola*,
Smith's Blue: Buckwheats, *Eriogonum latifolium* and *E. parvifolium*,
Coastal Green Hairstreak: Coast Buckwheat, *Eriogonum latifolium*; and Deerweed,
Acmispon glaber,
Callippe Silverspot: Violets, *Viola adunca*, *V. adunca* ssp. *adunca*, *V. pedunculata*,
Behren's Silverspot: *Viola adunca*,
Myrtle's Silverspot: *Viola adunca*,
San Bruno Elfin: Yellow Stonecrop, *Sedum spathulifolium*,
Bay Checkerspot: Dwarf Plantain, *Plantago erecta*,
Pipevine Swallowtail: Dutchmans Pipevine, *Aristolochia californica*,
Lotis Blue: Harlequin lotus, *Hosackia gracilis*,
California Dogface: False Indigo, *Amorpha californica*, *A. californica* var. *napensis*,
Monarch: Milkweed, *Asclepias fascicularis*, *A. californica*, *A. speciosa*.

To avoid pesticides, grow milkweed from seed, as milkweed plants are sprayed with pesticides to protect against the invasive light brown apple moth. Chewed leaves indicate happily fed butterfly caterpillars who are welcome in our gardens!

iNaturalist: Discover which butterflies and butterfly caterpillar plants are near you using iNaturalist, a free citizen science tool that identifies and maps wildlife and plants.
<https://www.inaturalist.org/>

San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI)'s Making Nature's City: A Science-based Framework for Building Urban Biodiversity is a report that explains how to encourage wildlife in urban and suburban areas. Key factors are native vegetation and creating green corridors for wildlife.
<https://www.sfei.org/news/building-cities-better-support-biodiversity>
<https://www.sfei.org/projects/making-natures-city>

California Native Plant Society chapters are adding native plants to our green spaces to create green corridors and enhance existing parks for butterflies and wildlife to find food and habitat. Each of these green spaces hosts a set of native plants and plant communities which feed a set of related butterflies. If you are interested in exploring these green spaces, there is more information at local California Native Plant Society chapters' websites
California Native Plant Society - Santa Clara Valley, <https://www.cnps-scv.org/restoration>
California Native Plant Society - Yerba Buena (San Francisco),
<http://cnps-yerbabuena.org/calendar/restoration-parties/>

Calscape: Information about each California butterfly and its caterpillar plants are available at Calscape, California Native Plant Society's (CNPS) plant selection tool. Calscape has California butterflies, caterpillar use by each plant, native plant pictures, plant size at full growth, soil types, sun/shade needs, water needs and nurseries with plant availability. <https://www.calscape.org/>

Jeffrey Caldwell's unpublished butterfly and caterpillar plant data is offered through California Native Plant Society - Santa Clara Valley
<https://www.cnps-scv.org/images/handouts/CaliforniaPlantsforLepidoptera2014.pdf>

California Native Plant Society chapters, including Santa Clara Valley, Yerba Buena (San Francisco) and the East Bay, have a variety of resources to inform gardening for your local butterflies. <https://www.cnps-scv.org/gardening/gardening-resources>
<http://cnps-yerbabuena.org/biodiversity/biodiversity-resources/>
<https://nativeherenursery.org/california-native-plants-that-attract-butterflies/>

Butterfly habitat is being enhanced by many Bay Area groups. You are welcome to visit these butterfly habitat locations.

San Bruno Mountain Watch - Mission Blue, San Bruno Elfin, Bay Checkerspot, Variable Checkerspot, <https://www.mountainwatch.org/butterflies-and-wildlife>

Nature in the City, San Francisco - Coastal Green Hairstreak. <http://natureinthecity.org/>
<http://natureinthecity.org/green-hairstreak>

Hallberg Butterfly Gardens, Sebastopol - many butterflies, including Pipevine Swallowtail
<https://hallbergbutterflygardens.org/>
<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/butterflies-of-hallberg?tab=species>

Professor Doug Tallamy's Homegrown National Park movement encourages all of us to plant native plants to feed butterfly and moth caterpillars as the base of our food web. Professor Tallamy's book, *Nature's Best Hope*, describes the actions each of us can take to encourage wildlife in our gardens. <https://homegrownnationalpark.org/>
<https://homegrownnationalpark.org/tallamys-hub-1>

Plant

- local native keystone plants (oaks, willows, cherries) as the base of your local food web.
- a variety of native plants to feed your local food web.
- for specialist pollinators and caterpillars. These wildlife use native plants to create food for other wildlife and for humans.

Create sites for caterpillars to pupate/hide their cocoons in native leaf litter, below native trees, in native shrubs and in native ground covers.

Build a conservation hardscape

- Use motion sensors for lights (use yellow LED light bulbs)
- Install a water bubbler.
- If there is lawn, set the blade height no lower than 4 inches.
- Remove lawn. Lawn feeds no one.
- Remove invasive species which displace native species. There are 3300 invasive species in North America. Invasive species decimate local species diversity.
- Talk and coordinate with neighbors to create food web corridors and make a larger impact than any of us can achieve alone.
- Advocate for native plants with cities, corporations, universities, civic organizations and home owner associations to manage our shared landscapes to enhance biodiversity.
- Avoid spraying insecticide or herbicide.

Information about butterfly caterpillar plants and the butterflies they feed in all US states (not only California) is available at the National Wildlife Federation's plant finder tool.

<https://www.nwf.org/NativePlantFinder>

National groups advocating for butterfly conservation:

Xerces: <https://xerces.org/pollinator-conservation/>

North American Butterfly Association: <https://www.naba.org/> <https://naba.org/pubs/bg.html>

Monarch Watch: <https://monarchwatch.org/>

<https://monarchjointventure.org/get-involved/i-am-a/departement-of-transportation/monarch-high-way>

San Mateo Arboretum Society

Seminars and Nursery

All Sunday Garden seminars and workshops are web-based using Zoom and will be recorded and viewable by all those registered even if you miss the live presentation.

Questions: education@sanmateoarboretum.org or call 650-579-0536 x3.

ROSE PRUNING SEMINAR via ZOOM. FREE!

Sunday, January 9, 1 - 2:30 pm

Reservations required: SanMateoArboretum.org/classes--events/call 650-579-0536 x3

Rose expert, Stuart Dalton, will teach you how to shape your rose bushes to encourage beautiful profuse flowering with winter pruning and winter care. He will cover equipment, safety in the garden and principles of pruning as well as demonstrating rose care techniques.

HELP PRUNE CENTRAL PARK'S ROSE GARDEN. FREE!

Saturday, January 15, 10am - noon

Preregistration: sanmateoarboretum.org/classes--events or call 650-579-0536 x3.

Come to learn or share your expertise on how to prune roses. Heavy rain cancels. No experience is necessary. Volunteers from the San Mateo Arboretum Society will be on hand to instruct beginners. Dress warmly and bring pruning shears and gloves.

Location: Central Park Rose Garden - meet at the gazebo.

Children ages 13 - 17 are welcome with accompanying adults.

All volunteers will be required to sign a Volunteer Release and Waiver of Liability.

THE BEAUTY OF CAMELLIAS via Zoom. FREE!

Sunday Feb 13, 1 - 2:30pm

Reservations required: SanMateoArboretum.org/classes--events/call 650-579-0536 x3

Camellias are easy to grow and a wonderful addition to your garden, patio and front entrance to your home or apartment. Gene Fleet will talk on the history, culture, care and the beauty of camellias. Discussion will include the various types of camellia plants and flower forms.

Pruning and re-potting of camellias will also be demonstrated. www.camelliasfpcs.org,

WILDLIFE HABITAT IN YOUR BACKYARD via Zoom. FREE!

Sunday March 6, 1 - 2:30pm

Reservations required: SanMateoArboretum.org/classes--events/call 650-579-0536 x3

Many human-related factors are taking a major toll on our native wildlife, but bees and butterflies and birds can at least take refuge in our gardens, right? That isn't necessarily true! In fact, many if not most gardens have little to offer ecologically. Mike Azevedo, naturalist for the California Bluebird Recovery Program (www.cbrp.org), will show us how our gardens can become part of the solution rather than an ecological dead-zone.

NURSERY PLANT SALES: CLOSED Jan 1 & 2. OPEN all other weekends in January and February from noon to 2 PM on both Saturday and Sunday - WEATHER PERMITTING.

March hours: 11 AM to 2 PM. We try to maintain these hours, but since we are staffed by volunteers, we may occasionally be closed, so call 579-0536 x2 before coming. Payment is by credit, debit card & Apple Pay. No cash is accepted.

**Location: San Mateo Central Park, Kohl Pumphouse,
101 Ninth Ave, San Mateo. Enter at Ninth Ave. & Palm Ave.
www.SanMateoArboretum.org; (650) 579-0536**



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FIRST CLASS



MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

10% discounts on all purchases from the SMAS GREENHOUSE and the following PARTNER STORES (with various restrictions). Membership card required.

Birders Garden, San Carlos
Blooming Vase, Burlingame
Golden Nursery, San Mateo
Green Fashion Nursery, San Mateo
Lyngso Garden Materials, San Carlos
Wegman's Nursery, Redwood City

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