



CALENDAR

There are no activities scheduled for May and June

My Wild

[inspired by the line "Wilderness sings despite the devastation" from "Mazatzal Fire" in *Memorizing Shadows* by Heidi Blankenship]

Out my kitchen window
are no cottonwoods
but local leaves that dance
stiffly, not in a desert
breeze, but afternoon
ocean change of mind.
Flicks of insects catch
what's left of the light.
One-note sparrow invaders
blurt. I say the leaves
dance anyway, leaves that
leave nothing on the stage
in the lie of the garden.
Sometimes an oriole sits
for a second at the fountain,
almost too close
to the house for bright yellow
him;
just right for us window
insiders,
wishful thinkers: wild-ness
sings wherever you care
to pay attention.

Thea Gavin

Native Gardener's Corner—

Member's Tips, Tricks, and Techniques

This column is a regular newsletter feature offering chapter members and local experts a chance to briefly share information on many things related to gardening with natives. The request for this edition is: **"How is your native garden helping you get through this isolated and troubling period of time?"**

Chuck Wright: "During these trying times my postage stamp view from my window is a marvel: native insects and birds visiting my native plants. I walk at least two hours a day and am so especially grateful for the "saved wildlands" in the nearby San Joaquin Hills. The park parking lots are mostly closed but the margins offer an escape and a connection to what wild that there is."

Bob Allen: "Revising all of my teaching to be online means I cannot spend as much time in the garden as I'd like, but I've been tending and admiring the remodeled front yard garden as it starts to grow in. Also added some new pots of perennials and annuals. Not enough time to do all the weeding that I need, but that's nothing new. In the pots, I top them off with fired clay pellets from Ikea. Love how they look and keep moisture in."

Jake Hoffman: "It is peaceful when there are orange poppies and mighty Pacific blue lupines—colors of California to keep us company. Just waiting for Mariposa lilies to join the party."

Alan Lindsay: "The urgency to control weeds and pot up volunteers has kept me distracted from the quarantine. Also, I almost feel grateful for an excuse to stay home and study a few botany topics I've been meaning to get into."

Ron Vanderhoff: "I have been visiting the site of the September 2018 Holy Fire in the Santa Ana Mountains, doing plant surveys for OC CNPS, under permit from the USFS. The entire 23,000 area is closed to public entry, so I am pretty much the only person in the entire area on these days. This is the most extreme social distancing in all of Orange County. Very peaceful, just the mountains, the plants and me."

Elizabeth Wallace: "I removed non-native ferns and replaced them with Mimulus, mugwort, pitcher sage, and Heuchera. Then I removed non-natives in sunny places and replaced them with wooly blue curls and deer weed. Everything already looks better and I enjoyed the physical labor of planting."

Linda Southwell: "All the life, growth and splashes of color in my garden—Poppies! Lupine! Everywhere Elegant Clarkias! Golden Yarrow! My Lompoc Manzanita blooming *again*—everything blooming, plump with green. Cooking with wild onions. The gift of

a Spotted Towhee stopping by. Seeing plants that I bought at Tree of Life Nursery just days before the world turned upside down happy and thriving. And in all of this—feeling connected to a community of kindred spirits who share a passion for native plants and a joyful reciprocity with the rhythms of nature.”

Terry LePage: “I have more time for my garden than I’ve ever had. It’s not clear that I am taking better care of it, but I am experimenting with far more varieties of cut flower and branch displays than I ever have, with some delightful results. These offerings cheer my house as I sit with them all day long.”

Stephanie Pacheco: “I’m so busy gardening I don’t really have time to feel stressed too much. This is spring and being around the wildflowers and insects like bees and butterflies, and the birds, even the raccoons, bring great joy!”

Tina Cremer: “My life would be so empty without my garden. I have had time to do some therapeutic Zen pulling of weeds that were close to getting out of control. Because my back yard is mostly natives now, I am seeing new birds and butterflies. It’s so very beautiful this year that I go outside several times a day to just look at it. It’s a stress reducer and a joyful experience.”

Thea Gavin: “My spirit is lifted every day I get to witness, over and over, how my back yard native plants provide shelter for skittery lizards, local bees, migrating birds . . . what a fun crowd to stay safe-at-home with (and no social distance needed between me and the wooly blue curls perfume).“

Leon Baginski: “There is nothing more relaxing than sitting in the yard looking at the magnificent blooms of poppy, blue eyed grass, farewell to spring, and a host of other wildflowers with the many varied native pollinators. Who needs anything else, well besides toilet paper and sani-wipes.”

Dan Songster: “There have been so many projects in the backyard I have put off, at least this does give me time to work on those. Also at GWC Native Garden there has been much pruning to be done. And the weeds are so big and numerous that I am staying busy pulling them, and that is good therapy. The colorful bloom of the Garden’s wildflowers is encouraging and refreshing.”

Our question for the next newsletter: “**What’s the biggest ‘mistake’ you have made in your native garden and what would you do differently?**” Email your responses to Dan Songster at songster@cox.net. Please remember to keep replies brief so we can include most of the responses!

THE GREEN HANDS OF SPRING

I refuse to wear gloves in the garden. Perhaps refuse is too strong a term. I mean if I was picking through prickly *Mahonia nevinii* or irritating *Fremontia* leaves I would probably put them on. But in most cases I find they get in my way. Even the “mudgloves”. nice with their rubberized grip, or the nylon ones with the Velcro tab across the back of the hand. They are so superior to the old style leather gloves which once becoming wet stayed wet until the next day. Plenty of great glove choices to choose from, but not for me. If I skin a knuckle or badly break a nail I will curse myself for being so pigheaded, but I still won’t wear them. I must admit that part of this avoidance must be just laziness or impatience about getting a job done or keeping the good momentum going when working. Should I stop what I’m doing and go find my gloves somewhere (yes I do own some) and walk all the way back just to pull those weeds or dig the hole or plant that coffeeberry? No way.

Neither is it some Zen connection with the soil I refuse to give up, although that would certainly sound better. I do have a mantra of sorts that I mutter when the soil is just moist enough to give up those weeds without too much struggle: “grab low, pull slow, small breath, repeat.” But generally, whether planting, trimming, or weeding (whether muttering or not) I simply can’t be bothered.

When weeding, especially in spring, this results in hands that are not the prettiest unless you are Irish (which I am). I mean, when I take Elizabeth out to dinner after a day pulling the soft, succulent weeds of spring, even after scrubbing like crazy there is still residual evidence of my battle with the chlorophyll crammed weeds.

Written after another day of trying to catch up with those darn weeds!

—Dan Songster

MY TWELVE RARITIES

Ron Vanderhoff



Locoweed (*Astragalus gambellianus*), Pectin Reef, Aliso Viejo, 04-01-20
First coastal record for OC. Nativity uncertain.



Australian Pygmyweed (*Crassula colligata* ssp. *lamprosperma*), Santa Ana River basin, E Yorba Linda, 04-11-20
First OC record for this tiny succulent. Non-native but spreading.



Coastal Popcorn Flower (*Cryptantha leiocarpa*), Balboa Peninsula, 04-14-20
Southernmost colony in the U.S. Also collected for the UCI Herbarium.



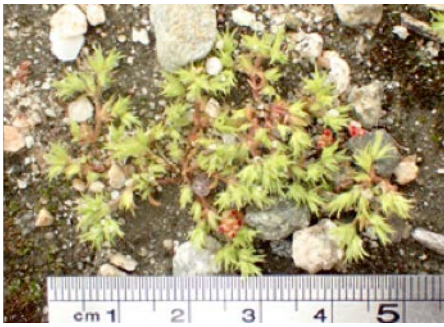
Field Fumitory (*Fumaria agraria*), Upper Newport Bay, 04-04-20
Only CA colony. Discover 2017 and now collected for the UCI Herbarium. Non-native.



Palomar Monkeyflower (*Erythranthe diffusa*). North Main Divide Rd., Santa Ana Mts., 04-16-20
Second or third OC record. A fire-follower from the 2019 Holy Fire.



Round leaved geranium (*Geranium rotundifolium*), San Diego Creek Channel, 04-22-20
Few reliable OC records. Non-native.



Spreading loeflingia (*Loeflingia squarosa*), Santa Ana River basin, E Yorba Linda, 04-11-20
Second OC record, the last from 1908.



Small Flowered Meconella (*Meconella denticulata*). Leach Cyn., Santa Ana Mts., 04-26-20
Huge colony of thousands.
Uncommon tiny annual. Poppy family..



California adder's tongue (*Ophioglossum californicum*), Nr. Whiting Ranch Wilderness Park, 04-25-20
One of only two OC colonies. Discovered 2018, now collected for the UCI Herbarium.



Fire Poppy (*Papaver californicum*). Leach Cyn., Santa Ana Mts., 04-26-20
Not especially uncommon, but a rather strict fire follower. Holy Fire burn site.



Wild Petunia (*Petunia parviflora*), Quail Hill, Irvine, 03-23-20
A good-size population of this uncommon, tiny native petunia.



Columbia water meal (*Wolffia columbiana*), Huntington Central Park, 04-15-20
World's smallest vascular plant, 1 mm. Second OC record.