



Calendar

- Sep 2Board Meeting
- Sep 16 Chapter Meeting
- Oct 7Board Meeting
- Oct 9SmartScape Expo
- Oct 16SCB Symposium
- Oct 21 Chapter Meeting
- Oct 23 Plant Sale at TOLN
- Oct 26 – 29Cal-IPC Symposium
- Nov 4Board Meeting
- Nov 18 Chapter Meeting

SEPTEMBER CHAPTER MEETING: Plants of the Channel Islands—Natural History, Evolution, and Horticulture

Thursday, September 16, 2021

Kevin Alison, Presenter

Incredible floristic treasures lie off the coast of southern California. Accessible only by boat (or small airplane) the Channel Islands are not the easiest places to visit. Thus we are delighted to have Kevin Allison transport us for an introduction to the unique flora, some endemic to a particular island, that is found on these islands. Kevin will also discuss the forces both natural and introduced that have made the islands the interesting places they are. Equal parts science, botany, and horticulture—Kevin explains the natural history of these plants, some interesting evolutionary adaptations, and how these

plants can be used in our natural gardens.

Kevin Alison is a Board Member of the OC Chapter of CNPS as well as recipient of our 2020 OCCNPS Charlie O'Neill Grant. He currently works at Tree of Life Nursery as a native plant propagator specializing in Plant Tissue Culture and Research and Development. His education includes associate degrees in both Environmental Horticulture and Natural Resource Management at College of the Desert in Palm Desert, his bachelor's in Coastal Resource Management at the University of Hawaii at Hilo, and recently completed his master's in Conservation and Restoration Science from UC Irvine. Besides gardening with native plants, you might find him sailing his boat, the *californica* to one of his favorite Channel Islands. **Please note: this will be a Zoom presentation.**

Native Plants for Small Spaces and Containers

—Ron Vanderhoff



Even small spaces like patios and balconies can support California native plants and bring the benefits of wildlife habitat and water conservation. And having native plants nearby gives you and your home a connection to where it is, beautiful Southern California. Here are a few tips for creating a successful natural garden in a small space.

Containers

To grow natives in containers, use a lean soil with less organic ingredients than most general purpose potting soils. Some "Cactus Mixes" will do. It's also useful to blend a bit of good

quality garden soil with any bagged soil mix, to get some beneficial microbes going. But don't use 100% garden soil as it will compact too quickly in a container and may create drainage and watering problems.

Soil over-heating is a common issue, especially with native plants. Soil temps in a pot are often much higher than in the ground. To reduce this issue, select containers that reflect heat, not absorb it. Light colors are usually better than dark colors and thick-walls are better than dense or thin walls. Double potting is a new technique, where you plant in one pot, then set that pot into a slightly larger one, with an inch or two of soil between the two pots. This insulates the soil around the roots and keeps them a bit cooler.

Avoid setting individual native plant pots onto hot surfaces, like concrete patios or stonework.

Clustering a few together, where the plants get the sun, but the pots and soil get some shade from one another will help.

I suggest overpotting native plants slightly, a bit bigger container than you might use for other plants. Many low water and drought resistant plants have large root systems. These root systems are not problematic around concrete, pipes, etc., but they may be wide spreading (sage scrub plants) or deep growing (chaparral plants) and need the extra space. Larger pots are better for most natives.

Water

Water according to the plant's natural requirements when in the ground and try to group plants with similar water needs together. Water according to Southern California's natural rainfall patterns. Usually this will mean several irrigations in the cool, rainy (usually) months and much less during the warm dry months. Rainfall will handle a lot of this irrigation, but supplement when it's not there.

In general, deeper but less frequent irrigation is the rule for natives. When you do irrigate the plant, do so all the way to the deepest part of the root system.

Don't rely on drip irrigation for most native plants. Natives generally do not perform well with this approach, for several reasons. Instead, water as

nature does, over the top, like rainfall. Slow and deep is best, wetting the entire root system.

During the warm, dry months a frequent "refreshing sprinkle" is a great idea! This is a wonderful technique that Mike Evans at Tree of Life Nursery in San Juan Capistrano has been championing. It is basically a splash of the leaves. It's a great activity to do at the end of a hot day, when you get home from work or your chores. And it's good therapy for you as well! This "splash" should be over the top and just enough to wet the leaves and the area around the plant, but not enough to irrigate the soil. Don't worry much about water conservation – you'll not be using very much water. Of course, some of this water will fall to the ground, but it will rather quickly evaporate and not create an over-watering issue. In the meantime, this "refreshing sprinkle" will cool the environment around the plants, and many natives will absorb some of that moisture directly into their leaves, hydrating the plant without overwatering it. You can do this with a garden hose and a thumb (for the best therapy too – haha) or by setting your overhead sprinklers to come on for a minute or so in the evening. A "refreshing splash" every day or two during the hot dry summer can make a huge difference to the health and appearance of native plants.

Miscellaneous

Plant natives in the fall and winter where possible, whether in containers or the ground.

Just as natives like lean soil, most also like slightly lean nutrition. A slow-release organic fertilizer applied to containers or around the entire root system of plants in the ground is a good idea. Do this at the onset of the growing season, which for most natives is mid to late Fall, then other light half-strength applications through the remainder of the cool growing season. Put away the Miracle-Gro and other synthetic fertilizers for use on non-native plants.

As you add these and other native plants to your garden be sure to learn their stories. Find out where they grow in Orange County, or if they are rare, or what insect pollinates them. With even a small collection of California native plants your garden will have a whole new meaning.

Some native favorites for small spaces and containers:

Heuchera maxima, Coral Bells



One of the best and most popular. Hummingbirds love the flowers too. A bit of shade, esp. inland, is best.

Penstemon Margarita Bop



There are lots of native penstemons, but this one might be the easiest and one of the showiest. It's a native selection and not a pure wild plant, so if you're a purist you may want to look for the straight species, but otherwise it's a "gotta have".

Dudleya species, Live-Forevers



One of the absolute best for pots. And many of them have "stories" about where they grow, their rarity and so on that you will want to learn. Just don't over-water them! Slow growing, so be patient. Learn the differences between the species: some grow on ocean bluffs, others on dry inland hillsides, still others in deserts, so their tolerances and preferences to heat and humidity vary.

Asclepias fascicularis, eriocarpa or *californica*, Milkweeds



Not exactly a compact plant, but milkweeds are incredibly popular now because of their connection to monarch conservation. If you can fit them in, one or two of these is a must. But for the sake of the Monarchs, plant **only** locally native species and avoid those from other parts of the state, country, or planet.

Monardella villosa, Coyote Mint



Very pretty and smallish perennials that can be tucked into borders or grown in pots. Good for pollinators. Fragrant foliage too, so put a pot or two up on a table or shelf where you can be sure to rub against it or just play with its leaves.

Sisyrinchium bellum, Blue Eyed Grass



Blue eyed grasses will delight you in late winter and spring with their cheerful appearance. But will disappear in the summer and fall, when they go to sleep, so position them with this in mind.

Epilobium canum, California



One of the most popular native plants and in every enthusiast's garden. Dozens of varieties have been selected over the past few decades so be sure to shop for what you want—small and compact, large and bushy, low and spreading, grey or green leaves, orange flowers or red flowers and so on and so on. One of the primary reasons for these in a garden is their propensity to bloom in the summer and fall, after most other native plants have finished.

Juncus patens, Rush



A very architectural group of plants with stiff, upright, grass-like foliage. It likes a bit more water than some others so position it with that in mind. Very nice in a pot when mixed with other natives

Diplacus aurantiacus, Monkey flower



Monkeyflowers have been growing in popularity. Mostly you'll find hybrids and selections. Their tubular, brightly colored flowers are especially attractive to hummingbirds. Plan on two or three years, but worth every moment.

Eriogonum grande 'Rubescens', Red Flowered Buckwheat



A very rare plant in the wild, but a stalwart in our gardens. Masses of rosy red flowers on a compact and well

Achillea millifolium, Yarrow



An ideal native for along pathways, tight patios, and in the spaces between larger plants. The ferny foliage can even be stepped on occasionally (but not too much). Creamy blooms clusters rise above the foliage in Spring. I have it in my parkway and it is perfection.
flowers

BOARD MEMBERS AND COMMITTEES

OFFICERS:

President Brad Jenkins jenkinsbradc@gmail.com
 Vice-president Ron Vanderhoff ronv@rogersgardens.com
 Secretary Sarah Jayne Sbjayne@cox.net
 Treasurer Lewis Marchand
 Chapter Council Dave Pryor davidpryor@gmail.com

AT LARGE

Kevin Alison
 Laura Camp campsjc@mac.com
 Rebecca Crowe rcrowe@uci.edu@uci.edu
 Matt Garrambone msgbone@mac.com
 Jennifer Mabley jenpod@gmail.com
 Dan Songster songster@cox.net
 Elizabeth Wallace eltwallace@gmail.com

Administration

Membership: Elizabeth Wallace
 Volunteer Recognition: Dan Songster
 Luminare Admin: Sarah Jayne
 Book Inventory: Brad Jenkins
 Poster Inventory: Dan Songster

Communications Committee

Communications Coordinator: Gabriel Verduzco
 Newsletter: Sarah Jayne
 Email News: Sarah Jayne
 Social Media: Elizabeth Wallace, Ron Vanderhoff, Laura Camp
 Website: Rich Schilk, Brad Jenkins

Conservation Committee (Protect OC)

Chair: Matt Garrambone
 Conservation Advocate Analyst: OPEN
 Emergent Invasive Plants Team
 Lead: Ron Vanderhoff, Josie Bennett
 Members: Erin Andreatta, Matt Major, Joan Miller, David Pryor, Dan Songster,

Gardening Committee

Chair: Dan Songster
 Acorn Grant: Sarah Jayne, Open position, Board reviews
 Homeowner Associations: Elizabeth Wallace

Garden Tour:

Lead: Sarah Jayne, Terri LePage
 Members: Mabel Alazard, Jennifer Beatty, Dori Ito

Plant Science Committee

Chair: Ron Vanderhoff
 Field Trip Team
 Lead: Jonathan Frank
 Members: Diane Etchison, Ron Vanderhoff, Kent Henry, Robin Huber, Emile Fiesler
 O’Neill Grant Team
 Lead: Matt Garrambone
 Members: Kevin Alison, Greg Vose, Sunny Saroa
 Rare Plant Team: Bob Allen, Fred Roberts, Ron Vanderhoff

Public Events

Scheduler Coordinator: OPEN
 Monthly Meeting Program: Dan Songster
 Tech: Brad Jenkins, Bob Allen
 Hospitality: Sarah Jayne, Elizabeth Wallace
 Welcome Table: Dori Ito
 Volunteer Coordinator: Jennifer Mabley
 Sales: Jennifer Mabley
 Equipment Supplies: Brad Jenkins

“We need a name for this ineffably tranquil time of the year, when the effects of four to six months with no rain are felt in the landscape and in our gardens.”

Judith Larner Lowry
 The Landscape Ideas of Jays

It’s easy to join or renew online! Go to our website at www.occnps.org and click on Join or Renew or visit the state organization at www.cnps.org