



MARCH CHAPTER MEETING

Special Day! In Person Event at Tree of Life Nursery

NOT a Zoom Presentation

Garden Allies—The Insects, Birds, and Other Animals That Keep Your Garden Beautiful and Thriving

Saturday, March 19, 10 AM at Tree of Life Nursery

Speaker: Frédérique Lavoipierre

- This meeting will be **IN PERSON** not Zoom!
- This meeting will be on a **Saturday morning**, not our usual 3rd Thursday.
- This meeting will take place at **Tree of Life Nursery**

The birds, mammals, reptiles, and insects that inhabit our yards and gardens are overwhelmingly on our side, and after shifting our mindset, we can see they are not our enemies, but instead our allies. They pollinate our flowers and vegetable crops and keep pests in check. Our gardens are alive with more than just our wonderful native plants! Frédérique will share fascinating portraits of the pollinators and other flower visitors, predators and parasites, and common garden insects, describing their life cycles and showing how they keep our gardens' ecology in balance. The presentation is brought to life with photography of insects and garden habitats and the lovely illustrations by Craig Latker from Frédérique's wonderful book, **Garden Allies**. There will be time for questions!



Frédérique Lavoipierre was the director of education at the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, where she shared her enthusiasm for native plants and insects. Prior to working at the garden, she was the founding director of the Sustainable Landscape Professional Certificate program at Sonoma State University, where she also revived the Garden Classroom program, and established an entomology outreach program. Frédérique holds a M.Sc. in biology, with an emphasis on ecological principles of sustainable landscapes. Her research focused on plant/insect interactions. She currently lectures, teaches, and works as a consultant. She serves on the editorial advisory group for the American Public Gardens Association magazine, *Public Gardens*, and is on the content committee for the Pacific Horticulture Society. Frédérique authored a ten-year long series, *Garden Allies*, for *Pacific Horticulture Magazine*, and continues her contributions to the Society. Tree of Life will be selling her book, **Garden Allies**, and the author will gladly sign it.

Directions: 5 FWY from Orange County: Exit Highway 74/Ortega Highway and head east. Tree of Life Nursery is 7-8 miles east of I-5 FWY, on the left hand side just before Caspers Park.

More information can be found on the Tree of Life Nursery Website: <https://californianativeplants.com/> and on the Chapter Website: occnps.org

Covid Note: *It is hoped that with the meeting being basically outside, all will feel comfortable to attend. We feel confident in the safety of our members health. Masks are certainly welcome for additional protection.*

CALENDAR

Mar 3.....	Board Meeting
Mar 13.....	Santa Rosa Plateau*
Mar 19.....	Chapter Meeting
Mar 27.....	Chino Hills*
Apr 3.....	IRC Driving Tour*
Apr 7.....	Board Meeting
*For all field trips please visit occnps.org/field-trips for details	

DATE SET FOR MEMORIAL



Long-delayed by the pandemic, a memorial/celebration for Celia Kutcher is scheduled for Saturday, April 9. Those who would like to attend may go to <https://fb.me/e/2dns0z3Mk> or visit the Facebook event page (no membership required) to RSVP.

Celia Kutcher was a plant person and most especially, a *native* plant person. A founding member of our chapter, she served in almost every capacity over the years. Perhaps most impactful was her role as Conservation Chair. Supremely dedicated and never one to shy away from controversy, she attended endless meetings, read voluminous EIRs, and wrote countless masterful responses. Her regular column in our newsletters, *The Conservation Report*, provided a summary of conservation issues highly regarded by local “enviro” groups. An integral part of Celia’s dedication to our native landscapes is the Coastal Sage Scrub habitat she tended so carefully in her front yard. Full of the kinds of plants that once covered this area, it is a living display of her deep knowledge of and caring for the natural world. We welcome this opportunity to honor and celebrate our friend and colleague, Celia Kutcher.

NATIVE GARDENERS CORNER—MEMBERS’ 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 of the newsletter was: ***“In what ways does your native garden make you Happy?”***

Bob Allen: “Oh, so many reasons! My native garden reminds me of being in the wild; produces beautiful foliage, and flowers (angiosperms) or cones (gymnosperms); and brings in wildlife of all sorts.”

...working in my native garden always makes things better. Taking my mind off my problems and focusing on their needs creates a psychic shift that yields peace of mind and body.”

Laura Camp: “I love the surprises in my native yard. My mahogany tree is in full bloom now. My red buckwheat produced several seedlings. After a yard renovation, seedlings of *Solanum hindsianum* randomly came up from 15 year-old seed. That kind of thing happens all the time.”

John Gossett: “Subtle and intense fragrances, year-round colors, textures, blooms, and the busyness of pollinators and guardian lizards. A quiet, near waterless feast floods the senses.”

Christopher Reed: “Of all the parts of my garden, natives, bulbs, English, Mediterranean, it is the natives that give the most pleasure. They seem so natural, so right. The yellow splash of giant coreopsis, the white pearls of manzanita, and the azure mass of ceanothus are simply beautiful. I stand in awe, faintly smiling. Nature is perfect.”

Thea Gavin: “Let’s do the math: today’s sage perfume + dangling toyon berries + manzanita cloud of flowers + poppy and lupine breeze dance (just outside my kitchen window) + yellow-rump warblers bobbing at the fountain + lizards posed on sun-warmed rocks = the “secret formula” . . . native plants create habitat wherever you plant them (even in the middle of the city, especially in the middle of the city). That makes me happy.”

Paul Hanson: “Being in a native garden makes me happy just seeing all the life it attracts; from birds to butterflies to bees to lizards to squirrels. It’s so full of life compared to lawns or manicured flower beds.”

Ron Vanderhoff: “Native plants give me a sense of where I am on the planet. I prefer California to look like California, Washington to look like Washington and Brazil to look like Brazil. And I think the critters preference for native plants are even far greater than mine. Just knowing this makes me feel happy.”

Stephanie Pacheco: “I enjoy seeing the wildlife, such as rarer birds, butterflies, an occasional visitor like a raccoon (even including my hens) out in the garden, the colors and peacefulness of nature, and the benefits of fresher air and some noise block from nearby roads. Even if I don’t have much time to sit outside, when I do, I feel happy I can enjoy the beauty of the garden.”

Linda Southwell: “It makes me happy to feel that one plant at a time my native garden might be helping to honor and restore the original ecosystem of south Orange County. I garden for the birds, bees, butterflies, and lizards. I am so happy when they visit and feel ‘at home’. And I love the gifts of watching the seasonal cycles of growth, the green awakening from dormancy, colors, textures and smells.”

Tom Betts-Aranda: “So many things about the garden making me happy. The beauty of the plants and the smell that greets me when I arrive. The birds chirping and the bees humming all contribute to a sense of connection to nature that brings me a sense of contentment and happiness.”

Amy Litton: “I love watching birds in a native garden, particularly when they're foraging for food! But sometimes I just find a spot to perch and watch the plants, reflecting on the process to date, imagining the possibilities for the future. In other gardens, I enjoy seeing what's been done & generating ideas I can use, or sometimes, just admiring the gardens!”

Antonio Sanchez: “Being in a native garden makes me happy ... because I'm with friends, and these plants have stories and songs and I get to hear them when I'm in the garden. From dormant bulbs to superblooms, to old oaks and dying manzanitas, the whole damn garden is singing. Too bad nobody writes songs about them (Instagram @nativesageagainstthemachine)” (Note: Of course, Antonio DOES write songs about them with the alternative plant/punk/rock group, *Sage Against the Machine*.)

Leon Baginski: “It’s easier to say why being in a non-native garden makes me unhappy!!”

Dan Songster: “The many responses above capture my feelings better than I could express them. But I will add that I like that there is a very close connection between botany, wildlife, conservation, and gardening when involved with native plants, that does not really exist with conventional landscape gardening. Most of these native plants don’t fit the mold of “normal” gardening—it goes way beyond the pretty plants. Also, I like the people associated with native plants, a bit more independent thinkers perhaps. Certainly, an interesting group!

Our question for the next newsletter: “*As Summer approaches, which native plants do you love for their late spring and early summer flowers (or other interesting features)?*”

Email your responses to Dan Songster at songster@cox.net. Please attempt to keep replies brief so we can include most of the responses!

HOW TO DIG A HOLE

Sometimes simple things are taken for granted. Fortunately, most of us eventually learn how to fold a shirt, peel an onion, replace a furnace filter, light a barbeque or even change a diaper. We learn these simple things because someone, somewhere along the way took the time to show us. Before we were shown, we probably did it wrong.

With that said, I should tell you all that I still can’t play a DVD on my television without my wife’s help; even though she’s shown me at least ten times.

Sometimes we never get shown how to do certain simple things. We plod along, doing these things incorrectly, ignorant of our own incompetence. It wasn’t long ago that I assumed hot water was always best for washing clothes. I still think a flush beats a full house in poker.

In our gardening pursuits how many of us have ever been shown how to dig a planting hole—one of the most fundamental skills. I suspect most gardeners just picked up a shovel one day and started digging

and pretty much do it the same way today that they did twenty or thirty years ago. They've never been shown.

Size of the Hole



One of the most common misconceptions is that a planting hole should be about as deep as it is wide. Furthermore, if the soil is heavy clay, most gardeners dig the hole even deeper. Fact is, almost all planting holes should be much wider than they are deep, especially those in clay soils. For better drainage and root growth, a planting hole should be dug about three or four times as wide as the container and usually no deeper. A shallow, wide hole is best.

Shape of the Hole



The hole should be round, right? Of course shovels have rounded backs which make the "round-hole" assumption almost automatic. But in fact, planting holes should be irregular in their outline, with jagged edges, creases and pointed corners. Round, smooth-sided planting holes might be easier to dig, but they discourage the roots from exiting the planting hole and penetrating the native soil around it. Rather than circling round and round, as roots are encouraged to do in a round planting hole; a hole with jagged, irregular edges will encourage the roots to break the confines of the hole and set off into the native soil.

Watering



The final instruction in my hole-digging lesson is to water the hole first, before planting. Most people dig the hole, install the plant, add the soil mixture back into the hole and then go get the hose. But, it is better to fill the hole with water now, while it is empty, and then proceed with the planting after the water has completely drained. This has two advantages. First, it lets you measure how good the drainage is in the area. If the water drains through the hole at less than an inch per hour, most plants are going to fail without more complex adjustments; but that's another article. Secondly, by soaking the hole first, when the planting is finished and the final irrigation is given, the drier surrounding soil will not wick the water away from the rootball, a

common occurrence.

Any complete instruction of shrub or tree planting should also include soil amendments, placing the plant at the correct height in the hole, irrigation wells, checking the rootball for matted roots, plant handling and more. But first, the hole must be dug.

So there it is, after twenty or thirty years of planting trees and shrubs, you've finally been properly instructed on how to dig a hole. Good digging.

Ron Vanderhoff

Reprinted from an article in the *Daily Pilot*, January 9, 2010

CALIFORNIA POPPY—AN APOLOGY

Dan Songster

I find myself an aging gardener, still puttering around as a volunteer in the Golden West College Native Garden with friends twice a week. Finally, as I have matured, I have gained a reborn appreciation of what although common is a quite astounding plant. So, I now officially apologize to the California Poppy. I have had a cynical, perhaps arrogant attitude towards it and wonder if over the years I have become jaded—a plant snob of sorts. For quite a while I had scoffed at our state flower. Was it because it is so commonly found in our gardens? Flowering and seeding so readily, dispersing itself easily throughout a landscape, and growing like crazy regardless of the type of soil or weather, thriving on neglect, even growing in pathways and in sidewalk cracks. Evolution, ecology, and environment have seen to it that each seed pod ripens and seems to have a zillion seeds per pod, and each one very likely to germinate!

Like all new native gardeners, I was originally smitten with its bountiful nature, sheer energy, and bold, outrageous color. But as years went by, I tired of the aggressive quality of the Poppy, seeding between deserving young perennials I wanted, crowding and shading them out. By the end of spring my smaller plants (whether annuals or perennials) would lay hidden beneath a mass of silver green poppy foliage, slowly rotting. Oh, I pulled the Poppies out by the handfuls, and tried to eliminate it from much of the garden for a couple years. I even found myself reading through the contents of wildflower seed packages, avoiding those that listed the California Poppy. Perhaps a plant so easily grown is scorned despite its many positive qualities?



But now I find myself looking back to the years when I was new to growing native plants, when any success on our mostly clay soil was appreciated, and when the California Poppy was a treasure to have in the garden. To a time when, after the hot, dry, and relatively colorless months of summer and fall (and often early winter), the native garden and myself were ready for some life, some color. Oh, the amethyst of the Blue Dicks, the shell pink of Manzanita, the restful blues of the Ceanothus, and pinks for the Redbud and Coral bells were all welcome indeed. But it was the Poppy that showed up in billowing numbers with an astounding saturated orange, an orange so pure it almost seemed unreal, it stopped campus visitors in their tracks. I did not work at growing the Poppy as I did with some other native plants, but I was proud of its display. It yelled Spring at the top of its lungs!

Today, like decades ago, I find myself appreciating its madcap, generous, almost reckless ways once again and I sit back and smile at the riot of satin orange in the garden, shining in the sun, deeply rich in the shade. While weeding I must still remove many of the poppy plants that tend to dominate their smaller neighbors, but where there is room, I let them roam and grow to full size. And when a campus visitor stares at them and says Wow! I nod and agree that nothing beats our state flower, the California Poppy.

Note on *Eschscholzia californica*'s aggressive nature: It does produce a lot of seed and they all seem prepared to germinate. No wonder the California Poppy is not always welcomed in New Zealand where it is on the *WeedBuster* list, and its immigration to Chile and Australia is clearly discouraged. Even here in its home state, caution should be used when planting anywhere near wildlands. For although native to California, it is not native to everywhere in California and it can genetically overwhelm other species in the *Eschscholzia* genus. But does the need for caution extend to a garden separated from the wild by being in a city, within other cities? I think not.

For a greater understanding of where to, and where not to plant California Poppy, read Curtis Clark's short page: https://www.cpp.edu/~jcclark/popy/spreading_seeds.html