

CALENDAR 2023

Jan 11..... Zoom meeting
Feb 15In-person meeting
Apr 19 in person meeting
Jun 21in-person meeting
In-person meetings will be held at the **Norman Murray Center** in Mission Viejo.
Jan 29.....**Bryophyte Field Trip**
Feb 25**Oak Canyon Field Trip**
Mar 19 **Laguna Canyon Field Trip**

ELECTION SLATE FOR 2023

The following candidates are nominated for the 2023-24 chapter officer and at-large board positions. **Elizabeth Wallace**, currently Board Secretary and Conservation Chair, is nominated as President, to serve out the last year of Brad Jenkins’s 2022-23 presidential term. Brad will remain on the board as an at-large member. **Lewis Marchand** is nominated for another two-year term as Treasurer. **Lesley Bindloss** is nominated as Secretary. **Jonathan Frank** and **Sunny Saroa** are nominated as at-large board members. **Laura Camp** returns for another two-year term as an at-large board member. Voting will take place during the January general meeting. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor.

As a board member, secretary candidate Lesley Bindloss will participate in outreach events and volunteer wrangling. (See the December newsletter for a

brief biography.)

Jonathan Frank, OCCNPS member for nearly a decade, has a deep interest in the ecology of Orange County, especially its native plant communities and rare plant populations. Along with his background in anthropology and environmental restoration, he has an ongoing interest in incorporating more native plants in horticultural and urban settings. Jonathan will serve as Field Trip Coordinator and use his background, knowledge, and interests to educate the community and foster an appreciation and care of our native plant communities and the variety of life that depends on them.

Sunny Saroa is a project manager in the Plant Material Development program at the Irvine Ranch Conservancy, where he facilitates the production of locally sourced seed and container plants in support of IRC’s restoration program. Prior to joining IRC, Sunny received a bachelor’s degree in Environmental Science with a minor in Plant Biology at UC Riverside and worked as a lab manager in restoration and plant ecology labs where he worked on a range of projects including post-fire vegetation monitoring, restoration, and nutrient cycling experiments across Southern California. As a board member, Sunny will assist with several programs of the Plant Science and Conservation committees, serve as chair for the O’Neill grant, and provide general aid and support for field trips and monthly meetings.

Self-nominations to the board are accepted and will be voted on at the January meeting. The minimum time commitment for a board position is a two-hour evening meeting on the first Thursday of every month and a daytime meeting sometime in the summer. If you are interested in joining the board or want further details about qualifications and responsibilities, please contact Rebecca Crowe, rebeccaecrowe@gmail.com. Committees are established and committee chairs are appointed by the president and approved by the board as needed. The new committee structure and chairs will be listed in the February newsletter.

CHAPTER MEETING: Wednesday, January 11—A Zoom Presentation

Out of the Ice Age and Into the Pyrocene—A Natural History of Southern California’s Chaparral as Told from Fossils

Speaker: Dr. Regan Dunn, Assistant Curator at La Brea Tar Pits and Museum. *Dr. Dunn is a paleobotanist who seeks to understand the interplay between climate, plants, and animal evolution through time.*

Voting for the open board positions will take place at this meeting using the thumbs-up feature in Zoom. To register for the meeting, go to <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZludOigrjlvGNMv76tqHxb9KZbWEVOF-wSt>

The meeting pre-chat will start at 7:10 with meeting announcements at 7:30 followed by the presentation.

2023 OCCNPS FIELD TRIPS WITH TENTATIVE SCHEDULE FOR THE YEAR

Sunday, January 29: Mosses, Lichens, Liverworts and More

Chris Wagner, an expert bryologist, lichenologist and botanist will lead us into the fascinating world of nonflowering life, specifically the mosses, liverworts and lichens. Chris is a federal botanist and the non-vascular curator at the UC Riverside Herbarium as well as a former botanist at several national forests. We will learn the biology of these important organisms and the fundamentals of their identification and classification. Chris will likely also demonstrate lichen and moss collecting.

After meeting at the base of Trabuco Canyon, we will consolidate vehicles and drive up the canyon at least a couple of miles and into the forest. We will stop at various spots to examine and discuss the various organisms. The road is gravel, with some rutted sections, but passable by most passenger cars.

Meet at 9 a.m. at the intersection of Live Oak Canyon Road and Trabuco road. This is just west of the city of Rancho Santa Margarita.

Leaders: Chris Wagner, with Ron Vanderhoff. Bring trail shoes, hat, sunscreen, camera, water and lunch, if desired. A hand lens is recommended. Easy hiking. Bryophyte and lichen intensity: Moderate

A Saturday in February: Tree of Life Nursery with Jonathan Robbins

Saturday, February 25: Oak Canyon Nature Center

Oak Canyon Nature Center is a 58-acre natural park in Anaheim Hills. It contains coast live oak woodlands, coastal sage scrub, and riparian habitats. This will be an easy to moderate hike of between 1.5 and 2 miles identifying all the native and non-native plant species in the Nature Center. This is a perfect field trip for students and those interested in learning the common native plants. No entrance fee is required though donations at the Nature Center are greatly appreciated. Physical Difficulty: Easy to moderate

Meet at 9 a.m. at the Oak Canyon Nature Center Parking Lot, 6700 E. Walnut Canyon Road, Anaheim, 92807.

Leader: Sandy Leatherman, sandy@leathermanbio.com; approx. time 9 – 12 a.m.

Sunday, March 19: Laguna Coast Wilderness with the Laguna Canyon Foundation



Celebrate the arrival of Spring with a morning of fresh air and flowers, hosted by the Laguna Canyon Foundation. LCF is an amazing land management and educational organization doing restoration, conservation, interpretation and expert natural resource management. Alan Kaufman and/or Chris Gort, both excellent biologists, will show us the new LCF headquarters and adjacent native plantings as well as their restoration along Laguna Canyon Creek. We will then cross the road and hike 3-4 miles up Laurel Canyon and back down Willow Canyon, identifying and discussing the many plants and flowers along the way.

Free and open to all. Meet at 9 a.m. at the headquarters of the Laguna

Canyon Foundation, 10 Phillips Street, Laguna Beach, one driveway south of the Anneliese School on Laguna Canyon Road, near El Toro Road.

Leaders: Alan Kaufman and/or Chris Gort, Laguna Canyon Foundation. Bring trail shoes, hat, sunscreen, camera, water and lunch, if desired. Moderate difficulty on good, but uneven dirt trails. Plant intensity: Moderate to high.

Late March/early April weekday—Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve

Spring 2023—OCCNPS Botany Blitz, Whiting Ranch

Sunday, April 2—Tour with the Irvine Ranch Conservancy

April TBD—Cleveland National Forest field trip with a USFS Botanist

Late April—Crystal Cove State Park

Late April, early May—Arroyo Trabuco

Sunday, May 7—Hot Springs Canyon

Saturday, May 13—Seaview Park, Laguna Niguel

Sunday, May 21—Black Star Canyon

Sunday, June 11—Family Picnic, Irvine Regional Park

Saturday, June 17—Trestles

November 19—Falls Canyon

Final details for all field trips will be available on our website, occnps.org

LAGUNA BEACH DUDLEYA POACHING?

—Ron Vanderhoff

On December 12, 2022, OCCNPS was contacted by Laguna Coast Wilderness Park about plant losses at a colony of the rare Laguna Beach Dudleya (*Dudleya stolonifera*).

Dudleya stolonifera is protected by both U.S. and CA Endangered Species laws as a Threatened species. It is Orange County's only endemic plant species and also the logo of the Orange County Chapter of CNPS. Six colonies are known to exist, all in and around the city of Laguna Beach. To protect the species, the locations of these colonies are secretive and generally not publicly known. The colony in question, as well as the others, are periodically monitored by OCCNPS Rare Plant Committee members. This colony was last visited and documented by OCCNPS in May 2019. At the time of the 2019 visit, between 500-1,000 plants were tallied and a Field Survey report was filed with the CA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW).

Upon being notified of possible plant losses, within three days an OCCNPS botanist visited the site and assessed the population. 155 living plants (larger than seedling stage) were counted, along with many dead and decaying plants. Images of these dead and decaying plants were shown to Stephen McCabe, the foremost Dudleya expert and Fred Roberts, chair of the OCCNPS Rare Plant Committee.

The population at this site is greatly reduced. Most of the large mature plants in the more accessible portion of the colony are gone. Of the dead plants, their leafy top rosettes are missing, but their semi-woody decaying caudex bases were seen, but only on the lower more accessible areas of the wall. In addition, a few pieces of debris and trash were found within arm's reach of the plants, including an empty plastic strawberry basket.

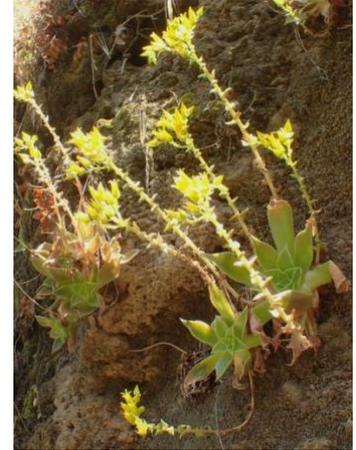
On Dec. 22, a OCCNPS rare plant botanist returned to the site, this time with a contingent including biologists from OC Parks, CDFW, the CA Botanic Garden and the Chambers Group. Also included in the team were CDFW game wardens and OC Parks enforcement officers.

Is this loss the result of illegal live plant poaching or is it death from other reasons? We cannot be certain, but it is a reasonable possibility. This is one of the most accessible locations for the species. Other possible explanations are natural die-off from drought, insect damage by a moth (suggested by Stephen McCabe. If a moth, Bob Allen suspects



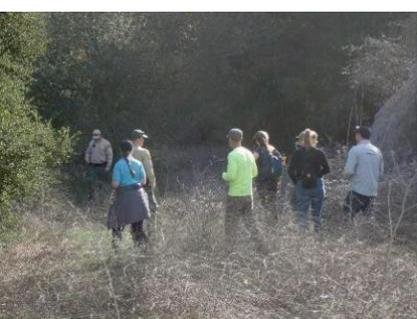
Healthy Laguna Beach Dudleya (*Dudleya stolonifera*). A rare endemic species to Orange County and the logo of OCCNPS.

that it would be the dudleya moth, *Rhagea stigmella*,) or cold and frost. As mentioned, OCCNPS also monitors the other five known colonies of the species and during the past two to three years has not noted any similar losses increasing the likelihood of poaching as the primary suspect here. CDFW, OC Parks and OCCNPS will continue to monitor this population and others in the Laguna Beach area and will work collaboratively to ensure the effective conservation and management of this iconic Orange County native plant.



On the lower portion of the wall where the Dudleya grows are several dead caudexes with the leafy top rosettes gone. Natural death or poaching?

The top photo, from May 2019, shows mature *D. stolonifera*. Bottom photo is the same rock face taken on Dec 15, 2022.



An empty plastic strawberry basket within arm's reach of endangered *Dudleya stolonifera* plants.

Representatives from CDFW, OC Parks, CA Botanic Garden and OCCNPS, including Game Wardens and enforcement officers, gather near the *Dudleya stolonifera* population, assessing the colony and next steps.



A Correction



After publication of the article “Underused Native Plants-Part 2” in the December 2022 issue of the OCCNPS Newsletter, I received an email from the chapter member, eminent botanist, and all-around great person Fred Roberts. Simply put, he corrected my placement of *Antigonon leptopus* in the California Floristic Province. I had said it was found on San Miguel Island. Fred corrected me stating, “The ‘San Miguel’ in the name may, I believe, refer to the town of San Miguel, Baja California Sur, and not an island. It is found only in the southern half of the peninsula (and adjacent islands) well south of the California Floristic Province.”

His response caused me to do more research on this plant, showing that *Antigonon leptopus* is native to the Pacific and Atlantic coastal plains of Mexico. On the Pacific coast of Mexico, this species is found in the north from the Sierra de la Giganta in Baja California Sur, the Gulf of California Islands and northern Sonora. It also occurs as a roadside weed from Mexico south to Central America. In fact it is widely introduced and invasive throughout tropical regions of the world, including in the south and eastern United States, the West Indies, South America, and the Old World tropics of Asia and Africa.

Wow! Where did I get the idea that it was from an island off Baja? While there are numerous place names in Mexico that are derived from “Saint Michael,” search as I might I could find no island or even a town in Baja other than my favorite surf break in Baja by Ensenada, named for the village of San Miguel, which is nowhere near where the plant exists.

So, although it is an interesting and lovely plant, it is not native to the California Floristic Province, more mainland Mexico, and although found in Baja it is pretty far to the south and on the gulf side of things not near the CFP at all. My apologies for misleading our readers and thanks to Fred for setting me straight.

Stay curious and keep learning!

Dan Songster

A SAGE IN EVERY GARDEN

Young white sage plants continue to find homes in Orange County! In addition to Roger’s Gardens, give-away events are scheduled for the following locations:

- Saturday, January 14: Nature Interpretive Center**, 9:30 a.m. until noon, Dana Point Headlands. 96 plants will be given away, one per OC resident while supplies last.
- Saturday, January 21: Orange Home Grown**, 10 a.m. until noon, Orange. 96 plants will be given away, one per resident while supplies last.
- Saturday, January 28: Heritage Garden**, 10 a.m. until noon, Irvine. 96 plants will be given away, one per resident while supplies last.
- Saturday, February 11: Environmental Nature Center**, 10 a.m. until noon, Newport Beach. 96 plants will be given away, one per resident while supplies last.
- Saturday, February 19: Unitarian Universalist Church**, 10 a.m. until noon, Costa Mesa. 50 plants will be given away one per resident while supplies last.
- Saturday, February 22: Laguna Beach Garden Club**, 9:30 a.m. until noon, Laguna Beach. 80 plants will be given away, one per resident while supplies last.
- Saturday, February 25: Shipley Nature Center**, 10 a.m. until noon, Huntington Beach. 50 plants will be given away, one per resident while supplies last.