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Oak Notes

NEWSLETTER OF THE CALIFORNIA BOTANIC GARDEN VOLUNTEERS

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Oak Notes

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Scerra and Lauren Stoebel



FROM THE PRESIDENT Lynn Miller, Volunteer President

It's March, and in a few weeks, it will be spring, but the wildflowers aren't waiting because they are already popping up and blossoming. They come in all shapes and sizes, and their array of colors brighten the Garden. Hungry birds and pollinators flit among the flowers ensuring the plants continue to thrive. The more I observe this seemingly simple example of partnership, the more I am amazed and humbled by nature.

In February, the Garden hosted Bird Fest. Visitors learned about birds from Garden demonstrators and local birding experts, while the children made clever bird crafts. Thanks for all the support from our enthusiastic volunteers, and Lauren Stoebel and Jennifer Scerra for organizing this successful day!

In other news, Betsy MacLaren said the recent order of logo wear should be in by now. Visitor Education chairs, Ann Morgan and Katy Douglass, reported that as school tours rev up, so do the Garden Guides. The Volunteer Library is open on the first Tuesday of the month, 9:30–12:30. Now volunteers can check out some of our recently reviewed books. Thank you, Amy Baumann and the Library Committee. The Hospitality Committee and its co-chairs, Susan Starr and Anne Odgers, are planning the next Quarterly Meeting for Tuesday, April 11th. Tom White shared that the GNN is open on weekends, and that after the rain the work crews are busy keeping up with the weeds. Thank you, Dorcia Bradley and the PR Committee for volunteering at the Claremont Wine Walk, which earning \$1,000.00 for the Volunteer Organization. By now the Native Designs Garden is waking up, and we look forward to the creative possibilities.

The Garden staff and the Volunteer Board truly appreciate your dedication to CalBG, and going forward we encourage you to think about joining one of the many committees that coordinate our activities. It's fun to learn and work together.

Stay well, and I will see you at the Garden.

The deadline for articles to be submitted for the OAK NOTES is the **15th** the month **prior** to publication. Thank you for your prompt submission!

Volgistics

reminder: Please submit your monthly volunteer hours to Volgistics. Every volunteer minute counts.

Upcoming dates:

Friday, March 17th: The Grapevine Harvest and Potato Feed

Tuesday, April 11th: Volunteer Quarterly Meeting and Luncheon

Sunday, April 23rd: Earth Day in the Garden

Friday, June 9th: Annual Year End Quarterly Meeting and Luncheon

—Lynn



FROM THE DIRECTOR

Lucinda McDade,
CalBG Executive Director

The Incredible Importance of Volunteers at California Botanic Garden

Hello volunteers! First, I am so happy that we are doing Bird Fest this coming Saturday (Feb 19th)! The event will be over by the time you get this and I will — unfortunately — have missed it. I am off to Tucson for the annual census of the Turk's Head cactus — an endangered plant that occurs in just a few locations to the west of Tucson. This is a long-term project that I collaborate on with three of my former students (now colleagues and friends) from my stint as professor at the University of Arizona in the 1990s. We relocate, measure, and assess the health of individually marked plants which means that we have amassed an incredibly valuable data set.

BUT back to Bird Fest: YOU volunteers will have helped enormously: in fact, you will have made the event possible by virtue of your service. It is wonderful to be back after three years of covid. STILL, though, I want to encourage all of you to continue to be careful and stay safe. There are MANY new cases reported every day in LA county and quite a few deaths. Please do NOT be in that number!

Recently, I came across an image in the library that bears the title “Docent Board 1986.” I looked at it with interest because I am always keen to see familiar faces in such images. I did not find Marilee Scaff in the image which somewhat surprised me given how active Marilee was in the early years of our

volunteer organization. But I DID find a number of others who brought a smile to my face and a spirit of gratitude to my heart.

First, I was happy to see Irv Goldhamer. I was not lucky enough to meet Dr. Goldhamer (he passed away in 2004 and I arrived in October of 2006), but his name is reverentially in the air here often. When Dr. Goldhamer passed away after many years of service to the Garden as a volunteer, his wife, Phyllis, and son, David, set up a fund for graduate education in his name. Over the years, David has continued to add to the fund and it now totals nearly \$250,000. Each and every year, one or more of our students benefits from the Goldhamer Family Fund and communicates his or her gratitude to David. The Goldhamer Family Fund is making a difference for graduate education at CalBG and we are all grateful.

Inspecting the image, I was also very happy to ‘meet’ June Teitsworth (she was ‘Docent Chairman’ that year — 1986). June passed away not too long ago and left the Garden in her estate plans. The Garden received a very nice legacy gift as a result of June’s generosity and her advance planning. June made a generous contribution to Garden Fund this year, and also will

Docent Board 1986



Pictured from left to right: seated Nadine Johnson, Doris Welby, Arlene Noreen (on ground), Margaret Steinbrugge, Lois Martin, and June Teitsworth, standing: Bernie Crowell, Mildred Taylor, Kit Tournay, Irv Goldhamer, and Pauline Gilliland. Not pictured: Anne Hurnence.

Docent Chairman--June Teitsworth
Hospitality--Margaret Steinbrugge
Library--Nadine Johnson
Finance--Mildred Taylor
Clerical--Lois Martin
Secretary--Arlene Noreen
Field Trip--Kit Tournay

Records--Doris Welby
Touring--Pauline Gilliland
Evaluation and Goals--
Bernie Crowell
Members-at-Large--Anne Hurnence,
Irving Goldhamer

be helping with the redesign of the kiosk plus indoor Poppy Shop plus restrooms at the entrance. Knowing how pragmatic and firmly grounded our volunteer corps is, I fancy that June would be very happy that she is able to help in these ways!

And those are just two of the enthusiastic, committed and Garden-loving faces who smile out at me from the image of the Docent Board in 1986. Clearly, the wonderful people in the image were all critical to Garden programming in 1986 (and probably well before and after than year in most cases); presumably all had important roles in hosting educational visits from school group. Each of these wonderful people has left an indelible mark on this Garden and our programs, and each is celebrated in all that we do here every day.

IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN!

The trimmin' o the green!

by Linda Prendergast



Bring your Tam o'shanter and join us in **The Great Grapevine Harvest and Wreathmaking Event** on Friday, March 17th—which just happens to be St. Patrick's Day. All Irish-persons and non-Irish-persons are bade to attend! We will be cutting back the grapevines along the eastern fence and other locations in our fair Garden. And from those vines we will fashion wreaths to be decorated and sold later in the year to benefit the Volunteer Organization.

The Harvest is an annual event at CalBG, and all volunteers are welcome to come and help out. After the harvest we celebrate with a terrific potato feed hosted by the leprechauns on our Hospitality

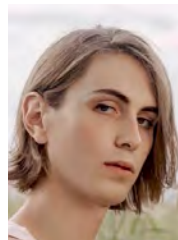
Committee. Baked potatoes with more toppings than you can shake a shillelagh at, a crispy green salad, and yummy desserts. Food and drink aplenty for staff and volunteers alike!

Experience is NOT NECESSARY for the pruning or wreath-making. There will be wee folk on hand to walk you through both should you need guidance. You can bring your own clippers if you like, or we will have some for you to use. Garden gloves, closed-toe shoes, a bottle of water, and a sun hat/sunscreen are recommended. Kilts are optional.

We will commence at 8:30 a.m. under the direction of the Horticulture Staff. Meet in front of the Hort Building. Sign up in Volgistics for the pruning and wreath-making shifts. We want to have enough potatoes ready, so please register your intentions! Rain cancels.

MEET THE CALBG HORTICULTURE STAFF

Oak Notes is currently featuring CalBG's Horticulture Staff. In this issue, we introduce Rowan Steffey, Horticulturist. If you see her in her work area, say "Hello!"



HORTICULTURIST Rowan Steffey

Rowan Steffey is a transgender woman from West Virginia, raised in a town nestled within the Shenandoah Valley. Her experience in working with plants began in small-scale organic agriculture and evolved into native woodlands management, during which she took care of a twelve-acre stand of eastern black walnut, black locust, and a variety of oak species. This stewardship primarily involved the removal of invasive species and restoration of the understory. In order to live with her long-time partner, Rowan moved to Southern California in January of 2022, where she found employment at the California Botanic Garden. Here she has begun her education and experience working with plants adapted to a

Mediterranean climate, far removed from the humid continental climate of her home. Somewhat shocked by the frivolous waste of water on lawn care and exotic humid-tropical plants, Rowan hopes to use her abilities to help cultivate a communal knowledge and appreciation for native plants and the relationships that we can have with them.

CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS!

by Lynn Miller

Volunteering at CalBG has so many unexpected rewards. Many volunteers serve in areas of the Garden that we can see and enjoy while others help with our special events. The work crews keep the Garden in fine shape, the GNN and Nursery volunteers ensure that plants are in good supply, Garden Guides lead school and adult tours, the Bench Brigade makes sure our benches are inviting, volunteers learn to mount specimens in the Herbarium, and the Research and Volunteer Library volunteers care for our resources. The staff are quick to say that they could not do what they do without volunteer help, and our Board and committee chairs say the same. You make a difference at CalBG.

Looking ahead, I want to encourage you to go one step further, so borrowing from Uncle Sam, we need you and your new ideas. Here is how you can help.

With elections in June, we need a nominating committee that will look for volunteers to serve on the Executive Board. Possible positions: President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. If one of these positions interests you, please let us know.

I also encourage you to join one of the committees in your interest area.

Committees to consider:

Library
Hospitality
Public Relations and Outreach
Visitor Education (Garden Guides)
Native Designs
Enrichment
Personnel

The CalBG Volunteer Organization is strong, yet we want it to continue to grow. We need you to keep it fresh and energetic. I guarantee that you will learn more about the Garden, get to know like-minded volunteers and staff—and it will be fun.

You can't pass this up!

Please contact: Lynn Miller at volunteers@calbg.org



A Very Happy March Birthday to:

Mark Kay	Harmut Wisch
Michelle Small	Lisa Donnell
Sharon Thompson	Sid Tice
Kathy Roth	Lisa Broderick
Lee Waggener	Lynn Miller
Arlene Noreen	Charles Gale
Gloria Slosberg	Pauline Assarian
Joan Sweeney	

PTERIDOPHYTES (FERNS AND ALLIES)

by Steve Bryant

Pteridophytes are a polyphyletic group of vascular plants, though each of the three groups listed below is monophyletic. The plants listed have true stems, leaves, and roots, reproduce by spores (not seeds), and are found in SoCal. As in seed plants, the easily visible part of these plants is the diploid sporophyte.

Ferns. When grown locally, those listed below need three-quarters to full shade, especially on summer afternoons. They also need regular water, except for *Myriopteris* and *Pellaea*, which need at least cool-season water.

Adiantum capillus-veneris (Southern Maidenhair): Its common habitat is in the spray of waterfalls. It can

go dry-dormant for at least several weeks in shade (top growth dies), but a long dryness will kill it. As a potted plant, it needs shade, regular water, and at least moderate humidity.

Myriopteris (Lip Ferns): Several common species are *M. parryi* (very fuzzy leaves) and *M. covillei*, often found under rocks, even in the deserts, and are generally dry-dormant.



Pellaea andromedifolia (Coffee Fern, above) and *P. mucronata* (Bird's-foot Fern): these grow in shady, seasonally moist places in our area and are dry-dormant.

Polystichum minutum (Western Sword Fern): common in coastal CA and the Transverse Ranges. A tough plant and easy to grow.



Pteridium aquilinum (Bracken, below left): common in the mountains but can be invasive in the garden.



Woodwardia fimbriata (Giant Chain Fern, above): leaves to 2 to 3 m, plant to 2 m tall. Growing along the coast and in the mountains from San Diego to Oregon, this coarse-looking plant is our largest fern. It is growing well on the north side of CalBG's administration building.

Selaginella (Spike-Moss). These are low-growing vascular plants, not mosses.



Selaginella bigelovii (above) is a locally common species in shady, seasonally moist places. In my garden it looks dead and gray in the dry seasons, but green and growing each moist season. (The "Resurrection Plant" is *Selaginella lepidophylla*, native to the Chihuahuan Desert.)



Equisetum (Horsetails). Horsetails are usually found in seasonally moist environments. Some, such as *Equisetum arvense* (Common Horsetail, above), are locally common. They can be invasive in the garden.

Image from CalPhotos, ©2021 Jean Pawek, licensed under CC BY 3.0.
Branched sterile stems, unbranched fertile stems.

SUPER BLOOM

by Fred Brooks

What are the chances of a local super bloom in 2023? Will the late winter rains of this year be enough to germinate dormant wildflower seeds in the soil? Some sources say probably not, others say it is possible. Several events are needed to produce a super bloom and their timing is important.

The first criterion is a dry spring and summer that inhibits invasive weeds. These plants can outcompete the annual wildflowers for water and sunlight. Next, rains of at least a half inch in September–October are needed to remove chemical inhibitors or soften hard

seed coats and stimulate germination. Heat or smoke from wildfires can also trigger this process.

Once seedlings emerge, some cloud cover is needed to protect them from the drying sun and strong winds. Well-spaced winter and spring rains then encourage growth, flowering, and seed development.

Following emergence, the new seedlings seem to stop growing. During this time, they are developing a strong root structure. Warming soil in the spring then accelerates aboveground growth and flowering. Common southland wildflowers include California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*), lupins (*Lupinus* spp.), tidy tips (*Layia platyglossa*), and bluebells (*Phacelia campanularia*).

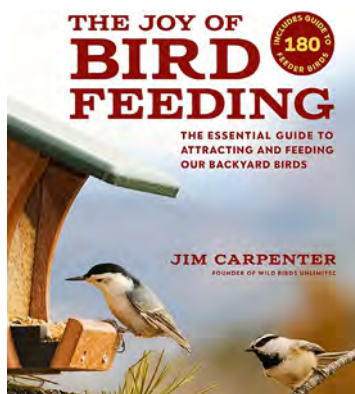
There have been two striking blooms in the southland recently, in 2017 and 2019. Super blooms only occur once a decade on average, but our recent rains in the southland are encouraging for a good bloom this year. The rains late in 2022 stimulated an explosion of poppy and lupine seedlings on our property. Will this happen in our deserts and burn scars, or will a lack of continuing rainfall and spring warmth prevail?



Photo: Poppies in our backyard

BOOK OF THE MONTH

by Amy Baumann, Volunteer
Library Committee



*The Joy of Bird Feeding:
The Essential Guide to
Attracting and Feeding
Our Backyard Birds.* By
Jim Carpenter. Scott &
Nix, INC. 2017. 432 pp.

Jim Carpenter is the founder of Wild Birds Unlimited, the unique retail stores that specialize in supplies to help people attract and enjoy birds in their backyard. The name of the book was thoughtfully chosen to draw attention to the joy and awe that can be found by watching beautiful birds every day, every season, in our own backyard. The forward of the book in itself is worth reading and shares the many values of feeding the birds. These include the richness of the hobby, what it gives back to nature, and the significant pleasure it brings to those who spend a lot of time at home, such as the elderly or infirmed. It is also one of the easiest ways to introduce children to nature as they enjoy the whole process—from buying the food, to filling the feeders, and watching the birds.

The book is divided into eleven helpful chapters with topics such as Bird Feeding Mastery, Feeding Stations, Critter Solutions, and Bird Feeding Hygiene. The chapter on Buying and Storing Bird Food provides tips for selecting decent seed blends at the big-box stores. The author details the importance of creating a diverse and bird-friendly landscape that includes plants native to your region. “All these plants provide fruit, nuts, seeds, sap, and buds, and also host insects that become food as eggs, larvae, pupae, and adults. Bird feeders supplement the natural in and around your yard.” The book refers to several studies indicating that even though wild birds can take care of themselves, they do benefit from supplemental

feeding. The studies also found that during critical times, access to feeders increases survival, reproduction, and overall health.

The exceptional photographs and clearly written directions make this an excellent guide for both the novice and experienced backyard birder. The book is available to volunteers for check out in the Volunteer Library.

FAMILY BIRD FESTIVAL AND BEYOND!

by Lauren Stoebel and Jennifer Scerra

The 2023 Family Bird Festival is “in the books”! Thanks to the combined forces of dozens of volunteers from CalBG and the community, the Garden was able to welcome over 1,300 visitors (a Bird Fest record!) on Sunday, February 19th to learn about birds and enjoy a gorgeous sunny day amongst the early spring blooms. Once again, volunteers were the heart of the event, filling every important role from traffic control to educational activities to crafts to bird handling and bird watching. If you worked at Bird Fest and have any feedback about the event, please feel free to reach out to Jennifer (jscerra@calbg.org) or Lauren (lstoebel@calbg.org) so we can make notes for next year.

In the meantime, public programs/community ed have a couple of upcoming events that we hope volunteers will keep on their radar:

- Garden of Verses & Poppy Hour (April 1): Stay tuned for information and Volgistics slots coming soon to help out with both our daytime poetry festival and evening “happy hour” cocktail party on Saturday, April 1st.
- Earth Day/Heart of the Foothills Outreach (April 23): CalBG will join Sustainable Claremont at their Earth Day celebration as part of the Heart of the Foothills street fair on Sunday, April 23rd. We’ll be mustering a team of Outreach/Education volunteers to provide info and activities for a good portion of the day. Stay tuned for more info.



FAMILY BIRD FESTIVAL

photos by Carrie Rosema

