

WESTERN HORT

May 2024 | PO Box 166, Mountain View, CA 94042 | www.westernhort.org

MAY 2024 MEETING

May 8th, 7:30pm

The May meeting will be an in-person meeting this month. Meetings are free for members, non-member attendees are \$10.00. The meeting room officially opens to members and the public at 7pm but if you can arrive by 6:30 pm to help with set-up, your assistance would be greatly appreciated. Masks are recommended but optional. See page 7 of this newsletter for information about joining the Western Horticultural Society.

SPEAKER: ARVIND KUMAR

TOPIC: GARDENING FOR HABITAT WITH NATIVE PLANTS

Why do we garden? Is it only for beauty and to enhance the curb appeal of houses? Or does the garden also play a role in the local ecology? More and more people are coming to realize that our yards can provide sustenance to wildlife, from butterflies to birds and more, without sacrificing aesthetics. A yard landscaped with well-chosen native plants can not only look good but also provide unparalleled habitat value. Come to this talk to learn the basics of habitat gardening and which native plants in our area are particularly suited for attracting birds and butterflies. A plant list will be available.



A software engineer by training, Arvind Kumar has been growing native plants in his home garden in San Jose for 22 years. He coordinates volunteer workdays at the 2-acre Native Garden in Lake Cunningham Park. He is a board member and former president of California Native Plant Society (Santa Clara Valley Chapter).

There will not be a speakers dinner this month

Judy Wong passed this along:

I don't know who needs to hear this,
But you're a great gardener.
That plant really should have tried harder.

Unknown

HORTICULTURAL HAPPENINGS

UC Master Gardeners of Santa Clara - Checkout Ongoing Events, Plant Sale Events, Talks and Workshops

<https://mgsantaclara.ucanr.edu/events-calendar/>

CO-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In the center strips of a couple of gravel driveways, I sowed California wildflower seeds before the winter rains. There are now tidy tips, baby blue eyes and five spot flowers amongst a megalopolis of bur clover, crane's bill and non-native grasses. Despite the weeds, sturdy clarkias (farewell-to-spring and mountain garland) are preparing their show. So, a suburban experiment with unsurprising results. At a warmer site, lupines, tidy tips and mahogany red poppies are in bloom amongst the remnants of a removed ceanothus. A hell strip planting with many passersby. As the days lengthen and warm up, the early flowers and weeds will subside.

Our speaker this month, Arvind Kumar, has much experience with California native plants both in his own garden and at Lake Cunningham Park in San Jose (<https://lakecunninghamnativegarden.org/>). At Cunningham Park, too, annual California wildflowers were difficult to establish because of invasive non-natives. As a public project with community engagement, perennials, shrubs and trees have been planted to greatly benefit birds, butterflies and other wildlife.

A note about bur clover (and an illustration that delving into weeds can be very interesting) from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medicago_polymorpha:

The plant is edible and consumed as a vegetable in China, primarily in Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai.^[5] Its Chinese culinary names include 草頭 (Wu tsho-doe, Mandarin Pinyin cǎo tóu), 金花菜 (Wu cin-hau tse, Mandarin Pinyin jīn huā cài), 三叶菜 (sān yè cài) and 秧草 (yāng cǎo), while 南苜蓿 (nán mùxù) is its scientific name. It is also consumed in indigenous Otomanguan communities in Southern Mexico.^[6] In the Triqui language it is known as *kkweej chakáj*, meaning 'edible green (of the) pig.'

~ Grace Tsang & Meri-Beth Bird

UPCOMING MEETINGS

June Picnic: Stayed tuned. More information coming soon.

***** Don't forget that Cal Hort invites us to all their meetings as well.** Upcoming events for Cal Hort include:
Saturday, May 25th - Coffee in the Garden where they will visit Jon Kaplan's hill-side private garden in Piedmont. This garden includes a formal parterre, shade plants and roses. A new rock garden should be near completion by the time of our visit.

Sunday, May 26th - Calochortus hunting trip with Kipp McMichaels. This is a local one day affair and more information will be available from Cal Hort via email.

Monday meetings: in person at the SF Botanic gardens 9th street and Lincoln. These meetings include a 4pm walk around the gardens, Pizza at 6pm and program at 7pm.

May 20, 6:30pm in person - Dr. David Pepper; Introduction to Ethnobotany. He will discuss early Native American and modern day uses of plants.

June 17th will be a zoom meeting starting at 6:30pm Year Round Food Gardening with Pamela Pierce. Watch for the email link from Cal Hort.

July 15th, In person at the SF Botanic Gardens, Rose Loveall, Morningsun Herb Farm plus a plant sale.

August 19th The Hidden Gem: San Bruno Mountain (watch for updates on this event)

APRIL MOVIE NIGHT NOTES

Five Seasons - The Gardens of Piet Oudolf

The movie was a sensual and meditative experience for many who attended our April meeting. The documentarian Thomas Piper's choice to structure the film as five seasons, beginning and ending with fall, along with the way images transitioned through time imparted a special quality of wistfulness. At the same time, Piet's wry humor, confidence in his own vision and beautiful partnership with his wife Anja were uplifting to see.

The first sound in the movie is the rasping of pencil on paper as the camera closed in on the colored shapes Oudolf was drawing during the creation of one of his designs. The drawings are works of art in their own right and remind one of the works of Gertrude Jekyll. There were many views of his gardens from all sorts of aspects, scales and times, namely the High Line and Battery gardens in New York, Chicago's Millennium Park, Oudolf's own Hummelo in The Netherlands and Hauser & Wirth Somerset in Southwest England. We were with Piet as he was shown standing or walking in each of these gardens, most often with a camera in hand. His photographs are featured in a Flickr catalog by Adam Woodruff, which could satisfy those of us who hungered for a bit more horticultural detail. (The address is <https://www.flickr.com/photos/adamwoodruff/albums/72157622697223838/with/4058423357/>.)

Undoubtedly, some of these plants are available in the United States and perhaps suited to our Mediterranean climate. For those on Instagram, one can see posts by Piet himself. For those who missed the film or who want to rewatch, it is available on a per-view basis for \$15 at <https://fiveseasonsmovie.com/>

~ Jen Dungan

Many thanks to our vendors that came to the meeting with wonderful plants, ceramics and art!

Terra Sole Nursery
Alivensilk Nursery
Carman's Nursery

Jia Nocon Ceramics
Emily Chin Pressed Flower Art
Plants from WHS members and Betsy Clebsch's garden

Vendor comment: Nancy Schramm from Carman's Nursery had this to say about the April meeting.

"I had a great time! I'd like to thank everyone who shopped with me and everyone who helped carry all the plants in and out for me! I'd like to do this again next year and Sherry and John (Terra Sole Nursery) would too."

MEMBER OPEN GARDENS ON MAY 5TH

Two of our WHS members are sharing their gardens with us on May 5th.

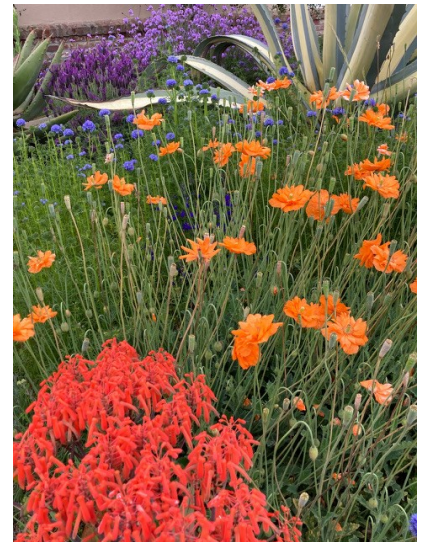
The first garden will be open from 1– 2:30pm at Jen Dungan's house, 565 Anza Street, Mt. View 94041. It should be in full bloom on the day!

Janet Hoffmann's will be the second garden from 2:30– 4pm. 826 Lana Court, Campbell, 95008. Janet's garden is a real gem with an array of native and other noteworthy plants that she has collected over the years from friends, fellow WHS members, CNPS plant sales and nurseries.



NOTE:

Janet will also have some plants from Betsy Clebsch's garden available for sale. Proceeds go to our society to support speakers, activities and scholarships. It is a wonderful way to remember our friend and member Betsy by putting something from her garden into yours.



APRIL PLANT SHARE

Judy Wong from Menlo Park shared:



Lachenalia mathewsii - (Cape Cowslip) This South African bulb is in the Hyacinthaceae family and is one of approximately 133 species. Endemic to the west coast of that country it is found on moist lower slopes. Charming yellow flowers with green markings, it is named after the first curator of Kew Gardens who discovered and collected it in early 1940. It was thought to be extinct until rediscovered in 1981. Only one known population currently exists making it's status critically endangered due to overgrazing and being choked out by agricultural weeds. It seems easiest to grow these bulbs in pots so that you can keep them dry in the summer. Growing 6 to 7 inches tall Judy says this makes them perfect for her container culture. Give light shade in hottest areas. Sunset Zones 16,17, 23 and 24.

Pat Ley from Los Altos Hills shared:



Iris- Pacific Coast Hybrid. This member of the beardless iris group is a reliable performer in our area. There are eleven species that are native but breeders have developed hybrids in a wide range of colors and patterns. Clumps of narrow strap shaped foliage has flowering stems 8 to 24 inches tall. Pat grows her iris along the road in front of her house and says she has never know them to be so big! Plant in a well drained soil and sun to light shade with moderate to little water in summer. In clay soil grow in a raised bed. Plant from containers anytime with spring through fall the best. Wait until fall to dig and divide. Sunset Zones 4-9 and 14-24.

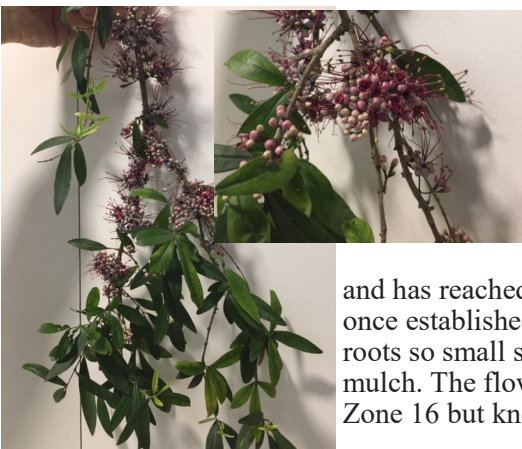


Cyclamen coum- Pat brought in a gigantic tuber that was six or seven inches across and several smaller offsets to share. *Hortus* comments that the tubers of this variety are one and a half inches in diameter. I guess these publishers don't know Pat! This perennial is dormant in summer with white to pink or carmine flowers in November. With part shade, any soil and low water needs Pat finds this to be a very easy plant to grow in your garden. The explanation on how it propagates itself by seed is interesting. Once the flowers are fertilized the seed head bends over and touches the soil. Then it twists itself into the ground to bury the seed head. Sunset Zones 2-9 and 14-24.



Small tuber

6-7" tuber



John Hammerschmidt from Los Altos shared a mystery plant: (he couldn't remember the name)

Myrrhinium atropurpureum- A South American shrub to small tree to 15 feet or more is a member of the *Myrtaceae* family. Native from Ecuador to Argentina and Southern Brazil it is somewhat rare. Many thanks to my Cal Hort colleague Ellen for pointing us in the right direction as meeting attendees didn't recognize it at all.

John reports that it is very easy to grow and lives in the corner of his yard and has reached 15 feet in 20 years. It is frost hardy for him, grows in his clay soil and once established he discontinued watering it. This plant will send up suckers from the roots so small starts are possible for propagation. John does not fertilize, but he does mulch. The flowers are quite interesting and are a favorite food source for birds. John is in Zone 16 but knows it will grow in zone 15 as well.

ROVING REPORTER



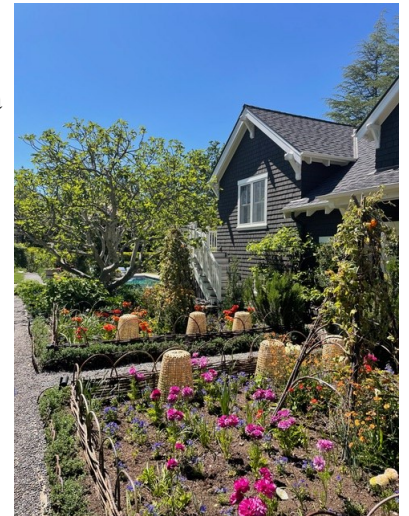
We had a wonderful day visiting two gardens, one in Woodside and the other in Portola Valley. About 20 people, mostly from Western Hort, attended in total. It was an absolutely lovely day and the gardens were awe inspiring. The first garden was Karen and Ned Gilhuly's three acres in Woodside. There was a mix of California native and Mediterranean plants in a pleasant



woodland setting. One truly spectacular sight was the 30', white blooming, *Crataegus mexicana*? above the pool area. Karen told us that it was one of the trees on the property when they purchased it more than 30 years ago and that we were lucky to catch its short bloom period. The rest of the garden was a study of mostly white and blue flowers amongst grey, green, chartreuse and burgundy foliage. There were newly planted vegetable beds in the back yard with low wattle fencing defining the edges as well as a small wine grape orchard and a number of fruit trees of all sorts.



The second garden was that of Lori and Deke Hunter in Portola Valley. Their format was more formal with a lovely flower and shrub bed in front with similar tones to the Gilhuly garden. The mild slope to the front yard was perfect to showcase the beautiful ceanothus used as a low groundcover mixed with a drift of allium family bulbs, *Helleborus* and other part- shade loving plants.



Co-president Meri-Beth Bird with our host, Lori Hunter

Entering through the front door we were immediately drawn through their dining room, out through double French doors, to a pleasant

covered patio area. Then in the back yard they had converted much of their large lawn area into raised vegetable beds. Along one side was an amazing arbor made from willow whips with berries and kiwis climbing over it. Another wooden arbor stretched across the back with grapes clambering over it. This home farm has, in addition to the homegrown vegetables, bee hives for honey, chickens for eggs and two very happy pigs.

Refreshments were provided by our hosts as well as our Western Hort organizers, Jim Salyards, Joe Rothleutner, Grace Tsang and Meri-Beth Bird along with a few delectables from other members. Overall it was a great opportunity to connect and enjoy plants and share our passions with other garden enthusiasts.

~Janet Hoffmann

28 YEARS

On May 6th 1996, Western Hort met to hear Kathy Eckols talk about Australian Plants. (These days plants from Australia are easy to find in our gardens and nurseries, but 28 years ago they were much less common. Kathy was one of the horticulturalists who brought this plant palette to our attention. I heard from Kathy about a year ago, she has moved to Oregon and she said "I am finally getting the garden started, got a greenhouse and am loving the area." – NLS)

Our annual June picnic was to be held on June 9th at Yerba Buena Nursery, at the original location off Skyline Blvd, hosted by Kathy Crane.

A field trip was planned for Quarryhill Botanical Garden (now the Sonoma Botanical Garden) in Glen Ellen, on May 25th, followed by a "picnic lunch at the winery". (The winery was not specified.)

28 Years Continued:

Elizabeth and Budge Garbett invited WHS members to visit Elizabeth's garden and Budge's Matadero Valley Garden Railway in operation on May 18th. "A collection of roses grown from cuttings and donated by Allicin Rauzin will be on sale to benefit WHS."

The Plant Notes for May 1996 described a bounty of blooms from eight different members.

Dick Dunmire brought in *Chamelaucium uncinatum* with dark red/reddish purple flowers, which "make excellent cut flowers, lasting a couple of weeks in water", *Acacia glaucoptera*, "looking like a giant fern from the Jurassic...dotted along this midrib are the tiny yellow puff balls of flowers", *Leptospermum petersonii*, a small tree with lemon scented leaves and *Mackaya bella*, "an evergreen shrub for the shade from South Africa".

Faith Duhring shared "a branch of the Chinaberry tree, *Melia azerdarach*, native to Asia but grown around the world in warm climates. This tree has a dozen common names from the many regions in which it is grown and prized for its usefulness, hardiness and adaptability."

"Sally Casey showed two of our most attractive native flowers, *Calochortus luteus*, the yellow Mariposa lily and *Triteleia laxa*, Ithuriel's spear. Sally raised her plants from seed – they took five years to bloom!"

Carol Coate brought *Amsonia taberae montana* 'Blue Star'.

"Judy Wong showed a charming and amiable plant, *Inpatiens balfourii* that pops up in the garden of its own accord because of its free seeding nature. ...the oddest thing is that the bud in maturing twists 180° on its pedicel until, by the time it blooms, it is completely inverted. Try to figure the survival value of that maneuver!"

Bill Kurtz brought in *Albuca crassifolia*, "The flower has six perianth segments, the three outer spreading and arching above the inner three which never open but remain firmly upright around the reproductive organs. How it gets pollinated is a mystery but it does set seed so it must have figured out something." Bill's *Eucrosia bicolor*, a bulb bought "at great expense from Van Bourgondien Bulb Catalogue in 1995" was blooming for the first time.

Ed Carman shared *Thymus membranaceous*, with "small white flowers subtended by showy membranaceous bracts that are greenish-white flushed pink" and *Lobelia erinus* 'Mrs. Kathleen Mallard', with "dense foliage and prolific bloom". (We lost this plant many years ago. Always had to take cuttings in the fall to overwinter in the greenhouse. One year we didn't. Wish I had this one again! – NLS)
~Nancy Schramm

Officers and Board Members:

Co-Presidents: Grace Tsang & Meri-Beth Bird

Vice President: **Open Position**

Secretary : Jennifer Dungan

Corresponding Secretary: **Open Position**

Treasurer: Eva Huala

Other Board Members: Jim Salyards, Carol Dahout
(More board members welcomed and needed)

Volunteer Committees and Responsibilities:

Plant Sale Table: Carol Dahout

Email and website maintenance: Ursula Haschke

Membership: Ursula Haschke

Publicity and Outreach: Grace Tsang

Meeting Tech: Grace Tsang, Jennifer Doniach,

Janet Hoffmann & John Hammerschmidt

Welcome Table: Meri-Beth Bird & Eva Huala

Speaker Program Committee: Leslie Dean (chair),
Nancy Schramm, Judy Wong, Glenda Jones, Eva Huala &
Meri-Beth Bird

Newsletter Editor: Kathy Anberg

Newsletter Contributors: Jennifer Dungan & Nancy
Schramm

Scholarships: Grace Tsang, Jennifer Doniach,

About Membership in Western Hort:

Membership Rates: A one-year membership (Sep-Aug) includes an e-mail copy of this newsletter and admittance to all of our monthly meetings. Regular membership is \$35, Family membership for two or more members at the same address is \$50, and a discounted rate for students is \$20. Please visit the Pac Hort page for more information or to join Pacific Horticulture Society, for whom we are now a sponsoring organization, go to: pacifichorticulture.org.

To join or renew visit our website at: <https://www.westernhort.org/membership> You may pay online with a credit card or print form and mail with your check to the contact us address below.

To contact us: Please send email to: info@westernhort.org or snail mail to: PO Box 166, Mountain View, CA 94042

Decades After Butterfly Species Vanished, Close Relative Fills Gap

A close relative of the shimmering iridescent butterfly species has been reintroduced to the dunes in Presidio National Park in San Francisco.



A silvery blue butterfly, the closest relative to the extinct Xerces blue butterfly, is seen under netting after its release in the Presidio's restored dune habitat in San Francisco, Thursday, April 11, 2024. (AP Photo/Eric Risberg)

SAN FRANCISCO — More than 80 years ago, a beautiful butterfly called Xerces Blue that once fluttered among San Francisco's coastal dunes went extinct as stately homes, museums and parks ate up its habitat, marking the first butterfly species in the United States to disappear due to human development.

But thanks to years of research and modern technology a close relative of the shimmering iridescent butterfly species has been reintroduced to the dunes in Presidio National Park in San Francisco. Dozens of Silvery Blue butterflies — the closest living relatives of the Xerces Blue — were released in the restored habitat last week, officials said Monday.

Scientists with San Francisco's California Academy of Sciences utilized the Academy's genetic sequencing capabilities and analyzed Xerces Blue specimens in their vast collection to confirm a group of Silvery Blues in Monterey County, about 100 miles (160 kilometers) south of San Francisco, could successfully fill the ecological gap left by the Xerces Blue.

"This isn't a Jurassic Park-style de-extinction project, but it will have a major impact," said Durrell Kapan, a senior research fellow and the lead Academy researcher on the project. "The Silvery Blue will act as an ecological 'stand-in' for the Xerces Blue, performing the same ecosystem functions as both a pollinator and a critical member of the food web."

The iconic butterfly, whose name inspired the Xerces Society, an environmental nonprofit that focuses on the conservation of invertebrates, went extinct in the 1940s.

Chris Grinter, the collection manager of entomology at California Academy of Sciences, said it all started by using their collections and "modern technology, genome sequencing to go back and extract genomes from these extinct butterflies that are over 100, 150 years old."

Meanwhile, the Presidio Trust and other organizations worked to restore the butterflies' native dunes, planting deerweed — a preferred host plant of the Xerces Blue and the Silvery Blue butterflies.

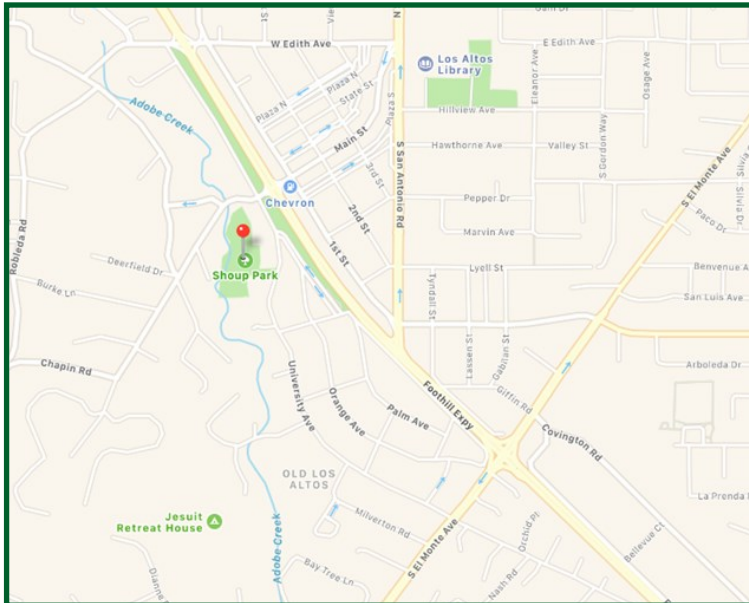
Wildlife experts collected dozens of Silvery Blue butterflies in Monterey County, marked them for future identification and transported them to San Francisco, feeding them a few drops of fruit punch-flavored Gatorade along the way. The team will continue to track their movements using high-resolution photographs to identify their markings and learn ways to replicate the habitat regeneration lessons learned, officials said Scott Sampson, executive director of the California Academy of Sciences.

"The lessons we learn from the Silvery Blue here in our backyard could serve as a model for regenerating other ecosystems across California and beyond," he said.

By *HAVEN DALEY* and *OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ* Associated Press



PO Box 166
Mountain View, CA 94042
First Class Mail
VISIT US AT WESTERNHORT.ORG



Meeting date & location : May 10th, 2024
In Person at Shoup Park Garden House, 400 University Ave., Los Altos
(Masks optional)
Meeting starts at 7:30 pm.
Would you like to **sponsor a lecture** or suggest a speaker for the WHS that is of particular interest to you?
It would be much appreciated!
Please call Leslie Dean at 650-966-8364.

Newsletter Submissions
The newsletter publishes on the first of the month. **Note: deadline for submission for the next newsletter is the 20th of August.** Submissions after this date will likely appear in the next month's newsletter. Send submissions to: Kjanberg@gmail.com or snail mail to Kathy Anberg, 1332 Peggy Ct. Campbell, CA 95008-6342