

# OAK NOTES

NEWSLETTER OF THE RANCHO SANTA ANA BOTANIC GARDEN VOLUNTEERS

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## MAKE WAY FOR “GATEWAY TO THE COMMUNITIES”

**Lucinda McDade,  
RSABG Interim Executive Director**

Where on the grounds of our favorite botanic garden can you suddenly find yourself under a closed canopy of madrones (*Arbutus menziesii*, Ericaceae) that seems so off the beaten path that you almost feel that you are the first to discover it? Where can you find yourself amid a stand of mature red shanks (*Adenostema sparsifolium*, Rosaceae)—the trees standing more than 25 feet tall and whistling to themselves as the wind stirs their strange forms? Where can you come upon a gorgeous patch of Baja California birdbush shrubs (*Ornithostaphylos oppositifolia*, Ericaceae), so like our more familiar manzanitas and yet different? The answer is, indeed, off the beaten path and along the new system of trails that loops through the California Plant Communities.

Since fall, horticultural staff have been working hard on the Communities, an area of the Garden that I suspect we all might agree has been under-achieving in terms of conveying information about the plant communities of California to our visitors. RSABG staff Dago Lopez, Joshua Kreutzer and Richard Rojo have been carefully inventorying plants, caring for accessioned plants (sometimes involving propagation if the plant is rare in our collection or otherwise), removing plants that have vied with their seeds but do not belong where they took root, and weeding. They have gone about doing this and other management tasks in a way that is guided by and entirely consistent with the master plan of Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden. As many of you know, the plan calls for some reorganization of the communities, a great deal more interpretation, and some changes to the trail system.

It is these last changes that have provided access to the remarkable areas mentioned above. Horticultural staff have designed and largely installed a loop trail that will take you to parts of the Garden that few have seen. I predict that these will become favorite places for many of you, as they already have for me. These are places that you take your family and friends every time that you visit;

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plants that become special friends that you check in on regularly (...they should be in flower now...); sites that call out for benches to support us in quiet contemplation (or not so quiet conversation!).

In parallel, a RSABG-wide group is working on interpretation for the Communities: signage that will tastefully provide information about California's plant communities, their constituent plants, human uses of those plants and ecological interactions. Director of Visitor Services Eric Garton is in the lead on this and graduate student Jessica Orozco is working closely with him, as are a number of others. The team invites input in various ways, from participating in their weekly meetings (Tuesdays 8–10 a.m.) to, eventually, commenting on the draft versions of the signs as they are installed. Share your thoughts with us, please!

So, where are we headed with all of this? Make way for "Gateways to the Communities." In just over a month's time, the path heretofore known as "the way off the back of the mesa down to the Communities" will become a gateway...not just a path off of something, but instead the entrance to an important section of the Garden. We hope that many of you will be there on April 4 at a special evening opening reception with guided tours for RSABG Gold Card members, and certainly join us the next day, which will welcome all members through the Gateway to the Communities.

I am very proud of all of our staff, students and volunteers who are participating in this important effort to improve the Garden's effectiveness in conveying information about California's native plants and the communities in which they occur across the state. We are all looking forward to sharing the "Gateway to the Communities" with you!

*Lucinda*



## NOTES FROM TIFFANY Tiffany Chandler, Manager of Volunteer Programs

A huge thank you for all your help with the Family Bird Fest! It was another successful event!

What is coming up next? Wildflower Show (sign-up sheets will be posted soon)

March 30 through April 1 from 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

Wildflower Senior Day is Monday, April 1 and offers free admission for guests over 65 as well as special tram and walking tours.

If you'd like to sign up for one of these events, (and we hope you do) please let me know.

Please be sure to turn in your time cards monthly. Time cards can be found in the volunteer library as well as on the volunteer board in the main hall. Thank you for getting your hours turned in.

For those of you not sure of your hours, below is a list of all the hours turned in from July 1–Feb. 14. If your name does not appear on this list, no hours have been turned in during this time frame. If corrections need to be made, please be sure to contact me!

John Macdonald	378.50	Jean W. Beckner	148.50
Barbara A. Booth	351.00	Janice Tsuma	147.00
David Gish	305.50	Ernest Pianalto	143.50
Carol K. Lerew	276.50	Jay Williams	135.00
Herbert Boss	254.50	Amy Baumann	125.00
Sandee Rose	199.00	Norma Standard	124.00
John Turner	190.50	Ruth C. Henzie	119.50
Albert Finnerty	186.50	C. Richard Perre	116.00
Linda Prendergast	183.00	Ezra S. Godinez	115.00
Grace Clark	182.00	Gordon Olson	111.00
Emy Lu Weller	179.00	Laura A. Dodds,	110.00
Michael Abata	177.25	Karina Chappell	109.75
Louise Gish	167.50	Carol Petty	100.25
Nadja A. Cole	167.00	Shaunna Gygli	94.25
Lenore Boss	162.00	Janice Bishop	90.25
Clifford Hutson	152.50	Eleanor Carter	88.00

Suzanne Dunbar	85.00	Mary K. Pierson	37.00	Cynthia Pearson	13.50	Gail Holladay	7.50
Fraser Pemberton	83.00	Yvonne Wilson,	37.00	Bill Nagel	12.50	Penny Garris	7.25
Bernadine Spencer	81.50	Jack Rosenbrock	35.00	Susan Gregory	12.25	Peter Cherbak	7.25
Judy Whale	80.50	William Gendron,	35.00	Bernice Goh	12.00	Robertta Drake	5.75
Sharon Thompson	80.00	Celeste Palmer	34.00	Lisa Broderick	10.50	Gale Ortega	5.00
Victoria Geary	80.00	Chris Caenepeel	33.50	Elizabeth Tulac	10.25	Kathleen Mulligan	5.00
Kathleen Ritchie	76.00	Barbara Hughbanks	33.00	Toni Clark	10.25	William Waggener	5.00
Valerie Cressy	75.25	Catherine Rowlee	30.75	Josephine Muir	10.00	Patricia B. Norin	4.75
Charles Brasch	72.50	Angela Kwok	30.25	Lindsey Hagelberg	10.00	Robin Winderman	4.25
Alice Oglesby	71.25	Rudi Volti	30.25	Mary Chamberlain	10.00	Arlene Scott	3.50
Cindy Walkenbach	70.50	Eugene Baumann	30.00	Michael Tschudi	10.00	Skip Prusia	3.50
Jane Hehnke	68.00	Pauline Assarian	29.75	Patrick Kostun	10.00	Suzanne Horsburgh	3.50
Wesley Marquis	68.00	Bruce Hines	29.00	Susan Dodson	10.00	Joan W. Oyler	2.00
Hugh Menton	67.50	Sheryl Fox	28.00	Beverly Pemberton	9.50	Michael Gregory	1.25
Anne Moreau	67.00	Kelly Swift	27.75	Rhoda Huffman	8.50		
Marilyn Irwin	67.00	Stephen D. Simon	27.50				
Mike Smith	67.00	Dawn Thielo	27.00				
Charley Julien	65.00	Jean Rosewall	27.00				
J. W. Aldrich	63.50	Sharon Gee	27.00				
Linda Clement	63.50	Sherry Hogue	26.75				
Susan Spradley,	63.00	Bryan Vejar	26.25				
Jim Lucke	61.25	Kathleen Noll	26.25				
James Ritchie	59.00	Tom White	25.50				
Richard D. Griffin	59.00	Beverly Jack	24.50				
Lee Waggener	57.50	Terry Givens	24.00				
Nancy S. Carlisle	54.50	Ann Wichman	23.00				
Virginia Herd	54.50	Margaret Steinbrugge	23.00				
Dean McHenry,	52.50	Joan Rosenbrock	22.50				
Bonnie Shimmin,	52.00	Lana Kreivis	22.00				
Ingrid Spiteri	51.75	Carol Hopping	21.00				
Donna Bedell	50.00	Richard Angus	21.00				
Edmund James,	48.50	Margaret K. Hover	20.75				
Cathy Reaves	48.00	Pamela Stevenson	20.50				
James Brashler	48.00	Nan Keith	20.25				
Laura Perry	48.00	Alan Wild	20.00				
Betty Fox	47.25	Elda Silva	18.00				
Gloria Slosberg	46.50	Sandy C. Wilson	17.50				
Frances Neu	42.50	Laura Burt	17.25				
Sharon Kaatmann	42.50	Lynn Amason	17.00				
Julie Scheuermann	42.25	Wendee Lee	16.00				
Sara Simon	39.50	Charles Burt	15.75				
Liselotte Van Balgooy	39.00	Eduardo Martinez	15.00				
John Biddle	38.00	Joyce Morales	15.00				
Jackie Pace	37.50	Lillian A. Vega,	14.50				
Susan Winderman	37.25	Alan Jack	13.50				



**VISITOR SERVICES**  
**Eric Garton,**  
**Director of Visitor Services**

**Eric Garton, Director of Visitor Services**

With so many exciting things developing this spring, I'll take this opportunity to share some quick news and notes from around the department and Garden.

Help spread the word about Spring Open House on Saturday, March 23. This **free admission day** shares awareness of Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden with a broader audience. March 23 is also Member Appreciation Day. All members are invited to join us and receive special thanks for your support of RSABG through your membership.

Expect to hear and see upcoming programs that incorporate important aspects of our developing Sustainability Plan. Words like conservation, sustainability and environmentally-friendly are no longer just buzz words, they're becoming standard practice in the way we think, act and implement programs and events both internally and externally.

The Wildflower Show March 30-April 1 is one of the first programs to receive a *sustainability makeover*. The event is being re-envisioned as more than just a beautiful mass display of wildflowers, but as a showcase of why and how it plays a role in conservation. At the same time we'll provide guests with a meaningful educational experience directed at affecting change in attitudes and actions. Thank you in advance for helping to make this a great event!

The Visitor Services Department continues collaborative efforts with both Horticulture and Research departments to develop and implement interpretation themes for the new Gateways to the Communities exhibit opening (officially to the public) on Saturday, April 6. Don't miss member and volunteer opportunities in the days leading up to the opening to get special sneak peeks at this exciting new offering.

For more as it develops, continue exploring [www.rsabg.org](http://www.rsabg.org) for news, resources and schedules.

Thank you as always, for your continued support of the Garden. Feel free to contact me or my staff with questions, suggestions or concerns. with questions, suggestions or concerns.



## VOLUNTEER FIELD TRIP: THE HUNTINGTON

**Krista Von Stetten,  
Field Trip Committee Chair  
Sunday, March 17**

Join us on a visit to The Huntington Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens, where outdoor gardens aren't the only thing in bloom this March.

The Huntington's Boone Gallery is hosting "When They Were Wild," a special exhibition that tells the story of California's native plants through a fascinating collection of illustrations, herbarium (plant specimen) collections and publications.

Thanks to the joint efforts The Huntington, Theodore Payne Foundation and RSABG this project is beauty, botany, horticulture and ecology combined.

And you're in luck: since RSABG is a collaborator on this exhibition, all RSABG members visit free during the duration of the exhibit. Remember your RSABG membership card. Regular adult admission to The Huntington is \$23

There are plenty more exhibits to explore, too. Vibrant WPA-era paintings by Maurice Merlin, numerous permanent exhibits, and "Beautiful Science" at the newly-renovated Dibner Hall are definitely worth a peek.

Be sure to savor the outdoor beauty, too. The Huntington's glorious gardens include the freshly-renovated Japanese garden and its latest addition, the Chinese garden.

Bring a lunch or snack to enjoy there or try the munchies at either of The Huntington's on-site cafes. Rose Garden Tea Room reservations may still be available too, if you hurry!

Family, friends and staff welcome as always. You can afford to treat them!

**Date:** Sunday, March 17, 2013

**Time/Transportation:** Meet at RSABG at 9:30 a.m. for casual carpooling.

**Return time:** Head home 4 p.m. (or as desired by drivers/passengers)

**Cost:** Free admission with RSABG membership card. Gas donation to your driver kindly appreciated.

**Eating at The Huntington?**

Cafes \$12, Tearoom \$28

**Sign up** in administration, horticulture buildings or email Tiffany [tchandler@rsabg.org](mailto:tchandler@rsabg.org)

Hope to see you on the trail!

## VOLUNTEER ENRICHMENT

Sherry Hogue, Volunteer  
Enrichment Committee

**“Unleashing Natives from  
Natural Landscapes, Designing with  
Natives Coast to Coast”  
with Scott LaFleur  
March 25, 2013, 12 p.m.**

Please join us for a volunteer-only session with Scott LaFleur, RSABG director of horticulture. He will re-introduce us to the garden so we see it with fresh eyes.

LaFleur comes to RSABG from New England. After graduating from the University of New Hampshire he worked the private sector and later joined the staff of New England Wild Flower Society as a senior horticulturist. After one year, he became their director of horticulture, where he stayed for six years. In March 2012, he and his family moved to Southern California to join RSABG and, so far, they love it.

LaFleur's overall objective for RSABG is to make it a renowned center for native plants and sustainability. The Garden should be a shining example of how to live sustainably in Southern California with native plants at the core of that lifestyle. By realizing the full potential of Grow Native Nursery in Claremont and GNN in the Veterans Garden, we can expand our reach and influence throughout the LA basin. His talk, complete with photos, will take us on a journey from the seacoast of New Hampshire to the mountains of Vermont to the nation's oldest plant conservation organization. LaFleur will show how he reinvigorated New England Wild Flower Society's Garden in the Woods and reinvented their native plant nursery, Nasami Farm. He will then cover what has changed under his leadership and how vital implementation of the master plan for Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden is, which should give volunteers good ideas for new opportunities to contribute our talents.

We will meet in the East Classroom. Coffee, tea and cookies will be provided. You may bring a lunch.



## TOURING PROGRAMS

Judy Hayami,  
Touring Programs Manager

### Spring Greetings!

Please check the March Nature Interpreter Tour Calendar just as soon as you can. If you need assistance finding the calendar or have difficulty accessing it, please call or email me. School tours will be arriving frequently beginning this month. We have no official Wednesday team, but some of you indicated you could be available. Please take a look at the Wednesday dates, in addition to reviewing your regular team day(s), and let me know if you can help.

An orientation tour for Spring Garden Walks will be led by Naomi Fraga, conservation botanist, on March 20 at 10 a.m. Meet at the Garden entrance. Nature Interpreters, this is your chance to see what will be blooming where during the wildflower season. Regularly scheduled Spring Garden Walks are offered to the public free with paid admission on Saturdays and Sundays at 11 a.m., and 1 p.m. beginning March 23. Reservations are not required. These tours are posted as sign up tour opportunities. We really struggled to fill the need for Spring Garden Walk and other sign up tour guides last spring. Please help by signing up early and often.

Plans are afoot to reconfigure the upcoming Wildflower Show, but I will still need help with set up and clean up even if tables are suspended from the ceiling! Please keep your eyes on your email inbox and watch for opportunities posted on the hallway boards.

The Team Captain and Tour Committee meeting will be held on March 25, following volunteer enrichment.

Thank you for all the help with Family Bird Fest! I will report some facts and figures next month.

# LET'S TRY SOMETHING DIFFERENT...

**Amy Baumann, Hospitality Committee**

**Volunteer Potluck Luncheon  
Saturday, March 16, 11 a.m.**

Saturday, March 16 is our quarterly volunteer's potluck luncheon. Saturday? Yes, Saturday! We are hoping that the weekend date will allow more volunteers to attend. A number of RSABG volunteers are still in the work force and cannot attend Friday functions. We are hoping still working and weekends-only volunteers will come and get better acquainted with the greater volunteer family.

By special request, Lucinda McDade will speak on "The State of the Garden." Lucinda's talk will begin at 11 a.m. followed by a salad buffet luncheon at 11:45 a.m.

**Lunch will be an all salads buffet, with breads, beverages and desserts. Please, no appetizers for this event.** Attendees are requested to bring their best recipe salad or a dessert. The Board will provide beverages and rolls. If you make a specialty bread, such as nut bread or zucchini bread or banana bread, you are welcome to bring it in place of a salad. And for you volunteers who don't do kitchen, just stop by Trader Joe's (or wherever) and pick up a salad or dessert. The emphasis is on Lucinda's presentation and camaraderie—not the food.

**RSVP** to the hospitality committee. Email [tchandler@rsabg.org](mailto:tchandler@rsabg.org) with your response and what kind of salad or other dish you will be bringing. We expect that Lucinda's talk will draw a larger-than-usual crowd, and need to know how many tables and chairs to set up, so **your RSVP is important!** If you don't have email, you can call and leave a voicemail at **909-625-8767 ext. 501.**

The luncheon will be held in the Lantz Outdoor Classroom. The tram and Faymobile will shuttle from the Admissions Kiosk starting at 10:15 a.m.

and return guests at the conclusion of the business meeting. Please wear your name badge, dress for the weather and come join your fellow volunteers for an informative and entertaining event.

## DEVELOPMENT UPDATE Debbie Carini

The Development Office is happy to welcome Karina Chappell as the new special assistant for development! Karina has been a volunteer at the Garden since June 2012, and brings ample experience to the Development Office having served as the director of the Desert Institute at Joshua Tree National Park Association for six years. Karina encourages all volunteers to stop by the Development Office and say hello!

**By Invitation Only** Gold Card Members are invited to a very special preview and reception at The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens for the "When They Were Wild: Recapturing California's Wildflower Heritage" exhibition. Reception March 8, 6 until 8 p.m.

**All Garden members**, and up to two guests, can visit The Huntington during the "When They Were Wild" exhibition, March 9 through June 10, 2013, for free when they present a valid Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden membership card.

For information about more upcoming events, visit [www.rsabg.org/join](http://www.rsabg.org/join).

A big thank you to the volunteers who have generously supported The Garden Fund 2012–2013! Every gift makes a difference; you still have time to make your contribution to this year's effort! Call **909-625-8767 ext. 221**, or visit [www.rsabg.org/support](http://www.rsabg.org/support)



## SEEP-SPRING MONKEY-FLOWER

Cliff Hutson, Nature Interpreter

The seep-spring monkeyflower (*Mimulus guttatus*) is a variable plant ranging from spindly and tiny to large and bushy, between one and three feet tall. The two-lipped yellow flowers have red, or reddish-brown spots and can range from about one-half inch to almost two-inches in length. Described as a plant that likes to get its feet wet, it is found in moist places throughout most of California below 10,000 feet and flowers from March until August.

My field guides place it in the Scrophulariaceae (figwort family). Newer references, such as Jepson eFlora, have it in the Phrymaceae (lopseed family). The name monkeyflower comes from the supposition that the flowers look like little faces when viewed from the front. I have never seen a monkey's face, but have noted that the blossoms close their stigmas after pollination. Most years it blooms across from the California Container Garden, so you may want to look for it yourself.

These are not just plants lovely to look at—monkeyflower leaves were eaten as a salad. The stems and roots were brewed as a tea and used to treat diarrhea and kidney problems.

*Mimulus guttatus* is also known as the common monkeyflower. I tried to research the reason for this. Is it because it is more readily found than other species, or because it is plainer than its relatives? None of the sources I found shed any light on that subject. What I did find out is that it may not be a *Mimulus* at all.

Recent molecular analysis seems to indicate that almost all *Mimulus* species in western North America should be reassigned to the species *Erythranthe*, and eventually *Mimulus guttatus* will be called *Erythranthe guttatus*. RSABG's very own Naomi Fraga is one of the coauthors of a paper discussing this and other revised classifications.





## **BOOK OF THE MONTH** **Jim and Kathleen Ritchie**

### **“MARGARET MEE IN SEARCH OF FLOWERS OF THE AMAZON FOREST: Diaries of an English Artist Reveal the Beauty of the Vanishing Rainforest” Edited by Tony Morrison**

The book that we are adding to the volunteer library caught our eye at the RSABG Library’s book sale last year because of its wonderful illustrations. Little did we know what an adventure we were going on when we opened it.

This book was created from 400 folios of gouache illustrations, 40 sketch books and 15 diaries of Margaret Mee. She was a British botanical artist who specialized in plants of the Brazilian Amazon rainforest. In 1950, she attended the Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts, where she learned her style of illustration. Her first expedition was in 1956 to Belém in the Amazon Basin. She then became a botanical artist for São Paulo’s Instituto de Botanica in 1958.

In her exploring of the rainforest, she sketched and painted the plants, some new to science, as well as collected some for later illustration. She was one of the first environmentalists to draw attention to the impact of large-scale mining and deforestation on the Amazon Basin.

We are also adding:

A small book titled “British Botanists” by John Gilmore. This book includes botanists from 1500-1900.

“A Celebration of Flowers” by Ray Desmond. This book is a history of the 200 years of Curtis’s Botanical Magazine.

A special thanks to Judy Hayami for giving our library a copy of “Habitats Alive”, An ecological guide to California’s diverse habitats

We appreciate suggestions you may have for purchasing new books for the library. Take a look in the California Garden Gift Shop and leave us a note. Our mail cubby is on the last shelf in the new library, or you can email us at: [jmritchie1023@verizon.net](mailto:jmritchie1023@verizon.net).

## **HORTICULTURE** **Linda Prendergast**

**Meet Arcto...**

Arctostaphylos T. Feline joined the RSABG staff in December as the newest member of the integrated pest management team. Arcto, as he is known to his colleagues, brings unique skills to the job, and is expected to have full control of the rodent population in the potting shed shortly. While he spends much of the day sleeping in a nursery flat on the counter in the head house, Arcto is on the prowl after dark and seems to have made himself right at home. He is a very chatty kitty-cat and will carry on a full conversation with you when you have the time. He follows Dolores, Valentin and Antonio around the nursery and seems to enjoy his role supervising the nursery volunteers and staff. Volunteers have learned that once he gets to know you, Arcto loves to have his tummy rubbed. Please stop by and welcome Arcto to the RSABG family.



# CALLING ALL TIME CARDS!

Carol Lerew

If you have a bright lemon yellow time card then you are up to date. But, if you are using a gold or goldenrod colored card to mark your hours, then you have one that was in use several years ago. Please turn the old cards into Tiffany or tear them up because the format on those cards is no longer being used.

It goes this way. The newer cards were redesigned, adding or dropping categories, to more accurately track where we work. The new RSABG computer system has a program designed to fit the data on those cards. Tiffany inputs the hours from our cards into the proper areas. Simple. But not if you are using an old card. This important data collection can't be done.

So please check the color and format of your card, especially those of you who took a stack home for convenience sake, and make sure you have what is in use. Time cards are available on the volunteer bulletin board in the hallway outside the Herbarium and in the volunteer library.

By the way, don't forget to turn in your time cards at the end of the month so your hours can be recorded. That's important because, among other things, those hours are used when RSABG applies for grants.

We are all going to do this, right?

## ANTONIO SANCHEZ JOINS RSABG AS NEW NURSERY PRODUCTION MANAGER



Antonio Sanchez joined Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden in November 2012 as nursery production manager. Sanchez landed in Claremont after having spent some time in some of the most well-respected California native plant nurseries and botanic gardens in the state.

He began his horticultural career by organizing and planting a community garden at Oxnard College and then went on to work on small farms in northern New Mexico and Sonoma County. After turning his attention to California native plants, he gained hands-on nursery and field experience working at Cal Flora Nursery, Channel Islands Restoration and The Theodore Payne Foundation for Wildflowers and Native Plants. Along with his cousin and a good friend, he underwent a 10-week training course at Santa Barbara Botanic Garden for nursery management, and in 2009 they opened Nopalito Native Plant Nursery in Ventura. Nopalito was successful in organizing educational events, promoting native plant and drought-tolerant gardening and developing bilingual homeowner and gardener training. The nursery closed its doors in 2012 due to economic hardships, but the experiences Sanchez gained through that and many other horticultural endeavors make him a great addition to the RSABG horticultural team. Having been a farm worker, business owner and volunteer, he understands and believes in the power of hard work and determination, and knows the value of non-profit organizations and working together in a fun atmosphere for the common good. Some of his favorite plants include the buckwheats, or *Eriogonum*, with one of his personal favorites being *Eriogonum arborescens*. He is on a personal mission to get at least one buckwheat plant in every California garden. His personal motto is: "Down around your feet, there should be a buckwheat!"



# Bandit

**Carol Lerew, Nature Interpreter**

Picture a quiet residential neighborhood late at night. Several muffled thumps followed by a loud thud break the silence. Dogs bark and angry human voices command them to stop. The next morning the householder finds his trash can overturned, the soggy contents strewn about and well-picked over.

As you may have guessed, the culprit was a raccoon, *Procyon lotor*. Found throughout North America from Canada to Panama, it is of medium size with a grayish coat. Two of its most distinctive features are its dexterous front paws and its facial mask. It is intelligent, omnivorous, usually nocturnal and highly adaptable. It can be found in habitats ranging from mountains to coastal marshes, and escape from captivity has enabled it to become widely distributed in Europe and Asia. The raccoon often occupies human habitation where it enjoys a variety of easily found food.

Raccoon kits of two to five are born in the spring in nests in hollow trees, rock crevices, mammal burrows or buildings such as barns and attics. The female

raises the young until they go off on their own late in the fall. Though they are usually solitary, groups of females will often share a common area and males may live together in groups to defend a territory.

Scientists have concluded that a raccoon washes its food to soften the hard skin on its front paws so it can feel the object and remove unwanted parts. The earlier theory that a raccoon does not have enough saliva production to moisten its food has proven incorrect.

Occasionally staff, volunteers and guests encounter a raccoon at Benjamin Pond or the upper pond hunting for tidbits. Which is an encounter I prefer to the one I had in my garage when a raccoon was dousing a charcoal briquette in the cat's water dish. The charcoal became soggy and messier by the moment, leaving black streaks on the raccoon's muzzle, paws and muddy globs on the floor!



# MARCH 2013 TOUR CALENDAR

## **Friday, Mar 1, 9:30 – 11:30 am**

Native Partners: Arroyo Elementary, Ontario.  
4th grade, 76 students, 5 adults, 3 teachers.

## **Saturday, Mar 2, 12 pm – 1 pm**

Biola University. 10 adults. Eric will conduct tour.

## **Tuesday, Mar 5, 9:30 – 10:30 am**

Sensational Walk: Citrus Elementary. Kindergarten.  
82 + 8 adults + 4 teachers. Ms. Ponder

## **Wednesday, Mar 6, 9:30 – 11:30 am**

Bird's Life: Cabrillo Elementary, Upland. 3rd. 41 +  
4 adults + 2 teachers. Ms. DeFazio. Need 4 NIs.

## **Thursday, Mar 7, 9:30 – 11:30 am**

Native Partners: Royal Oaks, Duarte. 3rd.  
92 + 9 adults + 4 teachers. Ms. Covert.

## **Friday, Mar 8, 9:30 – 11:30 am**

Web of Life: Sycamore Elementary, Upland.  
4th. 65 + 6 adults + 2 teachers. Ms. Anderson

## **Wednesday, Mar 13, 9:30 – 11:30 am**

Native Partners Need 4 NIs: Krystal School,  
Hesperia. 3rd. 32 + 10 adults + 1 teacher. Ms. Rivers

## **Thursday, Mar 14, 9:30 – 11:30 am**

Web of Life: Camino Grove Elementary, Arcadia.  
4th. 64 + 4 adults + 2 teachers. Mr. Rhee.

## **Friday, Mar 15, 9:30 – 11:30 am**

Bird's Life: Cabrillo Elementary, Upland. 3rd. 62  
+ 6 adults + 2 teachers, Bircheff & Sperling

## **Sunday, Mar 17, 10 – 11am**

Guided Tram Tour: See the California coast and  
Mojave Desert in an hour! Tickets are available after  
8 a.m. at the admission kiosk the day of the tour.  
Tickets \$5 per person; tickets are required in addition  
to standard Garden admission. Visitor information  
Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden is located at 1500  
N. College Ave., Claremont, California. Admission:  
free for RSABG members; \$8 adults; \$6 seniors and  
students; \$4 children 3–12. For more information  
please call 909-625-8767 or visit [www.rsabg.org](http://www.rsabg.org).

## **Monday, Mar 18, 10 am – 11:30 am**

NICE (Nature Interpreter Continuing  
Education) Walk. Meet at Kiosk. Plant I.D.,

tour topics, techniques and tips. A continuing  
monthly series on the third Monday each  
month. Open to all Nature Interpreters.

## **Wednesday, Mar 20, 10 am – 12 pm**

NI orientation tour – Spring Garden/Wildflower  
Walk: Review what is blooming in the garden  
at the beginning of our wildflower season with  
Naomi Fraga, RSABG conservation botanist. Great  
opportunity for all NIs leading school tours and  
those who wish to sign up to lead weekend walks.

## **Thursday, Mar 21, 9:30 – 11:30 am**

Native Partners: Camino Grove Elementary,  
Arcadia. 3rd. 70 + 4 adults + 3 teachers. Ms. Chia.

## **Friday, Mar 22, 9:30 – 11:30 am**

Native Partners: Edwin Rhodes Elementary, Chino.  
3rd. 62 + 6 adults + 2 teachers. Ms. Contini.

## **3:15 – 4:15 pm**

Sign Up Tour: Brownie Troop 7774, Claremont. 12  
Brownie scouts + 5 siblings + 3 adults + 2 leaders.  
Ms. Morgan. Working on First Aid badge. Would  
like to identify poison oak and other plants that may  
be toxic, cause skin irritation or upset stomach.

## **Monday, Mar 25, 1 – 2 pm**

Team Capt. Tour Committee  
Meeting: Volunteer Room

## **Wednesday, Mar 27, 9:30 – 11:30 am**

Native Partners Need 2 NIs: Sherman Indian High  
School, Riverside. 20 + 1 adult + 1 teacher. Ms. Tuyen.

## **Thursday, Mar 28, 9:30 – 11:30 am**

Web of Life: Camino Grove Elementary, Arcadia.  
4th. 68 + 6 adults + 2 teachers. Mr. Rhee

## **Friday, Mar 29, 9:30 – 11:30 am**

Native Partners: Edwin Rhodes Elementary, Chino.  
3rd. 62 + 6 adults + 2 teachers. Ms. Contini

## **Saturday, Mar 30 – Sunday, Mar 31,**

All day Wildflower Festival

# VOLUNTEER BIOGRAPHY

**Win Aldrich, Treasurer, RSABG**

## **Volunteer Organization**

After growing up in a rural farming community in Connecticut and living in Boston and the coastal regions south of Boston, one is surprised at how much the natural outdoors becomes a part of one's soul. Nevertheless, the last place I expected to find the beauty of nature was in Southern California. After a career as an industrial research scientist and engineer, we moved to Claremont in 1991 when I took a job at Cal Poly Pomona as an engineering professor, department chair and dean. Certainly Claremont reminds one of a small New England town, but the surprise was finding Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden and the Southern California bio-diversity two blocks away. Although we enjoyed walking through the Garden and its seasonal beauty, it was not until I retired in 2004 and formally became a volunteer that I fully appreciated all that the Garden has to offer in terms of not only the beauty, solitude, science and learning—but the people, both staff and fellow volunteers, and their dedication.

Over the years I have been involved in several projects as a volunteer: database entry in the Herbarium, the Library, the Robert F. Thorne slide collection and the design, modification and maintenance of the volunteer hour's database—but these tend to be lonely isolated tasks. I also worked to establish the early experiment in vernal pools and painted/stained the entire fence around the California Cultivar Garden. However the best experiences have been the group work parties like the grapevine trimming, plant sale preparation, clearing in the Communities and more recently bagging for the luminarias — always with a fun, interesting and outgoing group of people with such a wide range of life experiences. From what we learned here, we have been able to explore the regions represented in the Garden—Channel Islands, Anza-Borrego Desert, Lake Tahoe, Mojave Desert, Eastern Sierra, Carrizo Plain, Elkhorn Slough and Death Valley with a deeper awareness.

Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden plays an important part on many levels in the study, conservation, preservation and appreciation of the richness of California, and I feel eternally in debt to its history, mission and future.

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NEWSLETTER OF THE RANCHO SANTA ANA BOTANIC GARDEN VOLUNTEERS



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