

# Marsh Mailing

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Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center

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Marsh Mailing is also available in full color at [www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com](http://www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com)

## Weeds in My Sandwich

Suzan Hubert, President



Suzan Hubert

Some folks have a big garden, some have a terrace or patio garden with pots; and we all get weeds. Weeds, by my definition, are anything I don't want growing in my garden. Successful plants in my garden have to survive on natural rain and twice weekly watering. Your garden, your rules, but be sure to follow

your community's drought rules for watering.

In the Preserve we have a unique definition of weeds. We preserve and restore native plants that predate European contact and we remove everything else. As far as I know, the first European visitor to this area was Juan Cabrillo from Spain who arrived in 1427. Take a moment to consider what that means the next time you walk through the Preserve. Most of the plants you see are descended from plants that were here 500+ years ago. Those plants supported a healthy civilization of Tongva people and many animals.

One of the native plants in the Preserve is White Mustard, which is a very bland species of mustard. When Father Serra came to San Diego in 1769 and began his mission-building project, he planted Black Mustard seeds from Spain everywhere he went in California. Those seeds found this climate to their liking; thus we have wild Black Mustard in abundance. Mustard is the waist-high plant with little yellow flowers we see growing in fields and alongside the roads just about everywhere.

Not surprisingly it's the source of the condiment we call mustard. My sister Jane, who is quite the urban farmer, alerted me to the website of Hank Shaw:

Hunter, Angler, Gardener, Cook@honestfood.net.  
(Ed. Note: Or, just [honestfood.net](http://honestfood.net).)

Hank knows a lot about mustard. He says, "It ain't mysterious. If you have mustard seed and water you can make mustard." If you want all the details about mustard and lots of other recipes using wild plants, visit Hank's site.

Here is some basic information about making your own mustard: In late summer/early fall you gather a whole lot of seeds, dry them, grind them to powder and add enough liquid to make a paste. Really, that's all it takes. If you don't want to collect and grind the seeds, you can just buy a can of mustard powder. The liquid you mix with the mustard powder offers you a creative opportunity. The liquid you use can be almost anything: water, beer, fruit juice or wine; each creates its own unique flavor.

There are two critical points to remember—  
Critical point #1: The temperature of the liquid makes a dramatic difference. Mustard gets its bite from a chemical inside the seeds reacting with hot or cold liquid. Cold liquid results in hot mustard, hot liquid makes mellow mustards. That's important to remember as cold liquid makes killer mustard that scorches your sinuses. Once you mix up your first batch, taste it; absolutely awful! Critical Point #2: It takes a few hours, a day or maybe two for the bitterness to go away. Let time pass, taste again and voila! Yummy mustard! Set your favorite flavor with a little bit of vinegar. Add a little sea salt to support the flavor. Once made, mustard is nearly invulnerable to deterioration.

Mustard is also one of the more powerful antimicrobial plants. When mixed with vinegar, salt and a bit of honey, it's powerful stuff. My nanny was English; she made her own mustard and every cut called for one of her mustard plasters. A mustard plaster is a dab of mustard on a cut wrapped with gauze; the original band aid! Perhaps the Tongva people from our Preserve used White Mustard to prevent infections.

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*"Weeds..." continued on page 2*

# Mystery "Bird" Exposed!

**By Suzan Hubert and Tracy Drake**

Last summer, while working at night in my upstairs home office, I began hearing an unusual bird call. It always began around 8:30 p.m. and lasted most of the night. I may be a night owl, but I am not a bird expert; and yet this bird's call reminded me of the Bobwhites I grew up listening to on Cape Cod. I knew it couldn't be a Bobwhite, as they aren't night birds. However I now had a bird call I could describe to an expert.

I brought my description to Tracy Drake, Naturalist/Manager of Madrona Marsh and together we listened to lots of bird sounds. Some were close but none were exact. It drove me crazy all summer and then in the fall it disappeared.

This year, I first heard it again very faintly on June 21, then off and on for a few days. Tracy leaves no bird mystery unsolved and asked me to text her when I heard it again, which happened on June 26 at 10 p.m. She arrived thirty minutes later and we both stood at my upstairs window listening to this weird bird. Tracy had driven over to my house in North Torrance from Long Beach so I had two big concerns. First, I was worried the bird would go silent, and second that it was just a common night bird. Neither came to pass and the mystery deepened.

Tracy is quite the expert when it comes to identifying birds by sound but had no idea which bird owned this weird call. She recorded the sound and sent it to several experts in ornithology including Kimball Garrett, Director of the Ornithology Collection at the L.A. County Natural History Museum. Most of the experts responded that they had never heard this bird call. Kimball said, "It's not a bird. It's a frog!" Sure enough, my weird bird is a species of Coquí Frog. Mystery solved by Sherlock Tracy and friends!

This tiny frog is about the size of a quarter. It is native to the Caribbean, established itself in Hawaii and has now moved into North Torrance. Google Coquí Frog and you can hear their charming call on a YouTube video. They sound like birds, right?

My sister calls them 'Mockingfrogs'—a very appropriate nickname. Coquí frogs spend the day in damp plant debris. They don't have a tadpole stage, so they don't require a body of water. Coquí Frogs lay eggs which hatch into froglets (I'm not making that up). The frogs eat snails and insects. They in turn are eaten by rats and raccoons, which are eaten by hawks and snakes.

In their native Puerto Rico they are loved, and children sing a song about them. Christine, a Puerto Rican native herself, stopped into the Nature Center and shared the words with me:

El coquí, el coquí a mi me encanta.  
Esta lindo el cantar del coquí.  
Por las noches salir acostarme.  
Me adormece cantando así.

Chorus:  
Coquí, coquí, coquí,  
Me adormece cantando así.  
Coquí, coquí, coquí,  
Me adormece cantando así.

In English that translates to:

Little coquí frog how I love you.  
How I love your beautiful song.  
In the night as I am sleeping,  
You sing to me all night long.

Chorus:

Coquí, coquí, coquí,  
I hear you singing to me.  
Coquí, coquí, coquí,  
I hear you singing to me.

So if you hear a weird bird call at night that sounds like KO QUEE, it's a bonus. A bit of the Caribbean and a piece of Hawaii came to you.

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*"Weeds..." continued from page 1*

From weeds to sandwiches, plants are astonishing. The more time I spend on the Preserve, the more I learn about our native plants, and I am a lot less likely to pull a weed before I know what I'm pulling. If you want to know more about practical and medicinal uses of native plants, join one of Connie Vadheim's "Out of the Wilds and into your Garden" classes, or just go make mustard! I've included a recipe. Let me know how that works for you.

## **Hank Shaw's Mustard Recipe** [honestfood.net](http://honestfood.net)

There are two caveats to homemade mustard: First, remember that hot water equals mellow mustard and cold water equals hot mustard. Secondly, you cannot eat it the day you make it. Mustard has to marinate to dissipate its bitterness.

6 Tablespoons of coarsely ground mustard seeds for texture and added flavor  
½ Cup mustard powder  
3 Tablespoons vinegar (cider, white, wine -- your choice)  
½ Cup liquid (water, beer, fruit juice, wine -- whatever you like)  
2 Teaspoons sea salt  
Mix it up and wait (see above).  
Optional additions: 2 Tablespoons honey, 2 Tablespoons grated fresh horseradish, or ½ Cup minced fresh herbs



# Long-awaited Bird Guide Now at Gift Shop

Finally, an easy-to-use bird guide for the novice birder at Madrona Marsh!

This wonderful book includes all the birds usually found at OUR Preserve (without all those other birds seldom seen around here).

For each bird species, there is a full-color photograph, a clear description, and an interesting fact or two.

Of special interest to the new birder, there is also a section which tells you Where To Look for each species, keyed to a Map of the Preserve (included).

All that, and it fits easily in your pocket.

Copies are 'flying' off the shelf at \$12.95

Thinking of the holidays? This will make a lovely gift.

We will sell it to experienced birders, too, and our modest profit goes to support restoration of the Preserve and our educational programs.

It's published by Friends of Madrona Marsh with extensive and exhaustive assistance from Manager Tracy Drake, staff member Dinuk Magamma and many members of the local birding community.

**Common Birds**  
of the  
**Madrona Marsh**  
**Preserve**



Published by  
**The Friends of Madrona Marsh**  
Torrance, California

## Black-headed Grosbeak

*Pheucticus melanocephalus*

SP- F    L 8.25"    WS 12.5"    WT 1.6 oz



### Description:

This grosbeak has a large triangular bill, black head, burnt-orange underparts and rump. It has a few white patches on the black wings, and when in flight, one can see yellow under the wings. They are more often heard than seen. They sound like Robins, but their song is clearer, louder, and has a faster cadence.

### Interesting facts:

Unlike other female birds, the female Black-headed Grosbeak will sing songs in the breeding season just like the male does.

### Where to look:

This bird can be heard singing high up in any of the tall trees. They are most often seen near the Meadow, in the trees that line Plaza Del Amo, and in the Kelt Area.

# New Look for the Friends' Website

Visit [www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com](http://www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com) and explore our ALL-NEW Website.

After considerable discussion and thought, the FOMM Board of Directors contracted with Denise Shiozawa, owner/operator of UmeWorks, to give the Preserve and Nature Center a more lively presence in cyberspace. Primarily the redesign improved navigation around the site and made it "mobile" (compatible with smart phones). The new "What's Sprouting" and "Special Events" features provide a quick update on the latest happenings at

Madrona. In addition, you can virtually explore the Preserve in strikingly beautiful photos, videos and slide shows.

It's definitely worth a look. (See "birds eye view" below.)

The Board wants to acknowledge Dwayne Sinclair, who made many earlier improvements to our website and has served as our webmaster for the past eight years as a donation of his time and skills to FOMM.

Thank you, Dwayne!



**What's Sprouting**  
Prairie Warbler spotted right here at Madrona Marsh by our Preserve Manager, Tracy Drake. Native to the southeastern US, this is a very rare bird for Los Angeles County with less than a dozen sightings in the county in the last 60 years!  
[View Madrona's Bird Photo Gallery.](#)

**Support Madrona Marsh**  
[DONATE NOW](#)

**SPECIAL EVENT**  
**NATIVE PLANT SALE**  
October 3, Friday  
5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.  
For members of California Native Plant Society, Friends of Madrona Marsh and Palos Verdes Peninsula Land

## The Friends of Madrona Marsh...

is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation, education and aesthetics of the Madrona Marsh Preserve. The organization works in coordination with the City of Torrance, and creates, sponsors, and conducts various activities to promote the understanding, enjoyment and

# Madrona Marsh: Ordinary and Extraordinary

*Tracy Drake, Naturalist and Preserve Manager*

The weather in the first few months of summer was interesting and the weather in September has been no less interesting. The high heat of the early weeks brought along with it high humidity. The high humidity changed the look of the Preserve dramatically. Generally the Preserve is dry by mid September—the land awash with hues of gold and brown and yellow. But still, now in late September, the land is very green. Why? The humidity has delayed the evaporation of water from the soil. The moist soil continues to support many grasses, flowering plants and trees. These in turn support a host of pollinators, frogs and birds.

Seeing frogs in September is uncommon. By this time of year, most are estivating (a form of hibernation) nestled deep in cool moist areas in the tule patches that dot the wetland areas of the Preserve. This dramatic seasonal variance has had two significant impacts on the Preserve.

First, the continued moisture and growth and the animals it attracts have caused us to alter our management plans for the wetland areas. Typically by early autumn we have finished our annual tree trimming, mowing and tule clearing; but now, in the third week of September, we have only trimmed some of the trees and have just begun to mow. No tule trimming has yet been started. It is hard to know when we will finish, but in order to protect the animals, we need to wait until the land is a bit drier.

Second, the population of birds is currently very different from what it has been in recent history. Most notably, the population of Scaly-breasted Munia (formally Nutmeg Mannikin) is tremendous. Commonly we see approximately 20 of these birds on any given day in fall; on rare occasions, we may document about 60 individuals. Now, on any day, one can count 120 individuals!

More normal to September, the annual movement of birds from points north towards South America has been fun to witness. Like every year, many birds from the north or from the Great Basin area of the United States have passed through and the typical winter residents started to arrive on September 19.

For those interested in the arrival dates of these birds to the Preserve: the White-crowns arrived on September 24 in 2011, September 23 in 2012 and on September 21 in 2013. The Yellow-rumps arrived on October 3 in 2011, September 22 in 2012 and September 27 in 2013. This is a tiny data set, but isn't it amazing that the observed arrival dates for these two species varied that little over a three-year period? Especially the White-crown Sparrows,

arriving within a four-day span—on our human calendar, that is.

Of note there was a beautiful Prairie Warbler who visited the Preserve from September 7<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup>. It had remarkable fidelity to its favorite spots on the Preserve as it moved from the willows to the sunflower field west of the bridge that crosses the middle road. This bird represents number 261 on the Preserve life list and pulled in visitors from several states and from all over Southern California. Prairie Warblers are rare in our area.

According to eBird, the national database of observations, our Prairie was only the fifth seen in the South Bay since 1993. On Nov. 6, 1993, Don Sterba found one at Sand Dune Park; on Feb 16, 2004 Kimball Garrett found one at the Gardena Willows. Dick Barth found one on Oct 10, 2001 at Wilson Park and found one again Aug 31, 2007 at Deforest Park in Long Beach.

Over the years birds have been wonderful ambassadors for Madrona. As an island of habitat in a sea of humanity that, from the point of view of birds, seems to be a good place to stop and visit for a while. People like Shirley Wells, Mitch Heindel, David Moody, Kevin Larson, Ron Melin and Martin Byhower started birding the Marsh in the seventies and set the stage for people to notice that some really great birds visit—every year.

About twenty years ago David Moody became the keeper of all our data and continues still. As more and more people in the area become interested in birding, more people come to the Preserve to learn about our local birds. A few years ago, Suzan Hubert came across a book made to help fledgling birders learn about local mountain birds and brought the idea to Madrona. It took a lot of work and the combined effort of more than a dozen staff and volunteers, but it finally happened. We published the book and it is now available in the gift shop.

The book was in all, a labor of love. It represents and honors the folks who have, through more than forty years, dedicated parts of their lives to make the Preserve a rich and healthy habitat. It honors those giants—the phenomenal birders that literally put Madrona on the map as a place to see both ordinary and extraordinary birds any time of the year. And it honors those who will be birders in the future, as they use the guide to learn about the birds common to Madrona Marsh—and to discover some interesting fun facts as they explore our beautiful Preserve.

(See page 3 for a preview of the new book.)

## Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center\*

### Schedule of Events for October 2014 through January 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			10 am-Adult Weeders <u>1</u>	10 am-Tyke Hike-donation 10:30-Prop. Society. <u>2</u>	10 am--12 n-3 Friday Fun** 5-7 pm-Native Plant Sale-(Members) <u>3</u>	8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 9am-2pm-Native Plant Sale-Public welcome 7:30 pm-Star Party <u>4</u>
<u>5</u>	<b>CLOSED</b> <u>6</u>	8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders Vadheim-no class Vadheim/Sattler Exhibit begins*** <u>7</u>	8 am-Bird Walk/ Bob Shanman 10 am-Adult Weeders 6:30-8:30 pm-FOMM Board Meeting <u>8</u>	10:30-12:30- Propagation Society <u>9</u>	10 am--12 n- Friday Fun** <u>10</u>	8:45am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 10 am-Turtle&Tortoise Day <u>11</u>
2-4 pm-2nd Sun.Science, "Fantastic Spiders," fee <u>12</u>	<b>CLOSED</b> <u>13</u>	10 am-Adult Weeders 1-2pm-Naturalists Program <u>14</u>	10 am-Adult Weeders <u>15</u>	10:30-12:30- Propagation Society <u>16</u>	10 am--12n- Friday Fun** <u>17</u>	8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 9-11am-Intro to Birding 6:30-8:30pm-Night Life(fee) <u>18</u>
<u>19</u>	<b>CLOSED</b> <u>20</u>	8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders 7 pm-Audubon Mtg. <u>21</u>	10 am-Adult Weeders <u>22</u>	10:30-12:30- Propagation Society <u>23</u>	10 am--12 n-24 Friday Fun** 6-8pmVadheim/Sattler Recept*** <u>24</u>	8:30-12n-Make a Difference 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 10 am-Nature Walk <u>25</u>
10 am- Nature Walk <u>26</u>	<b>CLOSED</b> <u>27</u>	10 am-Adult Weeders <u>28</u>	10 am-Adult Weeders <u>29</u>	10:30-12:30- Propagation Society <u>30</u>	10 am--12 n- Friday Fun** <u>31</u>	

### OCTOBER

\*All activities and classes meet at the Madrona Marsh Nature Center, located at 3201 Plaza del Amo (between Maple and Madrona) on the north side of the street. \*\*No charge for Friday Fun, but reservations are required. \*\*\*See Artists Corner, page 9. For latest event information, see our newly updated website, [www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com](http://www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com).

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 10 am-12 n- " Planning a Pot"-Dr. Vadheim <u>1</u>
4-6pm-Vadheim/ Sattler Reception*** <u>2</u>	<b>CLOSED</b> <u>3</u>	8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders 6:30-pm,"Planning a Pot"-Dr.Vadheim <u>4</u>	10 am-Adult Weeders <u>5</u>	10 am-Tyke Hike-donation 10:30-12:30- Prop. Society <u>6</u>	10 am--12 n- Friday Fun** <u>7</u>	8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 9am-Binocular Seminar 10:30am-"Sunsations" <u>8</u>
2 pm-2nd Sunday Science-"Games & Toys of Tongva"(fee) <u>9</u>	<b>CLOSED</b> <u>10</u>	10 am-Adult Weeders <u>11</u>	8 am-Bird Walk/ Bob Shanman 10 am-Adult Weeders 10am-Art in Nature(fee) 6:30-8:30 pm-FOMM Board Meeting <u>12</u>	10:30-12:30-13 Propagation Society Vadheim/ Sattler Exhibit Ends*** <u>13</u>	10 am--12n-14 Friday Fun** <u>14</u>	8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service <u>15</u>
<u>16</u>	<b>CLOSED</b> <u>17</u>	8:30 am-Tour d' Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders DeRidder ExhibitBegins 7 pm-Audubon Mtg. <u>18</u>	10 am-Adult Weeders 10am-Art in Nature(fee) <u>19</u>	10:30-12:30-20 Propagation Society <u>20</u>	10 am-12 n Friday Fun** <u>21</u>	8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 10 am-Nature Walk 6:30pm-Night on Preserve <u>22</u>
10a.m.- Nature Walk <u>23</u>	<b>CLOSED</b> <u>24</u>	10 am-Adult Weeders <u>25</u>	10 am-Adult Weeders <b>CLOSE AT NOON</b> <u>26</u>	<b>CLOSED FOR HOLIDAY</b> <u>27</u>	10 am--12 n- Friday Fun** <u>28</u>	8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Re- stor. & Student Service 1pm-"Flavored Vinegars..." 6:30-pm-Star Party <u>29</u>
<u>30</u>						

### NOVEMBER

# Nature Center & Gift Shop

(310)782-3989

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<u>1</u> <b>CLOSED</b>	<u>2</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>3</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>4</u> 10 am-Tyke Hike-donation 10:30-12:30-Propagation Society	<u>5</u> 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun**	<u>6</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Restor. & Student Service 10 am-"Myths, Magic..." Dr. Vadheim
<u>7</u> 1pm-Potpourri workshop(fee) 2-5, DeRidder Reception***	<u>8</u> <b>CLOSED</b>	<u>9</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders 1-2pm-Naturalists Program 6:30-Myths, Magic..." Dr. Vadheim	<u>10</u> 8 am-Bird Walk/ 10 am-Adult Weeders 6:30 pm-FOMM Mtg.	<u>11</u> 10:30--12:30-Propagation Society	<u>12</u> 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun**	<u>13</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Restor. & Student Service 9am-Wreath Making 8am-Bird Count Class 1-3pm-Nature Origami
<u>14</u>	<u>15</u> <b>CLOSED</b>	<u>16</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders 7 pm-Audubon Mtg.	<u>17</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>18</u> 10:30-12:30-Propagation Society	<u>19</u> 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun**	<u>20</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Restor. & Student Service
<u>21</u> All-Day Bird Count	<u>22</u> <b>CLOSED</b>	<u>23</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>24</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders <b>CENTER &amp; PRESERVE WILL CLOSE AT NOON</b>	<u>25</u> <b>CLOSED FOR HOLIDAY</b>	<u>26</u> <b>CLOSED FOR HOLIDAY</b>	<u>27</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Restor. & Student Service 10 am-Nature Walk
<u>28</u> 10 am-Nature Walk	<u>29</u> <b>CLOSED</b> 1pm-Photog. forTeens	<u>30</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders 1pm-PhotogforTeens	<u>31</u> <b>CENTER &amp; PRESERVE WILL CLOSE AT NOON</b>			

## DECEMBER

\*All activities and classes meet at the Madrona Marsh Nature Center, located at 3201 Plaza del Amo (between Maple and Madrona) on the north side of the street. \*\*No charge for Friday Fun, but reservations are required. \*\*\*See Artists Corner, page 9 For latest event information, see our newly upgraded website, [www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com](http://www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com).

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				<u>1</u> <b>CLOSED FOR HOLIDAY</b>	<u>2</u> 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun**	<u>3</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Restor. & Student. Service 10 am-12 n- TBA-Dr. Vadheim
<u>4</u>	<u>5</u> <b>CLOSED</b>	<u>6</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders 6:30-pm, TBA-Dr. Vadheim	<u>7</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>8</u> 10:30-12:30-Prop. Society	<u>9</u> 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun** DeRidder Exhibit Ends***	<u>10</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Restor. & Student. Service
<u>11</u> 2 pm-2nd Sun. Science "Fossils, Stories of Stones"(fee)	<u>12</u> <b>CLOSED</b>	<u>13</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders 1-2pm-Naturalists Program Hines Exhibit Begins***	<u>14</u> 8 am-Bird Walk/ Bob Shanman 10 am-Adult Weeders 6:30-8:30 pm-FOMM Board Meeting	<u>15</u> 10:30-12:30-Propagation Society	<u>16</u> 10 am--12n-Friday Fun**	<u>17</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Restor. & Student. Service 10am-Art in Nature (fee)
<u>18</u>	<u>19</u> <b>CLOSED</b>	<u>20</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders 7 pm-Audubon Mtg.	<u>21</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>22</u> 10:30-12:30-Propagation Society	<u>23</u> 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun**	<u>24</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Restor. & Student. Service 10 am-Nature Walk 6:30 pm-Star Party
<u>25</u> 10a.m.-Nature Walk	<u>26</u> <b>CLOSED</b>	<u>27</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders 10 am-Home School Nature Class	<u>28</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders 10 1m-Home School Nature Class	<u>29</u> 10:30-12:30-Propagation Society	<u>30</u> 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun** Hines Reception***	<u>31</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Restor. & Student Service

## JANUARY

# Time to Plant Drought Tolerant Natives

Tony Baker of the California Native Plant Society offers these words of advice: Fall is the optimum season for successful planting of natives as the days are shortening, temperatures are cooling and rain is on the horizon—we can hope.

You can help save our precious resource—WATER—by planting drought tolerant natives and cut your water bill. It is estimated that 70 percent of the water that is diverted to the Los Angeles area is used in the home landscape. You will attract wildlife such as birds, butterflies, bumblebees and more with habitat friendly native plants. In fact many of our local species are dependent on our local native plants. Enjoy a garden buzzing with activity.

You can avoid the pesticide and fertilizer aisle at the local home center because natives don't need them and the wildlife that you are attracting will have a safe harbor. At the same time you will avoid tainting our ocean with polluted runoff.

Maintenance requirements are low so you can sit back and enjoy your native garden with its colorful flowers and sweetly scented foliage. Pull up a chair and pour a glass of Lemonadeberryade.

Celebrate our Natural Heritage by planting natives in your garden that have called Southern California home for millennia, but many of which have been declining in the wild. Thousands of plants are available for sun and shade/small and large.

Some examples are:

- Wildflowers add annual color.
- Ground covers such as Beach Strawberry and Fescue Grasses are great under trees.

## **Save The Date** **February 28, 2015**

Well-known horticulturist and California Native Plant expert, Carol Bornstein, will present “An Embarrassment of Riches—Choice Natives for Southern California Gardens” at the Madrona Marsh Nature Center on Saturday, February 28, 2015 from 10 a.m. to noon.

Carol Bornstein is Director of the Nature Gardens at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, where she oversees the long-term care and development of this newly created, 3.5-acre landscape. For nearly 30 years, she was horticulturist at the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden.

As co-author of two books, the national award-winning *California Native Plants for the Garden* and more recently *Reimagining the California Lawn: Water-conserving Plants, Practices, and Designs*, she championed the benefits of designing gardens in harmony with nature. She continues to advocate for sustainable, regionally appropriate landscaping and to share her knowledge of plants native to California and other mediterranean regions.

- Perennial Milkweed and California Fuchsia will attract butterflies and hummingbirds.
- Ornamental grasses add a soft visual element to the garden.
- Sages with their fragrant foliage and Ceanothus both stand out for their beautiful flowers.
- Manzanitas have a beautiful structure and urn shaped flowers followed by edible berries.
- Buckwheats are irresistible to nectar seekers.
- California Poppies add a splash of color and attract bumblebees for its pollen.
- Trees like Toyon and Elderberry are magnets for insects and birds.

## Reflecting on a Friend

Tracy Drake

Usually I watched him from a distance though I don't really know why. . . . Maybe it was because I always thought he might be embarrassed if I caught him being so gentle and sweet—to the tortoises. But then again, maybe it was just me. He would likely have been okay with it because that's just how he was. Eric was solid and clear about what he believed in—what he simply knew was right. It did not even matter if no one else believed in the same things or projects. He remained steadfast and supportive. I admired that in him—that unwavering knowing that brought both a grace and a quiet confidence which permeated all he did. I don't think there has ever been one who cared about the tortoises like Eric did.

In time, I learned that his love of the tortoises was simply a reflection of who he was. On the mornings he volunteered, he took the time to clean and replace the often rather “poopy” papers on the bottom of the tank. He then would reset the environment—making sure it included fresh food, water, comfortable sleeping quarters and safe places for his reptile charges to wander around their enclosure. He paid attention to every detail. Many people like the tortoises but their care for them often stops just short of cleaning up after them.

Eric's care and attention to detail also helped us get our new weather station, a \$25,000 grant for the native plant garden, and several illustrations in our upcoming book, **The Story of the Madrona Marsh**.

I'm gonna miss Eric, miss that nice feeling I'd get every time he visited. It was like seeing my favorite uncle walk in the door with a smile that said, “I'm glad to see you—to see this place—and I'm proud of all you've done and are trying to do!”

Thanks for your support Eric Carson, we will always honor your memory . . . .

*Ed.Note: Long-time Nature Center Volunteer and former Friends Board member Eric Carson passed away unexpectedly in August. Like Tracy, we will all miss Eric and his calm, thorough approach to the perplexities of life.*

# "California Colors..." Art Show Debuts

Ever wonder if California's colorful plants could be used for dyes? A new art show at the Madrona Nature Center Gallery, "California Colors: Fiberworks Using Local Dyes," features fiber-based items dyed with California native plant and insect dyes.

Artists Barbara Sattler and Constance M. Vadheim extract color from flowers, leaves, bark and roots, then dye cloth/ yarn/fiber to create wall hangings, needlepoint, clothing and knitted works.

## Artists Corner

View the works of local artists portraying the beauty of the Madrona Marsh. Artists and photographers inspired by the beauty of the Madrona Marsh are regularly on display at the Nature Center.

October 7-November 14 - **"California Colors: Fiberworks Using Local Dyes"** An Exhibit by **Dr. Connie Vadheim and Babara Sattler**. Artist Receptions Friday, October 24, 6:30-8:30 p.m. and Sunday, November 2, 4-6 p.m.

November 18 - January 9, **An Exhibit of Illustrations**, by **Estelle DeRidder**. Artist Reception, Friday December 7, 2-5 p.m.

January 13 - February 27, **"Impressions of Life,"** A Photography Exhibit by **Altha Hines**. Artist Reception - Friday, January 30, 6:30-9:30 p.m.

## Gift Shop Needs Volunteers

**The Friends are in great need of volunteers willing to spend 3-4 hours once or twice a month in our Nature Center Gift Shop. The shop is open Wednesday-Sunday and during special events at the Nature Center.**

**Call 310-326-2774 and leave a message for Bobbie.**

*Marsh Mailing* is a quarterly newsletter designed to provide information about activities and upcoming events at or relating to the Madrona Marsh Preserve. Contributions are welcome and may be e-mailed to Diane Gonsalves at [gonwild2@yahoo.com](mailto:gonwild2@yahoo.com) or Bill Arrowsmith, [FrاندBill@att.net](mailto:FrاندBill@att.net) or dropped off or mailed to the Nature Center, P.O. Box 5078, Torrance, CA 90510.

The show runs from October 7 through November 13. You can meet the artists and learn more about natural dyeing at two artist's receptions: Friday, October 24 (6-8 p.m.) and Sunday November 2, (4-6 p.m.)



*Fiber Art uses native plant dyes.*

## Donations of \$100 or More

Date	Donor	Amount	Comments
June	Theodore Kotzin	\$160	
June	The Vinters	\$100	
June	Juno & Ethel Uyematsu	\$100	
June	The Standifer's	\$100	
June	Lisa Hansen	\$500	
June	Torrance Teachers Association	\$300	
July	Lenore Bloss	\$100	
July	The Kurosumi's	\$120	
July	F1 Key Foundation	\$200	
July	Bobbie Snyder	\$500	
August	Hermosa Garden Club	\$300	
August	Sharon Angelos	\$100	ITG Employee Matching Funds
August	Cindy Shaw	\$100	

*Ellen Peterson*

# South Bay Native Plant Corner

Dr. Connie Vadheim, CSU, Dominguez Hills



## California Goldenrod *Solidago vetulina ssp. californica*

Is your garden looking a little bland? Fall is the dormant season for many local native plants. This means that local gardens are a symphony of browns and tans—lovely, but subtle. It also means that there's little to eat for native pollinators and birds.

Fortunately, several plants in the Sunflower family are at their peak in September and October. If you've been to the Preserve recently, you can't have missed the tall Annual Sunflowers and the shrubby Goldenbushes with their bright yellow flowers. If you look closely, you will see butterflies, native bees and many other insects on the flowers. These sunflowers are important habitat plants in fall.

If the local Goldenbushes are too large for your garden, consider planting a smaller sunflower like the perennial Goldenrods. California goldenrod is native to our area and particularly well suited to local gardens. It has medium green leaves that are sometimes hairy. The spring leaves are large and clustered low on the plant. In summer, plants send up several two to four foot tall stalks with smaller leaves.

Goldenrods are fall bloomers. Hundreds of small, golden-yellow sunflowers are clustered wand-like along the upright stalks. This explains the common name 'goldenrod.' The flowers are a magnet for all sorts of interesting insects from small butterflies, bees (including tiny native

species), flower flies, beetles and others. In fact, a goldenrod plant is a great place to sit with children and watch the insect parade! Later, the seeds are enjoyed by the smaller seed-eating birds like finches.

Like most sunflowers, California goldenrod does best in full sun, but can be grown under tall trees (half-day of sun). It grows in any local soil and particularly favors clays. While quite drought tolerant, goldenrods prefer—and will flower best—with occasional summer water. After blooming is done in late fall, prune plants back, almost to the ground. New sprouts will emerge with the spring rains.

California goldenrod is a spreader, particularly if given plenty of water. It's an opportunist, like many of our local wetland plants. You can contain it by planting it in a planter or container—or by giving it less water.



California goldenrod is a very useful plant. Dried powdered leaves are used for skin sores and fresh or dried leaves make a soothing tea. All parts of the plant make lovely yellow dyes. To learn more about California

goldenrod see: <http://mother-natures-backyard.blogspot.com/2014/09/plant-of-month-september-california.html>

Learn more about local native plants at our "Out of the Wilds and into Your Garden" series on the first Saturday and following Tuesday of each month. Plant Information Sheets and Plant Lists are also available at the Nature Center.

# Species of September 2014

Compiled by Tracy Drake, Mark Rubke, Anthony Strangarity, Ron Melin and David Moody

## Birds

Canada Goose	Acorn Woodpecker	House Wren	<i>Clay-collared Sparrow</i>
Mallard	Downy Woodpecker	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	<i>Brewer's Sparrow</i>
Great Egret	American Kestrel	<b>Western Bluebird</b>	Savannah Sparrow
Green Heron	Yellow-chevroned Parakeet	Swainson's Thrush	<b>Song Sparrow</b>
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Mitered Parakeet	Hermit Thrush	Lincoln's Sparrow
Cooper's Hawk	Willow Flycatcher	European Starling	White-crowned Sparrow
Osprey	Pacific Slope Flycatcher	<i>Phainopepla</i>	Western Tanager
Red-shouldered Hawk	Black Phoebe	Orange-crowned Warbler	Black-headed Grosbeak
Red-tailed Hawk	Say's Phoebe	<i>Virginia's Warbler</i>	<i>Blue Grosbeak</i>
Western Gull	Cassin's Kingbird	<i>MacGillivray's Warbler</i>	Lazuli Bunting
California Gull	Western Kingbird	Common Yellowthroat	Red-winged Blackbird
Herring Gull	Cassin's Vireo	<b>Yellow Warbler</b>	<b>House Finch</b>
Rock Pigeon	Warbling Vireo	Yellow-rumped Warbler	<b>Lesser Goldfinch</b>
Eurasian Collared-Dove	Western Scrub Jay	<i>Prairie Warbler</i>	<b>American Goldfinch</b>
Mourning Dove	American Crow	Black-throated Gray Warbler	European Goldfinch
Vaux's Swift	Common Raven	Townsend's Warbler	<b>House Sparrow</b>
White-throated Swift	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	Wilson's Warbler	<b>Scaly-breasted Munia</b>
Anna's Hummingbird	Barn Swallow	<b>California Towhee</b>	<i>Italics = rare</i>
Allen's Hummingbird	Bushtit	Chipping Sparrow	<b>Bold = bred this year</b>

## Butterflies

Monarch	<i>Buckeye</i>	Marine Blue	Sandhill Skipper
Queen	Western Tiger Swallowtail	Acmon Blue	Checkered White Skipper
Gulf Fritillary	Giant Swallowtail	Umber Skipper	
Painted Lady	Gray Hairstreak	Eufala Skipper	<i>Italics = rare for this season</i>
West Coast Lady	Western Pygmy Blue	Fieri Skipper	

## Dragonflies

Common Green Darner	Variiegated Meadowhawk	Wandering Glider	Red Saddlebags
Blue-eyed Darner	Flame Skimmer	Black Saddlebags	Blue Dasher

# Friends of Madrona Marsh

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We appreciate your support. Thank you! *Your donations are tax deductible. Please consider a donation to FOMM in your will or trust!*

Annual Membership: \_\_\_\_\_New \_\_\_\_\_Renewal

Individual \_\_\_\_\_\$20 Family\_\_\_\_\_ \$30 Youth (under 18)/Senior (over 65)\_\_\_\_\_ \$10

Patron \_\_\_\_\_\$50 Club/Organization \_\_\_\_\_\$75 Business/Industry\_\_\_\_\_ \$150

Lifetime Membership\_\_\_\_\_ \$500 Amount Enclosed\_\_\_\_\_

Please send your donation or offer of services to:

**Friends of Madrona Marsh, P.O. Box 5078, Torrance, CA 90510**

FOMM is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation.

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Address \_\_\_\_\_

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I will volunteer for: (Gift Shop, Reception Desk, other) \_\_\_\_\_

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