CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- **Friday, April 15, 1PM, Sustainable Landscaping Seminar**, Solano College, (See Page 1)
- **Saturday, April 16, 9AM, Earth Day at Botanic Garden**, (See Page 3)
- **Saturday, April 16, 9AM, Earth Day in Vallejo, Downtown Farmers Market**, (See Page 3)
- **Monday, April 25, 7PM, Chapter Meeting, Native Plants for the Garden**, (See Article Below)
- **Saturday, May 7, 9AM, Spring Native Plant Sale, Benicia Community Garden** (See Page 3)
- **Monday, May 23, Chapter Meeting, Native Oaks: Threats & Opportunities**, (See Page 3)
- **Plant Propagation Workdays – Vallejo, Every Thursday and Sunday, 10AM–12, Vallejo Sanitation District**, Call Becky at 429-2494
- **Forrest Deanker Botanic Garden Workdays**, every Saturday, 9:30-11:30, Benicia State Rec Area

Sustainable Landscaping

*By Alison Fleck – Simply Perfect Gardens*

Many of my clients would like a sustainable garden, knowing that it is better for the environment, but they still ask me “what exactly is a sustainable garden?”

The first correct answer is simple and straight forward. A sustainable landscape is a landscape that uses the least and produces the most. This is MY take on the concept; I am known to simplify things, so let’s break it down a bit. I will give some examples of sustainable practices, this is not a complete list but it will begin to give a flavor of the concept. A sustainable garden will:

1. Either not disturb the native soil, or will build a more healthy soil.
2. Keep as many natural resources on-site as possible.
3. Use as little irrigation as possible.
4. Provide food gardens for the owner or neighborhood
5. Use local and/or recycled materials.
6. Use native plants to support local pollinators
7. Have on-site composting
8. Allow as much storm water to stay on site as is safe.
9. Not cost too much to install or maintain.

Now, let’s look at some of the details.

1. Most people live on property that has been disturbed while building the home. That means the soil might not be the best for even native plants. Some plantings need soil amendments, some do not. Any soil will improve over time if a mulch layer is applied after planting.

2. If you are cutting into the soil to create a path, try to keep the soil on-site and use it for forming mounds and swales. The mounds can be made to host special plants and will give the garden areas of interest. If you are removing concrete, it can often be used somewhere else on the property as a retaining wall.

3. For irrigation, a drip system is best when ever possible. A pop up sprinkler head with a 7’ throw can use 3 gallons of water per minute. A drip head for a

Native Plants for Gardens

*Native Plants for the Garden* will be the topic of discussion at the Jepson Chapter’s General Membership meeting on April 25. Laura Hanson, Principal Vegetation Ecologist and Production Manager for Watershed Nursery, will be demonstrating the many values of using local California native plants in a home garden. She will showcase a series of plants that provide aesthetic appeal, habitat to local critters, low water use and low maintenance. Many of these plants will be available for sale at the Chapter’s Spring Native Plant Sale on May 7th.

Laura received her MS in Environmental Science at Cal State Hayward where she studied the ecology of eelgrass habitats in the Bay. Since 2001, Laura has been a part owner of The Watershed Nursery and is dedicated to growing site-specific native plants.

The meeting is free, open to the public and will begin at 7pm at the Benicia Public Library, 150 East L Street in Benicia. Call 745-4675 for more info.

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shrub can use half a gallon per hour. While you are considering your landscape, the less lawn you plant, the better! Some drought tolerant plants will do just fine if only watered for the first two years.

4. Even though a food garden will use extra water, if you grow your own food, it does not need to be trucked in and that is a good thing! Go organic, or at the least use an integrated pest management approach to control unwanted bugs and diseases – which reduces pesticide use.

5. Use recycled products, like Trex. Trex is a decking material made of recycled plastic and wood. You should know where all the materials for your garden are from. Stone can come from all over the world, but local stone can be as nice as the imported stuff.

6. There are local birds, bees and butterflies that are best supported by native plants. If you have some local color in your garden, you can have more live entertainment in your garden too.

7. You can create quite a bit of compost annually with a simple compost pile. Composting is even faster with a composting barrel, but a simple system is inexpensive.

8. This storm water thing is all the rage. I will say clearly that you need to be careful with your site drainage. Involve a professional if you are thinking of rerouting any significant amount of water. With that said, if you can capture some run off in swales, it can drain into ground and improve the overall health of local trees.

9. A well designed sustainable landscape will be easy to maintain. It should do well with a bit less water. It should need less trimming and should be less susceptible to insect and disease attacks.

Finally, this should be a landscape that is pretty to you. You can have a style of garden that pleases you and include many of the traditional elements found in a home garden, it is just meant to be done with an eye toward making the most of what we have so there might be enough left for the next people who come along.

For more information about sustainable gardening, attend the free sustainable landscaping seminar on April 16, from 1 to 3:30 pm at Solano Community College in Fairfield. The seminar is sponsored by the Master Gardeners of Solano County, who will show how gardeners can take steps described above to create and maintain a sustainable landscape. To sign up, contact Jennifer Baumbach at 784-1321 or jmbaumbach@ucdavis.edu.

Events of Others

SPRING BRINGS HIKES

Spring hiking season is upon us. There are too many hikes in and around Solano County to list individually, so this article will only provide websites.

- Solano Land Trust, www.solanolandtrust.org/activitiesEvents.php
- Stebbins Cold Canyon Reserve, Solano County http://nrs.ucdavis.edu/stebbins/guides/guide_schedule.htm
- Marin, http://www.marin.edu/cnps/FieldTrips.html
- Sonoma, http://www.cnpsmmb.org/
- Santa Clara County, http://www.cnps-scv.org/

For farther flung floriferous adventures, check out the newsletters of CNPS chapters elsewhere in the state at http://cnps.org/cnps/chapters/list.php Most have extensive lists of hikes and contact information. To maximize your chances of being in the right place at the right time for spring wildflowers, you might want to periodically check the wildflower hotline (818) 768-3533 or online http://www.theodorepayne.org/hotline.html

SPRING BRINGS GARDEN TOURS

Here are three self-guided home garden tours that feature California native plants, are water-wise, and wildlife friendly. All require registration in advance.

- Going Native Garden Tour in Santa Clara Valley and Peninsula, April 17, 10am to 4pm, Free, www.gngt.org
- Napa Bay Friendly Garden Tour, 9 gardens in Napa Fee: $10/household to obtain map for the self guided tour. www.bayfriendlycoalition.org/GardenTour.shtml
- Bringing Back The Natives Garden Tour in Alameda and Contra Costa counties, May 1, 10am to 5 pm www.bringingbackthenatives.net

NATIVE GRASSLANDS WORKSHOP

For a 4th consecutive year, the California Native Grasslands Association will team up with Hedgerow Farms to provide hands-on learning about native grasses and grassland restoration in Winters on April 15. Learn from expert instructors, be immersed in a wide variety of grassland projects, and enjoy networking with a diverse group of people who share a common interest in California grasslands. Fees: $60 CNGA members / $75 non-members / $35 students w ID. Information online at www.cnga.org or call 530-661-2280
Jepson Chapter Activities

**EARTH DAY AT THE BOTANIC GARDEN**
The Forest Deaner Botanic Garden is proud to be a part of the California State Parks Foundation’s 14th Annual Earth Day Restoration and Cleanup program on Saturday, April 16. The schedule of events includes:

- 9am to Noon, plant and tend the Botanic Garden. All ages and skills are welcome we will have a range of activities you can choose from. Come dressed to get dirty, bring hat, sun screen and gloves.
- Noon, free lunch will be provided by Fresh Choice. Following lunch, there will be an optional guided hike in the park; leaving around 1pm for about two hours.

Meet at the Botanic Garden in the Benicia State Recreation Area off Interstate 780 between Benicia and Vallejo. Free parking for volunteers (fees waived by California State Parks). Please carpool as parking is somewhat limited.

Register online at [www.calparks.org](http://www.calparks.org), select Benicia. Registration is encouraged so we can plan for sufficient activities and lunches. Or just show up ready to help.

Pacific Gas and Electric is the event sponsor, and the Benicia Tree Foundation and Benicia State Parks Association who are helping with the day’s activities. Additionally the Benicia Plein Air Gallery artists will be painting in the park, and Arts Benicia will help launch our Botanic Garden photo contest.

**EARTH DAY IN VALLEJO**
Vallejo will celebrate Earth Day on April 16 during the Farmer’s Market on Georgia Street. Details of the event will appear on the website [www.valcorerecycling.org](http://www.valcorerecycling.org). The Jepson Chapter will be there selling plants and promoting CNPS. If you would like to help out at the booth please call Mary Frances Kelly Poh at 745-5461.

Activities start at 9am and include:
- Jugglers & performances;
- Raffles & door prizes;
- Kids craft projects, games, and petting zoo;
- California native plant sale at Val San booth;
- Exchange your mercury thermometer for a free digital thermometer at Val San booth; and
- Exchange your incandescent light bulb for a free twisty florescent bulb (limit 5/person) at VALCORE booth.

**MAY MEETING FOCUS ON NATIVE OAKS**
Our Conservation Chair, Dr. Ted Swiecki, will discuss threats to California's oaks posed by pests, diseases, and land management practices. Actions to counter these threats and restore oak woodlands will also be discussed. Details for this May 23rd meeting will be provided in the next newsletter in May.

**CHAPTER NATIVE PLANT SALE IN MAY**
California native plants will be offered at our Chapter’s Spring Plant Sale on Saturday, May 7th at the Benicia Community Garden located at the corner of E. 2nd St. and Military East. Sales begin at 9am. Help publicize the sale by posting the enclosed flyer where it can be seen.

CNPS members will provide advice on plant selection and care, and answer your garden questions. Books, posters and other resources will be available too.

Check the Chapter website after April 25 for a list of plants for sale. Many of these plants can be seen by visiting the Botanic Garden in the Benicia State Recreation Area. Come at 9:30am on April 23 and Steve will show them to you. Plants have markers so you can also visit on your own ($6 state parking fee)

We need helpers for the sale, particularly to move plants to the site on Friday and back to the propagation area on Saturday afternoon. Some of our regular volunteers won’t be available. Call Sue at 747-4815 if you can help.

**Spring Plant Sales by Others**
- April 30, 9am-1pm, UC Davis Arboretum, Featuring plants for color, texture, fragrance - some natives, Free parking in visitor lot 55. Arboretum Teaching Nursery on Garrod Dr, Davis, (530) 752-4880.
- April 16th, 10am-3pm, East Bay Regional Parks Botanic Garden, Anza View Road, Tilden Regional Park, Berkeley. [www.nativeplants.org](http://www.nativeplants.org)
- April 16th, 8am-Noon, Solano Resource Conservation District, Spring Plant Sale, 6390 Lewis Rd, Vacaville, [www.solanorcd.org](http://www.solanorcd.org)
- May 5th, 8am-8pm, May 6th, 8am-5pm, and May 7th, 9am-2pm, Horticulture Club of Solano Community College, (some natives), 4000 Suisun Valley Rd. Horticulture Bldg. 1000, easy parking in Lot 6, 486-0719, avantgarden@sbcglobal.net
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Mail with check to CNPS, 2707 K Street, Suite 1, Sacramento, CA 95816, or you can join or
renew automatically year after year via the website www.cnps.org and click on JOIN.