



Santa Maria, California “Where Natural History comes to Life”

MEADOWLARK

The Spring Equinox 2022 Newsletter

Our Mission is to inspire and educate our community through regional collections and to promote the discovery and appreciation of the natural world.

COME CELEBRATE EARTH DAY WITH US!

APRIL 24, 2022 • 12 NOON TO 3 PM

Our theme this Earth Day 2022 is... **“Yard Transformation, a little bit for Nature”**

Check out the great article on page 3 by our Nature consultant, David Kisner, on how to go about this. And watch for more information about another backyard that is also being transformed in a later newsletter.

12 Noon, Reverend Robert “Bob” Isip, Invocation. Earth Day Conservation Awarded by NHM

12:00 to 3PM, enjoy lunch. Delicious tacos.

Check out (books) from the Library Bookmobile. Also check out Los Flores Ranch Exhibit & “Little Bear” the smallest horse in CA.

1 to 2PM, have a seat and enjoy . . .



- 2 to 3pm** • Guided tours of the museum • Make flower bombs with Evelyn
- How to water bees in your garden • Free plant starts from Plantel Nursery
- Water conservation info from the City • Make pinecone birdfeeders
- Music by Mr. Bigger’s Ukelele Band of kids

FREE • FREE • FREE • FREE • FREE



NHM President's Report

My big 85th March birthday took me, my sister, Annie and my husband Clif, to meet up in Santa Barbara with daughter and son-in-law, and friends. If you get a chance to visit another museum, I highly recommend the Vincent Van Gogh exhibit at the Museum of Art in Santa Barbara. Thinking of you, our NHM members, that leads me to one of Van Gogh's quotes: "Great things are done by a series of small things brought together". Dear members, how great that you have stayed with us for many years! Our numbers have grown a bit, so instead of taking up space listing you in the newsletter, I will be sending you a personal reminder of your 2022 dues renewal on the anniversary of your 2021 renewal. Don't worry, I and our treasurer, Nancy, keep good track of membership, and we appreciate your continued support to keep the museum open. **See you soon on Earth Day at the museum, Sun. April 24th • 12 to 3pm!**

— Judy Garrett



Education Report

Plans are being made for summer visits and United Way's summer program for students which will add to the education of our young community. I'm working with SMBSD for plans for future 4th and 5th grade student classes to tour the museum in the fall. Information for signing up for tours of the museum will be sent to the schools.

— Suzanne Hajnik

ONE MILLION PENNY PROJECT



At the Grand Re-opening on October 3, 2021 we began the Penny project again. So people, please bring your pennies and other change to the jug in the front room of the museum. Someday we'd like to have a drop box out front for when we're not open. If anyone wants to take on that project let us know.

Remember

1,000,000 pennies = \$10,000

That would help us hire long term office help especially with school tour tasks. This museum was meant for children! Visitors have stopped by and told us they had visited when they were going to school and still remember it today!

Membership Donor Form

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, zip _____

Phone _____

e-mail _____

___ Hummingbird.	\$25 Individual
___ *California Quail.	\$50 Family
___ *Meadowlark.	\$100
___ *Great Horned Owl.	\$250
___ *Golden Eagle.	\$500
___ *Red-Tailed Hawk.	\$1,000
___ *California Condor.	\$2,000

*These membership categories include family members.

A T-Rex Birthday party at the Museum!



- Pin the tail on the T-Rex
- A decorated birthday cake
- NHM Nature Journal Activities
- We will make fun nature crafts
- T-Rex Nancy might even appear!
- All for \$200 donation to museum



Have you seen Nancy our T-Rex around town lately? She appeared at the Chamber's Expo where we had a booth in February at the Radisson Hotel. And she was spotted at Hancock College helping the museum ladies search for volunteer docents! Hope you get to see her, maybe at our Earth Day Celebration?

Coming soon inside the museum.
The NEW Steelhead Trout/Beaver Exhibit!

Check your email or www.smnaturalhistory.org for this newsletter in beautiful color!



NHM Nature Consultant

YARD TRANSFORMATION, *a little bit for nature*

My wife and I moved to this area about 15 years ago and promptly started killing our lawn. We are both biologists and wanted to create a yard that was “more natural” and had native plants that we found interesting. Our approach was a bit extreme and is definitely not the right path for everyone, but almost every yard has room for “a bit of nature”.

Transforming your yard has a number of benefits including reducing your water bill, decreasing the area that needs to be mowed, increasing the complexity of your yard, adding a free bird feeder or three, and having interesting flowers for part of the year. If you were to choose that corner of your yard – you know the one that just doesn’t seem to be doing well or has too many weeds – and cap the sprinkler and cover it with a dark plastic sheet for the next two or three months (ideally over summer), it will be ready for planting some native plants in the fall or early winter.

Your choice of native plants is very broad since there are plants that do well in full sun to heavy shade and everything in between. The size, shape, and colors are very diverse also and there are some that can be encouraged to climb walls, fences, or into trees. If you like certain types of birds, the plantings can be geared toward hummingbirds, goldfinches, sparrows, or even bees. Be careful not to “over plant” where larger shrubs crowd out each other and all the herbaceous flowers and encroach on the walkways ... unless you enjoy bonsai-ing your garden.

To keep the rest of the lawn out, edge the new area with rocks, blocks, plastic edging, or whatever strikes your fancy. In the dead lawn, you can cut holes for the new plants, add some fertilizer and better soil, and water heavily during planting. Leaving a small gap around the installed plants you can cover the dead lawn with a thick layer of mulch (about 3-4 inches) and forget about it. You can even sprinkle poppy seeds on top of the mulch in the fall and let the rain do its work. The capped sprinkler can be traded out for a set of drip emitters to make watering spot specific and automatic. Adding a couple larger rocks or logs can also create some habitat for lizards.

Over the next few months, the lawn may try to regrow from some of the surviving roots – just pull out the new starts and eventually you’ll win. The natives will start to thrive but may need some extra water now and again as their roots develop. Ideally, you will also start to see some of the local birds checking out the new area. That corner is now a low-maintenance area that is now creating habitat for other critters and is far more interesting than a patch of so-so grass.

Since everyone’s yard, needs and wants are different, you should talk to someone who has experience with native plants and gardening in general to ensure you meet your goals. Some native plants will need periodic watering to get established and others will do well with seasonal trimming. The possibilities are near endless on the path to creating a bit of nature.

— David Kisner

From the NHM Garden Committee

Winter and early spring is an especially lovely time in our native garden. The progression of blooms starts with manzanita, and proceeds to California poppies, blue-eyed grass, silk tassel bush, hummingbird sage, ceanothus, redbuds, Douglas iris, and fremontias.

The fremontia is a unique and one of the most spectacular California natives. You don’t often see it in gardens because it is extremely sensitive to over watering. We have several in our garden. Often called ‘flannel bush’ because of its fuzzy gray-green leaves, this hardwood shrub or small multi-trunked tree produces large (1.4” – 2.4” in diameter) rich yellow flowers. They sometimes have orange, coppery, or reddish margins.

Many of you may have heard of Coreopsis Hill, an area adjacent to Oso Flaco Lake on private land that is known for magnificent displays of coreopsis. In March, we were able to go on a field trip there thanks to one of our committee members, Kathy Sharum. She is a member of the SLO Chapter of the California Native Plant Society (info on back page) which sponsored the event along with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and The Dunes Center. Although this was a poor year for coreopsis, it was very educational and we did get to see many dunes-specific, and sometimes rare, native plants in full bloom.

— Nancy Heck



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FACEBOOK;
The Natural History Museum of
Santa Maria
Please Like Us

OPEN:
Regular hours:
Wed-Sat 11:00am - 4:00pm

FREE ADMISSION

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Photos of Fremontodendron californicum

Check out these great resources, dates coming up soon . . .

[www.https://cnpsslo](https://cnpsslo) in San Luis Obispo for their biannual plant sale of California natives. April and November and David says November is the perfect month to plant California drought resistant natives.

Spring & Fall Compost Giveaway
Kompogas-slo.com
4300 Old Sante Fe Rd. SLO
April 10, 2022, 10 to 2
Bring your buckets, bring your pick up truck, bring a cup of coffee and get in line for free compost.

“The Earth is our Mother, we must take care of Her”