



MEADOWLARK

Summer 2024 Solstice Photo Gallery
(Email only) Update for our Members & Friends

412 South McClelland, P O Box 5254, Santa Maria, CA 93456

EARTH DAY AT THE MUSEUM, APRIL 21ST, GREAT FUN WAS HAD BY ALL!



- **Free Family Fun**
 - Food
 - Music
- **Spring Garden Demo**
- **Native Plant Sale**
- **Succulent Sale**
- **Veggie Garden starts**
- **Crafts for Kids**
- **AND ▶ ▶ ZOO TO YOU**



continued on page 2



Nancy Heck
(the Museum's Garden Committee)
was quite surprised at being awarded the
NHM's annual "ConservationAward"





The Museum hosted the first 4th grade classroom to test our new Santa Maria River Watershed Nature Journal on May 28. Mrs McNeil was the teacher. Lupe Murguia, the Museum educational contractor for watershed, facilitated the tour for 34 students who walked the 2 miles from Adam School to NHM. The weather was not too hot, so all went really well. The students arrived at 10 A.M. They were broken into small groups by their teacher, to run through various watershed lessons including “What the heck is a “watershed” anyway??”- Students used magnifying glasses for work around the topic of “insects of the watershed” and compasses as they walked around the newly painted utility box at the museum depicting the SM Watershed. The day’s finale was a student led demonstration of the Museum’s infamous Enviroscape. The large Museum Watershed exhibit is used for special events and school groups and is interactive. Let’s suffice to say that 34 students at the end of a very busy day were thoroughly engaged and excited by their Enviroscape activity. In exchange for a verbal test review of all they learned, each student was given a polished rock along with their own Journal which they carried back to school: tired and happy.

June 6th the Museum was eager to see how a 5th grade school field trip would use a nature journal experience. The 5th grade experience involved actually making the journal itself from blank sheets of paper with a stick for the spine, a hole punch and some colored pencils to personalize it. These students were also broken in small groups. This time they were first given a tour of the inside of the museum. Following this, there were, again, some special focused lessons involving observations and recordings. St. Mary’s students used magnifying glasses in some of their work. One of their parent chaperones was part Chumash which made the conversation about conservation and how Native Americans interacted with nature even more interesting. At the the end of the tour the St. Mary’s Principal was eager to expose all of her grades to the Museum with differing focus for each grade. In the coming year, these new school field trips will be created.

Interestingly, no students from either field trip had ever visited the Natural History Museum in the past. They were all enthusiastic about bringing their families into the little Museum in the future.

Virginia Souza, NHM President





The Santa Maria Natural History Museum was able to host a booth at the 2024 Santa Maria Valley Open Space (SMVOS) Trailpalooza on Saturday May 25th. The SMVOS has been working to established free, publicly accessible trails in the Santa Maria Valley which dovetails well with the Museum's mandate to teach kids of all ages about the natural wonders of our area. Whether you start out in the Museum to learn about nature and then step outside to put your knowledge to use, or start in nature and have a plethora of insistent questions to answer -- the Museum and SMVOS are like salt-n-pepper and will add spice to your life!

David Kisner, NHM Nature Consultant

JUNE in the Natural History Museum Garden FEATURED PLANT – NARROW LEAF MILKWEED

Can you find it? (Hint - #s 10, 11, & 2 on the map)

Narrow leaf milkweed (*Asclepias fascicularis*) is probably the single most important host plant for Monarch Butterflies in California, attracting them and hosting their caterpillars.

It is a flowering perennial that grows fast to 3 feet tall and is dormant in winter, often dying back to the ground. It will take full sun but is adaptable to most conditions, being easy to grow in soils with good drainage, even with no summer water. It can self-seed if the seed pods are not removed.

The Chumash twisted the fiber strands together to form cordage rope. This twined fiber was used to produce nets, netting bags, feather capes, deer nets, bow strings, and other items.



The Monarch Butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) is known for its striking orange & black coloring and its long migrations. Milkweed is the only food source for the caterpillars. The toxic milkweed sap is absorbed by the caterpillars making them & their adult stages toxic to other creatures. Be sure to only plant local species such as the Narrow Leaf Milkweed & definitely avoid the Tropical Milkweed sold in nurseries because it can host the OE parasite. The Monarch is an endangered species.

Monarch Lifecycle Timeline



Visit the
Museum's
garden
bulletin
board
in the
back garden
and see
if you can
spot
one of
these
monarch
butterflies!

Nancy Heck, Garden Committee

NHM M E M B E R S H I P

Please become a member of Santa Maria Natural History Museum.

Help us to support the activities and growth of the biggest/littlest museum on the Central Coast.

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

And speaking of membership. . .

Dear members, we thank you for your continued support. You will be reminded of your month for renewal each year. We presently have 62 members. These are suggested categories, so don't feel constrained by them--feel free to contribute whatever you can afford.

Judy Garrett, NHM Membership