

of the Southern California Botanists

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President's Message

Hello!

The 49th annual Southern California Botanists symposium occurred on October 21st, 2023 at Pomona College in Claremont, CA. Our topic was *I'll Take My Plants Rare!* We had a total of 180 attendees. This was our best turnout since before the pandemic, and one of our best turn outs overall – we are so excited to have spent such an incredible day with so many of you!

We raised \$1,213.00 during our silent auction. All of this money will go towards the Gary Wallace Conservation Grant. This is one of our annual grants that we offer to support research or projects that contribute to the understanding and conservation of rare plants in southern California. In total, we raised \$7,995.13 in revenue above expenses. This revenue is vital to the functioning of SCB, as it helps fund student grants and scholarships for symposium attendance, as well as SCB's annual program of work, which includes publishing Leaflets and Crossosoma, conducting workshops and field trips, and organizing future symposia. The great turnout at this year's symposium helps us make these programs possible, and we are so grateful that you all were able to join us!

During the lunch break, we had a successful career panel that was well attended by early career folks. Many great questions were asked, and it was a perfect time for networking and open communication about different careers in botany. Following the symposium, SCB hosted a poster session at Pomona College, while the mixer and banquet were held at the Memorial Park in Claremont. Food was catered during the mixer by Just Vegana, a truly delicious all-vegan catering company.

We would like to thank Pomona College for generously allowing use of their auditorium and building space. For many years now (excluding virtual covid years!), the Southern California Botanists

Native Plant Gardens

- California Botanic Garden, calbg.org
- Fullerton Arboretum, at CSU Fullerton, fullertonarboretum.org
- Los Angeles County Arboretum and Botanic Garden, tinyurl.com/hahpacyd
- Native Garden at Golden West College, tinyurl.com/lymfrke3z
- Nature Gardens at Natural History Museum of L.A. Co., tinyurl.com/47th7nfz
- San Diego Botanic Garden, sdbg.org
- Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, sbbotanicgarden.org
- UCLA Mildred E. Mathias Botanical Garden, botgard.ucla.edu

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symposium has been held at the Seaver North Auditorium. Knowing the space allows for a smooth event, and we are so grateful they continue to welcome us on campus. We would also like to thank Fabien Jammes, our contact in the biology department at Pomona College. He worked with us throughout the year to ensure that the symposium ran smoothly. From getting poster boards to meeting with IT – he was integral in making this year’s symposium happen! We would also like to thank our ten invited speakers who presented on truly fascinating, educational, and timely topics. The symposium wouldn’t have been what it was without them!

I would also like to thank all of the SCB board members for making this year’s symposium possible. Now being in Berkeley, some of the logistical planning for this year’s event wouldn’t have been possible without on-the-ground support. Thank you to every single board member for everything you do!

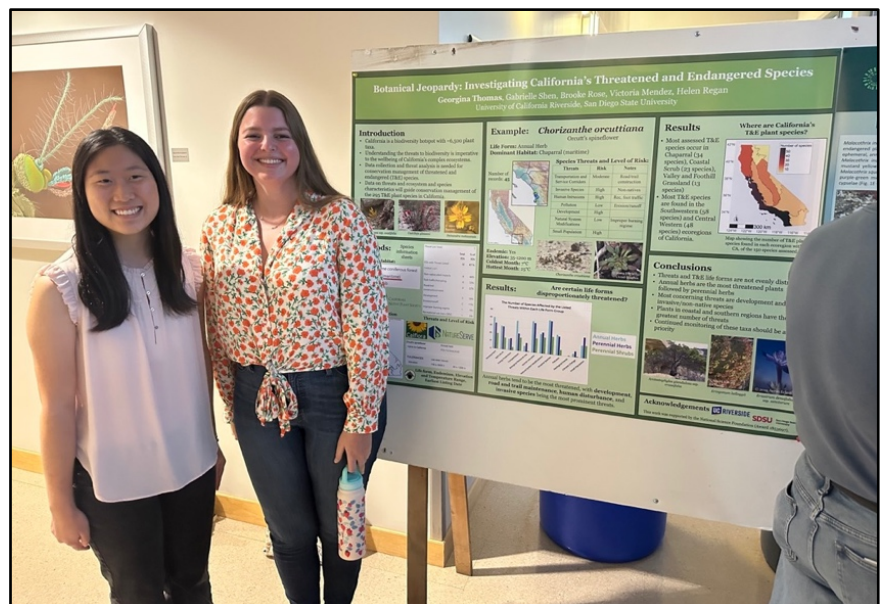
And, finally, thank you to all of you for attending and making our symposium the exciting event that it is! This was my final symposium as president of SCB, and I couldn’t have asked for a better event. Thank you all for making it an incredible day!

–Nina House, SCB President 2023

Aaron Sims (Rare Plant Program Director, California Native Plant Society) started out the day, speaking on The CNPS Rare Plant Inventory: Improvements in how we navigate, nominate, and review the conservation status of California rare plants.



Congratulations to this year’s poster winners, Georgina Thomas and Gabrielle Shen! They presented on Botanical Jeopardy: Investigating California’s Threatened and Endangered Plant Species.



Board Updates & Profiles

Important! It's time to vote for board candidates. Please review the profiles below, then head over to the ballot and vote before February 2 (sooner would be better).

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Diana Brand Ramirez (she, her, hers) is a botanist and native to southern California. She sprouted in Los Angeles and transplanted herself to San Diego where she has resided for the last ten years. Professionally, she works as an ecologist for a consulting firm where she manages natural resource driven projects while trying stay in the field as much as possible. Her favorite part of the job is problem solving and botanizing with clients and co-workers/colleagues. Her focus, as a consultant, is botany, habitat conservation, and the occasional document preparation project. She is eager to continue contributing to the SCB Board and looks forward to pushing the SCB goals forward.

Ninfa Negrete Alcaraz is a Botanist with four and a half years of experience with long-term monitoring of rare flora and habitat restoration in San Diego County. Her love for the outdoors is what inspired her to pursue her career as a consulting Botanists/ecologist. She is intent on learning all about the cool plants and wildlife species San Diego is a home to and loves exploring new-to-her habitats the beyond San Diego, too. Ninfa is eager to serve as a SoCal Botanists Board member and hopes to contribute ideas and unique perspectives to the board. She is interested in supporting all that the organization offers including merchandise, field trips, and workshops!

Sunny Saroa is a botanist and plant ecologist who has worked across Southern California for the past 7 years. Recently, he managed a native seed farm in Orange County, but he has previously worked in research labs focusing on plant community ecology, plant-soil-feedbacks, invasion ecology, and restoration ecology. Currently, he serves on the Board of Directors for the OC Chapter of CNPS, where he oversees grants and coordinates monthly programs. He has a passion for plant systematics, plant conservation, and loves to botanize in his free time. He is excited to join the SCB Board and collaborate with other botanists throughout the region.

Mel Letterman is a current undergraduate student at CSU, Fullerton, where they are studying Plant Science, volunteer at the Fay A. MacFadden Herbarium, and worked as a student assistant at the Biology Greenhouse. In addition, they are currently a Program Technician at the Irvine Ranch Conservancy's Native Seed Farm where they collect and process native plant seed used for local restoration projects throughout southern California.

Gabe Elliott is a relatively new addition to the SoCalBot community. I grew up in northern California where I fell in love with the oak woodlands, chaparral and riparian thickets of Mt. Diablo State Park. The frequent interactions with *Toxicodendron diversilobum* are vivid memories but did not stop me from admiring *Lupinus* and *Castilleja* flowers long before I knew their names. In 2014 I moved to southern California for college and by the time I did my first vegetation transects in a field biology course I knew I was on the right path. After graduating, I worked in California, Nevada and Oregon before returning to southern California in 2022. My personal highlight was the time I spent in the Mojave Desert - landscapes and plants unlike any other! I currently work as a botanist in western Riverside County. I also enjoy gardening, scrapbooking, and photography.

Allison Rudalevige has been on the SCB board since 2015, serving as President in 2020 and 2021. She has worked as a biological consultant in southern California for almost 20 years. As part of her job, she performs vegetation mapping, jurisdictional delineations, rare plant surveys, and

restoration monitoring. Most of her work is in southern California, but she has recently had the opportunity to learn a bit about the Sierra Nevada (cis- and transmontane) and even all the way up to northern Oregon.

Drew Kaiser is a Senior Environmental Scientist in the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Native Plant Program working on the implementation of the Western Joshua Tree Conservation Act. Prior to this position with the state, he worked for the National Park Service as a botanist for Mojave National Preserve and a rare plant specialist for Death Valley National Park. Drew has been on the SCB board since 2019 and most recently completed a term as Vice President. In his free time, he enjoys backpacking, brewing beer, and volunteering for the GLORIA Great Basin chapter.

Joe DeWolf is part of the Science and Conservation team at San Diego Botanic Garden. He manages restoration projects around San Diego County as well as the SDBG conservation nursery. Joe joined the team with extensive experience in restoration ecology and land management of natural areas. Most recently, he worked as a Restoration Ecologist at Nature Collective for six years, where he managed the community-based habitat restoration programs and spearheaded the San Elijo native plant nursery and propagation program. He also served as Park Ranger for the City of San Diego where he focused on land management of open spaces, habitat restoration, biological monitoring, and protection of natural and cultural resources. Joe was previously a gardener for SDBG for four years, as well as a Backcountry Ranger at Yellowstone National Park and gardener for the City and County of San Francisco.

Nina House has been a Museum Scientist at the University & Jepson Herbaria since January 2023. Prior to that, she lived in southern California for 5.5 years. During her time there, she worked as a Seed Conservation Intern at the California Botanic Garden, before completing a master's degree in botany at the same institution. For her thesis, she completed a floristic inventory of the Manter & Salmon Creek watersheds in the southern Sierra Nevada, Tulare County, CA. Nina has been on the board of Southern California Botanists since 2019. She was vice president in 2020 and 2021, and then president in 2022 and 2023.

Duncan Bell is the Senior Conservation Botanist for California Botanic Garden where he spends a great deal of time working in the field with the rare and endangered plants of California. He has a special affinity for California's deserts and a general love for the American Southwest. He is a lover of dinkophytes and narrow endemics.

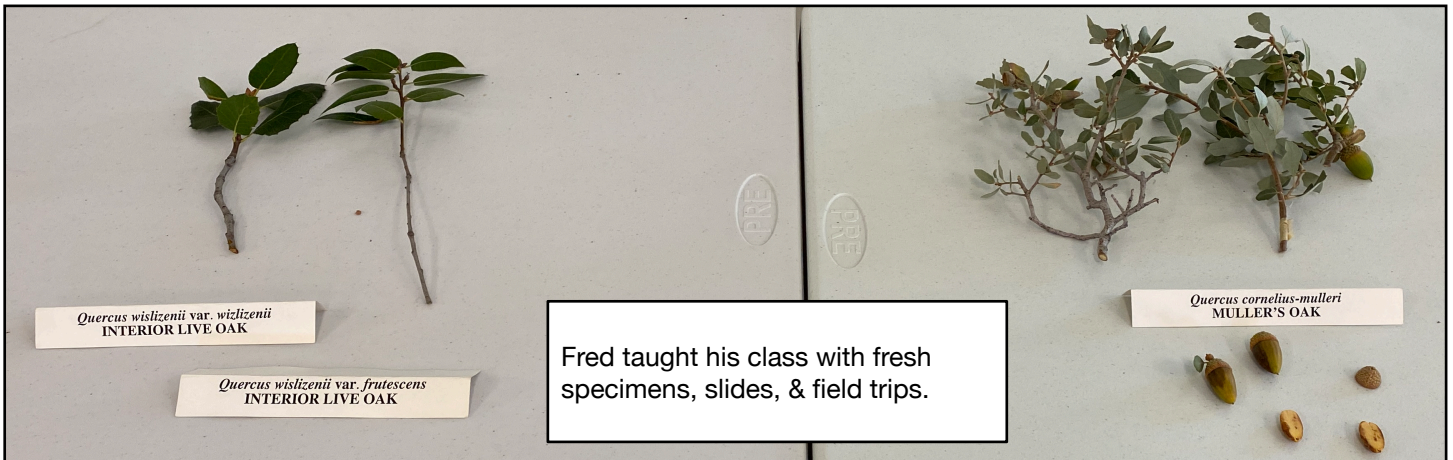
Crossosoma News

Crossosoma, Journal of the Southern California Botanists, is going digital! We are in the process of transitioning to a digital format as you read this. If all goes well, you will have your opportunity to read volume 48 (2022) in January 2024. You will also notice that the volume years are finally closing in on the current year, something the editors, Michelle Cloud-Hughes and I, have been working toward for years. We are certain to close that gap in 2024. *Crossosoma* will be posted under the Crossosoma heading at the top of the SCB website page (socalbot.org/crossosoma). Some details are still being worked out, but members will be alerted when new volumes are available online. Recently published volumes will also be joining volume 48.

–Fred Roberts, layout editor, *Crossosoma*

Oak Workshop Report

Our own SCB Board Member and co-Editor of *Crossosoma*, Fred Roberts, put on another successful oak workshop at the San Diego Botanic Gardens in Encinitas. The “Oaks of Southern California Workshop” consisted of two days of in-depth discussion on the genus *Quercus* in Southern California. On the first day Fred taught the 15 attendees the details of each *Quercus* species by providing detailed information in a handout, a Keynote presentation, and fresh specimens. To end the first day, everyone was fortunate enough to look at the trichomes of each oak leaf under a high-powered, high-resolution microscope provided by the botanic garden, and projected on the large flat screen. The second day of the workshop sent attendees on a trek from Encinitas east to Julian and the desert near Banning. The group got to inspect and discuss 18 *Quercus* taxa and several hybrids in Southern California during the class.



Upcoming Workshop: The Cacti of California

Dates: March 9-10, 2024

Where: Steele-Burnand Anza Borrego Desert Research Center, 401 Tilting T. Drive, Borrego Springs, CA 92004

Cacti are a diverse and integral component of our Southern California ecosystems, comprising approximately 38 species in 12 genera. Cacti exhibit several unique adaptations which allow them to survive our hot, dry environments. This two-day workshop will include a classroom day covering the evolution, biogeography, adaptations, and taxonomy of the cactus family, along with more detailed information on all of the cactus species found in California. The field day will provide a close look at the many cactus species of the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park region. There will also be live specimens for study of several species found outside the Anza-Borrego region.

Instructor: Michelle Cloud-Hughes

Registration: \$150 (SCB members) / \$180 (Non-members)

Register online at: tinyurl.com/2p8ryd2x



Michelle, *the Queen of Cactus*, teaches her cactus classes with slides, spines, glochids, & field trips.

SCB Grants Program

Did you know that SCB has a 39-year tradition of awarding grants?

- * SCB Annual Grant
- * Susan Hobbs Grant for Field Research
- * Alan Romspert Grant in Desert Botany
- * Jessica Mae Orozco Diversity Grant
- * SCB Conservation Grant

For more information, visit socalbot.org/grants or inquire at grants@socalbot.org

Please donate to the SCB Grants Program and help fund these wonderful grants:
paypal.me/socalbot?locale.x=en_US

Other Grants Programs

- * CNPS Student Research Grants, cnps.org/education/students/grants
- * Orange County Chapter CNPS Grants, occnps.org/education/grants.html
- * Dean Taylor Botanical Exploration Memorial Award, norcalbotanists.org

Membership

Join SCB or renew your existing membership online via PayPal at: socalbot.org

Do you have something to contribute to *Leaflets*?

We like short informal articles, notes, sketches, & photographs. Send email to the Editor: SoCalBotNewsletter@gmail.com

To submit scientific articles for publication in *Crossosoma*, send email to editor@socalbot.org