What’s Up on Wildflower Hill?
by Madena Asbell, Assistant Nursery Sales Manager

As the rainy season approaches and thoughts turn to native wildflowers—when to plant and where to see them—we think of Wildflower Hill and its colorful springtime show. You’ll find the trailhead in the nursery, marked by a sign beyond the sales booth, about 50 yards up the road. Wildflower Hill Trail offers adventurous visitors a scenic, tranquil walk among locally native plants, including aromatic sagebrush, brilliantly colored penstemon and rugged laurel sumac.

At the top of the roughly half-mile loop, trekkers are rewarded with a bird’s eye view of the nursery and expansive vistas of the San Fernando Valley. The hill is a wonderful place for spotting our native fauna, as well. Step quietly as you explore the slope and you just might sneak up on a covey of California quail or a herd of hungry cottontail rabbits. Watch where you step, as you may find the droppings of a coyote. Look up and you may glimpse red-tailed hawks swirling overhead.

Both the trail and a booklet, _Trail Guide to Chaparral Plants in the Theodore Payne Foundation Gardens_, were created in the 1970s with encouragement from TPF Guild and Board member Erna M. Comby. The guide documents more than 25 native plant species observed along the trail, including _Artemisia californica_ (California sagebrush), _Salvia apiana_ (white sage), _Lotus scoparius_ (deerweed), _Opuntia occidentalis_ (prickly pear), and _Rhus integrifolia_ (lemonade berry).

At the time, the trail took a slightly different course and was known as the Eddie Merrill Nature Trail. Comby had a special fondness for our hillside path and its flora and fauna. In addition to her active role here, she was president of the Los Angeles chapter of the Audubon Society and founder of the Whittier chapter, among others. The last page of the trail guide features “Bird, Mammal, and Reptile Life in Theodore Payne Foundation Gardens.” This list, originally compiled in 1969 by Eddie Merrill, is a fascinating record of wildlife seen here in the past. Though many of the animals cited—mule deer, coyote, phainopepla and various snakes—are still occasional if not frequent visitors, some, such as the gray fox, have not been spotted in recent memory.

Plant–animal relationships were recognized long ago by Theodore Payne, who compiled a list for the Los Angeles Audubon Society titled “California Native Plants Desirable for Gardens and Bird Sanctuaries.” He cites plants with

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“attractive fruit relished by many birds,” including quail, doves, mockingbirds, robins, thrushes, cedar waxwings and many others. Copies of the original Audubon pamphlet (which includes several obsolete botanical names) are available for TPF visitors with a special interest in birds. Our current list of native plants recommended for birds draws heavily on Payne’s information. In 1971, the Foundation property was itself designated a bird sanctuary by California Garden Clubs, Inc.

In 1985, the trail became known as Wildflower Hill and an effort to develop wildflower displays overlooking the nursery was led by TPF Board member Kevin Connelly. Non-native plants were removed and trail work was done by members of Los Angeles Conservation Corps. All native plants were started from seed. Connelly’s labors paid off with the return of popcorn flower, chia, dove lupine and Canterbury bells, among others, and lasted for many years. Despite the recent resurgence of non-native weeds and grasses, wildflower shows on the hill are still worth the hike each spring. (Connelly’s contributions to the Foundation include authorship of Gardener’s Guide to California Wildflowers [Theodore Payne Foundation, 1991, $12.95]. Copies are available in our bookstore and e-store.)

Wildflower Hill remains and always will be a work in progress. Trail improvement and maintenance continue, with invaluable help from eager Eagle Scouts and dedicated TPF volunteers. In addition, an updated trail map and guide are in the works.

We hope you’ll trek up Wildflower Hill this autumn and again in winter and spring. Every season on the trail offers botanical surprises, wildlife sightings, fabulous vistas and a definite sense of place. 

Purple sage blooming on Wildflower Hill (top left): Eagle Scout Patrick Lee of La Cañada Troop 507 with the retaining wall that he and his fellow scouts built on Wildflower Hill (top right). Assisting with quality control is our canine neighbor Quincy French.
Meet Our New President and Board Members

We're pleased to introduce our new Board President, Cassy Aoyagi, and four new Board members! Each one brings fresh energy, unique knowledge and valued talents to our organization.

**Cassy Aoyagi**  
A longtime friend and board member, Cassy Aoyagi was elected board president this July. She is a renowned landscape designer and co-founder of FormLA Landscaping who brings an infectious enthusiasm for sustainability and California’s native landscape aesthetic. Not only does she teach a wide array of sustainable landscaping courses here at TPF, but she also represents us on L.A. County’s Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance subcommittee, which is helping to green the way L.A. gardens.

Cassy’s gardens are popular stops on our annual Native Garden Tour, as well as on the Pasadena Showcase House of Design and La Cañada Valley Beautiful garden tours.

**Pamela Burgess**  
Pamela is a fine artist inspired by nature and its materials and a reverence for craftsmanship. She was our first Artist-in-Residence in 2008. Her resulting exhibit, *Radiant Light, Shadow Drawings*, captured shadows cast by botanicals, evoking a direct experience with nature. This fall, her shadow sculptures will be featured in an outdoor installation at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden.

Long active in the community, Pamela serves on the Elysian Park Master Plan Oversight Committee and is active in nature and conservation organizations. She also publishes MoonMails, a monthly e-newsletter devoted to the celebration of the full moon.

**Snowdy Dodson**  
You may know Snowdy Dodson as the president of the Los Angeles/Santa Monica Mountains Chapter of the California Native Plant Society and co-chair of its annual wild flower show. Snowdy is a committed native plant advocate who also enjoys getting her hands dirty—look for her at CNPS’s monthly “weed wars.”

A science librarian at California State University, Northridge, for over 30 years, Snowdy has degrees in zoology, biology and information science and is a leader, volunteer, or member in numerous organizations, from the International Association of Marine Sciences Libraries and Information to the Nature Conservancy.

**Janica Jones**  
Janica brings a passion for protecting the natural environment, along with hands-on experience in horticulture, arboriculture, environmental planning and environmental impact reporting. When the Los Angeles Zoo began the process of accrediting its botanical collections, she was hired as the institution’s horticulturist. Today, as lead gardener, she educates visitors on the intricate connections between plants, animals and people.

An avid hiker, Janica enjoys trekking into local wilderness areas with the group Habitat Works to remove invasive plants, and spending first Saturdays with Theodore Payne’s own intrepid group of First Saturday volunteers.

**Deborah Wittwer**  
Recently retired from managing information systems projects for the City of Los Angeles, Deborah looks forward to helping preserve, restore and promote our native flora as a member of the Board. She credits the Foundation with providing inspiration and assistance in her own native plant gardening efforts, which go back many years.

In addition to being an IT guru and an accomplished gardener, Deborah leads nature walks for schoolchildren as a volunteer with the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority and participates in a variety of other organizations, including the Sierra Pacific Fly Fishers.
FALL EVENTS AND CLASSES

Enroll in a class—or two! Our Education Center is comfy and cool, the perfect spot for inspiration and learning.
To register, call (818) 768-1802. Visit our website (theodorepayne.org) for class updates and details on our three-part California Native Plant Garden Design course. The design course is limited in size to ensure individual attention, and spaces fill almost immediately. If you’re interested, please call to add your name to the waiting list.
Our cancellation policy: no refunds for cancellations made within seven days of the class date.

SEPTEMBER

Native Plant Horticulture with Lili Singer
Saturday, September 18, noon–3:30 p.m.
$35 members, $45 non-members
This class offers the basics on gardening with California flora. You’ll learn what a native plant is, why natives are valuable and about plant communities, plus planting techniques, establishment, irrigation, pruning and ongoing maintenance. Recommended for beginners; required prerequisite to our three-part California Native Plant Garden Design course. Lili is a horticulturist and garden writer and TPF’s special projects coordinator.

Pruning Young Native Trees and Shrubs, a Hands-on Workshop with Lynnette Kampe
Saturday, September 25, 1:30–3:30 p.m.
$25 members, $35 non-members
Learn how to prune small trees or specimen shrubs to improve structure, preserve health and enhance aesthetics. This class will cover: reasons for pruning, how a tree heals and responds to pruning, how and where to cut and when to hire an arborist. Please bring your favorite clippers or loppers for hands-on practice to transform your classroom knowledge into practical skills. Lynnette is TPF’s executive director and an ISA–certified arborist with 20 years’ experience in urban forestry. Class limited to 10 participants.

OCTOBER

First Saturdays
Saturday, October 2, 9:00 a.m.–noon
Summer break is over! Join the Theodore Payne Foundation family of volunteers on the first Saturday of each month to improve and care for our gardens. We will clear, clean, plant, mulch, prune and do other tasks to spruce up the grounds and show how beautiful native plant gardens can be. Bring a hat, gloves, knee pads and other tools for personal use. TPF will provide shovels, trowels, rakes, loppers, hoes, pruners and refreshments.

Native Plant Horticulture with Lili Singer
Saturday, October 2, 12:00–3:30 p.m.
$35 members, $45 non-members
For details, see September 18.

Small Spaces/Big Savings with Susanne Jett
Saturday, October 23, 9:30–11:30 a.m.
$20 members, $30 non-members
Does converting a space from turf-centric to California-friendly really pay off in long-term savings? Follow the development, implementation and life of a unique garden project intended to measure actual resource use—and answer that question. Susanne is a landscape designer/contractor (jettscapes.com) and key figure in the Santa Monica demonstration garden. She has been designing and installing environmentally sensitive gardens for 30 years and has provided consulting services to the City of Santa Monica since 1989.

Chumash Healing with Native Plants with Cecilia Garcia and James D. Adams
Part 1: Saturday, October 23, 12:30–3:30 p.m.
Part 2: Saturday, October 30, 12:30–3:30 p.m.
$60 members, $80 non-members
This two-session in-depth class on medicinal uses of California flora discusses the plants and their properties. Part 1 includes a photographic presentation and plant descriptions. Part 2 moves outside to TPF grounds to collect and prepare plants for use. Cecilia, a Chumash healer, and Jim, associate professor, USC School of Pharmacology, are co-authors of Healing with Medicinal Plants of the West: Cultural and Scientific Basis for their Use, Second Edition (Abedus Press, 2005). Class limited to 12 participants.

FALL HOURS RESUME OCT. 19
Nursery and store will be open
Tuesday–Saturday, 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

FALL FESTIVAL
OCTOBER 8–9/15–16

AMAZING SELECTION
Plants, seeds, gifts and more!

OUR BIGGEST SALE OF THE YEAR!

MEMBER DAYS: FRIDAY—SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8–9, 8:30 A.M.–4:30 P.M.
Plants (1 gal. and up): 15% off  |  Seed: 10% off
Open to the public; memberships available at the door

DISCOUNTS TO ALL: FRIDAY—SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15–16, 8:30 A.M.–4:30 P.M.
Plants (1 gal. and up): 15% off for members, 10% for non-members
Seed: 10% off for all
Native Plant Garden Maintenance with Sabine Hoppner  
Saturday, October 30, 9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.  
$35 members, $45 non-members  
Subjects covered include watering, fertilizing (or not), pruning, grooming, mulching and other aspects of garden maintenance. You'll also discover how native plants respond to pruning cuts (good and bad), what we trigger with our gardening activities, and how to develop good maintenance goals. Class is limited to 12 participants. Sabine, a former TPF nursery staffer, is the owner of Water's Edge Gardening, a specialty maintenance firm.

NOVEMBER

First Saturdays  
Saturday, November 6, 9:00 a.m.—noon  
For details, see October 2.

Relief Printing Workshop with Elinor Nissley  
Saturday, November 6, 12:00–3:00 p.m.  
$25 members, $35 non-members, plus $15 materials fee  
Learn the art of relief printing using native plant imagery! It's easy! First, you'll print directly from plants—onto both paper and fabric. Next, inspired by plant forms, you'll carve your own rubber stamps and print from them. Elinor, the Foundation's second artist-in-residence, creates letterpress graphics in her Silver Lake garage (krankpress.etsy.com). Her work will be on exhibit in the Theodore Payne Gallery, October through December. For details, see page 8. Class limited to 12 participants.

Native Plant Horticulture with Lili Singer  
Saturday, November 13, 9:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m.  
$35 members, $45 non-members  
For details, see September 18.

How to Find Birds in the Desert with Steven L. Hartman  
Saturday, November 13, 1:30–3:00 p.m.  
$20 members, $30 non-members  
Deserts are not wastelands, and many spots in our local deserts are literally bird oases, thanks to the presence of water and associated trees and shrubs. This illustrated program reviews bird-attracting desert plant communities and habitats, and identifies locations for rewarding bird-watching—that is, where birds roost, feed and make their nests. Seasonality and human impacts will also be discussed. Among his many credits, Steve is a fellow of the California Native Plant Society and long-time activist of the LA/Santa Monica Mountains chapter. He also serves as treasurer of the Theodore Payne Foundation, and recently produced a series of Wildflower Field Guide iPhone applications.

DECEMBER

First Saturdays  
Saturday, December 4, 9:00 a.m.—noon  
For details, see October 2.

Gardening in the Shade: From Trade-offs to Payoffs with Carol Bornstein  
Saturday, December 4, 1:00–3:00 p.m.  
$20 members, $30 non-members  
A cool, shady spot can be a welcome respite in an otherwise hot, sunny garden—or it can be a source of frustration due to competition from tree roots, disease problems and varying light patterns from season to season. In this class, we'll wade into the shadows, search for solutions and discover native plants that are tailor-made for the shade. Carol is a horticulturist, garden designer and writer. For 28 years, she directed horticultural operations at Santa Barbara Botanic Garden. A leading advocate for using native grasses and sedges in California gardens, she was responsible for selecting several new cultivars, including Verbena lilacina 'De La Mina' and Lessingia 'Silver Carpet.' Carol co-authored the award-winning book California Native Plants for the Garden (Cachuma Press, 2005) with Bart OBrien and Dave Fross, and is collaborating with them again on the upcoming publication Re-imagining the California Lawn: Water-Conserving Plants, Practices, and Designs.

Native Plant Horticulture with Lili Singer  
Saturday, December 18, 12:00–3:30pm  
$35 members, $45 non-members  
For details, see September 18.

Fire in La Tuna Canyon reaches parts of upper Foundation property: shrubs and trees burned or scorched (burn marks are still visible on the old oak at the base of Wildflower Hill); plant stock lost or seriously singed. Subsequent rainy season saw significant flooding and debris flow along the road, as well as a resurgence of non-native plants such as mustard and wild oats.

First Wildflower Hotline, a recorded phone message offering free weekly updates on where to find the best spring wild flowers. (The 2010 hotline, produced by Marie Massa, featured both a phone message narrated by Joe Spano and more-detailed, illustrated website postings.)

Poppy Day—now a spring tradition—first observed at TPF.

Four new wildflower seed mixes offered: Perennial, Mountain, Hummingbird and Butterfly. As described then in The Poppy Print, these mixtures provide “beauty, hardiness, ease of germination and extended bloom periods.”

Correction: In Foundation Milestones in our last issue, the name of the first editor of The Poppy Print, Ysabel Fetterman, was misspelled as Isabel Futterman. Apologies (and greetings) to Ysabel's family!
**DID YOU KNOW...? PLANTS WITH SPECIAL POWERS**

**PINING FOR YOU** Worldwide, there are more than 600 living species of conifers in 68 different genera. The genus *Pinus* is the largest, with more than 100 species, including 19 that are native to California. Eleven of these are endemic to the California Floristic Province. In *California Native Plants for the Garden* (Cachuma Press, 2005), authors Carol Bornstein, David Fross and Bart O’Brien write, “Within this distinctive collection of pines are many worthy of superlatives: Torrey pine, the rarest pine in the United States; bristlecone pine, the oldest living tree on earth; sugar pine, the tallest pine; and Coulter pine, the pine with the heaviest cones.”

Each pine tree bears two types of cones: male and female.

Small male cones, also called pollen cones, are made up of papery scales and usually produced in the spring. These cones develop in clusters toward the tips of lower branches and are full of pollen grains. If you’ve ever parked under a pine tree and come back to find your car covered in fine yellow dust, those were pollen grains (and if you are allergic, they made you sneeze!). Once male cones have released their pollen, they dry up and fall from the tree.

Female cones, or seed cones, are much larger than male counterparts. The seed cones of our native *Pinus lambertiana* (sugar pine) and *P. coulteri* (Coulter pine) are especially enormous—up to two feet in length for sugar pine and up to five pounds for Coulter! Female cones are produced on the upper branches of a tree, and most take two years to mature. During the first spring, cone scales spread apart, allowing windblown pollen to enter. Once a female cone has been pollinated, the scales close, and the second year is spent making seed. When the seed, also known as pine nuts, are mature, the cone scales reopen and release them.

Some pine nuts are held tightly within cones for years. The cone scales of Coulter pine, as well as *P. attenuata* (knobcone pine) and *P. contorta* (lodgepole pine), may remain closed until exposed to fire, releasing mature seed only when conditions are right for germination.

**A SHADY CHARACTER** Columbines (*Aquilegia* species) are shade-loving perennials. Each columbine flower sports five spurred petals said to resemble a circle of doves—hence the name derived from *columba*, the Latin word for dove.

Some Native Americans believe that columbine seeds have aphrodisiac properties. They say a person can grind the seeds, rub the powder into the palms of one’s hands and then shake hands with the object of one’s desire, hoping that, influenced by columbine, he or she will succumb to such advances!

—Louise Gonzalez, Nursery Manager

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**Pinus lambertiana** pine cone
photo courtesy of Oakley Originals; *Aquilegia formosa*
photo courtesy of Dr. Robert T. and Margaret Orr © California Academy of Sciences
What to Do in the Garden Now

Hooray for autumn—a pleasant time for working in the garden and the optimum time for planting natives! Be they container-grown plants or ready-to-sprout bulbs or seed: Just plant, water and enjoy!

Plant  Don't miss Fall Festival, our biggest plant sale of the year: Friday–Saturday, October 8–9 and 15–16. Bring a friend—memberships available at the door!

Before you buy, assess your site (think climate, soil, sunlight, etc.), then pick and group plants that will accept those conditions. Small plants in 4” or 1-gallon pots are easy to transplant and establish more readily than plants from larger containers. Space transplants according to mature sizes—they will grow!

BULBS! California is rich with native bulbs, and TPF offers a great selection during the month of October. Most native bulbs need fast-draining soil and a spot that stays dry all summer.

Good choices for beginners: Allium unifolium (one-leaf onion), Dichelostemma capitatum (blue dicks), D. ida-maia (firecracker flower) and Tritleia laxa ‘Queen Fabiola’. Other jewels offered this year: Odontostomum hartwegii (Hartweg's doll’s lily), which can take summer water; stunning orange Calochortus kennedyi (desert mariposa lily); and rarely grown Brodiaea pallida (Chinese Camp brodiaea).

Select plants with the best fall color. Consider these: Acer macrophyllum (big-leaf maple), Cercis occidentalis (western redbud) and Berberis aquifolium var. repens (creeping barberry).

Sow  Save 10% on seed at Fall Festival, Friday–Saturday, October 8–9 and 15–16! Start annual and perennial wildflowers from seed. First, clear the area of unwanted plants. Rough up the soil surface, sprinkle lightly, sow seed according to directions, and water gently. Keep the bed moist (but not soggy) as seed germinates and seedlings become established.

Native shrubs, trees, groundcovers, perennials and succulents can also be started now from seed, and TPF carries a wide selection.

Water  Deep-soak summer-dry native bulbs and summer-deciduous plants to bring them out of dormancy.

Always check soil moisture before watering—water only when the top few inches are dry. Water deeply to encourage and support deep root systems.

Even the most drought-tolerant natives are not drought-tolerant until they're established, which can take a year or two. During that time, new transplants require frequent attention and regular, deep irrigation of the root ball and surrounding soil.

Weed  Hoe, cultivate or pull winter annual weeds as they sprout. Dig deeply to control perennial invaders with tough, deep specialized roots.

Prune and Cut Back  Prune young and newly planted shrubs and trees for good shape and strong structure.

Remove dead, weak and crossing wood on established shrubs and trees to make space for fall and winter growth. Do not prune living branches on manzanita and ceanothus; pruning cuts invite disease and, at this time, these plants are carrying or developing buds for winter and spring flowers.

In November or December, whack Romneya coulteri (Matilija poppy) stems down to one or two inches from the base.

Divide  Propagate native Iris species and Pacific Coast hybrids in late November or early December. Dig and split large clumps or leave them in place and cut sections from the edges. Replant divisions; water regularly until new growth appears.

Dig and divide cool-season grasses (e.g. Festuca, Nassella, Leymus, Calamagrostis and Melica). Make sure each new clump has ample roots; water well after replanting.

Mulch  A 3–to–4-inch layer of organic matter, gravel or decorative rock helps retain soil moisture, moderate soil temperatures, suppress weeds and beautify the garden. To prevent disease, keep mulches away from stems, crowns and trunks. Leave some areas un-mulched to provide habitat for ground-nesting native bees and wasps.

Members’ Open House a Success!

On Sunday, August 22, more than 100 spirited TPF members joined staff, board and volunteers at Foundation headquarters in Sun Valley to celebrate our 50th anniversary and honor outgoing Board president John Wickham. Festivities included behind-the-scenes tours, snacks and dinner, and an opportunity drawing. (In this photo, Mary Benson, senior community representative for Councilman Paul Krekorian, presents John with a plaque commemorating his service to TPF. To his left is a bench donated by the TPF Board of Directors in his honor.)

Thanks to all who contributed time and muscle, demonstrated culinary skills, provided “raffle” items—and those who attended (including life members Snowdy Dodson, Lynnette Kampe, Eric Mulfinger, Bart O’Brien, DJ Peterson, Richard Smith and John Wickham). The atmosphere was pleasant and lively and future gatherings are being planned!
IN THE ART GALLERY

Letterpress Artistry by Elinor Nissley, TPF Artist-in-Residence
by John Wickham

Artist-in-Residence Program  In spring 2008, in order to foster new ways of viewing our beautiful native flora, the Foundation initiated an artist-in-residence program. The concept was to engage local artists with our native flora in dedicated, focused projects. At that time, we fortunately encountered Pamela Burgess and instantly fell in love with her unique vision and approach to botanical subjects.

Pamela spent many days at the Foundation, creating dozens of images that, she says, “express a kind of serenity similar to a direct experience with nature.” The work resulted in a compelling exhibition, “Radiant Light: Shadow Drawings of California Native Plants,” which graced the walls of the Theodore Payne Gallery in Fall 2008.

Since then, we'd been searching for another artist ready to work with our flora, when, by happenstance, Arts Council member Ellen Steel brought Elinor Nissley to our attention. Ellen displayed a brilliant perpetual calendar depicting fruit and vegetables for Southland gardens. Its simple yet stunning prints and striking use of color showed the hand of a very talented artist. One phone call, several e-mails and a meeting…and Elinor jumped on board as our second artist-in-residence.

About Elinor Nissley  Elinor Nissley is an architectural designer and the proprietor of Krank Press, a letterpress printing company. Raised in Washington, DC, in a family of birdwatchers, she has a keen interest in the urban ecology of Los Angeles. In fact, one of her collections features images of wildlife you’ll find in your backyard. Elinor holds a Bachelor of Arts in printmaking from Rice University, Houston, Texas, and a Master of Architecture from UC Berkeley. When not setting type in her basement, she enjoys birding and traveling.

Elinor’s interest in urban wildlife and gardening found a natural extension in California native plants. This spring, as we talked about her work and other pursuits, Elinor discussed a desire to make prints of the California flora—and that she needed the opportunity to think about what that artwork would look like, learn about the plants and dedicate time to creating the work. That’s exactly the idea behind the Foundation’s artist-in-residence program.

Elinor runs Krank Press out of her Silver Lake garage. She prints all of her work on a 1956 Chandler and Price Craftsman letterpress, and, for her residency at Theodore Payne, is focusing on carving and printing relief blocks from her drawings of plants at the nursery—and enjoying this process of turning the organic objects into graphic forms.

And so, this autumn, we are very pleased to present the work of Elinor Nissley, TPF artist-in-residence, in the Theodore Payne Gallery. Her exhibit, Nature in Relief: Letterpress Graphics by Elinor Nissley, will be on view October through December 2010, Tuesday through Saturday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Please join us on Saturday, October 16, at 2:00 p.m. for an artist’s reception. It’s a great opportunity to meet the artist and learn about her art and process. Elinor will be selling her work both Saturdays of Fall Festival, October 9 and 16. For event details, see page 4.

Dichelostemma pulchellum (blue dicks or wild hyacinth) by Elinor Nissley, 2010
Fall and Winter—Time for Sowing Wild Flower Seed!

by Edward L. Peterson, Master Seedsman

Edward L. Peterson, a friend and colleague of Theodore Payne, helped create the Theodore Payne Foundation and was a founding Board member. He originated our seed collection program, managed the seed room, field-collected seed and shared his knowledge until his death in 2005 at the age of 100. We offer here Ed’s timeless and sage advice for planting wild flower seed in the garden.

In our Mediterranean climate, the rainy season awakens dormant native plants. It also initiates seed germination of the seed dropped from native plants the previous spring and summer. Gardeners who sow seeds of native wild flowers in their yards (especially annuals) can grow vigorous, healthy plants from fall through to the end of January. If we are in an El Niño year, we can continue to plant seeds through mid-March. Cool temperatures and adequate moisture promote seed germination and enhance seedling growth with less risk of drying out during critical periods of plant growth and root establishment. (Of course, if you want to start seeds outside of this time period, you will need to be disciplined about sprinkling!)

In the wild, seeds germinate without any human intervention, and you can see the differences in the flower show from year to year based on rainfall and temperature patterns. In our yards, we can affect some of these conditions and enhance our flower shows.

Clear the Area  First, clear the intended sowing area of weeds and non-native grasses. These plants tend to germinate much more quickly than native wildflowers, and can be small plants before the native seeds have even germinated. Hand-weed existing plants and then irrigate the area to germinate weed and grass seed in the soil. Hand weed again. This process may take several weeks.

Loosen the Soil  Now your soil is ready to be raked and broken up. Tiny roots need to be able to break into the surface area of the soil. If soil is compacted and hard, the roots can’t grow. Use a hoe, a metal-tined rake, a shovel or a tiller. Wildflowers don’t need more than a few inches of loose soil, so you don’t need to go to any great depth.

Sow  The next step is to sow the seed. There are several options here. You can let the rains wet the soil thoroughly and then sow the seed, or you can sow on dry ground. Remember that the longer the seed is on the ground without moisture, the more time the seed is exposed to hungry creatures who want the seeds’ dense nutrient content!

Some seeds are very tiny and light. *Achillea* (yarrow) and *Castilleja* (Indian paintbrush) seeds are an example. These seeds can be mixed with 5–10× the amount of dirt or washed sand as seed to increase the bulk and better the spread. (Avoid seashore sand—it has salts that can hinder germination). Other seeds are heavier and can simply be thrown by hand. Do two sowings—the second sowing walking in a direction perpendicular to the first sowing. Doing this helps to give even coverage and an even flower display.

Rake and Cover  Once the seeds are on the ground, lightly rake the soil to cover the seeds a bit with dirt. This helps to protect the seeds from hungry creatures and encourages better seed-to-soil surface contact. The seeds still receive the needed light for germination. You can also put a board on the ground and walk on it, instead of raking.

Irrigate—Or Wait  Now wait for the rain, or irrigate gently but thoroughly. Keep the plot moist until the plants are about 2 inches tall (if the rains are not well spaced). Your wild flowers are now mature enough to survive on their own. (Before this time you may have to protect the seedlings from trampling, birds and snails). Depending on the choice of wild flowers, you can have a flower show 2 months from the time of sowing!

Some of the loveliest and easiest to grow of our native wild flowers include all of the *Eschscholzia* (California poppy—germinates in about 5 days!), *Clarkia* (Farewell to Spring), *Gilia*, *Nemophila*, *Phacelia*, and *Lasthenia* species. Happy sowing!

A donation to the Ed Peterson Fund for Native Plant Education is a great way to help us honor Ed and his lifelong dedication to the study and preservation of California native flora. Please make checks payable to the Theodore Payne Foundation and note “Ed Peterson Fund” in the memo. Thank you!
EDWARD CONDIT

Recognize this impish face? It’s Edward Condit, an extraordinary volunteer who is also part-time staff. Eddie brings his wry sense of humor and a devotion to Zen Buddhism to all he does at the Foundation: carpentry, painting, cart repair—you name it—and customer assistance, particularly if you have a dog. (Next time you’re at TPF, ask to see Eddie’s “Dog Book.”) The sales yard bridges, nursery kiosk and wooden signs around the grounds are all Eddie’s design and handiwork, and we are deeply grateful for his creativity and keeping us in working order!

As Eddie describes it, his working years in local business were totally cerebral—the antithesis of his present hands-on reality. Retirement was life-changing, as was meeting the late Janet Planet in 1994 (they married in 1997). Janet, a Zen priest, introduced Eddie to the Foundation in 1995, and the Foundation has been his fortunate beneficiary ever since.

One of Eddie’s guiding principles is “do as good a job as you possibly can,” because people respond positively to integrity. Eddie feels that the Foundation’s product—native plants and teaching people how nature works—has great integrity, as it fosters living with gratitude and acting responsibly.

In his garden on Flora Morgan Trail, a historic road on a north-facing slope of the Verdugo Mountains in Tujunga, Eddie tends an old oak tree and many species of Salvia, Epilobium and Malacothamnus. He loves the salvias for their connection to native peoples and earth-based ceremonies, and admires Malacothamnus for its magnificent summer blooms. He says his garden has taught him many things, including the effects of soil composition and how to prune. (Eddie’s first volunteer job at the Foundation was to prune some Muhlenbergia [deer grass]. He didn’t know a thing about pruning, so he decided to emulate his hair stylist: “Lift and cut.”).

An avid history buff, Eddie feels that many Californians have lost their sense of place, and that the Theodore Payne Foundation is helping people develop an appreciation of their natural inheritance.

Thank you, Eddie, for all you do for the Foundation!

by Genevieve Arnold, Seed Room Manager

Welcome to new Seed Room volunteers Andrea Miranda and Vicki Jennings. Their capable help is invaluable!

Many thanks to those who donated supplies this summer:

John Anderson and George and Marcia Fuller for large bags of stockings used to catch seeds directly from plants with dehiscent fruit. Lynnette Kampe for a bag of incense cedar pieces that will help deter bugs from getting into drying seed collections. An anonymous donor for a large sieve used for cleaning seed.

Several people generously donated seed gathered from their personal gardens:

Ken and Rhonda Gilliland: Arabis pulchra, Carpenteria californica, Clarkia unguiculata, Delphinium cardinale, Erysimum menziesii, Gilia capitata, Isomeris arborea, Keckiella cordifolia, Malacothamnus palmeri, Thermopsis microphylla

Steve Hartman: Clarkia purpurea, C. unguiculata, Encelia farinosa, Gilia capitata, Salvia columbariae

Frederick Maupin: Clarkia amoena, C. purpurea

Louise Olson: Arctostaphylos glauca, Baileya multiradiata, Bidens nudata, Camissonia cheiranthifolia, Cassia purpusii, Coreopsis gigantea, Eschscholzia californica, Linum lewisii, Lupinus succulentus, Salvia clevelandii, Sisyrinchium bellum, Trichostema lanatum
More Big Leaps Forward
by Lisa Novick, Outreach and Volunteer Coordinator

Though summer temperatures were cooler than average, our summer volunteer hours have been soaring! In addition to all the usual very much-appreciated labor on our behalf, two more Eagle Scout Projects were completed at the Foundation in July. Thank you, dedicated volunteers, Eagle Scouts and troop members for all you have done for Theodore Payne!

**Administration**  Steve Hartman

**Archives**  John Wickham

**Atwater Village Centennial Street Festival**  Keith Malone

**Bulb House Refurbishment**  Alex Beebee, Lex Beebee, Sally Beebee, John Wickham

**LA Cactus & Succulent Society Event, Encino**  Kathy Burke, Mardi Caruso, Carlos Flores, Hana Hrabec-Snyder, Barbara King, Carole Missirlian, April Taylor

**Construction of Retaining Wall on Wild Flower Hill**  Eagle Scout Patrick Lee of La Canada Troop 507 and troop members Jin Ahn, William Ban, Lucas Connelly, Sam Frederich, Thomas Han, Erick Kim, Peter Kim, Steven Kim, Justin Koo, Sam Lee, Erik Park and Roy Yu, with special thanks to parents Sook and Paul Lee, brother Steven, sister Samantha, troop co-leader Mr. Connelly and project advisor Mr. Myers

**Construction of Nursery Container Storage Bin**  Eagle Scout Pearce Ferriter of Granada Hills Troop 549 and troop members Pat Coffin (Scout Master), Nick Coffin, Ben Dorschner, Carl Dorschner, Josh Kelfer, Nathan Kelfer, Grant Lehmann, Hans Lehmann, Bill Luehrman, Phyllis Luehrman, Abha Misra, Gitanjali Misra, Sumita Misra, Sumita Misra, Tom Moorman, David Nusbaum, Gary Shannahan, Tommy Shannahan, Quentin Sylvester, Tom Sylvester and Chris U moye, with special thanks to parents Maria and Michael Ferriter

**Education Center Carpentry, Painting and Remodel**  Edward Condit, Lynnette Kampe, Mark Kampe

**Facebook Updates**  Keith Malone

**Fiftieth Anniversary Planning**  Cassy Aoyagi, Pamela Burgess, Keith Malone

**First Saturdays**  Dee Farnsworth, Joe Grant, Kathleen Grantham, Jennifer Kramer, Fredric Maupin, Andrea Miranda, Anita Sheridan, Julie Takayama, Malka Youngstein

**Foothill Water District Events in Altadena, La Cañada and Pasadena**  Edward Condit, Mark Uhlmann

**Garden Maintenance**  Edward Condit

**Hollywood Farmers’ Market**  Michelle Auchterlonie, Gail Butensky, Kathy Burke, Mardi Caruso, Weina Dinata, Carlos Flores, Larry Gabriel, Jenny Garcia, Kathleen Johnson, Barbara King, Loretta Leiker, Iain McConnell, Andrea Miranda, Margaret Oakley, Beatrice Olsen, Joya Salas, Mitzi Zack Walters

**Open House Planning**  Pamela Burgess, Keith Malone

**Open House Event**  Kirk Aoyagi, Joe Grant, David Grimes, Jennifer Kampe, Iliana Korche, Keith Malone, Fredric Maupin, Kayla McCue, Jacque Munroe, Scott Munroe, Dru Murawa, Lisa Novick, Margaret Robison, Kathy Sturdevant, Antonia Warner, Malka Youngstein

**Propagation**  Mary Brooks, Roxanne Correa, Dee Farnsworth, Nancy Edwards, Vicki Jennings, Lily Kerrigan, Andrew Peck

**Seed Room**  Vicki Jennings, Andrea Miranda, James Pineda, Malka Youngstein

**Weeding**  Jakub Gawronski, Lee Lanselle

And thank you to our webmasters, Ken and Rhonda Gilliland, and to all of our Board Members, past and present, for your hard work and effort on behalf of the Theodore Payne Foundation.

Eagle Scout Pearce Ferriter of Granada Hills Troop 549 shows off the newly constructed nursery container storage bin (spiffy)!
Each month we feature a different species and offer a 20% discount to members.

**October**  *Salvia leucophylla* ‘Point Sal’—Point Sal Purple Sage  (Lamiaceae)

This relatively low spreading selection of purple sage grows quickly to 2’ (or more) high and 8’ wide, with silver-gray foliage and lavender-pink spring/summer flowers. Full sun is best; accepts most soils; drought-tolerant, once established; deep-rooted; semi-evergreen; frost tender.

**November**  *Arctostaphylos hookeri* ‘Wayside’—Wayside Manzanita (Ericaceae)

Replace your lawn or hold your slope with this handsome evergreen groundcover that sports pink winter/spring flowers, followed by beautiful red berries. Slow-growing to 2’-3’ high and 8’ wide; full sun or part shade; okay in clay; hardy to 15˚F. A bird and butterfly favorite.

**December**  *Prunus ilicifolia* ssp. *ilicifolia*—Holly-leaf Cherry (Rosaceae)

Though prices have changed, everything else holds true in this listing from Theodore Payne’s 1941 catalog: “Of all our native shrubs, there is none more beautiful than this wild cherry with its rich, deep green holly-like foliage and sprays of white flowers. Of dense spreading habit and fairly rapid growth, it is extremely hardy, standing both heat and cold. It is not at all particular about soil and will thrive without any water other than the natural rainfall after once becoming established. At the same time it will stand ordinary garden culture. It likes a sunny location but will grow well in the shade. There is no end to the places where this shrub can be used effectively. For foundation planting against a building or wall. As single specimen plants for for mass plantings. For screen plantings or for covering banks and hillsides. It makes the most beautiful hedge allowed to grow informally or trimmed, while for decorating purposes the cut sprays have no equal. Gallon cans, 40¢; 5 gallon cans, $1.75. To 15’ by 15’ at maturity.

*Please note:* We reserve the right to make changes. Offer is good while supplies last—sorry, no rain checks or holds. We may need to limit quantities. Please check our website for more information on the plants listed here.