



# COUNCIL THYMES

NEWSLETTER OF THE CALIFORNIA CONSULTANTS COUNCIL  
Published since 2013

CALIFORNIA GARDEN CLUBS, INC. - NATIONAL GARDEN CLUBS, INC.

## Chairman's Message

After twelve years of discussion, the formation of a single council that includes environmental, gardening and landscape design consultants was organized June 7, 2013. To date, thirty-six charter members remitted their \$20 dues over the summer. It's not too late to join the CCC - dues are welcome at any time during the two-year term.

Plans are already underway to sponsor a tri-refresher at the 2014 Convention so **save the dates**, June 6 (tentative convention tour to Forest Lawn Memorial Park) and June 9 (morning lectures and afternoon tram tour of Descanso Gardens with box lunch) on your calendar to refresh your credentials! Details will be announced when they are finalized.

Please join us at the CCC meeting scheduled for CGCI's Fall Board Meeting.

## Next Meeting

The next CCC meeting will be held at the CGCI Fall Board Meeting at the Ayres Hotel in Essex EW, Costa Mesa on Thursday, September 5 at 8:00 p.m. Items on the tentative agenda are the proposed budget for 2013-2014 and Tri-Refresher. Your input is invaluable to the success of the CCC. We hope to see you there!

All are welcome to attend and join the Council.

## A Message from our President

*By Rita Desilets, CGCI President*

Congratulations on the formation of the California Consultants Council and the first issue of "Council Thymes" newsletter. The Gardening Consultants, Environmental Consultants and Landscape Design Consultants will surely benefit from the support and increased communication provided by the CCC.

*Heard at the NGC Convention in Seattle:  
"Education is the transportation to the future."*

## Gardening Study School, Series 23

*By Mary Lou Goodwin, Series 23 Chairman*

Humboldt District's Gardening Study School, Series 23, was completed on July 13, 2013 with a graduation ceremony complete with certificates in the Sequoia Park Zoo Flower Garden. The consultants will be introduced at the District Meeting.



Ten students completed the school and all are now members of garden clubs. Three additional Provisionals may also complete the courses. Twenty faithful garden club members attended the school but did not take the test. The average attendance was 28 students at each session.

The students enjoyed seeing the Humboldt Botanical Garden, College of the Redwoods Campus, and greenhouse and the plants in the Sequoia Park Zoo and gardens.

The catered breakfasts and lunch added to the sociability of each day and the educational displays were varied. Plants were donated by several nurseries for the students to study and the huge display of California native cut specimens covered the room.

Since this was a fundraiser, we are happy to report that \$2300.00 was added to the district treasury. New friendships have been created and the group will continue to meet twice a year.

We have been asked to repeat the experience, but no action has been taken to date.

*By Shane Looper, Council Treasurer*

## We're glad you've joined us!

**Current Membership: 36**

See Dues Invoice on page 8 of this newsletter

**Pay your council dues so we can keep this number growing!**

### How Does Your Garden Grow

*Excerpts from "Garden Clippings," Fortuna GC by Donna Farris*

In May, our speaker covered the gopher and mole subject, with an interesting repellent for gophers, rabbit urine! However, some members had questions about voles, and about shrews. Since my cat deposited a dead (thank goodness) shrew at my feet recently, I took it as a sign to address the topic of shrews and voles. (She has delivered many a vole to me in various states of health, from lively to feet up) over the years, and that addresses one of the differences between the two, voles being gregarious and prolific, shrews being solitary, and aggressively territorial.



Vagrant shrew, small forefeet

Shrews are not rodents, but are small mammals more closely related to moles than voles or gophers, which are rodents. Shrews have sharp pointy teeth and a narrow, hair-covered snout. Their diet consists of worms, grubs, slugs, snails, crickets, centipedes, millipedes, mice, snakes, birds, newborn rabbits, or anything they can catch, including, on occasion, other shrews. Some species will eat nuts and seeds, or tubers if they can't get anything better. They are mostly quite small, though one species in our area, the Pacific shrew, can get as large as four or five inches. The common wandering or vagrant shrew, like the one the cat brought in, was about two inches long.

Moles, in contrast can be quite large, as eight inches or larger is quite common. Shrews are one of the few mammals that can have venom in its bite, in some

species, and that is how it can kill mice and other small animal prey. Shrews have a high metabolism, and can eat up to three times their body weight daily. Because of this they drive away other shrews except to mate briefly, and are pugnacious and irritable. They have a short life, a year or two. They are one of the few mammals, (like bats) to use echo location to find their way around, (as their eye sight is weak), though they don't use it to find prey, only for navigation. Our local species are most active at night, but will hunt when they have to find food.



Notice the front feet on the mole.

Moles are similar in appetite and diet except they pretty much limit themselves to underground prey of insects and worms, with a very occasional vegetable side, have almost nonexistent eyes, seldom come above ground, and have huge front feet for excavation, where a shrew's feet are small and mouse like.



Volcano shaped mole mounds

Moles and gophers are master excavators making miles of tunnels, whereas both voles and shrews, though capable of tunneling, tend to make short ones, and prefer to use the abandoned tunnels of moles and gophers, and make nests in them.





Fan shaped gopher mound

I would sum up shrews by saying, it seems as though they are not such a problem, as they keep insect, slug and mouse populations down, although the vagrant shrew has been known to eat a certain amount of Douglas fir seeds, potentially lessening seedling tree growth, but not devastatingly so.

Most animals don't eat shrews, as they have unpleasant tasting musk glands, though some birds, most notably, owls, will prey on them. You can trap them with snap traps using ham, beef, peanut butter or chocolate. (One may catch some gardeners using those items as well.) I would say, generally, not to worry about the shrews. Voles, however, are a different matter.

Voles, known also as meadow mice, are rodents, superficially resembling a cross between gophers and mice. They are actually quite cute and cuddly looking. Too bad they cause so much damage in the garden. They are mouse-like and have big heads, fluffy fur and short tails.



Vole, or meadow mouse

Voles have a series of entrance holes to their shallow burrows that are free of dirt mounds, and have the vegetation neatly mowed down around the entrance.



Vole burrows

They eat roots, tubers, grasses and vegetables, like gophers. But while gophers specialize in underground feeding, with only occasional surface feeding, voles will feed readily on the surface as well as underground, and have many paths or runways beaten through the grass or groundcover between their burrow holes. They like tall grasses to hide their runways from predators, so keeping the grass mowed down exposes them more to predation. They are prolific in breeding and like living in large groups, so populations can get quite dense. When populations reach peak density, they will sometimes crash. So some years you may see much vole damage, other years very little. They will eat tree bark and roots when succulent grass is scarce in winter or in dry summers, and can girdle trees, killing them. They are fond of vegetables and can be as hard as gophers on artichoke plants.

Thick mulches of straw can provide cover for voles to tunnel under. Almost every predator finds them tasty, so keeping grasses and weeds mowed down short and exposing their runways discourages them. A 15-foot buffer zone of mowing between outlying areas and your yard or garden will make your yard less desirable to them. They don't climb very well, so they don't move into homes and outbuildings like mice do. A fine mesh wire fence (1/4" or less openings) 12" above ground and 6" to 10" below ground will stop them from crossing into a garden area. Wooden mouse traps baited with a peanut butter and oatmeal mixture or apple slices, placed in their runways works. They seldom leave their trails or runways, so trap placement is important. Poison used for mice will work, but is **not advised**, as so many wild and domestic animals find voles quite tasty, and may eat a dead one, including cats and dogs, and bait placement is in the open, so could be a hazard to children and pets. Owls and hawks are major

predators of voles, so you might try some of the fake owl or hawk items out there that keep birds out of fruit trees and see if they make your voles nervous. Shrews might be a help as well, though a shrew or two would be unlikely to keep up with a burgeoning meadow mouse population. My best ploy is my cat, Pumpkin Face. She definitely makes my voles more than just nervous.

**Save WATER – Remove Your Lawn**

*By Maria Orefice, Southern California GC*

You've probably noticed that your water bill rises in direct proportion to the rise in temperature. While officially summer begins on Friday, June 21, the weather has already been blistering hot. This does not bode well for Southern California...or for our water usage.

Have you thought about ways to reduce water consumption? Consider removing your lawn.



The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California has introduced its Residential Turf Removal Program. Turf grass is one of the most water-intensive plants in your landscape. Its high water and frequent maintenance needs make it a time-consuming and expensive option.

If you choose to remove some or all of your lawn to reduce your outdoor water usage, you can receive \$1 or more per square foot of removed turf as a reward.

**Don't dig up your lawn yet!** To qualify for the program certain criteria must be met such as:

- You must be a customer of a participating water agency.
- An application is required--all projects have to be pre-approved
- After receiving approval, your turf removal project must be completed and rebate request must be submitted within 120 days.
- Converted areas must be permeable to air and water including weed barriers and hardscape.
- Exposed soil must be covered with a 2-3 inch layer to prevent erosion.
- The use of drought tolerant and native plants is strongly encouraged. Synthetic turf is an approved option for certain water agencies. **No invasive plants allowed.**
- At least 250 square feet of turf must be removed; some exceptions permitted.

Before you sell your lawnmower, learn if your water district participates in the Residential Turf Removal Program and find out more about the program by visiting [www.socialwatersmart.com](http://www.socialwatersmart.com), and under "Main Menu" click on Turf Removal.

Nevada City Gardening Study School, Series 24 had 22 attending; 11 testing and passing, and four refreshers.

The offer was made to give a gift of small Fiskars clippers to all those registering and paying for the three remaining classes. Michelle Bull was the first, and was presented with the first clipper.



Following the Soils class on Sunday, the students were to have a bit of free time before lunch, but Paul Vander Werf, our new CGCI Chairman of Vermiculture/Vermicomposting was visiting and accepted our invitation to tell us about his chairmanship. The class became really excited and ate luncheon later to learn more. He was a big hit!

Another highlight of the school was the Soils instructor who took the class outside into the garden for a hands-on learning how to test and identify soil with just a little water.

Join us for the second session on August 24-25, 2013. For information or to register contact: [forgivenami@wavecable.com](mailto:forgivenami@wavecable.com) or 530-346-8561





## **NGC Environmental Studies Schools**

*By Judy Newman, NGC Environmental Studies Schools Chairman*

The Environmental Studies School Committee is looking forward to working with the State and Local ESS Chairmen. The updated *Environmental Studies Handbook*, including the updated curriculum, forms, brochures and changes/corrections since the 2010 printing, is available at NGC Headquarters. All of the ESS Courses should be using the updated curriculum. There are two brochures available on the website; one is an overview of all of the ESS Courses, the second is a guide for all ESS students and consultants. It contains information about completing the four courses to be an ESS Consultant, obtaining out of state credit, applying for Consultant Cards, obtaining Refresher Credits and/or Extensions, Record Keeping, Reinstatement and NGC 4-Star and 5-Star Memberships.

Consultants may request a copy of ESS Courses and Refreshers, or to ask questions, by emailing me at [newman9641@aol.com](mailto:newman9641@aol.com).

### ***New Award Announced***



As a result of the formation of the newly organized California Consultants Council, a new award is now available. In addition to the traditional Gardening Consultant of the Year and Landscape Design Consultant of the Year awards, Environmental Consultant of the Year has been created.

The new Environmental Consultant of the Year may be awarded each year, at the CGCI Annual Convention, to a Consultant or Master Environmental Consultant in recognition of non-professional achievement, involvement and/or service as an environmental consultant in either the community or the NGC Environmental Studies program.

Submit your recommendation by January 10 to CCC Chairman, Julie West.

### ***NGC Schools News***

*By Greg Pokorski, NGC ES, GS, and LD Schools Coordinator*



Our NGC schools chairmen continue their positions in this new 2013-2015 term:

*Environmental Studies Schools* – Judy Newman, Chairman

*Landscape Design Schools* – Jane

Bersch, Chairman

*Gardening Study Schools* – Greg Pokorski, Chairman

Cathy Felton, Libby Coffey, Idalia Aguilar and Julie Schoenike continue with the committee, and we welcome new members Lana Finegold and Julie West.

Please contact any of our NGC Schools Committees Chairmen if you have questions and for assistance in conducting schools.



New NGC President Linda Nelson's president's theme is "MAKING A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE: Choices Matter," and her President's Special Project has the purpose of highlighting through state programs and garden club projects the basics stated in the NGC Conservation

Pledge. The pledge incorporates themes (protecting and conserving the natural re-sources of the planet earth, promoting education, making us caretakers of our air, water, forest, land and wildlife) that tie in with the purpose of and subjects included in our NGC Environmental Studies, Gardening Study and Landscape Design Schools programs. The Schools Committees challenge states to promote education by holding schools and refresher events during these two years. See how you can use the president's theme and project to promote your schools and let your schools emphasize education that reinforces the Conservation Pledge.

We have had reports that Consultants have sought refresher credit by attending one day of an NGC school. Please be re-minded that in order to receive refresher credit by attending a school course the consultant must attend all classes that comprise the course (must attend both days of a two-day course).

We have received questions about the processing of refresher certificates for those who attended the Tri-Refresher at the NGC Convention in Seattle in May. We are pleased to report that the Event Chairmen have completed the attendance rosters and other required forms and these are now being routed to the NGC Accrediting Chairmen for each school who will verify that refreshing consultants are eligible to receive credit and then issue refresher certificate/cards to the state school chairmen for distribution to the consultants. Consultants who have taken an out-of-state refresher should notify their home state school chairmen to anticipate receipt of these cards for distribution.

Thanks for your participation in and support of our schools – a major benefit of membership in NGC. Our schools can make a world of difference to our members and our communities.

### ***Invasive Plants in Pacific Region***

*From WACONIAH by Jane Buck, Invasive Plants PR Chairman*

An invasive plant is a non-native species whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.

Around for many years, invasive plants are a serious threat and growing problem in the environment



worldwide. Invasives infest millions of acres of forests, rangelands, wetlands and urban landscapes across the country.

Invasive plants can be introduced by natural dispersal from one area to another by birds, wildlife, livestock, vehicles, railways, and wind. Wind-dispersed seeds can be carried long distances on light wind currents. Animal-dispersed seeds are typically fleshy berries. They can be introduced through intentional introduction as an ornamental or food plant. Cheatgrass (see picture) is believed to have come to the west as a wheat seed contaminant. Salt cedar was planted along streams for erosion control. Purple loosestrife was planted in gardens for its pretty purple flowers. They can be unintentionally introduced as a by-product of waste disposal, such as garden waste dumping. Many can multiply unchallenged without their native diseases and growing conditions to keep them in check.

The Bureau of Land Management estimates that invasive plants cause \$123 billion in damage and loss to the U.S. economy annually. About \$5 billion are spent annually by agriculture to control weeds. A 1998 survey in Washington State found that 130 million pounds of forage were lost annually on knapweed infested rangelands.

### What can you do to help stop Invasive Plants?

- o Contact your local native plant society or state Department of Natural Resources to find out which plants are invasive in your area.
- o Learn to identify important local invasive plants.
- o Identify and remove invasive plants in your yard and garden to prevent their spread.
- o Plant non-invasive plants in your garden. Go native! There are a wide variety of beautiful, easy to care for native plants available. Look for an alternative plant list for your state.
- o Use systemic herbicides carefully as a last resort to remove invasives.
- o Make other gardeners and neighbors aware of invasive plants.
- o Encourage garden centers not to carry invasive plants for your area.

## Invasive Plant Resource List for Pacific Region States

Check out [Invasive.org](http://Invasive.org) to find out what is invasive in your state. Other resources for each state are listed on the Pacific Region website.

Do your part and become aware of invasive plants in your garden/area. If you know of a project in your area, to rid invasive plants, share it with us.

### Horticulture: Calyx



A sepal is a part of the flower of angiosperms (flowering plants). Collectively the sepals are called the calyx (plural calyxes), the outermost whorl of parts that form a flower. The word *calyx* adopted from the Latin *calyx*, not to be confused with *calix*, a cup or goblet. Usually green, sepals typically function as protection for the flower in bud, and often as support for the petals when in bloom. After flowering, most plants have no more use for the calyx which withers or becomes vestigial, however, some plants retain a thorny calyx, either dried or live, as protection for the fruit or seeds.

After blooming, the sepals of *Hibiscus sabdariffa* expand into an edible accessory fruit

### Landscape Design Schools

By Alexis Slafer, Landscape Design Schools Chairman

Landscape Design Consultants of the National Garden Clubs gain knowledge, promote awareness and understanding of landscape design, site planning and landscaping. CGCI has over 125 Landscape Design Consultants representing 20 Districts. You can join this cadre of Consultants or refresh your credentials by attending the upcoming School being planned in Luther Burbank District, with the first course scheduled for October 23-24, 2014. Look for the dates of the other three courses on the CGCI website.

As a consultant you can promote good land use and encourage participation in this exciting program by helping your club or district sponsor a Landscape Design School in your local area. Let's get one started in southern California within the year! Contact Alexis Slafer, the CGCI Landscape Design Schools Chairman at [aslafer@ca.rr.com](mailto:aslafer@ca.rr.com) for more information.

### Gardening Study Schools

By GSS Chairman, Greg Pokorski

Gardening Consultants and Master Gardening Consultants may refresh once each calendar year. To maintain good standing, you must refresh by the end

of the fifth calendar year following your last class or refresher. (This same requirement also applies to ES and LD Schools.) All Gardening Consultants in good standing who became Consultants prior to 2013 and who have not refreshed in 2013 are eligible to refresh at any time.

Once a Consultant completes four refreshers he/she is eligible for Master Consultant status. Master Consultants must continue to refresh at least every five years, but a Master Consultant who no longer wants to refresh or who is no longer able to refresh may apply for Emeritus status as opposed to letting their Gardening Consultant status lapse.

**These Gardening Consultants must refresh in 2013** or request an extension in 2013 or their Gardening Consultant status will lapse 12/31/2013: Kay Burdick, Michael Habib, Rosalie Hooper, Arthur Loesch, Nancy Lee Loesch, Maryanne Lucas, Cathy Rios, and Doris Rivas-Brekke.

Gardening Study School Series 24 in Nevada City has already produced its first Gardening Consultant: **Gina Bush**.

Gardening Study School Series 22 in Encino



**Thanks and congratulations to Southern California Garden Club and Local Chairman (and CCC member) Robin Pokorski** for completion in March of a successful series with 30 new Gardening Consultants:

Ilona Buratti	*Sue Nolan
Susan Carmona	Maria Orefice
*Albert Chang	Joyce Parrott
Jean Crail	Andrea Polk
Maggie Crane	Frann Rosenblum
BJ Doerfling	Sherie Sanford
Rosemary Ecker	*Alexis Slafer
Carolynn Fisher	Christine Stabile
Mary Fleer	Bette Tang
Mardy Graves	Terri Taylor
Sandy Konow	*George Unrine
Lenora Lee	*Judy Unrine
Alexa Moss	Rebecca Valentine
Marybeth Muir	Harriet Vallens
Bea Nicholas	*Paul Vander Werf

And 10 new Provisional Gardening Consultants:

Gail Anderson	Marissa Mendenhall
Judy Benedict	Sherry Molinari
Lisa Caston	Patricia Runions
Michael Cox	Caroline Russom
Norma Daughenbaugh	Doris Tinius

Gardening Study School Series 23 in Eureka

**Thanks and congratulations to Humboldt District and Local Chairman Mary Lou Goodwin** for completion in July of a successful series with 11 new Gardening Consultants:

Jeannine Bentley	*Maria Krenek
Doris Todd Brown	Serena Meadows
Candice Boggs	Sandra Miracle
Eva Frontz	*Anne Van Zandt
Janean Guest	Gretchen Ziegler
Becky Hall	

And three new Provisional Gardening Consultants:

Anne Barrett  
Grace Marton  
Shearin Whalen

**Congratulations** to all 42 new Gardening Consultants and all 13 new Provisional Gardening Consultants and to our **newest Master Consultant** and CCC member: **Emily Bueermann**.

Thank you for supporting our Schools, the Local School Chairmen who put in so much work to make each school series informative and interesting educational opportunities for all, and the clubs and districts who sponsor them.

Please contact me if you have questions regarding your Gardening Consultant status or about the GSS program.  
\* = CCC member

**School Daze**

### GARDENING STUDY SCHOOLS

Nevada City, California Contact: Myrtle Findley,  
530-346-2450 [Myrtle@exwire.com](mailto:Myrtle@exwire.com)

August 24-25, Course II  
September 28-29, Course III  
October 26-27, Course IV

### Calendar of Events

Sept 5 CCC Meeting, 8:00 p.m., Costa Mesa  
June 6, 9 Tri-Refresher (held in conjunction with the CGCI Convention in Glendale)

Chairman:

Julie A. West [JulieAWest@aol.com](mailto:JulieAWest@aol.com)  
850 Grandview Road, Sebastopol, CA 95472-2930  
707-829-3942 707-484-6199 (C)

Editor:

Robin Pokorski [RobinP@juno.com](mailto:RobinP@juno.com)  
Deadline for next issue: December 26, 2013

# CGCI California Consultants Council



2013-2015 COUNCIL DUES  
\$20.00 INVOICE Payable upon Receipt

June 7, 2013

It's time to remit "charter" membership dues for the newly organized California Consultants Council. If you are not part of the California Consultants Council, please think about it and the impact you can make.

The objectives of the California Consultants Council (CCC) are to protect the environment, to increase knowledge in horticulture and to promote excellence in landscape design. Members may act in an advisory capacity serving on local and state committees in addition to promoting the study of the environment, gardening and landscape design by encouraging and promoting sponsorship and attendance at NGC Environmental Studies Schools, Gardening Study Schools, Landscape Design Schools and refreshers.

Remit your \$20 dues, payable to CGCI. Note on the Memo line: California Consultants Council for the 2013-2015 term along with this completed form and send to: CGCI California Consultants Council - Treasurer. Be sure to include your email address\* below for you to receive electronically the Consultants eNewsletter issued three times a year, a benefit of membership.

Thank you in advance for your support of the newly organized California Consultants Council!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Garden Club \_\_\_\_\_

District \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone including area code \_\_\_\_\_

Email address\* \_\_\_\_\_

**Please check the following that apply to you:**

**Environmental Consultant:**

Provisional \_\_\_ Accredited \_\_\_ Master \_\_\_ Emeritus \_\_\_

**Gardening Consultant:**

Provisional \_\_\_ Accredited \_\_\_ Master \_\_\_ Emeritus \_\_\_

**Landscape Design Consultant:**

Provisional \_\_\_ Accredited \_\_\_ Master \_\_\_ Emeritus \_\_\_

OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Dues Rec'd: \_\_\_\_\_

Cash or Check #: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

Remit California Consultants Council membership dues (payable to CGCI) to:  
Shane Looper, 213 Carmelo Lane, South San Francisco, CA 94080-2204