

# THE NATIVE PLANT PRESS

*The Newsletter of the Central Puget Sound Chapter of WNPS*

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Vol 17, No 8, November 2016

## **Chapter Meeting Thursday, November 3 Center for Urban Horticulture\***

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### **Sword Fern Die-off in Seward Park: A Research Update**

*By Tim Billo*

The sleuthing goes on! For several years now, sword ferns in an area of Seward Park have been dying, and the problem is getting worse. Dr. Billo will share the work to date to unravel this mystery. He'll review the multiple etiologies that have been explored and share the hypotheses the research team has developed. He will also share the team's plans for experimental work to test their hypotheses and to identify restoration solutions. The need for extensive monitoring in Seward and other parks will be discussed. Finally, Dr. Billo will place this challenge in the context of anthropogenic climate change and other human pressures.

Tim Billo is a Lecturer in the UW Environmental Studies Program. He received his PhD from the UW Biology department in 2011. His undergraduate degree also, in biology, was earned at Williams College in Massachusetts. Over his career as a biologist he has worked on the ecology and evolution of birds and plants, in both tropical and temperate ecosystems. His current focus is on undergraduate education, including the facilitation of research experiences for undergraduates. His many course offerings include a philosophical summer course in the Olympic Mountains in which they ponder the role of wilderness in the Anthropocene, and among other things, spend time informally monitoring populations of Olympic Mountain endemic plants. Interested folks can learn more at his website: <https://timbillo.wordpress.com/>.

*Programs produced by Shelly Evans and Sharon Baker*

## **Field Trip Calendar**

The board position for Field Trip Chair is available.

If you would like to take this position please call Chrys Bertolotto, 206 588-1247 or email her at [sitka.periwinkle@gmail.com](mailto:sitka.periwinkle@gmail.com).

## **Native Plant Identification Workshop**

*By Nelson Salisbury, Chapter Botanist*

A free plant identification workshop is offered before each Chapter meeting at 6:00 PM in CUH, Main Hall. While the workshop is oriented primarily toward beginners, anyone who wants to work on improving keying skills or their familiarity with the northwest flora is welcome. Feel free to bring samples of unknown plants in for identification. We will have plenty of material and tools if you come empty-handed.

### **\* CUH Location**

The Chapter meeting will be held on the University of Washington campus at the Center for Urban Horticulture, 3501 NE 41st Street, (Mary Gates Memorial Dr. NE) Seattle, 98195. We will meet in the Main Hall. To help you find the meeting location, you can find excellent maps at the UW website at [www.universityofwashington.edu/maps](http://www.universityofwashington.edu/maps).

Look for the Northwest Horticultural Society Hall adjacent to Miller Library. Refreshments and socializing begin at 7 PM, followed by a short business meeting at 7:30 PM, and then the program.

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## Board Reports

### Message from the Co-Chair

*By Franja Bryant*

CPS Board members have been asking ourselves: What do we want our Chapter to accomplish in 2017? What activities are most important in fulfilling our WNPS mission to promote the appreciation and conservation of Washington's native plants and their habitats? How can our Chapter keep its members informed and involved in this mission? How can we make it fun and collegial to be a WNPS-CPS member? These are some of the issues the CPS Board considered at its annual retreat last month – and we came up with some great ideas. Here are a few:

- **First and foremost**, we agreed that it is crucial to **re-establish our Native Plant Stewardship Program**. Its purpose has been to “educate community volunteers about our region’s native plants and plant communities, and to teach how to use this knowledge to protect and restore Washington’s natural ecosystems.”

Our CPS chapter started this program in cooperation with the WSU King County Extension 20 years ago, but due to funding issues it has been on hiatus for the past two years. Thanks to the committed efforts of our chapter chair, Chrys Bertolotto, 2017 will see its return. We’re excited and fully supportive and hope you are too. We also hope that if you are not already a Native Plant Steward, you will consider becoming one by taking the 10-week course. You’ll develop your knowledge of native plants, and gain useful information about the geology, wildlife, soils and environment of our state. Better still, you’ll learn how to put all this knowledge to work in your own community. This year’s course is scheduled to begin February 3, 2017 and will be held in Shoreline. More details available soon.

- **Second**, we want to **improve communications**, especially within our chapter. This will include: 1) creating a calendar on our website ([www.wnps.org/cps](http://www.wnps.org/cps)) of all our upcoming CPS activities; 2) a commitment to updating our website regularly; 3) having a social media presence by keeping our Facebook pages active and informative; 4) using Mail Chimp to notify our members of upcoming chapter events and opportunities.
- **Third**, we want to work out ways to **re-engage our Native Plant Stewards**. This might be done by offering occasional continuing education classes and/or by forming online study and discussion groups focused on particular interests.
- **Fourth**, we decided that a concerted effort to **reach out to other organizations with allied interests** would benefit all of us. We will be working to form some partnerships and joint activities, working together with other environmental groups for our common cause.
- **Fifth and finally - we want being a CPS Chapter member to be friendly, fun, involved and informative! We want our members to STAY members.** We’re setting up a schedule of greeters to welcome new members and visitors to our program meetings. (We’ll even make name badges for anyone who would

like one so we can connect names to faces.) In addition, there's always the opportunity to interact with other members through activities such as monthly native plant nursery work parties, field trips, salvage operations, stewardship projects, plant sales, and work parties at the Bellevue Botanical Garden. If you have more thoughts about ways of pulling us together, please share them. **We welcome your ideas!**

## **2016 Fall Plant Sale**

*By Rick Thompson*

The Central Puget Sound chapter, Fall Plant Sale was held on Saturday, October 1 at the Bellevue Botanical Garden. I want to take this time to personally thank all the volunteers who made this sale a success. The WNPS mission goal, "to promote the appreciation and conservation of Washington's native Plants and their habitats through study, education, and advocacy", would be difficult to achieve without our fundraising efforts and the tireless work of our volunteers. If you have an interest in being part of our winning team, we want to hear from you. Thank you for your continued support.

## **Eastside Branch News**

*By Sid Gupta*

We hope you were able to attend our October program, **Gardening with Native Plants**, by our very own Marcia Rivers Smith. Stay tuned for information about next year's programs and opportunities to volunteer with our host and partner, the Bellevue Botanical Garden!

This month we wanted to highlight a project that's been developed in part by our many active Native Plant Stewards in Sammamish.

The Sammamish Stormwater Stewards are working with city staff, developers, and residents to encourage natural, gentle-sloped, and natively-landscaped stormwater ponds instead of the concrete block, chain-link-fenced "stormwater prisons" that have become more and more prevalent in the past few years.

Per the Stewards:

Landscaping is the most critical component in the proper functioning of stormwater ponds. Many stormwater ponds in Sammamish are simply mowed to the water's edge, rather than being appropriately landscaped for the long-term benefit of the pond and stormwater treatment. Mowed grass to the water's edge means the pond is not providing its full ecological value, to filter and purify water and to provide habitat for wildlife, including pollinators. This project seeks to create unmowed buffers that extend into the pond where possible by using emergent wetland plants. The buffers will be planted with a diverse plant community that includes native plants and that provides both habitat and aesthetic appeal. The proper buffer will provide both a water quality and wildlife component. The goal of this project with regard to cleaning polluted runoff is to restore the functioning of stormwater ponds to that of a rain garden or a planted wetland, where runoff flows through the stormwater wetland, and pollutant removal is achieved by settling and filtration and biological uptake by vegetation. In addition we seek to take advantage of opportunities for the community to view nature by installing footpaths and resting and viewing sites such as large rocks.

This project seeks to partner with the city, Sammamish Stormwater Stewards and Habitat groups, local neighborhoods, as well as schools and the general community members via the city's volunteer program. Sammamish is a growing community, and many residents are distressed by the loss of forested greenspace. This project provides an outlet for that frustration as it involves residents in their community to restore stormwater ponds to native vegetation, improving water quality, restoring habitat, and providing pollinator opportunities. Similar to the King County Adopt-a-Road program, the Sammamish Adopt-a-Stormwater Pond project offers community members the chance to participate in a Green Sustainable Sammamish movement, to replace mowed lawns with native plants and to restore stormwater ponds to natural wetland functioning that includes improving water quality, water supply, flood control, erosion control, wildlife support, recreation and cultural benefits.

For more information about the Sammamish Stormwater Stewards, please visit their website.

If you have any questions about the Eastside Branch and its activities and opportunities, contact Sid Gupta: [siidd@gmail.com](mailto:siidd@gmail.com).

## Field Trip Schedule

### Trail Trip Leaders Wanted:

The board position for Field Trip Chair is available.

If you would like to take this position please call the WNPS office at 206-527-3210 or email us at [info@wnps.org](mailto:info@wnps.org). Trail Trips are on the WNPS website <http://www.wnps.org/>

## Volunteers

### Plant Salvage

Do you have plants that need separating? Could you donate some of these plants for our fundraising sales or share with others? Would you like to help others who need this task accomplished? I'm interested instarting a "Salvage" group. There are very few King County parcels left as sites for salvaging plants as we have done in the past, so this group would mainly serve the members and facilitate sharing of plants. The months of activity would be November through March, with times and locations to be determined. If interested, please contact Grace Stiller 206-795-5783 or [gracestiller@comcast.net](mailto:gracestiller@comcast.net).

### Volunteer at WNPS Office

The WNPS office, in Magnuson Park, is always looking for volunteers to provide valuable, "behind-the-scenes" assistance. In the past six months, 6 volunteers have given a whopping total of 50.5 hours that resulted in critical projects being completed on-time. Tasks range from a one-shot project to a larger, more complex one. You can work solo or with a group, and every task is tailored to your interest and availability. We also try to make it fun and social, and new friendships have already begun as a result. If you want to know what's ahead for 2016, you can call the office (206-527-3210) or send an email inquiry to Elizabeth Gage: [info@wnps.org](mailto:info@wnps.org).

## News and Announcements

### National Wildlife Federation (NWF) Training Opportunity in Kitsap County

Sarah Bruemmer is the Habitat Coordinator at the NWF's Seattle office and is organizing a NWF Habitat Steward Training program in Kitsap County. The goal of this workshop is to educate community members on environmental stewardship and to empower volunteers to restore, enhance, and preserve wildlife and their habitat.

The details are as follows,

#### Dates and Times:

- Mondays, November 7 & 14 at 5:30-8:00pm;
- Thursdays, November 10 & 17 at 6:00-9:00pm;
- Saturdays, November 12 & 19 at *\*tentatively* 9:00am-3:00pm.

#### Locations:

- Monday classes will be held at the Downtown Bremerton Library (612 5th Street, Bremerton, WA 98337);
- Thursday classes will be held at the Poulsbo City Hall in the Council Chambers located on the first floor(200 NE Moe Street, Poulsbo, WA 98370);
- Saturdays will take place at various locations as they are our field trip days, more detailed information on meeting locations will be communicated closer to the training dates.

#### Registration:

- Cost of the training is \$30 to cover classroom materials, *but scholarships are available! No one will be turned away due to lack of funds.*
- Visit [kitsapnwf.bpt.me](http://kitsapnwf.bpt.me) to register or search "Habitat Steward" on [BrownPaperTickets.com](http://BrownPaperTickets.com).

#### **Sarah Bruemmer**

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## Plant of the Month: Pacific Madrone, *Arbutus menziesii*

By Janka Hobbs



Once upon a time, steep Pacific Slope bluffs from Southern British Columbia all the way to Central California were covered by a broad-leaved evergreen tree with white flowers and orange to red berries that early Spanish explorers recognized as a relative of Madrono, *Arbutus unedo*, the strawberry tree native to Southern Europe.

A later surveyor of the Puget Sound coastline mis-identified the plant as a magnolia, thus giving the Seattle neighborhood its name. Unfortunately, madrona trees and people don't mix all that well. Madrones are sensitive to air pollution. They don't grow well in rich soils. They dislike summer irrigation. And, most of all, they are very sensitive to root disturbance and soil compaction. Added water and nitrogen increases their susceptibility to *phytophthora ramorum*, sudden oak death. This is unfortunate, because madrones make beautiful landscape trees, well worth the benign neglect required to grow them.

Madrones sprout readily from seed. They require cold stratification. Removing the flesh from the berries reduces fungal problems. The catch is that they dislike being transplanted, so if you start some in pots, plant them out before they reach 12 inches, and disturb the roots as little as possible during transplanting. I've heard that keeping them at the same orientation (mark the north side of the pot, and don't turn the tree) helps as well. Alternately, you can scatter fresh seed on partly sunny, bare mineral soil and see what comes up. Seed viability is high, but seedling survival rates are low.



Many birds and mammals feed on the berries. The flowers are pollinated by bees, and also visited by butterflies and hummingbirds. Large madrones are important to cavity nesting birds. Madrona is a larval host to ceanothus silk moth and brown elfin butterfly.

Pacific madrone provides excellent erosion control. Madrone has very hard wood that traditionally was used to make small tools. In modern times, it is sometimes made into veneer, and occasionally used for flooring. The wood is beautiful, and harder than oak, but often warps while drying. The berries are edible but not flavorful to humans, though they can be used to make cider. The leaves have medicinal properties.

## Central Puget Sound Chapter WNPS Officers & Committee Chairs

**Chair**

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## WNPS and CPS Contact Information

### The WNPS Office Welcomes visitors:

Monday – Thursday – 9:00am to 4:30 pm daily

Friday – 9:00 am to 1:00 pm, appointment only.

Please call ahead to confirm availability, especially if traveling a distance.

### Office Contacts

Denise Mahnke, WNPS Business Manager, [wnps@wnps.org](mailto:wnps@wnps.org)

Elizabeth Gage, WNPS Office & Program Coordinator, [info@wnps.org](mailto:info@wnps.org) Phone:  
(206)527-6310

Full WNPS Staff Information is available online:  
[http://www.wnps.org/contact\\_wnps.htm](http://www.wnps.org/contact_wnps.htm).

### Membership, Dues and Questions

#### Membership Rates in 2016

Individual Membership \$35  
Family Membership \$45  
Club or Organization Membership \$65  
Budget Membership \$20  
Student \$20 (name of institution \_\_\_\_\_)

This is the address members should use for correspondence regarding membership, dues payments, etc.

Washington Native Plant Society  
6310 NE 74th ST, Suite 215E  
Seattle, WA 98115  
206-527-3210  
[info@wnps.org](mailto:info@wnps.org)

### Email Lists

**The State WNPS List** is a state-wide list for announcements, news and discussion relevant to native plants and the WNPS.

To join, go to: [https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/WNPS\\_DiscussionGroup/info](https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/WNPS_DiscussionGroup/info) and hit the "Join" button, or send an email to [wnps\\_discussiongroup\\_subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:wnps_discussiongroup_subscribe@yahoogroups.com). It only takes a couple of minutes!

The new group will be "restricted" in that admission to the group must be granted, but messages will be unmoderated. Once you are a member, you will be able to set your personal preferences for receiving messages (e.g., individual messages as they are posted or a daily digest). You will also be able to unsubscribe yourself if and when you desire.

### **Electronic Newsletter Option**

Many of you have chosen to receive your Native Plant Press electronically, and we thank you! This will save printing and postage expenses that can better go to our Chapter programs and activities. If you did not receive an e-mail about this option and would like to get the electronic version of the newsletter, please send your request to the CPS Staff Person at [info@wnps.org](mailto:info@wnps.org).

### **Newsletter Submission**

The deadline for the newsletter is the first Thursday of the preceding month, exactly one month before the meeting. Send submissions to the editor: Rick Bergman

Email: [rickbergman@comcast.net](mailto:rickbergman@comcast.net)

Phone 206-372-9816

Digital photos must be high-resolution or will NOT be accepted.