

UCRBG Newsletter

Butterfly Corner

West Coast Lady

Article and photo by Ann Platzer



Dorsal view

The West Coast Lady, *Vanessa annabella*, is one of the three North American species of brush-footed butterflies known colloquially as the “painted ladies”. The other two species are the Painted Lady, *Vanessa cardui*, the most cosmopolitan butterfly in the world and the American Lady, *Vanessa virginiensis*, seen across North America but absent in Riverside County.

At a casual glance it is not easy to differentiate these three ladies but there are three visible differences pointed out in the photo of a dorsal view of a West Coast Lady. First, on the leading edge of the forewings above, the last large bar near the wingtip is orange (orange arrow) but is white in the other two ladies. Second, the forewing tip is extended and squared off (white arrow). Third, the upper hind wings above have four sub marginal blue spots each surrounded by a black ring (black arrow). The West Coast Lady is medium sized from 1¾ to 2½ inches.

The adults fly all year long and even hibernate as adults. Distribution is everywhere except deep woods. This species is very familiar in gardens, vacant lots, and other urban areas along the west coast where this lady overwinters. The range is throughout California and the western United States from southern British Columbia into Montana, Colorado, New Mexico, and Baja California, but the species is less common in desert areas. The West Coast Ladies migrate eastward and to higher elevation as the season progresses. True to their common name, they fly most of the year on the west coast with multiple broods, spring to fall, while elsewhere there are one to two broods.

The typical duration of the egg stage is four to fourteen days, the caterpillar (larva) stage is two to four weeks, the pupal (chrysalis) stage is seven to fourteen days, and the adult butterfly stage is six to twenty days. Host plants include cheeseweed or bull mallow, *Malva nicaeensis*, western hollyhock or dwarf checkerbloom, *Sidalcea malviflora*, lupines, *Lupinus succulentus*, and many other genera in the mallow family.

Please plant California native and butterfly friendly plants in your garden to help restore a habitat for butterflies.

HAPPY BUTTERFLY GARDENING!

AP

To help you with gardening for butterflies, Master Gardener Docents are available in the Butterfly Garden the 1st and 3rd Sundays through October.

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Director's Report - Dr. Jodie Holt



When I became director in 2016, I assumed my days would be filled with strolling through the Gardens and interacting with visitors. I soon learned that nearly every day would bring the opportunity to learn something new, no day was predictable, and change was a way of life.

Early on we implemented numerous new UC, UCR, and HR policies, which mandated a new business model and processes for managing our activities. To our surprise, most events lost money and pulled staff away from their primary responsibilities, so we re-vamped plant sales, partnered with CNAS Development to assist with Primavera, and redesigned other activities to reduce expenses while advancing our mission.

Just when I thought I could start strolling in the Gardens, the pandemic mandated closure of UCR. Protecting and maintaining the collection and Gardens was essential, which required development of a reopening plan to ensure safety of staff and volunteers. Once again, a new business model was needed to stay financially solvent. With campus support we transitioned plant sales, events, workshops, volunteer onboarding, and more to an online format.

As normalcy returned, the next few years were spent controlling weeds and contracting for deferred maintenance of facilities damaged by termites, dry rot, and ravages of time. While most work has been completed, we are still working with campus architects on an affordable concept for replacement of the dome, which is closed to the public due to severe decay.

Throughout these challenging years we have been gratified by the extraordinary loyalty of our volunteers, members, and donors. With their generous support we have invested in new staff and student workers, bringing our current number to 21, including 10 staff and 11 students, nearly twice the number in 2016! Of course, this wonderful development also requires new ways of operating and interacting to stay cohesive over our 40-acre Gardens.

It's not time for strolling yet, as more change is coming. Our Nursery Technician of the last eight years, Lois Whyde (profiled in the Spring 2024 Newsletter), will be retiring on July 1, taking with her a wealth of knowledge and experience in horticulture, propagation, and garden care. Once again, we must restructure our activities, especially plant sales, to fit our current staffing, satisfy our changing constituency, and continue to serve our mission as a botanic garden.

Although I would be happy for a few uneventful months, I am excited by the opportunity to change, adapt, and continue improving the Gardens. At the very least it will not be boring! As always, please continue to follow us through our website, Newsletter, eNews, and social media, and send your thoughts and feedback to me at bgdirector@ucr.edu or 951-827-7095.

Jodie

UCR Botanic Gardens Staff

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Pam Ferre, Program Coordinator
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Around the Gardens

Birdwalk & Breakfast Highlights

By Nancy Cullen

We welcomed spring with our first Bird Walk & Breakfast on March 9th. The event sold out and we had a great turnout of experienced and novice birders. Following the welcome introduction our College Corps students, Justin Vinuya and Lissette Castillo, spoke to the group on current Gardens projects and improvements. Then our experienced guides from RCRC, Michele Felix-Derbarmdiker, Bob Packard, and Jennifer Iyer, led their groups into the Gardens on a warm and clear morning.

After their tour, the group enjoyed a breakfast of juice, coffee, yogurt, pastries, and fruit including citrus from our Subtropical Fruit Orchard. Michele led the bird watch debrief of bird sightings from our local e-bird.org list. Our guests went home with local bird guides and a small bag of "No-Mess Blend" birdseed donated by Wild Birds Unlimited, Inc.



Photos by Justin Vinuya

I want to thank my volunteers Lauren, Jeremy, and Nancy for aiding me with setup, check-in, and cleanup. I would also like to thank my photographers that captured the event - Justin and Lissette (College Corps) and film student Eddie Basturo.

We will be planning another birdwalk near migration time. Keep an eye out on our calendar for upcoming events.



Merchandise for Sale at Pop-Up Shops & Online



Tote, hat, water bottle, mug, coaster, t-shirts, kneeling pad, cleaning cloth, mouse pad, journal, garden flag, and apron!

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& click shop/register/pay online



Back in Action in the Butterfly Garden

By Janine Almanzor

After taking a break during the winter when the butterflies are less active, the Master Gardener Docents resumed their Sunday Butterfly Garden information table. Karen Fleisher, George Spiliotis, and Ann Platzer were back in the Butterfly Garden on Sunday, April 7th and will be there the first and third Sundays of each month from 9am to 12pm to talk about gardening for butterflies and California native plants and to answer any questions visitors may have. They haven't noticed too many visiting butterflies yet due to the cool spring weather, but there have been a lot of human visitors. They speak with about 60 people, both adults and children, each open Sunday. One young budding entomologist around nine years old was very curious and even brought her own magnifying glass. She was excited to see Gulf Fritillary eggs on the passion vine (see photo below).

On May 5th the event was coupled with the Pop-Up Shop Plant Sale near the entrance, so the Docents spoke with 80 visitors that day. It was cool that morning, but they still sighted several butterflies and caterpillars. The butterflies they have seen so far are the Cloudless Sulfur, Gulf Fritillary, Cabbage White, Monarch, Western Tiger Swallowtail, and a Skipper. As the weather warms up there will be many more.

Karen and George also come regularly to the Butterfly Garden for maintenance. They weed, prune, plant, and even donate plants for the garden. If you see them working in the garden when you're visiting, feel free to ask them any questions you may have. They would love to share their knowledge so more people can garden for butterflies.



Ventral view of a Gulf Fritillary enjoying the nectar of a lilac



Nine-year-old budding entomologist looking for Gulf Fritillary eggs.



Visitors watching carpenter bees on the popcorn cassia plant



Ann Platzer (left) talking with curious visitors

Spring Plant Sale and Pop-Up Shop

By Janine Almanzor

STAY
TUNED FOR
OUR NEXT
POP-UP
SHOP!

The Spring Plant Sale was held online again this year, and we were pleased with the outcome. The sale took place on Saturday, April 6th for Friends members and Sunday, April 7th for the public with in-person pickups April 16th and 18th. We grossed nearly \$12,000 on plants and BG branded items, about average for our online sales. We continue to get mixed comments about the sales, with some people loving the convenience of shopping online and others preferring in-person shopping. For this reason and to reduce the cost and impact of sales on staff and volunteer time, we have been experimenting with smaller Pop-up Shop plant sales held at the entrance in conjunction with events, such as Welcome Week last fall and Art in the Gardens in November.

We had a successful Pop-up Shop on Sunday, May 5th in conjunction with the Butterfly Garden event. We offered a small selection of plants that included pollinator plants, California native plants tolerant of summer water, decorative succulent planters, trees, some house and patio plants, and many different shrubs. Our patrons, some of whom brought their own carts, were thrilled to have a second chance to buy plants they missed at the on-line sale in April. There was a constant flow of people from 9am to 12pm, and we made over \$3,000 on plants and BG branded items. This was a great outcome for three hours and very minimal set up and take down! We had a shuttle to take people and plants to the overflow parking lot and several volunteers and staff to assist customers with plant questions. Our financial team, BEES, was also present for cashiering. Everything went very smoothly, and people were so glad to be able to buy plants in person.



Volunteer Kay Force (left)

Our plant sales enable us to share Gardens-grown plants with the campus and community for the purpose of promoting the Gardens, engaging visitors, and growing our membership. As a botanic garden we are not a retail nursery, nor can we operate as one. Without a functioning nursery and attending staff, large plant sales are a tremendous burden on staff and volunteer time, pulling them away from curation, maintenance, and initiating new projects in the Gardens. Online sales add extra complexity with the need for an accurate, up-to-date inventory of live plants, a moving target!

For these reasons, our plan is to hold smaller sales more often and transition away from large and online sales. Long term we hope to hold sales in our new nursery area on a regular basis, but our first on-site sale in the nursery last fall revealed many issues still to be resolved, including power and Wi-Fi for cashiering, staffing, proximity to parking, and accessibility. We hope you will continue to support us and our plant sales while we work towards a sustainable model for the future. We would like to thank all the volunteers who assisted with these two spring plant sales. We really could not have Plant Sales without them!



Volunteer Nancy Prokopchuk helping with the houseplants and merchandise

Wildlife of the Gardens

Snakes!

By Michele Felix-Derbarmdiker

Ophidiophobia, or the fear of snakes, is one of the most common specific phobias. During a 2001 Gallup poll, just over a thousand Americans were surveyed about their fears. Over half of those surveyed listed snakes as their number one fear. This may surprise some readers but I did not find it surprising in the least. As a local biologist who has worked in environmental education and other jobs involving interaction with community members, it is extremely common to meet people who are fearful of snakes. Unfortunately, this fear has led to the demise and vilification of our local snake species. Snakes are an integral piece in our local ecosystems and education could be their needed lifeline.

Habitat/Diet

Worldwide there are over 3,000 species of snakes and they can be found everywhere except Antarctica, Ireland, Greenland, New Zealand, and Iceland. Within Riverside County there are 28 species of snakes. Some species are more common than others, and while the UCR Botanic Gardens is geared towards visitors of the human kind, it serves as an important wildlife habitat in an ever expanding urban landscape. The plants, rocks, and water features of the Gardens have created an ecosystem of which snakes are key members. Snakes that have been seen in the Gardens are California king snakes, gopher snakes, night snakes, red racers (or coachwhips), ringneck snakes, rosy boas, western blind snakes, as well two species of rattlesnakes. Most of these species are found in dryer scrublands, while a couple prefer to be closer to wetter riparian habitats. The Gardens offers a variety of habitat types, which lends itself to this snake diversity. Habitat variety also allows for a diversity of prey. Whether these snakes call wildlands home or the Gardens, they could eat lizards, insects, rodents, birds, amphibians, rabbits, squirrels and even other snakes. These snakes are integral in keeping populations of their prey species in balance. Even the hunter will become the hunted. Snakes are on the menu of other snakes, birds of prey and some local mammals.



Large rattlesnake resting in the Dome after a meal



Red diamond rattlesnake (Photo by Lee Reeder)

Breeding

It is difficult to describe the reproduction habits of so many species in one short article but in general, local species of snakes breed annually in the spring and give birth to live young or lay eggs from late spring to early fall. This will all depend on the specific species and elevation. Females can take several years to become sexually mature and will release pheromones when they are ready to mate. Generally, larger females attract more males due to the ability to have more young. Pheromones of larger females can smell different from those of smaller females, which males will pick up with their Jacobson's organ. Males will battle for females, with rattlesnakes being the most well-known for this behavior. It is referred to as a combat dance but it is actually more of a wrestling match with the winner being the snake that can slam his opponent to the ground.

You will generally see more snakes from March until November not only due to warmer weather but due to mating and the birth of young. On that note, despite what you were probably told at some point in your life, baby rattlesnakes are not more dangerous than adult rattlesnakes. Young rattlesnakes do have venom and can deliver a potentially dangerous bite but their venom glands are small compared to an adult. This is like the difference between being hit by a 5-year-old child verses a 25-year-old adult. They are both going to hurt but the damage will be significantly different.

Continued on page 10

In the Works

By Botanic Gardens Staff

The wet spring brought abundant plant growth, flowering, and weeds, as well as increased numbers of visitors, UCR classes, and tours. Here are some of the things underway in the Gardens as we head into summer:

Gardens and Grounds:

- ▶ Miguel's team installed temporary irrigation for the turfgrass replacement in Alder Canyon, eventually to be replaced by a permanent system.
- ▶ The team also sowed bermudagrass seeds, bringing the first round of turfgrass replacement to a close.
- ▶ A new culvert was designed and installed to facilitate better drainage from behind the greenhouse toward the arroyo.
- ▶ Giant chain ferns (*Woodwardia fimbriata*) were installed under the coast redwoods in the bed at the bottom of the steep driveway to better represent the California North Coast forest.
- ▶ Staff and volunteers have been removing stinknet (*Oncosiphon pilulifer*), an aggressive invasive weed, from several areas in the Gardens.
- ▶ Following the repair of the top of the Celebration of Life Memorial, which was destroyed by a fallen limb, the concrete bench was removed and will be replaced by two new teak benches.
- ▶ Many of the plants have been removed from the dome in preparation for its replacement.
- ▶ Volunteers continue to weed and clean up the new nursery area as we decide how to best utilize that space.
- ▶ A memorial plaque was installed near the first bridge honoring Dennis Kucera, the first Gardens employee, who was responsible for many of the plantings we see today.

Activities and Events:

- ▶ The Gardens parking lot finally got a new, modern dispenser, providing another way to obtain a permit in addition to using ParkMobile online or the ParkMobile app.
- ▶ The Master Gardener Docents have resumed their information table in the Butterfly Garden on the first and third Sundays each month through October.
- ▶ A very successful Pop-Up-Shop took place at the Gardens entrance on May 5th. We plan on holding many more in the future and phasing out our online sales.
- ▶ GIS consultant, Mike Cohen, is producing short drone videos of the Native American Garden and the redwoods to add to our GIS app.
- ▶ Five new docents have completed their training, and just in time for the many school tours we have had this spring. From March through May, there have been over 50 tours!
- ▶ Several new volunteers have been onboarded and are volunteering regularly. This has helped with staffing the entrance, and we also have two people who want to be trained as docents. For more information about becoming a docent, call 951-827-7093.
- ▶ We have placed a moratorium on our memorial program so we can develop better ways to commemorate our constituents that also serve our mission as a botanic garden.



Temporary irrigation in Alder Canyon



New culvert for better drainage



Ferns planted beneath the redwoods



Memorial plaque for Dennis Kucera

Project Updates

By Miguel Estrada

Summer is nearly here, and we are moving along with a few projects that we started last year. After nearly half a year, we were able to clear a sizable portion of the grass in Alder Canyon, set up a temporary irrigation system, and sow the new turfgrass seed. Now we must wait for the seed to germinate, which can be as early as late May or mid-June at the latest. Our project will continue until we have replaced all the turfgrass in Alder Canyon and the Deciduous Forest, which means that we will repeat the process for the next two to three years.

The completion of the turfgrass replacement project brought me immense satisfaction, but I cut my celebration short to focus on our next project - the Native Bee Garden Forage Ground. The planting site has proven to be a challenge. We have knocked down weeds by mechanical and chemical means, but they keep coming back. We will install an irrigation system; after which we have one final preparation before we solarize the area. Our goal is to have the new irrigation system installed by mid-June, and we will also install a series of water bars on the trail beside the forage ground. As of this writing we have cleared the trail of all organic matter and expanded it by several inches. We hope to have the trail stabilized and fitted with the water bars by early July.



Alder Canyon turfgrass replacement



Stinknet, *Oncosiphon pilulifer*

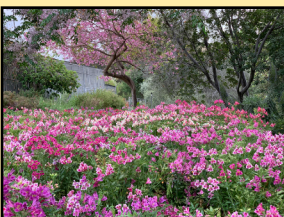
In addition to planned projects, sometimes we need to respond to ever-changing needs of the Gardens. The Gardens are a place of tranquility, but amid the beauty of the plant life there is fierce competition for resources. We have prickly pear, *Opuntia* spp., in large clusters spreading slowly, but so well armored that few staff or volunteers enjoy the task of containing them. Brittlebush, *Encelia farinosa*, a well-adapted native, is sweeping west almost unabated from the Coastal Sage Scrub section. Mustard species pop up in many places in the Gardens, more than we can keep in check. Despite having all these rogue plants, we still have one that made it to the top of our search-and-destroy list. *Oncosiphon pilulifer*, globe chamomile or stinknet, is an invasive species in California. We have been going after this weed since March. As always, eradication is unlikely, but we are investing many hours to keep the population down to a manageable size. Please be aware that not all projects involve a

new garden or bed, rather they consist of our staff and volunteers pushing back against nature to reclaim trails, clear beds, and stand in the way of weeds that are determined to spread.

To see some of the plants in bloom please visit gardens.ucr.edu/information/bloom.

Many plants are blooming throughout the Gardens, but these areas are spectacular!

Rose Gardens, Butterfly Garden, Salvia Knoll, *Alstroemeria* Bed, and Herb Garden



Alstroemeria Bed



Matilija poppy,
Romneya coulteri



Roses



Yerba mansa
Anemopsis californica



Foothill penstemon,
Penstemon 'Margarita BOP'

Spotlight On Pam Ferre

By Janine Almanzor

"Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever." (Mahatma Gandhi)



Pam visiting the Mirabell Garden in Salzburg, Austria

This quote describes Pam Ferre very well. She puts all her energy and effort into every task given her to accomplish, and is always learning and growing in her position. Pam is our Administrative Assistant/Program Coordinator who mostly works behind the scenes. Most of you who are reading this have had some interaction with her, whether by email or phone, but may never have met her in person. Pam is the one who keeps all the moving parts moving. She answers all the UCRBG emails, places all our orders, sends out all our email notifications advertising events, makes all the beautiful event fliers and even made our visitor brochure. She also compiles the eNews, manages the Friends memberships, is our liaison with many campus departments, manages our website, manages the conference room rentals and photo shoots, and more. I often say her title should be "Everything". With all these responsibilities, she never comes across as overwhelmed, but performs each task with pleasure, always has an uplifting attitude, and is always one step ahead of us. We have learned to be 100% sure of what we ask her to do because she'll have it completed within the hour!

Pam began working for the Gardens in 2016. She was drawn here because of her love for plants and the outdoors. Her interest and knowledge of plants grew as she had to fill her half-acre property that had no plants when they moved in. It is now an incredibly beautiful garden. Besides the fact that she works in the most beautiful setting in the Inland Empire, Pam's favorite parts of her job are working on



Pam loves seeing visitors like these enjoying the Gardens

the website because it's a learning experience and conversing with all the volunteers and visitors. Every time she comes back into the office from being outdoors, she enthusiastically tells us about a conversation she had with some visitors. A recent interaction was with a couple of women enjoying the Gardens while having tea. She took the picture below and stated, "This sums up the essence of the Gardens--people enjoying the outdoors with friends or family!" When not working, Pam enjoys traveling, gardening, reading, and being with family. Her most recent trip was to northern Italy and Austria to visit her host family when she was in college studying abroad. Pam is living life to the fullest and her exuberance is obvious to all.



Jodie and Doug Holt at the State Botanical Garden of Georgia

Become a Friend!

The UCRBG is an institutional member of the American Horticultural Society. A Friends membership entitles you to the benefits of participating in the AHS Reciprocal Admissions Program, which gives you free or discounted admission and other discounts at 350+ gardens and arboreta throughout North America. The AHS RAP Directory can be viewed and downloaded at their website: ahsgardening.org/gardening-programs/rap.



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Around the Gardens



A group from the UC Cooperative Extension at a tour of the Gardens.

The Botanic Gardens is visited by a variety of groups throughout the year. In addition to the elementary and high school tours, we have also had tours for elders from San Manuel, our BEES finance team, the UCCE team, and other departments on campus. We also get a large number of campus classes from UCR and other colleges coming for field trips. Researchers visit the Gardens for studying insects, hummingbirds, climate, earthquakes, soil, weeds, and more. We have even had local firefighters come to the Gardens to stay fit by running through our many trails!



Elders from the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians came for a tour in April.



Even firefighters utilize the Gardens for exercise!

Join us

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ANNUAL MEETING
& STATE OF THE
GARDENS ADDRESS

JUNE 20, 2024
5:00-6:30 PM
UCRBG MEETING ROOM

Director Jodie Holt will present an overview of the past year in the UCR Botanic Gardens illustrated by beautiful photos of the Gardens.

A light reception will follow the presentation.

Register your attendance by 6/13/2024 via link provided:
INSERT

1 Botanic Gardens Drive
Riverside, CA 92507
gardens.ucr.edu | ucrbg@ucr.edu | 951-827-7090

Identification

Snakes - continued from page 6

All 28 snake species in Riverside County have their own personalities and distinctive markings or patterns. Some species, especially rattlesnakes, will take practice to identify. While many animals have the potential to bite in self-defense, only five local species can deliver a life threatening bite. In general, our species of venomous snakes can be identified by the presence of a rattle (will appear after the first skin shed), a triangular shaped head caused by the presence of the venom glands, elliptical shaped pupils, rougher appearing skin and the presence of retractable fangs (please don't get close enough to see this). Unfortunately, many non-venomous species are misidentified or killed in haste because their behavior or appearance leads humans to conclude that they are dangerous. Like any scared animal, snakes will first try to disappear into their surroundings by either moving away or hunkering down and being quiet before rattling or striking. Overall, when you see a snake, venomous or non-venomous, be respectful of its space and observe its beauty from a distance.

Threats

Snakes face the loss of habitat due to overdevelopment, exposure to rodenticides and interaction with a fearful and undereducated human population. As we continue to develop our native habitats, human snake interactions will become more commonplace. It is best to teach and understand that snakes have a pivotal role to play in our ecosystem and they deserve to have their space and abilities respected.

Michele has served as a biologist throughout Riverside County for the last 14 years. She is currently a naturalist for Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District.



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AUGUST 17, 2024 6:00-8:00 PM



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AUGUST

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PLEASE NOTE PARKING IS NOT INCLUDED
IN THE TICKET PRICE

GARDENS.UCR.EDU | UCRBG@UCR.EDU | 951-827-7090

Volunteers welcomed!

Please consider joining our volunteer team

Visit gardens.ucr.edu/volunteer for more information

Volunteer Orientations are held 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 9:30 am



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UCRBG Calendar of Events



Bimonthly	Volunteer Orientation , Entrance, 9:30 am (2 nd & 4 th Tuesdays)
June 20	Friends Annual Meeting , 5:00 pm - 6:30 pm
July 20	Twilight Tour , 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm
August 17	Twilight Tour , 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm
September 7	Member Twilight Tour , 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm
November 2	Art in the Gardens , 10:00 am - 3:00 pm

Please note: The UCRBG hours are Monday - Friday 8 am - 3:30 pm
and 1st and 3rd Sundays 8 am - 2 pm until further notice.
(Please check our website for closure dates)