

Edgewood



Explorer

June 2002

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JUDGES POISED TO PICK EDGEWOOD PHOTOS FOR DISPLAY AT HISTORY MUSEUM

Bay Area amateur photographers have the month of June to enter their Edgewood photos into **Expressions of Edgewood**, a juried exhibit at the San Mateo County History Museum this fall. All qualified entries will be on display, and the 16 entries selected by our distinguished panel of judges will be framed and hung in the rotunda, where they will be available for purchase.

Time is running out! All photos must be postmarked by June 30.



Photos currently on display in Museum's rotunda

Our judging panel consists of famed Bay Area photographer Robert Buelteman (www.buelteman.com), highly respected photographer and teacher Kate Jordahl (www.jordahlphoto.com), and noted photographer, exhibitor, and contest judge Carolyn Ramsay.

A portion of the proceeds from the sale will be donated to the San Mateo County Parks & Recreation Foundation and earmarked for the Edgewood Interpretive Center project.

Entry rules and forms are available at www.friendsofedgeswood.org or by calling

HERD OF GOATS AT EDGEWOOD?



Dr. Stuart Weiss's research into controlling non-native grasses on butterfly habitat at Edgewood.

During the week of March 10, 48 goats appeared at Edgewood as part of



Grazing is one of many methods being evaluated under the 2-year grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). Other techniques are mechanical mowing and fire (a controlled burn of a small plot is scheduled for June).

The goats, seen here contentedly munching on invasive Italian ryegrass (*Lolium multiflorum*) were supplied by Sycamore Farms, which breeds them for show and also makes them available for vegetation management. They are Boer goats, originally from South Africa.



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A CLOSER LOOK AT WESTERN HOUND'S TONGUE

By Bob Young

This is the nineteenth of a series of articles describing the flowers pictured in our wildflower brochure. —ed.



Photo by Sonja Wilcomer

Western Hound's Tongue (*Cynoglossum grande*) is shown in the brochure "Common Native Wildflowers of Edgewood," published jointly by the Santa Clara Valley Chapter of the California Native Plant Society and Friends of Edgewood Natural Preserve.

Western Hound's Tongue is a tap-rooted perennial plant in the Borage family. It blooms in Edgewood in shady woods from February to April, with a varying height of from one foot to thirty inches. Each of its bright blue flowers is about ½ inch wide and has an inner row of white teeth. The flowers are found grouped in a loose, irregularly branching inflorescence. In summer the plant dies back to its heavy underground root.

Almost all genera in the Borage family may be toxic from alkaloids or accumulated nitrates.

Western Hound's Tongue is found from British Columbia to the south coast ranges of California

under 4500 feet elevation. It is sometimes found in the Sierra Nevada foothills, but is not common there.

The scientific name of the genus, *Cynoglossum*, comes from two Greek words: *cyno*, meaning dog or hound and *glossa*, meaning the tongue or language. Both the scientific and the common names were bestowed because the shape of the leaves is similar to a dog's tongue.

Mary Elizabeth Parsons, in her book *The Wild Flowers of California*, gives this description: "Among the first plants to respond to the quickening influence of the early winter rains, is the hound's-tongue, whose large, pointed leaves begin to push their way aboveground usually in January.... The favorite haunts of this welcome blossom are half-shaded woods, where it rears its tall stalk in almost sole possession at this early season."

Parsons also describes the seed: "The distribution of the seed is most cunningly provided for, as the upper surfaces of the nutlets are covered with tiny barbs, which a magnifying glass reveals to be quite perfect little anchors, admirably adapted for catching in the hair of animals."

This bur quality of the seed has given the common name of Stickseed to two related genera in the Borage family: *Hackelia* and *Lappula*, usually found in mountain meadows.

EARTH DAY AT EDGEWOOD

An Earth Day event occurred at Edgewood on April 27th, one week after the traditional Earth Day weekend, to accommodate Parks & Recreation's Earth Day fair at Flood Park on April 20th.

28 people showed up at Edgewood, including several kids. They were taken to the knoll above the bush mallow site along the Edgewood Trail. There, they removed over 6,500 Italian thistles and 500 tocalote plants.

They volunteered a total of 63 hours.

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK

By George Raiche

Most people who visit Edgewood Park look down, because that's where the wildflowers are. I'm more interested in birds, so I tend to look up. In March of 1999 I happened to see a red-shouldered hawk (*Buteo lineatus*) fly overhead with a stick in its mouth. I was lucky enough to see its destination: the crotch of the large eucalyptus tree just south of the Stage Road parking lot. With its mate, this hawk was building a nest. I've watched that nest for the past three years as the hawk pair raised families of nestlings. You can see many photos of my observations at my web site, www.digibird.com. I couldn't help but be fascinated by what I saw.

Red-shouldered hawks are far more likely heard than seen at Edgewood. During nesting season their loud, repeated "key-er, key-er, key-er" cry is audible throughout the lower valley. Unlike their familiar red-tailed cousins, red-shouldered hawks prefer forested areas and hunt from low perches. They are slightly smaller than red-tails, and are far less likely to be seen



soaring. In flight, the easiest way to distinguish them is by noting the bold black and white barring on the underside of the tail. They tend to keep to the valley, while red-tails dominate the upper grasslands. Very beautiful birds with vivid coloring, they blend right in with the oak and eucalyptus foliage of the valley floor and are easy to overlook. Nesting season provides an unusual opportunity to study their behavior.

Birds only nest during breeding season, and once a successful nest is established most hawk species tend to reuse it.

Edgewood's hawks have maintained the Stage Road nest for at least three



years, refurbishing winter damage each spring. The nest is comprised of small sticks, foliage, and adult down. From the Edgewood Trail, the nest appears to be an almost happenstance accumulation of eucalyptus debris wedged in a fork of the tree; however, this nest has survived for three years without significant damage.



The nest is several feet in diameter and may weigh over one hundred pounds, and is large enough to hold an adult and three

full-size nestlings. (Most birds, including hawks, are full size when they fledge.) When the female is ready to lay eggs the hawks will decorate the nest with fresh green leaves and moss, and line the inside with their own down. The usual number of eggs is three; one egg is laid per day, so one egg will hatch per day, 33 days later.

Hawk parents must be among the most attentive guardians in nature. From the time the first egg is laid (for the Edgewood



hawks, around March 15) to first hatch (April 16) both parents share incubation duties. Once hatching starts, however, their roles diverge: the female tends the nest and the male hunts for food. Nest duties require the female's continuous attention during the first two weeks. Since the nestlings lack feathers, the mother is the sole source of protection from rain, sun, and chill. A jay or crow could easily steal a hatchling, so mom is also primary defender of the nest. She will attack other birds of prey that wander into the nesting area.

The male's role is equally important: he's feeding the entire nest, including the adult female, and

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RANGER ROUNDUP

By Shawn Witaschek

There have been a lot of changes at Edgewood Park since the last Ranger Roundup. Rangers Susy Boyd and Ric Munds have both transferred to other parks. Ric has gone to Crystal Springs Trail and Susy has gone to Pescadero Park. We wish them well with their new assignments and thank them for all the hard work and commitment they have demonstrated while here at Edgewood.

Ric and Susy have been replaced by me, Ranger II Shawn Witaschek, and Ranger II Katie Beltrano. We are very excited to work together here at Edgewood. We hope to use teamwork within the ranger staff and with the many groups and individuals who care about the park to make Edgewood better than ever. We have already met many volunteers and friends of the park and are looking forward to meeting the remainder. Many thanks to the docents that have helped Katie and me become more familiar with the flora of Edgewood Park.

Katie and I each bring a unique set of skills and experiences to the park. I was born and raised in the SF Bay Area. After four years in the army with a tour of duty in Germany I returned to California to attend college. I graduated from Humboldt State University with a BS in Environmental Biology. I worked as a park aide summers while in college, and after college worked at Genentech as a biochemical technician. I started my ranger career at Coyote Point Park and just transferred here after three years at Junipero Serra Park. I'm very excited to be here at Edgewood where I will, hopefully, stay for a long while.

Katie Beltrano is a 4th generation native of the Bay Area. After attending Saint Ignatius College Prep. in SF she went on to UC Davis where she earned BS degrees in both Environmental Policy & Planning and Psychology. While attending college she worked as a park aide for five seasons, primarily at San Pedro Valley Park. Prior to being hired as a full-time park ranger,

ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY UPDATE

Nine road warriors showed up on April 6 to groom I-280 along the border of Edgewood Park. On this day, the job of removing roadside trash was made pleasant by the lovely spring weather and the abundant wildflowers.

Walking through knee-high grass, we came across the usual complement of flowering plants along the serpentine embankments: poppies, tidy tips, owl's clover, and blue-eyed grass.

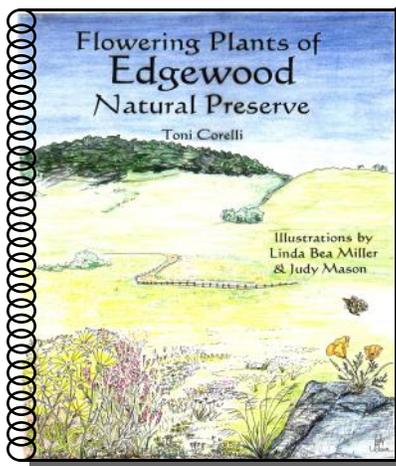
Our group consisted of Brian Cole, Don Hoyl, Billy James, Bill and Kathy Korbholz, Ulla Peterson, Susan Russell, Maggie Mah, and Katherine Greene. In under 3 hours we collected 17 bags of garbage and found a hubcap, a chimney cap, a \$1 bill, a live snake, and a bunch of Western fence lizards.

If you have an interest in joining our great group please contact Ken Seydel. We will see that you are safety trained and equipped with your very own Picker, hard hat, goggles, gloves, and bright orange vest. `

Katie interned with both the Senior Parks Planner and the Volunteer Coordinator. As a park ranger she has been assigned to Coyote Point, Huddart and San Bruno Mountain Parks. Katie feels both thrilled and lucky to now be working at Edgewood Park and Natural Preserve.

Katie and I have been busy with projects. New signs have been put in place throughout the park. These include replacement of old signs and the addition of some new signs. We will continue to upgrade signs in the coming weeks. We hope that these signs will increase public awareness and safety as well as enhance the park's appearance. The plantings at erosion site #2 on Ridgeview trail have been watered during dry spells to help ensure they get off to a good start. Katie and volunteers did a great job rebuilding a retaining wall and adjacent trail segment on Edgewood trail above the day camp area. The trail patrol office has been cleaned, refurbished and updated. `

LIMITED SUPPLY OF NEW EDGEWOOD FLORA AVAILABLE TO MEMBERS



The first edition of Toni Corelli's Flowering Plants of Edgewood Natural Preserve is nearly sold out. A limited number of the 360-page fully-illustrated book, which sells for \$25, is still available as a *free* premium for **new**

members at the \$25 level (or higher) or **renewing** members at the \$100 level (or higher).

To begin or renew your membership, complete the order form on page 7. `

FIELD THERAPY OFFERED

By Bill Korbholz

You can call it habitat restoration, or you can call it exotic pest plant removal, or you can just call it plain old weeding. Whichever term you prefer, what it amounts to is *therapy*.

The dictionary defines therapy as a power or quality of healing. Clearly, removing weeds heals the affected habitats. It also can be a source of emotional healing for those who do it: it makes you feel as though you've done something good. In short, it is satisfying.

If you'd like to give and receive a little therapy, try joining Ken Himes and his crew of weed warriors for a couple of hours any *Wednesday afternoon at 5:30 p.m. through October 23* or *Friday at 8:30 a.m. throughout the year*. Or plan to join us for a special *Saturday morning* session on June 22, July 20, or August 3. Satisfaction guaranteed. For details on times and meeting places, consult www.friendsofedgeswood.org/weeding_2002.htm, or call Ken at (650) 591-8560.

Help heal Edgewood and yourself. `

SPRING SCHOOL FIELD TRIPS

By Carol Hankermeyer

Spring wildflowers were at their best this year for school groups, scout and brownie troops visiting Edgewood. Sherri Osaka's homeschoolers braved the rain and one tick bite, but otherwise enjoyed their outing in March. The German-American School sent their first and second grade classes for a first and reportedly memorable experience with Edgewood's natural communities. All of Highlands Elementary third grade classes explored the Sylvan Loop trail in mid-April. Here are some excerpts from Pat Oren's account of one of those trips.

The kids were pretty good and let me stay in front of them 90-95% of the time. They seemed to be worried about attacks by spiders, snakes, and flying squirrels (!), and they may have let me lead just so I would be attacked first. Our group got lucky—we spotted in the bushes the biggest fence lizard I've seen in my life, maybe 9 inches long! We also saw banana slugs, which were a hit, too. And the kids were happy to find some flowers they knew: buttercup, paintbrush, Indian warrior. I showed them the last giant trillium, blue dicks, blue-eyed grass, yerba buena (talked about tea), miner's lettuce (talked about salad), hound's tongue (talked about burrs and animal transport of seeds), oaks (Native Americans eating acorns, leaching), California sagebrush (Native Americans used it as a purification incense before hunting), bay leaves (in spaghetti sauce), maidenhair fern (basketry), and goldback fern. When we got back, the kids ran around in the picnic area to let off steam. Overall, a good experience for them and for me, I judge.

You see what fun it can be to lead field trips for children. Many thanks go to our great schools outreach team: John Allen, Barbara Erny, Herb Fischgrund, Dick Gehrler, Paul Heiple, Pat Lisin, Pat Oren, Jan Simpson, and Robert Strode. They have offered wonderful support to the program. If you think this might be a way to use your talents to inspire children about environmental stewardship, please contact me. We certainly do need more docents! `



(Continued from page 3)

the success of the nest depends completely on his luck and skill. The nestlings' weight must double, on average, every

eight days to reach the adult weight of approximately one pound at fledging, 35 days after hatch. (At that rate, an eight pound human baby would weigh 128 pounds in 36 days.)

That growth rate requires a steady stream of reptiles and small rodents. Approximately once per hour the male leaves prey at the nest. The female tears the prey apart and feeds it directly to the nestlings, which beg with a whistling cry. Mom seems to try to distribute food equally among the nestlings. However, if food were scarce, the strongest (i.e., oldest) nestling would be fed first.

By their third week the nestlings show new feathering and mobility. Their feathers allow them better thermal control,



so mom can spend less time at the nest--and more time hunting. Most of the nestlings' time is spent sleeping or grooming their rapidly growing feathers. They appear far more alert to sounds and motion and can follow movement outside the nest (for example, walkers on nearby trails). This is a time of dramatic transformation. At such rapid growth rates, small differences in age—here, just two days—show acutely.



By week four, most feathers are in and the nestlings are strong enough for some exercise. They can walk

purposefully around the nest and feed themselves from delivered prey. They also practice for fledging by grasping the nest with their feet and flapping their nest-spanning wings. They've got most of their flight feathers now and aside from some bits of down they finally look like true birds of prey. This is the plumage they will retain until they achieve sexual maturity next year. Even as adults, males and females look identical.

The Edgewood nestlings begin fledging on May



21, about 35 days after hatch. The first "flight" is mostly a hop to one of the branches supporting the nest. After a few

minutes the fledgling hawk hops back to the nest. The younger nestlings appear fascinated by this.

Subsequent hops are more ambitious, and by the following day the fledgling really does fly to an



overhead branch. The first few times the fledgling appears to nearly fall out of the tree. Its grasping skills are strong enough to compensate for poor landing technique; as it gets stronger and more efficient, its ability to stick landings improves greatly. Each nestling follows this pattern in hatch order, and after a week of practice the fledglings can fly the 30-50 yards to nearby trees. For me, this is a bittersweet time: I'm thrilled to see "my" babies take their first substantial flights, but I know that my ability to monitor their progress will greatly decline. As much as I try to stay detached, after six weeks of intensive observation I can't help but feel like a surrogate parent to the nest.

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For another week or two the fledglings will continue to sleep and feed at the nest. This is the last period during which they'll be easy to see; once they learn to freeze on their perches, they become nearly invisible in the foliage. They're not capable of hunting yet and will depend on their parents for food for many more weeks. The nest will be the center of a constantly expanding circle of exploration and experience as the fledglings learn necessary life skills. They'll tend to stick together and will call to each other, and their parents, as they move around the valley's trees. But by fall the family will disperse to unknown destinations. If all goes well the fledglings may live 15 years, and the adults will return to Edgewood next spring.

CARLMONT HIGH SCHOOL OFFERS COMMUNITY SERVICE AT EDGEWOOD

By Bill Korbholz

25 biology students from Carlmont High School arrived at Edgewood on May 18th to help remove weeds, as part of the Community Service program set up by Parks and Recreation Volunteer Coordinator Nick Ramirez.



The students, mostly freshmen and sophomores, removed 30 bags of non-native thistles from the mow site south of the service road. Afterwards, they were treated to an educational nature walk led by Ken Himes (who else?).

A second planned visit on May 19th was rained out, but they'll be coming back on June 2nd to try again.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

New or renewing members may clip and complete this section to pay **tax-deductible** annual membership dues. Please send your check payable to **Friends of Edgewood Natural Preserve** to the return address on the back of this panel. Renewing members can determine their membership expiration date by checking the four-digit code to the right of their name on their mailing label. For example, if the code is 06/2001, membership runs through June 2001.

Questions, call Bob Young.

Name

Address

City State Zip

Home Telephone Work Telephone

- \$15 Basic Membership (includes newsletter)
- \$25 Family Membership (newsletter)
- \$7 Student/Retired Membership (newsletter)
- \$50 Supporting Membership (newsletter, *Edgewood Checklist of Plants*, and Edgewood photo greeting cards (boxed set))
- \$100 Benefactor Membership (above premiums plus Toni Corelli's 360-page fully-illustrated Flowering Plants of Edgewood Natural Preserve while available)
- \$250 Patron Membership (above premiums)
- I am enclosing a gift of _____.
- Please send ___ copies of the *Edgewood Checklist of Plants* (\$3), ___ copies of the 28-minute video *Saving Edgewood Park* (\$15), ___ copies of Flowering Plants of Edgewood Natural Preserve (\$25). Includes tax, S&H.

I would like to participate in the following:

- Docent program
- Trail patrol
- Publications
- Weed management
- School outreach
- Habitat restoration



UPCOMING EVENTS

o *June 1st - June 30th*, **EXPRESSIONS OF EDGEWOOD PHOTO SUBMITTAL**. Enter your favorite photo taken at Edgewood for display in the San Mateo County History Museum. See article on page 1 for details.

o *Saturdays and Sundays through June 16th*, **WILDFLOWER WALKS**. Meet at the Old Stage Day Camp and join a trained docent for a 3-hour walk to observe the late-spring wildflowers.

o *Last Sunday of Every Month*, **SUNDAY BIRD WALK**. Meet Audubon Society docent Lee Franks at the Day Camp kiosk at 8:00 a.m.

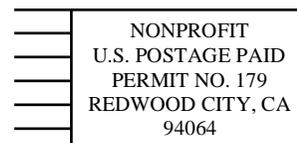
o *Saturday, August 3rd*, **ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY CLEANUP DAY**. Meet at the Park & Ride at 8:30 a.m. Call Ken Seydel for more information or to arrange for safety training and to get your very own trash picker.

o *Friday, August 9th - Sunday August 18th*, **SAN MATEO COUNTY FAIR**. Come to the San Mateo County Expo Center and enjoy the fun at this annual event for the whole family.

o *Thursday, September 19th - Tuesday, December 31st*, **EXPRESSIONS OF EDGEWOOD EXHIBIT**. Visit the San Mateo County History Museum to view and purchase photographs taken at Edgewood on exhibit at the museum.

The Edgewood Explorer is published four times yearly by the Friends of Edgewood Natural Preserve, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving Edgewood for the human, plant, and animal generations to come. The newsletter is produced by Kathy and Bill Korbholz with assistance from Laverne Rabinowitz and contributions from many Friends. For more information about the Friends of Edgewood, visit our web site at www.friendsofedgeswood.org, mail us at PO Box 3422, Redwood City, CA 94064-3422, call or fax toll-free at (866) GO-EDGEWOOD, or email info@friendsofedgeswood.org.

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Redwood City, CA 94064-3422



**Submit your favorite photo
by June 30 to
Expressions of Edgewood
and see it on display at the
San Mateo County History
Museum.**