



PAW PRINTS

Volume 41, Number 7 Newsletter of the Eaton Canyon Nature Center Associates July 2023

PUBLIC CALENDAR

Nature Center Hours: 10:30 am-7 pm (Saturday 9 am -7 pm) **Gate Hours:** 8:00 am -7:30 pm. Closed Mondays

Docent-Led Family Nature Walk
Every Saturday at 9 am. Meet in front of the Nature Center. No dogs please.

Conservation Group Work Day:
Second Saturdays from 9 am-12 pm
Sign-up to receive notifications:
<https://tinyurl.com/eatoncanyonconservation>

Moonlight Walk
Friday, July 28 - 7:00 p.m. \$2.00 per person donation. Free for ECNCA members, or if you wear an Eaton Canyon T-shirt or hat. Reservations required for groups of 10 or more. Wear sturdy walking shoes and bring water. No dogs are allowed on the walk (except service dogs).

Nature Trails Story Hour
Every Saturday at 10:30 am on the Outdoor Patio. Stories and activities for children.

Saturday Nature Center Discovery
Saturday mornings on the Outdoor Patio. Animal Ambassadors: 10 am and 12 pm. Nature Discovery Tables: 10:30 am to 12:30 pm

Meetings:

Pasadena Audubon Society
Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month at 7:30 pm in the Eaton Canyon Nature Center Auditorium.

California Native Plant Society
Meetings are held in the Eaton Canyon Nature Center Auditorium, the fourth Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm.

Pasadena Group Sierra Club
Program meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month. Programs resume in September.
<https://www.sierraclub.org/angeles/pasadena>

National Trails Day at Eaton

On June 3rd, Eaton Canyon Nature Center participated in the National Trails Day with a much needed Oak Terrace Trail clean up. The LA County Parks and Recreation Planning and Development Trails Division and LA County Trails organized the event with participating Eaton Canyon staff, plus ECNCA and other volunteers. Their hard work helped clear the brush overgrowth and large boulders that were impacting the trail. They also painted and upgraded the trail sign posts with new trail signs and numbers.

Thank you to Lorraine Lazarus and her staff at Eaton Canyon Natural Area who planned and prepared for this event: Kenia Estrella, Malinda Miller, Rickey Miller, Brian Gonzalez, and Edgar McGregor.

Thank you to our ECNCA volunteers: Teresa Baldonado, Diana Gonzales, Susan Hopkins, Cal Walsten, and Pamela Wegner, for sharing their knowledge and expertise of plant materials, installing the sign tags, and for all your help in making the day a success!



National Trails Day volunteers at Eaton Canyon

Photo: Kenia Estrella



Photo: Jeremy Munns



Photo: Jeremy Munns

Trails Day photos continued on page 2



Paw Prints is a monthly publication of the ECNCA. Articles and photographs are welcome on topics related to natural history and Nature Center activities. If you see something interesting in the canyon, please share it with us! The deadline for submissions to the August 2023 issue is July 15, 2023. Send submissions to Brenda Hurst eatonmember@gmail.com.

Contributors: Kenia Estrella, Brenda Hurst, Lorraine Lazarus, Tom Mills, Jeremy Munns

Paw Prints Production

Content Editor: Brenda Hurst
Layout: Carole Scurlock
Copy Editor: Laura Joseph

Trails Day photos continued from page 1



Photo: Jeremy Munns



Photo: Lorraine Lazarus

DOCENT AND MEMBER CALENDAR

Bag Lunch and Mini-Inservice will be on hiatus until October.

Eaton Canyon Gardening Group

Every Wednesday at 9:30 am and second Sundays of the month at 10 am. Current volunteers only. Meet by Nature Center garage door.

Guided School Tours

School tours are conducted from October to the end of the school season. For reservations call the office 626-398-5420.

ECNCA Board Meetings

The ECNCA board meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month at 6:30 pm in the Nature Center. If you are interested in joining a meeting, please send an email to eatonmember@gmail.com, at least 2 days prior to the meeting.



Photo: Kenia Estrella

The Conservation Team is Back!

The conservation team has restarted the monthly second Saturday morning volunteer days. We have been restoring the trails around the nature center, most recently making the Fire Ecology trail passable again. We rely on docent support to help teach our volunteers about invasives, native plants, and how to minimize impact when clearing trails. We would love to have more docents (or members of the public) to sign up on our dedicated conservation email list: <https://www.ecnca.org/conservation-group-work-day>. Any questions, comments or concerns can be directed to the conservation chair Max Yasuda maxosmail@gmail.com.



Canyon Angel Awards

ECNCA Volunteers Brittany Fabeck and Kathleen Sesplaukis receive their well deserved Eaton Canyon Earth Steward "Canyon Angel" Awards!



Brittany Fabeck



Kathleen Sesplaukis

Plant of the Month

Poison Oak

Botanical Name: *Toxicodendron diversilobum*

Family: Anacardiaceae (Sumac)

Blooms: Spring

Lifeform: Shrub, Vine (winter deciduous)

Habitat: Canyons or woodlands

I decided to write our July Plant of the Month about a California native plant that lives in Eaton Canyon and was the focus plant for a recent maintenance clearing of our Oak Terrace Trail. Poison oak (Pacific poison oak or western poison oak) like many of other natives, has enjoyed all of the rain this year and in turn has grown quickly and abundantly.

The commonly named poison oak is a woody treelike vine & dense thicket (in shade) or tall shrub (in open sunlight) found widely distributed in western North America. It is common in various habitats, from riparian zones to dry chaparral. It is one of the more common shrubs in California, growing throughout the coastal and coast mountain ranges, the Transverse mountain ranges, through the Sierra foothills, and in the Sacramento Valley.

Two ways to identify poison oak are by its lobed leaves, which give it the appearance of an oak leaf, and by the leaf being made up of three leaflets ("Leaves of Three") that have a middle leaflet with a longer petiole (leaf stalk) than the other two. At this time of year the leaves are green, both new and aging leaves can be red. The plant is winter deciduous, so that after cold weather sets in the stems are leafless and bear only the occasional cluster of pale-green to light tan fruit.

All parts of the Poison oak contain a plant oil (urushiol) which is known for causing itching and allergic rashes in many humans after contact by touch or smoke inhalation. Because of this, it is usually eradicated from gardens and public landscaped areas. However, the plant is used in habitat restoration projects where it can be an early stage succession plant where woodlands have been burned or removed, serving as a nurse plant for other species. Also, I found it interesting, if not a little surprising, to read that it is also commonly used in carefully situated locations in natural landscaping, wildlife gardens, habitat gardens, and bird gardens and can be purchased at several California nurseries.

Bird species use the berries for food, and utilize the plant structure for shelter. Poison oak supports butterflies and moths as well. Black-tailed deer, mule deer, California ground squirrels, western gray squirrels, and other indigenous fauna feed on the leaves of the plant. It is rich in phosphorus, calcium, and sulfur. Neither native animals, nor horses, livestock, or canine pets demonstrate reactions to poison oak.

However, with all those good qualities, I just want you to know that I'm not planning on planting poison oak in my little home garden, but I do appreciate its beautiful appearance and importance in nature. If you would like to see what poison oak looks like, take a walk along our Oak Terrace Trail, but seriously don't touch it and stay on the trail. Remember: Leaves of Three, Let it Be!

Brenda Hurst



Poison oak

Photo: Tom Mills



Photo: Carole Scurlock

ECNCA BOARD MEMBERS

President: Brenda Hurst

Vice-President: Diane Marcussen

Recording Secretary: Sarah Richart

Corresponding Secretary: Mary Veselich

Treasurer: Terry Ginsberg

Bag Lunch Chair: Mary Foltyn

Bus Grants Co-Chairs: Mary Foltyn, Judy Jenkins

Conservation Group Chair: Max Yasuda

Gardening Group Chair: Marilyn Hildebrandt

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Moonlight Hike Co-Chairs: Ramie Case, Teresa Kirkland

School Trip Docent Chair: David Kristoff

Twilight Program Chair: Mike Regan

Weekend Docent Chair: Ramie Case

Members-at-Large: Judy Jenkins, Rose Haig, Susan Hopkins

Nature Center Director: Lorraine Lazarus

NCA President: Laura Nicholson

NCA Representative: Terry Ginsberg

Eaton Canyon Nature Center Associates (ECNCA) is a chapter of the Nature Center Associates (NCA), a non-profit support group of the natural area park system of Los Angeles County. Founded for educational and scientific purposes, its primary mission is to develop in children and adults an appreciation of the natural world and to preserve Eaton Canyon as a natural area for future generations.

The Eaton Canyon Nature Center and Natural Area Park are located within the unincorporated area of Los Angeles County in the Supervisorial district of Kathryn Barger. The Natural Area and Nature Center are operated by the County of Los Angeles, Department of Parks and Recreation, in partnership with the Eaton Canyon Nature Center Associates.

Become A Member of the ECNCA (Eaton Canyon Nature Center Associates)

Membership benefits include the ECNCA newsletter, program announcements and a 10% discount at the gift shop. To join the Eaton Canyon Nature Center Associates, fill out the form below and mail with your check, payable to the ECNCA, 1750 North Altadena Drive, Pasadena, CA 91107.

Name: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Please check appropriate box and mark return envelope "Membership"

Individual \$30 Family \$45 Senior \$15 Senior Family \$30 Student \$15

Friend of the Canyon \$75 Sage Saver \$100 Chaparral Contributor \$250 Riparian Guardian \$500

Oak Woodlands Protector \$750 Wildlands Angel \$1000 NEW RENEWAL

Enclosed is my MEMBERSHIP in the amount of \$_____ Enclosed is my additional DONATION of \$_____

Please make checks payable to the ECNCA. All contributions are tax deductible.

You may also join and/or donate online at www.ecnca.org.