



OAKLEAVES

A PUBLICATION OF FRIENDS OF EL MORO ELFIN FOREST
P.O. BOX 6442, LOS OSOS, CALIFORNIA 93412-6442 ♦ (805) 528-0392 ♦ AUTUMN 2024

State of the Forest

by Rebecca Rasmussen

On a foggy summer day, I took a walk in our local natural sanctuary. Strolling on the boards with the chilled, moist air blowing against my cheeks, I immediately felt a sense of calm and contentment surrounded by the sights, sounds, and smells that I knew truly belonged to this piece of land.

I began to reflect on the magic of our El Moro Elfin Forest and how it came to be. My year and a half of being on the FEMEF Board has not only been a time of helping, but also of learning, and I have much to learn still. In reading through past issues of Oakleaves, which date back to 1986, several themes reoccur. There are articles about fundraising and preserving the land, and feature articles about persons who have provided help or plants or animals native to the space. But, to me, the over-arching theme that links them all is love. The love of nature, love of our earth, love for each other and future generations, and love of the work and dedication needed to restore the Forest and to nurture it into becoming the preserve it is today.

Over the past forty years, hundreds of people have worked thousands of hours towards a goal that, at times, seemed truly daunting-- nearly impossible. But these people bonded together in spite of the odds and succeeded. They were people from all walks of life with a wide variety of skills and talents brought together by their love of a common goal, and they achieved it.

These people are so deserving of our praise and respect, but the work is not done. It never will be. The battle against invasive plants is ongoing, with Weed Warriors working every month

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We invite You to Join the
2024 FEMEF Annual Celebration
Saturday, October 12, Noon to 2:00 p.m.
Morro Shores Mobile Home Park Community Room
633 Ramona Avenue, Los Osos
(across from Sweet Springs Preserve).
Please try to carpool, as parking is limited.

By Yolanda Waddell

All State-incorporated non-profits like FEMEF are required to have an annual meeting for their members. We prefer to call it our Annual Celebration, celebrating the accomplishments of the year, our volunteers, and our loyal members. This meeting is for you! Join us for refreshments (no charge) to be served at noon, followed by our speaker, business meeting, and election of officers.

This year we will learn about the history of SWAP (now Friends of El Moro Elfin Forest/ FEMEF) from **our speaker, Pat Brown, a member of the FEMEF Board of Directors.** Pat has served SWAP and now FEMEF in many ways since she became an active volunteer in 2002. There is some biographical information about her on page 3 of the Spring 2024 *Oakleaves*.

To summarize, Pat taught nutrition at Cuesta College for 20 years, is a dedicated and expert photographer, has a great interest in butterflies that she shares during her annual 3rd Saturday butterfly walk in the Elfin Forest, and has chaired and been a member of many SWAP/FEMEF committees.

Pat has been delving into the history of SWAP - how it came to be, how it evolved, what its accomplishments have been in



Pat Brown, speaker for the Annual Celebration.

Annual Celebration *continued on page 2*



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

of the

Friends of El Moro Elfin Forest (FEMEF):

Steve Hendricks, Chair

Rebecca Rasmussen, Vice Chair

Roger Carmody, Treasurer

Dave Bowlus, Secretary

Beverly Boyd, Acting Recording Secretary

Pat Brown

Vicky Johnsen

Skip Rotstein

Ron Ruppert

The FEMEF Board of Directors meets monthly. Meeting days and times can vary and will be posted on the home page at www.elfin-forest.org.

FEMEF Board meetings are virtual and are open to the public.

To attend a FEMEF Board meeting, leave a message at 805-528-0392.

CONTACT FEMEF

If you have questions about FEMEF activities or want to volunteer, please call (805) 528-0392 and leave a message.

A recorded message will give information about our coming activities and other events.

If you have questions, concerns, or comments about any problems in the Elfin Forest, call or write Lasca Gaylord
SLO County Parks Supervising Ranger
1144 Monterey Street, SLO, CA 93408
(805) 781-1196.

Owners of dogs off-leash can be cited. If you witness dogs off-leash, vandalism, or obvious crimes, call the County Sheriff at 781-4550 or Lasca Gaylord at 781-1196.



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and sometimes twice a month. The boardwalk always needs checking for loose boards or railings. Brochures and newsletters need to be published. Events need planning. And, as we have seen recently, the forest needs oversight to protect it against dangers such as fires and vandals.

This work continues to be done by a group of people with diverse talents. We have carpenters, webmasters, public speakers, photographers, fine artists, accountants, teachers, scientists, historians, filmmakers, writers, and more. But we still need help. What talent or skill do you have that could be added to the list? We invite you to join us as we continue the legacy. To volunteer to protect the Elfin Forest please call (805) 528-0392 or email info@elfin-forest.org.



This undisturbed oak grove, photographed by Dave Bowlus, shows a scene of calm and contentment as Rebecca describes.

Dave took it in contrast of his photo of the nearby burned grove (see story on page 3), demonstrating, as Rebecca states, that the forest needs oversight for protection.

Annual Celebration *continued from page 1*

in addition to saving the Elfin Forest, and the people who were involved. She decided to share what she has learned with you, our members, because she has seen that few people are aware of how SWAP and the Elfin Forest came to be and the people who made it happen. Some Los Osos residents think that the Forest has always been a County Parks natural area.

Pat will give a presentation that will take us back to the days when there was no Elfin Forest and no organization called Small Wilderness Area Preservation. Then she will move forward in time through the many changes that took place in SWAP as an organization, and in the Elfin Forest until the present.

Following Pat Brown's talk, there will be brief reports by members of the Board:

FEMEF Chair Steve Hendricks will report activities and accomplishments during 2024.

Treasurer Roger Carmody will discuss FEMEF'S financial well-being. His annual financial report covers the FEMEF fiscal year from July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024. A paper copy of the report will be given to all members attending the meeting. The report will be published in Winter Oakleaves.

Conservation Co-Chair Vicky Johnsen will talk about the weeding, trail trimming, erosion control, and boardwalk and bench maintenance programs that keep the Forest in good shape.

Media Committee Chair Rebecca Rasmussen will report on work to redesign the Elfin Forest website (www.elfin-forest.org), such as expanding information in the Flora and Fauna page and improving the *Oakleaves* subject index. She will tell us about work being done with our Instagram and Facebook pages as well.

Election of candidates for the FEMEF Board of Directors will conclude the meeting. Ballots will be given to FEMEF members as they arrive and will be counted during the meeting. Also, ballots will be emailed to members who cannot attend the meeting if we have an email address in our files.

The FEMEF Board of Directors encourages you, our members, to join us at the 2024 Annual Celebration. We want to tell you, the supporters of FEMEF and the Elfin Forest, what we have done on your behalf.

Fires Caused by Illegal Campers in the Elfin Forest

By Pam Ouellette and Yolanda Waddell. Photo by Dave Bowlus

Vicky Johnsen, Zarah Wyly and Pat Brown wrote an article in our Summer 2024 issue, page 7, titled “Hooligans in the Forest”. It described various ‘unauthorized and sometimes deliberately illegal’ activities and incidents that have been happening in the Elfin Forest.

There is now an upward trend of damage and illegal activity that board members and other visitors are seeing and reporting. On June 29, Zarah Wyly reported finding 5 toilet paper pile locations as well as damage to a Morro manzanita in a grove north of the lower boardwalk. She found remnants of several campfires at the base of the manzanita. Melted plastic, broken tent poles and personal items like books and clothing were also in the ‘camp’ area.

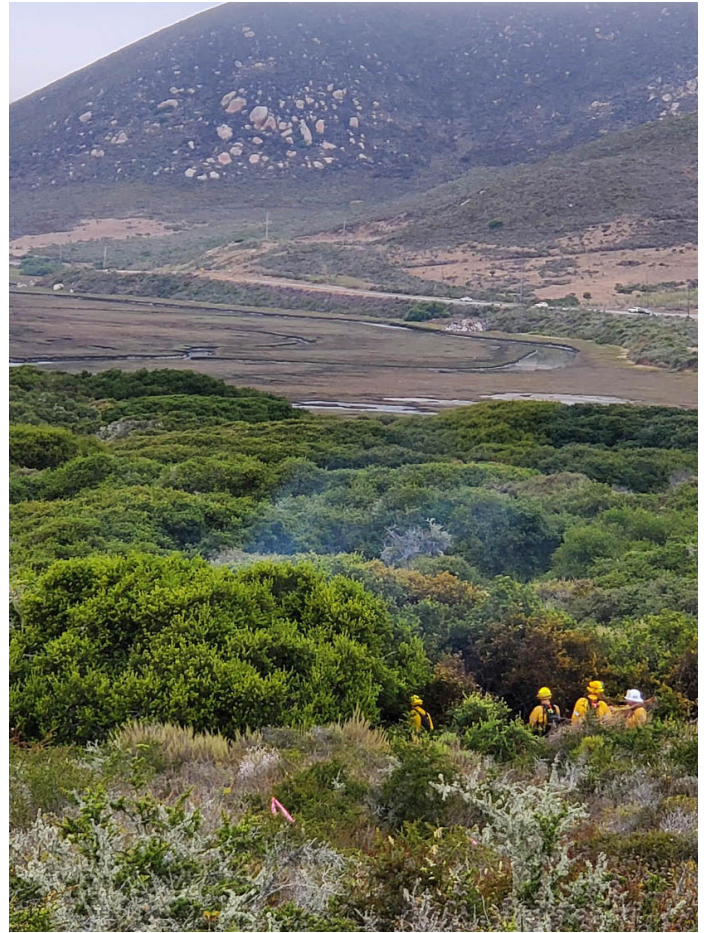
Pat Brown included Lasca Gaylord, Supervising Park Ranger for the County, in a recent email detailing the discovery of some encampments and campfires in the groves north of the lower boardwalk. On July 2, Lasca confronted a man (camping) along the Habitat Trail and told him he must leave.

The Sheriff’s office was contacted about the issue. Deputy Nottenkamper said they are aware of people trying to camp in the Forest. The Deputy was told about Trail Guide pamphlets that were set on fire on the boardwalk and was shown where the encampments were found. Deputy Nottenkamper has said he will relay all this information to the Sheriff’s staff and will continue to monitor the situation. There are “No Camping” signs at every Elfin Forest entrance. If anyone is seen camping in the Elfin Forest, the Sheriff’s Department should be notified when and where the campers were seen. The more information they receive, the better informed they will be to make decisions.

On July 27 and 28, two separate fires were discovered in the Elfin Forest. The County Fire Department was called to put out the blazes. The first blaze was north of the end of the 14th Street trail, while the second fire was in an oak grove east of Rose’s Grove. CalFire had to cut a perimeter around the grove that was burning, hosing down and digging up the soil. They had to chainsaw a number of limbs of the oak trees to fully extinguish the fire. Remnants of an encampment were found left behind; there was a tarp, a chair, clothing, trash, and a bong. The fires were presumably caused by illegal campfires.

On July 29, Dave Bowlus took comparison photos of an unburned grove and the grove fire east of Rose’s Grove. Dave called CalFire and the Sheriff’s Department; they both stated they had no further interest in the site. Lasca Gaylord was contacted. She sent a ranger to clean up the site. Dean Thompson also went to the site and found a bicycle that wasn’t there right after the fire. He also discovered that another camp had been set up next to the area that burned. He removed the bike.

Please report any illegal campers or other unlawful activity that you see in the Forest to the San Luis Obispo County Sheriff’s Office-Coast Station located on 2099 10th Street in Los Osos. Their phone number is 805-528-6083. A large fire in the Elfin Forest could spread to houses adjacent to the Forest. Lighting fires is arson, punishable with a jail sentence.



A crew of firefighters makes sure that the still-smoking July 28 Elfin Forest fire has been extinguished. Photo by Dean Thompson.



The day after the July 28 fire, Dave Bowlus took a photo of the grove that burned.

In the event of a fire found in the Forest, call 911 for immediate assistance. The town of Los Osos receives emergency services through CalFire at Station 15-South Bay. They are located at 2315 Bayview Heights Drive in Los Osos. Their phone number is (805) 528-1053.

Bats in Our Belfry Elfin Forest!

By Jean Wheeler, Ph. D.

Bats are flying mammals in Order Chiroptera. The only mammals capable of true, sustained flight and more agile in flight than most birds, their forelimbs have long, widespread digits more slender than our fingers and covered by a thin membrane.

Until this year, we could not lead walkers to experience our bats and identify them by species. Our Pocket Guide, © 2005, predicts Brazilian Free-tailed Bat, Hoary Bat, and “several species” of *Myotis* Bats as occurring in our Elfin Forest.

On July 11 this year, Ron Rupert led an evening walk for 20 walkers. Using the science of an electronic bat detector and clever computer software, five species of bats were detected and identified. Four species identified were, as predicted in our Pocket Guide, the Brazilian (aka Mexican) Free-tailed Bat (*Tadarida brasiliensis*), the Hoary Bat (*Lasiurus cinereus*), the Yuma Bat (*Myotis yumanensis*), and the California Bat (*Myotis californicus*). One species not indicated in our Pocket Guide but identified on July 11 was the Big Brown Bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*).

Of the two divisions of bat Order Chiroptera, megabats are found only in the Old World, are mainly fruit eaters, and fly and locate food by ordinary senses of smell and hearing, not by echolocation. Our Elfin Forest bats are all in the other division of the order, microbats. They use echolocation to guide flight and detect flying insects as prey. These bats emit ultrasonic waves from the larynx. The bat uses differences between waves it produces and those it hears bouncing back into its ears to orient its flight and detect and capture prey.

Differences in patterns of ultrasound waves produced vary by species of bat. These differences enable an electronic bat detector to record different patterns emitted and identify the bats by species. Our walkers were led to the middle of our Elfin Forest. They waited until their computer revealed the wave patterns, sonogram pictures produced by bats actively echolocating. The computer generated video patterns and identified the bat species doing the echolocation by that pattern.

The Brazilian Free-tailed Bat, clocked at over 99 mph, is claimed as the fastest bird or bat ever timed in level flight. About 3.5 inches long, they have dark brown to gray fur. Large round ears project in front of the muzzle to aid in echolocation. The Hoary Bat, up to 5.5 inches long with a 15-inch wingspan has dense, dark brown fur with white tips giving it the “hoary” look. Unlike our other four bats who seek caves and crevices in bridges or buildings for homes, the Hoary Bat roosts in trees, hidden by foliage. The Yuma *Myotis* Bat is the smallest of our five species at just under 2 inches long with a 9-inch wingspan. With pale, nearly whitish fur, it has moderately large ears and feet and a short, broad snout on a rounded head. The California *Myotis* Bat reaches a bit over 3 inches long with a wingspan of 8.5 inches. It has very small feet and medium-sized ears. The Big Brown Bat can be over 5.5 inches long with a wingspan of about 16 inches, light to dark brown fur contrasting with black ears, muzzles, and wing membranes.



Hoary Bat. Photo by Paul Cryan, National Geologic Survey.

Hardly any members of the Animal Kingdom are as misunderstood by as many people as are the bats. They are absolutely vital to our environmental health and agricultural economy. It is estimated that their consumption of insect pests saves us more than a billion dollars from crop damage and pesticide costs for just one crop, corn; and the total reaches at least three billion dollars in support of all our agricultural production. Accounts of each of our five species identified here on July 11 specify their importance to our agriculture. The Big Brown Bats are known as “friends of farmers.” The diets of our five species feature moths, flies, and beetles. Wasps, ants, and spiders also get frequent mention.

Unfortunately, numbers of bats are seriously declining all over the world. Too many are killed by people mistakenly believing them to be very dangerous to humans, our pets, and our livestock. Loss of habitat, especially for cave dwelling or cave hibernating species, is a severe problem. In recent years a fungal disease spreading across America has claimed the lives of millions of bats. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other governmental agencies as well as conservation organizations have been working to try to overcome these problems and to educate our citizens about how incredibly wonderful and tragically vulnerable our bat populations are. We can be proud our Elfin Forest is providing homes and meals for at least some members of these five very valuable species.

California Aster

Text Revised by Dirk Walters, Ph. D.

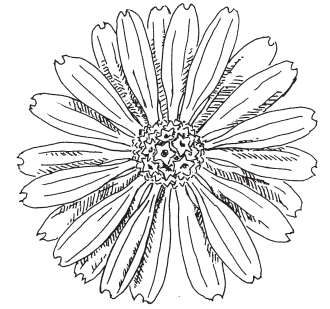
from his April, 2003 article. Drawing by Bonnie Walters

In the past there has been some confusion as to the correct identification of the plant that Bonnie drew for our previous article in Oakleaves. In Dr. Robert Hoover's original Flora, it was in genus *Corethrogyne* and then it was moved to *Lessingia*. According to Dr. David Keil's just published revision of Dr. Hoover's original Flora (*The Vascular Plants of San Luis Obispo County, California*) it's now back to *Corethrogyne filaginifolia*.

Although it is one of our more common coastal plants, it is not mentioned in any of our local illustrated plant identification books. Neither is it listed in the indices in any of my books on native plant gardening. However, I did find a reference to it in a very complete, but older, listing of plant genera, along with a note that its genus (*Corethrogyne*) contains three cultivated California species. In another source, the species is listed in one place as an herb and in another place as a shrub or sub-shrub. Another measure of its obscurity is its common name. Most of the time, there is no common name given at all. If there is a common name listed, it's simply California Aster. Yes, it is a California native plant that is distributed from southern Oregon, south along the coast, Central Valley and Sierra Foothills, into northern Baja California. Its distribution is described as particularly common in the plant community known as coastal scrub or soft chaparral, which is mostly coastal and restricted to below 2600 meters. However, California is also the home of hundreds of other species as well.

The remaining part of the common name, aster, is no better as this is one of several common names applied to members of its family affiliation ("composite," lettuce, dandelion, sunflower, or aster). This family also happens to be the largest family of flowering plants, Asteraceae. The family possesses an inflorescence known as a head that functions like a single flower in pollination. The center of the head is a flattish surface that can contain over 100 tiny yellow tube-shaped flowers topped with five teeth. Radiating from the edge are flowers that produce a single petal-like structure made up of three fused elements. These are called ray corollas, and they are attached to sterile ray flowers. The common name, aster, is the name generally applied to many members of the family with white, pink, or purple ray flowers which this species displays. Aster also refers to the distribution of the ray corollas. They spread out like radiating shafts of light from a star. Rarely does one find large numbers of heads in bloom at any one time. However, along the immediate coast, California aster can be found blooming every month of the year. Is the plant an herb or a shrub? It is probably both or neither. It has a habit that botanists call a half-shrub, suffrutescent. It is woody at the base, but puts out diffuse, thin, herbaceous shoots. The species is highly variable in appearance and this variability has resulted in individuals of the species divided among several species in the past. However, in recent treatments, only one variable species is recognized.

Neither California aster nor any of its near relatives are



listed in any of my references dealing with useful, medicinal, or poisonous plants of California. In the Elfin Forest its white to pale pink flowers can be found every month of the year if one looks for them. It is the scrawny, weak stemmed plant with the usually whitish leaves growing isolated among larger more robust shrubs. It is common wherever shrubs are dominant. So, what more is there to say about it?

How common is the plant? A group of California Native Plant Society members were doing a survey of plants growing in the back dunes near Morro Bay. They were surprised to find more individuals of this species than of any other shrub. However, they did not find this out until they analyzed their numerical data. None of them guessed it from their eyeball observations.

Photo From the Forest



Dave Bowlus was pleased to see and photograph a Horned Lizard in August. Horned Lizards are seldom seen In the Elfin Forest. See articles by Dave Bowlus and Jean Wheeler in Spring Oakleaves on page 4.

Weed Warrior Reports

By Conservation Chair Vicky Johnson

A special 'thank you' has been sent to Roger Carmody, Patrice Promack, Natalie Zaragosa, and Jeff Reifel as they spent 20 weed-warrior hours removing thistles from Don Klopfer Grove.

On the May work day, ten people totaled 18 weed-warrior hours removing narrow leaf ice plant, which is now under control. There is still a relatively small amount of Veldt grass on the South Bay slope. The asparagus vine is a lost cause and will be addressed next season with a chemical before it flowers. Various ivy infestations are also lost causes at present. Italian thistle is gone and Cheat grass is gone from Don Klopfer Grove. The Weed Warriors will now focus on trimming unless some weed infestations pop up.

On June 1st there were eleven Weed Warriors. On June 10th, five people worked for 10 weed-warrior hours, cleaning up the 16th Street parking area and pulling grass. Zarah Wyly created an infestation map, indicating where Cape ivy and Smilax are overgrowing oaks. FEMEF talked to the County about the need for herbicide as well as obtaining help from the CCC or Grizzly Academy to pull down vines and treat the ivy with off-the-shelf herbicides.

On July 6, ten volunteers worked 20 Weed-Warrior hours removing Narrow Leaf Ice Plant. They also began pulling down Cape ivy.

Jill Smith, Supervisor for the CCC, arranged a last-minute work day for the CCC in the Elfin Forest for July 9. Together with Natalie Zaragoza and Zarah Wyly, Vicky and seven Corps workers spent 70 Weed-Warrior hours removing Cape ivy from the oak grove below Bush Lupine Point. It was a very successful operation, but it barely scratches the surface of a major infestation of Cape ivy, a majority of which is in heavy Poison Oak. Zarah and Vicky are working on a plan for future efforts against the formidable invasive plant.

Vicky has been in touch with Lasca Gaylord regarding herbicides and spraying. The County will research what is appropriate for the Elfin Forest and any limitations.

Join First Saturday Work Parties

We invite you to join us on any first Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon at the north end of 15th Street in Los Osos. Please dress for wind, fog, or sun in layers of clothing with work gloves, and sturdy shoes with closed toes. Take care not to park in front of driveways or mailboxes.

To request more information, call (805) 528-0392.



On the July regularly scheduled Weed Warrior Work Day, Rhys Wyly stands in front of the huge pile of alien narrow-leaved ice plants he pulled.



On July 9, a CCC crew joined Weed Warriors Vicky Johnson, Zarah Wyly, and Natalie Zaragosaa for a special work day to pull the very invasive Cape ivy. Photo by Vicky Johnson.

Care of Elfin Forest Endemics in Your Garden

By John Nowak and Suzette Girouard

As Fall approaches, it's time to prepare our gardens for the Winter. Fall is also the ideal season to plant Elfin Forest favorites such as Black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), *Ceanothus cuneatus*, commonly called Buck brush, Morro manzanita (*Arctostaphylos morroensis*), and many others. This article will make several suggestions on preparing one's garden for potential November plantings. Suzette and I hope you find it interesting.

How do we prepare our gardens for Winter? Here are some steps I have developed over time. First, I like to walk through the garden and look closely at each area. Do some of these areas have old plants that need to be replaced? Take a note pad with you and write down your thoughts. Sometimes I like to do this after work, when I'm feeling relaxed. While designing a plan, ask yourself, what would grow here that I see on my nature walks? This could take weeks, but knowing that the rains are coming will be your encouragement. When possible, match size to area. For example, *Ceanothus* or a Manzanita in a large sandy area with *Salvia mellifera* would be appropriate.

We can't have fun all the time, so our next step is weeding. I prefer hand pulling, following up with mulch. When possible, use oak tree chippings as a soil top dressing to discourage weeds. In my experience, when mulch is applied too thin it is ineffective. A thick layer of three inches will inhibit or kill most annual weeds. Perennials, such as Veldt grass, will not be controlled with mulch. You must first remove established clumps of Veldt grass by hand, then follow up with mulch to kill the seeds.

With warmer Fall nights comes the need to keep a keen eye for insect pests. Many pests will show up when you least expect it. This has been a bad year for spider mites and aphids. These insects attack manzanitas (*Arctostaphylos* species), *Ceanothus* species, pacific wax myrtle (*Myrica californica*) and Coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*). Luckily, we have a secret weapon ... water. Using a spray nozzle, place dial on 'jet' and rinse. Safely control insect populations with a once weekly, early morning spray. For severe infestations, an application of neem oil or insecticidal soap followed weekly with a spray of water will rid your plants of most of the soft bodied insects (spider mites, aphids, etc.).

For hard to control insects such as scale, thrips, and mealy bugs, one might use a horticultural oil spray, such as the Bonide brand. Usually when you have scale or aphids, ants will follow, using them as a food source, with their honey dew being a favorite treat. To control ant colonies, use ant bait stations or ant bait stakes (use cautiously around pets and wildlife). Whenever we spray in the garden, even with a totally organic product, we need to watch for bees. If you see bees, the rule is to not spray. Spray late in the day when bees have returned to their hives. When using water, lightly spray first to send the bees on their way, then increase the water stream and use top to bottom motions to wash the plants.



Fuchsia-flowered gooseberry. Photo by Jean Wheeler.

We will conclude my steps with pruning. Many Elfin Forest species when grown in the garden over time will require pruning. Remove overgrowth, dead flower heads, insect infested branches or give a general shaping. After pruning, I like to water heavily to remove dirt and grime to give the plant a fresh appearance.

Suzette and I hope you found Fall preparation for the garden fun and fulfilling to read. Now you are ready for selecting your favorite Elfin Forest plant for your garden. We have chosen the Fuchsia-flowered gooseberry (*Ribes speciosum*) to plant in our garden.

Photo From the Forest



Mom Quail astonished Dave Bowlus by attacking him for photographing the family! Adult male (brown beard with white border, Dad?) is at the right.

Chicks were behind Mom, but Dave doctored photo to "move" one or two of them in front, better to be seen.

Coming Up in the Elfin Forest

Story by Jean Wheeler

In autumn our small reserve continues to offer much beauty. Some flowers are changing color or just coming into bloom, and some now bear colorful fruits. Young resident birds and other wild animals are acquiring maturity and learning to feed themselves, while migrating birds are passing through or arriving to settle in for the winter in our shrubs and trees or on Morro Bay.

Feathery white flowers of Coyote Brush waft their seeds on our sea breezes to patches of soil where they can flourish. White flowers of dune buckwheat age to pink, while white pompons on black sage turn brown, then black, providing appropriate Halloween décor. California asters (pictured here and subject species for Dirk Walters story on page 5) continue to open white to pale pink or lavender ray petals around central yellow discs. Mock heather is covered with yellow blossoms in early autumn, and yellow to orange flowers of California poppies show some blooms in just about any month. Bright red cherries festoon hollyleaf cherry bushes between Bush Lupine Point and Siena's View, and coffeeberries darken from yellow through red to black, often together on the same branches, seen in the lower boardwalk.

By late November, early rains may herald our winter floral extravaganza. If opening early, white to lavender flowers on buckbrush (aka California lilac) will soon surround our boardwalk, and tiny white bells on morro manzanita, blushing pink, would also begin to open on the lower boardwalk.

Our year-round avian residents and many species of migratory birds contribute active attractions within our Elfin Forest in autumn. Fox, Lincoln's, and golden-crowned sparrows settle in shrubs with our resident white-crowned sparrows by October. Ruby-crowned kinglets also arrive for winter. American robins and hermit thrushes from the north replace Swainson's thrushes leaving to winter in Central or South America, and yellow-rumped warblers also arrive. Resident black phoebes are joined by their relative, Say's phoebes. Passing through on their way south cedar waxwings, western tanagers, and pine siskins may be seen. Year-around avian residents named for our state include California quail, scrub jays, thrashers and towhees. Other full-time residents include spotted towhees, Anna's hummingbirds, bushtits, and blue-grey gnatcatchers.

Birders can also enjoy looking from Bush Lupine Point or Siena's View for avian waterbirds. Dabbling ducks to look for floating head down, tail up include mallards, northern pintails, northern shovellers (pictured), gadwalls, wigeons, and blue-winged, cinnamon, or green-winged teal. Diving ducks plunging below the surface to pop up with food could include lesser and greater scaup, ring-necked ducks, canvasback ducks, and buffleheads.

Horned, eared, pied-billed, western, and Clark's grebes also arrive in autumn migration, and wading and shorebirds such as egrets, sandpipers, dowitchers, godwits, and American avocets also reach peak populations in fall and winter. Look for local birders with their spotting scopes during Big Sit weekend, October 12-13, 2024!

We may not have tall trees covered in big red, orange, and yellow leaves in our autumn. But we do have lots of colorful flowers and very active and beautiful birds, and you might even see brush rabbits, squirrels, lizards, and very occasionally even a coyote or deer from or on our boardwalk!



Northern Shovelers. Photo by Jean Wheeler.



California Asters. Photo by Vicky Johnsen.



O A K L E A V E S

is a quarterly FEMEF publication.

Editors are Pam Ouellette, Jean Wheeler and Yolanda Waddell
Layout by Katy Budge

Contributors to this issue: Dave Bowlus, Pat Brown, Suzette Girouard, Vicky Johnsen, Betsy Kinter, Pat Murray, John Nowak, Pam Ouellette, Patrice Promack, Rebecca Rasmussen, Skip Rotstein, Dean Thompson, Yolanda Waddell, Dirk Walters, Jean Wheeler, Zarah Wyly.

Deadline for copy to *Oakleaves* is the first of the month before issue.
If possible, all copy should be submitted by e-mail to oakleaf@elfin-forest.org.

WALKS in the ELFIN FOREST

Docent-Led Third Saturday Walks

Reservations are required; masks are optional. To reserve a spot on the walk, email us at walks@elfin-forest.org and indicate the number in your party in the subject line of your email.

September 21, 9:30 a.m. Plant Pathology

Have you ever looked at a drooping plant and wondered about health problems of plants? Well, Wally Marks is going to tell us about the science that accomplishes studies of plant health problems, called plant pathology. He'll clue us in on how plant pathologists study plants and their biological processes, learning to understand how diseases affect plant health, how to identify plant diseases, and methods learned for preventing and treating some plant diseases.

October 19, 9:30 a.m.

Seeds: Space and Time Travelers

Enjoy an easy walk led by Barbara Renshaw, Faylla Chapman, and Jeff Reifel to study the properties of seeds and the methods plants use to send them to find a home in the environment. Many seeds on plants in the Elfin Forest will be investigated, including mature acorns on live oak trees. Berries will also be dissected to show the fruit, the seed coat, and the embryo inside the seed.

November 16, 9:30 a.m. To be announced.

Check our website under "Visiting" and then "Walks in the Forest"

Walks begin at times stated above at the north end (1100 block) of 15th Street off Santa Ysabel in Los Osos. Wear closed-toe shoes, long sleeves, and pants to avoid poison oak and mosquitoes. Park carefully, avoiding driveways and mailboxes, and leave pets at home. The easy-paced walks last 1-1/2 to 2 hours. For more information or if you use a wheelchair, call (805) 528-0392.



Jeff Reifel and Dennis Sheridan's 3rd Saturday walk topic in June was insect communities of the Elfin Forest. Here Jeff shows walk participants examples of the insects that they will see.

Photo by Pat Brown.

Please Report Sightings

Have you observed any unusual birds in the Elfin Forest? Mammals? Reptiles? Amphibians? Insects? Interesting activities or footprints of wildlife in our Elfin Forest? Unusual plants? Taken a good photo? Please report any interesting sightings to your *Oakleaves* editors at: oakleaf@elfin-forest.org or leave a message on FEMEF's answering machine, (805) 528-0392.



In July, two very popular late evening bat walks were given in the Elfin Forest. Five species of bats were identified, using ultrasound bat detectors. Leaders of the second walk (holding model bat wing) were (L-R) Cuesta College instructor Erin Naegle and Lisa Murphy, Bat Researcher. Photo by Rebecca Rasmussen.

Thank You to Our Generous Members

*Compiled by
Betsy Kinter, FEMEF Database Coordinator*

NEW LIFETIME MEMBER:

Pat Brown

NEW MEMBERS:

Kevin & Julia Ferguson*
Gregory Hauenstein*
Sarah L. Hooper*
Angela & Patrick Logan*

RENEWING MEMBERS:

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Anne Avril & Daniel Haifley*	Louise Noel*
Larry Bender*	Marshall Ochylski*
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DONATIONS:

Anonymous donation through Fidelity Charitable
Morris Chernick
Beth Currier, Rancho de los Animales for the Disabled, Inc.
Andrea Davis
Sharon Hite
Ryan Imhof
Karen O'Grady remembering Maj. John O'Grattan

**Thanks to those listed above who donated more than the \$25 (regular) or \$15 (senior or student) membership dues. The additional donations will be used for special projects in the Elfin Forest. If you recently sent a donation to FEMEF and don't see your name in this issue's New and Renewing list, be assured that your gift will be acknowledged in the next quarterly issue. Gifts are processed by two different volunteers before reaching our editors, and newsletter copy deadline is one month before the date of the issue.*



Working to transfer SWAP/FEMEF archival materials to Cal Poly on June 13 were (L-R) Jessica Holada, Director of Special Collections and Archives; Zack Vowell, Cal Poly Digital Archivist, Laura Sorvetti, Cal Poly Archivist, Board member Pat Brown, and Property and Records Committee Chair Patrice Promack. Photo taken by a kind passer-by using Pat Brown's cellphone.

SWAP/FEMEF Archives go to Cal Poly Library

By Patrice Promack

In 2014, Yolanda Waddell attended a tour of the library at Cal Poly with her husband, Jay. There she met Jessica Holada, Director of Special Collections and Archives and they discussed the possibility of placing SWAP archival materials at Cal Poly. Then in February 2022, Yolanda emailed Jessica to inquire about her interest in including historic material about SWAP (now FEMEF) in the Cal Poly Archives. Jessica said she would be interested in acquiring the SWAP records. Due to the pandemic as well as the fact that the Special Collections Department was physically relocating during a library-wide remodel, this daunting task did not move forward quickly. In June 2023, Bob Dees (then a FEMEF Board Member) re-initiated contact with Jessica at Cal Poly, and the process continued.

Several hundred volunteer hours later, on June 13th of this year, the Cal Poly Archivists (Jessica Holada, Laura Sorvetti, and Zach Vowell) came to the FEMEF storage unit and left with 10 boxes of records to take to the archives at Cal Poly. It was definitely a group effort over many months. Bob Dees and Patrice Promack visited the storage unit on many occasions in the beginning, and were occasionally joined by others: Pat Murray, Roger Carmody, Skip Rotstein, Carol and George Pilling, Dave Bowlus, Rouvaishyana, and of course Yolanda Waddell.

At the end of 2023, Pat Brown got involved. Because the donation of the SWAP/FEMEF files to Cal Poly means that anyone who wants to explore what is in the records will have to go to Cal Poly, Pat started the gigantic project of scanning a great deal of what was in the files and notebooks, and putting it all on a hard drive and a backup hard drive for FEMEF. She also worked with archivist Zach Vowell to compile some of the digital records that will be at Cal Poly.

The donation of records to Cal Poly Archives is not yet complete. After sifting through a lot more material, a second batch of material will be donated in November. The process of conserving over 50 years of history of SWAP and now FEMEF is such an important goal...and now within reach.



Quail

Great Gift Alphabet Bird Book: 26 facing picture/poem pages

Q is for Quail

All of my feathers
Lie in their place
Except for the one
That hangs in my face



FEMEF Shoppers' Order Form

See photos of all items at www.elfin-forest.org

All Prices Include Sales Tax

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Illegal Fires Threatened Elfin Forest in July ~ see page 3!

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Booth Workers Needed for Oktoberfest

Los Osos will be celebrating its annual Oktoberfest this year on Sunday, October 29 on Second Street in downtown Baywood Park. SWAP will participate by setting up a booth among others that feature many kinds of arts and crafts, as well as ethnic foods. We'll talk to visitors about SWAP, distribute literature, and sell T-shirts, sweatshirts, our beautiful coffee mugs and caps, guidebooks, notecards, etc.



We need volunteers to staff our table at this event. If you can work a two-hour shift between 9:00 am and 4:00 pm on this day, please call SWAP's message phone at 528-0392. Give your name, shift preference, and phone number. Join us, you'll have fun!

MEMBERSHIP FORM

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- I want to help, please call me!
 FEMEF has permission to email me.

All memberships include a year's subscription to FEMEF's quarterly newsletter *Oakleaves*.

- Check here to receive the online version by email.
 Check here to receive the print version by U.S. mail.
 Check here if you do not wish to receive *Oakleaves*.

All donations to FEMEF are tax-deductible.
 EVERY membership counts!
 Make checks payable to: FEMEF
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