

Solstice Special Newsletter - June 2025

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Proclamation

National Pollinator Week

June 16th - 22nd

WHEREAS, pollinators such as thousands of species of bees are essential partners in producing much of our food supply; and

WHEREAS, pollinators provide significant environmental benefits that are necessary for maintaining healthy, diverse ecosystems in towns and cities; and

WHEREAS, pollination plays a vital role for the trees and plants of our community, enhancing our quality of life, and creating recreational and economic development opportunities; and

WHEREAS, the City of Lemon Grove manages parks, public landscaping, and other public lands that may include greenways and wildlife habitats; and

WHEREAS, the City of Lemon Grove provides recommendations to developers and residents regarding landscaping to promote wise conservation stewardship, including the protection of pollinators and maintenance of their habitats; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Alysson Snow, Mayor of the City of Lemon Grove do hereby proclaim the week of June 16th - 22nd as our City's observance of National Pollinator Week.



Thank you to our very own Chelsea Gastulum for petitioning the city of Lemon Grove to issue the above proclamation in honor of Pollinator Week. You're the best! Read on to get more tips on how you can help support our local pollinator species, just like Chelsea!

Welcome to Glean Season - Plants and Pollinators!



Matilija Poppies (*Romneya coulteri*) - can you spot the carpenter bee in the last photo?



Bladderpod (*Cleomella arborea*) - these fast growing, easy to propagate shrubs are the preferred host of Harlequin bugs, like the one in the first photo. Bladderpod was one of the recent contenders for the official flower of San Diego. See who won on the next page...



Milkweed (*several varieties*) - There are two animal species here, three if you count VP Elena! Check out [Caterpillar Chow](#) with Ken to learn about the many, many species of milkweed.

How You Can Help :)

- **Plant a Pollinator Garden - for free!**

If you have space available to plant, you can collaborate with the Xerces Society through their [Southern California Residential Habitat Kit Program](#) , which serves to provide transplants of native, pollinator-friendly species to residents in Southern California. You just have to commit to planting the kit and caring for it. With that, you will contribute to creating habitat for our native pollinator species by introducing flowering plants into your garden. Proposals for the 2025 residential habitat kit season will be open from June 6 - August 6 in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

- **Donate to the Old Town Urban Greening Project**

We planted one side of the main parking lot in the middle of Old Town, San Diego. Three sides to go! For our next stage, we are receiving a Xerces Plant Grant with 90 pollinator plants to create a monarch butterfly overwintering site along their migration path. We plan to put in educational signage to inform the public about the monarch life cycle and the importance of native plants to their well-being. If you are able and interested, you can contribute to our funding at this website: [Old Town Pollinator Pathway Fundraiser](#).

[illegible]

It's not too late to enter our first official *Pollinator Photo Contest* at the link below!



Wild Ones San Diego Pollinator Photo Contest

Blue-eyed Grass for the Win!



Thanks to a successful campaign by the San Diego Bird Alliance, the city council voted unanimously on Earth Day to change the official San Diego flower from the carnation to a native species. [Blue-eyed Grass](#) beat out [Black Sage](#), [Bladderpod](#), [Blue Elderberry](#), [Bush Sunflower](#), [California Buckwheat](#), [California Rose](#) and [Cleveland Sage](#) based on three rounds of voting, and I attended my first ever San Diego City Hall meeting where the flower was officially adopted. I think it's safe to say that it was the most delightful agenda item on the docket that day, and Wild Ones was quoted in the Union-Tribune! If you missed the article, don't worry - check out the newspaper clipping my mother kept :)

Carnation out — blue-eyed grass now S.D. city flower

Native plant beat out the bush sunflower in a March Madness-style competition

By David Garrick
UNION-TRIBUNE

SAN DIEGO San Diego has a new city flower for the first time in 61 years.

The City Council voted unanimously Tuesday to replace the non-native carnation with blue-eyed grass, a native flower that can be found all over the city in meadows, along streams and next to freshwater wetlands.

Blue-eyed grass was chosen by the public in a March Madness-style bracket competition where it beat out seven other native flowers that met a long list of criteria established by the San Diego Bird Alliance.

In the finals, blue-eyed grass narrowly beat out the bush sunflower, 1,204 votes to 1,170 votes.

"The people of San Diego voted over and over for the blue-eyed grass," said Council President Joe LaCava, who spearheaded the effort to change the city flower. "The blue-eyed grass represents the beauty of San Diego in its resilience and historical ties."

Representatives from the bird alliance said the blue-eyed grass is well-balanced, symmetrical, drought-tolerant and fire-resistant and can re-seed itself and flourish



Western blue-eyed grass was voted the new city flower. **BRUCE CHAMBERS / SCNG**

in shade. Eloise Battle, a celebrated local environmentalist who died this spring, called the flower "the harbinger of spring."

Local environmental groups say choosing a native flower as the city's official one encourages residents to cultivate native flowers, which help support local bees, birds and butterflies.

Native plants underpin the survival of all local species by providing food, nesting materials, shelter and protection from predators, the bird alliance said. That's especially important in San Diego County, the most biodiverse in the nation.

Councilmember Kent Lee said his staff

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"Blue-eyed Grass is a perennial herb that flowers from January to July – after flowering, it goes dormant over the summer showing its drought-tolerant bona fides, and returns to flower again in the spring. It is also fire-resistant, acting as a barrier against wildfire spread. The plant is self-sowing, but can also be propagated through rhizome division or rooting from the stems. Blue-eyed grass supports many local birds and pollinators, including the Spring Azure Butterfly, various native bees, and Anna's hummingbird." - San Diego Bird Alliance

FLOWER

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enthusiastically participated in the bracket challenge, where 7,750 total votes were cast across three rounds.

"You truly made this a fun and interactive journey," Lee told LaCava's staff and the bird alliance. "While I supported the California

wild rose in the early rounds and then voted for the bush sunflower in the finals, I'm still happy to support the people's choice, the blue-eyed grass."

Miranda Halverson of Wild One San Diego, a native plant volunteer organization, also endorsed the city's choice. "It's hard to find an argument against this beautiful little iris that we have

right here," she said.

The bird alliance, previously known as the Audubon Society, narrowed the field from the county's more than 2,000 native flower species down to 40 and had 18 local experts shrink that to eight for the bracket challenge.

San Diego's official native tree is the Torrey pine. The official urban tree is the jacaranda.

More Recent Successes!

- Plant and Pollinator workshop at the San Carlos Community Garden with Elena!



- San Altos Elementary School has grown and bloomed, including the biggest yarrow I've ever seen! We will be featured in next year's California Native Plant Society native garden tour.



- The Old Town Pollinator Pathway Planting Party was a smashing success, with over 80 plants installed, a napales demonstration by the Chia Cafe Collective, and entertainment by our very own singer-songwriter Felicia. Stay tuned for Stage III this coming winter, and donate [here](#).



- Santa Ysabel Nature Walk. We had such a great time checking out Roz's amazing cabin. We look forward to going back to collect tons of Grape Soda Lupine seeds, and we are working on plans for a Wild Ones camping trip.



Upcoming Events - FREE! - ([click for details and more events](#))

- June 28th - Summer Seed Swap - San Diego Seed Swap always organizes great events with tons of free seeds, plants, and gardening accoutrement. This summer, they are holding it at the very cool Water Conservation Garden next to Cuyamaca College. Come join the fun!
- June 29th - Promenade Park Planting - Lemon Grove - We will be planting the first round of native plants around the Lemon Grove trolley station in collaboration with Busy Bee Garden Co-op.
- June 29th - Native Garden Docent Tour - San Diego County Fair - If you plan to go to the fair this year, why not aim for next Sunday and come meet President Miranda at the California Native Garden in the infield for a tour :)



- July 12th - Tribal Earth Day - Santa Ysabel - "This year's theme is Honoring Mother Earth, Respecting All Our Relatives. The Iipay Nation of Santa Ysabel wants to emphasize and remind community members of the interconnectedness we all share with plants, animals, elements, and soil. Whether we are working, playing, or being in nature, our actions impact all living things and in turn they impact us. Reconnecting with all our relatives and the earth has been proven to promote physical and mental health benefits, strengthen community bonds, and help us to remember our obligation to be good stewards of the land." - Joe Wier, Environmental Director, Iipay Nation of Santa Ysabel
- July 26th - Olivewood Gardens Day of Play - National City - In the past, Day of Play has engaged approximately 800 residents from National City and the greater San Diego area. This year's theme will center opportunities for STEAM learning in National City! Join us in our efforts to inspire families to form healthy habits with educational connections around STEAM, food, health, the environment, and of course - native plants!

Next newsletter: Meet the Board, Traditional acorn flour cookie recipe (including acorn processing tips), Holiday party announcement, and a shared Map of native gardens and seed libraries around San Diego!

