Volume 22 Issue 2

June 2020

Sycamore Sage

The Preserve may be closed during and after heavy rains. For your safety, please observe all closure notices.

Park hours are: April - Sept (8 a.m. - 7 p.m.);

Oct- March (8 a.m. - 5 p.m.)

For more information, call the Visitor Center at

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Friends of Goodan Ranch & Sycamore Canyon Open Space

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The President's Message

June 2020

Carol Crafts

So much has changed in our lives since our last newsletter!

Covid-19 has brought back vocabulary not heard since previous decades like "quarantine" and "isolation".

I remember signs on our front lawns when I and my siblings had measles, mumps or chicken pox. I had a classmate in an iron lung due to polio. And even before that my mother and 5 year old sister had the flu when I was born so I was isolated at my Aunt and Uncle's home.

Without a vaccine for the Corona-19 virus, life has changed.

Some of our members have been able to enjoy the peace and beauty of our open space. As the rains fell in March (7") and April (7") the waters rushed through our valley. Even in May we had light showers. Now the wild flowers are in bloom.

Spending more time in our own backyards has provided more observations of our abundant birds and even snakes. A neighbor in the center of Poway just had a bob cat leave the creek for a stroll through her back yard!

I hope all of you are well and safe

Carol

Why is Foam on that Plant?

The first time you encountered spittlebugs, you probably didn't realize you were looking at bugs. All you saw was white foam on a plant and wondered what it was. Was it a disease? What is that foam? The answer is rather interesting. It is a hiding spot for a bug…a spittlebug.

Never heard of spittlebugs? You are not alone. There are around 23,000 species of spittlebugs yet few gardeners have ever really seen one.

The aptly named Spittlebug (Cercopidae) is the nymph of a garden pest that comes out in late April or early May and starts feeding at the base of plants. The bug keeps moving up the plant looking for tender leaves and flowers. That mass of froth you see on your plant isn't there to do your plant harm. It's a very clever cover for the spittlebug while it morphs into an adult.

Spittlebugs feed on plant fluids, but not on sap. The bug drinks fluids from the plant's xylem, the vessels that conduct water from the roots to the rest of the plant's structures. This is no easy task and requires extraordinarily strong pumping muscles since the spittlebug is working against gravity to pull liquid upward from the roots.

Xylem fluids aren't exactly superfoods, either. The spittlebug has to drink enormous volumes of the fluids to derive enough nutrition to live. A spittlebug can pump up to 300 times its body weight in xylem fluids in a single hour. As you might imagine, drinking all that fluid means the spittlebug produces a lot of waste. If you're going to excrete massive amounts of waste, you might as well put it to good use, right? Spittlebugs repurpose their waste into a protective shelter, keeping them hidden from predators.

To do that, the spittlebug usually rests with its head facing downward. As it voids the excess fluids from its anus, the spittlebug also secretes a sticky substance from abdominal glands. Some species can produce as many as 80 bubbles per minute. The spittlebug nymph moves its abdomen up and down, and as the bubbles emerge, it reaches back with its legs and pulls the bubbles forward over its back. The foam, or spittle, flows down over the spittlebug's body, hiding it from predators. It also provides a high humidity microclimate and shields the bugs from rain.

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The nymphs mature in five to eight weeks. The adult can fly, but it usually “hops” about on plants and rests froglike with its head elevated, so the adult is often called a *Froghopper*. The adult bug can leap into the air as high as a flea, but weighs 60 times more than a flea. One study found froghoppers’ velocity, upon takeoff, to be four meters (more than 13 feet) per second. Such a jump requires the froghopper to exert more than 400 times its own body weight. The reason for these tremendous, sudden leaps is to help the hopper evade its enemies. Considering how fast these insects can jump away, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and mammals would seem to have their dinner disappear into thin air.

As adults, they move to nearby grassy areas, pastures or areas with broadleaf weeds leaving behind its spittle mass. Adults are rarely noticed without the conspicuous spit, continue to feed through the summer, migrating to new hosts as foliage dries out.

The female insect returns in September and October to lay clusters of eggs in plant debris or in leaves and stems. There is only one generation per year.

Other than looking unsightly, spittlebugs do very little damage to a plant. They do suck some of the fluid from the plant, but rarely enough to harm the plant – unless there are huge numbers of them. A quick blast of water from a hose end sprayer will usually knock them off and eliminate spittlebugs from the plant.

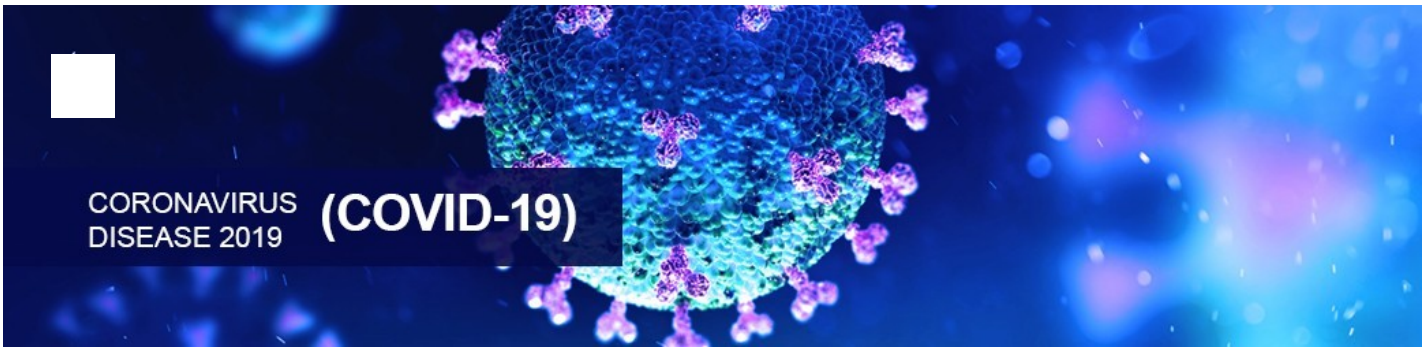
If you get spittle bugs on your garden plants, and the blast of water does not take care of the problem, consider an organic to not only kill the spittlebug but repel further infestation. A garlic or hot-based organic or homemade insecticide for spittlebugs works well in this case. You can do a double whammy with the following organic and homemade insecticide for spittlebugs:

Organic spittlebug killer recipe

1/2 cup hot peppers, diced
6 cloves garlic, peeled
2 cups water
2 teaspoons liquid soap (without bleach)

Puree peppers, garlic and water together. Let sit for 24 hours. Strain and mix in the liquid soap. Wipe the foam off the plant or dislodge it with a spray of water from the hose.
Spray all parts of the plant with your organic insecticide

Now that you know a little more about spittlebugs, you know what bug leaves white foam on plants and what you can do to stop it.



COVID-19 UPDATE

The County is working to protect the public's health in the face of COVID-19 by taking actions to help slow the spread of the virus.

Parks and preserves remain open to foot, bike and horse traffic, though some on-site amenities have been closed.

Sycamore Canyon/Goodan

Hours: No change; 8 a.m. –5 p.m.

Open: Parking lot at 67 staging area is at 50% capacity; trails are open

Closed: Goodan staging area, benches, picnic tables, and the Visitor Center are closed

Please obey posted signs

You may go outside for exercise if you can keep six feet away from people who are not members of your household. Avoid groups and crowded outdoor spaces. Remember that there is one rule that remains in place: **gatherings are still prohibited**.. Because of this, the Board Meetings of the Goodan Ranch/Sycamore Canyon have been canceled until further notice.

Additionally, as of May 1, everyone must be in possession of a face covering when they leave their home. All persons must wear face coverings if they are in public *and* if they come within 6 feet of another person who is not a member of their household. Masks should be carried as a precaution. If these protocols are not followed, the park may be required to close.
(https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Face-Coverings-Guidance.aspx),

A strong recommendation is made that all persons who are 65 years old or older, have a chronic underlying condition, or have a compromised immune system self-quarantine themselves at home or other suitable location.

For more information regarding the novel coronavirus and current status, visit the County's coronavirus webpage at coronavirus-sd.com.

News from our Park Rangers

Improving the County's 350+ mile trail system is a priority for the San Diego County Department of Parks and Recreation, and efforts to expand trail access are balanced by efforts to preserve sensitive habitats and culturally significant areas. Over the years, a number of unauthorized trails have appeared in Sycamore Canyon/Goodan Ranch County Preserve. These trails negatively affect these areas and can cause harm to plants, animals and other resources. You may notice signs and other barricades blocking access to these unauthorized trails. Please stay on trail and only in authorized areas as we work to protect this urban oasis.

Other news from *Park Ranger Patrick Wiener*:

We have been planting native plants and trees throughout the preserve as a part of the County of San Diego's Climate Action Plan

The San Diego River Conservancy is leading a project to eradicate invasive species in and around the Sycamore Creek waterways. The invasive species that are giving us the most trouble are the Black Mustard and Italian Thistle. We're doing our best to manage these weeds during the spring season.

It has been a busy season for snakes in the preserve. In the last few months there have been multiple sightings of rattlesnakes including Red Diamond and Southern Pacific. We have also seen Rosy Boa, Gopher, and California King snakes.

Preserve visitors must stay extra alert this time of year and always stay on trail in order to avoid possible dangerous encounters with the wildlife.

During this troubling time, we're keeping the public safe from COVID-19 by enforcing public health orders and maintaining a strict cleaning regimen.

Stay Safe!

Patrick Wiener

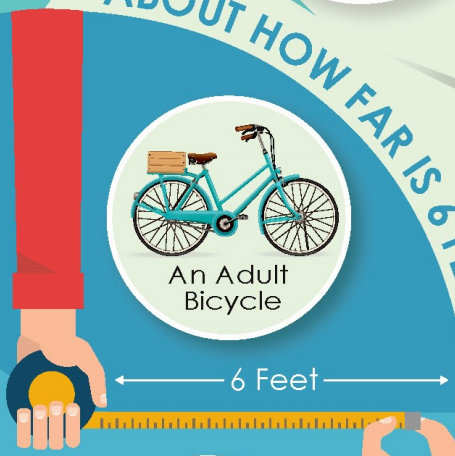
SOCIAL DISTANCING

HELP PREVENT THE SPREAD OF CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19)

COVID-19 is spread through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, sings, or speaks.

Practice social distancing by creating **6 feet of physical space** between yourself and other individuals outside of your household.

ABOUT HOW FAR IS 6 FEET?



WHY 6 FEET?

Respiratory droplets can travel up to 6 feet before setting to the ground or other surface.

Maintaining 6 feet of distance reduces your chance of coming into contact with the virus or breathing it in.

Washing your hands and cleaning frequently touched surfaces can remove these infected droplets.

It's EVERYONE'S
Social Responsibility.

For more information, visit:
www.coronavirus-sd.com

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO HHSA HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
LIVE WELL SAN DIEGO

BLACK MUSTARD

Brassica nigra

More Wildflowers, Grasses and Other Nonwoody Plants

EDIBLE

Family: Brassicaceae (mustards)

Description: Black mustard is a coarse annual weed, either branched or not. Flowers very small, yellow, the 4 petals arranged like a cross, about 3/8 inch wide. Blooms April–November. Leaves on long petioles, highly variable, often irregularly lobed to the midrib, generally ovate, some with teeth. Fruits long seedpods (called siliques) that form as flowering continues.

Similar species: There are 4 species of *Brassica* recorded growing out of cultivation in Missouri. All originated as introduced crop plants. In addition to black mustard, there is brown, leaf, Indian, or Chinese mustard (*B. juncea*); rutabaga or rapeseed (the source of canola oil) (*B. napus*); and field mustard or turnip (*B. rapa*). Because of their many growth forms and hybrids, these can be hard to identify in the wild.

Size: Height: to 5 feet.

The flowers of black mustard are very small, yellow, and about 3/8 inch wide, with the 4 petals arranged like a cross. It blooms April–November. The fruits are long seedpods (technically, siliques) that form lower on the stalk as new flowers develop higher up.

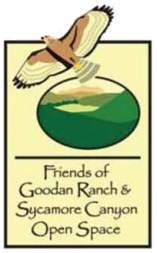
Joseph M. DeTomaso, University of California-Davis, Bugwood.org

While our standard rallying cry is to encourage people to spend more time outside, we understand that recent realities may not make that feasible. We are now poised to offer many of our incredible outdoor activities in an online environment via a Virtual Recreation Center.

Accessible from the sdparks.org home page and "Participate" tab, this one-stop shop for park information links to virtual hikes and 360-degree videos, pro tips from rangers, links to our social media accounts and coronavirus news sites, and other helpful resources. People who choose to venture outside can access recommendations for kids and adults along with advice on how to maintain social distancing. We've even built in options for those who want to give back to their community.

Please check it out, and let us know what we can add to make this a comprehensive site for all San Diegans. Email jessica.geiszler@sdcounty.ca.gov.

STAY SAFE



Friends of Goodan Ranch
&
Sycamore Canyon Open Space
Webpage—GoodanRanch.org
Facebook—Goodan Ranch
Email—FriendsofGoodanRanch@gmail.com

WE ARE ON THE WEB AT GOODANRANCH.ORG

Please enroll me as a member of Friends of Goodan Ranch & Sycamore Canyon Open Space.

Date_____
Name or Business _____
Contact Name_____
Address_____
City, State, Zip_____
Phone_____
Email _____

Please select your membership level

- ☐ •$ 25 Individual
- ☐ •$ 20 Student /or/ Senior -62 and above
- ☐ •$ 40 Family
- ☐ •$ 50 Small Business
- ☐ •$ 100 Patron
- ☐ •$1,000 Lifetime Member

Fill out the requested information & mail it with your check to:

Friends of Goodan Ranch & Sycamore Canyon Memberships
13030 Birch Lane
Poway, CA 92064

The Sycamore Sage
13030 Birch Lane
Poway, CA 92064