

Edgewood

EXPLORER

FRIENDS OF EDGEWOOD • WINTER 2022

Edgewood Bluebirds Set New Records in 2022

by Frances Morse

Let's hear it for our western bluebirds! In spite of wildfire in Edgewood Park and Natural Preserve, controlled burns planned near our nest boxes, and the extended drought,



Photo by Perry McCarty

we are happy to report we had a successful season. Team Bluebird Monitors John Morse, Perry McCarty, newbie Diane Campbell, and I checked our 27 boxes weekly from early March to early July this year. Whitney Mortimer (now living in Sebastopol) again did our

data analysis, and digitally helped us puzzle through some of our unusual findings. Here are our results.

2022 Nest Box Summary (27 Boxes)

Species	Nests	Eggs	Hatched	Fledged/Yield
WEBL	18	82	75 (91%)	59 (72%)
TRES	2	10	10 (100%)	10 (100%)
ATFL	1	3	3 (100%)	3 (100%)
CBCH	0	0	0	0
Total	21	95	88 (93%)	72 (76%)

Overall, we had 21 nests and 95 eggs from three species of cavity-nesting birds. There were 18 nests built by western bluebirds (WEBL), two nests built by tree swallows (TRES), and one nest by ash-throated flycatchers (ATFL). Thanks to their efforts, 72 new fledglings are now flying around Edgewood. These youngsters gave us a 76% yield (i.e., about 8 of every 10 eggs made it to the fledgling stage). We had no chestnut-backed chickadee (CBCH) nests this year and slightly fewer tree swallow nests.

Here are some highlights from this season. In the ten years I have been monitoring, we recorded the highest number of fledglings – 72 overall, topping our previous high of 70 in 2015. It was definitely a “Bluebird Bonanza” year. The 59 bluebird fledglings topped their previous high of 54 in

2015. This season, bluebirds also built their highest number of nests (18), and laid the highest number of eggs (82). (Number-junkies, see our 10-year bluebird table on page 7.)

We had success in several other ways, too. We had three boxes that had second nests (all bluebirds), and 100% of these eggs fledged. This is very unusual for second nests. This made up for the three total nest failures we also had: one nest where all five eggs disappeared (probably a snake ate them), and two nests where all the feathered chicks died (either because of parental death or infection from a parasite).

For the first season in many years, we had no mouse nests in our boxes! Perhaps it was because we installed some new baffles on some of our rodent-vulnerable boxes. Another seasonal highlight, we discovered two purple mouse-ear colonies off trail near two of our boxes. We reported these locations to the TERTELS team.

Finally, in one of our boxes, a pair of bluebirds built their nest on top of an old nest built by chestnut-backed chickadees. (See photo top left.)

As I usually do, I reported our findings to the California Bluebird Recovery Program (www.cbrp.org) which analyzes results from across California. Statewide results for the past two seasons have been compromised due to COVID-related trail closings. We are hopeful this season's results will reflect more open trails.



John Morse after installing new baffle. Photo by Frances Morse

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FoE Celebrates with Food, Fun, and Guests at Annual Meeting

by Barrie Moore

We kicked off our 30th anniversary year with our 30th Annual General Meeting on Oct. 9. This was our first in-person general meeting since 2019 and more than 50 members, volunteers, and special guests enjoyed catching up and enjoying delicious vegan food organized by Laurie Alexander and Barbara Erny. (See the recipe on page 6 for the addictive gluten-free cookies Barb made for the meeting!)

Our theme for the day was “Building Resilience.” In 2022, we restarted our spring wildflower hikes after a three-year hiatus, survived a wildfire in June, and continued to experiment with different habitation restoration techniques. Everyone was very interested to hear how FoE and SMC Parks are working to ensure Edgewood remains a resilient place of extraordinary biodiversity that is appreciated and protected forever.

Four stations representing habitat restoration, wildlife stewardship, nature education and interpretive programs, and Edgewood Farms allowed guests to learn about recent activities and find out about opportunities to support our efforts or get involved as a volunteer. Kathy Korbholz designed a game to encourage everyone to visit each station in order to complete a passport to be entered in a prize drawing. The winner was none other than Stu Weiss, who was recently named Bay Nature’s 2023 Conservation Action Local Hero. Congratulations, Stu!

Guest speakers included Walter Moore, president of Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST), and Nicholas Calderon, director of San Mateo County Parks. Moore spoke about the state-wide 30 x 30 initiative which includes several land conservation goals to help build resilience in the face of climate change and to advance biodiversity conservation as a state priority. Moore explained how protecting the rich biodiversity in Edgewood and engaging expert citizen scientists like the many Friends of Edgewood volunteers who help with habitat restoration is critical for meeting the 30 x 30 goals. Calderon spoke about the commitment to partnering with Friends of Edgewood to continue the important resource management work being done to protect the preserve from threats like wildfire and climate change, as well as upcoming plans to develop interpretive strategies county-wide across all SMC Parks.



FoE President Peter Ingram (l), POST president Walter Moore (c) and SMC Parks director Nicholas Calderon (r) at the General Meeting. Peter reads the new Edgewood Farms sign (below).
Photos by Barrie Moore and Kathy Korbholz

FoE president, Peter Ingram, shared that Friends of Edgewood is on track to deliver more than 13,000 volunteer hours in support of the preserve this year. Calderon commented that we are the envy of parks organizations across the Bay area, including Marin County Parks, who visited Edgewood earlier this year to learn the secrets of how to build a volunteer corps like FoE.

We dedicated a new extension to Edgewood Farms, which was funded by a generous grant from the Kenneth Himes Charitable Trust in addition to support from SMC Parks



Foundation, SMC Parks, and FoE. (More on page 4 about the scouts who helped with construction of the planter boxes). Sandy Bernhard was named the Friends of Edgewood Best Friend for 2022 (story on page 3).

The membership approved two slates for the 2023 board of directors. Incumbents Sandy Bernhard and Perry McCarty, and returning board member Bill Korbholz were elected to one-year terms designed to balance out the number of board seats expiring in a given year. We also welcome five new board members, Caroline Bowker, Junko Bryant, Michele Conway, Rebecca Reynolds, and Matt Tobin, all elected for three-year terms from Jan. 1, 2023 – Dec. 31, 2025. We are looking forward to having this talented group of folks on board as we head into our 30th anniversary year in 2023!

Our Best Friend for 2022 is ... Sandy Bernhard!

This year's well deserved award for Friends of Edgewood's Best Friend goes to Sandy Bernhard. She was chosen for her devotion to Edgewood, her kindness, curiosity, boundless energy, and her ability to bring people together and inspire everyone who works with her.

Sandy has poured her heart into Edgewood for more than a decade. She began as a docent and regular Weed Warrior in 2009 and has become an essential part of Friends of Edgewood through:

- Her leadership of our highly respected interpretive programs including docent training, the Edgewood Field Guide, and wildflower surveys
- Her expert knowledge that informs our habitat restoration efforts, including the newly formed TERTELS plant mapping program and her dedication to iNaturalist postings
- Her many years of service on the board
- Her superb writing skills – she chooses the perfect word to capture magical Edgewood moments
- And her willingness to cheerfully lend a hand to everything we do, whether it is proofreading the newsletter, being an Ed Center host, helping with events, or being a wise adviser to anyone who asks for help.

Sandy is described as “Docent Trainer Extraordinaire.” The uplifting way she has coped with the limits of COVID, plus her kind, welcoming demeanor and the way she teaches with a light, sensitive touch inspires her students to learn more.

Sandy probably touches more aspects of Friends of Edgewood than any other volunteer, her many contributions are too numerous to count. With her infectious enthusiasm for the natural world and commitment to protecting Edgewood's extraordinary biodiversity, we are honored to have her as our 2022 Best Friend.



Far off trail in Edgewood Natural Preserve, a bobcat (*Lynx rufus*) and kitten take a break on Bobcat Bridge. Photo by Ken Seydel through Friends of Edgewood Natural Preserve Camera Trap program. Photographer is licensed by County of San Mateo Parks Department to operate a camera trap within Edgewood Park and Natural Preserve.



Scouts Build New Planter Boxes at Edgewood Farms

by John Caffall

Friends of Edgewood and Edgewood Park and Natural Preserve have been extremely fortunate to have the assistance of local scouts from BSA Troops 149 and 301 in the construction of 16 new planter beds for Edgewood Farms.

The scouts measured lumber beams, cut them into the proper lengths, and formed and secured the pieces into rectangular boxes. After constructing the planter boxes, wire mesh was nailed to the undersides as a gopher and rodent barrier. Landscape fabric was attached and then the planter boxes were placed in the designated locations, later to be filled with soil and planted.

The troops spent many hours on several days constructing the planter beds in the area that was prepared and laid out with the help and guidance of Stuart Smith, volunteer coordinator for the County Parks. Catheryne Nicholson, Troop 301 Asst. Scoutmaster, said, "By far the hardest part was leveling and digging out the extremely hard ground of clay and rock to create a level surface for the box placements." Almost all of it was accomplished by hand.

The scouts completed the new planter boxes in two phases. Eight boxes were completed in each phase. The first phase was led by Oscar Livingston, Life Scout, working on his Eagle project. The second phase was led by Alex Nicholson, Life Scout and Troop 301 Outdoor Ethics Guide, as his Eagle service project. Completing this service project was a necessary

requirement for them to advance to the rank of Eagle Scout. Oscar and Alex spent several months planning their Eagle projects and procuring the materials and enlisting the labor to complete the planter boxes.

Scouts who participated in the first phase of the planter box project included Andrew Hendrickson, James Weaver, Conner Yagen, Max Lanzendorf, Oliver Newhauser, Carter Newhauser, and Jack Pink. The team had leadership and assistance from their parents and other adults: Fred Livingston and Kate Yagen (assistant scoutmasters), Jeannie Karl, Lyle Weaver, Vian Selvanathan, and Kevin Smith.

Scouts who participated and assisted in the second phase of the project included: Colin Tsai, Marah Alomari (and sister Happy), Nick Gellrich, Hayden Htun, Jiachen Huo, Lydia Rak, and Ellie Kearns, with additional adult leadership and assistance.

Catheryne and Alex Nicholson said the rewards for doing the work in the park are lessons in leadership and in education about the various plants and wildlife that the park has to offer.

After the planter boxes were completed, a group of Friends of Edgewood volunteers filled them with planting soil. A perimeter fence was constructed to protect the area from hungry wildlife. Friends of Edgewood had a dedication ceremony for the new planter box area at the Annual Meeting in October. Next, the planter boxes will be seeded for the 2023 growing season.

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Hips and Prickles: What to Notice

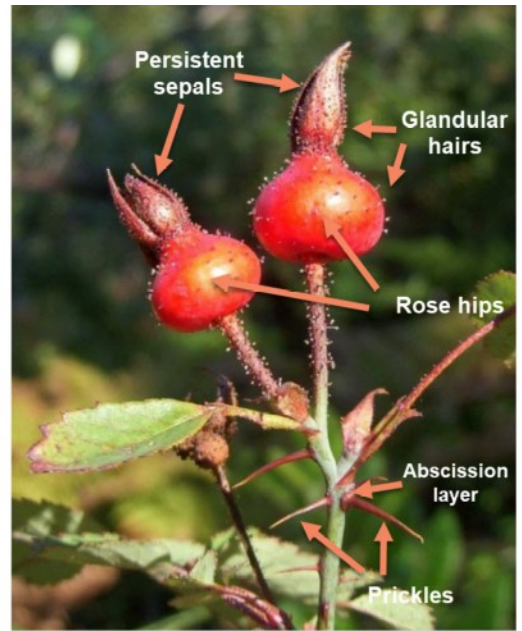
by Bruce Homer-Smith

Fall and winter give a new look to Edgewood's three native roses. Flowers and leaves drop to the ground, leaving prickly branches and rose hips. Here are a few things to look for as you find them on your winter walks.

Ground rose grows low to the ground, just north of the Live Oak trail. Even without leaves and flowers, it is easy to recognize with its scarlet rose hips heavily decorated with glandular-tipped hairs. Slender, straight prickles are widely spaced along the stem.

Prickles grow from just under the epidermis. Dividing and expanding cells push the skin out. There are no vasculcs in the prickle since it doesn't need to support further growth. Ground rose prickles are just cells that divide and grow equally over time, creating a straight and narrow shape. Once formed, the new growth adds lignin to the cell walls, making them hard. A corky abscission layer forms at the base of the prickle, similar to what happens to deciduous leaves in the fall, preparing the prickle to fall off without damaging the stem if an animal runs into it.

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Ground Rose (*Rosa spithamea*) Photo © Neal Kramer All rights reserved.

Scouts *continued from page 4*



Thank you ...

Many thanks go to these young scouts for their contributions to the park and the community. Thanks also to Stu Smith for enlisting the Scouts' help and coordinating the project.

Thank you to Ken and Dee Himes for the donation that funded the new construction project for Edgewood Farms, along with additional donations from San Mateo County Parks, the San Mateo County Parks Foundation, and Friends of Edgewood, who also contributed to the expenses for the potting mix and fencing.



Edgewood Farms has had 13 raised planter beds at a site in the Day Camp area since 2020. The farm now has beds in both sunny and shady areas of the preserve. The purpose of the beds is to grow native plants and then harvest the seeds for reseeding selected areas in the park, more specifically in HMP (hydro-mechanical pulverization) areas.

By the way ...

FoE volunteers Perry McCarty and John Caffall met with the Troop 301 team at the project site where they got to see the team in action. Perry and John found out that this is not the only service project the scouts have contributed to the preserve. The troop has also been active in trail maintenance and making sure

that areas where visitors have wandered off the designated trail are blocked by appropriate methods using brambles or poison oak to discourage passage.

Another previous troop activity was pulling French broom, a non-native, invasive species, from various park locations. It was funny to hear that one Troop 301 Patrol group named themselves "French Broom," and the patrol chant they shout is, "You can never get rid of us!"

Hips and Prickles *continued from page 5*

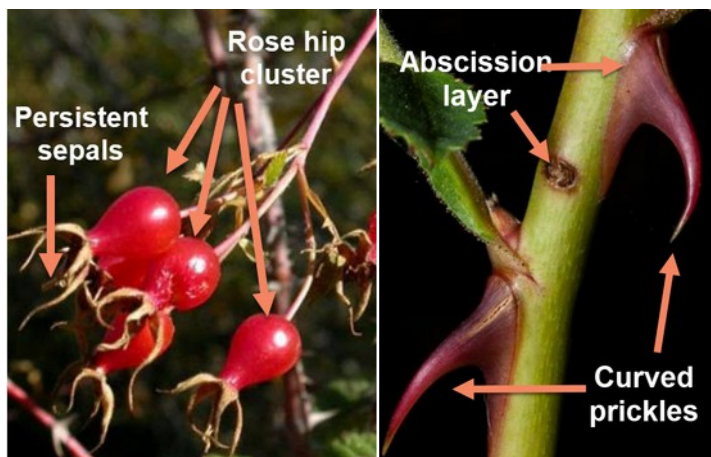


Wood Rose (*Rosa gymnocarpa*) Photos © Neal Kramer All rights reserved

Wood rose grows taller than the ground rose, to about four or five feet tall, on slender, generally erect stems. You can find it higher up the Live Oak trail. Even without leaves and flowers, it is easy to identify. Its rose hips are small, less than a half-inch across, and they have no persistent leafy sepals. Also, straight prickles grow densely along the branches.

California rose grows in a tangled thicket to six feet tall. You'll find it along the Sylvan trail. Rose hips gather in clusters at the end of branches. They have persistent sepals, like the ground rose. California rose prickles are more substantial than those of the roses discussed above. Cells at the top of the prickle divide more and grow longer, creating a curved shape. Not all California rose prickles grow to this size and shape, but you'll notice ones that do.

In the picture below, notice the corky, brown abscission layer left by a leaf that fell off. This is called a leaf scar, and protects the branch from infection from the outside. Leaf scars vary in shape between species and are useful in



California Rose (*Rosa californica*) Photo (L) by Keir Morse CC BY NC SA 3.0; Photo (R) by Wilde Legard CC BY NC SA 3.0

distinguishing between deciduous plants that have lost their leaves or prickles.

Rose Hips

Red rose hips are a late development of a plant part that started out life as a green hypanthium, acting as a cup-like base for the flower.

After pollination, the hypanthium takes on a new role, acting now as a fruit cover for the developing seeds and presenting itself as a scarlet red rose hip.



California Wild Rose (*Rosa californica*) Photo by Zoya Akulova-Barlow CC BY NC 3.0

Next time you see these roses, please look for additional winter features such as skin color, texture or growths, bud scar variations, thorn patterns, etc. If you discover something, please let me know at bruce@plantid.net.

Chickpea Chocolate Chip Cookies

from the book *nourish* by Dr. Reshma Shah

- 1 15 ounce can of chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 1/2 cup maple syrup
- 1/2 cup peanut butter (feel free to sub a different nut butter)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup rolled oats
- 1/2 cup walnuts, chopped
- 1/2 cup almond flour
- 1/4 cup chia seeds
- 1/4 cup hemp seeds
- 1 to 2 cups chocolate chips or raisins
(depending on how chocolatey you want them!)

Preheat the oven to 350° F.

In a food processor, puree the chickpeas with the maple syrup, peanut butter, and vanilla until smooth. Empty the puree into a medium sized mixing bowl. Without bothering to clean out the food processor, pulse the oats until they are coarse (somewhere between whole oats and oat flour). Add the oats and remaining ingredients to the bowl. Mix until combined.

Using an ice cream scooper, place the dough on a parchment lined baking sheet, making 12 large or roughly 18–20 smaller cookies. Gently press down to flatten. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes for larger cookies (and 8 to 10 for smaller) until cooked through and slightly golden. ... [If you like your cookies soft,] take them out early. If you leave them in too long, they tend to dry out.

Bluebirds *continued from page 1*

In these crazy times of droughts, fires, and uncertainty in all aspects of life, we bluebird volunteers found hope and solace in the spunk and spirit shown by the bluebirds in our park. We hope they will spark some peace and joy in your lives too as you walk in our beautiful (if dry and brown) park. It's hard to be sad or anxious when you see beautiful bluebirds flitting, fluttering, and flying.



Baby birds close to fledging. *Photo by Diane Campbell*

Team Bluebird can always use a few more volunteers. We need regular and substitute monitors to check boxes weekly from mid-February through June. No experience needed. On-the-job training provided, subject to County Parks guidelines for next spring. Monitoring nest boxes is intense work, but it is highly rewarding and fun! If you would like to find out more, please contact Frances Morse at info@FriendsofEdgewood.org.

Western Bluebird Ten-Year Nest Box Results

Year	Nests	Eggs	Hatchlings	Fledglings (Yield)
2022	18	82	75 (91%)	59 (72%)
2021	13	60	55 (92%)	41 (68%)
2020	12	60	47 (78%)	47 (78%)
2019	12	44	38 (86%)	29 (66%)
2018	9	43	42 (98%)	41 (95%)
2017	11	41	28 (68%)	16 (39%)
2016	9	40	34 (85%)	28 (70%)
2015	17	74	59 (80%)	54 (73%)
2014	15	74	63 (85%)	52 (70%)
2013	17	79	64 (81%)	50 (63%)

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JOIN or RENEW your membership ONLINE or by MAIL:

ONLINE: foew.org/donate

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Please make me a Sustaining Member and charge my credit card \$_____ each month. (\$5 minimum)

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Bill and Jean Lane Education Center at Edgewood Park and Natural Preserve

Open Saturdays and Sundays, 10 a.m.–2 p.m. See below
for expanded hours beginning in January and February.

To learn more about Friends of Edgewood, visit our
website at foew.org, call us toll-free at (1-866)
GO-EDGEWOOD, or email us info@friendsofedgeswood.org.



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- The Bill and Jean Lane Education Center is open Saturdays and Sundays, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Beginning in January, the Ed Center will be open 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Wednesdays in addition to 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on weekends.
- Beginning in February, weekend hours will be extended, 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays.
- Masking indoors may be required. Please comply with posted signs.
- Find volunteer opportunities at foew.org.
- Help support Friends of Edgewood by visiting the Edgewood store in the Ed Center or online at foew.org/shop.

The Edgewood EXPLORER is published quarterly by Friends of Edgewood Natural Preserve, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving and restoring Edgewood and educating the public about its treasures. Friends of Edgewood Board of Directors: Laurie Alexander, Sandy Bernhard, Nancy Enzinger, Peter Ingram (president), Kathy Korbholz, Linda Leong, Angela Mallett, Perry McCarty, Barrie Moore. The newsletter is edited by Michele W. Conway and supported by contributions from many Friends.