

**PROTECTING THE RARE, ENDANGERED AND UNUSUAL PLANTS OF SAUSAL CREEK
WATERSHED
December 16, 2022**

In the spring of 2022, Friends of Sausal Creek (FOSC) was awarded a \$5,000 grant from the Alameda County Fish and Game Commission. Part of this funding supported our organization's ongoing work to ensure the survival of the endangered pallid manzanita (*Arctostaphylos pallida*) within the Sausal Creek watershed. Additionally, with this grant, FOSC has expanded a project to relocate, update inventories, and protect other precious, rare, and locally uncommon plant populations in the watershed. In addition to a more thorough knowledge of sensitive plant populations, this inventory and monitoring project will make us better stewards of the Sausal Creek Watershed through more focused conservation, restoration, and public education efforts.



Our dedicated volunteer crew monitors and clears invasive species around the pallid manzanitas

This grant has allowed FOSC to continue and expand its work to support endangered, rare, and locally uncommon plant species and engage dozens of community members:

- **Significant outcomes:** Through the ongoing efforts of FOSC volunteers and staff noted below, we have pushed back invasive vegetation and created buffer zones around the pallids. **The CSSC population of over 120 seedlings continues to thrive, and nearly 50% of the population now produces fruit.** Of fruiting individuals, more than half fruited for the first time this year. This is an amazing accomplishment, as only one of the original pallid manzanita population remains.
- Expert volunteers assisted in two pallid seedling monitoring workdays (5/27/2022 and 5/30/2022) at the Chabot Space and Science Center (CSSC) pallid manzanita colony. This monitoring continues to ensure quality collections of pallid manzanita data. The monitoring events included some education and training for first time volunteers. Utilizing this data, FOSC is working on a report for the CDFW of the CSSC pallid population's seedling progress.

- In addition to monitoring workdays, FOSC led four invasive plant removal workdays at the CSSC (12 volunteers, 41 hours). Volunteers as well as staff members worked to remove 35 green waste bags of encroaching invasive plants from around pallid manzanita seedlings.
- With Eagle Scout assistance, temporary fencing around the Chabot pallid population was replaced by protective wooden split rail fencing. FOSC also installed additional fencing around 12 vulnerable pallids to protect them from foot traffic and any accidental damage from city brush clearing services.
- FOSC staff and volunteers participated in the SOD Blitz this spring, where we gathered bay leaves adjacent to pallid populations for phytophthora testing. These samples tested negative for phytophthora, and we continue our strict phytosanitation practices to protect these plants.
- With the Chabot pallid population flourishing, FOSC staff will focus substantial energy on the Big Trees population in 2023. This effort will include a full census and updated mapping of the pallids found there, as well as limbing up overstory trees and removal of encroaching invasive plants. Another Eagle Scout Project is planned for Spring of 2023, to decommission social trails within the Big Trees Pallid Population and remove adjacent invasive species.
- Our native plant nursery has ramped up production of numerous rare and unusual species. This year, we propagated 1,825 individuals from 32 species on the East Bay CNPS Rare and plants watch list. We also propagated 398 plants from 8 additional species that are rare in our watershed, to preserve their unique genetic lines.
- FOSC is consolidating 20 years' worth of rare plant data, and has created an internal database in addition to contributing to Calflora's public database. This step has been vital for monitoring and protecting rare and unusual plant populations, and educating the public about the importance and uniqueness of their local parks.



Meadow rue seeds ripening, which we later collected. Meadow rue is very rare in our watershed, and this was the first time we were able to collect seeds for future propagation.



Rosa spithamea, on the EBCNPS Rare Plant Watch List, blooming in our nursery.

FOSC's continued efforts have been made possible through the generous funding of the Alameda County Fish and Game Commission. We are grateful for the support of this important restoration and public education work as we strive to protect our watershed's rare and unusual plant populations.