



## Garden Manager at Hallberg Butterfly Gardens

by Evan Peterman

On a tour of the Butterfly Gardens a few years ago, my wife Meghan and I met Louise Hallberg. She greeted us at the side door of her house as caterpillars crawled over her hands. She explained, "I'm placing them on fresh milkweed branches, it's hard to keep up." Meeting Louise and going on a tour left us feeling like we discovered something unique and special, a feeling many experience when visiting the Gardens. At the time I had no idea I'd have the opportunity to help continue her legacy, and bring the experience of visiting her garden to others.

Meghan and I moved into Louise's house in the Fall of 2017 as caretakers of the property. In April 2018 we welcomed our daughter Luna into the world. Meghan works for the Gardens organizing tours, docents, outreach, Lepidoptera rearing, and much more. In December of 2018 I was hired part time as the garden manager.

A bit about my background. I gained a strong appreciation for nature from eighteen years of commercial fishing with my family in Southeast Alaska, where I spent summers learning about marine life and exploring remote islands. During the off-season I obtained a degree in architectural engineering. After two years of working in an office, I knew I needed to be out in the elements interacting with natural systems. After a couple years working internships in California and abroad, I gained a position as vineyard and small farm manager at a local winery in Sebastopol which I held for

six years. We farmed with organic and biodynamic practices, and promoted diversity on the farm by planting hedgerows of native species in addition to on-site habitat restoration.

I hope to not only maintain the Gardens but bring in more life and energy while respecting the well established wildlife habitat. We're using the approach of "tending the wild," which involves pruning a portion of overgrown habitat where trees and blackberries have taken over. The idea is to support a dynamic and diverse environment to encourage a wide variety of Lepidoptera species as well as other wildlife. This process also helps us achieve our fire prevention goals. In addition, we'll create an overall garden plan which divides the gardens into regions based on sun exposure, drainage, soil type, and other factors allowing us to plant appropriate native species when possible.

Last fall with the help of the local Scout troop we installed a shade structure to house plants propagated to sell at our Open Gardens event. I plan to increase the propagation efforts here in the following years. A big part of my job will be working with volunteers. We hope to add more people to our dedicated core group of volunteers and docents who have always been essential to the survival of the Gardens. I'm also working this



The Peterman Family. (left to right) Luna, Meghan and Evan

season with Dale Smith, a dedicated intern from SRJC, who has helped plan our large hillside garden. I am grateful for the opportunity to spend my days on Louise's unique property where I learn something new every day. Come visit us!

**22nd Open  
Gardens Day  
Celebration**  
Sunday, June 23th  
10:00am to 4:00pm



# A Sign for the Times

by Gay Bishop Brorstrom

The welcome sign at the Gardens, installed in 2003, was faded from exposure to the elements over the years. We discussed having it upgraded but hadn't as yet contacted anyone about doing the work.

Then, a surprising, serendipitous thing happened.

"In 2018," writes local artist Ricky Watts, "after dinner at The Underwood with my wife, we took the scenic way home, marveling at how cute the houses are in Graton. I looked over at this old sign next to a corner stop sign and felt chills run up my arms.

"I remembered working on the sign

The Gardens wishes to thank this talented artist and friend of the Gardens for his fond memories and fine work.

with my grandfather, Arthur Sell. I'd moved back from college in 2002. It was a 'what to do next?' moment in my life. I needed a space to be creative—that wasn't my old bedroom in my parents' house. One day, I was explaining this to my grandfather, and he offered a corner of his workshop to me. Arthur was a retired general contractor and woodworker. He had this beautiful workshop behind his house, where he spent most of his time. Always tinkering on a broken tool or building something out of wood, he stayed busy into his 90s.

"As I started working on my own art projects there, we got to spend time together that I will cherish forever. We shared stories, bounced ideas around and helped each other out as best we could. One day, he put a butterfly wood cutout on my desk with a magazine clipping of

a (Pipevine) Swallowtail butterfly and asked if I could paint his cutout to look like the magazine clipping. I obliged and spent a few hours bringing the wooden butterfly to life. I wasn't sure what the butterfly was for and never thought to ask. He mentioned building a sign for a butterfly garden but I didn't fully grasp the idea. In fact, I never thought about the sign after it left his wood shop.

"Arthur passed away a few years later and I eventually took over his workshop. I continue to use it as my art studio.

"Now, there was my butterfly, after so many years, mounted to a sign that looked very much like something Arthur would have built. Could it be our sign was still standing? I stopped and took a photo and posted the image to social media.

"A few days later, I got a message from Meghan at the Hallberg Butterfly Gardens, asking if I'd be interested in repairing the sign. The sign itself was still solid, but the lettering was fading and dirty. Jumping at the opportunity, I carved out a week in my schedule. The Hallberg sign now has a fresh coat of paint and I had the privilege to honor my grandfather one more time."

Ricky remembered the butterfly had been his first commissioned artwork—Grandfather Arthur paid him \$20.

Today he is a renowned visual artist whose abstract works of liquid shapes and psychedelic color movement can be found in large-scale murals on public art projects walls and intimate works on



Arthur Sell and grandson, Ricky Watts



canvas in galleries throughout the United States. His commission list includes pieces for major technology, fashion and automotive companies. He works out of his Northern California studio. For more information check out his website at [www.rickywatts.com/murals](http://www.rickywatts.com/murals)

# Insect Conservation

by Meghan Peterman

With a flood of articles about the decline of worldwide insect populations in the news this past year, the attention to invertebrate conservation is on the rise. While current research and information leave much room for speculation, there are productive steps we can all take to support these keystone animals.

Many conservation projects have historically focused on large connected land masses. According to a recent article published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, this approach may not best accommodate species of concern and biodiversity. A large habitat may not have complete representative populations of all local species. Many fragmented habitats hold space for some of the last of a certain population and can act as a necessary land bridge to connect larger habitats. They also provide “edge habitats” which are an

important component where biodiversity often thrives. How is this relevant for participating in supporting the biodiversity of your neighborhood?

It is a reminder that little steps go a long way. We can help connect the path of otherwise disconnected habitats both large and small by planting native species of host and nectar plants in backyards or other small open spaces. By simply letting a space stay open and “wild,” we can collectively contribute to the overall needs to support local insect populations. It doesn’t take a lot of space to support a wealth of little lives (some insects spend their entire life on a single seed).

For more information on this topic or to research native plants of your area, check out the following references:

*‘Global synthesis of conservation studies reveals the importance of small habitat patches for biodiversity’ – pnas.org*



A small Carpenter bee (*Ceratina* sp) overwintering in a dried stalk of goldenrod. Photo by Meghan Peterman

*Planting for Pollinators – In Your Backyard and Beyond’ – xerces.org*

*‘Habitat Gardening’ cnps.org*

*‘What Grows Here’ https://www.calflora.org/entry/wgh.html*

Art Shapiro - <http://butterfly.ucdavis.edu/>



Sharon Martinelli welcoming guests at the 2018 Open Gardens Celebration

\*\*All Open Garden photos were taken by Leah Brorstrom\*\*

# Helpful Spiders in Your Garden

by Emily Robinson

Walk around your garden on a sunny spring day and you might see bees, butterflies, beetles, maybe even a spider; perhaps a jumping spider running across a fence; a crab spider sitting on a flower; or an orb weaver spinning a web among tree branches. Though spiders bear an undeserved poor reputation, they play a crucial role in eco system stability. Because they're so numerous, spiders are an important food source for birds and other consumers. Without spiders, animal populations would experience food scarcity and stress. Spiders provide many tangible benefits to the humans. They offer valuable pest control services by eating flies, mosquitoes, and other insects that plague humans, harm crops and spread disease.

While there's no shortage of fear-mongering about spiders in the media, the truth is very few spiders pose any risk to humans. Even the notorious western black widow, which inhabits Sonoma County, has not been responsible for a human death in decades. Spiders are shy and nervous. They prefer to run from humans and bite only when threatened. By respecting spiders' space and letting them

be, humans and spiders can live quite harmoniously together. If you see a spider in your garden, remember all the benefits they provide; keeping pests at bay and providing sustenance for other critters. We enjoy finding new spiders at the Hallberg Butterfly Gardens and discovering the vast biodiversity of our area. How many different spiders can you find in your garden?



Emily Robinson is an artist and wildlife enthusiast who lives in Sebastopol. She especially loves spiders and finding as many as she can at HBG! She has been volunteering at HBG since 2018, leading tours and helping with various design, education, and marketing projects.



A jumping spider (*Colonus hesperus*) awaits a meal on the information kiosk at Hallberg Butterfly Gardens

Activity Statistics 2017				
(Number of guests shown in parentheses)				
Month	Total Tours	Groups	Children's Tours	Open Gardens
JAN				
FEB				
MAR				
APR	14	10 (50)	4 (106)	
MAY	37	23 (85)	14 (439)	
JUN	12	11 (96)	1 (30)	(582)
JUL	16	14 (77)		
AUG	18	18 (90)		
SEP	12	12 (53)		
OCT	11	4 (10)		
NOV	1	11(55)		
DEC				
Totals	114	95	19	
Total Guests	(1625)	(468)	(575)	(582)

HBG Garden Tours 1999 to 2017		
Year	Visitors	School/Children's Tours
2018	1,625	575
2017	2,043	503
2016	1,814	563
2015	1,904	484
2014	1,407	465
2013	1,891	417
2012	2,120	424
2011	2,358	489
2010	2,503	494
2009	1,884	679
2008	2,020	538
2007	1,620	493
2006	1,539	596
2005	1,573	818
2004	1,743	927
2003	1,872	912
2002	2,264	902
2001	3,239	1,290
2000	2,464	822
1999	2,505	484
Total	40,388	12,875



Hallberg board president and former SF botanical Garden Curator, Don Mahoney, teaching a class about habitat gardening for butterflies

# Teach and Learn Twice

by Meghan Peterman

Hallberg’s has long been a resource for learning about wildlife and habitat gardening. After successfully presenting a few trial classes last year, including a ‘Garden for Butterflies’ class with Don Mahoney, we are now offering regular classes and workshops during the tour season. Classes include a wide range of interests from tending to local butterflies with Don Mahoney and Meghan Peterman to learning about the intriguing life of spiders with Emily Robinson.

Our goal is to offer one class a month, usually on the last Saturday of the month. We are excited to have naturalist, Marley Peifer join our team of teachers with his Nature Journaling class in May. Students will be encouraged to notice, understand, and remember more of the vibrant world around them.

For the first time, we’ll celebrate the other Lepidoptera we love at Hallberg: moths! During ‘Moth Week’ in July, we’ll have an evening walk and other activities to be announced. Stay tuned!

For current details and dates of all classes, please follow our Facebook page or email [info@hallbergbutterflygardens.org](mailto:info@hallbergbutterflygardens.org).



Docent Maureen Pape talking to guests about wildlife habitats in the Gardens

Nature journaling teacher, Marley Peifer, closely observing Lupine in Santa Barbara County.



# Rhythm of the Seasons

Tendrils reach high and wide in the sun's light. Flower blooms are pollinated then slowly coil as they release moisture and surrender their seeds to the earth. As Winter dormancy takes over, all must wait until Spring returns to wake again. We see this pattern every year in our gardens mirroring our own human activities. This is especially observed at Hallberg's with its more than 100 year history. This year with Spring's arrival, the Pipevine Theater and tour signs have been renewed using old repurposed wood and other resources found in the Hallberg barn. Volunteer, Emily Robinson, renewed our kiosk with a lovely pipevine swallowtail butterfly painting and its iconic host plant. At the bottom of our hillside garden, we are establishing a large space to provide the Monarchs with native milkweed.

This site will be monitored by members of Pollinator Partnership in a research project (Monarch Wings Across California) studying the Monarchs phenology throughout our state.

We hope as you visit the gardens this year, you will observe and enjoy the continuing cycle of materials and caring hands that share a timeless story and make this spot a welcoming place to visit.

'Habitat in progress' sign marking the area in the Gardens we will be planting native milkweed for Pollinator Partnership's Monarch Research project



Adults and children alike enjoying the kids craft activities organized by volunteer Kathy Oetinger



Climbing rose framing the entrance to the Hallberg house

At right, one of our new signs in the garden made with repurposed wood from the Hallberg property.



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Baby Luna Peterman at her first Open Gardens happily being entertained by Maureen Pape.

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- I wish to become a Friend of the Gardens
- I wish to renew my Friendship
  - \$250 Pipevine Swallowtail
  - \$150 West Coast Lady
  - \$100 Monarch
  - \$50 Buckeye
  - \$25 Woodland Skipper
  - \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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Hallberg Butterfly Gardens

8687 Oak Grove Road  
Sebastopol, CA 95472

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• Gay Bishop Brorstrom • Kathy Oetinger  
DESIGN: Oetinger Design

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**The Gardens  
are open April - October  
by appointment only.**

Wednesday - Friday for schools  
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Call 707•83•3420 or email  
[info@hallbergbutterflygardens.org](mailto:info@hallbergbutterflygardens.org)

*Hallberg Butterfly Gardens*

**Thank You!**

Private donations are our only significant source of funds to purchase the plants, materials, and labor that create the Hallberg Butterfly Gardens. The individuals and organizations on page 7 helped sustain our nonprofit during this past year, although all contributors (past, present, and future) are deeply appreciated!

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at Hallberg Butterfly Gardens

**Sunday, June 23rd, 2019**  
10am to 4pm • 8687 Oak Grove Ave, Graton

Bird and butterfly sightings, children's activities, wildflower display, handcrafted items and books for sale

**Free, no reservations needed**  
Limited wheelchair access • Please no smoking or pets  
[www.hallbergbutterflygardens.org](http://www.hallbergbutterflygardens.org)