

Fourth Annual Weed & Wildflower Show Blooms with Record Crowd

Over 300 visitors enjoyed a sunny springtime afternoon at the Ventura County Agriculture Museum in Santa Paula on Saturday, April 12. The Ventura County Weed and Wildflower Show offered beauty, wonder, and education about our local native plants, weed invaders, and local conservation efforts.

The show is a collaborative effort between Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner/Weights and Measures (VC ACWM), Ventura County Weed Management Area, California Native Plant Society Channel Islands Chapter (CI-CNPS), University of California Cooperative Extension – Ventura (UCCE-Ven), Ventura County Museum, UCCE-Ven/Master Gardeners (MGs), Santa Monica Mountains (SAMO) Fund, Channel Islands Restoration, Ojai Valley Land Conservancy, Ventura Land Trust, and several other supporting conservation agencies, groups, and individuals.

The cool spring, late rains, and a show that was held a week earlier than usual portended to be challenging with regard to the number of flowering weeds and wildflowers available for the event. It was a surprise that a wide variety and approximately the same number of plants as past years were on display. Several new species that had not been gathered in prior years made their way to the display.

CI-CNPS held a native plant sale outside the museum entry. UCCE-Ven/MGs gave tours, had gardening exhibits for native, horticultural, and edible plants in the museum garden, along with a beneficial insects and pollinators table.

This year, event organizers invited several local groups to conduct outreach through tables and exhibits. Twelve participated indoors and out.

Keynote speaker was Chumash elder Julie Tumamait-Stenslie, who is also a board director for the Ventura County Museum. Julie spoke about many topics, including traditional uses of native plants as medicine, food, and daily life, as well as the relationship and connectedness of people and plants.

Her talk was followed by a showing of the short documentary *Saging the World*. This film focuses on white sage, its significance in tribal culture, and illicit harvesting in the wild for the global commercial market. After the film, SAMO Fund native plant and restoration nursery manager, Antonio Sánchez, and Tumamait-Stenslie discussed the film, concerns about plant harvest in the wild, and related topics during a dialogue circle with the audience.

Camarillo-based Growing Works Nursery Program Manager, Jenn Rodriguez, was the third presenter. She gave an overview of the nursery, discussed the multiple benefits of plant-human interactions, and their unique business model that uses interfacing with plants as a therapeutic method for members of its staff who are in recovery.

Thanks to the numerous volunteers, organizations and agencies whose collective hard work always make the Ventura County Weed and Wildflower Show an event replete in beauty, community, and learning.



Visitors view 2025 weed and wildflower display.

Credit: Melonie Morgan – Ventura County Agriculture Commissioner/Weights and Measures (VC ACWM).



Keynote speaker Julie Tumamait-Stenslie.

Credit: Melonie Morgan – VC ACWM.



University of California – Ventura Master Gardeners museum garden.

Credit: Melonie Morgan – VC ACWM.



University of California – Ventura Master Gardeners/Invasive & Beneficial Pests Outreach Group.

Credit: Melonie Morgan – VC ACWM.



Santa Monica Mountains Fund nursery manager Antonio Sánchez engages with visitor.

Credit: Melonie Morgan – VC ACWM.