CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
ORANGE COUNTY CHAPTER

Invasive Update
24 May 2017

Hypericum canariense, Canary Island St. John's Wort detected in Laguna Beach

On May 18, 2017 Dr. Peter Bryant, professor of Biology at UCI, reported a possible sighting of *Hypericum canariense* – Canary Island St. John's Wort - in Laguna Canyon. A couple of hours later it was confirmed.

Detection & Occurrence Details

Plants appearing to be *Hypericum canariense* – Canary Island St. John's Wort - were detected growing behind a business in the lower portion of Laguna Canyon on May 18, 2017 by Dr. Peter Bryant. Images of the plants were sent to the OC CNPS Emergent Invasive Plant Management Program.

Approximately two hours later OC CNPS visited the site. Plants were found and confirmed by OC CNPS over a gross area of approximately 50 acres and stretching over a distance of nearly a mile of the canyon. Plant density is estimated at 1-5% of the vegetative cover, with the net cover for the species at .5 acre. The colony was roughly mapped from vantage points along Laguna Canyon Road. Plants are well established, mature and currently in full flower; their golden yellow flowers making them easy to distinguish among the contrasting coastal sage scrub plant community.

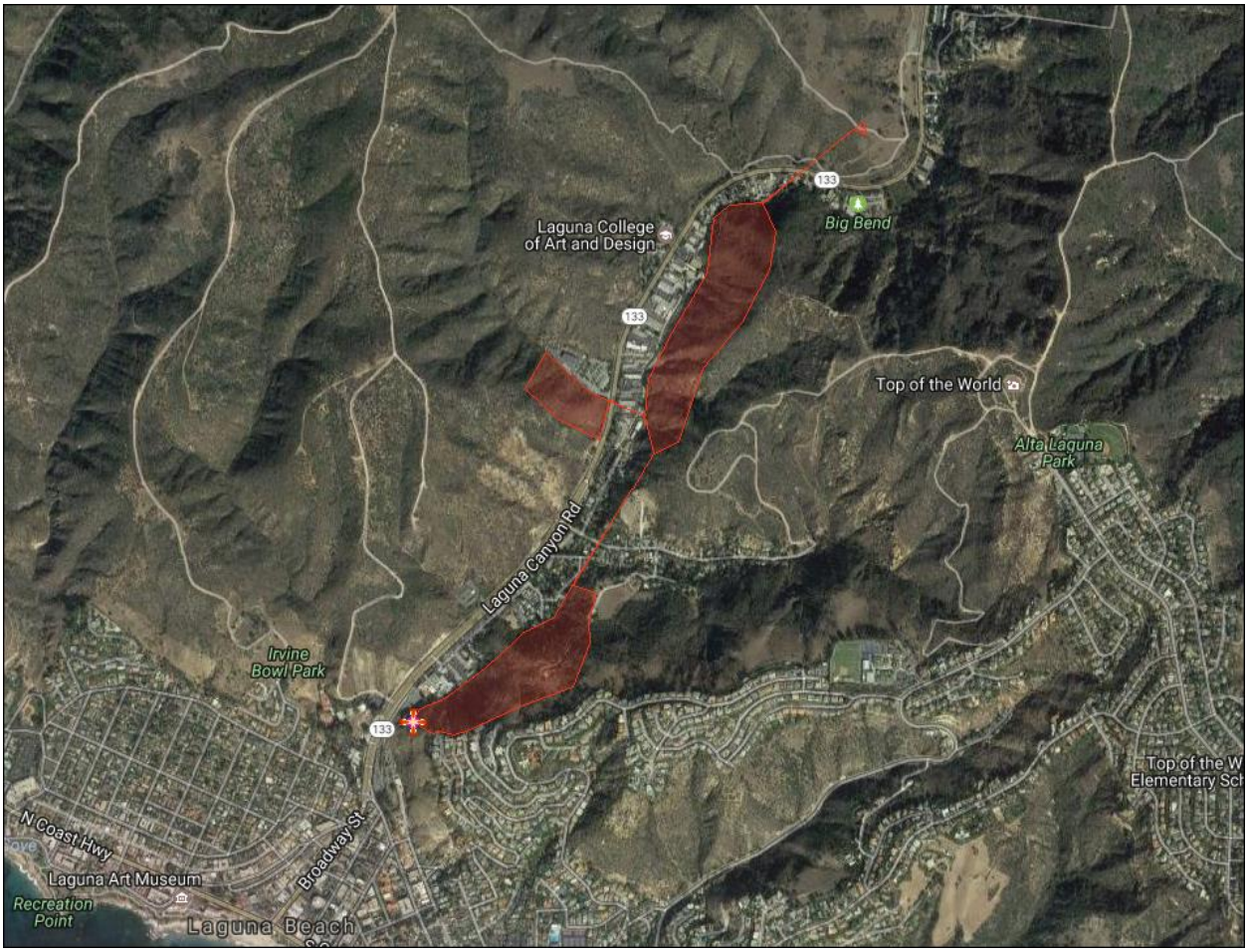
Plants are growing in several dense colonies, but with numerous individuals also scattered through the native vegetation. Plants were observed growing on the North facing slopes of the canyon, ranging from near the canyon bottom to near the ridgetop. It is uncertain whether plants have overtopped the ridge and are also on the South facing slope. Plants are growing in the midst of what appears to be an otherwise intact native plant community, not around the disturbed margins, as is common with many opportunistic invasive plant species.

Between 200-500 plants may be present, but because the species is rhizomatous some of these clusters may be clonal colonies, not unique plants. Most plants appear to be growing on City of Laguna Beach property, with smaller numbers probably also present on County of Orange property (Aliso & Wood Canyons Park) and adjacent private property. Plants are also present within the city's fueld modification zone, so Laguna Beach Fire will have a role as well.

This occurrence was posted to Calflora with a polygon and other details (http://www.calflora.org/cgi-bin/noccdetail.cgi?seq_num=po36358).

At the May 24 Santa Ana River/OC Weed Management Area (SAROCWMA) meeting it was noted by the OC Coastal Natural Communities Coalition that they did know of a portion of this infestation as early as about three years ago. This was on the opposite side of Laguna Canyon Road, just SW of the Stage 2 parking area. The NCC has done some management of the plant in this area during the past two years. Finally, OC Parks reported a single plant along Big Bend Trail, also on the West side of the canyon.

Laguna Canyon infestation 5-18-2017 and updated 5-24-2017:

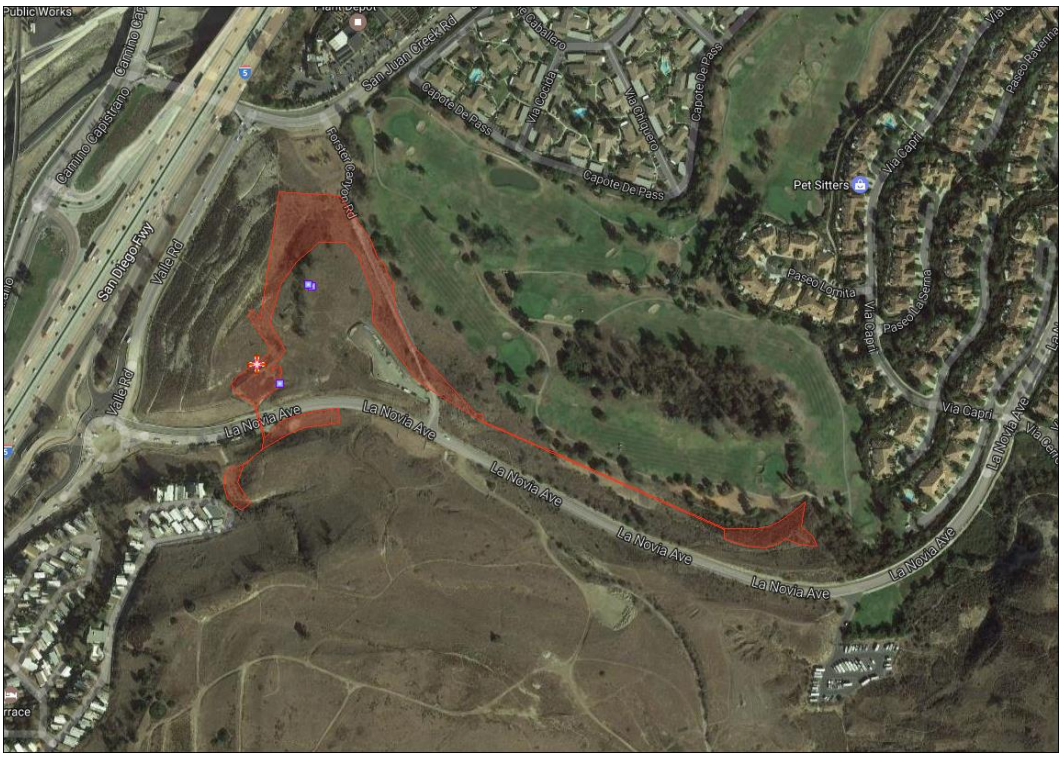


Other Orange County Occurrences

San Juan Capistrano

Located on what appears to be private property. This colony has been present since at least the 1990's and probably earlier, with little management. The colony is expanding.

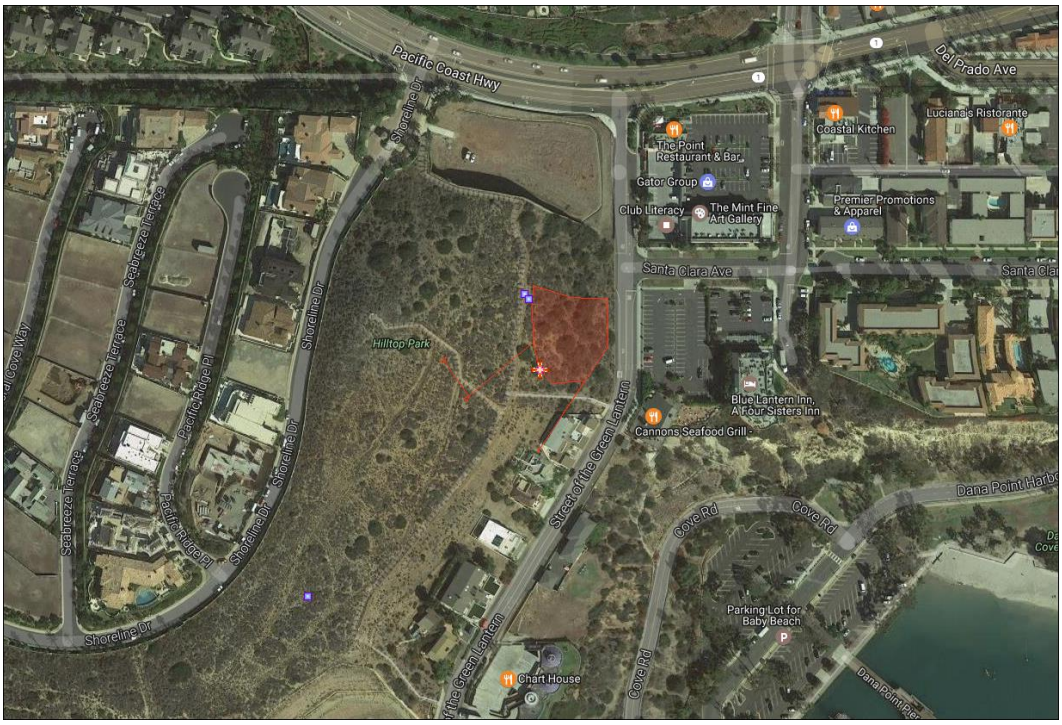
Gross area estimate: 16,856 sq. meters Percent cover: 20-25% Net cover estimate: 4,406 sq. meters



Dana Point Headlands

This colony dates to at least the mid 1980's when it was locally abundant and covered a larger area. Management of the colony began approx. 2004-2006 and has resulted in dramatic reductions in gross area and cover. A few young plants are persisting into May 2017. The polygon below shows the gross extent of the current infestation.

Gross area estimate: 1,971 sq. meters Percent cover: 1-5% Net plant cover estimate: 20 sq. meters



Species Overview

Hypericum canariense is recognized as an invasive plant species by The California Invasive Plant Council with a *Moderate* Rating and an *Alert* status. It is also one of 16 plants currently listed as *Emergent* in Orange County by the OC CNPS Invasive Species Committee. It is included in the CDFA Noxious Weed List.

In California this species is at present lightly established, its infestations are widely scattered. In Orange County, its infestations are described above.

Ecological Concern

Hypericum canariense is a problematic invasive plant. Its rhizomatous growth habit makes mechanical control of mature plants difficult. In this infestation it is growing on steep terrain, which will create access problems. Ecologically, from observations of plants at this site, as well as San Juan Capistrano and Dana Point, this species appears to readily invade intact native plant communities. Its large size, fast growth and biomass crowds out native vegetation and dense invasive monocultures establish.

Additionally, the location of this infestation is very near to known colonies of the US and CA Threatened plant species *Dudleya stolonifera* – Laguna Beach live-forever. Plants are growing within approximately 200-300 meters of this listed species. Laguna Canyon is one of few remaining significant coastal canyons in the Orange County area.

Additional Resources
Cal-IPC Plant Assessment: http://cal-ipc.org/paf/site/paf/359
Cal-IPC ID Card: http://cal-ipc.org/species_id_cards/Hypericum_canariense_Cal-IPC.pdf
OC CNPS Plant Profile: http://occnps.org/PDF/HYS-Hypericum-canariense.pdf
Article from No. CA: http://www.hmbreview.com/news/noxious-weed-threatens-native-species/article_c6a8ce68-129b-5fe2-b3eb-11f5f4da36b4.html

Many questions need to be answered?
Should other be included in communications about this issue?
Where does this rate among the affected land managers invasive plant priorities?
What are the management options? Is the objective management or eradication?

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