



China Creek Update

Warren Shaw

We once again dodged the bullet at our January workday. The weather was warm and dry as we worked on spreading mulch on the trail, although shortly after quitting time the skies opened up in a deluge.

We were impressed by the variety of mushrooms and other fungi sprouting from previously spread mulch as well as the piles of mulch yet to be spread. Unfortunately, none of us were knowledgeable enough to know which among these species were native and which had simply hitchhiked with the shredded material into the park.



Recent word from park neighbor Hank Urbach is that yellow star thistle is growing fast, so we need to be preparing for our annual assault on this persistent pest.

We hope our luck with the weather will continue for the February workday and we hope you can join us to spread more mulch, evaluate YST and simply to enjoy the peace and beauty of China Creek -- with your rake and/or pitchfork in hand.

February Workday. The workday is scheduled for Saturday, February 21 from 9 -12. Rakes and pitchforks will be useful. Please join us if you can. Call me, Warren Shaw, at 855-4519, or email me at <warshaw@netptc.net> for directions or with questions or suggestions.



S.H.A.R.E.S. Card for Sequoia Chapter

The Sequoia Chapter of CNPS has received our S.H.A.R.E.S. Cards. The SHARES card is an arrangement with SaveMart and FoodMaxx stores whereby most purchases at these stores earn points. A percentage of these points becomes a donation to the Chapter.

It's easy to use. Simply present your card at checkout before you pay for your purchases. The cashier swipes the card and that's it! You pay normally using cash, debit card, etc.

If you would like a card, contact Marian Orvis at mforvet@earthlink.net or 559/226-0145.

Home & Garden Show Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, March 6, 7, and 8

We need volunteers to staff the booth at the Home & Garden Show. You'll receive free attendance in exchange for a few hours of work. Contact Marian Orvis at mforvet@earthlink.net or 559/226-0145 if you can help, even if for only an hour or two:

Friday between 11 am and 8 pm
Saturday between 10 am and 8 pm
Sunday between 10 am and 6 pm.

Windshield Wildflower Tour Saturday, March 28, 9 am

This could be the wildflower tour for you! Many people who enjoy seeing our local foothill wildflowers in the spring but are no longer able to go on a hike into the foothills or just don't care for hiking.

Come with us for an easy, relaxed look, with no walking, at the variety of spring wildflowers in the foothills. We'll meet in the Centerville area at 9:00 AM, form carpools and caravan in a loop taking us along Pine Flat Lake, over the ridge to Watts Valley where we'll stop for lunch and bathroom break.

After lunch it's back to the starting point via Watts Valley Road, through blue oak woodlands, the serpentine area of Hog Mountain, and down along Fancher Creek.

An expert amateur botanist will be available to assist in pointing out and identifying the many species of California native plants at the various stops along the way. Free.

Contact Warren or Helen Shaw at (559-855-4519 or ,warshaw@netptc.net) for details or to add your name to our list.

2-Day Symposium on Native Plant Gardening Growing Natives: Celebrating California's Beauty in Dry Times

Day 1: March 28, 2009, at the Lafayette Community Center, Lafayette
Day 2: March 29, 2009, at Regional Parks Botanic Garden, Berkeley

Learn about creating beautiful water-wise gardens with California native plants. The Saturday program includes presentations on the flora of California (by botanist and author Glenn Keator), garden design (by author Carol Bornstein), the structure of the garden (by Phil Van Soelen, from Cal Flora Nursery), herbaceous perennials and bulbs (by plantsman Roger Raiche), creating a native meadow (by David Amme), and connecting with the garden (by Mike Evans from Tree of Life Nursery). The program includes a continental breakfast, lunch, and wine reception. A selection of books will be available for purchase.

Visit www.nativeplants.org for more information or call (510) 841-8732 or email bgarden@ebparks.org

A More "Native" Look for Fresno

Joseph Oldham

For as long as I can remember the landscape of Fresno has been dominated by lush lawns, tall trees, and a general appearance that speaks of an abundance of water. In reality, this landscape has been an illusion; the truth being that water in our region is a limited commodity and that the only reason the current landscape has been maintained is through an unsustainable depletion of groundwater.

Over the past few years however, Fresno has been in a "reality check" mode, as drought conditions, groundwater depletion, population growth, and new evidence of regional climate change impacts have revealed that the current landscape standards can not be continued. Efforts are currently underway to change those landscape standards and make them compatible with the climate conditions for our area. As part of these changes, drought tolerant native plants will become much more common in the new landscape look of the city along with plant species from other dry regions that are suited to grow in our climate.

For those of us that easily recognize native plants, here are a few examples of water-wise plants that will likely become more common in Fresno.

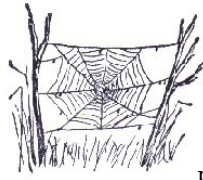
- Deer Grass (*Muhlenbergia rigens*)
- Arizona Cypress (*Cupressus arizonica*)
- Manzanita species (*Arctostaphylos* sp.)
- Toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*)
- Buckwheat species (*Erigonum* sp.)
- Western Redbud (*Cercis occidentalis*)
- Desert Willow (*Chilopsis linearis*)
- Coffeeberry (*Rhamnus californica*)

Along with the plant changes, there will be changes in irrigation and landscape designs that will encourage water conservation while discouraging run-off and lawns. "Bio-swales" or "rain gardens" will be more common along with the use of permeable surfaces in place of traditional concrete.

The new look of Fresno will not happen overnight, but it will happen and, as our climate becomes drier, the faster it happens the better! For those of us that already use drought tolerant native plants in our landscapes, we know how they can reduce water consumption and still provide a beautiful, vibrant landscape. Now our landscapes will act as examples for everyone else!

Happy gardening!

Observations



Our foothills reporter says that in the foothills Redmaids and Fiddleneck are starting to bloom. Buckeyes are leafing out, and buds are swelling on the blue oaks (though some haven't finished dropping last year's leaves). Ready or not, spring is coming!

Madeleine Mitchell writes, "When I first started my California native plant garden, a friend gave me some seeds of *Lupinus albifrons* from his garden in Yosemite Lakes. They were in a film canister and he said he wasn't sure if they were any good since they'd been in his truck, on the dash, for quite awhile. I scattered them between the few trees and perennials I'd already planted and quite a few came up and bloomed the first year. I collected the seed and tried to start them in 6 packs to share with friends and to plant at another garden I'd started at my church.

No luck at all, and trying to transplant the seedlings that came up on their own also didn't work. They have a deep taproot and must be very small to dig up without damaging it. A year or two went by and Ray Laclergue from Intermountain Nursery gave our chapter a lesson on plant propagation.

I learned that lupine seed needs to be scarified by heat! You must pour boiling water over the seed before planting. So mystery solved, the seed I'd been given had been in a clear film canister and had rolled around on Paul's dashboard for months, so had obviously been heated enough to sprout quickly for me. I still have a few plants, they live for several years and by the time they die of old age there's usually a new one nearby that's ready to take its place. They grow in a south facing bed so get the heat all day long. My plants are now budded and will bloom later this month.)"

In this winter of peculiar weather Jeanne Larson says, "Some years an unusual rainfall pattern sets off a memorable wildflower display. One I cannot forget is the year the roadsides were ablaze with Redmaids (*Calandrinia*) the size of quarters. (See *Featured Plant for more info on Redmaids*. -ed.) In my wildflower garden this year the Bicolor Lupine are overly abundant. Also abundant are the annual weeds in an area left uncultivated and dry, and with no weeds for several years. That area is today matted with annual bluegrass, Brassbuttons and a little Chickweed.

Unfortunately the large vacant lot passed on morning walks is its usual--Ripgut brome and Fiddleneck. The once natives of Owl's Clover and Bicolor Lupine are no longer in evidence. In their place are puncture vine and Russian thistle, brought in by tractor to plow for fire protection."

Like Jeanne, I watch my garden and surrounding fields from year to year. Although one reads histories and scientific writings about the ebbs and flows of rainfall, sunshine, low, and high temperatures, and soil composition, there is no substitute for the simple observation of a single patch of the Earth year after year. This is true for most types of gardening but seems especially humbling when your garden is mostly California native plants. For gardeners new to natives, one of the biggest challenges is learning to not micromanage the plants. They need to be cared for, tended, and initially protected from invasive weeds, but if you use plants suited to your ecology, they will thrive without much help from you. Then, over time as you observe, you will gain an admiration and respect for lives not so different from your own.

-Editor

CNPS 2009 Conservation Conference

Although we know of only a couple of members that were able to attend the three-day 2009 CNPS Conservation Conference, we had a look at the program and the range and quantity of topics was impressive.

Member, Laura Castro was one of the attendees and said she often found it difficult to select which of four concurrent sessions to attend. Because her work involves water, the range of sessions she attended were often related to that topic but still encompassed quite a range. From talks on vernal pools to livestock grazing effects to restoration to the effects on plants of the loss of groundwater...and more.

By all accounts this conference was a success and when next year's conference approaches, you might consider attending or recommending (and sponsoring?) a student to attend.

In 1850, Jeff Mayfield and his family first encountered the San Joaquin Valley:

"As we passed below the hills the whole plain was covered with great patches of rose, yellow, scarlet, orange, and blue. The colors did not seem to mix to any great extent. Each kind of flower liked a certain kind of soil best, and some of the patches of one color were a mile or more across...My daddy had traveled a great deal, and it was not easy to get him excited about wild flowers or pretty scenery. But he said that he would not have believed that such a place existed if he had not seen it himself."

Membership

Helen Shaw

If you require corrections or additions to your membership information, contact Helen Shaw at helshaw@netptc.net

The Sequoia chapter serves Fresno, Madera, and Kings counties.



*New Members and Membership Renewals

Fresno : Birrell, Cameron, Copp, Dulik, Gorman, Intermountain Nursery, LuValle, McCormick, Miller, *Roy
Madera : *Barnes, Freemire,
Out of Area : Meyer (Orange Co.), Yosemite Research Library (Merced Co.)

The IRS considers dues in excess of \$12.00 per year and all gifts to CNPS as tax deductible.

SEQUOIA CHAPTER OFFICERS* AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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Not Just Plants

Jane Pritchard

Encyclopedia of Life (EOL) is building Web sites for each of the 1.8 million known species. EOL now links to 7.4 million pages of books and journals via the Biodiversity Heritage Library portal (www.biodiversitylibrary.org). The Galaxy of Knowledge Web site (www.sil.si.edu) is the way into the Smithsonian Institution Libraries (20 of them) which includes reports from the 1838-42 U.S. Exploring Expedition. Major museum collections and museum libraries are digitized.

You can find interesting information about plants in old encyclopedias - like why Scrophulariaceae is called the figwort family. Wort is the Olde English word for plant. Hemorrhoids were called figs. A poultice of scroph leaves was applied to relieve the figs.

I once told a class this story. One student offered to give me a set of old encyclopedias from when he was a kid. How old were they? Published in 1982. Age is relative.

Next Newsletter: March 2009



Send newsletter corrections or suggestions to Thelma Valdez at nmtv@att.net. The deadline for the January newsletter is Thursday, March 5.



JOIN THE CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY RENEW

Membership includes the quarterly CNPS journal, *Fremontia*; the quarterly *Bulletin* which gives statewide and announcements of Society activities and conservation issues; and our chapter newsletter, *Carpenteria*.

I wish to affiliate with the Sequoia Chapter.

Name: _____

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City: _____

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California Native Plant Society
2707 K Street, Suite 1
Sacramento, CA 95816-5113

The California Native Plant Society is a statewide nonprofit organization of amateurs and professionals with a common interest in California's native plants. The mission of the Society is to increase understanding and appreciation of California's native plants and to preserve them in their natural habitat through scientific activities, education, science, and conservation.

CARPENTERIA

February 2009



CALIFORNIA NATIVE
PLANT SOCIETY
SEQUOIA CHAPTER

c/o Jeanne Larson ♦ 3457 Redlands ♦ Fresno, CA 93726

**Dedicated to the Preservation of the California Native Flora.
For a membership brochure call Helen Shaw at 559/855-4519.
CNPS Web site: www.cnps.org.**

FEATURED CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT

Red Maids

Calandrinia ciliata is a small annual herb with a big following. It is one of the first signs of spring with its small, bright magenta flowers, and is now just beginning to blossom in the foothills and around the lower elevations. While native to the California, it is also found in most of the other western states, Central America, and northwest South America. And then there is a singular population that occurs in Massachusetts!

Red Maids is a member of the Portulacaceae family. This is the same family to which belong our native Miner's Lettuce (*Claytonia perfoliata*) as well as the non-native but commonly found Purslane. Both seeds and leaves are edible. The seed is tiny, shiny, and black. If you have Redmaids in your garden it is important to let them go to seed because it is an important food source for seed-eating birds and insects.

It was also an important food for indigenous peoples and the seed is often found in archaeological sites. So it is not surprising that the USDA Agricultural Research Services's Germplasm Resources Information Network (GRIN) has cataloged this important annual. Because Redmaids is one of the

first colonizers after a fire, one of the management techniques used by native peoples was to periodically set grasslands on fire, after which the Redmaids would colonize and provide a healthy crop of seed. The seed is collected, toasted, and ground into a pinole.

If you've never tasted Redmaids, try a few of the young leaves and young shoots in a salad. Tortoises like them, too!



Sources: www.fs.fed.us, www.larnerseeds.com, photo by TValdez

FEBRUARY 2009

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SEQUOIA CHAPTER CNPS

Clockwise starting from top right



- *Mushroom*
- China Creek
- *Mushroom*
- China Creek
- *Mushroom*
- McKenzie Preserve
- *Lichen*
- McKenzie Preserve
- *Blue Oak*
- McKenzie Preserve
- *Mushroom*
- China Creek

