



Windshield Wildflower Tour

Saturday, April 14, 9 AM

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

Come with us for an easy, relaxed look, with little 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 and over the ridge to Watts Valley, with stops for closer looks and photo ops. An expert botanist will be available to assist in pointing out and identifying the many species of California native plants.

In Watts Valley, we'll stop for lunch and bathroom break at the Shaws' place. 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. Directions for returning via Fresno Earth Day event will be provided. Free.

Contact Warren or Helen Shaw at (559-855-4519) or helshaw@netptc.net

Space is limited; CNPS members will have priority registration until March 30.



Event Reports

Marian Orvis

Annual Home & Garden Show – March 2, 3, 4 Friday was the usual slow day and the cold/windy weather had much to do with that. The weather on Saturday and Sunday was much more pleasant. All in all, although our table was in a good area, we didn't have the attendees as in previous years. But in those previous years there were many complimentary tickets provided by the Show's owners and none this year. Economy? Probably. We might want to think whether or not we want to continue this event considering the effort it is to participate, but it is free. Show volunteers: Madeleine Mitchell, Lee and Rick Ellis, Warren Shaw, Thelma Valdez, Rudy Rulloda, Mary McClanahan, and Jeanne Larson. Kudos to them all!

Masters Gardeners' Smart Gardening Conference --February 25 Another sell-out. I'm not sure, but think there were ~300 in attendance. Thanks to Jeanne Larson and Rudy Rulloda for their help. Our table was in a good location for attendees to take our paraphernalia. Since this event focused on gardening only, there was much more enthusiasm on our product -- California native plants. Well worth the \$50 paid for the table.

DEVASTATION ON BLACK MOUNTAIN

Jane Pritchard

Siblings Clarissa and Ira Kneeland homesteaded Black Mountain and left it alone to protect the wilderness. Unfortunately, they gave the top 2 acres to the US Forest Service in the late 1920s to build a fire lookout. The government built a dirt road to the summit. Black Mountain is southeast of Prather and has radio towers on it now.

On Feb 5 the road had been completely cleared of brush (except for some elderberries) for at least 50 feet along each side.



Carpenteria californica

Three small *Carpenteria* bushes planted near the house are left standing. All the naturally occurring *Carpenteria* along the road were whacked off at the base. *Carpenteria* is endemic only in the foothills mainly between the San Joaquin and Kings Rivers. Several earth-star fungi always grew under one large clump of *Carpenteria*; yesterday I found 2 earth-stars – dried up before they matured. You now need binoculars to see ash trees and many types of shrubs covered with virgin's bower. The lone patch of chokecherries were disposed of a few years ago. This will sure reduce the number of signs I need to label flowers for the Black Mountain open house on Mothers Day. Brush piles and charred remains of burned piles dotted roadsides. Hillsides no longer held in place by vegetation were falling into the ditches along the road.

On March 3 the initial shock of seeing the no-longer pretty nature walk was gone. But it was just as ugly. More hillside had been eroded by the meager rain the past month. Erosion is made worse by feral pigs and cows going wherever they want now. The loose dirt had been packed onto the road surface but more dirt had fallen into the ditches. Drains along the road had been dug out - a mound of dirt left beside each drain.

When I first saw Black Mountain almost 15 years ago, the road was gravel and plants grew close in on both sides. Over the years the road widened. Vegetation changed as the roadsides were cleared and exposed to the sun. Flowers will not cover up this mess this spring – but maybe next year?? Not much is blooming on Black Mountain yet but one shiny yellow buttercup flower brightened my day.



FEBRUARY CHINA CREEK REPORT

Warren Shaw

Another nice day at the park. We started by walking the north dogleg section of the park, looking for Yellow Star Thistle plants – and, sure enough we found some, all very small.

We grubbed away for a while and then took our usual mid-morning coffee break. After break we had enough people for two crews, so while one group went back to grubbing weeds, the rest of us went off to mulch some of the trail. So far, it appears the dry winter has served to produce a light crop of new YST plants.

We were gratified to find the Park relatively clean – of both trash and graffiti, and the kiosk requiring only minor refreshment.

Looking ahead, Hank Urbach agreed to mow the old YST and spray the patches of rosettes with a weak chemical solution, and we noted a need for refreshment of trail signs.

Our March work “party” will be Saturday, March 17 (St. Patrick’s Day) from 8-12 (no green beer will be served, but we’ll finish in plenty of time for celebrating).

Observations

--from *Thelma Valdez*

- My manzanitas are in full bloom and abuzz with hummingbirds, bees, butterflies, and other very small unnamed flying insects. Yes, you can grow manzanita down in the flatlands, aka the Valley floor.
- Harvest brodiaea leaves seem to be extra lush this year, looking like some kind of East coast lawn
- A few needlegrasses have opened and are waving attractively, catching the sun's rays
- The other morning when the fog was lifting and there was a slight breeze, the intoxicating smell of Cleveland and Aromas Sages stopped me in my tracks.

--from *Warren Shaw*

At 2000 feet, the hills are greening a little as a result of recent (mostly light) rains, but there is little color. In prepping for the Home and Garden show, we were able to pick a small bouquet of popcorn, fiddleneck, poppy, manzanita blossoms, and one lone buttercup; but the annual lupine we had seen earlier was mostly over, and many other blooms we had picked for earlier shows just not showing (yet) this year.

On the way home, we did note a patch of baby blue eyes that either hadn't been open, or that we had missed in the morning.

Blue oaks have broken bud at lower elevations and we're expecting ours to show leaves soon.

Membership

Thelma Valdez

If you require corrections or additions to your membership information, contact Thelma Valdez at nmtv@unwiredbb.com
The Sequoia chapter serves Fresno, Madera, and Kings counties.



Thanks to *New and Renewing Members

Fresno County: Arnest, Birrell, Buada, Hartesveldt, Jones, Kast, *Mengshol, Rolloda, Schreiber, Wilkinson

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New Jepson Manual(s) –

The second edition of the *Jepson Manual: Vascular Plants of California* is now available in three versions: print, e-book, and online. In addition to the hardcover version (1600 pgs) one can purchase for slightly more money, an interactive e-book compatible with iPad, Kindles, computers, and the Nook. Those who do not need or want the print or e-book versions can access the online version at <http://ucjeps.berkeley.edu/IJM.html> This version includes keys, text, and maps but no illustrations.

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Sequoia Chapter, CNPS thanks Derrel's for their support



Next Newsletter: April 2012
Send newsletter corrections or suggestions to Helen Shaw helshaw@netptc.net The deadline For the April newsletter is Friday, Apr. 6.



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RENEW

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

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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

March 2012

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY SEQUOIA CHAPTER

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

MADELEINE'S MUSINGS

Madeleine Mitchell



It is only March 5; so spring is still 2 weeks away, but with poppies, bush lupine and the redbud blooming it's beginning to look like it is already here. *Cercis occidentalis* is a small multitrunked tree, well suited for a native plant garden. And its small size makes it a great tree for a patio, growing to a maximum of 20 ft. and well suited for modern smaller lots. It is found naturally along streams in the foothills of the Sierra up to 4,000 foot. It has beautiful spring color in pinks and wonderful shade provided by the circular lobed blue-green leaves in summer. The leaves provide great fall color before they drop and then the burgundy seed pods hang on all winter.



My tree needs some thinning this year, and I noticed today one branch that wasn't blooming so that will be taken out. It invigorates the tree to remove the older stems. I'm sure most of you know the Native Americans used the new stems for basket weaving, so they regularly thinned out the older stems. They then striped out the red part of the bark. One of the real bonuses of this species is that it has no pests. Mine is over 20 years old and I look forward to the bloom each year.



**Sequoia Chapter, CNPS
March 2012**

Counter clockwise, from top

- 1-Ruins of the Kneeland homestead on Black Mountain
- 2- *Cercis occidentalis* Madeleine's western redbud
- 3- *Ribes aureum* golden currant
- 4-*Claytonia perfoliata* Miner's lettuce
- 5- *Arctostaphylos densiflora* Manzanita

1-Google Images; 2-Madeleine Mitchell
3, 4, 5 - Thelma Valdez