

Carpenteria

CNPS SEQUOIA CHAPTER



April/May 2020
www.cnps-sequoia.org

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GARDEN NOTES

On the Garden Front

--Thelma Valdez

Warm winter weather, rain, more warm, more rain, cool, a little rain — that's been the story in my garden and it's made for yet another unique year for the California natives. I live in a flat area east of Clovis; the Sequoia chapter covers such a big area that I find it interesting how my experiences can differ widely from someone who lives only a few miles away, but much less compared to the foothill communities or gardens on the west side of Fresno toward Kerman.

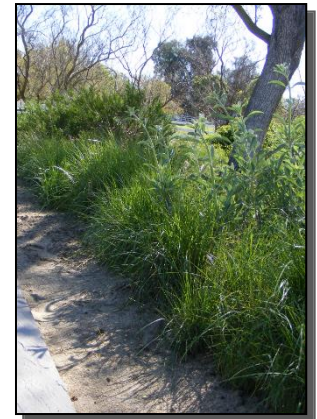


In any case, my manzanitas finished blooming back in February. Today the Lester Rowntree manzanita has the biggest, most beautiful berries ever! The whiteleaf manzanita (*Arctostaphylos viscida*) is pushing out new leaves with blended colors of pink, orange, yellow-green. Soon they'll turn their standard gray-green with their distinctive hairs that will see them through summer's heat.

Needlegrasses have been blooming for a month or so depending on how much sun they get. By the end of this dry week I presume they'll be in full dress, catching the sunlight and waving in gentle breezes. Black sage (*Salvia mellifera*) blooms earlier than the *clevelandii* varieties and the bees are working those blossoms. Speaking of sages, I have a Winifred Gilman sage (a *clevelandii* variety) whose scent makes me swoon when it blows past me after an evening of condensation or light rain. Oh my!



One of my 20 year old Valley oaks (*Quercus lobata*), planted from an acorn, is almost fluffy with new leaves. The others are getting green but this particular one leafed out early and strong. Desert willows (*Chilopsis linearis*) are just starting to put out new leaves, as is the California wild grape (*Vitis californica*). Beneath the row of desert willows are many deergrass (*Muhlenbergia rigens*) to which I gave a good pruning as well as a good raking.



GARDEN NOTES (CONTINUED)



They are raked every year but haircuts only happen every few years. This maintenance serves as a substitute for the burning with which they evolved.

And the woolly blue curls (*Trichostema lanatum*)...well, only positive adjectives are appropriate for the gorgeous blossoms of this shrub and the smell of its leaves. Some blossoms have started to take shape with the promise of more to come.

Lucky are those with California natives in your garden. You can have a wide range of plants that insects, birds, and humans alike can enjoy from January through June — sometimes their blooms, sometimes their leaves, and sometimes their shade. Follow the plants example when summer arrives. Slow down and be thankful.



CHINA CREEK REPORT

March 2019, No Work Party

--Warren Shaw

(photos by Laura Castro)

No work party occurred in March, of course, so this month's report will consist mainly of random thoughts, ideas and reflections concerning the Park's past, its current status, and the future.

We, Sequoia Chapter CNPS, have been doing restoration and public educational work at China Creek for a little over fifteen years now. We started by targeting a terrible infestation of yellow star thistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*; YST), using hand digging, mowing, grazing, and herbicides. This has been a basic success, and though we still find YST, we're able to deal with it mostly by hand, with a little spot spraying for bigger patches. We've also been largely successful in eliminating a grove of tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), though again we still have to deal with root sprouts every year. We continue to battle two other species of exotic invasive thistles, as well as "new" weeds that pop up on a regular basis. We've also built fences and gates to facilitate grazing, caged Valley oak (*Quercus lobata*) seedlings to protect them from the cattle, built and added signs to an interpretive trail, established a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Fresno County, maintained an informational display at the Park's kiosk, and done what we could to keep the Park clean and safe.



CHINA CREEK REPORT (CONTINUED)



It should come as no surprise that in the course of fifteen years many volunteers have fallen away, moved, aged out, or died. Fortunately, new folks have come along to take up the mission, and though the number who turn out for work parties varies, there is always a good crew of willing workers who come to do the unglamorous work of grubbing weeds, picking up trash, caging seedlings, maintaining the trail, and so on. Sometimes people ask why we don't do much planting. The answer is two-fold. One is that we've been impressed with the natural ability of the habitat to recover when we remove the competing weeds, so we haven't felt the need to plant, and the other is that there always seem to be weeds that need our time and energy. We

know, however, that there are probably plants that once abounded in the area, and have disappeared because of years of overgrazing, water table changes, and so on.

A major recent development was the formation of a China Creek Planning Committee, which has the goal of evaluating the Park's current condition and planning how we can make our restoration work more effective in achieving the goal of returning the Park, as nearly as practical, to its pre-settlement condition. This will include working out, as best we can, what plants would be appropriate to plant and developing a plan to return these to the Park.

Last spring, largely through the efforts of Gene Richards, we cooperated with Cal Fire to experiment with burning off parts of the Park where thatch was thick to see if burning would help eliminate weeds and encourage historically fire resistant native plants to grow. We're still evaluating the results and weighing advantages and disadvantages.

Another recent development has been the declining health of one of the Park's greatest benefactors, Park neighbor, Hank Urbach. For years, Hank has used his tractor and quad to keep the trail mowed, spray large infestations of weeds, control the flow of water to the north pond, and so on. He has also kept the gate area picked up, nagged the County to empty the trash, called the Sheriff to deal with vandalism and disturbances, and generally served as resident overseer for the Park. Unhappily Hank recently had his third heart attack. He continues to do what he can, but we know we can't count on his former level of commitment.



While we know we can never replace Hank and everything he has done for us, we have taken one step toward taking over some of the work by applying for a grant to buy mowing equipment so we can keep up with the trail. The Rose Foundation granted us \$3000 for a mower and a shed to house it and other equipment and supplies. We've begun shopping for a heavy-duty riding mower and a cargo unit or some other structure for storage. We ask everybody to be aware of these needs and to let us know if they hear of something appropriate becoming available.



Finally, the Kings River Conservancy is a well-established force for good along the lower Kings River. In the last couple of years we've been working to partner with them in making the China Creek project an ongoing feature of life in Fresno County. We intend to add the Conservancy to our MOU with the County, and have welcomed their help with weed abatement, including the addition of Conservancy volunteers to our crews.

For those of us who have devoted a lot of blood sweat, and, yes, a few tears, to the China Creek Project in the last fifteen years, it's a great comfort to feel that these efforts will continue to count for something in the future.

Upcoming Events and Classes

From CNPS Twitter Feed:

It's time to be safe and protect each other. In that spirit, CNPS and its 35 chapters are cancelling or postponing all events through April 7. Events after that date may be impacted as well. We'll be keeping you up to date.

• The Theodore Payne Foundation's Native Plant Garden Tour



- Was held as a livestream the last weekend of March, and can be viewed at <https://www.nativeplantgardentour.org/>.
- Both the links for March 28 and 29, 2020 are on that page.

• Annual Spring Garden Tour, rescheduled until Saturday, May 16, 9:00am – 5:00pm

- Tour five specially chosen gardens in the Fresno area, in addition to the Master Gardeners' Garden of the Sun.
- 100 percent of the proceeds from the Spring Garden Tour are used to support the UC Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Program of Fresno County.

Cost: \$30 in advance member/\$35 day of tour

Information:

https://ucanr.edu/sites/mgfresno/http___ucanred_u_sgtfresno/

• Ferns, rescheduled until August 8-9, Saturday, 8:00am – Sunday, 1:00pm

Location: UC Berkeley



- Workshop has been approved for 5 Professional Development Credits by the California Consulting Botanist Board of Certification.
- Introduction to ferns of the world, with a focus on wild California species.
- Will learn the basics of fern morphology, ecology, development, and evolution.
- Personal vehicle required for possible field trip (carpooling possible).

Cost: \$275 member/\$305 non-member

Information:

<https://ucjeps.berkeley.edu/workshops/#Aug8>

• California's Native Bees: Biology, Ecology, and Identification, May 29-31, Friday, 1:00pm – Sunday, 2:00pm

Location: Hastings Natural History Reservation

- Workshop has been approved for 5 Professional Development Credits by the California Consulting Botanist Board of Certification.
- Will provide an introduction to native bee biology and ecology, and methods used to study them.
- Participants will learn how to observe, collect, pin, and label bees for permanent storage in museums.
- Evening lectures on a variety of related topics will add to the field experience. Hiking easy.
- Dormitory-style rooms with twin, full, or bunk-style beds, plus option for tent camping.



Cost: \$475 member/\$505 non-member

Information:

<https://ucjeps.berkeley.edu/workshops/#May29>

• Arctostaphylos, June 5-7, Friday, 4:00pm – Sunday, 5:00pm

Location: Hastings Natural History Reservation and Monterey County Field Sites

- Workshop has been approved for 7 Professional Development Credits by the California Consulting Botanist Board of Certification.
- *Arcostaphylos* are commonly known as manzanitas in California, and 90 taxa are found here.
- Will focus on key taxonomic characters and some background on evolution, distribution patterns, and ecology.
- Sunday will include a field trip to several different habitats. Hiking easy.
- Transportation not provided.
- Dormitory-style rooms with twin, full, or bunk-style beds, plus option for tent camping.



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Cost: \$475 member/\$500 non-member

Information:

<https://ucjeps.berkeley.edu/workshops/>

- Keep in mind, rescheduling of classes may continue to occur.

**SEQUOIA CHAPTER OFFICERS*
AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

Membership

Thanks to new and renewing members.

If you require corrections or additions to your membership information, contact Cherith Merson at echerith@gmail.com.

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

The IRS considers dues in excess of \$12 per year and all gifts to CNPS as tax deductible. Renew your CNPS membership online using a credit card. As an option, renew automatically year after year. It is quick, easy, and convenient, and reduces renewal-mailing costs. Visit www.cnps.org and click on the JOIN button.

Next Newsletter: June 2020

Send newsletter suggestions to Laura Castro at lacastror@outlook.com. The deadline for submissions to the next newsletter is **Friday, May 22, 2020.**



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JOIN THE CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY RENEW

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

I wish to affiliate with the Sequoia Chapter.

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____
 State: _____ Zip: _____

- Student, Fixed Income \$25
- Individual \$50
- Plant Lover \$120
- Supporter \$500
- Patron \$1,000
- Benefactor \$2,500
- Steward \$5,000
- Guardian \$10,000

Make your check payable to "CNPS" and mail with this form to:

- New Member Renewing Member

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

April/May 2020

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY SEQUOIA CHAPTER

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

ANNOUNCEMENT



Keep a look out for a future
Chapter event announcement!

We all need to eat dinner.
So why not do it while talking about
native plants?

When we are cleared to mingle again, we will schedule a social/meeting at a restaurant in the spirit of modernizing our meetings and in hopes of attracting more members. We are shooting for the very end of spring or the summer.

In the meantime, we hope you and yours find yourselves well, and that you too are looking forward to an interesting night out.

