



CARPENTERIA

Newsletter of the Sequoia Chapter
California Native Plant Society

November – December 2004

CHAPTER EVENTS

Chapter Meeting: Tuesday, November 16. 7:00 p.m. “The Sequoia National Monument” with speaker Dr. Michael Kunz

Dr. Michael Kunz is a professor of botany at Fresno Pacific University. At the June CNPS State Chapter Council meeting at SCICON in Tulare County he gave a presentation on the Sequoia National Monument, on which Tuesday evening’s presentation is based. If you missed his presentation in June (which was very well-received), come to this meeting and learn about the history of this unique area in our midst.

Board meeting starts promptly at 6:00 pm. All members are welcome to attend the board meeting. Regular meeting and speaker are at 7:00 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 4144 N. Millbrook (S of Ashlan Avenue).

Future Meeting Programs

December Happy Holidays!
No meeting. See you next year!

Everyone is welcome to attend meetings and programs. Our meetings and programs are also open to the public and we encourage you to bring others that may be interested.

Here’s a New Year’s Resolution to ponder: Attend one of our regular meetings! We’d love to see you!

Interpretive Trail Begins at China Creek

By Peggy Jones

On Wednesday, November 3, Reedley College Forestry students began work on the planned interpretive trail at China Creek. Our devoted President, Warren Shaw, was on site early and marked the places of interest for the trail.

Thirteen students from instructor Amie Mazzoni's Projects class enthusiastically dug post holes, cleared paths, dug yellow star thistle and fought off wasps! These students were quick, efficient, and lots of fun to work with.

Amie said her students would like to return and will include another group, the Trail Building class. Warren and I agreed this partnership is definitely a win-win situation! Those kids made digging the holes look easy... ahhhh youth!

We hope to have some of the forestry students at our November meeting. Watch for them and please thank them. They helped achieve a significant milestone in the China Creek project and deserve our recognition!



“Edible Natives” Brochure

We are looking for personal experiences and recipes from those of you who enjoy eating and cooking wild native plants. Perhaps you nibble on Miner’s Lettuce or use some of the many native herbs in cooking. Maybe you can share stories or recipes told to you by your elders. Whichever native plants you’ve enjoyed eating, email Thelma Valdez at <nmtv@att.net> with your experiences. Our goal is to produce a brochure of local edible native plants.

Sierra Foothill Conservancy

Hike the McKenzie Preserve. (Free) This is the only fall hike. Walk the Discovery Trail (3.7 miles) or hike to the top of the table (moderate 6 miles) in the cool fall air. Saturday, November 27 at 9 am. For more information and registration call 559/855-3473 or visit <www.sierrafoothill.org>. Call for meeting points and weather information. Bring lunch & water.



Winter Chores for Native Gardens

Excerpt of article from the Orange County CNPS Newsletter
By Dan Songster



It was David Fross who correctly stated, “The success or failure of natives in the garden is dependent on regular, informed maintenance.” While maintenance is lower with native gardens, unfortunately native landscapes are often touted as being the type you install and then forget about.

Winter is a key time for accomplishing many of the chores that make the native garden so outstanding in late winter and spring. This is the time of year for mulching, winter watering, weeding, and especially pruning.

Pruning: For those natives that benefit from trimming, this is the very best time to prune, shear, or in some cases, hack away in your garden. Plants such as Desert Willow (*Chilopsis linearis*) and Mexican Elderberry (*Sambucus mexicanum*) often lack structure. In winter they are bare of leaf, making it easier to select and prune out unwanted crossing and cluttering branches. These cuts you make in winter will direct spring’s growth.

Shearing about 1/3 of foliage suits plants such as Cleveland Sage (*Salvia clevelandii*) and Coyote Mint (*Monardella villosa*). This helps create a more compact plant that is more densely flowered in spring. Lighter shearing, if any, is used on plants such as Chaparral Mallow (*Malacothamnus fasciculatus*), Hollyleaf Cherry (*Prunus ilicifolia*), and Woolly Blue Curls (*Trichostema lanatum*).

Matilija Poppy (*Romneya coulteri*), Coast Sunflower (*Encelia californica*), and Wild Rose (*Rosa californica*) do well with a severe pruning, to the ground, every year or two. (With *Romneya*, it’s every year for sure!) California Fuchsia (*Zauschneria californica*) also can be treated in this manner. These plants are fast growers and with the exception of *Encelia*, spread quickly by underground rhizomes. Care should be taken when placing these aggressive plants in your garden.

Some mature grasses and grass-like plants benefit from a close cropping every year or two. The Needlegrasses (*Nassella* sp.) and Melica Grass (*Melicxa imperfecta*) are good examples. Fresh growth is promoted by such trimming with either a sharp pair of hand pruners or a weed-eater. Not all grasses or grass-like plants benefit equally from such artificial grazing. Deer Grass (*Muhlenbergia rigens*), Purple Three-Awn Grass (*Aristida purpurea*), and Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*) are three that seem to prefer being left alone or can at least benefit from a couple of years’ pruning neglect and still look stunning most of the year.

Wildflowers: If you have seeded your garden with wildflowers, it is probable that they share their seedbed with several non-native annuals. It is best to weed these areas while these weeds are small and easy to pull, and before they begin competing for the nutrients and water the wildflowers need. This is much easier if you know what wildflower seedlings look like (as opposed to germinating weeds). Sow a small amount of each seed in a flat and label accordingly. You will see what the immature plants look like and what not to weed. Unfortunately snails and slugs seem to prefer wildflowers (and our young bulbs as they emerge) over weeds, so whether with bait or some home remedy, get them!

Stem Rot: One of the most important duties, regardless of the season, is an inspection of root crowns. There should be NO mulch up against plant stems (or tree trunks). Even more important, no soil should be washed up against the plants’ stem or trunk. This happens most commonly on inclines when a watering basin cut into the hill fills with soil washed from above, but can also occur in level situation if plants are installed too low and surrounding soil slowly washes in. Such conditions provide the right environment for stem rot, almost sure death for the plant. Scrape away soil until you get to the surface roots of the plant. This is especially important with woody perennials and trees. If the plant is too low, raise it. Remember to knock away the front rim of a hillside watering basins in the winter to allow soils and mulches to wash out instead of piling up around the plant’s stem.

Wet Soil: During the wet season we must be cautious not to ruin the structure of our garden soils. Most importantly we should avoid compacting our clay soils by trampling around on them when too wet. What is **too** wet? Here is **Dan’s Test** for clay soil workability. Dig out a shovel full of soil from your garden, raise it to a height above your knees and slowly turn the shovel upside down. If the soil stays stuck to the shovel blade, forget it. If it hesitates before falling, forget it. If the soil releases from the shovel upon being turned, but does not break apart when hitting the earth, you are close, but should probably wait a day or two longer if you can. Obviously the best case would have the soil breaking apart when hitting the ground. That’s when you dance happily into the garden, trimming, transplanting, and doing other winter chores.

Propagation: As the season progresses you will notice seedlings from various native plants in your garden. No, these are not weeds! Monkeyflower, Buckwheat, California Lilac, Blue Eyed Grass, Columbine, Douglas Iris, Chaparral mallow, Lemonade Berry, and others drop seeds that will germinate unattended in the garden. They can be carefully dug, potted up, and planted in the fall in suitable locations, or given to worthy friends. Don’t forget – spring is the time for cuttings.

Transplanting: Cooler temperatures and higher humidity mean less shock to the plant you’re moving. Such moves can stimulate new growth and vigor in a plant that was unhappy in its prior spot. Dig the new hold *before* transplanting. Install with root crown slightly above the surrounding grade. Unless rain is imminent, create a basin and water immediately. *Do not fertilize transplants.*

Vines: Now is a great time to trim and train your native vines. California Grape (*Vitis californica*) enjoys a good pruning about now. I usually take about a third off young plants, just above a growth point. Older, established plants can usually be trimmed back as hard as is needed without harm. Vines pulling away from the fence or arbor should be held in place with stretch tie. *Virgins Bower* (*Clematis* sp.) looks best hanging from the lower branches of a small tree or draped down the side of a large shrub. Disobedient runners should be wound up through its “host” plant before the new, tender growth of spring sprouts.

Garden Journal: Don’t you have one? Now is a good time to start a garden scrapbook. Fill it with photos, plant information, bird arrivals, strange weather, new gardening books you have read, plants you have killed, those you have revived, recipes involving native plants, and Dan’s Soil Test results. Of course nowadays it can most easily be done on computer with digital photos, etc. but I still love the written journal with its informal sketches and ideas, taped-in plant labels, and spontaneous observations, misspellings and all. By hand or computer, a journal is a useful tool for the garden and is also a lot of fun!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



It appears we're going to have a fight on our hands regarding damming the San Joaquin River at Temperance Flat. Recently President Bush quietly signed the federal legislation that would allow local and state agencies to proceed with the various steps that will likely lead to yet another dam on the San Joaquin. If you have not read Gene Rose's book The San Joaquin: A River Betrayed, I heartily recommend it.

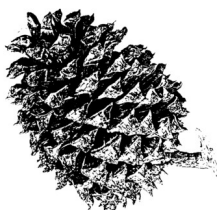
With the projected increases in population in the state and the ever-increasing demand for cheap, high-quality water for residences—with broad expanses of lawn and lush (exotic) tree and shrubs—golf courses, industrial parks and so on, this desire is easy to understand. But such a dam would not only further degrade a much degraded river system and its environs in general terms, it would specifically drown a large portion of the Backbone Creek Research Natural Area, designated in 1971 "in perpetuity" for the protection and study of a unique botanical community. It would, furthermore, threaten a newly discovered population of *Carpenteria californica* and open up a now pristine area to easy access by vehicles and boats.

While water conservation has received some recent attention (Fresno will someday have meters) and reclaiming and recycling wastewater some thought, neither of these seems to be considered as a primary source of new water.

The San Joaquin Valley aquifer, with its capacity for storing some 80 million acre feet of water, is dangerously low now—after six years of drought and steadily increased pumping, and though the Fresno area has made strides toward recharging, this is a ready made storage facility that could certainly be far more heavily exploited.

There are serious reasons to oppose a dam at Temperance Flat and several viable alternatives. Those of us who value natural habitat must gird our loins to fight the powerful governmental and commercial forces behind this project. "Taming the wilderness" (destroying nature) has to stop somewhere. Why not here?

-- Warren Shaw



"The grand show is eternal. It is always sunrise somewhere; the dew is never all dried at once; a shower is forever falling; vapor is ever rising."

-- John Muir

OBSERVATIONS



What a difference rain made in the foothills! Mosses responded in minutes, expanding and glowing bright green, broadleaf plants, mostly filaree, had sprouted by the second day and (exotic) annual grasses were up two or three inches by the end of the first week.

Buckeyes were stripped of russet leaves and left a ghostly silvery gray. Ferns and lichens brightened. Now even distant hills are showing green through the cleaner air and blue oaks, cleansed of dust and dead leaves, look refreshed, though probably little water has yet penetrated to their deep roots. "It's a different world," says Warren Shaw from his home in the foothills.

In my weekday commute into Fresno I monitor some natives growing along the roadways and in unnamed homes along the way. Like my own Western Redbud, those on the Bullard off ramp (off the 168 Westbound) perked up with the recent rains. Soon they will begin their leaf drop with the cooler weather. By the end of the year they will be no more than gray branches fading into the fog.

Desert Willows took that first rain and pushed out their last few blossoms before the cooler weather began. A large Desert Willow along my commute route is now beginning its leaf drop; mine are still holding on to their leaves, looking quite lush.

Within a week of the rain, the established Needlegrasses were looking well refreshed, with new bright green growth, and anticipating the winter. Next time you see native grasses, note the difference in the color of green from exotic annuals. Natives have a deep, shiny green unlike the bright green of exotics. And it just isn't cold enough for the California Fuchsia – they're blooming like mad!

Meanwhile, can it be that those yearling shrubs of Coffeeberry and Toyon are that much larger than a month ago?

California natives are found in more places than you may realize. A drive through the foothills in the fall and winter is one of the best ways to see the full cycle of natives. Take the same road again in the spring and in the summer to begin to understand the year-round world of California native plants.

-- Editor

OCTOBER CHAPTER MEETING

October's chapter meeting was accompanied by the first of the winter rains, happily coming in late October. This did not deter a large contingent of visitors.

The presentation by Joseph Oldham and Thelma Valdez was an hour spent generating enthusiasm for California native plants. It provided an opportunity for attendees to see a variety of home landscapes where natives have been used as well as to see natives in close-up.

Both Joseph and Thelma continue to phase out non-natives at their respective homes. Slides of Joseph's home before and after his "ascent" into California natives rounded out his description of the challenges of planting deep-rooted, water-thrifty natives in a tract home development that does not provide soil suited for this purpose.

Madeleine Mitchell's home landscape was also featured and provided a look at a mature native garden where she has used natives to provide a buffer between her home and the street.

Thelma's landscape near the house relies heavily on grasses and shrubs. A series of slides showed how an open field is transformed over the seasons with a variety of wild bulbs and annuals with periods of dormancy in between. A pleasant time was had by all.

FRESNO CITY PUBLIC WORKS

On the heels of our chapter meeting presentation, Joseph and I attended an initial meeting of a City of Fresno Public Works Department effort to focus on using native and drought tolerant plants in grounds managed by the City.

Joseph's work for the City puts him in a unique position of talking with staff from many departments and knowing about many City activities. In this case, he found like minds in some individuals at the Public Works Department.

While the meeting was very preliminary, our attendance was well-received and they have invited us back. The goal is a long-term one (could it be any less dealing with a city bureaucracy?). But we hope to educate and perhaps even influence an important group in the direction of California natives. We'll keep you posted!

-- Thelma Valdez

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Emily B. Roberson < EmilyR@cnp.org >

Bush Administration Policies affecting California

43 scientists, ecologists, and conservation biologists delivered a letter to President Bush expressing concern about the Bush Administration's environmental policies in the State of California their disregard for scientific principles, and their suppression of scientific information. The group includes 10 Nobel prizewinners.

The Bush Administration is putting forth regulations, plans, and policies which significantly reduce the role of science in resource management and weaken protection for California's water, forests, deserts, plants and wildlife. These initiatives are likely to damage, not only the environment, but also the economy, public health, and quality of life in our state," declared Anne Ehrlich, Associate Director, Center for Conservation Biology, Stanford University.

The scientists' letter focused on four issues affecting California:

* In the Sierra Nevada, the Bush Administration has proposed major changes to the Sierra Framework, a science based management plan for 10 million acres of national forests developed by a team of more than 100 scientists. The "revised" Bush Framework junks the scientists' plan in favor of a new developed by a five person team of non-scientists that will increase logging, grazing, and roadbuilding beyond sustainable levels, and will weaken or remove science based management standards.

* In the California Desert, the Bush Administration has relied on poor science to drastically weaken resource conservation of

millions of acres managed by the Bureau of Land Management. The Bush administration plan relies primarily on information from a report by an industry-funded consultant that received no independent scientific review.

* California Water Quality: Despite the Bush Administration's Earth Day announcement of a new commitment to protection wetlands, the Administration has continued to operate under a new policy "Guidance," issued by the Army Corps of Engineers, which has, in effect, withdrawn Clean Water Act (CWA) protection from 30-60% of the nation's wetlands, streams and other waters, allowing them to be filled or polluted without a permit.

* The Bush Administration's management of the federal Klamath Water Project has ignored decades of sound science, with disastrous results. In September 2002, the Bush administration reduced water flows much that more than 33,000 salmon died in the worst fish kill in U.S. history.

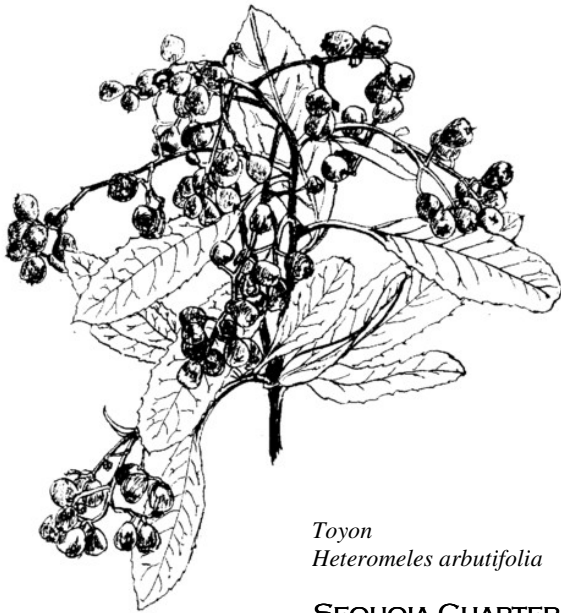
"The assault on good science and our environment must stop. That is why we have sent this letter to President Bush. He must fulfill his pledge that science would guide Administration decisions. It is only when we use the best scientific knowledge to guide natural resource management that we will be able to protect our nation's irreplaceable natural heritage for future generations, stated Barry Noon, Professor, Dept. of Fishery and Wildlife Biology, Colorado State University. Dr. Noon has worked on California wildlife and forestry issues for more than two decades.

JEPSON HERBARIUM PUBLIC PROGRAMS

The Jepson Herbarium's mission is to understand and conserve the California flora through systematic, floristic, and conservation biology studies, and to communicate knowledge of the flora through publications and instructional programs.

They offer a series of public workshops on botanical and ecological subjects, taught by recognized authorities in their field. Most workshops are designed to accommodate beginners as well as professionals. For a full schedule, descriptions, and registration, visit < <http://ucjeps.berkeley.edu/jepwkshp.html> >. Following are a few of over 25 upcoming workshops through mid-2005:

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| Plant Evolution and Diversity Saturday & Sunday December 4-5, 2004 | Introduces students to ways in which new plant species arise. Special reference will be made to California flora. Students will review herbarium specimens of selected native species groups. Aspects of California's geology and geography that contribute will also be discussed. | Photoshop for Botanical Photographers Saturday & Sunday January 29-30, 2005 | This workshop will teach the basics of using Photoshop specifically for post-production of digital images. Designed to help experienced photographers enhance their work through the use of Photoshop tools. |
| Intro to Morphology and Identification of Flowering Plants Saturday & Sunday March 12-13, 2005 | This workshop will teach you to identify wildflowers or refine your skills and expand your botanical vocabulary. Emphasis will be on learning the floral characters needed to identify plants using the Jepson Manual and other guides. | Intro to Digital Macro-Photography Techniques Saturday & Sunday March 26-27, 2005 | This course provides an overview of the fundamentals of digital photography and terminology, combined with how-to techniques for dramatic closeup and macro photography specific to botany, ecology, and nature images. By the end of the course you should be introduced to producing dynamic pictures for the Web, presentations, and printing. |
| Basics of Botanical Illustration Saturday & Sunday March 19-20, 2005 | Participants will learn how to create accurate pencil drawings of plants and plant parts. No experience is necessary. Experienced illustrators will have the opportunity to hone their techniques. Emphasis on using scientific methods, field sketching and reading and interpreting existing scientific illustrations. | Salix in the Sequoia / King's Canyon National Parks Friday - Sunday July 15-17, 2005 | This workshop is designed to help participants learn to identify the Willow species with confidence by use of field observation, lab study, and practical identification. Several short field trips will be taken into alpine and riparian habitats. A Guide to California Salix will be provided. Camping is at the Wolverton Boy Scout Camp. |



Toyon
Heteromeles arbutifolia

Newsletter

As you enjoy fall and winter weather, and look ahead to spring, send your perspectives, wonderments, poetry, or drawings to me. You know that this is your newsletter and it is enriched by your participation. Have you visited a great Web site recently? Are you particularly happy (or disappointed) with a native plant you've nurtured (or ignored)? Would you like to see more of /less of a topic? Do you know of hikes or other activities in your area?

The Observations section also welcomes your input. The Sequoia Chapter covers a wide range of climates and topography. And you don't have to be a gardener to appreciate California's incredible plant diversity. Indeed, gardeners should be sure to get out and learn from nature.

Send newsletter contributions, corrections, or suggestions to Thelma Valdez at <nmtv@att.net>. The next newsletter will be the January issue. Contributions are due by Tuesday, January 10.

SEQUOIA CHAPTER OFFICERS* AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

| | | | | | |
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JOIN THE CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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/Retired/Limited Income\$20
- Individual or Library\$35
- Family or Group\$45
- Supporting\$75
- Plant Lover\$100
- Patron\$250
- Benefactor\$500
- Bristlecone\$1000

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

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

November-December 2004



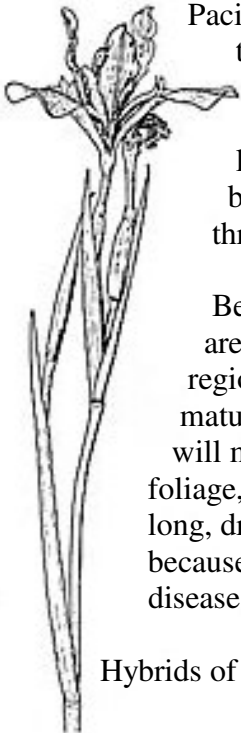
CALIFORNIA NATIVE
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c/o Jeanne Larson ♦ 3457 Redlands ♦ Fresno, CA 93726

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 PLANT

Pacific Coast Irises

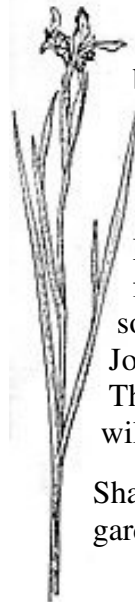


Pacific Coast Iris is the name given to irises native to California. Most bloom in early to late spring. Blooms are short-lived, lasting only a few days but they bloom continuously over a period of three to four weeks.

Because they are native to coastal areas, they require light shade in our region. For example, in the shade of mature shrubs and trees. Too little sun will mean you will likely have good foliage, but fewer flowers. They require long, dry summers (we have those!) because of their susceptibility to fungus diseases.

Hybrids of Pacific Coast Irises can occur

naturally or intentionally. This has produced cultivars with an increased blooming season, pattern and color variety, and increased tolerance to watering and disease resistance. Hybrid Pacific Coast Irises now number nearly 1000.



The irises are featured this month not because they are in bloom, but because fall and winter is the time to divide or move them. In time these irises spread out and leave a bare center with a ring of new sprouts.

Do not be dismayed if you find some have not formed roots. They will form roots if left soaking in water. (This was on advice from Dr. John Weiler, Fresno's expert on this species.) The weather will determine how fast the sprouts will root.

Share some with a friend or replant in your garden!