



## China Creek Update: Fallen Giants

Warren Shaw

Hank Urbach, park neighbor, chapter member, and faithful park volunteer, was unable to help in August because a massive 200 year-old Valley Oak had fallen near his house, destroying his shop building and many other things. On a recent visit to the Park we saw that another big old Valley Oak had fallen near the south pond. A tree which fell in the spring across the "sanctuary" fence seems quite happy, with lots of fresh new leaves, despite its horizontal position. Prior to their falling, none of these trees was dead or even appeared unhealthy.

These losses, while unfortunate, are not unexpected. The unnatural fluctuations in groundwater levels that have occurred since the construction of Pine Flat Reservoir in the 1940's seem to affect the big old trees' root systems negatively. We can only hope the process will be slow enough that the many vigorous young seedlings, which seem better adapted to the new conditions, will be ready to take their turn. But, of course, there's no way to replace 200 year-old trees.

At our August "work morning" we once again attacked the yellow star thistle with a will, but were unable to finish the job. Consequently we'll be asking Vulcan materials to mow one more time. We will then do what we can to finish off the remainder on our next workday, the morning of Saturday, September 19. While we'd love to have everyone there to help, this date IS just one week before the Plant Sale so if you can spare only one Saturday it should be for the Plant Sale on the 26th.

## Native Bees Enrich Native Gardens

Following is a summary by Jeanne Larson, Conservation co-chair, from CALIFORNIA AGRICULTURE, V 63, NO. 3, July - September 2009.

Evidence is mounting that pollinators of crop and wildland plants are declining worldwide. A research group at UC Berkeley and UC Davis conducted a 3-year survey of bee pollinators in seven cities from Northern California to Southern California. Results indicate that many types of urban residential gardens provide floral and nesting resources for the reproduction and survival of bees, especially a diversity of native bees. Habitat gardening for bees, using targeted plants, can predictably increase bee diversity and abundance and provide clear pollination benefits.

Previous surveys of ornamental plants in the Bay Area revealed 82 bee species of which 78 were native to California. To address questions regarding a wider geographic area and a larger group of plant species, a study was statistically designed. When all species, cultivars and hybrids were considered separately, the target plants comprised more than 31 distinct types. The two most attractive plant families were the Sunflower Family (Asteraceae), which provide pollen and nectar, and the Mint Family (Lamiaceae), which provide nectar.

While the study included both ornamental and native plants, we will mention only the native plants that were visited by bees. The plant visitation pattern was consistent in all cities.

One of the best plants for observing restricted bee taxa was the widespread California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), where bumble bees, small sweat bees and honey bees were common and predictable. Other favored plants were palo verde (*Parkinsonia aculeata*, a tree that deserves more use) and near native autumn sage (*Salvia greggii* cultivars), both of which attracted honey bees and large carpenter bees. Other native plant species visited regularly were yarrow, manzanita, goldenrod, ceanothus spp, sea daisy, tansy phacelia, bidens, black sage, buttercups and sun cups.

The main pattern that emerges from the statewide California survey is that a predictable group of native bee species can be expected to visit certain ornamental plants. From a biodiversity perspective, it is easy to understand why we should conserve and protect native bees. The approximately 1,600 species of native bees have had a long evolutionary history with about 6,000 different kinds of native California flowering plants. Besides bees, the plants will attract other flower visitors such as birds, butterflies and beneficial flies and wasps.

Bees are known to nest in various substrates. Most solitary bees prefer to construct their nests in soils. Nesting habitat can be provided by leaving bare soil and providing areas from sand to heavy clay to adobe blocks. Excessive soil mulching will greatly discourage ground-nesting bees, which need bare soil or a thin layer of natural litter. Other bee nesting sites are pre-existing cavities in trees or structures, abandoned rodent burrows, and burrows in wood or hollow plant stems. Nesting habitats in wood burrows must be protected from sun and water until adult bees emerge.

Information on pollinator-plant relationships can be used for more ambitious projects such as restoring ecological functions to degraded or fallowed landscapes. Urban areas can serve as genetic reserves for pollinators and other species that we deem beneficial for humans. Some of these may eventually be a resource for the pollination of agricultural crops.

The complete text of this study can be viewed at <http://californiaagriculture.ucanr.org>. Related sites:

### **UC Davis bee garden**

<http://entomology.ucdavis.edu/news/honeybeehavenwinner.html>

### **North American Pollinator Protection Campaign**

[www.pollinator.org](http://www.pollinator.org)

### **Urban bee Gardens**

<http://nature.berkeley.edu/urbanbeegardens>

## Reminder:

CNPS Plant Sale ➔ September 26, 2009 from 8-1 ◀ Clovis Botanical Garden

# Summer Hiking at Higher Elevations con Huevos

Jane Pritchard

Peg Smith and I make an annual outing to Potter's Pass - a great place to go after it gets too hot to hike lower down. A cutoff trail is just above the ranger's station at the intersection with the Kaiser Pass road. We always drive on up about 5 miles to the big parking area with toilets and cross the road to the trail. After an initial uphill, the trail is fairly level, mostly shaded with a meadow to the left visible through the trees. Several creeks cross the trail. The flowers are just fantastic - many I have never seen before. We have to limit our IDing time to make the two miles out to where the trail meets the cutoff trail and abruptly drops down to a meadow surrounded by hemlock and western white pine trees, with Banner and Ritter in the distance.

We stop first at the restaurant at Huntington Lake and talk with the other people sitting outside on the porch. Peg just has an English muffin and coffee. I have cottage fries with their month's quota of grease and poached eggs. In June we waited a long time before the food came and kidded that the cook had never poached an egg. That turned out to be true. Finally the eggs arrived looking like they had been stirred. I said that was OK because I just squash them up on the potatoes anyway. After a few minutes the waiter brought two more poached eggs with yolks still broken but not completely scrambled. I got one off on Peg and ate one. Then after a few more minutes the waiter brought two more perfectly poached eggs. Eggs were coming out my ears so I gave them to an adjoining table and left a humongous tip. The eggs have been great ever since.

We ID'ed some of the numerous mushrooms and butterflies from the colored line drawings in John Muir Laws' book, including the beautiful California tortoise shell *Nymphalis californica*. Each page has an interesting tidbit of information. I really like it.

I see best at three inches without glasses so was lying in a wet seep looking at a variety of water plantain buttercup *Ranunculus alismaefolius*. Lo and behold, there was Brewer's mitrewort *Mitella breweri* with its green antenna for petals. It was still blooming three weeks later but had gone to seed in late August and resembled a mini-heuchera.

After a mile and two-thirds (or so) the trail crosses an open hillside covered with scarlet gilia *Ipomopsis aggregata* (bloomed June-August) and mountain mule-ears *Wyethia mollis* (bloomed July). Breezes coming up draw stink from the red elderberry *Sambucus racemosa* var. *microbotrys*. Weeden says it has "ill-smelling foliage" - quite an understatement. Once a tree made a loud crack. I cringed, looked around and was ready to run although we were in the open. My fellow hiker saw the tree fall in the ravine below us. All I saw was the dust cloud.

In early July the low polemonium, *Polemonium californicum* had blue flowers with yellow stamens. Its foliage smells skunky with a tomatoey undertone - rather pleasant, like the faint smell of skunk. The smell is stronger in plants growing in moist shade than in plants in dry sunny places. Clumps of brook saxifrage *Saxifraga odontoloma* with round, toothed leaves were not in bloom yet. Fragrant white Macloskey's violets *Viola macloskeyi* dotted the wet stream-sides. In late August brooklime *Veronica americana* with 4-petaled blue flowers and yellow primrose monkey-flowers covered wet areas.

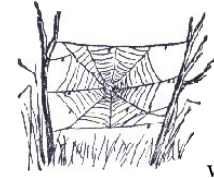
Two of Peg's friends met us at the restaurant and accompanied us on the August hike. Peg and I hardly ever talk except about flowers. All of us yakked it up the entire day and saw a lot more than usual. We were able to cover the 4 mile round trip in only 7 hours! When we started, the sky was overcast, and 30% chance of rain was predicted. They discussed the possibility of getting rained on. I said, "Naw. It won't rain until we get back to the cars." It was windy and cold out at the lunch spot. We actually felt a couple drops and I thought my prediction would soon be shot down. However, the rain held off until Peg started the engine to leave and raindrops started falling on the windshield. We laughed and saw our companions in their car laughing too.

A small red fir by the trail had a weird growth on one branch - thickened, yellowish stems. I said I'd never seen it before (just not close up as it turned out). Then we saw it on more trees. I thought it might be an *Arceuthobium* tree parasite but my copy of Weeden had nothing that matched it. People at the rangers' station had no idea what it was. So Peg took it home and did some detective work. It was fir dwarf mistletoe *Arceuthobium abietum*. It is listed in Russo's book on plant galls as the cause of broom and stem swelling.

In years past the bark was missing from a large area of a dead upright tree. In the right light the exposed wood was almost electric blue. Nobody knew what caused it. Some people seemed to think I was nuts. Somewhere I read about blue staining fungi. It's either *Chlorociboria aeruginascens* or *C. aeruginosa*. Now the outer layer of wood is gone so it's not blue anymore.

And we saw a mystery fungus that maybe someone can identify for me: A beautiful tan fruiting body 3-5 inches in diameter, not necessarily round, growing on wood, covered with drops of gold liquid. What is it???

## Observations



In the foothills, drought is apparent everywhere. Even some of the dove weed has dried up; other plants appear surprisingly lush and are humming with pollinators.

Blue oaks are in various stages of defoliation, but seem to be bearing a fairly good acorn crop. Some twinberries are producing their usual bright red fruit, but others have gone brown without bearing.

Summer is to the hot inland valleys of California as winter is to the Midwest or the East. It's our dormant season. Sometimes we may forget that many natives are simply hunkering down through the summer, especially through summers in a drought. It never seems unusual that the magnificent deciduous forests of the northeastern United States are dormant during winter, displaying only bare branches against icy skies. No apologies should be needed for dormancy. Therefore, no apologies should be needed for our native plant gardens in summer. We should be napping, too.

Summer is a good time to neaten things up. Prune back spent blossoms and branches; shape and thin overgrown shrubs; harvest some seed. However, don't ignore the needs of others. For example, I am late in tidying up two Blue Elderberry. To the unfamiliar they aren't much to look at in the summer. But to a house finch, the elderberry fruit that wasn't eaten when it was plump and ripe are now appetizing seed. And hummingbirds stop by to nibble an unsuspecting spider. Now I have to wait to prune that shrub until the finches are finished.

Many natives peak in summer - California Fuchsia and those bodacious Blue Curls, for example, are in full glory right now.

When you take a break from summer native gardening chores, spend a few minutes up close to a native bloom and peer into it. Now imagine yourself a hunter-gatherer the size of a bee or a hummingbird poking around in there for sustenance. When you step back and return to your personhood you may have a new (or renewed) respect for those beings.

-Editor

## Membership

Helen Shaw

If you require corrections or additions to your membership information, contact Helen Shaw at [helshaw@netptc.net](mailto:helshaw@netptc.net)

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



### \*New Members and Membership Renewals

**Fresno** : Horwitz, Judd, Kast, Kronman, Loucks, Mitchell, Peterson, Pryor, Rowe, Teviotdale

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

Renew your CNPS membership online using a credit card. As an option, set it up to renew automatically year after year. It is quick, easy, convenient, and reduces renewal mailing costs. Visit [www.cnps.org](http://www.cnps.org) and click on the JOIN button.

**The major problems in the world are the result of the difference between how nature works and the way people think.**

- Gregory Bateson

## SEQUOIA CHAPTER OFFICERS\* AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

<b>*President</b>	open	
<b>*Vice-President</b>	Paul Mitchell paul30@comcast.net	559/638-2784 (h)
<b>*Secretary</b>	Marian Orvis mforvet@earthlink.net	559/226-0145 (h)
<b>*Treasurer</b>	Jeanne Larson jrjlars@aol.com	559/243-0815 (h)
<b>*Past President</b>	Peggy Jones autumn_aspen@hotmail.com	559/897-9646 (h)
<b>Membership</b>	Helen Shaw helshaw@netptc.net	559/855-4519 (h)
<b>Programs</b>	Jane Pritchard xxiii_xx@yahoo.com	559/323-8253 (h)
<b>Newsletter Editor</b>	Thelma Valdez nmtv@unwiredbb.com	559/323-8962 (h)
<b>Hospitality</b>	Madeleine Mitchell madeleine43@comcast.net	559/638-2784 (h)
<b>Horticulture</b>	Joseph Oldham J.Oldham1@sti.net	559/658-7165 (h)
<b>Education</b>	Peggy Jones	(see Past President)
<b>Rare Plant</b>	John Stebbins johnst@cvip.net	559/297-0144 (h)
<b>Plant Sale</b>	Marian Orvis	(see Secretary)
<b>Conservation Co-chairs</b>	Jeanne Larson Joseph Oldham	(see Treasurer) (see Horticulture)
<b>Directors at Large</b>	Jim Seay Verna Arnest	jaseay@comcast.net vernaj@sti.net

### Next Newsletter: October 2009



Send content, letters, corrections, or suggestions to Thelma Valdez at [nmtv@unwiredbb.com](mailto:nmtv@unwiredbb.com). The deadline for the January newsletter is Thursday, October 1.



## 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: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

- |                          |                           |        |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Student, Limited Income   | \$25   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Individual                | \$45   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Family, Group, or Library | \$75   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Plant Lover               | \$100  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Patron                    | \$300  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Benefactor                | \$600  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mariposa Lily             | \$1500 |

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

September 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](http://www.cnps.org).**

## ANNUAL PLANT SALE

### FALL PLANT SALE



SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2009

8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Free Admission

CLOVIS BOTANICAL GARDEN

945 N. Clovis Avenue

(North of Alluvial in Clovis)

*For further information*  
(559) 349-1811

*Sponsored By:*  
Clovis Botanical Garden  
California Native Plant Society



## SEPTEMBER 2009

### SEQUOIA CHAPTER CNPS

Clockwise, starting at top:

- California Fuchsia (*Epilobium*)
- Dove Weed (*Eremocarpus* or *Croton setigerus*)
- Blue Curls (*Trichostema lanatum*)
- Fireweed or Willow Herb (*Epilobium* sp.)
- Rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus nauseosus*)

