



<http://www.cnps-sequoia.org>

Reflections on Another Growing Season

Thelma Valdez shares her thoughts on our weather and her plants' responses:

One of the things I appreciate about gardening with California natives is the connection with the essential elements of life - soil, water, air, sunlight, shade, temperature, length of day, length of night, and especially timing. Maybe all gardening provides this but as I only plant California natives, those plants are the source of my observations.

Each year is like a snowflake - no two are identical. The essential elements combine to stimulate growth so that one year everything is small and reaches maturity quickly before summer dormancy and other years everything grows three times as large as I expected. This year's dry December and January and two bursts of good rain in February seems to have stimulated huge leaves. After this last rain, wow!. Redmaids are leggy! I think I can hear the non-native filaree growing like Midwest corn now that they have a little moisture. Leaves that typically hug the ground are standing up tall. Two of my manzanita blossomed in early February and the fruit are emerging. After the last rain, more blossoms are in the making. Am I just getting older and sensing the fleeting of time or are all my plants trying to cram in to March what they would normally have leisurely made happen between January and April?

Most of my natives take a few years to get very big. I'm stingy with water to make them strong for the long haul. It's easy to look at a plant in my garden and say, "That plant is five years old? It's so small!" Yep. Hopefully it's small and tough. Goodness knows it's going to need all the drought tolerance it can manage.

--Observations from Jeanne Larson

The wild bees are working my Bee's bliss and in a day or two will be swarming the Powder Blue Ceanothus. There is indication that the warmer weather will again provide me with a spring and fall bloom on my Mexican Bush Sage (*Salvia leucantha*). It has solid purple spikes. There is plenty for give away clumps. The Bicolor lupine is blooming and the rain makes tiny water droplets in the center of the compound leaves that sparkle like little diamonds

Home & Garden Show – March 7-9, 2014 – Reports

--from Marian Orvis, chair

Early on, plans were made to figure out what to include in the booth graciously provided gratis by the owners of the Fresno Home and Garden Show. Visits to our storage unit in Clovis were made at least twice by me and at least once by Warren to pick up some of the items to educate visitors to our booth. We wanted to emphasize drought tolerant education. Expectations are that thousands of people will visit the event again this year. The weather will be wonderful. Many thanks to Warren for setting up the big red display and arranging photos and educational material that Thelma Valdez made over past years. Having a three-dimensional display makes a big difference in attracting people. Many thanks to Jeanne (Larson) for her diligence in providing numerous handouts as well as providing the first shift on Friday.

Volunteers giving of their time and talents include Helen and Warren Shaw, Madeleine Mitchell, Jeanne Larson, Mary McClanahan, Jeannine Koshear, and Laura Castro.

--and from volunteer, Jeanne Larson

Visitors to the booth are varied. Some seem to understand they need to change to more drought tolerant gardens. Some are attracted to wildflowers from Madeleine's garden—lupine, poppy, and sage. There was one sad tale. An older gentleman who is faced with losing a large oak (formerly on family owned Sanger farm land) scheduled to be cut down after the kiwis surrounding it were ripped out.

Unfortunately, there are no regulations in Fresno County regarding saving oaks as there are in Visalia, where they even have a small oak preserve on the outskirts of the City. He had contacted his Fresno County Supervisor to no avail.



Upcoming Events

March 29—Saturday--Spring Into Your Garden Festival Clovis Botanical Garden

Workshops include presentations by Sequoia Chapter members Madeleine Mitchell (Cactus & Succulents) and Thelma Valdez (Getting Started with California Native Plants) Other workshops by Arborist Susan Stiltz, garden columnist Elinor Teague, and water use advisors. Also available: lunch, music, landscape design consultations. \$5; free to current CBG members.

More information, details <http://clovisbotanicalgarden.org/news-events/page/2/>

Intermountain Nursery

April 26--Native Plants in the Landscape

June 7—Wildflower Walk and Forest Tour at Brand Bluffs

Full schedule intermountainnursery.com, events and classes

May 3 8-12 - **Annual Water-Wise Plant Exchange**, CSU Fresno Greenhouses

October 18 – New date for the chapter's **annual native plant sale**, in cooperation with Clovis Botanical Garden and their water-wise plant sale



FieldReports

Sierra Foothills Spring

--Belinda Gilbert

The middle of February heralded the start of native wildflowers blooming at 3000 feet elevation! *Draba verna* bloomed abundantly, and Showy Red Maids began to bloom. In the shade of oak trees, Miners Lettuce proliferated where grasses were cleared. Miniature Lupines, California Poppies and Goldfields are growing rapidly, but not yet blooming.

Gooseberry, Buck Brush, Redbud, Silver Leaf Manzanita and Cultivated Howard McMinn Manzanita are in full bloom, buzzing with solitary bees. Buckeyes have unfurled their bright green leaves, while local White Oaks and Blue Oaks are budding and leafing out earlier this year. Foothill oaks at 3000 feet are usually a month behind their lower elevation relatives.

I am weeding an area cleared of European Brome Grasses last year. It's interesting to observe the seedling populations that germinate on disturbed soil the following year. Surprisingly, few Bromes reappear, and native seed does not often germinate in these areas. The most common species to germinate in newly cleared areas on my property are the non-natives Rose Clover, *Erodium*, Dead Nettle and Italian Rye Grass. They are growing rapidly now. I'm hurrying to weed them out before they bloom and set seed.

The second year after clearing non-natives, annuals such as *Draba verna*, Miniature Lupine, Red Maids, Popcorn flowers, Fiddleneck and Farewell to Spring begin repopulating cleared areas. These species are the pioneers and colonists. Last year, an entire hillside was covered with grey-red *Draba verna*. This year about three quarters of that population has been replaced by Miniature Lupine. I wonder which species will be the next in succession. I have favorite blooms, and it's difficult to remain hands off while succession takes its course.

While weeding, I became curious about which species succeed by growing in populations of overlapping plants, such as Miniature Lupine, Red Maids, Popcorn flowers and Miners Lettuce; and which species form prostrate mats, such as some native and non-native clovers. Both are successful strategies, insuring few other species can sprout in the same location. Weeding prostrate clovers is difficult however, as these form dense mats, making knots of stems and roots. And the grasses! Both native and non-native grasses have fibrous roots which overlap, forming interlocking masses, also difficult to weed!

It's a beautiful spring season, filled with bright green (although non-native) grasses, and the recent rains have stimulated germination and flowering of spring annuals. It's a wonderful time to visit the foothills!

Stevenson's Creek Falls

--Jane Pritchard

On February 14 Roxy and I drove up Jose Basin Road and turned left onto Italian Bar Road about 3.3 miles to a locked silver gate posted with Forest Service and Edison contact numbers. The road behind the gate is paved and has occasional vehicles and blind curves. Right away you come to an open lattice bridge and can see Jose and Mill Creeks cascading down the mountain and converging east of the bridge. Farther along Powerhouse 3 and Redinger Lake are below to the west. A penstock runs beneath the road and branches into four turbines. Just after some old cement foundations, an adit to the right is lined with waterfall buttercups=*Ranunculus hystriculus*. After this, the road is cut into the mountainside with a steep drop down to the San Joaquin River.

The Stevenson's Creek Falls are in about 2.5 miles with another longer open bridge and another adit. Signs on either side of the bridge say: Danger – Absolutely no crossing when water hits bridge. The top of the falls is visible from the east side of the bridge when the sun shines through spray as the water hits rocks. According to the World Waterfall Database, the falls total 1200' high with primary drops of 380', 260', 250' and 180'. The road continues to the Mammoth Pool Powerhouse. I would need to bicycle it to see the whole thing but the thought was very scary at first. I have returned twice and am getting more used to it. Last time was after a rain, and plants had changed from looking like fall to a green spring. Popcorn, fiddleneck, miniature lupine, spider lupine, bush lupine, and redbuds were in bloom.

This is a fantastic and easy hike. Aaron found two thrilling videos: [here](#) (from the Jose Basin side) and [here](#) (from the Mammoth Pool side). One video is a high-water condition; the "cloud" near the horizon is actually spray from the waterfall. Also search Million Dollar Mile California; Candace's Sierra Club hike has many pictures of the scenery and flowers.

--Note:

Belinda lives in the foothills near Ahwahnee, working to restore her six-acre property, with the goal of replacing the non-native grass ground cover with annual wildflowers and native bunch grasses. As you can imagine, this is a herculean task to which she has dedicated years.

Jane knows our chapter's flora as few others do, having years of "boots on the ground" in the form of regular hikes in the Sierra Nevada hills and mountains.

Both enjoy sharing and our newsletter is richer for that. Their contact information is on the last page.

CHINA CREEK REPORT: February, '14

--Warren Shaw

It was kind of a good news/bad news situation. We had targeted Bull Thistle rosettes, and a good crew of volunteers showed up with hoes and shovels to attack them. The bad news was that, though they walked over a large part of the southwest section of the Park, they found very few such plants, thus making it appear we had gotten them out of their warm beds on a cool spring morning unnecessarily.

The good news was that there were very few new little Bull Thistle plants, suggesting the dry conditions of the current year had not proved hospitable to the copious seed produced by last year's mature specimens. There will be more, of course, but it does seem that the drought, in this case, at least, is working in our favor.

We also installed cages around some previously flagged oak seedlings to protect them from the cattle, which will soon be grazing the southeast area.

At our March work party on Saturday, 3-15, we'll, once again, be targeting Bull Thistle; we may also take time to clear the trail, where one of the great old Valley Oaks has, sadly, fallen across it, and we hope to finish caging seedlings, though, happily, we keep finding new ones. It should be a beautiful day to spend a few hours in the Park. Please join us if you can. To get to the Park, take 180/Kings Canyon east across Academy to Smith or Oliver. Turn south about 1/4 mi. past the school to Rainbow and Smith. Continue south on Smith about 1/4 mi. to the Park gate. Questions? warshaw1955@gmail.com.

Chapter news

The Directors, committee chairs, and any interested members are invited to our business meetings, held every other month, usually at the home of Thelma Valdez. We gather at 12:30 for potluck lunch—outdoors, weather permitting. A discussion of short- and long- term plans, upcoming events, committee reports, and issues of concern accompanies lunch and the meetings often finish with a walk around Thelma's acreage, most of which is devoted to plantings of natives. We are on our way home by 2:00-PM. All are invited and welcome. For directions: Thelma nmtv@unwiredbb.com. For an agenda: Marian Orvis mforvet@comcast.net

—→ note change of location:

Our March business meeting on the 16th will be at a different location. Warren and Helen Shaw will host this meeting. Directions: helshaw@gmail.com

March's agenda includes: lunch (of course) committee reports, planning for upcoming events (noted in previous pages and below)



California Native Plant Week – April 12 – 20, 2014

Celebrate Native Plant Week: Visit a botanical garden or arboretum. Talk to an expert at a native plant nursery. Take a walk in a preserve. Join a native garden tour. Volunteer in a park cleanup. Attend a workshop. Take a botany class. Plant a native!

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 Renewing Members

Belinda Gilbert, Mary McClanahan, Colin Wilkinson, Robert Hansen, Earl Knobloch, Sandra McCormick, June Richie, Christann Roy

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.



Sequoia Chapter, CNPS
thanks Derrel's for their support

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Directors at Large	Jim Seay Belinda Gilbert Michele LuValle	jinjseay@gmail.com belinda@sti.net luvalle@mcn.org

Next Newsletter: April 2014

Send newsletter corrections or suggestions to Helen Shaw helshaw@gmail.com The deadline for the April newsletter is Friday, Apr. 4



JOIN



THE CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY



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*.

I wish to affiliate with the Sequoia Chapter.

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

- Student, Limited Income \$25
- Individual \$45
- Family, Group, or Library \$75
- Plant Lover \$100
- Patron \$300
- Benefactor \$600

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

March 2014



CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY SEQUOIA CHAPTER

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

MADELEINE'S MUSINGS

Madeleine Mitchell

My native garden is beginning to bloom; first were the 2 large silver bush lupine. I saw they are blooming along the Kings River, too. The redbud is starting to color up with its bright magenta blossoms. But I want to focus this month on the wonderful selection of salvias. They are also known as sages. The genus name *Salvia* is Latin for "to save". There are many usages from medicinal teas made by the Native American tribes, to sage for flavoring soups; and great honey is made by having bee hives near white, black or purple sage. The flowers when dried on the bush produce a large amount of seed to feed goldfinches and quail.

The first to bloom was *S. brandegeei*; this plant has dark green wrinkled leaves and flowers are white and a nice contrast to the other greyish foliage of the nearby grey leaved salvias.

The second to bloom is 'Bee's Bliss' a hybrid between *S. clevelandii* and *S. sonomensis*. I've had it just 2 years and it's 8-9 feet in diameter and a ground cover about 18" tall, with the blue blooms. *Salvia leucophylla* is a pinkish bloom, just a few flowers are blooming and they went to the Home and Garden Show for display purposes. The common name is Purple sage. *Salvia clevelandii* is budded but not showing color yet. *Salvia spathacea* also has 3 large buds; the common name is Hummingbird Sage. And then there is the *Salvia apiana*, White Sage, the very fragrant salvia used by Native Americans both as a tea and a smudge; it blooms in the Summer with white blooms on a tall stalk. I love the foliage as it really stands out in front of the dark green of my Toyon. When it's just rained the smell of all the salvias is just wonderful. I've seen people walking by stop, back up and smell them.

See photos on photo page.



Harmony Manzanita
(*Arctostaphylos densiflora* "Harmony")



White Sage
(*Salvia apiana*)



Woolly Blue Curlew
(*Trichostema lanceolatum*)



Purple Sage
(*Salvia leucophylla*)



Golden Currant
(*Ribes aureum*)

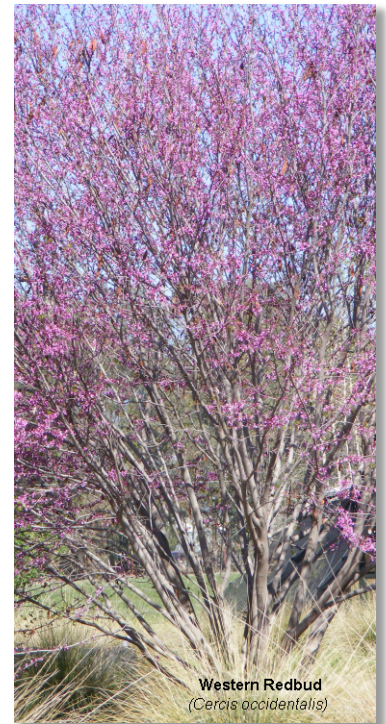
March 2014 Sequoia Chapter CNPS



Island Alum Root
(*Heuchera maxima*)



Hummingbird Sage
(*Salvia spathacea*)



Western Redbud
(*Cercis occidentalis*)



Cleveland Sage
(*Salvia clevelandii*)



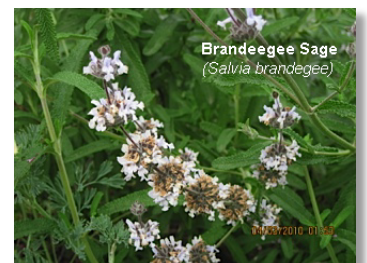
Purple Needlegrass
(*Nasella pulchra*)



Bee's Bliss Hybrid Salvia



Mahonia Skylark
(*Berberis aquifolium*)



Brandegee Sage
(*Salvia brandegeei*)