



China Creek Update

Warren Shaw

Another beautiful and productive morning, Saturday, February 21, was devoted to mulching the interpretive trail. We took occasional breaks to observe and identify various passing birds, but managed also to work up a little sweat as we worked to provide a walkable, weed-free surface for our trail, without using chemicals or burning much fossil fuel. Almost everybody brought citrus to share, and Ingrid Carmean brought homemade bread for break time -- what a treat!

After mulching, we did a quick survey of the state of yellow star thistle development, and concluded -- since it not yet begun to form stems - that it wasn't ready to graze yet. Later in the week, however, we got a call from Steve McDonald, who supplies cattle. Steve is concerned because ripgut brome is beginning to go to seed, and the seed can be injurious to bovines. Recently Grazing guru Neil McDougald of UC Extension met with Steve and others and recommended that grazing commence immediately -- so, we're still struggling to come up with a balanced approach to YST abatement.

April Workday. April's workday will be Saturday, April 25, from 9-12, when we'll concentrate once again on mulching the trail -- this time in the Oak Woodland Loop. Rakes and pitchforks will be the tools of the day, and we do hope you can join us. Call me, Warren Shaw, at 855-4519, or email me at <warshaw@netptc.net> for directions or with questions or suggestions.

Your Membership Helps Preserve and Protect California Native Plants and Their Habitats

For more than 40 years CNPS has been a leader in habitat protection, conservation, and promoting the use of native plants in landscaping and home gardens.

As a member of CNPS, you play a key role in our ability to promote the conservation of native plants through science, education, advocacy, horticulture and land stewardship. So much of what we do depends on the strength and commitment of our members! On the local level, your membership and involvement contributes to strong chapters that provide regular educational programs through monthly meetings and field trips, as well as support for local conservation efforts.

For a limited time, CNPS is offering a special incentive to new members! Join online at the \$45.00 member or higher levels and we'll send you one of three of our beautiful wildflower posters: Wildflowers of the Desert, Wildflowers of the Coast, or Wildflowers of the Redwood Forest. Visit www.cnps.org

S.H.A.R.E.S. Card for Sequoia Chapter

The Sequoia Chapter of CNPS has received our S.H.A.R.E.S. Cards. The SHARES card is an arrangement with SaveMart and FoodMaxx stores whereby most purchases at these stores earn points. A percentage of these points becomes a donation to the Chapter.

It's easy to use. Simply present your card at checkout before you pay for your purchases. The cashier swipes the card and that's it! You pay normally using cash, debit card, etc.

If you would like a card, contact Marian Orvis at mforvet@earthlink.net or 559/226-0145.

Windshield Wildflower Tour Saturday, March 28, 9 am

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

Come with us for an easy, relaxed look, with no 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, over the ridge to Watts Valley where we'll stop for lunch and bathroom break.

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.

An expert amateur botanist will be available to assist in pointing out and identifying the many species of California native plants at the various stops along the way. Free.

Sign-up Deadline: Thursday, March 26. Contact Warren or Helen Shaw by Thursday, March 26 at (559-855-4519 or warshaw@netptc.net) for details or to add your name to our list.

Home & Garden Show

Marian Orvis

It is unbelievable that 23 years of Fresno Home & Garden Shows have passed and we have been involved for 22 of those years.

This year's booth was in a great location and Thelma carried the logistics nicely. Thanks to Warren and Madeleine for the beautiful wildflower display. It included Baby Blue Eyes, Popcorn Flower, Fiddleneck, Bush and Annual Lupine, Redbut, Pseudobahia, Manzanita, Willow, Blue-Eyed Gilia, Goldfields, and more...

This year has been uplifting in that so many great folks stepped up to the call for coverage. Kudos to Madeleine and Paul Mitchell, Warren Shaw, Thelma Valdez, Nye Morton, Megan O'Leary, Darla Weiser, and Brianna Borders. Last but not least, Frank Orvis who waited with me for 2-1/2 hours for the booth to be setup.

Our experience this year has been one of the best. Many thanks and remember to save those badges for next year

Green Energy and Drought - Summer Challenges

Jeanne Larson, Conservation Co-chair

Green energy is proving to be a challenge to preserving wild lands. Big projects are scheduled for the Mojave Desert, an already delicate ecosystem. What will the land disturbance getting the panels in place do to the flora and fauna? Summer thunder storms rolling off solar panels will SURELY create a lot of topsoil disturbance.

The 640 acre solar project in western Fresno County could be no less destructive. Why don't we just put solar panels on homes and negate the need for miles of power lines. What will the effect be on migrating waterfowl if they see a "shimmering lake"?

One of the causes of wildfires are broken power lines igniting brush. Do we really need more power lines in the foothills?

The Harlow Fire nearly destroyed Oakhurst about 45 years ago and anyone traveling Hwy 41 can see that the brush fields are ripe for another catastrophe.

Goat grazing on public lands would be a good way to help reduce the fuel load, but property owners need to know that goats and Cal Fire can't do it all. Personal responsibility by those who live in the foothills is a must. This is the third year of below average rainfall, and drought conditions make it extremely important that we remember to be fire safe.

A note from the Desert Protective Council:

Please take the time to write Senator Feinstein NOW. Our deserts are under threat as never before. With the coming "solar rush" on our deserts, it is REALLY IMPORTANT to protect areas from being turned into solar farms.

Please forward to your desert-loving friends, and be sure to support LOCAL solar installations in the city. See Nick Jensen's excellent article in the most recent CNPS Bulletin for more details.

Time is short, so please call, fax or email Senator Feinstein: <http://tinyurl.com/cej6gh>

While you are at it, please also support wilderness designation, including lowlands like basins and washes, which often support the greatest biodiversity in the deserts. If you wish, the Desert Protective Council can take your letter directly to Sen. Feinstein. Email your letter to Laurel Williams of the Desert Protective Council: lwilliams@calwild.org

Spicy Smelling Shooting Stars

Granny Roberts had a plastic replica of a bare tree. At Christmas time she stuck little spicy, multicolored gumdrops all over it for us kids to eat.

In the first 2 weeks of February Sierra Foothill Conservancy's table tops were covered with white shooting stars. The blooms filled the air with their spicy fragrance - same as those gumdrops smelled. Sometimes the flowers have no fragrance. Is it related to the time of day or whether the flower has been pollinated. Does anyone out there know?

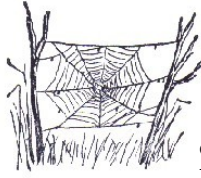
Some of the blossoms are pale magenta instead of white. Rarely petals will be a vivid red-orange-magenta color. Apparently each blossom stays the same color as it matures. I have seen the withered petals of each color surrounding a developing seed.

The name of these shooting stars is *Dodecatheon clevelandii* ssp. *patulum*. *Dodeka* is Greek for 12. *Theos* means god. *Dodecatheon* presumably is named in honor of the 12 great Olympian gods. Latin *patulus* means spread out. I'm not sure what that refers to.

These shooting stars grow in the open sun in moist soil among the basaltic rocks. The leafless stem grows from a basal rosette of obovate leaves. The stems are only 3-4 inches tall so are protected from wind. Shooting flowers point down. As the petals wither, they become erect and the seeds point up toward the sky.

Roasted or boiled roots and leaves of shooting stars are said to be edible. I'll err on the side of caution and not partake of the plant - just revel in its beauty and spicy scent.

Observations



The foothills are gorgeous! Blossoms are everywhere. Popcorn flower gives the hillsides a frosted look; high slopes are bright with patches of poppies; baby blue-eyes cover lower meadows, and fiddleneck is everywhere. Bush and annual lupines are out, redbuds are glorious, buckeyes are in full bright leaf, and blue oaks are starting to pop.

Dare I repeat it? The foothills are gorgeous! Spring in the foothill areas covered by the Sequoia Chapter is a showplace time of the year in the native plant world. (Although I must mention that this frenzy of above-ground activity, plant and animal, borders on the frenetic and I look forward to the quiet rest that comes with our hot summers.)

Regardless, you will be rejuvenated if you take a drive or especially walk in our local foothills. Each year the unique combination of the year's winter weather creates the conditions that produce a display that is unique to that year. This year the popcorn flower is outstanding. But only by getting out and walking near patches of earth will you see the delicate beauty of each blossom. Swaths of color are striking but the individuals that make up the swaths are inspiring. As the blossoms fade and you aren't ready to see them go, visit the higher elevations. We live in a remarkable region of the country and it's never more apparent than spring.

See page 1 for details on our Windshield Wildflower Tour. It's a good way to have some locals take you 'round to see some of the best of the foothills.

It's shaping up to be another year of drought and if you've planted natives in your garden, it's the time to enjoy their above-ground growth after a winter of underground activity. Even with little rain, established native plants are often vigorous as they demonstrate their having evolved with the ebbs and flows of winter rains. With the unending stream of news about the economy, the coming and going of the seasons helps put our little lives and the economy into perspective.

Native needlegrasses are not bothered by heavy clay soils and March can be windy. The combination is mesmerizing as the awns sway in the wind.



It would be unnatural to separate a discussion of native plants from the wildlife they support. Birds, in particular, rely on native plantings. Recently I watched some goldfinches in the Desert Willows. "What are they doing over there?" Turns out they were nibbling on the fuzzy dried seeds in the seed pods. They looked funny with the fluff showing on both sides of their beaks as they broke the seed apart. Another example of how a raggedy looking bit of plant life supports another side of the equation. It's good to leave the old, raggedy seed pods around. Someone can put them to beneficial use.

-Editor

-Jane Pritchard

Membership

Helen Shaw

If you require corrections or additions to your membership information, contact Helen Shaw at helshaw@netptc.net

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



*New Members and Membership Renewals

Fresno : Janzen, McClanahan, Merrill
Out of Area : Preece (Danville), Tuttle (Los Angeles)

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

RENEW ONLINE

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.

www.cnps.org
 Click on the JOIN button



"Nobody sees a flower, really. It is so small it takes time - we haven't time - and to see takes time, like to have a friend takes time."

- Georgia O'Keeffe

Dodecatheon hendersonii from Mary E. Parson's "The Wild Flowers of California," 1897.

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Next Newsletter: April 2009



Send newsletter corrections or suggestions to Thelma Valdez at nmtv@att.net. The deadline for the January newsletter is Thursday, April 9..



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: _____

- Student, Limited Income.....\$25
- Individual\$45
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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 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.

FEATURED CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT

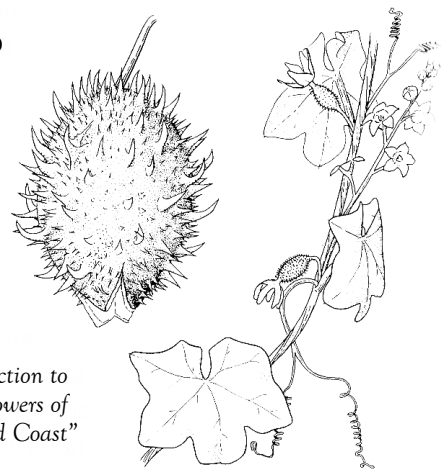
California Man-Root

Marah fabaceus is also known as California Wild Cucumber. It is a native vine in the gourd family and clammers 15-20 feet high over bushes and trees, sometimes almost smothering them. It is found throughout California in shrubby and open areas and near streams and washes up to about 5,000 feet.

Its white creamy flowers are in bloom right now (on the male stems) while the single female flower eventually produces a spiny oval fruit containing marble-size seeds. The fruit is not edible and the vine itself is not suitable for gardens.

It dies to the ground after fruiting and in summer in the foothills you can see the dried spiny fruit hanging from the dried vine.

What is impressive about this vine is its root. It can be up to five feet long and is shaped like a huge carrot or beet, hence the name man-root. The root lasts from year to year, storing great amounts of water and starch needed to produce the fresh growth each year.



Drawing from "Introduction to California Spring Wildflowers of the Foothills, Valleys, and Coast" by Philip A. Munz



MARCH 2009

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SEQUOIA CHAPTER CNPS

Clockwise starting at top left

- *Western Redbud* (*Cercis occidentalis*)
- *Miner's Lettuce* (*Claytonia perfoliata*)
- *Golden Currant* (*Ribes aureum*)
- *Purple Needlegrass* (*Nasella pulchra*)
- *Manzanita* (*Arctostaphylos* sp.)
- *Redmaids* (*Calandrinia ciliata*)
- *Blennosperma* (*Blennosperma nanum*)
- *Shooting Star* (*Dodecatheon clevelandii*)
- *Butter 'n' Eggs* (*Triphysaria eriantha*)
- *Meadowfoam* (*Limnanthes douglasii*)
- *Foothill Ash* (*Fraxinus dipetala*)
- *Tidy Tips* (*Layia platyglossa*) (below)

