



## November Board Meeting

The November Board Meeting has been canceled. All outstanding business will be discussed at the January Board Meeting.

## China Creek Update

Warren Shaw

At our October workday, we found, as suspected, that the yellow star thistle, was mostly past the bloom stage and was going to seed, so we concluded it was better to leave it alone for fear of spreading the seed.

This has been a hard-fought YST season with somewhat disappointing results. We tried really hard to get it all and thought we almost had a couple of times, but it just kept coming back. We're rethinking timing for grazing and possibly mowing as well, having noted that some ungrazed areas which were mowed late seemed to experience less recurrence. Nothing to do but keep trying until we get it right.

We're also trying a new approach to spreading mulch on our interpretive trail by having the tree trimmers dump piles of chips directly on or near the trail. The hope is that Hank Urbach can roughly spread the chips on the trail with his tractor and that we can refine the process by hand. We'll have a chance to test this theory at our November workday (details below)

We'll also be starting the process of mapping and marking areas for our proposed "Adopt-an-Area" program -- more later on that.

**November Workday.** The workday is scheduled for Saturday, November 27 from 9-3. Rakes and pitchforks will be the order of the day. Please join us if you can. Call me, Warren Shaw, at 855-4519, or email me at <warshaw@netptc.net> for directions or with questions or suggestions.)



## The CNPS 2009 Native Plant Conservation Conference *Strategies and Solutions*

January 17-19, 2009  
Sacramento Convention Center and  
Sheraton Grand Hotel

This conference aims to bring together over 1,000 scientists, conservationists, university students, public policymakers, professional and amateur botanists, and local and regional land-use planners from all regions of the state and beyond to share and learn about the latest developments in conservation science and public policy. This will be the largest of its kind devoted to California botany and landscape conservation. Its purpose is to identify and promote strategies and solutions to California's conservation challenges and to celebrate its diversity.

To register and to find out more about topics, keynote speakers, sponsorship, and volunteer opportunities, check the Conference at the CNPS Web site  
[www.cnps.org/cnps/conservation/conference/2009](http://www.cnps.org/cnps/conservation/conference/2009).

Early registration deadline ends November 15:  
<http://cnps.org/cnps/conservation/conference/2009/registration.php>

## Photo Contest!

A photo contest that is part of the CNPS 2009 Conservation Conference. Prizes go to first, second, third, and the first three runners up. The subject is "California Native Plants". Photos must be taken in California (or California Floristic Province) and feature plants native to the state. To learn full entry details, visit <http://cnps.org/cnps/conservation/conference/2009/photos.php> or email Stacey Flowerdew at [sflowerdew@cnps.org](mailto:sflowerdew@cnps.org).

## Can you sponsor a student?

38 students have requested grants to attend CNPS Conservation Conference. To date only four have been funded. CNPS is asking all chapters to ask for contributions to sponsor more students.

Six \$25 donations will fund one student, or twenty-five \$10 donations will get one student to the conference. Young conservation minded students are the future of our organization and the conservation movement.

If you can help send a student to the January Conservation Conference, please send a check to Josie Crawford, CNPS, 2707 K Street, Ste 1, Sacramento, CA, 95816.

## Silent Auction Committee

The Silent Auction Committee seeks donations to help raise money for CNPS' conservation programs. The silent auction, drawing, and live auction will take place January 18. What can you contribute? There are no restrictions! Just think about what you might like to buy--artwork, books, photos, seeds, garden tools, anything nice!. Perhaps you belong to a wine club and can provide a superb limited reserve bottle. Maybe a book signed by Ledyard Stebbins himself? What about an annual pass to our national parks and forests?

Other ideas: a gift basket full of items produced locally in your region, a week or weekend in a vacation home, airline tickets, camera, or binoculars, a garden design by a landscaper, garden services, a lovely vase or pot, a quilt with a plant theme.

Please contact Rachel Hutchinson if you have questions or donations. Phone: 559-304-0445 or [rahutchinson@gmail.com](mailto:rahutchinson@gmail.com).

## Beauty is in the Eye of the Beholder

Joseph Oldham

When most people think of beautiful plants for the garden the Coyote Brush (*Baccharis pilularis*) does not normally come to mind. However, from the perspective of promoting a healthy and environmentally balanced garden, the lowly Coyote Brush has no equal. It is a native of our California coastal scrub and desert areas but I have heavily used Coyote Brush in my garden and can personally testify to the benefits and beauty this plant brings to your home.

The most "beautiful" aspect of this plant is that it encourages beneficial insects to visit the garden. The list of beneficial species includes native pollinators such as bees, hoverflies, predatory wasps, and beautiful butterflies.

Coyote Brush is an outstanding nectar source plant with early and late season blooming cycles and that is a major component of establishing a healthy garden. The nectar from Coyote Brush provides much needed food to these insects when other sources are not available. This ensures a vibrant insect population. A relationship that is balanced between predators and prey, providing the foundation of a healthy food web.

One the other "beautiful" aspects of Coyote Brush is that it is an evergreen shrub with a rapid growth habit and low water needs. Small one-gallon plants become three to four foot bushes in one year and five to six foot specimens in two years.

I have used several Coyote Brush plants as a privacy screen and they do an outstanding job for this purpose. Some species of Coyote Brush can reach eight feet high and about the same width. Since the plant is highly variable in growth habit it can find a place in many areas of your garden. The fact that Coyote Brush will grow in our region with little of no supplemental water makes it a true water wise star as our garden practices change to adapt to a drying climate.

Coyote Brush is also very tough and can take abuse and still survive. I had a small one-gallon Coyote Brush that was run over by a truck about a month after I had planted it along the driveway. I thought that it was dead but to my surprise it survived and is now the same size as the other plants that were planted at the same time, but did not get run over!

As you can tell by now, I am a real fan of Coyote Brush! The plant is not common in most nurseries, but it is available from Intermountain Nursery in Prather and it is well worth a little effort to acquire.

Happy planting!

## Observations

The big news, of course is RAIN. At 2000 feet it had rained about half an inch by Sunday morning (Nov. 2). By Monday afternoon we had things sprouting, both broadleaf plants (mostly filaree) and grasses. Mosses are glowing ecstatically and lichens are not far behind.

Since Warren's note of a half inch of rain on Nov. 2, we've had another nighttime shower (Saturday, Nov. 8) that included five minutes of hail at least out east of Clovis! Bring it on!

Even though October's temperatures were above average, plants were beginning to show the telltale signs of the easing of summer into cooler and shorter autumn days. It's pretty easy to spot the almost overnight germination of filaree and other annual non-natives after that bit of recent rain. Subtler, however, is the greening of perennial needlegrasses that have been hunkered down all summer.

And wasn't it just yesterday that the Blue Curlys were abuzz with bees probing the profusion of lavender blossoms? After it rains Blue Curlys are tan, brittle silhouette memories of their recent elegance. Don't let that deceive you, however. Their pungent turpentine bouquet is as attention-getting as ever and a reminder of warmer (okay, hotter) summer days and nights.

So we return to that place in the seasonal cycle where the Manzanita leaves are all shiny after single rain; where mockingbirds start feeding on California Wild Rose hips; where the Coyote Brush is in full bloom and maybe also full of White-crowned Sparrows; where the Desert Willows begin to drop their narrow leaves and you can once again appreciate the beautiful color of the trunk and its structure; where the smell of sage lingers days after it rains. Do I have to stop?

-Editor

## September General Meeting

September's speaker, Alrie Middlebrook, spoke enthusiastically about native plant gardening to a group of over 40 attendees. Her enthusiasm was contagious. She has a long background in design as well as California native plants, both as a gardener and nursery owner.

Part of her vision is to bring California native plants into our everyday lives, including our everyday eating. Keep abreast of her nursery's activities at [www.middlebrook-gardens.com](http://www.middlebrook-gardens.com).

## Blue oak enhance soil quality in California oak woodlands

Excerpted from a research article in "California Agriculture", Volume 57, Number 2,

"Blue oaks create islands of enhanced soil quality and fertility beneath their canopy. The quality of soil beneath the oak canopy is considerably better than that of the grasslands adjacent to the trees. We found evidence of improved soil quality under blue oaks for physical, chemical, and biological soil properties. The type of vegetation (oak versus annual grasses) has a much stronger influence on soil organic matter and nutrient pools than does soil parent material. Removal of oak trees results in a rapid deterioration of soil quality with the majority of the loss occurring within 10-20 years after tree removal."

In this article by Randy A. Dahlgren, William R. Harwath, Kenneth W. Tate, and Trina J. Camping, evidence is provided that indicates oaks create these islands of enhanced fertility beneath their canopy due to nutrient cycling processes. These spatial patterns of nutrient availability may in turn influence the success of future regeneration and the structure of the plant community. Removing oak trees has been shown to increase forage production in areas beneath the former canopy, as opposed to adjacent open grasslands; however, this benefit is often short term - less than 20 years. These observations suggest that oak trees are an important component of the ecosystem and that they play an important role in maintaining soil quality and fertility.

Their documented research covered oak woodland ecosystems where extensive livestock grazing, firewood production, wildlife habitat and watersheds, as well as suburban human development.

The studies were conducted in three oak woodlands in the Sierra Nevada foothills (Madera and Yuba Counties) and Coast Ranges (southern Mendocino County). At two of the sites they examined the effects of oak removal on soil quality and fertility at intervals between 5 and 34 years following tree removal.

The full article is available at <http://calag.ucop.edu/0302AMJ/abstracts.html>.

If you have not visited the University of California, Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources Web site it's worth spending some time browsing. (<http://ucanr.org/index.cfm>). There is much to discover whether you're a gardener, a hiker, a farmer, or a city dweller who appreciates California's natural heritage.

## Related Events - Within Reach

### Growing Natives:

### Celebrating California's Beauty in Dry Times.

### Save these dates:

March 28, 2009 - Lafayette Community Center, Lafayette  
 March 29, 2009 - Regional Parks Botanic Garden, Berkeley  
 Co-sponsored by Pacific Horticulture, the California Native Plant Society and the Friends of the Regional Parks Botanic Garden .

We are pleased to present a 2-day program of talks and workshops exploring the possibilities for creating beautiful waterwise gardens with plants native to California.

For more information, please visit  
[www.nativeplants.org](http://www.nativeplants.org)  
[www.cnps.org](http://www.cnps.org)  
[www.pacifichorticulture.org](http://www.pacifichorticulture.org)

## Membership

Helen Shaw

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

### \*New Members and Membership Renewals

**Madera** : Colton, Hartesveldt  
**Fresno** : Bissonnette, Irvine, Knox, Merrill, \*Minar, Seay, Valdez

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

## SEQUOIA CHAPTER OFFICERS\* AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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<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

Sometimes it's good to re-read "old" information. How long does it take for the following to decompose to a non-recognizable form?

Styrofoam .....	Never	Cigarette butts .....	10-12 yrs.
Aluminum.....	80-100 yrs.	Leather shoes .....	25-40 yrs.
Plastic bags.....	10-20 yrs.	Vibram soles .....	50-80 yrs.
Plastic coated cartons .....	5 yrs.	Wool socks.....	6-24 mos.
Plastic containers .....	50-80 years	Orange peels .....	Up to 6 mos.
		Paper containers ..	2-5 yrs.

## Next Newsletter: January 2009



Send newsletter corrections or suggestions to Thelma Valdez at [nmtv@att.net](mailto:nmtv@att.net). The deadline for the January newsletter is Thursday, January 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: \_\_\_\_\_

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

New Member       Renewing Member

- Student, Limited Income..... \$25
- Individual ..... \$45
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- Plant Lover ..... \$100
- Patron ..... \$300
- Benefactor ..... \$600
- Mariposa Lily ..... \$1500

**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 2008



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).

## FEATURED CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT

### Coyote Brush (Bush)

*Baccharis pilularis*. Coyote Brush. Not exactly music to your ears. But this shrub native to coastal sage scrub and chaparral locations is one plant that is a winner all around.

It's resumé is long and impressive: It succeeds in almost any soil, from heavy clays to pure sand and is very tolerant of poor dry soils. It tolerates temperatures down to 15°F. It responds very well to strong trimming and actually looks better when kept in check.

It is the source of nectar for most of our predatory wasps, native (small) butterflies and native flies. Deer does not commonly eat it. It is sometimes touted as being fire-resistant but this only applies to well-watered and well-maintained shrubs (i.e., shearing back annually).

Coyote Brush maintains a large root system that extends many yards out from the plant. Branches grow from a crown that forms at the ground. It is due to this dense root crown that it can survive and regenerate quickly from heavy pruning or fire.



The leaves are ½ to 1 inch long with a waxy coating that reduces moisture lost to evaporation. In our area it looks better if watered occasionally in the summer to wash off the accumulation of dust.

It blooms between August and December with white fluffy female and yellowish male flowers, each growing on separate plants. From October to January the pappus catches the wind and blows away, like dandelions.

The Coast Miwok Indians applied heated leaves to reduce swelling, and other indigenous peoples used the wood from this bush to make arrow shafts and for building houses. Early pioneers called it "fuzzy wuzzy" because of its fluffy seeds.

It may be time to consider a few for your garden!

References: <http://www.pfaf.org>;  
[www.laspilitas.com](http://www.laspilitas.com);  
[www.blueplanetbiomes.org](http://www.blueplanetbiomes.org)

Drawing by Denise Robertson Devine from  
"Native Plants for use in the California  
Landscape" by Emile L. Labadie

