



China Creek Update

Warren Shaw

Our April workday took place on a gorgeous spring day, but was otherwise unremarkably more of the same: tidy up around the kiosk (including replacing the Plexiglas covering for the gate sign) and pull and grub weeds. We did note that the garbage can (newly painted by neighbor, Tracy Polownikow, with a park scene featuring the big dead oak in the southeast area) is as about as close to a thing of beauty as a garbage can can be. The photo at right doesn't do this trash can justice. You should visit China Creek and see it for yourself.



Another new aspect was the presence of Christine Rainbolt, who, as a grad student at FSU, will be mapping the Yellow Star Thistle infestations in the park; though Saturday she mostly helped with the weed work.

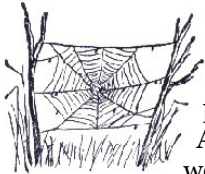


We have since received word from County contact, John Thompson, that the County has asked him to consider the Park for development as "mitigation bank land." When we asked for the implications of this designation, he promised to get back to us when he figured it out. No news as yet.

June Workday:

Call (855-4519) or email <warshaw@netptc.net> for date, directions, or other information.

Observations



It's years like this one when I find myself wishing I'd kept that gardening and weather journal I've had in mind for the past ten years. Suddenly one day in late April I noticed the white crowned sparrows were no longer in the Coyote Bush. In fact, they weren't around period! No worries, the goldfinches were still around in droves as long as the weather was cool. Then after the last rain and the beginning of 80 degree days, the Harvest Brodiaea began to bloom and the most of the goldfinches were gone.

Hummingbirds are now picking spiders off the California Wild Rose while they head over to the various blooming varieties of Cleveland Sage for a chaser of nectar. Or perhaps they're collecting spider silk for a tidy nest cup.

Up in the foothills Warren says that Blue Oaks are beginning to acquire their summer "blue" coloration while grasses on hillsides beginning to show signs of browning. Madia elegans are providing large, bright yellow patches here, there, and everywhere.

Various species of Clarkia, including Farewell to Spring are appearing. Many earlier blooming species: Pretty faces, Ithural's Spear, Blue Dicks, Mustang Clover, Chinese

houses, yellow Monkey Flower, Globe Lillies, and even a few poppies, are still colorful.

Just before the warm days settled in, Warren spotted an absolutely stunning display of Farewell to Spring on the slope above the quarry area across the river from Doyle's.

It feels like it's been so long since we've had a "normal" rainy season (whatever that means any more), that I find myself surprised at each native plant's vigor this year. My Carpenteria had great blooms this year and for those who may be wondering when your young Carpenteria will bloom, be patient. Sometimes good things take time and a Carpenteria fits that description.

-- Editor



Woolly Blue Curls
 (*Trichostemma lanatum*)

Water-Wise Plant Exchange

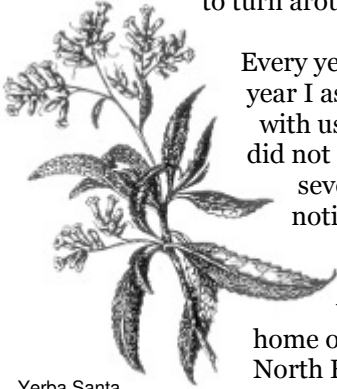
By all accounts this was another successful event. We gave away redbud seed, educated numerous individuals about the perfectly good use of our native California Bay leaves for cooking, and generally met one of the major items in CNPS' mission, namely that of public education.

Water meters in Fresno and other areas, and the general public awareness of water issues are serving to generate interest in California native plants.

Retired Teacher Wildflower Trip

by Jim Seay

Each year I lead a windshield tour of wildflowers for the California Retired Teachers Association, Madera County Chapter. We usually go to the Madera County side of Millerton Lake and then North on Madera County Road 210 (Hildredth Road.) where we have to ford Willow creek. Usually we stay on Road 210 until it connects back to Road 211. This year the creek was too full of water and so we had to turn around.



Yerba Santa
(*Eriodictyon californicum*)

Every year we find new plants. This year I asked Jane Pritchard to come with us because of her expertise. She did not disappoint and pointed out several plants that we had not noticed before.

After a morning searching for wildflowers, we drove to the home of Max and June Richie near North Fork for lunch. June had prepared a wonderful potato salad and we all brought sandwiches. Cookies

and chips were shared. The Richie home is a beautiful two story adobe house with double adobe walls with an dead air space in between. It has many unique features including antique doors, windows, tiles, etc. June has found items all over the western states and Italy and has combined them in building a beautiful and very unusual home.

We look forward to future trips. All retired teachers and CNPS members are welcome. Keep this in mind for Spring 2011.

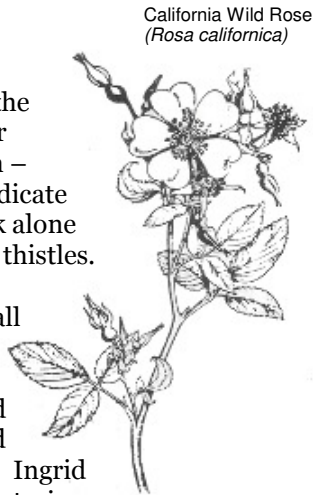
China Creek FUN Day!

Jane Pritchard

You're really missing out if you miss the China Creek work day. You have your choice of invasive thistles to deal with – yellow star, bull or milk. You can eradicate thistles with a talkative group or work alone and meditate. There's no shortage of thistles.

Break is a time to socialize and taste all the goodies everyone brings.

Warren always has coffee, lemonade from Jeanne's Meyer lemons, ice-cold foothill well water, peanut butter, and Helen's fantastic homemade muffins. Ingrid has brought homemade peach and nectarine



California Wild Rose
(*Rosa californica*)

Not a "bored" meeting

Jane Pritchard

Board members really enjoy each other and Thelma's place where our meetings are held. After the meeting adjourns, Thelma always gives a tour of her garden/meadow for those who can stay. Her purple needle grass has done well this year and is five feet tall in places.

We decided to have a potluck at the April meeting. It was a huge success. Thelma had set up a table covered with a white cloth in her front yard under shade trees. People started arriving and setting out the food at noon. Over the chewing and slurping, Madeleine regaled us with her account of a recent hike. Paul had gone ahead as usual. She was stopped by a coiled rattlesnake that refused to move for 3 hours. Finally, Paul came very slowly over the hill. He had suffered an agonizing broken rib during a fall that Madeleine believes was caused by his holey tennis shoes with no tread left. She had tried to throw them away. Paul had retrieved them from the trash and worn them on the hike. (He missed the potluck. I was glad I hadn't worn my tennis shoes that day.)

People got coffee and seconds or thirds as the meeting commenced. We reported on past, future and on-going events and exchanged ideas on various topics. We decided to call these "planning potlucks" (P-P's) so everyone knows you don't need to be a board member to attend. The next meeting on August 8 at noon will be another potluck. Please join us. Bring your ideas, your special dish, and enjoy the ambiance, food and people. Contact Thelma to let her know you will be there.

ice cream and an unbelievable green salad with real silverware and plates. Sadly, there are times when so much food is brought, you stuff yourself to sample everything.

As they say: All good things must end. Finally you tear yourself away from the food and people and return to the thistles. Sometimes it's pretty uncomfortable to bend over after eating so much.

Maybe you think that certain people come to China Creek work day mainly to eat and talk. But pulling/chopping thistles (an adze works wonders) provides some upper body exercise which is very good for your heart. Come out once and you'll be hooked.



There is another plant that is native to Fresno County that is in stark contrast to *Carpenteria californica*. It's Keck's Checkerbloom (*Sidalcea keckii*), shown at right. It is a small annual and its range is isolated to serpentine soils such as those where this photo was taken – at Sierra Foothill Conservancy's Tivy Mountain Preserve. Warm temperatures mean the blossoms are gone for this year but mark your calendar to visit the Preserve next year and get some great photos of a species identified as endangered at both the state and federal levels.

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 (April and May)

Fresno : Castro, Janzen, Larson, Latimer, McClanahan, Orvis, Phillips, Rodriguez, Roy, Shaw, Smith, Yorganjian
Madera : Dal Cerro, Oulton

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, 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.

Next Newsletter: Summer 2010



Send newsletter corrections or suggestions to Helen Shaw @ helshaw@netptc.net The deadline for the Summer newsletter is Friday, May 7.

SEQUOIA CHAPTER OFFICERS* AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

*President	open	
*Vice-Pres.	Paul Mitchell paul30@comcast.net	559/638-2784 (h)
*Secretary	Marian Orvis mforvet@earthlink.net	559/226-0145 (h)
*Treasurer	Jeanne Larson jrjlars@aol.com	559/243-0815 (h)
Membership	Helen Shaw helshaw@netptc.net	559/855-4519 (h)
Programs	Jane Pritchard xxiii_xx@yahoo.com	559/323-8253 (h)
Newsletter Editor	Thelma Valdez nmtv@unwiredbb.com	559/323-8962 (h)
Hospitality	Madeleine Mitchell madeleine43@comcast.net	559/638-2784 (h)
Horticulture	open	
Education	Warren Shaw	559/855-4519 (h)
Rare Plant	John Stebbins johnst@cvip.net	559/297-0144 (h)
Plant Sale	Marian Orvis	(see Secretary)
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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.

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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

May 2010



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.

MADELEINE'S MUSINGS

Holly-leaved Cherry

Madeleine Mitchell



Baja. I bought my plant in 1992 at a CNPS fall plant sale in Monterey County. It was slow growing like most natives but now is a multi trunked large shrub, about 15 feet tall.

They can also be pruned into a single trunk tree. It blooms prolifically and the whole plant is now abuzz with dozens of bees. After pollination the large red fruit ripen in the fall. They look like Bing Cherries, but have a larger seed and less fruit. I eat them anyway as I find them tasty. Many fall off and have started new plants. The leaves are shiny and shaped like holly, hence the common name.

“Holly-leaved Cherry”, (*Prunus ilicifolia*) is an evergreen shrub that grows in the foothills, from Napa County through the Coast Ranges and down to northwestern

The plant is drought tolerant, not fussy about soil and is resistant to old root fungus. I've seen the shrub used as a hedge either tall as a screen or pruned into a boxwood-like short border. There is also a subspecies “Catalina Cherry”, that is found in Baja chaparral and on four of the Channel Islands, (*Prunus ilicifolia* ssp. *lyonii*).

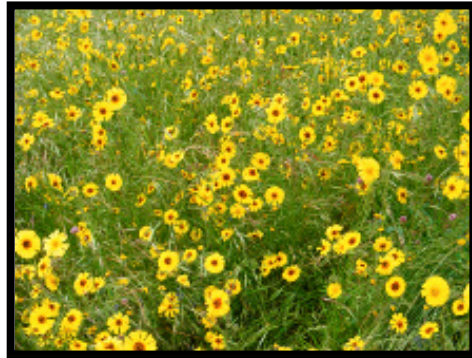
Native Americans ate the fruit, and used the seed after processing to remove the cyanide. The leaves, bark and roots were also used for medicine. The wood was used for bow construction.





Left to right, starting at top

- Ithuriel's Spear (*Triteleia laxa*)
- Carpenteria (*Carpenteria californica*)
- Manzanita fruit
- Common Madia (*Madia elegans*)
- Fairy Lantern (*Calochortus albus*)
- Five Spot (*Nemophila maculata*)
- Woolly Blue Curls (*Trichostemma lanatum*)
- Fiesta Flower (*Pholistoma auritum*)
- Tarweed in foothills
- Harvest Brodiaea standing tall before blooming.



MAY 2010
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