



CARPENTERIA

Newsletter of the Sequoia Chapter
California Native Plant Society

March 2005

CHAPTER EVENTS

Chapter Meeting: Tuesday, March 15. 7:00 p.m.

“Flora of the Sequoia National Forest” with Fletcher Linton, Forest Botanist

Board meeting starts promptly at 6:00 pm. All members are welcome to attend the board meeting. Regular meeting and speaker are at 7:00 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 4144 N. Millbrook (S of Ashlan Avenue).

The Sequoia National Forest spans a diverse stretch of the Southern Sierra, from the Kings River foothills and High Sierra southward to the Tehachapi Mountains, where the desert influence is increasingly evident. Fletcher will entertain us with photos representing this wonderful floristic diversity.

Future Meeting Programs

Tuesday	Vernal Pools
April 19	Carol Witham, CNPS President
Tuesday	California's Oaks
May 17	Pam Muick, Executive Director CNPS

China Creek Update

By Warren Shaw

For the February 19 workday, turnout was, as I expected, very light. Nonetheless we made fence repairs, trees requiring protection and the loop section of the interpretive trail were all flagged.

Vulcan Materials has volunteered their fence crew to do some of the fence work on Saturday, March 12. But it's a big job and there will be plenty left for us to do to prepare the grazing trial area. And then there's the trail. Please mark your calendars! Details to follow.

We email those who've signed up as “willing to be notified”. If you're not on this list and would be interested, please call Warren Shaw, 559/855-4519 or email at <warshaw@netptc.net>.)

(China Creek, an undeveloped Fresno County Park near Centerville on the Kings River, is a Sequoia Chapter restoration and educational project area.)

Chapter Native Plant Sale

We need a volunteer to coordinate our chapter's Native Plant Sale. Interested? Contact Warren Shaw 559/855-4519 or email at <warshaw@netptc.net>

What's in a label?

Have you noticed a four-digit number after your name on the newsletter's mailing label. This number tells you when your membership is due for renewal. For instance, memberships that expire this month will have 0305 after the name on the label, indicating membership expires the third month of 2005.

If the numbers indicate your membership will soon expire, you should have received a notice from CNPS. If you haven't received a reminder or have misplaced it, use the membership form on the inside of the back page of the newsletter and send it with your check to the address provided.

Lapsed members will receive newsletters for a time as a courtesy, while renewal information is being processed, but our tight budget requires the grace period to end after a couple of months.

If any of the information on your label is incorrect, please contact Helen Shaw, membership chair. Contact information is also on the inside back page.



Mini-Spring Plant Sale

Intermountain Nursery will be bringing a selection of perennials in 2 1/4 inch, tall pots to the March Meeting. Plants are ready to set out or transfer to gallons for fall planting. If you have a specific plant in mind contact Bonnie Bladen at 855-3113, fax 855-8809, or e-mail <Bonnie@Intermountainnursery.com > .

The Chapter coffers benefit from your Spring purchases so come to the meeting and buy a few plants! Got dirt?

Helen Shaw, membership chair. Contact information is also on the inside back page.

Wildflower Alert!!...Again

They'll be blooming throughout the months of March in the lower elevations. Then just keep moving to higher elevations as spring progresses to follow the blossoms. You can be seeing flowers until June!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



In my former life as a high school English teacher, I often assigned weekly vocabulary lists—words drawn from the planned reading assignments for the week. I remember including the word *sublime*, taken, I think, from Huckleberry Finn, in one such list.

For some reason I also remember the sentence I used for this word in the weekly quiz went something like, “In the spring, the central California foothills, green with new grass and sparkling with wild flowers, are _____.”

I recently finished reading Edward Abbey's Desert Solitaire. At one point he and a companion agree they do not believe in God. Later as he surveys a scene of incredible natural beauty, he says he is not an atheist but an “Eartheist.”

Whatever your religious convictions and no matter how you believe the Earth was created, I can see no conflict in recognizing the beauty, the order, and the “goodness” of our home planet. If we pay attention to the news, we know that evil of all kinds abounds in our world, and it can get pretty discouraging to think about. A little time spent quietly observing Earth in her natural state, especially in the spring, can help put things in perspective and keep us from being overwhelmed.

The desert bloom is, reportedly, the best in 50 years, perhaps surpassing the great spring bloom of 1998; see it if you can (at least check out < <http://desertusa.com> >). However, if, like us, you can't find the time for a trip to the desert, our local foothills are simply bursting with beauty after our blessedly wet winter. If you possibly can, try to find time to sneak off into the hills in the next few weeks and see for yourself—even if you have to take out a loan for gas). They are sublime.



-- Warren Shaw

SPRING ACTIVITIES

Yosemite Hiking!

Wendy Fisher, Botanist and Wetlands Ecologist is leading a free hike for the Sierra Foothill Conservancy on April 2 at Hite's Cove. The trail is well known for its marvelous wildflower display and is located between El Portal and Midpines.

It is the same day as the Upper Merced Watershed Coalition's “Day on the Watershed”. Since it is one way there and back, hikers can decide if they want to attend the entire hike or just part.

The “Day on the Watershed” will be sponsoring a great BBQ and get together at noon very close by. Meet at the trailhead 9 a.m. The hike will begin promptly by 9:15. Wendy plans to be on the trail until 3 p.m., so pack a lunch if you are not attending the BBQ. There will be a group meeting in Oakhurst in front of Radio Shack at 7:30 to carpool/caravan. Contact Wendy for questions or further information at 559.642.4880.

"History cautions that people experiencing long periods of relative stability are prone to excess. We must thus remain vigilant against complacency."

--Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan

California Native Grasslands Association Spring Events

Identifying and Appreciating Native and Naturalized Grasses of California.

Wednesday, April 6, is a full day classroom experience taught in Lake Elsinore. Thursday, April 7, is a full day field experience at the Santa Rosa Plateau. Tuition is \$175 for members and \$210 for nonmembers. This class has a maximum of 30 students.

Registration forms can be downloaded from the website < www.cnga.org > . Select the Spring Workshop heading at the top of the page to go to the workshop explanations.

California Native Grasslands Association Annual Conference April 14 – 16 at the Heidrick Ag Center Woodland, CA.

To learn more, visit < www.cnga.org > or email admin@cnga.org.

FEBRUARY CHAPTER MEETING

February's Chapter Meeting was held with the welcome sound of heavy rain pounding the building. Members that braved the rain were treated to an informative presentation by Brent Johnson, YNP Botanist, regarding the spread and control of invasive plants in Yosemite.

Over the past few centuries, and especially in the last few decades, there has been an unprecedented redistribution of plant species. Invasion is normal, of course, but this level of global redistribution has never before occurred.

The Park's Invasive Plant Management Plan recognizes three major invasive plants (among many) : Yellow Star Thistle (which has invaded hundreds of acres in the El Portal area), Himalayan Blackberry (30-35 acres in the Yosemite Valley as well in various riparian areas and meadows), Spotted Knapweed (a new invader to Yosemite and California.)

In Yosemite, 150 non-native species have been identified with 25-30 specifically marked as invasive. As one would expect, most of these occur in the lower elevations in developed and disturbed areas. Interestingly, upper elevation locations such as Tuolumne Meadows have surprisingly few invasive plants although there is a clear history of heavy sheep grazing. We are still observing and learning.

Current actions being taken to eliminate invasive plants include community involvement, volunteer work days, heavy equipment inspections as a component of work contracts, a variety of control techniques (mechanical, fire, chemical, and biological), and public education.

Limited resources require that all areas cannot be monitored or controlled. Therefore part of the task is to target areas that can be regularly checked for invasive plant status and to prioritize what can actually be done to control the plants, as well as monitoring the effects of the control methods.



Mimulus guttatus
monkey flower

RELATED ACTIVITIES

Sierra Foothill Conservancy

Classes

Classes require early reservations (\$10/person, \$20/family). Space is limited. Bring lunch and water for daytime classes. Visit <www.sierrafoothill.org> for more information, registration, and changes/additions or call 559/855-3473.

Saturday March 19	Wildflowers of the McKenzie Preserve. With botanist John Stebbins, this popular class is held at the height of the wildflower season on the Preserve. Includes a strenuous hike to the top of the table to see vernal pool species and great scenery. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Saturday May 21 or June 18	Wildflowers of Grand Bluffs. Enjoy the cool mountain air at 6000 ft. while taking a moderate hike with Bonnie Bladen and John Stebbins (May 21) or Bonnie and Chuck Peck (June 18). 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Hikes

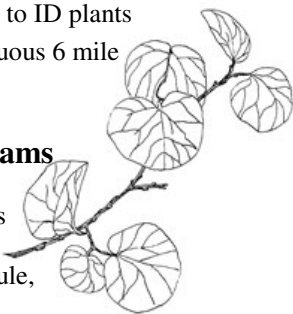
Hikes are free, led by experienced volunteers, not limited in size, and begin at 9:00 a.m. Call for meeting points, weather information, and possible cancellations.

Saturday March 12	McKenzie Table Top. 6 miles, moderately strenuous
Sunday March 13	McKenzie-Smith Basin. 5 miles, very strenuous.
Saturday March 19	McKenzie Loop. 7 miles and very strenuous.
Saturday March 20	Miller Summit. 4-6 miles round trip
Saturday March 26	Wildflower walk at the McKenzie. Moderate hike with stops to identify plants
Sunday April 3	McKenzie Table Top. 6 miles, moderately strenuous
Saturday April 9	McKenzie-Smith Basin. 5 miles, very strenuous.
Sunday April 10	Wildflower hike at Tivy Mountain. Moderate hike with stops to ID plants
Sunday April 10	Tivy Peak. A very strenuous 6 mile hike.

Jepson Herbarium Public Programs

Workshops are taught by recognized authorities in their field. Most workshops are designed to accommodate beginners as well as professionals. For a full schedule, descriptions, and registration, visit <<http://ucjeps.berkeley.edu/jepwkshp.html>>.

Saturday & Sunday March 12-13	Intro to Morphology and Identification of Flowering Plants
Saturday & Sunday March 19-20	Basics of Botanical Illustration
Saturday & Sunday March 26-27	Intro to Digital Macro-Photography Techniques.



Chawanakee Unified School District Spring 2005 Classes - Chawanakee Adult School

Classes are \$10. For information, call Luba at 645-1137 x2. Pack water and a snack; dress in layers; wear hiking shoes.

Saturday March 19 1-4 p.m.	Wildflowers & More. San Joaquin Experimental Range. Explore a local bio-sphere reserve at the peak of foothill wild-flower season. A level 4-mile round trip and a little rock-hopping will lead us along Cottonwood Creek to a scenic Native American village site.
Saturday April 16 10-3 p.m.	Horseshoe Bend – A Wildflower Walk. See the best wildflowers near North Fork. A relatively easy though rocky trail leads 4 miles round trip through colorful meadows to the San Joaquin River. Meet at North Fork School.
Saturday May 14 1-5 p.m.	Big Sandy Granite Caves – San Joaquin River Gorge. A fairly level 4-mile round trip trail leads us along the river to rare granite caves, sculpted by the waters of Big Sandy Creek. Dress for warm weather. Meet at North Fork School.

UC Extension Class at Riverview Ranch

Drought Tolerant Landscaping for Mountain, Foothill, and Valley Homes. Wednesday, April 13, 2005, 9:30 – 12:00. Learn basic techniques to establish/convert to a drought tolerant landscape in Central California locations. Bonnie Bladen from Intermountain Nursery will discuss general guidelines and answer specific questions about plants, soils, watering systems and procedures to start using less water in your yard.

Pre-registration is by mail (\$10 to UCCE, 1720 S. Maple Ave., Fresno, CA 93702.) <cefresno.ucdavis.edu> or 559/456-7285.

Intermountain Nursery Classes

Foothill Wildflowers

Saturday, March 26, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

The morning will be spent walking and recognizing local flower species. Meet at the Nursery and carpool. Bring a hand lens, binoculars, and sun protection. Class is \$10.00

Native Plants in the Landscape

Saturday, April 2, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

This class is offered by Bonnie Bladen of Intermountain Nursery. Tour the demonstration gardens and find out what will do well in your location. Cultural requirements of the plants will be discussed and handouts are available. Class is \$10.00. Call 559.855.3113 or <intermountain@psnw.com>

Sierra Spring Sojourn (May 13-15, 2005)

The Bristlecone Chapter of CNPS holds their 8th Biennial Sierra Spring Sojourn at the Bernasconi Center in Big Pine. It includes field trips and evening programs focusing on the flora of the White Mountains, Owens Valley and the eastern Sierra Nevada.

Registration packs are available by email when they are available in March. Contact Sherryl Taylor at staylor@npgcable.com. To receive the pack by mail, send an SASE to Sherryl Taylor at P.O. Box 1638, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546 or call 760-924-8742.

Volunteer's Corner

- **CNPS Sequoia Chapter Native Plant Sale**, typically in September. Consider growing natives in 4" pots for sale – they are 100% profit! Contact Jeanne Larson for additional information. 559/243-0815 or email <jrjlars@aol.com>

- A joint “**River Walk**” with El Rio Reyes Trust. Sunday, April 24, 1:30 pm. Opportunities to volunteer TBA.
- **China Creek Workday** tentatively scheduled for Saturday, March 12th to repair fences and protect vulnerable plants.

INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Conservation Visioning Meeting Announcement From: Ileene Anderson, CNPS Conservation Team

The Conservation Team at CNPS is having a series of Conservation Visioning Meetings focused on how CNPS proceeds with the Conservation Program, including refocusing our goals and mechanisms for achieving them.

To date, one meeting has taken place in Southern California. Three more regional meetings are planned. A CNPS Web site is devoted to these Conservation Visioning Meetings. It gives information on meetings dates and locations, and includes the posting of the meeting notes. The Web site address is: < www.cnps.org/programs/conservation/meetings.htm >.

The outcome of these meetings will be a prioritization of issues that will be presented to the CNPS Chapter Council Conservation Conference in September 9-10, 2005 (hosted in southern California). The final step will be implementation of priority issues.

The strength of CNPS' Conservation lies within its members and chapters. Please take time to participate in this effort, so that the CNPS' mission of conserving our legendary flora can be achieved.

Volunteer Botanists Needed

The San Luis National Wildlife Refuge Complex seeks volunteer botanists for the collection of field specimens, the identification of specimens, and the preparation of voucher specimens for the Refuge herbarium collection. The Refuge Complex encompasses 43,547 acres in Merced and Stanislaus Counties. Ecological communities protected on Refuge lands include wetlands, vernal pools, riparian corridors and native grasslands.

Suitable volunteers must demonstrate a rudimentary level of competency in conducting botanical field work, via a reference from another botanist or previous botanical work/volunteer positions. Inexperienced students who are able to collaborate with a suitable professor in an independent study project are also encouraged to inquire. Refuge housing may be available for individuals who can commit to multi-day collecting periods, such as during a school holiday. To insure that Refuge resources, including rare plant populations, are not harmed by collecting activities, volunteers are required to sign a volunteer agreement, will be subject to appropriate levels of Refuge oversight and supervision, and be expected to coordinate their activities with Refuge staff.

This is an excellent opportunity for botanical enthusiasts to become intimately familiar with the flora of the Northern San Joaquin Valley and to make a lasting contribution to conserving this valuable resource. If interested, please contact Stephen Winter, Wildlife Biologist, San Luis NWR Complex, (209) 826-3508 ext. 38, <stephen_winter@fws.gov>.

OBSERVATIONS

Paul Mitchell made a quick trip to the Mohave desert and saw lots of wildflowers, but it was still too early for the “full show”. In another few weeks as the weather warms, it should be impressive.

As for the Mitchell yard in Reedley, the Redbuds are just beginning to show color and there is a lot of new growth with all the rain. The California Poppies are huge but no blooms yet.

As the weather warms I take a daily peek at a different section of the landscaping around our house. This time of year presents a discovery every day – a single early-blooming Poppy, the Black Sage blossoms beginning to burst out everywhere, an early and beautiful show of Needlegrass awns and seed catching the sun, Blue Wild Rye seed heads emerging, Miner's Lettuce blooming but already showing signs of retreating, some early Blue Dicks in the sea of non-native grasses.

A most exciting native plant event for a gardener is when natives begin to spread of their own accord from seed produced by a plant purchased at a nursery. For example, growing needlegrasses from seed can be satisfying and is very easy, but what a treat when they begin to establish themselves and thrive in a location of their choosing, or the choosing of a bird. Yes, these “volunteers” are sometimes not welcome in their selected spot (that's the time to put them in a pot and nurture them through summer so we can sell them at the Native Plant Sale in September!). But if you can let some of them stay, they often become the healthiest specimens, lending credence to the value of letting nature take its course.

Speaking of value, Joseph Oldham has first hand experience of the value of native plants. In the 4 years that he's owned his home in a new development in southeast Fresno, converting the traditional developer landscape into a native plant landscape has been a labor of time, money, and love. The benefits include the return of native birds and beneficial insects, minimal runoff of water when it rains, minimal use of supplemental watering in the summer, and a variety of smells that only California natives can provide.

So when he decided to sell his home and move to a larger place to accommodate his growing children, the question was how well his native plant landscaping, evaporative cooling, and solar electric system would fare in the marketplace. His realtor emphasized these features and the good

news is that in less than two days, he had four offers, three of which were for more than his asking price! Yes we are in a housing market boom, but it appears his native plants thrive not only in his yard but in the Fresno housing market.

-- Editor



Fremontodendron
(*Fremontia californica*)

California Invasive Weeds Day at the Capitol Wednesday, March 9th, 2005

Secretary of Resources Agency Mike Chrisman just confirmed as keynote speaker!

The morning session will include state agency briefings, plus afternoon meetings with state legislators to discuss invasive weed projects. Don't miss this great opportunity to speak with Sacramento decision makers about your work. Event information and the registration form are also posted at <http://www.cal-ipc.org/> -- click on the link for "2005 Invasive Weeds Day at the Capitol" and tell your friends and associates.

If you have further questions, please contact coordinator Wendy West at < wendyw@co.el-dorado.ca.us >

Newsletter

Send your perspectives, wonderments, poetry, or drawings to me. Have you visited a great Web site recently? Are you particularly happy (or disappointed) with a native plant you've nurtured (or ignored)? Would you like to see more of /less of a topic? Do you know of hikes or other activities in your area?

The Observations section also welcomes your input. The Sequoia Chapter covers a wide range of climates and topography. And you don't have to be a gardener to appreciate California's incredible plant diversity. Indeed, gardeners should be sure to get out and learn from nature.



Send newsletter contributions, corrections, or suggestions to Thelma Valdez at < nmtv@att.net >.

The next newsletter will be the April issue. Contributions are due by Friday, April 8.

SEQUOIA CHAPTER OFFICERS* AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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JOIN THE CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Membership includes the quarterly CNPS journal, *Fremontia*; the quarterly *Bulletin* which gives statewide news 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:

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California Native Plant Society
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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 2005



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 PLANT

California Buckeye



Aesculus californica is also known as Horse Chestnut (note that it's in the Family Hippocastanaceae). You've probably seen this large deciduous tree in the foothills.

It's striking during full bloom in early spring with its long pinkish-white blossoms shaped like candles and covering the entire plant. The blossoms are short-lived and the plant itself loses its foliage very early – usually lasting only about two months.

Once all the leaves have dropped, it becomes a display of handsome, silvery-gray bark, or from afar, a rounded canopy. In the fall its leathery pear-shaped seed capsules have glossy brown seeds similar to chestnuts.

A full grown Buckeye can reach 40 feet tall and 30-60 feet wide. California Buckeyes are found only in California, in the coastal mountains, Central Valley, and Sierra Nevada foothills below 5,000 feet. They prefer moist, well-drained soil but are quite drought tolerant once they become well-established.

Poisonous? The nectar from the blossoms is toxic to bees. The fruit was used by the Pomo, Yana, Yokut and Luiseno peoples to stupefy fish (Kroeber, 1925). They were also eaten after slow-roasting the nuts and then cutting them into thin slices, putting them into a bag and leaching them under running water (usually a stream) for 3-5 days, and then cooked into a gruel.

MINI-SPRING PLANT SALE

During the March Chapter Meeting (Tuesday, March 15 at 7:00 p.m.) we will be having a spring plant sale. As long as you can get some natives in the ground before April's warm (and sometimes hot) weather, and are prepared to provide some supplemental water to get them established, you can be quite successful in your native planting. See details on the front page of this newsletter, and see you on the 15th!

