



September Chapter Meeting: Tuesday, September 19, 7:00 p.m.

*Designing California Native Gardens:*  
**The Plant Community Approach to Artful, Ecological Gardens**  
**Speaker: Alrie Middlebrook, Native Garden Designer, Middlebrook Gardens**

We will be welcoming Alrie Middlebrook to speak about designing native plant gardens. This is an expert on the subject that is well worth the listen. Please spread the word about this meeting and come to hear an expert in the field, as well as the co-author on the subject. The timing is perfect for planning your plant purchases at our Plant Sale to be held at the end of September (see Plant Sale notice on this page.)

Alrie is a committed advocate and practitioner of the sustainable lifestyle, respected landscape professional and California native plant specialist. Her San Jose, California-based build/design firm, Middlebrook Gardens, has installed over 150 California native gardens and remains on the leading edge of the rising sustainability movement.

She published the California native plant cook book, "Eating California" and co-authored the groundbreaking new book "Designing California Native Gardens; The Plant Community Approach to Artful, Ecological Gardens," with renowned field botanist, Dr. Glenn Keator.

Her marketing and garden installation program, Lose The Lawn, offers low cost, simple solutions to "lose your lawn" and upgrade to a pesticide free, water saving, low maintenance native landscape.

Alrie is committed to educating the public and promoting sustainability through native gardening. Her many workshops and speaking engagements at diverse venues throughout the State of California have provided key forums promoting critical knowledge and understanding. Her support of community efforts to embrace sustainability has spawned recent projects like Granada Native Gardens, Guadalupe River Park and Gardens, River Street Historical Gardens and her co-founding of The California Native Garden Foundation.

***General Meetings:***

March., May, September., October.

***Board Meetings:***

November, January, February, April.

## China Creek Update

*Warren Shaw*

Unsurprisingly, few were willing to brave the foul smoky air and high temperatures to whack yellow star thistle on our June 28 workday. Those of us who did turn out didn't actually destroy much Yellow Star Thistle, but did have an opportunity to evaluate the amount of handwork remaining after Vulcan's recent mowing of the park.

We were generally encouraged by the reduced population of Yellow Star Thistle. Years of mowing, grazing, and handwork ~ and probably drought ~ have made a difference. (We also were pleased to note that the Lizard Tail is still beautiful and in abundance.)

This is not say there is no handwork left, but most plants we saw were immature enough to wait until after the Fourth. Therefore we've scheduled the next weed abatement day for Saturday, July 12, 8 am -12 noon.

We're hoping for better conditions, but are determined to give it a shot, no matter what! We sure hope you can join us ~ many hands do make light work.

## September Plant Sale!

The annual Plant Sale is scheduled for Saturday, September 27. Mark your calendars now! This is a joint effort with the Clovis Botanical Garden and is held at the Garden again this year. Clovis Botanical Garden is a good place to hold the sale and one can see natives and non-natives, all of which are selected in the Garden for their low use of water.

CNPS sells only California natives at the sale. While you're taking it a little easy during hot summer days, spend a few minutes here and there thinking about your own garden. Where could you replace a thirsty shrub or piece of lawn with a California native that would use much less water?

Plan to come to the September meeting to hear ideas about designing native gardens from Alrie Middlebrook. Make your list and come out to the Plant Sale to get your plants. More details will be forthcoming in the September newsletter.

In the meantime, consider lending a hand at the plant sale. Even a couple of hours helping out would be much appreciated!

## Explore the Sierra Vista National Scenic Byway

Chawanakee Adult Education naturalist Joanne Freemire will lead a guided tour of the Scenic Byway Saturday, July 12, 2008 from 9 AM – 5 PM. The group will carpool or caravan 50 miles to High Sierra meadows, waterfalls, beautiful rock formations, and viewpoints. Highlights include rare and insect eating plants, Globe Rock, and a natural granite arch.

To join, contact Kris Rich at the Chawanakee Academy at 559.868.4200 x321 to ensure there is room. Make your check for \$22 per person to: Chawanakee Unified School District

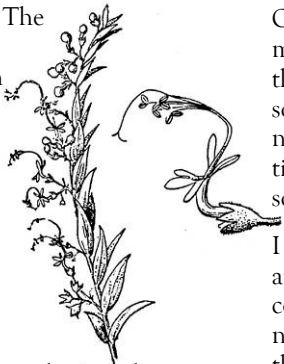
For the Tour, meet at North Fork Elementary School by 9 AM on July 12th. Dress in layers. Wear shoes for short walks. Pack lunch, water, insect repellent, and camera.

Questions? Call Joanne at: 559-877-4911

## Observations

The foothills are very dry, of course. Buckeyes are beginning their annual dormancy, completely defoliating and showing bright white trunks shining in the sun. The blue oaks haven't begun dropping leaves yet, though they may start soon in response to the drought. The rain in late May brought second crops of some flowering plants – most notably Clarkia, but they're gone now and only milkweed and dove weed show signs of life.

It's clear that summer has arrived in the lower elevations, too. The Blue Curlys are just beginning to bloom in the back four. Those hardy annuals are remarkable. They thrive in the hottest temperatures in open, all-day sunshine. And yet their blossoms are delicate lavender-blue beauties that often go unappreciated as they are dismissed as weeds. Schade.



In open fields or unused empty lots in town it seems one sees way too much Yellow Star Thistle, blooming profusely. This is not to be mistaken for our native Tarweeds. There is a lot of tarweed around, too. Brush against either Blue Curlys or Tarweed and you're rewarded with the smell of summer in Central California.

## Horticulture

*Thelma Valdez*

I spend way too much time watching birds these days. And insects, too. The vacuum cleaner is abandoned mid-cleaning in favor of binoculars and a scrub jay in the birdbath. It happens again and again and I never tire of watching even a house sparrow dipping its beak in water on a hot day. Spider webs grace the leaves of many plants in our garden that some might wonder what manner of individual would let all those spiders proliferate? I'm that individual. I like to watch the hummingbirds catching some protein or selecting webs for their nests. And who among us can match the excellence of a spider's web?

It wasn't always like that. We didn't used to have so many birds in the early years living in our home. But slowly the expanse of Bermuda grass lawn gave way to a wide variety of California native plants, mulch, stones, and the birds started to visit and raise families. Yes, it could have been accomplished with non-native plants, I suppose. But when I see that the berries on the Blue Elderberry are devoured by kingbirds, mockingbirds, sparrows, and even the occasional phainopepla, or when the non-stop summer blossoms on the Desert Willow are buzzing with bees and hummingbirds, I can't think of better low water use plants that provide as much habitat and food.

Does some of this ring true for you, too? If yes, a toast to you! What brought you to this place? A life raised on a farm? A family that loved hiking or other outdoor activities? Or, like me, a parent who cultivated a love of watching spiders spin their webs and ants working in the hot sun?

There's a bigger context that surrounds appreciating California native plants. It's appreciating nature itself. And that takes time. Appreciation of anything requires attention and it isn't only young people who seem to be having a difficult time with attention. In an article by L. Gordon Crovitz titled "Unloading Information Overload" (Wall Street Journal, July 7, 2008), he talks about a new book: "There's a lively debate on the broader issues raised by information overload. In a new book called "Distracted: The Erosion of Attention and the Coming Dark Age," author Maggie Jackson warns that the cumulative effect of new technologies is that we may be losing our ability to maintain attention more generally. Attention requires focus, awareness and what she calls executive attention.

"Relying on multitasking as a way of life, we chop up our opportunities and abilities to make big-picture sense of the world and pursue our long-term goals," she writes. "The way we live is eroding our capacity for deep, sustained, perceptive attention – the building block of intimacy, wisdom, and cultural progress." Ms. Jackson concludes that "as we plunge into a new world of infinitely connectible and accessible information, we risk losing our means and ability to go beneath the surface, to think deeply."

Of course, it doesn't have to be this way. Even in a world of the Internet, video games, and many electronic "must-haves", one can make time for spending in the garden and sharing the wonder of plants and animals with others, especially youngsters. This is the time when so many people have the seeds of love of nature planted. When the plants are California natives, all the better because of their appropriateness to the present with their ancestry tied to California's history; perhaps even what was growing in your particular patch of soil so many years ago.

I suggest you let California native plants take your mind to a peaceful place of "executive attention". Well, when it's 104 outside you might prefer pondering where a native plant could be located that would not wither in our summer heat. Make notes of these areas now. You might even sketch a rough outline of an area of your garden, indicating where the sun is relentless and where there's partial or full shade. These simple steps are exactly what you need when considering plants to purchase at the September plant sale (shameless promotion).

Make note, too, about the type of soil in the various areas – sandy? clay? perfect? How easily can you get water to the area, even if only infrequently? You can get this information once the temperatures drop and you pay "executive attention" to the soil. And, by the way, soil is really the fascinating part of plant life. If you're looking for excellent summer reading, try "Tales from the Underground: A Natural History of Subterranean Life" by David W. Wolfe. You'll never look at soil the same way again.

## Photo Contest!

Don't forget the 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).

## Membership

Summer 2008

Apologies to some who renewed in April or May. A clerical error in the Sacramento office made names of renewing members unavailable. Their new renewal dates have been posted but chapter membership people were unable to know exactly when the renewal went through. If you renewed your membership during that period and do not see acknowledgment in the newsletter, you can confirm your status by checking the code on your label (e.g. 0509=May '09)

### \*New Members and Membership Renewals

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

**Fresno** : Arredondo, Enyedy, Kronman, Riedel, Rowe, Siegfried, Urbach, Whitmore, Horwitz, Mallory, Borders

**Madera** : Dal Cerro

**Kings** : Arroues

**Out of Area:** Snyder (Davis), Juarez (Ramona)

Thanks to all for your continuing support. Send membership corrections to Helen Shaw at [helshaw@netptc.net](mailto:helshaw@netptc.net). The IRS considers dues in excess of \$12.00 per year and all gifts to CNPS as tax deductible.

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## SEQUOIA CHAPTER OFFICERS\* AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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*Secretary	Marian Orvis mforvet@earthlink.net	559/226-0145 (h)
*Treasurer	Jeanne Larson jrjlars@aol.com	559/243-0815 (h)
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Horticulture	Joseph Oldham J.Oldham1@sti.net	559/658-7165 (h)
Education	Peggy Jones	(see President)
Rare Plant	John Stebbins johnst@cvp.net	559/297-0144 (h)
Plant Sale	Marian Orvis	(see Secretary)
Conservation Co-chairs	Jeanne Larson Joseph Oldham	(see Treasurer) (see Horticulture)
Directors at Large	Jim Seay Verna Arnest	jaseay@comcast.net vernaj@sti.net

## Newsletter



Send newsletter corrections or suggestions to Thelma Valdez at [nmtv@att.net](mailto:nmtv@att.net). The deadline for the September newsletter is Thursday, September 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 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
- Family, Group, or Library .....\$75
- 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

Summer 2008



CALIFORNIA NATIVE  
PLANT SOCIETY  
SEQUOIA CHAPTER

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

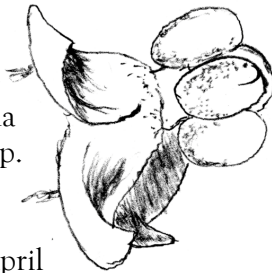
Dedicated to the Preservation of the California Native Flora.  
For a membership brochure call Helen Shaw at 559/855-4519.  
CNPS Web site: [www.cnps.org](http://www.cnps.org).

## FEATURED CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT

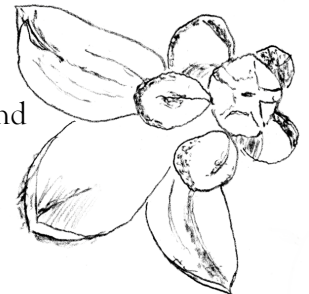
### Milkweed

California Milkweed (*Asclepias californica*) and Greene's California Milkweed (*Asclepias californica* ssp. *greenei*) are both found in our local central and southern Sierra Nevada foothills blooming from April through July. Milkweed is known in particular because it is a host plant for the Monarch Butterfly. The plant tolerates clay but prefers well-drained soil.

The flowers are hermaphrodite (have both male and female organs) and are pollinated by bees, insects, moths and butterflies. The leaves and blossom are densely woolly which accounts for the plant's ability to conserve moisture. The blossom is quite shameless about making itself available for pollination.



It's common to see a variety of insects in and around a milkweed blossom. Members of the *Asclepias* genus (of which there are 100 species in the United States alone) contain toxic resinoids, alkaloids and cardiac glycosides. They are usually avoided by grazing animals (including deer) and these chemicals give the butterflies that feed on it extra protection. These same chemicals have been used by native Americans for such applications as relief from spider bites (leaves dried and powdered). With most California species the milk was allowed to thicken and was chewed as gum.



References: [www.LasPilitas.com](http://www.LasPilitas.com), "Plants for a Future" ([www.pfaf.org](http://www.pfaf.org)), "Jepson Manual", "Edible and useful Plants of California" by Charlotte Bringle Clarke.

**SUMMER  
2008**  
◆  
**SEQUOIA CHAPTER  
CNPS**



Clockwise starting from top left

- Lizard Tail (*Anemopsis californica*)
- Blue Curls (*Trichostema lanceolatum*)
- Blue Elderberry (*Sambucus mexicana*)
- Desert Willow (*Chilopsis linearis*)
- Greene's California Milkweed (*Asclepias californica* ssp. *greenei*)
- Greene's California Milkweed (*Asclepias californica* ssp. *greenei*) and Manzanita
- Dove Weed (*Eremocarpus setigerus*)
- Lizard Tail (*Anemopsis californica*)
- California Fuchsia (*Epilobium canum*)
- Woolly Blue Curls (*Trichostema lanatum*)

