



CARPENTERIA

Newsletter of the Sequoia Chapter
California Native Plant Society

February 2006

CHAPTER EVENTS

Chapter Meeting: Tuesday, February 21, 7:00 p.m. "Ecology and Conservation of Vernal Pools"

Speaker: Carol Witham, Botanical and biological consultant specializing in rare plants and vernal pools

From the cracked mud and seemingly barren plains comes an eruption of color on the alluvial terraces of the eastern edge of the Great Valley of California, and the surrounding lower foothills. A succession of rainbows of color in concentric rings around the drying vernal pools---small, rain-filled depressions with an impermeable layer of clay, hardpan or volcanic material that prevents the water from percolating downward, and a flora and fauna found nowhere else on the face of this planet.

Vernal pools were once widespread in the Central Valley, as were the wildflowers that characterize these unique habitats; 75 to 90% of the state's vernal pools are now gone.

We offer you an opportunity to enjoy a presentation on this fascinating topic by one

of the state's authorities on the subject. Carol Witham, editor of "Ecology, Conservation, and Management of Vernal Pool Ecosystems", will present a slide-show on the distribution, ecology, and unique flowers and other organisms of vernal pools.

Many plants and animals unique to vernal pools will be discussed. The tour includes vernal pools from around the state and a variety of geomorphic settings, e.g., hardpan vernal pools, claypan vernal pools, volcanic mudflow, ashflow and basalt-flow vernal pools. The talk will also highlight one of the finest remaining examples of vernal pools in California, in eastern Merced County.



Vernal Pool Goldfields
(Lathenia fremontii)



Horned Downingia
(Downingia bicornuta)

Unitarian Universalist Church, 4144 N. Millbrook (South of Ashlan Avenue). The public is welcome!

"Those who submissively allow themselves to be packed and brined down in the seats of a stage-coach, who are hurled into Yosemite by 'favorite routes', are not aware that they are crossing a grander Yosemite than that to which they are going."

-- John Muir, referring to the "great central plain of California"

Future Meeting Programs

March 21	Rare and endemic plants in Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks. Sylvia Haultain, Plant Ecologist with the National Park Service
April 18	Invasive plants and the California State Weed Plan. Bob Case, Invasive Plant Management & Integrated Pest Management
May 16	Melanie Baer-Keeley, Restoration Horticulturist, Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks
June-August	No programs.

Field Trips

See details on page 4 of this newsletter.

April 1	Roadside Wildflowers with Warren Shaw
April 17	Table Mountain with Bob Case
April 18	China Creek with Warren Shaw & Bob Case
June 24	Grand Bluffs with Bonnie Bladen

Home & Garden Show – March 3-5

Sign up to be at the booth for a 2-hour stint. Sign up at February's meeting or contact Marian Orvis (226-0415 or mforvet@earthlink.net). Get free admission to the entire Home and Garden Show!

China Creek Workdays

February 18 and 25. See page 2 for dates and details.

Teach The River

February 25, 8 am-3 pm at CART. Sign up with Marian Orvis

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



As I started to write my first President's message I reflected on what I'd like to accomplish during my term. I composed and deleted until I had to admit, I didn't have any earth shattering goals or ambitions.... just to continue on the path we're headed.

I'd like to see us grow as an organization and as stewards. To accomplish this we need to reach people and that takes manpower. We're a small and mighty group but we can only stretch so far. I ask that all members consider volunteering sometime this year. We have so many needs that I'm sure there is a job that would be just perfect for you!

I'd like to thank Warren for his dedication to China Creek and his continued role as "caretaker." The park is what it is today because of Warren and his leadership. I'm fortunate to have his guidance as I take over the helm.

Thank you all for your hard work and support. Spring is around the bend and we have several exciting events so "spring" to your feet and come out and get native!

-- Peggy Jones

The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes.

~ Marcel Proust

China Creek Update & Workdays

By Warren Shaw

Madeleine Mitchell and Thelma Valdez turned out for the January 21 workday. Thelma walked our interpretive trail and announced it had survived the winter in good shape, with just a few areas needing some weed work. Madeleine and I finished the final layout of the new fence [almost 1/8 mi.]. At one point this included Madeleine's tolerating have a high powered rifle [unloaded, of course] aimed quite close to her head as we used the scope to align posts.

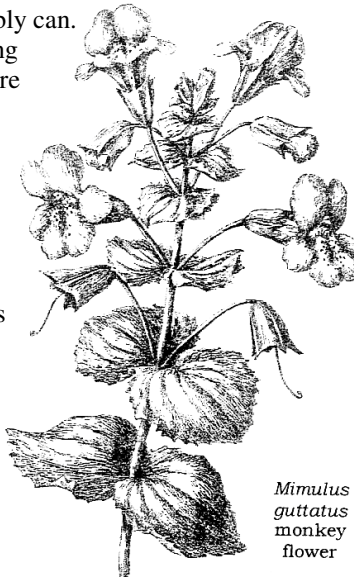
This fence is needed to open a second section of the park to spring grazing -- after last year's experiment proved cattle to be very effective in discouraging yellow star thistle. In order for the cows to do a good job, it is important to turn them in by early March. Therefore we will be holding two chapter workdays in February and I'll be working weekdays in between (and would welcome company).

Join us for ANY PART of those days if you possibly can. In addition to willing hands, we need fence building equipment: post hole diggers, T-post pounders, wire stretchers, etc. Please contact Warren Shaw <warshaw@netptc.net>, or 559-855-4519 for more details.

Next Workdays

Saturdays, February 18 and February 25. from 9-3. All are welcome. Bring gloves, hat, water, lunch, rakes, shovels, shears, and any other weeding tools etc. Hope to see you there.

Take 180 East to Smith Road (West fence of Centerville School). Go south on Smith Road for about a mile (cross Rainbow Road) and drive to the pipe barrier/gate.



Mimulus guttatus
monkey flower

Highway 168 Beautification Project

By Jeanne Larson, Conservation Co-Chair

It is unfortunate that the erosion control and beautification project on Highway 168 in Clovis (article in Fresno Bee 2/2/06), though well meaning, was poorly planned and will potentially be harmful to the environment.

Spring flowering, winter annuals are timed to germinate when it is cool, after the first fall rains. Annual wildflowers should be sown in the early fall, not now, especially with the warm temperatures we've had.

Unfortunately, seed companies sell many mixtures as "wildflowers" that are not California natives, but mixtures of previously cultivated plants (exotics) that have escaped from gardens and have been shown to survive under non-cultivated conditions. Of the seed mixture mentioned in the article, African daisy and toadflax are introduced from other continents and have already escaped to our roadside and wildlands, and are best described as weeds.

The lupine species and desert goldfields come from different habitats in California and could impact the gene pool of our local native species. The yellow, red, and white colored "California poppies" are horticultural hybrid strains. The introduction of these plants can cause "genetic pollution" to weaken our naturally occurring gold poppies -- our state flower!

The best species for erosion control are low, shrubby perennials as they hold the soil all year long. This may be the reason Cal Trans planted coastal buckwheat (*Eriogonum lanceolatum*) on Highway 41 from the lower foothills to Oakhurst. While the yellow blooms are showy in spring, the rust colored seed heads (which are good in a garden setting) make the shrubs appear dead in the fall. These plants have dry and brittle foliage which makes for good wildfires. I have seen it escaped in Woodward Park and a cattleman of my acquaintance said it is invading his rangeland near O'Neals.

The Sequoia Chapter of CNPS has commented before to Cal Trans on improper use of non-native species because vehicles can carry seed onto roadsides as far as the mountains and coast (and spread into our native wildlands).

Annual plants usually have only a tap root and are poor choices for erosion control. Unfortunately Cal Trans and Clovis officials who promoted this project neglected to research the issues or obtain the expertise necessary to actually proclaim it to be an environmental benefit

“Consider the Future When Planning Your Garden”

By Joseph Oldham

Whenever I set out to do a new project in my garden I normally have a “vision” in my head of what it will look like when I finish. Professional landscapers normally have a scale drawing of the landscape project to work from, but being an amateur and somewhat of an “experimenter” I prefer the mental visualization method. That vision also includes images of the landscape as it matures through the years taking into account any problems that the project may pose in the future such as roots invading plumbing, lifted sidewalks, crowding of other plants, etc. Recently another factor has been influencing my planning for my garden. The new factor is climate change.

Call it “global warming”, “global climate change”, whatever phrase you like. The fact is that our climate is changing, getting warmer, and any observant person can see it. There are many debates, discussions, arguments about the cause, what can be done to stop it, etc. My focus here is how to adapt to it relevant to our Central California gardens.

While no one knows exactly how climate change will impact Central California, several studies indicate that drier conditions will dominate our area as rain and snow patterns are affected. Fresno historically has averaged about 11 inches of annual rainfall, which is borderline for a desert classification. Drier conditions will likely push our area over the edge and firmly place us in that category. Increased population combined with reduced precipitation will further strain limited water resources. Landscapes that require the least supplemental water will certainly be the most responsible choice for our future.

Native plants endemic to Central California and drier regions to our south are great choices if you are planning a new landscape or changes in your landscape. Some of the plants that I have used are Cleveland Sage (*Salvia clevelandii*), Sugar Bush (*Rhus ovata*), Toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*), Sulfur Flower (*Erigonum umbellatum*), Creosote Bush (*Larrea tridentata*), Blue Elderberry (*Sambucus mexicana*), Desert Willow (*Chilopsis linearis*), Coffeeberry (*Rhamnus californica*), “Dr. Hurd” Manzanita (*Arctostaphylos manzanita*), and Our Lord’s Candle (*Yucca whipplei*). There are hundreds of other plants that can be used from plant communities such as Creosote Bush Scrub, Valley Grasslands, Central Oak Woodland, and Pinyon-Juniper Woodland as a guide.

Another reason to choose drought-tolerant native plants for your garden is that they provide great benefit for wildlife. As the climate changes, wildlife will be stressed and there are many studies that predict the extinction of many species. Native plants in our landscapes can help ease this pressure while reducing the demand for water. Plants such as Blue Elderberry, Cleveland Sage, Desert Willow, and Toyon attract insect-eating bird species, hummingbirds, butterflies, native bees, and a whole host of other beneficial insects. These creatures add life and beauty to the garden and help control many pest species. Native plants are the foundation of the food-chain and they allow the establishment of a natural balance in our gardens. If our gardens are balanced, there is far less need for costly pesticides and our landscapes become healthy places for all creatures great and small.

Climate change, whether human-caused, natural in origin, or a combination of both, presents many challenges for life on our planet. People can take action now to reduce stresses on our environment, or wait until crises occurs to react. I have chosen to take action and I encourage all of you to do the same.

Happy Planting!



Yerba Buena
(*Satureja douglasii*)

February 2006 Chapter Meeting

Botanist, Nur Ritter took members on a visual tour of the 6 year old research project on the Valley’s retired agricultural lands. The work is centered on 2090 acres of retired land near Tranquillity. Part of the effort is to locate as many native plants as possible in order to use local seed sources for the restoration work. That work has also produced an impressive native plant nursery.

The lands were removed from agricultural after of years of irrigation that caused low productivity, poor drainage, shallow water tables, and high groundwater selenium concentrations.

The project site is primarily Alkalai Sink or Valley Grassland and this is one of the very few places in the San Joaquin Valley where you can see the variety of native species in these plant communities.

Nur’s talk was very informative and the research provides both a disheartening look at agricultural overuse as well as hope for the possibilities of restoration work. You can read much more about this project at < <http://esrpweb.csustan.edu/projects/lrdp> >.

Nur has also agreed to host a tour of the project on Saturday, April 29. Details in the next newsletter.

OBSERVATIONS

Foothill hillsides continue to green with grasses and filaree, etc. Blue Dick and Ithurial’s Spear are up, and woody plants, especially Twinberry and Buckeye are showing new leaves. Manzanitas and Buck Brush are in full bloom and Blue Oak and Live Oak buds are swelling noticeably.

Silver Bush Lupine flowers have been spotted in Yosemite Lakes Park and the California Buckeye seedlings are about 6 inches high and large Buckeye trees are starting to leaf out.

Cottonwood trees along Hwy 41 near Road 209 are starting to leaf out and the first annual Lupine has bloomed.

Down in the lower elevations (Reedley), the buds are swelling on Madeleine Mitchell’s *Lupinus albifrons*, but one at the Unitarian Universalist church garden is already in bloom!

Needlegrasses in certain areas have already produced nodding seed heads. And Coral Bells planted at the office are just about ready to bloom.

-- Editor

RELATED PLANT AND FIELD TRIP ACTIVITIES

Sierra Foothill Conservancy

Hikes. Hikes are free and begin at 9:00 a.m. Call to sign up and for meeting points and weather cancellations. Led by experienced volunteers. Bring lunch & water, hiking boots.

Saturday February 18	Table Mountain Archeological Site. Easy.
Sunday February 19	Table Mountain Discovery Trail. Easy.
Saturday March 4	Table Mountain Loop Trail. Very strenuous.
Sunday March 5	Black Mountain Summit. Easy.
Saturday March 11	Table Mountain Table Top. Moderate.
Saturday March 18	Table Mountain Archeological Site Easy.
Sunday March 19	Table Mountain Smith Basin. Very strenuous.

Classes

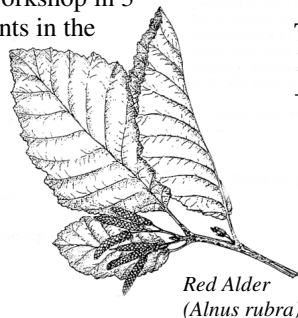
Classes require early reservations (\$10/person, \$20/family). Space is limited. Bring lunch and water for daytime classes. Visit <www.sierrafoothill.org> for more information, registration, and changes/additions or call 559/855-3473.

Saturday March 4	Mushrooms of the Sierra Foothills. At the McKenzie Preserve with local mushroom expert Russell Kokx. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Saturday March 11	Geology & Wildflowers of the Tivy Mountain Area. With biologist Rodney Olsen and geologist Craig Poole. Learn about the interactions between the unusual geology and beautiful rare plants of this area. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Saturday March 18	Wildflowers of the McKenzie Preserve. With botanist John Stebbins, 6 mi. round trip hike to the top of the table to see vernal pool species and a great view. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

California Native Plant Society (CNPS) and the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG)

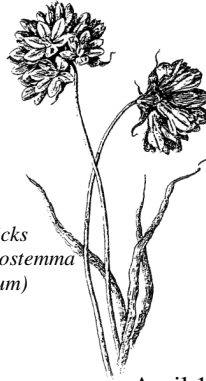
Feb. 28 - March 3 (Tuesday – Friday).

Extended four-day vegetation and habitat workshop in 3 locations. Aimed at professionals and students in the fields of biology, botany, conservation, ecology, environmental consulting, etc. Registrants may sign up for the full four days, or the first two days only. For details contact Josie Crawford at (916) 327-8454, jcrawford@cnps.org.



Sequoia Chapter CNPS

Saturday
April 1



April 17

April 18

April 29

June 24

Roadside Wildflowers with Peggy Jones & Warren Shaw. For those who want to see wildflowers but aren't into hiking. We'll meet at Doyal's store near Piedra at 9. Our route will take us up along the shore of Pine Flat lake, over the ridge and along Watts creek to Watts valley -- where we may stop at the Shaws' for a lunch and bathroom break -- and back to town by Watts Valley road, through blue oak woodlands, the serpentine area at Hog Mountain and down along Fancher creek. To add your name to the list and get carpool information, contact Warren <warshaw@netptc.net>, or [559] 855-4519. Free.

Table Mountain with Bob Case. Details TBA.

China Creek with Warren Shaw & Bob Case. Details TBA.

Tour of the restoration research site near Tranquillity with Nur Ritter, Restoration Botanist for the Endangered Species Recovery Program at CSU, Stanislaus. Details TBA.

Grand Bluffs with Bonnie Bladen. Details TBA.

Hildreth History and Wildflower Walk

Saturday, March 11, 10:30AM – 4:30 PM

Spring Valley School. Explore a gold mining ghost town then hike 4 miles round trip to Kennedy Table Mountain. See hidden waterfalls and fabulous flower fields on this privately owned site. Bring lunch and water and dress in layers. Instructor: Joanne Freemire, Naturalist. Fee: \$15. Chawanakee Unified School District Adult Education Classes. Call Doug Waltner at 683-0808 for more information.

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/jepwksph.html>>.

Sunday
February
25

Tree of Life Series: Species Concept. The species debate encompasses a variety of important issues in evolutionary biology. This one-day workshop introduces participants to the contentious realm of species. Interesting species-level case studies from research in the University and Jepson Herbaria will also be presented.

Thursday,
March 30
– Sunday,
April 2

Flora of San Luis Obispo County. SLO County is extremely diverse – from rainfall of 6" or less on the Carrizo Plain to over 50" in the coastal mountains. Over 1500 plant species are found here. This field course includes an all-day Friday trip from SLO to the Carrizo Plain with stops along the way. Saturday includes coastal communities and Sunday includes a trip to the closed-cone forests of Cuesta Grade.

NEW & RENEWING MEMBERS

January 2006 Membership Renewals

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

Fresno: Clasen, German, Irvine,
Kauffman, Miller, Poole,
Schreiber, Van der Noordaa, Yorganjian;
Madera: Gilman;
Parlier: Jenderek;
Danville: Preece;
Friant: Eckenrod;
Tollhouse: Jones;
Kingsburg: Jones;
Clovis: Pritchard

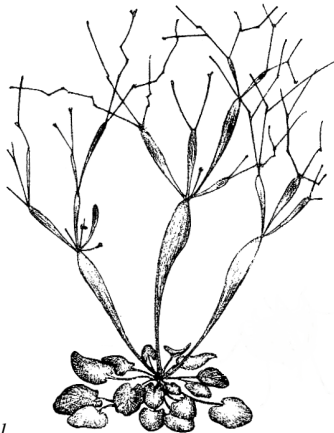
Thanks to all for your continuing support. Send membership corrections to Helen Shaw at helshaw@netptc.net

Want your newsletter by e-mail instead of printed and mailed? If so, email Helen Shaw at the above email address.

NEWSLETTER



Send newsletter corrections or suggestions to Thelma Valdez at <nmtv@att.net>. Contributions for the March newsletter are due by Friday, March 10.



Desert Trumpet
(*Eriogonum inflatum*)
Ill. By Henry R. Mockel

SEQUOIA CHAPTER OFFICERS* AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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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



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
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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

February 2006



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

Silver Bush Lupine



Lupinus albifrons is in the early stages of bloom right now or in some areas has already bloomed with our recent warm weather. It's a beautiful small shrub with silky hairs on the silver leaves that reflect head and also protect the leaves from drying.

The botanical name is derived from Latin for wolf, from the mistaken idea that plants rob soil of nutrients. Of course, as with all members of the pea family, it actually fixes nitrogen from the air, which makes it a favorite for enriching nutrient-poor soil.

Silver Bush Lupines can live many decades and in ideal conditions can reach over 20 feet wide. They require full sun, good drainage, and fairly dry conditions, although they will tolerate some water. They are native to areas that range from 8" to 35" of rainfall.

Photo © Br. Alfred Brousseau, Saint Mary's College.

References: Jepson Manual, Las Pilitas Nursery, Crissy Corkboar