



China Creek Update

Warren Shaw

Rain was threatened for our February workday, but failed to materialize, and the weather indeed was quite lovely. The fact that there had been only minor tagging and no significant destruction added to the pleasure we found in being in the Park -- and to the time and energy we had to devote to more productive activities.

We had expected to start spraying for Yellow Star Thistle by individual members with backpack sprayers. That plan was aborted because of the predicted rain. Having no distractions we just pulled weeds. Many people might think that's a pretty terrible way to spend a spring Saturday but for those of us who truly hate invasive exotics there is little that is more satisfying. We take great pleasure in grasping a weed at its base with a bare or gloved hand, uprooting it easily because of the rain-softened soil and the early spring shortness of its root, and throwing it aside to wither in the sun. That sounds a little sadistic perhaps but was enormously satisfying.

A little over a week later on Monday, March 1st, the projected spraying was completed by Park partner and cattleman, Steve McDonald. He provided a tractor, a boom sprayer, a couple of days of his own time and expertise, and that of a driver. They sprayed about 7 acres of the worst infestation. At last report YST was already showing signs of wilting. Well done, Steve!



We have, of course, resisted using chemicals for many years. We still hope we can reduce the YST infestation to the point where we can manage it with mowing and pulling. Time will tell.

The March Workday will be Saturday, March 20. We hope you can join us for some more satisfying weed work.

Sequoia Chapter – Upcoming Activities

Windshield Wildflower Tour Saturday, March 27, 9 am

This could be the wildflower tour for you! Many people who enjoy seeing our local foothill wildflowers in the spring are no longer able to hike into the foothills or just don't care for walking.

Come with us for an easy, relaxed look, with little walking, at the variety of spring wildflowers in the foothills. We'll meet in the Centerville area at 9:00 a.m., form carpools, and caravan in a loop taking us along Pine Flat Lake and over the ridge to Watts Valley, with stops for closer looks and photo ops. An expert botanist will be available to assist in pointing out and identifying the many species of California native plants.

In Watts Valley, we'll stop for lunch and bathroom break at the Shaws' place. After lunch it's back to the starting point via Watts Valley Road, through blue oak woodlands, the serpentine area of Hog Mountain, and down along Fancher Creek. Free.

Contact Warren or Helen Shaw (559-855-4519) by Wednesday, March 24th, for details and to put your name on the list.

Master Gardener Conference Report

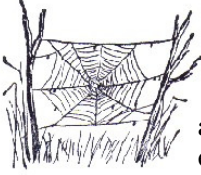
Marian Orvis

What a great day! Crowded!! The Master Gardeners' Smart Gardening Conference on Saturday, February 27 was truly amazing. With 400+ attendees our table was initially outside in the cold, wet morning, but eventually I was fortunate to be relocated inside the lobby with the other 20+ vendors. The table was in a great location next to the ATM machine and across from the main entrance but apart from the other vendors.

Seed and Plant Exchange Saturday, March 20, 12 noon – finish

This event is held at Mariposa and B Streets in downtown Fresno. It is hosted by Localmotion Fresno and The Pamela Kincaid neighborhood center. A potluck follows the exchange. For more information contact localmotionfresno@gmail.com or call 559.412.7710.

Observations



Many chapters of the California Native Plant Society cover large expanses of land and the Sequoia Chapter is no exception. Not only is the area we cover large, it is extremely diverse: elevation ranges from 200 to over 13,000 feet above sea level, rainfall ranges from 8 inches to 50, our chapter includes an area that is highly urban (Fresno is the sixth largest city in California), but also rural (prime agricultural land, grasslands, ranches), contains many smaller towns as well as oak woodland foothills and alpine forests.

In looking at the CNPS chapter map shown here, notice that only the Mount Lassen chapter comes close to the geographic diversity of our chapter without the large urban membership. Our three counties, Fresno, Kings, and Madera, are fascinating, important, and challenging.



We try to bring you snippets of what's happening in as many different locations as possible. If you are reading this and want to send a snapshot of your corner of the world, please feel free to share.

I find it particularly interesting to hear about the foothills and compare it to what's going on in my home on the foggy Valley floor. Cold winter fog usually means that everything in my garden blooms weeks later than the same species growing natively in the foothills.

Warren Shaw in Watts Valley writes, "The foothills are intensely green -- with bright colors here and there: patches of orange California Poppies, light blue Baby Blue Eyes, Buttercups, annual Lupine, Blue Dicks, Birdseye Gilia, and others. Some hillsides have a kind of frosted look provided by masses of Popcorn; Blue Oaks are beginning to leaf out; Buckbrush is blooming, with characteristic smelliness, and our Manzanita still hums with bees."

When all that was happening in the foothills, I had only one or two opened poppies and manzanita blossoms. Then a week of 55-65 degree temperatures and little cloud cover pushed everything over the edge. The fiddleneck burst into full color, annual lupine and ceanothus are making the bank of the 168 freeway lavender and blue, and the non-native filaree looks like it's on steroids! Sometimes I forget what a wet winter can do.

In the city of Fresno, Jeanne Larson mentions that one way to study native plants is to collect seed and sow them in your garden. In this way you will be able to recognize them as seedlings and watch their different growth stages.

She says, "Today, there are Bicolor Lupine just starting to bloom in my garden as well as seedlings just emerging. Mother nature makes sure that the hard seed covering is not the same for all the seeds. The rains have been timed this year so that the seed not ready to germinate one time, have been kept moist enough until the next rain for their chance to break dormancy and germinate.

"Have you noticed that the chickweed has performed in this way, too? One is not always successful. A collection of White Chinese Houses has not germinated for me. On the other hand Bird's Eye Gilia have become almost weedy.

"Last summer's heat killed some of my Blue eyed grass even though it had open shade under a tree canopy. Seedlings are now coming up in profusion to fill in. My poppies will be late this year, but on my morning walk I saw one in bloom."

CEQA-stopper Bills Introduced By Legislators

Greg Suba, Conservation Director

This is an excerpt from the February CNPS E-News

Four new bills have been introduced in the State Legislature that would create the "CEQA Litigation Protection Pilot Program." These bills would immunize over 125 "favored" projects selected by the Secretary of Business and Transportation from CEQA enforcement, and CNPS has joined with conservation organizations statewide to strongly oppose the proposed legislation. The bills and their sponsors are:

ABx8 37 (Calderon (D) & Nestande (R))
AB 1805 (Calderon (D) & Nestande (R))
SBx8 42 (Correa (D) & Cogdill (R))
SB 1010 (Correa (D) & Cogdill (R))

The language of all four bills is the same, with regular and fast-tracked versions heading through both the Assembly and the Senate. On February 24th, senators in the Senate Committee on Environmental Quality, after some candid debate, pushed the legislative "pause button" on the fast-tracked Senate version of the bill (SBx8 42). If any version of these bills passes, the Secretary of the Business, Transportation, and Housing Administration (BT&H) could select 25 projects each year for the next 5 years and grant them immunity from any legal challenges brought by citizens to enforce either CEQA or California Planning and Zoning law requirements.

What Can I Do To Help?

To preserve our ability as private citizens to protect California's rare plants, native vegetation communities, and other natural resources through the full CEQA process, now is the time to write, send emails, and make phone calls to the Governor, to your State Assembly Member, and State Senator.

Make it clear that eviscerating CEQA is unacceptable, and that you oppose the four bills listed above. To find your state legislators' names and their contact information, follow this link (www.leginfo.ca.gov/yourleg.html) and enter your zip code.

Membership

Helen Shaw

A computer upgrade in the main office of CNPS has resulted in some confusion. If you think your membership information may be incorrect or would like to verify it, please contact Helen Shaw, membership chair (helshaw@netptc.net).

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 (June)

Fresno : Bauda, Brown, Burgess, Jones, Kauffman, Kentner, McCormick

Madera : Arnest

Out of Area : Gilbert (Merced), Yosemite Research Library (Merced), Botti, (Boise, Idaho), Preece (Danville), Tuttle (Los Angeles)

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, set it up to 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.



Winter isn't over yet...

Desert Willow
(*Chilopsis linearis*)



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Plant Sale	Marian Orvis	(see Secretary)
Conservation Co-chairs	Jeanne Larson	(see Treasurer)
Directors at Large	Jim Seay Verna Arnest	jaseay@comcast.net vernaj@sti.net

Next Newsletter: April 2010



Send newsletter corrections or suggestions to Thelma Valdez at nmtv@att.net. The deadline for the April newsletter is Friday, April 2.



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
- 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

March 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.

FEATURED CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT

Ceanothus maritimus 'Valley Violet'

Madeleine Mitchell



This is one of the Arboretum All-Stars plants that I have been testing at the Garden of the Sun since June 2007 and it is newly released by McCall Nursery.

The plants were first tested at the UC Davis Arboretum and then placed throughout the state for further testing by different county Master Gardeners. Not all of the plants are California natives, but I've chosen to only test natives.

The plants were chosen for attractiveness and those that thrive in our Mediterranean climate.

The 'Valley Violet' selection will remain small unlike most of the other Ceanothus species. After two and a half years they still measure less than three feet tall and wide. They are in full bloom this month in dark violet color. They also attract beneficial insects.

I just bought one for my native plant bed at home. They need full sun, and water about twice a month after established.

For more information about the 100 plants selected by UC Davis they can be found through the website:
http://arboretum.ucdavis.edu/arboretum_all_stars.aspx