



Summer Camp

Those of you fortunate enough to have memories of summer camp (and those of you who are still looking forward to the experience) may or may not have heard of a wonderful resource for us in the Sierra Nevadas. I refer to the Sierra Nevada Field Campus of San Francisco State University.

Located near Highway 49, about 60 miles north of Grass Valley, the SNFC is in one of the most beautiful and wild regions of the northern Sierra Nevada. Here is a description copied from their website:

<http://sfsu.edu/~sierra/>

It is a place where students of the environmental sciences can get hands on experience. It is place where people can stop to smell the roses and Jeffrey Pines. It has been called a nature camp for adults. It is a place where personnel working in the environmental fields can upgrade their knowledge. It is place where people from all walks of life can come together, energized by the easy camaraderie and humbled by nature's magnificence. It is simply a wonderful experience.

This is summer camp for adults with workshops and classes way beyond popsicle-stick crafts. Subjects range from fungi and medicinal plants, to birds, bats, and insects; also fly fishing, astronomy, photography, writing, drawing and painting. As classes fill, waitlists are established.

Accommodations include furnished tent-cabins or bring-your-own gear; prices are reasonable and include meals. Off-site accommodations with or without meals are also an option. All classes are available to the general public, although one can take class for credit; and all full time students at any university can receive a 30% discount on food and camping prices.

At the website you can find links to accommodations and course descriptions, including fees and schedule. Class lengths are generally 3-6 days.

Kaweah Oaks preserve—second chance

Kaweah Oaks Preserve, a 322-acre nature preserve, protects one of the last remaining valley oak riparian forests in the San Joaquin Valley. Our field trip to Kaweah Oaks Preserve, originally scheduled for April has been rescheduled for May 17. To begin, visitors from the preserve will join the restoration work party at China Creek on May 17. After they see the work at China Creek Park, both groups will car pool to the preserve near Visalia, where we hope both to see more and different California natives, and to learn some things we can apply to our own project. All are welcome (even if you haven't been able to make the work party); for meeting time and place, call or email Warren Shaw (warshaw1955@gmail.com). Additional details are included in Warren's regular China Creek report on page 4.





ANNUAL WATER-WISE PLANT EXCHANGE

--Marian Orvis

Over 600 people attended the 6th annual Water-Wise Give and Take Plant Event held at the Fresno State Horticulture Greenhouse Park on May 3 with a new kick-off event hosted by Friends of the Madden Library on May 2, which attracted about 100 people. Both events were free to the public and designed to educate on how to save water with Fresno friendly landscaping practices. It's what our organization has been preaching for years, so it's great that so many benefited from both events. Many thanks to Helen and Warren for assisting with Saturday's set up.

WATER-WISE PRE-PARTY

Beyond Lawns

--Warren Shaw

The very successful Water-Wise Plant Exchange on Saturday, May 3, reported by Marian Orvis above, was preceded by a new event this year on Friday evening, with a reception and program hosted by Friends of the Madden Library at Fresno State.

The reception included an opportunity for relevant organizations (including ours – Marian Orvis again) to offer information, literature and giveaways to attendees. There were also generous hors d'oeuvres and no-host beverages.

The program focused mainly on reducing water consumption by residential (and some commercial) landscapes while maintaining attractive and complimentary ambiance. Specifically, of course, the main method of reducing water dependence is the replacement of lawns with shrubs, bunch grasses, trees (and surprisingly few cacti).

The two speakers were Susan Stiltz and John Valentino, both landscaping contractors, among other things; they offered general principles of design, showed slides of completed projects, recommended resources for materials, answered questions, and gave out literature.

It was a great kickoff for WWPE, and the library itself is mind-blowing, especially for those of us who were well acquainted with it – nigh onto fifty years ago.

For more from the presenters: www.treesusan.com www.valentinolandscapedesign.com

CONSERVATION REPORT

--Jeanne Larson, Conservation chair

•Some recent notes from State CNPS advise that CNPS is working with CalFIRE to develop science-based standards that address structure, composition, and function of forest lands.

There has been a lack of management of shrub lands in the urban/wildlands interface. While part of the problem is some complacent homeowners, thinning the shrub element mechanically, or by grazing for 1/4 mile along the interface, would act as a safety zone.

Hopefully this would prevent some of the damage to the ecosystem when bulldozers go in while a fire is raging and cut a destructive fire line while trying to protect structures.

•It is hard to understand that while Fresno City's groundwater has been subsiding for 60 years, the Fresno City Water Department has not made fewer watering days mandatory. If we must have green lawns, dry thatch can be dyed or painted. Cutting back on watering after a droughty winter takes planning, as some plants may need a little hand watering if sprinklers are cut off for too long.

I would bet many concerned Fresnans wonder at the stance taken by Fresno's Water Department, to go on depleting ground water, (wells have recently been deepened) to make deeper pumping possible. Those who rightly worry that next year could be another drought year, are doing their best inside and out, to conserve water.

FIELD REPORTS

Foothill Spring

Belinda Gilbert

Warm March weather and rain created stunning floral displays in the foothills at 3000 feet elevation. The White, Black and Blue oaks leafed out a full month earlier than usual, and many perennial shrubs such as White Leaf Manzanita, Buck Brush, White Thorn Ceanothus, Elderberry and Redbud bloomed abundantly in March and April. The absence of cold weather and frost seemed a boon for trees and shrubs that appeared to tolerate drought conditions pretty well.

The most striking April flowers were the Lupines. Spider Lupines with tall inflorescences bloomed bright indigo with white tips on rocky outcroppings and along the roadsides. Bush Lupines with soft blue-purple inflorescences also bloomed on rocky hillsides.

Miniature, Annual, White –flowered and Harlequin Lupines, although smaller, added to the magnificent show in blues, purples, yellows and pinks. Bright orange Fiddlenecks combined with eye-popping white Popcorn flowers to make the open foothills look on fire. In the shade, magenta Chinese houses and yellow Buttercups added to the festivities. Joining the show slightly later were the flowering bulbs of the foothills: Blue Dicks and Golden Brodiaea were the first to arrive in mid-April.

On my Ahwahnee property, I am proud of the three acres cleared of non-native grasses. In April, the damp meadow area was a carpet of Miniature Lupines. Smaller populations of Popcorn flower, Baby Blue Eyes, Five



Five spot

Spot and Monkey Flower dotted the meadow, and gave the appearance of Monet's flower garden. In shady areas spreading into filtered sunlight, Miner's Lettuce proliferated, more abundant than I have seen before. There was less diversity of species this year, as some

species didn't germinate. Mustang Clover, Whisker Brush and Globe Gilia were less abundant.

In May, across damp meadow areas, the bloom season continued: Miniature Lupine seeded, Annual Lupine flowers opened striking royal blue and white, Monkey Flowers bloomed in eye-catching lemon yellow, and clovers such as Small-headed, Rancheria and Ciliate Clover emerged among the floral carpet. Goldfields continued to paint the hillsides with their blooms. Rose-red Bolander's Monkeyflower blossomed later on sunny slopes. In the shade, Miner's Lettuce seeded, with leaves turning from green to rose-red and sunny yellow-gold, while the shade-loving Chinese Houses continued blooming.

March, April and May weather created a symphony of native blooms, ascending and descending as they bloomed, then seeded. Species that co-existed for thousands of years bloomed in a sequence, which varies in diversity and abundance from year to year. I was happy to watch and learn.

Aristolochiaceae – pipevine and wild-ginger

Jane Pritchard

Pipevine (*Aristolochia californica*) and wild-ginger (*Asarum* species) belong to the Magnoliids, primitive flowering plants. Aristos means noblest in Greek; locheia means childbirth. Birthwort is another common name for pipevine. Pipevine and wild-ginger contain the alkaloid aristolochic acid which increases uterine contractions and can be used to accelerate childbirth or as an abortifacient. The alkaloid can also cause kidney damage and urinary tract cancer but is a good disinfectant. Pipevine and wild-ginger have aromatic leaves leaving you to wonder what aristolochic acid smells like. Wild-ginger was used for flavoring.



Pipevine blooms January-April in the foothills. TJM2 says *Aristolochia* is often foul smelling. I could only detect a very faint musty odor, which probably was from the surrounding plants and moss. The flower is dull tan with green-purple stripes along a curved tube that is formed by fused sepals. In both *Aristolochia* and *Asarum* the flower color and lines at the tube opening resemble mushroom gills. Pipevine flowers are pollinated by dark winged fungus gnats. The wing cells are clear with brown veins and margins. Gnats fly toward a translucent window at the base of the flower tube. The flowers temporarily trap the gnats so they have a longer time to exchange pollen and then expand to release the gnats. Pollination is inefficient as very few flowers set fruit (a winged capsule) which can cause cardiac and respiratory arrest. However, each capsule has hundreds of seeds, and the plant is long lived. Pipevine is reported to be undemanding in the garden and is a good ground cover or climber in the shade. Intermountain Nursery will have pipevine plants in the future and has *Asarum lemmonia* plants now.

The beautiful pipevine swallowtail *Battus philenor* has black forewings and iridescent blue hindwings with orange spots. The female lays up to 20 brick red eggs on pipevine leaves. Larvae (caterpillars) eat pipevine only and accumulate aristolochic acid in their tissues. Larvae are black with rows of orange-red "horns" on their backs. The bright colors warn birds not to eat them. In mid-February we saw a dead pipevine butterfly on the path to the San Joaquin River Gorge but no pipevine. In mid-March several butterflies were visiting a profusion of flowers along the same path. They resembled dark impersonators of the medium brown sphinx moth (*Hyles lineata*) which looks like a hummingbird. In late March Aaron showed me pipevine with fresh flowers. Pipevine butterflies in the area were visiting fiddleneck flowers. Fiddleneck is the only plant I have seen the butterflies on and is not even included in the list of flowers the butterflies use. When we returned a few days later with a camera, the flowers were past their prime and the tubes were closed. A search for "pipevine fungus gnats" results in good pictures of the pipevine flower, the fungus gnat, and lots of other information.

APRIL CHINA CREEK REPORT

Twos the day before Easter, and most people were involved in festive family and churchly activities. We few opted to postpone the scheduled field trip, probably to the relief of the Kaweah Oaks staff.

We then took our shovels and toiled in the north leg of the Park to slay invasive thistles – relatively easy in their early (“rosette”) stage. We left a few for next time.

We’re expecting visitors from Kaweah Oaks at the May work party (Saturday, May 17), and, after showing them around China Creek, we will – after our mid-morning muffin break – carpool to Kaweah Oaks for a look at their preserve, to see what we can see and learn what we can learn. All are invited to join – in either or both parts of the day.

For information, contact Warren Shaw warshaw1955@gmail.com 559-451-1256 h 559-281-8080 cell.....

To get to the Park, take 180/Kings Canyon east across Academy to Smith or Oliver. Turn south about 1/4 mi. past the school to Rainbow and Smith. Continue south on Smith about 1/4 mi. to the Park gate.

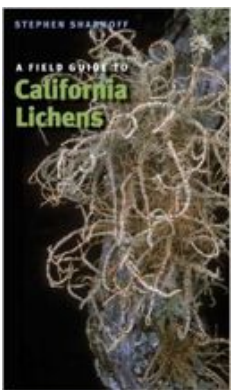
OBSERVATIONS

Thelma Valdez

Maintenance. That's my word of the month. The definition is unambiguous - care or upkeep. Ask most folks and you'll hear two faces of maintenance. We appreciate anything that is well-maintained but doing the maintenance? Not so much. In our enthusiasm over NEW stuff, maintaining old stuff has become unappealing. Even the fine art of pleasure of garden maintenance has given way to requests for a low maintenance garden.

California native plants. Now you can have a balance of fine art and pleasure of garden maintenance and low maintenance. They are win-win-win-win-win. Select the right plants for your garden and they will thrive on little water and hot sun; they will provide food for insects like bees and butterflies; they will provide nesting material and hiding places for birds; and everything will provide you with the sounds and smells of California.

Natives are low maintenance, not no maintenance. I have a lot of native plants and that means certain times of the year I get my fill of maintenance. It seems like a chore until I'm out there. I'm as busy as anyone with life's activity. However, once outside, time is suspended and I realize I've seen the arrival and departure of Goldfinches and White-Crowned Sparrows. A newly-hatched Praying Mantis climbs up a grass blade and hummingbirds hover near my head to see if I'm a flower (I guess!). I don't know that I would call my garden maintenance "fine art" but it is definitely fine.



A Field Guide to California Lichens

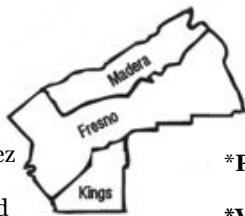
Newly published field Guide by Stephen Sharnoff

Lichens are especially abundant and varied in California, where climates range from temperate rainforests to arid deserts. *A Field Guide to California Lichens* features stunning new photographs of some 500 lichen species by award-winning nature photographer Stephen Sharnoff. Up-to-date descriptions accompany each illustration. Among the special contributions of the guide are its coverage of most common macrolichens in California and its inclusion of many of the crust-forming species. For land management professionals and scientists involved with ecosystem studies, for birders, hikers, and all others curious about the natural world around them, this book will be a welcome field companion.

Membership

Thelma Valdez

If you require corrections or additions to your membership information, contact Thelma Valdez at nmtv@unwiredbb.com
The Sequoia chapter serves Fresno, Madera, and Kings counties.



Thanks to Renewing Members

April Renewals:

Joanna Clines, Martha Johnson, Jeanne Larson, Ingeborg & James Minton, Margaret Rivers, Warren & Helen Shaw

The IRS considers dues in excess of \$12 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.



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Next Newsletter: July/Aug. 2014

Send newsletter corrections or suggestions to Helen Shaw helshaw@gmail.com The deadline for the April newsletter is Thursday, July 3.



JOIN



THE CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY



RENEW

Membership includes the quarterly CNPS journal, *Fremontia*; the quarterly *Bulletin* which gives statewide news and announcements of activities and conservation issues; and our chapter newsletter, *Carpenteria*.

I wish to affiliate with the Sequoia Chapter.

Name: _____

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- Student, Limited Income..... \$25
- Individual \$45
- Family, Group, or Library..... \$75
- Plant Lover \$100
- Patron \$300
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Make your check payable to "CNPS" and mail with this form to:

New Member

Renewing Member

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/June 2014



CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY SEQUOIA CHAPTER

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

MADELEINE'S MUSINGS

Madeleine Mitchell

Paul and I took a ride in our truck with camper to see if we could find wildflowers in this dry year. We drove up 180 above Squaw Valley to the Samson Flat road, which is a mile past the Snowline Lodge. It was a dirt road that runs through Sequoia National Monument down to the Kings River near Camp 4 1/2 alongside Mill Flat Creek. That might make it easy to find on a map. We really found the wildflowers but the road was awful going downhill. We found a flat spot eventually and spent the night. In the early morning, I used my IPHONE to photograph what was around us, but most of the photos were blurry as a breeze was blowing. I think I had hit something on the screen that changed the color tones as the photos were drab and weren't right so I only included a few shots. We saw many Bush Poppy shrubs, *Dendromecon rigida*, in full bloom right along the road. The hills were orange with thousands of orange poppies. We also saw Chinese houses, *Collinsia heterophylla*, Buttercups, *Ranunculus californica*, White Lupine and many, many other species. I should have taken notes as we drove or walked around.

We were alone and no other vehicles were seen. We only saw cattle grazing and a few birds. We were planning on going down to the river and having lunch before we made the trip home. BUT, there was a huge rock slide blocking the road with 1/2 ton chunks of rock. We were along Mill Flat Creek at this time and turned around to return the way we came. Another 2 hours of bad road, but the road uphill didn't seem as scary as it was going downhill. We'll try this again next year if the road is open. We did stop at the Hume Lake District Ranger Station and reported the slide. The woman we spoke with said they had no equipment to move the rock so they'll just close it.....



Abrams' Onion (*Allium abramsii*)

Spring in the Sierra Foothills

Photos from Stevenson Creek and Tollhouse

Rock by Aaron Turner and Eileen Bennett



Dutchman's Pipe Vine (*Aristolochia californica*)



Farnsworth's Jewelflower (*Streptanthus farnsworthianus*)



Indian Warrior (*Pedicularis densiflora*)



Orange Lupine (*Lupinus citrinus*)



Sourberry (*Rhus trilobata*)



Liveforever (*Dudleya cymosa*)



Indian Pink (*Silene californica*)

Photo by Marian Orvis



Poison Oak Fasciation Gall



Fritillaria



Mock Orange (*Philadelphus lewisii*)

Photo by Michele Luvall



Ceanothus

May 2014 Sequoia Chapter CNPS

Clearing the trail at China Creek

