



### **Home and Garden Show – March 4-6. Free admission for volunteers.**



Our chapter is provided a spot for our table of information in the Garden Pavilion. Of particular interest to many who stop by is information related to landscaping with natives, given the advent of water meters. March also brings questions about wildflower viewing, planting, and identification. Help is needed for minding the table and its information brochures Friday through Sunday. It would be a shame to lose this great opportunity for community education and outreach but, if our table is not staffed throughout the show, we stand to lose our gratis spot from the H&G folks. An hour or two will be much appreciated by Marian and all who visit our table.

**Contact Marian Orvis at [mforvet@comcast.net](mailto:mforvet@comcast.net) 559/226-0145**

### ***Saturday, March 12, 9 AM Windshield Wildflower Tour***

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 AM, 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 photos. An expert botanist will be available to assist in pointing out and identifying the many species of California native plants. We return to the starting point via Watts Valley Road, through blue oak woodlands, the serpentine area of Hog Mountain, and down along Fancher Creek. Free. Limited space.

Contact Warren or Helen Shaw at (559-855-4519) or [helshaw@netptc.net](mailto:helshaw@netptc.net)

### **China Creek Update – *Warren Shaw***

Having pushed hard to get Stage One of the grass-planting project finished in early January, our January 15th workday was something of an anticlimax. (It was also Martin Luther King's Birthday weekend). We did, however, pick up trash, paint over graffiti, whack weeds and rake leaves around the kiosk, empty the heavily overburdened garbage can, and survey the trail for maintenance needs.

We noted that, once again, weeds have taken over the trail in many places, so have planned to return to mulching it, which will be our primary activity at the February workday, Saturday, February 12, from 8-12. The park is beginning to awaken from its winter dormancy, with willow catkins, swelling buds, new leaves and other evidence of early spring. Please bring your rake and/or pitchfork and join us in the great outdoors if you can.

To get to the park, take Kings Canyon/180 east of Academy to Centerville. Turn south on Smith or Oliver about ¼ mile to the intersection of Smith and Rainbow. Follow Smith south about ¼ mile to the Park gate. For more information call Warren Shaw 559-855-4519 or email [warshaw@netptc.net](mailto:warshaw@netptc.net).

## I Never Get Sick!

Jane Pritchard

The history teacher brought newspapers from WWII to class one day. The only thing I remember is that a steamroller ran over a kid. That is how I feel right now. I visited my sister over the holidays. As usual, they had all just been sick. I came home with stomach flu and have had colds ever since. So this article may not be as scintillating as normal.

On McKenzie preserve very few newts and only 2 small popcorns, 2 vernal pool goldfields, and very few white shooting stars bloomed a month ago. How they did it in the cold overcast is a mystery. A few more flowers and newts appeared every week. The last weekend of January, there was a carpet of small white peppergrass flowers, lots of fiddleneck, more popcorn and shooting stars, lomatium, and a

## Observations

In the Shaws' lovely green foothills, Blue Oak buds continue to swell, but none are showing leaves yet. However, Twinberries are in full leaf, and Buckeyes are beginning. Manzanitas are blooming and humming with bees, Popcorn, Red Maids, Fiddleneck, Buttercups, and numerous other flowering plants are showing signs of starting the race with the already rampant annual grasses.

Thelma says that east of Clovis, winter's blanket of fog over the valley usually means our lowland native plants are weeks behind the bloom of their foothill cousins. While her manzanita blossoms are only just looking like blossoms, foothill manzanitas that receive lots of sun are in full bloom. Now that the sun is back, the green of emerging grasses and leaves of other plants is everywhere. Harvest brodiaea have steadily increased and spread, despite gophers and ground squirrels.

Jeanne Larson in central Fresno took a walk one morning to a remnant valley grassland (the 3 acre vacant lot in her area) and the stunted grasses, mostly ripgut brome, are heading out. This tends to point out that it is more important in what

## A couple of Alerts:

The activity around Friant should be closely watched for a number of environmental reasons. For CNPS, there are several significant vernal pools south of Millerton Road and west of the Friant-Kern Canal on the Bigelow-Smallwood property. The proposed Friant Ranch development is being monitored by various groups of concerned citizens, among them the League of Women Voters. For their updates, see Mary Savala's Natural Resources column in the newsletters. <http://fresno.ca.lwvnet.org>

The proposed Big Sandy Rancheria Resort, casino, and spa project (BSR) threatens Foothill Conservancy McKenzie Table Mountain Preserve. For information and details from the Rancheria, check [www.bigsandyrancheria.com](http://www.bigsandyrancheria.com). For Sierra Foothill Conservancy's position on the proposed project see "Sierra Foothill Conservancy" on Facebook.

blennosperma by the vernal pool. There have been mushrooms galore during January. One kind looks like small (2-3" diameter), dark cow poop. A few pairs of newts were copulating. Creeks are still high, and quieter pools are just starting to form.

The penultimate weekend of January, bay trees were the only bloomers on the Black Mountain preserve. They smell very sweet. Eileen Bennett, who lives near Tollhouse Rock, volunteered to haul away trash in her truck. I'd had doubts about my pickup hauling it in one load. Flowers were at least 10 days late in 2010 because of the cold spring. I'll check my notes and guesstimate a day for the cleanup and put it in the next newsletter. If we are very, very lucky, the creeping sage will be in bloom.

time frame rain falls, rather than the amount. A little bit of fiddleneck is blooming where the grass is not so dense. Along the road there is a lot of miner's lettuce. There are lots of filaree rosettes, but they may be lucky to form one seed, as they are so depauperate with no rain in sight to wet this sandy soil that is fast drying out.

In her yard, the Frosty Blue Ceanothus has a few buds open and lots of buds just developing. This Ceanothus is a tall shrub, eventually, and is spectacular in full bloom, if the rains come at the right time. Some farewell-to-spring are well developed and would only be starting in a different weather year. She expects them to bloom early. Will this be the same in the foothills?

Madeleine, in Reedley adds: "I just went outside and found the only native blooming is the *Salvia brandegeei*. Last year it was April. My Bush Lupine is full of buds but no open spires yet."



**Membership**

Thelma Valdez

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



**\*New and Renewing Members - January**  
**Fresno County** Cameron, Hansen, Stebbins, \*Wilkinson  
**Kings County:** King  
**Madera County:** Meyer

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](http://www.cnps.org) and click on the JOIN button.

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**3rd Annual Water-Wise Plant Exchange  
An Opportunity to Share**

Saturday, May 7, 8-12 at the Fresno State Horticulture Greenhouses (3150 E. Barstow—just east of Chestnut). Gardeners are invited to bring drought tolerant landscaping plants, cuttings, and seed, including but not limited to natives, to share, and to select from plants brought by others. This free give and take event is a unique opportunity to acquire water-wise plants for your garden—even if you have nothing to share.

It's also an opportunity to acquire more information about drought tolerant gardening from the many organizations (including our chapter) that will be offering a variety of materials and services.

Native gardeners, please look at your garden and consider sharing plants, cuttings, seed, and knowledge with your neighbors at this event.

**Next Newsletter March 2011**

Send newsletter corrections or suggestions to Helen Shaw [helshaw@netptc.net](mailto:helshaw@netptc.net). The deadline for the March newsletter is Tuesday, March 8.



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
- Benefactor \$600
- Mariposa Lily ..... \$1500

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

February 2011



CALIFORNIA NATIVE  
PLANT SOCIETY  
SEQUOIA CHAPTER

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

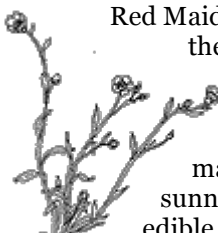
Dedicated to the Preservation of California's Native Flora.

## MADELEINE'S MUSINGS

(From February 2005) Madeleine's Musings will return in March.

### Red Maids and Fiddleneck

This month's featured plants are two commonly seen California natives that herald the beginning of spring and remind us not to overlook many of the common native plants that are reliably there, year after year. They are not rare or endangered, but this does not diminish their value or beauty.



Red Maids (*Calandrinia ciliata*) are members of the purslane family and germinate as soon as the rains begin in the fall. They bloom in the cool, damp conditions of late winter. Small, bright, four-petaled magenta flowers open in the afternoons of sunny days and close at night. The leaves are edible and have a tang like arugula that works well in salads. They move quickly into disturbed areas and serve as a colonizer plant in restoration projects. These plants play an important role because they are nitrogen-fixing and in their short life they make the soil favorable for longer-lived plants.

They usually complete their cycle by drying up with the onset of warmer spring weather. The abundant tiny black seeds are favored by doves but have frequently been found in archaeological sites and are known to be collected and eaten by Native Americans. They were also used as a pot herb by early settlers.

Fiddleneck (*Amsinckia menziesii* var. *intermedia*) is a California native plant (some say "weed"). There are 17 species and sub species of *Amsinckia* that are native to California.

Lewis and Clark collected Fiddleneck during their return trip in 1806 as shown by herbarium specimens in their collection.

Known mostly for their toxicity to horses, swine, and cattle, or the irritation caused by rubbing against the skin, they are another plant that readily colonizes disturbed areas such as roadsides, plowed firebreaks and orchards. Their benefit to the land is similar to Red Maids.

Their toxicity is mainly a result of the presence of the seeds in grain and grain screenings fed to livestock.

In the presence of adequate grazing, animals do not normally eat Fiddleneck. Interestingly, cattle and horses are thirty to forty times more susceptible to this toxicity than sheep and goats.







- Counterclockwise from top
- Early forming Manzanita blossoms (*Arctostaphylos Dr. Hurd*)
  - Many-Flowered Bushmallow (*Malacothamnus densiflorus*)
  - Native needlegrasses (Nassella species)
  - California Poppy leaves (*Echscholzia californica*)
  - Coyote Brush (*Baccharis pilularis*)
  - Miner's Lettuce (*Claytonia parviflora*)



**CNPS  
Sequoia**

**February 2011**





**Foothill Natives  
February 2011**

Counterclockwise from top

- Popcorn Flower
- Red Maids
- Buckeye
- Manzanita
- Fiddleneck

