



CARPENTERIA

Newsletter of the Sequoia Chapter
California Native Plant Society

Summer 2006

CHAPTER EVENTS

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

“Central Valley Native Plant Gardening – From Foothills to Flatlands”

Speakers: Madeleine Mitchell, Joseph Oldham, Thelma Valdez

Three Central Valley gardeners share their diverse experiences with native plant gardening. Madeleine is a Master Gardener who has incorporated California native plants in her Reedley home for many years. Joseph re-landscaped a home with natives in a Fresno development and is now experiencing the differences a little altitude can make in his home in the foothills. Thelma lives on a bit of acreage east of Clovis and tends to lean to the hardiest, low

water plants, incorporating what grows naturally (sometimes thought of as weeds) with other hardy California natives.

Meetings are open to the public. Bring your note pad and join us! Unitarian Universalist Church, 4144 N. Millbrook Avenue. (South of Ashlan Avenue), Fresno

Future Meeting Programs

September 19 *“Central Valley Native Plant Gardening – From Foothills to Flatlands”*. Presented by long time native plant gardeners, Madeleine Mitchell, Joseph Oldham, and Thelma Valdez.

November 21 *“Finding Keck’s Checkerbloom on Tivy Mountain”*. Presented by John Stebbins, Herbarium Curator, California State University, Fresno

October 17 *“Projects and Goals of the State Vegetation Program”* and *“The Manual of California Vegetation”*. Presented by Julie Evans, CNPS Lead Vegetation Ecologist for the state Vegetation Program.

December No meeting. Enjoy the holidays!

Summer at China Creek

By Warren Shaw

Cattle were removed from the park during the last week of June, having done their job ~ reducing the yellow star thistle population ~ for this season. We learned a few things this year; in the early weeks the cattle attacked some elderberries, in our newly fenced area, that we had thought they would not find attractive. With the help of cattleman Steve McDonald, we got those fenced, and they have recovered nicely.

Late in the season, apparently as forage got scarcer, they damaged a couple of seedling oaks we had thought big enough to fend for themselves. We hope they too will recover, but will rethink our protective fencing standards before next spring.

Shortly after cattle were removed, Vulcan materials once again mowed YST in all sections of the park: grazed and ungrazed. It was a comedy of errors, with mechanical breakdowns, failures to communicate, etc. but we eventually got it done. We will plan to mow a second time around August 1.

As we were dealing with YST, we noted that some of our other enemies, most notably bull thistle, ailanthus trees, and milk thistle, have really taken off, in 2 consecutive wet years, and we will have to turn our attention to them soon.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



I can't believe July is almost over! Where did summer go? I trust all of you have been enjoying the lazy days of summer, watching your gardens grow and watering!

When I moved from the "Inland Empire" of Southern California in the early 70's I packed my car, my dog, and my music collection and took off for "greener pastures." I rambled from the Coast to the Sierra then totally unexpectedly settled in Sanger...a far cry from the Big Sur coast or Oregon where I thought I'd eventually settle. Love has a funny way of changing one's perspective!

During the summer of '76 I was a packer for a High Sierra Outfitter and it was then that I realized the greener pastures I had been seeking were the product of water. (Remember that I was from L.A.). It was then that I fell in love with the Kings River. That love has grown, as has my dependence on its vital life force...water. For the last 30 years the Kings River has watered my family's crops, washed my clothes, quenched my thirst, refreshed the dog on a hot day, but most of all has been my place of escape.

We have an opportunity to take our appreciation and stewardship of this magnificent river a step further with a collaboration of several grassroots organizations with similar interests. (See the article later in this newsletter titled "China Creek Park - Where do we go from here?") I ask everyone to become involved. If you're using the King's water you already are part of the equation. Now, are you willing to secure its preservation for generations to come?

~ Peggy Jones



Study nature, love nature, stay close to nature. It will never fail you.

~ Frank Lloyd Wright

May 2006 Chapter Meeting

Back in May 2006 (when temperatures were just beginning to rise), Melanie Baer-Keeley, Restoration Horticulturist for Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, gave an informative presentation at the May chapter meeting. Members enjoyed many photographs and gathered tips and techniques Melanie shared from her years of cultivating native plants in the Sequoia National Park restoration nursery.

Although there are differences of temperature and elevation at the nursery compared to the lower elevations covered by the Sequoia Chapter, many plants she detailed are well suited in the lower elevations also. And higher-elevation foothill residents could use most all of what she described.

Fairmont Elementary Field Trip

On May 26th 54 fourth grade students from Fairmont Elementary school (Sanger) took a field trip to Choinmni park on the Kings river. Teachers Linda Hubbard and Gwen Olshave took advantage of the "free" fieldtrip sponsored by a grant from the Sanger Environmental Fund and Sequoia chapter of CNPS. They enjoyed an interactive display table of natural history information, an oak identification hike, a rowdy game of "who gets the acorn," and a reading of Grandmother Oak.



Yerba Buena
(*Satureja douglasii*)

17 parents chaperoned and they too enjoyed the outing. I heard several parents say, "We should come back." That's all it takes!

Sanger High had 72 students attend the day before. A special thank you to volunteer Anne Merrill for her support and assistance in "tending to the herd." More fieldtrips are planned for next year and your help would make the experience even more powerful! If you are interested, contact Peggy Jones.



Water ~ Essential for Life

By Joseph Oldham

This time of year as temperatures soar above 100 degrees for days on end, it is hard to remember back a few short months when rain was falling, the hills were green, and our native gardens were lush with new growth and life. Our native gardens are still vibrant with life these days, but the cycle has come to the time that I call “the time of testing” when life in California is challenged by dry conditions and high heat. Only the strong survive this time of year and native plants have survived these conditions flourishing in California for millions of years.

This is the time of year I get asked about summer watering of native plants. On this subject I am in an “ever learning” stage, just like almost every other native plant gardener. I have discovered that there is no set “formula” for most natives, but there are some plants for which summer water means death!

The plants that can't take any summer water are mature Blue Oaks, Flannel Bush, and many of the local species of Ceanothus. A common and tragic mistake made by many new homeowners in foothill communities is to set up a flower garden or lawn under the mature trees and shrubs that they may have on their property. When they do this, the water that they add during the summer months encourages the growth of toxic fungus species that attack the trees and shrubs through the roots. Over time these stately plants that could have been hundreds of years old wither and die and the homeowner is left with dead crags where once stood magnificent examples of survival in California.

For those of us who use native plants as a basis for our gardens, the application of summer water is dependent on the native habitat of the plants being used. Riparian plants that are normally found near stream or river channels will require regular summer irrigation. Examples are White Alder, various Willow species, Fresno Ash, and Buttonwillow. Valley Oaks can fall into this category also, but they can also be fairly drought tolerant once they have achieved some age. However, that may be beyond the life span of the typical homeowner.

Plants that are native to the foothill areas are able to take various amounts of summer water depending on the type of terrain where they grow. A good example is Western Redbud. I have found this plant to be very tolerant of summer water provided it has good drainage. On the opposite extreme is Flannel Bush; it can not take any summer water after the first year no matter how good the drainage is.

When it comes to watering methods, I favor a modified drip system. I use the term “modified drip” because I do not use single drip emitters near the base of the plants as recommended by most drip irrigation handbooks. Instead, I use the adjustable fan spray and bubbler heads. When using these adjustable heads, I have been able to make sure that the entire root area of the target plant receives water and since they are adjustable, as the plant grows, the watering amounts can be adjusted accordingly. These fan spray head also encourage wildlife to enter the yard. It is not uncommon to find a California Towhee or Western Bluebird bathing in a puddle near a spray head. Anna's Hummingbirds just fly through the sprays of water to take their baths. California Quail seem to like the bubbler heads for getting drinks and often bring the entire family of 8 to 10 chicks to gather around a bubbler head for refreshment.

Finally as to watering frequency and amount of time for watering, again there is no set formula or rule for success. I have found that location and soil type largely determine watering frequency. With west or south facing exposures, I have had to water about twice a week, about an hour to hour and a half per setting, for most of the plants in my garden. For north and east facing exposures, you may only have to water about once per week, but your plants will let you know if this is enough. If you see wilting, yellowing leaves near the trunk, and leaf drop; you will likely need to increase the amount of water.

Water is an essential element for life and a precious commodity here in California. California native plants have evolved very successfully in this climate and are very efficient in water use. If more Californians recognized and learned about water conservation from our native environment, most of the water issues that have plagued the state for the last 60 years would go away. Happy gardening!

OBSERVATIONS

Charles Darwin is quoted as saying “It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.”

It is interesting to observe adaptations, especially as local temperatures continue to reach or break records. During this record heat the larger specimens of Dove Weed and Vinegar Weed look as fresh as if they had a long cool drink each morning when in fact they've received nary a drop of water since before germination. Daily temperatures of 104 degrees take their toll on the smaller specimens but even they do not seem to complain. I have an incredible respect for those plants.

Unfortunately Yellow Starthistle is highly adaptable and quickly robs what nutrients are available from natives that may not be so quick. This is how invasive plants can take over. It isn't that native plants cannot adapt; it's just that they must be in the ground and established in order to feel the change and make adaptations. Dormancy and waiting is part of their adaptation.

People, too, must adapt. Is it my imagination or am I reading more and more about the madness of maintaining an expansive lawn? In the Central Valley it seems more madness than in many other places. According to Cristina Milesi, a researcher at NASA's Ames Research Center, lawns are today the single largest irrigated crop in the U.S. Lawns cover three times the amount of acreage as corn.

It takes time to change our perspective and become used to the heat, the increasing population, and the need to conserve water and not pollute our world. It takes time to learn to appreciate the beauty of California native plants if all your gardening experience is rooted in “East Coast” green instead of the colors of California. It takes time to change, but change we must.

Summer is a time for resting, for napping, and for enjoying beautiful, warm (OK, hot) evenings with the smell of sage in the air.

~ Editor.

China Creek Park – Where do we go from here?

On the morning of July 8 Warren Shaw gathered a group of China Creek enthusiasts at the Blossom Trail Cafe to make some important decisions about the future of this **big** education and restoration project for our **little** chapter

We discussed the subject of using chemicals to aid in the battle against Yellow Starthistle but need to do a little more research to determine if this is possible.

Research is needed to determine the cost and type of permanent interpretive signs at stations on the trail. We would like to find methods and materials that are inexpensive and easily repairable/replaceable. If members have any ideas on this, please contact Warren Shaw.

After some discussion, we unanimously agreed to pool our efforts with the Kings River Conservancy and to contact other relevant organizations in our campaign for a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the County of Fresno. Hank Urbach agreed to take on the job of spearheading the MOU effort. Peggy Jones will provide an example of an MOU and Warren will take the lead on writing.

The actual work of maintaining the trail, leading field trips, weed whacking, and the like is still a challenge. Although it has been difficult to engage high school, college, and university students to help, Peggy will continue to try and make contacts and obtain help. Increased member participation is also a challenge. We discussed that we may simply have to hire some labor and/or hope for more help from the County.

Warren provided a draft Vision Statement that will serve our purpose for the time being. As decisions and progress are made, the Vision Statement will become more formalized.

After the meeting some members adjourned to the Park for a field trip, noting the increasing advance of *Ailanthus* trees with concern. We also noted large exotic thistle populations, especially in the north grazing area. Action will depend on what we discover about chemical possibilities, but we (Hank) may simply mow. We noted a certain amount of YST in inaccessible areas (fence lines, etc.) which will require hand work. We also looked at areas newly mowed by Hank Urbach: both YST and an access path inside the fence at the south pond to allow fishermen to get around the pond without climbing through (and damaging) fences. Hank had also recently mowed the entire trail.

Native Plant Sale

Mark your calendars for Saturday, September 30, 2006. We will be at the Clovis Botanical Gardens again this year and planning has already begun. Marian Orvis is the point person for the Plant Sale and we appreciate any help you can give us. We always need help unloading plants and placing them in their sale location. The day of the plant sale we need volunteers who are willing to help direct people to the plants they are looking for (there will be a map) as well as people to schlep plants to cars, help with cashiering, and simply to be an enthusiastic member promoting the benefits of California native plants!

One of the biggest needs we have is for publicity. If you know of any way we can publicize the event, please email Marian Orvis (mforvet@earthlink.net) or Thelma Valdez (nmtv@att.net). We will have posters available and we can write up brief publicity pieces to put in your local newspaper, church, school, or workplace newsletters, or any other creative publicity methods you can think of.



Saltbush
(*Atriplex canescens*)

RELATED ACTIVITIES

Fresno Dome Hike

Saturday, August 19, 1- 5 pm

with Joanne Freemire

Mountain House Restaurant parking lot

Climb our favorite local granite dome on an easy 2 mile trail. Wear long pants and sleeves. Pack water, snack and insect repellent. Fee: \$10

14th Annual Harvest Festival at Intermountain Nursery

Saturday and Sunday, October 14 and 15th. Two days of live music, hand crafted gifts, children's activities and great food. Wander the Nursery to see a wide range of California Native plants in various demonstration gardens.

Propagation of California Native Plants

Saturday, October 21, 9:30 am

with Ray Laclergue

Intermountain Nursery's class will teach you about the various propagation techniques for California Native Plants. Ray will demonstrate and discuss collecting, storing, stratifying, and germinating seed. Taking and rooting cuttings successfully and proper growing conditions for California Natives will be covered. A tour of the Nursery's growing facilities will be given.

Forest Service Web Portal

From the Native Plant Conservation Campaign (NPCC) News comes information about a Web portal from the U.S. Forest Service: www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers. This new web site is the gateway to an enormous amount of botanical information. Every Region, Forest, Grassland and Prairie contributed to the content of this new site.

The majority of NPCC's partners are reciprocating with links to the new Web site, which will dramatically increase the traffic and will also emphasize the close working relationship with public and private partners. A number of other modules such as rare plants, native plant materials, ethnobotany, lichens, ferns and other botany subject areas are currently under development and will be posted to the Web site as they become finalized.

The Forest Service is extremely proud of the work the botanists, plant ecologists and other resource specialists, and NPCC's many partners contributed to the current content of this site.

NEW & RENEWING MEMBERS

May and June 2006 *New Members and Membership Renewals
The Sequoia chapter serves the Fresno, Madera, and Kings counties.

Kings County: Arroues
Fresno County: Betancourt, Horowitz, Juarez, Mallory, *Martin, Riedel, Roessler, Siegfried, Teviotdale, Urbach, Vance, Weibe, Whitmore
Out of Area: Borders (Visalia), Snyder (Davis),

Special thanks to Deloria Martin on behalf of CNPS for her generous membership donation.

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. The deadline for contributions to the September newsletter is Wednesday, September 6, 2006.

Everyone is welcome to contribute. We have a busy membership and some of you are doing interesting and noteworthy activities regarding natives. I encourage you to send me information on your doings. It would be great to hear how natives are used in your endeavors.

I would feel more optimistic about a bright future for man if he spent less time proving that he can outwit Nature and more time tasting her sweetness and respecting her seniority.

~ E B White

The IRS considers dues in excess of \$12.00 per year and all gifts to CNPS as tax deductible.

SEQUOIA CHAPTER OFFICERS* AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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Conservation Co-chairs	Jeanne Larson Joseph Oldham	(see Treasurer) (see Horticulture)
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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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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 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

Giant Chain Fern

Woodwardia fibriata can reach 8 feet tall in the right conditions. Naturally it inhabits areas where riparian woodland merges with forests. In the Sequoia Chapter area this means the higher foothill elevations (below 7000 feet) of the Sierra Nevada. Light reaches such areas while streams provide enough water to keep its roots moist.

For landscaping it can be used near pools or other sources of running water to simulate its native habitat where it can easily grow to 4 feet or more. Be sure it gets the type of partial or even full shade it would have if it were in the wild.

The tall arching fronds provide cover for a variety of wildlife. It can grow nicely, if not quite as large, even in hot, drier areas of the state. It will require more shade and water and may not grow as tall, but if you have the right conditions it can do nicely.



Excerpted *The Natural History of Big Sur* by Paul Henson and Donald J. Usner, *California Native Plants for the Garden* by Carol Bornstein, David Fross, and Bart O'Brien. Image from *The Natural History of Big Sur*.