



China Creek – June/July Update – Warren Shaw

As promised we had home-made strawberry ice cream for our mid-morning break at the June workday. It met with such acclaim that Ingrid was talking about the possibility of home-made fresh peach ice cream for the July workday (Saturday, July 16th)!

Hank Urbach had sprayed most of the YST in the Park with a light mixture of the selective herbicide, Milestone, using his “Norwegian” spray rig. However we were able to find some that was blooming, and pulled and cut a good-sized pile, which we stacked on the pavement and covered with clear plastic to “cook” in the sun.

Last year’s solarized pile is still intact, and, despite a wet winter and spring, no seed appears to have survived and germinated in that stack, so we’re pretty sure this system works to eliminate the thousands of seed each of those many plants could produce.

More good news: we found definite evidence, for the first time, that at least some of the Needle Grass we so laboriously planted early in the spring has germinated and is thriving. We hope to get a better idea of how much took at the July workday, when most of the annual grasses will have dried up.

We’re hoping for a reasonably cool morning on the sixteenth, when we will, once again, fight the good fight against invasive species, but we will start by eight and knock off by twelve, before it gets too warm. And there’s the possibility of that peach ice cream! Sure hope you can join us.

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

Water-wise Plant Sale and Fair

Saturday, September 24, 2011, 8am-2pm

As we have for the past several years, CNPS will be selling California native plants at Clovis Botanical Garden, who will be selling some natives, along with water-wise plants from other areas. This joint effort has served us well by introducing California natives to a wide range of attendees who may not have considered natives before.

This is also a call for volunteers to help unload and organize the plants and set up canopies on Friday evening. Saturday's volunteers will be directing customers to the cashier, helping customers with their purchases, and generally being a smiling face. We also appreciate volunteers who have used natives in their

gardens and are comfortable talking to customers about their experiences. Do you only have a couple of hours to spare? That's fine. Even a few hours can be a great help.

- Contact Marian Orvis at mforvet@comcast.net or 559.226.0145 if you can help.



Grand Bluffs

By Jane Pritchard

On June 25, Bonnie and Ray from the Intermountain Nursery give an annual tour of their Grand Bluffs Demonstration Forest at 6300' elevation. There were still patches of snow at forest edges as we drove up. So far almost 200 species have been found, some of which are rarely seen. I highly recommend this outing.

First we went to the Grand Bluffs, a long granite outcrop that overlooks Blue Canyon to the west. Many different ferns and *Dudleya cymosa* (live forever) grew among the rocks. Areas of soil were covered with *Mimulus bicolor* (yellow and white monkeyflower), *Allium abramsii* (a purple onion), *Clarkia williamsonii*, and many other flowers and shrubs. The seep that drained down over the rocks contained *Nemophila maculata* (five spot), *Calochortus minimus* (star tulip), and the sweet smelling *Trifolium variegatum* (white-tipped clover).

As we left the rocks and entered the forest, we encountered a *Fritillaria micrantha* (brown bells) and several food leaves. One leaf emerges to photosynthesize food, which is stored a year or more before the fritillary puts out the flowering stem. Bonnie spotted a few of the entirely white *Pitopus californicus* (California pinefoot) under the leaves on the ground. I could have looked all day and never seen them. A wetter area near a creek was covered with *Circea alpina* (enchanter's nightshade) of the Onagraceae not Solanaceae family.

We walked down over more exposed granite amongst *Mimulus layneae* (purple monkeyflower with skunky smelling foliage), *Lewisia triphylla* (3-leaved Lewisia), *Madia minima* (tiny yellow flower), and *Lomatium torreyii* (Torrey's lomatium). That rock has a long, narrow water slide down toward a stream where we had lunch. Red sprouts of *Darmera peltata* (Indian rhubarb) looked like aliens standing in the water. Bonnie took some flowers from *Rhododendron occidentale* (western azalea) to show everyone, and then put them in her hair. They looked great. *Juncus orthophyllus* (iris-leaved juncus) grew on an island in the stream. The leaves look just like iris before it blooms. I have seen it on many hikes this spring and don't remember ever seeing it before.

After lunch we followed a road back to the cars with a couple of side trips into the forest to see several large clumps of *Dicentra formosa* (bleeding heart), a carpet of *Trillium angustipetalum* (giant trillium), and the completely white *Cephalanthera austini* (phantom orchid). Don't miss next year's outing—it is always a great one.

Observations



--from Thelma Valdez

Yellow star thistle seems to have made big-time moves into the dry, flat lands east of Clovis to the foothills. The weather conditions this year may have been particularly favorable, or perhaps it was simply time. You know our chapter's battles with yellow star thistle from reading the China Creek updates; perhaps you've even spent time helping to reduce its spread there. Do what you can to keep it out of your own areas, too.

In happier news, I see a lot of Blue Curls (*Trichostema lanceolatum*) and Willow Herb (Fireweed) around our place. Anyone unfamiliar with natives might see these plants and wonder why I don't get rid of the weeds. Little do they know...

Other observers note unusual bloom: Jeanne Larson's Frosty Blue Ceanothus was jolted into reblooming after June's early downpour, only to have them scorched with recent heat; her Everett's Choice California Fuchsia is blooming early, and a friend's saucer magnolia has begun a second bloom.

From Warren Shaw—

In the foothills the mid-summer look has set in: dry, brown annual grasses, dull bluish leaves on the oaks, shriveling buckeyes, and stagnant, algae-covered pools all that's left of the rushing streams of a few weeks ago.

There is fresh green growth, however. The amount and size of Dove weed is astonishing, attributable, no doubt to the wet winter and spring. Milkweed is also plentiful and is blooming heavily.

On a recent trip to Shaver Lake we noted Red Monkey flower at about 2000 feet, lots of Farewell-to-spring above that, and, surprisingly, both Fremontia and Carpenteria still blooming a little between 3000 and 4000 feet. Higher up it is still fresh and green and spring-like with a great variety of mountain species doing their summer thing.



Do you have chapter meetings?

New or prospective members of the California Native Plant Society ask this question, or a version of it from time to time. The answer, or a version of it is, “Yes and No.”

Several years ago, it became clear to us that the downside of living in an area that is not densely populated is that the travel necessary to attend a chapter meeting is not practical for many who support CNPS and our Sequoia Chapter. After a couple of years of maximum effort, in which our program chair did a stellar job of scheduling really fine programs and presenters, only to see in attendance a population that looked like our board members --and no one else, we instituted a change.

Three or four times a year we schedule an open board meeting. This is, we have a meeting that includes regular business items (membership updates, reports from treasurer and other committee chairs) along with planning for the events that a small nucleus of active members can manage: our fall native plant sale, the winter Home and Garden Show, our Windshield Wildflower Tour, and other community events like Earth Day, the water-wise plant exchange, and our ongoing restoration work at China Creek Park.

These meetings are usually on a Sunday afternoon in the garden of a board member and include a potluck luncheon. We welcome any who feel they are ready to be involved beyond maintaining their membership. We do appreciate the fact that we have a stable membership of about 100—including a majority who have faithfully renewed their membership for years and years. Thank you. And if you'd like to attend the next potluck and planning meeting, one is scheduled for mid-August, when we will discuss all of the above, with emphasis on the September 24th Native Plant sale. RSVP Helen Shaw or Thelma Valdez (contact info on page 5).

If you'd rather not attend meetings, but would be willing to lend a hand on an “as needed, when needed, when available” basis we'd love to hear from you about that also.



Oak Galls

HOW GALLING!

One of the most intriguing characteristics of many plants is the formation of galls, tumor-like growths on the leaves, stems and other parts of a great variety of plants, which are created by the plants themselves but stimulated chemically by some other organism. Galls are most often initiated by insects, but, according to Ron Russo, Author of *PLANT GALLS OF THE CALIFORNIA REGION*, can also be caused by mistletoe, bacteria, fungi and mites.

Some 13000 different species of insects can produce galls. We in central California are most familiar, probably, with the gall-producing activities of Cynipid wasps, which create the widely varied and colorful galls we see on oaks and sycamores in our valley and foothills. Alfred C. Kinsey, before he got distracted by sex, was one of the world's recognized authorities on Cynipids, of which there are around 1400 species. Cynipids are members of the wasp family, but are generally small, stingless, sometimes flightless, and very unobtrusive.

These tiny insects deposit their eggs, either singly or in groups, on specifically targeted plant areas, depending on the species. The magical and still mysterious part of the process is what happens next. After the eggs hatch and the larvae begin to feed, they release compounds that “instruct” the host to create “housing” for them in the form of the gall -- specialized for the individual species. These galls all have scientific names, based on the species of Cynipid, but, inevitably, they also have colorful common names as well. Among these are Apple gall, Hershey's Kisses gall, Urchin gall, Pink Bow Tie gall, Striped Volcano gall, Spined Turban gall, and so on.

The importance of the galls becomes obvious when one considers that the larvae spend months in them, living for only a week or so as adults to locate a new host, reproduce and thus renew the process. Speaking of sex, it's common for spring and fall generations of Cynipids to alternate between sexual and asexual reproduction, with the larvae of every other generation all female and creating completely different galls.

This mysterious process, by which one organism can “order” another to produce a specific structure, obviously has significant medical and other implications. However, it remains one of the great discoveries yet to be made.

For (far) more detail, see the book mentioned above or a fascinating article in December 2009/January 2010 *NATURAL HISTORY*, also by Ron Russo.



CNPS 2012 Conservation Conference

--January 10-14, 2012

Town and Country Resort, San Diego

- -
 - Plenary sessions and keynote speakers including Peter Raven, long time director and now President Emeritus of the Missouri Botanical Garden!
 - Over 200 accomplished presenters in 22 sessions
 - Research and Chapter Poster sessions
 - Student presentation and poster contests
 - Two days of pre-conference workshops
 - Field trips
 - 30 Exhibitors and vendors
 - Photo contest and Botanical Art contest
 - Poetry and Spoken Word reading
 - Social events, working groups, and associated meeting opportunities
 - Student and volunteer discounts, scholarships, and travel stipends
 - Hundreds of cool volunteer opportunities
 - San Diego, San Diego, San Diego: the weather in January beats everywhere else!
 - Public Day Celebration, Saturday, Jan 14th
- Time to see old friends and make new ones

Details, Call for Abstracts – www.cnps.org



The Conifer Connection

A Resource for Learning and Teaching About Coniferous Forests and Watersheds

This recently-published work was written by Michael Roa, illustrated by Faith Rumm, and funded in part by various organizations, including our chapter.

The Conifer Connection is written for teachers, docents, parents, youth group leaders, naturalists, and anybody else who wants a comprehensive guide to coniferous forests and parks. *The Conifer Connection* provides the user with information on: The human history of California's coniferous forests and watersheds; Basic ecological principles; The science particular to the coniferous forest ecosystem; How to set up and conduct a field trip to a forest or park; Standards-correlated lessons and activities for before, during, and after a visit to a park or forest; Up-to-date lists of contacts and sources of materials.

This resource or any part of it is available for viewing or download without charge.

www.parks.ca.gov/teachersguides

Print or DVD versions are available at www.caltrees.org

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.



SEQUOIA CHAPTER OFFICERS* AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Thanks to *New and Renewing Members (June)

Fresno County: O'Leary, Pryor, *Rainbolt, Rodriguez, Siegfried, Whitmore

Madera County: Yosemite Research Library

Out of area: Snyder

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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CALIFORNIA
NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

In conjunction with **Friends of the Regional Parks Botanic Garden** and **Pacific Horticulture** - presents
2011 Autumn Symposium

**Growing Natives:
Inspiring and Enduring Gardens**

September 17, Lafayette Community Center
Talks by Carol Bornstein, Deva Luna, Michael Craib,
Luke Hass, and Dave Fross
Sept. 18 – Regional parks Botanic Garden, Berkeley
Workshops: pruning natives; natives for dry shade,
wildlife, containers; the native rockery

www.pacifichorticulture.org

Next Newsletter: Sept. 2011

Send newsletter corrections or suggestions to Helen Shaw helshaw@netptc.net. The newsletter deadline is Friday, Sept. 2.



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: _____
Address: _____
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- Student, Limited Income \$25
- Individual \$45
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Make your check payable to "CNPS" and mail with this form to:

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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

July/August 2011



CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY SEQUOIA CHAPTER

Jeanne Larson ♦ 3457 Redlands ♦ Fresno, CA 93726

www.cnps-sequoia.org

MADELEINE'S MUSINGS

Madeleine Mitchell

Remember our long, cool spring? I wish I could re-experience it today. It's hard to remember when we're in our first "heat wave" now that it's July. But I'll share some photos of spring since there isn't much blooming in my native garden now that I haven't written about in the past.

I want to feature a common plant that grows at our adopted Fresno County Park, China Creek, called *Rosa californica*. It grows there in several areas but the most visible one is just off the paved roadway about 50 yards or so from the gate. It blooms there longer than mine blooms at home because the water table is so high, especially this year. The one in my native garden had one last bloom last week, as I don't water it at all during the summer. Naturally it is found throughout the state below 6,000 feet. In reading about it in "[California Native Plants for the Garden](#)" (Bornstein, Fross and O'Brian) it mentions to rejuvenate the plant by cutting it to the ground in late summer or fall. I've never done this but will try it this year. I usually let the rose hips develop for winter color and prune in January.



CNPS + Sequoia Chapter

July/Aug. 2011
Clockwise, from below

California wild rose *Rosa californica*
Blue Elderberry *Sambucus mexicana*
Desert willow
Woolly bluecurls *Trichostema-lanatum*
Oak Galls

