



# CARPENTERIA

Newsletter of the Sequoia Chapter  
California Native Plant Society

March 2006

## CHAPTER EVENTS

Chapter Meeting: Tuesday, March 21, 7:00 p.m.

### *“Rare and Endemic Plants in Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks”*

Speaker: Sylvia Haultain, Plant Ecologist, Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks

This is your chance to learn about rare & endemic plants in Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks.

Find out why these parks have such a rich tapestry of environments that support over 1,200 species of vascular plants - many of which are found only in the Sierra Nevada.

Sylvia Haultain, plant ecologist for the National Park Service, will show slides of some of the rare and endemic plants and describe how park botanists document their locations and habitats.



*Munz's Iris (Iris munzii)*

Sylvia has a masters degree in ecology from UC Davis. She has studied the plants and rambled through the wilderness of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks for over 25 years.

Everyone come and join Sylvia's presentation on March 21 at 7 PM. Snack on homemade (or not) goodies washed down with coffee or tea. See you there!

Non-members are welcome so even if you can't attend, tell a friend!

**Board meeting starts promptly at 6:00 pm. All members are welcome to attend the Board Meeting.**  
Unitarian Universalist Church, 4144 N. Millbrook (South of Ashlan Avenue). The public is welcome!

### Future Meeting Programs

April 18	Invasive plants and the California State Weed Plan. Bob Case, Invasive Plant Management & Integrated Pest Management
May 16	Melanie Baer-Keeley, Restoration Horticulturist, Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks
June-August	No programs.
September	Central Valley Native Plant Gardening - From Foothills to Flatlands. Madeleine Mitchell, Joseph Oldham, and Thelma Valdez.

### Sequoia Chapter Field Trips

See details on page 5 of this newsletter.

April 1	Windshield Wildflowers with Warren Shaw & Peggy Jones (Intrigued? See page 5)
April 17	Table Mountain with Bob Case
April 18	China Creek with Warren Shaw & Bob Case
May 13	Signal Peak with Joanna Clines
June 24	Grand Bluffs with Bonnie Bladen

### Fresno Home & Garden Show

By Marian Orvis

Kudos to the following brave souls who weathered the weekend of the Home and Garden Show. My grateful appreciation to Jane Pritchard, Jeanne Larson, Madeleine Mitchell, Mary McClanahan, Morgan Jones, Nye Morton; Paul Mitchell, Peggy Jones, Penny Stewart, Thelma Valdez, and Warren Shaw. A special thanks goes to Frank Orvis who, behind the scenes, is always a willing and able journeyman for this yearly show.

Our booth was well attended due in part to the design expertise of Thelma who has a knack for making a small space inviting to the visitor.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



As I was driving down blossom lined Academy Avenue the other day, I felt a tug on my heartstrings. I always think of Eunice, a beloved aunt, who loved anything that grew. Eunice gardened while others watched television or talked on the phone, She owned neither and that was fine with her.

Eunice grew wonderfully aromatic lavender, roses, and sage in soil enriched from humus she composted from garbage. I remember following her down the garden path, watering can in hand, listening to her tales of the breeding successes of her miniature roses.

Those days were the best! I grew up, moved away and married, but Eunice and I corresponded often, mostly about our gardens. I would always write to her with news of the first blossoms.

The last time I was with her, she lay still, almost gone, her room filled with the scent of lilacs from her garden. As the foothills begin to bloom, I drift back to those wonderful days spent in her garden.

We all have had someone in our lives that sparked our interest in plants, whether it was someone we knew personally or someone we respected from afar. Now it's our turn to pass on the legacy and watch it grow.

I'll be taking several groups of students to China Creek and Choinumni Park in May. If you have a few hours to spare please consider sharing your legacy with an at risk student.

~ Peggy Jones



Howard Latimer, Paul and Madeleine Mitchell at work during a perfect day at China Creek.

## Kings River Opportunity

by WarrenShaw

Joseph Oldham and I have been attending meetings of, and doing some committee work with, the Upper Kings Basin Water Forum. This group was formed under the auspices of the Center for Collaborative policy and consists of representatives of Kings River water users: urban, agricultural, and environmental. It has as its goal the development of a definitive plan to distribute river water in an equitable and sustainable manner. We (the Forum) are in the process of applying for a grant from the Department of Water Resources that will finance the development of this plan.

Recently Joseph and I and representatives of other environmental groups met informally with David Orth, General Manager of the Kings River Conservation District and Gary Serrato, General Manager of the Fresno Irrigation District. They seemed sincerely desirous of additional input from us regarding environmentally sensitive development of the river and its environs, as well as water distribution facilities.

It eventually developed that in addition to the general philosophical principles of habitat preservation we have been espousing, they would like for us to offer up "defined projects" which could be integrated with the plan.

As we talked we agreed that the most obvious kind of project to start would be integrating habitat enhancement with ponding basins, designed for groundwater recharge, and along the corridors (canal banks) which connect these basins. At its simplest level this is obviously a matter of contouring the basins with gradual slopes around their edges and planting natives which will provide food, shelter and nesting sites for birds and mammals. We know we have in our own membership all the knowledge needed to form a good plan for such a project. However, for the purposes of the grant, we need a careful, scientifically documented design. This could prove more time consuming than any of us could manage.

We believe that this can't be an original idea. There must be existing plans we could use as a starting point and adapt for specific local sites. We're hoping the membership can suggest places to look for appropriate designs, or suggest people who could be consulted to create such designs (there may, eventually, actually be some money available.)

The environmental subgroup will meet, again informally, in about 3 weeks, and we'd like to go to that meeting with some pretty definite suggestions to offer.

We're pretty excited. This seems a fantastic opportunity to make a difference in our area's habitat by restoring, in effect, some lost wetlands, with a lot of high-powered help to get it done. Please let us know if you have any suggestions.

## China Creek Update

By Warren Shaw

Things are happening at the park. At the February workday, it was a great day. The weather, despite predictions, was glorious ~ cool and breezy, but bright and clear. It was the best possible weather for hard work. Many of the "China creek stalwarts," Howard Latimer, Madeleine and Paul Mitchell, Hank Urbach ~ and "the kids," Thelma Valdez and Nye Morton, turned out to drive steel posts and dig post holes (in soil characterized by cobbles ranging in size from golfballs to footballs.) All this is toward building a fence that will enable us to expand the area of the park to be grazed for yellow star thistle abatement after last spring's very successful trial.

Since then Hank and I have set some of the wood posts needed, and Vulcan Materials crews have built new fence and repaired old fence on the other 3 sides of the new area. A second February workday, scheduled for the 25th, was postponed because our supply of wood posts (recycled sections of power poles) was delayed.

We're very hopeful, however, that, by the time this is published, we will have strung barbed wire on "our" section of fence and are close to turning the cows in to eat incipient Yellow Star Thistle.

## If You Plant Them, They Will Come

By Joseph Oldham, Horticulture Chair

The "them" in the title refers to native plants and the "they" refers to the vast number of creatures, great and small, that will come to your garden because you have used native plants in your landscape.

There are many books on this subject and the Internet is full of Web sites that encourage gardening for wildlife benefit. I used these resources to establish a native plant garden at our home in Fresno, and I consulted many of these same resources again last year as I planned our new garden here in Yosemite Lakes Park.

Of course, when you move to the foothills, you expect to see wildlife...in fact our first drive through the area when we were looking for a house produced several encounters with deer. But when we finally selected our house I remember that one thing that struck me about it was the lack of life near the house. The areas of the property that had not been touched during construction were teeming with critters, but the area next to the house and the yard was dead. The cause for this "dead zone" was plain to see from my perspective - no native plants.

When the house was new the owner had put in some "standard" landscape plants: junipers, African daisies, etc., with bark mulch around them for accent to make the house more appealing for sale. All of these plants were doomed to the garbage as soon as escrow closed. On our first night in the house last March, I was amazed at the silence...no sounds of crickets, frogs...nothing. The next day I was out in the yard surveying the site and pulling up African daisies. The junipers lasted about a week, but by the next garbage collection day they were gone too. Next stop was Intermountain Nursery and I quickly found out how many native plants could fit into a Toyota Prius. And it was a lot.

By summer Pacific Tree Frogs had moved in, entertaining us each evening as they crawled across the living room window hunting insects that were now thriving and swarmed to the light from the house. During the day, Western Fence Lizards darted about the front yard jumping from rock to rock, snatching insects, and displaying for prospective mates. The birds showed up in droves. Hummingbirds, swallows, flycatchers, woodpeckers, bluebirds, jays, hawks, and even vultures visited our landscape. At dusk, the children and I stood outside and watched as bats came out from their daily sleep and swooped over our head picking insects out of mid-air. The yard was full of life and the native plants that were now filling it provided the foundation for that life.

This March as I walk through the yard it is a much different place from a year ago. Lady Bird beetles, tree frogs, toads, and lizards are patrolling the yard feeding on aphids and other pest species eliminating the need for chemicals and making the yard a safe place for children to play. The Cleveland Sage that I planted are about three times larger and should produce a spectacular display of blooms all summer, providing nectar for hummingbirds, native bees, and butterflies.

California Fuchsia and Desert Willow will be blooming from May through the fall and provide additional nectar sources. Soon butterflies will be attracted to the Yarrow flowers while Sticky Baccharis and Coyote Bush will be attracting the most amazing array of beneficial native wasps that I have ever seen. It will be a lively and wonderful spring! Happy Planting!

A great source of information about gardening for wildlife with California native plants is [www.laspilatas.com](http://www.laspilatas.com).



Oak galls at China Creek

## Cityscape Awards 2006

First Annual Landscape and Beautification Awards

*"Showcasing Fresno at its Finest"*

Fresno California (February 2, 2006)

For the past twenty years, Tree Fresno and the Greater Fresno Area Chamber of Commerce have worked to improve the quality of life in Fresno. These two organizations are sponsoring the new **Tree Fresno "Cityscape Awards"** for landscape and beautification of the Fresno metropolitan area. We want to honor those businesses that have exemplified this spirit of community improvement and civic pride.

To be eligible, projects must be located in the Fresno metropolitan area and visually or physically accessible to the general public. Applications are available on-line at [www.treefresno.org](http://www.treefresno.org) or the Fresno Chamber of Commerce at 495-4800.

You may make a request for an application via fax or mail by contacting Tree Fresno at (559) 221-5556. Entries are due by Monday, July 3rd. Judging will take place in July.

The awards will be presented at Tree Fresno's Annual Dinner on Friday, September 15th at the Smittcamp Alumni House of CSUF. The dinner brings together community leaders, activists, and philanthropists to celebrate the outstanding achievements of the award winners. The dinner also serves as a fundraiser for Tree Fresno, drawing sponsors from corporations, foundations, and private individuals.

Call Tree Fresno at (559) 221-5556 or visit our web site at [www.treefresno.org](http://www.treefresno.org) for a complete list of projects.

Jane Fortune, Executive Director Tree Fresno  
776 East Shaw Ave, Suite 102  
Fresno, CA 93710  
Phone: (559) 221-5556 ext 101  
FAX: (559) 226-0979

## Healthy Living Fair

Saturday, March 25, 8 a.m. - 12 noon

Tree Fresno and Fresno City College are partnering to present a Healthy Living Fair at Fresno City College (West lawn), 1101 E. University Ave., (Maroa & Weldon) Admission is free.

Sequoia Chapter will have a table at this Fair. If you would like to participate, contact Marian Orvis at [mforvet@earthlink.net](mailto:mforvet@earthlink.net).



## FEBRUARY 2006 CHAPTER MEETING

We were awash in the delicate beauty of California's vernal pools during February's chapter meeting. Carol Witham took us on an educational and picturesque journey through some remaining vernal pools in the Great Valley. Although Carol's 20+ years of studying vernal pools initially focused on plants, she quickly recognized that the fauna was as fascinating and important, and intertwined with the flora of these ecosystems.

Carol took us through the annual cycle of a vernal pool. The apparent life in a vernal pool appears (to human eyes) only during the wet season with the appearance of the concentric rings of annual wildflowers and migrating waterfowl. Get closer during these times and the pools are teeming with insects, crustaceans, amphibians, and other invertebrates. No wonder the birds are here! When the flowers bloom, native bees emerge from underground nests to pollinate.

Most vernal pool flowers are all blossom and very little foliage. Nearly their entire energy is spent producing large flowers (the easier to be seen by pollinators) and to set seed. One flower, Meadowfoam (*Limnanthes* spp.), is being investigated as a source of oil to replace whale oil used in industrial applications.

As the water evaporates and the pools dry out, the adaptations of plants and animals move into the next phase. Plants set seed, insects produce eggs, crustaceans produce cysts, and amphibians and native bees retreat deep into the soil. The vernal pools may look like nothing more than dead grass but in fact are simply the resting phase of these reservoirs of life. In drought periods the resting phase might last a couple of years.

What was originally 4 million acres of vernal pool habitat in California has been reduced to 10% of that (EPA estimate). Carol provided an insight into the success she and others have had in getting the UC Merced campus location to be adjusted to reduce the impact on rich vernal pool ecosystems there.

Perhaps Carol's strongest point in discussing the long struggle with UC Merced is that with persistence and determination goals such as this can be achieved.

## OBSERVATIONS

For more information on vernal pools visit [www.vernalpools.org](http://www.vernalpools.org).

We are blessed with what most would call mild winters. Winter weather in the Valley is enough to experience seasonal changes without having to deal with truly cold temperatures. Higher elevations get enough snow to feel real winter. It's cold enough to wish for a hot summer day, to thoroughly enjoy every drop of precious rain, and to gasp with delight at various plants' re-emergence from winter dormancy.

Those warm days in February were a bit too soon for my pleasure. March's return to cooler weather was welcomed because I much prefer a slow emergence from winter so as to savor the subtle changes dormant native plants exhibit as they, too, emerge from their rest.

When the air is still very brisk California Fuchsia have gone from a bunch of dry-looking stems to a profusion of small foliage that will eventually reach 4' across by September. The stems of needlegrass blooms appear suddenly. Just as suddenly they've bloomed and the sun is glinting off their purple-colored awns as they sway in the breeze.

At 2,000 feet Blue Dicks and Buttercups are beginning to bloom. Fiddleneck is full out at lower elevations and moving up. Down lower, the Harvest Brodiaea leaves are thick in places and portend a coming riot of violet blossoms.

In the foothills Buckeyes are bright green with new leaves and buds; Live Oaks are blooming and Blue Oaks are starting in their highly individualistic way.

Valley Oaks at China Creek have tiny bright green leaves that seem almost too small for such a massive plant. Look quickly - the energy of this time of the year will pass before you know it and you'll be looking for a shady place to nap.

- Editor

### The (Foot)hills are alive with the sound of.....gates?

By Jeanne Larson, Conservation Co-chair

The newest environmental threat to our lower foothills are gated community developments. Gates may keep the 2-footed varmints out, but what will the homeowners reaction be to the 4-footers? One is situated on Marina Cove Road (to Millerton Lake boat docks), the other near Friant and Auberry Roads.

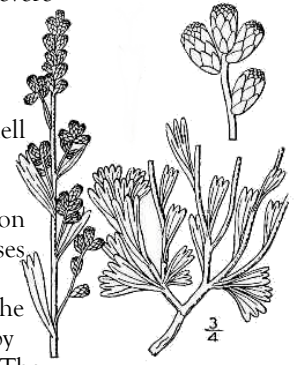
Another proposed development is located north of the town of Friant on O'Neals Road where there are significant vernal pools and the endangered Adobe Surburst (*Pseudobahia bahiaefolia*). Guess if you've seen one piece of open land you've seen them all - and choose which is the cheapest.

### Sagebrush sends a warning signal

From *The Christian Science Monitor*, March 2, 2006

Move over Paul Revere - meet *Artemisia tridentata*, alias Sagebrush.

Biologists at Cornell University have found that when predators munch on the shrub, it releases volatile organic compounds into the air, warning nearby plants of danger. The scientists found that wild tobacco plants can detect the compounds and begin to "prime" their own natural defenses until it's attacked; the effort is too costly in energy and nutrients for false alarms. But the priming does allow it to respond more quickly to attack when it happens.



Sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*)  
Illus: Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913. *Illustrated flora of the northern states and Canada*. Vol. 3: 20.

The scientists aren't sure how this plays out in the real world: tobacco and sagebrush typically live in different ecosystems, and the two plants attract different types of predators. But their experiments in the greenhouse and in the field using predators specific to each plant, showed that some form of biochemical danger signal was passing from sage to tobacco. Their results appeared in recent issue of the journal *Oecologia*.



Oregon Ash (*Fraxinus latifolia*)

# RELATED PLANT AND FIELD TRIP ACTIVITIES

## Sierra Foothill Conservancy

Table Mountain Open House. Saturday, March 25 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Open invitation to stroll on this lovely property at your own pace. There will also be a guided wildflower hike beginning at 9 a.m.

**Hikes.** Hikes are free and begin at 9:00 a.m. Call to sign up and for meeting points and weather cancellations. Led by experienced volunteers. Bring lunch & water, hiking boots.

Saturday March 18	<b>Table Mountain Archeological Site.</b> Easy.
Sunday March 19	<b>Table Mountain Smith Basin.</b> Very strenuous.
Saturday March 25	Table Mountain Wildflower Hike. Easy
Saturday April 1	Tivy Mountain Wildflower Hike or to the Peak. Very strenuous.
Sunday April 2	Table Mountain Loop Trail. Strenuous.
Saturday April 8	Black Mountain Summit. Fairly easy.
Sunday April 9	Table Mountain Smith Basin. Very strenuous
Saturday April 15	Table Mountain Table Top. Moderate.

### Classes

Classes require early reservations (\$10/person, \$20/family). Space is limited. Bring lunch and water for daytime classes. Visit [www.sierrafoothill.org](http://www.sierrafoothill.org) for more information, registration, and changes/additions or call 559/855-3473.

Saturday March 18	<b>Wildflowers of the McKenzie Preserve.</b> With botanist John Stebbins, 6 mi. round trip hike to the top of the table to see vernal pool species and a great view. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Saturday April 8	<b>Wildflowers of the Mariposa Area.</b> With botanist Wendy Fisher. Moderate 4-5 mile round trip hike along the South Fork of the Merced River. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

### Hite Cove Hike

Saturday, April 22, 10:30AM - 4:30 PM

Oakhurst Post Office. Celebrate Earth Day on a walk through a wildflower-filled canyon to Savage's Trading Post and back with Joanne Freemire, Naturalist. Bring a lunch and water, and dress in layers. Fee: \$15. Chawanakee Unified School District Adult Education Classes. Call Doug Waltner at 683-0808 for more information.

## Sequoia Chapter CNPS

Saturday  
April 1

**Windshield Wildflowers with Peggy Jones & Warren Shaw.** For those who want to see wildflowers but aren't into hiking. We'll meet at Doyle's Store near Piedra at 9. Our route will take us up along the shore of Pine Flat lake, over the ridge and along Watts creek to Watts valley ~ where we may stop at the Shaw's for a lunch and bathroom break ~ and back to town by Watts Valley road, through blue oak woodlands, the serpentine area at Hog Mountain and down along Fancher creek. To add your name to the list and get carpool information, contact Warren at [warshaw@nerptc.net](mailto:warshaw@nerptc.net) or [559] 855-4519. Free. (If using a map search for directions, Doyle's General Store is located at 25425 E Trimmer Springs Rd, Sanger, CA 93657.)

Monday  
April 17

**Table Mountain with Bob Case.** 9 a.m. Meet at McKenzie preserve 3.8 miles past Millerton store on Auberry Rd. Bring all the regular hiking stuff including hand lens We'll go up to the vernal pools on the east table and over on the west table if the group wishes. About 6 miles round trip, elevation gain 800 feet.

Tuesday  
April 18

**China Creek with Warren Shaw & Bob Case.** 10 a.m. Meet at the pipe barrier/gate. Take 180 East to Smith Road (West fence of Centerville School). Go south on Smith Road for about a mile (cross Rainbow Road).

Saturday  
April 29

**Tour of the Restoration Research Nursery near Tranquillity with Nur Ritter, Restoration Botanist** for the Endangered Species Recovery Program at CSU, Stanislaus. Meet at 9 am at the ESRP office (1900 N Gateway, Fresno). Transportation available to Tranquillity (1 hour), or may carpool, depending on turnout. Bring hat, sunscreen, water, sturdy shoes, camera, binoculars. 85 species are planted in the nursery and should be in bloom. Visit the Web site <http://esrp.csustan.edu/projects/lrdp/nursery/> for a full description. 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Saturday  
May 13

**Signal Peak with Joanna Clines, Botanist.** Sequoia Chapter and Sierra Foothills Chapter invites you to see the rare Yosemite onion in bloom, and enjoy 360 degree vistas from this 7,000 foot mountain in the Chowchilla Mountains. This lookout is behind a locked gate, so here's your chance to visit this wonderful place. RSVP to Joanna Clines at [jlclines@fs.fed.us](mailto:jlclines@fs.fed.us) or 559/281-2789. Meet at the junction of Hwy 49 and Chowchilla Mountain Road at 9:00 a.m. We'll carpool to Signal Peak. Four-wheel drive vehicles may be helpful. From Fresno/Madera/Oakhurst, you may meet Joanna at 8:30 at the US Post Office parking lot in Oakhurst, near Longs Drugs on Hwy 49. Bring water, lunch, sturdy hiking shoes, sun protection. Optional: binoculars, camera, bird and flower field guides. We won't hike far, but the hiking we do will be on steep, loose, rocky slopes at 7,000 feet elevation. Expect to spend the day, getting back to Highway 49 by 3 or 4 pm.

Saturday  
June 24

Grand Bluffs with Bonnie Bladen.  
Details TBA.



Baby Blue Eyes  
(*Nemophila menziesii*)

## Intermountain Nursery Classes

Saturday March 25	<i>Foothill Wildflowers with Shirley Spencer, Naturalist.</i> We will go on a morning hike at the San Joaquin River Gorge to recognize wildflower species in our area. Meet at the Nursery at 9:30 a.m. to carpool. Bring a hand lens, water, snacks, and sun protection. Fee: \$10.00
Saturday April 22	<i>Native Plants in the Landscape with Bonnie Bladen.</i> Spring is the time to view most native plants in bloom. Tour the many demonstration gardens at the Nursery and find out what will do well in your location. Cultural requirements of the plants will be discussed and handouts are available. Fee: \$10.00

## Jepson Herbarium Public Programs

Workshops are taught by recognized authorities in their field. Most workshops are designed to accommodate beginners as well as professionals. For a full schedule, descriptions, and registration, visit < <http://ucjeps.berkeley.edu/jepwkshp.html> >.

Thursday, March 30 - Sunday, April 2	<b>Flora of San Luis Obispo County.</b> SLO County is extremely diverse – from rainfall of 6" or less on the Carrizo Plain to over 50" in the coastal mountains. Over 1500 plant species are found here. This field course includes an all-day Friday trip from SLO to the Carrizo Plain with stops along the way. Saturday includes coastal communities and Sunday includes a trip to the closed-cone forests of Cuesta Grade.
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## California Native Grasslands Association

CNGA's tuition based workshop schedule is available for Spring 2006. Full Descriptions and links to registration forms can be found at the CNGA Web site [www.cnga.org/calendar.php](http://www.cnga.org/calendar.php). Registration by non-members includes one-year membership in CNGA.

Wednesday April 12	<i>Grazing for Effective Grasslands Management</i> with Sheila Barry, Kent Reeves, and Joe Morris at Fatjo Ranch, Pacheco State Park. 8 am to 4:30 pm. Fee: \$120 CNGA members; \$160 non-members.
Wed. & Thu. Apr. 19 & 20	<i>Using Native Grasses and Graminoids in Restoration and Revegetation</i> with a team of CNGA members likely including John Anderson, Sheila Barry, David Kelley, Vic Claassen, Chris Rose, and Jeanne Wirka, at Bouverie Preserve, 13935 Hwy 12, Glen Ellen. 8 am to 4:30 pm Fee: \$250 for CNGA members and \$290 for non-members.
Mon. & Tue Apr. 24 & 25	<i>Identifying and Appreciating the Native and Naturalized Grasses of Southern California</i> with David Amme and John DiGregoria at Santa Rosa Plateau, 39400 Clinton Keith Road, Murrieta. 8 am to 4:30 pm. Fee: \$220 for CNGA members and \$260 for non-members.

## How old is grass?

The California Native Grasslands Association was recently asked to provide information to update the State of California's State Symbols Web page at [www.library.ca.gov/history/cahinsig.cfm](http://www.library.ca.gov/history/cahinsig.cfm). (It has not been updated as of this writing.) In response to their request from their membership for information about *Nassella pulchra*, the following information was received from Mark R. Stromberg Ph.D., Resident Reserve Director of the Hastings Natural History Reserve:

"We have a publication on the longevity of *Nassella pulchra*, based on work here at Hastings. The short answer is that they live at least 200 years. The long answer is that we have yet to see any mortality in a 40 year sampling period of the large clumps. Until some of the old clumps die, we can't really complete the age-specific mortality table. And that means our calculations of average life expectancy is constrained to the most conservative estimates (~ 200 years).



Jason Hamilton used a data set I found here, based on 8 plots where previous Hastings botanists installed metal stakes, and rolled out a large sheet of clear plastic. They outlined the perimeter of each clump, and then put a stainless steel wire around each clump with a numbered metal tag. Every few years from 1963 to 2000, the maps were updated. So, you could look to see what clump was still there, if any new ones showed up, or any died. We don't know the absolute ages of the clumps, but we could calculate how many 1" clumps went to 3" clumps, 3" clumps went to 5" clumps, (much like how many 1-year olds survived to 2-year olds, etc.). Although we have a data set that spans 40 years, this is apparently not nearly long enough.

Anyway, we need to wait another 10 years to repeat this. And evidently we need to keep monitoring the plants for many more decades to see if any big ones die. I suspect the big ones are hundreds of years old; maybe 500? more?

Here is the reference: Hamilton, J. G., J. R. Griffin, and M. R. Stromberg. 2002. Long-Term population dynamics of native *Nassella* bunchgrasses in unmanaged stands in central California. *Madrono* 49:274-284."

Thanks to Jan Bridge, CNGA Administrative Director for sharing this information with the membership.

**China Creek Last Minute Update:** Many, many thanks to those who worked on the fence this past Saturday, March 11. We had a great day, despite the dire weather conditions, stringing all the wire on the section that was ready for it and setting posts for last section. **Next Workday:** Saturday, March 18 to wrap it all up and be ready for the cows!



## NEW & RENEWING MEMBERS

### February 2006 Membership Renewals

The Sequoia chapter serves the Fresno, Madera, and Kings counties.

**Fresno:** Kunz, McClanahan, Patin, Russell  
**Caruthers:** Christenson  
**Clovis:** Hansen  
**Coarsegold:** Oldham, Zumwalt  
**North Fork:** Arnest

Thanks to all for your continuing support. Send membership corrections to Helen Shaw at [helshaw@netptc.net](mailto: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](mailto:nmtv@att.net). The deadline for contributions to the April newsletter is Friday, April 7.

So much to learn...

"As we know,  
 There are known knowns.  
 There are things we know we know.  
 We also know  
 There are known unknowns.  
 That is to say  
 We know there are some things  
 We do not know."

- Donald Rumsfeld

## SEQUOIA CHAPTER OFFICERS\* AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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 2707 K Street, Suite 1  
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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

March 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](http://www.cnps.org)

## FEATURED PLANT

### California Bay Laurel

*Umbellularia californica* is an evergreen tree that can reach heights of 100 feet in moist, deep, well-drained soil. It has a strong, but pleasant scent and its leaves can be used instead of the typical Mediterranean variety sold in spice jars at your local supermarket. Even the fruit, which resemble tiny avocados, can be roasted and eaten much as California Native Americans would.

In the Valley California Bay may not reach its tallest height but can often take on a shrub size of 30-50 feet. It can even be clipped to form a handsome hedge. Late winter brings the

California Bay's yellow-green flowers. It is fast growing in ideal conditions and looks better with periodic thinning to prevent becoming top heavy.

Due to its close-grained, hard wood, California Bay's is often used to make furniture, bowls, plates, and the like. If left multi-trunked, as it ages the base of the tree can become a burl whose smooth bark furrows and creates interest.

It's hard not to like this versatile tree. It is drought tolerant and relatively free of pest and disease problems and, indeed, its leaves can be used in pantries to keep various insect pests "at bay."

