



China Creek Update

Warren Shaw

On Saturday, January 23rd we held our first workday of 2010. We were pleased to find the park in better shape than we had expected, given reports of vandalism. Park neighbor and member Hank Urbach told us that Fresno County personnel had been working to clean up tagging and vandalism at the gate and kiosk and had emptied the garbage. We certainly appreciate these efforts knowing the County's financial straits. In the last months of 2009 we worked with park neighbors to place gates across Smith Avenue at Rainbow to prevent access to the park at night. So far this seems to be helping to prevent vandalism.

It was a gorgeous day and we had a good turnout. We replaced the paper sign on the gate with a new one and cleaned the Plexiglas cover. Most of our efforts were spent spreading mulch on the trail. New piles of mulch had been dumped on the trail after I had previously asked that no more such material be left in the park. We already have a lifetime supply. We may have to address this further in the future.

Noting that a large old Valley Oak had fallen near the entrance we've asked permission from the County to have the trunk milled for rough lumber to build benches and/or a picnic table. This has been tentatively granted. The County has also given qualified permission for us to establish and treat yellow star thistle with approved chemicals in two test plots. The star thistle is up early, so we hope to start treatment at our February workday (2-20). We also hope to continue trail work. We'll be working from 8-12, and we'd love to have you join us, with hats and gloves, rakes and pitchforks.

Sequoia Chapter – Upcoming Activities

Windshield Wildflower Tour Saturday, March 27, 9 am

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 a.m., 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 photo ops. An expert botanist will be available to assist in pointing out and identifying the many species of California native plants.

In Watts Valley, we'll stop for lunch and bathroom break at the Shaws' place. After lunch it's back to the starting point via Watts Valley Road, through blue oak woodlands, the serpentine area of Hog Mountain, and down along Fancher Creek. Free.

Contact Warren or Helen Shaw (559-855-4519) by Wednesday, March 24th, for details and to put your name on the list.



Baby Blue Eyes
(*Nemophila menziesii*)

Smart Gardening Conference

Saturday, February 27, 2010
sponsored by the UC Master Gardeners. Ramada Hotel,
324 E. Shaw Ave., Fresno.

We will have a table at this event (8 am to 5 pm). Contact Marian Orvis at mforvet@earthlink.net or 559/226-0145 if you can help for any part of the day.

Home & Garden Show.

Friday-Sunday, March 5-7, 2010
Fresno Fairgrounds. We will have a booth at this three-day event that always draws big crowds. Please contact Marian Orvis mforvet@earthlink.net or 559/226-0145 if you can help on any of the days even for only an hour or two.

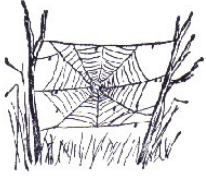
An Evening with John Greenlee, "The Grassman"

Thursday, March 18, 2010, 7-9 pm
Clovis Veterans Memorial Building, 453 Hughes Avenue

The Sequoia Chapter of CNPS and the Clovis Botanical Garden are jointly sponsoring this event. Attendance is free but seating is limited. R.S.V.P. required by February 28. R.S.V.P. to cbg.cnps@yahoo.com or call Anne (559.493.8052) or Thelma (559.323.8962).

A \$100 donation helps to sponsor this event and grants one person to an exclusive pre-event dinner with John Greenlee. Visit www.greenleenuresery.com to learn more about John Greenlee and his passion for meadow gardens.

Observations



Warren Shaw writes
“Here in the
foothills, remarkably,
spring has started.
Twinberry is in full
leaf and should be

blooming soon. Our big old manzanita
is loaded with pink blossoms.

Buckeyes are in full leaf at lower
elevations and ours (at 2000 feet) are
starting to pop. Poppies are blooming,
as are Popcorn Flower, the little
Fiddleneck, and Red maids. Blue Dick,
Ithurial's Spear, and Curly Leafed
Soaproot are up, and the hills are
bright with annual grasses. Can Baby
Blue Eyes be far behind?”

It's shaping up to be an early bloom in
the foothills. Our Windshield
Wildflowers tour could be just the
ticket for someone who hasn't the
ability or desire to hike. See details on
page one.

Spring comes fast and furious to our
Mediterranean climate. Jeanne
Larson lives in the midst of Fresno
and along her “wildflower” walk
around the neighborhood she finds
that many lawns are unmowed
because it's been so wet (yay!). That
means there is an abundance of plant
life, native and non-native. “What an
array – miner's lettuce, chickweed,
common and mouse-ear chickweed,
dandelions, pineapple weed, Lactuca,
and Senecio. Fiddleneck, riggut
brome is headed out, bitter cress,
henbit, mallow, shepherd's purse, and
verdant filaree, soon to bloom. And,
of course, lots of a real weed – annual
bluegrass.”

In her garden Jeanne's Bee's Bliss
Sage has lots of bloom heads and the
Frosty Blue Ceanothus is getting ready
for a big show.

Late winter in Mediterranean climates
feels a lot like spring in other parts of
the country. Plants emerge with a
vengeance, especially after some good
rain. No doubt it's impressive and
beautiful but I find it visually noisy,
too. The two quiet times of the year
(winter and summer) suit me best and
I now find myself looking for the last
remnants of winter's above-grown lull.

Natives are often underappreciated
during the less flowery days. I like
that I can provide a pile of branches
around for the songbirds. They find
spiders and other sources of protein
and they take shelter there when it
rains. Just yesterday I watched
American Goldfinches nibbling the
seed from the long seed pods of the
Desert Willows. Who else except
Lesser Goldfinches could perch on a
narrow seed pod five inches long and
3/8” in diameter?

Perhaps one of the best parts of late
winter here in the lower elevations is
the birds. The more natives you have,
the more likely you'll see bird and
butterfly action. For example, white
crowned sparrows are highly attracted
to Coyote Bush. Many foothill shrubs
are great in the garden – ceanothus,
toyon, different varieties of manzanita.
Those white crowned sparrows are
hungry, hungry right now. They
fan out across the areas
where needlegrasses have
dropped their seed. They
congregate and sing from
inside the cleveland sage. It
doesn't get much better than that.



-Editor



*Shooting Stars from Complete Garden Guide to
the Native Perennials of California by Glenn
Keator*

Flowers and newts

Jane Pritchard

On January 29 Roxy, Bess the dog,
and I had a beautiful hike. Poor Peg
had to stay home for a propane
delivery. Anna decided to stay home
and get some work done. My
philosophy: If I die tomorrow, what
would I rather have done – work or
have fun? Easy choice. We drove the
back roads from the Auberry Park &
Ride to the end of Pine Flat Reservoir:
L/168 to Lodge, L/Maxon Creek,
L/Trimmer Springs to Big Creek Road
at the bridge where Trimmer turns
south along the lake. We parked at the
intersection, hiked a little ways on the
dirt road, then went up to an old road
that follows along above the dirt road.

The sky was overcast with hazy sun in
the afternoon and full sun around 3
p.m.. Big Creek runs along the dirt
road and had lots of water rushing
down it. Innumerable shades of green
provided background for a few
flowers. A few poppies were open even
though it was overcast. Maybe they
haven't had a chance for sunny skies
lately. Fiddleneck was the most
abundant flower. I saw one blue dick
in bloom. Fringe pod only about 6
inches tall with one-inch diameter
flower heads covered a steep slope.
This area has lots of native bunch
grass in habitat favorable to and thick
with introduced grasses. Why haven't
the natives been crowded out?

We ate lunch in a spot beside a
tributary that flowed into Big Creek
from the west. Water fell down the hill
over bare rocks and formed a quiet
pool with a rock and sand bottom.
Numerous newts covered the bottom
and rose to the surface for air once in
awhile. There were no mating balls
but several couples. We felt sorry for
our friends who had missed the day.

Big Creek Road has lots of flowers
later on including the bright yellow
blazing stars. It connects to several
back roads that lead to Soaproot and
Peterson Mill Roads, Blue Canyon
Road, Dinkey Creek Road, and Shaver
Lake. I have wanted to explore those
roads for more than 10 years.

Membership

Helen Shaw

As of early February, Sequoia chapter has 110 members, many of whom have been supporting CNPS for a number of years. This includes several who are charter members, joining when the chapter formed some thirty years ago.



Whether your membership is recent or long-standing, we are appreciative of your support of our chapter and the California Native Plant Society.

If you have membership questions or would like to receive the newsletter electronically (with a page of color photos) let Helen Shaw know. If you have an email address you'd care to share with us, Helen would thank you for that also. <helshaw@netptc.net>

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



Miners' Lettuce
(*Claytonia perfoliata*)

SEQUOIA CHAPTER OFFICERS* AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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*Vice-Pres.	Paul Mitchell paul30@comcast.net	559/638-2784 (h)
*Secretary	Marian Orvis mforvet@earthlink.net	559/226-0145 (h)
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Rare Plant	John Stebbins johnst@cvpj.net	559/297-0144 (h)
Plant Sale	Marian Orvis	(see Secretary)
Conservation Co-chairs	Jeanne Larson	(see Treasurer)
Directors at Large	Jim Seay Verna Arnest	jaseay@comcast.net vernaj@sti.net

Next Newsletter: March 2010



Send newsletter corrections or suggestions to Thelma Valdez at nmtv@att.net. The deadline for the March newsletter is Friday, March 5.



JOIN THE CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY RENEW

Membership includes the quarterly CNPS journal, *Fremontia*; the quarterly *Bulletin* which gives statewide 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: _____

- 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 2010



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.

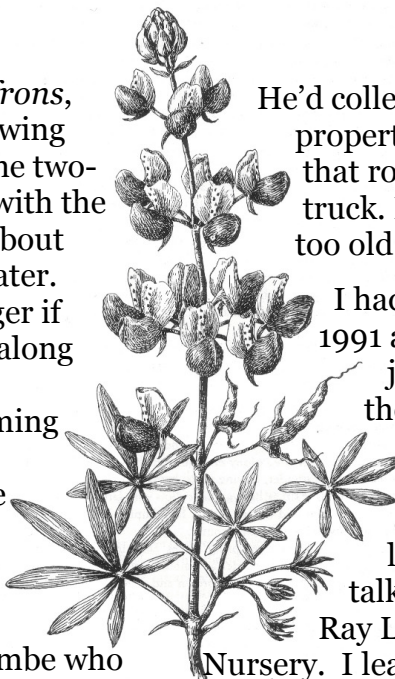
FEATURED CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT

Bush Lupine

Madeleine Mitchell

I've chosen to feature the *Lupinus albifrons*, Bush Lupine for February since it's showing some color in my native garden bed. The two-toned lavender flowers contrast nicely with the silvery grey leaves. My oldest plant is about five feet tall and receives no summer water. This is important because they live longer if left dry in the summer. It gets full sun along with the reflective heat off the asphalt street. Last year's seedlings are also coming up and transplant well if they are taken when the root is still short. I gave some to a friend last week, who has removed her lawn and is waiting for other native species to grow.

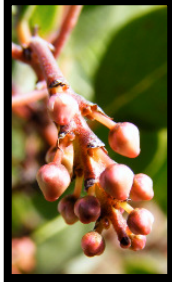
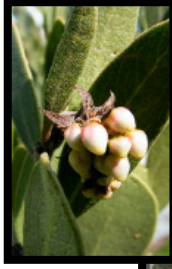
My original seed came from Paul Slocumbe who lived at Yosemite Lakes Park in Madera County.



He'd collected seeds from plants on his property and put them into a film canister that rolled around on the dashboard of his truck. He cautioned me that they might be too old to germinate.

I had just started my native garden in 1991 and all my plants were small so I just threw the seed out and many of them came up. When those plants produced seed pods, I collected seed and tried starting them in potting mix to share. I had no luck. Some time later I attended a talk on the germination of natives by Ray Laclergue from Intermountain Nursery. I learned that lupine seeds need heat to germinate, explaining why those original seeds in the film canister were prolific.

*Drawing from Complete Garden Guide to the
Native Perennials of California by Glenn Keator*



Left side:

- Foothill morning
- White crowned sparrow on Coyote Bush (*Baccharis pilularis*) + blossom closeup
- Miners' Lettuce (*Claytonia parviflora*)
- Woolly Blue Curls (*Trichostema lanatum*) early blossom
- Moss and lichen



Right side:

- Mexican (*A. pungens*), Harmony (*A. densiflora*) early blossoms
- Manzanita in full bloom (foothills)
- Baby Blue Eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*)
- California Wild Rose (*Rosa californica*) stem emerging from cane
- Wood's Rose (*Rosa woodsii*)
- Redmaids (*Calandrinia ciliata*)
- Blue Elderberry (*Sambucus mexicana*)
- White crowned sparrows on California Wild Grape canes (*Vitis californica*)

