

# Insignis

California Native Plant Society

Welcome to **Insignis**! As Alta Peak Chapter enters its second year, we encourage you to join us in our ongoing activities. We always welcome new members, so please share your **Insignis** with a friend!

## Calendar of Events

- March 6-7 CNPS Statewide Quarterly Meeting & Field Trips  
Men's Faculty Club Library, UC Berkeley
- March 11 Chapter Board Meeting  
Thurs. 7 pm Janet Fanning's, 41118 Blossom Drive, Three Rivers, 561-3461
- March 13 Wildflower Picnic, Potwisha Campground, Sequoia National Park  
Sat. 10-4 Meet at 9<sup>30</sup> at Cort Gallery, 41881 Sierra Drive, Three Rivers, 561-4036
- April 3 Vernal Pool Wildflowers  
Sat. 10-4 Meet at Cort Gallery at 9<sup>30</sup>
- April 8 Chapter Board Meeting  
Thurs. 7 pm Gwen Warner's, 42261 Mynatt Drive, Three Rivers, 561-0407
- April 24-25 Earth Fête Plant Sale Booth  
Sat/Sun 10-5 Cort Gallery
- May 6 Chapter Board Meeting  
Thurs. 7 pm Gwen Warner's, 42261 Mynatt Drive, Three Rivers, 561-0407
- May 8 ~~22~~ Field Trip to Case Mountain Sequoia Groves  
Sat. 10-4 Meet at 9<sup>30</sup> at Cort Gallery
- May 15-16 Living With A River: An Educational Exploration...  
Sat. 9-4<sup>30</sup> Conference at Three Rivers Art Center, North Fork Drive  
Sun. 10-2 Field trips
- June 5 & 6 CNPS Statewide Quarterly Meeting & Field Trip  
Sat. & Sun. Beetle Rock, Giant Forest, Sequoia National Park  
Hosted by Alta Peak Chapter!
- June 10 Chapter Board Meeting  
Thurs. 7 pm Elfrieda Blond's, 40934 Cherokee Oaks, Three Rivers, 561-3631

## Spring Is For Wildflowers!

The generous winter rains (we've only been waiting six years!) promise to bring us a bounty of wildflowers this spring. Already blooming are fiddleneck (*Amsinckia intermedia*), popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys* sp.), red maids (*Calandrinia ciliata*), miner's lettuce (*Montia perfoliata*), fringe pod (*Thysanocarpus* sp.), California lilac (*Ceanothus* sp.), and a few bush lupines (*Lupinus albifrons*) and baby blue eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*). Alta Peak Chapter has planned three outings to take advantage of the season.

- March 13 - Wildflower Picnic, Potwisha Campground, Sequoia National Park  
Meet at Cort Gallery at 9<sup>30</sup> or meet us in the parking lot across the highway from the campground at 10. Bring a picnic lunch to eat by the river. We'll observe the wildflowers along the lower part of the trail from Potwisha to Hospital Rock (2 miles, 2200'), enjoy our picnic, and then drive up to Hospital Rock to walk along the Buckeye Flat road (closed to vehicle traffic, 1-2 miles, 2400').
- April 3 - Vernal Pool Wildflowers  
Three Rivers members can meet us at Cort Gallery at 9<sup>30</sup>. Folks from the Valley can call Cathy (561-4671) for directions or meet us at 10 at the intersection of Highway 198 and Highway 216 (Woodlake turnoff; Texaco station). We'll visit two vernal pools. The first is on Highway 201 east of Seville (the only piece north of the road that hasn't been cultivated). This pool was purchased by the Wildlife Conservation Board (California Department of Fish and Game) within the last year. The second pool, near Lindcove, is the Hogwallow Preserve, which was donated to the Tulare County Historical Society in the 1970s. Comparing these pools will be interesting, because although they have similar plants, they have different soils and topography.
- May 8 - Case Mountain Sequoia Groves  
Meet at Cort Gallery at 9<sup>45</sup>. We'll carpool to Case Mountain (up a bumpy dirt access road). This trip will be led by Susan Carter, botanist for the Bureau of Land Management. We will visit two sequoia groves, hiking about two miles cross-country (no trails) at elevations over 6000'. We'll be looking for the rare, low-growing Shirley Meadows population of Mariposa lily (*Calochortus westonii*). Be sure to wear sturdy shoes for this trip.

For all field trips, bring a sack lunch, drinking water, hat, sunscreen, bug repellent, allergy medication (if sensitive), plant ID books, and a hand lens. Wear sturdy shoes, and long pants and long sleeves if sun and bugs bother you.



MOUNTAIN VIOLET



MARIPOSA-LILY



PURPLE NIGHTSHADE

## **Celebrate The Earth**

Coinciding with the celebration of Earth Day (April 22) Week, the Cort Gallery in Three Rivers presents "Earth Fête", a festival for all the citizens of the earth to join their voices in the expression of art, song, nature and spirit. The fête happens on April 24 and 25, and is open to the public from 10 am to 5 pm. Artisans and organizations are invited to share their appreciation and interpretation of the natural world by reserving booth space from the gallery. The fête will be an indoor-outdoor festival watched over by the flowing waters of the Kaweah River. A botanical fine art exhibition will grace the interior of the gallery from April 24 to June 7. This gathering of local fine art will have an emphasis on local wildflowers and flora. The Earth Fête presents an opportunity for all of us to learn ways to care for the earth and become sensitive stewards of our planet. Interested participants are invited to call Catherine Cort at 561-4671 for more information or fête applications.



## **Alta Peak Chapter Booth at Earth Fête**

Alta Peak Chapter will participate in the Earth Fête with an information-sharing booth that will include native plants for sale, as well as posters and books. We welcome plant donations for this sale and booth sitters. We see the Earth Fête as an opportunity to spread information about native plants while having fun in the sharing. Call Janet Fanning at 561-3461 to volunteer for the sitting schedule. Plant donations can be dropped off at the Cort Gallery the week before, or just brought to the booth on Saturday. The Chapter will also be purchasing some plants from native plant nurseries for this sale.

## **Board of Directors' Report**

Alta Peak Chapter's board of directors continues to evolve. Janene Richert has given up poster sales to become our new "artist-at-large." Janet Fanning, our new treasurer, will also take up poster sales. Finally, Elfreida Blond will work on "special projects" as needed. We welcome these volunteers and appreciate their contributions to chapter planning.

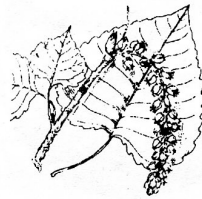
We continue to meet on Thursday evenings, usually the second Thursday of the month. For exact dates and locations, see the Calendar of Events, page 1). These meetings are becoming an event in themselves-- the February meeting included dinner and a lively discussion of our future plans! Chapter board meetings are open to everyone. Join us and share your views. We would still like to include more representatives from beyond the Three Rivers area, including conservation watchdogs from the Springville area and the valley floor.

## **Living With A River: Riparian Conference**

On May 15 and 16, Alta Peak Chapter will host "an educational exploration of all the communities-- plant, animal, and human-- that inhabit the banks of the Kaweah River."

This conference, designed for the general public, will provide an opportunity to learn more about the ecology of the Kaweah River, including its flora, fauna, and physical environment. Practical information on living harmoniously within the riparian (*i.e.*, riverbank) environment will also be presented. Guest speakers will include several professionals chosen for their expertise in aspects of "living with a river." We hope this community conference will be applicable to other riparian issues in California.

The conference will be held at Three Rivers Art Center (North Fork Drive), and is open to everyone. A registration fee of \$15 covers conference costs, including handouts and speakers' fees. A sack lunch is available for \$6.50, provided by Anne Lang's Emporium in Three Rivers (or you may bring your own). Watch your mailbox for a complete agenda and registration form for this conference.



Fremont Cottonwood

## **Landscaping With Natives: Growing Riparian Plants**

by John Moore, Native Plant Landscaping Chair

If it were possible to travel back in time 100 years ago and look down upon the eastern edges of the great Central Valley, and see the creeks carrying snowmelt out of the Sierra Nevada foothills, one wonders if any of the familiar landmarks would even be recognizable to a traveller from 1993. Human settlements and farming have left their mark everywhere, it would seem, and today little remains of the tall forests of valley oaks, the hummocky grasslands pockmarked with vernal pools, or the swampy basins lined with the tules. Only along some of the meandering creeks and drainages might it be possible to pick out some of the original landforms and vegetation that had escaped grazing, or levelling, or cutting. These riparian areas now serve as corridors, as sanctuaries, with the plants and animals sheltered there often the only reminders of what had once been in this place.

Revegetation work around the country has increasingly focused on riparian areas.

(Riparian/adj.: relating to or living or located on the bank of a natural watercourse, as a river, or sometimes of a lake). While nurseries supplying plants for this purpose are few, many of the indigenous plants found in our existing riparian habitats are relatively simple to get started.

Any watercourse observed is inevitably accompanied with cottonwoods (*Populus* sp.) and willows (*Salix* sp.). These offer quick shade and an excellent habitat as anyone who has seen warblers working over a stand of willows will attest. To propagate these is a simple matter of cutting limbs into foot-long sections, and inserting the "cuttings" half their length into

the soil. It is necessary to do this during the dormant period (December-February) so that roots will form before the buds break and new leaves emerge. Before you begin to "revegetate" your property with cottonwoods and willows, remember that these plants are water-seekers, and will seek out underground water supplies such as septic tanks and leach lines. Choose carefully where you plant them; they'll do well in lawns or other areas where water runs off and stands, in contrast to the many native plants which require drier, well drained soil.

Another ubiquitous riparian plant is the native grape (*Vitis californica*), often seen forming a groundcover and clambering up the trunks of trees. These plants are another candidate for cutting propagation, as any vineyard owner will confirm. Simply stick several unrooted grape cuttings made this time of year (prior to new shoots emerging) wherever you want the vines to grow. You will be amazed at the exuberance displayed in the growth put out by a plant with such a simple start. (With cuttings planted this way, for either grapes or trees, it is necessary that you pay attention to the direction that the buds point, and plant the cutting "right side up". Sounds simple but often overlooked!)

Not all of the trees and shrubs found in our local riparian areas are as easy to propagate by hardwood cuttings as described above. Sycamores (*Platanus racemosa*) can be rooted from cuttings in a similar manner with limited success using one year old wood; cut shoots 1/2" to pencil thickness into 12"-14" lengths with the bottom cut made at a node, *i.e.*, where a bud is located. Dipping the base of the cutting in rooting powder is helpful. However, propagation by planting seeds in sheltered locations is a more reliable method for this and many of the other deciduous riparian trees and shrubs.

Finding seed becomes a matter of recognizing seed structures and collecting in a timely matter, when the seed is ripe but hasn't yet dispersed. Sycamores have ball-like seed pods which fall apart in the winter, if the goldfinches haven't fed on them by then. The Button Bush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*) has similar ball-shaped seed heads, which persist on these medium sized, stream-side shrubs after the leaves have turned shades of golden-yellow and fallen. Another attractive shrub is the Spice Bush (*Calycanthus occidentalis*), whose distinctive brownish-red flowers and aromatic leaves have also given it other common names such as wine-flower, strawberry-bush, and sweet-scented shrub. Thriving along streams in shady canyons, as well as in full sun, Spice Bush bears seeds in distinctive urn-like structures about an inch long.

Also found in the wet, shady areas are groves of the White Alder (*Alnus rhombifolia*). These rapidly growing trees produce seeds in miniature, woody cones about 1/2" long. Like the cottonwoods and willows, alders come with a "warning label": Don't plant over septic lines, as these also have voracious roots that seek out water. Alder seed, like that of sycamores and other small-seeded riparian plants, germinates best in semi-shaded conditions, kept slightly moist with good air circulation.

Several of the trees found along foothill and valley streams have large seeds that are easily spotted at certain times of the year. The Bigleaf Maple (*Acer macrophyllum*) and the Flowering Ash (*Fraxinus dipetala*) have "winged" seeds (referred to as "samaras" by the botanists), which flutter as they scatter in the wind. If one looks carefully at this time of year around the maples and the ash trees, it may be possible to find seeds just beginning to sprout in the leaf litter at the base of these trees.

## **You Can Be A Part of Statewide Meetings**

by Catherine Cort, Director-at-Large, CNPS Executive Council

The Board of Directors of CNPS meets four times a year in various locations around the state. While it functions as a board meeting for Chapter presidents and committee chairpersons, it is also open to any member of CNPS. The meetings are fun and informative, giving a wide perspective of how CNPS works. It offers an opportunity to meet and talk with other volunteer members with all levels of involvement in CNPS.

Hosted by the East Bay Chapter, the next meeting is on March 6-7 in Berkeley at the University of California Men's Faculty Club Library. After the Saturday meeting there is a dinner at the Cafe Ristorante Venezia in Berkeley at 7 pm. On Sunday there is a choice of two field trips, one at the California Botanical Garden led by Roger Raiche, the horticulturist in charge of the excellent California Native Plant section. The other trip is a 3-mile hike at Mount Diablo, visiting one of the best stands of Mount Diablo manzanita (*Arctostaphylos auriculata*) and their accompanying Mount Diablo sunflower (*Helianthelia castanea*) populations. Led by David Bigham, landscape architect, this trip will explore an excellent example of park use impact on a natural landscape. To make dinner reservations send \$14.50 with choice of entree (salmon, chicken, or vegetarian fettuccine) to David Bigham, 2413 Fulton Street, Berkeley, CA 94704.

Alta Peak members are extended an "engraved" invitation to attend the June 5-6 Statewide meeting at Beetle Rock, in Giant Forest, Sequoia National Park. We are the hosts! While the June agenda has not been finalized (as of press time), the hours will probably be 9-5 on Saturday, extending into the evening with a social hour at 6 pm, a barbecue dinner at 7 pm, followed by a "Sunset on the Beetle Rock" program given by Bill Tweed, management assistant of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. On Sunday, Bill will also lead a two mile walk at Crescent Meadow, exploring sequoia groves, meadows, and mixed conifer forests. The early summer flowers should be out in the meadow and along the sunny southern edge of Giant Forest. This walk will focus on exploring many different plant habitats.

We hope you will be able to attend all or part of the June meeting. As the host chapter, we will need volunteer help in setting up and in the various other details of welcoming CNPS representatives from throughout the state. Please call me if you have some time to spare.

P.S. The September 11-12 meeting in San Luis Obispo will also be a conservation conference. Watch for our next newsletter for information.

## **Membership Information**

If you have received a complimentary copy of this newsletter and would like to join CNPS, dues are \$18 for student, retired, or limited income, \$25 individual, or \$35 for a family membership, paid to CNPS, 909 12th St. Suite 106, Sacramento, CA 95814. Be sure to indicate that you wish to be affiliated with the Alta Peak Chapter.

If you wish to receive this newsletter without joining CNPS, send \$5 for a one year subscription to Alta Peak Chapter, CNPS, P.O. Box 245, Three Rivers, CA 93271.

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## Annual Report 1992

Alta Peak Chapter submitted the following report of its activities to the statewide organization.

Alta Peak Chapter became the 30th chapter of the California Native Plant Society on March 7, 1992.

Membership: 56

Finances: \$941.60 in the general fund as of 12/31/92

Board meetings: We held five board meetings.

Programs: February 13, "Creating a New System for Naming Plant Communities" by David Graber, Research Scientist, Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks

April 23, "Learning About Local Rare Plants and Their Habitats" by Gail Presley, Wildlife Biologist, California Department of Fish and Game

September 26, "The Care of Oaks in Your Backyard" by Ginger Strong, Arborist, City of Visalia

Events: March 14, Plant Identification Workshop  
April, Youth Poster Contest Exhibit, Cort Gallery, Three Rivers  
April 18-19, Redbud Festival Booth  
April 26, Open House-- Native Plant Landscaping by John Moore

Field Trips: March 14, Cobble Knoll Trail, Lake Kaweah  
May 16, Kaweah brodiaea (*Brodiaea insignis*) Plant Watch, South Fork, Three Rivers

Newsletters: Four issues of **Insignis** were published. Heidi Schantz began the year as editor. Cathy Cort and Mike Neuman are co-editors now. John Moore has contributed very informative articles on native plant landscaping.

Conservation: Alta Peak Chapter was placed on the agency notification list of Tulare County. We responded to several land use permit processes involving riparian habitat.

Youth Poster Contest: Pearl Tucker coordinated the local youth poster contest. Four winners came from our chapter area. We are sad to report that Pearl has left our board, but are glad for her as she went to Hawaii to pursue a new teaching position.

Posters: Janene Richert chaired our poster sales. Our primary poster buyer is the Sequoia Natural History Association, which reports an increase in poster sales at Sequoia National Park.

Rare Plants: We have begun to collect plant watch information on *Brodiaea insignis*. We have discovered several new plant populations, as well as hybrids between *B. insignis* and related *Brodiaea elegans*.

## **Board of Directors - Alta Peak Chapter**

President/Newsletter Editor/Programs:

Catherine Cort, P.O. Box 245, Three Rivers, CA 93271, (209) 561-4671

Vice President/Conservation/Plant Communities/Newsletter Co-Editor:

Mike Neuman, 46076 Sierra Dr., Three Rivers, CA 93271, (209) 561-3501

Secretary/Membership/Historian:

Gwen Warner, P.O. Box 71, Three Rivers, CA 93271, (209) 561-0407

Native Plant Landscaping:

John Moore, 31393 Dahlem Drive, Exeter, CA 93221, (209) 592-9187

Treasurer/Poster Sales:

Janet Fanning, 41118 Blossom Drive, Three Rivers, CA 93271, (209) 561-3461

Special Projects:

Elfreida Blond, 40934 Cherokee Oaks Drive, Three Rivers, CA 93271, (209) 561-3631

**Insignis** Newsletter, CNPS  
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