



INSIGNIS

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CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY ALTA PEAK CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

*Please send changes of address to Membership Chair,
Janet Fanning, 41118 Blossom Drive, Three Rivers, CA 93271*

CALENDAR

CANCELLATION*KAT ANDERSON'S PROGRAM ON PRE-EUROPEAN MANAGEMENT OF VEGETATION, 19 MAY, IS POSTPONED. IT WILL BE RE-SCHEDULED, SO WATCH FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.**

PROGRAM. 22 September.
To introduce and talk about using native plants in landscape design--in your garden, around sites on your property, or wherever. We plan a panel format to include experienced gardeners, nursery and tree specialists, and botanists familiar with local habitats. Soil, water, shade-or-sun, where and how to get the material, will be reviewed, with an open question/answer period. Information will be illustrated with slides of garden settings. Program is free, open to public as well as CNPS members. At the Exeter Woman's Club, 201 No. Kaweah Ave, at 7:00. We chose this site and time to try to please members from both our Springville and Three Rivers cluster areas. Call Janet if you want to know more about the event, join us on this early autumn evening, get inspired, and then come to the-----

September 30 Plant Sale, in Three Rivers, place to be announced in next INSIGNIS

FIELD TRIPS

17 June--Dave Dulitz, Forest Manager at

Mt. Home State Forest, will lead another of his leisurely walks along a forest trail to Bogus meadow. There will be more than "just" plants to enjoy, and the weather in the next few weeks may produce a surprising number of flowers. Bring snacks/ lunch, water. Meet at 9:30 at Frazier Mill Campground. You can use either Balch Park Road, staying left when leaving Springville, or turn off onto Bear Creek Road from Balch Park Road, several miles up from Springville. Hike will be about 4 miles or less, and elevation gain less than 1000'. For further information, call Joan Stewart at 539-2717. This also a TOLT trip.

29 July--Camp Nelson Trail, along the higher, cooler slopes of the Tule River canyon. This has become an annual event, but it is never the same two years in a row. Once again, Gary Adest will organize and lead; call him at 539-0207 for details. This walk is co-sponsored by TOLT, Tule Oaks Land Trust.

12 August--Climb to Jordan Peak with us. In past years we have taken this hike in the spring, but this year we have the chance to find out what will be in bloom in midsummer at this elevation. Note that this hike involves elevation change from about 7000 ft. to 9000, with several moderately steep sections of trail. This is not said to discourage anyone, simply to let you know what to expect!! Meet at 10:00 at Hwy 190 and North Rd, about 9 miles beyond Camp Nelson.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

"Farewell to Spring" is blooming abundantly in the foothills as we approach the summer months and head for the higher elevations to follow the wonderful spring flowers. Due to the illness of Kat Anderson we have to postpone the May 19th program. We have received our new books and posters and look forward to sharing them with you. Soon

we will be making preparations for our fall plant sale and will send out the pre-sale order sheet in September. Until then, get out and enjoy this beautiful season.

OTHER EVENTS

Remember that all CNPS events are open to all members, meaning that if another Chapter is planning a program or field trip that interests you, feel free to attend. Here are just a few ideas. Call Joan Stewart for more detail about any of these. If your summer travels take you to other parts of the State, it might be interesting to contact a local Chapter if you want information about where to go to see special plants.

*** Milo Baker, in Sonoma Co., invites other chapters to join a weekend adventure in the Eastern Sierra. On Saturday, botanize area around Monitor Pass. The approach from the west winds through a steep narrow canyon, but the pass itself at about 8000 feet is an open sagebrush and meadow landscape fringed by groves of quaking aspen. This high elevation sagebrush scrub is enriched with desert and montane wildflowers....On Friday afternoon, explore trails through Jeffrey pine forest and meadows around Grover Hot Springs State Park, near Markleeville where campsites are reserved. For more information, call trip leaders Peter Warner (707) 763-7405/ Ann Howald (707)939-0775.

*** Los Angeles/Santa Monica Mts. offers a program on Oaks on June 13.

*** Orange County Chapter, June through August plans weekend trips into the San Gabriel Mts, the San Bernadino Mts, Rancheria Road and Sherman Pass (near us), Telescope Peak in Death Valley, and in Mineral King.

*** Santa Clara Valley Chapter has two trips of several days each into NW California (Smith River July 1-4, and the Siskiyou Wilderness Area July 4-8). Call John at 650-366-4910 for the first, and Joe at 408-292-5465 for the second.

*** In Bakersfield, 5 September, the Kern County Chapter brings us a program on California Desert issues, with Ilene Anderson, CNPS staff who works with public land managers from Joshua Tree to the

southern Colorado River. Bakersfield.

***The Sequoia Natural History Association offers field seminars in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, that combine learning and fun. Call (559) 565-3759.

ABOUT TULARE COUNTY SPECIAL PLANTS

This is a topic we have long wanted to write about, yet each newsletter seems to get filled up without including at least a brief account of some of the species that are distinctive within our region. This summer, we call attention to several that actually reach their geographic limits here, and are not as common or widespread locally as they are either to the north or south. This is important, because these populations at the limits of the distribution of the species may very well be adapted to more extreme conditions than are populations elsewhere; we are learning that there is often much genetic dissimilarity within what we term a single "species", and indeed the natural variation we arbitrarily divide into individual taxa may reflect more or less artificial divisions of a continuum of variability.

Yucca occurs in the mid-elevation canyons, blooming spectacularly in late spring, and we think of it as a 'common' plant. Yet *Yucca whipplei*, our species, comes just into this western base of the southern Sierra, and the Tulare County plants probably represent the northernmost extent.

Other species, less well known, grow no further south than Tulare County--*Ptelea crenulata* (Hop Tree) and *Staphylea bolanderi* (Bladder Nut) reach southern limits in the lower foothills near the south and middle Forks of the Tule River.

And remember that Douglas Fir and the Western Yew (of cancer cure fame) do not occur in this County. The specimens cited in earlier floras ('Tulare Co.') have been determined as misidentified California Nutmeg, an error easy to make.

Data is accumulating to document that the composition of plant communities in a particular place changes over shorter periods of time than previously thought--presumably

in response to climate shifts. All of this means that outlying populations, those at the edges of a species distribution, may well be the plants best adapted to climate changes, and may be the ones that can colonize and spread into new habitats under different conditions. So even if Yucca is ordinary in other parts of California, ours here are special, part of the diversity of our canyon habitats, and perhaps with special, distinctive attributes. Let's not take them for granted!

OTHER CNPS NEWS

A new website "Wildflowers--A Closer Look" at <http://www.renyswildflowers.com>. Photographs by CNPS member Reny Parker are cross referenced by botanical/ common name, family, color, and location. Many photographs show close-up, intricate details and colors. Most are from California, but flowers from other states are included in the 500 photos.

And remember that the CNPS website has photos, information, discussion boards covering conservation, horticulture, rare plants, and chapter activities. Carol Witham, of Sacramento Chapter maintains site.... <http://www.cnps.org>. Email comments or suggestions to her.

New Book: Sierra Nevada Wildflowers. A field guide to common wildflowers and shrubs of Sierra Nevada including Yosemite, Sequoia, and Kings Canyon National parks. By Karen Wiese, of Redbud Chapter, published by Falcon Press. New book treats 234 species, mostly common above 3,000 feet. Information reflects the personal experience of Karen and others.

Conifers of California, by Ronald Lanner, published last year. Not a field guide (heavy), almost a coffee table book (beautiful color illustrations), and extremely useful--it covers all 52 species of pines, firs, spruces and other conifers of California. Order from Sacramento Office.

CONSERVATION

Four State-wide issues are involving CNPS members here in Tulare County. The several USFS planning efforts, how Monument status will affect Sequoia Forest management, proposed roadless areas guidelines, and the Forest Plan Amendment (Framework) documents are being reviewed in public meetings over the next few months. CNPS has no formal positions on any of these plans, nor do we take stands either "for" or "against", but rather work with decision makers to try to ensure that good plant science is taken into account. We recognize that there seldom is any one best, right, or wrong way to proceed. Management is optimization, not maximization, as professional planners say. There are always tradeoffs--what helps one may hurt another species, and we try to understand the complexity of these very difficult situations.

The fourth situation that is causing much controversy to the north of us, but that in many ways involves choices all foothill communities will be facing in near future, concerns the location of the proposed UC Merced campus. The private properties that are proposed for development contain seasonal wetlands that are reported to be "magnificent" and rich biologically. The data in the documents that describe the environmental impacts of development are considered to be incomplete, or inadequate, but these data are all we have to base opinions on. Because CNPS restricts our formal positions to those that directly involve native plant resources, it is perhaps necessary at this time, to not sign or take part in statements that argue against placing the new university and the surrounding community away from an existing urban center. It certainly is an example of what urban sprawl is about, but for now, any opinions expressed are your own personal, not representing the Society.

The Alta Peak conservation chair would welcome help from someone interested in the Tulare County General Plan. Often it is the proposed exceptions or amendments to the Plan that are contrary to protection of habitats.

DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF THE NATIVE FLORA

The California Native Plant Society is a statewide non-profit organization of amateurs and professionals with a common interest in California's native plants. The Society, working through its local chapters, seeks to increase understanding of California's native flora and to preserve this rich resource for future generations. Membership is open to all.

Membership includes informative publications, free field trips and monthly programs and discounts on books and posters. Also included are *Fremontia*, a quarterly journal with articles on all aspects of native plants, the *Bulletin*, a quarterly statewide report of activities and schedules, and the chapter newsletter. Please call the membership chairperson for more information.

NEW MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name _____

Address _____

Zip _____ Telephone _____

I wish to affiliate with:

____ Alta Peak Chapter (Tulare County)

____ Other _____

Membership category:

____ Student, Retired, Limited income, \$20

____ Individual, Library, \$35

____ Household, Family, or Group, \$45

____ Supporting, \$75

____ Plant lover, \$100

____ Patron, \$250

____ Benefactor, \$500

____ Life, \$1,000

Mail application and check to:

Membership Chairman, California Native Plant Society, 1722 J St., Suite 17, Sacramento, CA 95814

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**DATED QUESTIONNAIRE
PLEASE RESPOND**