



# INSIGNIS

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY  
ALTA PEAK CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

Please send changes of address to Membership Chair  
41118 Blossom Dr., Three Rivers, CA 93271

Winter 2006  
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## GROWING NATIVE PLANTS

**Thank you,** from President and Plant Sale Chair:

It is perhaps "water under the bridge" to acknowledge now in November the time, effort, that Pam Clark, Cathy Capone, Melanie Keeley, and Linda Franson offered to prepare and present our annual Garden program in September. Each of them illustrated her own particular experiences with growing native plants, explaining "why it worked/didn't work", then we all joined in a commenting, asking, answering session. An evening of encouragement and information, paving the way for the Plant Sale the next Saturday, which was, again successful both as our annual fundraiser, and as a way to carry our "message" to others. We thank all of those wonderful people who helped us. Joan Stewart, Melanie Keeley, Janet Fanning, Gwen Warner, Marilyn Knesel, Jean Loscotoff, Jaqueline Zanini, Don Peter, Al Lowery, Carol Clum, Judith Zyskind, and Bill Tweed, plus those who came and went without giving us a chance to write down names. We donated thirteen plants to local projects being carried out by the Three Rivers Woman's Club and to the community garden via Melanie Keeley. Thank you Peyton Ellas for returning a small number of plants to Intermountain Nursery.

## Additional species?

Increasingly, people come to the Sale with specific requests, in addition to using the pre-order procedure to obtain plants. The commercial nursery at Prather that is the primary source of native plants in our region continues to add to their stock, but even so, cannot meet always meet all the demand for more plants, more species. The Porterville nursery grows material from locally collected plants, and this helps. Other chapters throughout California utilize the gardening experience of their members to increase the numbers of species they can provide. This Member-Grown material is a valuable addition to a Chapter's offerings, and we encourage some of you to try any of the species listed here, currently either not available at all, or in inadequate quantity. Locate some plants, preferable on private property with owner's permission, but at least not on "public land", and collect fresh seed, then good luck!

*Cornus nuttallii*..the showy dogwood, but difficult?

More *Ergonum fascicularis*; reported to be easy to start

various milkweeds

lupines?

*Dudleya*, any local species, using seeds.

*Sisyrinchium bellum, californica*...the blue-eyed, golden-eyed "grass"

*Philadelphus lewisii*

more *Rhamnus californica, crocea* (Coffee berry, Redberry)

*Solanum xanti*, local Nightshade

*Solidago*, goldenrod locally native

*Thalictrum fendleri* or *sparsiflorum*, useful as under oaks, a "dry shade" favorite

*Nassella lepida*; other species have not been difficult, but we also need this one

*Malacothamnus fremontii*

*Clematis*, more of both *lasiantha*, *ligustifolia*; another one that is considered 'easy' but we need more

*Dendromecon rigida*, the bush poppy

*Fragaria californica*, the native groundcover strawberry

Douglas Iris, or the local *I. hartwegii*, if you have source of cuttings from rhizomes

*Acer negundo*

ferns

Division of labor makes it easier for all. Some may enjoy collecting and germinating seeds, but then are less able to keep the seedlings happy during the months of summer. Someone else might prefer to take and care for the seedlings, and move them into larger containers (4" pots?) ready to bring to the Sale in October. Even if you have limited experience with starting garden plants, this might be an interesting challenge? Talk among yourselves, look over the list, learn more about any that appeal to you, and give it a try!

Cathy Capone, of CalNative Nursery, has information about propagation (seeds, cuttings, rootings, or?) and can help you get started.

**New: and available in limited quantities**, the long-planned and asked-for bilingual Care and Maintenance of Southern California Native Plant Gardens (Cuidado y mantenimiento de jardines de plantas nativas del sur de California) book, prepared with financial support from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, and written cooperatively by representatives of Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, CNPS, and the Theodore Payne Foundation. English and Spanish texts are on facing pages, and those using it locally already are finding it enormously valuable! The copies allotted to our Chapter are with Joan Stewart, so call her if you want to see one. Retail price is cited as \$29.95; we offer them at \$18 for members, \$22 for others.

#### A LOCAL, NOW-IN-BLOOM FLOWER

This time of year it is not easy to find "wildflowers", or to talk about the specialness of our grassland and oak woodland vegetation. I've heard our hills described as "golden" rather than dead and brown, a nice thought worth passing around. In southern California there is a species in the mint family, *Trichostema lanatum*, that is in such demand at CNPS plant sales that even with 50 one-gallon cans sold for \$15.00 each, the species is gone in the first half hour of the sale, and all day buyers ask "how can I get.....". The common name is Woolly Blue Curls....four stamens extend way out beyond the petals, two up, three lower, that are united about half way their length into an open tube. The pistil within the ring of stamens is also extruded. And the most striking aspect is that these long protruding stamens curl. Single flowers are small, but they develop along a stem that can be nearly 12 inches long, so you see not only the unique morphology of individual flowers, but a vertical line of pale blue-lavender blossoms. As do most taxa in this group, the foliage 'smells' (think: mint, thyme, rosemary, lavender, sage, catnip, oregano).

The species of *Trichostema* that grows around here, along roadsides, in the middle of dirt driveways, in badly disturbed clearings, has a flower that is in all ways the counterpart of the *Trichostema* in southern California. The formal description notes that petal lobes are three times the length of the tube which is curved upwards abruptly, stamens to nearly an inch long are "much exserted, strongly arched". Leaves, a soft

grey-green color, have strong odor, giving our local plant, sadly, a common name of 'vinegar weed', rather than sharing the Blue Curls name. Sadly, because first it is an annual plant, not more than about 24 inches high, rather than a more conspicuous shrub, because it thrives in places that are "weedy" habitats, and of course because of the smell of the leaves that is referred to as unpleasant...????, Take a closer look and decide for yourself if Blue Curls, Tulare County version, needs respect, appreciation! (Another species, in northwest California, see p.4, is called Turpentine Weed.)

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On a PERSONAL NOTE. Rodney Jones worked for Sequoia/ Kings Canyon Parks as a groundskeeper at headquarters, and as a member of the revegetation team. After his death this past summer his wife, Gretchen Hemmerich of Lemon Cove, suggested to his friends and co-workers in the Park that donations in his honor/memory be offered to CNPS here. We thus received a check from the S/K Employee Association to help support a "local CNPS project", and we gratefully acknowledge the family's wishes. Accompanying the check, a note described him as "a big man, tough about many things, but tender when it came to plants. He had a way with the auger in that rocky ground (of the Headquarters building) that none of the others could match. The donation honors Rod, his love for wife Gretchen, his kindness to friends, and his devotion to his garden and all the plants within his domain. He is missed by them all."

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LOOKING AHEAD, housekeeping chores, public events, or ?????

**Hikes:** We are hoping for, expecting?, several months of cool, rainy weather, and the prospect of another spring of flowers, new leaves on now-bare twigs and sprouting from the ground, to give us Sierra Spring and Summer days outdoors. Several of you have come forth with ideas for group hikes, explorations into new country. A climb into a "pristine" Sequoia Grove on the slopes of Solo Peak, a "What are Fens?" stroll, a trip to vernal pool, and repeats of some of the favorites from other years. Jordan Peak? Slate Mt.?

Field trips are meant to be what our members enjoy, ask for—let us know what kinds of plant communities, places, or species you want to visit. And better still, take us, as a co-leader, to places you care about.

**Program:** Our January/February program, in Springville, is traditionally planned as an ooh/aah anticipation of springtime. Often the evening is cold, dark, foggy and we seek something sunny and bright in the midst of mid-winter quiet. Steve Hartman, from Sherman Oaks, has spent many years exploring, photographing, writing about the deserts of southern California. Not a 'professional' botanist (economics at UCB, then career as businessman in Los Angeles) he has become expert enough on desert vegetation to be a partner with BLM and Joshua National Park staff in management of natural resources on these public lands, providing technical skills as well as botanical expertise. The program in Springville will remind us of the glorious places waiting for us to discover "over the hill" in coming months. Date not yet confirmed, so watch for newspaper notices and fliers.

Last-but-not-least, in the looking-ahead category, there are many **opportunities** for CNPS to **talk about the special plants of our county**, to help others enjoy and understand the land where we live. As examples, we were offered a no-cost booth/table at the Porterville Street Fair, and the best we could do was spend several hours sharing a space with another organization. This was great...lots of people wanted to know more about us, but we could have reached to more with more help.

Last year the manager of the Visalia Home and Garden show contacted us because of his personal concern for the natural areas of the county, to offer free space at the three day show. We couldn't come up with the necessary 'manpower' on relatively short notice, and had to regretfully say no. He promised to give us longer notice this year, and true to his word, we now have the chance to put up our table top display, add some living material (in pots), arrange a table anyway we choose on Feb. 9-11. This means, however, having someone there all three days.....more than a single "someone"!! Joan and Janet have been the foundation of Alta Peak Chapter for several years now, and if other members truly want to keep CNPS vibrant as a presence in the area, more of you members must step up. Springville Apple Festival could be another Outreach Opportunity, if someone volunteered! If you never have done this sort of 'thing', try it. It actually is fun, although time consuming.

A "stand-alone" project, one that someone who has been part of the **Plant Sale**, might find satisfying: Several years ago a member made, with computer, a large number of **signs** to attach to small lengths of dowling, to be inserted into the soil of a plant pot. These simply identified the genus, and cans were grouped and labeled this way. But we have added taxa to our 'for sale' stock, and need some additional signs. Call Joan or Janet if this interests you.

Another task, short and fun, is to glean from the newsletters we receive from other Chapters bits and pieces about **what is happening elsewhere in the State**, letting us be aware of what is going on around in other parts of California. Yes, Tulare County may not be a center of active participation in plant conservation issues, but many of us care, and it is good to know what other chapters are thinking about. This task simply means marking places in the newsletters we get in the mail, and sending them on to me, as editor. Think about this....?

#### SAMPLE GLEANINGS:

From the Sierra Foothills Chapter (Mariposa Co., +).

"Acorns - What is with this name? Curiously, the word for their fruit is not the same word for the tree. Apples grow on apple trees, hickory nuts and pine nuts grow on hickories and pines but acorns grow on oaks. Anyway, this odd disconnection between the parent and fruit names goes back to Old English. Acorn in Old English is "aecen", which in turn goes back to the Indo-European root..:( ), meaning "fruit, berry".

From the Sequoia Chapter (Kings Co.), a column written by the editor: Charles Darwin is quoted as saying "It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change." It is interesting to observe adaptations, especially as local temperatures continue to reach or break records (this newsletter was late summer). During this record heat the larger specimens of Dove Weed and Vinegar Weed look as fresh as if they had a long cool drink each morning when in fact they've received nary a drop of water since before germination. Daily temperatures of 104 degrees take their toll on the smaller specimens but even they do not seem to complain. I have an incredible respect for these plants.

People, too, must adapt. Is it my imagination or am I reading more and more about the madness of maintaining an expansive lawn? In the Central Valley it seems more madness than in many other places. According to a researcher at NASA's Ames Research Center, lawns are today the single largest irrigated crop in the US.

From Bob Allen's contribution in the Orange Co. newsletter: "It's fall and the

fall-blooming wildflowers are in high gear. Prominent among them is telegraph weed, *Heterotheca grandiflora*, a plant so common that we often ignore it (also true here in our area). Observe one of its flowers. Note the many slender ray florets that encircle its flowerhead. It also has numerous disk florets, each with yellow anthers. With all the yellow parts of the same tone and no contrast, it is actually a difficult flower to photograph clearly. When looking at it in the field, remove any glare from the sun by shading it with your body and taking a look, especially with a hand lens, camera lens, or close focusing binoculars.

Besides its aesthetic value as a wildflower, think of it as a resource for other forms of wildlife, particularly its pollen and nectar. Right now, one can find native bees and flies taking one or both."

Also from Orange Co, members there have developed a hands-on program to introduce plant concepts and California native plants to third grade students. Called, M.A.D (Move, Adapt, or Die), it begins by demonstrating parts of a plant and their purpose. One student is dressed in roots, stem, leaves, and a flower by other students. Learning stations present concepts tied to the state Science Standards. A native plant garden is designed based on understanding how plants grow, move, adapt, or die in response to environmental conditions. In the 2005-06 school year over 1,300 public school students will participate in the program. Interested in knowing more about the project? See your recent Bulletin, or contact Brad Jenkins at bradcjenkins@yahoo.com for more detail

#### OTHER ORGANIZATIONS, WITH RELATED INTERESTS.....

It would be useful to be able to know about **outings, events from the local organizations** whose interests and missions overlap ours. We will be glad to include notices here, if, when we receive them.

- ◇ Tule River Parkway Association has scheduled Meetings on Monday December 18, 2006 and Monday February 19, 2007 both at 5:30 pm, Dr. Don Stover's Office, 526 W. Putnam Ave. Purpose: to plan, prepare for Tree Care Day on Saturday February 24, 2007, 9:00 am, 1:00 pm at Jaye Street Park and Ride at the river. This will offer a chance to learn about and practice planting and caring for trees.
- ◇ River Clean: up Day date TBA
- ◇ TRPA hopes to work with interested parties on these and future projects involving the plants along the Tule River in the Porterville area. All meetings are open to the public. TRPA provides docents for groups wanting a hike/walk along the River. Please call Cathy Capone for more information 361-9164.

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We increased our membership by seven during the first half of the year, and others joined through Plant Sale outreach. Welcome, to all of you, and we emphasize that it is ongoing renewals that keep CNPS "alive and well" in Tulare County. Elections are on the agenda for next meeting; see back of this Insignis and think about what you can do for CNPS here in Tulare County. Finally, an end-of-year wish for all of us, that we get rain, sooner if possible, that we look out over greening hills and fields, knowing another year has come and gone, and the flowers are still with us, even if only as seeds in the ground or buds on the ends of branches.

Insignis News, CNPS  
 Alta Peak Chapter  
 c/o Janet Fanning  
 41118 Blossom Drive  
 Three Rivers, CA 93271

### California Native Plant Society

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, and includes informative publications, free field trips, programs, and discounts on books and posters. Also included are the *Bulletin*, a quarterly statewide report of activities and schedules, and this chapter newsletter. Please call the membership chairperson for more information.

#### New Membership Application

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Membership Category  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_ Individual \$45  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_ Family \$75  
 State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_ Group, library, agency, business \$75  
 Tele phone \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_ Student, Limited Income, \$25

I wish to affiliate with: Mail application and check to:

\_\_\_ Alta Peak Chapter (Tulare County)  
 \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

California Native Plant Society, 2707 K Street  
 Suite 1, Sacramento, CA 95816

#### Chapter Board Members and Committee Chairs 2006

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