

Insignis

Newsletter of the Alta Peak Chapter, celebrating and supporting the native plant communities in Tulare County, serving the Central Valley and Sierra Nevada Mountains and Foothills.

Volume 20, Number 3

June 2010

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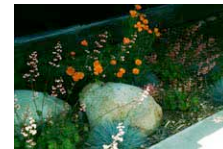
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Annual Native Plant Sale

October 2, 2010 from 9-1 pm

Three Rivers Arts Center, North Fork Drive

Deadline for submitting pre-orders is September 20.

Plants are provided by Intermountain Nursery in Prather and Cal Native Nursery in Porterville. Pre-order forms are in this newsletter. CNPS members receive 10% discount for pre-orders only. We need volunteers on both Friday and Saturday to help with the plant sale. On Friday at 10 am we will be unloading the plants and sorting the pre-orders. On Saturday we need help from 9-1 pm to assist with sales and provide information about gardening with native plants.

Call Janet Fanning at 561-3461 for more information.

The plant sale will be held in conjunction with the Green Faire, part of the 4th annual Three Rivers Environmental Weekend. (see pg. 6)

Fall Chapter Program

October 2, 2010 2 pm

Three Rivers Arts Center, North Fork Drive

**What's Cooking in the Foothills 600 Years Ago?
Native Americans and Our Local Native Plants**

presented by Mary Gorden

Program is open and free to the public.
Read about Mary's ethnobotany presentation on page 3.



Happy 20th Anniversary
Alta Peak Chapter

Chapter President's Report

by Joan Stewart

Summer is still sailing along as I write this..... recent trips to high elevation mountain meadows have been intriguing.... it is very different to see, recognize (?), or not, plants when there are no flowers, but only seed capsules, fruits, or empty stalks. The spectacular predictable late summer species, however, are in full bloom. Edges of meadows with stalks of Corn Lily (*Veratrum*), lots of orchids--some still in flower (interesting to be carefully looking at orchid Fruit?), bits and pieces of tiny Gilia, several yellow monkey flowers, patches of goldenrod that we haven't noticed before, and at Nobe Young, a "solid" field of sneezeweed. Latin name for this plant, *Helenium*, is said to be (by Linnaeus) after Helen of Troy. Why? And more....there is still a period of time before cold shuts down plant persistence; take some of those trails that you have always wanted to explore late season.....

Coming up is the CNPS event that probably is our most effective outreach--the October Plant Sale in Three Rivers. The pre-order list is included in this *Insignis*, as well as other relevant information of when, where, what. And of course, an "invitation" to join the fun and work of setting up on Friday, helping on Saturday, and generally being part of this well attended effort by CNPS in Tulare County that calls attention to the pleasure that our native vegetation can offer, whether in the wild or in gardens. The afternoon program, at the same place as the Plant Sale, features native plants in a somewhat different frame... see article following.

Jumping to a topic somewhat less enticing, our conservation efforts continue to be directed to reading, commenting on, and perhaps successfully influencing, planning documents for both Tulare County (General Plan) and our public lands in the National Forest/Monument. The *Insignis* preceding this issue discussed County plans; Alta Peak Chapter Report in recent State Bulletin included a brief review of topic. Now, just arrived at my door, are the four volumes concerned with the future of the Monument. The "Plan" itself develops the ideas outlined in the Preferred Alternative, while the other documents are the Draft Environmental Impact Statements for all six Alternatives.. Please, if any of this concerns, interests, you at all, contact me and let's together think through and compare what the consequences of these six 'plans' might be for the native species and the ecosystems they support. November 3 is deadline for submitted comments.

Throughout the State, Chapters are reviewing and marveling about the summer's experiences in the field....from deserts to alpine slopes, California offers so much....and together we work to preserve this bit of our world for whatever the future may hold...???? That's the Why for CNPS, here and in all the very different parts of our State....

ACR 173, Passed Aug 30 for CA Native Plant Week

This measure proclaims the 3rd week of April, each year, as California Native Plant Week and would encourage community groups, schools, and citizens to undertake appropriate activities to promote the conservation, restoration, and appreciation of California's native plants.

WHEREAS, California's native plants provide unparalleled and unique iconic, economic, artistic, historical, and environmental values to the state; and

WHEREAS, California's over 6,000 native plant species, subspecies, and varieties, of which over 2,150 exist only in California, make California home to more diverse plant life than all other states combined; and

WHEREAS, California's native plants include some of the oldest, tallest, and most massive living things on Earth; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Fish and Game recognizes nearly one-quarter of California's native plants as "special status plants" that warrant additional protections; and

WHEREAS, California currently contends with over 1,000 nonnative plants, some of which compete with native plant species, degrade soil, facilitate erosion and catastrophic wildfire, and alter the state's natural landscapes; and.....

WHEREAS, California's first Indian nations lived and thrived by their knowledge of native California plants, which provided them with food, clothing, shelter, dyes, tools, medicines, and fuel for centuries; and.....

WHEREAS, California's native plants have played a vital role in inspiring the creation and management of our National Park Service, including President Lincoln's 1864 signing of the Yosemite and Mariposa Big Tree Grove Grant to California, designating a park "to be held for public use, resort, and recreation ... inalienable for all time," and the adoption of the Sequoia cone as an official insignia of the National Park Service; and.....

WHEREAS, The impact of California's landscape has influenced literary and artistic works, including the works of Mark Twain, John Steinbeck, Ansel Adams, and many other internationally known figures, furthering California's legacy; and.....

WHEREAS, California's native plants provide essential watershed protections by helping to recharge natural aquifers, filtering water flowing through mountains, hills, and valleys, lessening erosion and flooding, and enabling efforts to beautify and renew our state; and.....

WHEREAS, Restoring California native plants provides natural links to wild land areas, while introducing people to their beauty and instilling a greater understanding and appreciation for California's natural heritage; now, therefore, be it Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature recognizes the essential value and importance of California native plants to our history, economy, landscape, and environment; and be it further Resolved, That the California Legislature encourages community groups, schools, and citizens to undertake appropriate activities to promote native plant conservation and restoration, and to inform their neighbors and communities of the value of native plants in nature and in horticultural settings; and be it further Resolved.....declares the third week of April, each year, as California Native Plant Week.....

Fall Chapter Program

October 2, 2010 at 2pm Three Rivers Arts Center

**What's Cooking in the Foothills 600 Years Ago?
Native Americans and Our Local Native Plants**

presented by Mary Gorden

Have you ever wondered if you could survive without all the comforts you now enjoy? It is hard to imagine what life was like many years ago. Six hundred years ago the people in the Sierra Nevada Mountains and foothills lived a comfortable life. Historic evidence indicates that hunter-gatherers did about everything that farmers do. They probably didn't work as hard.

At this time the locals were tribes who each spoke a dialect of the Yokuts language and lived in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada. Their neighbors, the Monache, who lived higher in the mountains, were a cultural mix of Shoshone-Piute and Yokuts speakers. We will take a brief glimpse at their technology and lifestyle as recorded by ethnographers at the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Their technology was sophisticated and complex. The women's skillful weaving ranks them among the best basket makers in the world. Their knowledge of plants was extensive and is useful to us today because native plants are better suited to our environment. In 1918 C. H. Merriam, a biologist, stated that everyone should be eating acorn because of its high nutritive value. John Muir often carried acorn bread on his tramps through the mountains because it was the most compact and nutritious food he had ever eaten. Besides acorns, the natives ate a wide variety of plant foods. We will look at how women prepared and stored plant foods and medicines. In addition, we will calculate the amount of plant material it would take to make a house, baby cradles and other items. While we cannot return to a hunter-gather way of life, we can appreciate the knowledge, ingenuity and technical skill that the Native Americans in the foothills and mountains displayed.

Speaker, Mary Gorden is a retired teacher who taught elementary and high school, in addition to college classes for teachers in history and archaeology. The class on Native Plants and Their Uses was the product of her research of early ethnographers in the San Joaquin Valley who recorded the culture of the Native Americans. Mary also worked as an archaeological assistant for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. She is particularly interested in San Joaquin Valley Yokuts' cultures and the conservation of historic and prehistoric sites in the Sierra Nevada Mountains and foothills. One project was the restoration of one of Shorty Lovelace's cabins in the Sierra National Forest. Mary has been active in volunteer site monitoring and recording in conjunction with the South Sierra Archaeology Society. She has served three terms on the Bureau of Land Management Regional Resource Advisory Committee as the representative for historical and archaeological interests. She is a recipient of the President's award for volunteer contributions to the Bureau of Land Management. She is active in the Tulare County Citizens for Responsible Growth.



Mary is gathering acorns.

Mary will talk about these California native plants (and more) and the parts they played in the lives of local Native Americans who lived here hundreds of years ago.



milkweed



elderberry



madia

Public Native Plant Gardens

Three Rivers currently has five public gardens which were designed and planted by members of the local Redbud Garden Club, (redbudgardenclub3r.org.) These gardens are in highly prominent sites, mostly along Highway 198 (Sierra Drive), so that the community and visitors can benefit from their beauty. About 8 years ago the club began reviewing its historical garden projects with a closer focus on their sustainability, since plantings in earlier projects didn't always survive the harsh climate extremes of Three Rivers.

In 2004, the Club was asked to develop a Fire-Safe Demonstration Garden of Native Plants at the CAL FIRE Station. They teamed up with a number of local groups and individuals to plant a garden that is beautiful, sustainable, and friendly to the environment...and that features magnificent foothill plants. They were fortunate to have help from Melanie Keeley, the horticulturist of Sequoia National Park (and Alta Peak Chapter Board Member), who had the expertise to guide them in correct plant choices and planting methods.

The Club has developed Garden Watcher teams who monitor sites to ensure their continued health and vitality. They also do the fine-tuning, like pruning, so that the gardens remain community treasures as well as educational tools and inspiration for the home gardener. The goal is to have gardens maintained and funded by the agencies whose sites they are on, although the Redbud Garden Club continues to support some gardens where this is not entirely possible.



Veterans Memorial Building, 43490 Sierra Drive (HWY 198)

The native trees, shrubs and wildflowers in this garden, initially planted in 2005-2006, brought the site into harmony with the natural landscape nearby and reduced the expensive water consumption on site, a prime concern for the Veterans Memorial Board. The Club was fortunate to have labor provided by Mountain Home inmates who removed large areas of overgrown plants so that new plantings could be established. So many redbuds, deer grass and other plants successfully reseed themselves here that this garden is becoming a nursery for seedlings that we transplant to other newer gardens. A second phase of the Memorial Building Garden has been designed and will be installed in the near future.



CAL FIRE Station, 40900 Sierra Drive

The Garden Club was requested to develop a fire-safe native plant garden on the newly developed building site in 2005 by a fire captain who saw the value in a demonstration garden. The garden required the teamwork of many individuals and entities and showed Club members the extent to which the community would be interested in "smart gardens." Fire Station personnel have continued to expand the garden so that the grounds now include two memorial gardens, one with a shaded picnic table and dry stream bed, and a more irrigated area with a volleyball court and a lawn outside their quarters. CAL FIRE is only seasonally staffed, therefore it has maintenance lapses and irregular irrigation that reinforce to us the value of native plants in tolerating difficult conditions.



U.S. Post Office, 40857 Sierra Drive (HWY 198)

The Post Office is a hub of Three Rivers where many residents have post office boxes and visit daily. The lovely native plant garden, originally planted in 1996, was extensively reconfigured and redesigned in 2007, at which time a formal dedication of the garden was held in memory of long time Redbud Garden Club member, Jean Darsey.

Tulare County Fire Station, 41214 South Fork Drive

The Garden Club, partnering with the County and fire personnel who staff this station year round, designed and planted this native plant garden in January 2009.

The fifth public garden is at the Three Rivers Library.

Cal Natives Nursery

by Cathy Capone, our Chapter Horticulture Chair from Porterville

What, a native plant nursery in Tulare County? I didn't know we could buy native plants without going to Prather, Los Angeles or the coast. Well boys and girls, gather round and I will tell you a story about an overly confident gardener and environmental activist. This woman who didn't know her limits, as you will find out....

Cal Natives Nursery was started as a mechanism of recouping some of the costs of growing native plants propagated from local native plant species destined for re-vegetation along the Tule River. Way back in 1995, I started growing valley oaks and other trees to give away to students to be planted at their homes for the purpose of increasing the shade cover in Porterville and connecting students to their local trees. Then, through active participation with the Tule River Parkway Association, a group that advocates for the development of a Parkway along the Tule River through Porterville among other goals, I found that the native plants needed for restoration of the altered river banks were not available for purchase because no current nursery was growing these plants. This couldn't be that hard I thought, I know how to garden, read books, and work hard. I can grow moderate quantities of native plants in my backyard and TRPA can work toward a demonstration project to replant a section of the river. Well the rest, as they say, is history.



Shade House at Cal Natives Nursery

If you have read this far you deserve to know what Cal Natives Nursery is now. We grow an ever-changing mixture of mostly local native plants. Currently we have 28 different plants available and we normally have between 25-50 different types of plants available for sale. Cal Natives Nursery carries vines, grasses, shrubs, ground covers, and trees. We do not handle annuals. Most of our stock is in one-gallon size but we do normally carry five and fifteen gallon trees.



Elderberry plants

All of the plants are propagated responsibly. We collect seed with permission and with care. We take cuttings without negatively impacting the plants in the wild. When at all possible, we propagate from the stock and mother plants we have growing in our demonstration garden. We are always interested in contract growing to meet our customers' needs. We are always interested in learning about plants that are native to Tulare County that might be useful in native garden settings.

Cal Natives Nursery makes its own potting soil mixtures, reuses plastic nursery cans and nursery equipment. We recycle any items that cannot be reused and generally uses a minimum of garden chemicals.

I genuinely welcome you to come look at the nursery even if you do not need any plants. Please call me let's talk about when you can visit a local – local – local native plant nursery. The nursery is open by appointment only, since I work full time as a teacher in Porterville. You can call me on my cell 559-361-9164, and leave a message, or email at ccapone@lycos.com. Normally customers make appointments for weekends or evenings.

A society grows great when old men plant trees
whose shade they know they shall never sit in.
(an old Greek proverb)



4th Annual Three Rivers Environmental Weekend
Green Faire on Saturday October 2 from 9-5 pm



Organized by the local group which calls itself the TREW CREW, the Green Faire combines the California Native Plant Society's fall plant sale with speakers and booths sponsored by both. The main theme for the day is food and farming and features several presentations. The first is by Dr. Donald Mosley on grass fed beef and other food animals, with additional information on organic gardening. Paul Buxman, organic farmer and artist from Dinuba, will speak on his years of experiences, and follow up with some music on his viola. Some of his agriculturally themed very beautiful oil paintings will also be on exhibit.

In the afternoon, archaeologists Mary Gorden and Christina Roper Graber will discuss the fascinating subject of the local native people's use of the surrounding landscape's plants and animals before the arrival of European settlers, including examples of some artifacts and their applications.

The Arts Center and surrounding grounds will be full of other things to see, and things to know as well. In addition to the plant sale outside, a solar cooking demonstration will be featured, along with what's new in home solar panels, art from natural and recycled materials, and green home products and practices.

Inside, many books will be available for perusal and purchase. CNPS and Sequoia Kings Natural History Association will have large displays. Local author Dr. Louise Jackson will be present to autograph her latest book, *The Sierra Nevada Before History, Ancient Landscapes, Early Peoples*. Also present will be local author, painter, and poet, Sylvia Ross, with two children's books, *Lion Singer* and *Blue Jay Girl*.

Master Gardeners will be there, and the Arts Alliance will be selling poppy seeds to support their scholarships for area youth. Spotted Owl researcher Lori Werner's owl display will interest both children and adults. Family Farm Fresh will present some of their home delivery produce, and information on Flora Bella organic items will be on hand. Tulare County Citizens for Responsible Growth, and a number of other information booths, will fill the Arts Center for the day. A drawing for free door prizes will take place at 4:30 pm.

4th Annual Three Rivers Environmental Weekend
Green Home Tour on Sunday October 3 12-5 pm

The Green Home Tour of five homes in Three Rivers is part of the American Solar Energy Society's annual national solar tour, nationalsolartour.org. All of the homes are either active or passive solar powered or assisted. Many homes incorporate recycled materials, earth forms and other natural materials, as well as green practices during construction and in use. Besides being innovative, they are quite beautiful. One of the homes this year, known locally as "the glass house" was Sunset Magazine's small space winner for 2009-2010. Reservations are required for the afternoon tour. Tickets are \$15 per person or \$25 per couple, with the proceeds going to the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund for specific legal support for the recent process of revising the Tulare County, supporting responsible growth instead of sprawl. Call 561-4676 to reserve a place, with one of two tour groups. One starts at 12 noon, the other at 1 pm.



Green Home Tour in 2009, visiting home of Barbara Lahmann



*Green Home Tour in 2009, roof of Rick Badgley's workshop
 (in the spring it is covered with blooming wildflowers)*

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See this newsletter in color
in a pdf file on our website.

Chapter facebook page

facebook.com/altapeak.chapter

Fall Classes at Intermountain Nursery in Prather

<http://www.intermountainnursery.com>



Botanical Drawing and Painting

Saturday, October 16, 9:30 to 1:30 pm \$35

Instructor: Shirley Spencer, artist and naturalist. This class will introduce and demonstrate the sketching and watercolor painting of local botanicals with stunning fall colors. We will explore composition, shading, perspective and the use of color pigments to achieve a realistic and dramatic painting. Watercolor paper, paint and brushes will be provided, or bring your own art materials. Bring a sack lunch.

Propagation of California Native Plants

Saturday, October 23, 9:30 am \$15

Instructor: Ray Laclergue, Intermountain Nursery. Learn about the various propagation techniques for California native plants. Collecting, storing, stratifying and germinating seed, taking and rooting cuttings successfully and proper growing conditions for the plants will be taught. Handouts and information about books and supplies will be available. A tour of the Nursery's growing facilities is included.

Trees and Shrubs of the Sierra Foothills

Saturday, November 6, 9:30 to 2:30 pm \$20

Instructor: Shirley Spencer, artist and naturalist. Hike and see the trees and shrubs that make up our chaparral foothills. Learn to identify the different species and use Shirley's book, *Flowering Shrubs of Yosemite and the Sierra Nevada*. Meet at the nursery, where we will carpool to class. It will be a moderate hike of about three miles. Eat lunch at the San Joaquin River. Bring sack lunch, water, hiking boots.

Coming in 2012 CNPS Conservation Conference:

Conserving and Restoring the Roots of California's Richness

January 12-14, 2012

Town and Country Hotel, San Diego

CNPS is currently looking for volunteers to work on and chair the Outreach Committee and the Local Arrangements Committee. The Outreach Committee develops an outreach plan for the conference and workshops with other major committees to promote the conference to sponsors, exhibitors, vendors, students, and attendees. This is a very important committee and work on the outreach plan begins about now! Marketing and promotion experience is preferred for chair position. The Local Arrangements Committee works with the Conference Coordinator and oversees San Diego contracts and venue arrangements and subcommittees, including Audio Visual Subcommittee, Local Information Subcommittee, and Catering Subcommittee.

Contact Josie Crawford at jcrawfordcnps.org, if you are interested in participating on either of these or other committees.

Alta Peak Chapter Annual Native Plant Sale

October 2, 2010



Three Rivers Arts Center
North Fork Drive in Three Rivers

Sep 20, 2010 Deadline Pre-order for Native Plant Sale

*Order form enclosed,
also available on Chapter website.*

altapeakcnps.org

CNPS MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

City / Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Email _____

(optional): _____

I wish to affiliate with: ____ Alta Peak Chapter

Other Chapter _____

Membership Category:

____ Student/Retired/Low income, \$25

____ Individual, \$45

____ Family / Group / Library, \$75

____ Plant Lover, \$100

____ Patron, \$300

____ Benefactor, \$600

____ Mariposa Lily, \$1500

Mail with check to CNPS, 2707 K St., Suite 1, Sacramento,
CA 95816, or you can join or renew automatically year
after year via the website www.cnps.org and click on JOIN.

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