



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 22, Number 3

September 2012

Fall Chapter Program
"Reimagining the California Lawn and Garden Using California Native Plants"
 with Bart O'Brien
 Page 1 and 3

Native Plant Sale
 October 6, 2012
 Page 1 and 8



President's Report
 Joan tells us what's up with our Chapter...
 Page 2

August Garden Stars
 California Natives in the Summer Garden from Cathy Capone
 Page 4 and 5

Background Plants for the Native Garden
 Growing tall in the garden, and beautiful! from Cathy Capone
 Page 5 and 6

CEQA Update
 A big thank you!
 Page 2

Green Faire and Green Home Tour
 the 6th annual ones
 Page 7

Join CNPS
 Membership form
 Page 8

Contact Information
 Join our Chapter Board of Directors.
 Page 7



Fall Chapter Program

September 15, 2012 at 7 pm

"Re-imagining the California Lawn and Garden Using California Native Plants"

Presenter Bart O'Brien
 Horticulturist and Director of Special Projects
 at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden in Claremont

Three Rivers Arts Center

Directions: east on Highway 198 to Three Rivers. Turn left on North Fork Drive (just before Anne Lang's Emporium). Arts Center is the first building on the left after crossing the bridge over Kaweah River

Bart O'Brien is one of the authors of *Reimagining the California Lawn*, along with Carol Bornstein and David Fross. They are visionary horticulturists who also wrote the award-winning book *California Native Plants for the Garden*. In this program, he will share his passion for water-wise plants and landscapes to help us discover the many possibilities and pleasures that come with reimagining our California lawn and garden.

This talk will cover the basics of gardening with California native plants (What is a California native plant? Why should I be interested in growing these plants? Why are these plants different from the usual plants found in nurseries?) as well as providing examples of some of the most beautiful and useful native plants from some of our best gardens and landscapes.

cont'd on page 3

Annual Native Plant Sale

Can you help the Chapter to share the gift of growing natives?

October 6, 2012 from 10-4 pm*
 (*or until all plants are sold)

CNPS members will be allowed into the plant sale for the first hour, from 9-10 am.

The Chapter's Annual Native Plant Sale will be held in the backyard of the Three Rivers Arts Center. You will find an enclosed pre-order form, with a discount given to Chapter members. We do our best to fill the preorders, but sometimes plants are not available from the nurseries as the plant sale gets closer. We apologize for any inconvenience.

Volunteers are needed to help set up the plant sale on Friday, October 5 at 10 am. Cathy Capone and Melanie Keeley will be the leaders for this important task. Cathy will be arranging the plants and Melanie will be making sure all the ordered plants are on the truck from Intermountain Nursery. We will also have plants from Cathy's nursery in Porterville, Cal Natives. We are so fortunate to have these two wonderful nurseries supplying us with locally grown native plants.

Janet Fanning will be in charge of all pre-orders and sales. Please call Janet, at 559-561-3461, for more information or to volunteer for the Native Plant Sale on Saturday. Please join us!

The Native Plant Sale will be held in conjunction with the 6th Annual Green Faire. See page 7 for more about this event.

Chapter President's Report

by Joan Stewart

As I write this, I muddle through these days, weeks, of summer weather, seeing many shrubs around the house with brown leaves, without any new green buds, despite my efforts to get water to the roots on a reasonable schedule. Every year we go through this period of frustration and disappointment, and there is always the October Plant Sale to anticipate, with new fresh material to replace, or combine with fading plants.

So, what else, besides our gardens, is happening in Tulare County that is of concern to CNPS members? We wait, hopefully, for final documents that will determine how our County will manage development near, or away from, existing "urban" centers. This question is often discussed in terms of sprawl or smart growth and involves concerns of costs, who profits, and values. In our area the huge development proposed for Yokohl Valley has headed the list of concerns, and CNPS has worked with TCCRG (Tulare County Citizens for Responsible Growth) to present alternatives that support what we work for, believe in, for our ecosystems. We are told these final documents should be out soon. We will wait and see what comes next. (*Editor's note: Tulare County Board of Supervisors passed the General Plan Update on August 28.*)

And more waiting lies ahead for the Management Plan and environmental documents for the Giant Sequoia National Monument. We are well aware of the tremendous conflicts that are part of deciding what is to be considered and how to manage these lands that are designated for protection, yet are used for so many conflicting purposes. No easy answers, and nothing that could be written as a Plan will satisfy all. Our concern, as always, will be with the plants, the habitats, and their long term preservation in natural systems.

This falls under the Conservation part of our Chapter work, other parts of California are carefully scrutinizing just what CNPS can, should, say or do. It has been noted that as a non-profit we are "absolutely prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for elective public office." This can become tricky in our partisan political environment. Our focus, to campaign for native plants and to work on issues that affect them, limits us in some critical ways. We participate in issues such as habitat loss, climate change, development, but other issues are marginally peripheral. Sometimes we help, sometimes we can't. Power plants, wind, solar, or natural gas are examples of difficult topics for CNPS in other parts of California.

At Chapter Council meetings, chapter delegates discuss these pervasive sorts of concerns, as well as topics that more immediately and directly affect our organization. A new Executive Director has arrived in the Sacramento office—Daniel Gluesenkamp. I have met him, and feel well satisfied that we have a leader with experience and skills well matched to our work. Dan began botany at UC Santa Cruz, then earned

a PhD at Berkeley studying ecology of native and invasive thistles!! He has a long history with California plant conservation and research and he recently authored the article in *Fremontia* about the Franciscan Manzanita.

The next, September 7-9, CNPS State meeting is to be at UC Santa Cruz Botanic Garden, and Cathy Capone and I will attend—me as delegate from the Alta Peak Chapter, Cathy as an interested member and Horticulture Chair for our Chapter. The September meeting is always focused on conservation issues, and our State leader on these topics is Greg Suba. I look forward to being part of these hours of discussion and learning. CNPS, through the leadership of the Vegetation Program, continues to map and describe plant communities, as alliances, associations, or special stands. A second edition of the Vegetation Manual documents an "explosion of information of California's vegetation". Contact me if you are interested in knowing more about this.

The Rare Plant Treasure Hunt, a joint USFS and CNPS effort to re-locate documented (and to find new) populations of listed plant species in a chapter's territory, came to us recently, and was a chance to simply look for, enjoy, and talk about species of plants that we don't see very often. Slate Mountain, and Needles were our designated sites.

Much more is going on throughout the State, cooperative conservation efforts among CNPS, agencies, interested public, and expanded education and horticultural projects to reach out to interested people in these fields. This issue of the *Insignis* is focused on local, upcoming native-plants-in-gardens ideas, plans, and it will all come together in October in Three Rivers at our annual Plant Sale. See you there!!

CEQA Challenge Update for CNPS Members

Thank you for helping to contact legislators this week. Your efforts helped send a clear message to Sacramento that Californians value CEQA, and overwhelmingly disapprove of the manner in which lawmakers tried to jam through changes. The proposal was withdrawn, preventing sweeping changes to CEQA from being enacted through last-minute amendments to bill, SB 317 (Rubio - (D)). As a result of your efforts, late afternoon on August 23, Senator Steinberg announced he would no longer attempt to move the bill forward during this legislative session, which ends next Friday August 31st.

Satisfaction from this news is both welcomed and temporary, as SB 317 or some CEQA "reform" variant will be back next year. This is fairly certain given the status quo. It will have leadership support in both the Senate and the Assembly. SB 317's defeat this week provides time for proponents of CEQA to study it, and ready an effective alternative for when the next CEQA-overhaul effort inevitably returns.

Vern Goehring and I will be studying this language to prepare a CNPS response for next year's legislative session. We welcome help and input from others. Thank you again for your swift and effective advocacy this week. Our responses changed minds on the Capitol floor, and prevented an unready proposal from becoming law.

Greg Suba, Conservation Program Director, CNPS

Fall Program, *cont'd from page 1*

These spectacular plants are then showcased through the prism of our five senses: touch, smell, sight, taste, and sound.

Bart O'Brien is Director of Special Projects at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden (RSABG) in Claremont an educational institution dedicated to research, conservation, and horticulture of California. A fifth generation Californian, he is an authority on the native flora of the state and of northern Baja California, Mexico and is an accomplished collector, grower, photographer, lecturer, and author.

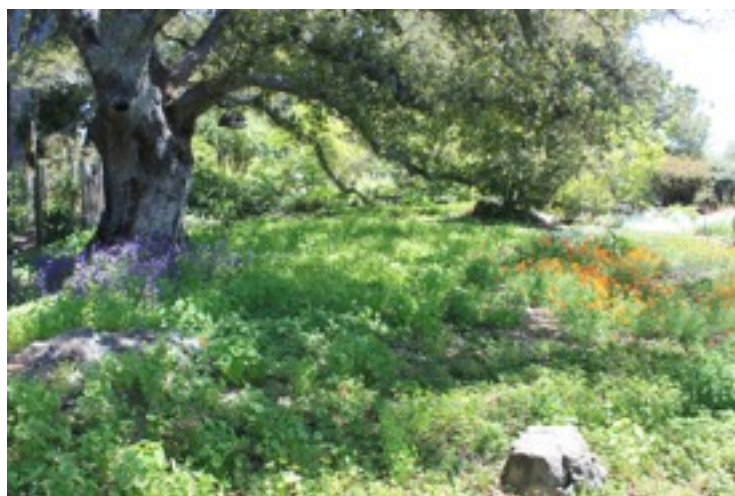
His most recent publication is a 514 page edit of a Percy Everett manuscript which was completed and published online earlier this year (2012) and is titled *Second Summary of the Horticulture and Propagation of California Native Plants at the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden 1950-1970*. Bart's ongoing work with the rivers of Los Angeles County resulted in the collaborative publication of the *Los Angeles River Master Plan Landscaping Guidelines and Plant Palettes* for the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works in 2004, and his *Plant Lists for the San Gabriel River Watershed* for the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy in 2007.

Get Our Chapter Newsletter Electronically!

Do you want to help save paper (and trees) and receive this newsletter in its original full color edition via a pdf file by email? Many Chapters are now sending most of their newsletters electronically to members via email.

Email your request to the Editor at
elsahc@dishmail.net

Bart was named Horticulturist of the Year in 2005 by the Southern California Horticultural Society. O'Brien was listed as one of "The 100 Most Powerful People in Southern California" by the editorial staff of the Los Angeles Times / West Magazine (Aug. 13, 2006). Bart was also editor of *Fremontia*, the journal of CNPS, from 2006 to 2009.

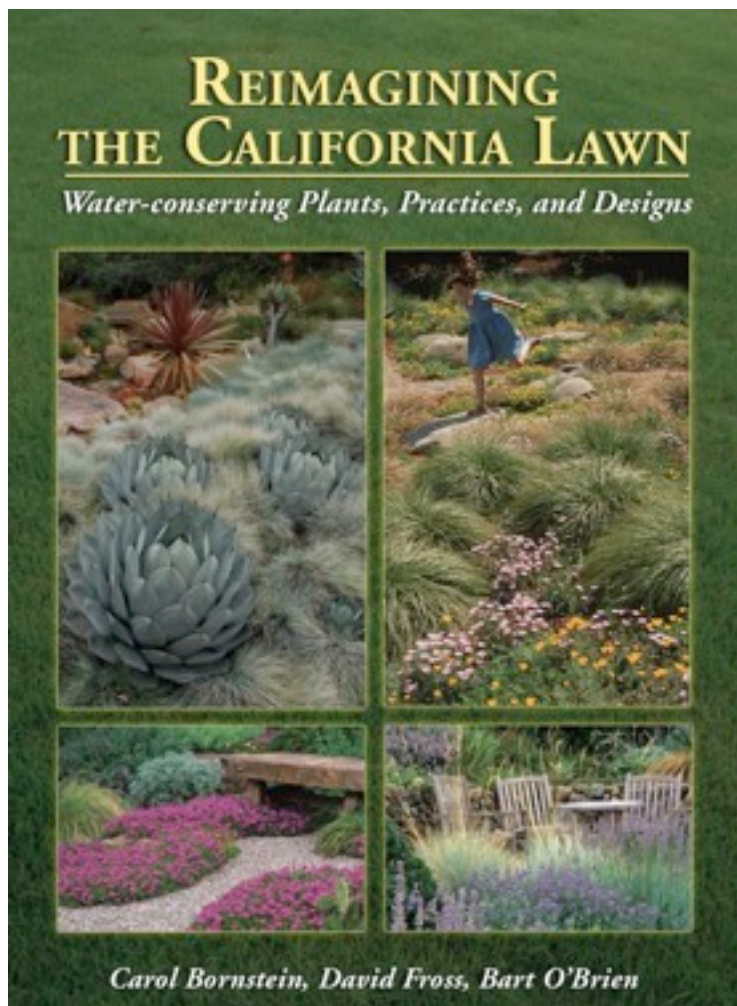


A "carpet and tapestry" garden

Also, Bart is currently working on a wide array of native plant projects, including the following:

- Leading the rare, endangered, and endemic vascular plants of northwestern Baja California, Mexico project (primarily funded by the Jiji Foundation; The project cooperators are: José Delgadillo Rodriquez, Facultad de Ciencias, Universidad Autónoma de Baja California, Ensenada, Mexico; Steve Junak, Herbarium Curator, Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, Santa Barbara; Thomas Oberbauer, Chief Land Use Planner, San Diego County Department of Planning and Land Use, San Diego; Jon Rebman, Curator of Botany, San Diego Museum of Natural History, San Diego; Hugo Riemann, Departamento de Estudios Urbanos y del Medio Ambiente, El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, Tijuana, Mexico; and Sula Vanderplank, Herbarium Collections Manager, Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, Claremont).

- Co-curating (with John Wickham of the Theodore Payne Foundation, Carolyn Bennett, and Kitty Connolly of The Huntington) the exhibit *When They Were Wild* of California native plant folk art at The Huntington's Boone Gallery in the spring of 2013.



Book available from Cachuma Press
(see cachumapress.com/catalog/california-lawn.html)

Summer Garden Stars

by Cathy Capone



Virgins' Bower (*Clematis ligusticifolia*) is a Tulare County native. It grows widely on the valley floor along waterways and in the foothills. It is a woody vine which is sometimes deciduous. The flowers are white to cream colored and held in clusters. Clematis grows rapidly given deep soil and twice a week water during the hottest months. Clematis will climb fences, trees, and bushes or extend for more than ten feet along the ground. This is a useful plant for locations that you may need to cut to ground level at times. The pictured vine was cut to the ground and the fence removed then replaced last summer in order to gain access to the septic tank. The flowers and rapid growth will more than pay you back for the light pruning needed to keep this vine controlled.



I am going to discuss all the native fuchsias as a group. I have several different native fuchsias growing in my gardens and their requirements are very similar. When selecting a fuchsia pay close attention to the mature height and spread of the plant. Selecting the correct size plant for your garden spot will make maintenance easier. I find it heartbreaking to cut back

beautiful fuchsia flowers because they are encroaching on the walkway. Fuchsias are very attractive to hummingbirds and butterflies. Fuchsias grow in all areas of Tulare County except the highest ranges of the Sierras. In my garden on the valley floor where the soil is very fast draining, fuchsias require regular water during the summer months to survive. They do well on three waterings a week when mulched. Fuchsias are doing well in 5 hour to almost full sun. Fuchsias in full shade are leggy and not flowering.



The California Wild Rose (*Rosa californica*) is a Tulare County native plant. This rose grows widely in our foothills. It is found in wetlands and dry areas. In both cases it grows in partial to full shade. I have grown California Wild Rose in Porterville and found that it can only establish in partial or full shade. The Wild Rose requires partial to filtered shade in order to survive our summer sun and produce abundant flowers. The California Wild Rose is a bramble rose which spreads by underground stems. This produces a thicket; however excess growth is easy to remove. A Wild Rose thicket provides habitat. The rose will flower from late spring to mid fall with pauses for the hottest weeks.

cont'd on page 5

An Invitation to Contribute to "Garden Stars"

Cathy Capone, the Chapter Horticulture Chair, is calling for your help to show off California native plants at their best. "Garden Stars" will become a chapter-wide garden exchange. You are invited to submit a current digital photo of a native plant in your garden. Include the date and short paragraph that describes how you care for this plant and its growing conditions. You can add more information if you choose. Cathy will review each submission and select one or more for each newsletter. Selected images will also be added to the chapter website. Please include your name and contact number. Your name will only be published with your permission.

Email your photos to cathycaponemail@gmail.com

cont'd from page 4



This picture shows the colorful rose hips that develop on mature rose bushes. The flower is a single row of pink petals 1-2 inches in diameter. If you have had nursery roses in your garden before, this rose is much different. It is easy to grow given partial shade and moist soil to establish. Once established with deep roots you can cut back on water to twice a week during the hottest months.

Creeping Snowberry (*Symphoricarpos mollis*) has a long period of bloom because it has a progression of blooms on each cluster. This plant is native to Tulare County and can grow in all Tulare county climate zones with irrigation. This is a low growing, spreading plant which can spread like a groundcover. Snowberry is best in partial to full shade in lower elevations. In my garden, this plant grows in full shade under a magnolia tree. The soil is generally dry but it is irrigated twice a week. In this shady location, the creeping snowberry grows with arching stems and less like a groundcover. Berries remain on stems after leaves fall, attracts birds. Best used as a wild thicket in sun or shade for erosion control on steep banks.



Background Plants for a Native Garden

by Cathy Capone

A garden design can be thought about in three areas—background, mid-ground and foreground. This article will focus on California native plants that you can use in a garden setting. All three of the featured plants are native to Tulare County. All the pictures for this article were taken in my garden during August 2012.

California Bay (*Umbellularia californica*), or California Laurel, is native to the foothills of Tulare County. This tree grows well in valley gardens if given some protection from the midday summer sun and regular water until established. The California Bay has a strong tendency to become a multi-trunked tree, but can be single trunked with consistent pruning. I have found the California Bay to be a very useful screening plant. It is densely covered with leaves which provide a near 100% screen year-round. It grows at a moderate rate, one and a half feet per year, and in my Porterville yard has grown to twenty feet in approximately fifteen years. It grows best and fastest in deep soil with ample water. It will grow in deep shade and ultimately becomes a shade maker itself; it casts a very dense shade unless thinned. California Bay is always neat, it is a good patio tree, background tree, or tall hedge. The leaves from the California Bay are used in cooking.



California Bay at the northwest corner of the my house.

cont'd on page 6

Background Plants, *cont'd from page 5*

Western Redbud (*Cercis occidentalis*) is native to the Tulare County foothills below 4,000 feet. Redbud is a shrub or small tree 10-18 feet in height and spread. Redbud grows several trunks from the base. It has all-year interest. In spring it delivers a 3 week display of delicate sweet peas shaped brilliant magenta flowers. They are ½ inch long and cover the branch ends before leaves appear. The summer foliage is green to blue green round leaves which flutter in a breeze. Seed pods are flat pea pods which produce a crinkling sound in a light breeze. In fall, the whole plant turns light yellow or red. In winter, Redbuds have bare branches in picturesque patterns which hold reddish brown seed pods. Redbud is resistant to oak root fungus. Water regularly in the first few years then twice monthly summer water for five or more years. Tulare County below 4,000 feet is an excellent climate for Redbud. Since Redbuds are deciduous, use them in backgrounds which do not require 100% screening.



Young Redbud behind the deer grass and mature Redbud in the background at the right.

Blue Elderberry (*Sambucus mexicana*) is native to Tulare County growing on the valley floor and up to 8,000 feet. Elderberries are fast growing and wild looking. They can be effective as a screen or windbreak in large gardens. Birds eat the fruit, but it can also be used to make juice, jam, pies, or wine. Hummingbirds are observed frequently visiting the flowers. One of the charming things about elderberry is that it has flowers from April to late fall. Berries ripen from June to late fall. Elderberry tree/shrubs grow to 30 feet in 15 years and handle drought by losing leaves. If you want to keep an Elderberry heavily in leaf, you must provide water.

Elderberry bushes are strongly multi trunked and require frequent pruning to keep as a single trunked tree. Elderberry bushes should be used where they can be allowed to develop their 10 foot or more base spread. This plant is currently a protected species because it is the only home to the elderberry

long horned beetle. Owners are prohibited from cutting stems one inch or more in diameter without extensive mitigation procedures. This regulation is being discussed as possibly no longer justified, but for now, Elderberries are still protected.



Elderberry flowers August 16, 2012



This 15 year old Elderberry is 30 feet tall and grows along my west property line.

Green Faire: Saturday, October 6

Alta Peak Chapter will be the sponsor and organizer for the 6th Annual Green Faire, that will be held in conjunction with the native plant sale at the Three Rivers Arts Center. Environmental groups and non-profit organizations may have a complimentary table/booth to share information with the public.

Artists and crafts persons are invited to sell their work in booths, both inside, outside, and in part of the parking lot of the Arts Center. Artwork can be in any media but must be inspired by the natural world, or be made from recycled materials, or reflect aspects of environmental concern. Booth sizes are variable and not necessarily the standard 10 x 10 ft square. Booths are available both inside the Arts Center and outside, in the front yard and part of the parking lot. The Green Faire will also be part of the First Saturday arts event that day. Booth fee is \$10, payable to CNPS. No percentage of sales is required.

Deadline for booth registration is September 28, and must done by calling Elsayh Cort at 559-561-4671. Booths must remain open from 9-4 pm.



oil painting © Mona Fox Selph, "Eagle Rock" (north side of Case Mountain) oil

Green Home Tour: Sunday, October 7

Tours start at 12 noon and at 1 pm

Five special sites, located throughout Three Rivers, are on the Green Home Tour, which is now in its 6th year and is part of the Annual National Solar Tour. Each location showcases active or passive solar powered, incorporate recycled materials, earth forms and other natural materials. One site is a multi-purpose garage, gym, and yoga studio built to Leed gold certification. A 6.5 KW solar system is mounted on the roof, and a west facing green living wall helps cool the space, and is a lovely hanging garden. Besides being innovative, all the sites are quite beautiful. Reservations are required for the two tours, one starting at 12 noon and the other at 1 pm. The groups will carpool to the locations.

Tickets are \$15 per person or \$25 per couple.

Call the Tour Organizer, Mona Selph, at 559-561-4676 to reserve a place.

Proceeds go to the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund for assisting with our local issues.

Alta Peak Chapter Board of Directors



WE INVITE OUR MEMBERS TO
JOIN THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
TO "SHARE THE GOOD STUFF"
ABOUT NATIVE PLANTS
FOR ALL OF TULARE COUNTY!

President, Conservation

Joan Stewart

559-539-2717

tori2toli@ocsnet.net

Vice President, Newsletter Editor

Elsah Cort

559-561-4671

elsahc@dishmail.net

Treasurer, Membership, Plant Sale

Janet Fanning

559-561-3461

janetfanning@att.net

Secretary

Joy Semple

559-539-7927

jdsemp@springvillemwireless.com

Outreach

Melanie Keeley

559-799-7438

mbaerkeeley@gmail.com

Horticulture

Cathy Capone

559-783-0201

cathycaponemail@gmail.com

Education

Betty Avalos

559-561-3211

elizabeth.avalos@rocketmail.com

Website: altapeakcnps.org

See newsletter in color in a pdf file here.

Chapter facebook page:

facebook.com/altapeak.chapter

Alta Peak Chapter Annual Native Plant Sale

October 6, 2012 from 10-4 pm

*** CNPS members only 9-10 am ***

*Please volunteer to help at the
plant sale for Friday or Saturday*



**Three Rivers Arts Center
North Fork Drive in Three Rivers**

*Held in conjunction with the Green Faire,
and the Three Rivers Environmental Weekend*

CNPS MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

City / Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Email _____

(optional): _____

I wish to affiliate with: ____ Alta Peak Chapter

Other Chapter _____

Membership Category:

____ Student/Limited income, \$25

____ Individual, \$45

____ Family \$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 cnps.org and click on JOIN.**

Elsah Cort, Editor
PO Box 245
Three Rivers, CA 93271