



# 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.*

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## Chapter President's Message by Melanie Keeley

It is June and the fire season has started already! As I write this, across the river from my house in Three Rivers, a 300+ acre fire smolders. After three days, it is almost, but not fully contained. Living with this threat from May to October is life as usual in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada. It is being projected that this will be a bigger than normal fire year due to the high levels of burnable, dry biomass generated by higher than usual precipitation.

Yes, all plants burn, including native plants, but there are ways to maintain and situate native plants around your living spaces that make life and property in the foothills safer. Once again, over the summer, Cathy Capone and I will be teaching a Do It Yourself Native Plant Landscaping Class (Saturday, August 26, 2017). Please see details within the pages of this issue of *Insignis*. We've been teaching this class for several years. Among many other topics, we'll definitely be discussing fire safe native landscaping principles.

To me, it is always interesting and informative hearing native plant experts' experiences with growing (and watering) native plants. In previous issues, board member Cathy Capone and I have shared what we've learned about growing them. In this issue, I've included thoughts on the subject from the former owner of Las Pilitas Nursery, Bert Wilson. Although Bert is

sadly no longer with us, Celeste, his wife with daughter, Penny, still operate the nursery in Santa Margarita, California. I encourage you to visit their establishment when you are in the San Luis Obispo area to see their vast collection of native plants for sale. Also, visit their encyclopedic website. The nursery ships native plants! I hope you enjoy Bert's colorful "Bertisms". He was quite a character with no shortage of horticultural opinions!

During the summer, there is somewhat of a respite from tasks needing to be done in the garden compared to fall and spring. Of course there will be a need for watering, weeding out summer exotics such as oxalis, spurge, and Bermuda grass, as well as adding mulch to cool plant roots. These aside, enjoy the relaxed demand on your time, stay cool and look ahead to fall planting.

### Calling All Alta Peak Chapter Members!

We want you! We know you are strongly committed to the mission of this society, which is "...to conserve California native plants and their natural habitats, and increase understanding, appreciation, and horticultural use of native plants." Now is the time to show that commitment. Giving back to this worthy organization can be very satisfying work. Please consider joining the Board of Directors. Positions currently open: Education/Grants, Membership, Legislation, Conservation, Historian. Or, if you have special talents to share with us, please contact Melanie for ways to participate.

## Chapter Council Report

*About the March 11-12, 2017, meeting held in Carpenteria  
by Cathy Capone, Chapter Council Delegate*

Marty Foltyn chaired her first meeting as President of the Council. Marty has served in many positions at the State level, most recently as the Council Secretary. Marty lead a discussion of potential goals for the Council this year. The Council is producing an annual review of the Board of Directors. This will be continued with a report at the June meeting.

Johanna Kwan and David Pryor, as Chapter Council Representatives to the Board of Directors, gave a combined report. They noted the ongoing work being done on Important Plant Areas (IPA). CNPS views development of a statewide mapping and documentation of Important Plant Areas as critical for planning and advocacy. This topic was continued by other presenters. The Southern Central Valley ranking of Important Plant Areas is in the process. Greg Suba is the contact on this matter. Currently, elevations below 1,000 feet in Kern and Tulare Counties are the focus. After this section is complete the focus will be Fresno County below 1,000 feet. Higher elevation areas will come after these are complete.

Gabi McLean, Treasurer on the Board of Directors, gave a detailed financial report. The state association continues to be in a good financial situation. We have an 89% rating as a nonprofit, which is an excellent rating.

Dan Gluesenkamp, Executive Director, reported that 12 million Californians are thought to have an affinity for CNPS. He stated that we need to get in touch with more of them. As an example, mountain bikers and people interested in bats have common interests with CNPS. Dan also mentioned that there will be money in the budget for chapters to use for phytophthora issues. The requests for this money will go through committee.

Liv O'Keeffe, the communications and Marketing Director, gave her first presentation to Council. Liv presented a polished PowerPoint which included the following statements;

- *What we do here matters.*
- *The nation is watching what California does at this time.*
- *We have a powerful story.*
- *We can grow our base.*
- *We can do better. We need a modern toolkit.*
- *We've got great bones, but we need to stay relevant.*

As part of Liv's job, she will be hosting a monthly engagement and outreach call. I have signed up for this monthly group call. The call will be on the fourth Wednesday of each month from 4-5 pm. If you are interested in joining this group, please let Liv know. Liv requests that we provide her what she calls hyper local stories, with the intention to look at serving chapter needs and looking at the potential connections between these local stories. She will be managing a transition in the way CNPS engages with and informs the public-at-large

and current members. Liv is requesting photos so that she can publicize for us. She is looking to strengthen the speakers bureau, look at garden tours as a statewide advertised program, and work to produce and disseminate a united message to the public. Her focus for 2017 is improving CNPS' digital platform.

Brock Wimberley, the new Finance and Operations Director, made his first report to the Council. He highlighted the state savings investment program. This program provides managed savings for the chapters where the funds are recorded separately but are professionally managed to maximize return on investment. This provides a higher rate of return than chapters can expect from bank savings accounts. State can improve the chapter savings return by earning more than banks provide. He is working on a handbook for chapter treasurers. The state is currently looking at the insurance policy and needs to know specifics of chapter inventories in order to obtain insurance that will cover the entire inventory.

A Climate Change Policy statement was brought to the Council for consideration. After discussion, the Council voted to send the matter to committee with the directive to bring the matter back to Council.

Under Political Action, CNPS as a nonprofit is allowed to lobby for bills and initiatives but cannot support or oppose a candidate for elected office. We are allowed to spend \$250,000 per year on lobbying, currently spending 6% of that amount.

Council and membership are requested to follow and comment on Senate Bill 249 by Scott Allen. The entire bill is available on line. My statement here only summarizes impacts to plants. The bill provides for the scientific study of the impacts to vegetation in current off highway vehicle parks. It requires OHV parks to protect sensitive vegetation once found. The bill also delays creation of any additional OHV parks until a scientific study is made and brings the OHV park division under the state park administration.

The Conservation Conference will be held on February 1-3, 2018, in Los Angeles. The call for abstracts is now open to presenters. Please let any potential presenters know that they can obtain the information on cnps.org. We are also looking for sponsors for the conference. The ticket price pays for 50% of the cost of the conference and student rate is 25% of the actual cost. The conference organizing committee and the Council will be talking about ways to make the conference financially accessible to any student in the field.

David Magney, Rare Plant Program Director, reported on the certification program for field and consulting botanists. Tests are being given. It is now the time to spread the word to people who are working in the field of botany that the certification program is available. Also, companies and government agencies can begin looking for certification as a criterion in hiring certified consulting and field botanists.

*cont'd on pg 3*



## April Field Trip Report

by Mary Merriman, Rare Plant Team

Alta Peak Chapter had the rare opportunity to co-sponsor a field trip with the Kern Chapter to the Case Mountain Recreation Area in Three Rivers on April 29, 2017. The Bureau of Land Management botanist Denis Kearns lead the group and provided us car access to the first few miles of the dirt access road, allowing us to walk to the Salt Creek falls, which was close to peak flow. Kern Chapter brought a contingent of about ten members led by Patty Gradek and exercised their considerable identification skills. Denis provided plant lists from various sources, along with his expertise of this area after fourteen years of work in the southern Sierra.

The lower portion of Case Mountain and the Salt Creek drainage was in its full glory of wildflower bloom. Masses of pretty face (*Triteleia ixioides*) popped up through the tall grasses. The magnificent heads of Ithuriel's spear (*Triteleia laxa*) graced the meadows. Many of our favorites bloomed in profusion like Chinese houses (*Collinsia heterophylla*), satin bells or fairy lanterns (*Calochortus amoenus*) and miniature bicolor lupine (*Lupinus bicolor*). Chaparral whitethorn (*Ceanothus leucodermis*) bloomed in abundance this year with showers of white blooms from the white stemmed, long-thorned shrubs. *Madia elegans* blanketed the slopes above and below the road. Other treasures found were butter n eggs (*Triphysaria erythranthe*), blue field gilia (*Gilia capitata*), pink twining lily (*Dichelostemma voluble*) which some like to call snake lily. A jewel flower called *Caulanthus coulteri* was found with some discussion if the dried stalks might be the rare *Caulanthus californicus*. Magenta owl's clover (*Castilleja exserta*) was another familiar and lovely find.

While some participants had to leave early, a small contingent were able to make the walk up the canyon bottom to view the *Iris munzii*. Further up the canyon, a previously unnoticed *Mimulus* was found and keyed out to *Mimulus inconspicuus*. The new name bestowed by genetic botanists is *Erythranthe inconspicuus*. A small dainty flower looking up from the trailside near a small rivulet caught everyone's attention. While it is a listed plant, there are records across the southern Sierra foothills of this dainty monkey flower. It has also been called *Mimulus acutidens* and may change names again as the "Mimulus expert" Naomi Fraga from Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden continues her reclassification work of this genus. The *Erythranthes* have a pedicel longer than the calyx so many previous *Mimulus* have fallen in this group. Dozens of other flowers and plants were found and identified at this peak season on Salt Creek. Many thanks to Kern Chapter for organizing this trip and to Denis Kearns for leading it.

For more information about the Case Mountain Recreation Area, go to [recreation.gov](http://recreation.gov) and type Case Mountain Extensive Recreation Management Area in the search box.

## Chapter Council *cont'd from pg 2*

Curriculum is 90% developed for Certified Landscape Specialists. After development is complete a test system will be developed. Discussion is happening on an entry level Botanist Certification which would serve to identify qualified Botanists as they are entering the work force after college.

The purpose of these certification programs is to increase the level of work coming from botanists. The desired result is better reporting on sites. The program is not restrictive; it is supportive. David asked chapters to talk to local consulting firms to encourage them to get certified and support governmental agencies to require certified botanists for projects. The next set of exams will be held in the Fullerton Arboretum on May 9.

David also reported on Rare Plant Treasurer Hunts for 2017. The focus this year is on rarest of the rare. Catherine Curley is the new Rare Plant Treasure Hunt Coordinator. She will be contacting the Rare Plant Committee members. CNPS can provide everything needed and training as necessary. We are asked to prioritize the 1A de-extinction, 1B and taxa with 10 or fewer populations known. We are advised to prioritize treasure hunts on private lands and land trust lands. When populations are found on private lands it is easier to get permission to collect specimens. One of the goals would be to identify populations which can be seed banked. Contact Catherine at [ccurley@cnps.org](mailto:ccurley@cnps.org) about your treasure hunt.

Bill Waycott, Vice-President of the Board of Directors, presented a request to add a new chapter, the Mountain Bike Interest Group. The matter was discussed and sent to committee to bring back at next meeting. Michael G. Barbour was nominated as a fellow. This passed unanimously.



Native plant garden in Three Rivers.  
photo © Martha Widmann

# Native Plant Landscaping

## Notes on planting and watering CA Native Plants from the late Bert Wilson of Las Pilitas Nursery

by Melanie Keeley

I am particularly interested in others' successes with native plants, like the late Bert Wilson who was the former owner of Las Pilitas Nursery in Santa Margarita in San Luis Obispo County. His wife Celeste and daughter Penny continue in his tradition of growing CA native plants. The nursery is well worth a visit, as is viewing Bert's website. A man of many horticultural opinions, he did a great job writing them down for posterity. I am sharing some of his information and recommendations on planting and watering methods for native plants.

Excerpted from *laspilitas.com* with some light editing:

### How to Plant CA Native and other Drought Tolerant Plants

Plant in existing soil. DO NOT ADD AMENDMENTS & DO NOT FERTILIZE. If the soil is brick hard, water the week before you plant or mulch the area a few months before. Try not to disturb the ground more than needed to remove weeds and debris. If you do not have weeds or debris, just dig a hole and plant. Fill around the plant with the dirt you dug out of the hole. Dig the holes about the size of the root ball or a little bigger. Don't dig holes smaller than the plant and rip off half the root ball or try to stuff it in the hole anyway. Do not dig a huge hole for a small plant. The ground will settle; and plant will be below ground level and drown during the winter. Do not fertilize. If there's more than one person planting multiple plants, one digs holes and fills for the plants as the other plants, stacks pots, and tamps. Use your feet as tamps. Step on both sides of the root ball to make sure it is making full soil contact. (Do this lightly if the soil is wet.) If you wish to use pre-emergent herbicides this is the point at which you could apply them.

Use mulch. Place it by hand, with wheelbarrow or tractor on top of the ground around the plant. Shredded redwood, shredded cedar, or arborist chips of chaparral, pine, or oak work well. Do not use newspaper, straw, green waste, or lawn clippings, as they are not found in nature. Mulch needs to be a few inches deep and appropriate for the plant. Do not till the mulch into the soil. Use between 1-4 inches organic mulch, 6 inch or larger rocks/boulders, or a combination of the two.

It is important to recognize that desert and prairie plants want rock or boulder mulch, chaparral and woodland plants want shrub or tree mulch mixed with boulders (or large rocks), conifers want tree mulch. This is what we see commonly in the wild and why we like rocks and mulch combined.

WEED! Weeds are the anti-native. WEED!! It's easier to get rid of them before you put the plants in. They're your enemy; remove them, any way you can that fits your particular

situation. We have used post-emergent herbicides, shovels, tractors, and hand weeding. DO NOT TILL or RIP the soil. Do not remove the weeds with tools unless you're going to plant or mulch. Disturbance favors weeds. Even weeds favor weeds. Weed control is always the lesser evil. To me, generally, the weeds are more evil than the herbicides. Many you have the curse of noticing and being bothered by weeds; the planet would be a better place if more folks noticed and ridded them.

Scrape one finger along the side of the root ball to make sure the roots are not coiled. Generally, if you have to cut the pot to get the pot out, the plant is too pot bound. If you tear up the root mass the plant will likely die, and if the root ball falls away more than 20-30% the plant may die. If you do not run your finger along the side of the rootball, you will have problems later as the roots will be coiled into a gnarled mass. Disturb the root ball enough so the roots are no longer coiled, but do not tear up the root ball.

### Watering California Native Plants

Adjusting to good watering practices for California native plants is difficult for many people. If there is 2-4 inches of mulch on the ground or the site is in town, it is really easy to overwater. (Remember, roofs, sidewalks, and patios have a tendency to concentrate water around their perimeters).

Plant your native plant, mulch heavily and then saturate the site with water. Put enough water down to almost float the mulch. This first watering must settle the voids around the newly planted rootball, recharge the water reservoir in the soil and leach the tannins out of the mulch and into the soil. After watering for about 1 hour the water only makes it down a few inches. Until you get the hang of it, check soil after you water. (Moisture meters are available for under \$10 at your local hardware store).

If planting in December or January, in much of coastal California and the Sierra Nevada mountains, this first watering may be enough for establishment. Many areas, San Joaquin and Sacramento Valleys, the desert, etc., may need once per week watering through the first year. For the first year: Check the soil under the mulch (dig down one inch to two inches) every week to two weeks. If soil is moist, do not water. If soil is dry, water thoroughly with four plus gallons of water. (Some sites may not need any watering.)

Second year and succeeding years: If the plant originated from an area of higher rainfall than your area, water extra from November to March. If the plant originated from a community that receives fog drip in the summer you will also need to do some light sprinkling during the summer. If your rainfall is between 12-20 inches and coastal you should be ok, if above 20 inches in areas that regularly exceed 100 degrees you should be OK.

If the year is unusually dry, supplemental water can be applied from March through May. (You got 3 inches of rainfall up into



February, might be time to water.) Other than that, discontinue watering. Try to maintain the mulch at a depth of two inches and wash the dust off of the foliage once a week or so. If you want to be 'fire safe' and have a lush native garden, wash the foliage off once a week with hose or sprinkler irrigated 5 minutes or so, maybe 10 minutes in Palmdale.

Don't water for growth. Water to keep the plant alive, not to make it grow fast. Try to make the plant drought tolerant! Watering less often and more deeply will stimulate roots to grow deeper instead of on the surface where they will be susceptible to drying out. BUT, it doesn't rain during the warm period in California. After the first or second season even one deep watering can kill a native plant. The plants do not tolerate dust, and can become unsightly if under full drought. (Not dead, just ugly.) If you wash the foliage off once a week after the first year, they look much better and still live for decades.

Watering is a vicious cycle. The more you water, the more you have to water. The irony is that the symptoms of a drowning plant are burnt leaf margins, leaf abscission, and terminal decline, very much like the symptoms of drought stress. Inappropriate watering causes most of the root system to 'drop off'. This often happens rapidly. The more you water the less stable the root system is, the greater the soil pathogens, and the more it looks under drought stress, 'till the plant is dead.

We do not recommend drip irrigation. Avoid drip if at all possible. Most drought tolerant plants do not like wet feet nor the way drip irrigation delivers the water (some trees have root systems that are mostly horizontal, while drip irrigation delivers the water vertically). The ecology of drip irrigation is a pond or lake. It's like planting the plant into a pond, for as long as the drip is on. If you water for four hours once per week with drip, picture the plant up to its leaves in a pond for four hours, every week. If you can move the emitters out away from the plant's drip line as the plant grows, that is acceptable for riparian and ruderal-type plants. Black polyethylene drip line is only good in towns and cities. In rural areas it is a chew toy for the rodents, see the critter section.

Spot sprays and micro-sprays seem to be acceptable alternatives. Put two half sprays in per plant, at the drip line of the plant, each pointing towards the plant. As the plant grows, rotate the microsprays away from the plant, keeping them at the drip line of the plant.

Summer water kills most natives. It doesn't rain in California from May to November. The plant roots are usually dry then. Water to start them, maybe even first summer, then back off. Think about how often it rains in the summer in California and where. The only areas that regularly receive significant precipitation in the summer are the edges of California. So apply this to your plants. Desert species like a little water in the summer. Most other plants are shutting down during this time. Winter and spring water is far better for the health of the plant than summer water. It is usually OK to water the first summer

or two. It does not work to water plants (other than washing dust off the foliage) beyond the third summer, unless you are willing to lose plants.

Gophers, squirrels, chipmunks, deer and rabbits will sometimes eat plants watered with drip irrigation or watered in summer, while leaving the un-watered ones alone. If the year is dry, water in March, April and May to make up the difference. When the soil becomes warm, turn the water off. As soon as the soil cools, except in really cold locations, you can water again.

During extreme years, like 2013, it's difficult to find the balance. You'll need to water your older native plantings. The trick is to not kill the older plantings while keeping them alive. You can water indirectly, either adding extra water once a week between plants or an overhead sprinkler like a summer shower. A great time to add a few extra plants to the planting as you'll probably need to water anyway.

Water for deep growth. Deep watering will help the roots to grow deep, shallow frequent waterings mean you do not have much of a root system. The lateral roots (and mycorrhizae) will not form if the conditions are not right. I've seen lawns that were not growing into the ground at all (the ground was waterlogged) and I have seen six year old plants on drip irrigation that were the same size as when they were planted! If you water with drip irrigation you need to water a minimum of 4-5 gallons each time you water; if that is too much, do not water. We and many of our customers have had sad experiences, killing plants with one summer watering and/or using drip irrigation. The plants will tolerate summer water usually only the first year or so. As they slow down their growth and 'mature,' they become much more susceptible to root rot and one watering seems to be enough to swing the balance. Light summer rains are not as adverse, while heavy late thunderstorms have caused us some losses. The roots of drought tolerant California native plants, and their allies, are not adapted to wet and hot soils.

Don't water if you don't have to. At all times before you water, check the soil a couple of inches below the mulch. Is it wet? Do not water. Is it moist? If you want to give extra water in the spring to increase the rainfall to normal levels, then water. If it is summer or the soil is moist do not water. If the soil is dry you can water for the first summer. After the first summer, water only in the spring to bring moisture levels up to normal rainfall levels or beyond if your plant comes from a higher rainfall area. Also, if there is a period of no rain for more than 2-3 weeks during the winter rain period in the southwest it is ok to give supplemental water.

Apply special watering requirements for certain communities. The only exceptions to this watering scheme are riparian, redwood, desert and closed-cone pine forest plant communities. Check these in summer; the forest communities need higher summer humidity. They do not need wet feet but they get a lot

*cont'd on pg 6*

## Landscaping *cont'd from pg 5*

of summer fog or constant soil moisture, so sprinkle those plants every week or so if you get no summer fog. The plants in the freshwater marsh community do need wet feet. Desert species like a little watering or two in mid-summer; duplicate a thunder shower if you can. The problem with the desert species is the fact that they need a winter dry period and winter rains can kill them.

## Other Bert Blog Posts of potential interest to Tulare County residents

Please take a look at these links to other particularly relevant issues for Tulare County.

You can view the true work of passion by Bert Wilson in person at the Las Pilitas Nursery, 3232 Las Pilitas Road, Santa Margarita, CA 93453. The nursery is open from 9-4 pm on Friday and Saturday.

- A CA Native Plant Garden in the San Joaquin Valley of Central California [laspilitas.com/classes/valley-plants.html](http://laspilitas.com/classes/valley-plants.html)
- Sprinklers and California native plants, Do you really need a sprinkler system? [laspilitas.com/garden/plant-your-garden/installing-irrigation-systems.html](http://laspilitas.com/garden/plant-your-garden/installing-irrigation-systems.html)
- Native Landscaping ideas [laspilitas.com/garden/native-landscaping-ideas.html](http://laspilitas.com/garden/native-landscaping-ideas.html)
- Bert rules (Bertisms) [laspilitas.com/blog/post--26--bertisms](http://laspilitas.com/blog/post--26--bertisms)
- Native Plant Gardening, The basic dirt about planting a native plant garden in California [laspilitas.com/easy/easy.html](http://laspilitas.com/easy/easy.html)
- Native planting in summer, [laspilitas.com/blog/post--54--planting-native-plants-in-summer](http://laspilitas.com/blog/post--54--planting-native-plants-in-summer)
- How to Prune Native Plants (without killing them), General Pruning Tips [laspilitas.com/garden/howto/pruning.htm](http://laspilitas.com/garden/howto/pruning.htm)
- California Gardens with Deer Problems, Deer resistant California native plants [laspilitas.com/easy/deer.htm](http://laspilitas.com/easy/deer.htm)
- Easy Drip Irrigation, Drip irrigation kills most natives! [laspilitas.com/drip.htm](http://laspilitas.com/drip.htm)
- Watering California Native Plants [laspilitas.com/easy/easywatering.htm](http://laspilitas.com/easy/easywatering.htm)
- Planting under oak trees in California [laspilitas.com/groups/oaks/Planting\\_under\\_oak\\_tree.html](http://laspilitas.com/groups/oaks/Planting_under_oak_tree.html)

## Editor's Note by Elsay Cort

Chapter members are encouraged to send articles, topics, photographs, and interesting native plant tidbits to include in our newsletter and/or online sites. We would love to hear the voices of our general members and swap stories.

Email contributions to [altapeakchapter@gmail.com](mailto:altapeakchapter@gmail.com)

*Encourage your friends and family to join the California Native Plant Society.*

[cnps.org](http://cnps.org)

## Alta Peak Chapter Grant Program

*by Melanie Keeley*

The Chapter is happy to announce that it has awarded the annual education grant to the River Ridge Institute to assist in organizing its first annual Foothills Festival. The event will be held in Springville on Saturday, November 4, 2017.

The Chapter's funding supports furthering River Ridge Ranch's goal to raise awareness of the beauty, diversity and importance of conservation of the Sierra Nevada foothills. With around two million acres of blue oak woodland in this county, these watersheds support enormous plant and animal diversity. The mission of the Institute is to demonstrate and disseminate information on the best land management practices to protect this county's valuable land. This event, with its tours and demonstrations, is an excellent way to provide that information.

The festival will feature live music, food, local artists, agency and organizational booths, demonstrations, hands-on activities, nature walks and guided tours. Participating artists will be chosen to feature plants and animals and local landscapes, and booths will be devoted to agencies and organizations affiliated with the natural world, e.g., US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), US Forest Service (USFS), Sequoia Riverland Trust (SRT), WildPlaces, National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), CNPS, etc. The Foothills Festival will follow the CNPS Alta Peak Chapter annual native plant sale which will be held in the north end of the county in Three Rivers. River Ridge Natives Nursery will offer native plants for sale in the southern end of the county.

## DIY Native Plant Landscape Design Clinic

**Saturday, August 26, 2017, from 9-2 pm**

College of the Sequoias in Visalia

Instructors: Melanie Keeley and Cathy Capone

Registration Fee: CNPS Members - \$45, Non-members - \$60.00

*Pre-registration is required. Class size is limited.*

Call 559-799-7438 for registration as well as questions.

The traditional garden of expansive lawns, and lolly-popped shrubs are a thing of the past. With California's unpredictable precipitation, it is time for a new model that will work in this hot, arid climate. California native plants not only use a fraction of the water that typical gardens do, they are attractive and colorful as well. In this class, designed for native plant novices, we will help you learn 1) how to ditch your lawn, 2) the best tried and true native plants, 3) how to combine them for maximum effect and 4) help you to design your own drought tolerant native garden. With a plan in place, you can landscape your garden in manageable steps. It's an opportunity to transition from a high care, water indulgent garden into a natural, sustainable low water use, beautiful garden.

*By joining CNPS at this time, you'll be eligible to pre-order native plants for the Annual Fall Plant Sale (October 7) at a 10% discount.*

## Rare Plant Report

About the Rare Plant Treasure Hunt for *Iris munzii* held on April 21  
by Mary Merriman, Rare Plant Team

A rare plant treasure hunt was conducted last year along the Mineral King Road to document a known population of *Iris munzii* there which had not been surveyed previously. Near Ash Mountain, in Sequoia National Park, is a population that had been surveyed in the past but not recently. After five years of drought what changes may have occurred? A collaborative effort between Sequoia National Park and Alta Peak Chapter set up a Rare Plant Treasure Hunt on April 21 along with opportunities for nature journaling.

The beautiful and iconic native iris called *Iris munzii* has evolved in our very own Kaweah River and Tule River drainages. CNPS has included this special iris on its list of endangered plants, due to the very limited distribution in just these two river drainages. While two historical records exist from other counties (Kern and Tuolumne), these are respectively 70 and 100 years old and have not been reported in these locations since then. Many populations thrive in the foothills shady glens or grassy slopes and burst out with elegant displays in April and May. Populations in the Tule River drainage are also fairly common especially on lands protected by the US Forest Service. However, a population on the Tule River at Coffee Camp seems to have disappeared. It is thought that over-collecting was the culprit. *Iris munzii* is named after Philip A Munz from Rancho Santa Ana Botanical Garden, who wrote the first comprehensive flora of California circa 1958.

On a balmy spring afternoon 16 enthusiastic nature seekers set out to find all the *Iris munzii* plants among the blue oaks and grassy slopes near Park headquarters. Erik Frenzel provided a description and history of the plant and the logistics of the search, including the identifying and avoidance of poison oak. Ginger Bradshaw provided journals and pencils for the artists, both beginners and experts. The group of both beginners and accomplished botanists and artists swept out over the slope finding many clumps of iris, while also enjoying and identifying a whole host of other native plants. Some sketched the iris while crouched on the hillside. Ann Huber of the Rare Plant Committee completed the survey forms for Fish and Wildlife Service and for CNPS. A total of 122 clumps were found which was similar to the previous survey showing no decline in the population in recent years. Once again, a native plant is shown to be more resilient in the face of California's historic and prolonged droughts

### Chapter Board Meeting on July 15 at 9 am

Home of Melanie Keeley in Three Rivers. Call 559-799-7438 for directions. Chapter Board meetings are open to all Chapter members. If you are interested in joining the Board, contact Melanie Keeley. The positions of education/grants, legislation, conservation, historian, membership are open.

### Alta Peak Chapter ❖ Online Resources

website: [altapeakcnps.org](http://altapeakcnps.org)

facebook page: [facebook.com/altapeakchapterCNPS](https://facebook.com/altapeakchapterCNPS)

email: [altapeakchapter@gmail.com](mailto:altapeakchapter@gmail.com)



### Chapter Board of Directors

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#### Membership

*This position is open....*

#### Field Trips

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#### Conservation

*This position is open.*

#### Horticulture, Council Delegate

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#### Education, Grant Program

*This position is open....*

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# Alta Peak Chapter Annual Native Plant Sale

October 7, 2017



Three Rivers Arts Center  
North Fork Drive in Three Rivers

image: *Melanie Keeley*

## CNPS MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

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(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](http://cnps.org) — click on JOIN.**

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