



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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August 2018

President's Message
news from Barbara...
Page 1

Native Plant Sale
October 6, 2018
Page 2

Foothills Festival
local natives...
Page 2

Chapter Fall Program
learn about Calflora...
Page 2

Board of Directors
Check out board member openings and join us...
Page 3

2019 Chapter Grant Application Deadline is March 31, 2019

Information about how to apply for a Chapter grant can be found at altapeakcnps.org

Chapter Field Trip Report
Big Meadow in June...
Page 3



DIY Native Plant Landscaping Design
using CA native plants
Page 2

Chapter Field Trip
with Calflora...
Page 2

Chapter Council Report
about June meeting...
Page 3



Chapter President's Message

by Barbara Brydolf

California is getting hotter and drier. The state is changing for us, but equally or more so for the animals and plants that call this place home. In addition, the CA Department of Finance projects that our population will increase by 25% in the next 37 years, up from an estimated 40 million now to 50 million in 2055. Not only is climate change putting unprecedented stress on our native plants (for example, think of the drought and beetle die-off of over 100 million forest trees, and the catastrophic fires), but population growth will increase pressure to convert native habitat into dwellings, businesses, and infrastructure. With such dire-sounding statistics, it is easy to feel discouraged and that the battle to save native plants is over, but such is not the case.

An interesting and hopeful perspective is provided by Douglas W. Tallamy, an entomologist (insect scientist) at the University of Delaware, and the author of *Bringing Nature Home*, along with numerous scientific publications. Dr. Tallamy gave a keynote address at the CNPS 2018 Conservation Conference, which is how he came to my attention in the first place. You can listen to that talk and view the presentation by going to youtube.com and searching "Doug Tallamy: Restoring Nature's Relationships".

Tallamy was invited to speak at the conference because he has studied the interaction of plants with insects for many years. The crux of Tallamy's argument is that plant-eating insects (and, by extension, birds and other creatures that eat them) are disproportionately dependent upon *native* plants for their survival and reproduction. In a particularly striking example, Tallamy found that native plants supported thirty-five times more butterfly and moth larvae (by weight) than non-natives. So not only are butterflies, some of our favorite insect species, inordinately dependent upon native plants, but, so too are birds, who depend primarily upon moth and butterfly caterpillars to rear their young. Looking at the contribution of trees, he found that oaks alone supported 534 species of butterfly and moth larvae.

Tallamy makes the argument that we can support wildlife by planting native plants in our gardens. He estimates that Americans collectively have 40 million acres of lawn alone—that have little-to-no habitat value for wildlife. If lawns were converted to native plant gardens we could make a huge contribution to supporting not only native plants themselves, but the species that depend upon them. His recommendations will sound familiar: plant trees if you can, plant a variety of plants, and plant species that are locally appropriate.

I urge you to consider planting a few native plants in your yard this fall. Find native plants for sale on October 6 and November 3. See page 2 for more details.

Chapter Fall Program

"Explore Calflora's Native Plant Database"

Friday, October 19, 2018 at 7 pm

presented by **Cynthia Powell, Executive Director Calflora**

St. Anthony Retreat, Mission Room

43816 Sierra Dr (Hwy 198), Three Rivers

Learn about new Calflora tools for Calflora users. Calflora's plant database hosts over two million plant occurrences, some of which have come directly from Alta Peak members. Powell will go over Calflora's new plant photo project, planting guide, population monitoring tools, email alerts, and speak more generally about the uses of Calflora for CNPS chapters. She would also like to know how Calflora can better serve the Alta Peak Chapter and to answer any of your questions.

from Barbara Brydolf: Did you ever go to a place and look around you, wondering what all those plants are? I certainly have. And I have friends who, mistakenly thinking I'm a plant expert, send me photos of plants to identify. Fortunately, there is a great website and app, called Calflora, for finding out exactly that. Calflora is a nonprofit organization that catalogs California plants by location, genus, common name, and a host of other search terms. I use it more than any other resource to anticipate what I will find in a certain place, and to identify a plant I don't know. Calflora has catalogued thousands of plant records from all over California, and continues to add information through citizen science, which means that anyone can contribute to the knowledge of what grows here. Our own Mary Merriman, with her Rare Plant Surveys, has made contributions to this site. Calflora is a rich tool, and I know that there are many features that I have not used, not to mention the phone app I haven't even downloaded yet. That's why I'm excited that Cynthia Powell, is coming here to Tulare County to give a talk about using the website and app, and to lead a hike the following day. I hope you can join us for this unique opportunity to learn more about native plants!

Field Trip Saturday, October 20, 2018 from 9-2 pm

Join Cynthia Powell for a hands-on plant data collecting field trip for Calflora. Meet at 8:45 am at Three Rivers Veterans Memorial Building on Hwy 198. Actual field trip location TBA.

Chapter Native Plant Sale

Saturday, October 6, 2018 from 10-3 pm

Three Rivers Arts Center, 41673 North Fork Dr., Three Rivers

The Alta Peak Chapter is back again with its tremendously popular, annual fall plant sale. Make sure to come early for the best selection. We are featuring high-quality native plants from Intermountain Nursery, which are better suited to our climate than plants from the coastal nurseries. Members will receive a 10% discount on all plants and can pre-order plants (using the form included with this newsletter). The chapter needs many volunteers to help with set-up on Friday and/or during the sale on Saturday. If you wish to volunteer, please contact Melanie Keeley at 559-799-7438 for more information.

rescheduled from August...

DIY Native Plant Landscape Design Clinic

Saturday, October 27, 2018 from 9-2 pm

instructed by **Melanie Keeley and Cathy Capone**

College of the Sequoias in Visalia, room TBA

Learn all you need to know to get started converting your landscape to a well-adapted, drought tolerant, pollinator rich native habitat! 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. This is a great opportunity to transition from a high care, water indulgent garden into a natural, sustainable low water use, beautiful garden.

Pre-registration is required. Class size is limited. Register early to ensure your spot in the class! Call Melanie Keeley at 559-799-7438 to register or for more information.

Registration Fee: CNPS members \$45, non-members \$60

2nd Annual Foothills Festival

Saturday, November 3, 2018 from 10-4 pm

River Ridge Ranch, 37675 Balch Park Road, Springville

Once again, the Alta Peak Chapter and River Ridge Institute are teaming up to present a celebration of our local natural world in the Sierra foothills. The Foothills Festival combines music, arts, food, activities, and outdoor education. And this year, it's free! Alta Peak Chapter will have a table at the event, and our President, Barbara Brydolf, will have locally sourced, native plants for sale.

The Bluegrass Element will be playing on the Main Stage and an eclectic mix of musicians and music will hold forth on the River Barn Stage. Route 65 Grill will offer up a variety of foods for sale, including a vegetarian alternative. Sierra Nevada Brewing Company will provide beer. Wine will be available.

Last year, Rob Hodges of Naturescapes designed and installed a fabulous labyrinth. This year, the public can walk that labyrinth and also visit with Rob as he demonstrates how to "Lose Your Lawn". Why not reduce water consumption and stop mowing at the same time? Dean Diaz de Leon will be wrangling artists around the River Barn and Erik Gonzalez will bring an entire team of spray paint artists from the Visalia area to continue the Art Wall mural. Also, expect some interesting and unusual approaches to a youth art contest.

For more info, visit riverridgeinstitute.org or call 559-539-0207.

June 2018 Chapter Council Report*

by Cathy Capone

The Chapter Council meetings are packed with CNPS state level activities along with information about what individual chapters and projects are doing. This summary report will highlight a few of the items from Chapter Council.

Aaron Sims, Rare Plant Botanist, is working on developing rankings for plants as new information comes in and creating an online inventory. Previously, CNPS has maintained a rare plant inventory in printed form only. The online format will allow the inventory to keep up with current findings.

California Rare Plant Rescue Project is collecting seeds and putting them in long term storage as a backup plan if conservation in the wild fails. There is also an effort to rescue rare plant data. If you have print or digital data, either current or historical, CNPS will find a way to safely store it. In time, the records individuals have kept will be made available to a wider audience.

CNPS responded to the fires of 2017 by hosting a Re-Oak Project which collected 1,000 boxes of acorns and is coordinating the growing and replanting of oaks. They also publish a region-specific Fire Recovery Guide which is available in PDF.

The Annual Conservation Symposium will be held in Lee Vining on Saturday September 8th with the Quarterly Meeting the following morning.

June 23 Big Meadow Field Trip Report*

by Mary Merriman

An abundance of flowers and plants greeted us at Big Meadow, beginning in the field around the "Winter Trailhead" at the meeting place on Big Meadow Rd! *Lupinus fulcrata* (green-stipuled lupine) covered most of the area with wands of blue. The ground was carpeted with smaller gems such as *Allium campanulatum* (dusky onion), *Gayophytum ssp* (ground smoke), brilliant scarlet *Ipomopsis aggregata* (Rocket gilia), which is a favorite of hummingbirds, and several phacelias, including *Phacelia tanacetifolia* and *Phacelia hastata*, Phacelias are in the Borage family like fiddleneck and popcorn flower with a coiled inflorescence (flower head as the distinctive characteristic). Little blue *Collinsia torreyana* created a swath of pale blue punctuated with showy *Erysimum capitatum* (wallflower). A few pink *Hackelia mundula* (stickseed) another *Borage* genus, and *Monardella odoratissima* (coyote mint) drew us further away.

Surrounding Big Meadow are the rounded granite slopes so typical of the Sierra Nevada with a somewhat sparse forest of *Pinus contorta* (Lodgepole pine) and *Abies magnifica* (red fir). The decomposed granite hosts a few more rare plants. First is the *Dicentra nevadensis* (Sierra bleeding heart) which even pops out along the roadside with a pale pinkish yellow blossom. Also, the rare *Oreonana purpurascens* (purple mountain parsley) can be found along the sandy granite patches. Last, but not least, in the decomposed granite is *Eriogonum polypodium* (Tulare County buckwheat). One was blooming early so the prostrate stems were evident. *Oreonana purpurascens*, *Eriogonum polypodium* and *Ivesia campestris* are almost exclusive to Tulare County. Many more flowers were blooming that we had no time to see or list, but late June is definitely a good time to visit Big Meadow. I call it Big Meadow North because there is another Big Meadow, also huge, in the south part of Tulare County off the Sherman Pass Road. It has a unique flora worth investigating although a long drive from Visalia or Three Rivers.

If you would like to be on a list of notifications for "last minute" wildflower hikes or more focused rare plant hunts, please notify Mary Merriman at marymtnsprir@gmail.com to be added to the list. If you have signed up before, please add your name again.

*ed note: These are abbreviated reports. See complete reports at "News" at altapeakcnps.org

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Field Trips

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Conservation

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Legislation

This position is open...

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

cnps.org

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 — click on JOIN.

Alta Peak Chapter Annual Native Plant Sale October 6, 2018



Three Rivers Arts Center
North Fork Drive in Three Rivers

image: Melanie Keeley

Alta Peak Chapter ❖ Online Resources

website: altapeakcnps.org

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