May Chapter Meeting:

California’s Botanical Landscapes: A Pictorial View of the State’s Vegetation

Presented by Julie Evens

CNPS staff and numerous eminent plant ecologists from around the state have published a vivid, photographically rich, 350+ page book about California’s vegetation. This new work illustrates the incredible diversity of our state’s wild landscapes, focusing upon fourteen ecological regions from the Northern California Coast to the Sonoran and Colorado Deserts. Each chapter displays the unique plants and plant communities found in each region with a phenomenal array of photographs paired with in-depth, interpretive prose.

Our Golden State’s varied landscapes contain an impressive breadth of native plants and plant communities, including an incredible number of endemic plants — found nowhere else in the world but here. Why is this? California has an abundance of different ecological settings, which vary in rainfall, temperature, elevation, slope, proximity to the ocean, geology, and soils. Some areas, like the Central Coast, are mixing zones of plants and plant communities boasting high numbers of endemics, along with many generalists. The Great Valley, specifically, bears expansive, alluvial plains of cultivated land interspersed with riparian woodlands, marshes, alkaline scrublands and scalds, rolling grasslands, and vernal pools that delight in spring wildflowers. Where ever you go in California, you are sure to be amazed by the varied landscapes that abound and to be reminded of how important it is to help in protecting them. With the co-editors of California’s Botanical Landscapes as our guide, you’ll travel through these diverse landscapes, revealing the botanical richness found therein with breathtaking photographs from this popular new book.

You’ll also be able to purchase a copy of the California’s Botanical Landscapes: A Pictorial View of the State’s Vegetation at the meeting.

The mission of the California Native Plant Society is to conserve California native plants and their natural habitats, and increase understanding, appreciation, and horticultural use of native plants.
A Great Victory for Conservation
By Glen Holstein

Ten years ago local conservationists sat around a table discussing a vision for a great park in California’s North Coast Range that might be something like New York State’s Adirondack Park. Years of hard work followed, led by our allied organization Tuleyome, but supported by our chapter all the way to the great day last year when President Obama officially created the brand new Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument. This March 19 was another great day when many of those who worked on creating the monument gathered on a beautiful spring day in the Bear Creek valley to dedicate it.

This dedication was a big deal because the Secretary of Interior Sally Jewell attended. John Laird, the head of the California Resources was also there, as well as the heads of the US Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. Our federal representatives, Congressmen Mike Thompson and John Garamendi did a lot to make the monument happen and were there to complete a job well done. So were State Representatives Senator Lois Wolk and Assemblyman Bill Dodd.

The dedication was also a chance for the many local folks who helped create the monument to meet in this moment of sweet victory. Bob Schneider and Sara Husby of Tuleyome, Pamela Flick of Defenders of Wildlife, the kids from Winters schools who had lobbied for the monument, our own chapter president John Hunter, and Woody Elliot of Mt. Lassen Chapter who came down to make sure CNPS was represented by a booth.

What’s next for Berryessa Snow Mountain? To fill in some of its missing pieces, work on legislation creating a Northern Inner Coast Range state conservancy much like the one recently proposed for the lower American River, has already begun. The dream goes on!

Volunteer Opportunity!
Elderberry Farms will have a Plant Sale during this Soil Born event on May 15th; if you can help, email Chris at cnpschris@gmail.com (Free admission to the event for volunteers!)
Archaeologists don’t agree on exactly when this happened, but some time, more than three thousand years ago, a group of seafaring people left their homes in western Polynesia and set out on canoes, heading hundreds of miles northeast into the open sea. Why these people undertook this incredible journey has been the subject of intense scholarly debate, but one thing is clear—they were prepared.

The Hawaiian Islands, like most Pacific islands and very much unlike our native California, offers little in the way of edible and nutritious vegetation. When the first people arrived to colonize the island, they brought along with them a variety of animals including pigs, dogs, and chickens. They also brought along a variety of seeds or young plants including breadfruit, sugar cane, coconut, banana, and the tuber that would come to symbolize Hawaiian food: taro.

This month, the test kitchen took a culinary field trip to the islands of Hawai’i, where we tried a simple recipe for taro cakes. The ingredient list is short and simple: two small taro roots, three tablespoons of butter, and hot sauce.

Taro is widely cultivated and is commercially available in most grocery stores on the island. The taro plant shown here is growing in the garden of the Bishop Museum in Honolulu, where we left it. This time, we would do our harvesting at the store.

The taro is a thick brown tuber with a hairy appearance. Unlike the famously purple taro, the flesh of ours was pure white. Different varieties can range from white, to purple, to brown. At first glance, the plant doesn’t look particularly inviting to eat, and in its raw state it certainly isn’t. Uncooked taro contains oxalic acid and is mildly toxic to ingest or touch. It reportedly causes itching in the throat after consumption if it is undercooked. This can be mitigated by soaking cubes of the root in water overnight and pouring it off the next day, or by thoroughly cooking the plant.

Our recipe entailed peeling the roots, chopping them into medium sized chunks, and boiling until very soft. We boiled the taro for at least 45 minutes, changing the water twice. No oxalic acid for us. After it was thoroughly cooked, we mashed the taro chunks with butter and a dash of hot sauce. The results looked just like mashed potatoes, and had a similar flavor, though more bland and with a slimy texture. The taro could certainly be eaten at this point, but we weren’t done with it yet.

Lacking an oven for baking, we dolloped biscuit sized blobs of the mashed taro onto a greased pan and placed it inside a gas grill on indirect heat to duplicate the effect of roasting in an oven on a low temperature setting (our staff estimates approximately 300 degrees). At this temperature, the cooking took approximately 45 minutes. Soon enough the cakes took on a crispy texture and a rich golden brown color.

Despite the attractive appearance of the roasted cakes, our testers were not impressed with the flavor. One tester noted that the taro imparted little flavor, and that the small amount of butter dominated the taste. The team also noted that the slimy texture of the boiled taro was not entirely eliminated by the roasting, which made the cakes less palatable.

It may be that the test kitchen simply sampled these cakes in the wrong context. Certainly in a hotel room on vacation they left something to be desired. We suspect that had the test kitchen just sailed across the Pacific Ocean, in a canoe full of dogs, pigs, and chickens that these taro cakes might have really hit the spot.

Thanks for reading and indulging our Polynesian adventure. The test kitchen will return next month, with another wonderful example of some of the natural bounty of edible California native plants!
Call for Fieldtrip Ideas and Field Trip Leaders
By Shellie Sullo

This is my second year as the CNPS Sacramento Valley Chapter Field Trip Coordinator. When I was asked to step in as coordinator I knew I would have some big shoes to fill. For many years, Pam Kirkbride provided great opportunities to our members and she held a vast array of knowledge of the valley and surrounding areas. I enjoy planning activities and have some knowledge of plants and natural history but I am not the most knowledgeable of what is out there to see. I would like to hear from our members about places to go for future field trips and what they want their experiences to be.

Please let me know about places of interest to you to visit inside or outside our chapter’s region. I am also interested in what you would like to do during a fieldtrip. Would you prefer a trip with a guide providing information regarding what plants are there or would you rather explore and key plants out yourself? Do you have an idea for a trip for which you can be the lead? Do you know of someone who I should reach out to for help to lead a trip?

Any ideas are welcome. I want to provide good opportunities and meaningful experiences to our Members. I can only do this if I have your help and direction. Please contact me at shellie_sullo@yahoo.com

New Committee Chair Members Needed
For years, Hazel Gordon has served as our membership chair, a role that is integral to the distribution of this newsletter. Mary Maret has arranged for the presentations we enjoy at our chapter meetings. Through their work in these roles, our chapter has benefited immensely. However, Hazel and Mary can no longer continue in these roles, so we are seeking volunteers to fill their shoes. If you are interested in becoming the new membership or chapter meetings chair, or would like to learn more about these positions, please contact Hazel at arctostaph@gmail.com or Mary at maretm@saccounty.net

Shepard Garden and Arts Center Representative Needed
Our Sacramento Valley CNPS chapter is a “member club” of the Shepard Garden and Arts Center, where our chapter meetings are held. As a member club, we have a representative attend the monthly meetings of the Center, which are held the first Monday of every month at 7 p.m. at the Center. Currently, we are in need of a designated representative who can regularly participate in these meetings. Representing our chapter at these meetings is a great opportunity to interact with members of other local organizations, particularly gardening and arts and crafts clubs. If interested, please contact Mary Schiedt at (530) 400-7094

Elderberry Farms Native Plant Nursery
2140 Chase Drive, Rancho Cordova, on the American River Parkway at Soil Born Farms
By Chris Lewis, Nursery Leader
cnpschris@gmail.com

The mission of Elderberry Farms Native Plant Nursery is to promote awareness of the benefits of native plant habitat, encourage community involvement, and provide a source of local native plants for restoration projects as well as gardeners

Wednesdays Workday hours: 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Nursery leaders are often working at home or at the Nursery earlier and later than our official workday hours. If you’d like to be more involved, talk with Chris at the Nursery or via email at cnpschris@gmail.com.

Join us for propagation work on Wednesdays and help pot up seedlings and learn various propagating techniques under the excellent direction of Robin Rietz, Propagation Manager. We treat volunteers to peanut butter and jelly sandwiches (you’re also welcome to bring your own lunch).

There will not be a 2nd Sunday Workday this month:
(Since it falls on Mother’s Day)

Weekly Friday Walks
We walk most Fridays; check our website for updates. Friday Walks are for seed and data collecting, plant identification, photography, and fun. The Nursery grows only plants that are native to the American River Parkway and/or around Folsom Lake. Our destination changes each week depending on the Nursery’s need and the group’s interest. SacValleyCNPS.org/Field Trips/Friday Walks
Vernal Pool Tour at Yolo Bypass
Saturday May 7,
Please contact Mary Schietd for more information. (530) 400-7094

North Davis Riparian Greenbelt Restoration (Putah Creek),
Mother’s Day Walk
Sunday May 8, 1 p.m.
The North Davis Riparian Greenbelt project is in the process of “greening” a storm water channel in north Davis by replacing weeds with drought-tolerant native plants, establishing trees to shade the channel, and creating educational areas.
We will visit three interpretive areas while walking along the 1.25-mile long vegetated channel.
Meeting Location: Davi, Bird Entry Park - park on Anderson Rd. or Peregrine Ave
Total time: About two hours.
For more information contact Shellie at Shellie.sullo@yahoo.com.

CNPS Early Bird Walk at Walk On The Wild Side
Saturday, May 14, 8 a.m.
Come early and join John Huls and Mike Heacox for a two hour birding and botanizing walk through the mature valley oak forest along Morrison Creek. This is a joint CNPS Sacramento and Sac Audubon walk.
Directions: Exit I-5 at Pocket Road and head east. At Freeport Blvd. turn south. Continue two miles through the town of Freeport and past the golf course. Turn left at the signs (just opposite Cliff’s Marina) and continue until you reach the Beach Lake event parking area. Tell the parking attendants that you are there for the Audubon walk and they will direct you to the far southern end of the parking field. For more information contact John at johnhuls@sbhglobal.net and for more information about Walk on the Wildside go to http://www.regionalsan.com/event/walk-wildside

Elderberry Farms
Native Plant Nursery
Located at Soil Born Farms
2140 Chase Drive, Rancho Cordova
Wednesday Workday 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
We pot up seedlings and learn plant propagation techniques. Peanut butter and jelly sandwiches provided. RSVP to Chris, cnpschris@gmail.com.

Friday Walks 9 a.m.–noon.
Plant identification, photography, art and fun! Go to sacvalley.cnps.org, find Friday Walks under Events and Field Trips.

Garden Work Parties at the Native Plant Demonstration Garden Sacramento
Historic City Cemetery 1000 Broadway, Sacramento
Learn about native plants, bees, and more while helping us maintain the largest California native plant garden in the City of Sacramento. Bring a hat and water and wear garden-appropriate clothes.
Gardening tools available for use and refreshments provided. Free plants and seeds are available to volunteers to take home. For more information, contact Cassandra at cnpsgarden@gmail.com.

Ceanothus—Collaborative Plant Identification Workshops
9 a.m. - noon. UC Davis Herbarium (Center for Plant Diversity)
Michael Bower, (530) 902-8721
Bring any plants you’re curious about and the Jepson Manual. Visit www.ceanothusfieldbotanist.blogspot.com for more information. Email questions to ceanothusfieldbot@gmail.com.

Native Plant Garden Club
Meets the 3rd Tues. of the month, May 17, 12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Carmichael Library, 5605 Marconi Ave, Carmichael.
For more information on the Native Plant Garden Club visit SacValleyCNPS.org/Gardening/Garden Club

Other Items of Interest

Friends of The Chico State Herbarium Workshops:
Rare Mosses of the Plumas National Forest
Tuesday May 24, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
For more information go to: www.friendsofthechicostateherbarium.com.

CNPS members living in Stockton who would like to find others in the area to carpool to chapter activities in Sacramento should contact Nadia Zane, at (209) 931-5151.
This year’s exhibits were not only wonderful but better attended than previous years. It’s all about location, location, location! The exhibits were more accessible and there were lots more people stopping and engaging. The demonstration gardens were beautiful, and the nursery had a vast assortment of plants for sale. All of it came together with the help of a few of our wonderful, hard-working friends:

Friday Set-up (plus the wind turned Saturday into Set-up, Day 2)–John Schmidt, Robin Rietz, Tara Collins*, Alex Morton, Greg Sutter*, Jami Rains, Kim Erickson*, Lee Perrone, Mark Lum, Mark Young*, Meg McAneny, Michaele Longhofer*, Rob Caprriola*, Steve Moore*, and Steve Woodward (*Tara Collins invited co-workers from Westervelt Ecological Services to join her for a Community Service Day with us).

Exhibitors–Bill Bianco (Audubon), Cathie Lazier (Audubon), Christine Casey (Bees), Clay DeLong (Riparian), Doug Bryceson (Discovery Zone), Glen Holstein (CA Prairie), Greg Kareofelas (Butterflies), Jennifer Neale (Oaks), John Hunter (Chaparral), Kevin Marr (DWR), Melissa Roberts (DWR), Shellie Sullo (Discovery Zone), Stephen Layton (DWR), and Tara Collins (Vernal Pools).

Plant Sale Staff–Joining Robin Rietz: Alex Morton, Bernadette Balics (Landscape Design), Carol Clifton, Carole Gates, Eric Lum, Mike Heacox (Landscape Design), Steve Woodward, Subhash Chand, Susan Fregien and Mary Schiedt (seeds).

Ancillary Staff–Books/Cashiers/Golf Carts/Parking/Welcome–Joining Carol Witham, Betsy Weiland and me:

Andrea Jaggers (Soil Born), Aruna Gopalan, Carrie Black, Chris Jakle, Christine James, Colene Rauh, Danny McClure (Elderberry Plant Description Sheet), Gavin Pace, Guy Galante (Soil Born), Heather Williams, Jami Rains, Jasmine Pace, Jay Chamberlain, Jim Wadsworth, Kelly Cohen, Leticia Morris, Leah Morton, Linda Blackmarr, Linda Ramos, Mark Lum, Meg McAneny, Nicole Brint (Photographer), Olga Myslevic, Pat Gilbert, Paul Barth, Paul Lester, Rich Blackmarr, Ryan Pace, Tom Pimienta, and Zuzu.

Calflora May Photo Contest
All plant observations with photos from the month of May will be considered in our 2nd annual Calflora Photo Contest.

How to submit your photos:
1. Register as a Calflora data contributor at http://www.calflora.org/
2. Use the free android or iPhone applications to log and upload your wild plant observation photos, or go to the Calflora web application Plant Observation Entry.
3. Include photos and scientific name and any other details you’d like to include such as location description or notes.
4. Publish your records so others can see them

Get Your eNews Here!
The Sacramento Valley Chapter CNPS emails announcements about upcoming events (talks, hikes, sales, and events).
The eNewsletter is another way to get information about what’s happening in our Chapter. Don’t worry, signing up for the eNewsletter does not interrupt your Hibiscus newsletter service.

Sign up at: sacvalleynps.org or contact Chris at cnpschris@gmail.com.

Thank You Wildflower Wonders 2016 Volunteers!
By Chris Lewis
Note from the Editor: Thank you to everyone who wrote in to guess last month’s mystery plants! Congratulations to Suzanne Guthri who identified both plants correctly. The answers were:

Mystery Plant #1 was Dutchman’s pipe *Aristolochia californica* and Mystery Plant #2 was soap plant *Chlorogalum pomeridianum*. This month’s photos were taken in Chico.

(A color version of the newsletter can be seen at: www.sacvalley.org/Home/Newsletter) Send in your answers to editorhibiscus@gmail.com.
Submit content for the Summer Hibiscus by May 7!
Be sure your membership is current! See your address label for your renewal date.

May 2016
Sacramento Valley Chapter Newsletter

The Sacramento Valley chapter newsletter, Hibiscus, is published monthly, except for July, August, and December. Deadline for Hibiscus contributions is midnight of the Friday before the monthly meeting for possible inclusion in the next month's newsletter. Please send your submittals to editorhibiscus@gmail.com.

May PRESENTATION:
California's Botanical Landscapes: A Pictorial View of the State's Vegetation
Presented by Julie Evans

May 2016
Sacramento Valley Chapter Newsletter

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Join or renew today!

Or Current Occupant

Volunteers Come Forward!
We are looking for:
• Committee Chair Members
• Field Trip Leaders

Our chapter meetings are open and public!