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General Meeting
Wreath-making workshop
December 18, 2012 7:30 pm

Once again we will have our traditional wreath-making workshop at the December meeting. We have been doing this since 1993 and it is always well attended and we all have a good time. This is a members only event, so it is a benefit for Milo Baker members. Liz Parsons will give you a few simple instructions and you will discover how easy it is to make a spectacular wreath for your home. The Milo Baker Chapter will provide wreath rings, paddle wire, and greens for the wreaths. To add special touches, please bring anything that you have to share: pine cones, acorns, lichen, eucalyptus, douglas fir, and ribbons. No red berries please--they are very hard to clean up after. You can add berries at home. Remember to bring your clippers. There will be cookies and hot cider for holiday cheer. Call Liz 833-2063 if you have any questions.

NOTE: There will be no dinner before the December meeting. Preparing for the workshop takes the time set aside for the dinner. The dinner will return before the January meeting. Call Liz 833-2063 to make reservations in January.

Back From The Brink
January 15, 2013 7:30 pm
Speaker: Betty Young

Get a behind the scenes look at the continuing saga that saved the Franciscan manzanita from extinction. Thought to be extinct in the wild, a naturally occurring plant was rediscovered by Dan Gluesencamp, now CNPS Exec Director. In the way of the Doyle Drive rebuild, a team of botanists from the GGNRA, academia, government and our own chapter member and past president, Betty Young, were intimately involved in the relocation, propagation and restoration of this infinitely important plant. Betty will talk about the intense preparation for the move of a 20 ton plant, how it’s doing now and what the plans are for the long-term establishment of not only this single plant but the restoration of its complete associated plant community in multiple locations.

See page 7 for speaker biography.

Plant I.D. Hour
You see the plants blooming but the names are unclear? No need to fret, Plant I.D. Hour is here! Arrive at 6:45 p.m. before the General Meeting, and bring specimens of plants you want to identify. At Plant I.D. Hour you can see plants up close and key them to species, while getting to know fellow Milo Baker Chapter members. Plants that you key out or learn with friends are easily remembered! Bring in some mystery plants to challenge us.

Join us for Dinner before the Meeting:
We’ll gather for dinner at 6 pm at Kirin Restaurant, 2700 Yulupa Ave. We hope our speaker will join us, but we always have an enjoyable group of fellow members and a delicious Northern Chinese meal in any case. Please contact Liz Parsons, 833-2063, or lizpar8993@aol.com by Jan. 14, if you plan to attend.

General Meetings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at Luther Burbank Art & Garden Center, 2050 Yulupa Avenue, Santa Rosa.
Milo Baker Chapter Board meetings start at 7:00pm, 2nd Tuesday nine months of the year, Environmental Center, 55 Ridgeway Avenue, Suite A, Santa Rosa. The next Board meeting is January 8th. Anyone interested in the work of the chapter is welcome to attend!
State News

Help CNPS Preserve California’s Wild Gardens
The CNPS has launched a Conservation Campaign in an effort to raise money to sustain the CNPS Conservation Program. CNPS is asking supporters to make a special gift to this effort. The CNPS Conservation Program works to preserve the wild gardens that we all cherish—the native flora and the beautiful places it needs to survive.

Conservation is fundamental to the CNPS. We all want the legacy of the California flora to endure. The flora is facing tremendous threats from development, invasive plants, and climate change. The Conservation Program brings science and law as well as a love of nature, to address these threats.

The CNPS Conservation Program is very engaged with solar energy development in the Mojave and Colorado Deserts. A massive planning process is underway that will determine the fate of millions of acres of public lands. The Conservation Program has already had a major role in developing policies for this process. The agencies overseeing the desert also rely on CNPS to provide the basic scientific information on plant distribution, vegetation types, and endangered species that is needed to design huge preserves. This work needs your support.

The goal of the Conservation Campaign is to raise $100,000.00 this year to keep the Conservation Program effective and strong. This funding is necessary to continue CNPS’s successful and ongoing work protecting the desert, improving forest management, supporting vital chapter conservation efforts, and more. The Milo Baker Chapter Board voted to donate $500.00 to the conservation campaign. Our successful plant sale made this generous donation possible. Many members have made individual contributions. The Milo Baker Chapter and its members have contributed over $1,200.00. Please consider a donation to the effort.

Donations can be made via the CNPS website (http://cnps.org/support) or by mail to CNPS, 2707 K Street, Suite 1, Sacramento, CA 95816-5113 (please note “Conservation Campaign” on the check). Together we can ensure that California’s wild gardens have a future. If you care about science-based conservation in California, please consider making a special gift this year.

Plant Sale News

Iris Workshop
December 2, 2012 at 11 am

It is time to begin the yearly cycle of plant sale workshops. Our first workshop is the Pacific Coast Native Iris Workshop. December is the best time to propagate the PCN Iris, therefore we will meet at Mary Aldrich's at 11 AM on Sunday, December 2 to perform this task. Mary’s house is at 4775 Newanga, SR. For more information call Liz at 833-2063.

Liz Parsons
Gardening with Natives

Through the Garden Gate
December Gardening

So many of us easterners recall with nostalgia the Eastern Dogwood trees that light up the spring time woods. Did you know we have our own Western Dogwood or Pacific Mountain Dogwood (*Cornus nuttallii*)? It is attractive year round; red twigs during the winter; spring brings delicate green leaves followed by huge saucer-like, white flowers (actually, they are called bracts). After blooming, the “flowers” give way to red berries, treasured by birds. In the autumn, its green leaves transform themselves into wonderful fall colors. The Western Dogwood could be a focal point in the garden where you can watch it go through its seasonal changes. It does need summer shade and well-drained soil. Injury to bark should be avoided; the same with summer moisture and pruning. Dogwood disease, a non-native fungus, could be a problem with a stressed tree. It’s always best to do some research before going to the expense and time of planting a tree or shrub.

If you have Pyracantha bushes or our native Toyon nearby, you’ve probably seen the Cedar Waxwings and the Robins come in for their annual feast of red berries. A suggestion for this year’s planting: put in a Toyon or two (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*). I use branches as Christmas decoration on packages and in vases in the house. I swiped several branches only, leaving the rest for the birds. A flock of velvety Cedar Waxwings or handsome red-breasted Robins amongst the red berries and shiny green of the Toyon leaves is a festive sight on a winter day.

I mention Pyracantha because they came with the purchase of my house many years ago. I do not recommend planting Pyracantha shrubs. They become huge, they have dreadful thorns, and they are invasive as the birds “plant” the berries everywhere.

Judy Brinkerhoff
joodbrink@comcast.net

Invasives Corner

Thistles, Thistles, Thistles

With this thistle sits Seth. I tried this tongue twister out on my smarty pants son who looked annoyingly triumphant as he rounded the corner to # 3 of 5 and then lost it! Hooray! Now the score is 6 to 150 instead of 5. I just made this up because this column is required to feature a bracing dash (in my opinion) of silliness. Something had to soften the unmitigated disaster of California’s weed problems. Dishonestly folks, before I discovered I could be silly, I used to have to wipe away the tears after each newsletter article I submitted!

I should know the thistles. I don't. Only the ones I hate the most—Italian, yellow and purple, and cardoon. It's a good idea to know the thistles since so many have such a bad reputation. I wish it were easy to tell the difference. A few years ago, hikers at Hood Mountain in a fit of righteous indignation at the presumptuousness of “invasive” thistles, pulled up our native swamp thistle, *Circium douglasii*. They had
probably never heard of swamp thistle. I know it was years of going on our botanist-led hikes before I ever saw one. Some of our other thistles are easier to identify, especially when in bloom. Cobwebby thistle and brownie thistle for instance. But then you've got the umpteen other ones in the Thistle Tribe. I thought maybe there would be 15 or 20 of them, but in Cirsiumumalone there were over 100. Granted, worldwide, but we Californians seem to gather invasive thistles as if they were your tired, your poor, your huddled masses...Then there's the Carduus, Centaurea, Carthamus and other genera listed in the thistle tribe of the Asteraceae. So what is a thistle's definition? Sonchus or sow thistles belong to the Chicory Tribe. Russian thistle doesn't look at all like a thistle. It's in the Chenopodiaceae, not even an Asteraceae. In the case of the last two, as far as I can say, it's just that they are sort of stickery. As much as I love common names, I have to admit they can be misleading. But don't you think Silybum marianum (milk thistle) is delightfully misleading? Maybe Marian doesn't think so. I bet she made up “milk thistle.” So we've got a concise, scientific Thistle in the Thistle Tribe, and a sloppy thistle for people who just don't give a hoot.

M.L. Carle
<mlml@sonic.net>

Events and Items of Interest

Cunningham Marsh 2012 - The State of....
This has been a very mellow year at Cunningham Marsh, a 19-acre conservation easement in south Sebastopol....home of the endangered Pitkin Lily (Lilium pardalinum ssp. pitkinense). Early in the year, one of the large and very beautiful Black Oaks (Quercus kelloggi) lost several of its heavy branches. Peter Ehlich volunteered to cut the branches which were moved off most of our leach field. Ken, The Gentleman Farmer, mowed the easement twice, trying to keep the invasive Velvet Grass (Holcus sp.) seeds from spreading.

We had two workdays in June. A total of 16 volunteers helped with weeding among the lily exclosures, opening of trails, freeing of Azaleas and other native plants and weed whacking around the supply area. As of this writing, another workday is schedule for mid-November, with at least 10 volunteers helping. The main focus will be the planting of approximately 175 tiny Pitkin Lily bulbs, which Betty Young grew from seed. Our other main task is to plant in the big field, Valley (Quercus lobata) and Black Oak (Q. kelloggi) acorns protected by milk cartons. This will add to the 27 cartons planted in Nov. 2011, with the help of M.L.Carle. Only 2-3 of these acorns failed, so we are hoping for another high success rate. They have been planted in long rows, in order to facilitate safe mowing when the grasses get high.

A big thank you to all who helped this year at Cunningham Marsh. Special thanks, per usual, go to Betty Young and John Herrick who are always there to answer questions. Displays of the Pitkin Lily and native Azaleas were as spectacular as always! If you would like to be added to the Cunningham workday list, contact Marcia at: owlsnesttwo@att.net.

Marcia Johnson
Steward, Cunningham Marsh
Laguna Foundation
Laguna Keeper Day – Gravenstein Creek Restoration
December 8, 2012, Saturday, 9 am - noon
Meet at the Brown Farm entrance at 2200 Llano Rd. and drive in to the parking area. Help us get kick off this brand new restoration project by planting riparian vegetation along Gravenstein Creek.
Contact info: John Guardino (707) 527-9277 x108 or email: john@lagunafoundation.org

Laguna Environmental Center – Open House
December 8, 2012, Saturday, 10am – 3pm
Location: 900 Sanford Road, Santa Rosa
Learn about the natural and cultural history of the Laguna de Santa Rosa and historic Stone Farm by taking a self-guided nature walk or a guide-led tour of the historic house & barn. Fun, hands on environmental education activities for all ages! Birdwatch from the observation deck. Visit our gift shop and art exhibit in Great Blue Heron Hall.

The Art of Tracking: Learning to See Patterns on a Landscape
December 8, 2012, Saturday, 3pm to 4:30pm
900 Sanford Road, Santa Rosa
Presentation by Meghan Walla-Murphy, local biologist, experienced tracker and educator. Meghan will share the discipline and mechanics of tracking while she delves into the Art of Seeing. Most people are astonished by what can be elucidated about animal behavior with these techniques. Meghan will also address tracking as a non-invasive way to research and conserve wildlife that leaves both observer and observed at peace. $10 suggested donation

Native Plant Nursery Workday
December 8, 2012, Saturday, 9 am to 12 pm
Sonoma Garden Park
19996 7th Street East in Sonoma
Contact person: Megan FitzSimmons
Telephone: (707)996-0712 x113
Ever wonder about those large ornament like balls hanging on the bare branches of the California Buckeye? Those ‘balls’ are actually the fruit of the California Buckeye and inside is a large fleshy seed that looks like a buck’s large eyeball – hence the name ‘Buck-eye’. Come down to the nursery and help us sow buckeye seeds for next year’s planting!
All ages and skill levels are welcome. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Volunteers will be getting dirty, so please dress appropriately: wear sturdy shoes, and bring gloves, a snack and refillable water bottle. Space is limited. RSVP is required.

Sonoma Garden Park: Sustainable Gardening
Sonoma Garden Park is a 6.1-acre working farm and model of sustainable agriculture - a project of Sonoma Ecology Center. Located at 19996 7th Street East in Sonoma, the Garden offers a beautiful, natural environment with educational opportunities for both adults and children. Donated to the City of Sonoma by Pauline Bond and managed by Sonoma Ecology Center, the Garden features a demonstration garden, butterfly garden, fig forest, straw bale barn, over 150 fruit trees, a solar well, interpretive displays and walking trails.
Volunteer
Volunteers play a huge role at the Garden.
Become a regular volunteer and grow your gardening knowledge while meeting some wonderful people. Drop-in volunteers are welcome:
Every Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday from 9:00-2:00 in the Garden.
Every 2nd Saturday of the month from 9-12 in the Garden’s Native Plant Nursery.
For more information call (707) 996-0712 x120.

**Plant Sales**
Want to grow your own? The Garden has a new greenhouse and shade structure with the capability of growing 40,000 plants! We propagate native plants, vegetable starts, flowers and more. Look for our public plant sales or contact us to purchase native plants for your landscaping project or ask us about our native plant restoration services.

**Rincon Ridge Park**
**Sensitive Plant Area-An Adopted Greenspace with the City of Santa Rosa**
History of CNPS involvement: The Milo Baker Chapter adopted the Sensitive Plant Area of Rincon Ridge Park, City of Santa Rosa, in 2004 for conservation purposes. The park is located off Fountaingrove Parkway at Rincon Ridge Drive. Before the 2-acre area was fenced, chapter members were involved in surveying the plants and working with the city and homeowners to mitigate destruction of the natural habitat for the Rincon manzanita and Rincon Ridge Ceanothus, for which it was set aside. The initial park preserve was made possible by the hard work of Betty Guggolz, former longtime Rare Plant Chair for the chapter, and gained interest as a potential adoption by Greg Wahlert, former Southridge Preserve Steward, and Lynn Houser, who was exploring. The city’s fencing, which is taller and stronger than first specified, has been the preserve’s greatest asset, and is accessible to CNPS members by a combination lock.
Help needed at this time: the Rincon Ridge Park preserve needs continual monitoring to help preserve the unique habitat. Volunteers are wanted for the following, to be shared and coordinated with the steward: to stop by occasionally and note plants blooming, weeds in need of attention, or damage; help recruit volunteers and educate homeowners, create publications and collaborate with the city, help at work parties, and generally commit to help care for the beautiful, rich Rincon Ridge Park preserve.
Contact information: Patricia Sesser, Preserve steward 528-9197 or email patriciasesser@comcast.net

**Riverkeeper Stewardship Park Volunteer Days**
**Wednesdays 8:30 am to 11:30 am**
Everyone and all ages are welcome to visit or volunteer. No experience necessary. Enjoy time on the Russian River every Wednesday except when there is enough rain to need a raincoat. Please bring your own drinking water and wear sturdy footwear. The Park is located at 16153 Main St., Guerneville on the north bank of the Russian River directly upstream of the pedestrian bridge. Access is down a driveway in front of Sonoma Nesting Co. At the bottom of the driveway look for the blue and white sign that says, “Russian Riverkeeper Demonstration Riparian Restoration Project Future Community Park.” Parking is available near the sign. For more information contact Victoria Wikle at 865-2474 or
VictoriaWikle@usa.net. Visit our website at www.russianriverkeeper.org.
**We need more newspapers and cardboard. Please drop off in or near the sheds.

Field Trips

Jenner Headlands Hikes
The Jenner Headlands is located just north of where the Russian River meets the sea. The property stretches along 2.5 miles of coastline with its western boundary delineated by Highway 1 and running from the coastal resort town of Jenner, north to Russian Gulch. The acquisition of this amazing 5,630 acre property was made possible through a multi-partner effort which includes the Sonoma Land Trust and The Wildlands Conservancy partnering to manage the property and the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District holding a conservation easement over the property, securing its safety forever.

December 1, 2012, Saturday, 10am-3pm
A Hike in the Forest
This is the rare hike that goes into the forest of the Jenner Headlands! Learn about forest ecology and our plans to care for the Jenner Headland's 3,100 acres of forest, now and into the future. Ecologically-sound management practices are the key to our long-term goal of bringing back the big trees and restoring the native forest. We'll hike four miles. Bring a picnic lunch to enjoy. Level 4

December 2, 2012, Sunday, 10 am-4 pm
When One World Ends, Another Begins: Autumn Tales at Tolay Creek Ranch
Abundant wildlife and views stretching from the Petaluma River to Mount Diablo make Tolay Creek Ranch an exceptional place. Equal to its natural beauty is Tolay’s rich human history, which spans at least 8,000 years. Join historical ecologist and storyteller Arthur Dawson for an autumn ramble across space and time. With the land itself as a backdrop, we’ll hear old stories about how the world began on top of Sonoma Mountain, catch a glimpse of Tolay as it was just prior to Mexican settlement, and recount how that world has become the one we know today. Level 4

Speaker Bio:
As director of nurseries for the Golden Gate National Parks, Betty led the effort to propagate cuttings of this manzanita before its move and now is involved in research into the best seed propagation methods. Before beginning her 15 years in the Parks, Betty managed a native nursery and wholesale nursery in Sonoma County. After completing her degree from UC Davis she managed the nursery at FILOLI Gardens and served in the PeaceCorps.

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Iris douglasiana ©2007 Jerry Murray
Newsletter & Web Site Info:

Send newsletter submissions to:
Editor, cnpsmbnewsletter@yahoo.com
Deadline for inclusion in the February Newsletter is January 15.
The chapter web site www.milobaker.cnps.org contains a wealth of information plus current and archived newsletters.
For newsletter mailing/membership issues, contact: Suzanne Harmon at cnpsmbmembership@gmail.com.

Lilium pardalinum ssp. pitkinense
Pitkin lily