We will have our traditional wreath-making workshop at the December meeting. This year the workshop will be very early—December 15! This is a members’ only event... a benefit for Milo Baker supporters. Liz Parsons will give a few simple instructions and you will discover how easy it is to make a spectacular wreath for your home. The MBC will provide 12” wreath rings, paddle wire, and greens for the wreaths. Most of the greenery comes from Alan Brubaker’s Kenwood garden where he grows many unusual conifers as well as Incense cedar and Doug-fir. Thank you Alan. To add special touches, please bring items you want to use for your wreath or to share: pine cones, ribbons, etc. NO red berries please—they are hard to clean up. Remember to bring your clippers and gloves. Rob Fox will serenade us as we work. 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 at Kirin will return before the January meeting.

Ponds for Wildlife: January 19, 2016
Speaker: Kathy Biggs
Learn about one of the best ways to support wildlife in the current drought. Kathy Biggs will give a PowerPoint presentation on how a pond built for dragonflies and other wildlife differs from one built for Koi, Tropical Lilies and other exotics. See Speaker Bio on page 2.

You see the plants blooming but the names are unclear? No need to fret, Plant I.D. Hour is here! Arrive at 6:45 pm 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. (No ID Hour In DEC)

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 Virgini Hotz-Steenhoven at 528-6030 or vsteenhoven@sonic.net by January 18th, if you plan to attend.

General Meetings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at Luther Burbank Art & Garden Center, 2050 Yulupa Ave, Santa Rosa.
Milo Baker Chapter Board meetings start at 7 pm, 2nd Tuesday nine months of the year, Environmental Center, 55 Ridgeway Ave, Ste A, Santa Rosa. The next Board meeting is January 12th. Anyone interested in the work of the chapter is welcome to attend!
**Chapter News**

**January Speaker Biography**

Kathy Biggs

Kathy Biggs has been a nature lover all her life. As a child she traipsed through the fields and hills around her homes in the Bay Area, enjoyed camping outings, collected insects, and tried unsuccessfully to catch birds by shaking salt on their tails. After she married, she and her husband became birders, first joining Mt. Diablo Audubon and then after they moved, Madrone Audubon in Santa Rosa. But it was when she and Dave built their wildlife garden pond using mostly native plants in Sebastopol that the dragonflies arrived and became her passion.

When she discovered that there were no guides available for the dragonflies, she began collecting her own data which, as an educator, she decided to first 'publish' on the Internet to share with others. The web site eventually evolved into her first book, *Common Dragonflies of California, A Beginner's Pocket Guide*. Kathy has since published other guides to dragonflies.

**Gardening with Natives**

Salvia sonomensis

One sunny Saturday in early November, I found myself driving through unfamiliar back roads looking for, and praying that I would find, a gravel road that would lead me to Nefertierra where I would join Susan Smith, and several of her neighbors, on a walk through her wild and beautiful land in the Mayacamas. Sue, a local chapter member, was also active in the East Bay and San Francisco chapters for many years, has organized garden tours for Pacific Hort, Filoli and San Francisco Arboretum, and spent many volunteer hours weeding rare plant sites around the Bay Area, including the bluffs of Mendocino where she now lives part-time.

Sue purchased these 78 acres of wild land back in 1971, but even for a long-time native plant lover, the diversity of plant communities growing here was unexpected. As she pointed out while we were walking, the plant community changes about every 100 feet! At present, 326 native species have been identified on Nefertierra, which, according to Sue, is 20 percent of the species catalogued in the Sonoma Flora of 1996.

Along narrow leaf-strewn paths up and down and around the hillside we walked through stands of manzanita (Stanford, common, Eastwood), oaks (eight species), alders and hazelnut, big-leaf maple, toyon, and buckeye. The plant list shows over 30 species in the aster family, 12 species in the rose family, and 15 species in the lily family, just to name a few of the 66 plant families represented here.

It was the *Salvia sonomensis*, however, that attracted me in the first place; I knew Sue had given starts of this local salvia to SF Arboretum to propagate, and I was looking forward to taking some home with me. Large drifts of this salvia were growing under the oaks close to the pathways and visible in multiple places along our route. I am eager to return in spring; I counted close to 70 species of wildflowers on the plant list!
Just as the walk was coming to an end, one of the neighbors pointed to a huge wood rat dwelling, nicely camouflaged behind a large oak, innocently resembling a pile of leaves at first glance; at second, an impressive structure. My favorite chapter in Secrets of the Oak Woodland starred the wood rat, possibly nature’s most talented architect, and this wood rat condominium was clearly the largest of any wood rat dwelling I had ever seen. Perfect ending to the adventure.

Susan Smith aims “to preserve and protect in perpetuity the indigenous plant community” on Nefertierra. There is a conservation easement with Sonoma Land Trust, and they support her in this endeavor. Sue is generous with plant cuttings and in sharing her beautiful land with others. Contact her at: suesmith44920@gmail.com.

Monarch News flash: In a recent interview with Beth Ruyak of Capital Public Radio, Art Shapiro from the University of California, Davis, reported that “this is the best monarch year in my part of California in at least a decade.” He went on to say that he had seen more monarch caterpillars this year than in the last five to 10 years put together. All the more reason to plant that milkweed!

Nancy Bauer
nbcoyoteridge@gmail.com

A New Partner in Scotch Broom Control?
Sonoma County has several kinds of nonnative invasive broom plant species. One of these is Scotch broom (Cytisus scoparius), which infests roadsides and hillsides in various locations in our county. Scotch broom was first introduced into North America as an ornamental and for erosion control. However, its ability to outcompete native plants and form dense stands has also made it one of the more challenging wildland weeds to control. Hope for its control however may exist in the form of a tiny mite that is nearly invisible to the naked eye, and measuring roughly the width of a human hair. Called the broom gall mite (Aceria genistae), it is more closely related to spiders and ticks than insects. Although the mite is tiny, it causes galls, which are small abnormal growths on the plant’s buds. The galls form during feeding and greatly reduce Scotch broom’s ability to grow and reproduce. Although the mites are very hard to see, the galls are small fuzzy masses that occur along the length of the stem and can be quite numerous and noticeable.

Native to Europe, and a natural enemy of Scotch broom, the gall mite was accidentally introduced and first documented in the U.S. on Scotch broom in parts of Washington and Oregon in 2005. The mite has since become low-growing herbaceous plant species that is California Rare Plant Rank (CNPS) 1B. This 1B designation means the plant is rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere. Removal of the iceplant will help stabilize this occurrence of the Point Reyes bird’s-beak population and allow other native species to recolonize as well. In 2016, the Weeding Group will be at other Regional Park locations, and also Nefertierra, an 80-acre private preserve east of Santa Rosa. Tentative dates at Nefertierra are May 15 and June 7. Stay tuned for the Milo Baker website for details on outing information as they become available. If you would like to be notified of upcoming Weeding Group outings, please email me at kate@terraserve.net. The more the merrier!

The Milo Baker Weeder’s Group will be assisting County Regional Parks to remove nonnative iceplant in priority locations at Doran Regional Park in Bodega Bay on December 2, 2015 and other dates (TBD). Nonnative iceplant is over running and displacing native marsh and dune vegetation, including the rare Point Reyes bird’s-beak (Chloropyron maritimum ssp. palustre). This is a low-growing herbaceous plant species that is California Rare Plant Rank (CNPS) 1B. This 1B designation means the plant is rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere. Removal of the iceplant will help stabilize this occurrence of the Point Reyes bird’s-beak population and allow other native species to recolonize as well. In 2016, the Weeding Group will be at other Regional Park locations, and also Nefertierra, an 80-acre private preserve east of Santa Rosa. Tentative dates at Nefertierra are May 15 and June 7. Stay tuned for the Milo Baker website for details on outing information as they become available. If you would like to be notified of upcoming Weeding Group outings, please email me at kate@terraserve.net. The more the merrier!

Invasives Corner

The Milo Baker Weeder’s Group will be assisting County Regional Parks to remove nonnative iceplant in priority locations at Doran Regional Park in Bodega Bay on December 2, 2015 and other dates (TBD). Nonnative iceplant is over running and displacing native marsh and dune vegetation, including the rare Point Reyes bird’s-beak (Chloropyron maritimum ssp. palustre). This is a
established throughout western Washington and Oregon and even into parts of British Columbia. The gall mite was first discovered in California in March 2014 in El Dorado County and is now found throughout El Dorado, Placer, and Nevada counties. It is unknown how it got there, however, the mite is known to travel long distances using wind currents and hitching rides on animals and equipment. It is anticipated the mite will be found more widely in California. So far, this mite is not known to feed on other plant species in the wild (one study found it on Lupinus densiflorus in a greenhouse, but not on that species in the wild), and it is therefore considered an ideal biological control agent due to its specific feeding habits and the damage it can cause to Scotch broom. In some areas of the northwest, the gall mite has already killed large stands of Scotch broom. Researchers have not found the broom gall mite on nonnative French (Genista monspessulana), Spanish (Spartium junceum), or other brooms. However, in our area, you may notice that French broom will occasionally become defoliated in summer and fall. The defoliation is caused by a native pyralid moth, the Genista broom moth (Uresiphita reversalis). This insect in its larval (i.e. caterpillar) form may severely defoliate some French broom shrubs, but plants are able to grow new leaves in winter after the larval stages undergo metamorphosis. Therefore, the Genista broom moth generally does not kill French broom. What to do if you see broom mite galls? The University of California (UC) Statewide Integrated Pest Management Program website says that the gall mite can help greatly in the control of Scotch broom plants that have invaded wildlands throughout California, and to not use pesticides if the mite is present! UC is asking if you or your neighbors see evidence of Scotch broom gall mites, to please report it on the University of California Cooperative Extension website:ucanr.edu/broomballmite. And if you see evidence of the broom gall mite in Sonoma County, drop me a line as well!

For photos and more information on the Scotch broom gall mite:
http://ucanr.edu/blogs/blogcore/postdetail.cfm?postnum=17435
So there’s some good news for wrapping up 2015!

Kate Symonds

Plant Sale Workshop

Iris Workshop
Sunday Dec. 13 at 11 am

We begin the new plant sale year with a potting workshop for the PCN (Pacific Coast Native) Iris. December is the best time to propagate these delicate Iris. Therefore we will meet at Mary Aldrich’s house (4775 Newanga, S.R.) at 11 AM to perform this task. Mary has a protected area so this event will go forward rain or shine. We usually finish in less than 2 hours. On Saturday, December 12 at 11 AM, we will meet to help Mary set up the potting area. Call Mary, 539-9005 or Liz to volunteer.

Liz Parsons

Events

Trees of the Modini Mayacamas Preserve
Sunday December 13, 2015
10AM-2PM at the Preserve. Meet at 9:15AM at east end of Park and Ride under Hwy 12 across from the Fairgrounds/Vet’s Hall for casual carpooling.

Get in the holiday spirit by joining Sherry Adams, biologist and manager of the preserve, for an introduction to the trees of the Modini Mayacamas preserves. We’ll walk through the areas that burned in the 2004 Geysers fire, at a variety of intensities, and observe the various fire adaptation strategies that these different species have. We may even see some germinating wildflowers. The walk will be less than 3 miles and at a relaxed pace but it does involve some uphill. After our walk we’ll take a lunch break at a spot with some
benches and a nice view of the mountains. We’ll finish up with a few road-side stops on the way down the hill. Don’t miss seeing this beautiful area.

Bring lunch, drinking water, and dress warmly in layers. Please help keep out invasive plants by cleaning your shoes and assuring that you have no seed in your pant cuffs as you arrive. Weather is iffy this time of year. So please e-mail me your phone number by Dec. 8th, if you are coming. If rain cancels I can then notify you that morning. If there are few sign-ups, Sherry can also offer the trip on Meet-Up to round up a few more hikers.

We will meet Sherry at 10 AM at the intersection of Pine Flat Road and Red Winery Rd., there is a large gravel shoulder with ample parking.

Mushrooms of Ragle Ranch Regional Park, Sebastopol
Thursday, January 21, 2016
10AM – 2pm
Meet at the Oak Meadow Group Picnic Area, by the playground near the entrance.

Celebrate all the rain, by searching for mushrooms. Learn to identify the most common with Darvin DeShaz, Science Advisor to the Sonoma County Mushroom Society. We’ll enjoy a stroll through lovely oak woodland and other areas of Ragle Ranch looking for these little beauties. Darvin has lots of information on line at:
http://SOMAmushrooms.org
http://MushroomObserver.org – daily observations with photos
http://darv.typepad.com – Darvin’s local observations with photos

We will not be picking them, so to see the gills bring a mirror and a hand lens, if you have one. Also, bring lunch, raingear, pencil and something to write on, mirror and hand lens.

Trip goes rain or shine. Rain is mushroom weather. RSVP to Betty, youngb0721@msn.com or 595-1463. Trip limited to 10 people, so we can all see.

Upcoming Trips:
Mark your calendar – but always verify in the newsletter, things change:

February 28, 2016
Early Wildflowers of Mount Burdell
With Doreen Smith

March 18, 2016
Bryophytes at CYO Camp, Occidental
With Stephen Rae

March 20, 2016
Flora of Fitch Mountain
With Kate Symonds

March 26, 2016
Ferns and other Beauties of Pomo Canyon
With Wendy Born and Liz Parsons

April 1, 2016
Wildflowers of Sonoma Valley Regional Park
With Steve Barnhart

April 22, 2016
Laguna Wetlands and Native Demo Garden
With Denise Cadman

May 6, 2016
Wildflowers of Pepperwood
With Steve Barnhart

May 14, 2016
The Cedars
With Roger Raiche
RSVP to Betty, $25

May 22, 2016
Wildflowers and Plant Communities of the Fairfield Osborn Preserve
With Kerry Wininger

2016 Eco-Friendly Garden Tour

Be sure to mark your calendars for April 30. Ten of our own member gardens will be on the tour. We will need volunteers at each garden to greet visitors or assist the homeowner in answering visitor questions about the plants. We will also need gardeners to help spiff up the gardens and label plants before the tour. If you can help, please contact Betty Young, youngb0721@msn.com, 595-1463.
**Lilium pardalinum ssp. pitkinense**  
Pitkin lily

**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 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

---

**Milo Baker Chapter Officers & Board of Directors 2015/2016**

Co-President: Sarah Gordon, 833-1243, Sarahpgordon@gmail.com  
Co-President: Leia Giambastiani, 322-6722, leiagia@gmail.com  
Vice President: Liz Parsons, 833-2063, LizPar8993@aol.com  
Secretary: Wendy Smit, 431-7913, wendysmit@ Hughes.net  
Treasurer: Jim Piercy, 539-3441, terrapencarylolinamajor@yahoo.com  
Book Sales: Cindy Tancreto, 528-9225, cindytancreto@pacbell.net  
Conservation Chair: April Owens, 331-2070, aprileeeowens@gmail.com  
Cunningham Marsh: Marcia Johnson, 829-3808, owlsnesttwo@att.net  
Director at Large: Lea Davis, 239-5605, legil42@sbcglobal.net  
Director at Large: Patty Mohar  
Director at Large: Pat Sesser  
Field Trips: Betty Young, youngb0721@msn.com  
Hospitality: Becky Montgomery, 573-0103, montyb@sonic.net  
Hospitality: Liz Parsons, 833-2063, lizpar8993@aol.com  
Invasive Plant Chair: Kate Symonds, kate@ terraserve.net  
Membership: Suzanne Harmon, (209) 275-7396, cnpsmbmembership@gmail.com  
Newsletter Editor: Wayne Clark, cnpsmbnewsletter@yahoo.com  
Outreach Chair: Virginia Hotz-Steenhoven, 528-6030, vsteenhoven@sonic.net  
Plant Sale: Liz Parsons, 833-2063, lizpar8993@aol.com  
Poster & T-Shirt Sales: Cindy Tancreto, 528-9225, cindytancreto@pacbell.net  
Programs/Lectures: Virginia Hotz-Steenhoven, vsteenhoven@sonic.net  
Publicity: Wendy Born, wendyborn@comcast.net  
Rincon Ridge Park: Penny Dalton  
SCCC Rep.: Wendy Kruptick, 544-4582, wlk@sonic.net  
Southridge Preserve: 539-3441, terrapencarylolinamajor@yahoo.com  
SRJC Representative: OPEN  
SSU Rep.: Kerry Wininger, 888-5616, kerrywininger@gmail.com  
Web Site: Molly Levitt, cnpsmb.webadm@gmail.com  
Vine Hill Preserve: Sarah Gordon, 833-1243, Sarahpgordon@gmail.com

---

**We invite you to join CNPS**

Name______________________________
Address______________________________
City/Zip______________________________
Phone______________________________
Email______________________________
Chapter affiliation:
☐ Milo Baker (Sonoma County)
☐ Other county ______________________
Membership category:
☐ Student or Limited Income……………….. $25  
☐ Individual……………………………….. $45  
☐ Family, Group or Library……………….. $75  
☐ Plant Lover…………………………….. $100  
☐ Patron…………………………………….. $300  
☐ Benefactor……………………………... $600  
☐ Mariposa Lily…………………………….. $1500  
☐ New Member  ☐ Renewal

Make check payable to CNPS and mail to:  
CNPS, 2707 K Street, Sacramento, CA 95816  
To pay by credit card or for more info call  
(916) 447.2677 or visit www.cnps.org