General Meeting:
Western Monarch Butterflies
March 17, 2015 7:30 pm

Abstract: Mia Monroe will talk about our declining Monarch butterflies as well as their relationship with our native milkweeds.

Speaker Bio: Mia Monroe is a Xerces Society volunteer and coordinates the Thanksgiving Count of Western Monarch Butterflies, one of the longest continuous citizen science efforts! She will share the latest news on why the monarch butterfly is in crisis as well as the significant efforts being proposed to restore this butterfly's population throughout North America. Mia has visited monarch overwintering sites up and down the California coast as well as in Mexico. She works closely with docent programs and grassroots efforts to re-establish native milkweed. Mia is a National Park Service ranger and has been involved in efforts to re-establish native plant communities while also seeking a way to continue to keep a few eucalyptus for the monarchs.

NOTE: We would like to thank Hedgerow Native Seed Farm for donating the milkweed seed being provided at the March meeting.

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.

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 at 833-2063 or lizpar8993@aol.com by March 16th, if you plan to attend.

General Meetings are held at 7:30 pm 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 March 10th. Anyone interested in the work of the chapter is welcome to attend!
Chapter News

Meet our Field Trip Chair

Retirement means being busier than ever. The difference between retirement and work is that you are busy at things you love. The CNPS-MB field trip chair came open and I jumped on it, soon after retiring from directing the 6 native plant nurseries of the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy (GGNRA’s non-profit partner). What better way to have lots of opportunities to explore the rich flora we have here in Sonoma County.

Work life before my 17 years in the GGNRA were spent in Sonoma County at Circuit Rider Nursery, Skylark Wholesale Nursery, and FILOLI gardens as nursery manager preceded by a degree in Plant Science/Nursery Management from UC Davis. Longtime members may remember, I was chapter president in the late 1990s.

It’s great being back on the Board for the chapter and moving back to Sonoma County. I’m looking forward to seeing everyone on a field trip or garden visit soon. If you have ideas for field trips or a garden we should visit, please contact me, Betty Young, youngb0721@msn.com or 707-595-1463.

Betty Young

Plant ID Volunteer Still Needed

Additional Volunteer needed for Plant Identification time at monthly general meetings: (Alternate months) 4-5 times per year. Lea Davis, Milo Baker Board member and our current plant identification volunteer for monthly general meeting, seeks another enthusiastic member to volunteer to alternate general meetings with her. Duties include arriving at the meeting at 6:30 pm, setting up the 2 chapter microscopes, bringing plant specimens for attendees to examine (your imagination and limits are yours to reach), making reference materials available for the specific meeting (usually what you own and wish to share for the evening); if possible tying in the subject of the talk with the examples being shown.

Further information can be had by contacting Lea Davis at (legil42@sbcglobal.net).

Gardening with Natives

Monarchs and Milkweeds

Photo credit: Harmina Mansur
Showy Milkweed and Monarchs

Populations of the beloved Monarch butterfly, once so ubiquitous throughout the country, are in steep decline and have been for over a decade. The Monarch is battling habitat loss,
climate change, pesticides, and the disappearance of its only larval food plant, milkweed. What’s more, some scientists have recently declared that tropical milkweed (Asclepias curassavica), a non-native species commonly planted in backyard gardens, is not helping but hurting Monarchs. I’ve been following the story for a while, lately through one of my favorite blogs, the Bug Squad from UC Davis. There are two problems: (1) tropical milkweed doesn’t die back in warm-winter areas, which may be encouraging Monarchs to overwinter instead of migrating (especially in Texas and the Southeast), and (2) milkweed hosts a parasite (Ophryocystis elektroscirrha) which if ingested by the caterpillar, results in a weaker adult butterfly. Evidently the parasite is more of a concern with winter breeding.

Art Shapiro, an entomologist and butterfly expert at UC Davis, recently weighed in on the issue on the blog site. He points out that tropical milkweed has been in gardens in California for decades without signs of Monarchs attempting to breed in winter. This is a recent phenomenon, he says, first noted in southern California and now in the Bay Area. Normally, Monarchs do not reproduce in winter. “Many of us,” says Shapiro, “would like to understand why these animals are NOT in diapause!” In other words, some other factor is amiss. Secondly, Shapiro provides an easy answer to the parasite problem associated with milkweeds: “cut the plants to the ground several times a year to encourage new growth, which will be cleaner, prettier, more nutritious and uncontaminated with OE [the parasite].” “There is nothing inherently ‘bad’ about winter breeding,” he adds, “if it’s clean.”

If you grow tropical milkweed, be sure to cut it back in the fall, after checking for eggs and caterpillars, of course. Here in Sonoma County, our native milkweeds die back in late fall, but they too may need to be cut back at that time if weather patterns continue to be unseasonably warm. Here are a few native milkweeds to consider for the garden:

- **Davis milkweed (Asclepias ‘Davis, CA’)** Flowers are pink and white and the bloom period is June/July. Annie’s Annuals is growing it.
- **Showy milkweed (A. speciosa)**. Large pink and white flowers in the summer. Can be very slow to get established, but if well situated, one of the most beautiful milkweeds for the garden. Needs water in early growing stages.
- **Indian milkweed (A. eriocarpa)**. Yellow and pink flowers in the summer, native to California, tolerates dry conditions. High in alkaloids (toxin that gives Monarchs protection from birds).
- **Narrow-leaf milkweed (A. fascicularis)**. Adaptable to most gardens, drought tolerant, very low in alkaloids.

Be sure to plant at least 3 of each species, more is preferable. If you are lucky enough to get caterpillars and they outlast their many predators, you may be looking for more from your friends. Regardless of which milkweed they get started on, Monarch caterpillars will readily switch to the tropical milkweed, which some of us have relied on when desperate!

nbcoyoteridge@gmail.com.
Nancy Bauer
**Book Collection Update**

On January 21, 2015 Liam Davis and I delivered the 35 books from the Marian Weiger collection to the Jepson Herbarium in Berkeley. The herbarium received all of the books in the collection that had been written by Lynn Willis Jepson as well as some old, historic books. The remainder of the collection will be sold to raise funds for the Milo Baker Chapter. They will be sold by donation, rather than at a fixed price. The list of books is on the Milo Baker web-site so take a look and contact me and I will do my best to find the book and get it to you. I will be bringing a selection of books to our meetings for you to take a look at. The books are all pre-1984, which is when our member Marion died. Some of them are very interesting, I hope that everyone will look at the list and buy some of the books and make a donation to the Chapter.

Liz Parsons

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**Events**

**March 8, 2015 – Sunday**
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Leader: Peter Warner
Salmon Creek Road, Town of Bodega
Trip by Reservation only

![Dirca occidentalis](image1)

Western Leatherwood

This will be a leisurely walk along Salmon Creek Rd., starting about 1 mile west of the village of Bodega to see an abundance of locally native shrubs, some of which might be in flower, including gooseberry, currant, osoberry, and the northernmost population of western leatherwood. Bring lunch or snacks and water; the canyon can be a bit cooler than surrounding areas. There are no facilities along this walk, which will cover 2 to 3 miles, relatively flat road – generally not busy with vehicles.

Parking is very limited along the road, and all properties adjoining are private; in consideration, I’m limiting how many people can join our group. We will carpool from somewhere nearby, such as along Bodega Hwy. or Salmon Creek Rd. in the village. Get details when you contact Peter to RSVP. Please call or email Peter to reserve your place: phytopagan@sonic.net or 707-666-9071.

**March 19, 2015 – Thursday 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

Annadel State Park, Cobblestone Trailhead, Channel Dr., Santa Rosa
Leader: Peter Warner

![Fritillaria liliacea](image2)

Fritillaria liliacea

This walk will take us along Cobblestone and Orchard Trails to arrive in False Lake Meadow to monitor the population of fragrant fritillary

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(Fritillaria liliacea) and see what else is blooming there. We’ll then head upslope to see a small population of Fritillaria recurva along North Burma Trail. We’ll circle around Lake Ilsanjo and down Canyon Trail to seek more fragrant fritillary. The walk back will take us through Spring Lake Park and back to the parking area along Channel Drive. The total distance for this hike is about 7 miles, moderately strenuous. Please pack a lunch, water, and appropriate trail gear. Heavy rain (ha! I dare it!) will cancel. Peter Warner contact info: phytopagan@sonic.net or 707-666-9071.

March 26, 2015 – Thursday 11 a.m. to Noon.
(Carpool Hwy 12 Park & Ride at 10:15 a.m.)

Modini - Mayacamas Preserve Native Plant Demonstration Garden, 226A Center Street, Healdsburg

Get a sneak peek at this new garden and visit with the chief visionary and gardener: Susan Maxwell. Just started in Fall 2014, the garden is still in the works, with a 1st Open-House Event scheduled for April 18th. The garden features native plants that grow on the Modini Mayacamas Preserves. Why we’re gardening with Native Plants: to showcase the beauty of native plants; for education about native plants & their virtues; for native pollinators; for wildlife habitat; for water conservation; for herbal and ethno-botanical interests; and to propagate plants for restoration on the preserve.

If in the north county, meet at the garden at 11a.m. (come a little bit early, as you may have to park around the block.), otherwise meet at the Park & Ride under Hwy 12 in Santa Rosa at 10:15 a.m. Questions to Betty Young, 707-595-1463.

March 28, 2015 – Saturday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Montgomery Woods State Natural Reserve, Pruitt Creek watershed,
Leader: Peter Warner

This jaunt will explore the backcountry of the Reserve’s Ross Addition, starting at the Pruitt Creek trailhead along Orr Springs Rd., about 1 mile east of the old-growth grove parking area (about 1.5 miles beyond Orr Springs from Ukiah). We start out in a riparian stand of redwoods, often dappled with numerous early-flowering herbs, then meander upslope through Douglas-fir and hardwood forests, oak woodlands, chaparral, across grassland, rocky talus slopes, and a few small wetlands. Be prepared for one or more creek crossings – waterproof or old shoes and walking sticks are advised. Otherwise, pack a lunch, plenty of water, and prepare for a moderately strenuous walk of up to 5 miles.

Peter will post a Reserve plant list to the Sanhedrin and Milo Baker Chapter websites prior to the trip. Ride-sharing is strongly encouraged, as parking at the trailhead is limited. Sonoma County parties should meet at 8 a.m. at the River Rd. – Hwy. 101 commuter lot. From Ukiah, allow about 45 minutes to the Reserve.

Please contact Peter Warner if you plan to attend, and as well, if you subsequently cancel. (707) 666-9071; phytopagan@sonic.
**Newsletter & Web Site Info:**

Send newsletter submissions to: Editor, cnpsmbnewsletter@yahoo.com

Deadline for inclusion in the April Newsletter is March 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