General Meeting: "Where the coast meets the valley: floral diversity and citizen science at Pepperwood"
October 21, 2014 7:30 pm

Abstract: Join Michelle Halbur, Preserve Ecologist at Pepperwood Preserve, and find out the latest native plant research taking place there.

Speaker Bio: Michelle Halbur grew up in Sonoma County and has a strong connection with the flora of the region. She has 10 years of experience working in conservation and botanical sciences and received her MS from Purdue University where she investigated the impacts of mitigation on the endangered vernal pool plant Sebastopol Meadowfoam (Limnanthes vinculans). As the Preserve Ecologist at Pepperwood she conducts research on the impacts of climate change and land management on Mediterranean plant and animal communities, manages the Stephen J. Barnhart Herbarium, and runs the Citizen Science and volunteer program which had over 5800 volunteer hours donated in 2013.

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 Virginia Hotz-Steenhoven at (707)528-6030 or vsteen@sonic.net by October 19th, if you plan to attend.
**Chapter News**

**Chapter Elections**

Come to the General meeting or vote by mail. Please complete, cut out and mail your ballot by October 14th (to be received by Oct. 21st) to: CNPS Milo Baker Elections, P O Box 892, Santa Rosa, CA 95402. Or come to the general meeting and vote in person.

Other nominations may be submitted by Chapter members, in writing and with written permission of the nominee(s), and will be received from the floor before the general meeting on October 21st.

Your participation is needed!

*******************************BALLOT**************************

CANDIDATES FOR THE MILO BAKER CHAPTER BOARD of DIRECTORS FOR 2015-2016:

Please check or write-in your choices below:

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Write in:____________________________

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Secretary: _____ Wendy Smit

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_____ Kerry Wininger

Santa Rosa Junior College Representative:
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**Gardening with Natives**

**Why Focus On Native Plants?**

In a subtle way, California’s native plants help us know where we are. A unique mixture of plants, animals, landforms, bodies of water and so on define the natural place in which we live. So truly, as we look around at the native plants that exist in Sonoma County, and as we watch the butterflies, bees and other insects, and the birds, we see that certain plants are feeding or sheltering the animals and insects that evolved with the plants.

It is no longer easy to see that co-dependence because the native habitats are pretty much gone. They fell to suburban lots and houses, they fell to roads and parking lots, and for all the other reasons we paved over our native lands. We who live here now, in general, did not do it ourselves. Most of us would have said “no” to this rampant development. But we needed somewhere to live, somewhere to shop, and on it went. Feeling guilty won’t help, but what WILL help is doing all we can to mitigate and alleviate the damage already done.

Drive through a suburb, you may even live in one, and you will not see the plants and flowers that existed here before. You will not see coyote bush, or oaks, or toyons, or the beautiful purple needle grasses that covered the land. You will see lawns, which hark back to English manors. You will see lots of petunias and lots of pansies. They are sweet, yes, but look closely…do you see any pollinators on them? Do you see any insects or birds finding a use for lawns?
Okay, so now what? What does the poor homeowner do? Must she rip out the lawn where her little kids love to romp? Must she ignore the flats of petunias and coleus that she sees spread out in colorful array at the big box nursery? Well, yes, mostly that’s true! Perhaps not all the lawn...perhaps a few of her favorite pansies, but to make any kind of meaningful change in our outlook on how and what we plant, we need to know what to replace our traditional plantings with. Sadly, the big box nurseries will not be of much help. They exist to sell what people think they want. People think they want pansies because that is what they have been offered over the years. It’s so easy to purchase several flats of what is offered. What a miracle if the big nurseries began to offer alternatives to the usual standard plantings! They won’t do that unless we ask for them.

It is not easy to figure out, to do the research, on what the alternatives are. It takes time and work and effort. Most folks in the work force just don’t have the time to spare.

I helped a friend figure it out. He was tired of mowing, fertilizing, applying pesticides and more on his front lawn. He began to read articles on what he could do. We had the lawn removed, we added some good soil and compost. We went to various small nurseries and looked at all the offerings. He began to know what appealed to him, he did some reading, and we went to native plant sales. We settled on some selections and got them in the ground. A drip irrigation system was easily installed.

Over the last two or so years, some plants have died, either too hot for them, too cold, too dry, etc. A bit of an experiment, certainly, but he is learning what works. His desire to plant for pollinators is being actualized. He now has bees and hummingbirds! And he is in the midst of a Santa Rosa suburb: Sidewalks, asphalt, homeowners’ associations, hot winds and so on!

Hopefully, his neighbors will become curious about his garden. It looks different, unusual. Not everyone will enjoy his particular look.

But they could create their own look and extend the focus on pollinator and native plants. One isolated yard helps a little bit, but we need yard after yard of plants to feed our wildlife. That will make a difference!

Knowledge first, then action....

Judy Brinkerhoff

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**Invasives Corner**

**Arabidopsis thaliana: The Non-native Plant Lab Rat**

Cruising Huffington Post which has a nature section I came across this plant, mouse-eared cress, better known as Arabidopsis thaliana. It's not often a plant is better known by its Latin name but this is a special case. Most of the people who know of this plant are researchers. The rest of us are unlikely to have ever heard the name.

Here's a layman's introduction to the plant and why it is insignificant in appearance but famous among plant geneticists.

http://botany.about.com/od/PlantGenetics/a/Arabidopsis-Thaliana-The-Most-Famous-Plant-Youve-Never-Heard-Of.htm. Briefly, the article explains that it reproduces quickly, is small in size and produces many seeds which makes it ideal for genetics research. Too ideal, as A. thaliana's genetics turn out to be a bit misleading. The financial adage: "If it seems too good to be true, it probably is." holds for this plant. Researchers have been using it to the exclusion of other plants because of its
convenience, and now they find at least one important characteristic of the plant has been taking them off track. Here’s a more complicated article if you want to know more: http://www.scienceworldreport.com/articles/10416/20131023/model-plant-hoodwinks-scientists-thale-cress-lacks-usual-censorship-protein.htm?utm_source=zergnet.com&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=zergnet_1029

We have it in several counties in California, but it’s not noted in Sonoma County - at least out of the lab. I don’t know if SSU uses it for research or not. There is one siting in Marin County from 1973. The most sittings are in Tehama County at 16. Like the plant I featured last time, it has been with us in small numbers for quite a while. But it doesn't appear to be spreading, despite its excellent ability to reproduce and love of waste areas. We sure do have enough of that in our county! Like my back yard.

ML Carle

Preserve Workday

CUNNINGHAM MARSH WORKDAY – OCTOBER 25, 2014

Please join us for the final workday at Cunningham Marsh. This special place, south of Sebastopol is a 19-acre Conservation Easement, home to the endangered Pitkin Lily (Lilium pardalinum ssp. pitkenense). We plan to do a final check of all lily exclosures, pulling any unwanted velvet grass (Holcus lanatus), cutting back any unwanted blackberries and generally getting the area ready for, hopefully, a wet winter.

TIME: 9 a.m – 11 a.m. or a bit later
BRING: Water, hat, favorite digging tool, gloves if you have, long pants. Other tools will be provided
Contact: Marcia Johnson – owlsnesttwo@att.net 707-829-3808

If you cannot make the workday, but would like to be on a list for future days, please contact me.

Marcia Johnson
Steward, Cunningham Marsh

Plant Sale News

At the general meeting in September, Bart O’Brien spoke about plants that are good in a drought situation. He mentioned many of the plants that we will have for sale. Bart did a wonderful job of getting us excited about the uses of native plants in our gardens. He also helped familiarize us with the names and varieties of CA native plants that do well in Sonoma County.

I hope that everyone who received the plant sale flyer in their September newsletter, or downloaded it from our webpage, will place it on a bulletin board in their neighborhood. We thank Rob Fox for his beautiful drawing of the Epipactis gigantea – stream orchid.

I have posted a partial plant list on the web-site...please note that the web-site is-- www.milobaker.cnps.org. Check it out. The September newsletter also contains information about the plants that we will have available on October 11 at the sale. I ask that everyone go to their local market and collect beer flats and other small boxes for our customers to use. I have been collecting boxes all month.

This year we will again be able to accept debit and credit cards! Last year it increased our sales and we are grateful for the new technology.
The new t-shirts sold well last year. Cindy Tancreto ordered more t-shirts from Pangea in Petaluma. The Pamela Glasscock line drawings of the following plants: western buttercup, blue dicks, California catchfly, long-tubed iris, CA poppy, and mission bells. This ensemble of flowers is printed on black (with grey printing) t-shirts and pistachio green (with brown printing) t-shirts. There will be men’s and women’s styles. The women’s black features a v-neck with 3/4 length sleeves. Thanks to Pam for donating her work.

Perennial plants that we are growing include: the reliable Penstemon heterophyllus ‘Margarita BOP’ and P. h. ‘Blue Springs’ with beautiful blue flowers; Erigeron glaucus ‘W. R.’ which flowers profusely with blue/yellow flowers and grows to 6 inches high with a spread of 2-3 feet; Heuchera maxima (Island alumroot) has a low growing cluster of evergreen foliage with a stalk (2 ft.) of white flower in the spring; and Satureja (new name Clinopodium) douglasii (yerba buena) is a creeping groundcover that also makes a lovely, minty tea. The grasses available will be Festuca idahoensis ‘Tomales Bay’ and Muhlenbergia rigens (basket grass). There will be about 8 PCN Iris seedlings from my garden available, as well as about 60 of the PCN’s that we potted up in December and 21 straight species Iris douglasiana. Bart O’Brien talked about Dudley’s and we will have two--Dudleya cymose and Dudleya farinosa--the only Dudleya’s native to Sonoma County.

Other plants will be purchased and donated by Cal Flora and Mostly Natives the two nurseries that support our sale. There will be wonderful CA native bulbs from Brent and Becky’s again this year. We have also been increasing the number of seeds. Kathi Dowkakin has sent in some Lilium humboldtii, a species that Bart mentioned as very garden worthy. I just collected some Styrax redivivus (formerly S. officinalis), snowdrop bush, a beautiful shrub native to the chaparral. So check out the seed and bulb table at the sale, you will be delighted.

There will be some new books that you must add to your collection. Bart O’Brien (with Carol Bornstein and David Fross) has a new book, reimagining the California Lawn. Cindy Tancreto has a wonderful selection of books on CA horticulture and CA botany. A book that caught my eye was about the conifers of the Klamath Mountains. This is an area that Milo Baker members have enjoyed over the years. This guide to the area is very handy.

Betty Young, Mary Aldrich, Kathi Dowdakin, and I will be pricing and labeling plants the week before the sale. Anyone who has some free time during the day on Monday October 6 at Casa Grande H.S., Tuesday October 7 (Cal Flora in Fulton), Wednesday October 8 (Kathi Dowdikin’s in Sebastopol), or Thursday, October 9 (Santa Rosa) please call Liz at 833-2063. The plants will be collected at the usual collection centers.

If you are growing plants for the sale please bring them to any of the following collection centers on the weekend before the sale:

Collection Centers:
1. Mary Aldrich, 4775 Newanga, SR, SR, 539-9005
2. Cal Flora Nursery, D and Sommers, Fulton, 528-8813

Friday night, October 10, we will need truckers to transport plants from the collection centers to the Vet's Memorial Building. Call Liz (833-2063) if you have a truck and can help.

If you helped at our sale last year, Judy Hartwig (823-1821) has probably already called you! She is most efficient and already has all of the cashiers that we will need. Thank you to the fabulous volunteers who return year after year to help with our sale.

This is our most important fund raiser, so please come and buy plants. You can create a beautiful native landscape to enhance the beauty of your home. There will be expert gardeners on hand to help you make the right selections.

Liz Parsons
Lilium pardalinum ssp. pitkinense
Pitkin lily

Newsletter & Web Site Info:
Send newsletter submissions to:
Editor, cnpsmbnewsletter@yahoo.com
Deadline for inclusion in the November Newsletter is October 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

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SRJC Representative: Lea Davis, 538-1499
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

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☐ Other county________________________

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☐ Student or Limited Income.............. $25
☐ Individual................................... $45
☐ Family, Group or Library................ $75
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☐ Patron......................................... $300
☐ Benefactor................................... $600
☐ Mariposa Lily............................... $1500

☐ New Member  ☐ Renewal

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