General Meeting:
There's a New Plant Disease in Town: We Can Beat It

With Betty Young
October 20, 2015 7:30 pm

Abstract: We all know about Sudden Oak Death. It became a massive tree killer because it was not identified for several years. Now we have a new disease, related to SOD but much more destructive. Areas of rare manzanitas and ceanothus have been 100% killed. The good news is that it was found early. The bad news is that it can be in your garden plants. Learn a little about this new disease and how you can recognize it and help stop its spread.

Speaker Bio: Betty Young has been active in our chapter for 25 years, serving as President for 3 years. Her day job, before retiring, was as a native plant nursery person for 30 years after obtaining her degree in Plant Science/Nursery Management at UC Davis.

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 September 19th, if you plan to attend.

General Meetings are held at 7:30pm 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 October 13th. Anyone interested in the work of the chapter is welcome to attend!
Chapter News

Native Garden Tour 2016
Next April our chapter will be partnering with the water agency to present a native plant garden tour. We have a wonderful list of gardens to be included. We will need lots of volunteers to help weed and groom gardens before the tour, label plants, greet visitors, answer questions, sell plants, t-shirts and books. We will have a sign up list at the plant sale on October 10. Look for the sign-up sheet by the seeds and bulb area on the stage. We hope many of you sign up for this fun and important event. Thanks so much.

Plant Info Cards

As you walk into the plant sale on the 10th, of course you will first notice all the beautiful native plants for sale. But next check out our new Plant Information Cards. Each gives thorough information about the plant, a photo, and hints on maintenance and pruning. Even better, you will be able to access the 200 cards from home by going to our website. www.milobaker.cnps.org/index.php/nativeplants/gardening-with-natives.

This was accomplished by the best committee ever. They entered all the information in our new database, took and sent photos to be included, and did it all by our deadline. Thanks so much; Kathi Dowdakin, Pat Sesser, Penny Dalton, Cindy Tancreto, Wendy Born and Liz Parsons. Thanks especially to Barbara Althoff for programming the database for us and other great photographers in the chapter for sending photos; Phil Van Soelen, Ralph Johnson, Deb Dobish, and Reny Parker. Betty Young

Outreach and Education Committee Update

Our Optics and Nature Festival table at the Sonoma Vallejo Barracks was successful thanks to volunteers Marcia Johnson, Lea and Don Davis. Thanks to Jon Steenhoven for driving the materials over to Sonoma and to Lea and Don for pack-up and delivery back to our CNPS storage shed. It was a VERY hot day.....but lots of non-profits and vendors.

Leaf and fruit specimens needed: Umbellularia leaves and nuts, Quercus kelloggi, garyanna, kellogii acorns; Notolithocarpus leaves and acorns, Toyon leaves and berries, Arbutus menziesii leaves and berries, Rhamnus leaves and berries. Call Virginia Hotz-Steenhoven at 528-6030 for details. These materials used in Outreach and Education.

We also need good color 8X10 photos of Sonoma Native Plants for use with our handouts on gardening with California/Sonoma County natives.

Two other important Outreach and Education activities dates: Saturday, October 10, 9-1 at our annual Plant sale at the Veterans Auditorium in anta Rosa. Two more volunteers needed.
October 17th, Petaluma Campus 'LUMAFEST'.
We'll need at least two or three more volunteers.

Saturday, October 24th, 10:30am to 4pm, North Bay Science Discover Day, Sonoma County Fairgrounds. More volunteers needed!

Please contact either Co-chair, Lea Davis at: legil42@sbcglobal.net or Virginia Hotz-Steenhoven at: vsteenhoven@sonic.net (707) 528-6030.

We need the following for Outreach and Education activities:

Your old copies of our Milo Baker Newsletters and any copies of Fremontia you'd like to share with us. They make ideal give away materials at our outreach table, both informative as well as attractive.

We can also use the following:
Large magnifying glasses, 10X hand lenses, and an additional plant press.

Our continuing wish list:
One 6 ft portable folding table
One 4 ft portable folding table
2-3 folding camp chairs
Scientific plant structure model
Large Laminating machine
2 binocular dissecting microscopes with built in lighting and a digital camera attachment for projecting images on a laptop or classroom screen
Laptop for Outreach and Milo Baker Chapter use
Reiker Mount specimen exhibit frames
Virginia Hotz-Steenhoven, Co-chair Outreach and Education

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Gardening with Natives

When October rolls around and rain may still be at least a month away, I look at my wild garden with gratitude; the many native plants that demand so little, yet give so much. Quail parents and their youngsters forage in the understory, communicating with their distinctive calls and cackles. Finches feed on the seeds—and leaves—of the Delta sunflowers; bushtits scour the shrubs for insects, stopping often to bathe communally in the birdbath. And hummers hone in on the California fuchsia (Epilobium spp.) If you want to make your hummers happy, plant lots of this late summer-blooming perennial. There will be many species available at the sale this month.

I’ve mostly planted E. ‘Everett’s Choice’ and the ones peeking through the branches of the California buckwheat (Eriogonum fasciculatum) seem the happiest. My neighbor grows E. arizonicum (one of Liz’s favorites), which is quite beautiful and vigorous (see photo), and will be offered at the sale. California fuchsias are drought tolerant and keeping water away from the base of the plants is a good idea, but until well established, at least occasional water through the summer is advised.

The seaside daisy seedlings (Erigeron glaucus ‘Wayne Roderick), which were transplanted from another habitat garden and planted in early spring, have been a happy surprise. Even the ones not caged for gophers have made it! Scattered here and there along the rock-lined edges of a dry, sunny raised bed,
they have clumped and spread, blooming (with some occasional summer water) into the fall, those lovely blue-lavender faces a welcome sight to the pollinators, and me.

Though I saw only one Monarch in the garden in August, I had plenty of milkweed on hand: showy milkweed (Asclepias speciosa) and tropical milkweed (A. curassavica). After more than a few years of waiting for the showy milkweed to bloom (we may have to blame the gophers again), that day arrived this summer. Not only did they bloom, they moved, clearly to where they wanted to be! A friend had an unexpected hatch-out of Monarch caterpillars on both the showy and tropical milkweeds in her garden. When it became obvious there was not enough of the host plant to feed them, we transferred the remaining caterpillars to mine. (Note: it can be helpful to grow tropical milkweed along with the native milkweed species because Monarch caterpillars will feed on this milkweed regardless of which species they started out on. Planting more than one species (three or more of each species) is a good idea. Please plant lots of milkweed for the Monarchs this fall or next spring.

Last fall at the sale I bought Salvia mellifera x ‘Calamity Jane’ to add to my growing collection of salvias (S. brandegee, S. mellifera, S. leucophylla ‘Pt. Sal’ and S. ‘Bee’s Bliss). I love them all. Calamity Jane has been a fast grower, spreading to 3 ft. by 3 ft. this first year. The flowers were a soft shade of lavender, a nice contrast to the pink-lavender flowers of the ‘Pt. Sal’ nearby. Wonderfully drought tolerant, these native salvias are some of the earliest shrubs to bloom in the spring. If they begin to get a bit woody, I prune back. Undemanding and hardy, their flowers in early spring are an important source of nectar for hummers, emerging native bees, and the earliest butterflies.

Anyone interested in sharing your garden and favorite natives? If so, please contact me.

Nbcoyoteridge@gmail.com

Nancy Bauer

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**Invasives Corner**

**Pennisetum setaceum** – Green (a.k.a. crimson) fountain grass. Have you seen this nonnative grass? Most likely you have, or will soon because it is starting to appear in Sonoma County from intentional landscape plantings and the presumed drift of seeds of plants that have subsequently established outside gardens. It is both an ornamental grass and, in southern California and Baja, an invasive nonnative wildland weed. Without diligence to curb its spread, it may be on its way to becoming a wildland weed here in Sonoma County.

Ornamental grasses, both native and nonnative, are becoming increasingly popular for commercial and residential landscaping. They add texture, color, and interest to the garden year round and can contrast nicely with leafy ornamentals. In addition, as outdoor watering comes under increasing scrutiny in years of drought, gardeners are turning to drought tolerant ornamental grasses to reduce water usage.

Unfortunately, some of these nonnative ornamental grasses are highly invasive. Some are capable of becoming self-sustaining, and some can be difficult to eliminate once established.
One such species that is becoming more prevalent in Sonoma County’s landscaped areas and consequently in disturbed waysides is *Pennisetum setaceum*, often called crimson fountain grass or green fountain grass. This is not to be confused with the cultivars of *Pennisetum setaceum* ‘Rubrum,’ ‘Fireworks,’ and ‘Fairy Tails,’ which are generally referred to as purple fountain grass. Purple fountain grass is currently considered non-invasive by the California Invasive Plant Council (Cal-IPC). It can be confusing keeping all these Pennisetums straight, so it’s important to read the entire plant label at the nursery. But one easy way to keep track of which type is invasive in this case is to think “green is mean.” See side-by-side photo (in color) of these two types of fountain grass for comparison.

As a weed, green fountain grass is extending northward from southern and central California. Although myself and others have seen this plant in several locations, none of the online plant databases I checked showed any occurrences in Sonoma County, as of yet, and I suspect it may be underreported elsewhere in the North Bay. The nonprofit Sustainable Conservation’s PlantRight program has identified green fountain grass as an invasive ornamental grass and has issued a statewide recommendation to consumers to avoid buying it. Unfortunately, it appears there is enough green fountain grass seeds aloft that it is showing up along roadsides. This means it’s self-seeding and it has become more than just a nursery supply problem, although nurseries should still pull it from their inventories.

What is worrisome about green fountain grass is that it is very drought tolerant and is a prolific seeder. This means it will persist during dry years and is therefore capable of outcompeting and eventually displacing many of our native species.

### What is it? Why is it a problem?

Green (a.k.a. crimson) fountain grass (*Pennisetum setaceum*) is a coarse tufted perennial grass (family Poaceae) native to Africa that grows 2 to 5 feet tall in a densely clumped growth form. It flowers from July through October. The flowerheads are prominent, nodding, and feathery and resemble bottlebrushes 6 to 15 inches long, with many, small, green, to light pink to purple flowers. Leaves are green, not purple. Green fountain grass spreads aggressively by seed into natural areas by wind, water, or vehicles. A fast grower, it impedes the growth of locally native plant species and eventually takes over natural areas. It also raises fuel loads and fire frequency in natural areas. It is spreading rapidly in California. Existing research indicates that red or purple varieties of fountain grass (e.g., *P. setaceum* ‘Rubrum’) are not invasive. (adapted from Cal-IPC website)

Once established, green fountain grass is difficult to eliminate. The long-lived seeds make control difficult. Hand pulling of long-established plants is difficult as roots can be one foot deep. Continued monitoring is essential for resprouts. The best way to deal with it is to quickly remove plants before they get established. For more information on control methods for green fountain grass visit: [http://www.cal-ipc.org/ip/management/ipcw/pages/detailreport.cfm?userid=66&surveyid=182](http://www.cal-ipc.org/ip/management/ipcw/pages/detailreport.cfm?userid=66&surveyid=182).

### Some native alternatives for your garden:

Here is a list of some alternatives to green fountain grass for your garden. While the non-invasive purple fountain grass (*P. setaceum* ‘Rubrum’) might seem the obvious alternative, consider these California natives instead: *Festuca californica* (California fescue), *Stipa pulchra* (Purple needlegrass), *Deschampsia cespitosa* (tufted hair grass), *Calamagrostis foliosus* (leafy reedgrass), and *Muhlenbergia rigens* (deergrass). The latter two are native elsewhere in California, but are not native to Sonoma County.
Meanwhile if you see green fountain grass popping up and you are certain it is green fountain grass (and not purple fountain grass), consider ways to actively discourage its further spread. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of spread!

Kate Symonds

**Plant Sale News**

I hope that everyone who received the plant sale flyer in their September newsletter will place it on a bulletin board in their neighborhood. In this way we should cover the county with our publicity.

I have posted a partial plant list on the web-site...please note that we have a new web-site-- www.milobaker.cnps.org. The September newsletter also contains information about the plants that we will have available on October 10 at the sale.

We often have a problem with boxes. It is difficult to have enough, so I hope that everyone will go to their local market and collect beer flats and other small boxes for our customers to use. Many of our customers bring their own! Once again we will accept debit and credit cards!

The Pamela Glasscock, line drawing t-shirts will be available again. The shirt is with 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 will feature a v-neck with 3/4 length sleeves. This style has proved so popular that we are on our second order. It can be seen modeled by our members at all the Milo Baker events.

Perennial plants that we are growing include: the reliable Penstemon heterophyllus ‘Margarita BOP’ with beautiful blue flowers; Heuchera maxima (Island alumroot) has a low growing cluster of evergreen foliage with a stalk (2 ft.) of white flower in the spring; Sedum spathulifolium ‘Cape Blanco’ is a succulent ground cover; and Satureja douglasii (yerba buena) is a creeping ground cover, that is persistent, but not aggressive. It also makes a lovely, minty tea. The grasses available will be Festuca ‘Tomales Bay’ and Muhlenbergia rigens (basket grass). There will be eight or more varieties of Mimulus aurantiacus, sticky monkeyflower. Many colors of the Pacific Coast Iris will be available, so will the species, Iris douglasiana, Douglas iris. There will be many shrubby Salvias including S. clevelandii, S. mellifera, and S. leucophylla.

We want to thank Barbara Althoff for helping us prepare new plant information cards with color photos. Many of us provided information and photos to use on the cards and Betty Young brought it all together in a spread sheet format for Barbara to use. Betty Young has a small article about the cards with a web-site for viewing them. (See the article in this issue.)

Other plants will be selected at 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 that will be offered. So check out the seed and bulb table at the sale you might be surprised.

On the west wall of the hall, you will find the t-shirts, books and posters. Check out the selection of books, there is always some new book that you must add to your collection.

Virginia Steenhoven and the Out-reach Committee will have a table where they will let our customers know about the Milo Baker Chapter and the benefits of joining. There will also be a reference table and a table to raise awareness of invasive plants and the
destruction that they are doing to our native areas.

**Pricing the Week before the Sale**

Becky Montgomery, Mary Aldrich, Kathi Dowdikan, Cindy Tancreto, 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 5, at Casa Grande H.S. in Petaluma, Tuesday, October 6, at Cal Flora in Fulton, Wednesday, October 7, in Sebastopol, or Thursday, October 8, Santa Rosa, please call Liz at 833-2063. These vital tasks go faster if we have a lot of help. 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 to the 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 9, 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 (832-1821) 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 fundraiser, so please come and buy plants. You can create a beautiful native landscape to enhance to beauty of your home. There will be expert gardeners on hand to help you make the right selections.

FALL IS PLANTING TIME IN CALIFORNIA

Liz Parsons

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**Events**

**Bodega Marine Laboratory and Reserve**

Saturday, October 17, 2015
10 AM – Noon
By RESERVATION ONLY.
If you would like to carpool, meet at 9 AM at the east end of “under Hwy 12 Vet’s Hall-Fairgrounds Park and Ride Lot”.

The Bodega Marine Laboratory and Reserve does groundbreaking marine research and it is also the home of some great preserved coastal plant communities.

Join us for a tour. We will tour the Lab facilities and hear about the types of research going on there. Following the Lab tour, we will take a leisurely 90-minute hike on the adjacent Reserve to explore the coastal prairie, bluffs, and dune system, and to get a glimpse of the beach and rocky intertidal habitats that make up this University of California Natural Reserve. Hike will be mostly level with some uneven terrain. Hiking boots, water, a warm jacket and sunscreen are recommended. Tour and hike is limited to 25 people. To attend, sign up with Betty, 707-595-1463, youngb0721@msn.com. She will confirm your reservation, and provide entry code to the preserve. Field trip will cancel if raining. If weather questionable, call Betty the evening before.
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

Milo Baker Chapter Officers & Board of Directors 2015/2016
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Co-President: Leia Giambastiani, 322-6722, leagia@gmail.com
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Publicity: Wendy Born wendyborn@comcast.net
Rincon Ridge Park: Penny Dalton
SCCC Rep.: Wendy Krupnick, 544-4582, wlk@sonic.net
Southridge Preserve: 539-3441, terrapenecarolinamajor@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

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☐ Individual……………………………………..$45
☐ Family, Group or Library…………………..$75
☐ Plant Lover……………………………………$100
☐ Patron……………………………………….$300
☐ Benefactor…………………………………….$600
☐ Mariposa Lily……………………………...$1500
☐ New Member  ☐ Renewal

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