General Meeting:
Gardening for drought, climate change, biodiversity, and nutrition in Sonoma County

With Alrie Middlebrook
September 15, 2015 7:30 pm

Abstract: Alrie will talk about managing urban environments, for today and in the future, while providing for the protection and perpetuation of ecological services, returning disturbed soils to their natural state, assuring clean water and air as well as healthy food production.

Speaker Bio: Alrie Middlebrook is a coauthor, with Glean Keator and Phyllis M. Faber of "Designing California Native Gardens. The Plant Community Approach to Artful, Ecological Gardens" and the author of "Eating California". She is also the founder of Middlebrook Gardens in Palo Alto, California. She's designed public landscaping incorporating California flora and habitats in Los Gatos and other cities.

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 14th, 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 September 8th. 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.

Chapter Scholarships
After the October 2014 plant sale, member Barbara Coe, in conversation with Sue Flagg, mentioned her concern to Sue over the decline in profits from our sale, which helps fund Merit Scholarships for students of native plants, in addition to other chapter needs. Barbara was concerned that fewer scholarships would be offered, due to less plant sales.

Sue offered to support our Milo Baker Chapter by donating $5000 to our scholarship fund. This donation is made in honor of her mother, Marcella (Lollie) Spenger.

The Milo Baker Chapter awards a $500 scholarship twice a year to students from Santa Rosa Junior College and Sonoma State University, whose course of study is biology, botany, or conservation. Students must have an interest in California native plants, their habitats, and conservation of the flora.

One of our recipients for the 2014 Merit Scholarship for students of Native Plants, was Kelsey Cox, who recently graduated from SSU with a double major in Biology and Environmental Studies & Planning in the Conservation & Restoration track. Kelsey currently interns at Point Reyes National Seashore doing rare plant monitoring and rangeland management.

It is dedicated people such as Barbara Coe and Sue Flagg that keep our chapter, and the interest in promoting California native plants, alive. Thank you Barbara and Sue!

Wendy Born

Outreach and Education Committee Update
We've been made an "official" committee with approval of the Milo Baker Board and our title now includes "Education" since that's the overall purpose of the committee's activities.

PLEASE NOTE AN IMPORTANT CORRECTION for the OPTICS and NATURE FAIR day and date: SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20TH, 9:30AM TO 5PM at the Sonoma Barracks on the Sonoma Plaza. We can use a few more volunteers for our two hour shifts.

All you need is your interest in California's native plants and a willingness to share that with the public. It's a wonderful opportunity to speak with visitors about California's flora, biodiversity, habitat preservation and these wonderful plants' uses in home and public landscaping. We provide the materials for the booth; you provide your enthusiastic knowledge.

Two other important Outreach and Education activities dates: Saturday, October 10, 9am-1pm at our annual Plant sale at the Veterans Auditorium in Santa Rosa. Two more volunteers needed.

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: vsteenboken@sonic.net (707) 528-6030.
We need the following for Outreach and Education activities:
- Old copies of our Milo Baker Newsletters
- Any Fremontia Issues

They make ideal give away materials at our outreach table, both informative as well as attractive.

Thanks again to the Outreach and Education committee members: Co-chair, Lea Davis; Kerry Winninger, Patty Mohar and Megan Wilson. Please join us on the committee or just volunteer for a few hours each year at our Outreach and Education activities. We'd love to have you!

Virginia Hotz-Steenhoven, Co-chair Outreach and Education

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**Gardening with Natives**

As we move into the dry fall season, and gear up for the planting season ahead, it seems a good time to mention a product that several of my habitat gardening friends and I have used with great success: DriWater. When April Owens and I put in our first public habitat garden in Sebastopol in late spring, as part of our Habitat Corridor Project, we used DriWater as a water source throughout the summer.

The project site is the Chamber of Commerce landscape in Sebastopol and it was covered with Bermuda grass. Once we removed the grass (and we are still dealing with that problem) we planted 22 shrubs from 1-gallon pots, each with 2 tubes of DriWater gel that was donated to the project. The shrubs included elderberry (Sambucus mexicana), pink-flowering current (Ribes sanguineum ‘Tranquillon Ridge’), coyote brush (Baccharis spp.), Manzanita (Arctostaphylos ‘Howard McMinn’), black sage (Salvia mellifera), brandegee sage (S. brandegei), and pitcher sage (Lepechinia calycina). (Many of these plants were donated by CalFlora nursery.)

DriWater is a time-release plant watering system that is available in Gel Pacs and solid tubes and also in a quart carton delivery system. The gel is made of 98 percent water and 2 percent food grade ingredients. It is safe to use around children and animals. As the gel contacts microorganisms in the soil it breaks down, slowly converting to liquid and moving down the tube through the root zone of the plant. Our gel packs (two to a plant) lasted almost 3 months before we replaced them mid-summer. The solid tubes are inserted near the plant roots on opposite sides of the plant. Replacing the gel packs is simply a matter of removing the tube cap and inserting another one inside.

We used small half-quart carton sized gel packs for the grasses (1-inch tree pots); the cartons break down after a month. However, the grasses are making it on their own with only occasional hand watering. We lost only one shrub; the rest have thrived and have actually grown considerably since the April planting, certainly more than we hoped for at the time, especially with so many hot days this past summer. While DriWater is often used for restoration projects, especially involving native plants, it is extremely useful for getting plants established in garden areas that are not irrigated and/or are inconvenient to water. And, of course, water savings are considerable. Others I know have relied on the product to get their newly planted native shrubs and trees through the first dry season, both for restoration landscapes and their own gardens, and have been pleased with the results.

Nbcyoterridge@gmail.com

Nancy Bauer

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**Invasives Corner**

Our roadside and highway margins are seldom, if ever, free of invasive plant species. Roadsides are subject to regular disturbance from road maintenance and other activities, and therefore provide ideal conditions for disturbance-loving weeds to get established.
The seeds of those weeds can spread up and down the transportation corridor by tires, wind, birds, etc. and some end up getting established in natural areas, which then results in displacement of native plants. While many of these weed species may be here to stay (sadly, yes), keeping an eye out for invasive plants that are newly-arrived or not yet widely established (early detection) is the way to be able to begin to prevent their spread. So far, a few invasive plant species have begun to show up in low numbers along the Highway 101 corridor in our area. From south to north these include the shrub *Photinia* (I wrote about in my April column) at the south end of the Sonoma/Marin narrows (in Marin County), patch of perennial pea (*Lathyrus latifolius*) on the west side of the Cotati grade, and a single clump of green fountain grass (*Pennisetum setaceum*) on the southbound College Avenue off-ramp in Santa Rosa. Perennial pea is rampant in west Sonoma County, but is just starting to spread east of Hwy 101 to the central parts of the County. Green fountain grass (not to be confused with purple fountain grass, *P. setaceum ‘rubrum’*) is an increasingly popular nursery ornamental that is invasive in landscaped areas, and also spreads along highway margins. The northwest quadrant of the Hwy 101 and Sir Francis Drake Blvd interchange in Marin is a good example of green fountain grass gone wild! Sadly I see it for sale in nurseries in our county! The first two species are on the California Invasive Plant Council’s (Cal-IPC) 2014 watch list, and the third, fountain grass, is listed as moderate threat in Cal-IPC’s inventory rating. To prevent further spread of these three invasive species at least along the Hwy 101 corridor in Sonoma County, I contacted the Landscape Specialist who covers the North Bay for Caltrans. It was fortunate that the Caltrans Landscape Specialist’s background in a previous job was to manage a roadside crew to remove invasives in one of the Sierra foothill counties. So I didn’t have to explain long why this was important. He promptly investigated the three locations and provided the information to the roadside vegetation management crew for removal. So far, the *Photinia* and the fountain grass have been removed and the removal of the perennial pea occurrences is planned. We’re sending a thank you letter to Caltrans! I also reached out to the Sonoma County Road Department to initiate a similar effort, and have yet to get a response. Do you have observations of any newly-arrived invasives that are uncommon (e.g., few plants or a cluster) along the roads and highways in Sonoma County?

**More weed news:** Last Spring, at the Vine Hill Preserve, a 1.6-acre preserve near Forestville owned by the Milo Baker Chapter, a group of CNPS volunteers pitched in to hand pull nonnative velvet grass (*Holcus lanatus*). Milo Baker Chapter’s Vine Hill Preserve manager and Chapter co-president, Sarah Gordon reports velvet grass has spread into areas that support the endangered Vine Hill clarkia (*Clarkia imbricata*). In response to concerns that the declining counts of Vine Hill clarkia may be attributed, at least in part, to displacement by velvet grass, we started a semi-regular Vine Hill Weeder’s Group (sign-ups started at the March General Meeting). This is for people willing to be regular weeders, and after some orientation to the Preserve and instruction on which were the target weeds, they would come out on their own and pull velvet grass and other weeds on a regular basis, for example an hour or two every few weeks. We are off to a very good start! On April 28 and May 6 we had a total of 11 weeders pulling velvet grass! Many thanks to Penny Dalton, Susan and John Dean, Ann Howald, Gary Hundt, Wendy Born, Wendy Smit, Glen and Peggy Caulkin, Emily Cole, and Megan Wilson. We were able to remove most of the velvet grass this first pass so that subsequent visits will be less time consuming to manage any resprouts. Seeds are still in the soil, so like all weed projects, repeat visits are necessary over time, but at least we prevented perhaps several hundred thousand seeds of velvet grass from forming this year. Since May, Glen and Peggy Caulkin...
have made several repeat visits to the Preserve to pull velvet grass resprouts. We have more Weeder’s Group opportunities coming up! Please contact me if you’re interested in being on the Weeder’s Group list to get announcements of upcoming work parties and such. So far this is an informal list, and not yet posted on our website. The projects are largely aimed at sites with high botanical value and/or “early detection, rapid response” effort where a group of volunteers can make a difference. In this vein, I am in discussion with Regional Parks on ways our Chapter can team up on weed removal projects in our local Regional Parks. In the “early detection, rapid response” category, we are also exploring opportunities to team up with the Russian Riverkeeper to remove an invasive shrub called scarlet wisteria (*Sesbania punicea*) from the main stem and tributaries of the Russian River. Scarlet wisteria is rated as a High Alert weed by Cal-IPC. It has spread in the Central Valley, but has only made small incursions, so far, along the Russian River. As these and other opportunities develop, I will post details to our Weeder’s Group email list, and in future newsletters, or contact me for more details.

If you know of a site that could use a few work parties of our Weeder’s Group that is of high botanical value or for an “early detection/rapid response” effort, please contact me at kate@terraserve.net.

Kate Symonds

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**Plant Sale News**

**THE FLYER** for our 44th annual sale is included with this newsletter. The illustration of *Salvia clevelandii* ‘Winnifred Gilman’ is by Liz Parsons. Please post the flyer in your neighborhood.

**CASA GRANDE POTTING WORKSHOP**

On August 1, we held our fourth and final potting workshop of the season at Casa Grande High School in Petaluma. Teacher and Nursery Manager John Shribbs has created an excellent growing facility there and a group of 20 people potted up 700 liners in a little over two hours. The plants are in the growing grounds and will be ready to sell on October 10. The plants were supplied by Shooting Star Propagation Nursery in Graton. A group will be monitoring the plants and if there are any members in the Petaluma area who have time to do some monitoring, let me know.

Thanks to our members Betty Young, Rob Fox, Kathi Dowdakin, Pat Sesser, Cindy Tancreto, Penny Dalton, Alan Brubaker, Patty Mohar, Audrey Kapitan, Lisa Seale, Elmarie Hutchinson, M.L. Carle and her granddaughter Mae, Cookie, Danny, Jane Merryman, and John’s interns Brenda, Terrie, and Andrew.

**SPECIAL PLANTS FOR THE SALE**

We potted up some very special plants and I am excited about some of the unusual plants that we will have at the sale--of the varieties of *Salvia clevelandii* we will have S. c. ‘Pozo Blue’ which is a selection from Las Pilitas Nursery near San Luis Obispo with deep blue flowers; S.c. ‘Santa Cruz Dark’ is a selection from Ginny Hunt with dark blue flowers; and there are two always popular S.c. ‘Allen Chickering’ and S.c. ‘Winnifred Gilman’. ‘Winnifred Gilman’ has deep purple flowers and red stems and deep green leaves. All other *S. clevelandii* cultivars are upright shrubs with a woody base; they grow to about 4 feet with a 5 foot spread; the lavender flowers are in whorls on tall stems that remain attractive after bloom. Other *Salvias* that we will offer are *Salvia apiana* (white sage, a shrub to 5’), *Salvia x ‘Bee’s Bliss’*, a ground cover with grey leaves,*Salvia spathacea* (hummingbird sage) a creeper with tall (2’) stems with pink flowers, *Salvia brandegei* ‘Pacific Blue’, *S. mellifera* (Black Sage is tough and drought tolerant; grows to 4’x4’; with green leaves and whitish flowers.) , *S. mellifera* ‘Terra Seca’
The number of Mimulus aurantiacus varieties that we will have is truly mind boggling. We will have eleven different varieties in shades of orange and red with one white form. In August and September, the California fuchsia (Epilobium canum or Zauschneria) is my favorite native plant. It is drought tolerant (blooms better with extra summer water) and the bright scarlet flowers are important nectar source for the hummingbirds. They bloom until the first frost and come in many varieties so I like to grow all of them. One of my favorites is Epilobium arizonicum; it is an aggressive spreader and a profuse bloomer with an upright growth habit to 2 1/2 feet and green leaves. We will also feature E.c. ‘Calistoga’ (low growing with large, fuzzy grey leaves), ‘Everett’s Choice’, ‘Shefflein’s Choice’ (grey leaves, to 2’) ‘Chaparral Silver’ (forms a mat of grey leaves), ‘Liz’s Choice’ and ‘Marin Pink’. The complete list of plants that we have potted up at our four workshops is on the website. Remember we will shopping for plants at Cal Flora and Mostly Natives to make sure that we have the most complete selection of California native plants found at anywhere. We are very proud of our sale and if you want to be a part of the action call Judy Hartwig at 823-1821.

This year we are making an effort to improve our signs. Betty Young, Pat Sesser, Kathi Dowdakin, Cindy Tancreto, and Penny Dalton are working to have signs with photos and with improved cultural information. We are creating a data base that can be used to print the signs.

SEED PACKAGING WORKSHOP AND POTLUCK-WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 23
We will meet a Liz’s house in Kenwood for a potluck and seed packaging. Come any time after 5 PM to help with this important task. No experience necessary. Last year we had over 25 species of seeds at our sale. This is a unique feature of our sale. We will also have bulbs from Brent and Becky’s. The bulbs are always delivered at the last minute and we package them on Friday night while we move in the plants. Wendy Born has been in charge of this in the past, but is unavailable this year. If you would like to take part in the bulb packaging come on Friday night to help out.

Anyone who would like to learn how to collect and clean seeds can come to Kenwood and help me prepare mine. Call me and we can arrange a time for this activity.

PRICING FOR THE SALE
Becky Montgomery, Mary Aldrich, Kathi Dowdikan, and I will be pricing and labeling plants the week before the sale. Anyone who has some free time during the day on Monday (Casa Grande), Tuesday (Cal Flora), Wednesday (Sebastopol), or Thursday (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 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:
1. Mary Aldrich, 4775 Newanga, SR, SR, 539-9005
2. Cal Flora Nursery, D and Sommers, Fulton, 528-8813

On Friday night October 9, we will need truckers to transport plants from the collection centers to the Vet's Memorial Building. Call Liz if you have a truck and can help.

We welcome everyone to our sale and want to provide the plants that they need for their particular purpose. I welcome suggestions. If you have any plant that you would like to see at our sale, let me know and perhaps we will be able to fulfill your request. An almost complete list of plants is on the website www.milobaker.cnps.org

If you helped at our sale last year, Judy Hartwig (823-1821) will be calling you soon to ask you to volunteer. I hope that all members will help us again. This is a huge effort and
WE NEED YOU! Call Judy and volunteer. We need cashiers, salespersons, drivers, and help in many areas. Please mark your calendars for October 10 and plan to help us by working at the sale. If you can't work, please come by and shop for plants. Only workers can purchase plants on Friday evening before the sale, so make plans to work for the sale and this special privilege will be yours.

The work of the Milo Baker Chapter depends on the success of our plant sale. Our members are our best customers. Please tell your friends to attend and buy plants. Please place our flyer in an area near your home. If everyone does this we will blanket the county with the information.

Fall is planting season in California. The soil is still warm and the roots will grow slowly through the rainy season. The following spring, the well rooted plants are ready to survive the summer heat. A plant planted in the spring does not have a well-developed root system and will have difficulty surviving through the summer.

FALL IS PLANTING TIME IN CALIFORNIA
Liz Parsons

Preserve Workday

CUNNINGHAM MARSH WORKDAY
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2015

Please come and help get Cunningham Marsh, home of the endangered Pitkin Lily, ready for a rainy winter.

WHEN: Saturday, September 19, 2015 – 9 a.m. -11 a.m. or so
BRING: Hat, gloves, water, long pants best, and favorite digging tool
TO DO: Careful weeding, small feet preferred to weed within the lily exclosures, opening up any needed trails. Working on oaks in big field, General maintenance

Please RSVP if you can come. If you need directions, please contact me.

Marcia Johnson
Steward, Cunningham Marsh
owlsnesttwo@att.net
707-829-3808

Events

Margaret Spaulding’s Native Garden
Glen Ellen

September 16, 2015
9:30 am at Park and Ride under HWY 12 across from Vet’s Hall
10am at Margaret’s

We will visit an amazing showcase terraced hillside garden in Glen Ellen at the home of Margaret Spaulding. Here you will see southern California Carpenteria, Clematis (Virgin's Bower), Heteromeles (Toyon) and a Fremontodendron; at the base are some ground cover Arctostapholos (manzanita), many Eriogonums (buckwheats), Ribes viburnifolium, and Epilobiums (California fuchsia) and many other perennials. Beautiful examples of native grasses; Muhlenbergia rigens and Festuca california will be seen. Hear from Margaret about the challenges in the garden in this fourth drought year.

We will form carpools at the Park and Ride lot under Hwy 12 across from the Vet’s Hall. Meet there at 9:30am. If you are coming from east of Glen Ellen, get directions by contacting Betty, youngb0721@msn.com 707-595-1463.
Lilium pardalinum ssp. pitkinense
Pitkin lily

**Newsletter & Web Site Info:**
Send newsletter submissions to:
Editor, cnpsmbnewsletter@yahoo.com
Deadline for inclusion in the October Newsletter is September 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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**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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Poster & T-Shirt Sales: Cindy Tancreto, 528-9225, cindytancreto@pachbell.net
Programs/Lectures: Virginia Hotz-Steenhoven, vsteenboven@sonic.net
Publicity: Wendy Born wendyb0rn@comcast.net
Rincon Ridge Park: Penny Dalton
SCCC Rep.: Wendy Krupnick, 544-4582, wk@sonic.net
Southridge Preserve: 539-3441, terrapenechristinamajor@yahoo.com
SRJC Representative: OPEN
SSU Rep.: Kerry Wininger, 888-5616, kerrywininger@gmail.com
Web Site: Molly Levitt, cnpsmb.webadm@gmail.com

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We invite you to join CNPS

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**Chapter affiliation:**
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- [ ] 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

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