General Meeting:
Gardening During a Time of Drought

September 16, 2014 7:30 pm

Abstract: Bart O’Brian, always a popular speaker, will be back speaking on a timely topic. He will speak about plants that do well without much water. Bart is a special person and we look forward to his talk.

Speaker Bio: As of December 2013, Bart O’Brien is director of the Regional Parks Botanic Garden in Tilden Regional Park in the Berkeley Hills - one of the three major gardens dedicated to California native plants. An authority on the California flora and of northern Baja California, Mexico, he is also an accomplished collector, grower, photographer, lecturer, and author. He is co-author of three recent books: the award winning California Native Plants for the Garden (2005), Re-imagining the California Lawn - Water-Conserving Plants, Practices, and Designs (2011) and the bilingual Care & Maintenance of Southern California Native Plant Gardens (2006).

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 15th, 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 9th. Anyone interested in the work of the chapter is welcome to attend!
Chapter News

Get involved with state CNPS

The 2014 Election cycle for 2015 – 2016 State Offices is now open. 2014 elections will be held for the CNPS Chapter Council and Board of Directors. These bodies, working together, create policy and provide direction that helps CNPS accomplish its mission.

CNPS has a very democratic election procedure. Any CNPS member in good standing can self-nominate with a letter of support from their local chapter board or the support of five CNPS members. Positions open this year for self-nomination on the Chapter Council include Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary for two-year terms. Positions open this year for self-nomination on the CNPS Board of Directors include Vice President, Treasurer, Directors, and Council Representative for two-year terms. These positions offer CNPS members a unique opportunity to guide our organization in protecting California’s wonderful native plants. If you have questions you’d like to discuss about any of these openings, please contact david@hjuliendesigns.com.

Self-nominating forms can be found at http://www.cnps.org/cnps/admin. Forms are due by Oct. 1.

Gardening with Natives

The “Good Guys”

Eriogonum latifolium

We have so many reasons to love our native plants—their beauty, the way they make gardening so easy and so rewarding, the way they just make themselves so at home in our gardens. They are the plants that are thriving without summer water, the ones I don’t have to maintain, just enjoy. And they bring a great deal of pleasure to the birds and insects that are also part of my garden landscape. I am always amazed at the variety of insects that hover around the buckwheats (Eriogonum spp.), both in my garden and out on the trails. I especially like E. latifolium and Eriogonum grande var. rubescens but plan to check out the buckwheats at the plant sale next month, maybe squeeze a few more into my overfilled garden though sun space is at a premium. I’ve seen many tiny native bees, honeybees, and other pollinating insects hovering around the buckwheats this summer, plus at least a half dozen of the smaller butterfly species. Buckwheats are also caterpillar food plants for the Acon Blue, the Blue Copper and other butterflies.

One of the most sought after nectar plants in my garden from mid-summer into fall is California aster (A. chilensis ‘Pt. St. George’). It gets barely any water at all, forms a low-growing carpet and blooms for months with small lavender flowers that feed a host of butterflies, bees and other pollinators. In early spring, the whorls of flowers on the native salvias—brandgeee sage (S. brandegei), black
sage (S. mellifera), purple sage (S. leucophylla ‘Pt. Sal’) — are a welcome sight to native bees that have just emerged, Anna’s hummingbirds, and the early butterflies. They, too, receive no summer water.

Birds forage not only on seeds and fruit, but on the many insects our California natives attract. One outstanding example is coyote bush (Baccharis pilularis), which attracts over 200 insects, which, in turn, feed many songbirds, bats, and other creatures. White-crowned sparrows, finches, and other seed-eating birds feast on the seeds, though they, too, supplement their diet with insects when seeds are in short supply. If you don’t have room for the shrubs, the prostrate form B. pilularis ‘Pigeon Point’ makes a neat bright green carpet only one foot high but up to six feet wide. Plant it in full sun or part shade with occasional water if needed.

Our native milkweeds are not only caterpillar food plants for the Monarch butterfly, and a nectar source, they also provide seeds for small mammals and birds. Ladybird beetles and the larvae of lacewings and other beneficial insects hunt the orange oleander aphids associated with milkweeds. Two species of beetles and two species of true bugs are milkweed specialists.

Douglas Tallamy (Bringing Nature Home) discovered in his own garden that many of our native insects “cannot or will not use alien plants.” “So many animals depend partially or entirely on insect protein for food,” he points out, “that a land without insects is a land without most forms of higher life.” Our native plants are not just pretty faces; they, as Tallamy so aptly states, “have the critical role of sustaining, directly or indirectly, all of the animals with which we share our living spaces.”

Invasives Corner

The Mysterious Travels of Stinking Goosefoot

My friend has a 1941 Dodge which he finally finished restoring recently, so I was treated to a hot rod trip to Bodega Head for whale watching. People kept looking at us and at first I thought I had at last become famous or else we were on fire. Then I realized it was the car that was so cool. On the way there my friend told me he had found a weed on his property in Penngrove that smelled like the time my dog rolled in dead fish at the Garcia River and we had to drive all the way home with that dog in the car. I wanted to hang her out the window, but decided that would certainly make me the wrong kind of celebrity. Even the smart woman who works for Mostly Natives didn't know what the plant was - yet my friend thought I would? Ridiculous. I sent my friend's picture to the excellent Doreen Smith who so far as I know can tell you every plant in Marin etc., and sure enough, she had a diagnosis. Stinking Goosefoot or Chenopodia vulvaria or Haisusavikka if you happen to be Finnish. I don't know why the Finns chose such a fancy and unpronounceable word to describe a yucky-smelling plant.
I wanted to find out more about the plant so I would sound very intelligent to my friend when I told him what it was. I went to Calflora and found there was only one report in Marin (Doreen’s) and one report in Sonoma County from John Thomas Howell! Described by an English botanist "Although edible, cooked and used like spinach, the smell of the leaves would discourage most people." Howell just calls it "evil-smelling". Other research suggested that it could be used to expel worms. You tie one of the leaves to a worm and it explodes like a suicide bomber in the gut I presume. Anyway, researching the plant, I found it interesting that it was found in eight widely scattered California counties, from Klamath to Kern. I used the Google satellite pictures to see what kind of places it liked to stink up. Some were at lower elevations, one at Ebbet’s Pass that is labeled 8,700 feet. Some reports were near lakes or creeks, one in a dry, bleak-looking trailer park, another by the side of a rural road. It became obvious why Calflora could find no other plant with such distribution. The curious thing is that there are only a few sightings in each of the eight counties, the first of them many years ago. The smell itself seems as though it would come to the attention of botanists, or maybe they just run away. Scandinavian botanists claim the seed came into Europe in ship ballast and that this plant preferred "landward edges of salt marshes and shingle beaches, inland in waste areas." Other than the waste areas, I didn't find any sightings near the coast except for Doreen's. So - how did it get here, so dispersed and why has it spread so little? It's practically a worldwide plant. The only possible explanation is Martians throwing seeds from Hail - Bopp - or something.

\[\text{ML Carle}\]

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**Plant Sale News**

Kathy Dowdakin & Liz Parsons

CASA GRANDE POTTING WORKSHOP: A SUCCESS

On August 9, we held our fourth and final potting workshop of the season at Casa Grande High School. Teacher John Shribbs has created an excellent growing facility there and we are very lucky to be able to work there. 18 of us gathered and we potted up over 700 plants in a little over two hours! Everyone worked so well together. The plants were supplied by Shooting Star Propagation Nursery in Graton. Dan and Nancy and the liners that they give us are so important to our sale.

Thanks to our members Penny Dalton, Cindy Tranceto, Betty Young, Elmarie Hutchinson, Phil Persons, Janet Ross and Pat Whitfield, Kathi Dowdakin, Rob Fox, Alan Brubaker, Patty Mohar, Steve Long, Danny Bever, Judy Mazzeo, Lea Davis, Anne Aymes, and Wendy Born. We potted up liners of *Atriplex lentiformis* (Quailbush), *Cornus sericea* (red twig dogwood), *Festuca ‘Tomales Bay’* (a grass), *Lonicera ciliosa* (orange-flowerd honeysuckle), nine different varieties of *Mimulus*(!), *Muhlenbergia rigens* (basket grass), *Penstemon ‘Blue Springs’* and *Penstemon ‘Margarita BOP’* (both blue flowered), *Physocarpus capitata* (ninebark) and *Physocarpus capitata ‘Tilden Park’*, *Ribes aureum* (Yellow flowered Gooseberry), *Ribes viburnifolium* (Catalina

It was a very successful day and now we look forward to our sale on October 11. (See flyer).

**SEED PACKAGING WORKSHOP AND POTLUCK- WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 24**

We will meet at 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 the sale. This is a special feature of our sale and we can be proud of this.

The bulbs have been ordered and they will be packaged on the Friday before the sale.

**Plant Sale News**

The flyer for our 43rd plant sale features an illustration by Rob Fox. It features the stream orchid, *Epipactis gigantea*.

I have posted a list of the plants that we potted up at our four workshops on the NEW web-site...milobaker.cnps.org As always, we will shop for plants at Cal Flora in Fulton and Mostly Natives in Tomales so many plants will be added at the last minute. These nurseries are also very generous in their donations to our sale.

I am very excited about the number of plants that we will be growing year. We will have a great selection of ferns this year. Sword ferns (*Polistichum munitum*) and deer ferns (*Blechnum spicant*) we will have in good numbers. However, the following ferns were dug up from members gardens and there will be limited quantities—northern maindenhair fern (*Adiantum jordanii*), wood fern (*Dryopteris arguta*), and giant chain fern (*Woodwardia fimbriata*).

In December, we potted up over 60 PCN hybrid iris...in beautiful colors including striped gold, striped brown, red-violet w/gold blaze, magenta, lavender w/yellow, and one that we call ‘Sunset’. We will also have many of the straight species - *Iris douglasiana*. The *I. douglasiana* flower color is in lavender tones.

My garden is ablaze with California fuchsia aka *Zauschneria*. It blooms profusely from July until the first frost and the bright red-orange flowers make it the star of the late summer garden. The hummingbirds love it! It should be planted in the hottest, driest part of the garden and every garden should have this stunning plant. It responds well to a little water, but not too much because it spreads by underground runners and might invade other parts of the garden. The sale will feature many California fuchsias (*Epilobium* sp.). *Epilobium canum* ‘Calistoga’ is a variety that Phil Van Soelen (co-owner of California Flora Nursery in Fulton) collected in the Pallisades near Calistoga in Napa county and it has proved to be a very popular. It grows to 1 foot tall with wide grey-green leaves and scarlet flowers. It is a slow spreader. Other varieties that we will have include *Epilobium canum* ‘Scheiffelin’s Choice’ a nice gray leaved species that grows to 15” tall and *Epilobium canum* ‘Everett’s Choice’ with its furry leaves and bright red flowers. We will also have an unusual *E. c. ‘Marin Pink’ which has pink flowers and is also a low grower.

We will also have several varieties of shrubby Salvias. *Salvia clevelandii* ‘Allen Chicking’ is shrubby (5’ tall x 6’ wide) with lavender flowers and grey leaves and *Salvia c. ‘Winnifred Gilman’ has small green leaves, purple flowers, and red stems--a real beauty. We have found two new *S. clevelandii* varieties this year--S.c. ‘Pozzo Blue’ and S.c. ‘Santa Cruz Dark’. We have limited experience with them, but I think that they will grow to 5’ x 5’ with flower whorls in blue tones.
S. leucophylla ‘Pt. Sal’ was successful this year, we will have 20 of them at the sale. We have also discovered Salvia spathacea (hummingbird sage) which creeps by underground runners and has large pink flowers. This year we will have a good number of Salvia x ‘Bee’s Bliss’ which is a cross that includes our Sonoma sage (Salvia sonomensis), but does better in gardens and is very drought tolerant. Another Salvia with sonomensis in its parentage is Salvia ‘Dara’s Choice’. We will be offering Yerba Buena, Satureja (new name Clinopodium) douglasii. This is a fragrant, creeping plant that is a great addition to the shade garden. It is lovely cascading down a wall.

There will be a huge selection of Mimulus aurantiacus, sticky monkeyflower, and the named varieties. These Mimulus are very drought tolerant and love a sunny location with little summer water. Creating a mass planting with several different colors is a great idea for lots of summer color...so buy more than one. We will have the following varieties..., ‘Rob’s Orange’, ‘Vibrant Red’, ‘Eleanor’, ‘Pumpkin’, ‘White’, and a new one which we call ‘UC Hybrid’.

Other unusual plants at the sale include: Atriplex lentiformis - quailbush, Myrica (new name Morella) californica (wax myrtle), Physocarpus capitatus,-Ninebark, Cornus sericea-red twig dogwood, and Penstemon heterophyllus ‘Margaret BOP’ and ‘Blue Springs’.

Grasses will include Muhlenbergia rigens, basket or deer grass and Festuca idahoensis ‘Tomales Bay’. Deschampsia caespitosa holciformis, coastal hairgrass, a tufted low growing grass.

If you like plants with brown/green flowers, there will be a a good number of Dutchman’s Pipe (Aristolochia californica) at the sale (look at the habitat table) and wild ginger (Asarum caudatum) which is such a successful ground cover for the north side of the house or in any shady location and Epipactis gigantea, stream orchid. Epipactis is a hardy (to 0 degrees ) orchid found along stream banks and seeps over much of the western U.S. It grows from creeping rhizomes which send up leafy stems that bear a loose cluster of 1” blossoms in shades of tan and green. They require well drained soil, sun and water. They can go dormant in late summer if the water source dries up.

This lack of rain reminds us that CA natives are drought tolerant plants. We live in a Mediterranean climate with 6 hot dry months. Our natives are drought-tolerant and can be used in a water-wise landscape, also called a xeriscape. Manzanitas (Arctostaphylos) and CA wild lilacs (Ceanothus) are shrubs that are native to the chaparral ecosystem and are perfect for this sort of landscaping.

Manzanitas and wild lilacs are evergreen plants that come in sizes from small shrubby ground covers to large (15’) shrubs. Ceanothus, or CA wild lilac, is drought tolerant plant that fits well in the dry garden and in the habitat garden. At the sale we will have Ceanothus ‘Dark Star’, a stunning shrub that has electric blue flowers and grows to 6’x6’. C. griseus horizontalis ‘Yankee Point’ is a ground cover (to 2 ft.) with shiny green leaves and striking light blue flowers.

Manzanitas (Arctostaphylos) are another large group of plants from the chaparral. At the sale, we will have Arctostaphylos canescens ‘Emerald Carpet’ an introduction from Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden that is very popular: A ground cover that forms a dense mat of shining emerald-green leaves, decorated by white/pink flowers in the winter. It requires moderate watering in hot summer areas. Arctostaphylos uva-ursi ‘Pt. Reyes’ is another ground cover manzanita rather similar to the A.c ‘Emerald Carpet’. Another ground cover manzanita will be my favorite A. ‘Carmel Sur’. Another favorite of mine is A. ‘Pacific Mist’ which grows to about 15” to 2’ and has lovely grey foliage. A. manzanita ‘Dr. Hurd’, which is a large shrub with lovely red bark, is a good focal point for the garden. A. densiflora ‘Howard McMinn’ (5’x5’), the most versatile and popular shrub for almost
any location. It is covered with white/pink flower in the spring.

There will be a table featuring habitat plants at the sale. We hope that Sonoma County’s own butterfly expert, Louise Hallberg, will be able to attend to answer all of your butterfly plant questions. Nancy Bauer, the author of The Habitat Garden Book: Wildlife Landscaping for the San Francisco Bay Region, will also be on hand.

PRICING FOR THE SALE

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, October 6 (Casa Grande), Tuesday (Sebastopol), Wednesday (Cal Flora), 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 Ave, SR, 539-9005
2. Cal Flora Nursery, D and Sommers, Fulton, 528-8813

On Friday night October 10, 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 NEW website www.milobaker.cnps.org. We will have the ability to take credit cards.

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 11 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 TIME IN CALIFORNIA

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.

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 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 2013/2014**
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**We invite you to join CNPS**

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☐ Plant Lover………………………………… $100
☐ Patron……………………………………. $300
☐ Benefactor…………………………………. $600
☐ Mariposa Lily…………………………….. $1500

☐ New Member  ☐ Renewal

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