February General Meeting – Tuesday, February 17, 7:30 pm
Stewart Winchester: Plants of the Carrizo (not so) Plain
Join Stew Winchester, instructor of horticulture at Pleasant Hill’s Diablo Valley College, plants person extraordinaire, and veteran leader of field trips to special places, as he takes us on a virtual journey of words and pictures into this remarkable remnant of the California landscape.

There are a few activities happening right before the February General Meeting!
Check out “Chapter Events & Activities” for more details!

March General Meeting – Tuesday, March 16, 7:30 pm
Wilma Follette: Wildflowers of Point Reyes

**Chapter Board Meeting
Milo Baker Chapter Board meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday of every other month at the:
Environmental Center, 404 Mendocino Avenue, Suite A, Santa Rosa
Next meeting: Tuesday, February 10, 2004, 7:00 pm.
Anyone interested in the work of the chapter is welcome to attend!

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President's Corner

It’s been a very full month and I’ve got exciting news. We have two new board members: Marianne Perron and Daniel Murley. Marianne, who is taking on the position of treasurer, has been a CNPS member since the 1970’s. Marianne grew up in Berlin and has always had an interest in gardening. She is a Master Gardener, has a diploma in Horticulture from Merritt College and two Master’s degrees from UC Berkeley (in Business Administration and Social Work). Marianne has kept books for her own landscape gardening business and real estate ventures. Marianne is now retired from what sounds like a very full life. I want to thank Nancy Prouty, our retiring treasurer, for all the work she has done for the chapter, and especially thank her for staying on a few months to help with the turnover of the position!

Daniel Murley has recently retired after 30 years(!) as a Ranger at Salt Point State Park, and then Ranger and archeologist at Fort Ross State Historic Park. Some of you may have had the pleasure of Dan leading you on a wildflower hike at the coast. He is currently the Curator at the Healdsburg Museum. Dan has a real love of native plants and photographs them as well. His experience as an archeologist at Fort Ross has also given him much insight into the history of the Pomo Indians.

Lynn Houser has returned to the board to take on Bob Hass’s position of Conservation Chair. Bob is leaving for personal reasons but hopes to join us again next year. Lynn has experience in the area of conservation our group has been pursuing and we are happy to have her back. Board members Betsy Livingstone and Barney Brady have agreed to be Hospitality Co-Chairs to assist Joan Grosser.

We warmly welcome these new and returning board members and thank them for responding to our requests and filling these positions. We currently have the positions of president and secretary for which we need volunteers to join the board. Please contact me or Ruby if you can help.

Another bit of nice news: I was just informed that the Chapter received a “Certificate of Appreciation” for the Spring Wildflower Festival from the State Board of Directors at the September Chapter Council Meeting. Regrettfully, I missed that presentation, but am pleased our Chapter’s work was recognized by the State.

Reny Parker

Volunteer Opportunities

Milo Baker Chapter needs you!

Call for participation

Spring is almost here! We are preparing for our second annual Spring Wildflower Festival and we need your help to make it another success like last year! Would you like to: Be the first person to greet people at the entrance and sell tickets? Or do you enjoy art and art auctions? Can’t get enough of those CNPS posters, books and T-shirts? Can’t say enough about CNPS? Like kids? Come volunteer at the front gate, in the art auction, at the education table, at the membership table, or at the kids’ table to satisfy your hunger! For front gate and the auction, contact Marcia Johnson at owlsnest@earthlink.net. For posters, books, t-shirts, membership, education, and kids, contact Ruby Herrick, 887-8542 or rdherr@yahoo.com. Hope to see you at the Spring Wildflower Festival, Saturday May 8th at the Luther Burbank Center for the Arts.

Secretary Needed!
The nominating committee (Pauline Haro, Ruby Herrick, and Wendy Born) has been busy searching out members who are willing to be a part of the Milo Baker board. With the positions of Treasurer, Program Chair, and Co-Hospitality Chair filled we are now searching for a Secretary. Duties for this position include: attending the Milo Baker board meetings, preparing the agenda prior to the meetings, taking and distributing notes, and maintaining the chapter archives. If this sounds like a position for you, contact Wendy Born at 829-7519.

Help protect native plants

Are you interested in becoming more involved in protecting Sonoma Country’s precious native plants and their habitat? They need your advocacy. There are lots of ways to help. If you’re not sure how you want to be involved, whether you’re just at the “checking it out” stage or looking for a committed role, you can start by introducing yourself to any of the Board members at the General Meeting. Or give a call to Ruby Herrick at 887-8542, or email her at rdherr@yahoo.com.

Wish List

Want to help out, but don’t have the time to volunteer? How about donating one of the following...
Got books?
If you have any native plant books such as field guides, nature studies, etc. that you’d like to clean out of your closet we’d love to find new owners for them. The Spring Wildflower Festival art auction included books, the sale of which brought in a nice extra amount of money. To donate your books, and get a tax-deduction, bring them to Joan Grosser at the general meetings. Or contact Joan at 781.3854 JRGrosser@aol.com

Got plant lists?
We’d like to collect reliable Sonoma County plant lists from the membership to organize and cross reference for the use of the chapter and interested persons. If you can locate any for us, please contact M.L. at mlml@svn.net

Conservation Report
Restoration/Conservation/Forestry/Invasive Exotics/Political Presence

Photos and Drawings Requested
We still need some images for the chapter's rare plant file, which will contain all of the Sonoma County plants published in the CNPS Inventory. If you are an artist who does descriptive B & W illustrations or a photographer who works in color (either slide or prints) you may be able to help. We have complete lists of all the images we still need if folks want to look through their collections or make new pictures. We do need clear reference images but they don’t have to be pretty.

Some of the plants we need color photos of:
- Allium peninsulare var. franciscanum
- Amorpha californica var. napensis
- Amsinckia lunaris
- Arctostaphylos bakeri ssp. bakeri
- Arctostaphylos bakeri ssp. sublaevis
- Arctostaphylos canescens ssp. Sonomensis
- Arctostaphylos hispidula
- Arctostaphylos manzanita ssp. elegans
- Arctostaphylos stanfordiana ssp. decumbens
- Astragalus rattani var. rattani
- Blennosperma bakeri
- Calamagrostis bolanderi
- Calamagrostis crassiglums
- Calandra breweri
- Calachortus raichei
- Brodiaea californica var. leptandra

Contact Sherrie 869-3930 or Heidi 823-0442 if you have questions, want a list or have pictures we can copy for the files. Thank you.

Chapter Events & Activities

February Speaker: Stewart Winchester
Bordered by the La Panza (west) and Temblor (east) Ranges, the Carrizo Plain is a vestigial home to pronghorn antelope and vernal pools, both now in short supply and distant to most of us. Midway between California’s central coast and the great valley, between San Luis Obispo and Bakersfield, the Carrizo Plain allows the mind and body to wander into history, natural or human-made. Once slated for development, the area is now jointly managed by the Bureau of Land Management, The Nature Conservancy, and the California Department of Fish and Game. In January 2001, publicly held lands in the valley were protected as the Carrizo Plain National Monument. The current lack of human heaviness is indeed uplifting. Distant horizons, silent settings, and wind playing on the endless contours of grass allow one to connect with the past. The foothills are vibrantly colorful tapestries of wildflowers and the valley floor’s alkali flats are stunning with pink mustards and blue delphiniums set in Atriplex and Allenrolfea. The Carrizo, known for San Andreas Fault dramatics on its east side and aboriginal pictographs on the west, is perfectly situated in time and space.

Join Stew Winchester, instructor of horticulture at Pleasant Hill’s Diablo Valley College, plants person extraordinaire, and veteran leader of field trips to special places, as he takes us on a virtual journey of words and pictures into this remarkable remnant of the California landscape.

Join Us for Dinner Before the General Meeting!
We don’t know yet if February speaker Stew Winchester will be with us (we certainly hope so) but our monthly free-form, lots-of-talk dinner should be a good beginning to a memorable evening before the general meeting on February 17th. Join us at 6:00 pm at the Kirin Restaurant at 2700 Yulupa Ave (about a half mile south of the Art and Garden Center) for a co-op Chinese feast. Be sure to be there by 6:00 pm so we can get our orders in by 6:15 pm and get to the meeting on time. Contact Louisa Carter to make sure
Plant ID Before the February General Meeting
Wood Identification: Recognizing Local Wood
Arrive at 6:30, an hour before the February 17th General Meeting and bring specimens of plants you would like to identify. Although I am no expert at identifying wood, I sure enjoyed it in Plant Anatomy Lab! I will bring two excellent R. Bruce Hoadley books, Identifying Wood and Understanding Wood. Have a look in the dissecting microscope and check out some secondary xylem! Some wood and fresh plant specimens will be available if you don’t have any but just want to practice; Hoadley’s identification techniques are different from keying. Bring your dinner if you want to, a hand lens and a copy of the Jepson or Sonoma Co. Flora if you have them. A copy of each and glossaries will be available. The plants are what CNPS is about—come get to know them and some fellow chapter members too! ☞ May Miller

Plant Sale News & Potting Schedule
On December 6, five hardy souls (Kathy Dowkin, Alan Brubaker, Wendy Born, Mary Aldrich, Liz Parsons) gathered at Mary Aldrich’s garden and put 88 Pacific Coast Native Iris (PCN) into gallons cans. Mary’s husband Richard prepared an area under a protective roof for our work and we thank him for that. It took us less than two hours to do the dividing and potting. Alan Brubaker and Wendy Born brought in large clumps of iris from their gardens and we divided them. Sunday, February 28, Liz Parsons’ Garden, Kenwood, 10:30 am: We will be dividing wild ginger (Asarum caudatum), bleeding hearts (Dicentra formosa), stream orchid (Epipactis gigantea), and giant blue wild rye (Levmus glaucus ‘Canyon Prince’). Sunday, May 2, Cal Flora Nursery, Fulton: pot up rooted cuttings Sunday, August 8, site TBA: pot up cuttings of fast growing perennials such as Zauschneria, Salvia, and Mimulus. October 9th is the Fall Plant Sale! Call Liz Parsons at 833-2063 for more information. ☞ Liz Parsons

Chapter Field Trips

January Field Trip Report
Thanks to Judy Robertson’s careful planning, expertise, and the contributions of her friend Jack, the Howarth Park lichen trip was one of our best field trips ever. We had 20 people with hand lenses poring over twigs and tree trunks. I am sure the sweaty joggers who passed us thought we had all taken leave of our senses. I think we only traveled about 10 feet, yet no one seemed to mind. This went on for four hours! I could hardly get them to stop for lunch. Judy had a bad case of laryngitis, but croaked to us as best she could. She gives a workshop on lichens at Sonoma State on Thursday evenings with quality microscopes, for anyone who’d like to attend (for more information, check out “Activities & Events of Interest” below)

February Field Trip
Sunday, February 8th at 10:00 am, we’ll meet at Armstrong Woods’ parking lot to see what’s blooming or fruiting, as in mushrooms. Bring a lunch and a plastic bag to sit on. The first part will be an easy walk on the valley floor, and you can elect whether to continue on to a more strenuous hike. Contact ML, mlml@svn.net, 792-1823 for more details.

French Broom Quest
We are having a dual-purpose field trip to Lake Soulajule on February 28th. The first purpose is our usual one, to have a good time and learn more about native species with a congenial and encyclopedic botanical mind like Peter Warner’s. The second purpose is to help Americorps remove broom to preserve a lovely spring flowering bank adjoining the barbaric tribes of broom. Marin chapter is sending members to take a stab at it, too.

For those of you who haven’t had the opportunity to visit Lake Soulajule, it lies about 15 miles west of Petaluma. The reservoir is hardly ever visited, except by anglers. One side of it has large swaths of invasive thistles. The other side has many native species just beginning to be invaded by broom. Peter found in excess of 245 species when we visited last year. The area also attracts many bird species. It usually takes about an hour to get to the more pristine area, but on this visit, Marin Water District is making arrangements so that we can cut to the chase. This means we’ll be able to reach farther around the lake, and not perspire as much coming back.

Let’s meet February 28th at Noah’s Bagels in the Safeway parking lot on the east side of the freeway, at the Washington St. exit. off 101 at 8:00 am. Bring sturdy boots, a plastic bag to sit on for lunch comfort, and work gloves. Tools to remove broom will be welcomed. Contact ML, mlml@svn.net, 792-1823
March Field Trip – Bring the Kids!

March 20th is the date for parents and children, aged 6 to 12, at Foothill Park in Windsor. Lynn Houser will be leading, and I’ll be bringing up the rear. This trip will have a sign-up list for 20 people, so if you are interested let me know soon. If I don’t get responses in the next two weeks, it will be advertised in the PD. Look for details in the next newsletter or contact ML, mlml@svn.net, 792-1823

Laguna de Santa Rosa Tour

On March 27th, we will be visiting the Laguna de Santa Rosa with Denise Cadman. Denise is the Natural resource specialist for the City of Santa Rosa. Look for more info in the March newsletter.

MORE TO COME!

We have several exciting field trips planned for the upcoming months. A schedule will appear in the next newsletter.

Activities & Events of Interest

Ongoing Lichen Identification Workshops

Darwin Hall, Room 207, Sonoma State University. Join us every 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month, 5 pm to 8:30 pm, for these Lichen ID sessions at SSU. We bring our specimens use the classroom dissecting and compound scopes and a variety of keys to identify them. Be prepared to pay a $2.50 parking fee.

Creek Week: Check Out Local Hike/Bike Trails

The Rohnert Park and Cotati Creeks Council and Sierra Club Redwood Chapter are sponsoring self-guided and docent-led tours of the Crane/Hinebaugh and Copeland Creek bike and hiking trails during Creek Week (the week after Earth Day). A display of old maps, aerial photos, and native plants and fauna can be viewed at the old Teen Center on City Hall Drive near the Rohnert Park Library. Portions of Crane/Hinebaugh Creek and Copeland Creek were chain sawed to the bare earth during last summer’s notorious botched SCWA crew jobs, but are to be replanted with native steelhead-friendly trees and flowers, based on community input. Suggestions from CNPS members on what to plant along these beautiful urban wilderness creeks are welcomed, as well as hints on what is actually there now, in the ecletic mix of plants that have established themselves in and along the creeks since the Endangered Species Act stopped dredging and pesticide applications. Photos, aerials, and maps of these miles-long, little known, urban wilderness parks can be found at: http://rohnertpark.bizhosting.com, http://groups.yahoo.com/group/RPACCC. Suggestions on what to plant can be posted to: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/RPACCC

Annual Docent Training Class

The Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation is now taking applications for our 10-week, 40-hour (total) training in the science, history and lore of the Laguna. Docents lead field trips for 3rd, 4th and 5th grade schoolchildren and teach in classrooms about the wonders of the Laguna de Santa Rosa—the largest fresh water wetland on the North Coast. Docents also lead nature walks and hikes for older students and adults, and participate in ongoing continuing education and special nature activities. It’s a wonderful way to learn about our backyard wilderness and to give to the local community. Trainings take place Monday afternoons 12:30-4:30 from March 15 through May 24th—ten weeks of training by experts in biology, natural history and environmental education. For information and application, please call the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation office at 824-2966 or log onto: www.lagunadesantarosa.org

Who is the Greenest of Them All?

The presidential primary election is approaching - whom will you vote for? Attend this public forum and learn which of these 3 Democratic candidates best represents your interests and views. "Kucinich, Dean or Clark? Your choice for the environment, the economy, and the future." Representatives from each campaign will present their candidate's platforms on issues of concern to the local community; a facilitated question and answer session will follow the presentations. February 10, 7:30-9:30 pm. The Masonic Center, 373 N. Main St., Sebastopol, across from Safeway. Donation of $5 - $20 requested at the door. For more info, contact Wendy Krupnick, 544-4582

The Wayne Roderick Lectures . . .

. . . at the Regional Parks Botanic Garden on Wildcat Canyon Road and South Park Drive (South Park Drive is closed Nov.-March) in Tilden Park, Berkeley, (510) 841-8732, bgarden@ebparks.org, www.nativeplants.org
Saturday Mornings, 10:30 am. Free to the Public. Seating is limited. To be sure of a seat, come early and save a chair.

Saturday, February 7, 10:30 am
Plant Communities of California, Phyllis Faber

Saturday, February 14, 10:30 am
California and East Bay Invasive Plants Update, Bob Case

Saturday, February 21, 10:30 am
California Indian Material Culture, Steve Edwards

Saturday, February 28, 10:30 am
The Bay and Its Creeks the Way They Were: Investigations into the Changing Bay Area Landscape, Robin Grossinger

Articles to Increase Your Knowledge

Vine Hill Manzanita in Pacific Horticulture
Phil Van Soelen has written an article for Pacific Horticulture magazine on our own Vine Hill Manzanita (Arctostaphylos densiflora)! The article will appear in the January/February/March 2004 issue. The Vine Hill Manzanita is the source of some of the most widely planted and adaptable cultivars in California, yet the species is one of the rarest plants in nature. The article deals primarily with the history of the Vine Hill Preserve and horticultural selections of the Vine Hill Manzanita. Check it out!
[Ed note: Look for more info on the Vine Hill Manzanita in upcoming newsletters!]

A Gardener’s Journal: Mulch
When I plant natives or any other plant I like to use mulch to cover the bare earth around my new plants. I continue to add mulch to my plants as they mature. Mulching is good for all soil types and makes gardening much easier by eliminating many chores and problems. Mulching is nature’s way of recycling nutrients. Bare soil looks naked and impoverished to my eye. Mulches save on watering by helping soil retain moisture. They keep the soil from drying out because they prevent dew and water found deep in the soil from escaping. Dew is partially made up of moisture from the air but also is made of condensation of moisture found in underground air pockets. Mulches are good for suppressing weeds. (Of course the mulch must be weed free!) The mulch must be thick enough to prevent existing weeds from germinating. Some tough weeds will still find their way up through the mulch, but these will be weaker for having to make their way to the surface, easy to spot once they surface and easier to remove if surrounded by mulch. Mulches can help regulate root temperatures. They keep plants warmer in winter and cooler in summer. They act as insulation to keep the roots from having to cope with sudden temperature swing thereby reducing plant stress. Mulches will stabilize and improve soil. They can stop compaction and erosion by gently absorbing raindrops. When organic mulches break down they add organic matter to soil that in turn improves soil structure, aeration, water percolation and nutrient distribution. Mulches encourage one of my favorite garden critters, earthworms. Earthworms aerate the soil and enrich it with their castings. You know you have healthy soil if you have earthworms. Organic mulches also increase microbial activity that does important work in soil. Microbes speed up the break down of organic matter to make nutrients available faster to the roots. Mulches can be organic (things that decompose) or inorganic (things that don’t rot). Common organic mulches are hay, straw, compost, redwood bark, leaves, and agricultural by-products like hulls, but can be newspapers or even old cedar shingles. Common inorganic mulches are gravel, plastic and landscape fabric. Obviously some mulches are more attractive, more readily available, less expensive to use and longer lasting.

Usually, the greatest challenge is acquiring weed-free mulch and putting it down in the garden. One source of weed-free straw is Hedgerow Farms, in Winters, California. They grow native grass seed for retail sale. As a by-product they have native grass straw. The straw has some seeds mixed in it, but instead of weed seeds as found in most straw, the Hedgerow Farm straw has native grass seeds as a side benefit. I used a bale of their straw, and now I have native grasses growing, generating straw for my own use. If you go there you can pick out the type of grass straw you want. I chose a grass that is native to Bodega Bay in Sonoma County, blue wild rye (Elymus glaucus). It is a large, wide-leaf bunchgrass, usually tall about 24-55 inches. The seeds heads are long and narrow. It grows in a wide variety of sites and weather conditions. It prefers full sun or partial shade and is found in rich soils of flood plains and riparian areas. It is tolerant to mowing, fire, drought, and short duration flooding. Native blue wild rye is used for grassland and habitat restoration. The straw was very affordable at $5 for a bale. You can contact Hedgerow Farms by phone at 530-662-4570 or email hedgefarm@jps.net

Victoria Wikle
President        open
Vice President  Reny Parker  reny@renyswildflowers.com  894-9100
Secretary        Sheri Emerson  sjemerson@ci.santa-rosa.ca.us  543-4225
Treasurer        Marianne Perron  mariannesp@earthlink.net  887.1362
Membership       Wendy Born  spores@excite.com  829-7519
Newsletter Editor  Debby Zygielbaum  zygie@sonic.net
Program Chair   Daniel Murley  Df47@mcn.org  847.3466
Conservation Chair  Lyn Houser  housers@sonic.net  568-3230
Legislative Chair  Barney Brady  bbrady@pon.net  433-0485
Education        open
Field Trip Coordinator  ML Carle  mlml@svn.net  792-1823
Publicity        Terry Loveton  tloveton@msn.com  829-6824
Plant Sales      Liz Parsons  lizpar8993@aol.com  833-2063
Poster Sales     Jeff Woodward  ..........  765-0245
Book Sales       Colleen Gibbons  ..........  433-4246
Hospitality     Joan Grosser  JRGrosser@aol.com  781-3854
SCCC Rep.        Wendy Krupnick  wendyk@pon.net  544-4582
RRWC Rep.        open
Webmaster        Leha Carpenter  webmaster@cnpsmb.org  874-2899
Directors at Large:  Ruby Herrick  rdherr@yahoo.com  887-8542
open
Chapter Council Delegate  Reny Parker  reny@renyswildflowers.com  894-9100

Newsletter Submissions & Website

Check out the Milo Baker Chapter newsletter on our chapter Web site at:  http://www.cnpsmb.org

Send items for the newsletter to Debby Zygielbaum, zygie@sonic.net
Deadline for inclusion in the March newsletter is February 15, 2004.

Support Our Local Native Plant Nurseries

Appleton Forestry Nursery
(call for appointment)
1369 Tilton Road, Sebastopol
707-823-3776

California Flora Nursery
Somers & D Streets, Fulton
707-528-8813
www.calfloranursery.com

Circuit Rider Productions
(call for appointment)
9619 Redwood Hwy, Windsor
707-838-6641

Mostly Natives Nursery
27235 Highway 1, Tomales
707-878-2009
www.mostlynatives.com

North Coast Native Nursery
(call for appointment)
2710 Chileno Valley Road, Petaluma
707-769-1213
www.northcoastnativernursery.com

Wayward Gardens
1296 Tilton Road, Sebastopol
707-829-8225

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THE CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY is a statewide non-profit organization of amateurs and professionals with a common interest in California’s native plants. The Society, working through its local chapters, seeks to increase understanding of California’s native flora and to preserve this rich resource for future generations. Membership is open to all. Membership includes *Fremontia*, a quarterly journal with articles on all aspects of native plants, the *Bulletin*, a quarterly statewide report of activities, and the Milo Baker Chapter newsletter. WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US.

Name________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Address______________________________________________________________________________________________________________

City_______________________________State_______Zip_____________Phone_____________________Email_______________________

CHAPTER AFFILIATION: ☐ Milo Baker □ Other_____________________________________(County)

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY: □ Student, Retired, Limited Income $20 □ Plant Lover $100
☐ Individual or Library $35 □ Patron $250
☐ Family or Group $45 □ Benefactor $500
☐ Supporting $75 □ Angel $1000

Please make check payable to: THE CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Mail membership application to: CNPS, 2707 K Street, Suite 1, Sacramento, CA 95816