September General Meeting
Tuesday, September 21st, 7:30 pm

Seed Packaging Workshop

It's time once again for our annual Seed Packaging Workshop!

Join us to help label and pack up those seeds you've been collecting for our Fall Plant Sale.

Please call Wendy, 707.829.7519, ahead of time with what you will be bringing so that appropriate labels will be ready.

Join Us for Dinner Before the General Meeting!
Come to dinner at our monthly free-form, lots-of-talk dinner before the general meeting on September 21st. 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 May Miller, 538.4551, maygmiller@aol.com to make sure we'll have the right size table.

October General Meeting – Tuesday, October 19th, 7:30 pm

TBA

*General meetings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at Luther Burbank Art & Garden Center, 2050 Yulupa Avenue, Santa Rosa

**Milo Baker Chapter Board meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday nine months of the year at the Environmental Center, 404 Mendocino Ave, Suite A, Santa Rosa. Next meeting is September 14th. Anyone interested in the work of the chapter is welcome to attend!
President's Corner

I am writing this from Portland, Oregon, being here to attend a funeral for a family member. The passing of a loved one or friend always brings home one more time how precious life is and how short our time is here. My message is short and probably one you've heard many times but it never hurts to hear it again, enjoy life and its bounties while you can. Make each day as pleasant as possible. Smell the flowers!

Reny Parker

Volunteer Opportunities

Milo Baker Chapter needs you!

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 to Milo Baker Chapter? Donations are tax deductible and make you feel good, too.

- Free-standing umbrella(s)
- Adding machine
- Small calculators

Got pots?

Milo Baker NEEDS YOUR GALLON POTS!

Every year our plant sale uses almost one thousand gallon pots. Please recycle your old pots with the Milo Baker Chapter. Call Liz Parsons, 707.833.2063 or Mary Aldrich, 707.539.9005 or bring them to the monthly meeting. Please do NOT take them to Cal Flora in Fulton as they have no more space!!!

Thanks!

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

Chapter Events & Activities

Chapter Picnic Report

Our potluck at Alan Brubaker’s gorgeous garden was a huge success! Not only was the venue and the weather outstanding, the food was a gourmet smorgasbord. Gary Hundt brought us slides from the recent field tips to the Siskiyous, and Dr. Keith Wagnon showed slides of California natives.

Also, someone left a nice tupperware at the chapter potluck. Contact M.L. at mlml@svn.net if you don’t know Alan’s number.

Chapter Picnic Honored Dr. Keith Wagnon

Dr. Keith Wagnon is a botanist and longtime member of the Milo Baker chapter of the California Native Plant Society. When Keith was born, his parents lived in Douglas Arizona near the actively contested border of Mexico. Arizona was a hot spot for mining ventures at that time. His father worked for a smelting company. The government issued weapons to the denizens of the town to protect themselves from border raiders. When he was 5 years old, his family had had enough and moved to Sebastopol, a place Keith’s dad had evidently admired in his wanderings as a young man seeking his fortune. He had set out for the new Yukon goldfields from the Texas horse ranch where he grew up, but ended up herding cattle to market in California. They bought property on what now is Wagnon Road. At first they hired out as pickers. They planted mammoth blackberries for a quick harvest, and built a house from redwood milled nearby. They planted apples for the future. Keith worked on the farm and attended Spring Hill Elementary School (a round trip
of 6 miles; at least it didn’t snow . . .) After graduating from 8th grade, he attended Analy High. It was the depression and times were hard. His family thought he would take over the farm in time, but Keith had other ideas. He had always been interested in nature, and knew the common names of the plants in his area. When he was a teenager, his older brother who was studying cattle behavior at Davis, gave him a copy of the first Jepson. By the time he decided to become a forester and attend Santa Rosa Junior College, he was already on his way to becoming a botanist – though he may not have known it at the time. In the course of his studies, he met Milo Baker, our chapter’s namesake, and his life took another turn. (Louise Hallberg - of butterfly garden fame, and Ruth Haas were also students of Milo Bakers during Keith’s years at the JC.) We can imagine how delighted Milo Baker must have been to have a student already unafraid of the Jepson.

Milo Baker, our namesake, was a dedicated and accomplished botanist, and at one time, president of the California Botanical Society (When you see a plant named bakerii, that’s our Milo.) Keith and Vanette Bunyan were Milo Baker’s devoted students, although Vanette was a student at an earlier time. Keith met Vanette when she was illustrating a publication on violets for Milo. They went on many plant collection trips with Milo Baker. Keith was his assistant at the JC herbarium. Every year the JC had a wildflower show, and Keith scouted out many of the specimens when he was enrolled. He met the famous botanist Alice Eastwood at the flower show one year. Keith helped Milo out on his Kenwood garden on Adobe Road, pruning his trees, and weeding Milo’s prized violet collection. Keith also worked at the Luther Burbank home to pay his way through college. Luther Burbank’s wife, who was living in the house then, gave him a scholarship for his further education. Keith maintained his friendship with Milo Baker until Milo Baker’s death at the age of 90 in 1960. He collected plants for him and visited Milo often. Milo left Keith his books.

After Milo died, Vanette and Keith arranged and carried out the transfer of Milo Baker’s collection of close to 13,000 plants, many of which were collected by Keith, to the herbarium at Sonoma State, where they are now. Many of the specimens had never been identified and cataloged. The job fell to Vanette and Keith. This began their association with the botanists at the California Academy of Sciences, Thomas Howell (of Marin and Sonoma Flora) for one. But before all that came to pass, Keith had to deal with being a young man during World War II. Keith spent those years staring down the barrel of a microscope as a bacteriologist, instead of staring down the barrel of a gun, because of an eye injury. Keith diagnosed many a disease brought back by soldiers from the front.

When the war was over, Keith went on to Cal Berkeley and the University of Michigan to earn his doctorate studying grasses. His Bromopsis key was used in the Munz Flora. He was hired as a plant pathologist by the state of California, Department of Agriculture and spent much of his time ferreting out the causes of diseases in various food crops such as Pierce’s disease. Keith also spent a year in Turkey working for the UN to help the Turkish people modernize their agriculture. Although the use of methyl bromide is suspect these days, it was a major breakthrough for the control of soil diseases when Keith was working on this project.

Whenever Keith had time, he was out in the California wild country photographing and keying plants! When he retired and moved to Santa Rosa from Sacramento, he went out botanizing with his friends Jimmy Vale a UC physicist, and Walter and Irja Knight, knowledgeable amateur botanists. Walter and Irja Knight, as you may know, are co-authors of Sonoma Flora with Thomas Howell, Catherine Best and Mary Wells of Cal Academy. You can find Keith’s name as the identifying botanist in many places in the book. Keith went on trips with the well-known botanists Ledyard Stebbins. and Wayne Roderick, and on the early field trips with our fledgling chapter.

For several years Keith led the Monday Walkers on trips to sites in Marin and Sonoma Counties. He was my first contact with the native plant society. Keith proved to be a kind and generous man. He wrote up plant lists for us and answered our endless questions. He never lost his patience. I don’t know how many times I asked him what a hedge nettle was. He was kind enough not to mention it. Those of us who have been regular Monday Walkers all have books Keith has given us. We are all deeply grateful to him for what he has taught us. Keith has taken thousands of beautiful slides of California native plants. All of them are carefully documented as to species and location. Many of them will be featured in a book CNPS is publishing on redwood forests and associated areas.

ML Carle
**Plant Sale News**

On August 8 a very successful potting workshop was held at Shone Farm. The participants were: Mary Aldrich, Alan Brubaker, Victoria Wikle, Mary Anne Defosse, and Wendy Born. The group worked so rapidly that in a little over two hours over 550 plants were placed in gallon containers! Shooting Star Propagation donated many rooted cuttings of perennials and shrubs. The plants are currently growing at SRJC’s Shone Farm greenhouse under the care of Wendy Krupnick. The Chapter thanks everyone involved in this huge final effort before the plant sale on October 9. Special thanks to Alan and Mary for conducting the workshop in my absence!

The member survey showed that the plant sale is very popular with members. The sale is a wonderful opportunity for us all to work together, get to know each other, and to add new plants to our gardens. This newsletter includes the plant sale flyer with a stipple drawing of *Asarum caudatum*, wild ginger, by our member Claire Etienne. Please place the flyer in a prominent place in your neighborhood so we will get good local advertising. Tell your friends and plan to attend.

The success of our May and August potting workshops insures that we will have plenty of plants for our sale. There will be many shrubs: *Arctostaphylos* 'Howard McMinn', *A. Emerald Carpet*, and *A. 'Pt. Reyes'; *Cneorothus 'Yankee Point'; Ribes sanguinum var. glutinosum* (pink flowering currant); *Rhamnus californica* (coffeeberry); and two species of shrubby monkeyflower, *Mimulus bifidus* (azalea-flowered monkeyflower) and *M. aurantiacus* (common goldenflowered monkeyflower) and many shrubby sages such as *Salvia clevelandii* 'Winifred Gillman', *S. clevelandii* 'Alan Chickering', *S. leucophylla* 'Pt. Sal', and the very successful ground cover, *S. 'Bee's Bliss'* (a hybrid of *S. sonomensis* and *S. apiana*). There will be some delightful herbaceous perennials such as *Penstemon heterophyllus*, *Achillea borealis* 'Pink Island Form', *Asarum caudatum* (wild ginger), several varieties of *Epilobium* (Zauschneria), lots of PCN iris, and *Dentica formosa* (bleeding heart). Vines will include *Clematis ligusticifolia* and *Aristolochia californica* -- great additions to any garden!

Once again we have ordered bulbs from Brent and Becky’s Bulbs. After three years experience, we know which of their bulbs grow well in our Sonoma County gardens. We ordered our favorites. Look for *Triteleia ixioides* 'Starlight' has an umbel of yellow star-like flowers. It is not native to Sonoma County, but the bulbs that we purchased last year were so successful and beautiful, that I wanted to offer them again. Harvest *Brodiaea* or *Triteleia laxa* 'Queen Fabiola', (variety 'Queen Fabiola' has large dark blue flowers) grows in Sonoma County and blooms in early summer at the same time as the *Calochortus*. We ordered two types of *Calochortus -- C. luteus* 'Golden Orb' (native to Sonoma County) and *C. superbis*. *Calochortus* grow in open grassy areas and are perfect for a sunny spot in that garden that doesn’t get much summer water. The Firecracker *Brodiaea* or *Dichelostennum ida-maia* is a spectacularly showy plant with clusters of showy, deep red, tubular shaped flowers. There will also be the beautiful blue Camas lily (*Camassia quamash*). Every year our member Vicky Wilson harvests our own special Sonoma County *Brodiaea elegans* from her Windsor garden. (Thanks to Vicky for all her hard work.)

The bulbs will be at the seed and bulb table that is located on the left as you walk into the south entrance of the dining room at the Vet’s Building. The seeds will be packaged at the September meeting so it is too early to know exactly what we will be offering, but expect some surprises.

This is just a partial listing of the plants that will be at the sale. There is always something new and unusual at the sale! If you helped with the sale last year, Judy Hartwig (707.823.1821) will be calling you soon to ask you to volunteer again this year. Give her a call if you are new and want to help. This is a huge group effort and WE NEED YOU!!! Mark your calendar for October 8 and 9, which are the two big days. On Friday afternoon, the 8th, we will move all of the plants into the Santa Rosa Vet’s Hall and on Saturday we will sell them. Our last 6 sales have been spectacularly successful and since our members are our best customers, please plan to come early and shop late!! In the October newsletter there will be information on the plant collection centers; if you have questions contact Liz Parsons at 707. 833.2063 or lizpar8993@aol.com or call Mary Aldrich at 707.539.9005.

*Liz Parsons*

**State Meeting at Walker Creek Ranch**

**September 10-11, 2004**

Plan to come out to the rolling hills of Marin County’s Walker Creek Ranch (Marin Office of Education) to meet members of other CNPS chapters, state office staff, board members, and program directors, here for the Board and Chapter Council meetings. The focus will be on Conservation (usual
for September), with the Marin, Napa Valley, and Yerba Buena chapters joining us in hosting. The Conservation meeting will be on Friday night, and the Chapter Council meeting all day Saturday.

There are little things we could use help with, like getting wine and beer donations, driving older members who need a ride, and helping folks get settled in on Friday. If you want to attend and need a ride, give me a ring. If you want to help out, please contact me at 707.568.3230 or housers@sonic.net. For reservations, call the state CNPS office at 916.447.2677.

Lynn Houser, Conservation Chair

Chapter Field Trips

Plant Nerd Field Trip?
Hey Plant Nerds!!
I'm working on getting us a visit to the herbarium with one of the professors at Sonoma State. There are at least 13,000 native plant specimens there. If you would be interested, please email me if possible mml@svn.net, or TRY to call me at 707.792.1823 (good luck!) - or drop me a postcard at 9407 F Old Redwood Hwy, Penngrove, CA 94951. I'll get back to you as soon as I succeed (if I do).

ML Carle, Field Trip Organizer

Siskiyou Field Trip Report

On Saturday afternoon, July 17, 2004, a group of CNPS adventurers/botanists/photographers met east of Crescent City in the small town of Hiouchi, gateway to the Smith River Recreation Area. Peter Warner led the group with Pat Chan, Ann Howald, Jessica Wilson, Hesh Kaplan, Alan Brubaker, Vishnu, Gary Hundt and I. We traversed some miles of dirt road to our first camping area near High Divide. First botanical excitement came along the way with hanging gardens of Darlingtonia californica, aka California pitcher plant or cobra lily. Many other plants were eagerly identified by our expert botanists. Next morning we identified more plants and new digital cameras were put to use. Afternoon saw us miles more down a steep dirt road and enjoying a dip in the Smith River with beautiful scenery all around. Next day we backtracked to Hiouchi again for supplies, and then took Knopki Creek Road to our next campsite at Whiskey Lake. At an altitude of probably over 6,000 feet, we were thrilled to see our lake was really a meadow filled with great beautiful patches of Downingia bachigalupii or Bach's downingia. Other highlights of the road in were Lilium pardalinum ssp. volloni, or Vollmer's tiger lily, and Cypripedium californicum, or California lady’s slipper. The latter was so inspiring to everyone that all cameras were employed. We met Picea breweriana, weeping spruce, and Chamaecyparis lawsoniana, Port Orford cedar. Sanger Lake provided a great swim and more plant treasures. Evening campfires with great guitar and singing by Peter (Thanks, Peter!) and plenty of good cheer (that was passed around) when we enjoyed hilarious slide shows from Gary and his laptop computer. This was also a great way to review the plants and learn about what we had seen each day and to laugh and laugh. (Thanks, Gary!) Even we had a few lessons on the stars one night. All in all a well-rounded and easy going trip we all enjoyed. (Did I mention a few mosquitos, a nasty tick, and the sight of a huge rattlesnake?)

Adele Wikner

Activities & Events of Interest

Friends of the Petaluma Wetlands
Would you like to lead tours for adults and/or school groups around Petaluma’s public wetlands? A new DOCENT TRAINING COURSE will be offered on four consecutive Saturday mornings (8:30 AM - noon) starting on October 16th. Each class will begin with a two-hour classroom session and end with a one-hour walk around the wetlands at Shollenberger Park. We need docents for both weekdays and weekends. Bilingual skills helpful but not required. If you would like to become part of this fun, rewarding activity call Bob Dyer, 707.763.2934 or Gerald Moore 707.763.3577.

“From Poppy to Prickly Pear” Returns
We are pleased to report that the next showing of our “From Poppy to Prickly Pear: California’s Native Plants” photography exhibition will be opening at the Sonoma Country Day School on September 13. There will be a wine and cheese reception on a date as yet to be decided. Anyone interested in attending, please email Rosalie and Marcus Wardell at wardellphoto@earthlink.net. Our show at the Capitol was extended by six weeks, so our schedule has been subject to change.
**Articles to Increase Your Knowledge**

**Why Should CNPS Care About Genetically Engineered Organisms?**

*An open letter to State CNPS and the Milo Baker Chapter from CNPS members Wendy Krupnick, organic farmer, and Bob Hass, former Chapter Conservation Chair.*

This letter is an appeal to the CNPS state board, and to the individual members of the Milo Baker chapter, to take a stand against introducing genetically engineered organisms in California.

The mission statement of CNPS is clear—we are dedicated to “conserve [native plants] and their habitats through education, science, advocacy, horticulture, and land stewardship.” The risk to habitat and to many natives themselves through genetic engineering is as real as any bulldozer or invasive exotic plant.

We are not a broad-based environmental group like the Sierra Club, which is taking a strong anti-GE position on environmental, scientific, health, and political grounds. (See the Aug/Sept issue of Redwood Needles, the Redwood Chapter’s newsletter.) But even if we only look at the issue from the point-of-view of what biological effects these GE plants are having on local plants and the ecosystems that support them—we can see that drastic changes are certain. The only thing that is unclear is the long-range implications of such changes.

We know this by looking at the places GE crops have been grown around the world.

In the prairies of Saskatchewan, runaway biotech genes are a top environmental problem. Not only has the herbicide-resistant canola escaped the fields, it has crossed with wild mustards to produce “superweeds” that aggressively invade new areas and may not succumb to even the strongest herbicides.

In Mexico, where maize first was domesticated some 6,500 years ago and has evolved with adaptation to the local ecosystems, GE corn has crossed with the native varieties. It is creating corn that doesn’t work in those niches and is destroying farmers’ ability to select what is most adapted to their needs.

Biotech companies want to grow GE lawn grass, which is herbicide resistant, in California. In every case where GE crops have been grown, there have been “escapes,” “mistakes,” and contamination of other crops and areas have occurred. Do we want GE grass on our list of invasive exotics?

Rice is another crop slated for GE production, and studies have shown the modified genes to transfer through the wind to a common weed, red rice weed.

And what about the insects that feed on the modified plants? A study of lacewings that fed on “corn worms” that were feeding on GE corn showed greatly increased mortality to the lacewings. In addition, soil microorganisms are changed when they interact with the roots of modified plants. What does that mean for future vegetation or the fertility of the soil? It is all interconnected out there.

We already have enough threats to our native species. California cannot afford to engage in further experimentation until extensive, rigorous research is conducted to determine the long-term environmental and health impacts of each GE organism. In science, this conservative approach is often called the precautionary principle, and at the very least, state CNPS and local chapters should take a position on GE organisms based on this principle.

Many counties around the state are taking a stand to keep GE crops out of their area. We urge state CNPS to formulate a policy on this issue, and encourage members in local chapters to become involved by voicing their views publicly, both to state CNPS and in their own communities, and by giving support to groups already working on this issue.

To get involved in Sonoma County, please call 707.823.4410, or visit www.gefreesonoma.org.
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**Newsletter Submissions & Website**

*Check out the Milo Baker Chapter newsletter on our chapter website at: [http://www.cnpsmb.org](http://www.cnpsmb.org)*

Send submissions for the newsletter to Debby Zygielbaum, zygie@sonic.net

Deadline for inclusion in the October newsletter is September 15, 2004.

**NOTE:** For newsletter subscription questions or problems, please contact Wendy Born, spores@excite.com

**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](http://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](http://www.mostlynatives.com)

- **North Coast Native Nursery**
  - (call for appointment)
  - 2710 Chileno Valley Road, Petaluma
  - 707-769-1213
  - [www.northcoastnativennursery.com](http://www.northcoastnativennursery.com)

- **Wayward Gardens**
  - 1296 Tilton Road, Sebastopol
  - 707-829-8225
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  ≤ Bristlecone $1000

Please make check payable to: THE CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
Mail membership application to: CNPS, 2707 K Street, Suite 1, Sacramento, CA 95816