May General Meeting: Flora of the Laguna
Tuesday, May 15th, 7:30pm

The Laguna de Santa Rosa watershed is home to a rich biodiversity of species. We will take a virtual tour with Denise Cadman through the wide array of plant habitats found in and around the Laguna such as our majestic valley oak forests. We will meet our local floral inhabitants, including a number of special status plants protected by federal, state or local government. Denise will also explore the many introduced species that are invasive at certain times and locations.

Denise Cadman is a natural resource specialist for the City of Santa Rosa, working on the reclamation properties in the Laguna. Denise also teaches biology at the Junior College and operates a draft horse powered farm in the Laguna with her family.

Join us for Dinner before the meeting! Let’s gather with our speaker at the Kirin Restaurant before the April General Meeting. We meet at 6 pm. Please call or e-mail Lynn Colborn at 829-9128 or lcolborn@earthlink.net by the day before the meeting.

Come to Plant I.D. Hour at 6:30, an hour before the May 15th General Meeting, and bring specimens of plants you want to identify. Please see page 3 for more information on plant ID hour.

June General Meeting: Rincon Ridge; A Botanical Treasure
Tuesday, June 19th, 7:30pm

Our own President, Lynn Houser will be presenting us with a meeting dedicated to one of the chapter’s preserves: Rincon Ridge. The preserve is an area of beautiful chaparral and woodland plants. The presentation will highlight the representing local flora, plus chapter efforts in conservation and education.

Donate to Support Our Native Plants

A New Feature on the CNPS website makes it easier to make donations regularly with several options! Go on the web to www.cnps.org and you’ll find a brand new poppy icon that links you to a page where you can donate to CNPS in installments: monthly, yearly, or whatever suits your schedule and budget! This feature was developed through the Membership committee, chaired by Arvind Kumar on the State Board of Directors, at the March meeting. Several members wished it could be “as easy as KQED” to make regular contributions to CNPS; now it is! Tell your friends, and check it out today. Your donations are tax-deductible and can make a real difference for our flora. Thank you!

Lynn Houser

*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 7:00pm, 2nd Tuesday nine months of the year, Environmental Center, 55 Ridgeway Avenue, Suite A, Santa Rosa. Next meeting is May 8th. Anyone interested in the work of the chapter is welcome to attend!
President's Corner

The Diogenes’ lanterns are coming out in the woodlands and forests and spring may get just a little more rain this year to keep the blooms going. The higher elevations in the county benefited from some snow and extra precipitation and have had wonderful displays. You can see the rare fawn lilies (Erythronium helenae) from the April 7th Audubon-CNPS hike at the Mayacamas Sanctuary on at Gary Hundt’s website, www.muddyknees.com if you missed them. Gary has been an incredible asset to the chapter with his photography and constant presence out in the field. Thanks Gary!

I would also like to acknowledge John Herrick, who continues tirelessly as Conservation Chair until another chapter member steps up to help (will it be you?)! John has done an incredible job working with the county, landowners, agencies, neighbors, and chapter members to conserve quality habitat like Cunningham Marsh and Pitkin Marsh, for example. The law is all we have to protect plants: come learn how. Your help is needed to review and comment on incoming proposals that arrive daily in the chapter mailbox, and create tomorrow’s successes. I can preview items and forward them to you. Please contact me if you can help with Conservation or any other chapter role.

Right now we especially need a Newsletter Editor, which is a great opportunity to educate our 500 members. Heide Keeble has done an excellent job and needs a break; she can show you the procedure.

Ask what you can do for the Milo Baker Chapter and our native plants, while you enjoy the spring bloom! Thank you for supporting CNPS.

P 568-3230 or housers@sonic.net

Lynn Houser

Plant Sale News

Potting Workshops: We will be gathering at Cal Flora on May 13 at 10 am

We will have our traditional Mother's Day potting workshop at Cal Flora on Sunday, May 13 at 10 AM. We will be putting liners of slow growing shrubs and trees into gallon containers. We need members who will help at the workshop and members who will take the plants home to grow until the sale on October 13. On Saturday, August 11, at 11 AM, we will have our second potting workshop of the year at Shone Farm. We will do the Salvias and Zauschnerias and other fast growing perennials. Call me at 833-2063 if you have time to help with these projects. If you are growing plants for the sale and need soil or fertilizer call Mary Aldrich, 539-9005 and arrange to pick some up at her Santa Rosa home. Remember to collect seeds of spring flowering annuals and perennials.

Collect in our garden and on the trail. We need more seeds for the sale. It is never too early to think of our plant sale.

Liz Parsons

Chapter Field Trips

Serpentine Plants with Roger Raiche, Coleman Valley Road, Occidental
Saturday, June 9th, 9am-1pm

We'll join botanist Roger Raiche for a stroll on Pieter Meyers' conservation easement protected property in Occidental. For those of you missing out on the Cedars walk (and I know there are some sad folks out there!), this is another opportunity to walk with Roger on serpentine. We'll lunch at Ocean Song. Meet in Occidental at the public parking lot on Main Street, just behind the tennis courts, next to the health clinic. If you're coming from the east, take Graton Rd into Occidental. Turn left onto Main Street (before you get to the stop sign on Bohemian Hwy) and the parking lot is on your right. Parking is limited on Coleman Valley Road, so we'll carpool from there. Contact: Beth Robinson, bethysmail@gmail.com or 490-4951.

Beth Robinson

Chapter Activities

Cunningham Marsh Workday
Sunday, May 20, 2007, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

1460 Big Cedar Lane (off Lone Pine Road, 2nd house from end), Sebastopol

Extend Earthday and help unique and precious Cunningham Marsh in South Sebastopol. We will be hand weeding around the rare Pitkin lily, making screens for oak seedlings, using a weed eater on Purple velvet grass, cutting non-native white poplars (bring hand saws). The native azaleas should be in bloom, by themselves worth the trip. Wear long sleeves and long pants. Bring water, lunch, gloves, and hand picks or your favorite weeding tool. If anyone has a gas powered
Plant ID Hour – Where Even the Experts Get Stumped!
Just call it “Nemo-sport”: a Baby White-eyes (Nemophila menziesii ssp. atomaria) apparent hybrid with black-purple coloring that we could not key properly last year at the Mayacamas Mountains Audubon Sanctuary. This year in the same area the plants were all white (no spots).

Arrive at 6:30, an hour before the May 15th General Meeting, and bring specimens of plants you want to identify. Every spring we search our brains for the names to our familiar and not so commonly seen native plants. After a few weeks out in the field and time with the Flora and hand lens, the names come back to us. However, there are more plants blooming every day! Come get a quick refresher course at Plant I.D. Hour or lend a hand on the mystery plants.

At Plant ID Hour you can see plants of interest from the local area, view them through a dissecting microscope, and discover the unique characteristics of our many native species. I really enjoy helping you work through the keys in The Jepson Manual and A Sonoma County Flora or just answering questions. I also bring Munz and some other field guides. Keying can be fun, even when you get stuck! The best-learned plants are those learned with friends. You can bring your dinner if you want to, a hand lens and a copy of Jepson or Sonoma Co. Flora if you have them. A copy of each will be available. I also have L.H. Bailey’s Manual of Cultivated plants (my first manual used to key plants) for your latest garden mystery or escape. Spring is here and it’s going fast, so stop by and smell the flowers.

Lynn Houser

Invasive Plant Corner
Freshwater Ornamental Aquarium and Water Garden Plants with Too Much Attitude
I got interested in this aspect of invasive plants because of an e-mail I got from Frank Zwolinski, a member, pond owner, retired JC faculty member and founder of the JC’s Summer Repertory Theater. He has a large pond in Petaluma, completely full of Azolla, probably filiculoides, a tiny native fern. He says it is so thick the ducks can almost walk on it. He wanted to know how he could control it without poisoning the plants. He thinks ponds should have a little blue in them. Don't you? The bad news was that even if he drained the pond and started over, it would be back on some duck's feet. The good news wasn't so good. Azolla, a nitrogen fixer, is great fertilizer, but requires special tools and a strong back to harvest. Of course the reason our little native fern was so thick was that there were too many nutrients in the pond. Duck poop? My curiosity piqued about water plants, I went on line and found lists of invasive plants used in aquaria and ornamental ponds. Next I looked at what the on-line nurseries were selling. Invasives are what they were selling. One site specially featured four pond plants: Water hyacinth, Parrot's feather, Water lettuce, and Sensitive plant. All the really bad ones. Sensitive plant isn't a threat here, but is in Hawaii and Florida, because it likes it warm - so far. So why are they so bad? When they are dumped into waterways, or hitch a ride on birds, or escape when ponds are flooded, they cause economic and wildlife damage. Besides crowding out natives, they make it impossible for fish to spawn, and turtles to lay their eggs. Animals that evolved to interact with natives cannot find them anymore. The invasives clog waterways and dams, interfering with recreation as well. The infamous Ludwigia is also sold for ornamental ponds! So if you are among the convinced, what to do? Educate others: When disposing of aquatic plants, dry them out and burn them - kindling? Don't take them to a pond and dump them, and don't compost them. Don't ask the dealer whether the plant is invasive - the aquatic trade in general is not the most enlightened - YET. Go on line and check out aquatic invasives. CalIPC is a good site and will have another "Don't Plant a Pest" brochure on aquatics out soon. Weed Science Society of America is informative: Landscapeonline.com has an excellent recent article, "Keeping Aquatic Plants in their Place," written by UC Davis researchers. It’s got even more "don'ts"!

M.L. Carle  mml@svn.net

Items of Interest
Identifying and Appreciating the Native and Naturalized Grasses of California

Saturday and Sunday June 9-10, 2007, 8:30am to 4:00pm
Pt. Reyes Station, CA
This is a 2-day class and field course for the beginner. The theme of this workshop is “Grasses are fun and easy to identify”. Our goal is to learn the basic skills of identifying grasses. On the first day, we will learn about California’s grassland ecology, the qualities of specific native grasses for restoration, and become skilled at recognizing the basic groups and common species
through our work with plant samples in the classroom setting. We will review both the old Tribe method of identifying grasses as well as the artificial key methodology focusing on the important distinguishing traits. A valuable class syllabus binder and a basic key will be provided. The next day, we will explore the Point Reyes’ native grasslands, rich with a diverse assemblage of both native and naturalized grasses, and make use of our new understanding and skills. Bring a 10X hand lens, notebook, scotch tape and any field guides to grasses you may have. Recommended texts are the Jepson Manual, the Hitchcock Manual, and Beecher Crampton’s Grasses in California (U.C. Press). Information and directions will be sent with paid registration. Sign up early, the workshop is limited to 35 people. Deadline: June 1, 2007

Instructor: David Amme, Wildland Vegetation Program Manager, EBRPD
Registration fee: $ 220/members; $ 260 nonmembers
Visit http://www.cnga.org/calendar.php for registration information. Click on “Spring 2007 Workshop Series” and download the PDF file to get to the registration form. For more information, contact Jan Bridges, Administrative Director, CNGA by phone: (530) 759-8458; fax: (530) 753-1553; or e-mail: admin@cnga.org.

Friends of the Jepson Herbarium Weekend Workshops
The Friends of the Jepson Herbarium are pleased to present a broad range of topics for the Weekend Workshop series this year. There are one-day workshops in Berkeley, as well as multiple-day field workshops. Please visit http://ucjeps.berkeley.edu/workshops/2007/index.html for the complete list of workshops, details for each, and registration information.

Mattole River Stewardship Collaborative Volunteer Workdays.

Sonoma County Park Pass Promotion
Sonoma County Regional Parks will hold the ‘Park Pass Promotion’ April 1 - June 30, 2007. The Park Pass offers unlimited day use parking in all 43 Sonoma County Regional Parks for a full 12 months. Park enthusiasts get much more for their money with the special offers available only during this 3-month promotion, with discounts and freebies from many local businesses. Check out http://www.sonoma-county.org/parks/releases/07_releases/07_passpromo.htm for the entire list of offers. ‘Day Use’ passes (individual or family) cost $55, ‘Golden Years’ passes (60+ yrs.) cost $25, and ‘Access’ passes (for the permanently disabled) cost $15. During the promotion,
the Day Use & Golden Years Passes are available at all 12 Longs Drugs stores in Sonoma County, and REI-Santa Rosa, Sonoma Outfitters, Rincon Cyclery and the Bike Peddler/NorCal Bike Sport in Santa Rosa, Bodega Bay Surf Shack, Sebastopol Hardware Center, or at any staffed Regional Park entry station. Day Use passes may also be purchased online at www.sonoma-county.org/parks. Access passes are available only through the parks’ main office.
For more information, call (707) 565-2041 weekdays.

Gardening With Natives: Heuchera
Alum root and coral bells are species of the genus Heuchera. Heucheras are sometimes overlooked because they are small, but still beautiful and tough evergreen plants, often with interesting leaves. They perform well in gardens with good drainage, also in containers and rock gardens. They can make a lovely border for a walking path because they are evergreen and the leaves are quite attractive. Planted in a large group they are showy when in bloom. The bloom period is usually in the spring but some hybrids bloom into the fall. They can be planted in full sun in cooler regions but do well in shade and partial shade elsewhere.

Heuchera is pronounced, HEW-ker-uh. Gardeners have struggled with the name so you hear it called alum root, coral bells and other common names but still many people have trouble knowing what plants are being discussed. So call them heucheras.
Heucheras provide nectar to hummingbirds. The hummers visit regularly when they are in bloom. Deer usually leave them alone. Heucheras have been actively cultivated and now there is a huge selection of hybrids that come in a range of sizes from less than one foot tall up to five feet tall. There is also a wide choice of flower and leaf color. The flowers come in white and in shades of pink and red. Many also have interesting marbled, scalloped, ruffled colorful leaves that make the plant worthwhile just for the leaves.
There are several species of heucheras to choose from. I will tell you about two that may do well in our area. Heuchera maxima, Island Alum Root, grow to about two feet tall with a three foot spike of dainty whitish to pinkish flowers in the spring. This native to the Channel Islands has heart-shaped dark green leaves 3-5 inches across and is very drought tolerant. It can be planted under oak trees and it makes a very pretty ground cover. I’d plant it in a mass with the plants about two feet apart and then add a lot of mulch to minimize the need to water.

Heuchera micrantha, Alum Root, is a slightly smaller species, usually one foot tall with two foot flower stalks of dainty creamy white flowers. A healthy mature plant can have about a hundred flower spikes. It is native to an area ranging from California to British Columbia. The roundish hairy leaves are toothed and lobed growing to about 1-3 inches across. It is a good choice for a shady spot with good drainage, but regular moisture.
If you would like to see a collection of photos of Heuchera from various locations and photographers, enter Heuchera as the scientific name at the website http://calphotos.berkeley.edu/

Victoria Wikle

Feature Plant for May
Napa False Indigo (Amorpha californica var. napensis) Leaves are similar to honey locust, in the Pea family. Look for this deciduous rare plant on northeast-facing slopes, growing under madrones, bay, and firs, with snowberry, poison oak, and ferns. The banner is reduced, unlike other pea flowers, and the petals are deep purple, with orange anthers protruding.

Why did the toadstool go to the party?
Because he was a Fungi.
Why did he leave early?
Because there wasn’t mushroom.
CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
Milo Baker Chapter www.cnpsmb.org
P.O. Box 892
Santa Rosa, CA 95402

Lilium pardalinum ssp. pitkinense
Pitkin lily

Newsletter & Web Site Info
Send newsletter submissions to:
Heide Keeble: nemorphila@yahoo.com
Deadline for inclusion in the June newsletter is May 15.
For newsletter/membership issues contact:
Wendy Born, spores@excite.com

The chapter web site www.cnpsmb.org contains a wealth of information plus current and archived newsletters.
To receive notification of the online newsletter, sign up at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/cnps

We invite you to join CNPS

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