Greetings to all!

I hope to see a great turnout for our December potluck dinner meeting in the Willow Springs clubhouse, in Soulsbyville, Ca. Remember that this event starts at 6:00 PM and to bring your photos that you wish to share with the group. The preferred media is a flashdrive with no more than 20 images; but if I know in advance, we can accommodate other media types including film slides.

I am soliciting your ideas for our programs for the upcoming year so that we can incorporate them into our planning session. We’ve decided to make long range planning easier for everybody by making our three major events take place on fixed time periods. Mark your long term calendar with our three major events for 2012: The Spring Plant Sale (This will be held on the third Saturday in April to coincide with Native Plant week in California.) which in 2012 will be Saturday, April 21. Our Growing Natives Seminar will be held on Saturday, September 8 (We have decided that this event will be held on the first Saturday after Labor Day every year.) The Fall Plant Sale will be on Saturday, October 13 (We have planned for this event to take place on the second Saturday in October in the future).

I have decided to add a new event to this year’s December potluck meeting called the President’s Recognitions. This is my opportunity to recognize and thank specific members who have made important and significant contributions over a number of years that have helped in the successes of our organization. As a result of our November election the officers for the calendar year 2012 will be:

- President                       Bob Brown
- VP Tuolumne Co         Pat Gogas
- Co-VP Calaveras Co    Bob & Judy Dean
- VP Mariposa Co.        Ann Mendershausen
- Treasurer                    Patti Hohne
- Secretary                   Stephanie Garcia

I look forward to seeing you at our December potluck dinner meeting!

--Bob Brown, President
ANNUAL POT-LUCK DINNER
At the Willow Springs Ranch Clubhouse, Soulsbyville, Ca

Directions: From Sonora, take Hwy 108 east approx. 5 mi., go right on Soulsbyville Road for 1/8 mi.; go left on Willows Springs Drive for 1/4 mi; (past the Post Office on your right). The “Willow Springs Ranch” Office and Club House are on the left.!

DINNER STARTS AT 6:00PM
Bring: a dish of food to share, your own place setting, (cups, plates, silverware, napkins, etc.) Coffee will be served.
Program: Bring a flashdrive or 10-15 slides of California native plants and trees, or field trips.

FIELD TRIP
The October 22nd Fall Colors field trip was fabulous. The colors started along Highway 120 with the deep reds of dogwood (Cornus nuttallii). The aspen (Populus tremuloides) at the higher elevations were various shades of yellow and orange with one stand north of Conway summit in deep shades of red. The weather was perfect – sunny and warm. Thank you to Pat Stone for once again leading this excellent annual trip.

The ad hoc Field Trip Committee will be meeting in late January or early February to plan out the 2012 field trip schedule. If you have trip location ideas or would like to join the committee to help plan out the schedule, contact Jennie Haas, (209) 962-4759 or jhaas953@gmail.com.

Flowers Blooming This Month

I’ve decided to highlight some of the rarer and less common wildflowers in our area that are all CNPS listed. Of course I’m also trying to spark your interest to want to observe these in the field and to interest you in participating in a Rare Plant Treasure Hunt.

The first flower is Beaked Clarkia (Clarkia rostrata) which was observed roadside in Mariposa county on a CNPS fieldtrip. This just proves that not all rare/uncommon flowers are in remote, inaccessible places. Our second flower is the Pansy Monkeyflower (Mimulus pulchellus) and is always a delightful find in the field. The flowering head is two distinct colors of yellow and a shade of purple. This was photographed within 100 feet of Tuolumne road. Our last picture is of the Chinese Camp Brodiaea (Brodiaea pallida) that is a lighter shade of blue than most other Brodiaeas. It should be of special interest to all of you because it is located on a parcel of land that our chapter pays an annual rental fee to protect.

I hopefully have created an interest and triggered your curiosity through these blooms so that you will be motivated to get out and join a Rare Plant Treasure Hunt.

--Bob Brown

JANUARY PLANT SALE

We will be having a special plant sale on Saturday, January 14 at our growing area in Sonora, from 11 am until 1 pm. All plants are 1 gallon and will include mostly shrubs with some perennials, grasses, ferns, and trees. Rain/Snow cancels. If you would like a plant list and/or need directions to the growing area please e-mail Stephanie at sjgarcia@mlode.com.

SPRING 2012 PLANT SALE SATURDAY, APRIL 21

Mark your calendar!

Barbara Strother has agreed to work with Stefani Reichle to organize and guide the volunteers for the 2012 Spring Plant Sale. We want to welcome Barbara, a long time CNPS member, to assist us all to have a very successful sale in 2012.
Thank You Plant Sale Volunteers

Although this thank you to all the plant sale volunteers is a bit late, it nevertheless is sent with our sincere gratitude. Stephanie and I cannot say enough about the hard working volunteers that helped make this sale a success. From the folks who came to the growing area to unload and price plants to the drivers of trucks and the cashiers and tag pullers on sale day, we want to say “Great job!” and “Thank you so very much for your time and commitment.” We especially enjoyed welcoming new members and volunteers that signed up to work after attending our ‘Natives Seminar’.

Since this was my last sale as your Plant Sales Chairperson, I had hoped for a really spectacular sale. Unfortunately, we did not have the sales as we have had in the past years and that was a bit disconcerting to me. However, we did have a wide variety of great native plants and the buyers benefited from the variety of choices.

I would personally like to say thank you to all the volunteers who have worked with me in the past years that I have chaired the plant sales. Your participation has been what made the plant sales such successes. While I will miss being a part of the process from choosing the plants to selling them, what I will miss the most will be the friendships that I have made during my time with this chapter of CNPS. Again, I thank each and every one of you who have worked with me and I hope to see you at future sales where I will be just one of the shoppers!

--Carolee James

Fall and Winter Pruning
by Allison Levin
(Adapted for this newsletter)

As a general rule, just as in summer we pruned and tidied shrubs and trees whose growing season was winter and spring, in winter we’ll prune trees whose growing season was spring and summer. In fall, many trees may be looking shaggy, overly dense, or leggy from a second, late summer’s growth spurt. What kind of pruning can be done for this?

Remember that larger pruning cuts should be made when a tree is dormant. But that rule doesn’t preclude tipping cuts of long whips -- wait to do this until the growth spurt is complete, or you’ll have to do it a couple times in a season. If this wild, exuberant (some might call it coarse) seasonal growth is removed or shortened now, it won’t have a chance to become more established in spring.

Pruning Basics Review
When it comes to structural pruning in winter dormant trees, review the basic rules of pruning: develop and refer to a multi-year plan, and don’t take too much off at once. Solve problems first, like crossing branches or those moving into the center of the tree. Prevent future problems by removing problem branches while they are still twigs.

Winter Dormant Species
California pines are in deepest dormancy during the coldest time of year. Pruning in December and January will minimize sap run, and, in turn, minimize the hazard of attracting beetles to the tree.

While California pines are not generally thought of as garden-size trees, their dimensions can absolutely be controlled, and in an aesthetically pleasing form, if pruning begins while they are small. Some that are especially suitable include Pinus contorta (Beach or Lodgepole Pine), P radiata (Monterey Pine), and Trogia heterophylla (Western Hemlock). Other Bay-friendly California conifers that can be pruned in winter include Torrefya californica (California Nutmeg) and Sequoia sempervirens (Coast Redwood).

Deciduous Trees
To many of us, the glory of a tree in leaf is almost surpassed by the beauty of a winter silhouette. To polish that graceful form, spend an hour or two in fall plucking or shaking off the dead leaves off a focal point tree, and remove the coarse summer growth that I referred to earlier. Wait until the appropriate time in winter for structural work.

Deciduous plants from the Rosaceae family – Amelanchier (Serviceberry), Cercocarpus (Mountain Mahogany), and Prunus virginiana (Chokecherry) -- should be pruned in the coldest part of winter. Non-deciduous Heteromeles (Toyon) can be pruned now, or, if only light work is needed, in summer.

In the Betulaceae family, the two Alnus (Alder) species and Corylus cornuta (Hazeloid) should also be pruned in January. Betula (Birch), however, would be pruned in October, to avoid infestation by Bronze borers. In fact, Betula take pruning very poorly, and the wise tree lover should not plant this tree when it can’t grow naturally.

Cornus nuttallii (Pacific Dogwood) is a slow growing tree, and rarely needs structural pruning; make those rare larger cuts in January, and touch up for form and airiness in summer.

Acer (Maple) species, from A. macrophyllum to A. circinatum, should be pruned for structure in February.

Touchup work including thinning of small branches, twigs, and leaves can be done in late spring, once the leaves have hardened off.

Platanus racemosa (Western Sycamore), like Acer, is healthier for a late winter pruning. These trees are very susceptible to the fungi anthracnose and powdery mildew. To minimize the spread of these diseases, sterilize tools between each cut on an infected tree. Annual garden hygiene can also help curb these infestations: shake out, pick up and dispose of all the tree’s leaf litter at the end of fall. Because these spores are airborne, many sycamores will never be rid of the disease; the species does put out a second round of leaves in summer, which don’t typically show symptoms.

HAPPY PRUNING

Editor’s Note
The deadline for contributions or corrections is the 10th of each month prior to publishing. Contact conny@simonis.org or (209) 589-0434

--Conny Simonis, Editor
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