GREETINGS EVERYONE

We had a very productive planning meeting and as a result we are going to be trying a few new things in the future. We would like to start a transition to a “greener” newsletter by having all of you with an email account giving us your address so that we can send you a digital copy instead of the printed. This saves time, money and resources in assembling and mailing. For those of you who wish to continue receiving the printed copy you will be able to without having to do anything.

One significant advantage of the digital version over the printed one is that all of the photos are in color.

Again I want to remind those interested in our Rare Plant Treasure Hunt outings in July to contact me for further info and details. We will be exploring some high elevation locations near and around the Sonora Pass area. Remember that our field trips are open to everyone, so bring a friend and join one of our outings.

The officer nominating committee is being formed and anyone wishing to be on it or who has a name of someone interested in becoming an officer should notify me.

I hope you continue to have a great summer filled with lots of outdoor activities and that I’ll see you on one of our field trips!

--Bob Brown, President
Flowers Blooming This Month

This month we’re going to venture into the high country with wildflowers from the St. Mary’s trail with all of them found at elevations above 8000 feet. Our first flower is Jessica’s Stickseed (Hackelia micrantha), which is a member of the Boraginaceae (Borage) family. It has small blue flowers on a plant that can be several feet tall. The next flower is Lemmon’s Rock Cress (Boechera lemmonii), which is in the Brassicaceae (Mustard) family and has bluish tinted flowers. This has had a name change in the new Jepson Manual from its former Arabis lemmonii. The last flower is the Hairy Arnica (Arnica Mollis), and is in the Asteraceae (Sunflower) family and has large yellow flowering heads.

Hopefully I have created enough curiosity through these pictures so that you will be motivated to get out and explore the great variety of wildflowers in our area on your own or to join us on the St. Mary’s Pass field trip and explore these and other flowers in their native habitat.

--Bob Brown

July 22 – Tuolumne Meadows. Leader: Alison Colwell. Hiking level: easy. Alison invites you to join her on a Yosemite National Park interpretive program and hike called Tiny Botanical Treasures of Tuolumne Meadows. A good number of our unique Sierran plant species are just knee-high to a grasshopper. Bring a hand lens and something to kneel on to enjoy these 'belly plants'. The afternoon will begin at Parsons Memorial Lodge at 2:00 pm with a 30-minute presentation on the tiny (and some rare) plants found in and around Tuolumne. This will be followed by a ramble to nearby moist sites where everyone can get down on the ground and experience a safari in miniature. Allow 30 minutes walking time to the lodge from either Lembert Dome parking area or the Tuolumne Meadows Visitor Center. For more information, contact Alison at 240-997-5153.

There will be no field trips in August or September. Watch for the details of our annual Fall Colors Field Trip on October 20th in the October Shooting Star.
In Memory Of Winnie Stone

It is with heavy hearts that we tell you that a cherished member of our chapter, Winifred (Winnie) Stone passed away on June 19, at the age of 96. She was a cheerful, positive, supportive participant of our plant sales and membership meetings. She was our Hospitality Coordinator for many years, providing refreshments at our membership meetings. She was the dependable source of donut holes at our plant sales, sending 2 boxes to the Spring sale this year, even though she was unable to attend.

Winnie was a great teller of stories. She had a varied life as a teacher, mother and rancher. But she didn’t always do the talking. She showed genuine interest in what others were up to, actively listening and always complimenting people on their accomplishments. Her response was often “oh, how fun!” to our stories about wildflower hikes or other activities.

Winnie befriended many and was a friend to many of us, in the chapter. Our sincerest sympathies go out to Winnie’s son, Pat Stone and his family in this time of sorrow. We lost a good friend, whom we miss very much

--Sierra Foothills Board of Directors

Lewisias and others from seed

Although I sow most seed outside, I learned to make exceptions for Lewisias and other succulents. Seedlings of any of them are from the day of sprouting, so extra juicy and tender that they’re prone to damping-off, frying, and insect attack more than those of just about any other plant, making Lewisia seedling survival better in an indoor windowsill project. Sterile potting soil wouldn’t hurt, especially for Cactus seedlings, (which, by the way oddly enough, ALWAYS start out dicot even though the cactus may be a ball type).

Only ripe Lewisia seed easily falling like pepper should be taken, but even at that, not all seed lots will germinate well. I go ahead and sow thickly, but watch close. If one day I see a whole lot at once “peeking”, I can prepare more pots of soil mix and carefully shake some of the overcrowded sprouters into them while not breaking any long root. The pinhead-sized young can easily be moved and arranged in pots with a large carpet needle. If the crowded seedlings got ahead of you with their roots, either move them very carefully roots and all with nudes from the carpet needle, or letting the pot go bone-dry an then flooding it. An even, wrung-out sponge sort of moisture is best, in a light airy mix containing perlite. And although bigger plants acquire drought resistance, I find Lewisias and native Sedums look and do best with some water at low elevations.

Cacti, Lewisias, and similar plants having fleshy crowns sometimes rot in wet garden dirt. The soil layering method recommended in a cactus book helps, in which ordinary tight, substantial yard dirt is low down for the fibrous roots to drive down into, but in the middle is more porous gritty soil and then around the plant crown itself is grit and/or gravel. Native rocky cliffs, Lewisias, native Sedums, and Dudleyas would like a garden wall, rock garden slope or crevices, or pots, but can take flat ground if drainage is good.

Filtered light to half sun is important. Deep shade makes scrawny succulents, but May through September full sun at 2000 feet causes yellow Lewisias. If your Lewisia is ugly yellow, move it. Even if the bilious tone of an unhappy Lewisia was caused by rot problems instead of all by sun, lifting and inspecting may enable you to save it in time.

Sedum Spathifolium is another native succulent which resents too much low-elevation Summer sun, and would suddenly brown and crash on me until I started putting it at the top of a low rock wall, under oaks, where it is forming nice mats.

Cutting propagation

Cactus rooting is covered in garden books so I’ll skip it.

I found Lewisias and native Sedums to be not nearly as easy to start from unrooted top cuttings as are the non-native Sedums and Sempervivums. The best and laziest way is to keep eyeing these plants until you see some of them throwing aerial roots on their own, then detach the rooted pieces and immediately get them in the ground.
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Chapter Officers and Chairpersons
All phone numbers are 209 area code unless otherwise specified.

**PRESIDENT**  
Bob Brown  
928-9281  
rbrown4674@aol.com

**VP AMPADOR CO.**  
OPEN

**VP CALAVERAS CO.**  
Robert & Judy Dean  
754-5887  
goldrushdean@yahoo.com

**VP MARIPOSA CO.**  
Ann Mendenhausen  
742-7734  
ralph@sti.net

**VP TUOLUMNE CO.**  
Pat Gogas  
586-9043  
pfgogas@yahoo.com

**SECRETARY**  
Stephanie Garcia  
586-3593  
sigarcia@mlode.com

**TREASURER**  
Patti Hohne  
352-4312  
thohne@gmail.com

**CONSERVATION CHAIR**  
Pat Stone  
984-0304  
patstone@gmail.com

**EDUCATION CHAIR**  
Steve Stocking  
754-9029  
mnbsw@earthlink.net

**FIELD TRIP COORDINATOR**  
Jennie Haas  
962-4759  
Jhaas953@gmail.com

**GROWING AREA MGR.**  
Stephanie Garcia  
586-3593  
sigarcia@mlode.com

**HOSPITALITY COORD.**

**INVASIVE EXOTICS**  
OPEN

**SALES COORD.**  
Pat Reh  
536-0871

**MEMBERSHIP COORD.**  
Jennie Haas  
962-4759  
jhaas953@gmail.com

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR**  
Conny Simonis  
588-0484  
conny@simonis.org

**PLANT SALES CHAIR**  
Stefani Reichle  
533-3181  
carpecircus@gmail.com

**PLANT SALES VOL. COORD.**  
Barbara Strother  
481-2326  
Bjaas37@msn.com

**PROGRAM COMM. CHAIR**  
Bob Brown  
928-9281  
rhbrown4674@aol.com

**PUBLICITY COORD.**  
Conny Simonis  
588-0484  
conny@simonis.org

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