UPCOMING FIELD TRIP
June 1 – Calaveras Big Trees: Leader – Steve Stocking. Hiking Level: Easy. We will be looking for *Trillium angustipetalum* and other spring flowers typical of mid elevation Sierran forests. As time allows, we will visit multiple sites. Meet at 10:00 AM inside the park at the picnic area adjacent to the meadow behind Jack Knight Hall. Remember, there is an entrance fee to enter the park and bring lunch/snacks as well as water. For more info, contact Steve at 209-754-9029 or snlsox@earthlink.net. A reminder that rain will cancel this field trip.

So far most locations have had better than expected blooms considering the dry conditions.

-- Bob Brown, Field Trip Coordinator

CALIFORNIA NATURALIST TRAINING PROGRAM COMING TO CENTRAL SIERRA
A new opportunity for volunteer training will be offered in Tuolumne, Calaveras, Amador, and El Dorado Counties, beginning fall 2014 (http://calnat.ucanr.edu/). Contact Rebecca Miller-Cripps if interested in applying to the program: rmillercripps@ucanr.edu or leave a message at the Tuolumne County UC Cooperative Extension office at (209) 533-5695.

CNPS 2015 CALL FOR ABSTRACTS
50th Anniversary Celebration and Conference, January 13-17, 2015, in San Jose! CNPS proudly announces the opening of the CNPS 2015 Call for Abstracts and encourages you to submit an abstract for an oral or poster presentation. The program will focus on communicating the most recent and effective conservation science. Go to cnps.org/2015/abstracts.

BOARD MEETING
There will be a Board meeting on Tuesday, June 10th at 6:00 pm, at Starbucks (13761 Mono Way, Junction Shopping Center). No general meetings in the summer.
Yerba Santa (Ericoidyspon californicum) is also called “Holy Herb”, translated from Spanish. It has a wide range in California, from Kern to Plumas County in the foothills, from San Luis Obispo to Siskiyou in the Coastal Range, and in the Great Central Valley.

It likes hot, dry slopes in chaparral to mixed evergreen forests up to 6000 feet. It tolerates pop up in the disturbed soil of human development projects. It is an erect evergreen shrub that spreads by underground roots. Its alternate lance-shaped leaves are dark green and resinous on top, woolly and light-colored on the underside. The stem is also resinous. The trumpet-shaped flower is 1/4-1/2 inch long and lilac/white in color.

Sometimes called “Native American chewing gum”, the leaves have been used to quench thirst. At first they taste bitter, but this changes into a sweet aftertaste with time. The leaves were also boiled to make a strong tea to relieve stomachaches, colds, sore throats, coughs, and rheumatism. As an external wash, it was used to reduce fevers and soothe sore limbs.

Crushed leaves were used as a poultice on cuts, wounds, insect bites, and sprains. A poultice was also used to reduce pain and swelling of bone fractures. In a tea, tincture, or syrup, it has been used as an expectorant and bronchial dilator. In tincture or poultice form combined with Gumweed, Grindelia, it has been used externally to ease the suffering of poison oak rash.

Its curative powers in treating lung ailments earned it a spot in the U.S. Pharmacopoeia from 1894 to 1905, and then again from 1916 to 1947.

Yerba Santa is flowering right now, and if you want a peek at this medicinal plant, both Dragoon Gulch in Sonora and the Westside Trail inTuolumne have some stands just off the trail. Happy hunting!

--- Stefani Reichle

--- Barry Breckling

Sources: Discover California Shrubs, Maryruth Casebeer and The Way of Herbs, Michael Tierra.

### What’s Blooming This Month?

**Lupines**

There are over 70 lupine species in California, and they grow from sea level up into the alpine zone. People saw these plants growing in areas of poor soil and gave them the name lupine, the Latin word for wolf, believing that lupines devoured nutrients in the soil. In fact, lupines are able to grow in poor soil because they can produce their own nitrogen. When they die back in season, the nitrogen in their remains becomes part of the soil, significantly enriching it.

When fires burn through areas, they leave nitrogen depleted soils, and fires are often followed by impressive displays of lupines. Fire burns away the hard outer coat of the seeds so that they readily germinate when the weather brings rain. Lupine seeds of some species are known to remain viable in the soil for over 50 years.

As summer begins, the lower elevation Sky Lupine (Lupinus nanus) will begin to fade and the mid-elevation lupines will take the stage. Harlequin Lupine (Lupinus stivertsi) is unmistakable with its striking yellow and pink to magenta flowers. Another easy to identify lupine, Bush Lupine (Lupinus albifrons var. albifrons), is a shrub with woody stems and silvery-hairy leaves. It has an extensive elevation range, and by May it will be past blooming in the lower foothills but will be in full bloom at higher elevations, growing up to 5000 feet. On coniferous forest slopes, in June, Gray’s Lupine (Lupinus grayi) will be plentiful, and Brewer’s Lupine (Lupinus breweri var. breweri) will just be starting to bloom at around 6,500 feet. *L. breweri* var. *bryoides*, which grows up to 13,000 feet, will still be sleeping under the snow. Travel to the higher elevations in July and August to see this lupine variety and several of its other high-elevation relatives.

--- Barry Breckling

--- Stefani Reichle

### NEW WILDFLOWER APPS NOW AVAILABLE

**New Yosemite Wildflowers App**

Sierra Foothills CNPS chapter members Judy and Barry Breckling have developed a wildflower identification app for Yosemite National Park. Sierra National Forest botanist Joanna Clines said, “There is a new iPhone (and Android) app called Yosemite Wildflowers and it’s awesome!!! My friends Judy and Barry Breckling collaborated with High Country Apps and the Yosemite Conservancy to produce this nifty tool. I just downloaded it and I think it’s great!” To learn more about the app, visit [www.highcountryapps.com](http://www.highcountryapps.com). You can buy the app for $7.99 at Amazon, Apple, and Google app stores.

**Android apps for California Wildflowers on the Google Play Store**

Interactive plant keys in a “field friendly format.” Apps are titled “2950 N. California Wildflowers,” “2950 C. California Wildflowers,” and “2800 S. California Wildflowers.” For more details, see website: [http://flora-id-northwest.com](http://flora-id-northwest.com) or the web page for a specific app on Google Play Store (select apps, then do a search for “wildflowers” and scroll down to the solid green icons).
SAN ANDREAS NATIVE PLANT SALE A SUCCESS

Thanks to our many enthusiastic volunteers, a beautiful site, perfect weather and lots of publicity the Sierra Foothill Chapter’s first Calaveras County native plant sale was a success. The spring plant sale has been traditionally held in Tuolumne County since the majority of our members and volunteers are residents there. Our board of directors has been casting about for ways to increase membership and to generate interest in native plants in the Chapter’s northern region. As a consequence, our board decided to hold our spring plant sale in Calaveras County. It also helped that I volunteered to chair the sale and that I lived in Calaveras County. With the help of my husband Bob, whom I ordered to assist, I organized the sale. Bob is a director with the Calaveras County Water district and arranged collaboration with CCWD’s general manager, Mitch Dion, to make the sale possible at the newly built CCWD headquarters on Pool Station Rd, outside San Andreas. The idea behind sponsoring the sale was to utilize the District’s newly planted native/drought tolerant/deer resistant landscaping- designed by me- to illustrate how attractive a water-wise landscape can be. Although the landscaping was only partially installed at the time of the sale, it will be a great teaching tool for our next spring plant sale and we’re looking forward to it. Even without the complete water-wise garden in place the sale was a total success.

The sale attracted many people, new to the world of native plants and unfamiliar with many of the 100 or so different taxa being offered. Nevertheless, all were enthusiastic about the plants, the sale, the location and information they received from many of our member volunteers on how to garden with native plants. We sold nearly five hundred plants, a number of books and signed up five new members. We shared the sale space with our local chapter of the Audubon Society. They sold bird houses, birding books and dispensed expert birding suggestions.

And now for the thank yous. First, we extend our thanks to CCWD for hosting our sale at its beautiful site among the oak stands of the Sierra foothills and to our long standing partners the Audubon Society. Our sale would not be the success it is if it was not for our friends from the Audubon Society. We truly appreciate the participation of our dedicated volunteers who stepped up to unload nursery delivery trucks, price plants, water them, transport the delivered plants from storage to the sale site, advise and help customers and visitors to make informed plant and book choices, prepare and serve refreshments, collect boxes, set up tables, chairs and canopies and finally collect the money for the sales.

And then, after 3 hours, we took it all down again. Everyone banded together to break down all the tables, chairs and canopies, inventory the remaining plants, load them and transport them to the Sonora grow area. Now it’s time to start planning for our fall sale, care for our plant inventory and prepare to do all these tasks all over again. And if Patti Hohne didn’t do enough setting up and working the sale she had to do the accounting too- thank you.

This was my first time ordering plants for a sale. It sounds simple and straightforward, but it isn’t. I couldn’t have done it without the guidance, support and encouragement of Stephanie Garcia. I definitely benefited from her experience and plant sale expertise. For that, I thank her. I enjoyed the experience and learned a lot. I’m sure it will be easier (fingers crossed) next year. I’d like to thank the several Calaveras and Amador County Master Gardeners who showed up to help unload the plant deliveries and then came later to help work the sale. I hope you can join us as members of our local Sierra Foothill chapter. As anyone knows, who volunteers for any worthwhile cause, the enthusiasm is “catchy” and the feelings of cooperation and friendship are very rewarding. Equally rewarding is the satisfaction of making more people aware of our wonderful native plants.

Now that the sale is over I have to go plant all the plants I bought at the sale.

-- Judy Dean, Spring Plant Sale Chairperson

WILDFLOWERS ON MOTHER’S DAY IN A DRY MAY

We are in a chronic drought situation with no more than a quarter of normal rainfall for the Sierra foothills. But although there has been little runoff and the underground aquifers have not been adequately recharged we still have had many of our typical wildflowers show up in abundance. How can this be? The storms of spring, March and April, have provided enough moisture to keep the upper layers of soil wet and the seeds and bulbs have responded. Many areas between 500 and 1,000 feet in the western parts of Calaveras County have shown extensive flowering of Royal Larkspur (Delphinium variegatum). The Foothill Poppy (Eschscholzia caespitosa) has outdone itself this year and has covered hillsides along Hiways 49 and 12. This is the tall, to 12 inch, form which many confuse with the California Poppy, (E. californica). California Poppy is not as common in the foothills except where it has been planted by Cal Trans such as at the intersection of Highway 4 and Pool Station Road. The short form of (E. caespitosa), 2-3 inches, has also been outdoing itself this spring but at least in Calaveras it is more often found in dry washes and does not show up as well at a distance as it is short.

Earlier have been lupines such as Sky Lupine (Lupinus nanus) and Spider Lupine (L. benthamii) flowering. In May the most abundantly flowering species have been the Bush Lupine (L. albifrons) and the white flowering (L. densiflorus var. densiflorus). One display of Globe Gilia (Gilia capitata) along Highway 49 and a hillside of Elegant Clarkia (Clarkia unguiculata) on Highway 4 near Copperopolis were larger and more showy than in past years. Both Narrowleaf Mule Ears (Wyethia angustifolia) and Gray Mule Ears (W. heliophila) are common in patches at the elevation of Hiway 49.

In shady, and so damp longer north-facing slopes under the oaks the following are still flowering toward the middle of May. Hartweg’s Iris (Iris hartwegii), Chinese Houses (Collinsia heterophylla), White Nemophila (Nemophila heterophylla), and White Globe Lily (Calochortus albus). Some of the Globe Lily plants have as many as eight flowers! On more sunny, grassy hillsides the Gold Nuggets (Calochortus luteus) and Superb Mariposa (Calachortus superbus), both have put on a show. Along the drying creeks areas are blanketed by showy Seepspring Monkeyflower (Mimulus guttatus) which is also found flowering in a form no more than 2-3 inches tall in dry foothill washes.

It is about the end of the season for the flowers of the foothill zone but even in this dry year there has been quite a display. We hope for more rain next year. In the meantime we can start our summer field trips to the Mid Sierra Forests where spring has already begun with the flowering of the Western Dogwood (Cornus nuttallii) and its associates at Calaveras Big Trees State Park.

-- Steve Stocking Education Chair
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Membership includes the journal Fremontia, CNPS Bulletin and the Sierra Foothills monthly newsletter, The Shooting Star.

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