

# The Shooting Star

Publication of the

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY- SIERRA FOOTHILLS CHAPTER  
INCLUDING AMADOR, CALAVERAS, TUOLUMNE AND MARIPOSA COUNTIES



Blue Fiesta Flower, (*Pholistoma auritum*)

Photos: Bob Brown

## Flowers Blooming in May

This month's location is Old Wards Ferry road and is mostly a drive and stop type outing. One caution for this area is that the road down into the canyon is very narrow, steep, curvy, and subject to slides occasionally. There are several pull off spots that make it convenient to get out and walk either up or down hill to look at the blooms. Because of its elevation, the flowers here tend to be really showy in April to the middle of May.

Our first flower, a member of the waterleaf family (*Hydrophyllaceae*), is the Blue Fiesta Flower, (*Pholistoma auritum*). Its pretty blue flowers can be found on a few of the hillside ravines and drainage channels along side the roadway. The next flower is a member of the pea family, (*Fabaceae*), and is called either Spider or Bentham's Lupine, (*Lupinus benthamii*). This is one of more than forty lupine species that can be found in Tuolumne and is fairly common. The flowering spikes are intensely blue topped with a little white. Its leaves are palmate, long and narrow which contribute to one of its common names with the resemblance to spider's legs. Our final flower is a member of the buttercup family, *Ranunculaceae*, and goes by the common name of Foothill or Western Larkspur (*Delphinium hesperium*). This flower has flowering spikes with colorations ranging from dark blue to reddish purple and even some variations being a light pink to almost white. Its flowering stems grow up to 2-3+ ft tall and is found on the sunny south



Spider or Bentham's Lupine, (*Lupinus benthamii*)



Foothill or Western Larkspur (*Delphinium hesperium*)

### CALENDAR

**Thursday, May 5th, Board Meeting,**  
6:00 pm, (all members welcome)

**7:00 pm General Meeting.** Location: Tuolumne County Library, 480 Greenley Road, Sonora. Refreshments will be served.

**PROGRAM:** Martin Hutten, Lichens in Yosemite: inventory results & potential impacts by atmospheric nitrogen deposition. See page 2 for Martin's Bio.

#### Editor's Note

The deadline for newsletter contributions or corrections is the **10th of each month** prior to publishing. Contact Conny Simonis at [conny@simonis.org](mailto:conny@simonis.org) or (209) 588-0484

## President's Message

Greetings to all!

Jim Shevock's presentation on bryophytes continued our outstanding series of programs and world class presenters. Again, I think that all of those that were there left with a greater understanding of these plants that most people find difficult to understand and identify. We have one program left before our summer hiatus and you really should try to attend to hear Martin Hutten who will be speaking about lichens at our May 5<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Special thanks to all of you who helped with our Spring Plant Sale and most especially to Stefani Reichle who served as the coordinator. It is only with your active involvement in this event and others that we are able to successfully stage this sale and all of the chapter's other activities.

Hopefully by now all of you have had an opportunity to get out and enjoy some of the recent nice weather and go for some kind of a wildflower walk or outing. It seems that for the area that I've visited that some flowers are later than in most years and others are blooming at their expected times. I would say that overall this is shaping up to be a very good year to be viewing blooms in all locations. Unless we have some really warm weather sooner than normal, the high country may be a little later than usual with the abundance of snow that we have received. Remember that we have many chapter field trips scheduled between now and September that provide opportunities for viewing lots of different species and habitats.

Anyone wanting to assist with the planning and organizing of this year's Growing Natives Seminar should contact me for dates and times for the planning sessions.

--Bob Brown, President

You can check out Bob's website ([TuolumneWildflowers.com](http://TuolumneWildflowers.com)) and the Locations/Blooms tab with maps, location descriptions and lists of what plants you may find at what times of the year.

## SOME THINGS OLD ARE NEW AGAIN (part 2)

I have finished cleaning out my old C.N.P.S. files which included newsletters and notices from the 1970's and 1980's. I wish that I had kept them all as they reminded me of many interesting field trips. At first, during the 1970's, the trips were organized by the Society and advertised to all the membership but by the 1980's I was receiving newsletters from the Sacramento Chapter which advertised their chapter trips. This was of necessity as some of the groups on the more popular trips had become very popular and were doing damage to the flora that they had come to enjoy. Two of these that I recall were one with Dr. Ledyard Stebbins to the Carson Pass area where it was almost impossible to get anywhere near the leader to hear what he had to say, and the other was to Del Puerto Canyon where the group (with dogs) were establishing a new trail across the "scree" slope above the road. In both cases there were well over 50 people on the trip. It is easy to see why the Forest Service limits the size of groups on the Lake Winemucca trail at Carson Pass and why there are no longer society-wide field trips.

One great thing about many of these early trips was that participants were often provided with rather extensive lists of the plants which could be expected on the trips. Then we did not need to ask the leader to spell the common name or binomial. These lists were prepared by L. Stebbins, Joe Aparacio, Joe Medeiros, John Willoughby and others and are certainly accurate although the synonymy is sometimes out-of-date. I have lists from Jepson Prairie, Italian Bar, Montezuma Hills, Merced N.W.R. Pine Hill and Washington Area in Nevada Co., Gates Canyon near Vacaville, Del Puerto Canyon, San Luis N.W.R., Nelder Grove, Haystack-Burns Creek and others. Let me know, and please send a donation for copying and postage if you would like a copy of any of these. I will throw in a list for early spring in Western Calaveras County which I have made up for my fieldtrips there last year and this year. That in the footsteps of the fine CNPS tradition which dates back to the 1970's. (Note: Ann Mendershausen read part One of this article and wonders if there are others in the Chapter who went on any of the early CNPS trips in our Chapter area.)

--Steve Stocking: Education Chair

### PROGRAM FOR MAY 5th. MEETING:

Martin Hutten, Lichens in Yosemite: inventory results & potential impacts by atmospheric nitrogen deposition.

Martin is an avid bryologist and lichenologist who also happens to work for the National Park Service, taking on the noble work of fighting weeds and promoting biodiversity. Currently at Yosemite National Park and pursuing a PhD at Oregon State University, Martin has also worked extensively at Olympic National Park and at Craters of the Moon, among many other places. If you google Martin you will also find that he is a great photographer. He was the lead author and photographer for the hard-to-find pocket guidebook, "101 common mosses, liverworts, and lichens of the Olympic Peninsula."

Chaparral virgin's bower  
(*Clematis lasiantha*) also from  
Hunters Valley Mtn. Access Rd. 2010,  
Photo: J. Haas



*Dedicated to the Preservation of California native flora*

## SPRING PLANT SALE

The Spring Sale on Saturday, April 9th in Rocca Park, Jamestown, was a lovely, sunny day. Despite the last snow of the season in the days before it, the weather was kind the day of the Sale. Turnout seemed a bit less than usual, perhaps because of the still cold Spring. People were enthusiastic though, such as two men from Monterey who have a home in Tuolumne County who bought a lot of plants and left saying "See you in the Fall".

The volunteers, as usual, were invaluable. Thank you to all, you are the ones that make it happen. Margaret, Pat S., and Pat R. went beyond the call of duty when they came ASAP after the Suncrest nursery truck showed up 2 hours earlier than they had told me they would.

People that loaded plants into their vehicles the Friday evening before, did so in off and on again rain. When we couldn't fit them all in the vehicles available, a couple went back in the morning to get the ones we left behind. Billy Hamilton even came out on his birthday Saturday to help us. After the Sale, several people crammed things in the nooks and crannies of the cars and trucks to get it all back to our growing area. At the risk of not naming everyone, I would like to just say a huge "Thanks!" for the tremendous team effort.

And now we prepare for the Fall seminar and Sale...



Indian warriors  
(*Pedicularis densiflora*  
ssp.  
*densiflora*)  
from Hunters  
Valley Mtn.  
Access Rd.  
2011,  
Photo: J.  
Haas.

## FIELD TRIPS

When the field trip committee met in January, we used a number of resources to determine the best date to schedule each trip. However, the timing really does get down to an educated guess since it's impossible to predict the weather. So, sometimes our guesses are a little off. This year, plant blooming periods are running a two to three weeks later than normal because of the many cold, snowy storms. We'll attempt to reschedule trips when weather interferes with a trip. And we'll post the changes on our Twitter, Facebook and website pages. The March 26<sup>th</sup> Hunters Valley Mountain Access Road field trip was rained out so we moved it to April 16<sup>th</sup>. See the June Shooting Star for a report on this one and all of the scheduled April field trips.

For all field trips: bring lunch, water, sunscreen and appropriate clothing and footwear. Hiking level varies with each trip. Your trip will be enhanced by bringing field guides and magnifying lenses, although these are optional. Carpooling is encouraged. Call ahead if the weather looks iffy. Check [http://www.twitter.com/SIE\\_CNPS](http://www.twitter.com/SIE_CNPS) for updates. Our field trips are open to everyone. Bring a friend or two. It is Chapter policy that pets are not allowed on our field trips. We would appreciate everyone's adherence to this policy.

**April 23 - Merced Canyon/Pigeon Gulch/Moss Creek Confluence.** Leaders: Barry and Judy Breckling. Hiking level: moderate. Merced Canyon is full of botanical delights. We'll search for naked broomrape (*Orobanche uniflora*) parasitizing Pacific stonecrop (*Sedum spathulifolium*), paper-flowered onion (*Allium hyalinum*), Sierra bladdernut (*Staphylea bolanderi*), Layne's monkeyflower (*Mimulus layneae*), and two rare plants, Congdon's woolly sunflower (*Eriophyllum congdonii*) and Congdon's lewisia (*Lewisia congdonii*). We'll meet at 9:30 a.m. at the Forty-Niner Market parking lot in Mariposa. The parking lot sits back off of Hwy 49 just northwest of the intersection with Hwy 140. We'll car pool from there. The group size for this trip is limited due to parking considerations, so RSVP is required. To sign up or for more information, contact Barry and Judy at 209-878-3041 or [barryb@coepark.org](mailto:barryb@coepark.org).

**April 30 - Deer Creek Fawn Lilies.** Leader: Margaret Willits. Hiking level: moderate (uneven, sometimes steep walking). The Tuolumne fawn lily has been one of our favorites over the years. The Deer Creek area is an interesting area to botanize and we'll see other wildflowers in addition to the fawn lily. High clearance vehicles will be needed for part of the trip. Car pooling is advised. Meet at 9:00a.m. at the back of the parking lot between the Sonora McDonalds and the new Kohl's, on Mono Way, in the Junction Shopping Center, in East Sonora. For more info, contact Margaret: 209-928-5999, [mlwillits@gmail.com](mailto:mlwillits@gmail.com).

**May 14- Trumbull Peak.** Leader: Jennie Haas. Hiking level: moderate. Trumbull Peak is the center piece of an historic and botanic Special Interest Area in the Stanislaus National Forest. It sits on the rim of the Merced River Canyon and is home to over 100 species of wildflowers, shrubs and trees. The trip is timed to catch peak bloom of the wildflowers and 3 state-listed rare plants. Sturdy, non-slip shoes are essential. Plan on a long day. Meet Bob Brown at 8:30 a.m. in front of the Tesoro Gas Station on Highway 108 in Jamestown or the rest of the group at 9:15 a.m. at the library parking lot in Groveland (next to Mary Lavaroni Park on Main Street, Highway 120). Contact Jennie for more info: 209-962-4759, [jhaas953@gmail.com](mailto:jhaas953@gmail.com).



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