



The Shooting Star

Publication of the

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

Flowers Blooming in June



Snow Plant (*Sarcodes sanguinea*)

Photos: Bob Brown

This month's location is what I call Confidence trail which is actually an old railroad grade that runs from Middlecamp road to Lyons Dam. This trail has been graded to accommodate timber harvesting vehicles because it runs through a large section of SPI owned land and you can encounter hikers, cyclists and horseback riders throughout its length. The elevation is about 4200 feet and has a very gentle grade of plus or minus 100 feet and offers a really nice variety of flowers with the peak bloom period from the middle of May through June. You can walk the entire 5 miles (one way) to the dam or any distance in between and be rewarded with a variety of wildflowers.

Our first flower is the Snow Plant (*Sarcodes sanguinea*) and is a member of the heath family (*Ericaceae*). It is a myco-parasitic plant and its bloom is a striking brilliant red color that makes it easy to identify from a distance. The next flower is a member of the lily family (*Liliaceae*) and is commonly called Giant Trillium (*Trillium angustipetalum*). It has three very large leaves and a flower that is very dark reddish purple. Our final flower is another member of the lily family (*Liliaceae*) and is known by the common name of Hooker's Fairy Bells (*Prosartes hookeri*). This flower can be easily missed as the flowers are usually hidden on the underside of the leaves and also because they have a greenish yellow hue that tends to blend in well with the foliage. Again, this is another plant that likes shaded and semi-shaded areas best.

Hopefully, this will be another location that you will explore at your own pace and personally find enjoyment in discovering what's blooming here when you visit!



Giant Trillium (*Trillium angustipetalum*)

You can check out Bob's website (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.



Hooker's Fairy Bells (*Prosartes hookeri*)

SUMMER 2011 MEETING HIATUS

We will not have our normal monthly meetings during the months of June, July and August. The Newsletter will be mailed during the summer as usual. Have a great summer!

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 or (209) 588-0484

President's Message

Greetings to all!

Martin Hutten's talk and presentation about lichens at our last meeting will be our last program until September as our summer hiatus (no meetings during June, July and August) begins this month. We are starting work on our program schedule for September through May of 2012 and would like any program ideas that you think would be of interest to our membership. Please contact me with any of your thoughts as I'm always looking for good program resources and material.

The board has decided that this year's Growing with Natives Seminar will be an entire day with a lunch provided and the date of Saturday, September 10th has been selected. So reserve this day on your calendars and plan on attending. The committee is working on details for the event and hopefully will have more information available regarding speakers, topics, and cost for our next newsletter. If you would like to participate in the planning activities or have some suggestions that you feel should be incorporated into the event please let me know.

Even though we won't be meeting over the summer, I want to remind all of you that we have an excellent assortment of field trips planned during this period and that you should give serious consideration to getting out and participating in at least one of them. This year's theme has been exploring our local fawn lilies; and thus far, we have been fortunate to be able to see thousands of them in the locations that we have visited. Going on one of our field trips is a great way to learn about our local wildflowers, to have a good time socializing with other members and guests and to perhaps experience a location or area new to you while having a nice outdoors outing.

Have a great summer season and I hope to see you on one of our field trips or at the very least at our September meeting.

--Bob Brown, President

THE BEAUTIFUL TREE POPPIES

In late April or early May, look on the banks along Big Hill Road between Columbia and Twain Harte or along Doster Road near Mountain Ranch to find the Bush Poppies, lovely yellow-flowering foothill shrubs. You will find them growing on steep banks or cuts overhanging the road. The reason that they survive and bloom in that precarious location is that two of their important cultural requirements are met on those slopes: good drainage and dry summer soil.

The genus name, *Dendromecon*, means "tree poppy." It is the only truly shrubby plant in the Poppy family which includes, among others: Cream Cups, California Poppy, Matilija Poppy, Prickly Poppy, and Frying Pan Poppy (*Eschscholtzia lobbia*).

There are two species in this genus: *D. rigidum*, the Bush Poppy, and *D. harfordii*, the Island Bush Poppy. *D. rigidum* can be found up to 3,000-foot elevation in the Sierra foothills. The Island Bush Poppy is found naturally only on the Santa Barbara Channel Islands, but it probably would prosper in the lower foothills below 1,500 feet, provided it could remain dry in the summer and be relatively frost-free in the winter.

The Bush Poppy grows two to ten feet high, generally three to five feet wide. It can tolerate a considerable amount of cold. Under optimum conditions, the Island Bush Poppy may grow up to twenty feet in height, maybe five to ten feet wide.

The Bush Poppy was discovered in the early 1830s by the intrepid plant collector David Douglas. However, it was not introduced into horticultural trade until 1854 when William Lobb, a collector for the commercial nursery firm, Veitch, in England, found some seeds in California. This little-known collector was responsible for introducing numerous and important species to the nursery trade, many more than the better-known Douglas.

Both of these species have pale gray-green leaves -- smooth and willow-like in form. The one- to three-inch leaves are borne alternately on the stems. The latter stems and larger branches are also attractive because of their grayish or whitish shreddy bark.



Bush Poppy

The bright lemon-yellow flowers with four rounded petals contrast beautifully with the gray-green leaves. The one- to three-inch flowers with numerous yellow stamens are borne solitary at the ends of short branches. An added bonus of this flower is its fragrance -- a clincher for me.

The Bush Poppies have great garden appeal with their colorful and tidy appearance. Once established, they are fairly long-lived IF they have sufficient summer heat and dryness. The companion plants in the garden should be drought-tolerant varieties such as manzanitas, *Ceanothus*, *Fremontodendron*, shrubby sages and buckwheats that also demand good drainage.

Seeds of the Bush Poppy are difficult to germinate. To break the dormancy of the seed, burn a four-inch layer of pine needles or straw over the seeds planted in a wooden flat. Water thoroughly. The seeds should germinate in about a month. Transplant to small pots. If you are trying to propagate from cuttings, some say, take them when the plants are in bloom.

--MaryRuth Casebeer
from *Speaking for the plants*, vol. 2

Membership: If you change your mailing or e-mail address, be sure to send a notice to: Jennie Haas, 19287 James Circle, Groveland, 95321 jhaas953@gmail.com (209-962-4759); and California Native Plant Society, 2702 K. St., Ste 1, Sacramento, CA 95816. This will keep your Newsletter on time and save postage. Non-member subscription: \$6.50/year.

Dedicated to the Preservation of California native flora

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

As many of you know, I have been coordinating the Spring Plant Sale for the last five years. For the first three years, Alison Hartman co-coordinated with me. Whereas many people help me along the way, I've come to realize where I still need help.

In order for the Spring Sale of 2012 to happen, I need a volunteer coordinator to organize volunteers for all the various jobs that make the Sale possible. This part of coordinating the Sale has become too much for me. If you are able to help in this way, please give me a call, (209) 533-3181. I will again put out this request in the November newsletter, and if I hear from someone by the end of the year, great. Otherwise, I will not be able to coordinate next year's Spring Sale. In any case, I thank you for all your wonderful help in the past.

--Stefani Reichle

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 our website and Facebook pages or 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.

Of his field trip to the Hogan Lake area in Calaveras County on **April 10th**, Steve Stocking reported that the hills around Milton had spectacular displays of goldfields (*Lasthenia sp.*) and butter and eggs (*Triphysaria eriantha*). He said that almost any wet spot or drainage was awash with white meadowfoam (*Limnathes sp.*). In addition, the Salt Springs Valley had some spectacular areas of royal larkspur (*Delphinium variegatum ssp. variegatum*).

Moving the Hunter's Valley Mountain Access Road field trip **April 16th** proved to be an excellent decision. We found the Sierra fawn lilies (*Erythronium multiscapideum*) in full bloom. A variety of other chaparral plants were also in bloom including the stinkbells (*Fritillaria agrestis*). The trip was well attended too - about 30 people joined trip leaders Jennie Haas and Ann Mendershausen. It was a great day.

Another great day was the April 23rd Merced Canyon/Pigeon Gulch/Moss Creek Confluence field trip aptly led by Barry and Judy Breckling. The paper-flowered onion (*Allium hyalinum*) was spectacular and the Sierra bladdernut (*Staphylea bolanderi*) was exquisite. There were many other flowers in full bloom.

Our final April field trip was on **April 30** to see the rare Tuolumne fawn lily (*Erythronium tuolumnense*) at Deer Creek with leader Margaret Willits. Margaret hiked us up to a new occurrence that was absolutely spectacular. Fawn lilies were nestled in collected soils in the cracks in the lahar (volcanic tuff) bedrock. It was an amazing

sight. She also showed us the rare pansy monkey-flower (*Mimulus pulchellus*) on a nearby lahar.

June 5 - Calaveras Big Trees. Leader: Steve Stocking. Hiking level: easy. This is a favorite destination where we'll see harlequin lupine (*Lupinus stiversii*), a leafless form of white-veined wintergreen (*Pyrola picta*), Washington lily (*Lilium washingtonianum*), phantom orchid (*Cephalanthera austiniiae*), and Stebbins' lomatium (*Lomatium stebbinsii*). Meet at 9:30a.m. in the park, at the picnic area on the creek behind Jack Knight Hall. There is an entrance fee to enter the park. For more info, contact Steve: 209-7054-9029, snlsox@earthlink.net.

DATE CHANGED - Shuteye Peak, Sierra National Forest. Leader: Joanna Clines, Forest Botanist. Hiking level: moderate to strenuous depending on how much snow remains on the access route. In the spotlight for this trip is the Shuteye Peak fawn lily (*E. pluriflorum*). This rare species is endemic to the Chiquito Ridge area of Madera County. If we're lucky the rare Kellogg's lewisia (*Lewisia kelloggii ssp. kelloggii*) may be in bloom as well. Heavy snow is causing a delay in opening roads at the higher elevations. At press time, the new date was uncertain. Contact Joanna for the new date. Space is limited to 25, please RSVP to Joanna at jjclines@sti.net or 559-760-3618 (cell) or 559-877-2218, ext. 3150 (office). We'll need to car pool in high clearance 4WD vehicles. Meet Joanna in Oakhurst at 9:30a.m. Specific location information and other details provided when you RSVP. Prepare for a long day, as it takes an hour or more to get to Shuteye Peak from Oakhurst, and once you're there you'll want to spend some time.

June 25 - Long John Meadow. Leader: Scott Brush. Hiking level: moderate. This meadow near Cherry Lake, Stanislaus National Forest, underwent a gully rehab project two years ago. The meadow has been fenced to allow time to heal with amazing results. If time allows, we'll also visit nearby John's Meadow and Boggy Meadow for more botanical highlights. From Sonora, meet at 8:30a.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. From Groveland, meet 8:30a.m. at the Groveland Library parking lot. Both groups will meet at about 9:30 at the intersection of Cottonwood Road and Forest Road 3N01S, just east of Reed Creek. For more information contact Scott at 209-962-7825 ext. 553 (leave message) or 209-962-5291 (evenings).



Tuolumne Fawn Lily
April 30, 2011
(Photo: J. Haas)



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