



# The Shooting Star

SIERRA FOOTHILLS CHAPTER

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

OCTOBER 2013 Page 1



Sierra Lessingia



White Hedge Nettle



Twiggy Wreath Plant

*Photographer for October  
Bob Brown*

## FALL NATIVE PLANT SALE

Join us at one of our favorite events of the year. We will have another amazing selection of native plants, including packets of wildflower seeds. There will be 45 different kinds of shrubs, 28 different perennials; you'll also find a nice mix of ferns, grasses, vines and trees. We will even have the hard to find Western Azalea. Included will be some of your favorites: Dogwood, Redbud, Lupine, Matilija Poppy and California Fuchsia. If you would like a list of the plants BEFORE you come to the sale, send an email to

[sjgarcia@mlode.com](mailto:sjgarcia@mlode.com).

Our sale also provides a great opportunity to get some help with your landscaping ideas and challenges. We have plenty of knowledgeable people to help

you with any questions you may have. But remember, come early for the best selection. Better yet, volunteer to help at the plant sale. Volunteers get to select plants before the sale is open to the public. Most importantly, volunteers with trucks or a SUV, are needed to load plants the night before and deliver them the morning of the sale. We also need cashiers and tag pullers, as well as any knowledgeable plant person who would like to help shoppers pick 'the right plant for the right spot'.. So email [sjgarcia@mlode.com](mailto:sjgarcia@mlode.com) to volunteer. Our sale is on Saturday, October 12 from 9 am until Noon. We will be at the same location: Rocca Park, Main Street, Jamestown.

*-- Stephanie Garcia, Secretary*

**(See Page 2 for more on Fall Plant Sale)**

**PLEASE JOIN US FOR OUR NEXT SPEAKER, October 3rd at 7:00 p.m.** Ellen M. Zagory will present "Why you should garden with California Native Plants." **See Page 3 for details!**

**Thank you to all those who attended the Symposium and contributed to it's success!!**

**Check out our website to see new improvements: <http://www.sierrafoothillscnps.org/>**

If you change your mailing or e-mail address, be sure to send a note to these people. This will keep your newsletter on time!

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Dedicated to the Preservation  
of California Native Flora.

## 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



Fall wildflower,  
Grass of Parnassus.  
Photo: Bob Brown

policy that pets are not allowed on our field trips. We appreciate everyone's adherence to this policy.

**October 19 – Fall Colors.** Leader: Pat Stone Hiking Level: very easy. Our annual fall colors field trip will take place along the Highway 4 to Highway 89 to Highway 88 route this year. We'll have lunch at the deli in Markleeville. 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. For more information, contact Pat at 209-984-0304, [patmstone@gmail.com](mailto:patmstone@gmail.com).

If you would like to be on our field trip alerts e-mail list, send an e-mail with the subject line "Field Trip e-mail List" to Jennie at [jhaas953@gmail.com](mailto:jhaas953@gmail.com).



## E-Shooting Star Addresses Needed

Please send your e-mail address to Jennie Haas: [jhaas953@gmail.com](mailto:jhaas953@gmail.com) for the e-Shooting Star mail list.

-- Jennie Haas, Field Trip Coordinator

## What's Blooming This Month?

### What's Blooming?

Our blooming location for this month is the Westside trail which is a converted railroad grade just outside of Tuolumne City. A great walk anytime of the year with very gentle grades and nice views. All of these blooms were observed between the first and third weeks of October proving that even though



**White Hedge Nettle**

it is late in the blooming cycle you can still see blooming wildflowers.

First is a quite common flower in disturbed areas in late summer through the middle of fall, Sierra Lessingia, (*Lessingia leptoclada*), which is a member of the Sunflower family, Asteraceae. It is a common lavender bloom along roadways and trails and generally is covered with a light coating of dust. Our next flower is called Twiggy Wreath Plant or Rod Wire Lettuce, (*Stephanomeria virgate*), and is another light lavender colored bloom. It is a tall stalked plant with widely spaced flowers. The last flower is the White Hedge Nettle or Cobwebby Hedge Nettle, (*Stachys albens*), and is a member of the Mint family, Lamiaceae. This was an unusually late bloom for this particular and was probably due to the presence of a seep that had been wet through the entire summer and into fall. It has white flowers that are in whorls and a characteristic smell of a mint if you break one of its leaves. This particular bloom just proves that you never know what you are likely to find in any given location throughout the year.

Remember even though most people stop thinking of blooming wildflowers after about the middle of July, it is still possible to observe some delightful blooms into middle to late October. I do hope that these pictures will encourage you to get out and explore the many native wildflowers in our area that bloom throughout the year in their many and varied habitats.

-- Bob Brown, Program Coordinator

## Fall Native Plant Sale (continued from page one)

Fall provides the rain and cooler temperatures that natives need to get established before our hot, dry, Mediterranean summer. Eight types of grasses will be available and include California Fescue and deer grass; 28 varieties of flowering perennials such as Western Columbine, monkeyflower, penstemon and zauschneria will be there; over 40 kinds of shrubs include coyote bush, western azalea, salvia clevelandii, Bee's Bliss and California wild rose.

Books and refreshments will also be available near the gazebo during the sale. Signup sheets will be available at the next Master Gardener meeting (Tuesday, 10/1) or the Native Plant Society meeting (Thursday, 10/3). Volunteers can contact Stephanie Garcia or Pat Gogas at 586-9043.

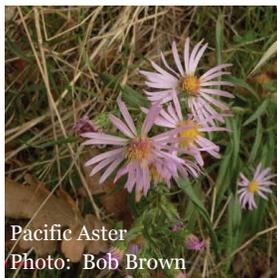
## UPCOMING SPEAKERS

Our speaker for the October 3rd meeting at 7 pm is going to be Ellen M. Zagory with a presentation entitled "Why you should garden with California Native Plants." She will discuss the relationships of native plants with birds, insects and other fauna and why that is important to all of us. Ellen is the Director of Public Horticulture at the UC Davis Arboretum and has been responsible for selecting and coordinating many of the plantings on the grounds.



One of our late Bloomers, Rosilla  
Photo: Bob Brown

The November 7th meeting will feature Shelly Davis-King, a local professional archaeologist and specialist in Native American cultures who has an avid interest in native plants of our area. Her topic will be centered about the "Ethnobiological Considerations of Some Central Sierra Native Plants." She will share with us some insights as to the use and cultivation of a number of plants within our area by the local Native Americans. I think that you will come away from her talk with a new understanding of the importance that a number of plants have to our local Native American culture.



Pacific Aster  
Photo: Bob Brown

-- Bob Brown, Program Coordinator

## FALL COLOR IN CALAVERAS (& ELSEWHERE IN OUR CHAPTER)

You might think that in a dry year like this one there might be fewer wildflowers. Some were earlier, there were not as many of some others, but more have been at least as abundant as they were in wetter years. Why? One possibility is that they have not had so much grass to deal with. In any case I have seen a lot of color toward the end of August and on into the first part of September. Most of the color in the lower elevations of Calaveras County has been yellow. The very common native tarweed, *Holocarpa virgata*, covers whole fields and hillsides. Some "dis" it for its smell but others like the odor as it reminds them of the hills in the fall. In the lower hills it is joined by vinegar weed which also has a smell characteristic of the foothills and not unpleasant to many of us. Vinegar weed, *Trichostema lanceolatum*, has been around this year but has not been as common as it has been in some previous years. It is an important native bee plant. Two other colorful native fall bloomers are common madia, *Madia elegans*, and the common roadside native sunflower, *Helianthus annuus*. The sunflower is a close relative of the cultivated sunflower but gets nowhere near as large. Weeds? How can any plants which add so much color to our otherwise summer hills be weeds? One definition of weeds, which I like, is that they are "plants out of place." Since these are native here they certainly are less out of place than are we and they provide seed food for wild birds.

At somewhat higher elevations, often above 2,000 feet, there are other fall flowers which add to the palette, two of the most striking of these are queen ann's lace, *Daucus carota* and everlasting pea, *Lathyrus latifolius*. These both prefer disturbed areas and so are particularly abundant along the local roads. The *Daucus* is a relative of our cultivated carrot and both are from Europe and were introduced as garden vegetables. *Daucus* has a nutritive value similar to legumes. Its fruits have hooks so are good at attachment to dogs and people and the buried seeds are very long lived. The weedy sweet pea is beautiful, but nowhere near as innocuous as the wild carrot. It is very common along roadsides from about 2,000 to 5,000 feet in the Mother Lode. The fruits and foliage are toxic to livestock and people when ingested in quantity over time. "Horses, humans and other animals with a single stomach are more susceptible than are ruminants such as cattle and sheep." This native of Europe, like foxglove is beautiful but should be grown only where it will not be eaten by humans and other animals.

White sweetclover, *Melilotus albus*, is not as visible as the aforementioned plants but it does grow along roadsides. It can be safe when eaten by livestock in moderation but if it is in poorly cured hay or silage it has a compound that will convert to a toxic form which can kill cattle. Also seen along roadsides near Calaveras Big Trees State Park is "nude buckwheat," *Eriogonum nudum* var. *nudum*, which is very widespread and comes in many varieties. It must have a wide range of tolerance to soil types and other environmental conditions as it grows well on serpentine soil near San Andreas and on more typical forest soils in the mixed evergreen forest at Calaveras Big Trees. Common salsify, also called wild oyster plant, *Tragopogon porrifolius*, has recently finished flowering along Highway 4 near the entrance to the State Park. Some persons claim that the roots are edible and taste of oysters. Strongly attest that there are much better roots to eat and that only a person with a fertile imagination could claim that these non-native plants even vaguely taste of oysters. Their flowers are colorful and the fruits interesting so whether or not they are weeds is in the mind of the beholder.

-- Steve Stocking, Education Chair



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Page 4