



The Shooting Star

SIERRA FOOTHILLS CHAPTER

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

MAY 2016

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Brown bells (*Fritillaria micrantha*)



Fruit of a wild cucumber, Sierra man-root (*Marah horridus*), hanging in a toyon shrub

Photos: Jennie Haas

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

May 14 – El Portal Fire Wildflowers, Foresta. Leader: David Campbell. Hiking Level: Moderate. We will see many blooming wildflowers, potentially including several park special status and CNPS rare species, near Foresta in the footprint of the 2014 El Portal Fire in Yosemite National Park. Space is limited to 15 participants. Please RSVP with David. Meet at 9:00a.m. at the junction of Foresta Rd. and Big Oak Flat Rd. overlooking Big Meadow in Yosemite National Park. The admission fee to enter Yosemite National Park is \$30 per vehicle. Seniors can use their Golden Age Pass or acquire one at the entrance for a nominal fee with photo ID. To sign up or for more information, contact David at moonwort.campbell@gmail.com, or 612-867-8700.

May 21 – Evergreen Road, 3 Years After the Rim Fire. Leader: Jennie Haas. Hiking Level: easy. We last visited this area in 2012, a little more than one year before the 2013 Rim Fire. Highlights will include the uncommon phantom orchids (*Cephalanthera austini*) and the rare mountain ladslypper orchids

ALERT!!!

Change of location for the
May General Meeting!
Location: Senior Center (next
to Sonora Library)
(General Meeting will resume in September at Sonora Library on Thursdays)

(*Cypripedium montanum*), slender-stemmed monkeyflower (*Mimulus filicaulis*) and aquatic lichen, Goward's waterfan (*Peltigera gowardii*). We'll check out the progress of post-fire restoration efforts in the area. Meet at 9:30a.m. at the library parking lot in Groveland (next to Mary Lavaroni Park on Main Street, Highway 120). For more information, contact Jennie Haas, 209-962-4759, jhaas953@gmail.com. (See page 2 for more details).

May Calendar

Thursday, May 5:

6:00 pm—Board Meeting at Senior Center (all members welcome to join discussion with your Chapter Board)
7:00 pm—General meeting with Presentation Speaker

May 14: FIELD TRIP: El Portal Fire Wildflowers, Foresta. Leader: David Campbell

May 21: FIELD TRIP: Evergreen Road, 3 Years After the Rim Fire. Leader: Jennie Haas.

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

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Sierra Foothills Chapter
www.sierrafoothillscnps.org
Dedicated to the Preservation of California Native Flora.

Field Trips

As I write this on April 10th, there is a lot in bloom at the mid-lower elevations (roughly 2,000-3,000 feet). The buck brush (*Ceanothus cuneatus*) and Mariposa manzanita (*Arctostaphylos viscida* ssp. *mariposa*) are on an extended blooming period due to the abundant precipitation in March and the nicely spaced storms in early April. The lower elevations are finishing up due to curtailing of rain and the recent temperatures in the 80s. It has been a bountifully floriferous spring so far with reports of lots of good flowers in the Red Hills and Bagby Serpentine.

Lynn Robertson reports from her March 26th Hite's Cove Field Trip: "The oft-repeated Hite's Cove trail description says that 50 wildflower species can be found in the first mile of this hike. Our group of 12 found about 60 different flowers! It was a beautiful day with a great diversity of flowers as well as large palettes of goldfields, poppies and bird's eye gilia." Thank you for your expert leadership, Lynn!

The Westside Railroad Trail field trip on April 2nd was a tad early for many of the flowers but we caught the silver bush lupines (*Lupinus albifrons*) coming on strong with two of the shrubs fully engulfed in fragrant purple-blue flowers. The poppies (*Eschscholzia caespitosa*) were still displaying as vibrantly orange patches in the open slopes above and adjacent to the trail. And the brown bells (*Fritillaria micrantha*) at the 2 mile turn-around spot were exquisite. I would like to thank Judy and Barry Breckling for providing their expert identification of plants along the way. Judy carries a field guide at the ready and looks up everything in question, helping us learn the difference between related species. It's always a pleasure to have them on our trips.

The Red Hills Field Trip on April 10th was cancelled due to rain. Since it was just past peak bloom due to the brief spell of hot, dry weather the week before, we'll look to scheduling another trip to the Red Hills for next year.

As the temperatures continue to warm and the weather becomes more dry, the bloom will move up in elevation. Look for wildflowers at the mid-elevations, 2,500 to 4,000 feet. Reports have started coming in about mountain dogwood (*Cornus nuttallii*) already starting to bloom. Try finding dogwoods in late April and May along the South Fork Road out of Twain Harte, Calaveras Big Trees State Park (entrance fee required), and along Highway 120 in Yosemite National Park (Entrance fee required). Look for wildflowers on your own along the Hetch Hetchy Trail (entrance Fee required), Westside Railroad Trail, and the Confidence Trail or join us on one of the following trips.

May 14 – El Portal Fire Wildflowers, Foresta. Leader: David Campbell. Hiking Level: Moderate. We will see many blooming wildflowers, potentially including several park special status and CNPS rare species, near Foresta in the footprint of the 2014 El Portal Fire in Yosemite National Park. We will be passing through the 2009 Big Meadow Fire and participants will have the opportunity to observe the juxtaposition of regeneration two years and seven years post-fire. If you joined us last year, you know that we saw many blooming species, many of which are fire associates, in the Rim Fire near Hetch Hetchy. This year we'll be a bit lower in elevation and see a different suite of species. Space is limited to 15 participants. Please RSVP with David. Meet at 9:00a.m. at the junction of Foresta Rd. and Big Oak Flat Rd. overlooking Big Meadow in Yosemite National Park. The admission fee to enter Yosemite National Park is \$30 per vehicle. Seniors can use their Golden Age Pass or acquire one at the entrance for a nominal fee with photo ID. To sign up or for more information, contact David at moonwort.campbell@gmail.com, or 612-867-8700.

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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 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 appreciate everyone's adherence to this policy.

Sign up for our field trip alerts e-mails. Send an e-mail with the subject line "Field Trip e-mail List" to Jennie at jhaas953@gmail.com. We'll use this mailing list and Twitter to provide timely information of field trip changes and those impromptu "emergency field trips."

- - Jennie Haas

Stinkwort, *Dittrichia graveolens*

Description: Annual plant up to three feet tall; branched from base; Small daisy looking flowers with yellow outer petals with yellow to reddish interior, 1/3-2/3 inches wide; narrow grey green leaves, 1-4 inches long with serrated edges, clasping partially to the stalk, sticky, strong camphor aroma; reproduces by seed; Native to Western Europe, Mediterranean Region, and Southwest Asia.

Background: Stinkwort, *Dittrichia graveolens* is native to the Mediterranean. In California, it is a non-native plant species, spreading rapidly along roadsides throughout California. First reported in 1984, in Santa Clara, this species is considered new to California. Stinkwort infestations remained undetected by botanists and weed managers, in the early 1990s. Reports show Stinkwort, *Dittrichia graveolens* was not included in the 1993 edition of *The Jepson Manual of California flora* (Hickman 1993).

Characteristics: Stinkwort is considered a non-native invasive species, due to the threats it poses to California's economy and ecological resources. The invasive characteristics of the species include: being toxic to livestock, causing contact allergic dermatitis in humans, invading overgrazed pastures and croplands, and ecologically the biology of the plant suggests potential for damaging riparian habitats.

Treatment: The bloom period for Stinkwort is September to December. Timing for Stinkwort treatments are in Spring when plants are in seedlings form. Stinkwort grows deep taproots and is a prolific seeder. To avoid soil disruption and the spread of seeds, treatments should be done in Spring, so now is the time! Manual removal or an integrated pest management plan is the preferred approach to eradicating a Stinkwort infestation. For more information on treatment methods: <https://ucanr.edu/repositoryfiles/ca6702p110-102540.pdf> Use <http://www.calflora.org> for more information on proper identification and locations of infestations in your area. Remember reporting infestations are the first line of defense in stopping the spread of *Dittrichia graveolens*.

- - *Rebecca Andrade, Invasives Exotics*

Traditional Uses of Redbud

Redbud, or *Cercis occidentalis*, is one of my favorite harbingers of Spring here in the foothills. It's bright pink/ magenta color amongst the brilliant green of new growth never fails to give me a thrill. *Cercis* is a shrub that grows below 5000 feet, from 6 to 20 feet, in full sun or partial shade. It grows in canyons, foothill woodlands, on steep slopes and gravely streambanks. It can grow in nitrogen poor soils because, as with many legumes, it has nitrogen fixing nodules on it's roots that can convert nitrogen from air pockets in the soil for it's use.

The shiny gray branches bear heart shaped leaves that alternate on the stem. They turn from bright green to dark blue green to yellow in the Fall. The pea-shaped flowers are bright pink to magenta, and are pollinated by bumblebees and orchard mason bees. The fruit is a three inch legume pod that turns from a dark purple to reddish-brown.

Mule deer browse on *Cercis*. Mono, Yukt, and Miwok natives used the long, straight, slender, and pliable shoots for basketry. Both the red wine color of the bark and the white inner material were prized for their color and ease of weaving. The natives would heavily prune the shrubs to create more shoots for the next season. The bark and root were used to treat diarrhea and dysentery, as well as chills and fever. Navajo were known to roast the seeds in ashes and eat them. Some people eat the flowers in salads.

So when you drive or walk by Redbud in the Spring know that it is more than just a pretty face.

- - *Stefani Reichle*

Sources:

Encyclopedia of Life, A. Gray

Discover California Shrubs, M. Casebeer



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