



The Shooting Star

SIERRA FOOTHILLS CHAPTER

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

OCTOBER 2019

October Meeting and Program *Favorite Native Plants for the Garden*

Presenter: Stephanie Garcia

Thursday, October 3, 6:00 p.m.

**Tuolumne County Library Meeting Room
480 Greenley Rd., Sonora**

Stephanie will lead an interactive discussion on the plants that will be offered at our October 19 Fall Native Plant Sale. She'll have a list of the plants that will be available at the sale. Have a favorite native garden plant? Come to the meeting and share the reasons why you like it.

CNPS Native Plant Sale

We are in special need of volunteers with trucks or SUVs to load plants the night before and deliver them the morning of the sale. Reminder that volunteers get to select plants before the sale is open to the public. We also need cashiers and tag pullers. So email Stephanie at sjgarcia@mlode.com to volunteer.

Our sale is on **Saturday, October 19, from 9 a.m. until Noon**. We will be at the same location: **Rocca Park, Main Street, Jamestown**. We will have many different species of shrubs and perennials that need minimal water, once established, during our hot summer months. At the sale, there are many knowledgeable people to answer your questions and help you choose appropriate plants for your location.

Upcoming Field Trip

We've had a long field trip season this year, thanks to the extra-long blooming period brought on by the abundant May rains. Next up on the docket is the brilliant hues of yellows, oranges and hopefully, reds in the aspen trees and low-growing plants on our annual Fall Colors Field Trip. Information at the California Fall Colors website indicates that the colors are developing at a normal pace so we should have some nice colors to look at. <https://www.californiafallcolor.com> [Editor's note: If link does not open from Newsletter, copy and paste it to your browser.]

In addition to the following field trip on October 12, Jennie Haas is considering an impromptu trip on October 13, to view fall colors in the June Lake Loop area south of the Tioga Pass highway. Contact her at jhaas953@gmail.com or 209-962-4759 if you're interested in going along.

October 12 – Fall Colors. Leader: Jennie Haas. Hiking Level: very easy (car tour with minimal walking). This year, we'll return to one of our all-time favorite locations to view fall colors: Highway 4 over Ebbetts Pass to the renowned Hope Valley where the colors are usually well developed. We'll take a drive up to Monitor Pass on Highway 89 checking out the aspen stands along the way. Lunch will be our favorite deli in Markleeville. The group will decide if we'll return over Carson Pass on Highway 88 or go back the way we came on Highway 4. RSVP is required. For more info or to sign up, contact Jennie at jhaas953@gmail.com or 209-962-4759.

– 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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*Dedicated to the Preservation of
California Native Flora.*

Field Trip Report: Winnemucca Lake

Your Editor reports on the September 8th field trip to Winnemucca Lake, led by Bob Dean:

Three members joined Bob for a delightful day of botanizing between Carson Pass and Winnemucca Lake (elevation range 8,600–9,200 ft). Even though overnight temperatures were dipping below freezing, at least 70x species were blooming. Other plants were decked out in colorful, fleshy fruits. We were all surprised to see so many wildflowers this late in the year. The plants were so numerous and engaging that we stayed out almost until sunset!

We encountered a number of plants on this field trip that were not seen on either day of the High Sierra Double Header, including: Shasta Knotweed (*Polygonum shastense*), Brook Saxifrage (*Micranthes odontoloma*), Scarlet Gilia (*Ipomopsis aggregata*), Sparse-flowered Bog Orchid (*Platanthera sparsiflora*), and two EXTRA SPECIAL TREATS: Sierra Primrose (*Primula suffrutescens*) & Eschscholtz's Buttercup (*Ranunculus eschscholtzii*). We encountered perfect specimens of the latter two plants close to a small creek, just above the lake, that was still being fed by snow-melt. (Sierra Primrose was a “first-time” plant for your Editor. It fully lived up to its reputation as an alpine beauty.)



TOP ROW: Bob & Val admiring an exquisite patch of Sierra Primrose (*Primula suffrutescens*) near Winnemucca Lake, with a profile view of one specimen.

MIDDLE ROW: Eschscholtz's Buttercup (*Ranunculus eschscholtzii*), Scarlet Gilia (*Ipomopsis aggregata*), Sparse-flowered Bog Orchid (*Platanthera sparsiflora*), Brook Saxifrage (*Micranthes odontoloma*).

BOTTOM RIGHT: Shasta Knotweed (*Polygonum shastense*) – one of the most abundant plants along the trail. (photos © Editor).



“He found biology a chaos and left it a cosmos...”

[This is the first of two excerpts that I would like to share from a long essay that John Muir wrote as a tribute to the father of modern taxonomy. For those among us who occasionally cringe at Latin names and technical scientific jargon, this passage reveals another side of the man who started it all. In next month's Newsletter, or whenever space allows, I will give a second excerpt in which Muir describes a personal encounter with Linnaeus's favorite flower. –Ed.]

“Much has been written by naturalists on the Linnaean system; and while recognizing its usefulness as a convenient index to nature's floral book, they seem puzzled to account for the revolution he effected in natural history, and his unparalleled influence. Even his most enthusiastic admirers seem at a loss to know the secret of his unrivaled power. The so-called Sexual system of Linnaeus, they anxiously point out, was needful in bringing order out of chaos, and making a foundation for the ‘Natural system’ now universally adopted, and in preparing the way for the work of De Jussieu and De Candolle. Strong, they say, in body and mind, with marvelous industry and insight, Linnaeus worked with the strength of ten. He improved the existing distinctions of genera and species, introduced a better nomenclature on the binomial method, and invented the system founded on the stamens and pistils. In half praise, half apology, they claim that ‘his verbal accuracy and the terseness of his technical language’ reduced the crude accumulations of his predecessors into available form, arranged their endless synonyms, cast out the confusing varieties of gardeners' terms, like a Moses led botanical science out of ‘Egyptian darkness’; and in fine, that he found biology a chaos and left it a cosmos.

“But it is not in methods of classification, technical skill, tireless energy in making books and gathering plants, that we are to look for the secret of the marvelous influence he exerted, and which made him the king of naturalists. No. Dry words and dry facts, however clear-cut and polished, will not fire hearts. A botanist may be a giant in intellect, gather plants from the four quarters of the globe and pile them in labeled heaps as high as haystacks, without kindling a single spark of the love that fired the followers of Linnaeus. In drying plants, botanists too often dry themselves. But Linnaeus loved every living thing as his friend and brother, and his eyes never closed on the divine beauty and harmony and oneness they displayed. All the dry word-work he did, however technical and severe, was done to bring the plants and animals as living children of Nature forward into light to be loved. In the midst of his immense classifying labors, he seemed always to be saying in a low glowing undertone, ‘Come, darlings: I love you, and want everybody to love you! Come, stand in rows and let me see you and count you and call you by name.’ And they came - from his own Scandinavia, from the tundras of Lapland, from icy Siberia, from sunny India and Africa, from both the Americas, and from the isles of the seas. They came to his love, led by devoted disciples. For as a sun, he warmed others and inspired them; and thus warmed and inspired, they radiated like light over all the world and did the master's bidding. The beasts of the field came also to this solar man to be seen and warmed and loved; and the birds from every grove, and insects and creeping things, and fishes from the seas and streams, and crystals from the mountain caves - all for love. And so his radiant influence works on, cheering and enlightening the world, and will go on while flowers bloom and birds sing.”

Ode to Gentians

A note from your Editor

Readers of the Newsletter know that I quote Muir and Thoreau a lot – not because I am ignorant of other writers, but because I rarely find other writers who have anything better to say. As I re-read the passage at the top of this page, I recall how surprised I was not to see any small Gentians on the High Sierra Double Header or Winnemucca Lake field trips. After Winnemucca, I visited Convict Lake, Saddlebag Lake, and Warren Canyon and found *Gentianopsis holopetala* at all three locations. My summer was complete.



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