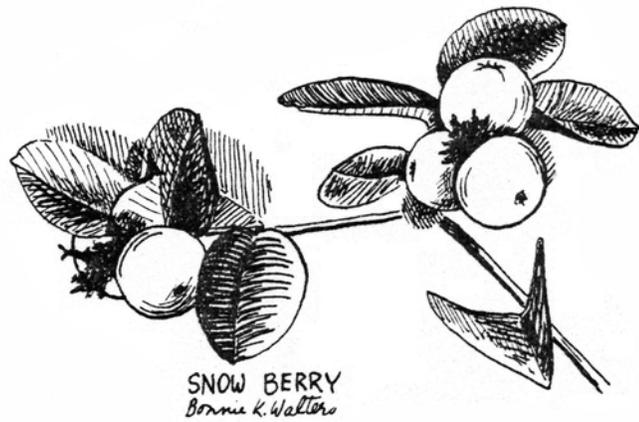
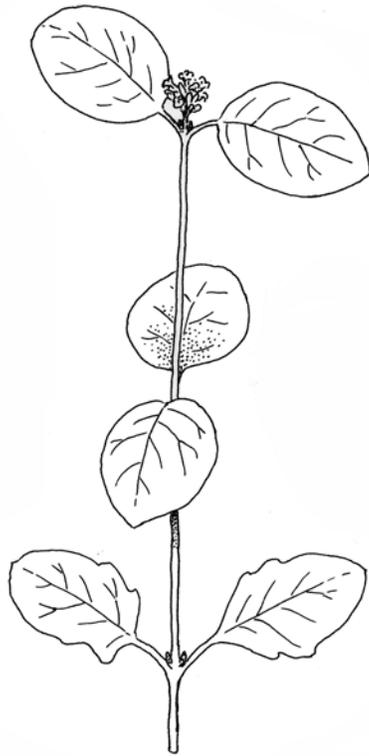


OBISPOENSIS

Newsletter of the San Luis Obispo Chapter of the
California Native Plant Society for San Luis Obispo
and Northern Santa Barbara Counties



OCTOBER 2007

Creeping snowberry (*Symphoricarpos mollis*)

The illustration for this cover of *OBISPOENSIS* is a composite of something new and something old and very obviously consists of two very different styles. The fruiting branch was done by Bonnie long ago using drawing pens that yield lines of varying widths. We have both forgotten its original purpose, although we are guessing it was done for one of our installation banquet covers. The drawing of the flowering leafy branch is a new drawing done for this article using a rapidograph. A rapidograph is designed for engineering drawing and results in uniform width lines. The drawings are of creeping snowberry (*Symphoricarpos mollis*). This shrubby species probably is more common in our area than the more widespread and more flamboyant relative common snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus* var. *laevigatus*) with which it is often mistaken. Separating these two highly variable species is quite difficult. They differ only in degree. Common snowberry is said to be taller and straighter, with larger, narrower leaves. Creeping snowberry is said to be shorter with weaker stems that often spread horizontally creating a loose mat. Creeping snowberry therefore more closely resembles a tall groundcover than a true shrub. Its leaves are also supposed to be smaller and more rounded (oval). However both species produce individuals that fall into the range of the other. The characters that most of the ID manuals use are number of flowers per cluster (inflorescence), presence of nectar glands below the petal lobes and as well as whether the floral tube bulges at the base. Creeping snowberry produces few small flowers per inflorescence, nectar glands below its petals and no bulge. Common snowberry usually produces many large flowers per cluster and a single large gland enclosed in a bulging tube. Creeping snowberry has a greater tendency to produce leaves covered by fine trichomes (hair). Creeping snowberry, according to the books, is more common in brushy areas whereas common snowberry generally inhabits shaded canyons. Both species are native to and widespread through the western states. Common snowberry has become naturalized in the eastern U.S.

The white berries are smaller in creeping snowberry than in common snowberry, but they are still probably poisonous. A saying coined for poison oak is equally valid here, "Berries white; poisonous sight." Further evidence of their poisonous nature is the tendency for the fruits to remain on the plant long after they are produced. That is, wild animals seem to be avoiding them. According to Fuller and McClintock, *Poisonous Plants of California*, common snowberry possesses chelidonine, an isoquinoline alkaloid. They also note a single case of poisoning by common snowberry recorded in the U.S. Apparently, there have been no recorded cases of creeping snowberry poisoning. I would guess this has more to do with their small size and limited number, which would make collecting them a major chore.

The authors, Carol Bornstein, David Fross, and Bart O'Brien, in their *California Native Plants for the Garden* recommend this species as a ground cover capable of withstanding the shade and chemistry under live oaks. Even in the wild, the ground under live oaks is usually devoid of anything but poison oak. Creeping snowberry can and does thrive here. I suspect after it gets established it could even prevent the establishment of poison oak.

Dirk Walters

Illustration by Bonnie Walters

President's Message

Welcome Back! I hope everyone had a good summer and took lots of photos of interesting plants and places that we can all see at our upcoming October meeting. Of course our local CNPS chapter did not have much going on during the summer, which gave some of us a chance to recuperate after hosting the State CNPS Chapter Council meeting in Morro Bay in June. I can't thank all of the volunteers enough for making it a success; we estimated there were about 200 volunteer hours spent on that event. I was still getting compliments from some of the people that attended when I went to the September Chapter Council meeting. Thank you all very much.

If you have been thinking about getting more involved with our local chapter, now is the time. We have several people on our current board and committees that would like to change (or take a break). Also, we need help with planning our annual banquet for this year. We will not likely be at Dairy Creek since the cost keeps going up, so we are looking for a new venue. Please let me, or anyone on the current board, know if you are interested in helping out your local chapter. You do not need to be a committee chairperson to contribute. If you have a field trip or program you would like to see happen and can help get it planned and organized, we welcome your input. Thank you, Lauren.

New State CNPS Policies in development:

On the CNPS state level, we are working hard to develop policies for the application of herbicide and Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM). These are separate policies and both herbicide application and IVM are very emotional issues that bring comments from those that are strongly in favor and unconditionally opposed. The need for developing a policy came from members who, as representatives of local CNPS chapters, were asked about CNPS' position on certain activities. However, since CNPS is a state-wide organization, the task was not simple. Our members have a lot of experience on how herbicide application and IVM can work to promote native plant and ecosystem preservation but also can destroy it. It has taken a very long time to develop a policy that would be compatible to CNPS' mandate. In a few weeks, the policies will be submitted for final review and approval. Before final approval, we would (*continued on next page*)

like to hear from our local chapter members who have both positive and negative experiences with regard to herbicide application and IVM in natural environments. The committee members developing the policies are also looking for published case studies on these subjects. If you would like to contribute case studies, or are interested in reviewing these policies before they are final, please contact me (preferably by Email) and I will put together a distribution list for interested members. Thank you, Lauren (Email: brownla@saic.com). Lauren M. Brown

Conservation News

David Chipping

After a refreshingly uneventful summer, there is not a lot to report on. The Santa Margarita Ranch issues regarding water supply and the avoidance of habitat are still being addressed in an update to the draft EIR. Water is still the biggest issue here, with the developers shredding the conclusions of their own consultants and hiring others who would, I presume, produce results more pleasing to them. Santa Margarita Residents Together (www.margaritaresidentstogether.org) have on their archives page two letters from the Department of Fish and Game expressing concerns that vineyard pumping was dewatering surface streams in 1999 and 2000.

CNPS has not got involved with the viewshed ordinance issue as it has no direct nexus to the protection of plants. We are also staying out of the Los Osos sewer issue until there is a project to work with, and then the Habitat Conservation Plan will have to be revisited.

The September CNPS Conservation Conference in Santa Cruz yielded information on the manner in which certain local governments are interpreting new fire clearance, with Los Angeles declaring that native vegetation is a de-facto problem by way of being native. Locally the big issues are the manner in which fire protection will be carried out in the Monterey pines of Cambria. An apparent demand to remove low vegetation will result in the loss of young trees that will replace those lost to age and disease, and could result in the eventual elimination of big sections of that pine forest in the next century.

We also were treated to some interesting information on Southern California chaparral wild fires, which appear NOT to be dependent on the age of the chaparral, but mostly on the plant moisture content and the presence of Santa Ana conditions. We also heard that many of the home ignitions are from burning embers and not from the direct contact of flame from the brush or from radiant heat.

I am searching for new blood in our local conservation program. I don't seem to get much response, so, one more time, if there is anyone who would like to take on a 'watch' of a political entity such as a council, planning commission, committee or whatever, or at least monitor the document flows in a search for hot potatoes, I would be grateful.

Meetings and Programs

San Luis Obispo Chapter Meeting: Thursday, October 4, 7:00 p.m. Dessert Potluck and Members' Slide Show. Bring a dessert to share and your 15 best photos, slides and digital pictures. Meet at the Veterans Hall, Monterey Street and Grand Avenue, San Luis Obispo. Call Dirk Walters, 543-7051 or Charlie Blair, 733-3189, for more information.

Habitat at Risk: oaks, birds, grasses and grapes

a talk by David Chipping, Conservation Chair of SLO Native Plant Society,
and Andrea Jones, Conservation Chair of Morro Coast Audubon Society



Photo by Greg Smith

This presentation will provide information on unique habitats in the Santa Margarita area, focusing on grasslands, oak woodlands, and chaparral and the unique plant and animal species that inhabit them.

Monday, Oct. 22 at 7:00 pm
AARP Clubhouse, Atascadero
(2848 Pismo Street, 1 block S. of Zoo entrance on Hwy. 41)

A FREE COMMUNITY PROGRAM PRESENTED BY
**MORRO COAST AUDUBON SOCIETY AND
SLO NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY**
Complimentary refreshments by MCAS

Field Trips

Saturday, 20 October, 9:00 a.m. Fall Plant Walk, La Purisima Mission: Charlie Blair will be leading a tour of fall-blooming plants of the Burton Mesa Chaparral. Come and see what is out at this sometimes forgotten time of the year. Meet at 9:00 a.m., east end of Burton Mesa Blvd. (1550 E Burton Mesa Blvd.) in Mission Hills at the Community Service District Office. From the north, take the Constellation Rd. off-ramp from SR 1, heading left, then turn right on Burton Mesa Blvd. From the South, Burton Mesa Blvd. can be accessed from either Harris Grade Rd. or Rucker Rd.; again turn right. Call Charlie Blair, 733-3189, for details.

PLANT SALES

Did you know that fall is the best time to plant in California? This is when the summer heat has dissipated and rain is just around the corner. The rains reduce the need for supplemental water and help young plants establish their root systems. In California's unique climate, this below-ground growth during winter powers the stunning floral displays of spring. This fall, consider planting California native plants, which are naturally adapted to the local soil and climate; thrive without amendments, fertilizers, or pesticides; look beautiful; and offer incomparable habitat value. —
Arvind Kumar, CNPS Santa Clara Valley Chapter

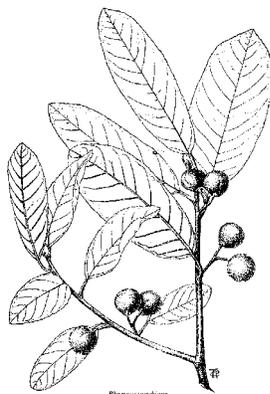
Nipomo Native Garden's Annual Fall Plant Sale

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 7
9 am – 3pm

MID-STATE BANK PARKING LOT
615 W. TEFFT STREET, NIPOMO

CALIFORNIA NATIVE & DROUGHT TOLERANT PLANTS
TEE SHIRTS & CAPS FOR SALE

FREE PLANT INFORMATION HANDOUTS AVAILABLE
COME EARLY FOR BEST SELECTION
FOR INFORMATION CALL
929-6710 or 929-3589



San Luis Obispo Chapter Plant Sale

Its that time of year again when I ask all of you for help at the plant sale. It will be held on Saturday, November 3, at the Heritage Oaks Bank / Blakeslee & Blakeslee building in Madonna Plaza, San Luis Obispo. Please fill out the sign up sheet on the back page of this newsletter and mail it back to me as soon as possible.

As you know, working the plant sale is a lots of fun.

You will meet many new people, learn plant names and the best locations to plant them in your yard. Plus, get first pick at reserving plants to purchased. I'm really looking forward to this year's sale and of coarse, hearing from you so please sign up soon.

Thank you, your chairperson John

Second Annual SYVNHS Plant Sale Fundraiser

The Santa Ynez Valley Natural History Society is having its second annual plant sale this year at the Dunn School campus in Santa Ynez, Roblar Street Entrance.

The plant sale will feature native plants, many of which have been propagated from materials of local origin. This includes native grasses and hard to find bulbs. Other plants that should thrive in the Valley will also be available, along with expert horticultural consultation.

Date: Saturday & Sunday, September 29 and 30, 2007. The public is welcome on both days starting at 10 a.m. SYVNHS members will be admitted at 9 a.m.

Fall Watering

I have been receiving many questions from people concerning what to do about watering their gardens. Some have plants drying out from the heat and others are very concerned about loosing new plantings all together. The question, I'm afraid, is not that easy to answer. First, we must consider how old are the trees and shrubs in question are. Second, it's very important to know how much normal rainfall we received last winter.

Let's start by discussing older more mature plants such as oak trees, ceanothus, fremontia, toyon and manzanita. Older more mature trees and shrubs would not do well with watering this time of year. Watering them now could cause a root problem such as oak root fungus and do more harm than good. Watering late in the season can also cause fungal leaf spot on many species of manzanita and toyon. Older trees and shrubs have extensive root systems and the ability to survive even the driest of summers. The lack of rain will only become a problem for them if we have two or three

years with low rainfall. During these extended dry times its best to water extra only during the rainy season as a supplement. This will help the trees and shrubs to store up the reserves needed to make it through the long dry summer months.

Now, let's talk about newer plantings, let's say less then two years. If you purchased plants at last year's sale you are properly starting to see them suffer. They were planted during a low rainy season and were not able to develop the extensive root system of the older more mature trees or shrubs. Without the ability to store up enough reserves they are now starting to decline and may even die. I'm suggesting that you give these new plantings a deep drink to help them through the rest of the summer. Make sure you build a basin around the plant to direct the water to the root zone. A sprinkler set on low can also do a good job. Some plants will pick up right away others may not show any signs at all but they will still benefit from the watering.

I hope that helps a little. Until next month, happy gardening,
John

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Position vacant

Cuesta Ridge Monitor

Neil Havlik

Newsletter Editor

Robert Hotaling (805) 238-6044 rhotaling@charter.net

Newsletter Mailing

Linda & David Chipping (805) 528-0914

NEW BOOKS

The Laws Field Guide to the Sierra Nevada, written and illustrated by John Muir Laws and published by the California Academy of Sciences and Heyday Books, came off the press this August. The guide covers 1,700 species and features 2,800 of Laws' original watercolor illustrations, many done in the field over the past six years. 366 pages; \$24.95

Marin Flora - An Illustrated Manual of the Flowering Plants, Ferns, and Conifers of Marin by John Thomas Howell, Frank Almeda, Wilma Follette, and Catherine Best, has just been published in its newly-revised third edition by the California Academy of Sciences and the California Native Plant Society (Marin Chapter). 510 pp, 7 x 10", ISBN 0-940228-71-8, softcover, \$35.00.



Obispoensis is published October through June except January. Items for submittal to *Obispoensis* should be sent to rhotaling@charter.net. The deadline is the 10th of each month. Botanical articles, news items, illustrations, photos, events and tidbits are welcome.

Visit the websites

www.cnps.org and www.cnps-slo.org



New and Renewal CNPS Memberships

- Limited Income \$25
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- Family, Group \$75
- Plant Lover \$100
- Patron \$300
- Benefactor \$600
- Mariposa Lily \$1500

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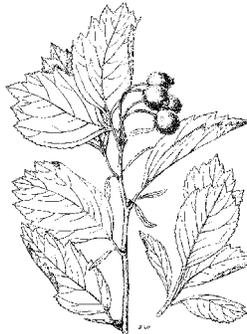
San Luis Obispo Chapter

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Websites: **www.cnps.org** & **www.cnps-slo.org**



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Please make your check payable to CNPS and mail to:
California Native Plant Society
2707 K Street, Suite 1
Sacramento, CA 95816-5113

Dedicated to the Preservation of the California Native Flora

The California Native Plant Society is a statewide non-profit organization of amateurs and professionals with a common interest in California's native plants. The mission of the Society is to increase understanding and appreciation of California's native plants and to preserve them in their natural habitat through scientific activities, education and conservation. Membership is open to all.

Membership includes the quarterly journal, *Fremontia*, the quarterly *Bulletin*, which gives statewide news and announcements of the Society activities and conservation issues, and the chapter newsletter, *Obispoensis*.



*San Luis Obispo Chapter of the
California Native Plant Society*
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Native Plant Sale Volunteer Sign Up

Heritage Oaks Bank, Madonna Plaza, San Luis Obispo, Saturday, November 3, 2007

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Please mark the hours and tasks you can help with:

Set Up 7 - 8 a.m. Help as needed Unload & set up plants
 8 - 9 a.m. Set up tables Hang signs

Sales 9 - 10 a.m. Help as needed Sell Plants
 10 - 11 a.m. Sell seeds Load customers' plants
 11 - 12 p.m. Cashier's table Sell books and posters
 12 - 1 p.m. Sit at sales table Clean up
 1 - 2 p.m.

Please complete this form and bring it to the October meeting for John Nowak or send it to him at 8605 San Gabriel Road, Atascadero, CA 93422.