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# *Obispoensis*

Newsletter of the San Luis Obispo Chapter of the California Native Plant Society

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APRIL 2011

## ABOUT THE COVER

The drawing on the cover on this issue of the *Obispoensis* is, I suspect, one of our most taken for granted wildflowers. I've regularly noticed people on our wildflower hikes walk past fields of them with nary a glance. True, the flowers are not huge, but they are not tiny either. Sure, they are tightly packed into a ball, but they're nearly a half-a-dozen of them blooming at a time. So why are they so often ignored? Maybe, it's because their globular clusters grow at the top of spindly stalk up to a foot or so tall and these are usually widely scattered. The result is field of smallish, diffuse, blue balls that are difficult to focus on. They are even difficult to get a good photograph with an ordinary point and shoot camera. In a photograph, it's hard to tell where one flower ends and the next one begins. Bonnie's drawing of a single flower helps. We can see the three sepals and three petals that are nearly identical making up the six-parted perianth, which is a major characteristic of this group of the old lily complex of families. Even in the drawing however, we can't see the stamens or the pistils as these are hidden by the large, flat, tooth-like appendages that are attached to the filaments of three of the six stamens. These three appendages completely dominate the center of the flower. And this sort of creates mush of the flower portrait. Anyway, that is my explanation as to why it has taken this long to profile our most commonly encountered wildflower.

What is its name you might be asking? I suspect many of you all already know. However, I also suspect, each of you may know it by a different common and/or scientific name. It seems to have acquired at least four scientific names over the years. These include: *Brodiaea capitata*, *Brodiaea pulchella*, *Dichelostemma pulchella*, and *Dichelostemma capitatum*. According to the Jepson Flora website, the last name is going to be the one accepted in the upcoming edition. The most widely used common name in our area for this plant is blue dicks. The reason for calling it "blue" is obvious as the flowers are usually blue although pink and almost white flowers are not uncommon. The name wild hyacinth was common in the literature referring to this plant. The origin of the name "dicks" escapes me however. I'm sure it has nothing to do with the meaning that came to mind of my college age students indicated by their smirks when I would say it for the first time on field trips. If anyone out there knows the origin of the term "dicks" as used in this common name, I'd really like to know it. In one of the classes at Cal Poly, the name "ookow" was applied to this plant and it was said that it was the native California peoples name for it. But the current *Jepson Manual* ascribes this name to a Northern California species of *Dichelostemma* not found this far south.

Whenever I'm out in the general public sooner or later I get a question that I gives me great trepidation. The question

is, "Was this plant used by native people for food or medicine?" Why should this cause me concern? There are a number of reasons. The most obvious one is due to our modern litigious society. Plants affect people differently and what is ok for one may not be ok for another. Also, use of wild plant depends on accurate identification by the collector and the person who says a species was used is not usually the one doing the collecting and preparing. Second, there is a legal issue. The United States follows English common law when it comes to ownership of plants growing on land. Plants belong to whomever owns the land. So if one gathers plants for whatever purpose, without permission of the landowner, they are in violation of the law. Admittedly, this is rarely enforced, except on public lands and for protected species. There is also a conservation question. I was reminded of this recently by an e-mail question about eating some spring greens. It turned out the question was probably about some escaped weedy mustard and was therefore moot but was still important. (An aside, one shouldn't depend on photographs for identification of anything one is going to put inside your body!) With the world population approaching 7 BILLION this year, can we expect the natural world to supply much more than it is already doing. Finally, there is little doubt that blue dicks or wild hyacinth was used by essentially every tribe of native California peoples in just about every way possible. They ate the flowers, but mostly they ate the small corms that reside some 10 cm (4 in) deep in the soil. They ate them either raw or boiled. However, one source I read indicated that they NEVER collected the corms unless there was a blooming flower stalk attached. Why? Because, the corms of blue dicks too closely resemble the bulbs of the death camas, *Zigadenus venenosus*.

Illustration by Bonnie K. Walters - Text by Dirk R. Walters

## CONSERVATION

CORRECTION: In the last newsletter's discussion of the solar project that adjoins Belmont Trail and which lies closest to the Temblor Range I mistakenly named the developer as First Solar, instead of SunPower. CNPS is also commenting on First Solar's project, which is further north and to the west.

I regret to say that the Planning Commission seemed to have ignored CNPS concerns with the SunPower project's impacts to flower fields, and approved the project by unanimous vote. We had asked that some definite conservation actions such as offsite mitigation funding be set up prior to approving the project, as the EIR assigns Class II impacts (impacts that can be mitigated) only if additional steps are taken. We have concerns that the Board of Supervisors might be equally dismissive of biological impacts on the basis of an overriding consideration that solar power and carbon reductions trump local effects. We do not have the same problems

with the First Solar/ Topaz project, where impacts to flora are much less evident.

In another problematic move, the City of Pismo Beach is changing the area that they are considering for annexation in the Price Canyon area, removing the Spanish Springs North Ranch property which is northwest of the highway, and adding the Godfrey Ranch which lies southwest of the Spanish Springs South Ranch, and is west of the western end of Vetter Lane. The Godfrey ranch is essentially undeveloped grasslands with scattered oaks and would appear to be prime habitat for Pismo clarkia. To develop this property, which is remote from the core of Pismo Beach, would be the epitome of urban sprawl. One would imagine that this property would also require an additional water source.

As state and federal agencies get poorer, it looks like conservation actions such as noxious weed removal are being ignored. I would be interested in seeing if there are any certified herbicide applicators within our chapter who could be called upon in the event that CNPS could take over some weed control from certain agencies under an MOU of some sort. I would also ask any agency people who are reading this to contact me if they think CNPS and the agency could work together on certain weed removal projects. — David Chipping

## PRESIDENT'S NOTES

We had an excellent turnout for our yearly north county meeting, and it was really great to see faces that don't usually appear at our SLO Meetings. I would be very interested to hear from north county people on what they thought of the program, and what they would like to see next year.

Our next meeting not held in the Vets Hall, but at Shell Creek, and the field trip information is elsewhere in the newsletter. This is always a fun outing, and it may be a bit more of an adventure as the creek is running high at the moment. I think the wildflowers will be great this year, including those along Highway 58 on the way.

We are going to be present at Earth Day celebrations at the SLO Botanic Garden, so give us a visit. We are always looking for volunteers who would help our boothing regulars. We will be presenting before the Board of Supervisors the week before California Wildflower Week (third week in April) with a long list of happenings, which will also be mounted on our web site. Contact me if you have something in mind for celebrating wildflowers during either that week or the weekends at either end. We are also trying to post stuff like wildflower sightings on the Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/CNPSSLO>. — David Chipping

## Chapter Meetings

**Saturday, April 2, Annual Malcolm McLeod Memorial Field Trip Meeting to Shell Creek.** See Field Trips. There is no meeting at the Vets Hall this month.

**May 5** How Native Plants have become a priority for UCSB open space areas by Lisa Stratton, the Director of Ecosystem Management for UCSB's Cheadle Center for Biodiversity and Ecological Restoration.

## A Warm Welcome to New Member

Marcia Harvey

## Thank you to our chapter Renewing Members

Jesse Arnold, Miranda Canestro, Liz Curren, S. Ela, Marjorie Erickson & Wesley Roe, Francesca Fairbrother, Suzette Girouard, Esther & John Gowan, Dennis Hadenfeldt, Peggy Heathcote, David & Joanna Kisner, Sara Kocher & Dan Levi, Christina & Erick Holenda, Tim Matthews, Kate Montgomery, Al Normandin, Joan & Tim O'Keefe, James Patterson, Ellen and C.S. Perryess, John Pierszalowski, John Reid, Gary Ruggerone, Nancy Farrell Rose, Tina & Jay Salter, Natalie Schaefer, Larry & Laurie Vierheilig, and Jean Young

## Note to Native Plant Shoppers

Growing Grounds Farm is expanding the hours that the general public can shop at the Farm on Orcutt Road to 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. on the 3rd Tuesday of every month. CNPS members receive a 20% discount off retail prices.



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*Obispoensis* is published October through June except January. Items for submittal to *Obispoensis* should be sent to [rhotaling@charter.net](mailto: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](http://www.cnps.org) and [www.cnps-slo.org](http://www.cnps-slo.org)

## Field Trips

**Saturday, April 2, Annual Malcolm McLeod Memorial Field Trip Meeting to Shell Creek** led by Dirk Walters and David Chipping. Meet at the SLO Vets Hall at 8:30 a.m. and Santa Margarita Park & Ride, on the south side of Hwy 58, just east of Hwy 101 intersection, at 9:00 a.m. Our first stop will be at the Santa Margarita Park to use the bathrooms, there will be no other bathrooms available after that point. We will then drive east on Hwy 58, about 18.5 miles. If we encounter abundant flowers en-route, a single roadside stop may be made in Calf Canyon on the way to Shell Creek. At Shell Creek Road, turn left and park there. The group will meet somewhere near the windmill. We will walk through the fields along both sides of Shell Creek Road looking at wildflowers. We will visit spots with shell fossils that gives this area its name. We will meet as a group for lunch somewhere along Shell Creek Road. This will end the morning part of the trip. In the afternoon some people may wish to explore other spots in the area, while others may want to return to town. Consider the afternoon options when making travel arrangements. Bring water, lunch, cameras, dress in layers and don't forget your "Wildflowers of Highway 58" plant guide by Dr. Malcolm McLeod or plan to purchase one on the trip. For more information call Dirk Walters at (drwalters@charter.net), (805) 543-7051, David Chipping at (dchippin@calpoly.edu), (805) 528-0914 or Bill Waycott at (bill.waycott@gmail.com), (805) 459-2103

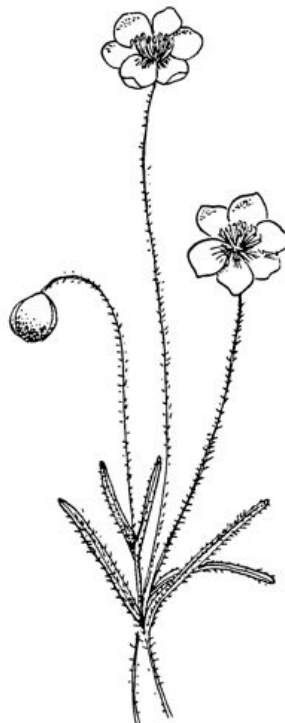
**Wednesday, April 6, 8:30 a.m., CNPS Chimineas Field Trip:** Chimineas is a Dept. of Fish and Game Ecological Reserve in southeast SLO County with wonderful wilderness and wildflowers. To car caravan from SLO, meet at the Veterans Hall (Grand at Monterey), at 8:30 am. At Chimineas meet at 10:00 am at the Feed Lot pull out, on the north side of Hwy 166, 33 1/4 miles east of Hwy 101, 1/4 mile east of Miranda Canyon Road. Have the usual water, food, sturdy shoes, sunscreen, and clothes for the weather. This is an all day trip. Roads are dirt, a little rough but passable; trucks are good; small sedans not recommended. Rain cancels to the following Wednesday. Contact George, (805) 438-3641, or gbutterworth8@gmail.com.



Islay Hill field trip, March 5

**Saturday, April 9, 9 a.m., CNPS and Sierra Club Spring La Purisima Burton Mesa Wildflower Walk:** Meet at the La Purisima Mission Parking Lot, corner of Purisima and Mission Gate Roads. (2295 Purisima Rd. Lompoc) at 9 a.m. for this annual California Native Plant Society and Sierra Club spring tour of the beauties of the Burton Mesa Chaparral. This is turning out to be a fair year for wildflowers, annuals as well as shrubs. Optional afternoon tour. Sturdy shoes, lunch & liquids, camera and binoculars advised. For more information, call Charlie at (805) 733-3189.

**Saturday, April 16, 9:00 a.m., LPNF and CNPS Wildflower, Native Plant Week, and Earth Day Weekend Figueroa Mountain, at the Figueroa Fire Station:** The Santa Lucia District, Los Padres National Forest (LPNF) will hold its one of its eleventh annual Wildflower Weekends on Figueroa Mountain in conjunction with the California Native Plant Society (CNPS). This tour will start a local celebration of the first California Native Plant Week (3<sup>rd</sup> week in April, the 16th to 23rd this year). Meet at 9 a.m. at the Fire Station on Figueroa Mountain Road. Turn left at the SR 154 - Figueroa Mountain Road intersection near Los Olivos, and proceed to the Fire Station parking lot. This will be a "drive and stroll" tour of this year's spectacular display. Sturdy shoes, lunch and liquids, and camera and binoculars recommended. Call Helen Tabet at (805) 925-9538 ext. 246 or Charles Blair (805) 733-3189 for details.



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SUNDAY, MAY 1 MORRO COAST AUDUBON SOCIETY AND CNPS PICNIC AT SANTA MARGARITA

This sixth super fantastic collaborative Morro Coast Audubon Society and California Native Plant Society picnic will include several field trips. Daily use fees will be waived for event participants; we welcome members of either organization as well as the general public.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

**8:00-11:00 a.m.:** Birding with Maggie Smith at River Rode: An easy 3 mile walk along the Salinas River before it flows into the lake. Appropriate for all experience levels. Meet at the River Road Access.

The staging area for all other activities will be White Oak Picnic area (handicap accessible)

**9:00 a.m.:** Birding with co-leaders youth extraordinaire Ross Schaefer and youthful extraordinaire Eric Wier. (ALL experience levels)

**9:00 a.m.:** Walk on the wild-side hike. Join SML Ranger Chuck Woodard for a Pontoon boat ride across the lake to explore birds and plants on the far side of the lake on a portion of the Falcon Trail (limited to 12 participants).

**9:30-11:00 a.m.:** Beginning birders' walk: Join Stephanie Little and Jen Moonjian for a fun introduction to birding. Kids and adults welcome; binoculars, etc. provided.

**10:00 a.m.:** Kayak/canoe launch with Jack Beigle (bring PFDs, sunscreen, binoculars)

**10:00 a.m.:** Hike up the mountain with David Chipping and Dirk Walters in search of wildflowers and rare plants.

**11:00 a.m.:** Birding by chair: Bring along a lawn chair and join Jan Surbey while observing birds in detail, discussing seldom noticed features and possibly attempting to sketch birds. Digital cameras helpful, other materials provided.

**12 NOON:** Picnic potluck: Join us for an old fashioned new fangled PICNIC. Bring your own sandwich, a side dish, snack, or dessert to share and your own (preferably reusable) place setting and beverage container. Throw in your picnic tablecloth if possible. Assorted drinks provided by MCAS.

**12:45-1:15 p.m.:** Optics fest: Join Rouvaishyana and experiment with various brands of binoculars and spotting scopes to see which works best for you.

**1:15-2:15 p.m.:** Wildflower art with Janine Kirkpatrick. Use pastels, watercolors, and watercolor pencils to create gorgeous wildflower art. Bring a "sit upon" and your own supplies if you have them. Additional materials provided.

**1:15-2:15 p.m.:** Plant Stroll: David Chipping leads a "mellow stroll" around the area identifying plants and wildflowers.

ONGOING THROUGHOUT THE DAY

Waterfowl and woodpecker watch: Bird watching around the picnic area

Fishing: Kid's Cove (for kids only) and shore fishing around picnic area

Hiking: Grey Pine Trailhead located at picnic area

Junior ranger program: Self-directed activities for school-age children

BRING any kayaks, canoes, spotting scopes, binoculars, cameras, field guides, bikes, fishing gear, etc. for enjoying the day at the lake. (The marina store stocks supplies and rents boats.)



*Claytonia perfoliata* - miner's lettuce

**DIRECTIONS to Santa Margarita Lake White Oak Picnic area:**

From Hwy. 101, take the Santa Margarita (Highway 58) exit and drive through the town of Santa Margarita. Turn right on Highway 58. At the junction with Pozo Road (in approximately 2 miles), stay on Pozo Road for approximately 7 miles and follow the signs to the Santa Margarita Lake turnoff. Turn left and drive one mile to the park entrance. Turn right after entering the gate and follow the road for one mile to the White Oak Picnic area. (Allow 30-40 minutes from the SLO area)

**DIRECTIONS to RIVER ROAD access:**

Follow the above directions until the Santa Margarita Lake turnoff. Instead of turning, continue driving straight on Pozo Road for approximately 7.8 miles. Immediately after the bridge, turn left on RIVER ROAD and continue another 2.2 miles to the staging area on the left side of the road. (Allow 45-50 minutes from the SLO area)

For additional information contact Jan Surbey (jansurbey@earthlink.net) or 772-7273.

## April 17 to 23 declared "California Native Plant Week" by the California Legislature

Daily outings during the week with an emphasis on native plants. Descriptions of garden tours are on the following pages.

### *Saturday, April 16:*

- ✿ Guided tour of the Carrizo Plain National Monument given by the Santa Margarita Community Forestry Gateway Committee, from Santa Margarita, 9 am to 4 pm, reservation required, \$20 per person, sign up at [smcf.org](http://smcf.org) or e-mail Bev Gingg at [bgingg@smcf.org](mailto:bgingg@smcf.org).
- ✿ Butterflies and Native Plants, Elfin Forest, Los Osos, 9:30 a.m. See write-up page 7.

### *Sunday, April 17:*

- ✿ Nipomo Native Garden, 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm. See write-up page 7.
- ✿ Native Garden Tour, Wendy Brown, 1865 Wilding Lane, San Luis Obispo, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. See write-up page 7.

### *Monday, April 18:*

- ✿ Native Garden Tour, Bill Shearer, 170 Walnut Street, Arroyo Grande, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm, (805) 481-2849 See write-up page 7.

### *Tuesday, April 19:*

- ✿ Native Garden Tour, Mardi Niles, 665 Carpenter Canyon Road, Arroyo Grande, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm, (805) 489-9274. See write-up page 7.
- ✿ San Luis Obispo Growing Grounds, 10 am. Orcutt Road & Johnson Avenue, San Luis Obispo. See page 7.



### *Wednesday, April 20:*

- ✿ Native Garden Tour, Susan Grimaud, 1545 Wild Rye Way, Arroyo Grande, 10:00 am to 2 pm. See write-up page 8.
- ✿ Sweet Springs Nature Preserve, Los Osos, 10 a.m. Meet at main entrance on Ramona Drive. See write-up page 8.

### *Thursday, April 21:*

- ✿ Native Garden Tour, Wendy Brown, 1865 Wilding Lane, San Luis Obispo, 10:00 am to 2 pm. See write-up page 8.

### *Friday, April 22:*

- ✿ Native Garden Tour, Bill and Connie Shepard, 4820 San Jacinto, Atascadero, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm – See page 8.
- ✿ Las Pilitas Nursery, contact Penny Nyunt, [Penny@laspilitas.com](mailto:Penny@laspilitas.com)

### *Saturday, April 23:*

- ✿ San Luis Obispo Botanic Gardens, 10:00 am to 12:00 pm, Mardi Niles and Bill Waycott – See page 8.
- ✿ San Luis Obispo Botanic Gardens, 1:00 pm, talk on native plants for the garden, John Nowak – See page 8.

For more information please contact Bill Waycott ([bill.waycott@gmail.com](mailto:bill.waycott@gmail.com)), (805) 459-2103.

## Landscaping Symposium Keynote Speaker Brad Lancaster

The University of California Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Program is proud to present a Sustainable Landscaping Symposium featuring Keynote speaker Brad Lancaster, author of "Rainwater Harvesting for Drylands and Beyond".

### **Saturday April 9, 2011 8:00 am - 1:00 pm**

Find creative alternatives in conservation and preservation of water on your property whether it's a 100 acre ranch or a small city lot. Brad Lancaster will share eight universal principles of water harvesting along with simple strategies that turn water scarcity into water abundance. The morning will also include presentations by Mary Bianchi, UC Horticulture Advisor and Nancy Hartwick, Master Gardener. Learn about gardening practices that promote energy conservation and the use of native plants in the landscape. Cost of this program is \$45 and includes a continental breakfast. Located at the Paso Robles Culinary Arts Academy, 1900 Golden Hill Road. **Registration is required, as seating is limited.** <http://ucanr.org/symposium>

## Seventh Annual Cambria Wildflower Show Saturday, April 30, 12-5 pm & Sunday, May 1, 10-4 pm

Try to imagine the visual feast of more than 500 bouquets of wildflowers – and all under one roof! The Cambria Veterans' Building, at Main Street and Cambria Drive, will be the venue for a display of Fresh Wildflowers collected from the Monterey County line to the Morro Bay Estuary and from the coastal bluffs to the ridge of the Santa Lucia Mountains. Every flower is labeled with its botanical name and family, along with its common name. Trained collectors have permits and collect only from areas that have an abundance of each type of flower. The purpose of this show is to enhance the enjoyment of the area's native plants. CNPS will again be there with a large assortment of wildflower and plant literature. For more information or to volunteer to help, call 927-2856 or e-mail [ffrpcambria@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ffrpcambria@sbcglobal.net). Students of all ages FREE. All others, a \$3 donation at the door. Sponsored by Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch.

# Native Garden Open Today

California Native Plant Society people are eager to show their native gardens to you and we are so lucky to have five wonderful members who have graciously offered to open their gardens for tours during California Native Plant Week. You will find tour dates, garden descriptions and directions listed with each of the five gardens below. You will find that each of our member gardeners is willing to answer your questions and share their gardening experiences with you. We hope you will join all of us in their exciting tour of local native gardens.

## **Butterflies and Native Plants, A walk in the Elfin Forest Preserve, Saturday, April 16, 9:30 am**

In honor of California Native Plant Week, butterfly enthusiast Pat Brown will lead a walk from the point of view of a hungry butterfly. As you tour the Elfin Forest with her, Pat will introduce you to several native plants and talk about the butterflies that sip their nectar and the caterpillars that eat their leaves. Pat has taken many photos of butterflies in all stages of development from eggs to mature butterflies, and will share them along with fascinating butterfly facts. She'll lead you to hang-outs of variable checkerspot, Moro blue, swallowtail, hairstreak, and other butterflies that make the Elfin Forest their home. She will also share information about butterfly books, web sites and butterfly-related materials. She recommends that you bring a hand lens and a pair of close-focusing (5-10 ft.) binoculars.

The walk will begin at the north end of 15th Street off Santa Ysabel in Los Osos. Walk up the path at the end of the street to the boardwalk. Wear comfortable shoes, long sleeves and pants to avoid poison oak and mosquitoes. Please park carefully, avoiding driveways and mailboxes. Please leave pets at home. The easy paced walk lasts 1-1/2 to 2 hours. For more information call (805) 528-0392.

## **Nipomo Native Garden Spring Garden Tour, Sunday, April 17, 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm**

This is the perfect way for you to begin the state recognized Native Plant Week, April 17th through the 23rd. See our website at [nipomonativegarden.org](http://nipomonativegarden.org) or [cnps-slo.org](http://cnps-slo.org) for more events around the county.

Featured will be docent led tours of the garden. Participants will hear a talk on the continuing restoration efforts for the garden, the habitat areas found in the Mesa/Dunes complex and the plants that make up those areas.

Also, participants can attend native plant pruning and planting demonstrations. Talks will also be offered about which native plants are appropriate for the home landscape and their dry-season water requirements.

For more information contact: Cindy Jelinek (805) 929-3589, Laura Cornett (805) 929-2619 or Larry Vierheilg (805) 929-6710

## **Wendy Brown, 1865 Wilding Lane, San Luis Obispo**

Until 2005, the front yard at 1865 was mostly ivy and *Vinca major*. An improvement in house and yard drainage was the opportunity to remove it all and install natives and Mediterranean plants instead. There are now several varieties of ceanothus and manzanitas, both upright and prostrate coyote bush, monkey flower, toyon, muhlenbergia, *Festuca californica*, salvia, poppies, lemonade bush, mahonia, California bay laurel, and coast live oak. The Mediterranean plants include, echium, several kinds of bulbs and old fashioned naked ladies. The soil

is scraped-off adobe and construction leavings, with lots of bark mulch on top. The back yard is iron-hard adobe, with raised beds for vegetables and a home for three chickens. This garden will be open from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm on Sunday, April 17 and again on Thursday, April 21, 2011.

## **Bill Shearer, 170 Walnut Street, Arroyo Grande**

The 12-year-old garden is dominated by two heritage oaks lending itself to an oak woodland with dry shade plants. A sunny section contains chaparral plants. All are in sand with deep mulch. Plants live on rainfall.

From the north take the Halycon exit continuing straight to Grand Avenue and turning right. At the next block (just before Fair Oaks Theater) turn left on Alder and go two blocks and turn right on Maple. Go to the stop sign which is Walnut St., turn right and arrive at the second house on the left.

From the south take the Grand Avenue exit. Turn left and go approximately 3/4 miles and cross Halcyon. Follow directions from the above after turning onto Alder Street (just before Fair Oaks Theater). This garden is open Monday, April 18 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Information: (805) 481-2849

## **Home of Phil and Mardi Niles, 665 Carpenter Canyon Road, Arroyo Grande**

How to get there: From Hwy 101, take the Grand Avenue exit north through the Arroyo Grande Village on Hwy 227, driving two and one half miles to Long Horn Lane. The Niles' residence and driveway is behind the gate, just south of Long Horn Lane. Park along Hwy 227 or up on Long Horn Lane and walk down and around to the gate.

Mardi and Phil Niles have lived at 665 Carpenter Canyon, Arroyo Grande, for 38 years. There have been many changes to the property during this time. Dreams of having an "English Garden," surrounding the small Victorian farm house, were set aside after coming to grips with the water requirements in this semi-arid climate. Mardi's affiliation with the California Native Plant Society has had a big influence on this garden. The concept of "habitat restoration" became the goal. Now plants found in Coast Live Oak Woodland and Sage Scrub Chaparral habitats have been introduced, along with other suitable California native plants. Mediterranean and English plant can still be found in this garden but the focus and future of this garden is with California native plants. The reward has been the abundance of wildlife in this garden. Keep an eye out for the jackrabbit, deer and many quail!!!

This garden will be open on Tuesday, April 19, from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.

## **San Luis Obispo Growing Grounds Spring Garden Tour, Tuesday, April 19, 10:00 am**

Started in 1984 Growing Grounds Farm has evolved into a well respected wholesale nursery specializing in Mediterranean climate zone and California native plants. The Farm provides employment in a supportive environment for over 75 adults with severe and persistent mental illness who benefit from soft job skills training, socialization opportunities and horticultural therapy while earning a paycheck. With over 50,000 plants representing over 900 varieties to choose from, local retail nurseries, landscapers, and restoration organizations can always find the appropriate plant at the Farm or at our downtown store  
(Continued on back page)

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



### *San Luis Obispo Chapter of the California Native Plant Society*

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San Luis Obispo, CA 93406

Nonprofit Organization

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San Luis Obispo, CA

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located at 956 Chorro Street. Meet at the farm at 10:00 am, located at the corner of Orcutt Road and Johnson Avenue in San Luis Obispo.

#### **Susan Grimaud, 1545 Wild Rye Way, Arroyo Grande**

1545 Wild Rye Way is off Varian Circle, a loop road at the south end of Orcutt Road about 2 miles north of Lopez Drive (think Lopez Lake). You need to enter at the north end of Varian Circle (see red-roofed barn), go about 1/2 mile, turn left on Wild Rye. Driveway numbers are posted from there. We are at the top of the hill. The parking is limited, so carpooling is recommended.

The one acre garden was originally landscaped to provide food for birds, butterflies, bees and people (veggie garden and small orchard). Over time more and greater variety of natives have been included, always experimenting to see which would survive our clay soil. Many *Eriogonums* have come and gone, but some remain! We have a particular fondness for manzanitas and *Salvias* and of course *Ceanothus*, but have tried everything we've learned about that we thought would grow here. We would welcome your suggestions! This garden will be open from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm on Wednesday, April 20.

#### **Sweet Springs Nature Preserve Walking Tour, Wednesday, April 20, 10:00 am**

Come celebrate Native Plant Week with an easy stroll around the Sweet Springs Nature Preserve with Holly Sletteland, (805) 772-1991 or (805) 239-3928. View native plants in three threatened habitats: Coastal dune scrub, freshwater marsh, and salt water marsh, including several special status plants. View restoration projects completed on the preserve, including mature and recent projects. Learn about the invasive plants that pose the greatest threats to preserve habitats and future plans to address them. Meet at the main entrance to the preserve at 10:00 am on Ramona Avenue at Broderson Avenue in Los Osos.

#### **Bill and Connie Shepard, 4820 San Jacinto, Atascadero**

This garden was started 15 years ago with the goal of using native plants almost exclusively. I've stuck with that fairly well, although I have a few shade trees and an area for vegetables. My

lot is about an acre on a mild slope toward the east. The soil is sandy and has proven to be very much enjoyed by plants. My lot was essentially a bare grass slope to start with. I now have about 100 plants which are arranged in a natural way and allowed to go about their business without too much trimming. I have a lot of ceanothus, some of them 12 to 15 feet high. Manzanitas are also a favorite. I've replaced my front lawn with grasses and succulents, but still have a small lawn in the back yard. I won a prize from the water company a few years ago for a water conserving garden.

Directions: Coming from the south on 101, take the Traffic Way exit and turn left on El Camino Real. Go about 3/4 of a mile and find San Jacinto on the right (at the water company). Follow this about 1/2 mile to 4820 on the left. There is a fence and a gate.

This garden will be open from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm on Friday, April 22.

#### **San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden Spring Garden Tour, Saturday, April 23, 10:00 am to 12:30 pm**

The San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden's Earth Day Celebration will hold a special event for California Native Plant Week. First join us on a walk through the future gardens of California native plants in the oak woodland habitat. View plants suitable for use in a Mediterranean-style garden. Then, hike the trail to Eagle Rock with its lovely vistas of several of the Morros and hills around the valley. A plant list will be provided and the same species will be for sale at our Garden Shop. Hike co-led by Jean Wheeler, SLOBG docent, Mardi Niles and Bill Waycott of CNPS. Vehicles should be parked in the Cuesta College parking lot where a shuttle bus will take hikers to the ball field in El Chorro Park. From there, walk to the purple gates where hikers will assemble before the hike at 10:15 am. The hike will take 2 to 2.5 hours. Food will be available for purchase after the hike. At 1:00 pm, a talk will be given by CNPS specialist, John Nowak, about the use of California Native Plants in home gardens.

For more information, contact: Mardi Niles (805) 489-9274 or Bill Waycott (805) 459-2103