
Obispoensis

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



November 2016

Hearst mountain lilac (*Ceanothus hearstiorum*)

Introduction: October and November are when our Chapter gets serious about growing native plants. We have a November meeting devoted to it as well as our annual plant sale. This got me to remembering some articles written and drawings drawn by Alice G. Meyer that are in the Historians files. The mechanical typewriter written and her hand drawn copies on are on 8½ x 14 paper. I don't think they were published in our chapter newsletter as I don't remember us ever using that format. I think Alice may have produced them back in the 1970s or 1980s for the Morro Coast Audubon Society. If so, I hope they will forgive us for reprinting them. They're too good to lie forgotten in a file somewhere.

Alice, along with her husband, Henry (Bud), were our Chapters first members to be elected Fellows of the State CNPS. Alice was extremely interested in native plant gardening and had a fantastic native plant garden in her Los Osos back yard. It was Alice who suggested in the Early 1970's that our Chapter have a Native Plant Sale! She then went ahead and planned it. The first one was small and contained only plants grown by Chapter members as well as a few plants propagated by Cal Poly Students in a Native Plants Class several years before and that were scheduled to be thrown out. It was quite successful! The Chapter has had a plant sale the first Saturday in November ever since. Alice ran the sale until 1990 when the current plant Sale Chair, John Nowak, took over. Note, we have had ONLY two plant sale chairs since the early 1970s. This points out one of the strengths in our Chapter. Our member often have a long term commitment to the tasks required for running a CNPS Chapter.

Enough history, let's let Alice tell us about a fantastic native garden plant in her own words. Dr. Dirk Walters



Alice and Bud Meyer: Fellows of CNPS

PLANT OF THE MONTH

by Alice G. Meyer

The Hearst mountain lilac grows on low hills near the coast, just north and south of Arroyo de la Cruz on the Hearst Ranch. It is not known to grow anywhere else, and, is a rare and endangered plant. It is a spreading prostrate shrub, known botanically as *Ceanothus hearstiorum* (See-an-OH-thus hearst-ee-OH rum).

Horticulturally, it is an ideal ground cover, 4 to 8 inches tall, handsome all year, but especially when it flowers in March and April. The shrub is not widely available, but some growers do propagate it.

Hearst mountain lilac grows best on the coast, in full sun. Inland, it prefers filtered sunlight, and should have some supplemental water during the hot months. Once established, it will survive on the coast with normal rainfall, but will tolerate some summer water. In dry years it needs extra moisture to maintain its best appearance. An observant gardener will note stress and take necessary action. Inland supplemental water during the hot months is a must.

Wherever it is grown, good drainage is important, and there should be no basin around the shrub as water standing around the trunk will cause bacterial problems. When planting, it is better to plant it on a slight mound, so that water runs outward towards the drip line, but the soil should not be piled up around it higher than it was in the container.

The edges of the dark green leaves are curled downward between the veins, making them seem notched and giving the leaves a crinkled appearance. The deep wedge-wood blue flowers are in tight, upward facing racemes ½ to 1½ inches long. Each flower is no more than 1/8 inch across. If you remove one flower and inspect it with a magnifying glass you will find that it has a stem (pedicel) of the same color as the flower, and the five pointed sepals fold inward to the center around the three-parted stigma. The spaces between the petals are like five rays extending from the center to the edge of the flower. Near the outer edge of each 'ray' a yellow stamen rises, and at the very edge another petal extends outward. This petal is thread-like at the base, and at its outer edge it widens out to a spoon-like shape with a bowl about 1/16 inch long. Because the flowers are so small, a great many are crowded into each raceme. The groups are beautiful, but close inspection of an individual blossom reveals its complex structure. Should you grow this shrub, it is advisable not to let too many layers of branches build up on top of the shrub, as it will tend to die out underneath. Keep the shrub very prostrate. Where the plant is native, it is browsed by deer and cattle, and this tendency is thus resolved.

President's Input

For those who were unable to attend last month's CNPS Chapter Council meeting in Morro Bay, I will share with you my take on the research data presented during the Conservation Symposium and its framing of the impacts of climate change on possible California native plant migrations.

The morning started off with the research of Ellen Cypher of the Endangered Species Recovery Program at CSU Stanislaus. Her work focused on the preservation of the endangered Bakersfield cactus (*Opuntia basilaris* var. *treleasei*) and the two options of either working with the few existing natural populations that still exist within the habitat range or establishing new populations outside its range. Due to advances of land development in the Southern San Joaquin Valley, populations of this cactus have been severely reduced and biologists are testing the concept of assisted migration by planting new populations to prevent species extinction. At this time, her attempts to extend the range with new, permanent populations has been only partially successful due to several factors, the greatest of which is the ongoing drought.

Jessica Wright of the Pacific Southwest Research Station, US Forest Service was next, speaking about her work with valley oak, (*Quercus lobata*) in an attempt to identify elite strains that are better adapted to changing climates. Several valley oak populations were sampled throughout California in 2012 by collecting acorns and measuring the mother trees that produced them. Subsets of the acorns were extensively planted at two locations in 2013 in Northern California for observation. Those trees are now three years old and are being measured for growth parameters (size and architecture) as compared to the mother trees. DNA of these young trees has also been sampled in order to measure genetic similarities between each acorn subset and the investigation any connection with field performance. In the end, it is hoped certain subsets can be identified having adaptive capabilities for use in maintaining the overall health of valley oak as it is subjected to climatic changes.

The next presenter was Todd Esque of the Western Ecological Research Center, US Geological Survey speaking about the migration of Joshua tree (*Yucca brevifolia*) towards more northern and cooler (higher elevation) environments. His research surveyed all of the Joshua tree habitat throughout the Mojave Desert in California and southwestern Nevada, with preliminary findings that indeed this species is not reproducing well across most of its range, except in areas with higher elevation and/or more northerly locations. These data suggest that global warming is having a significant impact on the reproductive proficiency of the trees.

Alexandra Syphard of the Conservation Biology Institute was next to present, speaking about her extensive work in making comparisons between climate changes models. I found her work fascinating, noting how complex these models can be - requiring super computers to crunch hypothetical scenarios with multiple factors. The bottom line of her talk was that as the number of variables increases (urban growth, fire, invasive species, climate change, habitat loss, etc.), the modeling of plant species distribution gets affected by each and every factor simultaneously, thereby demanding extremely accurate inputs to generate these models which we really don't have at this time. Thus, the modelers continue, looking for the exact combination of factors to mimic what we see going on in nature.

The Symposium concluded with a talk by Jerre Stallcup, Chief Resources Officer and Senior Conservation Ecologist in San Diego County, giving a history of land preservation efforts in Southern California. She spoke of the successes and failures in land conservancy, stressing the need to stay intimately involved in the stewardship of each protected parcel long after its acquisition, lest the quality and productivity of each land holding becomes compromised, ultimately losing a great portion of its value to the community.

Bill Waycott

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

Editor's Note: Readers of the paper version of *Obispoensis* will miss the full color web site version. You can have this downloaded via email... sign up at <http://cnpslo.org/obispoensis/>

Visit the websites www.cnps.org and www.cnpslo.org

FIELD TRIPS

Sun. Nov. 6th, 8:30 am, Plants of Bishop Peak. Join us for a plant ID walk up Bishop Peak. Learn the easy to identify species along the trail. Pick out plants that attract you. Bring native plant samples with you to be identified. Meet at the Patricia Drive trailhead. Make sure to bring water and snacks. Sturdy shoes, sunscreen, hats, and jackets are recommended. No RSVP needed. Also bring paper and pencil to take notes, and a camera for a photo record. If you want a preprinted copy of the plant list for Bishop Peak, let the hike leader know 24 hours in advance. The Bishop Peak trail is moderate with an elevation gain of 950 ft., a 4-mile roundtrip, maximum of four hours. For more information, contact Bill Waycott, (805) 459-2103, bill.waycott@gmail.com. Rain cancels. **Remember we change the time by one hour Saturday night.**

Sun. Dec. 4th, 9:00 am, Plants of Coon Creek. Join us for a plant ID walk up Coon Creek. Learn the easy to identify species along the trail. Pick out plants that attract you. Bring native plant samples with you to be identified. Meet at the Coon Creek trailhead in Montaña de Oro State Park. Make sure to bring water and snacks. Sturdy shoes, sunscreen, hats, and jackets are recommended. No RSVP needed. Also bring paper and pencil to take notes, and a camera for a photo record. If you want a preprinted copy of the plant list for Coon Creek, let the hike leader know 24 hours in advance. The Coon Creek trail is moderate with an elevation gain of 400 ft., a 4-mile roundtrip, maximum of four hours. For more information, contact Bill Waycott, (805) 459-2103, bill.waycott@gmail.com. Rain cancels.

Invasive Species of the Month **Jubata grass (*Cortaderia jubata*)**

Mark Skinner



There is an intense infestation of Jubata grass on the California coast. As almost everyone knows it mars the most beautiful places such as Big Sur. On their web site California Invasive Plant Council (CalIPC) describes that Jubata grass is native to northern Argentina, Bolivia, Peru Chile and Ecuador. It was grown in France and Ireland from seed collected in Ecuador. It may have come to California from France and was first seen in 1966. Jubata grass has been called the “marriage weed” as honeymooners dragged the plumes behind their cars in Big Sur. Oy! What a mess!

Jubata grass flowers from late July to September. No pollination is necessary for reproduction. Flowers are female only, which produces viable seed. Each plume may contain 100,000 seeds! Plants may have 1 to 30+ plumes.

I started removing Jubata grass in the mid 1990’s with Jack Biegle and John Nowak, just north of Oso Flaco boardwalk. I’ve been at it ever since and removed hundreds from the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes, San Luis Obispo, Cambria and Vandenberg. I’m happy to report that from the many hundreds that were in the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes there are only about twenty remaining.

MEMBERSHIP CORNER

A very warm thank you to all of our new and renewing members this month! We’re very glad to have you with us. Our members are what makes everything we do at CNPS possible.

Karen Almas
Sandra Baers
Emily Coombes
Lawrence Davidson
Marlin Harms
William Johnson
Karen O’Grady

Ellen Nelson
Karen Osland
Dorothea Rible
Barbara Rosenthal
William Vanherweg
Aleksandra Wyzga

We hope that you’ll be able to join us for our annual Native Plant Sale on Saturday, November 5th and find that new fern, grass, shrub or tree that you’ve been searching for. The plant sale always has species that aren’t typically offered in local nurseries. You can even pick one up for free. **Give the gift of a membership to someone special in your life and you will receive a free 1 gallon plant for every gift membership you purchase. This is a perfect way to escape the materialism of the upcoming holidays by giving a gift that keeps on giving. The free plant will also apply to brand new memberships (not renewals) made during the plant sale.** Your recipient will receive all the benefits of membership over the course of a year including Obispoensis, The Bulletin, and Fremontia newsletters, as well as opportunities to participate in field trips, informational programs and our annual CNPS banquet. Your gift will also help support CNPS and advance our tireless efforts to protect California’s native flora. **Don’t miss out! The offer of a free plant with a new or gift membership is only valid one day - November 5th at the CNPS Native Plant Sale!**

CHAPTER MEETING

Nov 3, 2016 - Thursday - 7pm

Dave Fross of Native Sons Wholesale Nursery will give a presentation entitled "Home Ground, Forty Years Among the Natives." Meet at the Veterans Hall, 801 Grand Avenue, San Luis Obispo.

PLANT SALE NOVEMBER 5th

Suzette and I would like to invite any and all members, new or old to please volunteer to help at this year's annual plant sale; Saturday, November 5th. There are many jobs to be done and I can always match you to something that fits best for you. Some jobs are setting up chairs and tables, un-loading plants, directing traffic, assisting with plant sales, and answering plant related questions. It's a great way to meet new people, talk to old friends, learn plant names, and get some exercise. We will have books, posters, T-shirts, ... ooh did I forget to say volunteers get first pick on plants before the sale starts. e-mail John Nowak @ gritlys@gmail.com or call 805/674-2034 with any questions. Just indicate hours that you can help. We will also be at the Chapter Meeting on the 3rd. Until then Happy Gardening, John and Suzette.

SEEDS AVAILABLE AT PLANT SALE

There will be a selection of seeds that were left from the seed exchange available at the plant sale. Many of these are seeds that are not available commercially. It will be your chance to experiment with growing natives from seed. Our seeds are collected from member gardens, or, in a few cases, from other areas with permission. Seeds are sometimes from cultivars. Plants in garden environments often have ample opportunity to hybridize and some do so readily. For those reasons what might grow might not be exactly what you expect.

Our seeds are not subjected to germination testing. In many cases seeds will germinate readily. Some are known to be difficult. For advice on what might work see the book *Seed Propagation of Native California Plants* by Dara E. Emery (often available from our book sale). Wildflowers are usually reliable though much depends upon the environment where you are trying to grow them.

Some of the seeds may have been damaged by insect activity. I have tried to not include those but some may have escaped my attention. I do appreciate some of the insect activity because it means our natives are supporting the insects that are needed by other creatures that live with us. Most birds, even the nectar consuming ones, raise their babies on insects.

For all the reasons above our seeds are inexpensive and the numbers of seeds in the packets are usually very generous. There are no guarantees however.

Gardening Notes: November 2016

John Nowak

After last week's hot spell (last week of September) when Los Osos hit 98°F in the shade; a good feeling came over me. Back in the day when I was a kid I always remember a hot Indian summer before a normal rainy year. So keeping this in mind I'm hoping this fall will bring lots of the wet stuff and get all the plants you purchased at the sale off to a good start. So I'm going to go over some of the basics for buying the right plant for your garden.

First, it's important to think of others that come to visit your garden. I'm not just talking about your friends but other critters, such as birds, squirrels, gophers, moles, deer, rabbits ... you get the picture. If you have a deer problem, it will limit your selection. Likewise, if you want to bring bees, birds, and beneficial insects to your garden such as Monarch Butterflies you can do this by selecting your plants ahead of the sale.

Second, most important, if the rains don't come you will need to be Mother Nature and water until the plants become established. This would mean a good soaking over the Winter, twice a month until April. After that pay attention and water at least once a month over the first Summer depending on your soil type. Los Osos, Nipomo, etc. more water and clay soils less water every three weeks during the summer, just watch closely. If your lucky and you already have established plants then the idea would be to select something that can co-exist

with what you already have. Remember like playing music, less is best. Avoid the temptation to create a botanical garden and focus on simple design. Also, remember that bugs always want to destroy our best intentions. I like to use water spray on leaves to control aphids, spider mites, thrips, and to knock down oak moth caterpillars. If needed, consult your local nursery for other options.

Lastly, picking the right plant for the right spot. Sounds simple, but this is the most difficult task. Like a small boat on a large sea, the wrong plant in the wrong spot will die for sure and you won't be happy. Going back to my first topic, look at the big picture, sun, shade are very important. Soil, drainage, are number two on the list. Think about when you go out on a hike, what's growing on the trail. Well-drained, sunny slopes have manzanita, ceanothus, buckwheat, and lupine but shady areas have more organics, oaks, ribes, ferns, coffeeberry, and hummingbird sage, love it there

So in conclusion, I'm expecting a good chance of rain, if my gut feeling and childhood memories come through. Of course, we will have lots of good people working the sale this year so if you have special plant request, email me at gritlys@gmail.com and I will see what I can do. For now, happy gardening; Suzette and I will see you at the plant sale.

John.

NATIVE PLANTS FOR EROSION CONTROL

Way back in 1992 the Watershed Education Program for San Luis Obispo County, in conjunction with U.C. Extension and the Soil Conservation Service (now Natural Resources Conservation Service) produced a list of native plants suitable for erosion control. CNPS feels that the wildfires of 2016 justifies republication of this list, although we have edited for species name changes and removed a couple of non-native species from the original list. The Highway 41 fire burned two years later, but that was far smaller than the current spate of fires. . *David Chipping*

Trees and Shrubs

<i>Alnus rhombifolia</i>	White Alder 1,2	<i>Claytonia perfoliata</i>	Miner's Lettuce 16, 17
<i>Acer macrophyllum</i>	Big Leaf Maple 1,3	<i>Crassula connata</i> var. <i>connata</i>	Pygmy Weed 6
<i>Acer negundo</i> var. <i>californicum</i>	Box Elder 4	<i>Cryptantha</i> sp.	<i>Cryptantha</i> 6
<i>Artemisia californica</i>	California Sagebrush 5, 12,26	<i>Cyperus eragrostis</i>	Umbrella Sedge 1
<i>Baccharis pilularis</i>	Coyote Brush 12, 27	<i>Delphinium</i> sp.	Larkspur 6,28
<i>Ceanothus cuneatus</i>	Buckbrush 5, 6, 12	<i>Eleocharis palustris</i>	Common Spike rush 1,16
<i>Cornus glabrata</i>	Creek Dogwood 1, 16, 18	<i>Elymus glaucus</i>	Blue Wildrye 5,12,15,20,27
<i>Frangula californica</i>	Coffeeberry 5, 10, 28	<i>Elymus triticoides</i>	Creeping Wild rye 5,12,15,19,22,27
<i>Hazardia squarrosa</i>	Goldenbush 6	<i>Epilobium ciliatum</i> ssp. <i>watsonii</i>	Willow Herb 1
<i>Heteromeles arbutifolia</i>	Toyon 5,12,28	<i>Equisetum telmateia</i>	Giant Horsetail 1, 11,28
<i>Myrica californica</i>	Bayberry (Wax-Myrtle) 1, 16	<i>Erigeron canadensis</i>	Horseweed 1,13
<i>Plantanus racemosa</i>	California Sycamore 1, 16	<i>Eschscholzia californica</i>	California poppy 5,6,23
<i>Populus trichocarpa</i>	Black Cottonwood 1, 16	<i>Helianthus annuus</i>	Sunflower
<i>Quercus agrifolia</i>	Coast Live Oak 5,12,17,27, 28	<i>Hoita macrostachya</i>	Leather Root 1, 18
<i>Rhamnus crocea</i>	Redberry 5	<i>Hordeum brachyantherum</i>	Meadow Barley 15,19,23
<i>Ribes divaricatum</i>	Wild Gooseberry 8	<i>Lupinus albifrons</i>	Bush Lupine 5,6,28
<i>Ribes menziesii</i>	8, 24	<i>Lupinus succulentus</i>	Lupine 14,15,28
<i>Ribes menziesii</i> var. <i>hystrix</i>	8,20	<i>Microseris</i> sp.	6
<i>Ribes speciosum</i>	Fuschia flowered Gooseberry 8	<i>Mimulus cardinalis</i>	Scarlet Monkey Flower 1,16
<i>Rosa californica</i>	Wild Rose 1	<i>Mimulus guttatus</i>	Monkey Flower 1,16
<i>Rubus ursinus</i>	California Blackberry 1, 9, 20	<i>Phacelia distans</i>	Phacelia 6
<i>Salix lasiolepis</i>	Arroyo Willow 1, 16, 18,22	<i>Poa secunda</i>	Pine Bluegrass 5,12,23
<i>Salvia mellifera</i>	Black Sage 5, 6, 26	<i>Schoenoplectus americanus</i>	Threesquare Bulrush 1,19
<i>Salvia spathacea</i>	Hummingbird Sage 20	<i>Scirpus microcarpus</i>	Small Flowered Bulrush 1
<i>Sambucus nigra</i> ssp. <i>caerulea</i>	Blue Elderberry 1, 5, 11, 12, 28	<i>Selaginella Bigelovii</i>	Spike Moss 6,25
<i>Umbellularia californica</i>	California Bay, California Laurel 2, 5, 12, 16, 24	<i>Spergularia</i> sp.	Sand Spurrey 19
		<i>Stachys bullata</i>	Hedge-Nettle 1,20
		<i>Stipa cernua</i>	Nodding Stipa 5
		<i>Stipa pulchra</i>	Purple Needle Grass 5,6,12,14,23,27
		<i>Symphyotrichum chilense</i>	Wild Aster 1,11
		<i>Typha domingensis</i>	Narrow Leaved Cat-Tail 1, 24
		<i>Verbena lasiostachys</i> var. <i>lasiostachys</i>	<i>Verbena</i> 1,25
		<i>Vicia americana</i>	Vetch 20

Forbs and Grasses

<i>Acmispon americanus</i>	Pink Deer-Vetch 6,12
<i>Artemisia douglasiana</i>	Mugwort 1,5,24
<i>Bloomeria crocea</i> var. <i>aurea</i>	Golden Stars 25

Comment KEY

1. Prefers moist areas 2. Tolerates winds 3. Resistant to Oak Root Fungus 4. Messy, attracts pests 5. Drought resistant 6. Dry, sandy, or rocky areas 7. Needs irrigation 8. May not be available in nurseries 9. Seldom a good crop of fruit 10. Better with some summer water first year 11. Invasive root system 12. Good wildlife cover 13. Common weed 14. Heavier soils 15. Good on fresh cut/fill 16. Not for dry areas 17. Not for saline areas 18. For stream beds 19. Can handle saline/alkalal 20. Shaded woody areas 21. Can not tolerate wind 22. Spreads rapidly 23. Open hills and plains 24. Canyons 25. Will grow in serpentine soils 26. Keep on dry side 27. Not in standing water 28. Some species may have poisonous parts

CONSERVATION NOTE- SUDDEN OAK DEATH ARRIVES IN SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

Terrible news for the Coast Live Oak and Tanbark Oak of our County. CNPS was a major contributor to the collection of leaves on possibly suspect oak and bay trees. Locally organized by CNPS' Lauren Brown and Cal Fire's Kim Corella, volunteers sampled bay trees as 'carriers' of the disease's spores, which up to this year did not come south of Monterey County. The leaves were sent up to the labs in the Bay Area, and for the first time there were a large number of infections found, especially along Santa Rosa Creek. Other sites were Vineyard Drive, Cypress Mt. Rd., the west side of Atascadero, Cal Poly in Stenner Creek and Leaning Pine Arboretum and on Prefumo Canyon Rd. This was a major shock, primarily because of the breadth of the newly found infections. There is no cure. Prevention is through good sanitation in limiting the transport of spores. To learn more about the visible symptoms on infected leaves, go to the SOD website: <https://nature.berkeley.edu/garbelottowp/>

Water a milkweed, kill a monarch?

All of our local native milkweeds are perennials, but like a lot of our drought-adapted plants, die back and go dormant during the long late summer and fall drought. Many gardeners, knowing there is a monarch butterfly/ milkweed connection, try to keep the milkweeds green all year, or use non-native milkweeds that stay green. Cal Poly's Dr. Francis Villablanca has shown that winter breeding by monarchs will take place if green milkweed is available, which would not normally happen in the overwintering populations in SLO County. Nonstop breeding on the same plants can perpetuate the transmission of a devastating parasite called OE, for *Ophryocystis elektroscirrha*. Normally, the transmission cycle is broken when milkweeds go dormant. The infection can kill adults as they emerge from their chrysalis, while mildly infected monarchs fly poorly, don't reproduce normally, and die early. These very sick butterflies can then carry spores of the pathogen into the milkweeds in other gardens or along the entire migration route. You don't have to tear out a non-native milkweed if you cut it way back. While the infection issue is much greater

for the central USA migration paths, it is critical that we take preventive actions on the coast, especially since we are still determining how bad it actually is in California. Many thanks to Dr. Villablanca of Cal Poly on putting all of this together.



Monarch caterpillar feeding on *Asclepias fascicularis*
David Chipping

Our Chapter would like to thank the anonymous donors of \$1,000 to the Malcolm McLeod Scholarship Fund. This fund supports student research and has aided many students in projects that have contributed greatly to our knowledge of the flora. If you would also like to help students in their research, please look at our web page on the fund. (<http://cnpslo.org/2012/03/malcolm-mcleod-scholarship-fund/>)

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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*.



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California Native Plant Society
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