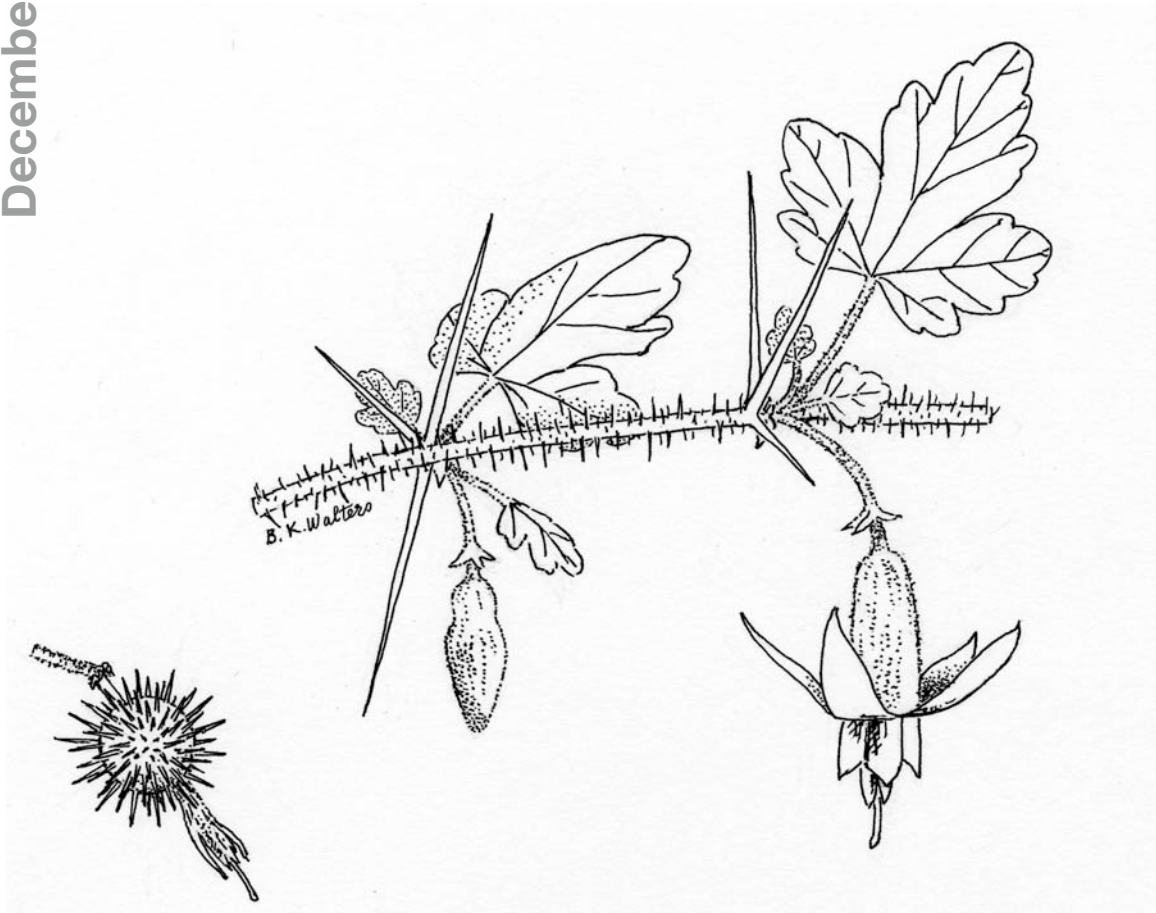


OBISPOENSIS

December 2007



Canyon or Bristly Gooseberry

The cover for this issue of the *Obispoensis* is a species of gooseberry found in local canyons and, less commonly, in depressions within coastal dunes along edges of willow groves. It grows below 300 M (ca. 1000 ft.) from Southern San Luis Obispo County northward into Southwest Oregon. The species is found also in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada. A survey of the various local floras and shrub ID books creates a confused picture of the species. All concede it is extremely variable in leaf characteristics. Most of the time leaves are relatively small (one inch or less wide), but in the shade they can be a couple of inches wide. Leaves are usually thick and without odor but sometimes they can be thick with pronounced odor. They are supposed to have thick pubescence on their lower surface, although one of our local named varieties lacks the pubescence and is quite odoriferous. As you might expect this tremendous variation has led to the description (and naming) of many varieties. However, the most recent identification books simply acknowledge the variation by noting that several "poorly defined varieties have been recognized" statewide.

Canyon gooseberry is a typical gooseberry in that it has strong 3-parted nodal spines along the main stems. These three spines are the modified leaf that is attached to that node. (A node is that portion of a stem to which leaves are attached, while internodes are the leafless portions between leaf attachments.) The typical green, photosynthetic leaves are produced on the very short (dwarf) branches that arise from the bud in the upper angle between spines and stem axis. A dwarf branch is one in which leaves seem to be arranged not individually, but in tight clusters. If one examines closely one of these leaf clusters one will see a very short stem with adjacent petioles attached very close together but one just slightly higher than the other. In other words the dwarf branch consists of several nodes with essentially non-existent internodes. In spite of all of its apparent variation, it is very easy to identify in our area. It is only one of two gooseberries with dark purple sepals and white petals. The profiled species is quite common and produces ovaries covered with 'spines' that turn into dark purple spiny fruits. The other species, straggly gooseberry or *Ribes divaricatum*, is much less common and has smooth ovaries that mature into green fruits lacking spines.

Canyon gooseberry is not listed in any of the more popular guides to native plant gardening. I suspect this is due to its stems tending to be somewhat cane-like and its flowers scattered. The individual flowers are however quite beautiful. The deep

purple sepals and floral tube do make a stark contrast to the white petals and anthers. The fruits of most gooseberries are excellent wildlife food. I suspect this species would be best in 'wildish' back corner within the shade of trees. According to The Jepson Manual if planted in sunny location it would require summer watering.

- Dirk Walters, Illustration by Bonnie Walters

President's Message

Hello CNPS Members. This is the last message I will be writing as Chapter President. It has been a great experience for me to serve as president for the past two years. I really enjoyed finding out more about CNPS on the State level and I will continue to stay involved in both our local chapter and the State meetings. I can tell you from experience that becoming involved in our local board was a lot more fun than work. Our chapter is fortunate that we have a lot of dedicated and experienced people on our Chapter board and I always felt I had all the support and encouragement I needed, which truly made the job enjoyable.

On that note, I want to encourage any of you who have had thoughts about joining a committee or running for a board position to jump in. The more there are to help in running our chapter, the easier it is. We have several committees that need chairpersons or just more members. We are also still looking for a Vice President; the main responsibility is arranging our programs (with help, of course). It would be great to see some new faces at our board meetings in the coming year. And, remember our board meetings are open to all members, if you just want to check it out. Thank you, Lauren Brown

Conservation News

CNPS has filed a 60-day notice of intent to sue the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regarding their failure to complete mandatory consultation with the Forest Service regarding the Forest Plans for the four southern California forests. The Forest Service has not received an incidental take permit for their proposed activities from the USFWS, and USFWS' biological opinion, entirely fails to specify, predict or determine the amount or extent of take that would be caused by the revised Forest Plans. CNPS is also appealing the Record of Decision by the Forest Service, which chose as the "environmentally preferred alternative" their "Alternative 4a", which emphasizes improvement of recreation opportunities as a greater goal than

“Alternative 3”, which focused in the primacy of natural resource protection. How the Forest Service can choose an alternative that will increase OHV use over one that would reduce it, and call it the environmentally preferred alternative, I don't know. One of our concerns will be interaction of OHVs and the purple amole populations of Red Hill Road. There are similar issues associated with additional trail development in the Mt. Pinos part of the mountains behind the Wind Wolves Preserve in Kern County.

So far we have about 20 people going up to plant acorns at Camp Roberts on November 24. Call David Chipping at 528-0914 if you want more information and would like to join the expedition.

Botanic Illustration Workshop

There are still seats left for the drawing and watercolor workshop being given on Friday, January 25 at the Art Center, San Luis Obispo. John Muir Laws, of the California Academy of Sciences will be the instructor. David Chipping has greater details on the nature of the class and more information will follow. Call David Chipping at 528-0914

David Chipping



John Nowak

Our CNPS Web Site

SLO CNPS has recognized the need to “remodel” our Web site, and to ensure that the information there is current and accurate. Jim Johnson will be attempting to address the currency and accuracy tasks, but we need your comments and suggestions for site appearance and topics for inclusion. We can't guarantee that we will incorporate each and every suggestion, but all will certainly be considered. Please send your comments, suggestions, complaints, or accolades to jw_johnson@msn.com and ensure that “CNPS” appears on the subject line.

If you've not been using the Web site, take a look at www.cnps-slo.org then share your thoughts for improvement.
Jim Johnson

Chapter Council Meeting

Information about the December 8, 2007 Chapter Council Meeting, to be held at the University of California Botanical Garden in Berkeley is now available on the CNPS website at <http://www.cnps.org/cnps/events/index.php>. Full details and a registration form are included on the site.
Mark Naftzger, CNPS Web Team

Plant Sale Round-Up

I just wanted to say thanks again to all of you who helped at the plant sale. By far it was one of the smoothest running sales I have worked in the last eighteen years. We sold lots of plants, books, and other cool stuff. I could tell that everyone was having a good time and that's the best part. We helped a lot of people who had some serious questions about native plants. Teaching people about natives can go along way helping them understand why conserving them is also important. We what to preserve natives not just in our backyards but also in the wild. Luckily, green is coming back and you can't get any greener than a native plant. The plant sale gives our chapter members a chance to inform the public about who we are and, by the way, see all the fun we are having. As one person said, “The plant sale is not just a sale, it's a social event”. THANKS AGAIN ! John

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Meetings

San Luis Obispo Chapter Meeting: Thursday, December 6, 7 p.m., Veterans Hall, Grand Avenue & Monterey Street, San Luis Obispo. December's speaker will be David Magney. David has been Conservation Chair of the Channel Islands Chapter since the mid-1970s. He was State President of CNPS from 1991 to 1995, was State VP for Legislation and Conservation, and is now on the CNPS Board. Mr. Magney began serving as the Channel Islands chapter president in early 2004, and has been editing the chapter newsletter, Matilija Copy, as the interim editor for two years. He is also currently serving as the Conservation Chair. He has been responsible for forcing Ventura County to take account of locally rare species in the County, and maintains an extensive data base of county species and their distribution. For his talk he will show up a great picture show of these species, and will also talk about the many hoops he had to climb through to get protection of these plants. He is an entertaining speaker with a great sense of humor. As you can see from his brief resume, he has needed a lot of humor.

Field Trip

Saturday, December 15, 9 a.m.: Fungal Foray led by David Krause, Mark Brunschwiler and Dennis Sheridan. We will look for mushrooms growing in the Monterey pine forests of Cambria. Meet at the San Luis Obispo Vets Hall parking area on Grand Avenue at 8 a.m. If you plan to drive with someone else please park your car on the street, just outside the parking lot. Meet at the Cambria Vets Hall at 9 a.m. How to get there: travel north on Hwy 1, take a right at Cambria Road (no stop light), go to Main Street and take a left and a left again into the parking lot. Bring water, your field guides and a mushroom basket for you may want to collect some edible varieties. Dress appropriately for the weather. Be prepared for *Toxicodendron diversilobum*. The hike will be easy, about a 3-hour stroll through the woods. For additional information call Daid Krause at 927-5182 or Mardi Niles at 489-9274.



Mushrooms of the Cambria forest

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California Native Plant Society*
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