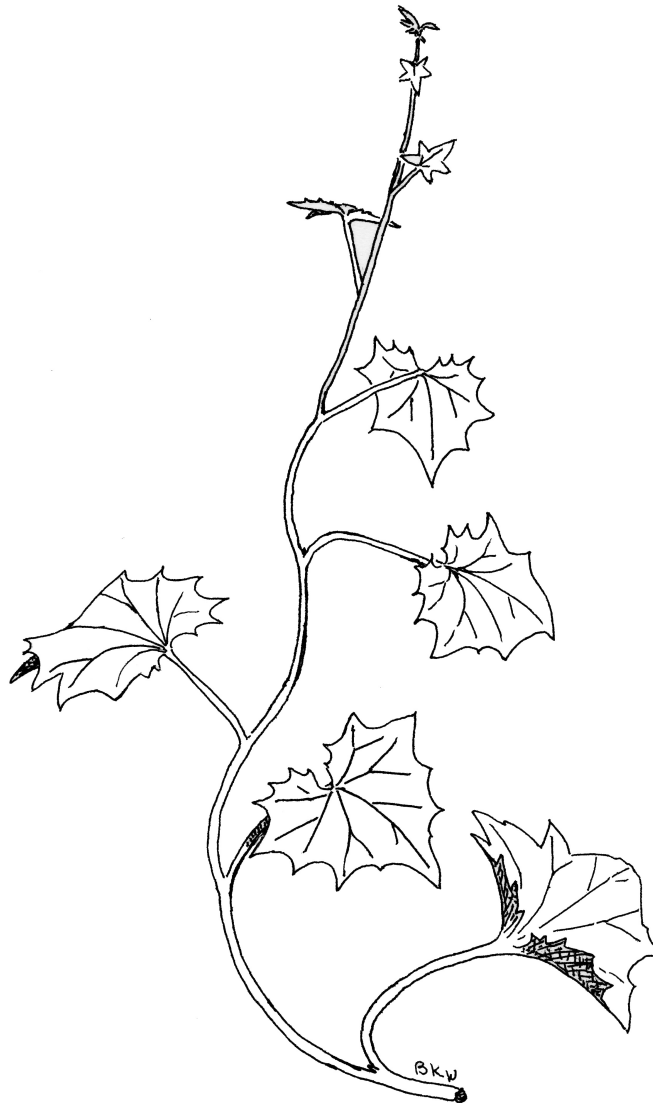


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# *Obispoensis*

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

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OCTOBER 2008

## About the Cover

Bonnie's drawing for this issue of the *Obispoensis* is of the tip of a plant that is definitely not welcome anywhere outside of a house. It seems to have two common names as well as two scientific names. The almost universal common name in all but one of my bookshelf references is German ivy. I saw at least one reference that gave the alternative name "parlor ivy." Parlor ivy refers to the plant's common use as a house plant. The weed abatement people in the California Native Plant Society are using another common name, "Cape ivy." To tell the truth, Cape ivy is a more correct name as the plant is native to the Cape Region of South Africa. I have no idea how the name "German" got associated with the plant other than it occurred a very long time ago. People often name introduced plants after countries that seem far away. In this case, I suggest that it simply means that the name was applied someplace other than Germany. The two scientific names are *Senecio mikanioides* and *Delairea odorata*. All of my older references, including the current *Jepson Manual: Higher Plants of California*, list the species in the genus *Senecio*. My only reference to the plant as *Delairea odorata* is *The New Royal Horticultural Society Dictionary of Gardening* (1992). I had remembered hearing cape ivy referred to by a different scientific name at recent meeting, but I found it very hard to track it down. If you want to look up anything about the plant in most available books, my guess is you will have to use the names German ivy and *Senecio mikanioides*. By the way, removing cape ivy from the genus, *Senecio*, drops the number of species in that genus from around 1,000 to a mere 999. Many consider *Senecio* to be one of, if not, the largest genus of plants in the world. The name *Senecio* is derived from the Latin word *senex* which means old man. It refers to the copious number of snow white "hairs" of the pappus (pictured right) on top of the fruits produced by almost all of members of the genus. The only other character that holds this diverse genus together is the bracts around its heads of tiny flowers. They consist of single row subtended by a few tiny scale-like bractlets. The most diverse characteristic of this genus is its habit. It contains everything from tiny annual herbs to large trees. In deserts and alpine habitats, especially African ones, the members of the genus take on bizarre, almost unworldly forms. Those of you into natural history might want to look for some illustrations of these. Cape ivy, itself, is somewhat succulent. If Cape ivy is moved to the genus *Delairea*, that genus will contain but a single species.



Cape ivy has been grown for years (under the name German ivy) as an easy to grow house plant. The 1910

edition of L.H. Bailey's, *Cyclopedia of American Horticulture* reports that this species is a "very common conservatory and window-garden plant, easily propagated by cuttings." I suspect it is the "easily propagated cuttings" that is the source material for the Cape ivy infestations visible along our coastal creeks. When I arrived in the county back in the early 1970s it was not uncommon to see piles of garden waste along our roadsides. Luckily, this practice seems to have become rare. The *New Royal Horticultural Society Dictionary of Gardening* mentions in passing that Cape ivy has become naturalized in California. This is an extreme understatement, especially here on the Central Coast. The species has become a smothering weed in stream side (riparian) habitats. It is common growing into and over willows bordering streams flowing into Morro Bay. Yolanda reports that a bad infestation has been found in the Elfin Forest far away from the board walk. The weed warriors who went to eliminate it not only had a hard time getting to it but came in contact with a common native riparian plant competitor known as poison oak. We owe the dedicated weed warriors a vote of appreciation as well as maybe some hints on getting rid of poison oak rashes. If they hadn't gone through the trouble of attacking it, it would probably take over all the willow groves along the bay. Unfortunately, I suspect the whackers will have to return to spray the plant a number of times. The many layers of succulent leaves prevent spray from reaching all the leaves. The outer layers die, only to be replaced by those underneath. - Dirk Walters, illustration by Bonnie Walters

## President's Message

I hope you all had a good summer, and are ready to start a new season with our first meeting, the desert potluck and slide/digital photograph show. Bring along anything that you think we would enjoy seeing, and we will have all possible projection methods there, excluding mimes.

Our chapter members have been busy. Some of us have been working with the Friends of the Carrizo's Mike Malkin as he puts together a video of the Carrizo Plain plants that will play in the visitor center. Another group are working with Neil Havlik and City of San Luis Obispo staff in their project to create a little booklet of local flowers, and others are working on weed management issues. Local politics grinds on, and hearings on Santa Margarita Ranch continue. On the national front, we have also been treated to the usual lack of substantive questioning of either of the presidential candidates on matters concerning the environment and the protection of species. Our hope is that whoever wins be not stoop to the unethical alteration of agency conservation science that is rife in the current administration. (*Continued on page 3*)

I once again implore you all to be as interactive as you can with our chapter. I am eager to hear from you any ideas about future speakers, gardening tips you would like to share, and anything else you can think of, unless I owe you money. I am especially interested in developing some hikes and new activities in the fall, but the really big event is the Annual Plant Sale on November 1, which is a major source of income to support the chapter.

- David Chipping

## Conservation

Not a lot to report over the summer regarding local issues that directly affect plants, although it appears that a lot of projects are being rushed toward the Board of Supervisors as the 2009 Board is projected to be more protective of the environment. I have testified at the County Planning Commission concerning water and California Environmental Quality Act issues surrounding Santa Margarita Ranch. The project is a regulatory mess, with apparent CEQA violations at every turn. These include a last minute addition of a different alternative project by county staff that was not part of the review process of project alternatives that received CNPS comment. In addition, the EIR also contained a so-called Program EIR for the total build-out of the ranch, but this is being ignored and all commentary is focused on the agricultural cluster that is Item#1 in the "Program." My guess that however this turns out, a lawyer some place will get rich.

- David Chipping

## Horticulture

For this month's column I would like to write about fall pruning of one of my most favorite native plants, *Mimulus aurantiacus* or sticky monkey-flower. *Mimulus* is a small perennial shrub that comes in four colors: orange, yellow, pink and red. It can be found growing in dry areas throughout California and prefers well drained soils. *Mimulus* begins flowering in June and provides color throughout the summer while other natives are starting to fade. Its beauty makes a welcome addition to any garden but as it gets older it will require pruning to keep it looking its best. Early in the spring, the dormant leaf buds will start to grow and the plant will be covered with new growth. Shortly after this new growth matures, the growing tips will start to change to many clusters of flowers. These stems will continue to bloom and provide habitat for hummingbirds, bees and butterflies. By late September water (continued on page 4)

Sticky Monkey Flower

*Mimulus aurantiacus*



# Plant Sale

Hello everyone, I hope you have enjoyed your summer and are now looking forward to the fall. I'm really excited about this year's plant sale. I'm hoping that I can plan on all of you coming out to help this November 1. On the back page of this newsletter you will find a sign up sheet that you can fill out and mail to me. The plant sale is our largest source of income and we really need to do well so we can keep up all the good work we do throughout the community. It's also a lot of fun to work the sale because you will get first pick at the best plants and meet lots of interesting people. Lastly it's a chance to socialize with others in the group, kind of a big get together. So get out your favorite pen and sign up today. Thanks again and I will see you at the first meeting.

- John

# Other Plant Sales

## Third Annual SYVNHS Plant Sale Fundraiser

The Santa Ynez Valley Natural History Society is having its third 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.

Saturday & Sunday, September 27 and 28, 2008. The public is welcome on both days starting at 10 a.m. SYVNHS members will be admitted at 9 a.m.

**Nipomo Native Garden's  
Annual Fall Plant Sale  
Sunday, October 5 9 am - 3 pm  
Rabobank 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**

## Chapter Meeting

**Thursday, October 2. Members' Slide Show and Dessert Potluck.** Bring a dessert to share and your 15 best photos, slides and digital pictures from your summer travels. Meet at the Veterans Hall on Grand Avenue, San Luis Obispo. 7 p.m. social half-hour, 7:30 business meeting.

## Field Trip

**Saturday, October 18, 9:00 a.m., Fall Plant Walk, La Purisima Mission:** Charlie Blair will lead 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 Road 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 Road. or Rucker Road; again turn right. Call Charlie Blair, 733-3189, for details.



*Sambucus mexicana*

© Peg Edwards-Carkner, 1998

The San Luis Obispo Chapter of CNPS holds its meetings the first Thursday of the month, October through June, except January, at the Veterans Hall, Grand Avenue, San Luis Obispo. Refreshments at 7:00 and program at 7:30 p.m. You don't have to be a CNPS member to attend!

*Obispoensis* is the newsletter of the San Luis Obispo Chapter of CNPS. It 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 the preceding month. Botanical articles, news items, illustrations, events, and tidbits are welcome!

To find out more about the California Native Plant Society visit our websites, **cnps.org** and **cnps-slo.org**.



## Horticulture continued

is scarce and the stems become leafless and dormant. This is when I like to prune. I have a very simple approach. I measure from the top to the bottom of the plant, and then I cut the plant in half. I then trim around the perimeter of the shrub bringing all side branches in about half. When finished you'll have an even more leafless stem structure that will look bad. Congratulations, you have completed your task. Now all you have to do is wait until next spring and your old plant will come out fresh and healthy. Next month I will continue to discuss pruning. I hope to see you all at our first meeting or for sure at the plant sale. Until then, Happy Gardening! - John

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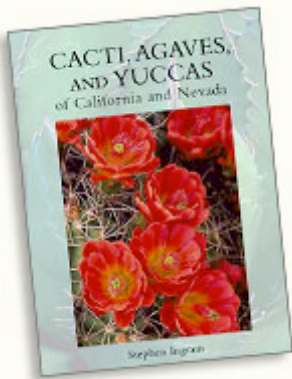
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## Cacti, Agaves, and Yuccas of California and Nevada

By Stephen  
Ingram

This new book features more than 60 species with a detailed text that is accompanied by 262 color photographs, 16 botanical water-colors, and 52 range maps. Much more than a field guide, this book examines the natural history of California's and Nevada's cacti, agaves, and yuccas, including their origins, ecology, and conservation. It also provides practical horticultural advice for their cultivation and describes some of the best places to see these remarkable succulents in the wild.

# NATIVE PLANT ANNUAL SALE

SATURDAY • NOVEMBER 1st • 9am-2pm

Heritage Oaks Bank at Madonna Plaza in San Luis Obispo



SHRUBS  TREES  FLOWERS

SEEDS  POSTERS  BOOKS

Friendly advice from experienced native plant gardeners



## GARDEN MAKING CALIFORNIA! STYLE

Explore the opportunities and constraints of garden making California-style at Gardening Under Mediterranean Skies VI: California! Saturday, October 11, 2008. This one day symposium, co-sponsored by Pacific Horticulture magazine and The Mediterranean Garden Society in concert with their international Annual General Meeting, offers a rare opportunity to meet gardeners from other Mediterranean climates of the world. The symposium will take place in stunning Monterey, the first California state capitol and a region rich in history and breathtaking beauty. Gardens have always been an important part of the developed landscape of this region where they compete for attention with the dramatic natural landscape of mountain and coastline, forest and dune.

David Fross, founder of Native Sons nursery in Arroyo Grande, will present a morning session entitled "An Overview of California Landscape and Flora" followed by "The History of California Gardens" presented by Russell Beatty, Professor Emeritus of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning at UC Berkeley and a consulting landscape architect in Santa Cruz, CA. Issues challenging California garden makers today will also be the focus of lively discussion.

Complementing these programs will be an afternoon tour of gardens in Carmel and the Carmel Valley (including gardens by Michelle Comeau and Bernard Trainor) that demonstrate a clear response to the region's Mediterranean climate. The day's events will conclude with an evening lecture by Bart O'Brien, from the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden and editor of *Fremontia*, entitled "Garden Jewels from the California Flora".

For further details or to register for this exciting event please visit the symposium website at [HYPERLINK "http://regonline.com/medskiesvi"](http://regonline.com/medskiesvi) or call the Pacific Horticulture office in Berkeley at (510) 849-1627

## *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 quarterly 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*  
P.O. Box 784  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93406

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit Organization  
U.S. Postage Paid  
San Luis Obispo, CA  
Permit No. 114



## CNPS Native Plant Sale Volunteer Sign Up

Heritage Oaks Bank, Madonna Plaza, San Luis Obispo, Saturday, November 1, 2008

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_



Please mark the hours you can help

- |                                       |                  |                          |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7 - 8 a.m.   | • Help as needed | • Unload & set up plants |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 8 - 9 a.m.   | • Set up tables  | • Sit at sales table     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9 - 10 a.m.  | • Set up tables  | • Sell plants            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10 - 11 a.m. | • Hang Signs     | • Load customers' plants |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 11 - 12 p.m. | • Sell seeds     | • Sell books & posters   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 12 - 1 p.m.  | • Cashier        | • Clean up               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 - 2 p.m.   |                  |                          |

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