
Obispoensis

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



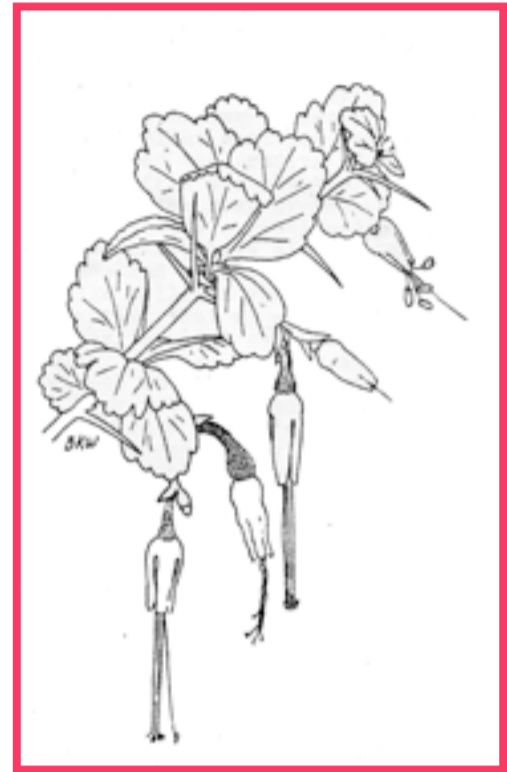
December 2021

Ribes speciosum Fuchsia-flowered gooseberry

Bonnie's drawing of the fuchsia-flowered gooseberry (*Ribes speciosum*) is the topic of this article. Bonnie did the drawing many years ago for the front of a program used at one of the chapter's annual banquets. Later, it was used as one of the components in a figure in Dr. David J. Keil and my textbook *Vascular Plant Taxonomy* published by Kendall/Hunt. It has also been used on several OBISPOENIS covers, the first of which was 1975 and the was 1998.

The fuchsia-flowered gooseberry is a shrub with thickish, dark green leaves that are approximately 1 to 1½ inches wide. The dark red flowers begin to be produced by late November or early December. So, one should be able to find it blooming right now. Being one of the few native plant species to flower this early in the winter, it provides food to the Anna's hummingbirds. Anna's hummingbird is our earliest nesting hummingbird, and it can nest this early partially because of the nectar provided by this beautiful gooseberry.

Look for the fuchsia-flowered gooseberry on the moister north and east facing slopes in clearings among the oaks and among the shrubs of the coastal chaparral throughout the coastal portion of our counties. It grows from Napa County south into Baja California. This gooseberry is rarely common but can be found as scattered individuals. That is, you will have to search for them. But the search will be worth the effort. By February or March, the flowers will be replaced by sticky, somewhat bristly reddish berries. Unlike the commercial gooseberries, which are primarily species from Eurasia and Eastern North America, this berry is quite dry and rather unpalatable.



The plant is quite beautiful. It is easy to grow from cuttings taken from the base of the stems. The plant is excellent for attracting hummingbirds. Since it is one of our few native plant species that is commonly sold at commercial nurseries, it can be seen regularly in suburban California landscapes. In the wild, it loses most of its leaves during the summer months. However, if given a small amount of summer water, it is practically evergreen.

The genus *Ribes* contains plants that are commonly called gooseberries and currents. The named gooseberry is given to species of *Ribes* that bear sharp spines on their stems and sometimes also on the berries. Currents, on the other hand, are *Ribes* that have stems and berries that lack these sharp spines and are therefore smooth. Some of us who grew up in the eastern United States may remember hearing bad things about gooseberries. You may have heard that “the only good gooseberry is a dead gooseberry”. This is because a few species of gooseberry serve as the alternative host of the white pine blister rust, which is a major disease of the commercially important eastern white pine tree (*Pinus strobilis*). This thinking has pretty much been abandoned, even in the East. Foresters found that it was impossible to eradicate the gooseberry even after many years of trying. But more important for us, there are no white pines, commercial or not, growing in our area. All members of the white pine group that grow in California are mountain trees restricted to moderate to high elevations. All non-commercial California pines are resistant to the rust. Besides, there are over 30 species of *Ribes* in California and nine species in San Luis Obispo County. Wild gooseberries and currents are much too common and diverse in the West to have any hope of eradication, even if there were economic species involved. Unfortunately, our western pines [especially Ponderosa (*Pinus ponderosa*) and sugar (*P. lambertiana*)] are susceptible to the combined effects of drought and ozone pollution which weakens them such that they are unable to protect themselves from their immediate cause of death – bark beetles (especially the western bark beetle).

DIRK WALTERS



Ribes speciosum from (left) the Elfin Forest in Los Osos, (center) the Cerro Alto Trail, and (right) the fruit seen on the Rattlesnake Flats Trail in Montana de Oro State Park.

(photographs by David Chipping)

DECEMBER 2nd CHAPTER MEETING (BY ZOOM)

Recruitment, Resprouting, and Recovery: Perennial Responses to Extreme Drought from the Sonoran Desert to the Coast in California

Dr. Ed Bobich, Dept. Biological Sciences CalPoly Pomona



Join us for our December presentation when Dr. Ed Bobich, Professor of Biological Sciences at Cal Poly Pomona, will discuss his work on drought responses in desert perennials and two iconic coastal trees. Southern California has recently been experiencing some of the most devastating droughts of the last millennium. Drought effects were seen in the deserts first, with massive die-offs of certain species as early as 2004. On the coastal side of the mountains, similar effects of the continued drought eventually led to widespread mortality of trees and shrubs by 2014. In this talk, Dr. Bobich will discuss how desert perennials, native walnuts, and coast live oaks have responded to these stressful conditions and speculate on their future.

Ed Bobich received his B.A. in Environmental, Population, and Organismic Biology from the University of Colorado at Boulder and his Ph.D. in Biology from the University of California, Los Angeles. Ed has also worked as a postdoc at Biosphere 2 Center and as a visiting faculty member at Whittier College. He has studied the anatomy, biomechanics, and physiological ecology of plants ranging from prickly pears to rainforest trees and is currently focusing his research on the responses of desert perennials and native California trees to extreme drought at Cal Poly Pomona.



Top Left: Deep Canyon in the Sonora Desert
Top Right: Ed Bobich and his daughter in Morro Bay
Bottom Right: Walnut resprouting after fire
(all photos by Ed Bobich)

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://cnps-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwudemqqDwqH9CjsnE96Z2Nc7l53LDCHKCw>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email about joining the meeting.

MISSED THE MEETING? YOU CAN VIEW SOME CHAPTER'S PAST PRESENTATIONS ON YOUTUBE

YouTube Videos of some past ZOOM presentations of our chapter's monthly meetings. I would suggest input of 'CNPS SLO', 'CNPS SLO' AND 'CNPS-SLO' as different programs show up on each search letter combination. You can also see the videos by clicking on the YouTube icon on the main page of our chapter website. It takes you directly to the selection of presentations that have been recorded.

THANKSGIVING? SOME TURKEY STUFFING



Turkey-pea
Sanicula tuberosa

This strongly-scented sanicle is found from the summit of the Santa Lucia Range to the La Panza Ranges, with Hoover Herbarium collections from Fernandez Creek, Stoney Creek, and Rinconada Mine. It can be up to 80 cm tall. The flower heads are both bisexual and male-only, so we can assume the plant is not found in Florida. (photo by Terry Gosliner CC BY-NC 3.0).



Turkey mullein
Croton setiger

This low-growing member of the Euphorbia family is a common roadside plant in the eastern portion of SLO county. The plant is toxic to animals, which could explain its abundance on heavily grazed land. However the birds will eat the seeds, so perhaps that is where the name comes from. Native Americans used the crushed leaves to stupify fish (photo by Marlin Harms).



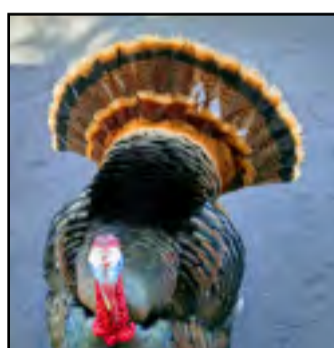
Turkey tail
Trametes versicolor

You have to admit that this fungus takes the title of ‘best named’ of our four ‘turkeys’. It is a wood decomposer, and generally considered inedible. It has been used as a medicinal tea, but what hasn’t? One of its compounds, Polysaccharide-K, has been used clinically in Japan for cancer treatment. Distribution is world-wide. It belongs to the Order Polyporales. (photo by D. Chipping in Los Osos Oaks Reserve).



False Turkey tail
Stereum hisutum

This fungus is mimicking a false turkey? Nah, just the ‘real’ Turkey tail. It even belong to a different fungal order, the Russulales, but shares a decomposing wood habitat with *Trametes*. (photo by D. Chipping in Los Osos Oaks Reserve).



A real turkey expressing the wish that you eat false turkey... thank you.
(photo from Wikimedia Commons)

Ida Mae Twitchell Blochman (1854-1931)

In the last issue we featured *Dudleya blochmaniae*, and knowing that *Erigeron blochmaniae*, *Senecio blochmaniae*, and *Delphinium parryi* subsp. *blochmaniae* all carry her name, we thought it would be nice to become reacquainted with this fine lady.

She was born in Maine, but her botanic collection was made when living in her ranch in the Santa Maria Valley. Her main collection of plants was in the 1890s, and in 1893 she sent a large collection of plants to the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. On May 13, 1896, Ida Blochman and Alice Eastwood collected the type specimen of *Dudleya blochmaniae*, named by Eastwood in Blochman's honor. The *Erigeron* and *Senecio* were named by Edward Greene, professor of botany at the University of California from 1885-1895, and later at the Smithsonian. Alice Eastwood used her ranch as a collection base, and Dr. Keil has noted several collections made by Alice from the Blochman Ranch.

After the Blochman family discovered oil on their ranch, they moved to Berkeley where Ida was active with the Board of Education.



Erigeron blochmaniae (below), *Senecio blochmaniae* (left), and *Delphinium parryi* subsp. *blochmaniae* (right). All are plants from the coastal dunes. (photo by David Chipping)



A source for much of this information was Islapedia, a web site dedicated to “perpetuating the memories of those whose exploration, energy and enterprise became the building blocks of the history of all California Islands.” The site is worth a visit at (<https://www.islapedia.com/>).

Get Your Geek On! Vegetation Community Sampling 2021+

Are you interested in rare plants? How about rare plant communities? The Vegetation Group is starting up again with a new vigor after over a year off and we are looking for new participants. We follow the CDFW/CNPS Rapid Assessment/Releve Protocol to collect plant community data, with an emphasis on rare natural communities. Our data are helping to provide valuable information that CNPS uses to update the Manual of California Vegetation Online. We are looking for people who want to volunteer and have experience or education with our local flora and are knowledgeable or keen to learn about the CDFW/CNPS Protocol. While our main group will have regular monthly field trips (3rd Saturday), we will also be providing mentoring to people who want to learn and use the Protocol. Please contact Melissa Mooney (mjmoon@charter.net), or Mindy Trask (mindymmt@yahoo.com) for more information. Field trips will be all around SLO County, mostly short hikes sometimes on difficult terrain, and challenging botanizing!

SCENES FROM A VERY SUCCESSFUL PLANT SALE

(left) A large browse collection



(right) over 80 pre-orders ready for pickup.



(left) Native plants make happy families.



(right) Marti Rutherford and her native plant seed sales table, with Mardi Niles (in hat).



(left) Lauren Brown made a cake to celebrate and thank the retiring Master of Plant Sales, John Nowak.



(right) LynneDee Althouse and David Krause at the sales desk.



(left) Dirk Walters at the Information Desk.



(right) Volunteers at the book and T-Shirt sales tent.



2021 Plant Sale Thank You to All Volunteers

Just a quick note to say thank you to all who volunteered, who took the time to come out on a beautiful day and really make this sale happen. With all working together, the SLO Chapter pulled off its first combined online/pre-sale and in-person plant sale. Thanks for helping to spread the word ... native plants rock! Abby McCutcheon, Ann Robin, Annie Zell, Bill Shearer, Bill Waycott, Bob Hotaling, Cindy Roessler, David Chipping, David Krause, Diana Waycott, Dirk Walters, Emma Whitehead, John Chesnut, John Doyle, John Nowak, Judi Young, Judy Johnson-Williams, June Krystoff-Jones, Keane Morrissey, Kristen Nelson, Lauren Brown, Linda Chipping, LynneDee Althouse, Mardi Niles, Marlin Harms, Marti Rutherford, Mason Jake Wong, Melissa Mooney, Nishi Rajakaruna, Peggy Burhenn, Suzette Girouard, Teresa Larson.

Have a great winter season and happy gardening, John and Suzette.

Save the Date: CNPS 2022 Picnic/Hike January 22, 2022

The SLO Chapter Board of Directors has decided to reimagine the January 2022 Banquet as an outdoor field trip/picnic, in consideration of the continuing concern for large, indoor gatherings. This will be a bring-your-own picnic lunch and gather with CNPS friends event. We have reserved the Mariposa day-use area at El Chorro Regional Park (near the botanic garden gift shop) and are still in the planning stages for the hike. You do not need to participate in a formal hike to come on by and enjoy this opportunity for a safe, in-person gathering, plus an early start to what we hope will be a great 2022 CNPS hike and events season! There will be another announcement in January with additional details. If you have any suggestions or questions, please contact Lauren Brown, lbrown805@charter.net or call/text 805-570-7993.

Lasthenia glabrata subsp. *coulteri* at Sweet Springs Preserve

Coulter's goldfields seems to have only been recorded within the County at the Sweet Springs tidal marsh in Los Osos, where it occupies a habitat a few inches higher than that of the rare Saltmarsh Bird's-Beak. The top three photos (below) show the habitat and the plants. Dr. Keil has noted that the plant keys out very closely to another salt-tolerant goldfields, *Lasthenia ferrisiae* (Alkali goldfields) which is seen in the extremely salty edges of Soda lake in the Carrizo Plain. Both species lack a pappus and have indistinct phyllaries, but differ in that the achenes of Coulter's goldfields have wart-like papillae, while those of *L. ferrisiae* have short, curved hairs. Actually *L. ferrisiae* can be distinguished fairly easily among the several other goldfields species of the Carrizo Plain. Besides being in the saltiest areas, the foliage is glabrous, and the plant is relatively tall compared to the other species.

Dr. Keil also notes that plants originally identified as *L. glabrata* in the Carrizo Plain and Cholame Valley are actually *L. ferrisiae*. Another factoid...Coulter's goldfields was apparently named by Asa Gray (1810-1888) of Harvard. He was honoring Thomas Coulter (1793-1843) who was founder of the Trinity College Herbarium in Dublin, Ireland. Robert Ornduff of the Jepson Herbarium named *L. ferrisiae* after Roxanna Stinchfield Harris (1895-1978), who ran Stanford University's Dudley Herbarium for sixty years.



Top Row: Coulter's goldfields in the Sweet Springs marsh west of the bird lookout,. Bottom Row:Alkali goldfields from the edge of Soda Lake, Carrizo Plain National Monument. (photos: top row and left of bottom row by D, Chipping, center and right of bottom row by George Butterworth)

Notes from the Herbarium

her·bar·i·um
/(h)ər'berēəm/

noun

1. a systematically arranged collection of dried plants.
 - a room or building housing a collection of dried plants.
 - a box, cabinet, or other receptacle in which dried plants are kept.
2. a museum collection for the purpose of research, education and the documentation of diversity. Label data associated with specimens include information detailing where and when the plant was collected, what environment the plant was growing in, and what the population of the individual was like at the time of collection.

On the Cal Poly campus, down the poster-lined hallway of Fisher Science and nestled between classrooms and offices are two rooms that are the hub of botanical research on campus. Housed in these two rooms is the largest collection of plants in San Luis Obispo County, with plants from China, Russia, Bermuda, Brazil, India, Costa Rica, Jamaica and of course our own hotspot of biodiversity—California.

These exotic and familiar plants are part of a museum collection known as an Herbarium. Many CNPS members are old friends of our local herbarium, the Robert F. Hoover Herbarium. The Hoover Herbarium is a bustling place, in which specimens are processed, catalogued and digitized. Under the stalwart leadership of Director Jenn Yost and the database management of Katie Pearson, a team of students and volunteers have photographed all 80,000 specimens. These images and their specimen data were uploaded to our database, the Consortium of California Herbaria's "CCH2". While massive advancement has been made, digitization is still ongoing, with 9,000 images remaining to be fully transcribed and 35,000 specimens awaiting latitude and longitude coordinates.

With the Cal Poly campus returning to in-person education, the Herbarium has had a return of in-person student involvement. This quarter, 40 students mount specimens, 4 students file new specimens into the collection, 4 interns are independently working on projects, and two curatorial assistants aid Herbarium Manager Annie Ayers. Dr. David Keil continues to be a juggernaut in herbarium activities, and together this curatorial team has made massive progress in addressing specimens that have been awaiting personal care and attention for 40 years. You too could be a part of this team. We welcome all plant enthusiast volunteers with diverse experiences and backgrounds. For more information, contact Annie Ayers at anayers@calpoly.edu or Professor Jenn Yost at jyost@calpoly.edu.

Funding for the digitization project is provided by the National Science Foundation Advancing Digitization of Biological Collection Programs.

To volunteer while social distancing you can visit "*Notes From Nature - Capturing California's Flowers*" and attend an upcoming volunteer training, or contact Katie Pierson at kdpearso@calpoly.edu.

ANNIE AYERS

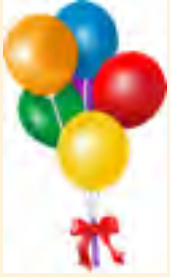
Lichen of the Month: *Candelariella rosulans*

This beautiful golden yellow to greenish yellow lichen has a crustose to squamulose form, usually as a crust on rocks. It is sometimes called egg-yolk lichen. This specimen was photographed at Rinconada Mine, and Cal Poly's collections come from Las Pilitas Road and River Road, which are in the same general area of the county. The genus is found worldwide.

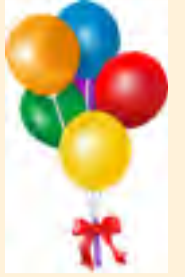
(photo by. D. Chipping)



Welcome and Thank You to New and Renewing Members, September-October, 2021



Laura Baldwin	Nancy Tholen	Peter Meehan
Karen Lauritsen	Reagen Oleary	Charlene Dehaven
Amanda Gowdy	Kim Whiteside	Patricia Krosse
Susan Grimaud	Kristie Scarazzo	Jiordana Stark
James Johnson	Marcia Coffeen-McElroy	Douglas McMillan



Nipomo Native Garden volunteer workday, Dec. 4th from 9:00 am to Noon

The Nipomo Native Garden workday is Saturday, December 4, 2021, from 9 am to noon; meet at the garden parking lot by following the signs from the intersection of Camino Caballo and Osage Street in Nipomo. Wear sun protection, gloves, and clothes that cover your toes, arms and legs, since we will be working in chaparral.

There is no bathroom facility at the Nipomo Native Garden, but you can drop by the nearby Nipomo Regional Park at 255 Pomeroy Road before or after your morning at the native garden.

We will be pruning many of the over-grown perennial shrubs in the garden, while leaving some dead/dormant branches as refuge for overwintering insects (some native bees lay their eggs in those stems), and seed heads to provide food for the many small birds, many that migrate to our coast for the winter. The area where we will be working does not have poison oak.

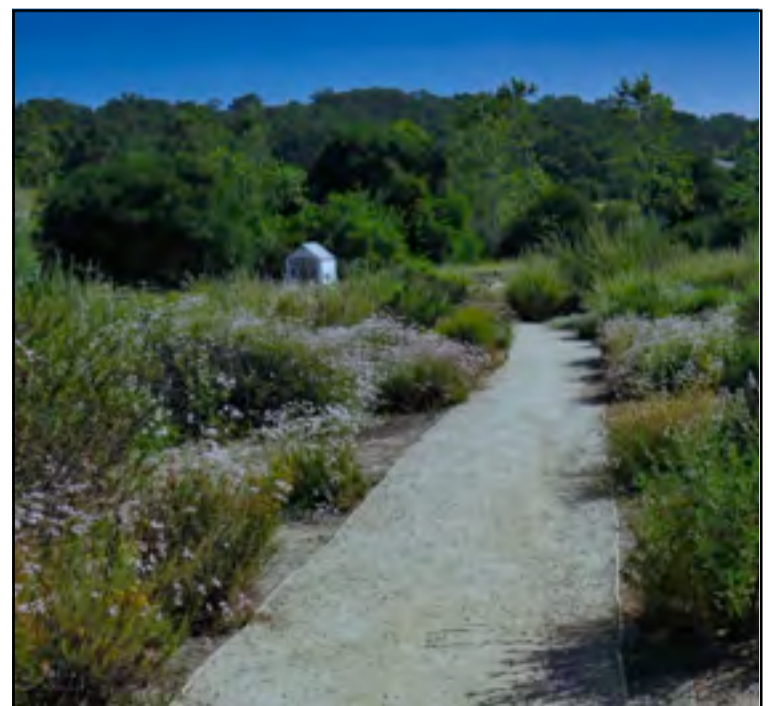


photo from Nipomo Native Garden Fall 2019 Newsletter

Invasive Species Report by Mark Skinner

On October 26th—29th I attended the 30th anniversary of the Cal-IPC (California Invasive Species Council) Symposium held on Zoom. The Symposium included a meeting of the statewide Weed Management Areas (WMAs). Our local WMA holds twice-a-year meetings and is led by Andrew Johnson (Upper Salinas-Las Tablas Resource Conservation District), Jon Hall (The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County) and Rusty Hall (SLO County's Ag Commissioner's office). In our meetings we discuss various weed eradication projects and review new weed pests.

At the Symposium there were discussions about *Arundo donax*, Himalayan blackberry, *Caulerpa prolifera* (this one threatens eelgrass), Yellow star-thistle, Black mustard, Japanese knotweed, Barbed goatgrass, *Dittrichia graveolens*, *Carthamus lanatus* and Stinknet (threatens Coastal sage scrub).

There are Early Detection Rapid Response (EDRR) programs throughout the state. For an incipient weed threat EDRR is used to deal with an invasive pest before all hell breaks loose. Often weeds are introduced to wildlands from fire fighting vehicles brought in from the western US. There is a big push to have wash stations at every big fire to decontaminate these vehicles.

There is a program—*PlantRight*—that works with nurseries to avoid selling invasive species and other inappropriate plants. At every Symposium there is a Weed Alert. Among the new invasives to worry about are: Australian eelgrass, Garlic mustard, Redpurple ragwort (it's here in SLO County!), Sea daffodil, Grass vetchling, Memphis grass, Swamp wallaby grass...

Cal-IPC is an exceptional organization. Thanks to them, California is making progress in saving and restoring our wildlands. The Cal-IPPC web site is <https://www.cal-ipc.org/>.

Two Yellow *Ribes* to admire



As an additional note on *Ribes*, here are the two yellow-flowered species found within the county. On the left is Golden current *Ribes aureum* var. *gracillimum* and on the right is Yellow gooseberry *Ribes quercetorum*. Both are found in the drier, rocky areas east of the Santa Lucia Mountains, with *R. quercetorum* extending in to the Carrizo Plain. Only *R. quercetorum* has spines.

Photos by E.C. Cunningham (left) and David Chipping (right)

Lauren Brown created this 'Thank You' tasty treat to thank John Nowak for overseeing 30 years of CNPS Plant Sales. Lauren brought this to the plant sale, where the little flower-decorated pastries were quickly consumed by attendees.

Photograph by Marti Rutherford



THE GOOD PEOPLE WHO MAKE THE CHAPTER 'HAPPEN' AND HOW TO FIND THEM

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WE ALWAYS NEED PEOPLE TO HELP OUT. OUR MISSION IS VITAL AND OUR FLORA IS AT RISK.

Protecting California's Native Flora since 1965

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 *Flora*, 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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