
Obispoensis

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



May 2025

Sticky Seed Daisy
Blennospermum nanum* var. *nanum
Dr. Dirk Walters

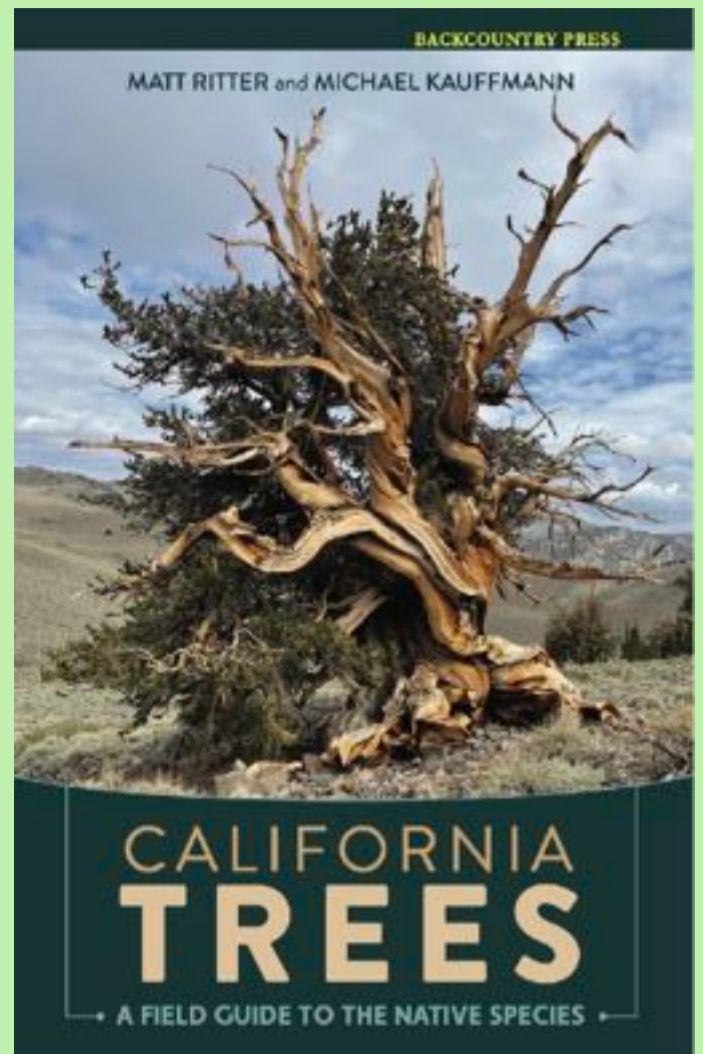
The article this time is based almost totally on my experience with a single population of *Blennospermum nanum* or common sticky seed daisy, glue seed, or around here simply called 'blennospermum'. The genus name *Blennospermum* has Greek roots, combining "blennos" (mucus) and "sperma" (seed). I'm only familiar with the Red Hill Road population, but there are collections from the west side of Soda Lake Road along Belmont Trail, and it has been described from the Creston area.

Sticky seed daisy is a typical member of the sunflower family (Asteraceae) that might be easily overlooked where goldfields are the local dominant. It seems to have a very limited habitat in very wet soils near seasonal pools, and can flower as early as January and persist until May based on the amount and timing of the rains.

Morphologically, although this species has all the characteristics of the showiest members of the sunflower family, all these characteristics seem to me to be subdued. The sunflower inflorescence (head) resembles a largish single flower from a distance. But the 'flower' in daisy-like sunflowers is an inflorescence composed of many flowers of two types. In the center of the head is a tight cluster of tiny flowers with 5 petals fused into a tube. These tubular flowers are tightly clustered into what appears to be a tight yellow disk and thus are called disk flowers. Immediately surrounding the disk are flowers with their 3 petals fused into an elongate single tongue-shaped structure. These corollas radiate out from the edge of the disk and resemble petals of a typical solitary flower and are termed ray flowers. The flower heads can be small, but can be over an inch across. The colors seem to me to be a paler yellow and not the brighter colors of tidy tips or goldfields. The plants are short and grow in flat cushions, with the solitary heads facing upward, which means you need to be standing over the plant to recognize them. One thing catches the eye when closely examining the individual head. It is the unique single large white dot on top of the disk flowers that, on close examination, is a large flat disk that sits on top of the style. I assume the disk is sticky and serves as an aid in the capturing of pollen from pollinators.

The genus *Blennospermum* has maybe four species which include two in South America and two endemics to California. All the species are isolated from each other. The California species and populations are found in widely scattered vernal pool communities. Although *Blennospermum nanum* ranges widely in California, I'm only familiar with plants growing in the outlet streams from the vernal pools along Red Hill Road and in a loop just beyond the edge of the drying pool. The number of individuals varies widely depending on the number and spacing of rain events, and the accumulated seasonal amount. For example, while the accumulated amount this year was somewhat reasonable, the spacing was disastrous. We got some early rains in October through early December, then there was no significant rain throughout January, February and most of March which is the prime growing period of our wildflowers. The significant rains of late March assured us that we'd see some wildflowers this year and we did, but it seemed to me that the distribution of the species was off. In late March, I saw species that I would have expected in early March and plants were scattered as individuals or in small groups. Even a few weeks later, plants were still solitary or in larger isolated groups. The low number of scattered plants certainly describes the situation at Red Hill Road this year. When I visited the Red Hill Road population in mid-March, I found only a couple of tiny plants and only a single tiny (much less than ½ inch in diameter) flower. I think this is due to the soil condition. The soil was totally saturated. I think sticky seed daisies require not only extra water, but there can't be too much water, and this is why they are not found in the water-filled pools. If the soil is too saturated, there isn't enough oxygen for the roots to function. The rains late this year fell just after they germinated and saturated the soil to the surface. Walking around the area of the population, water seemed to be rising up around my boot like water from a wet sponge.

***California Trees: A Guide to Native Species* with Matt Ritter**
Lupine Workshop 6:00. Social 7:00 PM, Program 7:30 PM, May 1st, 2025,
San Luis Obispo Vet's Hall



Join Dr. Matt Ritter—botany professor and author of the acclaimed new book *California Trees*—for a visually rich and inspiring celebration of the state’s iconic native flora. From the towering redwoods of the northern coast to the otherworldly Joshua trees of the desert, *California Trees* takes readers on a journey through the state’s diverse landscapes, highlighting the remarkable variety of tree species that call it home. With his striking photography, humor, and botanical insight, Dr. Ritter will share the natural history of California’s largest and most storied organisms. A book signing will follow the presentation.

“A worthy addition to the library or backpack of any California tree fiend or friend.” — Ken-ichi Ueda, iNaturalist Founder“

This book makes accessible what would otherwise be overwhelming. California Trees is a celebration of the state’s globally significant biodiversity.” — Stephen C. Sillett, Kenneth L. Fisher Chair in Redwood Forest Ecology at Cal Poly Humboldt

CNPS-SLO Mini-Keying Workshops:
Lupines!

- ❖ Free pre-meeting keying workshop using the Vascular Plants of SLO County
- ❖ May 1, 2025, 6-7pm; SLO Vets Hall
- ❖ Facilitated by Dena Grossenbacher and Mindy Trask
- ❖ Learn about key characteristics to identify *Lupinus* species and practice keying locally collected specimens
- ❖ Participants provide their own hand lens, headlamp, dissection tools
- ❖ We will provide extra tools and copies of relevant key



Photo: Mindy Trask

Introductory Plant Identification Tips and Resources by Mindy Trask

CNPS-SLO Workshop Coordinator

We have been providing free and low-cost plant keying workshops through CNPS-SLO at the intermediate skill level for the past few years, and plan on continuing that trend. But we have also heard from many members that they would like introductory-level training. The mini-keying workshops that have been held before the chapter's in-person meetings can feel fast-paced for folks without a background in botany. With this in mind, I researched and considered how I could provide some kind of introductory plant identification workshops. It's actually more of a daunting task for me than the intermediate-level workshops. That's because it involves conveying information that botanists typically learn through several different college courses, such as basic plant biology, plant ecology, plant systematics, and field botany.

Fear not budding botanists, this is not rocket-science. Much of the information you seek is already available, online. Therefore, for all of you who want to learn basic botany to feel more comfortable with properly identifying plants using a floristic key, I bring to you some tips and recommendations for free, online resources and self-guided study that you can pursue. This is going to require self-discipline and some time to invest in front of your computer. Also, if you haven't already, you should invest a little bit of money into a few basic resources: a flora (e.g., *The Jepson Manual* or a local flora like *Vascular Plants of San Luis Obispo County*; (hint, local floras are easier because there are fewer choices); a plant terminology book (e.g., *A Manual for Plant Identification and Classification*); a 10x hand lens (AKA loupe; higher quality really does make a difference); some kind of 10-20x magnifier with a light like those that I've been providing with the mini-keying workshops or an actual dissecting scope; and basic dissection tools like pointers, forceps and scalpel. For those on a limited budget, you can start with the hand-lens and using the free, *Jepson e-flora*. Toothpicks and paring knives can work as cheap dissection tools. I also like to use double-sided sticky tape and notecards to hold the plant steady while I gently dissect it to see the small parts.

Armed with these basic resources, sit down to your computer and ingest some useful information available through various online videos to help build your botanical foundation. I found several free YouTube videos that provide basic training on plant identification (see list below). When you get tired of the online training, get outside quiz yourself. While observing plants all around you, try to identify major plant groups, leaf shapes and arrangements, and floral parts. If you find you're having difficulty recalling what you've learned, go back to the videos. Or do what we did in school and make yourself flash cards. Next, with your newfound knowledge of basic botany, try keying out some plants. Stick to plants that grow in native gardens or natural areas because ornamentals are tricky. It can be easier to identify a collected specimen from the comfort of your kitchen table, but please try not to collect rare plants. I know, this can be a conundrum while you are learning – stick to collecting those that are plentiful (weeds are great to learn on) or when you are on a CNPS field trip and others can verify it's not rare. I also recommend starting with plants you already know because you learn so much trying to key them out. When collecting to identify at home, take some good photos to reference what it looked like before being plucked, squished into a bag or pressed, and loses its colors and shape. Take notes on where you collected (locale and habitat type) because part of the process to confirm your identification involves reading the description in the flora that typically includes the range and characteristic habitats.

In the field or at home, you can, and should, use all resources at your disposal, including Calflora, iNaturalist, online photos, and plant terminology guides. Dena Grossenbacher has some additional wisdom when using a dichotomous key: read both choices in the key carefully before you make a decision; don't guess - look up terms you don't know; check the description before accepting an answer; and use more than one specimen because nature is variable. The last pearl is important to keep in mind. Humans like to put things in boxes, such as naming a plant - it helps us make sense of the world around us. You are bound to find that variation in nature that just does not fit nicely into the key. Even the most experienced botanists have challenges keying out plants. Personally, I think that the process of finding a solution (e.g., correct plant name) to a problem (e.g., what is this plant?) is a fun and rewarding adventure (e.g., using a dichotomous key).

For those of you willing to embark on this journey, please let me know how it went (workshop.cnpslo@gmail.com). If you have some good photos and can tell me the locale and habitat, I might be able to confirm your ID. If you give me feedback on your journey, it can help me narrow down what to provide in plant identification workshops. And please keep coming to our mini-keying workshops before the meetings! For the 2025/26 year, I was thinking of focusing the mini-keying workshops on the family key.

On the next page there is list of free, on-line introductory plant identification videos.

Free, on-line introductory plant identification videos

1. IFAS Extension, University of Florida: [Introduction to Plant Identification \(2023 version\)](#) - YouTube (1.5 hrs)

2. Arkansas Native Plant Society Basics of Botany Series: [Arkansas Native Plant Society](#) - YouTube (3 parts, 1-hr each: Part 1 Plant Identification Terminology, Part 1 Plant Reproductive Terminology, Part 3 the Basics Behind a Name)

3. CNPS Santa Clara Valley Chapter – Keying with Natives by Dee Himes:

- [Keying With California Native Plants: Basics of Plant Taxonomy 2/18/2022](#) (2 hrs)
- [Keying With California Native Plants: Basics of Plant Morphology 1/21/2022](#) (1.5 hrs)

4. Nature Clearly, several short videos, including:

- [Learn to Read Scientific \(Latin\) Names | Binomial Nomenclature](#) (14 mins)
- [Learn easy to observe characteristics of monocots and dicots | Monocotyledons vs. Dicotyledons](#) (5 mins)
- [What are Eudicots and Basal Angiosperms? | Flowering Plant Classification](#) (5 mins)
- [What are the parts of a flower? | Flower parts and their function](#) (6 mins)
- [Monoecious vs. Dioecious plants | Is the plant male or female?](#) (5 mins)
- [Why do plants \(not\) have leaves | LEAF PARTS, FUNCTION AND MODIFICATIONS](#) (8 mins)
- [Learn How To Recognize Compound Leaves | Simple vs. Compound Leaves](#) (5 mins)
- [Learn to Recognize Different Types of Leaf Shapes | Plant Leaves](#) (7 mins)



LOOKING BACK: WHAT THE OLD MAY NEWSLETTERS TELL US

May 2015: We noted our participation in Native Plant Week, We were watching proposed projects at Wild Cherry Canyon, San Luis Bay Estates and at Black Lake, and had failed to get SLO County to do more than minimal environmental studies on solar projects below 40 acres in size. Connie Rutherford of USFWS spoke on the Endangered Species Act. There was a single field trip to Arroyo de la Cruz.

May 2000: Malcolm McLeod gave a slide show on plants found in Spain and the Canary Islands at the general meeting. There was a report on our vernal pool mapping in the Carrizo Plain, and of the wine industry trying to loosen water discharge requirements, and of attacks on the Coastal Commission. Field trips went to the Nipomo Dunes, Black Lake Canyon, Sedgwick Preserve and Caliente Ridge.

May 1995: A short two pages, with field trips to Black Lake Canyon, San Simeon bluffs, and West Cuesta Ridge.

May 1990: Joe Clokey was President. Wildflower Weekend was deemed a success. A new emphasis on consideration of vegetation alongside with that of species is announced. There was illegal grading in the Irish Hills, proposed destruction of oaks in Arroyo Grande, restoration of an island in Pismo Lake, and notes of a poor wildflower season except after a fire along Highway 58. An overnight trip to La Panza was planned with members of Monterey Chapter.

May 1985: No newsletter

Conservation Alert

Wildfire Risk Reduction Project (formerly the Ecological Restoration Project)

Los Padres National Forest has just released a new Draft Environmental Assessment which we have just received, and have not fully studied as this goes to press. Therefore we have not, as yet, fully assessed any changes over the 2022 plan. On the face of it, the version is much more precise than the original plan, which suggested doing fuel treatments on everything north of US 101. Please see the screen shot of the current map and note that there is proposed work along the entire length of West Cuesta Ridge, including the Botanic Area and on the Hi Mountain Ridge road. . However we should be concerned that the massive loss of USFS staff due to DOGE, and the trampling of environmental laws by the current administration bodes badly. As the Trump administration has also sent out an Executive Order to bypass environmental laws in order to increase timber production and resource extraction, it is difficult to see how this current project, which was presumably prepared before the Executive Order, might be changed.

You can download the Draft Environmental Assessment from the bottom of the page at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=62369&exp=overview>

There is an informational meeting on April 21st, 3:30 PM to 6:30 PM, Santa Maria Public Library, 421 South McClelland Street, Santa Maria, CA 93454. However they have stated that "No comments will be accepted" and in 2022 similar meetings were a bit of a 'dog and pony show' with the staff behind the tables mostly unable to answer my questions.

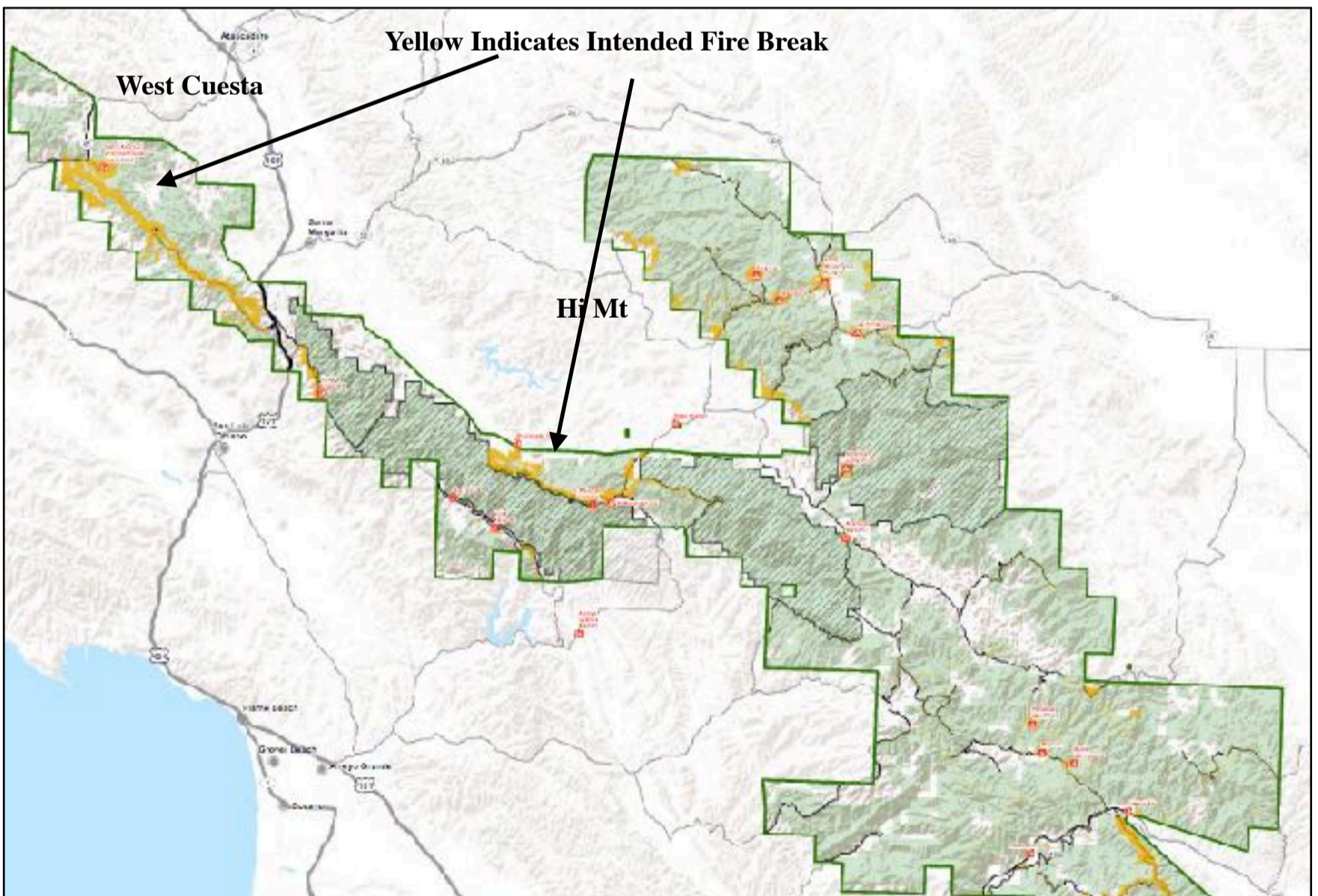
April 22nd, 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM, Teams Live Virtual Meeting, This is the [Join Meeting URL](#) for the time of the meeting.

Los Padres National Forest has launched a new easy-to-use multimedia "[StoryMap](#)" about the Wildfire Risk Reduction Project. The StoryMap explains why the project is needed, its intended outcomes, and the management actions the forest is proposing to take to

- Increase community and infrastructure protection;
- Improve wildfire containment opportunities by establishing and maintaining fuelbreaks and defense zones, and reducing hazardous accumulations of dead and decadent fuels; and
- Improve vegetation resilience and the health of forested areas from environmental stressors.

Interactive maps within the StoryMap compare the original proposal to the current proposal, and display the different types of defense zones, strategic fuelbreaks, and forest health units

:



ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT UNDER MAJOR THREAT

As we go to press, the Trump Administration is proposing to remove protection of species habitat from 'take' or protection under the Endangered Species Act, reducing protection to just the 'take' or killing of a species. What this means for Habitat Conservation Plans is uncertain.

Membership News

Greetings from the Membership Corner! The following list includes members who have joined, rejoined, or renewed their membership since the last newsletter. Those who have “joined” are brand new CNPS members, and we welcome you. Those who have “rejoined” were once CNPS members, took a break from membership for months or even years, and have now returned (welcome back!). “Renewed” members continued their membership by their anniversary date. Thank you all for your membership, your interest in the CNPS-SLO chapter, and your dedication to California native plants. If you have any questions regarding membership, please reach out to me at: chris.slo.cnps@gmail.com.

JOINED

James from Santa Barbara
Kimberly from Arroyo Grande
Lillian from Bakersfield
Linda from Atascadero
Marva Ann from Rancho Cucamonga
Tony from Templeton

David from Arroyo Grande
David from Arroyo Grande
Erik from San Luis Obispo
Francesca from Arroyo Grande
Gail from Cambria
George from Atascadero
Heather from San Luis Obispo
Jenn from San Luis Obispo
Judith from Atascadero
Kathy from Arroyo Grande
Kathy from Laguna Niguel
Kristie from Ventura
Kristin from Cambria
Laura from Santa Ynez
Laura from San Luis Obispo
Linda from Encinitas

Lindsay from San Luis Obispo
Lisa from Los Osos
Lisa from Morro Bay
Louis from Seattle
Lynn from Goleta
Nancy from Templeton
Nancy from Templeton
Patricia from San Luis Obispo
Rachel from San Luis Obispo
Rebecca from San Juan Capistrano
Robert from Orinda
Susanne from Arroyo Grande
Wendy from Oakhurst
William from San Luis Obispo
Willy from Templeton

REJOINED/RENEWED

Ana from Redwood City
Andrea from Oakland
August from Atascadero
Brian from Pismo Beach
Calvin from Templeton
Christopher from Arroyo Grande
Claudia from Ojai
Courtney from Alpine



Save the Date: September 13, 2025, CNPS Potluck Banquet and Malcolm McLeod Scholarship Fundraiser

We are still in the planning stages of this event, which will be in the evening (happy hour start time at 4:30 or 5pm) at Rancho El Chorro Outdoor Campus Auditorium on Pennington Creek Road, San Luis Obispo (on the North side of Highway 1, west of the SLO Botanic Garden). The happy hour will be on the deck outside the auditorium with wine and appetizers, followed by a potluck meal, Chapter updates, and presentation.

In lieu of a fee, the Chapter Board of Directors is requesting donations to the Malcolm McLeod Scholarship Fund. We would also like to include a silent auction, or other similar activity, to support fundraising efforts and are asking for members with ideas and volunteers to help with organizing.

Additional details will be provided in the June newsletter and follow-up Banquet announcement that will be sent a few weeks prior to the event. Volunteers will also be needed on the day of the event to help set up and break down. If you have any suggestions or questions, please contact Lauren Brown, brownlm4560@gmail.com, or call/text 805-570-7993.



Steve Schubert's photos from the March Bicycle Ride Field Trip to East Cuesta Ridge. The photo on the right shows bush poppy and, far below on the extreme left of the photo, the highway on the Cuesta Grade.

CARRIZO BUCKWHEATS

George Butterworth

Carrizo is a great place to see some old friends of mine -- buckwheats. There are seventeen kinds there. They like it sunny and dry. Many grow in sandy or gravelly places, some in clay, and one even grows in cracks in basalt. There are shrubs, perennials, and annuals. Round Rocks Valley, along Elkhorn Road, has many of the species (see below for latitude-longitude). Buckwheats are generally known to be good for pollinators; for instance, bees love California buckwheat, but we don't know much about this. Good research project. Most of these buckwheats are also shown in *Plants of the Carrizo Plain*, the electronic book available from CNPS. We follow the order of the key in Dr. Keil's flora. The first five are perennials to shrubs.

Eriogonum heermanii var *heermanii*, or Heerman's buckwheat, below left, is a shrub that's unusual in our county. It's not woolly. Leaves are oblong to elliptic to ovate. It grows in sandstone; also cracks in basalt, for example at the basalt "gate" on the trail to Padrones Spring, (GPS 35.0075, 119.5902_). Below right is *Eriogonum elongatum* var *elongatum*, longstem buckwheat. It's a woolly

perennial with white-pink flowers along the stems and somewhat narrow leaves below. It is widespread and likes sandy soil.



Eriogonum nudum, naked buckwheat, is a tall perennial with basal leaves, the blades of which are longer than wide and tomentose underneath, and clusters of white flowers. Variety *indictum*, protruding naked buckwheat, on the lower left, is scarce in this county, and Rare Plant Rank 4.2 . The only known site on Carrizo is in the Temblor foothills four miles north of Highway 58, not really accessible, but it also grows on Chimineas Reserve. *Eriogonum nudum* var *pubiflorum*, Fremont's naked buckwheat, lower right, has stems that are not inflated, and turn red in age. It can be found along Highway 58 west of La Panza Road, and along Branch Mountain Road.



CONTINUES NEXT PAGE

Eriogonum fasciculatum var *polifolium*. Desert California buckwheat is a very common shrub. This variety of the eastern county, lower left, has hairier, grayer leaves, and can withstand a lot of sun and dessication. The flower heads turn brown in age. It's in uplands in many places.

Next are the annuals, the first group of which have involucre on peduncles. *Eriogonum clavatum*, or Hoover's desert trumpet, is on the next page, top right. This non-woolly annual has roundish basal leaf blades, inflated stems, and yellow flowers on slender peduncles. It likes deep, soft clay, such as around Soda Lake, for example southwest of the tank along Simmler Road. It's in the Caliente foothills, (GPS 35.04394-119.66038).



Eriogonum ordii, Fort Mohave buckwheat, below left, is a somewhat similar annual, but the stems are not inflated. It's not woolly, the leaves are basal with roundish blades, and the involucre are on slender peduncles, with white flowers. I have seen this plant at Padrones (GPS 35.0088 -119.5951), Round Rocks Valley (GPS 35.155-119.666), and Burro Canyon (GPS 35.1431-119.6502). *Eriogonum gossypinum* has the common name of cottony buckwheat. This little annual, below right, is hard to see on its gravelly home. The plant is woolly, with leaves below that are longer than wide. Cottony wool mostly hides the flowers. It is somewhat rare, with a rank of 4.2. You might find it near Panorama Road (GPS 35.1872-119.7366, but not found in 2023), Elkhorn Road (GPS 35.18573-119.70635), and Cochora (GPS 35.10496 -119.60386).



Next we will examine the woolly annuals with involucre on slender peduncles. *Eriogonum gracillimum*, rose-and-white buckwheat. This woolly annual, lower left, has narrow leaves with some up the stem. Look closely and you can see that the outer tepals are flipped out. It's common in sandy places along northern Elkhorn Road; and I've seen it at Round Rocks Valley (GPS 35.155-119.666). *Eriogonum angulosum*, angle-stem buckwheat, is similar, but with white flowers and long stamens, with outer tepals not curved out. It's below right. The stem is ribbed or channeled. It grows in many places, usually with more clay, for example Beam Flat Road near Elkhorn Road, (GPS 35.0495-119.5485).

CONTINUES NEXT PAGE



The next two have outer tepals that are glandular-puberulent and inflated. *Eriogonum maculatum*; Spotted buckwheat, below left, has a red spot on the outer tepal. It likes sand and gravel. I've seen it at Round Rocks Valley, (GPS 35.155-119.666); Burro Canyon, (GPS 35.1431 -119.6502); and at Padrones, (GPS 35.0074-119.5906). *Eriogonum viridescens*, two-toothed buckwheat, is below right. The flowers are green-white-yellow. Outer tepals don't have the noticeable spot, but the inner ones are long and sharp and protrude, thus "two-toothed." This one is at Round Rocks Valley too, 35.1558 x 119.6644, and much of the Temblors.



The next group has involucre along the stem, or partly so. *Eriogonum temblorense*, Temblor buckwheat, below left, is a 1.B annual that only grows in SLO and adjacent counties. Leaves are basal and tomentose, with blades longer than wide. Involucre are along the stem and stalked as well. Find it along Elkhorn Road 8.4 miles southeast of Hurricane Road, (GPS 35.1174-119.6205), on barren loose shale. *Eriogonum roseum*, or wand buckwheat, below right, has all the involucre along the stems, with leaves below. It's like long-stem buckwheat but annual. I don't have a specific lat-long, but it's widespread and fairly common in sandy soil.



Eriogonum cithariforme, fiddle-leaved buckwheat, is below left. It has some of the inflorescence branches upturned. Leaves are below, longer than wide but variable, and often crinkled. It grows in sand or deep soft clay. It's been collected on Caliente Mountain, so it's a little harder to get to: at the top of Selby Road, head of Morales Canyon, (GPS 35.1074=119.8523); Caliente Mountain Trail, (GPS 35.1010-119.8344). *Eriogonum baileyi* var *baileyi*, Bailey's buckwheat, below right, is a small annual. Involucre are only 1-2 mm long and mostly along the stems, although the photo is misleading because it's a young plant. The involucre and stems are glabrous, but the leaves are tomentose. Flowers are white-pink. See it a Round Rocks, (GPS 35.155 -119.666) , Padrones Canyon Road, or other sandy places.

CONTINUES NEXT PAGE



Eriogonum covilleianum, Coville's buckwheat, is at right.. It is an annual with stems and involucre glabrous. Involucres are along the stems and terminal. Leaves are basal and round, tomentose below, somewhat above. It can be found in barren shale near Elkhorn Road (near *E. temblorense*), (GPS 35.1189 -119.6196), and (GPS 35.1174-119.6209). Also, with a steep climb, at Padrones at (GPS 35.0084-119.5916) on basalt.



Exciting News About Liability Waivers

Susi Bernstein

It's not every day you get exciting news about liability waivers, but that day has come. As part of our Chapter's recent effort to take local third grade students for a walk in nature, we require-scores of parents to read and sign the CNPS three-page release of liability waiver. If you've been on a field trip with CNPS, you've met this waiver yourself. It is quite a dense read, full of information that must be understood in order to be signed. Knowing that there would be a sizable population of students from Spanish-speaking homes, we wondered if the English waiver would be too difficult for some parents to navigate and understand, which might negatively affect student participation. This was the impetus for making a Spanish version of the CNPS waiver. Our Chapter's recent collaboration with the Santa Maria Natural History Museum had introduced us to the excellent bilingual skills of Analieze Castrejon, and, happily, she was willing to translate the CNPS waiver for us. In the course of about three short months, CNPS now has a Spanish waiver available electronically for all 36 Chapters to utilize. Our Chapter is already making good use of the translation. Of the 59 signed waivers received so far for our third grader field trips, more than half are signed on the Spanish version! Now we are offering the Spanish waiver on field trips for the general population. Simply pick your language of choice, and sign that one waiver. State CNPS staff and CNPS-SLO Board members offer our sincere thanks to Analieze Castrejon for making the Spanish translation a reality.

EDITORS NOTE: the waiver does not cover attack by walking, man-eating Triffid plants (left), as seen in *The Day of the Triffids*, or alien moss that attacked Stephen King in *Creepshow* (right) . However please send a sample of the killer moss to the Bryophyte Chapter if you encounter a smoking meteorite in your yard.



Lichen of the Month- *Thelomma californicum*



This species is found in coastal California on fence posts, old wood and rocks. The genus *Thelomma* often has 'frog eyes' apothecia, and are also called 'nipple lichens'. The thallus is relatively thick and gray to yellow-gray in color. The photograph is of an old fencepost along Turri Road in 2012, since removed. *Thelomma mammosum* is very similar but found on coastal rocks. *Thelomma santessonii* is also similar but has a darker thallus which is sometimes tan-colored and is also found on coastal rocks.

photo: D. Chipping

City Nature Challenge 2025

Forest Lurz, Morro Bay National Estuary Program and Kristen Nelson, CNPS

We are excited to announce that the San Luis Obispo chapter of CNPS, the Central Coast chapter of The Wildlife Society and the Morro Bay National Estuary Program are partnering to host the first-ever San Luis Obispo County-based project of the [City Nature Challenge](#) ! The City Nature Challenge (CNC) is a worldwide community science event that is an initiative of the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County and the California Academy of Sciences. It takes place over a four-day period every April, with individual CNC projects defined by specific geographic boundaries and led and led by local organizations. In California, County-based projects have been hosted across the state for many years – but SLO County has never had a CNC event!

Interested participants can contribute by submitting observations of any life form (plants, wildlife, fungi, slime molds... really anything!) to [iNaturalist](#) during the event dates: April 25 through 28, 2025. An observation can be a photo, video, or audio recording (such as vocalizations of frogs, birds, or insects). Once observations are uploaded and confirmed by another user, they become research-grade, meaning that they can be used by scientists and other researchers around the globe.

The CNC is an important event because it creates a massive global dataset of species diversity and distribution during a time when [biodiversity is diminishing around the world](#). During last year's CNC, over 83,000 people worldwide made 2.4 million observations in four days! This will be the first year that SLO County is officially participating in CNC. We are excited to contribute to this historic and impactful community science opportunity.

How to Join the City Nature Challenge

There are multiple ways to get involved with City Nature Challenge. The first and easiest way is to contribute observations independently! Either plan a walk or hike out in nature with friends or just document biodiversity while out and about during the event dates. We are also organizing several guided “bioblitz” hikes and walks during CNC weekend (April 25-28). A [bioblitz](#) is “a communal effort to record as many species within a designated location and time period as possible.” They are being hosted by local partners including California State Parks, Creek Lands Conservation, The Wildlife Society, and more. During a bioblitz, staff and volunteers will be present to assist attendees with making quality observations and using the iNaturalist platform. These events are a great way to explore natural areas around the county and participate in community science. All local bioblitz events will be listed on the SLO County CNC [iNaturalist page](#). If you are outside of SLO County, you can look for local bioblitz opportunities by searching for your town or county on [iNaturalist.org](#).

This is a family-friendly event, and people of all ages and physical abilities are encouraged to participate! You can also use the Seek app (instead of iNaturalist) as long as it's linked to an iNaturalist account. Just go outside anytime between April 25-28 and take photos or audio recordings of wild organisms (humans and domesticated cats/dogs do not count), then upload them to iNaturalist before May 4 so they can be counted in the challenge total.



Contribute to this important community science project by going outside and documenting biodiversity near you! Photo by Kristen Nelson: Saline clover (*Trifolium hydrophilum*) at Laguna Lake Natural Reserve in San Luis Obispo.



Grab some friends and head out to explore a new or familiar place! All observations submitted within SLO County on April 25 – 28 will contribute to our 2025 CNC project. Photo: Group hike to explore Carrizo Plain National Monument.



Saturday, May 3rd, 2025, 9:30 am, Pinnacles National Park, a joint field trip with the CNPS Monterey Bay Chapter.

This hike is strenuous, with a distance of 5 miles, and a 1,400 ft. elevation gain, when added to the roundtrip drive from SLO Co., taking most of the day. If you have not visited the Pinnacles NP, this area is a mixture of chaparral and grey pine woodland, interspersed with the remnants of 23 million year old volcanic eruptions that form rocky spires and deep canyons. Wildflowers will be in abundance and will replace the lower elevation flowers with new species as we ascend the trail. Temperatures may be warm to hot. Meet at the Templeton Park and Ride (35.553954, -120.713726) at 8:00 am to form carpools. Bring adequate water, a lunch and snacks, and dress in layers for the weather; a hat and sturdy shoes are advised. **To register for this hike, you will need to first contact Bill Waycott, 805-459-2103**, for a conversation on the necessary physical fitness level needed to complete this trek. For those who can manage this hike, the link to the liability waiver form will be forwarded to them for their signature. Rain or the threat of rain cancels.



Photos: Bill Waycott

Saturday, June 7th, 10:00 am, Manzanita hike #12, Cambria, CA.

Join us for a hike in the hills behind Cambria to see the rare Arroyo de la Cruz manzanita, 1B-2, *Arctostaphylos cruzensis*, as well as two other manzanita species. Initially, we will walk through tall grassland, then up into the Monterey Pine forest, where we will spend most of our time. This is a 3-mile hike, with a 400 ft. elevation gain, taking 2.5 hours, located in the Cambria Pines Ecological Reserve. Afterwards, we can reconvene at Sandy's Deli for lunch ([location here](#)), and visit the Friends of Fiscalini Ranch headquarters next door for browsing. An afternoon visit to Recurved Flats at Arroyo de la Cruz is possible, as well. Park along the edge of the road on Main Street, east of Cambria East Village (35.566529, -121.07626), just west of the intersection of Main Street and Santa Rosa Creek Road. Gather in the parking lot of the old Santa Rosa School House. Bring adequate water, snacks, and dress in layers for the weather; a hat and sturdy shoes are advised. Please register for this event by signing the liability waiver form available at the link below. More information, Bill 805-459-2103. Rain or the threat of rain cancels. **See photos of *Arctostaphylos cruzensis* below**



Photo: Bill Waycott

[CLICK Registration & Waiver](#)

Arctostaphylos cruzensis, appears to have a similar leaf to *Arctostaphylos crustacea*, but the latter has a basal burl, re-sprouting from the burl after fire, and *Arctostaphylos cruzensis* repopulates from seed after fire and has no burl. There was some confusion regarding manzanita populations on coastal terraces at Montana de Oro that Dr. Keil has determined are actually *Arctostaphylos osoensis*, which is not as prostrate as *Arctostaphylos cruzensis*, and has dark brown smooth bark on older branches compared to the shredding bark of *Arctostaphylos cruzensis*.



Horticulture Now

Welcome to Horticulture Now, a column featuring articles about gardening with California native plants. This month's article features fungal and insect infestations of four selected genera: *Arctostaphylos*, *Ceanothus*, *Heteromeles*, and *Quercus*. Suzette and I hope you find these topics interesting.

April would be amiss without two items for sure. Preparing taxes and battling insects and fungus in the garden. With hopes of helping you, I have selected four of the most likely California natives to experience insect or fungal problems, starting in April and ending in June. Let's start with the genus *Arctostaphylos*.

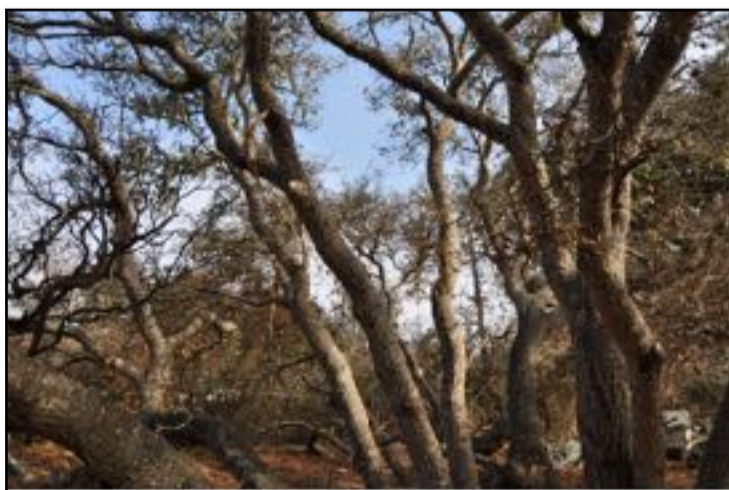
We all know there are many species; however, they all experience some form of leaf spot. Black leaf spot is caused by various fungi which are prone to affect plants that are typically planted in the wrong location. Perfect example, an inland variety planted on the coast. So pay attention to your location. Plant only coastal species in coastal zones and so forth. If not possible, provide good air circulation and do not overhead water during summer months. If leaf spot becomes a problem, spray with neem oil, baking soda or 2% hydrogen peroxide. As always, spray at night when pollinators are not active.

Ceanothus, like the genus *Arctostaphylos*, has many species and cultivars. Their abundant fragrant flowers attract many pollinators and unfortunately many insects, especially in the order Hemiptera. This is a large order, and its members are particularly prone to attack *Ceanothus*. These pests include aphids, white fly and scale. As you know there are many beneficial insects which can help, but it's best to watch closely and don't allow pests to get out of hand. If this does occur, the first step is, at sunrise, to wash the infested plant down with a stiff stream of water. This can be achieved with a standard garden nozzle placed on jet. It is important to wash from underneath in an upward direction to dislodge adults, young insects and eggs to obtain control. This should be done weekly until populations are reduced. As a last resort, insecticidal soap spray or neem oil can smother insects, especially scale. Here again, spray from underneath and at dusk to avoid pollinators.

There is no doubt that nothing matches the beauty of *Heteromeles* or Toyon. Its evergreen foliage and white flowers can only in beauty be surpassed by its red berries which arrive on time for the winter holidays. It should not, then, be a surprise that many gardeners have planted and failed to grow this beauty. Luckily the answer to solving the problem is right under our feet, which is soil drainage. Wet, poor-draining clay soil, is the worst-case scenario. Even sandy loam soil, which usually drains well, can become soggy during the rainy time of year, causing fungal root or crown rot. Good news: poor drainage can be easy to fix. Look for an elevated portion of your garden for placement. A slope is always best, plus a full to half-sunny location is a must. If you must have a Toyon, construct a raised bed with rock sides, backfill with a 50/50 mixture of coarse granite and bagged garden soil. Water sparsely during the summer months and avoid drip irrigation.

Oaks are not hard to find. If not in your yard, maybe nearby. Also, it's hard to imagine that anything, especially small critters, could hurt these majestic beauties. Sadly, hurt can happen and sometime the results can be scary to watch. Some experts say insect damage may be cyclical; others say it is limited to drought years. Either way our local oaks are overdue for an attack. No matter what species, all members of the genus *Quercus* are susceptible to insect infestations, especially from the order Lepidoptera and locally the California Oak Moth. During a bad year, the caterpillar stage can defoliate a tree, for sure a scary thing. Surprisingly they are easy to keep at bay. Watch closely for moths flying at sunset or during warm days. These moths are the adults, and they don't like water. especially stiff sprays from a garden nozzle. Wash down swarms after sighting the adults. Larvae will have hatched and they too hate water. Spray as needed. Lastly, if all else fails, there is an organism, similar to food poison for humans., that called *Bacillus thuringiensis*. Follow the application instructions, spray at dusk as sunlight kills the bacterium.

April can be the start of something good, other than taxes. With a keen eye and a stiff spray of water, you can stay ahead of insects and have a happy and healthy garden. Until next time, happy gardening. **John Nowak.**

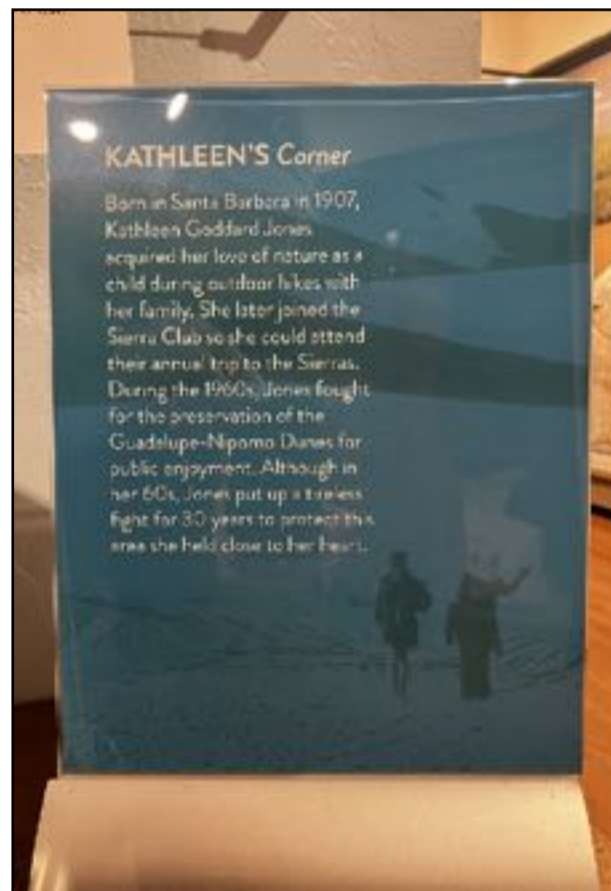


(Left): Oak defoliation from Oak moth in 2013; (Center): Caterpillars swarm birdbath; (Right): The same grove of oaks in April 2025.
Photos: Chapter Photo Collection

The Dune Center's Display Honoring Kathleen Goddard Jones: 'TheDune Mother'



**SUPPORT
THE DUNES
CENTER IN
GUADALUPE**



The Dune Center Wildflower Hike at Oso Flaco Lake, Saturday, May 24, 2025 9:00 AM- 12:00 AM Oso Flaco Lake Trailhead. The Dune Center is hosting a colorful morning exploring the blooming wonders of the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes on a Wildflower Hike at Oso Flaco Lake! This special outing will be led by botanist and docent Ray Segovia, who will guide us through the native wildflowers, plant communities, and natural history of this stunning coastal landscape.

CNPS-SLO High School Hill / Reservoir Canyon hike: Photos by Grace Hayes



Photos of the April Plant Sale



Scenes from the Coreopsis Hill field trip by Steve Schubert



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

Co-Presidents

Dena Grossenbacher
denagrosATgmailDOTcom

Bill Waycott (805) 459-2103
bill.waycottATgmailDOTcom

Vice President

Jacqueline Rose
jacqueline.SLOcnpsATgmailDOTcom

Secretary

Cindy Roessler
skanticsATgmailDOTcom

Treasurer

David Krause (805) 459-9007
dkincmbriaATAolDOTcom

Chapter Council Rep.

Melissa Mooney
mjmoonATcharterDOTnet

Conservation/Legislation

YOUR NAME HERE?

Chapter Wholesale Contact

Linda Chipping (805) 528-0914
lindachippingATyahooDOTcom

Education

Zach Tanner
ztannerATgmailDOTcom
Susi Bernstein
susi.slo.cnpsATgmailDOTcom

Horticulture & Plant Sales

John Doyle (805) 748-7190
jdoylelandscapingATgmailDOTcom

Field Trips

Bill Waycott (805) 459-2103
bill.waycottATgmailDOTcom

Plant Communities

Melissa Mooney
mjmoonATcharterDOTnet
Cindy Roessler
skanticsATgmailDOTcom

Workshops

Mindy Trask
sloworkshopsATcnpsDOTorg

Retail Sales Manager

Joyce Bauerle
whaledreamsATyahooDOTcom

Historian

Dirk R. Walters (805) 543-7051
waltersdirk746ATgmailDOTcom

Invasive Plants Control

Mark Skinner
mks333ATsbcbglobalDOTnet

Membership

Christopher Rose
chris.slo.cnpsATgmailDOTcom

Rare Plant Coordinator

Kristen Nelson
knnelson.nativeplantsATgmailDOTcom

Web Site Coordinator

David Krause (805) 459-9007
dkincmbriaATAolDOTcom

Hospitality

Lauren Brown: (805) 570-7993
Brownlm4560ATgmailDOTcom

Chapter Publications

Matt Ritter
mritterATcalpolyDOTedu

Cal Poly Faculty Representative

Dena Grossenbacher
denagrosATgmailDOTcom

Cal Poly Student Representative

Maya Netto
mrnettoATcalpolyDOTedu

Photography

Photo Curator
David Chipping (805) 528-0914
dchippinATcalpolyDOTedu

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

Newsletter Editor David Chipping (805) 528-0914 dchippinATcalpolyDOTedu

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, *Artemisia*; 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
P.O. Box 784
San Luis Obispo, CA 93406



Print, Clip & Mail, or use QR Code



Join Today!

- Student / Limited Income \$25
- Individual \$50
- Plant Lover \$120
- Supporter \$500
- Patron \$1,000
- Benefactor \$2,500

I wish to affiliate with the San Luis Obispo Chapter

Inquiries:

Phone: (916) 447-2677 Fax: (916) 447-2727 (State)
e-mail: cnps@cnps.org (State)

Websites:

Websites: www.cnps.org (State) & www.cnpslo.org (Local)

New Renewal Gift

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone _____

E-mail _____ * NEEDED FOR NEWSLETTER

Please make your check payable to CNPS and mail to:
attn Membership, California Native Plant Society, 2707 K Street, Suite 1,
Sacramento, CA 95816-5130

GIFT MEMBERSHIP RECIPIENT

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

Do you want CNPS to send gift recipient a postcard identifying you
as giftor Yes No