



Mimulus MEMO

California Native Plant Society
Kern County Chapter
winter 2005

CNPS President's Message

It's a new year, and time for new resolutions, aimed at improving ourselves, our gardens and our environment! Since I gave up smoking in 1977, that resolution is out. I've decided to focus on our Kern CNPS Chapter, and with lots of help from our officers and interested members, I think we're off to a good start in planning more activities for our members. At least through March!

We have three meetings planned, and field trips are being organized. If you know an interesting wild flower spot, please let me know at lucyg391@aol.com. We would love to explore areas near Tehachapi, Kernville, and Frazier Park, where so many of our members and plant sale shoppers live. Who knows what this winter's rains will bring, but discovery is part of the fun of our field trips! The other part is getting to know other plant lovers who share all levels of expertise. We have everyone from the RBs (Real Botanists) to those just beginning to identify our native plants. As a plant lover in the middle, I enjoy learning and helping others learn on these trips. It is a great experience to see all that our county offers in its diverse habitats.

The grazed hills in the greater Woody area are turning the softest of greens, and the currant is flowering. Before we know it, it will be spring!

I hope to see you in January at our horticulture meeting, in February at the multi-media presentation on the deserts of California and their blooms, and in March at the introductory workshop on keying our natives.

Lucy Clark

Welcome new members!

Diana & David Campbell
Dale Chitwood
Carol Cunningham
Eric Guzman
Anne Kittlitz
Richard Lewis

Maureen McDonald
Harriet Morris
Rich O'Neil
Jeanne and Marshall Rubin
Robert Rusby

Intermountain Nursery will Host Kern CNPS

Intermountain Nursery is one of the plant suppliers for our annual sale. The nursery is located in Prather, about 2 1/2 hours north & east of here and we are going there. This is going to be a outstanding day, **Saturday, April 22, 2006**. We will be given a tour of the nursery's gardens, growing grounds and hot house. We will be taught some of the peculiarities and specifics of growing native plants. Plants in the nursery will be in bloom and ready to be bought! We will leave Bakersfield at **7:30am** from the Montgomery Wards Plaza parking lot, south side, near the recycling bins. Bring your **lunch**, we will picnic by the creek. *Estimated* time of return is 5:00pm. This is a great opportunity to learn from experienced and knowledgeable growers and purchase plants that are usually not available for our sale because they were sold out. Be prompt, we will! leave at 7:30.

Wildflower Weekend May 19-21, 2006

Sponsored by *Blue Sky Meadow Science Institute* and *CNPS Mojave Chapter*

Blue Sky is on line at: <http://www.outdoorscienceschool.org/blueskymeadow/>

Where: It will be held in the beautiful San Bernardino Mountains at the Blue Sky Meadow Science Camp at 8000 feet. The San Bernardinos are renowned for their plant diversity and that they have the highest mainland rare plant concentration in the United States. Field trips will be held on Friday evening, all day Saturday and half day on Sunday. The Science Camp is 10 miles from Big Bear City and is surrounded by National Forest.

Cost: The \$80 fee includes food and accommodations in dorm style cabins (similar to the Bristlecone sojourn). Make checks out to Blue Sky Meadow, Box 2860 Big Bear City, CA 92314.

Schedule:

Friday	Saturday	Sunday
5pm Check-in, local walks	8am Breakfast	8am Breakfast
6:30-7:30 Light dinner	9:30-4:00pm, All day field trips	9:30 – TBA, Half day field trips
7:30 Keynote speaker – Scott Eliason	5:30 Dinner	
	7:30 Keynote speaker – Tim Krantz	

Trip Leaders: Tim Krantz, Andy Sanders, Pam MacKay, Tim Thomas, Tasha LaDoux, Oscar Clarke, Scott Eliason and RT Hawke.

RSVP: Please e-mail your reservations to rth00@yahoo.com, (that's rth zero-zero). (909) 584-8495.

Directions will be sent when your reservation is confirmed. Come join us for a spectacular time! And please pass this information on to anybody you might think be interested in this event.

Volunteer Opportunity

The Kern County Science Foundation is seeking qualified judges for the Kern County Regional Science Fair, to be held on March 29th, 2006.

Serving as a judge is so rewarding and takes so little of your time (from 8:15AM to about 1:00PM). As our chapter is awarding a monetary prize to the high school and the middle school winners in the Plant Biology category, it would be great to have several of us judging. I personally enjoy asking the kids questions about their work, and encouraging their involvement in science. The thrill is seeing how very many students participate in forming a hypothesis and testing it. The convention Center will be filled by students and their projects!

This Web address will get you to a letter and Judge Information Form. The form is due by Feb. 10:
<http://ci.kern.org/sciencefoundation>

For further information on science fair judging, contact Bob Allison at 872-2719 or Anne Santer at 636-4640.

I always attend the training session to know what to do. This year it is on March 21, 2006, 7:00 to 8:30 AM, as in the morning. Early. It will be at University Square, 2000 K St., Room US1. If you are not a morning person, the Judging Handbook is available at the Web address above, and you can train yourself.

Any of you with degrees in science would be considered qualified, and I hope to see you there along with the geologists from Aera, the engineers from China Lake, the local MDs, botanists, astronomers, etc.

Lucy Clark

Planting Oaks at Panorama Vista by Andy Honig

The Panorama Vista Preserve, below the Panorama Bluffs in Bakersfield, was acquired from ARCO in 1997 after a community-wide fund raising campaign. One of the major donors was the Brown Family Foundation to whom the commitment was made to plant a grove of trees in the family's honor. On October 29, 2005 that commitment was fulfilled with the planting of 60 valley oak (*Quercus lobata*) and California sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*) seedlings. The 35 valley oak were grown from acorns collected last fall on the Windwolves Preserve in the foothills at the southern end of the San Joaquin Valley. The 25 California sycamores were grown from seed collected from several large old trees in the Panorama Vista Preserve.

It is not known for sure whether valley oaks once grew on the terraces above the Kern as it flows into the San Joaquin valley, but they certainly grew along other central valley rivers (hence the common name "valley oak" or "swamp oak"), and it is possible that they grew on such terrain in Panorama Vista before oil and cattle activity began a century ago. There is what appears to be a single, large valley oak on private property next to the preserve and at some point we would like to find out more about the history of that tree. There is also the possibility of going through old turn-of-the-century photos at the Kern County Museum. Any information regarding the historical distribution of valley oaks in Kern county would be much appreciated. Valley oak is endemic to California and is the largest oak in California and perhaps the United States.

There are currently a number of large, old sycamores on the preserve, but no young ones. Most likely this is because sycamore establishment requires flooding, which has not occurred on the Kern since the Isabella dam was built in the early 50s. All of the preserve beyond the immediate riverside is strongly impacted by this since much of the natural riparian habitat is intimately associated with flooding events. Thus, if the preserve is to be maintained in a "natural" state, a certain amount of un-natural intervention will be necessary.

We found a few interior live oaks (*Quercus wislizenii*) growing naturally in the public access along the Kern River off of Rancheria Road and plan to plant this oak in Panorama Vista if we are successful in sprouting acorns gathered from around 4000 feet along Rancheria Road. (The trees in the public access area did not have acorns.) Like valley oak, we have not found any interior live oak currently

growing in the preserve, but they are known to grow in similar habitats: ie along rivers out into the central valley.

Elderberry and cottonwood almost certainly once grew at the site since they currently grow nearby, but the planting area appears to have been graded flat at some point so we are starting with a blank slate (of non-native mustard this year) in terms of restoration. This is going to be a long-term project.

The trees planted on October 29 are being watered by a drip line that connects to the water system at the small River Ranches development on the north side of Panorama Vista. At this point there appears to be a high rate of survival among the valley oak. All but a few of the California sycamore lost their leaves soon after planting. This may be due to stress from transplanting, but since they are naturally deciduous, it isn't all that surprising. The seedlings may still be alive as their stems appear green.

We failed to fully anticipate the activity of voracious rodents. All but three trees were protected by one inch chicken wire above and below ground. The three trees which did not have the above ground protective cages were nibbled to the ground by the very next morning after planting. Moreover a number of the small spaghetti connecting tubings were soon spraying water from gnaw holes although no damage has yet occurred to the main 5/8 inch line. I have been encasing the spaghetti tubing in heavy hose as damaged tubing is replaced and this appears to be successful so far.

For now we will water weekly for several hours and walk the drip line regularly to ensure that all trees are receiving water while awaiting spring and knowledge of success or failure.

We are also planning to plant plugs of a native perennial grass, creeping wild rye (*Lemus triticoides*) from plugs we will be gathering at Windwolves. We will be doing this planting in a fairly small grid lying in an area that was burned over this past summer, and was covered with mustard and non-native grasses before that. The burned area is not near the drip system and will require an initial hand watering and periodic flooding in hot weather. Very possibly this will be undertaken by a Boy Scout as part of the requirement for his Eagle badge.

Thanks go to CNPS members Lucy Clark, Clyde Golden, Steve Hampson, Paul Gipe and Sasha Honig who were among those participating in the planting.

Andy Honig can be contacted at andym5@cox.net

California Sycamore, *Platanus racemosa*

by Michele Garden

Found at the web site <http://kaweahoaks.com/>

The California sycamore ranges from Baja northwards to the Sacramento Valley and up into the Sierra Nevada foothills. It is absent from north coast ranges in what would seemingly be suitable habitat, but we'll get to that later. It is almost always associated with riparian woodland habitat and grows below 5,000 feet in elevation.

The California sycamore is long-lived (up to 400 years) and grows up to 100 feet tall. The tree usually has multiple trunks that can be up to five feet in diameter. These trunks are usually reclining and resting along the ground. The sycamore is an overstory/canopy species that is deciduous.

Its reproductive nature is monoecious (male and female flowers on the same plant), although individual plants may be mostly male or female. The wind-pollinated flowers occur in ball-like clusters and the wind-dispersed fruits (achenes) can be carried for very long distances, enabling rapid re-establishment after flood damage to riparian areas.

California sycamore's presence attests to the perennial abundance of near-surface water. It is an obligate phreatophyte, meaning the tree needs access to ground water within the root zone. Sycamore is usually in sites higher and drier than cottonwood and grows in coarse, porous sand and gravel. This suggests the need for adequate root aeration.

If traveling along the intermittent streams of the southern coast ranges and southern California, you would notice that California sycamore is a dominant tree of these areas. It forms open woodlands along the terraces. In the northern part of the tree's range however, its dominance diminishes. Shanfield (1981) found that in this northern part of its range, *P. racemosa* had a cover value of 4.8% compared to cottonwood, elder, willow, oak, and walnut which ranged from 17% to 20%.

The fungus (Anthraxnose) is a prevalent disease of the California sycamore and often causes complete spring defoliation. This fungus is promoted by cool, wet springs and is

currently stressing the sycamores in counties at the northern extent of the range.

California sycamore is not a pioneer species in the riparian habitat. This niche is occupied by the cottonwoods and the willows. Sycamore is considered a mid-successional species and forms older groves on the higher terraces. Land clearing of these upper terraces for buildings with a nice view has been the cause of a large reduction in the sycamore population of the Sacramento Valley.

Katibeh (1981) studied the riparian forests of California's central valley and found very few younger size classes of California sycamore. He noted that the central valley riparian wetlands once occupied 2 to 3 million acres, however they now have been reduced by 90%. The lack of continued recruitment into riparian vegetation communities indicates that over time, as existing adult trees age and die, systems are experiencing large structural and floristic shifts. This means that the ecological values (ability to support native riparian-dependent birds and other wildlife) of the vegetations are being progressively impaired.

Forty to ninety-seven percent of the vertebrate species of the central valley use or depend upon the riparian system. Birds use the canopy area of the riparian areas most heavily and therefore depend upon species such as California sycamore. Birds such as red-tailed hawks, red-shouldered hawks, Swainson's hawk, Downey and Nuttall woodpeckers and various species of warblers would be largely eliminated by the absence of the upper tree stratum.

References:

Katibeh, Edwin F. 1981. A brief history of riparian forests in the central valley of California. In, *California Riparian Ecosystems: Ecology, Productivity, and Productive Management*. Warner, R.E. and K.M. Hendricks. University of California Press, Berkeley. 1981.

Shanfield, Allan N. 1981. Alder, cottonwood, and sycamore distribution and regeneration along the Nacimiento River, California. In, *California Riparian Ecosystems: Ecology, Productivity, and Productive Management*. Warner, R.E. and K.M. Hendricks. University of California Press, Berkeley. 1981.

The Wind Wolves Preserve

Wind Wolves is on line at
<http://www.wildlandsconservancy.org>

In the late 1980s, Los Angeles development trends extended into the southern end of the San Joaquin Valley when Dale Poe Development bought the historic San Emigdio Ranch. The developers received controversial county approval to build a high-density city on former ranch land. During a lull in development in the mid '90s, the property was put up for sale to avoid bank foreclosure. The Wildlands Conservancy out-maneuvered many competing development interests and purchased more than 93,000 acres to create the largest privately owned nature preserve on the West Coast. Recent acquisitions have expanded the preserve to more than 97,000 acres.

On the San Joaquin Valley floor, the preserve is a 32-square-mile veritable sea of grasslands with remnant stands of saltbush. These grasslands are home to the endangered San Joaquin kit fox and blunt-nosed leopard lizard, and one of the largest stands of the endangered Bakersfield cactus. Rolling grasslands rise from the valley floor and transition into classic California blue oak and valley oak savanna with extensive riparian wetlands. Pinyon-juniper woodland and chaparral can be found at medium and upper elevations along with pockets of big-cone spruce and ponderosa pine.

The preserve is in an ecologically unique region where the Transverse and Coast Ranges, Sierra Nevada Mountains, western Mojave Desert, and San Joaquin Valley

converge. Due to this singular geographic location and an elevation range from 640 to 6005 feet, the preserve has an impressive array of landforms and habitats.

Through its spectacular scenic beauty and rich diversity of life, Wind Wolves Preserve has the power to inspire people to preserve their natural and cultural heritage. The preserve offers a free environmental education program. Educators have a choice of programs focusing on Native American Lifeways, Local History, and ecology programs for each grade level, which complement the State's science curriculum. In addition, The Wildlands Conservancy pays the cost of busing for students from low-income districts who otherwise would not have the opportunity to go on a nature field trip. For example, during the 2003 school year, we hosted more than 12,000 students at the preserve.

The Wind Wolves Preserve is one of the best places in Southern California to observe large mammals, and will soon open to the public on weekends for hiking, horseback riding, picnicking, and camping. For information, call (661) 858-1115

NOTE: There is always work to be done at WindWolves, and they have a schedule of volunteer workdays. Usually this involves planting oaks or removing tamarisk. Bring your own lunch and WindWolves provides a BBQ dinner around a campfire. Contact the preserve manager, Dave Clendenen, at 661-858-1115 for details. There is one work day a month and the schedule is:

January 21, February 11, March 11
April 15, May 20

To: Kern County CNPS Members
From: Wayne P. Armstrong, San Diego CNPS
Subject: Request For Corm of *Brodiaea terrestris* ssp. *kernensis*

Hello:

I am studying populations of the Earth *Brodiaea* (*Brodiaea terrestris* ssp. *kernensis*) in southern California which I believe may be different from populations in Kern County. This is a beautiful purple brodiaea, not the common blue dick or wild hycainth (*Dichelostemma*). I would like to grow several corms from Kern County to compare with our southern

California populations. The following article about brodiaeas appears on my web page (Wayne's Word):
<http://waynesword.palomar.edu/vernal2.htm>

If anyone can spare a corm that you know came from Kern County, please send it to my Palomar College address:

Wayne P. Armstrong
Life Sciences Department
1140 W. Mission Road
Palomar College
San Marcos, CA 92069
mrwolffia@cox.net

CHAPTER MEETING JANUARY 19, 2006

Native Plant Horticulture Resources

Randi McCormick will lead a round table discussion of books, nurseries, web sites, etc. designed to help those of us who want to grow California natives, whether in a pot, a mixed garden, or a "pure" native garden in Kern County. This will be an opportunity to share your successes, failures, and to ask the advice of other growers, as well as to peruse new books on the subject. We hope to find time to brainstorm ways to improve the Plant Sale.

PLEASE COME!

January 19, 2006, in the Tejon Room, upstairs in the Beale Library
6:30 pm Social half hour
7:00 pm Native Plant Horticulture Resources
8:50 pm Out the door!

We are working with Russo's to have the latest book for sale at a reduced price for you!

CHAPTER MEETING FEBRUARY 21, 2006

"My people are the people of the desert." Lawrence of Arabia
"My people are the people of the dessert." Old Town Pasadena graffiti

Join Kern CNPS at its second meeting of the year for dessert and a multimedia extravaganza on the California Desert, given by Steve Hartman of Sherman Oaks. Steve is CNPS Treasurer and was named a fellow of CNPS last September in honor of his years of contributions to our organization.

February 21, 2006, in the Tejon Room, upstairs in the Beale Library
Dessert at 6:30 pm
Horticulture discussion at 7:00 pm
Program at 7:20 pm
We will be tidied up and outside by 9:00pm

"Facing the New Millennium in the California Desert"

While leading a "virtual" field trip across the southern California desert, CNPS Fellow Steve Hartman will discuss conservation issues while showing images of his favorite desert locales. He edited the recently published CNPS Press book *The Best Spring Ever – Why El Niño Makes the Desert Bloom*, and will show images of some of the great wildflower blooms of the past few years.

Learn about the battle against invasive weeds at Joshua Tree National Park, why rare plants have received so much attention on the Algodones Dunes in Imperial County, and why desert plant communities have been the focus of intensive sampling over the past 8 years. Find out how CNPS has influenced recent major desert public lands planning efforts. Other topics covered include heap-leach gold mining, wildlife guzzlers, off-highway vehicle use and wildfires.

Along with many beautiful and interesting images, Steve has created a soundtrack of desert bird sounds played in "surround-sound" to recreate the sensation of being in the desert.

Steve Hartman has been a CNPS member for nearly 30 years, served on the CNPS state board as Treasurer for over decade, and is a long-time activist of the Los Angeles / Santa Monica Mountains chapter. He served on the Bureau of Land Management's California Desert District Advisory Council for 6 years representing CNPS. His local project is the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Area, in the San Fernando Valley, where he has guided revegetation projects and the largest native landscaping projects implemented by the City of Los Angeles. Steve is a business executive and multimedia artist, and has combined these talents to produce the "Nature Based Multimedia Information" series of wildflower CD-ROMs sold by CNPS.

CHAPTER MEETING March 11, 2006
Beginners Wildflower Identification Workshop

If you have always wanted to learn to identify our beautiful and varied wildflowers, here is the time and place!
Ellen Cypher and CNPS volunteers will help you learn:

- How to use a key
- How to identify basic plant parts
- How to recognize some common plant families in California.

Bring paper and pen for any notes you might want to take, and bring any of the following that you might have:

- *Jepson Manual- Higher Plants of California* or *Jepson Desert Manual* (just to look at the glossary and how keys are structured)(...so don't buy one just yet!)
- Magnifying glass or loupe
- A lunch and drink

Please reserve your place by calling Ellen at 661.827.1992 or by e-mail, ecypher@bak.rr.com

RANCHO SANTA ANA BOTANIC GARDEN
Presents the California Botanical Society ANNUAL BANQUET
Saturday, February 11, 2006 Founders Room, Pitzer College, Claremont

TOURS:

1:00-3:00pm: Tour1 RSABG living collection

by Bart C. O'Brien, Director of Horticulture

3:00-4:00pm: Tour2 RSABG library, herbarium, and laboratories

by Dr. Linda M. Prince, Biodiversity and Conservation Division

BANQUET & LECTURE:

5:30 pm: Reception at Pitzer College Founders Room

6:30 pm: Dinner

"Ecology and Evolution of Fire Prone Ecosystems in California"

by Dr. Jon E. Keeley, Research Ecologist, U. S. Geological Survey,
Western Ecological Research Center, Sequoia and Kings Canyon Field Station

Ticket prices are \$40 for non-students, \$25 for students

R.S.V.P. by February 1

For more information contact Stefanie Brown at (909) 625-8767 ext. 221 or stefanie.brown@cgu.edu

Please make checks payable to "California Botanical Society." Mail checks to:

CBS Banquet, c/o Stefanie Brown
Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden
1500 North College Avenue, Claremont, CA 91711

Please include this registration form with your payment

California Botanical Society Banquet Registration Form

Name of guest: _____ I am a student _____

I plan to attend RSABG Tour 1 _____ Tour 2 _____ Request for vegetarian entrée _____

Daytime phone (required): _____ E-mail (required): _____

Total amount enclosed: \$ _____ (Please make checks payable to "California Botanical Society")

What Happened at the Plant Sale??? . . .

Debby Kroeger, plant sale co-chair

It is an annual event, the plant sale. This year's native plant sale (October 22nd) was like the others: our desire is to interest the public in the benefits and beauty of landscaping with natives. It is a one-day event, but takes months of preparation. This year's preparation included a workshop. The response to the workshop was thrilling and showed at the sale. Plants (over 800) were ordered or hand-picked and brought to the California Living Museum. The sale opened at 8:00 for CNPS and CALM members and at 9:00 to all others. By 11:00 most of the plants were sold!!!!!!!!!!!! There was a whirlwind of activity. Past customers came to buy more natives, folks from the workshop came to choose some native plants that they had just learned about, some new home owners who needed to landscape their yards came and even members of some local garden clubs came. As I was assisting customers, I would tell someone about a plant they might like, then turn around to go get one and the plants were already sold! It was exciting and frustrating at the same time. It was possibly the largest "opening rush" of customers we have had. When a lull came, we looked around and regrouped. We gathered the few plants left into a cluster for the next customers. During the afternoon a few more plants were sold. Many of the afternoon customers promised to come earlier next year! There are a few key people for any event, but success is the result of a corps of volunteers. Thanks to all.

This sale showed us what it can be like every sale. We now have a lofty goal and are going to keep promoting our fabulous native California plants. We are already preparing for next year's sale (see the announcement about our January meeting) which we hope will be even better.

Our Kern County CNPS website is at <http://www.cnps.org/chapters/kern/>

If you know of some sites we should include links to, please let us know. Or, if you have some pictures or information on your own home page that you would like to share, that would be great! We would like to start a "local links" section on our web page where Kern CNPS members can share their thoughts, pictures, gardening experiences, or whatever with other members.

CNPS – Kern County Chapter
PO Box 9622
Bakersfield, CA 93389-9622

The mission of the California Native Plant Society is to increase understanding and appreciation of California's native plants and to conserve them and their natural habitats through science, education, advocacy, horticulture and land stewardship.