



MARCH 2014

The *Pipevine*

Newsletter of the Mount Lassen Chapter
CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

General Meeting

MARCH 5, 2014

Wednesday 7:30 pm

Butte County Library, Chico

The Impact of **Invasive Plants** *on the California Landscape*



Presented by

SUSAN MASON

Invasive Plants Chair

Mount Lassen Chapter CNPS

Invasive plants are second only to development in reducing the habitat available for California's native plants. This is not a recent phenomenon: as soon as the first European explorers set foot on California's soil in 1642, the annual grass seeds in the hay their ships carried for their horses came ashore too and spread quickly throughout the state. Learn more about how plants new to California, along with other major environmental impacts, forever changed California's landscape and how our own local open spaces have been affected by these accidental and deliberate plant introductions. Knowing about invasive plants is also useful to taking good care of your own yard and garden. Susan Mason is the Invasive Plants Chair for the Mount Lassen Chapter. She's been leading volunteer invasive plant removal projects in Bidwell Park and Chico's other open spaces for the last twelve years.

Invasive and very flammable giant reed on Little Chico Creek

Field Trips

Wes Dempsey and Gerry Ingco
Co-chairs

YAH I TRAIL UPPER BIDWELL PARK, CHICO

March 1
Saturday

Meet at 9 am in Upper Bidwell Park at Parking Lot L (Diversion Dam) by driving the gravel road about 1.7 miles beyond Horseshoe Lake's Lot E. Bring lunch, water, insect/sun protection. Wear sturdy shoes. Hike the scenic Yahi Trail in a majestic canyon with spectacular vistas. We will follow Big Chico Creek where it flows through a diverse selection of scenic natural features. We expect to see and identify a variety of plants and trees, and learn about the the biology, history and geology of the area. The trail transects grassy flats, open oak savanna, slopes and canyon walls covered with trees and shrubs. The trail crosses through shady and moist riparian woodlands in side drainages. The elevation at trail's end is about 800 ft. We will walk about 2 1/2 miles one way and return, walking to lot L on the park road. The first mile of the trail is narrow, has an uneven surface and must be negotiated with care. Leaders: Gerry Ingco 530-893-5123 and Wes Dempsey 530-342-2293.

NOMLAKI TRAIL MENDOCINO NATIONAL FOREST

March 16
Sunday

Meet at 9 am at Chico Park & Ride west lot (Hwy 32/99). Bring lunch, water, sun/insect protection, and money for ride sharing. Wear sturdy shoes. The hike is located about 27 miles northwest of Corning. From Forest Rd M4, the Nomlaki Trail, at elevation 1,200 feet, is an easy 3-4 mile walk rich with scarlet fritillary, fawn lily, and Indian warrior. Call for a secondary meeting place. Leaders: Margie MacNairn 530 343-2397 and Wes Dempsey 530-342-2293.



Checker lily (*Fritillaria affinis*) in seed with shorter growth after a very dry Oct. Photo by Jennifer Jewell

SPOTTED FAWN LILY & MCNAB CYPRESS LASSEN NATIONAL FOREST

March 23
Sunday

Meet at 9 am at Chico Park & Ride west lot (Hwy 32/99). Bring lunch, water, sun/insect protection, and money for ride sharing. Wear sturdy shoes. We will hike about 1-1/2 miles down a serpentine slope to a head dam on the West Branch of the Feather River for lunch. Under the cypresses are masses of yellow and white spotted fawn lilies and along the trail penstemon and fritillary. Trail head elevation is 2,400' with an uphill gain of 900' from the river. Not recommended for small children. Call for secondary meeting place. Leader: Wes Dempsey 530-342-2293.

BUTTE CREEK BLM TRAIL

March 30
Sunday

Meet at 9 am at Chico Park & Ride west lot (Hwy 32/99). Bring lunch, water, sun/insect protection, and money for ride sharing. Wear sturdy shoes. Then drive east on Highway 32 to Garland Rd. From Garland Rd we go south to the trailhead in Butte Creek Canyon at elevation of 3,000'. This is an easy 3 mile round-trip walk along a secluded section of scenic Upper Butte Creek. The trail stays close to the stream. Several wooden bridges and a structured steel stairway are encountered. The trail winds through a narrow band of riparian vegetation containing a variety of flowering plants. A mixed conifer forest extends up the rugged canyon walls. There is evidence of historic gold mining activity all along the creek. Leaders: Gerry Ingco 530 893-5123 and Wes Dempsey 530 342-2293.

Executive Board Meeting

March 19, 7 pm

Suellen Rowison

530 897-0226 suellen@garlic.com

President's Message

by Catie Bishop, President

Happy New Year Everyone (year of the horse). I think I'll use this space to talk about what the Executive Board is doing. Many of you may not know the kinds of things that are discussed during Board Meetings, and if you have something to add to the discussion, feel free to let the Board know, or come on down and speak for yourself. All are welcome.



A lot of discussion time in February is devoted to the budget for the upcoming year. During this process all the program chairs ask for the funds they need to run their programs for the year. We often start with our "wish list", and then have to scale back to keep our requests within practical limits. All the committees have costs associated with them.

For example, the Program Chair asks for enough to cover speakers travel costs or meals, and a complimentary t-shirt or apron. The Hospitality Chair needs to keep coffee, tea, napkins and accessories in stock, and buy an occasional hot water urn. The Invasive Plants Chair utilizes rented dumpsters to remove the cut plants from on-site. All the Chairs give generously of their time, and shouldn't have to pay out-of-pocket expenses.

Other discussion topics these days include: The design of a Chapter business card, the funding of student research projects, the scheduling of people to staff tables at events, finding a new place to hold our general meetings, looking for a way to grow our own native plants for our sales, and, another big topic, the planning of our Horticulture Symposium which will be held in September of this year. This is just a sample of our discussions.

As you can see, there is always a lot going on behind the scenes in your Chapter. Any amount of time you can help with any of these programs is welcome.

Legislative Notes

by David Anderson

SUSPENSION OF CEQA CAUSE FOR CONCERN

Section 9 of Governor Brown's January 17 Drought Declaration invokes the emergency exemption provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). It suspends the operation of CEQA in connection with the Declaration orders relating to dam releases and transfers of water between the State Water Project and the federal Central Valley Project. It also suspends a section of the state's Water Code dealing with water quality plans. The suspensions are another example of the dangerous view that we can ignore environmental protections in dealing with immediate crises without creating irreparable harm for the long term future. The cumulative effects of environmental degradation have created an emergency. Protecting our environment only when it is convenient to do so is not a sound policy.

Hopefully, the suspension of CEQA and the Water Code will be narrowly applied and not extended to other aspects of drought control. We environmentalists should monitor this.



Adobe lily (*Fritillaria pluriflora*) endangered species (listed 1B.2)
See page 6. for more on Fritillaries by Jennifer Jewell.

Photo by John Whittlesey

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

by Susan Mason

If you're interested in doing some community service while helping the environment and getting some exercise, there are many opportunities to do so this winter and spring. These activities are also a good way to see new outdoor areas and meet like-minded people. Below are some, but probably not all, of the available options.

The **BEEP** (Broom Education and Eradication Program) group in Forest Ranch is holding their annual winter sessions for invasive Spanish and French broom plant removal on Saturday mornings through March 22. They meet at the Forest Ranch Post Office at 9 am to carpool to the day's work site.

The recent hiring of an AmeriCorps intern has allowed the **Butte County Resource Conservation District** to begin offering volunteer projects near their Oroville office. In the last couple of months, they adopted a highway segment for trash pickup and did a cleanup along the Feather River. If you live in the southern part of Butte County, volunteering with the RCD is a good option. As an aside, they're also offering water conservation presentations for groups, so if you belong to an organization that is looking for presentations for your meetings, here's an easy way to get help.

The **Chico Park Division** schedules both vegetation management and trail repair volunteer projects throughout the year. Their major focus is on Bidwell Park but they also occasionally host sessions in Verbena Fields and elsewhere. For those who want to volunteer on their own, you can adopt, for a year or more, almost any city-owned open space area, no matter how large or small, via the Park Division. They'll help you to get started, loan tools if necessary, and if you decide to tackle a large project, recruit other volunteers to help you.



Invasive Himalayan blackberries smother riparian area of Big Chico Creek.
Photo by Susan Mason

Friends of the Comanche Creek Greenway offer morning work sessions on the 2nd Sunday and last Saturday of each month. Current projects include blackberry and milk thistle removal, litter pickup, and excavation of trash mounds from prior dumping on the property. They're working towards the goal of opening this open space for general use by the public so volunteering is a way to get an advance look at the area.

Friends of Bidwell Park (FOBP) have adopted the west-most section of Bidwell Park, the downtown Lost Park area. Most people don't know that Lost Park, along Big Chico Creek between Esplanade and the Camellia Way Bridge, encompasses property on both sides of the creek. FOBP hosts Saturday afternoon work sessions there twice a month, focusing on litter pickup and weed removal. FOBP also offers numerous other volunteer work sessions throughout Lower and Middle Bidwell Park, focusing primarily on seasonal invasive plant removal.

The **Sacramento River Preservation Trust** recently initiated monthly trash cleanup sessions on roadways near the Sacramento River. They're held in the morning on the first Saturday of each month.

The **Stream Team's** annual Big Chico Creek water monitoring sessions will start back up on the second Saturday in April. They meet at Five Mile Recreation Area at 9 am and then spread out up and down the creek to take water samples and other measurements of water quality and quantity.

Last but not least is the **Mount Lassen Chapter, CNPS**. We maintain the Alice Hecker Native Plant Garden at the Chico Creek Nature Center and the Yahi Trail in Upper Bidwell Park on an ongoing basis. In addition, we've adopted some of the Chico open space areas that aren't served by other organizations: Teichert Ponds, Little Chico Creek Greenway, a mini-park at the corner of 9th and Hazel Streets, and the riparian corridor through the CSU, Chico campus, with about a thousand volunteer hours spent last year on these projects. Our work is continuing at all of these sites this year with CSU, Chico sessions held on the first Sunday morning of each month, 9th and Hazel sessions on 1 or 2 Friday mornings each month, and at other locations when we have enough volunteers available to make it worthwhile. We've identified many other potential projects in these locations and other Chico open spaces and will be scheduling work sessions there after we've reviewed them with the Park Division staff. If you know of a public area that would benefit from CNPS volunteer work, please let me know.

YOU CAN CONTACT the groups directly to be added to their email notification lists or look at the online calendar at Friends of Bidwell Park (www.friendsofbidwellpark.org) which currently contains the most complete listing of local outdoor volunteer activities. Almost all of these sessions are drop-in; some have activities suitable for children and all of them welcome newcomers. If you're looking for a smorgasbord of activities and locations, on March 1 and 2, March 8 and 9 and April 26 and 27, both morning and afternoon sessions will be held on these dates at different locations for each session. Also on April 19, the Chico Park Division will be hosting Earth Day volunteer activities at several sites.



Spreading wood chips
in Bidwell Park
Photo by Susan Mason

Teichert Ponds privet and olive
tree removal project with
California Conservation Corps and
volunteers in front of the 6th
40-yard bin filled with vegetation.
Photo by Steve Overlock



NATIVE PLANTS *for the Garden*

FRITILLARIES: Native Bulbs that Add Seasonal Color,

by Jennifer Jewell



Some of the best gardens in my mind are those with a depth of planting that reveals itself over time. Revelations that can only be appreciated fully as you witness the slow unfolding of each season in their turn. Part of what I consider to be the most satisfying of a garden's seasonal revelations includes that magical appearance of different bulbs in surprising places in each season. Bulbs add a layer of depth - both temporal and spatial - that can transform and elevate a standard landscape into a good garden. A layered, considered, and *loved* garden.

Whether you are a native plant purist, or a gardener looking to incorporate more and more natives for reasons of aesthetics, principles, or economy - you have a nice handful of California native bulbs to choose from when adding this layer to your garden.

Some of my favorite bulbs - the Fritillarias - are beginning to bloom in the lower elevations of the North State right now. Late February through June will see their full unfolding in the wild.

Fritillaries are member of the Lily (Liliaceae) Family and are perennial herbs growing from membranous bulbs. They are native to temperate portions of Europe, Asia and North America and the Jepson Manual currently lists 24 species and varieties in California. Almost all of the ones with which I am familiar have smallish downward facing "nodding" bell or cupped shaped flowers that range from the bright and cheerful pinks/reds to much more muted colors of brown, burgundy and yellow.

Fritillaria affinis (right middle), which ranges from very dark brown with checkered markings to a clearer reddish brown with markings, can be seen February through March along fern bank in Upper Bidwell Park. *F. recurva*, is noted for the curled back edges of its petals when mature, and also varies in color but ranges from orange to red to brown, and can be seen in spring on the Magalia serpentine.



through the Seasons

Interest and Depth to a Garden

F. eastwoodiae seems less common but can be seen throughout the eastern edges of our region, and ranges from greenish to yellow to red and also has recurved petal tips. One of the brightest of our native Fritillaries is the so-called adobe lily (*Fritillaria pluriflora*) which is a rare and endangered species (listed 1B.2). This bulb grows in clay soils that are generally damp in spring but dry and hard in summer and sports multiple blooms of bright pink to red. (page 3.)

As with all natives, not all native bulbs or native Fritillaries are easy or even willing to settle into home gardens successfully, but enough of them are that you have some good possibilities. Before getting into specifics on the Fritillaries, let me say very clearly that in my opinion it is NEVER ok to collect bulbs in the wild for transplanting to your own garden. Never. It is far better to mark the spot and collect limited quantities of seed when they have ripened and attempt to propagate from there.

Your best bet by far is to locate a reputable source for some of our native bulbs and start with those. While commercial sources are not easy to find, a few places to try include: <http://www.keepingitgreennursery.com>, <http://www.telosrarebulbs.com>, and <http://www.yerbabuenanursery.com>.

If you do want to try to grow some from seed, according the Pacific Northwest Bulb Society, "Fritillaries are among the easiest and most reliable genera from seed....And, California Fritillaria need about four months of cold/cool weather to germinate well." In general both seedlings and mature flowering bulbs want conditions that allow for dappled shade, winter wet and complete summer dry. Most also want good drainage in their winter wet.

Written and photos by Jennifer Jewell. www.jewellgarden.com

Top left - native *Fritillaria sp.* in the foothills of Oroville. Bottom left - mature seed and pod of checker lily (*F. affinis*). Top right - scarlet fritillary by John Whittlesey. Middle right - checker lily (*F. affinis*). Bottom right - pale green-yellow *Fritillaria sp.*



FASCINATION WITH **FASCIATION**

by Rex Burress

In the winter-brown meadows along the Sewim-Bo River Trail, I saw the dark, dried shape of an oddly formed plant towering over weedy rubble. Upon investigation I found it to be a moth mullein with a picturesque flattened stem.

The mullein, *Verbascum blattaria*, had become a victim of fasciation. That odd term, so much like the word fascination, describes a flattened deformity caused by an irritant from several possible sources. Over 100 species of local plants, native and introduced, can acquire this condition that doesn't kill the plant but merely adds some additional attractive growth.



The introduced mullein had completed the yellow flowering stage and left behind hundreds of round, pea-sized pods, each containing dozens of pepper-sized black seeds. I transferred the marvelous oddity to the Feather River Nature Center where it's on display, along with some fasciated Tree of Heaven, *Ailanthus altissima*, samples. The rare condition also occurs in a few tips of poison oak along the river.

Among the Nature Center curios, we also have specimens of dried Round-toothed Ookow, *Dichelostemma multiflorum*, with a buberous bulge of a gall on the upper stem just below the blossoms.

Perhaps you have noticed those tall mullein stalks dotted with bright yellow cup-shaped blossoms along the river path in the summer. There is also the larger introduced common mullein version, *V. thapsus*, with wide basal leaves and yellow blossoms on the stalk. Seventy percent of the roadside plants along the river are of foreign origin, giving the natives staunch competition.

Like the round 'oak apple galls' on oak trees - an irregular growth caused by a stem disruption when gall insects lay their eggs in plant tissue - fasciation can be caused by viruses, bacteria, fungi, or genetic intrusion, but the end result is that gnarled flat shape replacing the normal round stem.

Of such are the variable surprises you find in the fields of nature. Many of those unnatural growths create additional biodiversity and add more marvelous nature subjects to study.

Aside from fasciation, irregularities in tree growth produce burls and bumps of many kinds. Burls are tumor-like enlargements on limbs or trunks created by the encapsulation of an injury, or more likely a virus. The twisted growth pattern is highly desirable for wood craft, sought after by illegal chain saw operators, often imperiling the tree, especially redwoods. It's on a par with killing an elephant for the ivory tusks, or a rhinoceros for the nose horn. Or killing a rare tiger for the skin. Or a bear for the gall-bladder. I've known the absurdity of cutting a giant tree down to get a raccoon pelt or honeycomb in Missouri.

The choke cherry (left) that grows abundantly around Oakland Camp near Quincy, has one grove inflicted with black, sculptured stem, oddly beautiful curios caused by a fungus called *Dibotryon morbosum*.

These elongated, massive swellings of the stems are found at any time of year as old galls remain on the shrubs for several seasons.

There are over 2000 gall organisms known to induce galls on American plants. Among the gall-makers are fungi, bacteria, mistletoe, viruses, and small animals like mites, midges, and wasps. The rust fungi are responsible for large galls on pine trees. Some rust fungi cause witches' broom; compact clusters of shoots that arise from a common base on branches.

Fasciation is also called 'cresting' when the growing tip, the apical meristem, flattens instead of growing round due to the disruption of growing tissues by the invading organism. The condition has become the norm for the commercial garden favorite cockscomb (*Celosia*) flower that seems to inherit the trait.

In animal and bird watching, the trick is to watch for movement, but in watching for fasciation, mushrooms, flowers of the plant kingdom, you focus on static structures usually close to the ground. Neither do plant entities run away from the camera but rather remain in place almost as if they are of a friendly nature and allow the photographers to take their time!

*In all places then and in all seasons
Plants expand their light and soul-like wings
Teaching us by most persuasive reasons
How akin they are to human things.*

FRIENDS OF THE HERBARIUM 2014 WORKSHOPS

INTRO TO SOIL MORPHOLOGY AND HYDRIC SOILS

April 12, 2014, by Russell Huddleston

This workshop is an introduction to general soil morphology with an emphasis on describing the characteristics of the surface horizons and an introduction to hydric soils including oxidation-reduction processes, types of redoximorphic features and field indicators of hydric soils. Russell is a certified Professional Wetland Scientist and has over 13 years of professional experience working in wetlands throughout the western United States.

DESIGNING A POLLINATOR GARDEN

April 19, 2014, by John Whittlesey and Adrienne Edwards

Learn how to design a garden to encourage native pollinators by using plants that provide overlapping nectar, pollen, and larval food resources, providing pollinator nesting habitat, and eliminating the use of pesticides that kill non-target pollinators. Visit pollinator-friendly gardens to discuss plant selection, placement and care of a garden that cultivates a thriving habitat for a wide range of pollinators.

BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATION

April 26, 2014, by Judy McCrary

Want to draw plants and flowers? Local illustrator and teacher, Judy McCrary, will lead this one day workshop and will concentrate on pencil and ink techniques, although other media may be explored depending on the interests of the participants.

For more information about registration please contact the CSU, Chico Biology office 530 898-5356 or jbraden@csuchico.edu Detailed workshop descriptions and sign up forms are available on the Chico State Herbarium website: www.csuchico.edu/biol/Herb/Events.html

Keep up with **MLC Activities**
on our website and Facebook

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MARCH 2014 issue



Pipevine



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CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

I wish to affiliate with the Mount Lassen Chapter

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Plant Lover	\$100
Patron	\$300
Benefactor	\$600

mountlassen.cnps.org



March

- 1 - Yahi Trail Upper Bidwell
- 5 - General Meeting
- 16 - Nomlaki Trail
- 19 - Ex Board Meeting
- 23 - Fawn Lily & Cypress
- 29 - Butte Creek BLM Trail

April

- 3 - General Meeting
- 16 - Ex Board Meeting