



# The Shooting Star

SIERRA FOOTHILLS CHAPTER

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

DECEMBER 2013

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Mountain Dogwood



California Mountain Mahogany



Leopard Lily

*Photographer for December  
Bob Brown*



## AMAZING BOOK SALE AT POTLUCK - REDUCING OUR INVENTORY!!

For some nice Christmas gifts, and to increase your library, come check out the book table at the CNPS potluck on December 5<sup>th</sup>. To reduce our inventory, we will be having a close out sale on many of our books. More popular titles such as Native Pollinators and Reimagining the Lawn -- will be at least 50% off retail price.

Some Ferns and Grasses will also be on sale for just \$5 per gallon. There will be some *Polystichum munitum* and *Woodwardia fimbriata*. Grasses will include *Nassella pulchra*, *Muhlenbergia rigens*, and *Festuca idahoensis*- both 'Siskiyou Blue' and green fescue.

Don't miss this great opportunity for some inexpensive Christmas shopping, spreading the word on "going native," and supporting your local CNPS Chapter.  
-- Stephanie Garcia

## ANNUAL POTLUCK & MEMBER SLIDESHOW

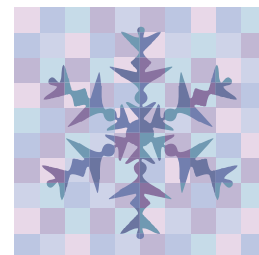
The **December 5<sup>th</sup>** meeting is our annual potluck dinner with the program being the sharing of photos of native plants within our local area. All those attending are asked to bring some type of food dish to share and plates, cups and silverware for their own use. (Note: It is requested that ingredient lists accompany food for those with food sensitivities). We will be meeting at **6:00 PM** in the Senior Center that is adjacent to the County Library just off Greenley road. Anyone who wishes to share their pictures of native plants, field trips, native gardens, etc., should bring them in a jpeg format on a flashdrive. We will provide a digital projector, screen and computer for the showing. If you have traditional "analog" slides, you need to let me know by Dec. 4, so that I can arrange for a slide projector:  
[rbrown4674@aol.com](mailto:rbrown4674@aol.com), 209-928-9281.

-- Bob Brown, Program Coordinator



Photo: Jennie Haas  
**November Fall Colors Field Trip to Heenan Lake.**

**Reminder:  
There is no  
Newsletter in  
January.**



If you change your mailing or e-mail address, be sure to send a note to these people. This will keep your newsletter on time!

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[www.cnps.org](http://www.cnps.org)

Dedicated to the Preservation  
of California Native Flora.

## Field Trips

Pat Stone provided us with this excellent description of the Fall Colors field trip: The fall colors field trip was completely and thoroughly enjoyable. The lower elevation black oaks (*Quercus kelloggii*) were showy and profuse. As we progressed on through Calaveras Big Trees, I was awestruck by the color variations of the dogwoods (*Cornus nuttallii*). I am convinced this park is the crown jewel of the California State Park system. All the pastel beauty you could imagine, with the fine yellow leaves of dogbane (*Apocynum androsaemifolium*) for enhancement. As we progressed on up the hill, the willows (*Salix* sp.) stood out, distinct shapes of leaves like some delicate painter with an extra fine brush. As we turned and went up Highway 89 to the top of Monitor Pass, both Fremont cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*) and aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) were showy. At our Heenan Lake stop, the familiar splashes of aspen, vibrant orange and yellow sweeping up from the lake, greeted us like old friends. After lunch, (deserving of an article all its own) and armed with a pint of the best pasta salad ever for the family back home, we continued back over Carson Pass to Jackson and home. The canyon of the Carson River below Sorenson's, is especially gorgeous. It has a colony of aspen that are particularly small leaved and they and the willows give a really special texture to this stretch. Hope Valley was a little past, but still elegant. The trip over the pass and through the lakes section is always a treat. As we began the grade down into Jackson, Jennie's sharp eyes spied a heavily laden madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*). We stopped and a low hanging branch, pendulous with berries, graciously donated a few. Perhaps with some luck (and Pat Rehs' talent) we will have some seedlings at a future plant sale. Thanks to all who attended. --Pat Stone

As we close out the 2013 field trip season, I would like to thank all of the trip leaders who guided us on some of the most excellent wildflower forays and native plant viewing we have done to date. Heartfelt thanks are extended to Ann Mendershausen and Michael Ross (Merced Wild & Scenic River), Barry and Judy Breckling (Bagby Serpentine and the Hetch Hetchy Hike), Bob Brown (Dragoon Gulch), Steve Stocking (Calaveras Big Trees), Maggie Berisha (Garden Tour at Sierra Outdoor School), Quinn Young (Rare Plant Treasure Hunt: the Search for *Boechea evadens* at Ebbetts Pass), Alison Colwell (Gaylor Lakes

## What's Blooming This Month?



### What's Blooming?

This month I've decided to do something a little different by showing some seed/fruit structures of some plants show the variety of some seed/fruit types. I won't be talking about one particular location but rather several with the focus on how different some seeds/fruits and their associated structures can be. I've also included photos of the same plant in bloom to see if you can identify which blooms go with the appropriate seed/fruit (Editor's note: see front page of newsletter).

My first example shows the fruit of a Mountain Dogwood tree, (*Cornus nuttallii*), and it is a member of the Dogwood family, Cornaceae. It's hard to imagine that this is the fruit when most people have only seen the flowers. This photo was taken in October along the old railroad right-of-way leading from Confidence road to Lyons Dam. This trail provides some great photos when the Dogwoods are in bloom in the spring. The next seed structure is that of a Leopard Lily, (*Lilium pardalinum*), a member of the Lily family, Liliaceae and was observed along the same trail as the Mountain Dogwood only a little later in October. At this particular site I've yearly observed more than 100 Leopard Lilies in bloom at one time. As you can tell from the photo this species certainly produces a lot of seeds per fertilized bloom. The last photo shows the seeds of the California Mountain Mahogany tree/shrub, (*Cercocarpus betuloides*), which is a member of the Rose family, Rosaceae. The feathery seeds bear little resemblance to the flower and are generally not associated with this particular tree/shrub by the casual observer. There are a number of these along the Westside trail where this one was photographed.

You might be surprised at what you'll encounter in the way of blooming plants or plants that have gone to seed/fruit when exploring our wonderful hills and mountains. I do hope that these pictures will encourage you to get out and explore the many native wildflowers in our area that bloom and fruit throughout the year in their many and varied habitats.

-- Bob Brown, Program Coordinator

and Rare Plant Treasure Hunt: Yosemite's Lost Pacific Yews), and Pat Stone (Fall Colors). Thanks are also extended to the many people who attended these trips. The combined knowledge base of our groups always lend a high level of learning from each other and, of course, we always have fun.



Bob Brown will be taking over as Field Trip Coordinator in January, 2014. Be sure to give him your suggestions for next year's field trip schedule: [rbrown4674@aol.com](mailto:rbrown4674@aol.com), 209-928-9281.

--Jennie Haas

## 2014 Officers are Elected

The following elected officers were nominated and approved by the chapter membership present at the November 7 general meeting. President: Bob Dean, V.P. Amador: Vacant, V.P. Calaveras: Judy Dean, V.P. Mariposa: Ann Mendershausen, V.P. Tuolumne: Pat Gogas, Secretary: Stephanie Garcia, Treasurer: Patti Hohné. We are especially glad to have Bob Dean step forward and take on the position of President. He has leadership experience and will help keep our chapter organized and focused on some of the topics that we started tackling in 2013.

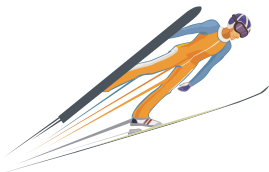
Among our appointed chair and coordinator positions, we have several changes for 2014. Stephanie Garcia is taking on the Fall Plant Sale coordinator position, while she continues her work as the chapter Growing Area Manager. Judy Dean is taking on the Spring Plant Sale Coordinator position and will oversee the sale which is being moved to San Andreas. Bob Brown will take on the Field Trip Coordinator position.

We will be scaling back the selection of books for sale at meetings and plant sales to relieve Pat Reh of the onerous task of schlepping around so many books. Look for liquidation pricing of many titles at our December meeting.

We still have vacancies to fill. Please consider yourself for one of the following positions: V.P. Amador County, Program Committee Chair, Publicity Coordinator and Hospitality Coordinator (with a budget for meeting refreshments). These are great entry-level positions which are important in carrying out the business of the chapter.

--Jennie Haas

## E-Shooting Star Addresses Needed



Please send your e-mail address to Jennie Haas: [jhaas953@gmail.com](mailto:jhaas953@gmail.com) for the e-Shooting Star mail list.

## WHATS BLOOMING IN YOUR YARD?

We have lots of Fall flowers this year. The weather has been mild and where we add water the growth and flowering of many plants continues. The two natives which have been blooming here early in November are *Symphoricarpos chilense* and *Baccharis pilularis* ssp. *pilularis*. (The genus used to be Aster, but this is one of the name changes in the new "Jepson"). *Symphoricarpos subspicatum* is much like *S. chilense* and is described in Jepson as being "highly variable, grading into *S. chilense*". This as if composites aren't already difficult to identify! The outer phyllaries are acute, not obtuse so I vote for *S. subspicatum*, Douglas' Aster. These are widespread in nature, along streams and in fields. They are Summer and Fall bloomers and do well in the garden. The species name *chilensis* means "from Chile", but this is a misnomer resulting from a mix-up. The botanist who named the plant misinterpreted the original collection label which had been written in Spanish, not his native language.

The Douglas Aster may be named after David Douglas who was an early Scotch plant collector who is best remembered by a tree he collected, the Douglas Fir. I have not been able to find a reference to tell me if the Douglas' Aster and the Douglas' Violet are also named after David Douglas. Can anyone help me with this? Recently we showed an excellent video about the life of David Douglas at Calaveras Big Trees State Park. Look for the video on public television as that is what it was made for, in Oregon.



Our Dwarf Coyote Bushes, *Baccharis pilularis* ssp. *pilularis* are also blooming now but the flowers are not conspicuous. The local butterflies are attracted to both the Aster and the Coyote Bush. The butterflies include the tiny, pretty, Acmon Blue which visits many flowering plant species. It is usually most abundant in Fall "and swarms over coyote bush, especially male plants and then overwinters as larvae in leaf litter". The Painted Lady butterflies are also visiting the Coyote Bush plus other plants which are flowering in our garden. They check out the Aster, but also Rosemary, various sages, but seem most interested in the Nandina which blooms until the first hard freeze. We have, in addition, what may be the Woodland Skipper but I am not sure of that identification.



Variety of plants in your garden will attract a variety of butterflies. Some will come to lay their eggs on food plants early in the season and others will stop by to feed when they are passing through on migration. The Painted Ladies feed on many food plants but others like the Pipevine Swallowtail are very specific about their diet. Check out the "Native Plants for Butterfly Gardens" information sheet on our website for more information about butterflies and their food plants in this area.

References: The Jepson Manual, Field Guide to Butterflies by Shapiro and Manolis (2007), and CNPS information sheet, "Native Plants for Butterfly Gardens".

-- Steve Stocking, Education Chair



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