



SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAINS

CHAPTER OF THE CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

APRIL, MAY, JUNE 2001

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DATES TO REMEMBER

Sun, Apr 8, 9:00 am: *Eaton Canyon Plant Walk* with Eva Morgan

Thurs, Apr 26, 7:30 pm: *Something Twisted With DNA? Classification of Polemoniaceae* with Dr. Mark Porter

Sat., Apr. 28, 10 am: *Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Preserve* field trip

Sun, May 13, 9:00 am: *Eaton Canyon Plant Walk* with Gabi & Cliff McLean

Sat., May 19, 10 am: *Walkabout Mt. Hillyer* field trip

Thurs, May 24, 7:30 pm: *At SEA in LA County: Learning About Significant Ecological Areas* with Dr. Daryl Koutnik

Sun, June 10, 9:00 am: *Eaton Canyon Plant Walk* with Steve Fischer

Thurs, June 28, 7:30 pm: *Fire in the Chaparral!* with Dr. Steve Davis

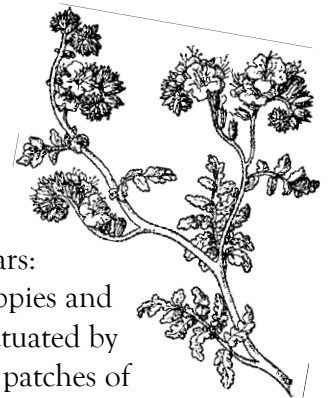
WE'RE ON A ROLL!

Kathy LaShure

This has been a great year for our Chapter. Our revitalized Board has been meeting regularly and has worked hard to make our monthly program meetings more "user friendly." Everyone seems to like the changes we've made. Gary and Mickey have lined up super speakers for us. Lyn has been getting the word out to local schools and newspapers. Cliff has provided handsome name tags and sent e-mail notices of meetings. Gabi has gathered interesting flora for the informal plant ID time and coordinated the refreshments. Our attendance has grown significantly (around 50 for the Jan. meeting with Scott Eliason) and we're now using the large meeting room at Eaton Canyon. If you haven't yet made it to a fourth Thursday night program this year, there are three more before our summer break. See page 2 for details. Do come and see how we've changed!

We've scheduled a Board election for an unusual time this year: the June 28th meeting. See page 3 for details and the slate of officers. Note that we'll have a President again—hurray!

And what about the wildflowers in this crazy weather year? In January we were despairing that no rain would come in time. Now it has—in buckets! I've made two spring trips to Arizona and have seen more in bloom there than I can remember in all my growing-up years: golden carpets of Mexican and California poppies and bladderpod mustard (*Lesquerella gordonii*) punctuated by purple and lavender phacelias; vivid magenta patches of owl's clover; rocky slopes completely covered with yellow-flowered brittle-bush; roadsides lined with lavender Arizona and purple Coulter's lupines; apricot mallows nearly four feet across and as tall.



Phacelia distans
from M. Armstrong's
Western Wild Flowers

Our Chapter has planned two exciting spring field trips. On April 28 join Harry Spilman for an exploration of the Santa Rosa Plateau. The site of a historic ranch and one of the richest, most diverse natural

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

landscapes remaining in southern California, the Santa Rosa Plateau is reminiscent of old California in the days before settlers arrived in great numbers. The 8,300-acre Reserve's rolling grasslands showcase the Engelmann oak—a magnificent tree that once was found from Baja California to Oregon but now grows only in southern California. You can preview this trip by visiting The Nature Conservancy's website at www.tnccalifornia.org.



Eriophyllum confertiflorum
from M. Armstrong's
Western Wild Flowers

Then on May 19 we'll be tramping up the short back-side trail on Mt. Hillyer, one of Jane Strong's favorite spots in our local San Gabriel Mountains. We can hope to see golden yarrow, silvermat lotus, prickly phlox, pumice hulsea, various species of lupines, penstemons, phacelias, monkey-flowers, as well as other wildflowers and shrubs. See the complete field trip writeups on page 3 (facing).

You might want to keep watch on these websites for up-to-date reports on California's spring bloom:
www.desertusa.com
www.calphoto.com.

This year the Theodore Payne Foundation has wildflower updates on their hotline (818-768-3533) and website (www.theodorepayne.org).

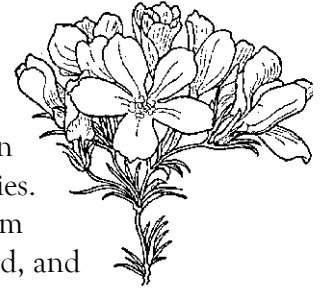
So, as I've said before, this is a good year to be out among 'em!

CHAPTER PROGRAMS

Meetings are held at Eaton Canyon Nature Center (map on back cover) on the fourth Thursday of the month. Informal plant identification and social time is from 7 to 7:30 pm; programs start promptly at 7:30 pm.

Thurs. Apr. 26, 7:30 pm: "Something Twisted With DNA? Classification of Polemoniaceae"

with Dr. Mark Porter, Associate Professor of Botany and Researcher I at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden and Claremont Graduate School, will talk about diversity in the Phlox family, especially California species. A new and controversial classification system based on DNA evidence has been developed, and Dr. Porter will explain why this may have an impact on the way we think about plant diversity. He will also discuss how relationships in this family have been viewed historically.



Linanthus parryae
from M. Armstrong's
Western Wild Flowers

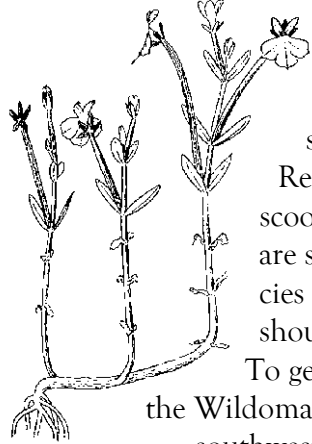
Thurs., May 24, 7:30 pm: "At SEA in LA County: Learning About Significant Ecological Areas" with Dr. Daryl Koutnik. Los Angeles County began SEA studies in 1972 as a background for the County General Plan. The purpose is to identify areas in LA County that have special importance ecologically, to establish boundaries for these areas, and to propose guidelines for managing and conserving ecological resources within them. The current 61 SEA areas were established as the result of a 1976 study. SEA designations are now being reevaluated, and in this program Dr. Koutnik, Senior Biologist for the LA County Department of Regional Planning, will give us background on SEAs and an update on progress being made in updating the county plan.

Thurs., June 28, 7:30 pm: "Fire in the Chaparral!" The ecology of fire will be the focus of this program by **Dr. Steve Davis**, Distinguished Professor of Biology at Pepperdine University. Wildfire is a natural ecosystem process, and those of us who live near wild areas not only need to be prepared for fire, but also to understand the benefits of fire. Ecologically speaking, natural areas are not destroyed by fire, but require fire for renewal and rejuvenation. Dr. Davis will speak about what happens in the chaparral as a result of fire. He will also discuss the effects of an increase in fire frequency caused by human activity and the invasion exotic weeds that are flashy fuels for fire.

CHAPTER OUTINGS

Sun., Apr 8, 9:00 am: *Eaton Canyon Plant Walk* with Eva Morgan. The rains may have arrived late, but they have brought out buds, leaves, and flowers. Come see what's blooming!

Sat., Apr. 28, 10 am—3 pm: *Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Preserve* with Harry Spilman. Basalt-capped mesas dotted with wildflower-ringed vernal pools; green, granite-cropped valleys



Dowlingia cuspidata
from P. A. Munz'
A Flora of Southern
California

brushed with mists and rare oak woodlands; narrow canyons cut by flowing creeks and shaded by sycamores and willows . . . this is springtime at the Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve. Already this spring the fairy shrimp are scooting about in the vernal pools, the mating frogs are setting up a deafening racket, and nearly 30 species of flowers are out. With our late rains this should be a super trip.

To get there, take the Clinton Keith exit from I-15 in the Wildomar area between Lake Elsinore and Murrieta. Go southwest on Clinton Keith Rd. 4.1 miles to the Visitor's Center (Operations Center) on the east side of Clinton Keith. There is a \$2.00 charge. Bring lunch & water, good walking shoes, hat, sunscreen.

Sun., May 13, 9:00 am: *Eaton Canyon Plant Walk* with Gabi & Cliff McLean. It's become a Chapter tradition—Mother's Day at Eaton Canyon complete with native wildflowers McLeans to lead us to them.

Sat., May 19, 10 am—3 pm: *Walkabout Mt. Hillyer (6220")*, *San Gabriel Mountains* with Jane Strong. This very short hike is very long on the rare plants of the San Gabriel Mountains. It's neat because the mountains divide the desert from the coast at this location and you get a wonderful blend of plant communities and some very unusual species. Besides spring wildflowers, we'll get a chance to identify two of the *Ceanothus* species that Jane profiled at the March meeting.

Take the Angeles Crest Highway, State Route 2, north from the 210 Freeway about 28 miles to the Three Points junction with the Santa Clara Divide Road [3N17], also called the road to Sulphur Springs. Take 3N17 about 3½ miles west to the trailhead to Mt. Hillyer. This is ½ mile past the Horse Flats Campground entrance. The trail end is a wide spot in the road marked by squawbush, three Jeffrey pines, and rocks in wire cages. Allow about one hour from the freeway.

Bring Forest Service Adventure Pass, lunch and water, good walking shoes, hat, sunscreen.

Sun., June 13, 9:00 am: *Eaton Canyon Plant Walk* with Steve Fischer. As the days lengthen and get warmer, the flora of the canyon changes gear too. Let Steve show you what early summer means to our local flora.

Election Ahead!

As referenced in the article on the front page, we will be having a Chapter election at the June 28 meeting. This may seem like an odd time of year, but the acting Board felt that the new duly-elected Board could use the summer months to get started on plans for next year. So we'll be in great shape when our program meetings and plant walks start up again in the fall. And we're hoping to start a new program of plant monitoring, perhaps adopting a particular relatively undocumented locality.

Here's the slate of officers:

President: Lyn McAfee

Vice-President: Cliff McLean

Treasurer: Virginia Iser

Please note that the remaining Board members are appointed. And, as always, we can use more volunteers, so if there's a job you'd like to help with, just let Lyn or Cliff know.



WELCOME! New members

Leslie Fraijo

Tom Hood

Russell Patton

Anne F. Celona

Patricia Morton

Karen & Martin Schlageter

Mrs. A. E. Zima

And thank you to all members who have renewed!

MEMBER PROFILE:

Kathy LaShure

I feel that many of you already know something about me from reading this newsletter—if not the details, at least what kind of person I am. If you're new to the Chapter, let me say that I'm *green*. That means I've got this thing about plants. I like to grow them, both for beauty (California natives, roses and interesting perennials) and utility (healing herbs and food). I like to find and observe them in the wild, whether it's the desert or high mountains. I like to share them with others.

I think this green-ness must be due in some part to the fact that I grew up in a citrus grove in what is now Central Phoenix, AZ. The intoxicating aroma of orange blossoms is never forgotten! I left Arizona to attend Pitzer College in Claremont, CA back when it was a women's school. I took one semester of Botany at Pomona College, but, more importantly, discovered Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden and a love of our state's amazing native flora.

For the past 15 years my husband Rich & I have been camping and hiking all over California and there's not a place we've been that I haven't discovered some interesting new-to-me plant. We found ourselves frequenting the east side of the Sierra Nevada, purchased a home outside of Bishop and have made plans to retire there. On our ½-acre site, I've designed a habitat-themed native landscape, actually collecting seeds (with proper permits) and growing some of the plants. When we moved to Whittier last summer I began replacing ivy and plum-bago with native flora and veggies.

So when you think of me, think green!

SPECIAL EVENTS

THEODORE PAYNE FOUNDATION

Sat., April 7, 8:30 am—4:30 pm: *Poppy Day* with plant sale discounts, open house tours of Wildflower Hill & Seed Room, propagation demonstration, 10 minute plant talks including Q & A.

Sun., April 22, 7:30 am—3:30 pm: *Wildflower Tour*. Go on the road with TPF and Milt Stark, noted Mohave Desert wildflower author and specialist. Rain or shine the bus will be visiting various localities in the Antelope Valley. \$40 for TPF members; \$50 for non-members.

Sat., April 28, 10:00 am—noon: *School Native Gardens: Speaking from Experience*. Finally, a class for educators, parent, and others interested in starting a native garden at a school site. Learn about the benefits of natives while gleaning useful tips for planning and planting from those who've done it.

Sat., May 12, 10:00 am—noon: *Guests or Pests? Wildlife in Your Garden* with Jan Scow.

For further information on any of the above events call 818-768-1802 or visit TPF's website at www.theodorepayne.org.



RANCHO SANTA ANA BOTANIC GARDEN

Sat., April 7, 9:00 am—1 pm: *Members-only Plant Sale*. Only plants appropriate for spring planting will be offered, including many special cultivars and some RSABG introductions, including a new *Solanum*, *Salvia leucophylla* 'Amethyst Bluff'.

Sat. & Sun., April 14 & 15, 10 am—4 pm: *Wildflower Show* with indoor and outdoor displays.

For further information on any of the above events or to inquire about RSABG's spring classes call 909-625-8767 or visit their website at www.cgs.edu/inst/rsa.



BRISTLECONE CHAPTER OF CNPS

June 1-3: *Fifth Sierra Spring Sojourn* at Camp Inyo west of Pig Pine, CA. Enjoy spring-time in one of the most spectacular landscapes California has to offer. And the area has surprisingly diverse flora as well, desert to alpine (although that will still be snow-covered in June).

For registration materials, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Sheryl Taylor, P.O. Box 1638, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546. Requests must be received by May 1, 2001. Registration is limited.

PLANT PROFILE:

Penstemon spectabilis; Royal Penstemon

Scrophulariaceae; Figwort family

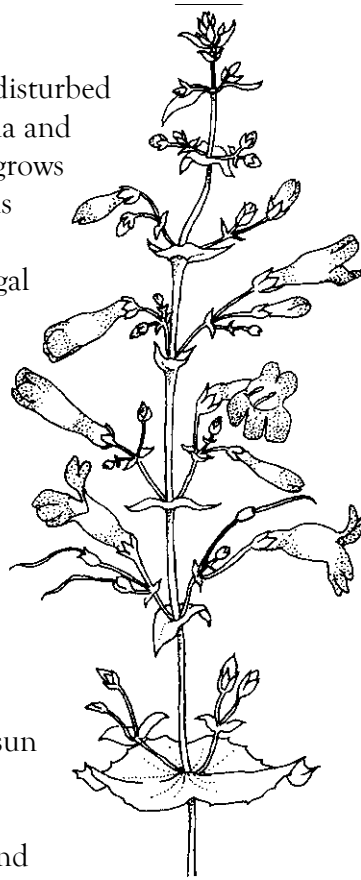
"I shall never forget my first sight of *P. spectabilis*. It was on one of my earliest school-girl forays into the then uninhabited southern California hinterland that I came without warning upon this many-colored sea of lavender and pink and blue which fairly took my breath away."

—Lester Rowntree, *Hardy Californians*

This penstemon is found in dry washes and disturbed places below 6000 feet in Southern California and northern Baja California. Royal Penstemon grows erectly to 3-4 feet with several evergreen stems from the base, forming a large clump when happy (i.e. not too much water). Given it's regal stature this is one of the few perennials that can stand up to a Matilija poppy clump. Although not long-lived, it is easy to start new plants from seeds or cuttings.

The large wide-mouthed flowers which cover the upper half of the stems are all the conceivable shades of pink, purple & blue. They will be visited by hummingbirds. Blooming time is April-June.

In the garden give this penstemon plenty of sun and well-drained soil that is low in organic content. Its companions could be sages, fremontia, woolly bluecurls, golden yarrow and foothill needlegrass. It is stunning when planted in masses. You can see this effect along the drive that curves down to Eaton Canyon Nature Center. Royal Penstemon is one of the easiest native perennials to grow from seed and it is surprisingly cold-tolerant; it has survived 5 or more years of below freezing temperatures in my Bishop garden before petering out. Give it a try!



Penstemon spectabilis
Marianne D. Wallace, Illustrator
March 8, 2001

NATIVE BOOKSHELF

A Natural History of the Sonoran Desert
edited by Steven J. Comas and
Patricia Wentworth Comas
Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum Press
University of California Press \$24.95

If you're venturing out into the deserts of Arizona, California, or Baja this spring, may I suggest that you take along this field guide. Yes, it's thick (628 pages) and heavy (2-3 pounds), but it's a wonderful overview of this fascinating region. With varied terrain, from parched desert low-lands to semi-arid tropical forest and frigid subalpine meadows, the Sonoran Desert is home to an amazing abundance of life: 130 species of mammals, 500 kinds of birds, 20 amphibians, 100 reptiles, 30 native freshwater fish, and perhaps as many as 3500 native species of plants!

This comprehensive yet reader-friendly volume provides the latest research on such subjects as deserts storms, air and light, geology and soils, human ecology, biodiversity, flowering plants and grasses, invertebrate and vertebrate life forms. There are excellent drawings, maps, and b/w photographs. And scattered throughout are personal observations that bring the desert to life right in your armchair.

Do You Know This Family?

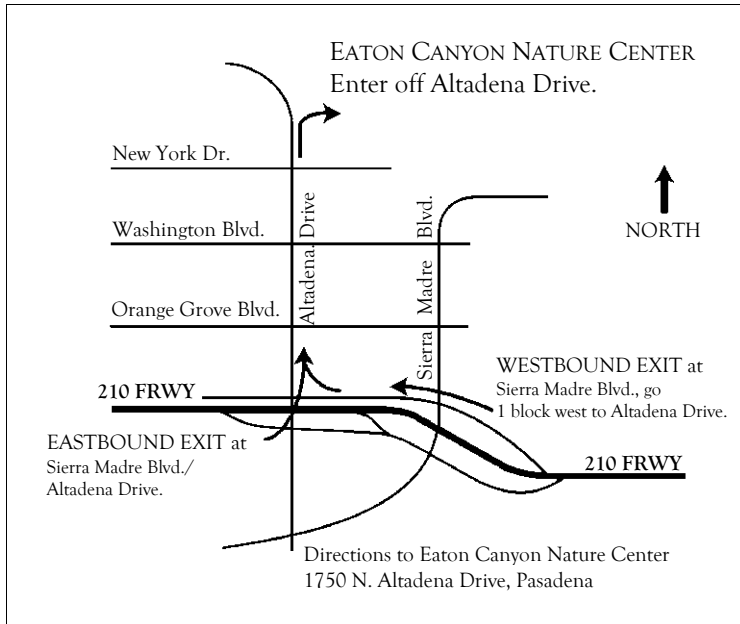
(Answer appears on back cover.)
Annual, perennial or subshrub with alternate or opposite leaves, usually simple. Flowers are perfect, regular, with united sepals & petals, corolla rotate to salverform, 5 inserted stamens, style 3-branched or w/3 stigmas. Fruit is a dry capsule. 13 California genera.



The Newsletter of the San Gabriel Mountains Chapter
of the California Native Plant Society is published bi-monthly
and is free to Chapter members. Non-member subscription is \$5.00.

To join the California Native Plant Society, write to
CNPS, 909 Twelfth St., Suite 116, Sacramento, CA 95814.

Please specify San Gabriel Mountains Chapter. Enclose check payable to CNPS.
Membership categories: Individual/Library - \$35; Student/Retired/Limited Income - \$20;
Family/Group - \$45; Supporting - \$75; Plant Lover - \$100; Patron - \$250.00; Life - \$1000.



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SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAINS CHAPTER
CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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And the answer is: **Polemoniaceae**

Dedicated to the Preservation of the California Native Flora

The California Native Plant Society is a statewide nonprofit organization of amateurs & professionals with a common interest in California's native plants. The mission of the Society is to increase understanding & appreciation of California's native plants & to conserve them and their natural habitats, through education, science, horticulture & advocacy. Membership is open to all.

Membership includes the quarterly journal Fremontia, the quarterly Bulletin which gives statewide news & announcements of Society activities & conservation issues, & the chapter newsletter.



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