



# Matilija Copy

Volume 18, Issue 1

Editor: David L. Magney

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**Note:** The Channel Islands Chapter has a **new mailing address**. Please send all mail to the Channel Islands Chapter to:

CNPS Channel Islands Chapter  
PO Box 6  
Ojai, CA 93024-0006

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**Directions to the E.P. Foster Library:** from the North on US101 take Ventura Ave exit, go straight 2 blocks and turn Right onto Main St.; go 6 blocks East and turn Left onto Chestnut St. From South on US101 take the California St. exit; go 2 blocks and turn Right onto Main St. and turn Left onto Chestnut. Parking is located behind the library, and there is a rear entrance to the **Topping Room**, on the West side of the library.

The **Santa Barbara Botanic Garden** is located at 1212 Mission Canyon Dr. (many routes lead through Santa Barbara to Foothill Road/SR192). Mission Canyon Dr. is North of SR192.

## UPCOMING CHAPTER PROGRAMS

### *"Common Birds and Plants of Ormond Beach"*

Reed Smith, Ventura Audubon Society

7:30 p.m., Tuesday, February 8, Poinsettia Pavilion, Santa Paula Room, Ventura

Reed Smith will be giving a slide presentation on the common birds and plants at Ormond Beach at the general meeting of the Ventura Audubon Society. The meeting is held at the Poinsettia Pavilion, 3451 Foothill Rd., Ventura. A large portion of Ormond Beach wetlands will soon be restored by the California Coastal Conservancy. Ormond Beach is an extremely important coastal wetland/beach complex in Ventura County, with many rare species.

\* Dinner at local restaurant before each meeting. Call local facilitator for time and place. \*

### *"Vegetation and Plants of the Chilean Lake District"*

David Magney, Botanist

7:30 p.m., Wednesday, February 16, Topping Room, E.P. Foster Library, Ventura

David Magney just returned from a trip to the Santiago and Lake District areas of Chile this last December. He will show slides of the Lake District and northwestern Patagonian Steppe of Argentina, as well as the plants of the Yerba Loca nature preserve in the Andes east of Santiago. Areas shown will include the Chochoamó Valley, Puyehue National Park, Osorno, Puerto Montt, and Andes near San Carlos de Bariloche (Argentina). The scenery of this region of South America is outstanding!

### *"El Niño Wildflowers of Death Valley"*

Rosemary Foster, Botanist

7:30 p.m., Wednesday, March 16, Santa Barbara Botanic Garden

The El Niño rains of 1997 didn't all fall on the coast - there was enough left to bring a record 5.8 inches of rainfall to Death Valley (average rainfall, 1.7 inches). The rains were just right to ensure an extensive bloom for much of the Death Valley flora. CNPS Monterey Bay Chapter's Rosemary Foster was there for a week in March and a week in April of 1997 to see and photograph the phenomenal display. Death Valley's geologic history, topographic diversity, and climatic extremes make it home to a fascinating flora. Of the nearly 1,000 plant species found in this National Park, 22 are found nowhere else and another 33 have only a few populations found elsewhere. Many of these bloomed in record profusion in the El Niño rains, some for the first time in years. Come see the vast fields of desert gold, the rare golden carpet, *Gilmania luteola*, Rock Mimulus, Death Valley Sage, and other beautiful treasures of one of our state's magnificent National Parks. Rosemary Foster studied horticulture and botany at Cal Poly SLO and is a landscape designer and horticultural consultant in Carmel. Her current projects include compiling and editing a collection of Lester Rowntree's articles on the horticultural use of California native plants for publication by CNPS.

### *"Plant Communities and Mapping of the Santa Monica Mountains"*

John Tizler, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area

7:30 p.m., Wednesday, April 20, Topping Room, E.P. Foster Library, Ventura

CNPS and the Park Service have been working furiously mapping and classifying the vegetation of the Santa Monica Mountains and surrounding landscape. The project is just about finished and John will discuss the project and the findings. The maps will be extremely useful for conservation and management purposes, and will add greatly to our understanding of the ecology of southern California plant communities.

*Photographs in this issue of Matilija Copy are by David L. Magney ©2004, 2005.*

## Conservation Front

### Douglas Ranch Unit 5 – Simi Valley

Larwin Company, a developer from the San Fernando Valley, has been trying to build condominiums on part of the old Douglas Ranch, located north of State Route 118 and west of Kuehner Road for the past several years. Simi Valley, the second largest city in Ventura County, located just over the hill from the San Fernando Valley, is home to a largely white population with many residents commuting to greater Los Angeles to work. The Simi Valley City Council has historically approved just about every development project that came before them, paying no attention to the direct and cumulative impacts and losses to the natural environment. Simi Valley has the worst air pollution in Ventura County. It is surrounded by beautiful mountains, with the Santa Susana Mountains to the north and the Simi Hills to the south. Arroyo Simi is the upper reach of Calleguas Creek, which drains into the Pacific Ocean at Mugu Lagoon.

Last year the City tried to push through the condo development with only a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) prepared by Rincon Consultants, ignoring the fact that CNPS found several plant species that are rare in Ventura County. The biological resources section of the MND minimized the diversity and richness of the small, 12+ acre, site by being very general in their description of the plant communities present onsite. Field surveys were not performed during the right season, and the biologists conducting the surveys were either inexperienced or otherwise constrained from doing an adequate survey or assessment. The Environmental Coalition of Ventura County successfully convinced the City to prepare an EIR for the project since CNPS had provided clear and convincing evidence that sensitive biological resources were in fact present onsite and that the project would likely result in unmitigated significant impacts. The EIR was prepared in 2004 by Envicon Consultants, but CNPS found that they still failed to consider the impacts to locally rare plants known to occur onsite, and persisted in recommending transplanting mature oak trees as mitigation, among other serious issues. Many Simi residents, including Cori Martinez, worked hard and hired biologists out of her own pocket to critique the MND and EIR.

Amazingly, the Simi Valley City Council voted 3-2 against the project at the project hearing held on 10 January 2005. This is one of the first times that this city has actually turned down a project over largely environmental concerns. Thank you Simi Valley.

Copies of CNPS's comment letters on this project can be seen on the chapter website, [www.cnpsci.org](http://www.cnpsci.org).

### California Legislation – Vern Goehring

CNPS needs to reactivate the Legislative Committee and is soliciting you in helping out with our Legislative efforts. Ideally CNPS would like 15-20 on the committee from around the state to ensure a wide reach of perspectives and increase the number of chapters represented.

In the past, the Committee operated almost exclusively via email and likely would continue to do so. However, if there is an interest or a need we could convene a Leg Committee meeting in conjunction with a Chapter Council meeting or possibly our very own CNPS lobby day in Sacramento. The primary functions of the Committee are:

1. Help identify and prioritize legislation of importance to CNPS (help determine to which bills I should devote my efforts).

2. Help analyze bills as to their impacts on native plant conservation or another aspect of CNPS's mission and objectives.
3. Help develop CNPS's position on bills and future amendments to bills (this could include helping to draft CNPS proposed amendments).
4. Help communicate our position on bills to our members, chapters, and local elected officials.
5. Be eyes and ears in your local community for bits of information regarding what your local legislators are doing that may impact native plants, legislation that we are concerned with, or the environment in general.
6. Be the eyes and ears in your local community for information regarding CNPS members that may be significant constituents of legislators (those with a special relationship to a legislator or those holding a special position in the community) and willing to occasionally contact a legislator on behalf of CNPS.
7. Assist with any grassroots campaigns we may undertake in support of our position on any legislation.
8. Help identify and develop legislative issues that CNPS may want to sponsor.
9. Gently critique my efforts.

I envision the Committee working like this: 1) Over the next several weeks I will share lists of bills via email that may be of interest to CNPS; 2) I will ask committee members to review 3-4 or more of the bills, at their choosing, to analyze the bill (what does it do, how does it change existing law or practice, how might it impact native plants, and what position if any should CNPS adopt); 3) Each member is free to comment on others analysis and recommendations in arriving at a CNPS position; 4) I will ask for any suggestions regarding priorities to assign to bills; periodically I will forward additional bills, amendments, or other legislative issues for committee input; 5) if it becomes necessary to activate CNPS members in an activist campaign I may call on committee members to help contact and assist local members; and 6) I would hope that Committee members would take the initiative to spread news of CNPS legislative efforts to local chapters thru newsletters, etc.

There is NO minimum level of participation required, although certainly I hope that some participation would be forthcoming. When a request for analyzing bills or responding to some question or issue is received, if you are notable to respond each time, that would be fine. Hopefully the next request will come at a time when you are able to join in. Of course if no one ever steps up to the plate, then the purpose and value of the Committee is pretty much lost.

I will strive to provide committee members with more frequent and more behind the scenes legislative information. I estimate that the busiest times for the Committee will be Feb-Mar and Aug-Sept. Requests for assistance during these times may be on a weekly basis. During the Apr-July period the level of effort will largely depend on the need for grassroots lobbying contacts needed (I will try to target our contacts to member activists in target legislative districts). During the Fall months our efforts will be devoted to identifying legislative issues CNPS may want to pursue for the next legislative year.

So there you have it. What do you think, are you interested in helping in this way? If you have questions please ask. Please let me know soon so I can begin referring newly introduced bills for your review. If interested, please contact: *Vern Goehring*. 916/444-8194 voice; 916/444-8195 fax.

## Education

**Get Involved with the Carpinteria Salt Marsh:** Change your life. Do something good for yourself and the environment this new year. Learn about the life of the Carpinteria Salt Marsh. The salt marsh's location between the land and the sea creates a diversity of life that is truly fascinating and beautiful. Marshes function as water purifiers, fish nurseries, habitats, preserves for rare and endangered plants and animals, and great recreational locations. Scientists estimate that 90-95% of

California's wetlands have been destroyed by land development. As these environments disappear, the plants and animals living in marshes are vanishing making our marsh a rare gem of preservation. We are presenting a series of classes to enlarge our group of docents. These classes are open to the public and may be used by CUSD teachers to obtain personal growth credits. The Carpinteria Salt Marsh Friends regularly lead tours for adults and occasionally children's tours. We have some tour materials following the state guidelines for curriculum, but we would like to increase them and create a program to integrate into the school district's K-12 program. The salt marsh is too incredible a resource not to be more fully utilized. If you would like to be at the ground floor of this development, join us.

- February 9<sup>th</sup> Terrestrial Vertebrates (TBA)
- February 16 Nature Interpretation (Mary Carroll, SBBG)

These lectures will occur at 7:00 p.m. at the **Carpinteria Library Arts and Lectures Room, 5141 Carpinteria Avenue, Carpinteria**. Admission is free and open to all interested members of the public (don't come if not interested). For more information call 684-8077 or email [carp\\_parks@yahoo.com](mailto:carp_parks@yahoo.com).

## Vegetation – Ken Niessen

### Invasive Exotics

#### *The Cancers of the Plant World - Charles Blair, M.D.*

The comparison of Invasive Exotic Plants (AKA Noxious Weeds) with cancers, is not meant to trivialize the impact of cancer, but to emphasize the real threat these aliens pose to agricultural, horticultural, and native plant communities. One has only to see the extent that Pampas Grass, Veldt Grass, Yellow Star-thistle, Giant Reed, and Cape (German) Ivy (nicknamed California Kudzu) have invaded various areas to appreciate their impact. It has been estimated that the economic loss from their depredation amounts to millions of dollars annually. As a surgeon, I have spent much of my career dealing with many cancers.

During that career, I found using the behavior of weeds, especially Crabgrass, very useful in explaining how cancers act, and in discussing the various available treatments. *Cancer* is the common Roman name for crabs and the scientific name for their genus. I understand that a surgeon many years ago noted that the appearance of a melanoma reminded him of a crab clinging to a rock, prompting the use of its Roman name for malignant neoplasms. Now that I have retired from active practice, I find the cancer analogy equally effective in discussing the destructive behavior of invasive exotic plants and animals in ecosystems.

To begin with, the rapid, invasive growth of weeds, especially their roots, depletes the soil of the nutrients necessary for the health of the host plant communities. In much the same way, widespread cancers drain the patients' resources. Both weeds and cancer, by their sheer bulk, can also interfere with vital functions. The pattern of invasion of weeds, bacteria, viruses, and cancer is also similar. When an initial event occurs, such as an infectious organism, the introduction of a species into a new environment, or the early growth of a cancer, there is a period of slower growth of the invading population or tumor. If conditions are suitable, then there is a rapid growth phase, which levels off towards maturity, often reaching a steady state (in ecosystems called carrying capacity) with periodic fluctuations. Limiting factors such as moisture, nutrients, and temperature often determine these fluctuations. Other limiting factors include predators and grazers in ecosystems and host resistance in the invaded organism.

Where these limiting factors are missing or weak, the invading species or tumor overwhelms the host location or individual, resulting in degradation or death. Most of our worst weed and animal pests are not natives, thereby often lacking predators. The presence of rabbits in Australia is a prime example of the devastation caused by unchecked growth of an exotic animal species. At higher levels of infestation, they crowd out native or desirable species. Much of the damage that invasive weeds cause is in the soil, as described previously. The depletion of desert water by Tamarisk is an all too familiar example.

Control strategies for both weeds and cancer also have many parallels. Maintaining healthy, intact ecosystems, discouraging the introduction of invasive exotics, and early removal can help prevent major invasions or infestations. In much the same way, maintaining good health, avoidance of known carcinogens, such as tobacco, and early detection and removal of a cancer can often result in recovery and possible cure. With major infestation with plant or animal pests, manual removal often needs to be supplemented by chemical control. In widespread cancers, more drastic measures such as chemotherapy or radiation are often needed. In neither situation, should chemicals or drugs be seen as substitutes for adequate initial care and maintenance of over-all health.

CNPS is emphasizing its interest in invasive weeds. Jake Sigg ([jakesigg@earthlink.net](mailto:jakesigg@earthlink.net)) is being joined by Bob Case ([bobcase@astound.net](mailto:bobcase@astound.net)), Don Mayall ([seleve@netcom.com](mailto:seleve@netcom.com)) and I. Ken Niessen, CNPS ([kgniessen@ojai.net](mailto:kgniessen@ojai.net)) is the Channel Islands Chapter Invasive Plants Chair, and Lauren M. Brown ([brownla@saic.com](mailto:brownla@saic.com)) holds that position for the San Luis Obispo Chapter.

We are recommending supporting The California Invasive Plant Council (Cal-IPC) contact, Doug Johnson Cal - IPC ([dwjohanson@cal-ipc.org](mailto:dwjohanson@cal-ipc.org)). We are also recommending involvement with county Weed Management Areas (WMA). For more information on Santa Barbara County's WMA, contact David Chang at 805/681-5600 ([Dchang@co.santa-barbara.ca.us](mailto:Dchang@co.santa-barbara.ca.us)) or <http://www.countyofsb.org/agcomm/WMA.htm>). I understand that Ventura County has yet to complete activation of its WMA. Why not?

#### *New Weed Report – David Magney*

A new weed from the Mediterranean region and Asia Minor has been reported for Ventura County: Stinkwort (*Dittrichia graveolens*). Stinkwort is an aggressive annual plant in the Sunflower family (Asteraceae). It was recently reported from the Santa Clara River Valley near Piru. This plant is considered a Noxious weed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and should be eradicated from any place it is found. It has been previously reported in California from Solano, Contra Costa, Santa Clara, and Madera Counties.



*Dittrichia graveolens*

Photos: K.C. Richardson

Photographs by K.C. Richardson. Image used with the permission of the Western Australian Herbarium, CALM (<http://florabase.calm.wa.gov.au/help/copyright>). Accessed on Tuesday, 18 January 2005.

Keep an eye out for this plant and report any sightings to David Magney at [President@cnpsci.org](mailto:President@cnpsci.org) or Ken Niessen at [kgniessen@ojai.net](mailto:kgniessen@ojai.net).

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

*Please join us on one or more of our events. You will enjoy yourself for sure!*

**13 February 2005, Saturday, 9:00 a.m., Ventura River Preserve Botany Hike.** Leader: Ken Niessen. Easy hike. Bring water and lunch (if you wish to stay that long). Meet at Ojai Valley Land Conservancy Ventura River Preserve parking lot at the end of Meyers Road, near the corner of Meyers and Oso Roads, Meiners Oaks. Contact Ken Niessen at 805/646-8650 or via email at [kgniessen@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kgniessen@sbcglobal.net) for more information. Rain cancels.

**16 February 2005, Wednesday, 7:30 p.m., Program: “Vegetation and Plants of the Chilean Lake District”, Topping Room, E.P. Foster Library, Ventura.** Speaker: David Magney. Just returning from a trip to the Santiago and Lake District areas of Chile this last December, he will show slides of the Lake District and northwestern Patagonian Steppe of Argentina, as well as the plants of the Yerba Loca nature preserve in the Andes east of Santiago. Areas shown will include the Chochoamó Valley, Puyehue National Park, Osorno, Puerto Montt, and Andes near San Carlos de Bariloche (Argentina). The scenery of this region of South America is outstanding! The vegetation is similar to California and the Pacific Northwest, but the plants are different, except for the weeds!

**26 February 2005, Saturday, 10:00 a.m., Mugu Peak Botany Hike.** Leader: David Magney. Meet at the parking area along the Pacific Coast Highway (SR 1) west of Mugu Rock, across from the Seabee Firing Range. Bring lunch and water, sturdy hiking shoes, and a jacket and hat, as it can be cold at times. Shooting Stars should be in full bloom, and just maybe some Chocolate Lilies too.

**12 March 2005, Saturday, 9:00 a.m., Pratt Trail Botany Hike, Ojai Valley/Nordhoff Ridge.** Leader: Cher Batchelor. Easy to moderate. Bring lunch and good walking shoes. Meet at Pratt Trail trailhead (at the Stewart Canyon Debris Basin). The trailhead is accessed from N. Signal Street, in Ojai. Take Signal St. north from downtown Ojai (Signal St. is at the light at the Ojai Post Office and arcade (downtown)). Call Cher for more information at 805/646-6045 workdays.

**16 March 2005, Wednesday, 7:30 p.m., Program: “El Niño Wildflowers of Death Valley”, Santa Barbara Botanic Garden.** Speaker: Rosemary Foster, Botanist. Slides and info about the diversity of wildflowers in Death Valley during an El Niño year, which should also be the case for this spring. See Page 1 for details.

**16 April, Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Spring Native Plant Sale.** Biannual native plant sale at Plaza Park, Ventura, CA, on Santa Clara Ave. just east of Chestnut, downtown. Books, posters, T-shirts, etc. will be available for sale as well.

**20 April 2005, Wednesday, 7:30 p.m., Program: “Plant Communities and Mapping of the Santa Monica Mountains”, E.P. Foster Library, Ventura.** Speaker: John Tizler. CNPS and the National Park Service has collaborated in mapping and classifying the natural vegetation of our mountains. John will talk about what they discovered. See Page 1 for details.

**23 April 2005, Saturday, 9:00 a.m., Dry Lakes Ridge Botany/Natural History Hike.** Leader: David Magney. Difficult. Meet at Wheeler Gorge Visitor Center. Bring lunch and plenty of water, sturdy hiking shoes, and a hat. Magney wrote the book in 1986 on this 4,800-foot mountain in the heart of Ventura County, in the Ojai District of the Los Padres National Forest. A relictual stand of Ponderosa Pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) occurs in and around the “dry lakes”, as well as a number of interesting plants. A slide show and talk will be given at the Visitor’s Center before driving to the trailhead. Directions to Wheeler Gorge: take SR 33 north about 8 miles from Ojai. The Visitor’s Center is on the right a short distance after the 3<sup>rd</sup> tunnel. The hike will take all day! Contact David Magney at 805/646-6045 or via email at [President@cnpsci.org](mailto:President@cnpsci.org) for more information. An Adventure Pass will be required,

**30 April 2005, Saturday, 9:00 a.m., Matilija Canyon Botany Hike and Broom Bash.** Leader: Ken Niessen. Easy to moderate. Meet at Wheeler Gorge Visitor Center. Bring lunch and water, sturdy hiking shoes, and a hat and gloves. A talk will be given at the Visitor’s Center before driving to the trailhead. Directions to Wheeler Gorge: take SR 33 north about 8 miles from Ojai. The Visitor’s Center is on the right a short distance after the 3<sup>rd</sup> tunnel. The hike will take all day! Contact Ken Niessen at 805/646-8650 or via email at [kgniessen@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kgniessen@sbcglobal.net) for more information. An Adventure Pass will NOT be required.

**14 May 2005, Saturday, 9:00 a.m., Wheeler Gorge Natural Trail Botany Hike.** Leader: Patt McDaniel. Riparian and chaparral habitats occur along this pleasant cool trail. Easy, short. Meet at Wheeler Gorge Visitor Center. Bring water (and lunch if you want to stay longer) and sturdy hiking shoes. A talk will be given at the Visitor’s Center before walking to the trailhead, which is about ¼ mile up the road. Directions to Wheeler Gorge: take SR 33 north about 8 miles from Ojai. The Visitor’s Center is on the right a short distance after the 3<sup>rd</sup> tunnel. The hike will be done by noon. Contact Patt McDaniel at 805/646-9948 or via email at [mcins@west.net](mailto:mcins@west.net) for more information. An Adventure Pass will NOT be required if parking at the Visitor’s Center.

**18 June 2005, Saturday, 9:00 a.m., Middle Lion Canyon Botany Hike and Knapweed Pull.** Leader: Ken Niessen. Easy to moderate. Meet at Wheeler Gorge Visitor Center. This hike will follow a nice trail along a steep canyon, hopefully getting as far as Spruce Falls. Bring lunch and water, sturdy hiking shoes, and a hat and gloves. A talk will be given at the Visitor’s Center before driving to the trailhead. Directions to Wheeler Gorge: take SR 33 north about 8 miles from Ojai. The Visitor’s Center is on the right a short distance after the 3<sup>rd</sup> tunnel. The hike will take most of the day. Contact Ken Niessen at 805/646-8650 or via email at [kgniessen@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kgniessen@sbcglobal.net) for more information. An Adventure Pass will be required.

## Plant Community Focus – *Cher Batchelor*

This issue focuses on one association of Coastal Sage Scrub, Mixed Sage Scrub, which is predominant plant community throughout much of Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties.

### *Mixed Sage Series*

CNPS' *A Manual of California Vegetation* (Sawyer and Keeler-Wolf 1995) describes Mixed Sage Series as an upland Coastal Sage Scrub plant community that includes at least two species of sage (*Salvia* spp.) and an equal canopy contribution by California Sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*). The sages and California Sagebrush are equally important to the scrub canopy. No single species or pair of species can dominate stands of this series; instead, three or more species must equally share commonness and cover.

The sage species typically observed contributing to Mixed Sage Scrub in Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties are White Sage (*Salvia apiana*), Purple Sage (*S. leucophylla*), and Black Sage (*S. mellifera*). These species are described below according to *The Jepson Manual* (Hickman 1993).

- *S. apiana*: subshrub with long tomentose stems; basal, lanceolate, densely fine-hairy leaves with minutely round-toothed leaf margins; whitish-lavender flowers in spike-like inflorescences; far-exserted stamens/style; common on dry slopes with Coastal Sage Scrub, Chaparral, and Yellow Pine Forest; at elevations below 1,500 meters.
- *S. leucophylla*: grayish, prostrate to erect shrub with dense, branched hairs; puckered, lanceolate leaves; leaf margin with small, rounded teeth, and margin sometimes rolled under; rose-lavender flowers; exserted stamens and style; dry open slopes; elevations of 50 to 800 meters
- *S. mellifera*: shrub with simple, glandular hairs; puckered, elliptic leaves (upper surface glabrous, lower surface hairy); white to pale blue or lavender flowers; stamen and style slightly exserted; common in Coastal Sage Scrub and lower Chaparral; elevations below 1,200 meters.

In addition to the sage species and California Sagebrush, Mixed Sage Series consists of a mixture of common Coastal Sage Scrub species, including California Bush Sunflower (*Encelia californica*), California Buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum* var. *foliolosum*), Sticky Bush Monkeyflower (*Mimulus aurantiacus*), and Coast Prickly-pear (*Opuntia littoralis*). Emergent Laurel Sumac (*Malosma laurina*), Lemonadeberry (*Rhus integrifolia*), and Blue Elderberry (*Sambucus mexicana*) may also be present growing over the sage canopy. This series forms a continuous or intermittent canopy (<2 meters tall) over a variable ground layer, and grows on sandy, rocky, shallow soils of upland slopes at elevations between sea level and 1200 meters.

Other scrub canopy associates include Coyote Brush (*Baccharis pilularis*), California Brickellbush (*Brickellia californica*), Birchleaf Mountain Mahogany (*Cercocarpus betuloides* var. *betuloides*), Sawtooth Goldenbush (*Hazardia squarrosa*), Toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*), Giant Wildrye (*Leymus condensatus*), Deerweed (*Lotus scoparius*), Silver Bush Lupine (*Lupinus albifrons*), Chaparral Bush Mallow (*Malacothammus fasciculatus*), Chaparral Currant (*Ribes malvaceum*), Fuchsia-flowered Gooseberry (*Ribes speciosum*), Chaparral Nightshade (*Solanum xanti*), and Poison Oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*).

The ground layer may include native herbs, such as White Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), Golden Yarrow (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*), Antisell Three-pod Milkvetch (*Astragalus trichopodus* var. *phoxus*), Goldenstars (*Bloomeria crocea*), Morning-glory (*Calystegia macrostegia*), Lay-and-Collie Indian Paintbrush (*Castilleja affinis* ssp. *affinis*), Blue Dicks (*Dichelostemma capitatum*), Lanceleaf Live Forever (*Dudleya lanceolata*), Green Everlasting (*Gnaphalium californicum*), Purple Needlegrass (*Nassella pulchra*), California Peony (*Paeonia californica*), Blue-eyed Grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*), and Western Verbena (*Verbena lasiostachys*).

## The Paradox of Groundhog's Day – *Charles Blair*

"Today is Groundhog Day, and up to the time of going to press the beast has not seen its shadow" Quoted from the *Punxsutawney Spirit*  
2 February 1886

If the groundhog sees his shadow upon arising on the Second of February, spring will come late that year, so he returns to his den for a longer hibernation. But Why? Seeing his shadow in the morning means that the sky is clear with lots of bright sunshine. Shouldn't that mean warmer weather? Think again! In the winter, which night is the colder, cloudy or clear? Cloud cover keeps the heat in while clear air lets the heat radiate back into the sky as anyone who has visited the mountains or high desert can attest. During the mid-winter time even a small decrease in heat retention can delay the melting of the snow. Conversely, clouds or an early rain may speed up its melting. Calendar Spring, 21 or 22 March, will come in six weeks whether he sees his shadow or not. Spring conditions with growth of grass and blooming of flowers depend on the melting of the snow, which may be delayed if it is cold at that time of the year, but why the 2nd of February? Where did that date come from? That day is midway between the Winter Solstice, the shortest day of the year and the Spring Equinox, when day and night are equal. It is a "crossed quarter", or a mid-point in the season. 'Halloween, May Day, and Lammas (a Celtic harvest festival) are other examples.

It seems that people in Northern Europe had been long aware that clear, cold days in early February portended a late melting of the snow as described above. For centuries, it was the custom of the clergy to bless and distribute candles on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February, hence the term Candlemas or St. Blaze's Day. The Germans concluded that if the sun made an appearance on that day, an animal, the hedgehog, would cast a shadow thus predicting the additional 6 weeks of winter. In England, the poem,

"If Candlemas Day be fair and bright  
Winter will have another flight;  
But if Candlemas Day be clouds and rain  
Winter is gone and will not come again."

reflects the same idea. The Germans who settled in Pennsylvania, "The Pennsylvania Dutch", finding no hedgehogs adopted the woodchuck or groundhog as their weather animal.

The "Punxsutawney Groundhog Club" was initially a group of picnickers interested in hunting and barbecuing this creature during the summer. A man named Clymer H. Freas, the city editor of the local paper, recalled the legend of the groundhog as a weather prophet, and proclaimed the groundhog residing on a hill known as Gobbler's Knob the official town forecaster. Over the ensuing century, various city boosters continued to promote their animal locally, regionally, and eventually nationally as the only true prognosticator. It has been called "one of the greatest ongoing publicity campaigns in history".

It would do us well to remember that some folk beliefs have a basis in reality, reflecting keen and careful observations over many years, and are not just groundless superstitions.

Interesting, you say, but how does this relate to our native plants? Very much in our mountain winter snow belts; less so in most of California, but still important. Mid-winter weather conditions are among the factors that determine germinating and sprouting times of our spring floral displays. Perhaps some of our more scientifically oriented members can look at the subtle influences these mid to late winter patterns may have on blooming cycles in our muted Mediterranean Climate. Could this be a project for some aspiring graduate student?

On a more general level, these associations and tie-ins can only help us in our outreach to younger students and the general public. Come February, we can use the media hype generated by "Punxsutawney Phil" as a teaching point rather than dismissing it as yet another annoyance. After all, the turning of the seasons is important to us all.

## www.cnpsci.org

The Channel Islands Chapter website has a new webmaster in the person of **Mike Adams**. Thank you Mike for your willingness to take on this important task, which had been vacant after our first and fabulous web mistress, **Cathy Schwemm** stepped down. Cathy did a great job in creating our website, and I and everyone else, I am sure, is very grateful for her volunteer efforts.

The website now has a new host as well. To date the website has been hosted by **Paul Van Zuyle** at no cost to CNPS. Thank you very much Paul for your generosity.

Be sure to visit the website regularly (at least every other week). We try to update it regularly, so keep checking it. The website includes chapter contacts, membership information, and various articles on: conservation, horticulture, and education issues. It has a page dedicated to rare plants, including definitions and lists of rare plants from the region. There is a page on horticulture, and soon a page on invasive exotics. The website also includes a current listing of programs (both CNPS and by related organizations), hikes, botany forays, workshops, symposia, conferences, and CNPS meetings. A **color** version of the newsletter can be downloaded in PDF format.

Photographs and drawings of locally native plants are spread throughout the website. The site also includes many excellent links to other interesting and informative websites. Be sure to visit it at least once a month at a minimum. Note: the "last updated" date on the various web pages does not necessarily reflect recent updates.

## President's Message

The year 2005 marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary for CNPS, which was founded in the Bay Area in 1965. There will be a series of celebrations throughout California, at the State level and at the 30 plus chapters. In that 40 years, CNPS has become the leader in native plant conservation in California, and is the model by which other similar conservation organizations focused on native plants is used, and looked up to. You should all be proud to be members of this great organization.

CNPS now has a membership of about 10,000, which provides a strong consistent financial foundation for running this organization. However, the membership dues provide nowhere near enough to support all the conservation, horticulture, and plant science programs and projects that we want and need to develop, work on, and expand in order to conserve the California native flora.

CNPS is reinitiating its strategic plan, which is done at least every 5 years, to develop our strategies, goals, and projects for the next 5 years. This is necessary to provide a guide to how CNPS structures its programs, and allocated funds, during the annual budget process (lots of fun). CNPS has to be very efficient in how it spends the limited funds it has to maximize our beneficial impact on the flora.

We also work to implement the strategic plan at the chapter level, which includes the efforts of all members. Be sure to check in to see what projects you would like to be involved with, and you are most welcome to participate in the strategic planning process, and attend any and all CNPS meetings and events.

Our annual chapter dinner and meeting (September 2005) will focus on the accomplishments CNPS has made, including the Channel Islands Chapter, over this last 40 years. – *David Magney*



*Ceanothus cuneatus* (Wedgeleaf Ceanothus) on Mugu Peak



*Schizanthus hookeri*, Cochamó Valley, Chile



*Paeonia californica*, California Peony, along Foothill Trail, Ojai

Photographs by ©David L. Magney 2004, 2005  
See these photos in color by downloading this newsletter from the  
[www.cnpsci.org](http://www.cnpsci.org)

## The Amateur Botanists' Lament

Academic taxonomists' prescriptions  
Caused amateur botanists' conniptions.  
For with Cruciferae's loss  
And Compositae's toss,  
Went some perfectly adequate descriptions.

**RARE PLANTS – DAVID MAGNEY**

**HEARTLEAF THORNMINT (*ACANTHOMINTHA OBOVATA* JEPSON VAR. *CORDATA* JOKERST)**

STATUS		
Federal	State / CNDDDB	CNPS (2003 Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants of California)
None	None / G3T3?/S3.2?	List 4 (Plants of Limited Distribution); R-E-D Code 1-2-3

*Acanthomintha obovata* var. *cordata* is a small, erect, broad-leaved, 4-25 cm-tall annual herb. The leaves are arranged along the stems opposite each other, as is the case for all members of the Mint family. Heartleaf Thornmint produces small pale lavender flowers (7-13 mm long), blooming April through early July. The bracts subtending the flowers are broadly cordate in shape, hence the common name (cordate means heart-shaped), with long spines extending from prominent reddish veins. Heartleaf Thornmint is a member of the Mint family (Lamiaceae).

Heartleaf Thornmint can be found on exposed slopes growing on grassy slopes in heavy clay soils, sometimes in alkaline soils, in Oak Woodland, Chaparral, and Pinyon-Juniper Woodland; ranging in elevation from 785 meters to 1,540 meters above sea level. It ranges from San Luis Obispo County, in the Outer South Coast Ranges, south through the Transverse Ranges, to the Liebre Mountains in northwestern Los Angeles County.

Heartleaf Thornmint is found in Ventura County infrequently in the northern portion of the county from the Ozena Valley, south slope of Mount Piños, San Guillermo Mountain, Lockwood Valley, and along the Sespe Creek, represented in Ventura County by only about eight known populations. Almost all of these populations occur on Lockwood Clay soils. It is considered locally uncommon in Ventura County by CNPS (Magney 2004 – Checklist of Ventura County Rare Plants, which can be viewed at [www.cnpsci.org](http://www.cnpsci.org) on the “Rare Plants” page).



Photographs by ©David L. Magney 2004, 2005

**PAST HIKE AND CHAPTER EVENT REVIEWS**

**Carpinteria Bluffs Restoration -Andrea Adams-Morden**

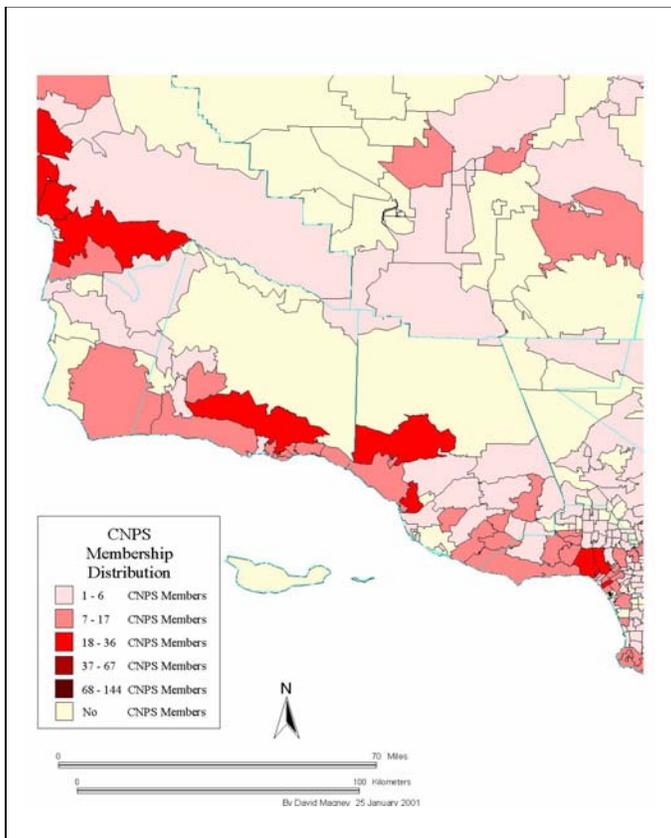
On Saturday, December 4th, more than thirty men, women, and children met at the new parking lot at the Carpinteria Bluffs to plant over 500 native shrubs and grasses. The hard work brought great camaraderie and appreciation for the beauty all these plants will bring. The City of Carpinteria wants to thank all these volunteers and ask for more assistance from the people of Carpinteria. We need to maintain these new plantings by keeping weeds away. We need volunteers to take on a small portion of the area to keep it weed free. After the initial weeding, areas usually only need care once a month or less. You will be able to choose your area and will be given personal weeding instructions. It's really a great experience to be able to look up from a weeding job and be able to gaze across the channel and see the islands. If you would like to help call 805/684-8077 or email: [carp\\_parks@yahoo.com](mailto:carp_parks@yahoo.com).

California Native Plant Society  
 P.O. Box 6  
 Ojai, CA 93024

www.cnpsci.org



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## TIME VALUE MATERIAL

### Channel Islands Chapter Officers/Program Contacts

Office/Position	Name	Phone #	Email Address
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Vice President-(V)*:	Lynne Kada	643-4842	VPresident@cnpsci.org
Vice President-(SB)*:	Charlie Blair	733-3189	blairce@sbceo.org
Secretary*:	Cher Batchelor	641-0863	Secretary@cnpsci.org
Treasurer*:	Elizabeth Chatten		Treasurer@cnpsci.org
Conservation*:	David Magney	646-6045	President@cnpsci.org
Vegetation/PlantScience*:	Ken Niessen	646-8650	kgniessen@sbcglobal.net
Education*:	<i>Your Name Could Be Here</i>		
Horticulture*:	Chris Bysshe		cbysshe@yahoo.com
Legislation*:	<i>Your Name Could Be Here</i>		
Rare Plant Coord. (V):	Rick Burgess	983-1312	
Rare Plant Coord. (SB):	Steve Junak	682-4726	sjunak@sbbg.org
Membership:	<i>Your Name Could Be Here</i>		
Newsletter Editor:	David Magney	646-6045	President@cnpsci.org
Periodic Plant Watch:	Rick Burgess	983-1312	
Invasive Exotics:	Ken Niessen	646-8650	kgniessen@ojai.net
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Program Facilitator (V):	Richard Bradley	646-6633	
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Plant Sales:	<i>Your Name Could Be Here</i>		
Poster Sales:	Scott Brown	525-9905	sbrown5534@aol.com
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Webmaster	Mike Adams	644-4862	Webmaster@cnpsci.org

(All telephone numbers are in Area Code 805)

\* = officer (voting)

### CNPS Membership Application

Category	Annual Amount
↑ Student/Retired/Limited Income .....	\$ 20
↑ Individual or Library .....	\$ 35
↑ Family or Group .....	\$ 45
↑ Supporting .....	\$ 75
↑ Plant Lover .....	\$100
↑ Patron .....	\$250
↑ Benefactor .....	\$500

I wish to affiliate with the Channel Islands Chapter of the California Native Plant Society.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

↑ Please do not share my address with any other organization

Send Membership application and check to:  
 California Native Plant Society (or CNPS)  
 2707 K Street, Suite 1  
 Sacramento, California 95816-5113

Note: We send two free Matilija Copy issues to non-members who wish to become acquainted with CNPS. If you are a member of another chapter, you may subscribe to Matilija Copy for one year with a \$5-donation to the chapter by mailing a check to the chapter to subscribe. CNPS/Channel Islands Chapter members automatically receive this newsletter.