



GOLD FIELD NOTES

EL DORADO CHAPTER ❁ CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY ❁ JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2008

CALENDAR

January 15

Monthly program.
Habitat Conservation for Wild Bees.
Katharina Ullmann, California Pollinator Conservation Coordinator, Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation. Details on front page.

January 28 (& through the Spring)

Class at Sacramento City College
Learn about California oaks. Details inside.

February 19

Monthly program.
Arlie Middlebrook, owner of Middlebrook Gardens, will talk about gardening with native plants. See inside for details.

April 21

Workshop
Botanical illustration offered by the Chico State University Herbarium. Fore details see: <http://www.csuchico.edu/biol/Herb/Events.html#A>

May 12

Workshop
Introduction to Identifying Northern California Grasses offered by the Chico State University Herbarium. Fore details see: <http://www.csuchico.edu/biol/Herb/Events.html#A>

Monthly programs are held on the third Tuesday of each month with the exception of August and December. Programs begin at 7 PM and are held at the Placerville Library, 345 Fair Lane Placerville, California.

BUMBLEBEES IN DECLINE *Excerpted from www.xerces.org/bumblebees/*

Six years ago, bee taxonomists started to notice a decline in the abundance and distribution of several bumble bee species. Three of these species (Western Bumble Bee, Rusty-patched Bumble Bee, and Yellow-banded Bumble Bee) were once very common and important crop pollinators over their ranges. Franklin's Bumble Bee was historically found only in a small area in southern Oregon and northern California, and it may now be extinct.

The dramatic decline in wild populations of these species occurred soon after a crash in populations of commercially raised bumble bees, which were distributed for greenhouse pollination across North America. The timing of this suggests that an escaped exotic disease organism may be the cause of this wide-

spread loss.

To better understand what has happened, the Xerces Society is documenting the former and current ranges of these species. This detailed information on past and present distribution and current search efforts will help determine the best methods for protecting those remaining populations. If you have any information on the distribution of any of these four species of bumble bees, please the Xerces Society (<http://www.xerces.org>).

For more information on the status of native bees check out the Xerces Society website (<http://www.xerces.org/bumblebees/index.html>) and attend the evening program on January 15 described below.



Rusty-patched Bumble Bee
Bombus affinis



Franklin's Bumble Bee
Bombus franklini



Western Bumble Bee
Bombus occidentalis



Yellow-banded Bumble Bee
Bombus terricola

JANUARY PROGRAM

NATIVE POLLINATORS AND NATIVE PLANTS: HABITAT CONSERVATION FOR WILD BEES

If you read the newspaper this summer, you were bound to come across articles about the disappearing European honey bee. While much of the media spotlight focused on the mysterious Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) and the looming pollination crisis, only a few stories touched upon our 1,500 species of native bees. Scientific research is putting a new spotlight on the valuable role these pollinators can play in agriculture when their habitat needs are met.

Katharina Ullmann, California Pollinator Conservation Coordinator for the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, will share stories and beautiful pictures about the diversity of our native bees and the latest research on their value as crop pollinators.

In addition to discussing land management considerations, she will show how you can use native plants to improve habitat for these important insects. Katharina will also highlight pollinator conservation work being carried out in Yolo County, where scientists from the Xerces Society and UC Berkeley, and restoration ecologists from Audubon California are field testing restoration techniques specifically aimed at bringing native bees back to large scale agriculture. This restoration and monitoring project is the first of its kind in North America!

This program will be held at 7:00 pm, January 15, at the Placerville County Public Library at 345 Fair Lane, Placerville.

For updates between newsletters
www.eldoradocnps.org

CLARK YOUTH FUND RECIPIENT PLANTS TREES AT PONDEROSA HIGH SCHOOL

In May, 2007, the El Dorado Chapter awarded \$250 to Ryan Wimmer, a student in greenhouse management and landscaping at Ponderosa High School, to plant native shrubs, subshrubs and perennials. The funds granted for this project were used to rent an auger to create planting holes and purchase plants. After postponing their planting day in order to wait for a good soaking storm, Ryan led 15 students, the agriculture teacher, 2 parents, and 2 CNPS volunteers in the planting of the 33 ponderosa pine seedlings. The pine seedlings were ones that

Ryan had grown from seed in 2007. The eager group also planted 40 silverbush lupine (*Lupinus albifrons*), 8 sticky monkeyflower (*Mimulus aurantiacus*), 40 deergrass divisions (*Muhlenbergia rigens*: thank you Steve Dowty). It was a muddy day, and as you can see from the pictures the planting site is a steep one, but the group was focused and got the job done. The final step in the planting day was the tough job of carrying buckets of water to outlying plants since only about half of the plants can be reached using a hose. The Agriculture teacher and student volunteers will be continuing on with hose and bucket watering if the spring season turns into a dry one. Not surprisingly, five pizzas disappeared in a flash at our lunch break.

This project was supported by the Clark Youth Fund. Each year the El Dorado Chapter awards grants to fund the study, conservation and exploration of California's native plants by the teachers and students of western El Dorado County.

Money for the Clark Youth Fund comes from the profits of our bi-annual plant sales, now an established community event in Placerville. Since its inception in 1997 the average award has increased substantially and the Chapter is now able to fund significantly more ambitious projects. Thank you for your ongoing support of this program through the purchase of plants at our plant sales.

Rosemary Carey
Coordinator, Clark Youth Fund Grants



Student volunteers at Ponderosa High School planting native shrubs, subshrubs and perennials.

Students operating the auger.



WILDFLOWER CLASSES SPRING AND SUMMER 2008

Laird Blackwell, author of *Wildflowers of the Sierra Nevada and Central Valley*, is offering wildflower classes in the Tahoe area in 2008. These two sessions are structured as a series of day hikes. Itineraries are subject to change—the classes will go where the flowers are the most spectacular, but all hikes/strolls will be

easy-to-moderate and no more than 3-4 miles roundtrip

The information below is to allow you to plan ahead. If you'd like to reserve a spot, you can do so by sending a non-refundable deposit of \$50 to: Laird R. Blackwell, 1105 Sky Tavern Road, Reno, Nevada, 89511. Questions: call Laird at 775-849-2295 or e-mail at lblackwell@sierranevada.edu.

FEBRUARY PROGRAM GARDENING WITH NATURE IN MIND

Arlie Middlebrook, co-author of *Designing California Native Gardens*, will speak about her new book with a special focus on plant communities in the Sierra Nevada foothills. Her book will be for sale and she will be available for book signing following the presentation.

In 1976 Arlie founded Middlebrook Gardens, a garden design/building/maintenance firm specializing in ecology-based landscaping, with California native plants. Arlie and Middlebrook Gardens have designed and built over 150 native gardens that reflect the natural beauty of the local ecology, conserve water, eliminate use of pesticides and reduce costs! Middlebrook Gardens received several awards including the prestigious Acterra Business Environmental Award in the Open Space and Habitat Preservation/Restoration category. For more information about Middlebrook Gardens: (408) 292-9993; <http://www.middlebrookgardens.com/>.

This program will be held at 7:00 pm, February 19, at the Placerville County Public Library at 345 Fair Lane, Placerville.

Month-by-Month Tahoe/Reno Area Class

Day hikes Saturdays April 12, May 10, June 14, July 19, August 16

April 12: Deadman's Creek, Thomas Creek, Topaz Lake (Great Basin)-strolls

May 10: Sagehen Creek (camas lilies), Kyburz Flat (north of Lake)-strolls

June 14: Peavine Mountain (north of Reno)-3 mile walk roundtrip

July 19: Winnemucca Lake, Meiss Meadow Pond (south of Lake)-3-4 mile walk

August 16: Pole Creek, Shirley Canyon (northwest of Lake)-3-4 mile walk

Each day 9:00-4:30, easy hiking

Bring: lunch, water, sun protection, jackets, comfortable hiking shoes, Tahoe Wildflowers: A Month-by-Month Guide, notebook and pen, camera?

Cost: \$300

Transportation: we'll carpool

Size of group: no more than 20 people

Summer Tahoe Basin Class

Day hikes, Monday-Friday, July 14-18

Monday: Sagehen Creek and Kyburz Flat (north of Lake)-leisurely strolling

Tuesday: Paige Meadows (west shore)-2 mile walk roundtrip

Wednesday: Barker Pass and Barker Peak (west shore)-3 mile walk roundtrip

Thursday: Winnemucca Lake (south of Lake)-3 mile walk roundtrip

Friday: Shirley Canyon (north of Lake)-3 mile walk roundtrip

Each day 9:00-4:30, easy hiking

Bring: lunch, water, sun protection, comfortable hiking shoes, wildflower field guide (e.g. my Wildflowers of the Tahoe Sierra or Tahoe Wildflowers: a Month-by-Month Guide), camera?, notebook and pen

Cost: \$300

Transportation: we'll carpool

Size of group: no more than 20 people

HELP NEEDED!

The California Native Plant Society relies upon the strong volunteer efforts of its members who contribute their time and talent to preserve California's unique landscapes and diverse native flora. Now, the State Office in Sacramento needs your help!

We are seeking local volunteers who could devote from 5 to 10 hours per week to help us process memberships, file, and perform other office duties. Volunteers are needed for data entry, mailings, fulfilling new and renewed memberships, filing, and photocopying.

Qualifications include: attention to detail, reliability, knowledge of office equipment or the willingness to learn, commitment to the mission of CNPS, and a sense of humor.

If you are interested in volunteering and want to work in a fun and friendly environment, please call Stacey Flowerdew, Membership & Sales Coordinator at (916) 447-2677 or email sflowerdew@cnps.org.

PLANT CLASS CALIFORNIA OAKS

Sacramento City College, Biology 494
Monday and Wednesday evenings
5:45 to 8:35 PM in Lillard Hall Room 112
plus four all-day Saturday field trips

Classes begin
Wednesday, January 23, 2008

Did you know that only four of the 21 species of oaks in California are deciduous, and that most California oaks grow as shrubs? California's oaks are amazing in so many ways – explore it all next spring semester!

This course covers identification, ecology, wildlife use, restoration, ethnobotany, compatible

planting in landscaping, conservation and more! There are no pre-requisites for this course; all are welcome!

Contact instructor Virginia Meyer, (916) 558 – 2115, meyerv@sccl.losrios.edu, if you have any questions.



Blue oak (*Quercus douglasii*) at Sutter Buttes. Photo by V. Meyer



El Dorado Chapter
 California Native Plant Society
 P.O. Box 1948
 Placerville, CA 95667

January-February 2008

Learn more about State CNPS at: www.cnps.org



**DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF
 CALIFORNIA'S NATIVE FLORA**

The California Native Plant Society is a statewide nonprofit organization of amateurs and professionals with a common interest in California's native plants. The mission of the Society is to increase understanding and appreciation of California's native plants and to preserve them in their natural habitat through scientific activities, education, and conservation. Membership is open to all.

Membership includes the quarterly journal, *Fremontia*, the quarterly *Bulletin*, which gives statewide news and announcements of Society activities and conservation issues, and the chapter newsletter *Gold Field Notes*. To join, call our main office in Sacramento, (916) 447-2677, or visit www.cnps.org to join online.

CHAPTER OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

PRESIDENT	Amy Hoffman	(530) 676-1916	AmyHof@gmail.com
VICE PRESIDENT	Armond Chase	(530) 620-7006	janischase@netscape.com
SECRETARY	Joanne Geggatt	(916) 939-3394	joannegeggatt@sbcglobal.net
TREASURER	Cindy Podsiadlo	(530) 642-0648	clpodsiadlo@yahoo.com
BOOKS AND POSTER SALES	Marty Oberlander	(530) 333-1536	mober44@sbcglobal.net
CONSERVATION	Sue Britting	(530) 295-8210	britting@earthlink.net
Field Trips	Shellie Perry	(530) 644-6335	seperry@concentric.net
HOSPITALITY	Karla Meadows	(916) 939-6828	kenkarla@netscape.com
INVASIVE EXOTICS	Annie Walker		botanist@d-web.com
MEMBERSHIP	Ben Parks	(530) 626-8889	baparks38@directcon.net
PLANT SALES	Shellie Perry	(530) 644-6335	seperry@concentric.net
PROGRAMS	Vivian Parker	(530) 622-8718	vivparker@starband.net
PUBLICITY	Rich Wade	(530) 644-7210	rwade@spi-ind.com
WEB MASTER	Steve Tyron	(530) 622-6567	steve@TyronGraphicDesign.com
NEWSLETTER EDITOR	Sue Britting	(530) 295-8210	britting@earthlink.net