



GOLD FIELD NOTES

EL DORADO CHAPTER ☉ CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY ☉ JULY-AUGUST 2007

GARDENING WITH CALIFORNIA'S NATIVE BULBS

CALENDAR

July 14 (Saturday)

Field trip.
Carson Pass to Lake Winnemucca, Alpine County. Details inside newsletter.

July 17 (Tuesday)

Monthly program.
Nancy Gilbert from Far West Farms will talk about gardening with native bulbs. Placerville Library, 7 PM. Details inside newsletter. There is no chapter meeting in August.

September 18

Monthly program.
Landscape designer Michael Glassman will talk about landscaping with native plants. Placerville Library, 7 PM. Details inside newsletter.

October 6 (Saturday)

Twice yearly native plant sale. Native plants, seeds and books will be on sale from 9 AM to 2 PM at the El Dorado Fairgrounds, Corker Building, 100 Placerville Drive, Placerville.

October 16 (Tuesday)

Monthly program.
Member potluck and slide show.



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.

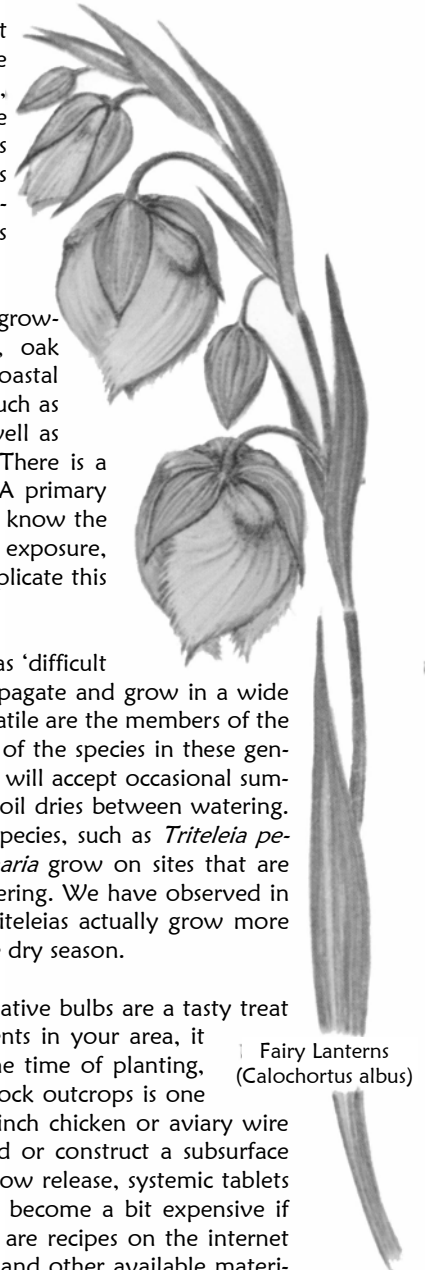
California is blessed with one of the richest and most diverse flora in North America, largely due to the incredible climatic and geological variety. The bulb, corm and rhizome producing plants rank among the most interesting and beautiful of California's plants and have tremendous gardening potential, which is largely untapped by the horticultural trade. For simplicity's sake, I'll use the term 'bulb' to refer to plants that produce a bulb, corm, tuber or rhizome.

Hundreds of species of California bulbs can be found growing in ecosystems ranging from alpine, chaparral, oak woodland, valley grassland, desert, riparian and coastal rain forest. Bulbs can be seen growing in wet areas, such as the edges of vernal pools, drainages and seeps, as well as on dry, rocky and difficult sites such as serpentine. There is a native bulb for almost every niche in your garden. A primary key to successfully landscaping with native bulbs is to know the preferred habitat of the species, including soil type, exposure, amounts of light or shade and water, and then to duplicate this habitat as closely as possible in your garden.

California native bulbs have sometimes been labeled as 'difficult to grow', but numerous species are very easy to propagate and grow in a wide range of conditions. Among the easiest and most versatile are the members of the genera *Brodiaea*, *Dichelostemma* and *Triteleia*. Most of the species in these genera are adapted to summer drought but many species will accept occasional summer water, so long as the drainage is good and the soil dries between watering. Many even perform well in heavy clay soils. Some species, such as *Triteleia peduncularis*, *Triteleia hyacinthina* and *Brodiaea coronaria* grow on sites that are very wet in spring and prefer moisture through flowering. We have observed in our own garden that many of the *Brodiaeas* and *Triteleias* actually grow more robustly if they receive occasional watering during the dry season.

Unfortunately for gardeners, most of the California native bulbs are a tasty treat for gophers and squirrels. So if you have these rodents in your area, it behooves you to protect your bulbs, especially at the time of planting, when they are most vulnerable. Tucking them into rock outcrops is one way to make them less accessible. You can lay one inch chicken or aviary wire over the bulbs, just below the surface of the ground or construct a subsurface cage of the same materials. Commercial sprays and slow release, systemic tablets that protect bulbs are readily available, but this can become a bit expensive if you have a large number of bulbs to protect. There are recipes on the internet for making your own sprays from hot peppers, eggs and other available materials. Sprays and repellent tablets will also work to repel rabbits, which can sometimes munch on the leaves of bulbs. If you have an overabundance of gophers, you may want to consider trapping them.

Most California native bulbs prefer lean soils with sharp drainage. Exceptions are those found growing in adobe soils, wet meadows, woodland areas or along creeks and seeps. Soils only need to be amended if you are trying to grow a species in a soil that differs markedly from the bulb's natural habitat. Woodland



Fairy Lanterns
(*Calochortus albus*)

2007 CLARK YOUTH FUND GRANT RECIPIENTS

The Clark Youth Fund has just concluded its tenth year of funding 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. This year we had a first: an application by a high school student aiming for a career in natural resource management who will use peer labor to revegetate with native plants on the Ponderosa High School campus in Shingle Springs. I am pleased to present such a variety of creative award-winning projects this year which embody the idea of thinking globally and acting locally.

Ryan Wimmer, Ponderosa High School, Shingle Springs.
\$250 granted for revegetation of the slope

east of the football field using 2 year old Ponderosa pine seedlings grown by Ryan Wimmer. The school namesake Ponderosa pine was killed by bark beetles. Replanting with these seedlings will keep this species on the campus. The project will involve renting an auger to drill planting holes on a compacted slope.

Todd Gillihan, Sly Park Environmental Education Center, Pollock Pines.

\$250 granted for restoration and revegetation, using native plants, of a compacted former leach field of approximately 1 acre. 5th and 6th grade students will first lop Scotch broom plants in the fall when they are drought stressed as a way to kill them. Plants native to the yellow pine community will be planted in the early winter.

Susanne Beaudette, Gold Trail School Garden, Placerville.

\$205.38 granted to create a butterfly garden using native plants in a 20' x 20' locked, fenced garden with a water system already installed. The project includes improving a small tub to provide water for the butterflies as well as other small wildlife attracted to the garden.

Kelli Wessman, Garden of Learning, Louisiana Schnell School, Placerville.

\$200 granted to expand the current butterfly garden by planting milkweed (*Asclepias* spp.) to provide a food source for Monarch butterfly larvae. The objective is for students to gather their own larvae from wild Monarch butterfly eggs, rather than buying larvae from a scientific supply house.

Eric Schlavin, Sierra Ridge Middle School, Pollock Pines.

\$150 granted to landscape around a solar panel water fountain with native plants. Bird houses around this area are also planned.

Adriana Findlay, Silva Valley Year-round Elementary School, El Dorado Hills.

\$150 granted to purchase a large, engraved, weather-resistant sign that identifies the "California Native Plants" section of the garden, as well as more engraved, weather-resistant plant identification markers to label plants with their scientific and common names. Three native plants that have died will also be replaced.

Rosemary Carey
Clark Youth Fund Grants

GROWING BULBS

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species may need to have humus added to the soil and bulbs native to rocky mountain scree areas will need to grow in rock gardens where soils have been altered for fast drainage. In general, it is not advisable to add any fertilizer to the planting holes except those formulated specifically for bulbs. These fertilizers are high in phosphorous and potassium, but low in nitrogen. We add only soft rock phosphate to our planting holes and have had good results.

All-in-all, California native bulbs offer the Mediterranean gardener or landscaper beautiful, versatile and water efficient plants whose full potential is just beginning to be appreciated. Many species are becoming rare in the wild, so using them in your garden is also a way to preserve these gems for future generations.

Adapted from an article by Nancy Gilbert. The full article including ideas about gardening with particular species visit: <http://www.californianativebulbs.com/HTML/Gardening.html> Nancy Gilbert will be our program speaker on July 17, 2007 at 7 PM.

SUMMER PLANT WALK

Please contact the trip leaders by the Wednesday prior to the hike to let them know you will be attending.

July 14 (Saturday)

Carson Pass to Lake Winnemucca (Alpine County)

Meeting time and Location: 8:00 AM, at the Perry's house, 6311 Sly Park Road.

Duration: All day.

Description: A moderately easy, 4.5 mile walk in one of my very favorite areas. The scenery is beautiful, and the wildflowers around Lake Winnemucca are fantastic! These are the kind of big, lush, colorful gardens that make people space out and walk around with goofy smiles plastered all over their faces. In addition, some long-lasting snow pockets near the lake give a home to beautiful and unusual subalpine plants like *Cassiope mertensiana*, *Salix arctica* and *Claytonia nevadensis*. Bird-watchers, this is a great place to watch Clark's Nutcrackers gathering nuts.

Bring: stout walking shoes, water, lunch, and bug repellent. Any dogs must be on leash at all times. Parking at Carson Pass costs three dollars.
Contact: Shellie Perry, 530-644-6335, seperry@concetric.net



MUSIC BY THE RIVER

Come on down to the South Fork American River for music and fun September 21-23. Artists playing include The Waybacks, Joe Craven, Laurie Lewis, Houston Jones, Dan Crary, Beppe Gambetta. Details of the festival visit: <http://www.americanrivermusic.org>

The El Dorado Chapter has been invited to host an information table at this event. If you are interested in helping out at the information table, please contact Vivian Parker, (530) 622-8718, vivparker@starband.net

JULY PROGRAM NATIVE BULBS FOR NATIVE GARDENS

Our speaker for the July 17 monthly meeting of the El Dorado chapter of the California Native Plant Society will be Nancy Gilbert, owner with her husband Ames of Far West Bulb Farm in Grass Valley, which specializes in California native bulbs

<http://www.californianativebulbs.com/>.

The presentation will be a digital slide show of California native monocots, including grasses, bulbs, and sedges, as well as groundcovers, shrubs and trees suitable for northern to central Sierra Foothill gardens. The discussion will focus on a wide spectrum of plants, ranging from those that are very drought tolerant to moisture-loving plants from riparian habitats, and their preferred

growing conditions. She will also discuss the best uses for each plant in the residential native plant garden. The presentation will be quite visual with many photos taken by the Gilberts, captured in the wild and also in several arboretums in CA.

Nancy received a Master's Degree in Science Education from the University of Iowa in 1971. She has taught elementary, middle and high school students at various times and locales, and also worked as a naturalist for the state of Vermont. She was director of the summer environmental education program for a private non-profit in Vermont. In 1981, she entered the field of landscape design and has been enjoying it ever since.

This event will be held at 7:00 pm, July 17, at the Placerville County Public Library at 345 Fair Lane, Placerville.



LEOPARD LILY
Lilium pardalinum

SEPTEMBER PROGRAM LANDSCAPING WITH NATIVE PLANTS

Michael Glassman will be the featured speaker at the September 18th chapter meeting. Michael is an award-winning landscape designer and owner of one of Northern California's most prestigious design firms, Michael Glassman & Associates. With over twenty years of experience in landscape design, waterworks, and the creative elements that enhance outdoor living environments, he has joined Discovery Channel Home as co-host and designer of their new series, Garden Police.

Michael's work has been the subject of over forty "Sunset Magazine" feature articles, as well as articles from numerous

other publications, including "Fine Gardening", "Better Homes and Gardens", and "Landscape Architecture". He has been twice honored by the American Horticultural Society, an organization that has selected his gardens to be on their tours of Northern California gardens.

His landscape design solutions and philosophies were the subject of the book "Gaining Ground" by Maureen Gilmer - the number one home and gardens book listed with amazon.com in 2000. He also co-authored with Ms. Gilmer "Water Works", a historical and practical guide to water in the garden.

Part environmental evangelist, part landscape-design coach and connoisseur, Michael regularly appears as a guest on many television shows, including HGTV's "Gardening by the Yard" with Paul

James. His pool designs were also featured on an HGTV special, "Spectacular Pools."

Michael's clients are always amazed by his expert vision in unifying the interior and exterior of their homes while finding the beauty in their natural outdoor settings, which are coaxed by his creativity into works of art.

He received a degree in landscape design and horticulture from the University of California at Davis and studied at La Napoule Art Foundation in France. He currently lives in Northern California with his wife and daughter and his work can be viewed on his Web site, www.michaelglassman.com.

This event will be held at 7:00 pm, September 18, at the Placerville County Public Library at 345 Fair Lane, Placerville.

BE A DOCENT AT WRIGHT'S LAKE A CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS!

Once again Rich Wade is organizing wildflower walks at the Wright's Lake Campground on Saturday mornings in July through mid-August. These hikes held at 10 AM for 1-2 hours are intended as an introduction to the plants of the Wright's Lake area for those who are camping or traveling in the area. Rich is looking for CNPS volunteers to lead the hikes. Contact Rich Wade (530-644-7210; rwade@spi-ind.com) for more information.



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

July-August 2007

LIBRARY DISPLAY ON NATIVE PLANTS

New this month is a display on native plants at the Placerville Main library. The display highlights:

- ◆ Exploring natives in El Dorado County including unique habitats such as Pine Hill, Lava Caps, and Traverse Creek
- ◆ Native American uses of plants
- ◆ Gardening with Natives

Please check out the display when you're at the library!

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.

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