



GOLD FIELD NOTES

EL DORADO CHAPTER ☉ CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY ☉ MAY-JUNE 2006

CLARKIAS: A BURST OF FOOTHILL COLOR

CALENDAR

May 9 (Tuesday)

Chapter board meeting.
Meeting to be held at 6:30 pm in the meeting room at Raley's on Placer-ville Drive, Placerville. All members are welcome.

May 14 (Sunday), 9 am

Plant walk
BLM led walk up Pine Hill. To sign up, please contact Barb Williams (Barbara_Williams@ca.blm.gov) or call the BLM Folsom Field Office at (916) 985-4474.

May 16 (Tuesday)

Monthly program.
Chapter member Ernie Hartley will give a slide presentation on "The Plants of the Lewis and Clark Trail."
NEW LOCATION: Cameron Park Library. Directions inside.

June 13 (Tuesday)

Chapter board meeting.
Meeting time is 6:30 pm and place to be determined. Call Amy Hoffman for details. All members are welcome.

June 20 (Tuesday)

Monthly program.
Malcolm North, UCD plant ecologist, Topic to be announced. Check web-site for updates. **NEW LOCATION:** Cameron Park Library.

Monthly programs are held on the third Tuesday of each month with the exception of August and December. Programs begin at 7 PM. For the months of May-July in 2006, meetings will be held at the Cameron Park Public Library, 2500 Country Club Drive, Cameron Park.

In late spring, the hills blush purplish-pink Clarkias as the grasses dry up and the formerly green slopes turn to golden-brown. These flowers seem to cheerfully announce the advent of summer with warmer weather to come. The genus was named in honor of Captain William Clark of the 1804 Lewis and Clark Expedition.

The Clarkias are annuals, native to western North America. You will find them on open slopes or banks throughout the foothills and lower mountains from 1500 to 4500 feet elevation. They grow from one to three feet high, depending on favorable conditions as well as species' differences. The flowers close up at night and reopen the next day; each blossom lasts several days. The green-gray leaves are linear and one to two inches long.

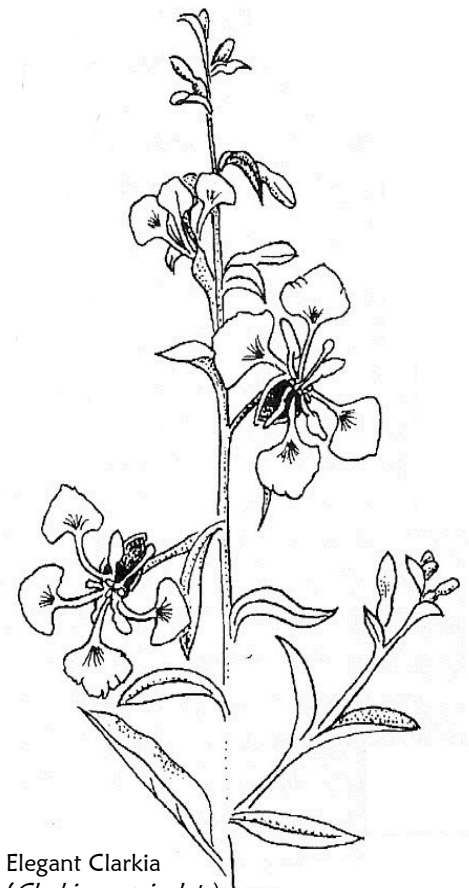
Two distinctive flower shapes emerge in the Clarkias: the four petals arranged either as an open cup-shaped flower, as seen in Farewell-to-Spring (*Clarkia amoena*) and *C. biloba*; or in a spoke- or wheel-like fashion as displayed by Elegant Clarkia (*C. unguiculata*) and Red Ribbons (*C. concinna*). In the latter two species, the upper parts of the petals – the blades, scissored at their tips into diamond or rounded lobes – narrow into a claw at the petal's base. Unguiculata means having a claw or stalk-like base; concinna means beautiful.

The colors of the various flower parts of the Clarkias are most unbelievable. For instance, the petals of Elegant Clarkia can vary from lavender-pink to dark reddish-purple to salmon. The sepals – the bud coverings – sometimes are purple and the stamens scar-

let with four red and four creamy-white anthers. A truly WILDflower whose color drives us crazy.

Though narrow at its base, the bright pink petals of Red Ribbons are deeply cleft into three lobes at its tip. With *Clarkia biloba*, the tip of each of the rosy-purple petals is divided into two heart-shaped lobes. It has no common name, but I call it Four Hearts for the petals that are attached to the stem at the base of each heart.

The Miwok tribes considered Farewell-to-Spring seeds, as well as acorns from Black Oak, among their most prized foods. The tops of *C. biloba*



Elegant Clarkia
(*Clarkia unguiculata*) PEC

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For updates between newsletters
www.eldoradocnps.org

Clark Youth Fund: Five Local Schools Awarded Grants

This year our chapter is supporting five outstanding projects in local schools. These projects highlight the importance of native plants in our daily lives.

Jackson Elementary, El Dorado Hills - awarded \$300 (Don Smith award) to start a new native plant trail and garden to replace the one closed due to asbestos concerns.

California Montessori Project, Shingle Springs – awarded \$250 to complete and maintain native plant garden.

Gold Oaks Art Charter, Placerville – Awarded \$230 to add native plant signage to an existing garden.

Grizzly Pines, Grizzly Flats – Awarded \$200 to purchase plants for native plant trail.

Lake Forest, El Dorado Hills - Awarded \$200 awarded for native plant garden.

Along with the cash award, the schools will receive \$2 for \$1 coupons that can be redeemed at the fall plant sale. If the awardees decide to use their grant to buy plants at the fall sale, then they will be able to stretch their grants even further.

It is through the success of our twice yearly plant sales that we are able to support the Clark Youth Fund grants each year. Steadily, over the years, we have been able to increase the annual amount awarded. Many, many thanks to all those who support the chapter and this program through the purchase of plants and books at our sales. So, don't forget, the next plant sale is Saturday, October 7, 2006. See you there!

Vivian Parker
Clark Youth Fund Coordinator

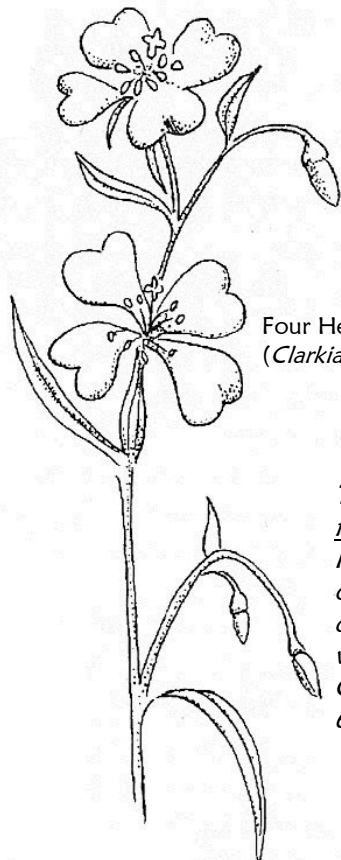
PLANT SALE SUCCESS STORY

On April first, our chapter presented the citizens of El Dorado County with more than one thousand native plants suitable for landscaping, and sold most of them. Customers who braved the cloudy weather were treated to hard-to-find but easy-to-grow plants such as Western Redbud, Bush Anemone and Deergrass, as well as a wonderful selection of books covering all aspects of native plants, from seed propagation to mushroom identification. CNPS members spent plenty of time talking to people, helping them select site-specific plants which could be useful and beautiful without a lot of labor or toxic chemicals-better for the customers, better for the land. With over six thousand dollars in total sales and several new members signed up, the sale was a big success, but only because of the hard work of lots of volunteers. To everyone who grew plants, transported and priced plants, sold books and walking sticks, took money, talked to customers, brought food and coffee, or signed up new members, I want to say, "Thank you! Thank you! CNPS rocks!"

Shellie Perry
Plant Sale Coordinator

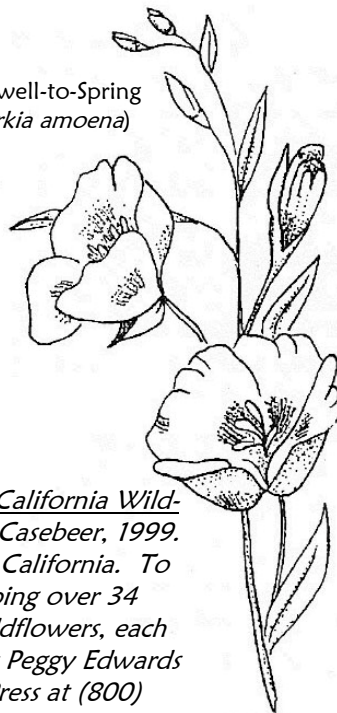
CLARKIAS (cont. from page 1)

and Farewell-to-Spring were broken up, tied in bundles, and placed on rocks to dry. When dried, the plants were bundled, spread out, and beaten with a stick to loosen the seeds. They also harvested seeds from Elegant Clarkia, removed the chaff, then stored them for treats at a later date.

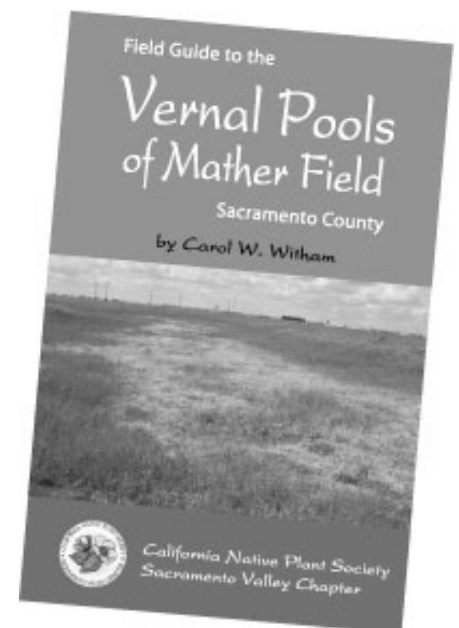


Four Hearts
(*Clarkia biloba*)

Farewell-to-Spring
(*Clarkia amoena*)



Taken from: Discover California Wildflowers, by MaryRuth Casebeer, 1999. Hooker Press, Sonora, California. To order this book describing over 34 different California wildflowers, each with a line drawing by Peggy Edwards Carkeet, call Hooker Press at (800) 696-5997.



NEW BOOK AVAILABLE!

Published by the Sacramento Valley Chapter of CNPS, this handy and easy to use guide is chocked full of pictures. The cost is \$10 and it can be purchased at El Dorado Chapter meetings and our twice yearly plant sales.

MAY PROGRAM

THE PLANTS OF THE LEWIS AND CLARK EXPEDITION

On May 16th, El Dorado Chapter member Ernie Hartley will present "The Plants of the Lewis and Clark Expedition". It has been a great year for blooming *Lewisia*, and the *Clarkia* are likely to be stunning this year also, given the heavy spring rainfall. Ernie's presentation promises to be a historical adventure and one that will educate and inspire future botanical excursions. Join us at 7 pm at the library at Cameron Park.

NEW LOCATION!

This program will be at the Cameron Park Library on May 16, 2006 at 7 PM.

Directions to Cameron Park Library May-July El Dorado Chapter CNPS Meetings

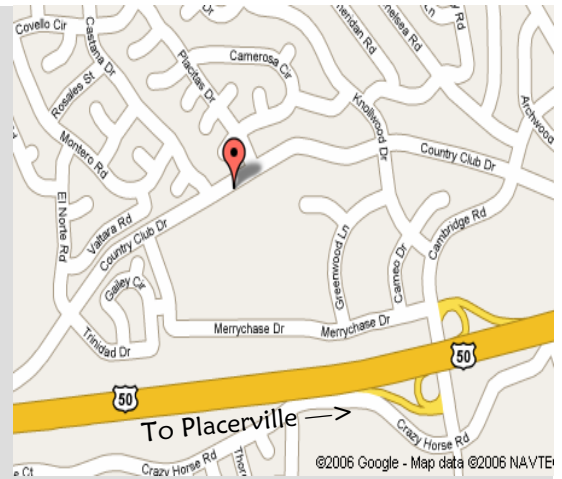
From Placerville

Take Highway 50 West
Exit Cambridge Rd.
Turn right at the end of the ramp
Take the first left (Knollwood)
Go to the stop sign and turn left (Country Club Dr.)

The library is on the left, about 1-2 blocks down

From El Dorado Hills

Take Highway 50 East
Exit Cambridge Rd.
Turn left at the end of the ramp; Go over the freeway; Just past the mini mall on the left, turn left (Knollwood); Go to the stop sign and turn left (Country Club Dr.)



The library is on the left, about 1-2 blocks down.

SPRING AND SUMMER PLANT WALKS

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

May 20 (Saturday)

Stevens Crossing Trail/Burnt Flat, near Colfax, Placer County

Meeting time and location: 8:00 AM at the Raley's on Placerville Drive, near the big sign.
Duration: Most of the day. There's lots to see.

Description: Plants of riparian and mixed-conifer forest, oak woodland, and serpentine hills and seeps. A recent (non-catastrophic) fire has opened up and fertilized the area, which means more and bigger flowers. As well as some serpentine endemics, we will see lots of "pretties", including *Calochortus superbus*, *Penstemon azureus*, *Tritelia bridgesii*, several species of *Clarkia*, and a particularly nice variant of *Mimulus aurantiacus*. Plant lists (in progress) will be provided.

Difficulty: Moderate. About 3.5 miles of walking with about 800 feet elevation gain.

Bring: Water, lunch, bug repellent, sunscreen. We will do some cross-country walking, so sturdy walking shoes are a MUST. Be prepared for Poison oak. Dogs are only allowed if on leash or under voice control at all times.

Contact: Shellie Perry, (530) 644-6335, or seperry@concentric.net

June 10 (Saturday)

Traverse Creek Special Interest Area, El Dorado County

Meeting time and location: 9:00 AM at the Raley's on Placerville Drive, near the big sign.

Duration: half to all day

Description: This large serpentine area at 2,400' elevation is located about 4 miles south of Georgetown. On this trip to Trav-

erse Creek we can expect to see plenty of later-blooming favorites, such as Leopard Lily (*Lillium pardalinum*), Mariposa Tulip (*Calochortus superbus*), and the rare Sanborn's Onion (*Allium sanbornii*). A wide variety of microhabitats - rocky outcrops, chaparral, and streamside - will be visited. This also is an area of geological interest.

Level of Difficulty: Easy 2 mile walk. For those who are less physically ambitious, there are lots of beautiful and interesting plants within 200 yards of the parking area. There is also a nice, shady picnic area.

Bring: Food, water, and binoculars if you like to bird-watch. Plant list will be provided.

Contact: Amy Hoffman, (530) 676-1916; amyhof@gmail.com

June 24 (Saturday)

Stevens Crossing Trail/Burnt Flat, near Colfax, Placer County

Meeting time and location: 8:00 AM at the Raley's on Placerville Drive, near the big sign.

Duration: Most of the day. There's lots to see.

Description: In the woods, later-blooming plants include *Piperia* orchids and Humboldt lilies. The serpentine hills will offer blooming Tripod Buckwheat and Sanborn's allium (v. *congdonii*), and some interesting *Calycadenia*, *Streptanthus*, *Cryptantha* and *Mimulus*. The serpentine seeps will be in full bloom, with *Epilobium*, *Antirrhinum*, *Heterocodon*, Morning glory, *Clematis*, *Stachys*, potato vines and others competing for our attention. This is a good place and time to see butterflies and dragonflies.

Difficulty: Moderate. About 3.5 miles walking, with about 800 feet elevation gain.

Bring: Water, lunch, bug repellent, sunscreen. Sturdy walking shoes are a MUST. We will encounter Poison oak and annoying weed seeds, so gaiters or lightweight long pants are suggested. Dogs are only allowed if on leash

or under voice control at all times.

Contact: Shellie Perry, (530) 644-6335, or seperry@concentric.net.

July 22 (Saturday)

Thunder Mountain, Amador County

Meeting time and location: 8 AM Safeway parking lot in Pollock Pines.

Duration: Return to parking lot by 6PM. Car travel time 1.5 hours each way.

Description: Although elevation gain is 1,800 ft in 3 miles and the trail can get your heart pumping, this hike will be a moderate meander where stops are frequent to view the different habitats and flora. We will not reach Thunder Mountain peak itself but stop at the ridge/saddle where there are huge rock plugs from past volcanic action. This is not a technical keying expedition, but some keying can be done at "snack and lunch" spots. The trail starts at 8,000' and goes through a Red Fir forest and small pond. There are a variety of habitats from Red Fir forest, open Juniper and scattered Lodgepole woodlands, to rocky openings and open hillsides. Based on these habitats, we'll be able to see a variety of plants from mule-ears, lupines, mountain pennyroyal, phacelia, Sierra onion, and grasses (bottlebrush squirrel tail, brome, blue wildrye, needlegrass) to many members of the Aster family. If we're lucky and it is early enough, there may be anemone and Sierra primrose.

Difficulty: Moderate

Bring: Bring water/lunch and snacks/hiking boots/bug repellent/hat/sunscreen and be prepared for windy conditions along the ridge and possible showers (bring wind/rain jacket: Thunder Mountain got named because of the thunderheads that seem to develop along there!). Based on the late winter, may have patches of snow in the forested or sheltered areas.

Contact: Cindy Podsiadlo (530) 642-0648; clpodsiadlo@yahoo.com



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

May-June 2006

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**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.

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