



GOLD FIELD NOTES

EL DORADO CHAPTER ❁ CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY ❁ SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2005

CALENDAR

September 20 (Tuesday)

Monthly program.
Learn about oaks and their fungal partners from US Davis graduate student Melissa Morris. See inside for details.

October 1 (Saturday)

Twice yearly plant sale.
Native plants, seeds and books will be on sale from 9 am to 1 pm at Building "C" of the El Dorado County Government Center in Placerville.

October 18 (Tuesday)

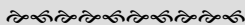
Monthly program.
Annual potluck and member slide show. Bring a dish and a few slides of your flower travels from the past year. Plates, utensils and beverage will be provided.

October 22 (Saturday)

Work party.
Work Party at IFG starting at 8:30AM. We will be defining pathways in the native plant garden and stacking small rocks for retaining walls. Refreshments will be provided! For more info, call Amy Hoffman at 916-933-8448.

November 15 (Tuesday)

Monthly program.
To be arranged. Check the chapter website for an update.



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

*For updates between newsletters
www.eldoradocnps.org*



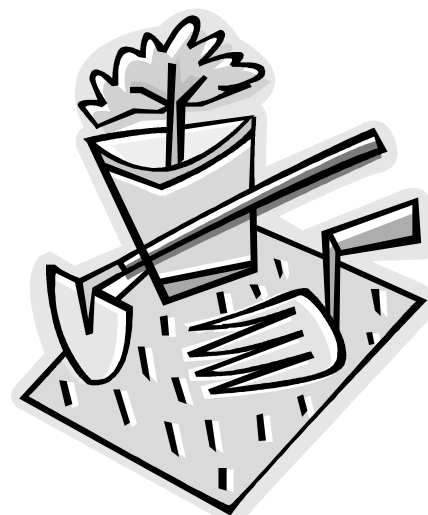
Now that the buckeyes have dropped all their leaves and the days are getting shorter, it is time to start thinking about the fall planting season. With cool days and evenings and the soon to arrive wet weather of winter, fall is the best time to plant most native plants — especially here in the foothills where the spring and summer tend to be hot and dry.

Once again Cornflower Farms and Steve Dowty will be offering native and drought tolerant plants that grow well in our area. Books on gardening with native plants and natural history will also be available at the sale. If you are new to gardening with native plants, there will be several experienced gardeners at the sale to answer your questions.

We have also listened to our customers and done some re-arranging to our sale area so that checking out and paying for your lovely new plants will go quickly with less time waiting in line.

Inside this newsletter is a list of plants that are likely to be at the sale so that you can plan ahead for your shopping trip. As in recent sales, we will not be taking orders for plants prior to the sale, so make certain you come down when we first open at 9 AM for the best selection.

The sale will be held in the entry way to El Dorado County Building C, 2850 Fairlane Court, Placerville (down the hill from the Main El Dorado County Library).



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

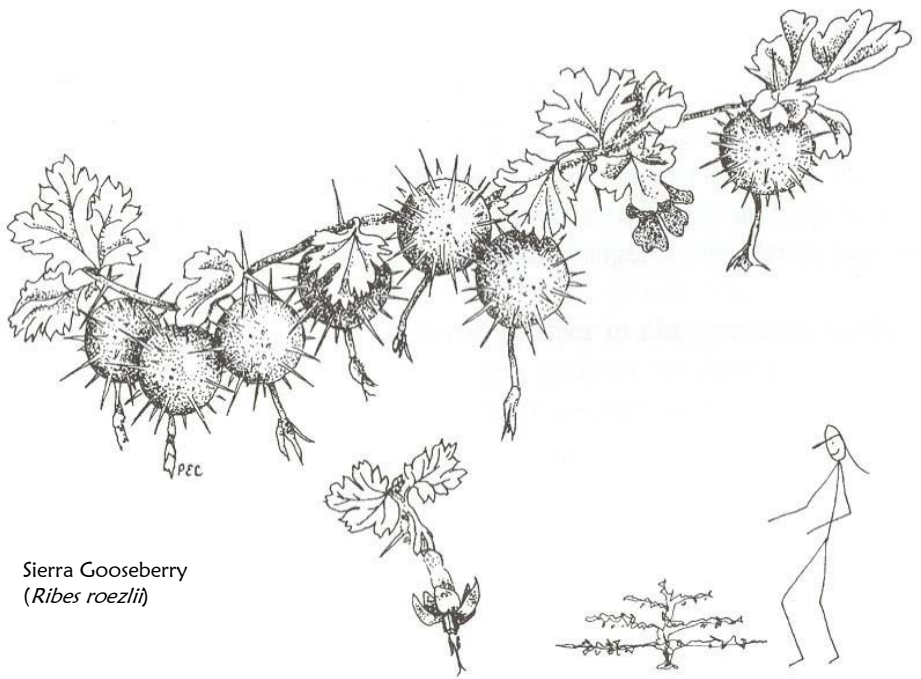
If you are interested in helping with the sale, we still need people to help prepare the plants on Friday and to assist with various tasks on Saturday. Contact Shellie Perry (530) 644-6335 if you can lend a hand.

FEATURED PLANT: SIERRA GOOSEBERRY

Though it may grow up to 9,200 feet in elevation, *Ribes roezlii* is more usually seen from 3,500 to 8,500 feet in many of California's mountains: the Klamath, North Coast and Cascade Ranges; the Sierra Nevada; and the Tehachapi, Transverse and Peninsular Ranges of southern California. The most common gooseberry at mid-elevation, Sierra Gooseberry prefers coniferous forests, though it can be found in chaparral and woodland.

A stout shrub 1 to 4 feet high, it has many long spreading branches with short rigid twigs and 1 to 3 straight spines at the stem node. Clustered on ends of the twigs, the 1/2- to 1-inch broad leaves are somewhat round in shape; each leaf has 3 to 5 toothed lobes and each lobe has a vein that flows from the leaf's base. The leaves are dark green above, and paler green and hairy beneath.

Blooming in the early June and July, the tubular flowers, in clusters of 1 to 3, are borne near the ends of the leafy twigs. The purple to dull-red sepals, each about 3/8 inches long, are reflexed, or turned back. The margins of the 5 white petals, less than half as long as the sepals, are curled inward. The anthers – the pollen containing parts—extend well beyond the petals; the styles, attached to the pistils, protrude even further. The red-purple or reddish berry, 1/2 to 3/4 inch in diameter, is sur-



Sierra Gooseberry
(*Ribes roezlii*)

rounded by stout spines. Sierra Gooseberry stands out as a montane gooseberry with big bristly berries. Native Californians ate the berries after singeing the prickles in a fire. Many animals have also enjoyed these gooseberries.

Ribes roezlii is an alternate host for white pine blister rust—a fungal disease accidentally introduced to the West from Europe early in the 20th Century. Though the fungus does not harm gooseberry plants, the rust spores need a *Ribes* species host in order to develop further before they travel to nearby White or Sugar Pines. The fungus can be a serious problem for pine trees; if too many pine needles become infected and die, the whole tree will succumb to

the disease. The genus name, *Ribes*, is from the Arabic word “ribas”, meaning “acid-tasting”, referring to the fruit. The species, *roezlii*, is named after Bertram Roezl, son of a Czech gardener, who collected seeds in California in 1869. He also collected seeds of Leopard Lily, Humboldt Lily and Washington Lily on that trip.

Taken from: Discover California Shrubs, by MaryRuth Casebeer, 2004. Hooker Press, Sonora, California. To order this book (\$17.95 plus shipping) describing 48 different California shrubs, each with a line drawing by Peggy Edwards Carkeet, call Hooker Press at (800) 696-5997.

INFORMATION SOURCE FOR WILD PLANTS

www.calflora.org

Want to know about the plants growing in wildlands? Calflora is the answer to your questions. The El Dorado Chapter donates money to help support this plant database and in return, all chapter members may use the site. To register and access the site, go to: www.calflora.org. Click “Register as a User.” Then click “Register as a personal user or guest.” Fill in the required information on the registration page and click on “create account.” At the payment page, select “Prepaid Account Group” for the Payment Method. Then, on the following page, enter the following Prepaid Account Group code: el-dorado-cnps





Acorn Woodpecker
(*Melanerpes formicivorus*)

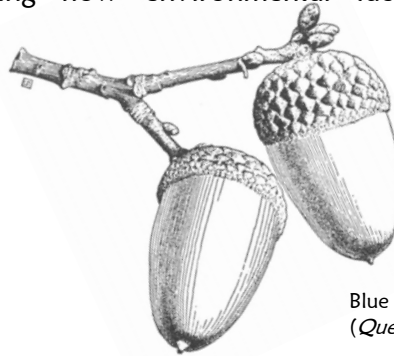
The acorn woodpecker is a busy bird in the fall. These birds gather and eat acorns as soon as they are ripe on the tree. What the birds can not manage to eat, they will tuck away in holes they make in tree trunks for later eating. Telephone poles and wood shingle roofs are also favorite storage places. Look around at the oak and pine trunks in your neighborhood to see if you can find granary trees nearby.

SEPTEMBER PROGRAM WHAT'S UP BELOW-GROUND: ECTOMYCORRHIZAL FUNGI ASSOCIATED WITH OAKS IN CALIFORNIA AND MEXICO

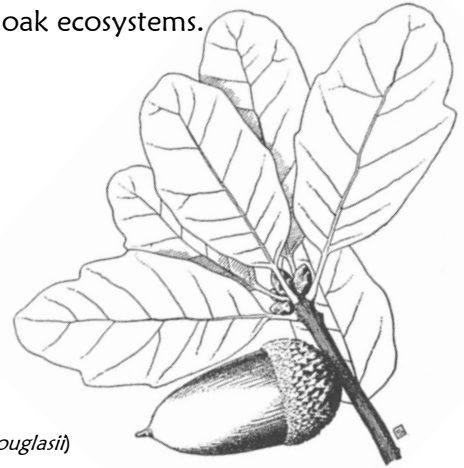
PRESENTED BY MELISSA MORRIS

Melissa Morris, a graduate student and UC Davis, will present a talk on the ecology and diversity of ectomycorrhizal fungi in a blue oak (*Quercus douglasii*) woodland in California and in an oak-dominated cloud forest in central Mexico. She is investigating how environmental factors

and host-specificity influence ectomycorrhizal community composition and structure. Melissa will also talk about some of the beautiful and interesting hypogeous (below-ground) and epigeous (above-ground) ectomycorrhizal sporocarps (mushrooms) found at her research sites. Mycorrhizae have important ecological impacts on plant diversity and plant community dynamics and a better understanding of the below-ground mycorrhizal community is essential for conservation and restoration of oak ecosystems.



Blue Oak
(*Quercus douglasii*)



FOOD FOR THE FALL: ACORN GINGERSNAPS

The acorn season is just around the corner. Birds, squirrels and deer have a fondness for acorns right from the tree. Humans, on the other hand, can not tolerate the bitter flavor of unprocessed acorns. Early Californians taught themselves how to grind and leach acorn meal and make acorn mush for a nutritious meal.

Featured here are directions for making acorn meal and a recipe for gingersnaps. Probably not your typical food of the early Californians, but experiment and enjoy anyway!

MAKING ACORN MEAL

- Crack nuts and remove skins
- Grind nuts using a food processor or large mortar and pestle
- Leach with hot water. Put several layers of cheese cloth in a colander, put acorn meal in center of cheesecloth, pour hot water over meal until no longer bitter.
- Dry in oven (200°F) or in sun
- Grind again as finely as possible
- Use acorn meal for cooking

ACORN GINGERSNAPS

- Cream: 3/4 cup butter
2 cups sugar
- Stir in: 2 beaten eggs
1/2 cup molasses
2 teaspoons baking soda
- Add: 2 cups acorn flour
13/4 cups all-purpose flour
3 teaspoons ginger
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon cloves
- Form dough into small balls. Bake on greased cookie sheet for 12 minutes at 325°F.



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

September-October 2005



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.

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