



GOLD FIELD NOTES

EL DORADO CHAPTER ☼ CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY ☼ January-February 2013

JANUARY 22ND PROGRAM GABBRO AND SERPENTINE PLANTS OF THE PINE HILL PRESERVE

CALENDAR

January 19 (Saturday)

Workshop.
Introduction into Mushroom Foraging and Identification with Phil Carpenter. Hosted by the Friends of the Chico State Herbarium, Chico, CA. For a details, see:
<http://www.csuchico.edu/biol/Herb/Events.html>

January 22 (Tuesday)

Program.
Pine Hill plant community and home landscaping. See details on this page.

January 26 (Saturday)

Workshop
Offered by El Dorado County Master Gardeners, the Edible Landscape Workshop emphasizes growing fruits, vegetables, and herbs in the context of the ornamental home landscape. For more information and to register see:
http://ucanr.org/sites/EDC_Master_Gardeners/Public_Education_Classes/

March 2 (Saturday)

Film.
Screening of *Green Fire* at the Cosmic Café, Placerville at 7 pm. Details inside.

March 26 (Tuesday)

Program.
CNPS and Vegetation mapping. See inside for details.

Evening programs are held on the fourth Tuesday of January, March, May, July, September, and November, and begin at 6:30 PM in the conference room of the Bethell-Delfino Agriculture Building, 311 Fair Lane, Placerville.

Dr. Deb Ayres (drayres@ucdavis.edu; 530.752.6852) is an Associate Project Scientist in Evolution and Ecology at U.C. Davis. She will talk about the endemic plants which are found on the gabbro and serpentine soils of the Pine Hill Preserve in the west county. She will discuss which native plants can be used in home landscapes on these soils which are widespread around Cameron Park as well as a belt



Photo: Steve Perry

Layne's Butterweed
(*Packera layneae*)

extending north and south. Dr. Ayres has also been a Master Gardener and landscape designer prior to her academic career, so she is well qualified to tie all of this information together.

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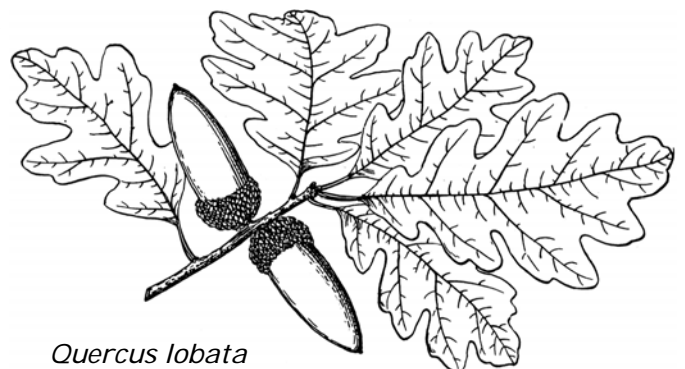


Photo: Sue Britting

Pine Hill Flannelbush
(*Fremontodendron californicum* ssp. *decumbens*)

FREE VALLEY OAKS

Tripp Mikich and Annie Walker still have a few valley oaks available free to members. See us at the General Meeting, or contact Annie at agastache@att.net.



Quercus lobata

For updates between newsletters
www.eldoradocnps.org

ALLELOPATHY

Yikes! When we were little we learned that birds sing in the spring because they are joyful and in love! Then we grew up and discovered what birdsong really says: "This is private property. Keep moving, buddy!"

Is this going to happen with fall colors too? All those grand and joyful colors, nature's last defiant celebratory outburst before winter sets in, express hostility? In some cases that is the case.

It's all about survival of course. The main reason trees drop their leaves, is to cut their losses before the leaves are killed by the frost. They pull as much as they can of their capital out of leaves and move it to their roots, storing it there till spring. The photosynthetic chlorophyll and some other stuff are converted to sugar, then moved to the roots and stored as starch till spring. The yellow colors are a side-effect of the process. That is what is left after the salvage is complete.

But the red colors are something else indeed. The red color in maple leaves, for example, is a chemical the trees produce in late fall, at considerable metabolic expense. Its sole purpose is to leach into the soil around the tree and inhibit competing plants' seeds from sprouting in the spring. This phenomenon is one example of "chemical allelopathy." It's just one example of how a plant can harm the competition.

There are other ways to do the same thing. Consider the Australian dry-climate trees in the Melaluka and Eucalyptus families. They conspire to cause forest fires, in order to prevent shrubbery from sucking precious water out of the soil below. The dry leaves contain a lot of oil. After falling from the trees they just lie around waiting for a spark. When the spark comes, the undergrowth gets burned up, but the thick punky bark of the trees insulates them from serious harm.

Oak and pine leaves contain large amounts of tannin. This gets into the soil and makes it quite acidic, and the acid prevents many small plant species from prospering. There are exceptions, plants which coevolved with oak and pine and really like acidic soils. Blueberries and azaleas for example.



Oak tree showing differences in plants growing close to the tree and farther away. Photo: Steve Parks

As for this author, he still intends to go hiking this October and enjoy the beautiful yellows and reds. They can't hurt ME, and that's all that counts. Right?

Steve Parks

Dr Parks is a native of Florida, and misspent his youth canoeing Florida's creeks with the Explorer Scouts. While doing so, he developed a taste for nature study and conservation. Parks has a Ph.D. in physics and his wife has one in biochemistry. Both belong to the Sierra Club and the Maryland Native Plant Society. All this gives the pair an unusual way of understanding ecosystems.

Editor's note: Steve Park's writes articles such as this for a regional periodical. Steve has kindly given us permission to use these articles in our newsletters.

RED FIR AND DOUGLAS FIR FOR SALE

Rosemary Carey has 15 red fir (*Abies magnifica*) available at \$3 each, or buy 9 and get the 10th one free. All of the stock has been professionally grown in TreePot 4 nursery containers, which are 4" square by 14" long, ideal for growing a long root system. These are all very healthy and attractive 3 year old seedlings, ranging from 14–22" high, which I expect to grow into beautiful trees. I also have 5 smaller Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) seedlings available at \$3 each. Contact me at 530.620.3631 or at rosemary-carey@comcast.net

California red fir grows naturally above 3900' in far northern California. At our latitude, it grows above 5500' on the Eldorado National Forest. In general, these seedlings would grow well at Lake Tahoe, at cabins in the mountains, and on north and east-facing exposures in Georgetown and Pollock Pines and above. They should be planted right now and deep-watered once a month with a hose or at the minimum 20 gallons of water through their first year while they are developing a good root system (late spring, summer, and fall until the fall rains and snow begin in earnest.) After that, if the 2012-13 winter is a normal snow year, they should be able to survive on precipitation only, although they will grow much faster with

supplemental summer watering.

On west and south-facing exposures in Georgetown, Pollock Pines, and above, to be on the safe side, I would recommend encircling drip irrigation for these red fir seedlings. As previously stated, these are general guidelines for where these seedlings are likely to thrive. Deep soils and at least filtered shade are preferable, so a south-facing site with deep soils and high shade may supply enough moisture that drip irrigation is not strictly necessary for their survival.

Douglas fir is widespread in El Dorado County between 2000-6600', depending on exposure.

FILM SCREENING GREEN FIRE: ALDO LEOPOLD AND A LAND ETHIC FOR OUR TIME

Saturday, March 2nd, 7pm at
the Cozmic Cafe, 594 Main
Street in Placerville

The California Native Plant Society (El Dorado Chapter), Center for Sierra Nevada Conservation, and the Placerville Natural Foods Co-op present the new Emmy Award-winning film, GREEN FIRE: Aldo Leopold and a Land Ethic for Our Time, with the film director Steve Dunsky of the US Forest Service on hand to introduce the film and answer questions.

Green Fire is a full-length documentary film about Aldo Leopold, author of A Sand County Almanac and legendary father of the modern conservation movement. Green Fire highlights Leopold's extraordinary career, tracing how he shaped and influenced the modern environmental and conservation movements, from hunter and fishing organizations like Trout Unlimited, to the Wilderness Society. Leopold is a giant, still relevant today, inspiring projects all over the country that connect people and land. His classic book, A Sand County



Almanac, is still read each year by hundreds of thousands of students and people all over the world. Proceeds to benefit environmental education for El Dorado County students.

Tickets available at the Cozmic Cafe, or Placerville Natural Foods Co-op. (\$10 (\$8 advance, \$7 Student). 15 and under free. No one turned away for lack of funds.)

MARCH MEETING MAPPING VEGETATION

On March 26 (Tuesday), a CNPS Vegetation Ecologist will explain their procedure for mapping vegetation, and demonstrate how to access existing internet maps of the Sierra Nevada Foothills vegetation.

The CNPS Vegetation Program has worked for 20 yrs. to inventory and classify plant communities across the state.

Describing and mapping vegetation scientifically enables conservationists and land managers to work to preserve existing plant communities at an ecosystem level.

This meeting will begin at 6:30 PM in the conference room of the Bethell-Delfino Agriculture Building, 311 Fair Lane, Placerville.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAPTER PRESIDENT

I wish everyone a happy and healthy New Year. It was a busy December which included a wonderful Chapter holiday party hosted by Cindy Podsiadlo at her northeast Placerville home. There was a lovely buffet which included Doris Corson's homemade bread, Cindy's salmon dip, spanakopita, chicken wings, vegetable dishes, and pecan pie, among many other tasty contributions. Tripp Mikich brought wild-collected, sauteed bleuet mushrooms. He showed us a non-edible mushroom that closely resembles bleuets. He has been searching for mushrooms for forty years, and that experience shows - and it inspired me with confidence. They were delicious. It was fun to see new faces and meet those new people at the party.

Also in December, all three existing members of the Executive Committee were re-elected to their positions for

another 2 year term. I am also delighted that Cindy Podsiadlo has become our new Vice-President for the next two years. Cindy's prior experience as both Treasurer and Chapter President amply qualifies her as Vice-President. Beyond knowing and carrying out all of those administrative duties, Cindy is enthusiastic about community outreach, especially at the Cameron Park library. She has created many lobby displays which introduce the public to the ecological significance of native plants. She also started a propagating group. She is an inspiring, energetic member who makes the Chapter's mission come to life. Think about her example and ask yourself what your talent is that could further our public profile? All talents are welcome.

The Chapter continues with our regularly scheduled speaker's series on January 22nd, and the fourth Tuesdays of

alternate months throughout the year. Information on upcoming topics can be found on our website:

www.eldoradocnps.org and now also on our Facebook page: El Dorado Chapter-California Native Plant Society, authored by Tripp Mikich, our Chapter Publicity Chair.

SAVE THE DATE!

On **Saturday, March 2nd, 2013**, the Chapter and local partners are screening **Green Fire: Aldo Leopold and a Land Ethic for our Time** at the Cozmic Café on Main Street in Placerville. See article in this newsletter for details on the film. Our goal is to raise awareness and participation in preserving the natural resources of our region by all outdoors-people, so please spread the word among your network. Advance ticket sales will be advertised soon on both our website and our Facebook page.

Rosemary Carey



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

January-February 2013

Coming Soon to Placerville!
**GREEN FIRE: Aldo Leopold and a
 Land Ethic for Our Time**
 March 2, 7 pm
 Cosmic Café, 594 Main Street
 See inside for details.



CALIFORNIA
 NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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

The California Native Plant Society is a state-wide 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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Learn more about State CNPS at: www.cnps.org