



# GOLD FIELD NOTES

EL DORADO CHAPTER ☼ CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY ☼ November-December 2017

## NOVEMBER 28<sup>TH</sup> PROGRAM PINE HILL PLANTS: ECOLOGY AND CONSERVATION

Learn about the biology and ecology of the rare plants found on gabbro soils in El Dorado County from Deb Ayres, a research scientist who has studied these species. Deb will be joined by Sue Britting who will talk about conservation of these species and the actions that wildlife agencies, CNPS and others have taken to secure their protection.

This program will be held on Tuesday, November 28, at 7 PM at the Planning Commission Room, Building C, 2850 Fairlane Court, Placerville. The program is free to both members and the public.

### CALENDAR

#### November 18 (Saturday)

Workshop.

Gardening in the Foothills with Steve Savage and UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County. 9 am to noon at Government Center Hearing Room - Building C, Placerville. Check website for details ([http://ucanr.edu/sites/edc\\_master\\_gardeners/](http://ucanr.edu/sites/edc_master_gardeners/))

#### November 28 (Tuesday)

Chapter program.

Ecology and conservation of the Pine Hill Plants. Presented by Deb Ayres and Sue Britting. See article to right for details.

#### January 23 (Tuesday)

Chapter program.

Oaks of California by John Kipping. See details inside.

#### March 4-5 (Saturday-Sunday)

Workshop

Introduction to Bryophytes taught by Brent Mishler, Director of the Jepson and UC Berkeley Herbaria. Hosted by the Jepson Herbarium, the workshop includes a day in the lab and a day in the field.. See website for details (<http://ucjeps.berkeley.edu/workshops/>).

*Evening programs are held on the fourth Tuesday of January, March, May, July, September, and November. The program begins at 7 PM at the Planning Commission Room, Building C, 2850 Fairlane Court, Placerville.*



Photo: Albert Everett Wieslander

Pine Hill - past, present and future? Photos of Pine Hill from 1931 (left) and present day (below).



Photo: Deb Ayres

## PLANT SALE SUCCESS— A BIG THANK YOU TO SUPPORTERS AND HELPERS!

A big heartfelt thank you to everyone that made this fall's native plant sale a huge success. It's only because of a dedicated group of volunteers and the enthusiastic gardeners that we are able to celebrate our native plants, raise important funds for the Chapter, and build community. Our vendors, including Floral Native Nursery, Gold Country Flora, California Flora Nursery, Cornflower Nursery,

and Wild Jule's seed pods, make it all possible as well. Our Education Chair, Pamela Hoover, organized specialized talks to promote growing milkweeds for Monarchs and the thoughtful use of native bunchgrasses for several eager learners. We appreciate all her hard work and all those that make the plant sales both fun and fruitful.

*(continued page 2)*

## TRADITIONAL USES OF CEANOOTHUS

California has a large variety of *Ceanothus* as well as a diverse habitat. There are at least 43 species and varieties, and the range includes the wind-whipped coastal areas as well as the dry, exposed slopes of the Mojave Desert. They vary in size from prostrate mats to large bushes to small trees. Although they can be deciduous or evergreen, almost all California varieties are evergreen. Leaves range from 3/16th of an inch to 3 inches long, and can be alternate or opposing in arrangement. Their color covers the full range of green shades. Branches are generally arranged in the same pattern as the leaves, i.e. alternating and alternating or opposing and opposing. Small flowers are clustered in densely massed terminal or lateral inflorescences. The inflorescences range from button-sized to almost 12 inches long. The color of the flowers vary from white to blue to purple, and, rarely, pink. The beautiful variety within the blues is often the draw to gardeners to this plant. The flower scent can be sweet or spicy, and sometimes the foliage has a resinous fragrance. The fruit is a three-celled capsule, with or without horns, less than a 1/4 inch in size. It's color ranges from ruby red to dark wine as it ripens.

The name *Ceanothus* comes from Greek and means "spiny plant." It is also commonly known as "Red Root", when it has been used medicinally. The root has been processed in cold infusions, tinctures, and decoctions. It is a bitter and astringent, and has been used for lymph, spleen, and liver congestion, as well as to slow bleeding such as uterine hemorrhage, nosebleeds, and hemorrhoids. Tea from the leaves and flowers were used by Native Americans to treat coughs, fevers, and colds. Deer brush root, when boiled, was used for coughs, sore throats, malaria, and kidney ailments.

Natives Americans also used *Ceanothus* as food. Buck Brush seed and Deer Brush leaves in Spring were eaten. The sticky fruits, when mixed with water, makes a soapy lather to wash with.



Pine mat *Ceanothus* (*Ceanothus prostratus*) grows very close to the ground and is often not more than 4-6 inches tall. This shrub is found in the yellow pine forests in the Eldorado National Forest. Photo: Paul Slichter.

Long, springy shoots were used in baskets and seed beaters. Finally, a red dye was made from the roots. American colonialists used the leaves as a tea substitute and gave it the name "New Jersey tea." This plant has a long and diverse history of being useful to various groups of human beings.

*Stefani Reichle*

*Reprinted from The Shooting Star,  
Sierra Foothills Chapter CNPS*



Deer brush (*Ceanothus integerrimus*) from recently burned area in Yosemite National Park. This shrub is about 5 feet tall and quite common in El Dorado County. Photo: Dawn Endico.

### PLANT SALE (*continued from p. 1*)

Thank you again to all those that volunteered their time: Kathleen Barco, Patrick Barron, Bill Blackburn, Tal Blackburn, Gail Cosmo, Bonnie East, Susan Friedrich, Pamela Hoover, Susan Levitsky, Martha Lovette, Jaime Ott, Shellie Perry, Karen Pitts, Cindy Podsiadlo, Linda Raymond, Jane Reed, Marcia Scott, Gwen Starrett, Mike Taylor, and Rich Wade.

Happy Growing!

Mahala & Christie, Plant Sale Co-Chairs

### YOUR PURCHASES CONTRIBUTE TO EDUCATION AND PLANT CONSERVATION

Gross sales from the Fall Plant Sale were \$13,374 which included plants, books, posters, and cards. Expenditures came to \$8,852 which included plants and seeds from 5 vendors, discounts applied to members' purchases, credit card fees, and some plant labels and printing. Therefore, the net profit is \$4,522. Hooray for a successful sale that will definitely help for providing a stipend to students going to the conference, future projects, and supporting the Clark Youth fund.

## LAVA CAPS IN THE PROPOSED CAPLES WILDERNESS AREA

In October, Annie Walker and Stubbs accompanied a few folks (Sue Britting, Janet Cicero, Randy Crooks, and Mike Taylor) to see a lava cap perched on top of a granite batholith at 6,240 feet elevation. This lava cap was first visited by Annie Walker and Tripp Mikich during the 2013 bitterroot (*Lewisia kelloggii*) surveys done by CNPS volunteers.

These lava caps are within the proposed Caples Creek Wilderness and may be subject to controlled burning in the future under the Caples Creek Ecological Restoration Project (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/eldorado/landmanagement/?cid=FSEPRD553069>). There are a series of volcanic openings here, and even though no *Lewisia* was found in 2013, there is still potential for it to be present. We explored two of the lava caps including a small dry lake, which ought to be more interesting in the spring-time.

The upper volcanic opening in this group has one individual pinyon pine (*Pinus monophylla*). Even though it is far from its normal home, it looks healthy tucked

under a juniper (*Juniperus grandis*) and is bearing cones this season. It's a bit out of place here on our west slope, as it is most commonly found on the east side of the Sierra in the high desert community. The nearest known pinyon pine is 10 miles to the east near Carson Pass.

The middle volcanic opening in this group had an unusual stand of oaks. About 6 to 8 feet high with well developed trunks, these trees/shrubs were unfamiliar to us. Growing nearby were low growing huckleberry oaks (*Quercus vaccinifolia*) and tall, stately black oaks (*Q. kelloggii*). The acorns cap of these plants were fuzzy like a gold cup oak (*Q. chrysolepsis*). We debated and wondered—is this a hybrid oak or another species? Huckleberry oak and gold cup oak do hybridize, so that's a possibility. Gold cup oak also has a shrubby, low growing form, so that might fit as well. Clearly, an interesting group of plants on the edge of the middle lava cap.

The annual plant community of lava caps is mostly dormant at this time of year, so no wonderful wildflower show today. For those of you who might want to visit it in the spring of 2018, please contact Annie Walker. We can get an informal field trip together. Best time would be in May.

## JANUARY 23<sup>RD</sup> PROGRAM CALIFORNIA'S OAKS

Local arborist John Kipping will talk about native oaks.

This program will be held on Tuesday, January 23, at 7 PM at the Planning Commission Room, Building C, 2850 Fairlane Court, Placerville. The program is free to both members and the public.



Pinyon pine cone. Photo: Annie Walker



The unusual stand of oaks on the edge of the middle lava cap.

Photo: Annie Walker.



Mike and Annie standing in front of the pinyon pine.

Photo: Sue Britting



El Dorado Chapter  
 California Native Plant Society  
 P.O. Box 1948  
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November-December 2017

**HELP NEEDED:**

**CLARK YOUTH FUND COORDINATOR**

For several years, we have been awarding grants to schools and other youth organizations to support plant conservation and education for kids. If the program sounds interesting and you would like to help us oversee it, please contact Bonnie East (contact information below) to learn more about this opportunity.

For Updates Visit Us on the Web  
[www.eldoradoCNPS.org](http://www.eldoradoCNPS.org) and



CALIFORNIA  
 NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

**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 conserve California native plants and their natural habitats, and increase understanding, appreciation, and horticultural use of native plants. 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](http://www.cnps.org) to join online.

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