



# GOLD FIELD NOTES

EL DORADO CHAPTER ☼ CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY ☼ SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2021

## SEPTEMBER 28 PROGRAM LANDSCAPE DESIGN PRIMER

How do you begin to tackle creating your garden? For many, it begins with the purchase of numerous ill-chosen plants that are haphazardly planted and later overgrow the space, die, or result in hodgepodgery. The creation of a pleasing, useful landscape begins with careful analysis aimed at identifying problems, coming up with solutions, and incorporating the features you want in your landscape. The very last step in this process is selecting the plants to bring your garden to life.

In this program Dr. Debra Ayres will introduce you to the nuts and bolts of landscape design. Beginning with the mid-century foundations of the California landscape, she will then guide you through landscape analysis with the help of her Questionnaire (available to print out on the El Dorado CNPS website:

<https://www.eldoradocnps.org/images/news-and-events/meetings/LANDSCAPEQUESTIONAIRE1.pdf>), giving specific examples of how the process works (see below Before and After pictures). Finally, she will discuss plant selection featuring native California plants.

A lifelong plant enthusiast, Debra has degrees in botany and plant ecology. She has been designing gardens since 1983 and was in the second class of Master Gardeners in El Dorado County in 1982. She was a project scientist at UC Davis for many years studying the genetics of invasive plants before retiring to El Dorado County where she is vice president of the El Dorado Chapter of the California Native Plant Society.

This presentation is free of charge and open to all as a webinar via Zoom. To register for the meeting (required), go to <https://tinyurl.com/EDC-CNPS> After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

### CALENDAR

#### September 28 (Tuesday)

Chapter program.  
A Landscape Primer. We are hoping to have this program in person at 7 pm. See to right for details.

#### September 24 to October 10 (online) & October 16 (pick-up)

Twice yearly plant sale.  
Online sale with in-person pick-up in Placerville. See inside for details.

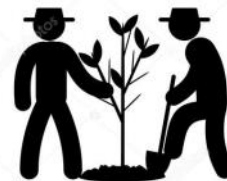
#### October 22 (Friday)

Plant walk.  
Conifers at Calaveras Big Trees State Park. See inside for details.

BEFORE



AFTER



# BOOK REVIEW: CALIFORNIA FORAGING, 120 WILD AND FLAVORFUL EDIBLES FROM EVERGREEN HUCKLEBERRIES TO WILD GINGER

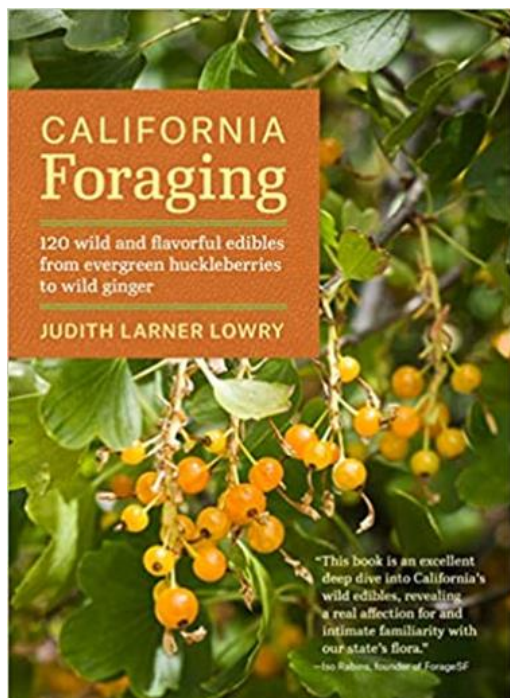
by Judith Larner Lowry (published by Timber Press)



When I started my ascent into gardening with native plants, one of the first books I read was Judith Larner Lowry's *Gardening with a Wild Heart*, and later *The Landscaping Ideas of Jays*. As a matter of fact, as I flip through them now I see loads of pages highlighted in pink and yellow, dog-eared and Post-it flagged. Her first two books overwhelmed me with what I didn't know about native plants, and inspired me to learn more through her melodic compositions of connectedness to the California landscape.

When *California Foraging* was released in 2014, I quickly returned to the Larner Seeds website to purchase a copy. This book has less verse than previous books, but it is after all a guidebook, though a bit large and heavy for one's daypack. It is a great tool for "armchair foraging" as the author describes, "which has merits all its own." Personally, I find it enjoyable to browse the familiar and unfamiliar plants in this book, learning more about them and believing I'll remember each nuance when next I encounter them on a trail or backroad. I've also perused the book prior to my California ramblings, taking iPhone photos from the book of plants I hope to meet.

The plants are organized alphabetically by the author's preferred common name, with botanical names and other common names below it. You will not find color tabs, keys, nor organization by family, form, or structure. This book is not meant as a field guide but rather as a reference to browse the plant pages, pictures, and the Seasonal Gathering Guide. The Seasonal Gathering Guide lists each plant, its edible parts (green plant parts, edible flowers, seeds, roots, and fruit, nuts, sap) and the months for harvesting each.



If you have some knowledge of California plants (and several weedy greens such as curly dock or chickweed), you will likely be familiar with most of the plants listed on the pages, or recognize them from their pictures. Further identification can be gained through Calflora, Calscape, the Jepson Herbarium and a myriad of ID apps. The author clearly states, "as a rule,

## FALL PLANT SALE: ORDER ONLINE SEPTEMBER 24 TO OCTOBER 10. PICK-UP OCTOBER 16.

Due to COVID, we will be holding the plant sale online again. Ordering will be done online starting Saturday, October X through the X. Pick up will be scheduled for Saturday, October XX between noon and 3 pm at the same place as always, Building C at the El Dorado County Government Center on Fairlane Court. Stay tuned for more details on our chapter webpage or the *Homegrown Habitat: Native Plant Gardening in El Dorado County* page on Facebook.

you should use more than one source to nail down a plant identification. Remember that the enemy of solid identification is wishful thinking."

### Information under each plant entry includes:

- How to Identify
- Where and When to Gather
- How to Gather
- How to Use
- Future Harvests
- Caution (if any)

Judith Lowry's overriding foraging principle is: "Do no harm, either to yourself, to your loved ones, or to the land whose secrets you seek to untangle." Early on in the book, she addresses the issues of learning where to forage legally, establishing your own wild food garden, and developing a sustainable foraging ethic. "When we forage, we become increasingly conscious of our long-term relationship with the plant world, and we want to keep the gift moving. In a give and take that becomes second nature, we earn the right to harvest wild plants by becoming responsible for their increase. Here is the goal: Imagine the satisfaction of returning to the harvesting site year after year to find the plants looking better and more numerous each time. Each plant entry in this book provides guidance on how to promote that plant's thriving. Spend time with the plant in question, observing it, thinking about its health, its reproductive strategies, and possible threats to its posterity. Providing this kind of attention is already a giveback to plants that will potentially feed you."

Now if you'll excuse me, there's a blue elderberry bush down the road that needs my attention.

This book is part of our chapter inventory and will be available for purchase during our fall online plant sale.

*Christie Johnson, Book Chair*





## PLANTS FOR A BRIGHT TOMORROW

More and more Californians are choosing native plants for their gardens. Why? Native plants have a beauty unique to California, are climate conscious, and provide invaluable habitat for the butterflies, birds, and other wildlife that share our home.

The California Native Plant Society is launching *Bloom! California*, a statewide campaign increasing native plant sales throughout our state's built environment – from backyard gardens to city parks to business fronts and more.

Starting this fall, over 100 participating

nurseries will offer a selection of native plants from 11 selected plants groups for your garden or outdoor space. In our county, the CNPS participating nursery will be El Dorado Nursery and Garden in Shingle Springs.

Plants will be available from these groups: ornamental grasses, mint, iris, currants, clarkia, manzanita, yarrow, sage, phacelia, toyon, and oaks. These were chosen because they are easy to care for, suited for the varying regions of California's diverse ecosystem, and have "habitat power"—they attract and support our native butterflies, birds, bees and other wildlife.

For more information about *Bloom! California*, visit the website: <https://bloomcalifornia.org>.

## NOVEMBER 16 PROGRAM: NEW LIGHT ON *CALOCHORTUS* EVOLUTION

Presented by Prof. Thomas Givnish (University of Wisconsin, Madison) 7pm, Tuesday November 16, 2021 and will be hosted remotely on Zoom. **NOTE this is the week BEFORE Thanksgiving.**



## REMEMBERING CNPS FELLOW L. DONALD SMITH (1919-2002)

**Editor's Note:** In honor of Don Smith's birthday on October 1 we are reprinting this article from the Fall 2002 issue of the *CNPS Bulletin*.

People who knew Don always remember the first time they met. It may have been a field trip to Pine Hill or Carson Pass, or if they were lucky, on a trip to his favorite place: Kings Meadow. He was impressive in a quiet way.

Don and his wife Betty were active in CNPS since its founding and were charter members of the El Dorado Chapter, established in 1994. He was the Field Trip chair until 2001 and led trips from the Foothills to the Sierra crest. His popularity as a trip leader was well deserved as he explained natural history of the areas to both novice and experienced botanists.

He, often with his good friend G. Ledyard Stebbins, explored and botanized many locations around El Dorado County and added to the list for the Eldorado National Forest; he helped develop a flora that now includes over 1250 taxa. He was honored as a Fellow of CNPS in

1996 for his extensive contributions as an amateur botanist. Don was a charter member of the Society who participated in the inaugural rare plant conference in 1974 that resulted in the first rare plant list entitled "Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants of California." Now grown to become the *CNPS Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants*, it is in its sixth edition.

As owner of a small non-industrial forest areas in the Sierra, Don was a careful land steward and particularly loved his Kings Meadow. The flora for Kings Meadow includes over 250 vascular plants including Pacific yew (*Taxus brevifolia*), twin flower (*Linnaea borealis* var. *longiflora*), sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*), and unusual red form of alpine lily (*Lillium parvum*) and seven species of orchids. He created a small display area for carnivorous plants that, though not native to the exact area, are thriving. Kings Meadow will continue to be a popular chapter fields trip

Kings Meadow expresses Don's spirit. He was the backbone of the El Dorado



Chapter as a person who loved nature and generously shared the knowledge acquired over a lifetime in the Sierra. He helped and inspired many people, some of whom became botanists. He cared about the public lands the U.S. Forest Service is entrusted to manage. His concern for our natural heritage is an inspiration to all who knew him. He will be dearly missed.

# PLANT WALK: SIERRA CONIFERS AT CALAVERAS BIG TREES STATE PARK, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2021

Curious about the amazing diversity of conifers (cone-bearing plants) in the Sierra Nevada? Then a walk through the forest at Calaveras Big Trees State Park with our chapter is right for you! During our walk in the park, you'll learn about the families of conifers found in California and get to know representatives of all three families, of course including *Sequoiadendron giganteum*, giant sequoia - aka "big tree"- the world's most massive tree.

You'll also learn about additional Sierra conifers not seen at Calaveras BTSP, so that you can recognize them and complete a "bucket list" of visits to see them with a Sierra Nevada Conifer Passport booklet that you'll receive on our walk! For those of you especially interested in

this wonderful group of plants, here are some suggested books with great info, photos, drawings and maps: *Conifers of California* by Ronald M. Lanner, 1999, Cachuma Press; *Conifers of the Pacific Slope* by Michael Edward Kauffman, 2013; and *Conifer Country*, also by Michael Kauffman, 2012. Also check out Michael's website, [conifercountry.com](http://conifercountry.com), for info about the conifers of California, Oregon, and Washington. P.S. We won't neglect non-conifer trees on our walk at Big Trees, such as mountain dogwood, *Cornus nuttallii*, which is gorgeous at the park in the fall!

To join us on this walk, email Ginna Meyer ([vcmeyer@me.com](mailto:vcmeyer@me.com)).

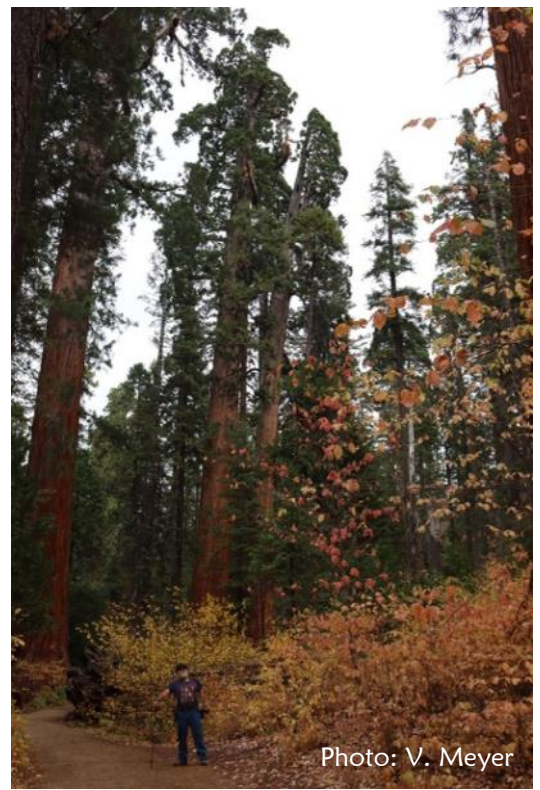


Photo: V. Meyer

## TRADITIONAL USES OF CEANOTHUS

*Editor's note: This article by Stefani Reichle was reprinted from the November 2015 issue of The Shooting Star, the newsletter of the Sierra Foothills chapter.*

California has a large variety of Ceanothus as well as a diverse habitat. There are 135 species native to California, 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 varies 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.

Native peoples 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. Long, springy shoots were used in baskets and seed beaters. Finally, a red dye was made from the roots. American colonials 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.

Sources: The Way of Herbs, Michael Tierra; Discover California Shrubs, Mary Ruth Casebeer; California Native Plants for the Garden, Carol Bornstein and others.



Buck brush (*C. cuneatus*). Photo: 2016 Calscape

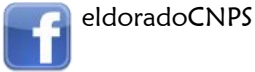




El Dorado Chapter  
 California Native Plant Society  
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September-October 2021

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 journal *Artemisia*, quarterly magazine, *Flora*, 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.

**CHAPTER OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

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