



# SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAINS

CHAPTER OF THE CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH 2001

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## DATES TO REMEMBER

**Tues., Jan. 9, 7:30 pm:** Board Meeting at home of Kathy LaShure, Whittier

**Sun., Jan. 14, 9:00 am:** Eaton Canyon Plant Walk with Gabi & Cliff McLean

**Thurs. Jan. 25, 7:30 pm:** On the List: Endangered, Now What? with Scott Eliason

**Sat., Feb. 3, 9:00 am:** Ramble around Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden

**Sun., Feb. 11, 9:00 am:** Eaton Canyon Plant Walk with Rick Fisher

**Thurs., Feb. 22, 7:30 pm:** Manzanitas with Bart O'Brien

**Sun., Mar. 11, 9:00 am:** Eaton Canyon Plant Walk with Eva Morgan

**Thurs., Mar. 22, 7:30 pm:** California Lilacs: Up Close with Jane Strong

**Sat., Mar. 24, 9:00 am:** Ben Overturf Trail hike in Monrovia Canyon Park

## WELCOME! New members

Anne F. Celona  
Lois Goodman  
Annalisa Miller  
Patricia Morton  
Karen & Martin Schlageter  
Sandra Tung

## PLANTS VS. PEOPLE?

Lyn McAfee

Chapter Public Relations

Long ago and far away I had a botany professor with *attitude*. On one wall of Dr. Clarkson's tiny office a large poster declared: **UP WITH PLANTS! PEOPLE ARE NO DAMN GOOD.** At the time I was amused and mildly supportive of the philosophy. In those far-distant days, it was possible for botanists—and students of botany—to be intellectual purists.

Today botanists and native plant enthusiasts cannot afford such purity. There has been too much destruction of habitat as the human population spread over the land, obliterating plant populations with asphalt and concrete.

People must be advocates for native plants. We are the only hope for preserving those precious remaining forests, meadows, and vernal pools. We are the only hope for protecting rare plants that could be bulldozed into extinction.

If I could go back in time, I would try to persuade my professor to change his poster, perhaps to one that read: **UP WITH PLANTS! PEOPLE CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE.**

*And speaking of making a difference, please take a moment to look at your address label. If there is a green oak leaf, your CNPS membership expired at some point during the last 6 months. Please consider starting 2001 with a renewed commitment to our native flora. Thank you!*

## ENVIRONMENTAL ROUNDTABLE

Last fall I decided to make CNPS and the conservancy movement in the San Gabriel Valley my main volunteer commitments. As a result I began attending the Environmental Roundtables sponsored by the San Gabriel Mountains Regional Conservancy. Here's a brief report from those meetings.

The November meeting focused on open space planning. Several speakers from public and private agencies explained their planning efforts. I learned that Southern California is the "hotspot of bio-diversity," with the greatest number of species facing extinction pressures. One way of protecting habitat is through Land Trusts, and there are 55 trusts between Santa Barbara and the Mexican border—30 in the L.A. area. I was amazed to find that many agencies are independently developing environmental master plans with the expectation that all plans will mesh at some point in the future.

The December Environmental Roundtable explained the business aspects of running a non-profit organization. Experts talked about such things as

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budgets, financial reports, investments, and accounting practices. Of special interest to me was a video “Land Trusts in America: Guardians of the Future,” produced by a national organization called the Land Trust Alliance.

*Editor’s Note:* See related article on local land conservancies by Rick Fisher on page 4.

## CNPS REORGANIZES

Remember the letter? It came from CNPS president Jake Sigg in November seeking member suggestions for steps that can be taken to improve the organization. The board of directors is restructuring the governance component of CNPS to make it more responsive and effective. The letter asked us to provide input: by phone or email, by filling out a questionnaire on the web site, and/or by attending one of six meetings held around the state in November.

I went to a meeting in Orange County. Five other members from various CNPS chapters were there and we discussed the issues with Marc Smiley, the consultant working with the board on this project. You can still put in your two cents worth—fill out a questionnaire at [www.cnps.org](http://www.cnps.org) (click on “restructuring”, then click on “questionnaire”) or call the state office. The board will be making final decisions in March.



[www.PasadenaAudubon.org/calendar](http://www.PasadenaAudubon.org/calendar)

If you misplace your newsletter or forget to enter our CNPS Chapter activities in your personal calendar or organizer, don’t despair. Thanks to Jane Strong, our programs and outings can now be found on the Internet at the Pasadena Audubon Chapter’s website. Thanks Jane!

## CHAPTER EVENTS

Meetings are held at Eaton Canyon Nature Center (map on back cover) on the fourth Thursday of the month. Informal plant identification and social time is from 7:00 to 7:30 pm; programs start promptly at 7:30 pm.

## PROGRAMS

**Thurs., Jan 25, 7:30 pm:** *On the List: Endangered, Now What?* with Scott Eliason. What happens in the field when species are listed as endangered? Scott Eliason, Mountaintop District Biologist for the San Bernardino National Forest, will give examples of native plants that have been listed recently and explain what protections they have now that they didn’t have before. Case studies will include actions being taken to protect and recover listed plants under current conservation programs.

**Thurs., Feb. 22, 7:30 pm:** *Manzanitas* with Bart O’Brien. Nearly everyone with some familiarity with California’s native flora has a generic idea of what a manzanita is: leathery leaves, smooth red bark, charming white or pink fairy lantern flowers that appear in late winter or early spring. Bart O’Brien, Director of Horticulture at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, will help us figure out what sets our local Manzanitas apart. And he’ll probably give us some tips for growing them in our home gardens, as well as telling us where to observe them in the wild.



*Arctostaphylos glauca*  
Big Berry Manzanita  
from Abrams’ *Illustrated*  
*Flora of the Pacific States*

**Thurs., Mar. 22, 7:30 pm:** *California Lilacs: Up Close and Personal* with Jane Strong. Do you know which *Ceanothus* seeds explode like bombs when you pass by, and which ones stick to you like glue? Come to Jane Strong’s *Ceanothus* workshop and find out! She will help us identify eight local species of *Ceanothus* and explain all the botanic terms you’ll need to know. She’ll also share her knowledge of where to find these beauties in the mountains, in botanic gardens and in nurseries. Our understanding of this interesting native species will be enhanced by specimens Jane brings to the workshop—branches from the wild, plants in pots, herbarium specimens, slides, drawings and diagrams.

## OUTINGS

**Sun., Jan. 14, 9:00 am:** *Eaton Canyon Plant Walk* with Gabi & Cliff McLean

**Sat., Feb. 3, 9:00 am:** *Ramble around Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden* with Rick Fisher & Harry Spilman. No matter what the weather’s been like, there are always plenty of interesting plants to check out in Claremont. Meet in the parking lot (1500 N. College Ave., Claremont).

**Sun., Feb. 11, 9:00 am:** *Eaton Canyon Plant Walk* with Rick Fisher

**Sun., Mar. 11, 9:00 am:** *Eaton Canyon Plant Walk* with Steve Fischer

**Sat., Mar. 24, 9:00 am:** *Ben Overturf Trail Hike in Monrovia Canyon Park* with Rick Fisher. Find out just how much you learned about *Ceanothus* from Jane Strong on the 22nd. Call Rick for details: 626-335-9304.

## PLANT PROFILE:

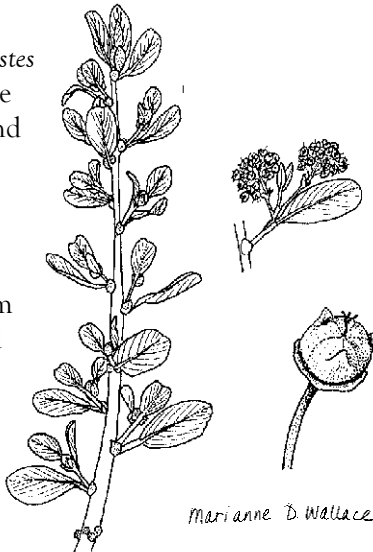
*Ceanothus cuneatus*; Buck Brush

*Ceanothus oliganthus*; Hairy-Leaved Ceanothus

Rhamnaceae: Buckthorn Family

According to *The Jepson Manual*, there are 61 species and varieties of *Ceanothus* in California. These are classified into two tribes: *Ceanothus* which have *thin* stipules and whose seeds *do not* have horns and *Cerastes* which have *thick* stipules and whose seeds *do* have horns.

Pictured at the right is *Ceanothus cuneatus* or Buck Brush which is an example of the *Cerastes* tribe. This rigid evergreen shrub is one of the main components of California chaparral and is the most widely distributed species of *Ceanothus* in our state. After a wildfire sweeps through chaparral, Buck Brush seeds sprout readily creating dense thickets which can appear as if snow-covered when in bloom from March to May. These fragrant-flowered shrubs grow on dry slopes between 800' and 5700'. Locally Buck Brush can be found in Bouquet Canyon, Echo Mountain, Mill Creek Summit and San Antonio Canyon.

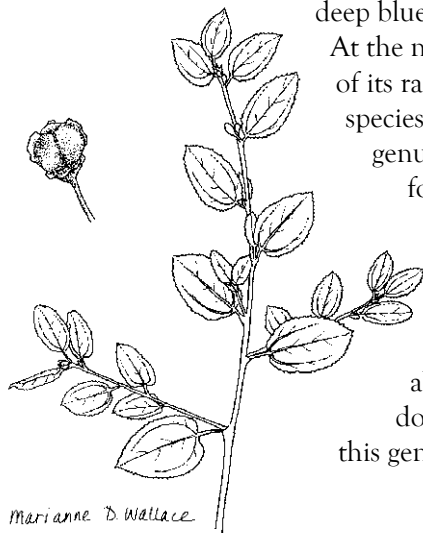


*Ceanothus oliganthus*, Hairy-leaved

*Ceanothus*, pictured below, represents the

*Ceanothus* tribe. It is a shrub that sometimes becomes tree-like growing to 10' in dry brushy woods and canyon slopes at elevations of 1450' to 4500'. It has deep blue to purplish flowers with little fragrance.

At the northern, southern and eastern extremes of its range it hybridizes with other *Ceanothus* species (a characteristic that is common of the genus, giving us many handsome cultivars for landscape use). Just hike up the Mt. Wilson Toll Road or drive through Pacoima Canyon to find this *Ceanothus*.



*Editor's Note:* If you want to know more about our local species of *Ceanothus*, don't miss Jane Strong's presentation on this genus March 22.

## Do You Know This Family?

(Answer appears on page 6, back cover.)

Annuals, perennials, shrubs or trees with alternate, usually compound leaves with stipules. The flowers are perfect, and generally irregular or bilaterally symmetrical with 10 stamens. The fruit forms a dehiscent, 2-valved capsule or pod, or it is indehiscent, 1-seeded and achene-like. Many members are of economic importance, providing food, industrial materials or ornamental plants.

## MEMBER PROFILE:

Rick Fisher

If you've heard this story before, bear with me. In spring of 1985, a young (only 21), not quite yet graduated, Landscape Architecture student found himself sitting in the classroom of the original Eaton Canyon Nature Center, waiting for a CNPS meeting to end. All I remember of the meeting was that Dorothy Poole, long time Nature Center personality, was giving a presentation on Native American uses of native plants. Next thing I knew, she was passing out instruments and asking us to do something musical (and most likely native American-inspired). I was getting a little worried.

However, my presentation to the group soliciting their support for a grant we were trying to obtain to begin the first stage of renovating the native plant garden at the Lummis Home in Highland Park had gone well. Everyone humored Dorothy, the music was done, and I was asked to join 'the group' for post-meeting activities at the John Bull pub in Old Town Pasadena (a tradition in need of revival, I wonder?).

All of this is by way of saying that evening, not only was I eventually dragged deeper into the depths of CNPS life than I ever imagined, but I also got to know several people who became important friends. Some more than others, perhaps. Mickey Long (who has patiently taught me more than either of us can remember about natural history—especially birds), Horace Birgh (a fantastic field botanist, and another patient teacher—come see us sometime, Horace?), Rebecca Rothenberg (I miss you, Becky—some of you may recognize this first bit from her memorial service), Harry Spilman (still the same after all these years—that's a compliment Harry), and infamous others.

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In what seemed like no time, I was chapter newsletter editor, chapter president, conservation chair (since 1986 and still going, ugh).

My interest in native plants actually came about at CalPoly, where I was introduced to, and intrigued by the appropriateness and subtle, natural beauty of our native flora. Ever since my senior class work involving the Lumis Home, my professional practice of Landscape Architecture has focused heavily on native plants, resource conserving site design, and integrating habitat-providing plants into the human landscape, as well as restoration and revegetation projects. My education in the area of land planning has served well in local conservation/land use issues (as well as a working knowledge of CEQA).

Nowadays, I am somewhat less involved in day-to-day chapter doings, but one may find me prowling about the local countryside researching populations of local rare plants, such as *Malacothamnus davidsonii*, *Dudleya densiflora*, *Dudleya multicaulis*, *Brodiaea filifolia*, *Berberis nevini*, *Astagalus brauntonii*, etc. I am also working with the San Gabriel Mountains Regional Conservancy on local land acquisition and restoration projects. Time for me to get back to the land, so to speak.

In hindsight, I have to say that I value most the terrific people I have met through both local and state CNPS activities. You can never have too many 'good people' in your life.



## LOCAL & REGIONAL CONSERVANCIES ALONG THE SAN GABRIEL FOOTHILLS

Rick Fisher

Chapter Conservation

Cruising along the 210 Freeway, most people would be quite surprised to discover how much of the undeveloped foothill lands



they see at the base of the San Gabriel Mountains are privately owned (and subject to development), and not preserved as part of the Angeles National Forest. Private land ownership, escalating land values, population growth, and poor planning/zoning decisions have had many of us fearing the loss of the last open spaces in the foothills. The threat of total build out ("Glendale-ization") of these last remnants of open space has increased steadily during the last 20 years. Lately, it has reached critical mass, sparking several communities to form local and public conservancies and land trusts. The unfortunate truth is that private landowners have certain rights based on how the land was zoned at purchase (appropriately or not) and they have very effective means of acquiring increased zoning densities through political processes (local Planning Commissions/City Councils). In many cases, the only way to stop an unpopular development is to purchase the land or to create a conservation easement.

As many as ten conservancies have formed or are being formed in the greater San Gabriel Valley, an area of just fewer than three million people. However, this is part of a growing national phenomenon. These local land conservancies have become key players in the battle against urban sprawl by helping citizens to actively acquire open space and manage watersheds in their own communities. Conservancies are viewed with great potential to create partnerships within their communities to balance private land ownership issues with local environmental, social, economic, and health concerns.

Of course, Conservancies may be either public or private organizations. The newly formed San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (SGLLARMC, which is a regional governmental agency similar to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy) is the new "big dog" on the regional block, with millions of funding dollars forthcoming from ballot-approved bond issues. It is comprised of appointees from state, regional and local governmental agencies, with specified roles, jurisdictions, and requirements that are spelled out in the State Law that created the Conservancy. In contrast, private conservancies are land trusts that typically are local, 501(c)(3) nonprofit, public benefit corporations offering tax deductions to contributors and holding tax-exempt status. Both types of conservancies may hold and maintain protected lands.

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The Newsletter of the San Gabriel Mountains Chapter  
of the California Native Plant Society is published bi-monthly  
and is free to Chapter members. Non-member subscription is \$5.00.

To join the California Native Plant Society, write to  
CNPS, 909 Twelfth St., Suite 116, Sacramento, CA 95814.

Please specify San Gabriel Mountains Chapter. Enclose check payable to CNPS.  
Membership categories: Individual/Library - \$35; Student/Retired/Limited Income - \$20;  
Family/Group - \$45; Supporting - \$75; Plant Lover - \$100; Patron - \$250.00; Life - \$1000.

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Private local conservancies can acquire and/or protect land through conservation easements and they can also support land stewardship through local education, outreach, and awareness activities. Out of necessity, they have grown beyond merely vocalizing local environmental issues to become a part of the long-term management of local lands.

The Sierra Madre Mountain Conservancy, formed in 1989, is the oldest of our local conservancies. Sierra Madre probably has more open space per capita than any city in Southern California. The City has declared itself a wildlife sanctuary and has acquired Prop A funds to purchase open space and conservation easements.

The Glendora Community Conservancy, formed in 1991, has received a variety of grants to purchase open space, including a reserve for a State listed Endangered plant, the thread-leaved Brodiaea (*Brodiaea filifolia*), protected with the help SGM/CNPS. The Glendora Conservancy is the recipient of the largest land donation of record in the San Gabriel Valley; 129 acres. Together these two pioneering conservancies have acquired and protected nearly 500 acres of land with grants estimated at \$7 million.

Dr. Ann Croissant, spiritual leader of the Glendora Community Conservancy, was also instrumental in the establishment of a regional body, the San Gabriel Mountains Regional Conservancy, which acts as an umbrella group, providing staff to assist partnering and fund-raising between all the local non-profit conservancies in the San Gabriel Valley. Because of support provided by the SGMRC, other conservancies are springing up, moving many agencies to reconsider the importance of regional open space issues.

Other new conservancies and land trusts are: Altadena Foothills Conservancy, Tonner Canyon Wilderness Conservancy (Diamond Bar); Monrovia Mountains Conservancy; Foothill Wildlife Conservancy (Monrovia); San Dimas Foothills Conservancy; and Friends of the Bernard Field Station. Covina, Azusa, Baldwin Park and Duarte. are expressing interest.

Currently, the San Gabriel Mountains Regional Conservancy is looking for resources to fund a comprehensive regional framework study. The study would map open space and natural resources for future local, regional, and county planning and policy decisions within the San Gabriel Valley. Such a document would potentially have wide application for both planning and grant writing applications. A faculty/student consulting team from Cal Poly Pomona's Graduate School of Landscape Architecture will perform the overall study.

## **NATIVE.NET**

**[www.sgmrc.org](http://www.sgmrc.org)**

*San Gabriel Mountains Regional Conservancy*

Here's a great website just for our corner of the world. The Conservancy's mission is to "promote the preservation of land and/or buildings for historic, educational, ecological, recreational scenic, or open space opportunities." The elegant and easy-to-use site features a recap of the organization's past successes and a look at their future roles and goals with regard to local land-use issues.

If you're interested in becoming more informed on local land-use concerns or if you have a student in your family who needs information for a school report, this is a fabulous resource.

## **SPECIAL EVENT**

### **BEYOND BASIC BOTANY**

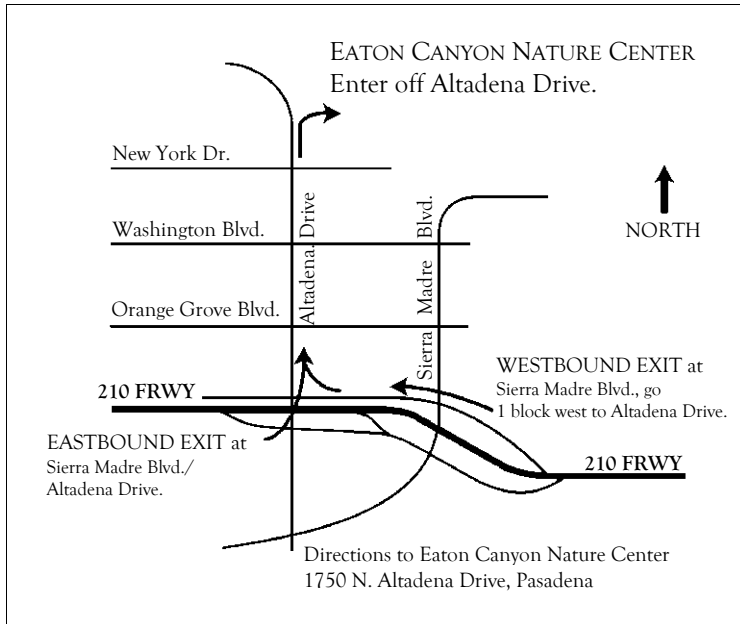
Join us at the Eaton Canyon Nature Center classroom for plant study with everyone's favorite naturalist, Mickey Long. Using live and preserved plant material, you will be guided beyond the basics in learning more about the mysteries of plant structure. If you have never looked at plant parts under a dissecting microscope, you will be amazed and delighted by their intricacy and perfection. As you learn, those confusing terms on the all the plant keys and diagrams will become increasingly clear. Starting on Jan. 16, 2001 classes will be held on three consecutive Tues. evenings from 7:00 to 9:30. Tuition is \$45. Class size will be limited to 20, so get your check in soon!

If you miss these classes, we will be following them, after a two week break, with a four week session on plant families, also taught by Mickey Long. Learning how plants are grouped together will be a major step in your botanical understanding. A Saturday field trip will enhance these classes. Tuition for the second series of classes, which begins Feb. 20, 2001, is \$75, and class size will again be held at 20.

Mail your checks (made out to Los Angeles County Dept. of Parks & Recreation) to Eaton Canyon Nature Center, 1750 North Altadena Drive, Pasadena CA 91107. Be sure to include your phone number. You will be notified of your enrollment status. If you have questions, please call the Nature Center at (626) 398-5420.



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**SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAINS CHAPTER**  
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And the answer is: **Fabaceae**  
 or Legume Family

**Dedicated to the Preservation of the California Native Flora**

*The California Native Plant Society is a statewide nonprofit organization of amateurs & professionals with a common interest in California's native plants. The mission of the Society is to increase understanding & appreciation of California's native plants & to conserve them and their natural habitats, through education, science, horticulture & advocacy. Membership is open to all.*

*Membership includes the quarterly journal Fremontia, the quarterly Bulletin which gives statewide news & announcements of Society activities & conservation issues, & the chapter newsletter.*



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