



THE PAINTBRUSH

MAY—JUNE 2002 NEWSLETTER

SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAINS CHAPTER
CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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DATES TO REMEMBER

Sun., May 12, 9:00 am: *Eaton Canyon Plant Walk* with Gabi & Cliff McLean.

Thurs., May 23, 7:30 pm: *Historic Fire Regime in Southern California Shrublands* presented by Jon E. Keeley

Sat. May 25, 10 am-3 pm: *Sulphur Springs, San Gabriel Mountains* field trip with Jane Strong.

May 31-June 2: *CNPS Chapter Council* in Bishop, CA (see pg. 7)

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

Thurs., June 27, 7:30 pm: *Oaks of Southern California* presented by Fred Roberts

Sun., Aug 11: *Butterflies & Butterfly Nectar Plants along the Angeles Crest* field trip with Jane Strong

PLANETS, PLANTS, PEOPLE . . . and PRESERVATION

By Lyn McAfee, Chapter President

As I sit at my desk, my gaze is drawn to the window. It's spring! The sky is blue, fluffy white clouds float by, flowers are blooming, birds are singing, and the fragrance of new beginnings fills the air.

Always at this time of year I am struck by how stunningly beautiful planet Earth is, and how lucky we are to be here to enjoy it. What a different experience we would have if our species were adapted to living on Venus or Mars, both earthlike planets.

Venus is only slightly smaller than Earth. It has active volcanoes and a similar chemical composition. But Venus' atmosphere is mostly made up of carbon dioxide and it has cloud layers of sulfuric acid many miles thick. As we know, the dense atmosphere produces a runaway greenhouse effect that makes the surface temperature of the planet hot enough to melt lead.

Mars, on the other hand, is mighty cold with a temperature always below freezing. The red planet does have many features like Earth's—canyons, gorges, active volcanoes and frozen water. But the thin atmosphere has almost no oxygen, thus no ozone to protect the surface against deadly radiation from the Sun and outer space.

Mars and Venus may be geologically fascinating, even beautiful in their own way. But try to imagine what it would be like to live without the richness and diversity of biological life as found on our home planet.

Will we humans be able to preserve the magnificent variety of plant and animal life as we know it today? Or will we allow decisions to be made that will eventually turn Earth into another blazing hot Venus—or freezing cold Mars—devoid of biological life?

CNPS is dedicated to the protection of native plant life in our local areas. Each of us must actively support this effort. It's the least we can do for Mother Earth.

MEMBER PROFILE

Gabi & Cliff McLean

Cliff and Gabi McLean have been members of CNPS since 1993. Both were attending a class to become naturalist-docents with the Eaton Canyon Nature Center Associates (ECNCA), a volunteer organization to support the Natural Area Parks system in Los Angeles county. At that time, they were searching for a way to learn more about native plants since they missed the instructions on this topic. Their absence from class was excused: after all, they were on their honeymoon.

Their romance has held strong; they attribute this to the many interests they share. Hiking in the local mountains is high on their list, together with a keen curiosity for natural history and love of the beauty and complexity in nature. They both name nature photography as a hobby, and several of their photos have been used in the Eaton Canyon Nature Center exhibits and slide shows. Gabi produced the photo book about common plants in Eaton Canyon, which has been used by many visitors to identify flowers, shrubs, and trees in the area. Cliff is working on creating a plant CD for Eaton Canyon and the lower elevation San Gabriel Mountains. Both continue to dedicate a lot of their free time to sharing their enthusiasm for nature and educate people about natural history and conservation.

Neither Cliff nor Gabi is an academically trained naturalist. Cliff holds a master's degree in physics from Northwestern University, and has worked in the computer industry for over thirty years, as a Systems Engineer with IBM and StorageTek. He is sought after as

(Continued on page 4)

CHAPTER EVENTS

Meetings are held at Eaton Canyon Nature Center (map on back cover) on the fourth Thursday of the month with the exception of Nov. (5th Thurs.). Informal plant identification and social time from 7:00 to 7:30 pm; programs start promptly at 7:30.

NOTE: There will be no evening programs in July & August.

PROGRAMS

Thurs., May 23, 7:30 pm: *Historic Fire Regime in Southern California Shrublands* presented by Jon E. Keeley. Prior to modern fire suppression did chaparral ecosystems experience small frequent fires, as some researchers claim? Or were large high-intensity fires the norm? Dr. Keeley (botanist at the Sequoia & Kings Canyon Field Station of the USGS) will present his research into the historical picture of fire frequency and fire suppression to answer this question.

Thurs., June 27, 7:30 pm: *Oaks of Southern California* presented by Fred Roberts. Oaks are one of the most important and recognizable groups of plants in Southern California. Most of ours are shrubs, a few are trees. Many hybridize freely. While others are a dominant part of the landscape, some are known only from a single hillside. Fred Roberts, author of *An Illustrated Guide to the Oaks of the Southern Californian Floristic Province*, will present an overview of the oaks that occur from Santa Barbara County south to the Mexican border. Mr. Roberts will tell us where we can find these oaks, how to tell them apart, and how they relate to each other.

OUTINGS

Sun., May 12, 9:00 am: *Eaton Canyon Plant Walk* with Gabi & Cliff McLean. Take the mother in your life out to enjoy Mother Nature!

Sat. May 25, 10 am-3 pm: *Sulphur Springs, San Gabriel Mountains* with Jane Strong. We'll be exploring this ecotone where the high desert meets the high mountains. There are several different moist habitats, each with their own assemblage of plants, including *Rosa californica*, our featured Plant Profile in this issue (see page 3). This area also

sports three different kinds of monardellas. Mountain lion and bear have been sighted here—lions and tigers and bears, oh my! But it should be a great place for plant watching!

Take the Angeles Crest Highway, State Route 2, north from the 210 Freeway about 28 miles to the Three Points junction with the Santa Clara Divide Road (3N17), also called the road to Sulphur Springs. Take 3N17 past Mt. Hillyer to Alder Saddle. Then

take 5N04, the right-hand paved road, to the end which is heavily gated and park. Bring the usual gear & Adventure Pass.



Swertia neglecta
Pine Green-Gentian
from *A Field Guide to
the Rare Plants of the
Angeles Nat'l. Forest*

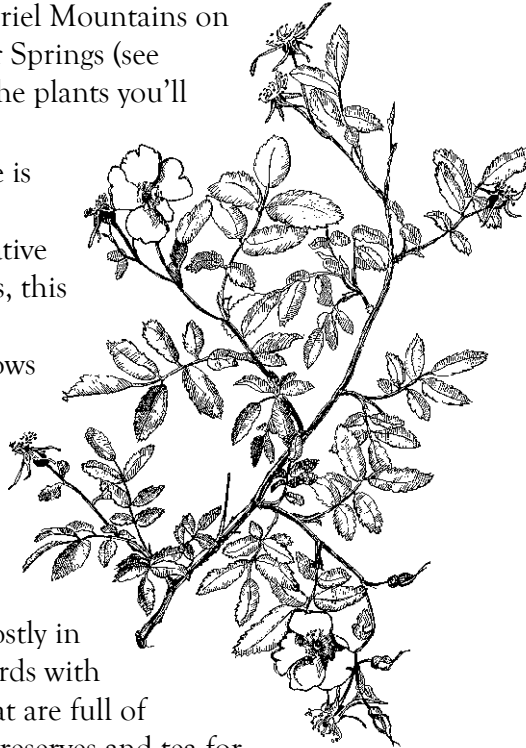
PLANT PROFILE:

Rosa californica, California Wild Rose

Rosaceae; Rose Family

Text by Kathy LaShure, Illustration by Christine Stetter (from *Shrubs of the Great Basin* by Hugh N. Mozingo, University of Nevada Press)

If you venture into the San Gabriel Mountains on our May 25 field trip to Sulpher Springs (see facing page for details), one of the plants you'll meet is the lovely, fragrant *Rosa californica*. California Wild Rose is the most widely distributed, abundant and variable of the native roses. Like all of the state's roses, this species occurs where there is a constant source of moisture; grows from wandering roots, forming thickets; throws up multiple, thorny canes (stems); has winter deciduous, pinnately compound, serrated leaves; displays small clusters of open, single, finely perfumed roses mostly in some shade of pink; provides birds with bright red-orange hips (fruit) that are full of vitamin C and make excellent preserves and tea for humans.



California Wild Rose has stout, recurved prickles on its 3 to 9 foot canes. Sometimes its large pink flowers, and the hips which follow, occur in large clusters of up to 30 blossoms. It tolerates more sun than other wild rose species. You're most likely to find it along creek banks, near seeps, and where roadside runoff collects. It occurs below 5000 feet throughout the California Floristic Province, that is, all of the State west of the dry regions of the Great Basin, Mohave, and Colorado Deserts (which have their own *Rosa* species).

A very important wildlife plant. If you are in an area of feral cats or wild dogs this plant should help. Its thorns are hooked. You do not walk through it. It is like thorny velcro. The cats may be able to walk under it but not get animals that are hiding in it.

—Las Pilitas Nursery website
www.laspilitas.com

In the native garden you'll need to give this handsome plant some extra room as it does like to wander. Although it will grow in full sun, it does best away from very hot afternoon exposures. It is easy to propagate from root divisions, growing rapidly when established. Try it as an informal hedge or barrier. It provides year-round garden interest with its beautiful flowers in late spring through summer and brilliant hips in fall and

winter.

OUTINGS

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Sun., June 9, 9:00 am: Eaton Canyon Plant Walk with Rick Fisher

Sun., Aug 11: *Butterflies & Butterfly Nectar Plants along the Angeles Crest* with Jane Strong.

Joint field trip with the Los Angeles Chapter of the North American Butterfly Association. We will look for butterflies and butterfly nectar plants along the Angeles Crest Highway, State Route 2, between Ladybug Canyon and the wet meadow at Big Pines. We will stop at snow melt gullies and numerous seeps and springs on the north face of the San Gabriel Mountains. This the one of best times for wildflowers in the High Country. Many blooming red scrophs like penstemon, monkeyflower and paintbrush attract migrating hummingbirds. The late yellow composites like rabbitbrush attract butterflies.

Meet at 9:30 am at the wide turnout at Ladybug Curve, mile markers 36.17 to 36.28, Angeles Crest Highway, State Route 2. This is about 20 minutes driving time from I-210. Bring food, water, full tank of gas and an Adventure Pass. Make all your carpooling arrangements before this spot as we will not return this way.

Road Guide to Plant Communities along the Angeles Crest Highway:
<http://tchester.org/sgm/plants/guides/ach-veg.html>
Butterflies of the San Gabriel Mountains
<http://home.earthlink.net/~teunice/sgm/butterflies/index.html>

Further information: Jane Strong at zelicaon@earthlink.net.

MEMBER PROFILE

Gabi & Cliff McLean

(Continued from Page 2)

a technical specialist, but it is a far cry from his boyhood dream of becoming a forest ranger. His volunteer work with CNPS and ECNCA brings some of the rewards that he expected from a ranger job. Gabi majored in business administration in her native Germany, at the University of Munich, and has applied her skills in the non-profit sector. She enjoys her demanding work as controller of a Regional Center serving developmentally disabled people. Teaching is another job she would have liked to pursue and leading groups on walks and hikes satisfies her craving of being outdoors and sharing, not just knowledge, but appreciation of the natural world. Gabi and Cliff each have a son and daughter from previous marriages. The McLeans travel to stay in touch with their families in Ohio and Germany, and to explore other natural environments.

Among their recent accomplishments was a 200-mile hike across the Alps, last summer. They realized that the vast majority of the European landscape has been permanently altered by either agriculture or development, and only the highest mountains remain wild. They gained greater appreciation of the American West where you can hike in true wilderness.

Gabi loves gardening and last year the McLeans replaced the lawn in their front and back yards with Southern California native plants. It was a labor of love and they are glad that they did it. This spring, their front yard exploded in colors from *eschscholzia*, *penstemon*, *phacelia*,

MEHAWOT

"Blue Dicks"

By Mark F. Acuña, Gabrieleno-Tongva

In late May the hills are covered with the purple-blue of *Dichelostemma capitatum* (formerly *D. pulchella*), "Blue Dicks". The Tongva chief (known in Tongva as the *Tomear*), with the assistance of his elder advisors, would lead his village on harvesting excursions lasting several days. Up along the foothills from the Santa Monicas, the Verdugos, the San Gabriels and on to the Chino Hills, chiefs would take their people. Men, women, and children all participated using digging sticks usually made from *Toobe* (Mountain Mahogany). And following the words of great skyfather *Weywot*, they would gather only what was needed, taking the old grandmother bulbs and replanting the young bulbets so that next year there would be *Mehawot* for the villages. The replanted *Mehawot* children were an offering to *Chehooit*, the Earthmother. Gathering was an active planned activity, involving planning for the following season. Gathering involved maintaining and planting, harvesting and seeding. Earthmother, *Chehooit* had given the word that "the world is not finished". The people kept finishing it by returning the plant world back onto itself. Tongva and *Mehawot* were part of that great cycle.

The bulbs of the *Mehawot* were eaten raw, boiled, baked, or roasted. They were usually cooked slowly, buried in a rock oven with venison or other game. The leaves and flowers were also eaten.

Mehawot flowers were also used as a soap and as a shampoo, and some of the older bulbs were crushed into a paste and used as a paint binder for bow decorations.

During festivals in late Spring, the flowers of "Blue Dicks" and those of *Brodiaea laxa* (Ethuriel's Spear) were worn as head wreaths for dances. The dancers' heads would be crowned in the purples and blues of two of the most beautiful flowers of the Tongva world.

Mehawot blossoms from March to May and can be found on the plains and hillsides below Yellow Pine Forest and in Pinyon-Juniper Woodland. The trails of the Santa Monicas and the San Gabriels are edged with the *Mehawot* blue sometimes as late as June and July.



Illustration from the new Jepson Desert Manual see opposite page for review

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, 1722 J St., Suite 17, 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.

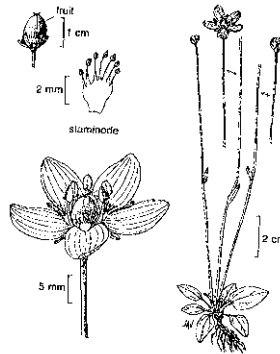
NATIVE BOOKSHELF

The Jepson Desert Manual: Vascular Plants of Southeastern California

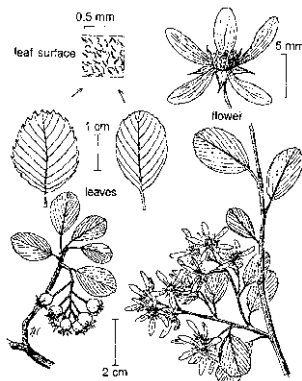
Margriet Wetherwax, Managing Editor

Bruce G. Baldwin, Steve Boyd, Barbara J. Ertter, Robert W. Patterson, Thomas J. Rosati, Dieter H. Wilken, editors
2002, University of California Press, 643 pages, 128 color photographs, more than 1,000 line drawings, 2 maps, \$35.00 paperback

In the spirit of the avid desert botanist Willis Lynn Jepson, *The Jepson Desert Manual* provides botanical enthusiasts with the first comprehensive field guide focused exclusively on vascular plants of California's deserts. Based on *The Jepson Manual*, this new volume incorporates new illustration for more than 200 desert taxa, revised keys to identification, updated distributional information, and 128 color photos. The guide will allow easier identification of our State's fascinating desert plants than would be possible in a manual with broader geographic coverage.



Parnassia parviflora
Grass-of-Parnassus



Amelanchier utahensis
Utah Service-Berry

As in *The Jepson Manual*, detailed descriptions and illustrations of plant characteristics are provided, along with information on native versus alien status, habitats, elevation, endangerment, toxicity, weed status, horticultural requirements, and flowering times. Introductory sections on the desert setting and vegetation offer readers a broad context and new perspectives for appreciating the more than 2,500 species included in the *Manual*.

For amateur and professional botanists alike, the *Desert Manual* will prove to be an invaluable companion in California's spectacular Mojave Desert, Sonoran Desert, and southern Great Basin environments, including the White Mountains.

Ed Note: The accompanying illustrations are two of the over 300 new drawings from this volume. And this would be the ideal book to take to the event below.

MEMBER PROFILE

Gabi & Cliff McLean

(Continued from page 4)

mimulus, salvia, camissonia and collinsia, all of which are also found in Eaton Canyon. Their neighbors are admiring the display of color and Gabi enjoys the time tending their native garden. They continue to learn about California native plants and encourage others to follow their hearts and do the same.

Cliff has been serving on the CNPS chapter board since 2000, when the chapter underwent a renewal. Both Gabi and Cliff serve as Hospitality chairs because they want to welcome all people who share their appreciation of California native flora.



WELCOME! New members

- Constance Marie Baldwin
- Mary J. Banton
- June Box
- Tom Chester
- Alan Strand & Kathy Crabb
- Janice Elliott
- Tom Kornoelje
- Dean & Tanya Scarborough
- Rebecca Schwiebert

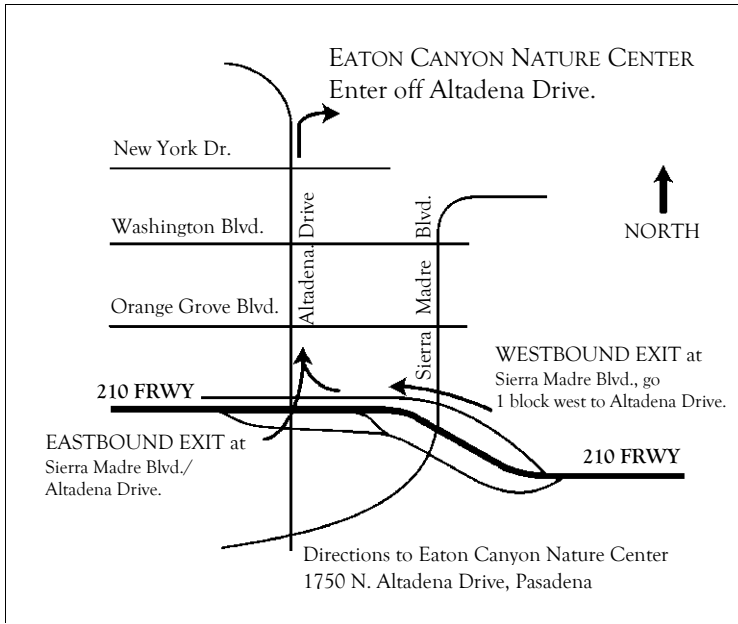
And thanks to all renewing members.

If you are renewing, please consider doing so at the next highest level. Your support is appreciated.

COME TO THE RAINSHADOW
May 31 to June 2, 2002 is the CNPS Chapter Council meeting weekend, hosted by the Bristlecone Chapter. All members and their families are welcome! This is going to be a fun event in a beautiful place. We will meet at Camp Inyo at the base of the Sierra near Big Pine. Anyone is welcome at the Saturday Council meeting, where there will valuable information-sharing and interesting discussions about native plant issues. Delegates can vote, but all can participate. And the Bristlecone Chapter has planned fun events: field trips on Friday afternoon & Sunday; a native plant sale; "Flora of the Glass Mountains" presentation Sat. evening; and more. And all this in the gorgeous and spectacular rainshadow lands of eastern California! For more information please contact Sherryl Taylor at Sherrylt76@aol.com. Responses before 15 May please. *This event will be the best way you can spend that weekend!*

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Website: <http://cnps-sgm.org>
for the latest information on
Chapter activities & links to other
organizations' activities

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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May 2002 Issue