

# THE PAINTBRUSH

JAN/FEB 2006 NEWSLETTER

SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAINS CHAPTER  
CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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## DATES TO REMEMBER

Sun., Jan. 8, 9:00 a.m.: *Eaton Canyon Plant Walk*  
led by Carol Carriere

Thurs., Jan 26, 7:30 p.m.: *Salvias* with Bart O'Brian

Sun., Feb. 12, 9:00 a.m. *Eaton Canyon Plant Walk*  
led by Tom Hood

Thurs., Feb 23, 7:30 p.m.: *Native Orchids of California*  
with Robert Lauri

## Botanical Special Interest Areas in the San Gabriel Mountains

By: Andrea Warniment

The U.S. Forest Service has established Special Interest Areas (SIAs) at recreation sites that possess significant botanical, geological, cultural, or other special characteristics. The Forest Service encourages public use and enjoyment of each SIA up to the level that will ensure protection of the special values for which the area was established.

Within the San Gabriel Mountains portion of the Angeles National Forest, three SIAs offer unique botanical elements. Devil's Punchbowl SIA is 1,255 acres and although it was primarily established for geological values, it also is known to support a "chaparral to conifer transition between 4,000-6,000 feet and riparian associations along a small, permanent stream." This SIA is located in the Mojave Front Country at the base of the San

Gabriels, and is managed by both the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation and the Forest Service.

Mt. Baden-Powell SIA is a 252-acre site located in the Angeles High Country. It was established because "the north slope of this peak supports one of the best examples of limber pine (*Pinus flexilis*) in southern California. The peak and adjacent area contain elements of sub-alpine habitat, including at least three San Gabriel endemic plant species." This SIA is located southeast of Devil's Punchbowl.

Mt. San Antonio (also known as Mt. Baldy) SIA is also located in the Angeles High Country, and includes 164 acres. "The major theme of the SIA is sub alpine and alpine vegetation, especially lodge pole pine forest. Mt. San Antonio exhibits one of the best examples of sub alpine habitat with a unique proximity to thousands of square miles of arid and semi-arid landscapes." Four endemic plant species are known to grow in this SIA, adjacent to the Sheep Mountain Wilderness Area.

This information is taken from the [Land Management Plan: Part 2, Angeles National Forest Strategy](#) published in September 2005 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region, and is currently available online at: [www.fs.fed.us/r5/scfpr/projects/lmp/](http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/scfpr/projects/lmp/).

## A Letter from our President Leaders of Change

By Gabi McLean, Chapter President

The beginning of the year prompted me to reflect on the past and look with anticipation to the future.

Our chapter board membership changed significantly in 2005. We saw the moving on of several dear and longtime board members. Most continue to be active in the chapter but wished to relinquish their particular board position. *Lyn McAfee*, president for four successful years, offered graciously to support me in my new position. *Kathy LaShure*, newsletter editor for ten years, and membership chair and Under the Oaks director for four years, moved to Ridgecrest. *Virginia Iser*, treasurer since the inception of our chapter, Jane Strong, Gary

Wallace and Mickey Long continue to provide support to the chapter. We thank them for their service and are grateful for the example they have set and the many hours they dedicated to our chapter.

I am grateful to the new members, too, who have stepped up to the challenge, willing to serve on our board and assuring that the departure of so many well-appreciated members meant merely a “changing of the guard” and not a folding of the chapter! We welcome those new leaders: Carol Carriere, our new secretary; Graham Bothwell, membership chair and treasurer; Carmen Wolf, who successfully organized this year’s Under the Oaks plant sale event; Orchid Black, our new program chair; and Tom Hood and Andrea Warniment, our new newsletter editor team. Andrea also volunteered to organize our field trips, which I am looking forward to.

Reflecting on changes as this year begins, with all its promise and uncertainty, I have decided I want to change as well. I will stop complaining about all the things that are going wrong in our environment. If I don’t like them I will do something about them, not lament how awful they are.

There are many things I can do: use native plants in my garden, make my voice heard in my city, and vote in elections. I can speak to my neighbors and my coworkers, call my representatives in Congress, and work with my neighborhood school and push for that native plant garden. I can pull invasive plants on a hike, and I can work with a local conservancy.

At a recent holiday event at my workplace, about 80% of the people polled said they’d rather be someplace “in nature”. We need to connect to those people who are longing for nature, and make them our allies.

Nature is where plants grow, animals thrive, and the people of the land find their soul. PRESERVING NATURE FOR PEOPLE is my motto. Preserving local native plant habitat is preserving wild places, for wild animals, for our water resources and fresh air, and for people. Nature is where our resources come from, where we find balance and peace, and connect with our beliefs.

Let us be the leaders of change so things change to our liking, not to our dismay. I invite you all to join in this journey. Rise to the challenge, impact our environment as we like it, we want it, and in a way that is consistent with the CNPS mission. I invite you to make this year, 2006, a year of awareness, thinking, and action. We can make this newsletter a forum for ideas of how to make a difference. I am looking forward to hearing from you about the steps YOU are taking towards changing our world to your liking. I am looking forward to a

year of positive changes, in our hearts, homes, and neighborhoods.

## CHAPTER EVENTS

Meetings are held at Eaton Canyon (map on the back cover) on the fourth Thursday of the month with the exception of July, August, November, and December. Informal plant identification and social time 7:00 to 7:30 p.m.; programs start promptly at 7:30 p.m.

### Board Meeting

Any members interested in helping with the Chapter activities are welcome to our next meeting on Thursday, February 9, 7:30 p.m. at the Chapter Board Meeting at Eaton Canyon Nature Center Classroom.

## PROGRAMS & OUTINGS

**Thursday, Jan. 26, 7:30 p.m.:** *Salvias* with Bart O’Brien.

Bart is the Director of Horticulture at Rancho Santa Ana Botanical Garden. He is an authority on the native flora of the state and of northern Baja California, and is an accomplished collector, grower, lecturer, and author. His new book, co-authored with Carol Bornstein and Davis Fross, California Native Plants for the Garden will be available at the meeting.

**Thursday, Feb. 23, 7:30 p.m.:** *Native Orchids of California* with Robert Lauri

Orchid expert, Robert Lauri will share an absolutely informative and exciting evening with us. The talk will focus on *Piperia*, the subject of Robert’s PHD dissertation study.



*Epipactis gigantea*

Illustration from Munz’s A Flora of Southern California

<http://cnps-sgm.org>

Check your Chapter’s web site frequently for up-to-date information on Chapter events and for links to other organizations’ field trips and classes. It’s one stop browsing CHAPTER EVENTS

## A SEASON OF BERRIES

*Heteromeles arbutifolia* ..... Toyon

By Marc Acuna

Illustration from Munz's A Flora of Southern California



As we enter the season of winter, we can celebrate that entrance into the cold times as did the Tongva in their villages throughout the greater Los Angeles Basin. We withdraw into our homes and tell stories to our children. It is the great season of mending

and learning. This is a time for family withdrawal from the outer world into the spiritual world of “Coyote Tale” time. While the rest of America finds itself under the cold blasts of wind and snow, the Tongva knew their winter was a time for the last gatherings. No snow for us; cold winds yes, but this time was also a time of great growth. Poppies are sending forth their first leaves and the wild cucumber “green stars”, as the Tongva called it, is already covering the hillsides with long vines. Winter in the Los Angeles Basin is not the dead time but the time of first growth. In spring, the physical world of “Yohúeeturhur”, will renew itself and the people will celebrate that return. But now in the cold times, in the months of “Whistling Wind” and “Cold and Last Hunts” the people rejoice in the harvesting of the bright red “Ashuwet” berries: the Toyon. Know by botanists as *Heteromeles arbutifolia* and by Californians as Toyon, Christmas Berry, California Berry, or Holly Berry (giving Hollywood its name), it is Ashuwet to the Tongva. This wondrous shrub gives food, medicine, tools, a dye and hair ornaments. From Autumn through Winter, the Ashuwet blossoms and gives its fruit.

The bark and leaves were made into a tea for stomach pains and produced a seasonal tonic. The bark and leaves were also made into an infusion to wash infected wounds. The leaves were mashed and applied to sores. The flowers were pulverized and steeped as a tea, which the women drank. The berries were made into a refreshing cider for all to drink. The berries also produced a dye, and the bark was used to dye fish nets.

The berries were eaten fresh, roasted, or boiled. After boiling, the berries would be baked in an oven for two or three days.

Ashuwet wood was turned into fine arrows, awls, wedges, scrapers, spoons, mashers, and stirrers. The men wore Ashuwet hairsticks decorated with Flicker feathers. Toyon brightened the cold dark days of “Achocheva” with its crimson fruit as the families gathered about their hearths sharing stories through the Winter.



### Under the Oaks V

#### A Truly Newsworthy Event

As most of you know, this was my first year as Chair of Under the Oaks (UTO), our Chapter’s annual native plant and wildflower seed sale. It was an enticing challenge, and I am so pleased I agreed to undertake it at a board meeting way back in May.

With the guidance and constant support of Kathy LaShure, UTO Chair for the previous four years, as well as excellent advice and assistance from many Chapter members, we were able to pull together a fun and successful sale on November 19<sup>th</sup>.

The first three plants to sell out were *Salvia apiana* at 10:10 a.m., *Monardella odoratissima* at 10:25 a.m. and *Ceanothus thyrsiflorus* ‘Snow Flurry’ sometime soon thereafter.

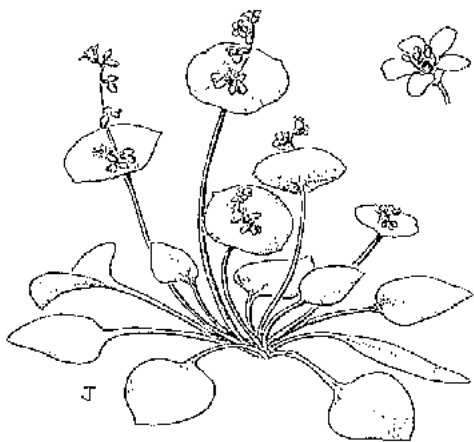
Our 11:00 a.m. lecture from Chris and Trish Meyer of Wildscaping.com on how to attract birds and butterflies was filled to capacity. Big smiles graced the faces of

people exiting the auditorium. I was delighted to watch them proceed immediately to plants that Chris and Trish had recommended. Not too long after, we had our first waiting line of shoppers. What a sight! Big thanks to the Meyers for an educational addition to Under the Oaks.

Dedicated volunteers on the day of the sale (and day before to help unload plants and set up) made everything run smoothly. I am grateful for their time, knowledge, energy and enthusiasm. Here they are, in alphabetical order - Orchid Black, Graham Bothwell, Karen Brumer, Candy Byers, Carol Carriere, Bill Davis, Barbara Eisenstein, Rick & Ian Fisher, Tom Hood, Dan Howell, Virginia Iser, Terry Keller, Mickey Long, Dave Matson, Lyn McAfee, Gabi & Cliff McLean, Eva Morgan, Linda Newfield, George & Cynthia Null, Elizabeth Schwartz, Madelyn Shaull and Andrea Warniment. Thank you! Hope to see you again next year!

Happy Holidays, everyone! And best wishes for glorious native gardens.

- Carmen Wolf



Miner's Lettuce *Claytonia perfoliata*  
Illustration from Munz's A Flora of Southern California

## Easily Overlooked, Walked Over, or Ignored, Palsingili, the Little One

By Marc Acuna

And now the nights of Autumn are lengthening, the daylight clouded by the coming rains of winter. But

beneath the cold damp soil the little roots of *Claytonia perfoliata* are stirring. In midwinter they will begin their full burst of growth and in the last days of winter this tiny plant will blossom tiny white flowers. Spring will give us the pink blooms of *Claytonia lanceolata*.

The Tongva, the indigenous natives of the Los Angeles Basin, waited for the tiny black seeds, gathering them by the hundreds and made little pounded "palsingili" cakes. And before the flowers opened, the women picked the leaves and the families ate them both cooked as a pottage or raw.

An ingenious method for gaining a vinegary flavoring was the taking of leaves and stems of "Miner's Lettuce", as the Yankee pioneers called it, and placing them at the entrances of red ant holes. The red ants, known as Ahn.naht, would crawl over the stems and leaves and the Tongva children would shake the greens, irritating the ants forcing them to deposit their formic acid on the stems and leaves. The ants were then shaken off and the "vinegary" flavored deposit was eaten. This deposit was greatly enjoyed.

The tiny roots which contain a high quantity of vitamin 'C' were also eaten both raw or roasted.

But Palsingili offered more than minimal food. The juice of the plant was used as an appetite restorer. And the juice of the stems was used as a mild wash for sore eyes.

The leaves and stems were brewed into an infusion for sore throats, and the leaves were made into a strong tea for use as a laxative. The tea was taken in moderation, for although *Claytonia* is a tiny plant, it is a powerful one. The leaves and stems were also made into a poultice for rheumatism.

*Perfoliata* can be found in shaded, moist areas below 5000 ft, in Southern Oak Woodlands. Its sister, *lanceolata* is found on dry ridges at around 8,000 ft in Lodgepole Forests.

These tiny round leaved gems are still gathered and relished by today's Tongva and make a wonderful addition to a salad. They leaves may be tiny but they are delicious.

## JOIN CNPS NOW!!

Learn to understand California's unique flora and help to preserve this rich heritage for future generations.

Dues are tax deductible. You will receive this newsletter, the informative quarterly journal *Fremontia*, and the statewide news *Bulletin*. If you would like to receive only this newsletter, the price of a subscription is \$5 per year.

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The Newsletter of the San Gabriel Mountains Chapter of the California Native Plant Society is published four times per year, and is free to Chapter members. Non-member subscription is \$5.00.

## WELCOME! New members:

Jean Casselman and Suxanne Exner

And thank you to our renewing members! Please consider renewing at a higher level! Your support of our native flora is much appreciated!

### Have you forgotten to renew your membership?

Please renew so Chapter numbers are maintained. There continues to be a noticeable number of members who have not renewed.

## From Tom Hood, Co-publisher

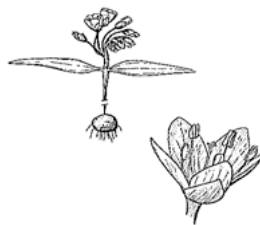
I apologize for the late mailing of this newsletter. I have never pretended to be an expert in publishing. My attempt to amass and actually format data and pictures into a readable document has been quite challenging. This has definitely been a learning experience, and I thank Graham Bothwell and Andrea Warniment for their support, both technical and emotional. I have confidence that the next newsletter, due in early March, will be a much easier journey for me, and for all concerned. I thank you for your continued support and confidence.

Thank you again to **BONTERRA CONSULTING** for printing and mailing our newsletter. Bonn Terra Consulting provides environmental planning, biological surveys, natural resources management, and city and regional planning services to their public and private sector clients.

<http://www.bonterraconsulting.com>

"I am pessimistic about the human race because it is too ingenuous for its own good. Our approach to nature is to beat it into submission. We would stand a better chance of survival if we accommodated ourselves to this planet and viewed it appreciatively instead of skeptically and dictatorially."

E.B. White



*Claytonia lanceolata*

Illustration from Munz's *A Flora of Southern California*

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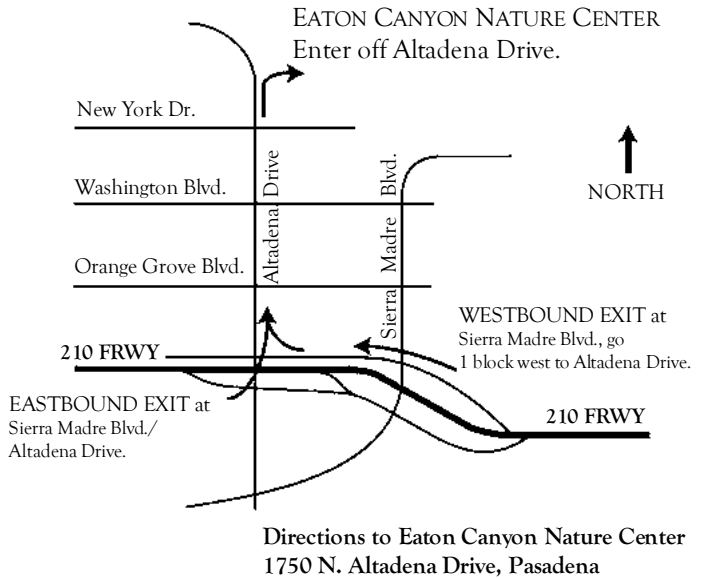
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**Dedicated to the Preservation of the California Native Flora**

*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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