



THE PAINTBRUSH

FALL 2006 NEWSLETTER

SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAINS CHAPTER
CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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DATES TO REMEMBER

- Sun., Sept. 10, 9:00 a.m.:** *Eaton Canyon Plant Walk* led by Eva Morgan
- Thurs., Sept. 28, 7:30 p.m.:** *What is Chaparral?* with Richard Halsey
- Sun., Oct. 8, 9:00 a.m.:** *Eaton Canyon Plant Walk* led by Carol Carriere
- Thurs., Oct. 26, 7:30 p.m.:** *Aasuingna, The Place of Plants* with Mike Brown
- Sun., Nov. 12, 9:00 a.m.:** *Eaton Canyon Plant Walk* led by Orchid Black
- Sat., Dec. 2, 9:00 a.m.:** *Under the Oaks VI Plant Sale*
- Sun., Dec. 10, 9:00 a.m.:** *Eaton Canyon Plant Walk* led by Gabi and Cliff McLean

JULY FIELD NOTES

By Michael Charters

CNPS Field Trip, Saturday, 22 July 2006 (Mt. Baldy)

On a day when the temperatures in some inland valleys were predicted to go as high as 115° (and later this was actually announced on the news as possibly the hottest day ever recorded in Los Angeles), Richard Sapiro and I joined Cliff

and Gabi McLean, Candy Byers and Mickey Long for a hike to the summit of Mt. San Antonio, better known as Mt. Baldy. We rode up the chair lift and set out around 9 a.m., and with the sun out it was pretty warm even at the elevation of 7,775 feet. The beginning of the trail was a hard slog up a steep slope. We found ourselves taking advantage of rest stops to study some of the plants like Woolly Mountain Parsley (*Oreonana vestita*), Beaked Penstemon (*Penstemon rostriflorus*), California Fuchsia (*Epilobium canum* ssp. *latifolium*) and various buckwheats such as Davidson's (*Eriogonum davidsonii*), Rock (*E. saxatile*), Alpine Sulphur-flowered (*E. umbellatum* var. *minus*) and Wright's (*E. wrightii* var. *subscaposum*). The Notch and surrounding areas were awash in the beautiful Giant Blazing Star (*Mentzelia laevicaulis*), one of the most dramatic wildflowers of our mountain areas. Soon Bush Chinquapin (*Chrysolepis sempervirens*) began lining the trail, covered with both lush spikes of flowers and spiny seedpods.



Bush Chinquapin (*Chrysolepis sempervirens*),
photograph by Michael Charters

The trail began to flatten out and we crossed the Devil's Backbone. There was a pleasant breeze that was especially

enjoyable when we could stop in the shade of a pine tree, of which there were Limber (*Pinus flexilis*), Lodgepole (*P. contorta* ssp. *murrayana*), Jeffrey (*P. jeffreyi*) and Sugar (*P. lambertiana*). We began to encounter two shrubby species whose bloom was pretty much done, Smoothleaf Yerba Santa (*Eriodictyon trichocalyx* var. *trichocalyx*) and Small-leaved Creambush or Mountain Spray (*Holodiscus microphyllus* var. *microphyllus*). Later and higher there would be plenty of both in prime blooming condition. Everywhere there was Curl-leaf Mountain Mahogany (*Cercocarpus ledifolius* var. *intermontanus*), beginning to produce its feathery curlicue achenes. Off to one side we spotted a patch of Gray Monardellas (*Monardella cinerea*). I don't know where this name came from because they don't look gray to me at all. The small wavy-edged leaves are a dull green, the bracts are a dark reddish-purple, and the corollas are rose-colored. Later we would see a tremendous bloom of this species on the barren rocky hillsides going across the summit ridge. We also spotted a single Parish's Catchfly (*Silene parishii*).

Mickey spotted an extremely interesting plant, California Ground Cone (*Boschniakia strobilacea*), which I had only seen once before out on Santa Rosa Island in May of this year. Then I noticed some leaves up on a bank that I thought was possibly a *Streptanthus* at first, but then when I saw the fruits the identification came to me, Showy Cycladenia (*Cycladenia humilis* var. *venusta*), although I couldn't quite get the name out until I got home. And it was in bloom! The only other place I've ever seen this was near the top on Mt. Baden-Powell. Then someone spotted an *Arabis*, which I'm pretty sure was Broad-seeded Rock-cress (*Arabis platysperma*), and Mickey's sharp eyes noticed an onion. We had been seeing the dried inflorescences of them all along the trail but this was the first one in bloom, and then there were quite a few of them hiding among the rocks. We tentatively identified it as San Bernardino Mountain Onion (*Allium monticola*). Also hiding among the rocks were a couple of Johnston's Monkeyflowers (*Mimulus johnstonii*), with small but spectacularly beautiful flowers.

As we drew ever closer to Mt. Baldy itself, dark clouds began gathering over the summit and a few rumbles of thunder could be heard in the distance. The sun was now blocked and the temperature went down significantly, something that none of us regretted. Mickey spotted a little green flowering plant that appeared to be a member of *Asteraceae*. I couldn't place it at all except that the flower looked like a *Hieracium* to me because it was all ligulate and didn't appear to fully open, but the rest of the plant was obviously not any of the three *Hieracium* species we have in Southern California. Mickey eventually suggested a *Crepis*, which I thought was a definite possibility because I had never seen *Crepis* anywhere except in the Sierras. I took some

photographs of it. Later at home, based on Mickey's suggestion, it only took a few minutes to come up with the correct identification, Dwarf Hawksbeard (*Crepis nana*). And my idea of *Hieracium* was not completely out to lunch because *Hieracium* and *Crepis* are closely related genera.



Dwarf Hawksbeard (*Crepis nana*),
photograph by Michael Charters

On the final series of uphill switchbacks leading to the summit, we saw a lovely *Heuchera* in bloom, but unfortunately I am unable to say for sure what it was. Maybe I'll be able to tell from my pictures.

**We will publish a photograph of this flower in the January edition of the "Paintbrush" with a final identification
Ed**

"Something will have gone out of us as a people if we ever let the remaining wilderness be destroyed; if we permit the last virgin forests to be turned into comic books and plastic cigarette cases; if we drive the few remaining members of the wild species into zoos or to extinction; if we pollute the last clean air and dirty the last clean streams and push our paved roads through the last of the silence, so that never again will Americans be free in their own country from the noise, the exhausts, the stinks of human and automotive waste."

– Wallace Stegner, *The Wilderness Letter* (1962)

CHAPTER EVENTS

Meetings are held at Eaton Canyon (see map on 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.

PROGRAMS & OUTINGS

Thursday, Sept 28, 7:30 p.m.: *What is Chaparral?* with Richard Halsey

Richard Halsey of the California Chaparral Field Institute is one of the leading voices in chaparral preservation, and works to debunk many of the myths that exist about chaparral and fire. Halsey is author of the book "Fire, Chaparral and Survival in Southern California." He was recently quoted in the L.A. Times about the harmful fuel load of non-native grasses in the Mojave, and was asked by the BLM to evaluate the role of vegetation in the Sawtooth fire.

Thursday, Oct 26, 7:30 p.m.: *Aasuingna, the Place of Plants* with Mike Brown

Come and hear about Aasuingna, "the place of plants" in the Tongva-Gabrielino language with Michael Brown, Curator of "Bio Trek" at Cal Poly in Pomona. Bio Trek includes an Ethnobotany Garden with approximately 300 native species as well as a Rainforest Learning Center and more. Michael will bring acorn sifting baskets and other tools of native people that are used in his classes for science and ethnobotanical interpretation.

SPECIAL EVENT

Under the Oaks VI Chapter Native Plant Sale

***Saturday, Dec. 2, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at
Eaton Canyon Nature Center***

We will be selling a nice variety of reasonably priced California native plants and wildflower seeds appropriate for gardens in the L.A. Basin. Knowledgeable chapter members will be on hand to answer your questions. This is a great opportunity to purchase hard-to-find natives for seasonally appropriate planting. Tell your friends!

Please join us at 11:00 a.m. in the Eaton Canyon Nature Center Auditorium for "*California Native Plants for Wildlife*" – Ken and Rhonda Gilliland of www.empken.com/quailhollow.html will discuss how to plant a native garden for attracting wildlife.

I thought it would be timely to include a scheduled Audubon workshop that might sharpen your birding skills once your native plant garden begins to attract many types of birds Ed

Birding: The Basics and Beyond

This event will be held Saturday, September 30, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and will be followed by bird walks on Sunday, October 1, from 8:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m.

The Pasadena Audubon Society and the Eaton Canyon Nature Center will be conducting workshops at Eaton Canyon Nature Center for fun and educational purposes. The workshops will get you started in birding or will improve your birding skills.

There will be two workshops. The cost is \$8.00 per workshop. Registration will be limited to 20 people per workshop. Please register early. The registration materials can be found at: <http://www.pasadenaaudubon.org>

NATIVE PLANT GARDENING CORNER

By Barbara Eisenstein

As Horticultural Outreach Coordinator at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, I receive many interesting questions about garden care for California native plants. This is part of a continuing series in which I share a few of these questions and answers with you. If you have a question of your own, please email me at rsabg.hortinfo@cgu.edu or call me at 909-624-0838.

Q: The leaves started drooping yesterday. My plant does not look good. Can it be saved?

A: The long heat wave this past July stressed plants as well as people, leading to numerous questions like this one. Water – either too much or too little – is a primary cause of death for garden plants. The way to tell whether your stressed plant needs water is to check the soil. If it is damp where the roots are, then the plant is probably suffering from over watering. Water is present but the plant can not take it up due to root damage. It looks thirsty and is thirsty, but this is due to too much water. These plants usually do not recover. The only thing you can do is cut the water, let the soil dry out and see what happens.

If the soil is dry and the plant perks up when watered, it was thirsty due to too little water. Water deeply and hope it was not too stressed to recover. The *Concha ceanothus* in my yard suddenly turned a sickly yellow. The soil was dry so I watered it. Alas, it was too late and the plant did not recover. I have removed it and plan to try again, planting in the late fall.

Young plants, those not yet established, are most vulnerable during severe weather. Their small size and undeveloped root systems make it hard for them to survive weeks of extreme heat. Water and hot soil often lead to root rot. So it seems that watering is bad and withholding water is bad. Observing your plants carefully – looking at the leaves, both old and young, and the buds – can tell you a lot about what they need. When old leaves turn yellow and drop, this may be due to senescence. It is common in sages, monkey flowers and some *Ceanothus*. When the younger leaves and buds dry up, you probably have a problem. If the whole plant wilts, you also are probably in trouble.

It is sad and expensive to lose plants. Still, we must remember that a garden is an organic system. One of the reasons I enjoy gardening is the unpredictability and challenge of it. When a plant dies, it should be a learning experience. I try to figure out what went wrong. If I think I know why it died, and I can change the adverse conditions, I try it again. If I just don't know, and I love the plant, I may try it again. If I lose a plant more than twice, it was not meant to be in my garden.

I try to be understanding when callers describe their garden losses. It may be helpful to know that even here at Rancho we have lost plants this hot summer. And as mentioned above, I have lost some in my own yard. When we make mistakes in life there can be serious consequences. When we make mistakes in our gardens, we can lose plants. But after all, it is only a plant!

Q: I live in a town home with a small patio behind the house. Can you recommend native plants that I can put in hanging baskets (to hang from my latticework over the patio) that can take partial shade? I would like to know if I can put up to 3 different types of natives in a basket for compatibility and for color and approximate common blooming time.

There are many California native plants that do well in containers. For hanging baskets in partial shade and moderate water try Yerba Mansa (*Anemopsis californica*), woodland or Seaside Strawberry (*Fragaria californica*, *F. chiloensis*), Wild Mints (*Monardella villosa*, *M. macrantha*), and Yerba Buena (*Satureja douglasii*). All of these will spill over the pot. Western Columbine (*Aquilegia formosa*), sedges like *Carex praegracilis*, and Rush (*Juncus patens*) have a more upright habit and look nice in the center of the pot. Dudleyas and Sedums also do well in pots, though they require excellent drainage and less water.

You can combine different plants in pots as long as their water, soil and sun requirements are similar. Consider putting a Western Columbine in the center of the pot with Wild Strawberries spilling over the sides. Yerba Mansa has showy white flowers in the spring and long draping stems

responsible for its other common name, Lizard's Tail. A pot of Yerba Mansa, Meadow Rue (*Thalictrum fendleri* var. *polycarpum*) and Rush mimics a small wetland area. Coral Bells (*Heuchera* spp.) also do well in pots and look nice with Woodland Strawberries and California Fescue (*Festuca californica*).



Potted native plants at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, from left: Heuchera, Douglas Iris, Hedge Nettle (*Stachys bullata*), Dudleyas
Photograph by Barbara Eisenstein

Container planting provides exciting gardening opportunities for everyone, including those with limited space or physical capabilities. A container garden is currently under construction at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden. Through generous grants from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and the Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust we are embarking on a new adventure in which we will experiment with all kinds of native plants, both likely and unlikely, to expand our knowledge and improve our horticultural practices for container gardens. We hope you will visit us and join in this new endeavor.

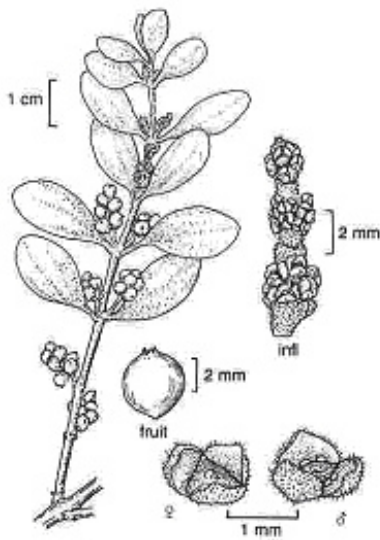
“How much wilderness do the wilderness-lovers want? ask those who would mine and dig and cut and dam in such sanctuary spots as these. The answer is easy: Enough so that there will be in the years ahead a little relief, a little quiet, a little relaxation, for any of our increasing millions who need and want it.”

– Wallace Stegner, *This Is Dinosaur* (1955)

DODDER AND MISTLETOE

By Mark F. Acuña

We are now in the first days of Ha.ah.mo Pah.ko O.cho.che.veh, some of the most beautiful months of the great year. September “Lalavaych”, the Month of the Gray Goose; October “Akwitscomel”, the Month of Wind-Whistling, when Agvangna and Jamiwu argue with their hot winds which we call the “Santa Anas”; November “A.akwit” the last Month of Acorns. The late golden afternoons will slowly but suddenly begin to cool down and the evening fogs will fill the valleys. The autumnal equinox song “Hayamoh Pahko Ohchocheveh Yowkeh Mahreh Horoorah Tahrahmeh Cheayeesh” was sung to solemnly sing in the turning of the year.



Oak Mistletoe (*Phoradendron villosum*),
from *The Jepson Manual* (1993)

To celebrate this great turning let us look at two rarely mentioned but fascinating plants: Cheruku Hoochoot and Chahyah! (Dodder and Mistletoe). Europeans, with their focus on the diabolical, named “Dodder” witch weed, witch’s hair, devil weed, strangle weed. The Tongva (Gabrieleno) sometimes called it ahikoli “breath plant” because its primary use was as a steamed inhalant for asthma. The long orange stringy parasite was brewed into a tea and its steam was said to clear nasal passages and the lungs; when gathered raw and stuffed in nostrils, it stopped nosebleeds.

A yellow dye was produced from the strings of Cherokee and used for the painting of feathers.

Dodder is found on many herbs and shrubs from sea level to 8,200 ft., and blossoms from mid spring to late summer.

As the year draws to its end, Cheruku Hoochoot is dying off, but a few patches can still be found in the foothills.

Chayal (Mistletoe) was another curious plant that Europeans mistrusted yet revered. Old Teutonic myths sang of murder and betrayal. The ancient Druids considered it a magical herb and said that it protected against lightning and misfortune; it’s magical force bound lovers who kissed beneath its branches, especially under Mistletoe which grew on oaks sacred to Odin.

The Tongva brewed a pleasant tea from its berries, although many Mistletoes are highly toxic and one should not attempt to use this plant as a source of food. The old ones knew a way to detoxify Chayal. Desert Mistletoe was a trade item and the berries were ground, mixed with ashes and boiled before eating.

Medicinally, the berries were poulticed for wounds and an infusion of Pacific Mistletoe was brewed for abortions. The leaves of most Mistletoes were also used for a toothache poultice.

As we end autumn and move into winter, the beautiful leaves of Chayal will become more pronounced and we will all meet in doorways standing beneath be-ribboned branches of Chayal and wait for our Winter Solstice kiss.

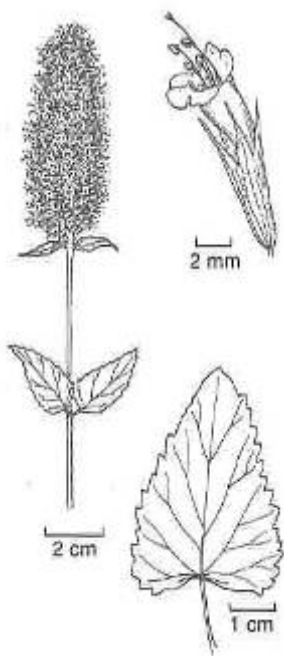


Coast Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*)
from *Munz’s A Flora of Southern California* (1974)

A PEACEFUL PLACE TO REST

By Tom Hood

In July I went on a Sierra Club Mule Pack trip to Tiltill Valley above the Hetch Hetchy Valley in Yosemite National Park. Our group started hiking early Friday morning from the Shaunnesy Dam that holds back Hetch Hetchy reservoir. We took a break at Ranceria Falls in the early afternoon, and then started up a ridge that would lead to Tiltill Valley. It was extremely hot and we were fully exposed to the sun on the many switchbacks up this ridge. We reached Tiltill Valley in the early evening, thoroughly exhausted by the heat. Our leader informed us that he was having difficulty finding where the mules had dropped our gear. The possibility of spending the night out in the meadow was real.



Giant Hyssop
(*Agastache urticifolia*),
from *The Jepson Manual* (1993)

Hyssops (*Agastache urticifolia*), Columbine (*Aquilegia pubescens*), Cone Flowers (*Rudbeckia californica*) and Woolly Mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*).

When we worked our way into the center of the meadow, we saw splashes of yellow, pink, red, orange, white and blue. I have seen some of the plants before, but many were new to me, as I have never before been to a lush, high altitude meadow like this one. The pink of Shooting Stars (*Dodecatheon jeffreyi*) beautifully mixed with the yellows of Golden Rod (*Solidago californica*), Sneezeweed (*Helenium bigelovi*) and Evening Primrose (*Oenothera hooker*), the white

I laid down in the lush foliage to rest. It smelled wonderful in the cool embrace of the plants. Gazing up at the sky, I began to relax, a sense of calm came over me as my body cooled. The thought of spending the night in this green haven became something I could accept. Twenty minutes later, our leader located the gear along a beautiful stream about a quarter of a mile away. We pitched camp, had dinner, and slowly recovered. It wasn't until a day later that we returned to this magnificent meadow to fully appreciate its beauty and vast palette of color. Moving along the edge of the meadow through thick stands of ferns, we saw Giant

of Cow Parsnip (*Heracleum lanatum*), Yarrow (*Achillea lanulosa*), Rein Orchis (*Habenaria dilatata*), and what became my favorite, Corn Lily /Skunk Cabbage (*Veratrum californicum*). The red hues were from Indian Paintbrush (*Castilleja miniata*), and the orange tones came from what was a new sighting for me, the Alpine Lily (*Lilium parvum*). I am sure that I missed identifying many flowers, but the ones I mentioned were the most numerous and showy. To stand in the midst of all of this was overwhelming. It was like being in the middle of a landscape painting.



Golden Rod (*Solidago californica*),
from *The Jepson Manual* (1993)

<http://cnps-sgm.org>

Check your Chapter's website frequently for up-to-date information on Chapter events and for links to other organizations' field trips and classes.

HU.UTAH, TRADE, AND THE PLEIADES

By Mark F. Acuña

We now enter the dry days. The last days of July and the drying time of August share a common Tongva name: Cucuat "The brown and drying time days". Before dawn Tongva shamans sat and watched as Chechiinoy Sheshiiyot, and the eye of Itar, Sky Coyote, the Pleiades and Aldebaran, rose in the eastern sky. Their rising signaled changes in the weather. The dry and sear days were here with an occasional storm out of the south. With the six sisters and their watcher came Pa.ahé Sheshiiyot the three stars that form the

belt of Orion, known to the Tongva as the great Mountain Goat.

The traders went north and south to barter for Hu.utah (Redshanks or as the Botanists would call it, *Adenostoma sparsifolium*.) Up in the dry slopes and mesas of the Ventura chaparral, the Chumash had been busy gathering the leaves prepared to trade with their neighbors. The Tongva medicine traders needed the leaves to make a strong tea to relieve ulcers and for colds and the coming winter chest ailments. A thick tea induced bowel movement. Hu.utah was a powerful medicinal. Other traders went east to trade with the Kokoemkam (Serrano) and the Kunitaraxam (Cahuilla) for Hu.utah.

Some went for medicine, collecting Hu.utah twigs along the way, and ground them into powder which would be mixed with animal fats as a salve for sores; others went to trade for the bark which was pounded and shredded and made into women's skirts. Hunters asked traders to bring back good branches to be made into two-foot long "throwing sticks" to hunt rabbits.



These were difficult days, dry, hot, and the mountain passes were often struck by dark thundering monsoons with dangerous flash flooding. Ah.rohrehvay (Summer) was transforming into Hayamo Pako Ochochevay (Autumn). The last of the

traders slowly made their way through the heat of late Summer bringing back the blossoms of Hu.utah. Soon the times would change and the winds would grow stronger; the great flocks of

geese would fly overhead and Sirius, the great star would rise in the morning signaling the time for thrift, the time to gather in for the coming winter.

Red Shank (*Adenostoma sparsifolium*), from Milt McAuley's *Wildflowers of the Santa Monica Mountains* (1996)

WELCOME! New members:

Susana Guerrero, Ginny Moniz, Kelly Schmoker, Sue Szabo, G. Valladolid

IS YOUR MEMBERSHIP UP TO DATE?

Have you forgotten to renew your membership?
Please renew so that Chapter numbers are maintained.

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. Subscription rate for members of other chapters is \$5.00 per year.

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

<http://www.bonterraconsulting.com>

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*.

- Yes, I'd like to affiliate with San Gabriel Mountains Chapter
- Student, Limited Income: \$25
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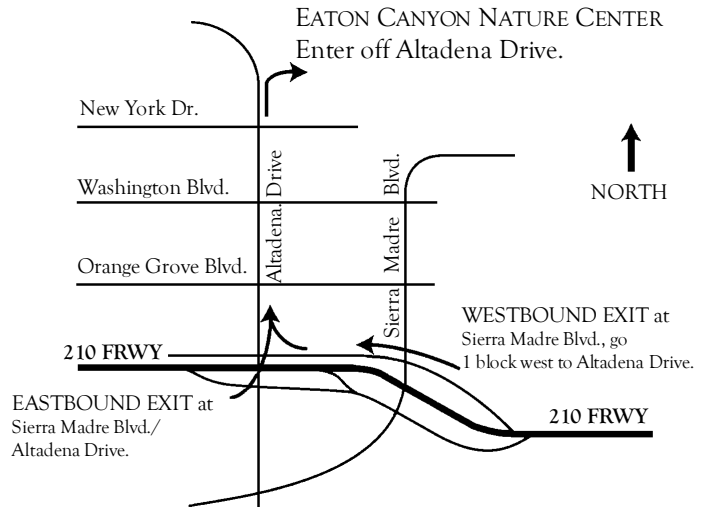
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Directions to Eaton Canyon Nature Center
1750 N. Altadena Drive, Pasadena

Website: <http://cnps-sgm.org>

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.



CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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