



The Paintbrush

Fall 2011 Newsletter, Volume 27, Number 4
San Gabriel Mountains Chapter, California Native Plant Society

CONTENTS

Native Plants for Foodies, 1
Conservation, 2
Understanding, 3
Horticulture, 6
Schedule of Events, 7
Chapter Directory, 8

EVENTS

OCTOBER

9 Plant Walk, 9 am
22 Field Trip, 9 am
27 Program, 7 pm

NOVEMBER

12 Plant Sale, 9 am
13 Plant Walk, 9 am
17 Board Meeting, 7:30 pm
19 Gardening Workshop, 3 pm

DECEMBER

3 Field Trip, 9 am
11 Plant Walk, 9 am

Second in a series

Native Plants for Foodies:

Blue Elderberry *Sambucus caerulea*

By Daniel L. Geiger

CNPS-SGM member and marine invertebrate systematist

JUST the name elderberry invokes something reverent and statesman-like. The large shrubs to multi-trunked trees are a common sight in the California landscape. Whether the blue elderberry should be considered a full species (*Sambucus caerulea*) or a subspecies of the black elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* ssp. *caerulea*) is handled variably. It is a well-known provider of raw materials for culinary purposes. Elderberries are ripe in mid summer (June–August), after currants have passed their peak.

There are two *Sambucus* species in southern California, red elderberry (*Sambucus racemosa*) and blue elderberry (*S. caerulea*). Only the latter is edible, but given the different color of the berries, red vs. blue, they are easily distinguishable. Both the flowers and the ripe fruits are edible, but all other parts of the plant including leaves and stems of the inflorescences contain toxins (cyanogenic glycosides). Accordingly, do separate the berries from the all-green pieces of the inflorescence. The seeds also contain those toxins, hence, eating quantities of the raw berries is not advised. However, when cooked, the berries are safe to eat. I have only tried a couple of applications, though many more avenues can be explored.

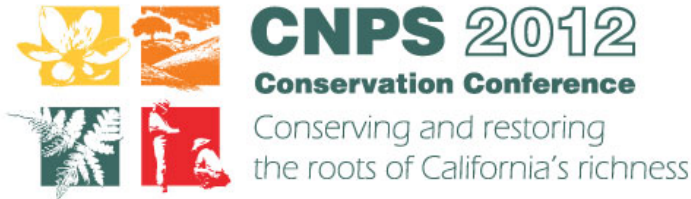
Elderberry jelly is perfectly suitable for the breakfast table with bread, croissants, or challah.

Option 1) Elderberry pie. I made essentially an apple pie, but with elderberry as the filling. A regular pie crust (flour, butter, a little water) was filled with sugar-sweetened elderberries dusted lightly with cornstarch (~2 teaspoons for 9" pie), and baked till bubbly. While the taste is perfectly fine, the many small seeds give the pie a granular mouth feel, and the seeds tend to stick between ones teeth. Using elderberries as an additive to a true apple pie might be a passable solution, but I still have reservations regarding the seeds. *Continued on page 2 ...*



© Peg Edwards-Carkeent 1998

BLUEBERRY ELDER (*Sambucus glauca*) ... It is also a beauty in a rustic way, with its frondose leaves of cheerful green, its bonny, flat-topped clusters of creamy sweetly fragrant flowers, and its wealth of berries (blue under a heavy glaucous coating of waxen white), so tempting to birds and children. Its pithy stems furnish the country boy with whistle wood. Indeed, the California Indians called it "the tree of music", for of it they made their flutes and the flute was the instrument of the Indian when he went courting. The Elder sticks for flutes were cut when green in early spring and left to dry with the leaves on. Then four flute holes were bored with a red-hot stick, but at random, so that no flutes had the same scale. From *A Natural History of Western Trees* by Donald Culross Peattie, 1950, pages 659 and 660.



Early registration for the CNPS 2012 Conservation Conference is now open!

You may register for all events including the conference, workshops, and field trips by going to the conference website at www.cnps.org/2012. Early registration discounts will be available through October 31. Members receive discounts for every event, so be sure your membership is current before registering.

The CNPS 2012 Conservation Conference takes place in San Diego at the Town and Country Resort and Conference Center, January 12–14 with pre-conference workshops and field trips January 10–11. This is a chance for our entire organization to come together and celebrate all that we do, learn what others are doing, and find out what can be done. This conference is about action through science, art and activism. There is something here for everyone—from professional to student to enthusiast.

You may now also register to stay at the conference venue at the special event rate. To register at the Town and Country Resort and Conference Center go to www.cnps.org/2012. Staying at the Town and Country will be relaxing and very convenient. Just ten minutes from the airport, and within short walking distance to the San Diego trolley system, you could leave your car at home.

Conference Highlights

- Member, student, and early registration discounts!
- Over 200 oral presentations in 22 sessions
- Opportunities for students to present talks, posters, network for research and jobs
- Scientific posters
- Chapter conservation posters
- Plenary and Keynote speakers: Drs. Louise Jackson, Bruce Pavlik, and Peter Raven
- Closing Plenary facilitated by Dr. David Chipping
- 15 skill-building workshops
- 2 field trips
- 25 exhibitors and vendors
- Banquet, welcome reception, student social events
- Poetry reading and songfest
- Botanical art and photography exhibition and contest
- Silent auction and drawing
- Millions of opportunities to participate and volunteer
- Abundant opportunities to take action on issues
- Registration rebates for volunteers
- Public Engagement Day with activities for children, families, gardeners and teachers

Board Elections

THE Chapter will hold board elections on January 26, 2012. Nominations for candidates are open at this time. The following are elected positions: President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Descriptions for each of the elected offices will be posted on the Chapter website in October. If you nominate someone other than yourself, please secure their consent in advance. Nominations will also be listed on the Chapter website after they are processed by the nominating committee. If you would like to submit a nomination or to serve on the nominating committee, please send an email to Terry Keller at tkeller@riohondo.edu. Nominations may also be made in person at Chapter meetings.

Continued from page 1 ...

Option 2) Elderberry jelly. This application removes the seeds from the preparation, hence overcoming the most objectionable attribute of these fruits. The same basic preparation as described previously for California golden currant (see *Paintbrush* issues for Spring and Summer 2011) applies. In abbreviated form: cook berries in little water, possibly pre-process through food mill, strain out seeds through cheesecloth, make low-sugar jelly with citrus pectin. Elderberry seems to require a little bit more pectin for the same consistency compared to currant, say a good teaspoon per cup of juice. The color of the jelly is a shiny black with a slight purple sheen. The taste is silky smooth, slightly tart, but in a refreshing sense.

Elderberry jelly is perfectly suitable for the breakfast table with bread, croissants, or challah. Jam cookies are certainly an option. Additional avenues to be explored include syrup, both from flowers as well as berries.

5 @ \$75, 2 @ \$100

TO ENCOURAGE attendance at the 2012 CNPS Conservation Conference in San Diego in January, our chapter is offering awards of \$75 to five chapter members and \$100 to two students. To be considered for one of these awards, send an email to tkeller@riohondo.edu with "CNPS conference in San Diego" as the subject line. State how your attendance will be beneficial to our chapter and how you plan to share the report you will write (general meeting, newsletter article, web page). Students must describe their education (college, courses, career choice). Your request should reach the committee by October 20, 2011. Please provide your statement in the body of the email. Attachments to the email will not be opened. Winners will be announced at the October 27 general meeting. For information about the conference, see <http://www.cnps.org/2012>.

The most often misspelled California plant?

By Mickey Long

WHAT'S wrong with *Artemesia*, as in *Artemesia californica*? Just the incorrect spelling. It's actually *Artemisia*. I believe I see this genus misspelled more often in print than any other plant. One contributing factor may be that the genus is important in California and with *Artemisia californica*, California sagebrush, so common and widespread, the name is used and seen more often than many plants. The misspelling occurs not only in simple articles describing coastal sage scrub and in nursery listings, but also in scholarly works in journals, books and online sources.

The prime trigger for this misspelling seems to be the pronunciation of the genus as "Artemeesia". Long ago, I trained myself to say in my head "Arte miss ia" whenever I have to spell the word. This came, I believe, after I had learned somewhere that the genus is named for the Greek goddess Artemis.

Artemis was one of the most widely venerated of the Ancient Greek deities. Her Roman equivalent is Diana. Some scholars believe that the name, and indeed the goddess herself, was originally pre-Greek. Homer refers to her as *Artemis Agrotera, Potnia Theron*, "Artemis of the Wildland, Mistress of Animals". In the classical period of Greek mythology Artemis was often

described as being the twin daughter of Zeus and Leto and the sister of Apollo. She was the Hellenic goddess of the hunt, wild animals, wilderness, childbirth, virginity and young girls, bringing and relieving disease in women. The deer and the cypress were sacred to her. (Thanks online sources!)

If you run Google Images for Artemis, you will see scores of various depictions, almost always as a beautiful woman holding a bow and arrow.

So now, next time you have to spell the word, just picture this beautiful young woman about to shoot you through the heart if you misspell *Artemisia*!



Five Plants for Five Different Kinds of Gardeners, continued from page 6 ...

- Silver Lining desert lavender (*Hyptis emoryi* 'Silver Lining') is a light gray desert shrub with soft lavender flowers and a delicate scent.
- Matilija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*), five to eight feet in height, bears large flowers that look like they are made of white crepe paper with a bright yellow central ball. Also known as fried-egg poppy, this plant will illuminate any moonlit garden.
- White sage (*Salvia apiana*), with its soft gray leaves, will be noted in a nighttime garden by both its color and its unusual scent.
- St. Catherine's Lace (*Eriogonum giganteum*) grows into a large spherical shrub with lacy white flowers that float above its soft gray leaves.

Nosy gardeners (aromatic plants)

- Hummingbird sage (*Salvia spathacea*) has fruity-scented leaves, and is adorned in spring with deep rose-pink spires of flowers, often visited by hummingbirds.
- De La Mina verbena (*Verbena lilacina* 'De La Mina') is a coastal perennial with softly aromatic lavender flowers.
- Pitcher sage (*Lepechinia fragrans*), an erect perennial with showy, bell-shaped lavender flowers, has scented leaves that delight the nose as well as the eye.
- California lilacs (*Ceanothus* species) come in many sizes and shapes but all carry a delicate, honey-like aroma when in bloom.
- Catalina perfume (*Ribes viburnifolium*) is an excellent ground cover with leathery, perfume-scented leaves. The flowers are not showy unless you get up close to enjoy their dusky pink color and simple design.

At the plant sale there will be signs with growing requirements and photographs for each plant. Volunteers with years of experience growing California natives will welcome your questions and make useful suggestions. So stop by to chat with friendly gardeners who are only too happy to share their knowledge, and pick up some beautiful and unusual plants that are perfect for your garden.

Book Review

Field Notes on Science and Nature.

Edited by Michael R. Canfield.

Harvard University Press. 2011. \$27.95

by Mickey Long

THIS new book caught my eye since like most Biologists and Naturalists I enjoy seeing others' notes and writings straight from field research, and I've kept my own form of field notes for over 45 years. In this interesting book, with a forward by E.O. Wilson, editor Canfield pulls together twelve chapters by as many authors. The authors have varied backgrounds as anthropologists, ornithologists, paleontologists, entomologists, mammalogists, and zoological illustrators, but all are field researchers and take us into their study sites with words and illustrations from their own field notebooks.

There is clearly a universal theme in these chapters and that is to encourage the presumed Naturalist-reader to record or keep recording their own field observations. Other common themes are to record a careful note of exactly where you were, using GPS, photos, drawings, or maps. Make copies of your field notes in case of loss of a field notebook, with scanning into a computer now one of the better ways. Make a duplicate set to store back home or better at a University, Nature Center or with a close friend. Several authors emphasize that it is difficult to anticipate all the needs your data will serve or the questions you will ask in the future, so record everything you can, while you can, in as many different ways as you can (anthropologists especially emphasized).

In one chapter, titled "One and a Half Cheers for List-Keeping", field ornithologist Kenn Kaufman discusses the difference between bird listing and more serious bird surveys. He openly takes us back to his earlier days as a rabid bird lister, chasing around and finding as many species as possible, but not necessarily paying much attention to standardizing the effort, keeping

counts of individuals and making the searches repeatable.

Perhaps of most interest to CNPS members is James Reveal's chapter on botanical field books. Reveal, the recognized expert on the Polygonaceae, and author of over 450 scientific papers, discusses and illustrates the use of the field notebook in collecting plant specimens for later use in preparing accurate labels. One page from his Journal documents the day he called eastern Sierra botanist Mary DeDecker to let her know the golden-flowered buckwheat-like plant she'd found was a new genus, he would name *Dedeckera eurekaensis*. Reveal also talks candidly about his recent switch from hand-written field notes to a computer-generated version and laments that his own notebook is becoming more removed, aloof, and even "dull" as he tends to stick to locality, habitat and dates while omitting other notes on thoughts while collecting. There are additional chapters on the use of computers and relational databases to capture field information and study data collected.

My own observations are that a field notebook doubles as a biologist's diary, yielding hours of pleasure in re-visiting early trips and notes, while at the same time serving to capture field data remarkably difficult to recall when you return home. A photo or two can often be used to recall the dominant plants after you've returned home. It is when collecting a voucher specimen of a plant, a photo of an unusual butterfly or observing a rare bird that you need to record most of the associated plant species to store ecological information and paint a "niche" picture of the species' habitat needs.

Here is a sample page (second of two pages) from an earlier year when an unusual lizard discovery prompted me to pay close attention to the botanical and geographic surroundings that would be important in explaining what a desert night lizard was doing high in the San Gabriel Mountains. It also reveals a young zoologist working to learn his plants.



Coulter pine

M.C. Forgo
1975JournalMt. Islip and Chilao Campground (Cont.)

15 May

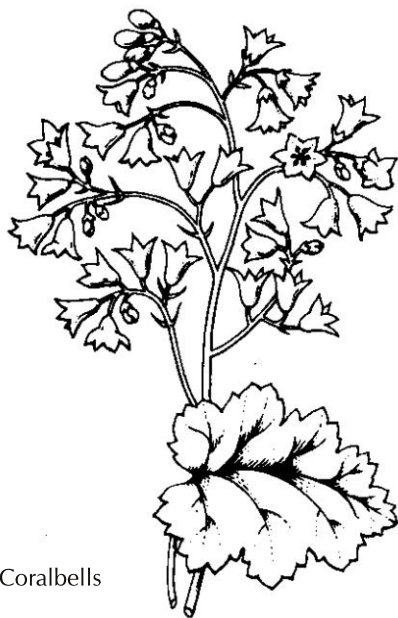
another Xantusia. The skin was under a large slab of bark peeled away from the upper side of a large fallen ~~Jeffrey~~^{Coulter} Pine. After about twenty minutes of searching we found a second Xantusia inside another fallen pine log. The lizard was found about 6-8 inches (ca. 2 dm.) inside the decaying log by prying away both the bark and a chunk of wood. The log was a maze of apparent Carpenter ant tunnels and the lizard was attempting to escape through the tunnels. The habitat at the site is a mix of Yellow Pine Forest and Chaparral with dominant plants being Pinus ~~jeffreyi~~^{coulteri}, Yucca whipplei, Quercus wislizenii, Eriophyllum confertiflorum, and Poa scabrella. Other plants noted in the vicinity were Quercus dumosa, Lotus sp., Phacelia curvipes, Viola, Linanthus and an Eriogonum. The first lizard was found on the hot, dry west slope of the small creek and the second lizard about 100 yds. eastward, on the other side of the creek. The lizards were found about 2:00 P.M. and the locality is about 5250 ft. elevation. The creek, about 1 ft. wide with flowing water, drains south from the Horse Flats Campground and the crest of the San Gabriel's is less than 2 air miles N. of the site. Just over the crest to the north are the headwaters of the South Fork of Little Rock Creek, possibly the "desert leak" by which the lizards reached the coastal slope.

Q: I have been hearing about the upcoming CNPS Plant Sale (November 12, 2011) but do not know much about the plants that will be available. What is being sold and how can I use them in my garden?

By Barbara Eisenstein, Horticulture Chair

A: Our chapter sells about 100 different types of California native plants, plus packets of California wildflowers. There is something for everyone. There are small perennials, flowering plants, succulents, trees, shrubs, and more. Some like sun, others prefer shade. Most are water-thrifty, though some require a bit more to drink. Among the perennials there are many with showy flowers; some with bright white leaves, perfect for a moonlight garden; and some with aromatic leaves delicious for a refreshing iced tea.

Since I cannot describe each plant, the following lists include five plants for five different kinds of gardeners. (Note: Although we do not know exactly which plants will be available at the sale, the following list is representative of plants sold in past years.)



Coralbells

For foodies (plants with culinary uses)

- Wild sages (*Salvia* species) are wonderful for seasoning and iced tea. Gently rub a leaf to see which ones appeal to you.
- Coyote mint (*Monardella villosa*) is a perennial with a refreshing minty flavor.
- Golden currant (*Ribes aureum*) has small currants that can be added to Sunday pancakes or eaten right off the shrub.
- California bay (*Umbellularia californica*) is a slow-growing tree with strongly scented leaves that can be used sparingly in a savory winter dish.
- Nevin's barberry (*Mahonia nevinii*) is an adaptable garden shrub that produces showy, red berries that are tasty right off the plant or can be collected for a delicious barberry jam.

For gardenless gardeners (plants that do well in containers)

- Liverforever (*Dudleya* species) are lovely, rosette-forming succulents that appreciate a well-drained soil mix in a container.
- Coralbells (*Heuchera* cultivars), named for their delightful pink, white or red flowers, can be grown in containers with other perennials that enjoy regular water and some shade.
- Silver Surprise California lilac (*Ceanothus* 'Silver Surprise'), a low-growing shrub with white variegation along the margins of its shiny, dark green leaves, puts on

an unusual display as it spills over a large patio container.

- Cape Blanco stonecrop (*Sedum spathulifolium* 'Cape Blanco') with its small silvery-blue succulent leaves and yellow flowers dresses up any pot all year long.
- Blue rush (*Juncus patens*) is a durable grass-like plant with stiff blue-green blades that will last for years in a container or in the ground.

For flower pickers (plants that are good for vases)

- Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) is an easy-to-grow perennial that blooms from late spring through summer. The large cream to pink flower clusters turn a tawny brown in late summer, making them perfect for country bouquets or naturalistic dried arrangements.
- Coralbells (*Heuchera* cultivars) produce delicate pink, white or red flowers on long stems that dance in the spring breeze.
- Coast sunflower (*Encelia californica*), as its name suggests, has bright, sunny, yellow daisy-like flowers that will brighten any floral arrangement.
- Margarita BOP penstemon (*Penstemon heterophyllus* 'Margarita BOP') is a neat, low-growing perennial with a profusion of flowers that begin with yellowish buds and progress through blue, rose and purple as they mature.
- Douglas iris (*Iris douglasiana*) is a geophyte that blooms in varying shades of purple to white. Cultivars of this plant produce flowers that are earth-toned, yellow, and a myriad of other unusual colors and patterns.

Night owl gardeners (plants that shine in the moonlight)

- David's Choice sandhill sage (*Artemisia pycnocephala* 'David's Choice') is a tightly hemispherical perennial with feathery gray leaves that will shine in any moonlight garden. *Continued on page 3 ...*

BOARD MEETINGS

On the third Thursday of odd-numbered months from 7:30 to 9 pm. All members are welcome to attend. Meeting place at Eaton Canyon Nature Center.

November 17

PROGRAMS

On the fourth Thursday of each month except July, August, November, and December. The meetings begin at 7:30 pm and are preceded by a social gathering at 7 pm.

October 27

Bart O'Brien, *Reimagining the California Lawn: Water-Conserving Plants, Practices, and Designs*

Bart, always informative and entertaining, will talk about his new book, on lawn alternatives.

PLANT WALKS

Join us on the second Sunday of each month except July and August at 9 am for a gentle walk around the Eaton Canyon Nature Center. Make friends with people of similar interests and learn the names and habits of the native plants in the surrounding area.

October 9 with Bob Dollins as leader

November 13 with Clem Padick as leader

December 11 with Cliff and Gabi McLean as leaders

FIELD TRIPS

On occasional Saturdays throughout the year. The walking is easy, usually on wide fire roads. If a convenient place is available nearby, we love to picnic afterward. Weather is unpredictable; snow, rain, fire and ice cancel. Email Jane Strong, zelicaon@yahoo.com, if unsure about weather, ability level or directions.

October 22, 9 am

**Fall Color in Baldy Canyon,
Barrett-Stoddard Road**

Take 210 to Baseline. Left on Baseline. Immediate right on Padua. At the stop signal turn right on Mt. Baldy Road. Continue up the canyon to Barrett-Stoddard Road. Turn extreme right and park.

We will examine those difficult-to-tell-apart, aromatic, yellow-flowered, fall-blooming shrubs in the Asteraceae and then walk up the road to overlook the brilliant maples in the canyons. Lunch at the Trout Ponds.

☒ If you wish email reminders about these events or if you would like to get the newsletter by email, send a request to Cliff McLean at cliff.mclean@verizon.net

December 3, 9 am

**Meet the Sumac Family,
Marshall Canyon**

Take the 210 Freeway to Fruit. North on Fruit to Baseline. Baseline to Esperanza. Right at Esperanza to Stephens Ranch Road. Right at Stephens Ranch Road toward Marshall Canyon Golf Course. Continue past GC to top of hill and around to where the road splits. Turn sharp right up an unpaved road to parking lot. Enjoy the views there.

Members of the sumac family including laurel sumac, sugarbush, poison oak, skunkbush, pepper tree and the brilliant Chinese pistache, are at their prettiest this season when other plants in coastal sage habitat are looking their worst, having gone a long time with no rainfall or fog drip. Your picnic lunch may have sumac family foods: mango, cashew, pistachio, pink peppercorn or mastic (gum).



Chinese pistache

SPECIAL EVENTS

November 12, 9am-2 pm

Native Plant Sale

Approximately 1,000 plants for sale! Reasonably priced California native plants and wildflower seeds appropriate for gardens in the Los Angeles basin will be available, including plants for attracting birds and butterflies to your home garden. Knowledgeable chapter members will be on hand to answer questions.

November 19, 3 pm

Native Plant Gardening Workshop

Gain hands on experience on how to plant natives at this free workshop at Eaton Canyon Nature Center, in the Becky Rothenburg Memorial Garden, at 3 pm. Bring work gloves. Tools will be provided.



CALIFORNIA
NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

stamp



CNPS San Gabriel Mountains Chapter
1750 North Altadena Drive
Pasadena, California 91107

CNPS-SGM CHAPTER DIRECTORY

Current Elected Officers

Gabi McLean 626-966-0580

* gabi.mclean@verizon.net
President, Member Services

Terry Keller 562-463-7503

tkeller@riohondo.edu

Vice-president

Shelly Magier 818-480-2438

shellyam@aol.com

Secretary

Graham Bothwell 626-449-8392

webcontact@cnps-sgm.org

Treasurer, Web Page Editor

Orchid Black 626-354-2240

orchidblack@charter.net

Chapter Council Representative

label



C A L I F O R N I A
NATIVE PLANT SALE

Saturday, November 12, 2011, 9 am

Eaton Canyon Nature Center

cash or check only

more information at <http://cnps-sgm.org>

Epilobium canum (E. Greene) Raven
California Fuchsia

© 1995

Bonnie K. Walters