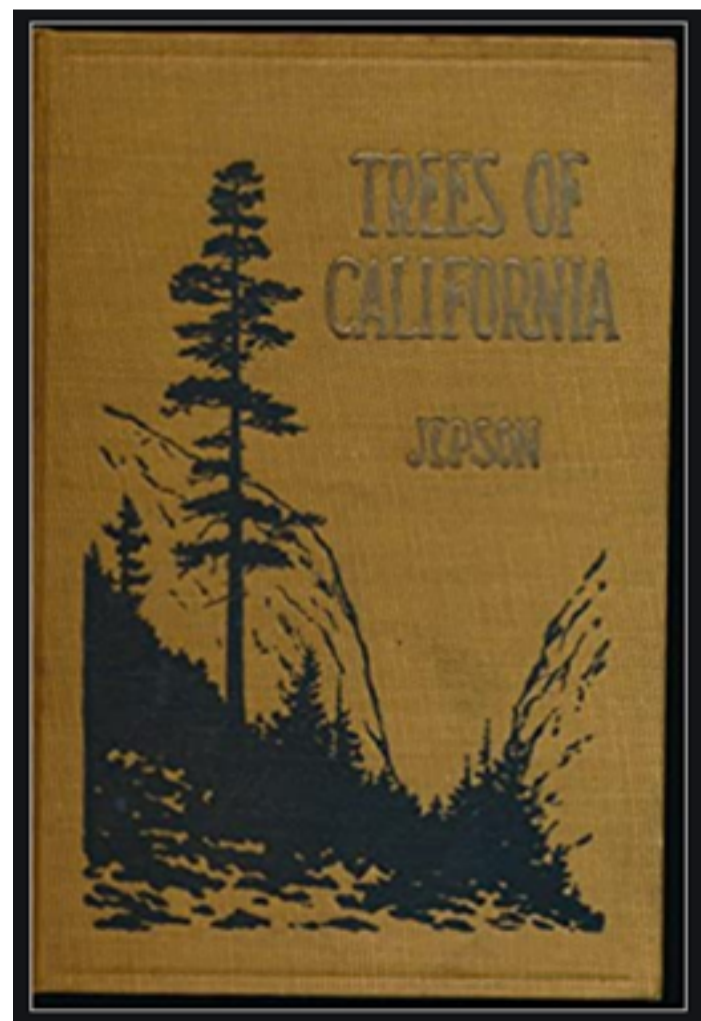
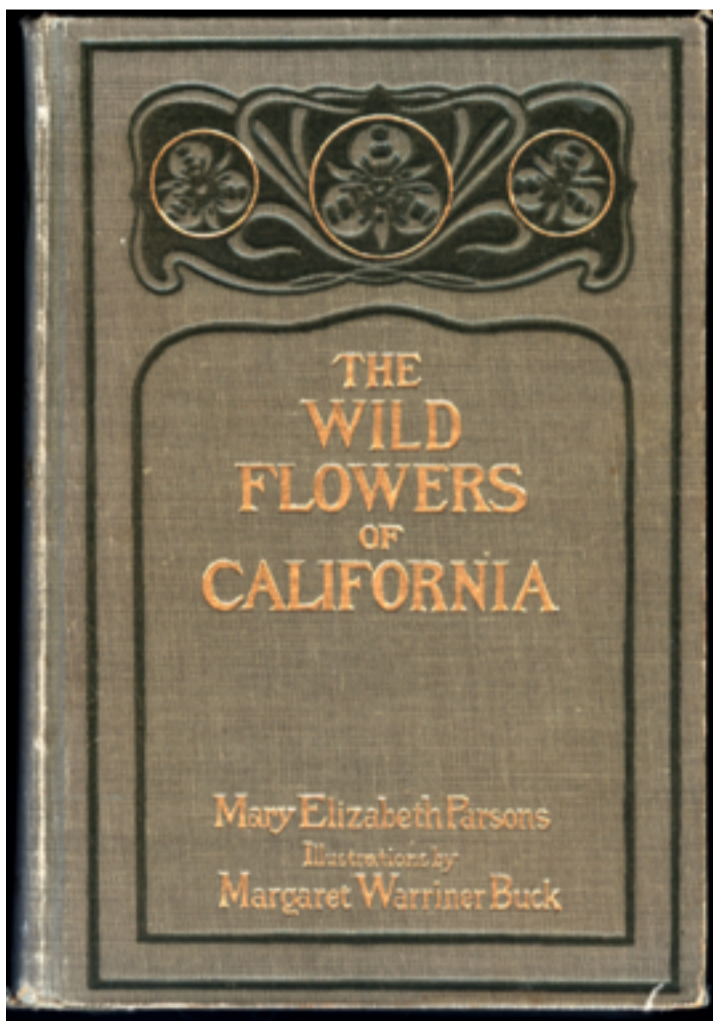
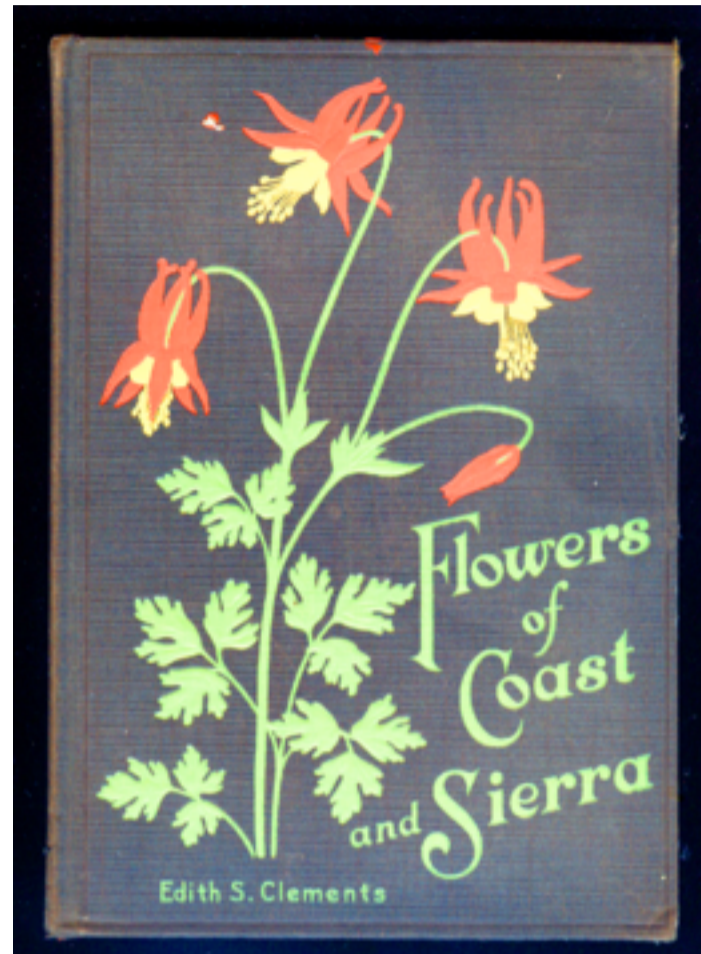


Obispoensis

Newsletter of the San Luis Obispo Chapter of the California Native Plant Society



THE BOTANY BOOK COLLECTOR (COVER)

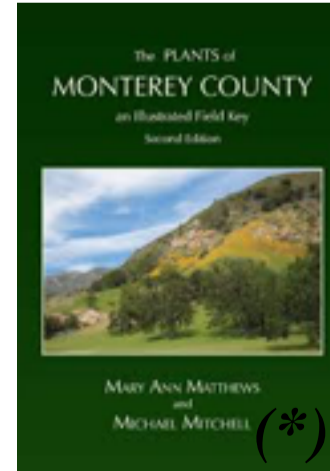
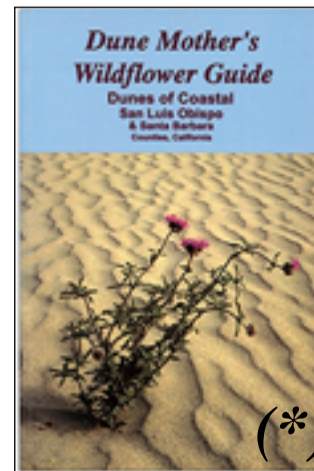
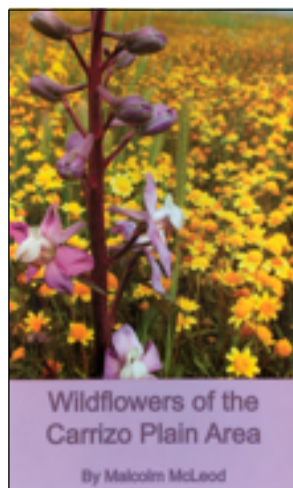
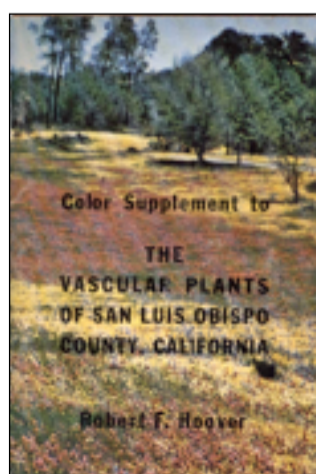
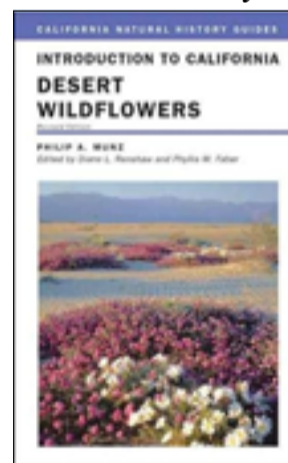
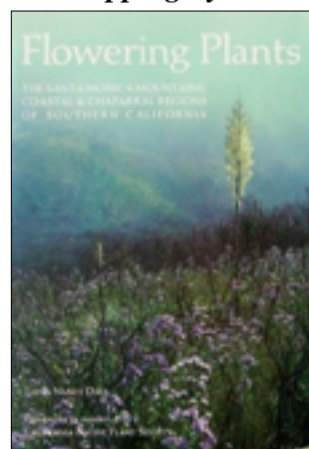
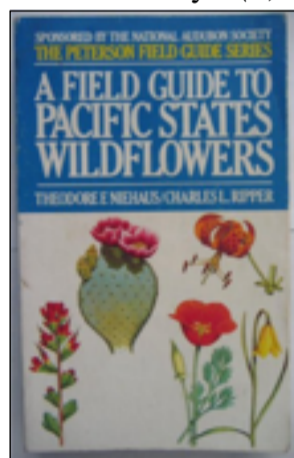
Those old flower guides from the the early part of the last century have a certain charm, as they often decorated the hard cover in the days when paper dust jackets were not much in use. The Edith Clements books are considered collectors items, and I was amazed to see the Amazon asking price for the 'Flowers of Coast and Sierra' (1947) to be in the \$800-\$1,000 range. The many colored plates are really beautiful. Edith's other book, 'Flowers of Mountain and Plain' (1926) is much, much cheaper in the \$20-\$30 range. The Mary Parsons book has had several reprints, but the original with its golden letters from 1925 is quite rare. The original 1923 edition of Willis Jepson's 'Trees of California' is fetching prices in excess of \$500.

THROWING THE BOOK AT YOU

A LIGHT-HEARTED ENQUIRY INTO ANALOGIES BETWEEN CRIME AND PLANT IDENTIFICATION

The phrase "Throw the book at you" refers to the threat made in police dramas to make as many charges as possible against an offender: "You may have gotten off lightly in the past, Donald, but this time we're going to throw the book at you." However to make charges stick, there has to be evidence, and evidence can come in increasing levels of value. The simplest, which is sometimes of the lowest value, is identification from the book of mug shots and goes back to caveman days: "Was it OG the Hairy, or UG the Hairier that you saw throw the rock?". The next and higher level is forensic evidence from the crime scene, such as an inscribed rock with the words "Me. UG, do it." The witness evidence and the crime scene evidence remained the main sources available until DNA evidence became available, making this the highest level tool. So what the heck has this to do with plant identification?

For the typical CNPS member with their love of flowers and with no training in the arcane language of plant taxonomy, the simplest identification is the equivalent of a mugshot. For oldsters like myself (I knew OG) the available tools were books that had good photos or sketches, hopefully arranged by color and number of petals, that we could flip through. I remember picking up an edition of the Hoover SLO County Flora, and being aghast that it was full of weird words like 'strigose' and had no pictures. Instead, I turned to what I still consider an excellent tool... a Peterson Field Guide 'A Field Guide to Pacific States Wildflowers' by Theodore Niehaus and Charles Ripper which has drawn illustrations of 1,492 plants and a good chance of getting you to the genus level of commonly seen plants. However there were no SLO-county photo-based flower identification books available, the closest coverage geographically being Nancy Dale's 'Flowering Plants: The Santa Monica Mountains & Chaparral Regions of Southern California' which was regarded as an excellent but far from comprehensive resource. The go-to bible of taxonomic identification of the late 20thC was Philip Munz's weighty "A California Flora and Supplement", found in the backpacks of serious plant-keyers, but a series of habitat based, photo-illustrated pocket field guides were useful but more limited in species mugshot coverage, and not very useful for our county. (*) *In Sales Table stock. Order from lindachipping@yahoo.com and it can be sent to you*



In this county, there were attempts to produce better photo-based guides. Robert Hoover self-produced a thin "Color Supplement to The Vascular Plants of San Luis Obispo, California" and then Dr. Malcolm McLeod produced the two booklets on the wildflowers of Highway 58 and the Carrizo Plain, and the *Dune Mothers Wildflower Guide*. Also 'Corky' Matthews published a line-drawing but comprehensive book for Monterey County, recycling line drawings from 'Illustrated Flora of the Pacific States' by Leroy Abrams.

A LIGHT-HEARTED ENQUIRY (Continued)

So, moving to the higher level of criminal investigation and plant identification, we enter the world of forensics. The scene of the crime, or plant's habitat, and the diagnostic features of both a crime scene and the features of a plant bring us to Munz, and then to the *Jepson Manual of the Vascular Plants of California*. For many CNPS members, using this book involves a steep learning curve because of the predominance of terms seldom seen outside the world of plant taxonomy. Just as a prosecutor must very carefully spell out the meaning of forensic evidence to a jury, each of those weird botanic terms must be understood before a decision on identification is made.



Now DNA analysis and computer analysis have expanded the nature of evidence beyond that which can be easily seen, placing it in the hands of technical experts far from the courtroom. The same thing has happened in botany. Just as new DNA evidence can free a convicted criminal, detailed plant genetic analysis can completely mess up earlier plant identification based on plant morphology, which is the core basis of the Munz, Jepson and Hoover identification keys. That is why plant taxonomists have an annoying habit of changing plant names, plant families and other things the rest of us took for granted. Witness the demise of the *Scrophulariaceae*. Another good example occurs with the endangered Ione manzanita, which had two separated populations containing very different upright and prostrate plants that resemble their apparent twins in the other population. Imagine the surprise that DNA showed the upright plants of one population were the same as the prostrate plants in the other population, and vice versa.

Lastly, new tools have allowed plant 'mug shots' to be available in the field through web access to the CalFlora site, where photos of just about every California plant species can be viewed. You can also search a digital, older version of the Jepson Manual, as it is really, really heavy in its analog form. But these tools don't work if phone reception is bad, and thus an old fashion photo book still works. George Butterworth's excellent photo-based flora for the Carrizo Plain allows you to carry a flora in a phone's memory that can be viewed through a PDF-viewer on your phone, and does not require internet access (on our web site). EDITOR

THE JOYS OF PLANT ILLUSTRATION

In the days before photographs, plant identification depended on accurate drawings and paintings of plants. These would become some of the greatest examples of fine art. For years the cover of *Obispoensis* carried the technically exact line drawings of Bonnie Walters, and were coupled with a description of the plant by Dirk Walters on the following page. Our chapter has also featured beautiful watercolors of plants by Mardi Niles and Heather Johnson. CNPS has invited artists to show at the CNPS Conservation Conferences



Marie Brennan (manzanita)



Susan Jackson (Claytonia)

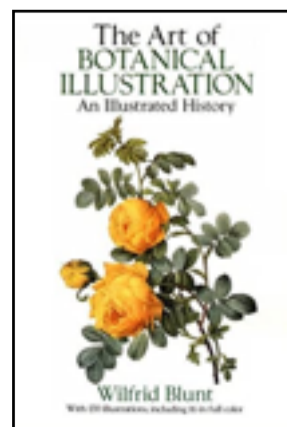


Ellie Yun-Hui Tu (Dudleya)

A Selection of Plant Illustration shown at the Los Angeles CNPS Conference



(left) Two past *Obispoensis* covers by Heather Johnson. (right) If you love plant art, the two books on the right are recommended. Taschen Press has several books of this sort,

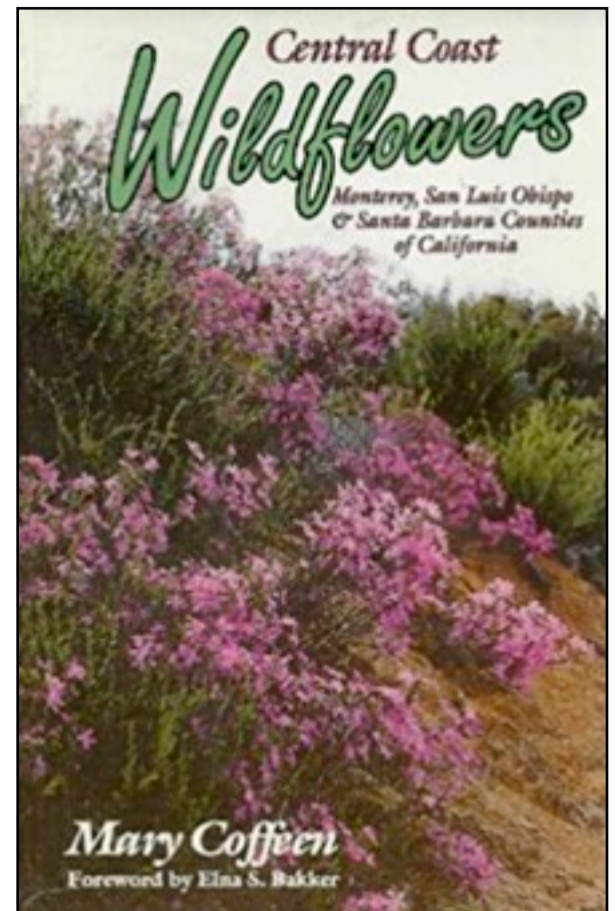


A LOST TREASURE: MARY COFFEEN'S *CENTRAL COAST WILDFLOWERS*

This little treasure was published locally by EZ Nature Books in 1983, is 160 pages of line drawings and has an extensive story about each plant, including Native American uses, how the plant got named, suitability for the garden, and much more. The book is out of print and difficult to find (I could not locate any on Amazon, for example), and I imagine that anyone who owns one will keep a tight grip on it, as it is such a fount of plant information.

Mary Coffeen led a number of hikes for CNPS, including the Cerro Alto Trail, and was an active docent with California State Parks. Soon after this book was published, Mary's health began to fail and she moved out of area and soon passed away. Sadly, I was unable to locate any quality photos of Mary, which is such a shame. Even her author's picture at the back of her book is of such poor quality as to render her unrecognizable.

Also something Mary was very proud of has vanished into the fog of history. She called for an extension of the Islay Creek trail system in Montana de Oro State Park. It left the Islay Road just beyond the 2 mile marker, and climbed a valley and around a hill on the east side of Islay Road, returning around the hill and closing the circle on the banks of Islay Creek where dank smelling sulfur springs were hidden. An excellent trail was built by the California Conservation Corps, and remained in place for many years before State Parks closed it, presumably due to upkeep costs. I chatted with Parks staff who tried to hike the trail this year, but it is deeply overgrown with poison oak. EDITOR

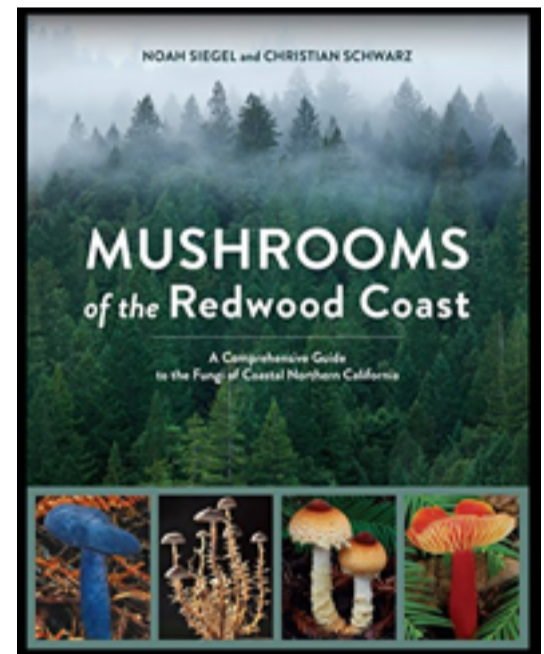


David Krause Suggests Something to Do in the Wet, Winter Woods



A regular feature of the CNPS year has been a mushroom identification field trip into the pine woods of Cambria organized by our treasurer, David Krause. This would usually take place around the end of the year, based on when rains had started and mushroom growth. David realized that this year, the mushroom searchers will not have experts along to help with identification, and recommends two books to bring along. These are *Mushrooms of the Redwood Coast*, and *All That The Rain Promises, and More*.

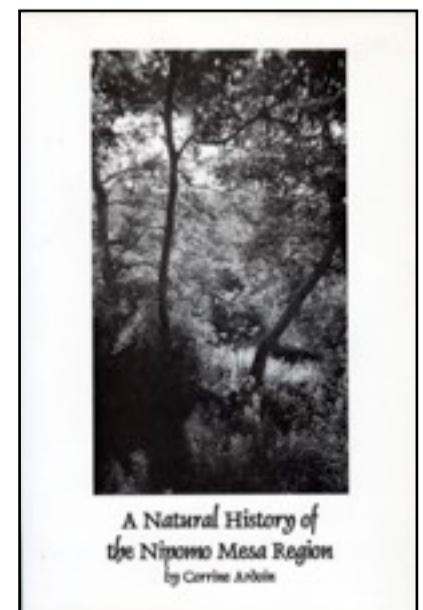
One thing to remember. A lot of mushrooms are poisonous or can trigger allergic reactions. While collecting for epicurian purposes is fine, in recent seasons just about every mushroom got taken by people, leaving nothing for the eyes. This has been true in Los Osos Oaks Reserve, where one school had a whole class collecting to take back to the classroom for later identification, leaving very little behind.



SLO Botanical Garden is having a Zoom workshop with Christian Schwarz from Santa Cruz - the weekend of Jan 22-25. Ticket info not available yet, but will be on their website. slobg.org

Corrine Ardoin's nice little book A Natural History of the Nipomo Mesa Region

We found this little gem at the Dana Adobe's gift store. Corrine did extensive research on just about every aspect of the natural history of the Mesa, and includes an extensive plant list. Its 166 packed pages retail for \$18, and we recommend using local bookstores or Dana Adobe's store for purchase. EDITOR





Plants of San Luis Obispo: Their Lives and Stories by Dr. Matt Ritter

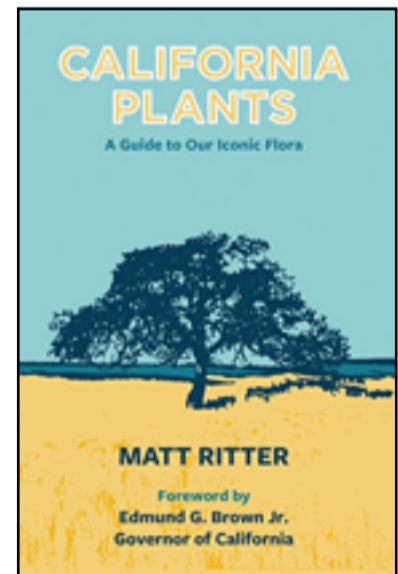
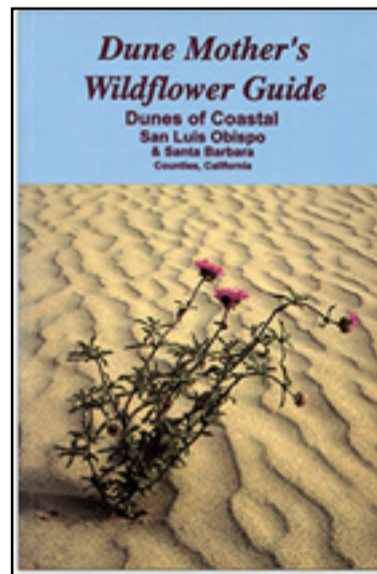
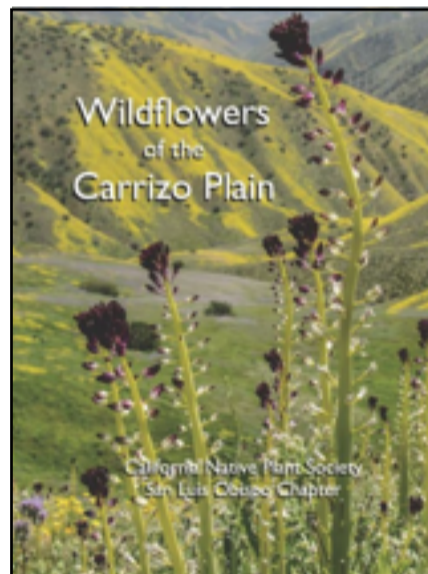
The following is taken from Matt Ritter's web page at <http://www.matritter.net/plants-of-slo>

"I wrote *Plants of San Luis Obispo* to impart the story of the area's botanical wonders in the format of an easy-to-read natural history guidebook. This part of California boasts an impressive diversity of plants, with more than 1,300 different native species (more than in the entire state of Alaska) and countless other introduced weeds and horticultural plants. This book vividly portrays the beauty, diversity, and history of the abundant and widespread wild and weedy plants in the area surrounding the county of San Luis Obispo and western portions of the California Central Coast. There are over 150 full-color pages that describe the habitat, botany, ecology, edible or medicinal properties, uses by Native Americans, etymology, and gardening uses of more than 200 plants. Encyclopedic in scope and full of interesting facts and stories, this comprehensive naturalist's guide is a wonderful overview of a historically and botanically rich area." This book appears to be temporarily out of print. *(In Sales Table stock. Order from lindachipping@yahoo.com and it can be sent to you)*

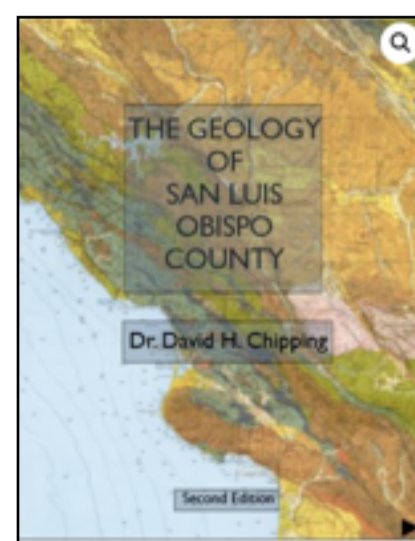
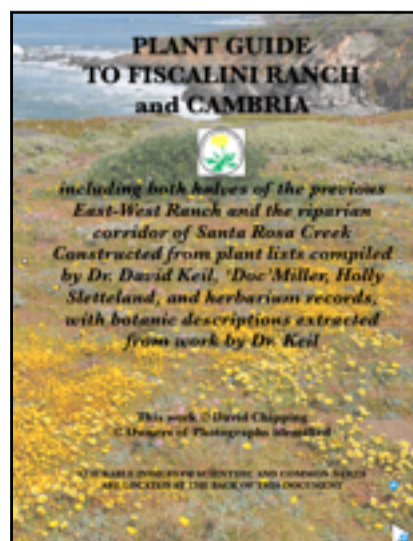
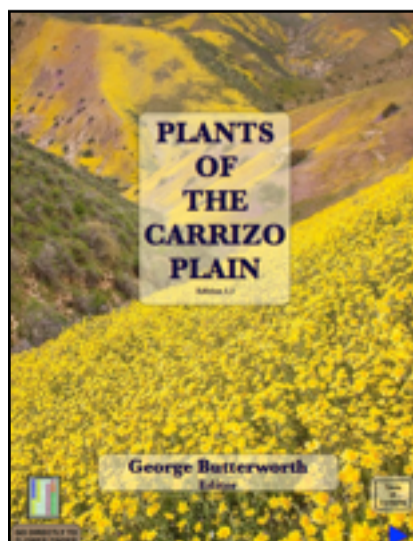
MORE GREAT PHOTO GUIDES FROM OUR WEBSITE

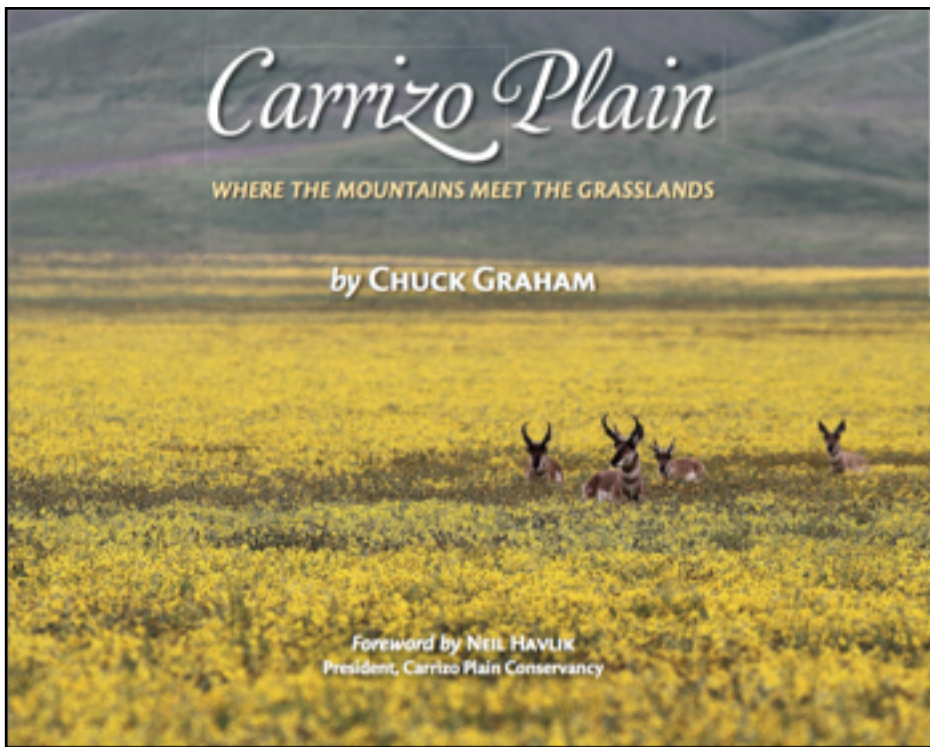
The following printed books by chapter authors are available from our website.

These books are all basically photographic guides. (left to right) **Wildflowers of San Luis Obispo County Second edition**, edited by David J. Keil, Ph.D. 8.5 x 5.5 inches. City of San Luis Obispo and San Luis Obispo chapter of the California Native Plant Society; **Wildflowers of the Carrizo Plain**; Fourteen pages, printed on heavy card stock paper. San Luis Obispo chapter of the California Native Plant Society; **Dune Mother's Wildflower Guide. Dunes of Coastal San Luis Obispo & Santa Barbara Counties, California**; Malcolm McLeod 97 pages Dimensions: .4" x 5.5" x 8.5" California Native Plant Society, 2001; **California Plants: A Guide to our Iconic Flora** Matt Ritter; Foreword by Edmund G. Brown Jr.



These three digital books are also available for direct download from the web site. The plant books are fairly comprehensive and allow query by color, and by plant morphology. All can be used in the field without internet access.

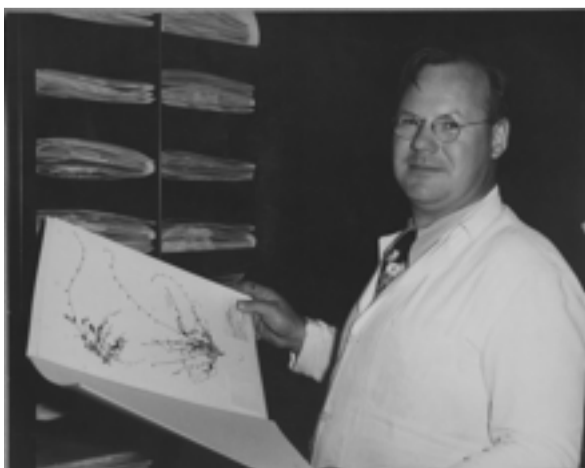




Introducing a fabulous new book, Chuck Graham's *Carrizo Plain, Where The Mountains Meet The Grasslands*

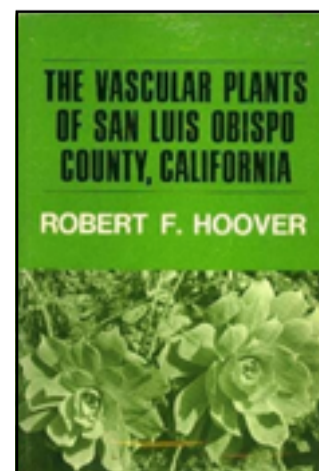
This book was just published in December 2020, and consists of 102 pages of spectacular photographs of the Carrizo Plain's landscapes, plants and animals. It is available at all of the local bookstores, all of which could use your business in these troubling times. It retails for \$25, and is a wonderful way to remind you of what a magnificent place we have in the Carrizo Plain. The selected pages shown above do not include many double facing page photographs. Neil Havlik wrote the foreward. EDITOR

.....and very soon we will see Dr. Hoover's great reference work on the county flora comprehensively updated by Dr. David Keil.

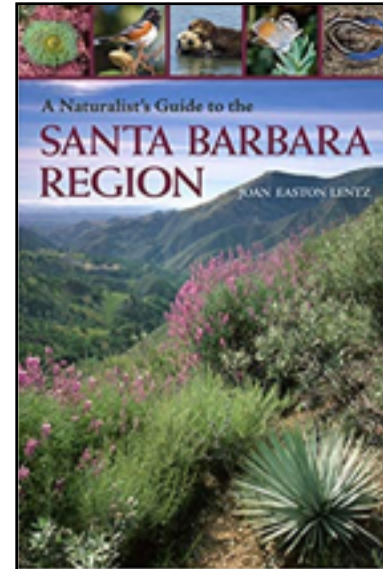
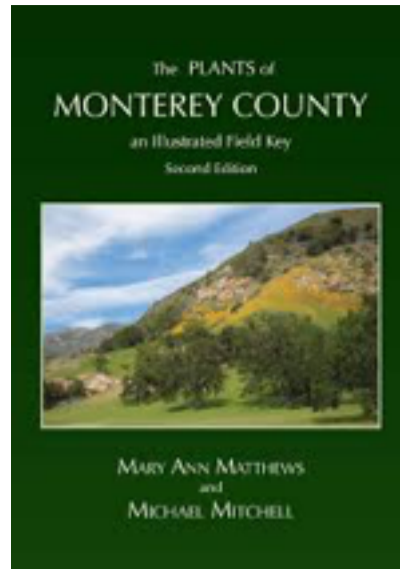
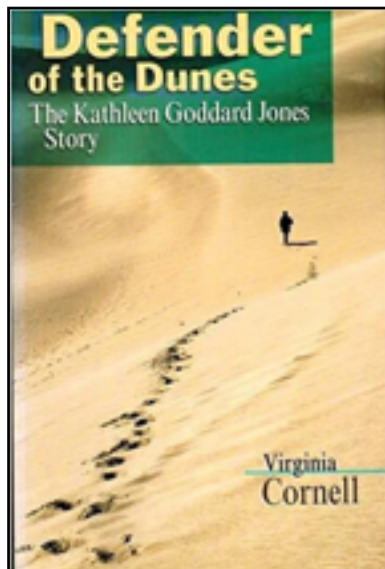
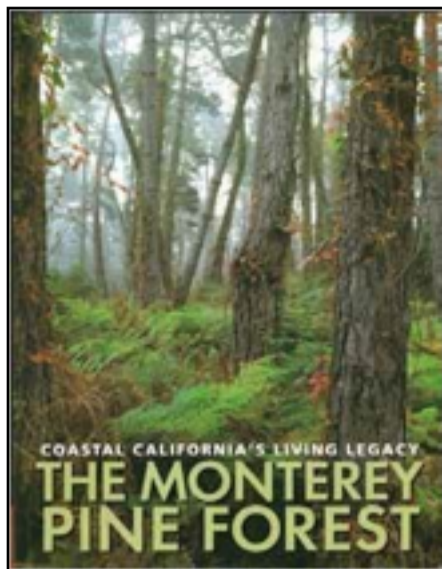


(left) This is the only photo we could find of Dr. Hoover, seen here in the herbarium that bears his name

(right) The original dust cover of Dr. Hoover's flora



BEYOND JUST PLANTS.....CINDY ROESSLER'S BOOK PICKS



***The Monterey Pine Forest - Coastal California's Living Legacy* by The Monterey Pine Forest Watch, 2nd edition.**

This is the book highlighted by our speaker Nikki Nedeff at her presentation to us last year. Good background on what makes Monterey pine forests unique at the five different locations where they still naturally occur, how they have changed over geologic time, human use, natural history, and parks where the native stands are protected including local Cambria and San Simeon. Beautiful photographs, maps and artwork throughout the book. Write to Pine Nut Press, The Monterey Pine Forest Watch, PO Box 505, Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA 93921-0505 for information on where to purchase.

***Defender of the Dunes - The Kathleen Goddard Jones Story*, Virginia Cornell.**

Oso Flaco Lake and the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes were saved as public lands partially due to the initial efforts of Kathleen Goddard Jones in the 1950s and 1960s. A housewife in the Sierra Club and married to an active member of the SLO County Republican party, she led monthly hikes along the entire county coastline, an eccentric woman for her times. This story about her persistent efforts might serve as inspiration for others, while also recognizing her struggles when the nuclear power plant initially proposed for the Nipomo area was moved north to Diablo Canyon and with the growing popularity of motorized vehicles on the dunes at the new state park. This history is particularly interesting now with the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant in the process of decommissioning, and serious debate about the use of motorized vehicles at the Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area. The book is out-of-print but can be found at county libraries and second-hand bookstores.

***The Plants of Monterey County - An Illustrated Field Key*, Mary Ann Matthews and Michael Mitchell.**

Until Hoover's Vascular Plants of San Luis Obispo County is updated, this Monterey flora is a good substitute for carrying in the field to have a semi-comprehensive key to SLO flora. The two counties share similar flora and this version includes numerous drawings originally from the four-volume Illustrated Flora of the Pacific States. (*** In Sales Table stock. Order from lindachipping@yahoo.com and it can be sent to you**)

***A Naturalist's Guide to the Santa Barbara Region*, Joan Easton Lentz.**

In the first-ever comprehensive nature guide to the Santa Barbara area, accomplished author, teacher, and Santa Barbara native Joan Easton Lentz shares her lifelong knowledge of this region renowned for its unique natural resources and legendary scenery. Taking readers on a journey from tidepools to mountain peaks and pinyon-juniper woodlands, Lentz combines lucid and evocative nature writing, including on-the-scene journal entries, with a rich array of photos and illustrations, creating a highly personal and scientific handbook. *A Naturalist's Guide to the Santa Barbara Region* at once deepens our understanding of the land and its array of inhabitants and inspires us to head outside. (*** In Sales Table stock. Order from lindachipping@yahoo.com and it can be sent to you**)

Remember *Berberis pinnata* from our last issue? An interesting follow-up story

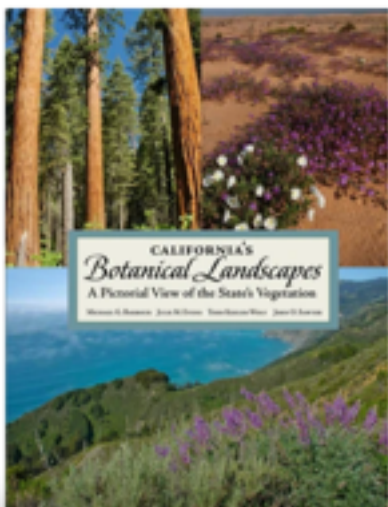
If you remember, I showed a picture of *Berberis pinnata* subsp. *pinnata* and the Tiki Head from the east end of Cerro Cabrillo. One of our learned readers counted the number of spines on the side of the leaf, counted 7-9 on one side and then consulted the Jepson Manual which stated that the species had 15-23 spines per side. Our reader then asked... is this possibly another species of *Berberis*, or is Jepson wrong. He referred the question to Dr. Keil, who first did a spine count of a large number of herbarium specimens, and then concluded that the Jepson Manual should have said 15-23 spines per leaf, not per side. Dr. Keil notified Bruce Baldwin, the Jepson editor, and the error will be changed during the next revision. EDITOR



and Susi Bernstein recommends....

California's Botanical Landscapes (Michael Barbour, Julie Evans, Todd Keeler-Wolf, John Sawyer)

I bought this book when it was first published as a present for my sister, but after flipping through it I was sorry to let it go. Happily, I recently was gifted with my own copy. It really is a joy to look deeply at the photographs of this book, even if you don't take the time to read the accompanying descriptions. We have such special and diverse landscapes in California, and this book lets you dream of all the places you'd like to see one day.



Gardening with a Wild Heart (Judith Lerner Lowry)

I read this enjoyable and inspiring book before I had a garden of my own. Judith Lowry integrates the concept of habitat restoration into her garden which was exactly what I wanted. She writes about a little open-door hut which serves as a place to nap and admire the garden, and I instantly wanted one of those too. She suggests that fluffy white coyote brush seed might serve as natural confetti, and that appealed to me so much that I incorporated it later into our friends' wedding. This was an important book that has shaped the way I think of our own garden. And I got my own napping hut in the end!

(* In Sales Table stock. Order from lindachipping@yahoo.com and it can be sent to you)



And for the young at heart...do you have grandchildren that might appreciate this award-winning book honoring indigenous peoples?

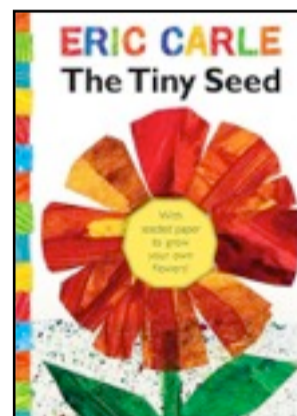
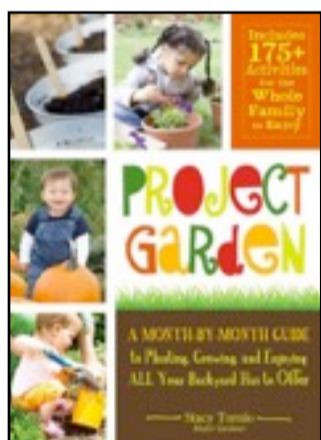
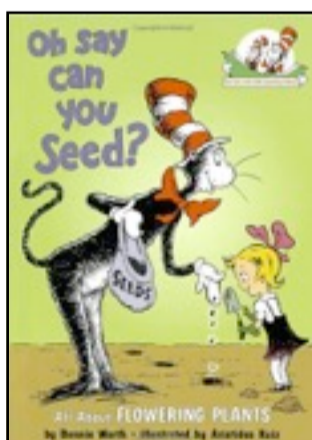
Birdsong is written by Cree-Metis author Julie Flett about a young girl who moves away from the coast and meets a new friend who shares her love of nature and art. The book was honored by the American Indian Library Association "Youth Literature Award" as an Honor Book for Best Picture Book for 2020.

Melissa Mooney

Editors Note: There is a YouTube reading of *Birdsong*, showing all the illustrations at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZaahD5Oc4a4>



We have also discovered a LOT of books for getting young children interested in gardening and plants in general. We have not reviewed the books, which we found at: <https://www.hellowonderful.co/post/10-children-s-books-about-plants-and-flowers/>



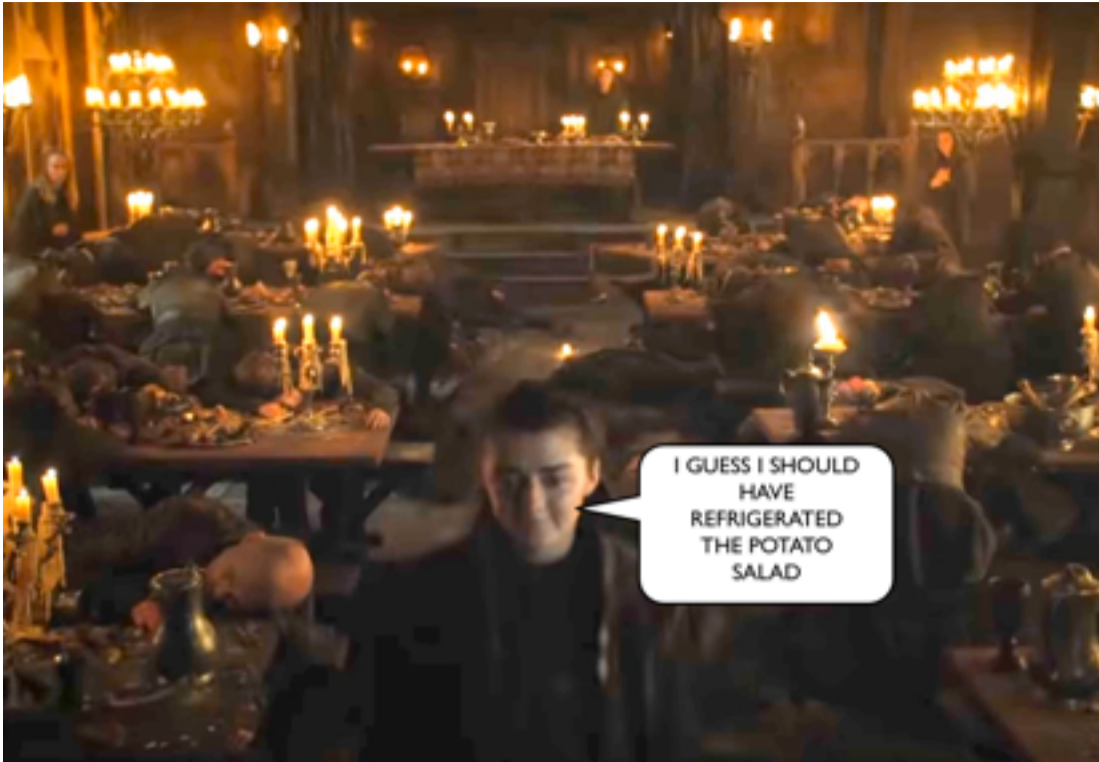
CHAPTER BOARD ELECTION: RESULTS AND CONGRATULATIONS

Thanks to all who participated in our Election of Officers during the last meeting (via Zoom). The elected slate of officers is **President Melissa Mooney; Vice President Kristen Nelson; Recording Secretary Cindy Roessler; Chapter Treasurer David Krause**

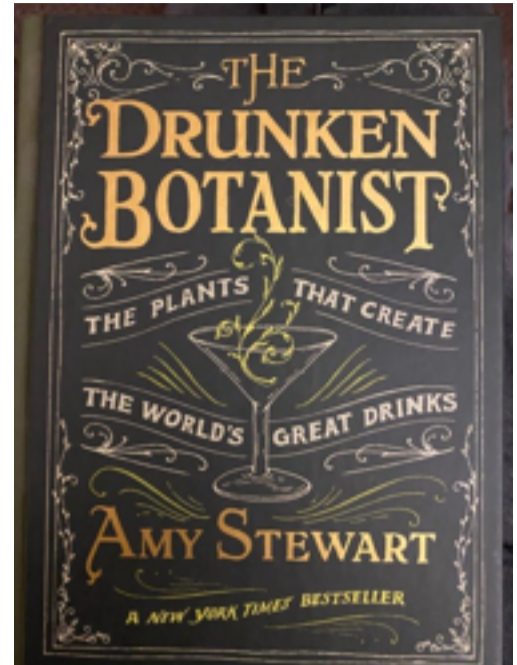
We owe a depth of thanks to these four people who make our chapter work. It is not a small task. To date, Rudy Giuliani has NOT raised the possibility that George Soros, China and a dead Venezuelan dictator conspired to fix this election.

Of course you knew this, but the banquet is canceled.

If things get better, perhaps an outdoor event in the spring could bring us all together (at a safe distance).



But you can still have fun.....



Apologies to the Game of Thrones

Remembering Past Banquet Bouquets

For many years I have had the good fortune of working with other members of our CNPS-SLO chapter making floral arrangements for the January Banquet. Because we are unable to gather in person this year, due to the coronavirus pandemic, I thought it would be fun to share a collection of photos from past banquets. All of the plants used for the bouquets were Californian native plants collected from the gardens by those of us working on the "Banquet Bouquets." For many years we tried to have the bouquets reflect the speaker's topic. Then other years we had a more serendipitous approach. Every year, rain or shine, but always in winter, we had a good time. I want to express my appreciation to Susi Bernstein, Marti Rutherford and June Krystoff-Jones for joining me on my back yard patio to make the floral decorations for the annual CNPS Banquet. **MARDI NILES**



Fire Followers



At our last chapter ZOOM meeting, we were treated to Bryant Baker's talk "From the Ashes: A Journey Through the Post-fire Landscape". Checking into Dr. Keil's species descriptions in a draft version of his revised Flora of San Luis Obispo County, the following species either followed fire and then became scarce, or flourished due to the changed condition. The list does not include stump-sprouters, and is probably incomplete. It is quite long, which is testimony to the nature of our local flora being fire-adapted.

Acmispon grandiflorus
 Acmispon heermannii
 Acmispon junceus var. biolettii
 Acmispon parviflorus
 Allophyllum divaricatum
 Allophyllum glutinosum
 Antirrhinum kelloggii
 Antirrhinum thompsonii
 Bassia scoparia
 Calandrinia breweri
 Calystegia longipes
 Camissonia strigulosa
 Camissoniopsis ignota
 Ceanothus spinosus
 Chorizanthe staticoides
 Claytonia parviflora subsp. parviflora
 Crocanthemum scoparium
 Cryptantha microstachys
 Cryptantha muricata
 Cuscuta californica
 Dendromecon rigida
 Diplacus rattanii

Ehrendorferia ochroleuca
 Elymus condensatus
 Emmenanthe penduliflora
 Epilobium minutum
 Eriastrum luteum
 Ericameria arborescens
 Eriogonum inerme var. inerme
 Erythranthe androsacea
 Eschscholzia caespitosa
 Eucrypta chrysanthemifolia var. chrysanthemifolia
 Eulobus californicus
 Gilia achilleifolia subsp. abrotanifolia
 Githopsis diffusa
 Helianthus gracilentus
 Heterocodon rariflorum
 Hosackia crassifolia var. otayensis
 Hulsea heterochroma
 Layia hieracioides
 Lupinus albifrons var. collinus
 Madia exigua
 Malacothamnus jonesii
 Malacothrix clevelandii

Malacothrix floccifera
 Malacothrix phaeocarpa
 Meconella denticulata
 Mentzelia dispersa
 Mentzelia micrantha
 Myosurus minimus
 Navarretia mellita
 Nuttallanthus texanus
 Papaver californicum
 Phacelia brachyloba
 Phacelia grisea
 Plagiobothrys collinus
 Plagiobothrys uncinatus
 Sidalcea hickmanii
 Silene multinervia
 Stipa lepida
 Streptanthus heterophyllus
 Stylocline gnaphaloides
 Toxicoscordion fremontii
 Trifolium bifidum var. bifidum
 Turricula parryi
 Vicia hassei



Poodle-dog bush, *Turricula parryi*, is an obligate fire follower. The pictures on the left and top-center are taken just east of Red Hill Road on Highway 58, following a fire. The plants formed an impressive display for a couple of years, and then vanished. The plant is very pretty, but has annoying hairs that can irritate the skin, just as do some others in the closely related *Phacelia* family. And you gotta love the name.

Photos by David Chipping

FIRST, THE GOOD NEWS.....SUDDEN OAK DEATH STILL LURKING NEAR, BUT NOT CROSSING, THE NORTH COUNTY LINE

Congratulations to all who collected leaf samples for the Spring 2020 SOD Blitz. It appears that only California bay trees were collected, and all of them (green) showed that the pathogen was not present. The map (right) is from a KMZ file of collection locations on Google Earth. Note the infected trees just north of the county line (red), where tanbark oak appears to be the host. My collections included several trees whose leaves looked very positive with the diagnostic dead, grey tip, a black band, and then yellow tissue passing back into the healthy green of the leaf. Our problem in tracking the disease is the large area of Hearst Ranch and other large private land holdings for which there is no access, but in which both bay trees and California live oak are present.

Editor



Keep an eye out for any sudden oak death, where death is fast enough to leave a full but brown leaf canopy, and for California bay leaves with the diagnostic banding. If you see something such as bay leaves with the black banding (not grey to yellow), please get a precise geographic fix and relay it to David Chipping.

AND NOW, BEING 2020, THE BAD NEWS...MEDITERRANEAN OAK BORER

U.C. Extension Cooperative Extension Forestry reports that a newly introduced borer beetle (*Xyleborus monographus*), or MOB, is invading and killing blue oak and valley oak in Napa, Lake, Sonoma and Sacramento Counties. MOB is an ambrosia beetle, belonging to a group that cultivate fungi as a food source within the tunnels they cut into the wood. Several of these fungi appear to be the cause of oak death.

MOB appears to initially attack the canopy of host trees where it kills branches, with persistent infestations spreading to the main stem and eventually killing the tree. Thus far, trees in California with MOB infestations appear to have been stressed by other biotic and abiotic factors prior to MOB colonization. MOB begins by colonizing a large branch in the upper canopy, so newly infested trees will often have one declining branch while the rest of the canopy appears healthy. As the infestation progresses, the entire



Photo: Curtis Ewing, CalFire/ UC Extension

canopy begins to decline and in some instances, heavily infested branches can produce extensive epicormic sprouting with leaves diminished in size and densely clustered (sometimes referred to as “popcorn foliage”). The most reliable way to confirm MOB is from the architecture of its galleries, which are trellis-like, intersecting, and fan out in a single plane (Fig A) . These gallery patterns distinguish it from native *Monarthrum* spp. of ambrosia beetles, which have galleries branching from a single point and do not intersect neighboring galleries (Fig. B). These native beetles will only attack trees that are already dead, dying, or diseased.

Ethnobotany Notes: Yerba Santa and Mullein

New World and Old World- A native plant and a common weed make a nice tea for lung support

This summer, I found myself looking at traditional remedies for lung congestion for myself for the first time. Not only did I have the usual seasonal allergies, but it was the smoke from the wildfires up here in the Bay Area that really did it! We had over a month of bad air quality and about ten days when we were advised not to go outside at all. Impossible for me! I find my joy during Covid in gardening and exercising outside on the landscape. I went outside thinking that my mask would protect me from the smoke, but it really didn't, so I decided to try a plant that I had also seen in the central coast and had known about as tea that helped with lung congestion.

I've seen several species of Yerba Santa (*Eriodictyon*) cited as being used by native people as a remedy for lung support, among other things. It was used for colds, cough, bronchitis, and chest pain. Many tribes used *E. californicum* which has a wide range in California. According to ethnobotanist Jan Timbrook, the Chumash used *E. crassifolium*. which we also have in SLO county. I had found *Eriodictyon californicum* in parts of SLO county as well as in Contra Costa where I am now. *Eriodictyon californicum* is known as a fire follower plant, which is interesting because I was looking for lung support after foolishly spending too much time outside during the dangerously poor air quality. The previous February, I had begun propagating it to help a friend with asthma. I planted it in her yard, however, it's not so easy to establish, and grows so slowly that I needed to look for something else. I ended up using another plant which is a prolific weed in my yard up north, as well as in most of North America: Mullein.

Common Mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*) was native to Europe, North Africa and Asia, prior to introduction to the Americas in the mid 1700s. It was used as a tea to treat tuberculosis in the late 1800s in the United States and Europe, and also used traditionally for earaches, migraines, wounds, and hemorrhoids. Its compounds are both anti-inflammatory and anti- microbial. It grows on poor, compacted soil, and can be extremely invasive, with seeds remaining fertile in the soil for years. I've begun picking the basal leaves in my yard, dehydrating them, and making a delicious tea, adding a small amount of the bitter Yerba Santa. It's nice during these colder wintry days and does seem to help. I'm glad now that I did not remove it completely, as it is another great use of a weedy species.

CATHY CHAMBERS



Eriodictyon crassifolium
Verbascum thapsus



“That’s How The Pickle Squirts”

Looking back to my very first plant sale, by John Nowak

Let me take you back in time, thirty years and my very first plant sale in 1990. When COVID-19 didn't exist and we could get together the first Saturday in November. It was a peaceful morning and the sun was just above the mountains. Alice Meyer (the previous plant sale chairperson) invited me to come to the International House of Pancakes (IHOP) for breakfast. Little did I know what was in store and what the future would hold.

After a wonderful breakfast with several cups of coffee, it was time to go to work. As the volunteers showed up, Alice was like a fine-tuned machine, directing the table set up and banner placement. There was no room for error.

Looking to the west at 8am, we could see a storm front brewing. At this point, the worst timing a plant sale chairperson could have. Rain coming in the next two hours. Alice looked at me and with a stern face, she said “that’s how the pickle squirts”.

It was raining at 9am when the sale started. Even though the rain was steady, it was light. Just like the storms you remember for November. As the wind picked up, Dr. Dirk Walters and Dorothea Rible scrambled to cover the books and tried to keep the posters from flying. And just as fast as it came, the storm front passed. The sun came out and it turned out (at that time) to be our best plant sale ever.

Going back to those days, I feel special to have worked with our founding chapter members. Alice told me once, “don't thank me for what I have done, rather as an inspiration to follow in my footsteps to achieve our goal, to help preserve native plants through science and horticulture.”

Enjoy the season. Best wishes for happy gardening. John Nowak.

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