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# *Obispoensis*

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

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January 2023

## *Cornus sericea* var. *occidentalis* (Creek Dogwood)

The cover photograph of *Cornus sericea* was made along Coon Creek, showing the characteristic red-pink of the plant's fall color, and the cluster of fruit derived from the umbel-like cyme of tiny white flowers. Note that the species name has been changed from *Cornus stolonifera*.

There are two ink drawings accompanying this article. The one on top was done by Bonnie Walters for Dr. David Keil's and my plant taxonomy book. The one below was drawn by one of the recipients of the very first Hoover Award, the award given by our Chapter for long-term service to the Chapter - Alice Meyer. It accompanied an article published in the Morro Coast Audubon Newsletter entitled, Plant of the Month. Her article will be printed in its entirety after the next paragraph.

A look at Bonnie's drawings leads one to see quite different features of Creek Dogwood. Bonnie's drawing emphasizes the small flowers and the characteristic secondary veins of dogwood leaves. Notice that they curve unbranched from the midrib to the leaf margin. She also made drawings of a single tiny flower and fruit. The small size of its flowers is visible in both drawings. Alice's drawing emphasizes a long branch which has the opposite, often clustered, leaf arrangement. The stem tip to the needs to be studied to ascertain the leaf arrangement. They are quite complementary drawings that emphasize different attributes. Here follows Alice's wonderful creek dogwood article.

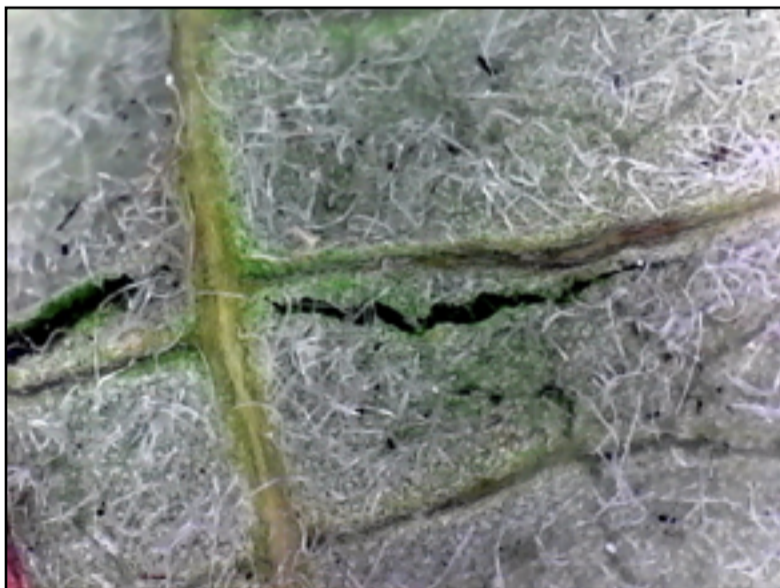
*The creek dogwood, also known as red osier dogwood, is widespread. It grows from 5 to 6000-foot elevations, along moist canyons, and stream sides from central California to Alaska. It even occurs in Southern California where there is adequate summer water. A member of the Dogwood Family, it is known botanically as Cornus stolonifera (CORN-us stole-on-IF-er-a). 'Cornus', meaning horn, referring to its wood, and 'stolonifera' in reference to its propensity to increase by means of underground horizontal stems (stolons).*

Dirk Walters



### ... and about the other variety *Cornus sericea* var. *sericea*

This variety is very similar to *C. sericea* var. *occidentalis*, and you might have to use a hand lens to see the difference. The back of the leaf for both varieties is finely hairy, but the hairs are usually curly in var. *occidentalis*, and straight in var. *sericea*. I read this photo as having straight hairs. Photo: D. Chipping



### Native American Uses of *Cornus sericea*

The organization *Plants for the Future* ranks the edibility of the dogwood as 2 out of 5, due to it being bitter and unpalatable to many who have tried. Native Americans dried this and other gathered fruits for winter use. Rather than eating the fruit, the plant was considered to have medicinal value. *Plants for the Future* states "The bark and the root bark are analgesic, astringent, febrifuge, purgative, slightly stimulant and tonic. Drying the bark removes its tendency to purge. A decoction has been used in the treatment of headaches, diarrhea, coughs, colds and fevers. Externally, the decoction has been used as a wash for sore eyes, styes, and other infections and also to treat skin complaints such as poison ivy rash and ulcers. The bark shavings have been applied as a dressing on wounds to stop the bleeding. A poultice of the soaked inner bark, combined with ashes, has been used to alleviate pain. The plant is said to have cured hydrophobia."



### ... and about the other species *Cornus glabrata* (Brown Dogwood)

This species has smaller leaves but can grow a little larger than *C. sericea* var. *occidentalis*. Leaf venation shows 3-4 pairs of veins on either side of the midrib for *C. glabrata* compared to 4-7 pairs in *C. sericea*. Twigs are brown or grayish, compared to the red to red-brown of *C. sericea*.

The left photo that shows the venation was taken at Adobe Springs, a small spring-fed wetland area along Traffic Way in Atascadero that is protected by Atascadero Land Preservation Society. The photo at the right was taken along Santa Rita Creek.

### ... and speaking of Santa Rita Creek

In winter, Santa Rita Creek's deeply shaded road is a great place to look for mosses, ferns, large oaks and madrones, and winter-yellowed torrent sedge (*Carex nudata* as the earlier name, *C. senta*, was misapplied).



Photos: D. Chipping

## CNPS outings for January and February 2023

**January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Sunday, 9:00 am, Manzanita Field Trip #3, West Cuesta Ridge, San Luis Obispo, CA.** Meet at the start of the paved road (TV Tower Road) off Hwy US 101, at the top of Cuesta Grade, heading west. (35.347018, -120.630359). This outing is a combination car and hike field trip. At the start, we will consolidate into fewer cars, then proceed toward the Botanical Special Interest Area, with stops along the way. At the Special Interest parking area, for those who want to continue on-foot, there will be a hike through the forest. We will see one manzanita species on this outing, the local endemic Bishop manzanita (*A. obispoensis*), and walk through the unique ridge-top vegetation adapted to serpentinite derived soils: the Sargent Cypress and Coulter pine forest, *Quercus durata* and other chaparral species, as well as see the rare San Luis Obispo sedge, 1B-2 ranking, (*Carex obispoensis*). Bring adequate water, snacks, and dress in layers for the weather; a hat and sturdy shoes are advised. Contact: Bill, 805-459-2103. Rain or threat of rain cancels.



Photo: Bill Waycott



Photo: Mardi Niles

**January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Saturday, 10:00 am, Mushroom Walk, Cambria, CA.** We will look for mushrooms growing in the Monterey pine forests of Cambria while enjoying the beauty of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve. The hike will be easy, about a 2-3 hour stroll through the woods. Meet at the corner of Tipton Street and Warren Road in Cambria at 10:00 AM. How to get there: Travel north on Hwy 1 to Cambria. At the first stoplight, turn left onto Ardath Drive. Follow Ardath and turn right onto Tipton Street. Continue to the intersection with Warren Road (2 blocks) and find a parking place (35.551073, -121.089615). Bring adequate water, snacks, and dress in layers for the weather; a hat and sturdy shoes are advised. The use of field guides is encouraged. Be prepared for poison oak. For additional information, email, text, or call David ([dkincmbria@aol.com](mailto:dkincmbria@aol.com)), 805-459-9007. Lack of sufficient rain leading up to this outing may cancel this field trip, while the threat of heavy rain cancels.

**February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Saturday, 10:00 am, Winter Bike Outing in Adelaida.** Join us for a road ride along beautiful rolling hills, rural canyons, and oak woodlands. This will be a loop ride of about 2 hours with a distance of about 10 miles on a paved road. There are moderate hills along the way. Elevation gain is about 750 ft. Bring your bike, helmet, other appropriate gear, and water/snacks. If you desire, bring a lunch for a picnic after the ride. Meet across the road from Justin Vineyards parking lot, 11680 Chimney Rock Road, Paso Robles. ([35.65417566178332](tel:35.65417566178332), [-120.90009120053105](tel:-120.90009120053105)). Contact David (805) 459-9007 or Bill 805-459-2103 for questions or information. Rain or threat of rain cancels.



Photo: D. Chipping



Photo: Bill Waycott

**February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Saturday, 9:00 am, Manzanita Field Trip #4,** Bishop pine forest, PG&E Pecho Ranch, south of Montaña de Oro State Park. Meet at the Coon Creek parking area at the end of Pecho Valley Rd, Montaña de Oro SP (35.258068, -120.886966). We will need to check in at the PG&E kiosk, Point Buchon trailhead. From there we will walk up the ridge observing the local endemic Pecho manzanita (*A. pechoensis*) as well as the brittle leaf manzanita, *A. crustacea*. This ridge has a healthy stand of Bishop pine, *Pinus muricata*, a two-needle pine which occurs in isolated groves along the coast between Santa Barbara and Humboldt Counties. Bring adequate water, snacks, and dress in layers for the weather; a hat and sturdy shoes are advised. Participants will need to RSVP one week prior to this outing. Email [bill.waycott@gmail.com](mailto:bill.waycott@gmail.com) to reserve a spot (please put “Point Buchon” in the subject line), 805-459-2103. Rain or threat of rain cancels.



**Nishi shows our flag in South Africa with his T-shirt**

Cal Poly's Nishanta 'Nishi' Rajakaruna - a great supporter of our chapter, is on leave and having way too much fun in South Africa. He sent us this picture taken from a subway platform and showing his proudly worn T-Shirt.

### Charmin is Not so Charming



The Natural Resources Defense Council warns that the 'ultrasoft' toilet papers require the long cellulose fibers of virgin old growth trees from Canada's boreal forest. This is resulting in massive deforestation, and these brands do not use any recycled papers. Read more at <https://www.nrdc.org>.

### CHAPTER BOARD ELECTION: RESULTS AND CONGRATULATIONS

Thank you to all Chapter Members who participated in the Board Election during the December General Meeting (via Zoom). The elected slate of Officers is Vice President Dena Grossenbacher; Treasurer David Krause; and Recording Secretary Cindy Roessler.

We are grateful to these three people who continue to make our Chapter work. It is not a small task, and we owe our thanks to them. Our new Officers will be formally installed at the February General Meeting.

The President position remains open at this time. The Chapter Board is working on a solution to address this vacancy, and will discuss at the upcoming January Board Meeting.

### The Beaver Brigade Warns of the Progressive Invasion of *Phragmites australis* into Beaver Habitat

This invasive giant reed is increasing its occupation of the Salinas River banks. It eliminates all competition from other plants such as willows, and removes bird nesting, reptile and amphibian habitat while also blocking the free flow of water and increasing flood risk. Once established, it is difficult to remove, like the similar giant invasive grass *Arundo donax*. One journal article reports that after seven years of herbicide treatment, the plant was significantly reduced but not eliminated at Cape Cod.

However, if the plant is cut underwater, or 'cut-to-drown', the plant's photosynthesis shuts down. Repeated cutting of new shoots must continue until the roots give up the fight.

The plant originates in Europe, and came to North America from the dumping of ships' ballast as early as the late 1700s.





# CALIFORNIA PLANT RESCUE

A member sent us a very interesting article from the Santa Cruz Sentinel, which was describing U.C. Santa Cruz Arboretum's participation in a statewide program to conserve the genetic diversity in California's flora.

The program is California Plant Rescue, which was founded in 2014 and has built a network of plant banks to store seeds and sprouts, each a modern-day Noah's ark that could help protect against the permanent loss of species. In 2019, the program received funding from the State of California to bank the rare and threatened flora of the state. Since then, collection efforts have surged. The consortium has also been able to secure infrastructure which improves the curation of the collected seeds. Read more about this program at their website (<https://www.caplantrescue.org>)

The newspaper notes that “ *California Plant Rescue has achieved remarkable success. Since its founding in 2014, its members have collected seeds from 78% of California's 1,166 rare, threatened or endangered plant species, according to Katie Heineman of the Escondido-based Center for Plant Conservation, which sponsors the effort. Inside each seed is a genetic code that represents millions of years of evolution. An infusion of \$3.6 million in state funding is boosting efforts to collect and preserve the remaining species. Prior to state support, the group banked only about 35 species a year. Now it's averaging 131 species a year. The long-term goal is to secure not just rare plants, but every California plant.*”

The article features Brett Hall, the native plant program director at the UC Santa Cruz Arboretum, who stated on Nov. 7, 2022 that this year the program saved 50,000 seeds. It has a total of 375 collections, representing 206 different species. Each specimen is stored in a small foil envelope in a chest freezer that is maintained at -10° F, cold enough for seeds to stay viable for years, perhaps decades.



**But... if climate warming causes plants to flower out-of-season and with less chance of successful pollination, seed production might not occur. The *Lupinus succulentus* (Arroyo lupine) and the *Salvia spathacea* (Hummingbird sage) are flowering in mid-December.**



Photos: D. Chipping

# Conservation Report

In the last newsletter we told you that CNPS commented on a planned change in the General Plan through a proposed **Paso Basin Land Use Management Area (PBLUMA) Planting Ordinance**. We regret having to tell you that the conservative majority on the Board of Supervisors voted for the ordinance. We were joined by the SLO County Farm Bureau, the SLO Cattleman's Association, the Paso Robles Winemakers Alliance and the County of SLO Agricultural Liason Advisory Board, all of whom had a vested interest in the long term survival of the groundwater basin. CNPS objected strongly to the allowance of additional water pumping and the potential dewatering of riparian areas, especially in light of the fact that the groundwater was already being over-drafted. While the current ordinance requires a "water neutral" policy that new well-pumped water must be balanced by a reduction in pumping elsewhere but allows a landowner up to 5 acre-feet per year of additional pumping, the proposed ordinance allows the landowner to pump up to 25 acre-feet per year without compensatory reductions elsewhere.

It remains to be seen why the Board majority voted against the interest of the people on this, and also against the conservation measures that are needed to bring the basin into compliance with the Sustained Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). Something smells real bad here.

In other news, the San Luis Obispo Tribune reports that the trial to decide the future of 2,400-acre **Wild Cherry Canyon** has ended. The Tribune reports "*The trial gave Eureka Energy Corp., a subsidiary of PG&E that owns the land, and the Pacho and San Luis Bay limited partnerships, which are largely owned by HomeFed Corp. and hold the lease, a chance to show San Luis Obispo Superior Court presiding Judge Rita Federman whether they believe the 1968 lease for the land is legally valid until 2166. The lease in question is for about 2,400 acres of land, dubbed Wild Cherry Canyon, just west of Avila Beach. It's considered to be part of the 12,000 PG&E-owned acres surrounding Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant as a buffer, free from major development. HomeFed argued during the case — which was first filed in 2019 — that the lease is valid for what it's written as: 99 years, plus an option to renew for another 99 years. That would mean the home developer could hold the lease until 2166. PG&E, on the other hand, argued that the lease term was valid for only 51 years because it is considered a lease for agricultural purposes. California civil code section 717 notes that "no lease or grant of land for agricultural ... purposes for a longer period than 51 years ... shall be valid."*

There is a lot at stake here. Should HomeFed win, it could mean leveling off the tops of the towering coastal mountains to make way for vacation and second homes for out-of-towners. Should PG&E win, residents of the area will likely see little to no change to the land. It's currently closed to the public and used solely for cattle grazing.

We are now told that the Draft EIR for the **Dana Reserve's** destructive project in Nipomo might be out in mid-February.

## Lichen of the Month: *Vermilacinia laevigata* (or *Niebla laevigata*) Black-footed Fog Lichen



The Lichen of the Month is *Vermilacinia laevigata*, which is found on rocky outcrops in the fog belt along the Central Coast. There are a number of somewhat similar species, but this is distinguished by the strap-like branches on the thallus. *Niebla homolea* occurs in the same locations but has narrower branches, and due to different internal chemistry, is placed in a different genus. Photo D. Chipping

## Continued Request for Photographs for the Chapter Photo Collection

Still working through Asteraceae, and here is the January 'ask': *Gamochaeta pensylvanica*, *Grindelia squarrosa* var. *serrulata*, *Hesperevax caulescens*, *Heterotheca oregona*, *Hieracium albiflorum*, *Hieracium albiflorum*, *Hieracium argutum*, *Holocarpha heermannii*, *Holocarpha virgata*, *Holozonia filipes*, *Hulsea heterochroma*



## Our Chapter Needs You



At press time your Board still has nobody offering their time and leadership to stand for Chapter President. Our chapter historian, Dirk Walters, drew up this list of past presidents, and filled that position himself for a total of nine years.

### SLO CNPS Chapter Presidents

#	President	Years	Age of Chapter	Notes
1	Marian Hull	1966	1	
2	Louis H. Wilson	1967	2	
3	Ralph Baker	1968-69	3, 4	
4	Neil Havlik (Ralph Baker)	1970	5	Filled out Neil's term
5	Dirk Walters	1971-73	6-8	
6	VL Holland	1974-75	9, 10	Originated and gave out 1 <sup>st</sup> Hoover Award
7	Malcolm McLeod	1976-77	11, 12	
8	David Keil	1978	13	
9	Rhonda Riggins-Pimentel	1979	14	
10	Lela Burdett	1980-81	15, 16	
11	Eileen Pritchard	1982	17	
12	Timothy Gaskin	1983-84	18, 19	
13	Gary Ruggone	1985-86	20, 21	
14	William (Bill) Sacks	1987	22	Originated the idea for the Chapter Tee Shirt
15	Linda Ellison (Chipping)	1988	23	
16	Linda Chipping	1989	24	
17	Joe Clokey	1990-91	25, 26	
18	Linda Chipping	1992-93	27, 28	
19	Dirk Walters	1994	29	
20	David Krause	1995-97	30-32	
21	Dirk Walters	1998	33	
22	John Nowak	1999-2001	34-36	
23	Dirk Walters	2002-04	37-39	Served 9 years total (4 different times)
24	Charles Blair	2005	40	
25	Lauren Brown	2006-07	41, 42	
26	David Chipping	2008-14	43-49	Served 7 years
27	Bill Waycott	2015-19	50-54	Served 5 years
28	Melissa Mooney	2020-22	55-57	
29				



## Photos from the December Ontario Ridge Field Trip

A beautiful day, fantastic views and *Arctostaphylos pilosula* (Santa Margarita manzanita)



Photos: D. Krause

*Arctostaphylos pilosula* (Santa Margarita manzanita) does not have a basal burl, has a red-brown smooth peeling bark, hairy young stems, ovate to narrowly elliptical leaves that have petioles, and the inflorescence is a raceme or panicle with one branch. The species was once named *A. wellsii* and called the Well's manzanita.



Photo: D. Krause



Other Photos:  
D. Chipping



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**WE ALWAYS NEED PEOPLE TO HELP OUT. OUR MISSION IS VITAL AND OUR FLORA IS AT RISK.**

**Protecting California's Native Flora since 1965**

The California Native Plant Society is a statewide non-profit organization of amateurs and professionals with a common interest in California's plants. The mission of the Society is to increase understanding and appreciation of California's native plants and to preserve them in their natural habitat through scientific activities, education and conservation. Membership is open to all. Membership includes the journal, *Artemisia*; the quarterly *Flora*, which gives statewide news and announcements of the activities and conservation issues, and the chapter newsletter, *Obispoensis*.



*San Luis Obispo Chapter of the  
California Native Plant Society*  
P.O. Box 784  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93406



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**Websites:**

Websites: [www.cnps.org](http://www.cnps.org) (State) & [www.cnpslo.org](http://www.cnpslo.org) (Local)

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