



The Shooting Star

CENTRAL SIERRA CHAPTER

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

JUNE 2026

Summer Field Trips

Sunday, June 14: Kathy Burnett will lead a field trip to the Bell Meadow Research Natural Area (RNA). Bell Meadow is a complex of three meadows situated southwest of Pinecrest at about 6,500' elevation. This RNA was established for its Aspen stands but also has beautiful wildflower displays. RSVP required to Kathy Burnett at burnale@frontiernet.net. We will rendezvous at 9 a.m. at the Twain Harte Market and arrange carpools from there. See website calendar for more details.

Sunday, June 21: Third in a series of field trips to Carson Pass Meadow. See April 19 calendar entry for description and how to RSVP.

Sunday, June 28: Bob Dean will lead the first of two field trips to Lake Winnemucca near Carson Pass. This will be a roundtrip hike of just under 5 miles at 9,000 ft. We will pass through numerous habitats including forest, meadows, seeps, and riparian areas. There is a significant succession of wildflowers at this altitude. An inspiring sub-alpine experience. We will gather at 9 a.m. at the Carson Pass Information Station Parking Lot, right off Highway 88. RSVP to denise_stephens@comcast.net. See website calendar for full details.

Sunday, July 19: Fourth in a series of field trips to Carson Pass Meadow. See April 19 calendar entry for description and how to RSVP.

Weekend of July 25-26: High Sierra Double Header near Ebbetts Pass

Both of the Double Header field trips will commence at 9 a.m. Brief descriptions are given here. See website calendar for full details and directions to start locations. We encourage participants to drive up on Thursday or Friday, find a campsite or more comfortable accommodations (Lake Alpine Lodge, Bear Valley Lodge, or a motel in Arnold), get acclimated to the altitude, then join us for one or both field trips. Birders and photographers are welcome too. Well-behaved dogs on leash are allowed on both of these field trips.

Day 1, July 26: Louise Christy will lead a wildflower walk on the Pacific Crest Trail, heading south from where it crosses Highway 4 at Ebbetts Pass. This will be an out-and-back walk over varied terrain. The distance will depend on the group's preference, but no more than 4 miles total. The trail crosses forest, small meadows, volcanic mudflows, and runoff channels with plenty of wildflowers. RSVP to louisedchristy@gmail.com.

Day 2, July 26: Karen Orso & Christina Gandolfi will lead a wildflower walk in the Highland Lakes area. Possible routes could take us to Upper Gardiner Meadow, Milk Ranch Meadow or a circuit of the western Highland Lake. RSVP to keolhg@msn.com. PLEASE NOTE: Unexpectedly poor road conditions on the unpaved portion of Highland Lakes Road could change the field trip location to Pacific Valley.

California Native Plant Society
www.cnps.org
*Dedicated to the Preservation of
California Native Flora.*

Central Sierra Chapter
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Report on May 2 field trip at Calaveras Big Trees State Park

by Louise Christy

Six native plant lovers did their best to keep their eyes on the ground while surrounded by Giant Sequoias. It was hard but we found lots to see. Being early May, the bracken fern was beginning to unfurl, and the dogwoods were just putting out their flowers. The snow was gone but the ground remained damp and puddly in the lower part of the trail by the creek. We wondered why there is so much Pacific Yew here. It turns out Big Trees State Park is basically the southern end of its range in the Sierra Nevada. Our favorite find was definitely Fairy Bells (*Prosartes hookeri*). An early bloomer in the Giant Sequoia forest, it would be easy to miss these lovely green flowers dangling below the plant's leaves. We marveled at the weird and wonderful basal flower of Hartweg's Wild Ginger (*Asarum hartwegii*). One of our group had been on the lookout for *Trillium angustipetalum*. Her wish came true! Other highlights include: White-veined Wintergreen (*Pyrola picta*), Snow Plant (*Sarcodes sanguinea*), Mountain Pink Currant (*Ribes nevadense*), Sierra Gooseberry (*Ribes roezlii*), Baneberry (*Actaea rubra*), and two species of violet (*Viola lobata* & *glabella*).



TOP ROW: *Prosartes hookeri*, *Cornus nuttallii*, *Asarum hartwegii*. BOTTOM LEFT: *Trillium angustipetalum*.

Report on May 3 Electra Road Wildflower Walk

by Denise Stephens

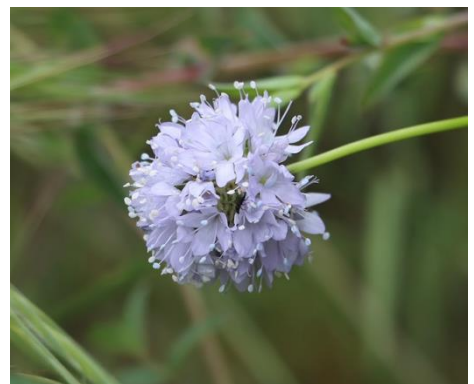
On May 3 a group of us enjoyed this year's last CNPS wildflower walk on Electra Road, outside of Jackson, along the Mokelumne River. As the wildflower season has advanced 2-3 weeks faster than previous years, some of our favorites, including Elegant Clarkia (*Clarkia unguiculata*) and Purple Chinese Houses (*Collinsia heterophylla*) were beginning to seed.

Old plant friends found in new abundance included the Twining Snakelily (*Dichelostemma volubile*). As John Muir described in our recent CNPS Book Club title, *My First Summer in the Sierra*, "The curious twining lily... I have oftentimes found climbing up through the broad, thorny bushes of Ceanothus, displaying its beautiful rose-colored umbels high above the leaves, as if it were a part of the bush." We found a number of them twining through the California snowdrop bush (*Styrax redivivus*). Both of these native plants are California endemics.

New discoveries on this walk included Small-flowered Catchfly (*Silene gallica*) and Bluehead gilia (*Gilia capitata*). The latter spread in a blue mat up the sides of Electra Rd., forming a contrast to the Foothill poppies (*Eschscholzia caespitosa*), which were blooming with renewed vigor after the April showers.

Leaving the best for last? Maybe; because this writer loves Mariposa Lilies, in this case, the Butterfly Mariposa Lily (*Calochortus venustus*), as much as her husband loves Canyon liveforever (*Dudleya cymosa*). At first we saw only individual Mariposa lilies but with diligence we soon found larger groupings.

Electra Road continues to delight us with wildflower and other plant discoveries. We will look forward to more "Walks on the Wild Side in Amador County" starting late winter 2027!



TOP ROW: *Clarkia unguiculata*, *Dichelostemma volubile*, *Gilia capitata*. BOTTOM ROW: *Calochortus venustus*, *Styrax redivivus*, *Dudleya cymosa*. Photos © Jess Stephens.

Last month's ID Challenge

The Red Hills field trip report in the May newsletter challenged readers to identify three wildflowers from photos, hinting that one of them was not an onion. Upside-down answers were given on the last page of that newsletter. Photos of the tricky pair are reproduced here. The LEFT inflorescence is *Triteleia hyacinthina*; it looks so much like an onion that one of its common names is Fool's Onion. The RIGHT inflorescence is a true onion: *Allium tuolumnense*. One of its common names is Rawhide Hill Onion. This plant has a California Rare Plant Rank of 1B.2 (rare and threatened). *Triteleia hyacinthina* is much, much, much more abundant at Red Hills than *Allium tuolumnense*. (For that reason alone, if you see something at Red Hills that looks like either of these, and you guess *Triteleia*, the odds are good that you got it right.)

How to tell them apart? Both have six white tepals and a crowded inflorescence, but if you look closely, you will see that the *Triteleia* has green lines on the back of the tepals and stamens that are significantly shorter than the tepals, while the *Allium* has brownish lines on the back of the tepals and stamens that are as long or slightly longer than the tepals. A professional botanist might offer better criteria for telling them apart, but these are the two things I use. – Ed.



Propagation.1d: Seed Fire and Heat Treatments (Part 2—Hot Water Treatment)

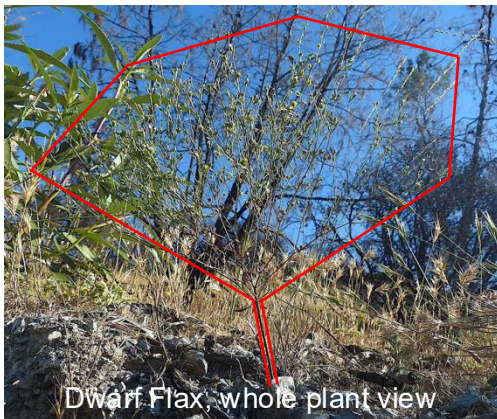
Ron Allen submitted another great article on plant propagation that was mailed as a standalone attachment with this newsletter. Here is the abstract from Ron's latest article:

"The hot water treatment propagation technique uses a bath of near-boiling water to break the dormancy of California native plant seeds. Plants amenable to hot water treatment are those species whose adaptation to our state's Mediterranean climate and associated fire regime relies on the heat, but not necessarily the chemistry of smoke or residual *charate* (burned plant material) from a fire. There are many such *fire-follower* plants in California, including many in the *Ceanothus* and *Lupinus* genera. This article explains the technique using the example of Western Redbud (*Cercis occidentalis*)."

Three plants in the Red Hills burn zone

by Doug Krajnovich

Since January, I have been making monthly visits to the Red Hills burn zone, looking for species that I never saw before the fire. On May 16, I encountered Small-flowered Dwarf Flax (*Hesperolinon micranthum*) and Tincture Plant (*Collinsia tinctoria*) for the first time. Both species appear in an extensive [Calflora checklist](#) for Red Hills, so they may have nothing to do with last year's fire, but they are new plants for me at this location. Dwarf Flax is easy to miss even if you are standing close to it. It has wire-like stems and petite flowers and leaves. The specimen I photographed was setting fruit. I saw a large, obvious patch of Tincture Plant on the Six Bit trail. The flowers of Tincture Plant resemble those of Chinese Houses (*Collinsia heterophylla*) with three important differences: the banner is shorter and curled backwards, the freckles are on the lip instead of the banner, and the inflorescence is glandular, so much so that it will stain your fingers. My third new plant was a yellow discoid sunflower that didn't seem to match anything in the aforementioned checklist. Lower stem leaves were lobed and nearly glabrous; upper stem leaves alternate, entire, tomentose. If you have an idea what this might be, please contact me.



Dwarf Flax, whole plant view



Flax flowers setting fruit



Tincture Plant



unidentified discoid sunflower



side view of inflorescence



lower stem leaf

FREE ONLINE BOOK GROUP

NEXT BOOK: "At the Edge of the Orchard"

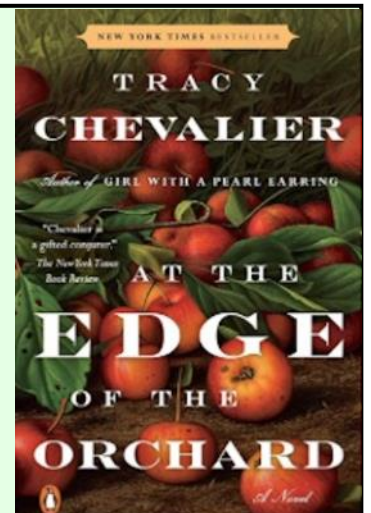
by Tracy Chevalier

NEXT SESSION: Thursday, July 16, 6-7:30 p.m.

Meetings conducted via Zoom.

If you attended past meetings, you will automatically receive the zoom link. If you are new, send an e-mail to centralsierra@cnps.org to join. Type **Book Group** on subject line.

ALL WELCOME!





Ron Allen and David Campbell were two of the volunteers who represented the Central Sierra CNPS chapter at the Mariposa Butterfly Festival. Thanks to everyone who dropped by.

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