

California Native Plant Society

Sacramento Valley Chapter
Stockton Sub-chapter



May/June
2004 Vol. 53



The spring wildflower season has now been under way for some time and several of our members have been out in the middle of this year's bounty of blooms. OK, I know some have been disappointed by a lack of the "carpets" as in years past. But close inspection and perseverance can always reveal wonders...

Adobe Lily Quest

March 28, 2004

by Martha Mallery

It was our third attempt to locate the rare adobe-lily (*Fritillaria pluriflora*) in Bear Valley. David, Bob and I followed the road along the tamarisk-lined creek, snaking our way through the foothills into the idyllic little valley around noon.



We stopped briefly to key out the goldfields that were carpeting the roadside, then resumed our search for the evasive lily.

Just when we were about to give up, Bob suddenly spotted something pink out in the field with his binoculars. We jumped out of the car, and tiptoed out into the pasture. There they were... jewels in the grass, their distinctive cabbage-colored leaves and stems crowned with nodding pink petals. So delicately shaped and colored as if they belonged in an English tea garden amid tiny roses and tinkerbells.

Long into the afternoon Bob photographed the flowers, meandering from one perfectly enchanting picture to one better and another even better than that. A coyote crossed the field and broke the spell.

As the sun dipped toward day's end, we headed up the winding road to the top of Walker Ridge. There, David delighted in the McNab cypress and knobcone pines.

We stopped and got out at the overlook above the reservoir to photograph the *Allium cratericola* Cascade onions, growing in the serpentine soil.

Yikes, there was a man in the bushes! A mugger? A mobster? A drug dealer?

"We're with the Native Plant Society," I said, trying to sound as harmless as possible.

A Tale From Table Mountain

by Robin Fallscheer

There I was, an off-duty botanist, on my first Stockton Sub-chapter CNPS field trip with one avid wildflower enthusiast and two photographers [visualize camera-clad figures with lenses pointing in all directions (I traveled light—only my hand lens)]. Our destination: Table Mountain overlooking the Stanislaus River from Tuolumne County.

At Table Mountain we were joined by Chico Grunder, who kindly allowed us to hike around on his property. Our pace: about 20 photo frames per hour.

To give you a general sense of the botanical phenological state on this April 3rd, the goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.) ranged from flowering to fruiting and crisp. We were fortunate enough in our timing to see both of the white-flowered wild hyacinths (*Triteleia lilacina* with lilac anthers and *T. hyacinthina* with yellow anthers) in bloom. Our herbarium specimen collection count: 1 (*T. lilacina*—glassy wild hyacinth).

Enter the botanical villain.

We confirmed that Owl Creek has a feisty patch of the dreaded *Sesbania punicea* (AKA rattlebush, red sesbania, scarlet wisteria). This evil, lovely menace from the legume family (Fabaceae) is a shrub with clusters of bright red flowers. It is invading riparian areas of California (this is one tough petiole-packing organism—it can crowd out Himalayan blackberry!). Back at the office the following week, I received a report from U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service staff of several dozen rattlebush plants along the Stanislaus River. We suspect that Owl Creek is the source population for



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2004 Upcoming Possible Trips of Interest:

DUCK LAKE near Lake Alpine
REDWOOD CANYON in Sequoia
CHINESE CAMP *Brodiaea* count

If you would like to be on our contact list for updates, changes or information about spur-of-the-moment unadvertised trips, please supply us with your email or telephone number.

Call Martha Mallery: (209) 477-3966
or Bob Stahmer (209) 943-2277
e-mail Bob at vbromper@aol.com

Springtime Exhibit

Oak Grove Regional Park
April 16 & 17, 2004

Over 50 species of wildflowers and a number of Bob Stahmer's nature photographs were on display at the Oak Grove Nature Center in mid-April. Such a beautiful exhibit, we've decided to make it an annual event.



photo by Martha Mallery



Torrey's Monkeyflower
Mimulus toreyii

Red Sierra Onion
Allium obtusum



CALAVERAS BIG TREES

On Sunday, May 16, Martha, David and I took off for a quickly-organized excursion to Calaveras Big Trees, the first visit for me in 2 years.

Arriving in the early afternoon, I proceeded to the visitor center office and signed volunteer papers. We met some of the new park staff including Ranger Jeff and Jeanne (his assistant). The park, as most of the California state parks, has seen some rough times. Three of the rangers have retired recently.

Martha and I donned volunteer vests and the three of us headed out for "trail patrol" on the North Grove trail. The weather was perfect. The trail plodders were very well-behaved. We made our way from the back entry to the trail to the front as prescribed by trail patrol dictums.

We found several species in bloom during our visit. I guess we should actually start before we actually entered the park. We usually stop at the rest stop/picnic area a few miles from the park entrance. There we found several yellow star tulips (*Calochortus monophyllus*). Indian pinks (*Silene californica*) were also plentiful. *Sidalcea* was blooming as well as a couple of yellowish globe lilies *Calochortus* sp.), a golden brodiaea (*Triteleia ixioides*) and a shooting star (*Dodecatheon* sp.) in fruit... OK, back to the North Grove trail. The most interesting find of the day for me was my first encounter with the beautiful striped coralroot (*Corallorhiza striata*). Also in bloom were some very nice dogwood specimens, wild strawberry (*Fragaria vesca*), pink mountain currant, false Solomon's seal (*Smilacina racemosa*), and baneberry (*Actaea rubra*). Martha had to confiscate a snowplant (*Sarcodes sanguinea*) being proudly carried along by one hiker. We delivered the corpse (not the hiker! Martha is not a violent person, really) to the visitor center for its final resting place in an educational setting.

A brief stop after trail duty, at the Scenic Overlook produced some flowering and fruiting specimens of red Sierra onion (*Allium obtusum*) in the drying gravelly soil. Further up the hill were small flushes of yellow & white monkeyflower (*Mimulus bicolor*). Along the road were some small specimens of harlequin lupine (*Lupinus stiversii*).

At day's end David BBQed some great hot dogs to accompany Martha's famous homemade potato salad. The pièce de resistance was Martha's elegant chocolate brownie concoction. If you plan to get to Big Trees this year you might want to go a little earlier than usual since the season may be up to a month earlier than usual. Don't get too excited yet because we did see the last lump of dirty snow still in the parking lot!





Bear Valley ... cont'd from page 1

“Which chapter?” came the innocuous reply.

Thus we met Vishnu from Sanhedrin (Ukiah) CNPS. We exchanged information on the adobe-lily sighting, our mutual opposition to the proposed windmills atop the ridge and he informed us of another species of *Fritillaria* down the road.

As the sun set, we headed homeward. *Fritillaria pluriflora*, *Allium cratericola* and a new flora friend. It had been a productive day.

Table Mountain ... cont'd from page 1

the shrubs along the river. This plant is not in The Jepson Manual. For a detailed description and more information go to:

<http://tncweeds.ucdavis.edu/alert/alrtsesb.html> or <http://www.riverparkway.org/html/invasive.html>

I have been mapping *Sesbania punicea* statewide but am sorry to report I have accepted a job in San Luis Obispo County. If you encounter it, please report it to:

Daniel Burmester
(916) 445-0086
dburmester@dfg.ca.gov
(209) 948-7163

Thank you Chico for another great day at Owl Creek Ranch!

Natives in Your Yard

by David Marraccini

Holly-leaf cherry, *Prunus ilicifolia*

The holly-leaf cherry is a medium-sized shrub that can grow into a small sized tree about 25-30' tall. It has holly-like lvs with spines along the leaf margins. The leaves are shiny dark green above and pale green beneath. The leaves are 1-2.5" long x 1-1.5" wide. The holly-leaf cherry grows in the chaparral and oak woodlands of California. It is found from northern Baja California all the way up to the San Francisco Bay Area and parts of Sonoma & Marin counties. It grows at elevations from sea level to 3 or 4,000'. It is found in the coastal hills of California and the Sierra Nevada foothills. I have grown them from seed and have them in my yard (i.e. they do well in the Central Valley). The holly-leaf cherry is a shrub that can also be trained as a hedge or used as a windbreak. It is a plant that has been used extensively in landscaping. A specimen at Delta College in Stockton has grown into a large tree approximately 2 stories tall! Seeds will germinate easily. It grows in any type of soil (rocky to loam). It can grow in full sun and is fairly drought-tolerant once established. However, it will grow faster with liberal applications of water. The plant has white flowers that bloom in the spring and attract plenty of bees. The flowers eventually become cherry-like fruit. The fruit skin is either black or purple in color with a large central pit. Native Americans ate the fruit raw. The excess fruits were dried in the sun. The pits were extracted, ground to a mash, leached and eaten as an “atole” or gruel.

Another relative which is only found naturally in Baja California and on Santa Cruz, Santa Catalina and San Clemente Islands, is *Prunus lyonii*. Commonly called Catalina cherry, the leaves are 2-3 inches long x 0.5-2.5" wide, similar to holly-leaf cherry but not spiny. These also can be used as ornamentals on the mainland. On Santa Catalina Island it forms groves of small glistening-leaved trees. Native Americans made a jam out of its fruit. It too makes a good evergreen hedge. Once established it requires little or no water. No pruning or pest control required. This species may be harder to locate if you are interested in trying it out in your landscape.

California Native Plant Society



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Striped coralroot
Corallorhiza striata

In addition to my dues, I enclose a gift to support
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Sacramento, CA 95814



photo by Bob Stahmer