



February 2007

The Bay Leaf

California Native Plant Society • East Bay Chapter • Alameda & Contra Costa Counties
www.ebcnps.org

Native Here p. 4

Fridays, February 2, 9, 16, 23 Native Here Nursery open 9 am-noon

Saturdays February 3, 10, 17, 24 nursery open 10 am-1 pm

Native Plant Restoration Team p. 3

Work party, Saturday, February 3, 9:30 am-12:30 pm,

French broom removal, Skyline Gate, Redwood Regional Park, Oakland

Membership Meeting see below

Wednesday, February 28, 2007, 7:30 pm

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Western Leatherwood: A Bay Area Treasure

Speaker: **Bill Graves**

Wednesday, February 28, 2007, 7:30 pm

Orinda Public Library Garden Room (directions below)



Bill Graves. Photo by Jasper Ridge Preserve

Dirca occidentalis (western leatherwood) is endemic to the Bay Area and is the only member of the Thymelaeaceae plant family indigenous to California. Leatherwood shrubs bloom during winter and have distinctive leaves, bark, and growth habits. These endearing traits, along with potential threats to this rare species, have led to interest in how leather-

woods reproduce and factors that influence reproductive success.

Bill Graves has been researching western leatherwood for the past several years. He will present his observations and a hypothesis he is testing this winter regarding how environmental differences among the niches where leatherwoods grow lead to striking disparities in plants' success at producing seeds. He has also found that leatherwoods in the East Bay are genetically distinct from those in the North Bay and on the Peninsula, and he will discuss related findings on the reproductive biology of the species that explain these differences.

Bill Graves is a professor of horticulture at Iowa State University who has worked collaboratively with researchers at Stanford University and UC Berkeley on the ecology of western leatherwood. Bill and his students study rare trees and shrubs, particularly species for which horticultural use might represent a conservation tool. Bill holds a Ph.D. from Purdue University and has taught at the University of Maryland and at Iowa State. He has published over 90 scientific papers and is the recipient of several awards, including the Colman Award for outstanding research from the American Nursery and Landscape Association.

East Bay CNPS membership meetings are free of charge and open to everyone. This month's meeting will take place in the Garden Room of the Orinda Public Library at 24 Orinda Way (in Orinda Village). The Garden Room is on the second floor of the building, accessible by stairs or an elevator. The Garden Room will open at 7:00 pm. The meeting begins at 7:30 pm. Refreshments will be served after the presentation. Please contact Sue Rosenthal, 510-496-6016 or rosacalifornia@earthlink.net, if you have any questions.

Directions to Orinda Public Library, 24 Orinda Way: From the west, take Highway 24 to the Orinda/Moraga exit. At the end of the offramp, turn left on Camino Pablo (toward Orinda Village), right on Santa Maria Way (the signal after the BART station and freeway entrance), and left on Orinda Way.

From the east, take Highway 24 to the Orinda exit. Follow the ramp to Orinda Village. Turn right on Santa Maria Way (the first signal) and left on Orinda Way. Once on Orinda Way, go 1 short block to the parking

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

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lot on the southeast side of the new 2-story building on your right. There is additional free parking beneath the building as well as on the street.

From BART (4 blocks): Exit the Orinda station, turn right and cross a pedestrian bridge, then cross a second pedestrian bridge on the left. Go 1 short block on the sidewalk to the third pedestrian bridge. Go 2 blocks on Orinda Way to the Orinda Library.

PRESIDENT NOMINEE LETTER

As of this writing, I have not yet been elected to lead the chapter through 2007, but since no one else is running, it seems a fairly good bet that I will be your president. My main goal is to have a candidate for this job by the end of the summer. That most likely means that someone now serving in another capacity will need to be replaced so that he or she can lead our Chapter in 2008.

At the end of January, the chapter board had a retreat to set goals and look at what resources we will need to achieve them. Look for that report in the March *Bay Leaf*.

Committee chairs will be seeking chapter members to help achieve specific project goals. For instance, the Conservation Committee continues to seek members

Upcoming Programs

Wednesday, March 28, 2007, 7:30 pm (in the Garden Room of the Orinda Library):

Doris Sloan (author of *Geology of the San Francisco Bay Region*): "Geologic Highlights of the San Francisco Bay Region"

to help represent us to their elected municipal officials. Help is needed to propagate plants for the Chapter and Native Here plant sales. The Restoration Team can always use more hands at the work parties.

I believe that the work of the chapter should be shared by many members in order to have manageable work loads for those volunteers heading programs or serving in elected positions.

The contact information is listed in the *Bay Leaf*. If you are interested in providing support, don't wait to be asked. Contact the person listed for the program you'd like to assist, and volunteer!

Charli Danielsen

SUNCUPS

Suncups (*Taraxia ovata*, *Camissonia ovata*, *Oenothera ovata*) are a species in the evening-primrose family (Onagraceae) that functionally has adopted the bulb strategy, and as a result can be treated as a bulb for cultivation purposes. Plants develop a large, thick taproot that generally needs a summer dormancy period, and if watered during this period are subject to rot. Healthy roots are otherwise quite tolerant of disturbance and transplanting, and may in fact be adapted to periodic disturbance for dispersal (another bulb-like character). Taproots have been successfully dug up and stored over the summer in an appropriate medium that prevents desiccation, such as a pot of dry dirt.

Leaves emerge soon after winter rains begin and do best where there is ample bare ground in full sun. Plants can flourish in a wide range of soil types, including heavy clay, provided that summer dormancy requirements are met. Historically this was one of the most common plants in the Berkeley flatlands, covering vacant lots with rosettes of leaves and bright yellow flowers in early spring. Plants do poorly when forced to compete, and the solid thatch formed by non-native annual grasses is probably a major reason why suncups have disappeared from so much of their former habitat.

Flowers develop in the center of the rosette, sometimes as early as midwinter, and new ones continue to appear throughout the growing season. One of the most intriguing features of suncups is that the ovary (seed-bearing portion) of the flower is actually tucked among the leaves, and the apparent "stem" of each flower is actually an elongated floral tube. This raises the question of how seed dispersal occurs, since the seeds mature practically underground and is undoubtedly another indication that suncups are adapted to periodic disturbance (e.g., by ground squirrels, or even grizzly bears).

Unlike bulbs, suncup roots do not regularly form offsets. Roots from old plants that have developed multiple crowns can sometimes be successfully divided, since healthy taproots have an amazing capacity to recover from major damage (i.e., another disturbance adaptation). Propagation occurs more regularly by seeds, with new plantlets commonly appearing in the spring near the crown of the parent plant. Even if the roots are immediately returned to the ground for the dormant season, periodic digging is important so that new plants that have germinated and developed too close to the parent plant can be spaced apart or transplanted elsewhere. An alternative, especially in

pot cultivation, is to keep an eye out for seedlings and to carefully transplant them as they appear. If the roots are dug for storage or transplant during the dormant season, seeds can be harvested from any capsules on the top of the root. Exact germination requirements have not yet been determined.

By these techniques I have successfully grown and

propagated suncups for nearly a decade, starting with plants salvaged from a site on Albany Hill that was fated for development.

Barbara Ertter

NATIVE PLANT RESTORATION TEAM

Work party, Saturday, February 3, 9:30 am-12:30 pm, French broom removal, Skyline Gate, Redwood Regional Park, Oakland

Please note: we will be meeting on the first Saturday in February (as opposed to our regular second Saturday of the month meeting time).

What better way to kick off 2007 than to return to Skyline Gate Staging Area to join with the "1st Saturday of the month" group and their incredible effort to remove the huge infestations of french broom from Redwood Regional Park?

Begun just a few years ago from the work of one person, this effort has grown tremendously, managing to get EBRPD staff on board in the process. With the help of schbolgroups and hearty volunteers great

swaths of land have been cleared of broom, revealing the abundant native plant communities, now thriving, that lie beneath.

This year CNPS would like to assist in taking this effort to the next level. By incorporating mapping and other tools used to develop a serious weed abatement plan, we intend to serve as a catalyst that brings together the necessary forces to bring about an effective long term strategy.

If you'd like to do something about the problem of French broom in our hills now is the time, this is the place.

Greg Welford

PLANT SALE ACTIVITIES



There's no new news this month. We continue to work with the City of Oakland on a lease for a plant sale nursery site at the Dunsmuir Estate.

For the latest news on the plant sale relocation project, visit the project web site at <http://www.monocot.com/cnps>. As always, feel free to contact me if you have questions or comments about the plant sale: rosacalifornica@earthlink.net or 510-496-6016.

Sue Rosenthal

S.F. GARDEN SHOW

The East Bay Chapter along with the Marin, Yerba Buena, and Santa Clara Valley Chapters is hosting a booth at the 2007 San Francisco Flower and Garden Show. The dates are Wednesday March 21st through Sunday March 26th. Volunteers are encouraged to participate in "personning" the booth in 3-hour shifts, in exchange for which they get free admission to the show. Admission price this year is \$20. For more information or to volunteer for this fun event, please email George McRae at Elegans@aol.com or call him at 510-233-7374.

THE WAYNE RODERICK LECTURES

at the Regional Parks Botanic Garden
Wildcat Canyon Road and South Park Drive (South Park Drive is closed November-March)
in Tilden Regional Park, Berkeley
510-841-8732 bgarden@ebparks.org www.nativeplants.org

Saturday Mornings 10:30 Free [Notice: Seating is limited. To be sure of a seat, come early and save a chair.]

February 2007

3 Mt. Diablo

—Steve Edwards

10 Geologic highlights and hotspots of the San Francisco Bay Region

—Doris Sloan

17 California Indian material culture

—Steve Edwards

24 John Muir: An inordinate fondness for plants: the study of John Muir's herbarium

—Bonnie Gisel and Stephen Joseph

Don't forget: free tours of the botanic garden every Saturday and Sunday at 2:00

CONSERVATION

So Long to 2006

It's tough to summarize in a few hundred words the many hours spent by our chapter fighting conservation battles this past year, so I'm not going to try. Instead, I'll tell you that we aimed our efforts at the macro and the micro and everything in between. On the one hand the chapter has continued to play a pivotal role in large regional planning projects like the Upland Habitat Goals Project—notable because for the first time plant communities will form the most basic information layer for planning to protect the next million acres in the nine Bay Area counties from development.

At the opposite end of the scale, we have focused in on several tiny patches of serpentine in the Oakland hills where the federally endangered *Presidio clarkia* persists—one of only two sites in the world. Because of development pressures in the Crestmont area, the remaining *clarkia* populations face a variety of threats: fuels management on Oakland city property and in private backyards, a proposed subdivision on a serpentine hillside that's a virtual botanic bonanza, and the degradation of the East Bay Regional Park District's Serpentine Prairie. To protect the *clarkia* and the other serpentine species requires bird-dogging many different government agencies and personnel, raising public awareness, and persistence!

Between these two extremes, we have undertaken dozens of other projects and tried to stretch our influence into the far corners of the chapter. I wish I could say that we have legions of CNPS troops in the field fanning out over our two-county area to protect our native flora. We don't. We have a small corps of smart, sophisticated, and dedicated volunteers. We also have Lech Naumovich—our half-time staff person—who is a man on fire. This year Lech forged bonds with other conservation organizations, made effective inroads into public agencies, and brought an infectious team spirit to all of our efforts. We are blessed to have him.

To you, our members, we want to carry the message that there is a great deal of native plant habitat that needs protection, and but little time left to do it. We have taken on some challenging issues this year in which we have made steady, measurable progress. With your help we can do more. Next month, we'll let you know the many ways in which you can become an active participant in our drive to conserve and protect the East Bay native flora.

Laura Baker

NATIVE HERE

The day is warm and clear. We scramble up the trail. At the top of the hill are large granite boulders with graffiti sprayed on them. Beer cans are tossed everywhere. But native plants cling to this hill: chamise, lemonadeberry, buckwheat, and others whose names I haven't learned yet. The view from the hill is stunning. Hills and mountains are everywhere; hardly any flat terrain exists. We see a lot of suburban sprawl, but we also see many undeveloped areas covered in green-and brown-colored chaparral. I haven't quite gotten my bearings here; I keep misjudging west and north. But my husband points out the directions; he should know—he grew up here. Watching the path that the sun and moon take helps as well.

Eastern San Diego County is beautiful. The granite hills remind me of Yosemite, and the chaparral is full of interesting plants and animals. I'm disappointed that people around here don't seem interested in their local native plants. Yards are full of non-natives: palm trees, lawns, banana trees, Italian cypresses, juniper hedges.

Even in the Bay Area some people think they're living somewhere else, or want to pretend they are. I guess if you come from places that are wetter and greener, you feel more comfortable being surrounded by plants that

come from those climates. Too bad they don't appreciate the plants that grow native right here—here being the East Bay in our case. Southern California has lots of nice natives, but they're not native here. California is a big state with many climates and habitats.

Many people come to the nursery with plant lists they've written up with the help of various books or classes or landscape professionals. They ask if we have these plants, and many times I have to say that we do not. They seem surprised. "Aren't those natives?" they ask. Yes, I explain, but they are not native to here. Some of them give me a disappointed or puzzled look, but others are curious and ask me to elaborate. They come away with an appreciation of our name: Native Here.

So, if you have a plant list, be willing to modify it. Immerse yourself in this place, the East Bay, and get to know the plants that have called the East Bay home for longer than we have been here. And if you move to another part of the state or country or world, immerse yourself in your new place and learn to appreciate the plants native to those areas. It's fun.

We're continuing our Restoration Special this month. Buy one, get one free of the following species: *Helenium*

puberulum (sneezeweed), *Heracleum lanatum* (cow parsnip), *Nassella pulchra* (purple needlegrass), *Elymus glaucus* (blue wild rye), and *Quercus lobata* (valley oak).

It's a great time to plant. We are located in Tilden Park at 101 Golf Course Drive (across the street from the entrance to the Tilden Golf Course), 510-549-0211.

Margot Cunningham, Native Here Nursery

ACTIVITIES OF OTHERS

Join Bay Area Botanist Dean Kelch for the CREEC (Carquinez Regional Environmental Education Center) winter hikes. These leisurely hikes will consist of collecting native seeds and cuttings for propagation at the Carquinez Horticultural Center in Crockett. Hikes are recommended for adults and older children alike. Dr. Kelch gives a great tour of native vegetation and explains in detail the ecology and horticultural needs of local plants. Some of these areas are rather steep, but all have good paths. Hikes are from 10 am to 12:30 pm. The wildflower, tree, and grass seed collected on these excursions will be used in restoration efforts in local watersheds. No prior experience is necessary, just a willingness to learn and enjoy nature. For more information contact Troy McGregor, CREEC Propagation Coordinator, at troy_cpc@sbcglobal.net. Heavy rain will necessitate rescheduling of affected field trips.

Sunday, February 4, **Edwards Creek, Carquinez Hills Regional Park**, 10 am-12:30 pm

The new park entrance is located 0.2 miles south of Pomona Street on Crockett Boulevard. Meet at the end of the car park.

Sunday, February 11, 10 am-12:30 pm, **Bear Creek Road, EBMUD land**

Meet at the small dirt car park located at the intersection of Bear Creek, San Pablo Dam and Wild Cat Canyon Roads.

Sunday, February 18, 10 am-12:30 pm, **Fernandez Ranch**

To get to the new Muir Land Trust Fernandez Ranch entrance, follow Route 4 east from Rodeo. Turn right on Christie Road, just past the golf course and just before the RR tracks. Follow Christie Road approximately 0.3 miles past the PG&E relay station just before the road enters a grove of trees and park near the gate on the right.

Sunday, February 25, 10 am-12:30 pm, **Pinole Valley Park**

Meet at the Adobe Road parking lot in Pinole Valley Park just east of Pinole Valley Road.

Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour

Free! Sunday, May 6, 2007, from 10 am to 5 pm at various locations throughout Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. Register for passes and a printed guide to 60 bird- and butterfly-friendly, pesticide-free, water-conserving, low-maintenance gardens that contain 30% or more native plants. More than 50 free talks will be offered throughout the day. The "Carpools and Gardeners Match" section of the website will help registrants find neighbors to share gardening skills, native plants or tools, plan work parties, or carpool.

Two new features will be offered for the first time at this year's Tour. The first, a series of "Select Native Garden Tours"—exclusive, guided tours of inspirational native plant gardens—will take place on consecutive Saturdays, April 28 and May 5. Gardening experts will lead small groups to a variety of exclusive private native plant gardens for an in-depth look at native plantings in a variety of settings. The fee for these tours is \$30 per person with a limit of 30 participants per group.

The second new Tour feature is the **Native Plant Shopping Extravaganza**, which will take place on Saturday and Sunday, May 5 and 6. This exclusive sale features native plant nurseries—many not normally open to the general public—which carry large quantities of hard-to-find California natives. This two-day shopping opportunity will offer native plant fans a good selection of native plants and provide a relaxed and less crowded shopping experience. Knowledgeable staff will be on hand to help shoppers select the right plants for their gardens, and Saturday shoppers will have time to visit more showcase native plant gardens on Sunday, May 6, during the **Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour**.

The registration deadline for both the Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour and the "Select Native Garden Tours" is April 25 and can be done online at www.BringingBackTheNatives.net. Both Tours are expected to fill up quickly. Early registration is suggested to ensure a place.

Volunteers are needed and will be rewarded with free, private tours of beautiful native gardens. For more information visit the website at www.BringingBackTheNatives.net, email Kathy@KathyKramerConsulting.net or call 510-236-9558 between 9 am and 9 pm.



Valley Oak (*Quercus lobata*) at Carnegie State Recreation Area. Photo by Lech Naumovich.

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Chapter web site
www.ebcnps.org

Recorded Chapter Information
510-549-0211

State CNPS web site
www.cnps.org

Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____

Zip _____ Telephone _____

I wish to affiliate with:

___ East Bay Chapter (Alameda and Contra Costa Counties)

___ Other _____

E-mail _____
(optional)

Membership category:

- ___ Student, Limited income, \$25
- ___ Individual, Library, \$45
- ___ Household, Family, or Group, \$75
- ___ Supporting, \$75
- ___ Plant lover, \$100
- ___ Patron, \$300
- ___ Benefactor, \$600
- ___ Mariposa Lily, \$1500

Mail application and check to: California Native Plant Society, 2707 K Street, Suite 1, Sacramento CA 95816



Umbellularia californica (California bay) leaves. Photo by Lech Naumovich.

**California Native Plant Society
East Bay Chapter
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