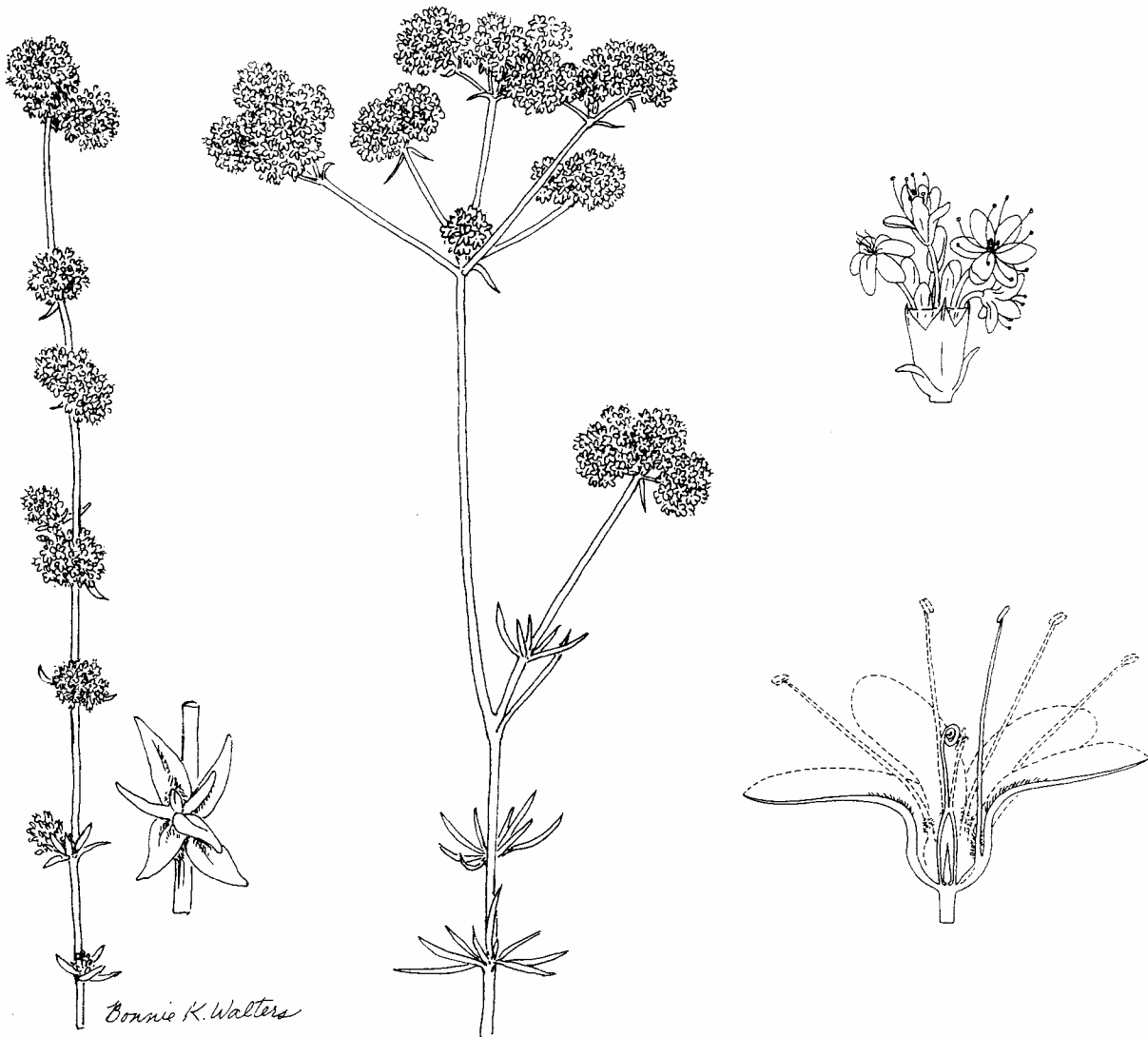


OBISPOENSIS

The San Luis Obispo Chapter of the California
Native Plant Society for San Luis Obispo
and Northern Santa Barbara Counties



OCTOBER 2003

ABOUT THE COVER

Bonnie's drawing for the cover of *Obispoensis* is a composite of something new and something old. The flowering branches and leaf clusters are newly drawn from life while the single inflorescence and diagrammatic flower are from Dr. David Keil's and my plant taxonomy textbook. Two species of shrubby California buckwheat, the genus *Eriogonum*, are represented in these drawings. To the left is one that made the spectacular show this August along the immediate coast. It is what I call the Coastal California buckwheat (*Eriogonum parvifolium*). Coastal California buckwheat is restricted to coastal bluffs and dunes along the central and south coastal regions from Monterey to San Diego Counties. I once found a single plant on Bishop Peak, above San Luis Obispo, but I have not been able to find it there since. It must be noted that *E. parvifolium* is only the common California buckwheat along our portion of the coast; other species replace it to the north and south.

The drawing to the right represents the much more widespread species known simply as California or wild buckwheat or, as I prefer to call it, common or interior California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*). This species is found in shrub-lands and open woods throughout most of California and extending beyond into surrounding states. In the dry inner coast range of San Luis Obispo County common California buckwheat can be practically the only shrub species present. It is said that chamise (*Adenostemma fasciculatum*) has more individuals and covers more area of California than any other shrubby species. But, I'm willing to wager that *E. fasciculatum* gives it a run for its money. Certainly, chamise produces more extensive stands below 5,000 feet, but common California buckwheat is scattered over several states and has a much greater altitude spread. It does seem to accept disturbance, so it is one of the most common shrubs on steep road cuts. This would tend to make it seem even more common.

In identification keys, these two species usually 'key-out' close to each other. This means that they look very similar. The most reliable difference between the two is the shape of the leaves. Common California buckwheat has narrow leaves that are widest near the middle while Coastal California buckwheat has leaves that are widest at the base. In both species, during summer, the leaves roll up and

can resemble short needles if not examined carefully. The inflorescence distribution that seems such an obvious difference in the drawings is not as reliable. Smaller individuals Common California buckwheat will have the small, stalk-less inflorescence clusters characteristic of *E. parvifolium*. At least in our area the rolled down margins of leaves and the leaves clusters at the nodes prove to be unreliable characters. I mention this because I have seen both of these used to distinguish these species in identification books.

The genus, *Eriogonum*, is one of the largest genera in California with well over 100 species recognized in *The Jepson Manual*. The most characteristic trait of the genus is its basic or unit inflorescence. The unit inflorescence is a cluster of stalked flowers surrounded by a group of fused bracts (involucre) with soft, rounded tips. In our two shrubby species, the involucre is not narrowed into a stalk, but resembles a hollow cylinder attached directly to its branch.. It sort of reminds me of a miniature tin can with a bouquet of tiny flowers coming out of the top. The 10 to 20 individual flowers are tiny and when newly opened are white to very pale pink. As they age and become pollinated they turn reddish, ultimately drying to a brick red as fruits mature. The sepals continue to be attached to the tiny triangular single-seeded fruit (achene) even after it matures. As all but a couple of genera in its family, Polygonaceae, the parts of the flower are in multiples of three. Flowers consist of 6 sepals, no petals, 9 stamens and a single pistil with 3 styles and stigma.

I looked these plants up in many different references trying to find a human connection. Most of them didn't mention either species at all and those that did tended to just talk about how common they are. I suspect they would make a great landscape plants since they require little or no care and bloom in late summer and early fall when few other plants bloom. Their fruits would be great for attracting birds to one's back yard. I have tried both species as an ornamental in San Luis Obispo. The coastal species didn't do well and died after a couple of years. On the other hand, my *E. fasciculatum* is not only surviving but also even spreading a little.

The common name 'buckwheat' was given because of the resemblance of the seeds of *Eriogonum* to those of the common buckwheat (*Fagopyron esculenta*) of pancake flour fame. Therefore I

expected to find that Native Americans would have used it in a similar way. It may have, but my limited references didn't indicate it. One reference mentioned fruit edibility and a second mentioned possible medicinal uses of leaves and stems. Both were only in passing however. Maybe, we should just enjoy it where they grow.

– Dirk Walters

*NATIVE
PLANT
SALE*

November 1
9 A.M. to 2 P.M.
Heritage Oaks Bank
Madonna Plaza
San Luis Obispo

LARGE SELECTION
OF BEAUTIFUL NATIVE
TREES SHRUBS FLOWERS
SEEDS BOOKS
BOTANICAL POSTERS



Sambucus mexicana

CONSERVATION

In early September CNPS conducted its 2003 conservation-oriented Chapter Council meeting in Carmel. Earlier, conservation staff had a two day retreat to determine where programs would be going in the next year. The bottom line is that, provided the fiscal resources can be found, we will be continuing in much the same manner as this year. This means we will be paying special interest to commercial timber operations and to regulation and protection of hardwoods, will be continuing to join with other organizations to oppose the dismantling of environmental protection within our national forests, and will be trying to get BLM to protect its lands from poor grazing practices and off-road vehicle damage. One area of interest is federally proposed weakening of law that protects isolated wetlands such as vernal pools under the Clean Water Act. We have been paying a lot attention to southern California, particularly in regard to large scale desert planning such as BLM's West Mojave Plan, giant developments such as Newhall Ranch and Ahmanson Ranch, and regional conservation plans such as the West

Riverside Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan. If we expand staff, we may try to find staff help to work on similar projects in northern and central California. Our conservation program has had to initiate a number of lawsuits, and a substantial majority within the Chapter Council seem to appreciate us using the law to defend our besieged flora. We usually work with partners such as the Center for Biological Diversity when challenging agencies and developers. We also work to improve California's laws regarding plant conservation, although we spend most of our time fighting against proposed degradation of protection. Changes to California's Endangered Species Act and Environmental Quality Act receive our immediate attention. We will be keeping our legislation program in place, so we work both on the changes in the law and on agency interpretation of existing law.

On the local front, things have been rather quiet. There are some problems associated with the routing of the Nacimiento Water Project pipeline through Laguna Park in the City of San Luis Obispo. This is the area that the City has been developing into pools to compensate for wetland losses along the south side of Los Osos Valley Road. I have been working with a group that is headed up by Rick Hawley of Cambria's Greenspace to find out if the county could be in favor of a ballot initiative on a tree ordinance. Rick paid for a neutral survey of county residents and it appears the answer is yes. If we go forward on this, we may need some volunteers and some extra capital. We are also closely monitoring several development projects around Los Osos, which are all quivering at the gate and the end of the moratorium. If you know of stuff we should be doing in your little corner of the woods, and haven't seen me mention it, contact me.

– David Chipping

*Weeding on Santa Cruz Island
A Worthy Adventure*

Santa Cruz Island is the largest of the Santa Barbara Channel Islands. This chain is essentially an extension of the Transverse Ranges. However, each of the islands has a unique geology, and similar but distinct flora and fauna. It is now believed that at one time they were one landmass, called Santa Rosae, but never connected to the mainland. This previous cohesion and their proximity to the mainland have resulted in similarities and differences, with exchanges among islands and with the mainland. It

is also believed that the Chumash Peoples may have brought useful plants over during their period of residence. European and American settlement has also brought many plants and animals, some of which have become destructively invasive, threatening the natives.

Santa Cruz Island is divided from east to west by the Santa Cruz Island Fault, running along a central valley with volcanic rocks on the north and sedimentary rocks on the south. The topography is spectacular with the contrasting colors and textures, and the chain's highest feature, Monte Diablo, being at in the western part of the volcanic portion. Among its unique flora are the Santa Cruz Island buckwheat, *Eriogonum arborescens*, and the fern-leaved island ironwood, *Lyonothamnus floribundus ssp. aspleniifolius*, and the Santa Cruz Island manzanita, *Arctostaphylos insularis*. The buckwheat and the ironwood are common central coastal ornamental plants.

Agricultural operations brought exotic plants, crop and ornamental; and animals, grazing and game. Over the last several years, the ranches eventually left, and most of the northern group is in the Channel Islands National Park, with the eastern two-thirds of Santa Cruz Island a Nature Conservancy preserve. In addition to the exotic plants, grazing has had several adverse effects on the flora. These include browsing of trees and shrubs; trampling and compaction of soils; suppression of natives. With the end of grazing, there has been significant recovery of many of the woody plants and some of the forbs and grasses. But on much of the degraded soil, aggressive weedy invasives, such as fennel, *Foeniculum vulgare*, yellow star-thistle, *Centaurea solstitialis*, and blackwood acacia, *A. melanoxylon*, have joined some of the less harmful grasses. Feral pigs continue to be a problem, rooting up geophytes, and encouraging fennel by their disturbances. California Department of Fish and Game is working their elimination. Fortunately, deer are not a problem on Santa Cruz.

Riparian areas have seen smilo or rice grass, *Piptatherum miliaceum*, and tamarisk, *Tamarix spp.*, with iceplants, *Carpobrotus spp.* and *Memsebranthemum spp.* on some of the beaches. Periwinkle, *Vinca major*, has gotten established

around some of the dwellings. Although fragments of giant reed-grass, *Arundo donax*, have washed up on some of the shores, most of them have been too dry to get established. Blue gum eucalyptus, *E. globulus*, is there as well. These are a few of the more troublesome invaders.

On 8-11 August, a stalwart group of 13 volunteers from CNPS and other groups joined Ken Owen and Duke McPherson for a weeding foray on an extended weekend of work and fellowship. Transportation was provided by the Park Service. We stayed at the UCSB Research Station in the central valley, and chipped in \$15 each for dinners we helped cook, bringing our own lunches and breakfasts. We all worked on the exotics mentioned above, and were able to enjoy the unique scenery and flora, including a swim in a pool under a waterfall on the volcanic side of the island.

All in all, I found this to be a very worthwhile venture. We were able to see areas not generally accessible to the public. Being a part of a significant restoration effort gave us a chance to meet and work with some really great people in the work group and others involved in studies at the Research Station. Ken and Duke organize around twelve such parties per year. They have also gotten a grant for additional activities. Anyone interested in one of these trips should contact Ken Owen at (805) 568-1507 or islands@rain.org. I will be considering a similar trip in the future.

Invasive exotic plants are a major threat to California flora in many areas besides Santa Cruz Island. There are several other local opportunities for weed control as part of restoration efforts. The Elfin Forest in Los Osos has work parties on first Saturdays, 9-12; contact Pete Sarafin (805) 528-3194. The nearby Sweet Springs Preserve has work parties on second Saturdays, 9-12; call John Nowak, (805) 464-0717, for information. On Monday, 3 November, 8 a.m.-3 p.m., the Santa Barbara County Weed Management Area 2003 Noxious Weeds Seminar will be "Invasive Ornamentals - The Problem and Alternatives" at the Royal Scandinavian Inn in Solvang. The cost of \$40 includes lunch and continuing education credit. Contact David Chang at the Agricultural Commissioner's Office at (805) 681-5600.

– Charles Blair

Circumventing Environmental Law

Dear Folks,

I hope that many of you saw and read the article of Monday, September 15, 2003 in the SLO Tribune. It was on the front page and had the headline "State Environmental Laws Challenged." It is an article by Gary Polakovic reprinted from the LA Times. I hope it makes you as dismayed as it did me because it is just the tip of the iceberg.

As I see it, the article implies that the Federal Government sides with business against California in most, if not all, cases where California environmental law is stricter than Federal Law. Because the article deals with matters such as offshore oil drilling, clean air standards, toxic waste cleanups, etc., one might ask why should we, as members of the California Native Plant Society, take an interest.

First, as citizens, we need to stay informed about what our government is doing. There will be elections soon and we need to know what kind of record our government has created. We need to know to be informed voters.

Second, we need to be aware that excellent environmental laws and regulations may be passed and signed into law and still not do anything. A law must be enforced if it is to be effective. All the executive branch has to do is either ignore the law or fail to fund it. In either case, the effect of the law will be nil.

Third, it appears that Washington has been very effective in circumventing environmental law through the courts. As I understand it, it is done this way: a law is challenged in the courts, but before it comes up for a hearing, the Feds settle out of court. The out-of-court settlement, done in secret, gives the business most of what it seeks. The Feds simply agree to not enforce the regulation. It's all so easy: the law or regulation remains on the books; it is just ignored. There is no messy politics involved. And most of us in the public are none the wiser.

Where this type of activity most directly affects native plants is when the plants are either subject to listing as special concern or they grow on federal lands. Agencies such as the federal Fish and Wildlife Service are not given the funds needed to do their job. Or they say we need more data before doing anything. Meanwhile, its business as usual as the environment continues to be degraded and rare plants become rarer.

– Dirk Walters

Summary of State Board Election

August 30, 2003

**Officers: Carol Witham, President
Carol Baird, Secretary**

Directors: David Magney, Vern Goehring, Diana Hickson, Mary Shaw, Lynne Houser

The 2003 election for the CNPS Board of Directors has been held and the ballots counted. Twenty-seven ballots were cast. The Leadership Development Committee extended the date by which ballots needed to be back to the state office to August 20, which hopefully made it easier for chapters to deliberate on the election.

At its February, 2003 meeting, the Board set its membership at 12. Board members take office on January 1, 2004. The CNPS Board for 2004 will be as follows:

Carol Witham, President ('04-'05)

Sandy McCoy, Vice President ('03-'04)

Steve Hartman, Treasurer ('03-'04)

Carol Baird, Secretary ('04-'05)

Lynne Kada, Chapter Council President (to May 2004)

Jim Bishop, Chapter Council Vice-Chair (to May 2004)

Vern Goehring, Director ('04-'05)

Lynne Houser, Director ('04-'05)

Diana Hickson, Director ('04-'05)

David Magney, Director ('04-'05)

Spence McIntyre, Director ('03-'04)

Mary Shaw, Director ('04-'05)

The Committee would first like to thank everyone who ran for a Board position. A large number of candidates enables the chapters to make real choices and to thereby exercise real power over the direction of the Society. The people who ran, whether they were successful or not, made a tremendous contribution to the Society by making the new structure meaningful. While the Committee of course congratulates those elected to the Board, the Committee would like to extend special thanks to all those who put themselves forward as candidates.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandy McCoy, Chair

CNPS Leadership Development Committee

Plant Activities

Thursday, October 2, 6:30 p.m. San Luis Obispo Chapter Meeting: Members' Slide Show and Dessert Potluck. Bring ten to twenty of your best slides, transparencies or digital, and a dessert to share at our first fall Chapter Meeting. The Vets Hall is at Grand Avenue & Monterey Street, near the Grand Avenue off-ramp. Call Dirk Walters, 543-7051, or Charles Blair, 733-3189, for details.

Saturday, October 4, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Nipomo Native Garden Plant Sale. The Nipomo Native Garden is having its fall plant sale at Jim O. Miller park on Tefft Avenue between US 101 and Thompson Avenue. A good source of plants and knowledgeable people. Call Larry Vierheilg, 929-6710, for further information.

Sunday, October 12, 9 a.m. Fall Plant Walk, La Purisima Mission. Charlie Blair will be leading his annual tour of fall-blooming plants of the Burton Mesa Chaparral. Come and see what is out at this sometimes forgotten time of the year. Meet at 9:00 a.m., east end of Burton Mesa Boulevard (1550 E. Burton Mesa Blvd.) in Mission Hills. From the north, take the Constellation Road off-ramp from SR1 and turn right on Burton Mesa Blvd. From the south, Burton Mesa Blvd. can be accessed from either Harris Grade Road or Rucker Road; again turn right. Call Charlie Blair, 733-3189, for details.

Saturday, November 1, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. CNPS Annual Native Plant Sale, Madonna Plaza. Come to the Heritage Oaks Bank parking lot (297 Madonna Road) for the SLO Chapter, California Native Plant Society Plant Sale. A wide variety of plants, posters, books, and gardening literature will be available along with many knowledgeable and helpful people. Contact John Nowak, 464-0717, Charlie Blair, 733-3189, or Dirk Walters, 543-7051, for more information.

Monday, November 3, 8 a.m. - 3 p.m. Noxious Weeds Seminar, Royal Scandinavian Inn, Solvang. The Santa Barbara County Weed Management Area (WMA) is pleased to announce its Noxious Weeds Seminar for 2003. This year's theme is "**Invasive Ornamentals - The Problem and Alternatives.**" Many invasive, non-native weeds escape from gardens where they were intentionally

planted for a variety of purposes. The seminar will be at the Royal Scandinavian Inn, Solvang, California. The fee is \$40, lunch is provided. Six hours of DPR and 3 hours of ISA continuing education credit are available. For details call Charles Blair, 733-3189, or Dave Chang, S.B. County WMA, (805) 681-5600, <http://www.countyofsb.org/agcomm/WMA.htm> .

Thursday, November 6, 7 p.m., San Luis Obispo Chapter Meeting. Native Gardening Program with Dave Fross. In conjunction with our Fall Plant Sale, Dave Fross of Native Sons Nursery, Arroyo Grande, will discuss the use of California native plants in landscaping. With Carol Bornstein and Bart O'Brien, Dave is writing a book on the horticultural use of California natives. The program will be at the San Luis Obispo Vets Hall, corner of Grand Avenue (801 Grand) & Monterey Street. Contact John Nowak, 464-0717, Charlie Blair, 733-3189, or Dirk Walters 543-7051 for details.

English Ivy Video and Outreach Project

August 2003

Greetings,

This is the third progress report intended to update partners and others interested in the English Ivy Video and Outreach Project. It covers the period April-July 2003. Future reports will be sent out every three to four months.

Intention

The English Ivy Video and Outreach Project seeks to raise awareness about the threat English ivy (*Hedera helix*) poses to the biological heritage in many parks, preserves and remnant natural areas in the United States. Impacts to valuable ornamental trees and other structures in urban areas will also be examined. An informational video documenting the best practices at managing this species will serve as the cornerstone for outreach efforts. Additional materials, including television public service announcements, a web site splashpage with streaming video clips, media kits and video workbook for educators are also planned (funds permitting).

The goal is to reduce the threat posed by English ivy while also generating greater public interest in the overall challenge of invasive alien species.

English ivy Video continued

Partnership/funding

All pending proposals from the last period, totaling \$20,200, were rejected. U.S. Department of Transportation reneged on their pledge of \$10,000, and a \$10,000 proposal to the National Park Service not mentioned in the last report was also rejected.

We do welcome two additional funding partners to the project. They are:

Save-the-Redwoods League (Pledge) \$ 500

* California Native Plant Society, Los Angeles Chapter. (Donation) \$ 500

Work Achieved

Production (i.e. filming) is largely complete. More original footage was gathered in California, Oregon and Washington. Ron Nelson flew back east and filmed control and restoration efforts in Washington, D.C., Maryland, Virginia and Tennessee. Tapes were logged, numerous interviews were transcribed, and more research was conducted. I have also been working on the script outline and making storyboards for a range of possible sections of the video. We are prepared to enter postproduction (i.e. editing) and believe we have enough material to make an informative and engaging video encompassing activities on both sides of the U.S.

Work Expected Next Period

Because of protracted delays to get fully funded, and the decision to film on the east coast (when pledged funds were then withdrawn), the project has hit a narrows and is in some jeopardy. Thus, our primary objective is to raise the balance of funds needed to complete the video. If any partners or readers of this

report wish to provide more support contact: Ron Nelson (Phone: 707/822-2354 Email: rbn10@hotmail.com). Ron and I will meet in September to assess the prospects and decide upon the final scope of the video. Without additional funds we cannot afford any graphics, animation, stock footage, or original music. Editing will need to be kept to a bare minimum. I will have to largely donate my time to finish writing and directing. And of course the public service announcements and other components originally envisioned for this project cannot be generated.

Funds raised over the past 12 months total \$47,300. We remain under-funded by a minimum of \$20,000 to cover the west coast, or \$40,000 if we are to expand the story and incorporate the east coast in the video. Contact us if you wish more details about the partnership or budget..

Phone: 541/552-0470 Email: leif@opendoor.com. Web site: www.xenob.com

In any case, we hope to complete the video in some form by early 2004. Thank you for your support and interest in this important project.

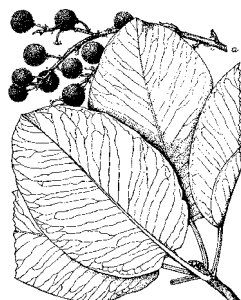
Sincerely,
Leif Joslyn, Director
Ecovisions
1550 Oregon St., Suite 3
Ashland, OR 97520

The purpose of Ecovisions is to foster ecological literacy. By drawing attention to environmental problems, ecological realities, and viable solutions, Ecovisions seeks to improve the human prospect in the ecosphere.



Please include me as a CNPS member

- Student/Retired/Limited Income \$20
- Individual or Library \$35
- Family or Group 45
- Supporting \$75
- Plant Lover \$100
- Patron \$250
- Benefactor \$500



Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone _____

I wish to affiliate with the **San Luis Obispo Chapter.**

Please make your check payable to CNPS and mail to:
California Native Plant Society
P.O. Box 784
San Luis Obispo, CA 93406

Annual Native Plant Sale Volunteer Sign Up

Heritage Oaks Bank, Madonna Plaza, San Luis Obispo, Saturday, November 1

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Please mark the hours and tasks you can help with.

Hours Available

- 7 - 8 a.m.
- 8 - 9 a.m.
- 9 - 10 a.m.
- 10 - 11 a.m.
- 11 - 12 a.m.
- 12 - 1 p.m.
- 1 - 2 p.m.

Tasks

- Help as needed
- Unload & set up plants
- Set up tables
- Sell books and posters
- Sit at sales table
- Sell Plants
- Sell seeds
- Cashier's table
- Load customers' plants
- Clean up

Please complete this form and bring it to the October meeting for John Nowak or send it to him at 8605 San Gabriel Road, Atascadero, CA 93422.

✂.....

DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF THE CALIFORNIA NATIVE FLORA

The California Native Plant Society is a statewide nonprofit organization of amateurs and professionals with a common interest in California's native 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 quarterly journal, *Fremontia*, the quarterly *Bulletin* which gives statewide news and announcements of Society activities and conservation issues, and the chapter newsletter, *Obispoensis*.



*San Luis Obispo Chapter of the
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MEMBERSHIP REMINDER

Check the date on your address label.
The four-digit number indicates the month

that your membership should be renewed.
Example: 0310 (year/month) = 2003 October.