IN JULY 2001, UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE YOSEMITE ASSOCIATION, Paul and I participated in a three-day botany course in the White Mountains. There were about twenty of us in the group, and our instructor was botanist Glenn Keator. On our excursions, we had breathtaking views of both the Whites themselves and the Sierra to the west; learned about the Great Basin bristlecone pines (Pinus longaeva), the oldest living trees; and identified a hundred or so species of native plants, many of which were in bloom. Flowers were abundant that summer, and those three days provided us with an unforgettable experience.

On the afternoon of July 18, we turned east at Big Pine and drove up into the White Mountains. When we arrived at the University of California’s Crooked Creek research station (el. 10,200 ft.), we moved into our room in the dorm building, met the rest of the group and our instructor, and enjoyed the first of the delicious, buffet-style meals of our stay at the research station, which had its own chef on staff.

Over the next two days, we hiked among the awe-inspiring bristlecone pines, which grow on permeable dolomite at between 9,800 and 11,000 feet. We learned...
Among the more abundant and eye-catching blooms were Bridle penstemon (Penstemon rastriformis), showy penstemon (Penstemon rostriflorus), and purple sage (Salvia spathacea) — coyote mint (Monardella odoratissima ssp. parvifolia), wavyleaf Indian paintbrush (Castilleja martini var. clts), and ruby buckwheat (Eriogonum umbellatum). The aster chilensis has come back from the frost and is a dense patch of dark green leaves about 6 inches tall. One of the two buckwheats seems to have suffered from the frost but will probably make it. The other was protected under the Palo verde tree and is looking good. Spring makes me want to plant things. I prefer plants in pots ready to go in the ground, because I like instant gratification. However, seeds can be pretty awesome too. The most gratifying for me are the California poppies. My favorite place to get seeds is at the Theodore Payne website (www.theodorepayne.org). They have all kinds of seeds, including specialty seed mixes. Don’t wait too long to order if you are thinking about planting this spring; the seeds need to get into the ground quickly.

To me, planning is lots of fun so long as I remember the most important tool for planning is an eraser! The Las Pilitas folks say you can plant year-round, which is true, but for me here in Bakersfield the best time for successful planting is early spring or late fall. I’ve been thinking of adding to my California garden. There is a 25 x 25 square that is sandy loam, fairly alkaline, and currently has no irrigation to it. Although it was a horse pen back in the day, it wasn’t much used so there’s hardly any organic matter in it. Today, I cleared off the accumulation of garden leftovers: pots and boards, old picnic tables and the like. Then the few weeds that somehow grew with only the bit of rain we’ve gotten were raked up. It is being watered a bit to mimic winter rains and hopefully will be planted within the next few days.

In the meantime, I’ll draw up a plan that will merge the old garden with the new garden, utilizing the dozen, gallon size pots of various sages, penstemons, and Zoanthemia, and two manzanitas acquired from Las Pilitas on Saturday’s field trip. To me, planning is lots of fun so long as I remember the most important tool for planning is an eraser! I like to plot out different versions of the space and compare different plants. I’ll need more plants eventually, and a good source will be the Bakersfield College Garden where the Kern Chapter of CNPS will be selling plants. Shameless plug: come and support the club! Of course I’ll keep you all posted on the newest additions, so stay tuned. ☀

**Thank you to:**

- Paul Gipe, for his excellent coordination of all the chapter activities.
- Lucy Clark and Clyde Golden for their very enjoyable presentation at the January meeting.
- Maynard Moo for his very interesting presentation at the February meeting on the plants of Yemen, Socotra, South Africa, Namibia and Madagascar.
- Monica Tudor for the excellent articles on native plant gardening that she has contributed to previous editions of the *Mimulus Memo*.
- Nancy Nies for her fascinating articles on famous Botanists from the past and her botanical discoveries in Yosemite.
- Patty Gazdek for planning and coordinating field trips and remembering all the little things that tend to get in the way.
- Dinah Campbell for the beautiful *Mimulus Memo* that she creates four times a year.
- Rich Spuit, Clyde Golden and Maynard Moo for teaching us about plant identification.
- All who’ve brought refreshment to meetings and contributed to our potluck.

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**Spring is in the Air**

by Monica Tudor

**VALENTINE’S DAY CONSIDERED LATE WINTER or early spring? I suppose it depends on your point of view. Anyhow, when it is in the 70s, I’m inclined to early spring. (If we actually get a cold snap in March, I’ll revisit the question.) The Bailey’s multiradiata and the western redbud are already blooming and the *Salvia spathacae* is sending up flower stalks. The whisly blue sage is blooming and providing pollen for the honeybees. The aster chilensis has come back from the frost and is a dense patch of dark green leaves about 6 inches tall. One of the two buckwheats seems to have suffered from the frost but will probably make it. The other was protected under the Palo verde tree and is looking good.

Spring makes me want to plant things. I prefer plants in pots ready to go in the ground, because I like instant gratification. However, seeds can be pretty awesome too. The most gratifying for me are the California poppies. My favorite place to get seeds is at the Theodore Payne website (www.theodorepayne.org). They have all kinds of seeds, including specialty seed mixes. Don’t wait too long to order if you are thinking about planting this spring; the seeds need to get into the ground quickly.

There’s barely more time to put plants in the ground. The *Las Pilitas* folks say you can plant year-round, which is true, but for me here in Bakersfield the best time for successful planting is early spring or late fall. I’ve been thinking of adding to my California garden. There is a 25 x 25 square that is sandy loam, fairly alkaline, and currently has no irrigation to it. Although it was a horse pen back in the day, it wasn’t much used so there’s hardly any organic matter in it. Today, I cleared off the accumulation of garden leftovers: pots and boards, old picnic tables and the like. Then the few weeds that somehow grew with only the bit of rain we’ve gotten were raked up. It is being watered a bit to mimic winter rains and hopefully will be planted within the next few days.

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**A Botany Course** (Continued)

that the oldest of the trees germinated roughly 5,000 years ago. We saw Pinus longaeva cones at various stages: a seed cone that would take two years to mature, a nearly mature seed cone, a mature seed cone, the previous year’s seed cone, and a pollen cone. We also noted that the ancient, gnarled trees have shallow, spiraling roots, and that they share their lofty domain with limber pine (*Pinus flexilis*).

My notes and photos remind me of the rainbow of alpine and subalpine flowers we saw blooming at various locations between 10,000 and 12,000 feet: along Crooked Creek, on the Schulman Grove and Patriarch Grove trails, on the Barefoot plateau, and along Cottonwood Creek.

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**Castilleja martini var. clts, wavyleaf Indian paintbrush**

(“Hummingbird sage”)

**Cirsium arizonicum**

**Linum lewisii**

**Erythranthe bruneaunis**

**Calochortus lily**

**Bruneau mariposa lily**

**Strirrumum idahoense**

**Salvia spathacae**

**Cercis occidentalis**

**Mimulus Memo** — March 2014

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**Rich Spuit, Monica Tudor**

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**Spring is in the Air**

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**Mimulus Memo** — March 2014

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**Mimulus Memo** — March 2014
FIELD TRIPS
by Lucy Clark, Patty and Dale Gradek

KERN CNPS FIELD TRIPS ARE OPEN TO ALL
Occasionally, numbers will be limited by the
land-owners or agencies. We welcome you to join
us to see and learn about our native plants and
their habitats, to learn to identify plants, or to photograph
them. If you are skilled in plant identification, you can
help us all learn.

Please always dress in layers, wear boots or shoes you
can hike in and bring food and water. You may also
want to bring a hat, sunscreen, binoculars, camera, plant
list and useful refer-
ences such as Kern
County Flora and the
Jepson Manual, or
any book you like.
We try to meet at
a spot where we can park some cars and car pool
our location to save the air, the gas, the money and
make sure that on a “roadside” trip that we will have
adequate space to park. CNPS does not arrange car
pools; each person does so at the meeting place.

All trips are by reservation
so, we know whom to
expect, and how many will be
attending each field trip.

All trips are by reservation only, so we know whom to
expect, and how many will be attending each field trip.

March 8, Saturday
ATWELL ISLAND with Jihadda Govan
(and possibly FIXLEY VERNAL POOLS)
Contact: Lucy Clark – lucyc391@gmail.com
RSVP Deadline: 8 pm, Thursday, March 6

Atwell Island in Tulare County is a BLM property
purchased from farmers and re-vegetated with
Val-
ley natives for the purpose of providing habitat for
threatened, endangered, resident and migratory birds.
It is an interesting view of what the Valley might have
looked like before dams and development. For
information, please look at their website:
www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/bakersfield/Programs/atwell
-island.html

This will be a drive-and-walk trip, with opportuni-
ties to learn what all of those plants we see from
our car windows really look like. We will be guided
by Jihadda Govan, the BLM-Atwell Island Project
Manager.

This may be a half-day trip unless rain has fallen and the
vernal pools have formed at the Pixley Preserve.
Please read about this preserve held by the Center for
Natural Lands Management at their website:
www.cnlm.org/ems/index.php?ref=
outlets.com/content/6658-eigenfeld-6666/itemid=213

and see the pictures of this amazing land and plant
formation.

We will meet at 7:30 am to form carpools (reflecting
your time constraints) behind the Del Taco on Merle
Haggard between Hwys. 65 and 99, in the far back
parking lot. We will leave ASAP. Bring a lunch and
water. Please contact Lucy at the above address to
RSVP. We should know by then if the Pixley Preserve
has had enough rain to form the pools.

March 15, Saturday
VALLEY FRINGE PORTION OF TEJON RANCH
with Scott Pipkin
Contact: Patty Gradek – pattysgraded@gmail.com
RSVP Deadline: 8 pm, Thursday, March 14

Scott Pipkin, Public Access Coordinator for the Tejon
Ranch Conservancy, will be leading us on an early
spring field trip through the portions of the Ranch
that border the Valley. The Tejon Ranch is a beauti-
ful place in the spring and we’re hoping for great
displays in these lower elevations. Plan on this being
a half-day trip. The meeting place and time will be
determined later so we can see the best displays.
Those who RSVP will be given the meeting place
directions and the time we will meet. Pets and
smoking are not allowed on the Tejon Ranch.

You may want to bring the Tejon Ranch plant list

The Carrizo Plain National Monument is a very spe-
cial area. Denis Kearns, BLM Botanist, will lead us on
this trip. The trip will be limited to 20 people due to
limits prescribed for such tours in the BLM Manage-
ment Plan. Therefore, if you want to attend we sug-
gest you contact Patty Gradek at pattysgraded@ymail.
com early, because no more than 20 will be allowed to
participate.

The Carrizo Plain is a magical, beautiful place. Denis
may have us assist with plant monitoring for a por-
tion of the day.

Please meet at the parking lot of the BLM office at
3801 Pegasus Drive at 8:30 am for carpooling. It will
be best to use four-wheel drive or high-clearance ve-
hicles to get to some of the special sites. We will leave
promptly at 8:45 am. This will be a full-day field trip.

There are restrooms at the Visitor Center.

April 9, Saturday
MILL CREEK OFF OLD KERN CANYON ROAD
with Clyde Golden
Contact: Lucy Clark – lucyc391@gmail.com
RSVP Deadline: 8 pm, Thursday, April 17

This is a relatively close place to see many beautiful
plants along a fairly level trail, from the hemiplarctica,
naked broomrape, to California Indian pink, to a tiny
yellow and white poppy. Hopefully, we will also
be able to see in Mill Creek, the California newt, known
by the writer as the “red gummy newt,” in its most
southern habitat. We look forward to seeing many of
the plants in Clyde Golden’s photos, viewed at
the January 16th Potluck.

This trip can be a half-day or a whole-day trip, de-
pending on your needs. Meet at the Tuesday Morning
store’s parking lot on Fairfax and Auburn, off HWY
178 at 7:30 am to form carpools. People who need to
leave before or just after lunch can ride together.