September Meeting!

I was just looking over the list of plants that we sold in our annual fall sale last year… It is an impressive group of Latin words and colorful nicknames. For me a comforting accounting of old friends that conjure memories of places and fragrances and life events. But for many, it is just that, a list of difficult to pronounce words that require an interpreter and beg for descriptions and photographs to have any idea of what it looks like, much less know how it might grow. Sometimes, when looking for new ideas for your own garden, even with a good concise description and a picture, many of these plants remain a mystery and feel like a risk not worth taking. What we often need is a friend who has grown the plant in their garden and can recommend it from their experience, to give us the confidence to give it a try.

Because the Chapter is still be observing the COVID-19 directives to avoid large gatherings of people, we will have a presentation using Zoom for our regular in-person chapter meeting. The link for the meeting details can be found at our chapter website, https://chapters.cnps.org/montereybay/

Please keep up with all of our social media, including our updated Facebook address, which is: https://www.facebook.com/CNPSMB/ and our new Instagram https://www.instagram.com/cnpsmb/. With our social media sites changing so much in recent times, we’re actively searching for new content to provide. If you’ve got an idea to share or contribute, please email it to CNPSMBWallflower@gmail.com. We hope to see you at the meeting, and we hope you come early to reserve your virtual right-up-front seat!

Meeting will be Thursday, September 9th at 7:30 PM

Topic: A Few of our Favorite Things, Part 2

Well, we would like to offer a group of friends to do just that. Our September 9th General meeting will include a panel of CNPS members who have discovered the joys (and agonies) of Native Plant gardening. Each will present 5-10 plants that they particularly like and have grown in their own gardens. Good photographs will be complimented with comments about why they like the plant, where they have grown it and extra tidbits that might include the origin, the natural history, good companions for that plant and any cautionary notes. (For example: don’t prune a Flannel bush and then rub your eyes to get the “dust” out) Our Panel includes Peigi Duvall, Amy Essick, Pat Regan and Loren Walden who have all gardened in a variety of California microclimates and had a full spectrum of successes and failures that will benefit your plant selecting this fall. -Patrick Regan
1) Del Rey Oaks Habitat Reserve (aka CNPS Plant Reserve 1North): The Chapter continues to wait for the City of Del Rey Oaks to prepare revised engineering plans for the proposed realignment and expansion of South Boundary Road. Realignment of the proposed road is necessary to completely avoid the 4.63-acre Plant Reserve protected as a CEQA mitigation for the extension of General Jim Moore Blvd. In June 2020, the Chapter sued the City and the now disbanded Fort Ord Reuse Authority to block the construction of the new road through the heart of the Habitat Reserve. After a constructive mediation session in November 2020, a second session scheduled in March of 2021 was postponed until the City completed legal research. The Del Rey Oaks Habitat Reserve was identified by CNPS as supporting extremely high quality Maritime Chaparral and a number of special status species. NN

2) MST SURF! Bus Road: Despite objections from CNPS, State Parks, Keep Fort Ord Wild and the Coastal Commission, the Board of Monterey Salinas Transit certified a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the construction of a brand new road dedicated as a bus route between the west side of Highway 1 and Fort Ord Dunes State Park. The CEQA document did not analyze or discuss alternatives to the construction of this new road that is slated to connect the Marina transit station with Sand City. Despite a flaw in the CEQA public process identified during a MST Board meeting, the Board moved forward with the project and certified the Mitigated Negative Declaration. CNPS will continue to track this project. NN

CNPS Conservation Symposium: “In the Hot Seat: The Flora and Fire”

Saturday, September 11, from 9:00 am – 12:30 pm
Please join CNPS staff and volunteers for a morning of presentations exploring what is, arguably, California's hottest topic: wildfire. To one degree or another, fire affects all Californians - from homeowners in the wildland urban interface grappling with how to keep their homes and communities safe, to city dwellers dealing with poor air quality, to first responders on the front lines of life-threatening, catastrophic fires. Today, government agencies and land managers are taking drastic, yet often necessary, actions to manage the landscape and prepare communities for inevitable wildfires. In some cases, these measures conflict with the conservation of native plants and habitats.

In this symposium, speakers will focus on the effects of fire on California ecosystems and the human environment, the role that legislation and the state budget play in decision making and the struggle to find solutions, and what CNPS volunteers are doing at the local level to ensure that habitats continue to be fire resilient reservoirs for biodiversity.

Speakers and timed agenda will be posted in the near future. This seminar is open to all chapter volunteers and others interested in conservation.

Register in advance for this meeting:
https://cnps-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZItd-ohqDgvHNZPWaU6wYUiMFurHeqB2Zmj

Questions? Contact Isabella Langone, CNPS Conservation Analyst, ilangone@cnps.org
Our exceptional native plant sale is expected to return on **October 9th** and close on **Saturday afternoon October 16**, with pickups scheduled for **Tuesday, October 12** through **Tuesday, October 19**. **Weekday pickups will be from 3:30 pm to 5:30 and Saturday pickups will be from 9-4.** Monterey and San Benito County’s best curated selection of California Natives will once again be on sale. We will feature plants from our local area, up and down the coast, our breathtaking mountains and spectacular desert climates. We hope to see you there!

While we are committed to making sure that we can provide our plants to be enjoyed this year, we also acknowledge the recent events going on in the world. With that in mind, we will have an online store set up and ready! We hope sincerely that we can get out in the sun with friends and family enjoying our amazing California Natives, and can’t wait until we can share that experience again with everyone in our magical, thriving native space.
Occasionally I will get a request from a homeowner looking for a plant that is evergreen, attractive year round, able to take full sun or shade, not fussy about soil, attractive to beneficial insects and provides food for wildlife, (other than deer) and is basically easy to grow. Surprisingly there are a number of plants that fit that bill but few that do so as easily as California coffee berry. The nickname is easy to understand when you look closely at the berries that turn from green to red to black as they mature. They do look very similar to the true coffee berry and the seeds inside the fleshy fruit are indeed similar to a small coffee bean. (Harvesting and roasting the beans for a hot drink will be a huge disappointment unless your original goal was to create a bitter, powerful laxative!)

This plant (and its various subspecies) is found throughout most of California, particularly in the coastal Counties and depending on where it is growing, can be a ground cover less than two feet tall or a tree-like shrub up to 16 feet tall and nearly as wide. Named, cloned selections (with known reliable (somewhat) height and width maximums) are available including ‘Eve Case’ a large leaved selection that will eventually reach 8-10 feet tall, ‘Leatherleaf’ with dark glossy leaves that provide a strong contrast to lighter green and gray leaved shrubs that can reach 5 feet high and 6 feet wide, and ‘Mound San Bruno’ a very densely branched shrub with narrow bright green leaves that will mound up to 5 feet high with similar width. A few ground cover selections are more difficult to find in the trade but do make excellent dense cover including in order from tallest (4-5’) to shortest (under 2’) ; “Ed Holm’, Little Sur’, ‘Seaview’ and ‘Seaview Improved’. The Wildlands of the Central Coast offer many opportunities for horticultural selection or simply serendipity from seed collection. Shrubs on the open slopes of the chaparral along higher ridges are shorter and grayer than those on the valley floors and smaller leaved than those found in the understory of the Redwoods and large Valley and Live oaks. Seed collection is best done in late September into October when most of the berries are turning from deep red to black. It can be a somewhat messy but rewarding process separating the seed from the fruit but is very easy and requires no special tools or skills.

Coffee berries are a staple food to many birds and small mammals (even Coyotes) at this time of year so if you are inclined to collect a few berries for yourself do not hesitate. A plant that may be covered with berries one day can be stripped clean by the time you decide to go back to get them. If your house is near a wild stand of coffee berry or you already have some planted in your landscape, the chances are good that the wildlife that eat the berries will do a little volunteer landscaping for you.
As with many berries that have relatively large hard seeds, the animals will frequently “process” the seeds through their digestive tracts, softening them just enough to germinate after they “deposit” them in a garden or planter.

If you find yourself disagreeing with the location selection of your feathered landscape designers, seedlings are very easy to dig up and transplant in the first year.

California coffee berry can be sheared into a formal looking hedge and would even make a valuable hedgerow around a fruit tree or vegetable garden as it attracts masses of beneficial pollinators in the summer with its abundant small (but not particularly showy) flowers. And last but not at all least….our local Deer don’t seem to have any interest in eating or cleaning or removing their antlers with it. A Winner!
Helpful CNPS Information Page

CNPS is dedicated to Preserving and Protecting California Native Plants and Their Habitats

You must register for field trips online at:

www.meetup.com/The-Monterey-Bay-Area-Hiking-Group

Meeting times, locations, and more details are on Meetup.
DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND LACK OF A FIELD TRIP CHAIR, MEETUP EVENTS ARE LIMITED.

The Next Publication of The Wallflower
Newsletter: November/December
Deadline: 9/28 Please!
-Articles submitted after deadline will NOT be published!

Check Out Our Websites
Monterey Bay Chapter:
https://chapters.cnps.org/montereybay/
State Organization: www.cnps.org

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☐ Plant Lover $120 There are more options online

☐ Supporter $500 including business and library.

Please mail this membership form with payment to:
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Dues and gifts to CNPS are tax deductible.