



June 2022

Chrissy Freeman, Editor

Redbud CNPS Program Coming Up

North American *Cercis* (Redbud): A Study of Evolution and Adaptation

See our iconic western redbud (*Cercis occidentalis*) and other members of its genus, *Cercis*, through the eyes of a botanist. On **Thursday, July 14**, at **6 p.m. on Zoom**, join the Redbud Chapter in exploring our namesake redbuds.



How did our iconic western redbud (*Cercis occidentalis*) first arrive here in California? What are its other close relatives, and where do they live? Might North America actually be home to not only our species and the Eastern redbud (*C. canadensis*) but another “cryptic” third *Cercis* species?

Join **botanist and Redbud Chapter member Camille Nowell** for a deep dive into the history of how *Cercis* has been understood, studied, and used through the ages. Learn what scientists are discovering today as they investigate *Cercis* on our continent.

Flower of western redbud (Cercis occidentalis)

Camille has conducted botanical surveys in the Mojave Desert, the Sierra Nevada Mountains,

the San Joaquin Valley, and southeastern Idaho. She earned her M.S. degree from San Francisco State University (in partnership with the California Academy of Sciences) in Ecology, Evolution and Conservation Biology, with an emphasis on California native flora. Her research on *Cercis* has taken her on expeditions throughout montane California, and the Colorado Plateau.

[Zoom info and more detail](#) about this *Cercis* program on our website.



Classic round leaves of Western redbud

Camille Nowell

Redbud Growing More Native Plants than Ever for Fall Sale — More Nursery Volunteers Needed!

By Jeanne Wilson, Redbud Plant Sale Committee

Can you believe we're already planning for fall? Our Redbud Fall 2022 Plant Sale will be happening in less than four months, in either the last week of September or the first week of October.

We're Growing More Natives Than Ever

Meanwhile, we're thrilled to report that our propagation efforts have produced over 1,000 young native plants, now being cared for at the nursery. This "crop" of young plants is the largest ever grown by Redbud members for a plant sale. Most of these plants have been started and nurtured over the past six to eight months by just four home-growers. Once our home-growers "pot up" seedlings into 4-inch containers, they bring them to the Redbud nursery where our core of dedicated nursery volunteers and monitors care for them.

We will also purchase and offer at our Fall Sale a comparable number of commercially grown California native plants. As always, our sale will feature a wide variety of locally native plants, as well as select cultivars and varieties that flourish in home gardens.

More Plants at the Redbud Nursery Means More of Your Favorites for the Sale

Our propagation efforts this year are focused on being able to offer larger quantities of the most desirable species at our Fall sale. We are growing more than two dozen each of eighteen popular species, listed following, and 15 to 20 each of another twelve species.

What's Growing for our Fall Plant Sale

Here are some brief previews of popular species we're growing, primarily low-growing native perennials for sunny places that also get some shade. Unless otherwise indicated, all these species need little summer water once established, bloom profusely, and spread easily, many by underground rhizomes. (They're evergreen unless otherwise indicated):



- **Mountain Strawberry** (*Fragaria vesca*) Fast-growing ground cover with showy white flowers and tasty berries.
- **June Grass** (*Koeleria macrantha*) Compact, deep green native bunch grass.
- **Yarrow** (*Achillea millefolium*) Numerous small white flowers with lacy emerald-green foliage.
- **Western Columbine** (*Aquilegia formosa*) Striking crimson and yellow flowers attract hummingbirds. Appreciates some summer water and afternoon shade.

Western columbine (Aquilegia Formosa) brighten part-shade locations with their vivid pendulous flowers, which are hummingbird magnets.

- **California Fuchsia** (*Epilobium canum*) Profuse scarlet flowers provide food for hummingbirds in late summer.
- **Crevice Alumroot** (*Heuchera micrantha*) Eye-catching in rock gardens with its airy wands of tiny pink and white flowers.
- **Coyote Mint** (*Monardella villosa*) Fragrant with lavender flowers, a pollinator favorite.
- **Azure Penstemon** (*Penstemon azureus*) Appropriately named for its gorgeous deep blue spring blooms.
- **Narrow Leaf Mule Ears** (*Wyethia angustifolia*) Tall green leaves with bright yellow daisy-shaped flowers. Summer/fall deciduous.
- **Naked Buckwheat** (*Eriogonum nudum*) Another pollinator magnet, white flowers on leafless ("naked") stems
- **Foothill Penstemon** (*Penstemon heterophyllus*) A garden standout, easy to grow and very showy.
- **Cobweb Thistle** (*Cirsium occidentale*) Beautiful white "cobwebs" on leaves and stems, with ruby red (or lilac) flowers. Biennial/winter deciduous, reseeds freely.
- **Pacific Aster** (*Symphoricaricium chilense*) This tall purple-flowered aster is easy to grow. Plant where it has room to spread, or in a large tub if you want to keep it in check.

Pacific aster (Symphoricaricium chilense) is a great pollinator plant, as this mylitta crescent butterfly and leaf-cutter bee would attest.



Shrubs

- **Western Redbud** (*Cercis occidentalis*) Striking all year, redbud is adorned with magenta blossoms in spring, has vivid yellow, orange and red fall color, and displays mahogany seed pods and bark during winter dormancy.



Hoary coffeeberry (*Frangula californica ssp. tomentella*)
Jeanne Wilson

- **Hoary Coffeeberry** (*Frangula californica ssp. tomentella*) The showy berries (see photo) provide food for birds and other wildlife.
- **Lemmon's Ceanothus** (*Ceanothus lemmonii*) Provides stunning displays of sky-blue flowers in spring.
- **Ninebark** (*Physocarpus capitatus*) This deciduous member of the rose family has clusters of white flowers and brilliant red seed capsules. Needs some summer water and does best in part shade.
- **Snowdrop Bush** (*Styrax redivivus*) Styrax likes morning sun with afternoon shade. In spring, its plentiful snowy white flowers provide a stunning accent.

Help Grow at the Redbud Nursery

To keep all our plants healthy and thriving so they are ready for our fall sale, we are seeking additional nursery monitors — and more home-growers. As a nursery monitor, you'd visit the nursery once a week, to water, weed, check for pests, and treat young plants.

Having someone check the plants every day is critically important, now that humidity is dropping and temperatures soaring. If our automatic irrigation system fails (such as because of a power shutdown), even for just one or two days, the impact on young plants could be disastrous. Many of our plants could die. In really hot weather, we have been supplementing the irrigation system by watering by hand as needed. If you are interested in volunteering at the nursery, please email nativeplanthelp@redbud-cnps.org.

The Redbuds Need You!

Make a difference to native plants by actively supporting Redbud Chapter's efforts to preserve, protect, provide, and promote them! Here are ways we could really use your help — Read full details on these current [Volunteer Openings](#) on our website.

- **Field-Trip Chair.** Recruit trip leaders, write trip descriptions, and facilitate trips.
- **Field-Trip Leaders.** Coordinate a trip to a place of note whose route you know.
- **Program Chair.** Set up programs of interest to native-plant enthusiasts.
- **Program Committee.** Help plan and prepare for Redbud programs.

- **Nevada County Conservation Advocacy Coordinator.** Share updates about issues in Nevada County involving native plants and their habitats.
- **Volunteer Co-Chair.** Recruit and support volunteers, such as for plant sales.
- **Greenhouse Assembly.** Share your experience assembling a large greenhouse.
- **Nursery Monitor.** Check nursery plants to water and keep them healthy.
- **Nursery Workday Volunteers.** On periodic workdays, propagate, pot up, weed landscaped areas, and sanitize containers.
- **Publicity Team — newsletter, website.** Write, edit, contribute photos, do layout. Promote Redbud events.
- **Tabling.** Do public outreach about native plants at public events.
- **Photo Librarian.** Establish and maintain a library of images for Redbud use.

Redbud's Calflora Photo Contest Finalist



See that glorious fritillaria in the nearby photo? Isn't that a gorgeous native plant, and so perfectly captured? That's the scarlet fritillary (*Fritillaria recurva*).

That photo was a finalist in Calflora's annual photo contest. The photographer of note is Tony Brillante. Tony has been known to join in on Redbud field trips with his wife, Pam Brillante, a member of the Redbud Board.

Kudos to Tony!!! Tony took this photo in their own front yard. He wants people to know, "You don't even need to go far to find native plants; they can be found right in your front yard just like this one was."

The scarlet fritillary occurs in mid-elevation locations in our part of the Sierra, as well as in other Northern California mountain ranges. As do many of our native bulbs, it

favors dry, open woodlands and chaparral, in yellow pine forest, foothill woodland, and chaparral plant communities.

See all the [2022 Calflora Photo Contest finalists](#), and the [photo contest winners](#)!

Maybe next year, even more members of the Redbud community will enter photos in this contest!

Upcoming Events

Most CNPS chapters have either returned to in-person meetings, or don't hold meetings in July and August, so they offer only a few Zoom presentations over the next few months. Closer to home, the Master Gardeners of Nevada County (MGNC) and the Master Gardeners of Placer County (MGPC) have some upcoming programs. Find more program info on their respective websites.

- [Nevada County Master Gardener \(MGNC\) programs](#) are in person at 1036 W. Main Street in Grass Valley, unless otherwise indicated.
- [Placer County Master Gardener \(MGPC\) programs](#) are offered live at the Loomis Library, 6050 Library Way in Loomis and simultaneously via Zoom. (Register for Zoom at PCMG.ucanr.org, unless otherwise indicated.)

Upcoming Redbud Events

July 14, Th., 6 to 7 p.m.

[North American Cercis \(Redbud\): a Study of Evolution and Adaptation.](#)

Join botanist and Redbud Chapter member Camille Nowell for a deep dive into history of how *Cercis* has been understood, studied, and used through the ages. Learn what scientists are discovering today as they investigate *Cercis*, with an emphasis on our continent. (See nearby article.)



Upcoming Events

June 25, Sat., 10 a.m. to noon. Houseplants (MGNC)

June 25, Sat., 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Ants, Nobody Likes Them (MGPC)

July 9, Sat., 10 a.m. to noon. Nevada County Fire Wise Landscape and Maintenance (MGNC)

*** July 14, Th., 6 to 7 p.m. [North American Cercis \(Redbud\): a Study of Evolution and Adaptation.](#)** (See upcoming Redbud Events, preceding, and lead article in newsletter).

July 14, Th. 7:30 p.m. Mahalo California: The Tarweed Origin of Hawaiian Silverswords (Yerba Buena Chapter, CNPS). Dr. Bruce Baldwin, Professor of Integrative Biology and Curator of the Jepson Herbarium at UC Berkeley describes the relationship between tarweeds and silverswords, their adaptive radiations across habitats, and the beautiful diversity of plants that arose from them both in California and Hawaii. [Zoom reservation required.](#)

July 16, Sat., 10 a.m. to noon. Family Fun #4: What's The Buzz? Beneficial Bugs! (MGNC)

July 16, Sat. Introduction To Bryophytes (Bryophyte Chapter, CNPS). Using the Center for Plant Diversity at the UC Davis herbarium as a base, this CNPS chapter is offering hands-on bryological workshops in the lab. The focus is on several common Northern California mosses, the keys used in their identification, and the tools and techniques used. For further details and time, email Stephen P. Rae (sprae@ucdavis.edu). Attendance is limited, due to space and materials.

July 21, Th. 12 noon to 1 p.m. Controlling Weeds. (UC Integrated Pest Management Webinar Series)

July 30, Sat. 10 a.m. to noon. Gardening In Drought (MGNC)

Aug. 6, Sat. 10 a.m. to noon. Family Fun #5: Harvest Day (MGNC)

Aug. 6, Sat. 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Arboretum All-Stars (MGPC)



Nancy Gilbert

*Carpenter bee on hummingbird
fuchsia (Epilobium canum)*



Chrissy Freeman

*giant chain fern
(Woodwardia fimbriata)*



Chrissy Freeman

*California bush anemone
(Carpenteria californica)*

The 100 Arboretum All-Stars have been tested by UC Davis Arboretum staff, and found to work well in hot summer-dry climates, and be easy to grow. They include almost 20 California native "straight" species, such as those shown above, plus a number of cultivars.

Aug. 10 to 14, Wed. to Sun., times vary. **Nevada County Fair!** Visit the MGNC booth and attend one of our workshops.

Aug. 13, Sat. 10 a.m. to noon **Native Plants** (MGPC) at the Roseville Utility Exploration Center, 1501 Pleasant Grove Blvd. Pre-register at MGPC.ucanr.org

Aug 18., Th. 12 noon to 1 p.m. [Pesticides and Water Quality](#). (UC Integrated Pest Management Webinar Series).

Aug. 19 to 21, Fri. to Sun, times vary. **Visit the Placer County Master Gardeners Booth at the Tri-County Home & Garden Show**, Roebbelen Center, 700 Event Center Drive, Roseville.

Aug. 20, Sat. 10 a.m. to noon. **Cool-Season Vegetables** (MGNC)

Aug. 20, Sat. **Keying Mosses** (Bryophyte Chapter, CNPS). Follow-up session at the Center for Plant Diversity at the UC Davis herbarium focused on keying out mosses. For details and time, email Stephen P. Rae (sprae@ucdavis.edu). Attendance is limited, due to space and materials.

Sept. 10, Sat. 10 a.m. to noon. **Compost Is the Gardener's Best Friend** (MGNC)

Sept. 14, Wed. 7:30 to 9 p.m. **Encouraging Indigenous Wildlife – Birds to Insects – In The Garden** (North Coast Chapter, CNPS). Pete Haggard will present the story of how he and his wife, Judy, over a period of 45 years, turned their dryland pasture in Fieldbrook into a food, native plant, and wildlife garden. Not known yet if this will be offered via Zoom or in-person.

Sept. 17, Sat. 10 a.m. to noon. **Family Fun #6: Putting the Garden To Bed** (MGNC)

Oct. 18, Tu. 7:30 p.m. **History of Herbariums** by Stephen Barnhart (Milo Baker Chapter, CNPS)

For another source of native plant information, check out the recorded presentations at the California Botanic Garden (calbg.org/visit/blogs) such as tours of their Herbarium and Seed Bank.

What's New on Our Redbud Website

Check out these additions to our Redbud Website.

- The [CNPS Program Bloom! California](#) encourages retail nurseries to sell more native plants — and gives you a discount on plant purchases!



Local nursery displaying a Bloom! California banner

- Take a visual tour of the [Botanical Treasures of Castle Peak](#), as captured and described by Shane Hanofee. The high Sierra is remarkably different from our own mid-elevations. We saw this posted on Redbud's Facebook group and wanted to share it with everyone!

News to Know



Bear River after fire measures designed to reduce post-fire sediment build-up in the Bear River.

[Sierra Conservancy Awards Grant for Bear River Wildlife Recovery Project](#)

Last summer, the River Fire swept through the Bear River Canyon. The Sierra Conservancy has now awarded \$570,000 to Nevada Irrigation District (NID) so the district can continue its work to address burned forest conditions from that fire.

The project will remove burned trees, treating areas to reduce fire fuel load. It will expand defensible space adjacent to Lake of the Pines and Alta Sierra. It will do erosion control

[CAL FIRE Gives Grants to Nevada County and Fire Safe Council for Woodpecker Ravine and Other Firesafe Projects...and to Two Projects in Placer County](#)

CAL FIRE has announced the recipient projects for its wildfire prevention projects throughout California. Nevada County's Woodpecker Ravine Shaded Fuel Break has been among those areas selected. This ravine is located in high and very high fire-severity zones just southeast of Grass Valley, between Highway 49 and Highway 174. The County aims to treat 754 acres.

CAL FIRE has also awarded funding for multiple projects in Placer County. The Headwaters Basin Forest Resilience Project will treat at least 800 acres of old-growth forests in the Headwaters Basin of the North Fork of the American River. Goals include reduction of the risk of losing such stands to fire, by increasing healthy forests.

The other award in Placer County will fund completion of the French Meadows Ecological Project, located in the Middle Fork American River headwaters of Tahoe National Forest.

[World's Biggest Wildlife Bridge Comes to California Highway](#)

Imagine being a deer or a mountain lion, much less a snake or a toad, whose critical habitat has been divided into two parts, separated by a 10-lane freeway. That's been the case until recently on Highway 101 in Los Angeles County. At least 25 mountain lions, how instance, have been killed on Los Angeles freeways in the past 20 years.

Fortunately, a new wildlife crossing, requiring at least ten years to plan and construct, opened in April. Now creatures great and small use this bridge. Such bridges are expected to pay for themselves in a decade or less, in avoided human deaths and injuries from collisions with animals, as well as in avoided costs of removal of larger animal casualties.

Such a project requires understanding of the role of native plants in relevant ecosystems, provision of lots of native plants and seeds, and knowledge of plant communities. Wildlife bridges have also been completed in Nevada, Utah, Montana, and back East. Canada has amazing wildlife bridges around Jasper National Park. We hope more will be built in future.

[The Same Pesticides Linked to Bee Declines Might Also Threaten Birds](#)

Neonicotinoid pesticides are the world's most widely used pesticide. Most of us are probably aware that they have been linked to colony collapse disorder among bees. Dozens of studies have also found that neonics can affect abundance and survival of aquatic species.

Aquatic insects, such as midges, are important prey for grassland birds and insect-eating birds in general, such as swallows and swifts. In the past 50 years, such bird groups have had the most rapid decline in population of any bird group. Some research has now determined that pesticide increases is the most plausible explanation for this decline. As neonics can persist and accumulate in ponds for months, perhaps years, they are the most likely culprit.



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