President’s Message:

I don’t know about you, but I find it hard to believe fall is already here. With such a mild summer it seems as if we skipped a season. I find myself looking forward to the fall rains and cooler temperatures as we approach the prime time for planting native plants. Your Chapter Board has some great ideas planned for the coming year. Please check out the calendar in this newsletter for times and dates of upcoming chapter meetings and events.

Come check out the great selection of native and low-water-use plants for your yard at our fall plant sale on October 23rd. I am excited to announce that the board voted to donate a portion of the proceeds from the sale to the Trans-California Pathway Project at California State University, Stanislaus. This is an exciting project that fits perfectly with our Chapter mission of increasing the awareness of California native plants through education and horticulture. The purpose of the project according to their website (http://www.csustan.edu/TCP/) is to provide a transect of native plant communities “from the Central Valley to the High Sierras [for use as an] educational tool for both local students and the general community”. Donna Pierce, wife of the late Dr. Wayne Pierce (the visionary who started the TCP project many years ago), has graciously agreed to share her continued vision for the completion of this project at our February chapter meeting. It will be an evening you won’t want to miss!

Don’t forget to keep photographing your native and mixed-native yards this fall. I want to see all the great projects and landscapes at our annual “Virtual Garden Tour” in January.

I look forward to seeing many of you at these and other events through the year.

Warmest regards,
James Brugger

September meeting:

On Thursday, September 23rd, 7pm at the Great Valley Museum Annex, please join us for a talk from Julie Rentner, Regional Director for River Partners on habitat restoration efforts targeting riparian brush rabbit.

Riparian brush rabbit is a federally-endangered subspecies of brush rabbit that inhabits stream-side areas in the northern San Joaquin Valley and the South San Joaquin/Sacramento Delta. Known from just two remnant populations, this terrestrial species is threatened by catastrophic floods which occur when the regional flood control system is overwhelmed (recently in 1997 and 2006). To abate future threat of extinction due to flooding, River Partners has teamed with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Endangered Species Recovery Program at California State University Stanislaus to develop habitat restoration strategies that efficiently create and protect precious high ground areas in the floodplain at the San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge, the primary site for reintroduction of captive bred riparian brush rabbits. Ms. Rentner will describe the methods used to design and implement riparian brush rabbit habitat restoration, and lessons learned from over eight years of adaptive management.

2010 Calendar

September 23—Meeting, Julie Rentner, 7 PM, GVM Annex
October 23—Fall Plant Sale, GVM native garden, 9 AM
November 14—Salmon Festival, Knights Ferry
January 20—Meeting, Virtual Gardens, 7 PM, GVM Annex
February 17—Meeting, Donna Pierce, 7 PM, GVM Annex
March 17—Meeting, 7 PM, GVM Annex TBA
March—Field Trip, Date TBA
April 2—Spring Plant Sale, GVM native garden
May—Field Trip, Date TBA
Publication Reviews by Suzanne Guthrie:


This large double issue features nine of the public gardens of California that either are totally “native” or feature prominent native plant collections. The articles discuss the history of the gardens and their collections and purposes. After reading the articles the reader is able to identify both many of the challenges to growing natives in these diverse geographic locations and their strategies in dealing with them. These gardens are accessible to all interested in native plants, the articles give an idea of the resources available to the visitor to the garden. For travelers the gardens were arranged in the publication from South to North. The last five are located from Santa Cruz to UC Davis, all a reasonable drive from Modesto.

What better way to choose plants than to observe their mature growth. There are also other gardens listed on the CNPS website.


If you are interested in expanding your native plant knowledge this handy book will do so in several ways. The plant descriptions utilize professional botanic terms, as this detail is missing in most common identification books, utilization of precise terms helps in both correctly identifying and selecting appropriate plants. Plants are grouped by “communities” enabling the reader to become familiar with plants with similar environmental needs. The plant usages covered can be wide-ranging, from ancient, Indian, and pioneer usage and including which animals and insects favor the plants and sometimes their usage as sources for dyes or weaving materials. There are a number of recipes included in the book. There are frequent line drawings and a few photographs. Before utilizing any recipes I would compare with more current cooking resources, Clarke still suggests using paraffin over jellies, and this is no longer recommended in newer canning resources. I am going to use her recipe for rose hip syrup this fall.