SUPERBLOOM IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

This Spring was amazing for desert wildflowers, vernal pool plants, and valley and foothill grasslands. One of the wettest winters on record resulted in spectacular displays throughout California—we hope you got an opportunity to see them in person. This photograph shows Lasthenia fremontii ringing a vernal pool at the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge.

Photo by Joe Silveira

Mystery Plant

This is a low-elevation, early-flowering plant of Northern California. It is found mainly on clay soils in foothills and grasslands (including pastures). The perianth parts have this unusual pinkish-purple color, and have huge nectaries on the inner surfaces. The capsular fruits, apparently resembling items sometimes used in gaming or gambling, gave rise to the generic name. The genus is a large one, with perhaps 100 species in temperate zones. (Answer on Page 2)

Photo by Robert Fischer
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2017-2018 Student Research Scholarship Awards

The Northern California Botanists provides monetary scholarships for students doing research on botanical subjects in northern and central California. The Sacramento Valley and Shasta chapters of CNPS generously support this program by funding an additional scholarship each. We received 30 applications this year and as usual there were many great research projects to choose from. Congratulations to these students and thank you to all that submitted applications!

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Answer to “Mystery Plant”: Fritillaria pluriflora Torr. ex Benth. (Liliaceae)
Northern California Botanists in Action

A continuing series that highlights well-known to possibly less-well-known botanists, with photographs from the present to several decades back. Please share unpublished pictures of northern California botanists: send jpegs and information to rschlising@csuchico.edu

Gail Kuenster’s name is familiar to anyone who deals with the Northern California Botanists (since 2007!). Gail is the friendly, efficient power-house that handles membership, newsletter, website, symposium registrations, scholarship checks (and more!). She is shown as a student, working for the CA Dept. of Water Resources some time ago. She is now an Environmental Program Manager with DWR in Sacramento, and has a home in Paradise, near where she did research on Erythronium for her master’s thesis.

Don Lepley, shown here at the Dye Creek Preserve in Tehama County, has been Assistant Botanist with the Lassen National Forest in Susanville since 2007. Don went to Dartmouth College and then worked for several years, mostly in the Boston Area. Then he criss-crossed the country (PA, TX, CO) working with various land management agencies before settling in Susanville. Don has dedicated considerable volunteer time collecting bryophytes for the California Academy of Sciences Herbarium.

Bob Patterson earned his Ph.D. at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and has since been leading a fruitful career at San Francisco State University. He has had 35 graduate students and always brings some of them to the NCB symposia. He works on the systematics of Polemoniaceae and Hydrophyllaceae and gave the keynote address on the phlox family for the NCB symposium in 2011. Bob has been editor of Madrôno and President of the California Botanical Society. Here Bob is shown in the field, demonstrating the thigmotrophic stigmas in the monkey-flowers.

Annie Eblin is a “new” botanist, who graduated from the University of California at Santa Cruz, with a degree in Environmental Sciences and a focus on plant physiology. She has been particularly active in projects relating to invasive species identification and abatement, and has already worked at various management and restoration projects in the Santa Cruz, Arcata and Santa Barbara areas. This year she landed a job as a botanist with Garcia and Associates, in Auburn. Annie is shown here at a CNPS plant identification workshop at Monterey in 2017.
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