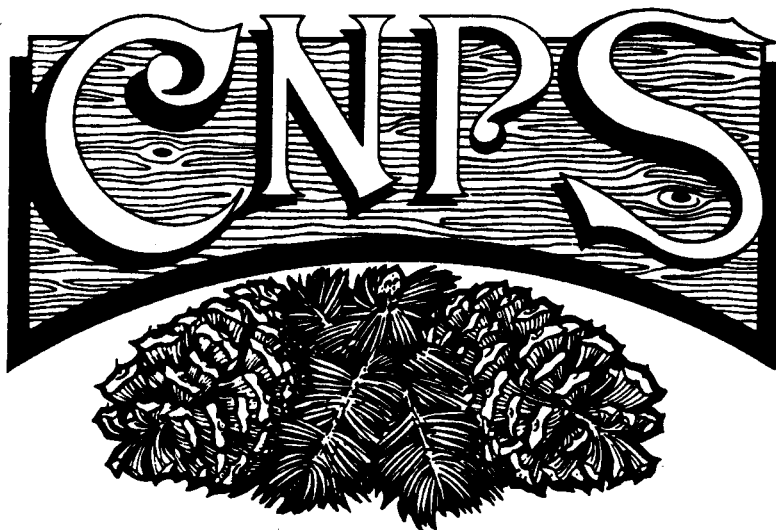


**BRISTLECONE • CHAPTER**



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Volume 15 No. 3 May 1996

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**NEXT CHAPTER MEETING**

Wednesday, May 29, 7:30 p.m. Sierra Baptist Church, Independence. Speaker Marty Dickes will present a talk titled: Exploring the new northern Inyo Mountain wilderness. Marty is a Forest Service ranger who has taken many backcountry trips into the remote reaches of the Inyo Mountains.

Much of the area has become newly-designated as wilderness since the passage of the Desert Protection Act. She will show slides of old mines, wildflowers, and other interesting sights to be seen in our mountains to the east.

**NEXT CHAPTER BOARD MEETING:**

Tuesday, May 21, 7:00 p.m. at Doris Fredendall's residence in Big Pine. All chairpersons are welcome and encouraged to attend.

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Last month I asked for volunteers to help fill some positions that need to be filled in our chapter. Well, my phone has **not** been ringing off the hook from people falling over each other trying to be the first to volunteer. Every few days I pick up the phone just to check that I still have a dial tone because nobody ever calls me. Now I still have another position that needs to be filled. Derek Olson was kind enough to build a display board for our chapter. Now I am looking for someone with a little artistic talent to get together some pictures and text to put on the board that would tell about our chapter and CNPS. Our display board could be set up at schools, banks, the fair, etc. This would be a nice way of telling the public about CNPS and native plants.

This spring our state organization found out that we were spending more money than we were taking in. Unlike the Government, we can not operate in the red. Cuts had to be made in our budget for 1996. Our legislative analyst, Kathy Lodato has resigned and our botanist, Mark Skinner was laid off. This is a real step backwards for CNPS and I hope that in the not to distant future these positions will be reinstated. Until we can be sure of a reliable source of revenue we will just have to manage without these fine people.

On a lighter side - the plants are blooming vibrantly this spring and I hope all of you are making many excursions to the botanical hotspots in our Eastern Sierra environs.

.....Scott Hetzler

The following article by Mary DeDecker is the eight in a series on native plants that will focus on ecology, taxonomy and other natural history information.

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### *Foresteria neo-mexicana* (Desert Olive)

*Foresteria neo-mexicana*, Desert Olive is a large green shrub that provides a handsome accent in the sagebrush country. It was named for Charles Le Forestier, a French physician of the early 19th century, and for the state of New Mexico where it was first collected.

It is a large, often tree-like, deciduous shrub, up to 9 feet with smooth pale gray bark and opposite, spiny branchlets. Its leaves and flowers are stemless. Although it grows in dry places, it usually occurs in the vicinity of springs or streams where ground water is within reach. It occurs occasionally in the Owens Valley and up to 6,000 ft. in the Inyo Mountains.

The leaves are firm, and commonly arranged in bundles, opposite on the branchlets. They are oblong-ovate to spatulate, 1/2 to 1 1/2 inches long. The flowers appear in March or April, before the leaves. They are unisexual. Although individually small and inconspicuous, the blooms may give the entire shrub a yellowish cast. The staminate (male) and pistillate (female) flowers have 2 to 4 stamens each. Pistillate flowers have 4 to 6 tiny sepals. Occasionally there are 1 or 2 petals which soon fall off. The stemmed

fruits are ovoid, blue-black, 2 seeded drupes about 1/4 of an inch long. They are attractive but not edible.

The white wood is very hard. Hopi Indians hardened it still more by fire and used it for digging sticks. Where the shrub grows in dense thickets it is valued as a cover for wildlife. However, it is seldom that abundant in this region.

.....Mary DeDecker

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### Upcoming Events

#### *Sierra Spring Sojourn*

The Bristlecone Chapter is sponsoring the first annual Sierra Spring Sojourn, a wonderful weekend of field trips and desert plant enjoyment on **May 17th thru the 19th.**

Registration will be on Friday evening, followed by a slide-show by Mary DeDecker. Join us for an all day field trip on Saturday and a catered banquet Saturday night. Sunday field trips will end about 2:00 or 3:00 in the afternoon. Breakfast and sack lunches will be provided both days.

We will be using the facilities of Camp Inyo at the Bernasconi Education Center, located in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada just west of Big Pine.

In addition to sleeping dorms, participants will be allowed to park their own RV's (no hookups), or erect tents on the grounds. Motels are also available. The number of participants will be limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis, so sign up early!

We are planning a variety of field trips to cover the diversity of our area. Trips are

tentatively scheduled for the Eureka Dunes, Fish Slough, meadows of the Owens Valley, the Alabama Hills, White Mountains, and the east slopes of the Sierra Nevada. All trips will be lead by our knowledgeable Bristlecone Chapter members. Each trip will be limited to a maximum of 15 participants. We'll wait to see how the wildflowers and the roads are doing in May, and how many people have signed up, before final field trip destinations are made.

For further information regarding fees and registration send a self-addressed envelope to:

**Vince and Ann Yoder**  
**POB 897**  
**Lone Pine, CA 93545**  
**(619) 876-4275**

If you haven't already volunteered, we could still use some more help with meals and clean-up. Please call Evelyn-Mae Nikolaus at (619) 878-2149.

### ***Upcoming Bristlecone Chapter Spring and Summer Field Trips***

For all field trips, bring any of the following: hand lens, binoculars, camera, floras and plant lists. Be sure to **bring plenty of water**, lunch, good walking shoes or boots, and appropriate clothing for inclement weather and hot sun. Please arrive at the meeting sites early enough to leave from there at the given time. Carpooling is encouraged. Everyone is welcome, but please, no pets. If you want to lead a trip or need more information call Field Trip Chairperson **Steve Ingram** at **(619) 387-2913**.

**May 11. Box Canyon in the Inyo Mountains. Leader: Mary DeDecker.** We will drive up the Mazourka Canyon Rd. to Box Canyon. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at Independence Park at the south end of town west of U.S. Hwy. 395 at Citrus Rd. High-clearance vehicles recommended.

**May 17-19. Sierra Spring Sojourn.** The first annual Eastern Sierra wildflower event. Many field trips and other activities are in store. For more information on registration, please see the previous announcement on page of this newsletter.

**June 8. Seed Collecting in the Alabama Hills. Leader: Richard Potashin.** We will search for seeds of interesting plants in the Alabama Hills and nearby areas including a possible trip to Oak Creek Canyon near Olancho for canyon live oak acorns. We will meet at the visitor's center just south of Lone Pine at the U.S. Hwy. 136 turnoff at 9:00 am.

**June 12. Sawmill Creek. Leader: Scott Hetzler.** This will be a strenuous hike as far as we can go up this dramatic canyon. Meet at the U.S. Hwy. 395 roadside rest stop by Black Rock, between Big Pine and Independence at 8:00 am.

**July 13. Rare Plant Monitoring at Smokey Bear Flat. Leader: Kathleen Nelson.** We will help Kathleen, Inyo National Forest Botanist, with monitoring populations the Mono milkvetch (*Astragalus monoensis*), and mapping *Lupinus duranii* if time permits. We will remain near our vehicles, and the work will not be strenuous. Meet at 9:30 am at the north end of Smokey Bear Flat on Hwy. 395, about 4 miles north of the turnoff to Mammoth Lakes.

**June 15. Lee Vining Creek Restoration/Mono Lake Visitor's Center (MLVC). Leader: Karen Ferrell.** We will have a Mono Lake Committee guided tour of the recent restoration of Lee Vining Creek in the morning. After lunch, we will work on the native plant gardens at MLVC. In addition to lunch and water, please bring insect repellent, hat, gloves, and gardening equipment. Meet at the MLVC at 10 am.

**July 20. South Fork of Big Pine Canyon. Leader: Doris Fredendall.** This moderate walk, only as far as "the wall", is about 3 miles round-trip along a trail bounded by plants awaiting identification. The end of the trail holds a small stream-bound meadow and cliff-loving plants. Meet at the end-of-the-road parking lot at the foot of Big Pine Canyon at 9:00 am. In Big Pine at the yellow caution light, drive west 10 miles up the Glacier Lodge Road.

**July 27. Sagehen Flat in the White Mountains. Leader: Kathleen Nelson.** We will assist Kathleen on a search of rare plants, including the White Mountain Horkellia (*Horkellia hispidula*) in Sagehen Flat and nearby areas. There will be moderate walking of 4-5 miles total. Meet at the triangle campground in Big Pine at 9:00 am, or 10:00 am at the turnoff to Crooked Creek from White Mountain Road.



**August 3. Bull Lake in the Bishop Creek Drainage. Leader: Jack Crowther.** We will hike from South Lake up the Bishop Pass Trail to Bull Lake for a look at some high Sierran plants. The walk is moderate with an elevational gain of about 1100 feet. Meet at the parking lot at South Lake at 9:00 am.

**August 10. Glass Creek Meadow. Leader: Steve Ingram.** We will hike up along Glass Creek to the meadow where many late summer wildflowers should be in bloom. This moderate walk will be about 5 miles round trip. Meet at the turnoff on U.S. Hwy. 395 to Obsidian Dome, about 9 miles north of the Mammoth Lakes turnoff, at 9:00 am.

**September 14. Convict Creek. Leader: Cathy Rose.** This will be a fairly strenuous walk up Convict Creek, possibly as far as Lake Genevieve, for a look at "botany", birds and water". Meet at 9:00 am at the parking lot at the end of Convict Lake road on the northwest shore of the Lake.

**October 12. Aspens: Ecology, Art, and Fall Color. Leader: Richard Potashin.** We will work our way from Conway Meadows south to Bohler Canyon, and possibly McLaughlin Spring, looking at the colors and historical carvings in aspen groves. Meet at the Smart & Final parking lot in Bishop at 8:00 am, or at the Mono Lake Visitor's Center in Lee Vining at 9:15 am.



## 1996 Field Trip Reports

### *Upper Rock Creek Cross-Country Ski Trip*

March 30

Word must have traveled far and wide that the famous, fearless, field trip leader Scott was going to lead another one of his famous ski trips. People came from as far away as Lone Pine and Big Pine to ski with "El Presidente", Scott. That's right, Doris and Pete drove up from Lone Pine and Kjell came all the way from Big Pine!

OK, so maybe a lot of people didn't show up for this trip. That's your loss...It will probably be better if I don't go on and tell you about all the fun you missed, but I guess I will anyway.

The weather was absolutely beautiful. Sun shining, no wind, and warm temperatures. The road we followed up the canyon was covered with hard packed snow, so Kjell and I walked up it instead of skiing. We all made it to Mosquito flats for lunch. Going up the road we were able to take our time and enjoyed looking at the beautiful trees growing in the canyon. Coming down the road was a different matter! You saw the trees alright, but all were so busy trying not to run into them that it was hard to really admire their beauty. It is a lot of work trying to stay on your skis when you are racing down the mountain at neck-breaking speed!

Somehow we all made it back to our cars in one piece - just kidding, it really wasn't that treacherous skiing down. With all the people that showed up for this annual event, I think next year I'll have to limit

the number of people to the first 50 that sign up.

.....Scott Hetzler

### *Chidago Canyon*

April 13

The desert was still a few weeks away from its eruptive peak, but with much satisfaction we sixteen hikers descended the viewful Volcanic Tablelands back to our vehicle, through fragrant fields of *Cryptantha utahensis*.

Easy walking and a bit of boulder-hopping and scrambling had brought us beneath magnificent columnar formations such as are found in the Owens River Gorge. High on the ledges were two old and huge golden eagle's nests. Earlier, an eagle soared low. White-throated swifts zipped by. A long-eared owl flew from perch to perch. A baby horned lizard scurried to safety.

We'd seen much and even heard some. (I tried listening to the bells of *Emmenanthe penduliflora*; they whispered to Sally Manning, who'd located them. The rock wrens were louder).

Along the canyon wall grew *Ericameria cuneatus* (not yet in bloom) and desert needlegrass (*Acnatherum speciosum*).

Leader Denise Waterbury was stumped by one lone plant in the middle of the wash, a member of the aster family, but she pointed out blooming scale-bud (*Aniscoma acaulis*), easterbonnets (*Eriophyllum wallacei*), white tidy-tips (*Layia glandulosa*), and desert dandelion (*Malochothrix glabrata*).

Other species just starting to bloom were fiddleneck (*Amsinkia tessellata*), yellowthroats (*Phacelia fremontii*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), little gold poppies (*Eschscholzia minutiflora*), evening snow (*Linanthus dichotomus*), paintbrush (*Castilleja angustifolia*) and buckwheats.

Some other plants promising a good show to come were indigo bush, apricot mallow, desert larkspur and the tall rose penstemon.

A fine plant list has been prepared for Chidago Canyon and the vicinity. Copies are available from Denise, to whom participants on this outing are indebted for a splendid day.

.....Larry Nahm

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### Tree Lore

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Tree Lore is a series by Andrew Kirk that will be devoted to the identification, distribution and natural history of our native trees.

#### *Ash Trees*

Ash trees on the east side of Owens Lake? So reported W.L. Jepson in this 1909 book, Trees of California. Of course there are no trees of any kind there today, but still it is tantalizing to imagine a white-capped Owens Lake with tree-shaded shores.

Ninety years later, look on the west side of Owens Lake to find *Fraxinus velutina* var. *coriaceae* (Arizona ash, leather-leaf ash, velvet ash, or desert ash). The opposite, pinnately compound leaves (with three to seven leaflets) and ash-gray bark with long

narrow ridges should serve to separate Arizona ash from any other tree native to the Owens Valley. Look for the oar-shaped single keys, borne on only the female trees. Branching is opposite, typical for the Olive Family. You can familiarize yourself with these features by observing Modesto ash, a common street tree. It is a cultivar (cultivated variety) of *F. velutina*.

This ash is quite variable, I recently collected leaves from Lubken Canyon, Ash Creek, and Cartago, apparently the only places Arizona ash grows in the Owens Valley. Only the leaves from Ash Creek were velutinous, (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*, or green ash of Eastern North America, also has leaves that are variably velutinous). Only in Cartago did I find a few coriaceous, or leather-like leaves. Leaflet shape varied among the three samples from lance-shaped to elliptical to obovate.

Trees at Ash Creek are well separated individuals, while in Lubken Canyon many cluster in a curious copse of even-aged trees. At Cartago, Arizona ash are scattered about town, including two specimens on the Cabin Bar Ranch that approach the maximum size for this species: ca. 50' (17 m) tall and 18" (1/2 m) in diameter.

On a recent trip to Ash Creek I was fortunate to discover a mistetoe growing on a moribund Arizona ash. Mary DeDecker returned with me and identified it as *Phoradendron macrophyllum*, apparently the first mistletoe to be found in the Owens Valley. Ash trees, as well as sycamores and cottonwoods, are common hosts of this parasite.

(I am grateful to Mary DeDecker, as well as Mike Prather and Larry Blakely, for their patient assistance)

.....Andrew Kirk

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### Native Plant Notes

The Mono Lake Visitor's Center is the only place in our area where it is possible to stroll through a native plant interpretive walk and enjoy a landscape featuring native plants of the Mono Basin. Due to ever-shrinking federal funding, the visitor's center does not have the staff or resources to plant and maintain their native gardens to their fullest potential. This creates a great opportunity for the Bristlecone Chapter to step in and help promote native plants with physical labor, gardening expertise, and by providing seed grown native plants for landscaping. We have an opportunity to help educate the thousands of tourists who visit the center about the variety and importance of our native plants.

On June 15, after spending the morning touring the restoration progress of Lee Vining Creek, there will be a work party at the visitor's center. It will be a fun chance to work together on weeding, pruning and general clean-up of the garden beds surrounding the center. With luck, we'll have some Mono Basin natives to plant in our adopted garden bed. There are many skilled gardeners in the Bristlecone Chapter and it would be great to have their help on this project. Please see the field trip schedule for details.

.....Karen Ferrell

## New Members

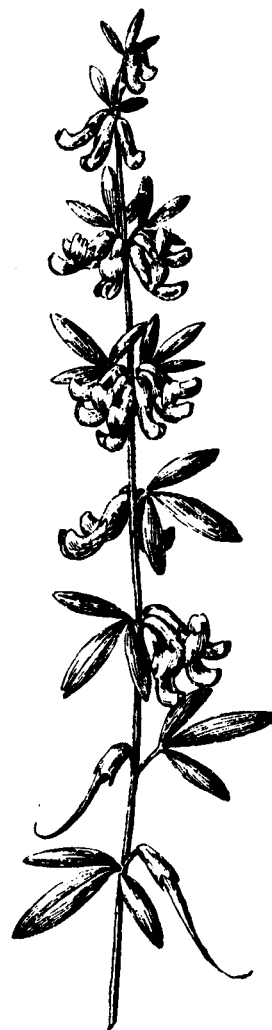
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The Bristlecone Chapter warmly welcomes the following new members:

Anna Martyn  
Inyo Kern

Genevive-Parrish-Croft  
Corona Del Mar

Nancy and Clark Reid-McCkee  
Lone Pine



**NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE:**  
June 26.

### THE CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY - Membership Application

The California Native Plant Society is an organization of lay persons and professionals united by an interest in the plants of California. It is open to all. The society, working through its local chapters, seeks to increase the understanding of California's native flora and to preserve this rich resource for future generations. Varied interests are represented.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ P.O. Box or Street \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 I wish to be affiliated with the Bristlecone Chapter \_\_\_\_\_, Other \_\_\_\_\_.

#### Membership Category

<input type="checkbox"/> Student/Retired/Limited Income	\$20.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual or Library	\$35.00
<input type="checkbox"/> International	\$35.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Family or Group	\$45.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting	\$75.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Plant Lover	\$100.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Patron	\$250.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Life	\$500.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor	\$1,000.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate	\$1,000.00

Please make check payable to: The California Native Plant Society. **Mail to:** Bristlecone Chapter, CNPS. HCR 67 Box 35, Independence, CA 93526.

**Gift Contribution:** Where most needed \_\_\_\_\_.

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THE BRISTLECONE CHAPTER NEWSLETTER comes out bimonthly. It is mailed free to members of the Bristlecone Chapter, CNPS. The subscription is \$5.00 per year for others. Editor: Anne Halford.

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