

DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF THE CALIFORNIA NATIVE FLORA

Volume 20 No. 1 January 2000

NEXT CHAPTER MEETING

The January meeting will be held at the White Mountain Research Station on East Line St. in Bishop on Wednesday evening, January 26, at 7:00 p.m. This month's speaker will be Dana York, Death Valley National Park Botanist. Dana's talk is entitled "Death Valley Extremes" and will be a "visual tour" of the Park. His talk will cover some human history and natural history, but will be predominantly about the rare plants of Death Valley. Bishop area residents, please bring some refreshments to share.

NEXT CHAPTER BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, January 18th at 7:00 p.m. at the White Mountain Research Station. All chapter members and other interested individuals are welcome and encouraged to attend.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As I write this one week past the first day of winter I check my mailbox and find my annual Gurney's 2000 Spring Plant Catalogue! Guess I'll just skip winter and go right into spring. How many times have I seen a mild winter and then gotten a killing frost in June? - many times - I guess I've lived in the Owens Valley long enough to never forecast the weather for more than one day in advance.

I hope you are calling Mark and volunteering to lead a field trip or two this coming year. Maybe you know of a place that you think would be great for a field trip but don't feel up to leading it yourself. If that's the case call Mark or me and maybe one of us will lead a plant field trip there.

This year our chapter will not be putting on the Sierra Spring Sojourn - we're rotating this event with our chapter Banquet which we'll be having some time in July. Look for more details in our upcoming newsletters. Hope to see you this coming year and let's hope on getting some good rains this winter and spring!

.....Scott Hetzler, a.k.a. El Presidente

BRISTLECONE CHAPTER UPDATES

Change in Chapter Membership Address

Please make note again of the following address change and send Bristlecone Chapter memberships and newsletter subscriptions to:

The Bristlecone Chapter, CNPS P.O. Box 364, Bishop , CA 93515-0364.

Newsletter articles still need to be sent to newsletter editor, Anne Halford at 312 Shepard Lane, Bishop, CA 93514 or preferably email, at ahalford@ca.blm.gov

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Jepson Herbarium Public Programs
1999-2000 - A Series of Workshops on
Botanical and Ecological Subjects

Below is a list of the Weekend Workshops,
Basic Botany Classes, & Special Series Courses
that are being offered this season.

March 2000

Microbiotic Soil Crusts & Lichens of the Eastern
Mojave Desert
March 10 - 12
Location: Desert Studies Center, Mojave Desert

Basics of Botanical Illustration
March 18 - 19 and/or
March 25 - 26
Location: UC Berkeley

April 2000

The Jepson Manual: How to Use the Keys
April 1 - 2
Location: UC Berkeley

Vegetation and Flora of San Luis Obispo
County
April 7- 9
Location: Rancho el Chorro, San Luis Obispo
County

Basic Botany II. Fifty Plant Families in the Field
April 8 - 9 and
April 15 - 16
Location: UC Berkeley

Wildflower Photography: an Introduction to
Field Techniques
April 14 - 16
Location: Bodega Marine Laboratory

Flora of Santa Rosa Island
April 20 - 23
Location: Santa Rosa Island

Poaceae
April 29 - 30
Location: UC Berkeley

The Jepson Desert Manual: A Preview
April 28 - 30
Location: Sweeney Granite Mountains Desert
Research Center

Facilities Use Fee: In addition to the course fee,
there will be a separate fee for facilities use for
those workshops that are held off the UCB
campus. The use fee will include room and
Board where applicable and will be billed
approximately 60 days prior to the course. For
more information please call Staci Markos or
Betsy Ringrose at (510) 643-7008 or e-mail
smarkos@socrates.berkeley.edu

WHO'S IN A NAME?

Large white desert primrose, *Oenothera caespitosa* Nutt. (Onagraceae)
Desert olive, *Forestiera pubescens* Nutt. (Oleaceae)
Nuttall's deserttrumpets, *Linanthus nuttallii* (A. Gray) Milliken (Polemoniaceae)

Thomas Nuttall (1786-1859), "a name which will last as long as flowers are loved", spent most of his adult life in the US, though he was born and also died in England. I've chosen three plants - one to represent each of his three expeditions west of the Mississippi - from the thousands he both collected and named, and of

many named in his honor. He was a remarkable man who penetrated much of what is now the US, mostly on foot, in a one-man quest to expand the horizons of botanical knowledge - and other areas of natural history to boot.

He was the quintessential rugged individualist, driven by a dogged determination, a botanist who did it all - both collection in the rigorous field and proper naming, later, in the herbarium. In 1810-1811, not long after settling in Philadelphia in 1808, he walked and canoed across the Great Lakes region, then on to St. Louis and up the Missouri, practically on the heels of Lewis and Clark.

His extraordinary focus was remarked on by a young lawyer, along for the adventure, who was with Nuttall near the Mandan villages: ". . . [he] appears singularly devoted [to collecting], which seem[s] to engross every thought, to the total disregard of his own personal safety . . . a young man of genius, and very considerable acquirements . . ." Along the Missouri, south of the Mandan villages, he collected specimens of the plant he later named *Oenothera caespitosa*, a low-to-the ground evening primrose with large white flowers, found in our neck of the woods also.

Later, from his base at the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences, he produced an epochal book on the then-known plants of North America. In 1818 he set out for the Arkansas region. The result, in addition to numerous new plants, was his only published travel journal, a work not only of interest to botanists but a primary sourcebook for the early history of the states of AR and OK. In this area he collected, and later named, many new species, among them the Desert Olive, which, while not plentiful, is common in the Owens Valley.

To put Nuttall's daring in perspective, in 1818 another famous 19th century botanist, John Torrey of New York City, found exploring in New Jersey arduous! Like his protégé, Asa Gray, Torrey was primarily a "closet botanist", preferring to have others collect for him.

Nuttall was now recognized as the leading naturalist of the United States. He was invited to join the faculty of Harvard University, where he labored in rather benign circumstances (for him) from 1823-1834. Finally he could stand the "vegetating" (as he called it) no longer, and, as he approached his 50th year, set off on his third expedition west of the Mississippi, an excursion destined to cement his later recognition as "the father of Western American botany".

In addition to Nuttall's many virtues, it must be said that he lived a charmed life. It is quite remarkable that he survived the perils of travel in those days, much of it solo, over so many thousands of miles. His American experiences seem like one big adventure - of the field and of the mind. On this last trip west, which took him as far as California (with side trips to Hawaii), again his luck held out, and he accomplished botanical miracles in this, his most ambitious adventure. Along the way, in southeastern Idaho, he collected a white-flowered member of the phlox family (later named in his honor by Asa Gray), familiar to us, along trails in the Eastern Sierra, as the bushy *Linanthus* or Nuttall's deserttrumpets.

After returning to Philadelphia and working up most of his latest collections - but before he had accomplished all that he had set out to do - circumstances dictated a permanent return to England in 1841. In a goodbye essay (I'll quote the whole on the website version) he recapitulated his American adventures. He wrote "privations to [the naturalist] are cheaply purchased, if he may but roam over the wild domain of primeval nature . . . For thousands of miles my chief converse has been in the wilderness with the spontaneous productions of Nature and the study of these objects and their contemplation has been to me a source of constant delight."

.....Larry

Blakely

Next Newsletter Deadline: February 23.

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	\$1,000.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor	\$1,000.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate	\$1,000.00

Please make membership checks payable to: The California Native Plant Society. **Mail to:** Bristlecone Chapter, CNPS. P.O. Box 364, Bishop, CA 93515-0364.

Gift Contribution: Where most needed _____ Conservation _____.

THE CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY 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 non-members and can be obtained by sending newsletter subscriptions to CNPS. P.O. Box 364, Bishop, CA 93515-0364. Send newsletter articles not memberships to Newsletter Editor Anne Halford at 312 Shepard Lane, Bishop, CA 93514 - or email to: ahalford@ca.blm.gov

The California Native Plant Society
 Bristlecone Chapter
 P.O. Box 364
 Bishop, CA 93515-0364
 PERMIT NO. 47

Non-Profit Org.
 U.S. Postage
 BISHOP, CA
 93515-0364