

# BRISTLECONE CHAPTER INTRODUCTORY NEWSLETTER

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## Welcome to the Bristlecone Chapter!

The Bristlecone Chapter is small relative to other chapters of the California Native Plant Society elsewhere in the state, but we have a big impact! This pamphlet gives an overview of our organizational structure, the activities we carry out and support, and ways members can participate.

## An Invitation to Get Involved

Following is just a partial list of ways to participate in the Bristlecone Chapter. Choose among them or come up with your own idea for involvement.

- Learn about a local conservation issue and become an active advocate
- Lead a field trip to one of your favorite areas
- Bring refreshments to a meeting
- Pitch in at a native plant garden work day or seed cleaning party
- Assist in organizing a banquet or Sierra Spring Sojourn
- Contribute articles or pictures to the chapter newsletter or website
- Volunteer to work with school children or with other local groups who request our expertise
- Simply come on field trips and come to evening programs

- Facilitate preparation and distribution of the chapter newsletter or help publicize
- upcoming events
- Help clean litter from our section of highway 395
- Contact another member and volunteer your time or suggest new ideas



## Organization and History

### History

Originally formed in 1965, the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) is a statewide non-profit organization of amateurs and professionals with a common interest in California's native plants. The Society, working through its 32 local chapters, seeks to increase understanding of California's native flora and to preserve this rich resource for future generations. For years, the establishment of a local Eastern Sierra chapter of CNPS had been a vision in the mind of Mary DeDecker, noted botanist and conservationist from Independence. Two major factors for establishing a local chapter of CNPS included the unique floristic environment of the "other side" of the Sierra and the need to protect the Owens Valley from the loss of vegetation due to Los Angeles Department of Water and Power's groundwater pumping activities. With enough environmentally-conscious, interested people living and working in Inyo and Mono counties, the time

seemed ripe in 1982 to start a new CNPS Chapter. Consequently, on March 31, 1982, the Bristlecone Chapter was formed and the first officers elected: President, Vince Yoder; Vice President, Frances Cholewa; and Secretary/Treasurer, Betty Gilchrist. Mary DeDecker was the first newsletter editor, and Kay C. Wylie handled membership. This 21<sup>st</sup> CNPS chapter was unanimously named Bristlecone in honor of the famous bristlecone pine, *Pinus longaeva*, nature's oldest living tree found in the high desert mountains of Inyo and Mono counties.

### CNPS Fellows

Four Bristlecone Chapter members have been named Fellow of the California Native Plant Society. A CNPS Fellow has mastered the local flora and demonstrated a serious commitment to protecting and disseminating knowledge of California's native flora. Our Fellows are: Mary C. DeDecker (1909-2000), Doris Fredendall (1909-2003), Vincent Yoder, and Mary Ann Henry.



### Officers and Board of Directors

The chapter is led by a board of directors composed of a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Newsletter Editor, Field Trip Chair, Conservation Chair, Legislative Chair, Membership Chair, Education Chair, Plant Sale Chair, Historian, Librarian, and others. Volunteers take charge of sales of books, t-shirts and posters. We also have a Webmaster and someone responsible for publicity for our many programs and field trips. The board meets every other month and members are welcome to attend. Officers are nominated by a nominating committee, elected by the membership, and serve one-year, renewable terms.

### Meetings and Programs

Membership meetings are typically held the last Wednesday in September, November, January, March, and May and are open to the public. In addition to brief discussions of chapter business, each meeting features a presentation by a guest speaker. Presentations are geared to appeal to persons of a wide range of knowledge of native plants, from beginners to professional botanists. The November meeting each year is a pot luck with a members' slide show in lieu of a speaker.

In an effort to accommodate members spread throughout our large geographic area (Inyo and Mono counties and Ridgecrest), meetings are held in a variety of locations. Currently one meeting a year is held in Mammoth, Bishop, Big Pine, and Independence.

## Newsletter

Members receive six (bimonthly) Bristlecone Chapter newsletters per year. Each newsletter provides listings of upcoming events along with dates and times and other useful information. Newsletters regularly contain a message from the chapter president, field trip reports, and updates on conservation issues. Special articles typically appear; these may profile a native plant or habitat, discuss local botanical history, or cover some other interesting information about plants in the area adopted by the Bristlecone Chapter. Finally, the newsletter lists current board members and their contact information, and contains a blank membership form.

## Website

Check [www.bristleconecnps.org](http://www.bristleconecnps.org) regularly to access a wealth of information relevant to the chapter. Besides a list of upcoming field trips and other timely items, the website has a complete archive of past newsletters, links to outstanding flower photographs, in-depth analyses of conservation issues, and much more.



## Activities

### Sierra Spring Sojourn/Chapter Banquet

Every other year our chapter conducts a Sierra Spring Sojourn, a weekend of field trips focusing on the native plants of the Eastern Sierra region. These weekends are held at an outdoor education camp in Big Pine where meals, dorms and camping facilities are provided. Participants go on one field trip on Saturday and one on Sunday with four or five to choose from each day. These trips cover much of the diversity of our area in and around the Owens Valley, including the east slope of the Sierra Nevada and the bristlecone pine forest in the White Mountains. In addition, guest speakers give presentations on both Friday and Saturday nights.

On years when the Sierra Spring Sojourn is not held, a chapter banquet is held in July with a guest speaker. Due to the wonderful geo- and biodiversity of the Eastern Sierra we have been able to persuade some very distinguished scientists to make the long trip to Bishop to speak at our banquets.

### Field Trips

Every year the Bristlecone Chapter plans a variety of excursions to interesting and floriferous places. Our trips usually begin in late March to points in the low deserts of our region, such as Death Valley or the Mojave Desert, where the flower display begins in early spring. We generally follow the flowers up in elevation as spring and summer progress, ending our quest for blooms in the highest regions of our awesome surrounding mountains in mid-summer. Our explorations usually finish with an appreciation of fall colors displayed in the extensive aspen groves

found in the Eastern Sierra. We also schedule seed collecting or cleaning trips and work parties at the Mary DeDecker Native Plant Garden.

Our field trips are planned to offer something for everyone, regardless of botanical knowledge, age, or fitness. Everyone is welcome on our field trips whether or not you are a member of CNPS and whether or not you know a turnip from a scarlet monkeyflower. We have overnight trips that involve strenuous hiking to see rare plants and we have trips that are mostly driving with short walks to see flower displays. The trip descriptions provide all the information needed to decide if a trip is appropriate for you. You can also get more info from the trip leader. Trips are publicized through local newspapers and radio, the Bristlecone Chapter website, and elsewhere.

Field trips are planned and led by Bristlecone Chapter volunteers. Some of our leaders are professional botanists while most are native plant loving amateurs. Leaders will scout out their trip, making a plant list and finding interesting and unusual plants to share. We encourage everyone with an interest in the fascinating and beautiful native plants of our region to come on a field trip!

### **The Mary DeDecker Native Plant Garden**

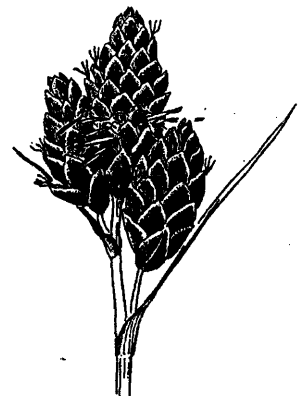
Make it a point to visit our chapter's attractive native plant garden, located on the north side of the Eastern California Museum in Independence, straddling Independence Creek. The garden honors our chapter's founder and was dedicated in 2003. Plants in the garden are procured, grown, planted, and cared for by chapter members. Many plants are labeled with the Latin and common names so that

locals and visitors, alike, may contemplate the local flora. Don't forget to obtain a garden brochure (available inside the museum). A visit is worthwhile any time of year, and the garden changes with the time of day as well as the season.

### **The Mary DeDecker Botanical Grant Program**

In 2001 the Bristlecone Chapter established the Mary DeDecker Botanical Grant Program as a fitting tribute to a renowned local botanist and a beloved founding member of our chapter. The purpose of these grants is to honor the memory of Mary DeDecker by facilitating research and projects that increase the understanding and appreciation of our region's native flora and ecosystems. The only requirement is that the project be relevant to the native plants of the northern Mojave Desert, Sierra Nevada, and Great Basin portions of eastern California. Selected researchers receive up to \$500 each for expenses and recipients are asked to present their findings to the Bristlecone Chapter either at a regular meeting or in an article in the newsletter. Grant proposals are requested in September with the deadline for submissions in mid-December. Please contact the Bristlecone Chapter for more information.

We have awarded grants to graduate students for research on various ecological, taxonomic and physiological aspects of our native flora. We have also funded an education program on native plants for local schools.



## Projects Funded by the Mary DeDecker Botanical Grant Program

- Flora of the Glass Mountain Region, Mono County, CA.
- Ruth Timme, San Francisco State University - Phylogenetic analysis of the genus *Polemonium* (Polemoniaceae) using both molecular sequence data and morphological characters
- Eve Laeger – Survey and Collection of Bryoflora in the deserts and the mountains
- Linah Ababneh, University of Arizona – The response of high altitude subalpine pine forests to elevated CO<sub>2</sub> and nitrogen depositions
- Hester Bell, Ranch Santa Ana Botanic Garden - *Swallenia alexandrae* and its relationship to *Distichlis* (Saltgrass).
- Valentine Eastern Sierra Reserve's Outdoor Education Program - The Native Plant Project
- Aaron Gabbe, University of California, Santa Cruz – Why do hummingbird-pollinated plants produce dilute nectar? Plant fitness tradeoffs between nectar concentration and pollination in *Ipomopsis aggregata*



## Adopt-A-Highway

The Bristlecone Chapter is responsible for a two-mile stretch of US 395 on Sherwin Grade about 12 miles north of Bishop. Cleanups are scheduled in fall and spring when weather is nice (the view is always beautiful).

## Deepest Valley Propagation Center/Plant Sale

The first annual native plant sale was held one late summer morning in 1997. It was inspired by the unmet demand for plants for the garden that were beautiful, adapted to the challenging climate of the high desert, and beneficial for pollinators and wildlife. With the recent establishment of the Deepest Valley Cooperative Native Plant Propagation Center at White Mountain Research Station in Bishop, we had a place to grow our plants.

With permits from public land agencies in hand, volunteers scour the region for seeds of the most garden worthy local natives. Many of these species haven't been grown for garden uses before, so research and experimentation are done to achieve germination and growth. Seeds are checked for viability and cleaned, given appropriate pre-treatment, such as a moist stay in the refrigerator for several months, and then sown in flats. The sprouted seedlings are potted up and grown through the summer and are ready to plant in gardens in the early fall. Over the past 7 years we have propagated and sold about 100 different native plant species at our sale.

The native plant sale, held every year in mid-September, is a popular and successful event for the Bristlecone Chapter that provides interesting and unusual plants for local gardening enthusiasts. The proceeds of the sale are used to fund the Mary DeDecker

Botanical Grant Program and for other projects. Volunteers are welcome and needed to help with everything from seed collecting to transplanting of seedlings. Please contact the Bristlecone Chapter for more information about the plant sale.

**10 Best Native Plants for the Sunny Owens Valley Garden\***

- White evening primrose (*Oenothera caespitosa* ssp. *marginata*)
- Rose penstemon (*Penstemon floridus*)
- Purple sage (*Salvia dorrii*)
- Apricot globe mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*)
- Needle and thread grass (*Hesperostipa comata*)
- Needle grass (*Achnatherum speciosum*)
- Prince's plume (*Stanleya pinnata*)
- California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*)
- Desert olive (*Forestiera pubescens*)
- Mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus ledifolius*)

\*with good draining soil



**Conservation**

Bristlecone Chapter members are committed to educating the eastern Sierra communities about the importance of rare plants and plant communities in general. Concurrent with its founding, the chapter became an important influence on local conservation issues. In fact, concern over groundwater pumping and its long term effects on plant communities in the Owens Valley was a key catalyst for establishing the Bristlecone Chapter.

The conservation chair, in consultation with the board, determines priorities for

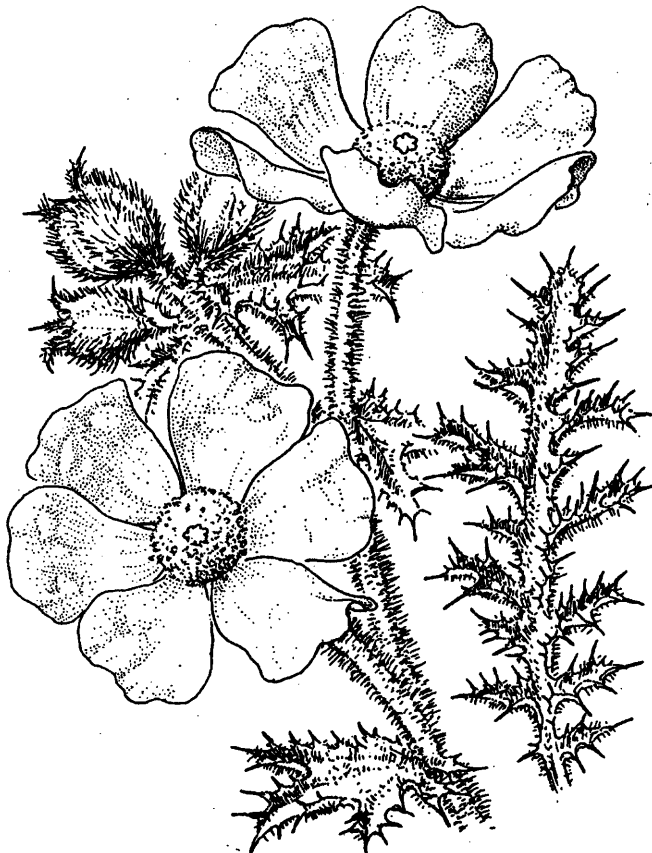
chapter conservation efforts and develops the chapter's positions on particular issues. Efforts to achieve conservation goals can be time consuming and challenging on many fronts; however, the environmental protections that come with successes cannot be achieved any other way. Specific activities used to make our voices heard include writing newsletter articles, letters to the editor of newspapers, letters to land management agencies, submitting written and verbal comments on Environmental Impact Statements/Reports, and leading field trips to areas of concern. Issues we have focused on deal generally with management of public land, for example off road vehicle issues, introduction of exotic species for hunting, road construction and development in undisturbed areas, and the implementation of the Inyo-LA Long Term Water Agreement.

CNPS and the Bristlecone Chapter are recognized as an authority on most plant-related issues. The local federal, state and county agencies routinely contact and consult with the Bristlecone Chapter when considering environmental issues



## Book, Poster, and T Shirt Sales

Books on topics of relevance to the plants, ecology, and other aspects of the eastern Sierra region are sold through the chapter. Colorful posters displaying native plant species of different regions are sold through the chapter and in stores throughout the region. The Bristlecone Chapter is quite proud of its handsome t-shirts. The t-shirt design features three showy species that occur only in our area: mountain heather (*Cassiope mertensiana*), scarlet loco (*Astragalus coccineus*) and rock midget (*Mimulus rupicola*). T-shirts are available in a variety of colors, sizes, and sleeve lengths. Some sweatshirts are also available. Shirts can be purchased at Spellbinder Books in Bishop or through the chapter's t-shirt salesperson. Sales of books, posters and t-shirts provide revenue to the chapter treasury.



## Hospitality

The Hospitality Committee arranges for refreshments at membership meetings. Anyone who likes to cook/bake is welcome on the hospitality committee.

We hope that you will join us for some of the activities our chapter offers. If you have specific questions please check our website [www.bristleconecnps.org](http://www.bristleconecnps.org) for a listing of chairpersons and phone numbers.

## 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** ([www.bristleconecnps.org](http://www.bristleconecnps.org)) 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: [fkhalford@earthlink.net](mailto:fkhalford@earthlink.net)