



Dedicated to the Preservation of California Native Flora
The California Native Plant Society

Bristlecone Chapter Newsletter

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July–September 2025

President's Message—Stephen Ingram

Greetings Bristlecone Chapter. We're back in business! We apologize for the lapse in our newsletter production. Putting our newsletter together is one of the most difficult and essential jobs we have. Elaine Chow, our previous editor, deserves huge thanks for creating six great newsletters each year from 2018 through 2024. But I'm glad to announce we have found a new editor in Carolyn Warren. Carolyn creates the newsletter— among other important tasks—for the Channel Islands Chapter where she is an active member.

We have decided to make it quarterly rather than bi-monthly, so you can expect the Fall newsletter in early September.

I'd like to welcome our new board member Tom Higley. Tom served a long career as a forest manager with the Inyo National Forest, and has recently stepped up to act as Field Trip Coordinator. He is taking the reins from Sue Weis, who continues to serve as our Treasurer/Bookkeeper. Thank you, Sue! I also want to thank Kathleen Nelson, who was re-elected as Secretary.

I'm proud to announce that the Bristlecone Chapter awarded \$9,000 in grants to six DeDecker Botanical Grant recipients earlier this year. Last year we voted to increase the grant amounts from \$1,000 to \$1,500 to keep pace with rising expenses. Look for news from these recipients in the next year or two, and see reports from 2024 grant recipients in this and future newsletters.

There is no denying that some of the plants, plant habitats, and public lands we all value will come under threat over the next few years. CNPS is well positioned to respond to threats and poised to help influence California's state congressional delegation with the voice of reason and science. CNPS Executive Director Jun Bando gave an inspiring talk at the Chapter Council Meeting in Coloma in early June. She spoke about the importance and value of hope which involves action and persistence. Unlike optimism, hope is empowering and can help create positive social change. There is no shortage of opportunities to contact your representatives to advocate for native plants. Whether you feel compelled to take action and speak out or not, it is always restorative to get outside and enjoy the diversity of the plants and landscapes around us. As plants at the lower elevations wither, subalpine and alpine plants are just getting started. So get out there and enjoy the emerging plants and flowers in the High Sierra. Come on a field trip! Or contact Tom and lead a field trip!



Castilleja chromosa. Photo by Carolyn Warren

Summer Events

Eriogonum Society Meeting

This year the Eriogonum Society will be returning to beautiful Bishop, California, and its abundance of buckwheats. With the Sierra Nevada to the west, White Mountains to the east, and volcanic features to the north, Bishop has a wide range of habitats that support some impressive Eriogonum diversity plus close relatives like Dedeckera, Oxytheca, and Chorizanthe.

The meeting will be August 7-10th, with an optional field trip on the 11th, so mark your calendars. The southern Sierra Nevada is beautiful this time of year, so plan a few extra days to visit Mammoth or Yosemite. We will not be offering lodging this year and rooms in Bishop fill up fast in the summer, so make your reservations soon. Follow this [link](#) for details.



July Field Trip

Sunday July 13: Horseshoe Meadows with Steve Matson

Meet at 8:30 AM at the Big Pine Kiosk. We will have a secondary rendezvous spot at 9:15 at Russell Spainhower Park at the north end of Lone Pine. We will drive up the Whitney Portal road and then turn left (south) onto the Horseshoe Meadows Road. We will make a number of road side stops before reaching the Horseshoe Meadows trailhead. From there we will walk out onto the meadow system, walking on nearly level ground for two miles or so.

What we will see beyond the usual eastern Sierra plants many of us are familiar with will be: *Eriogonum polypodium* (Tulare County Buckwheat), *Pinus balfouriana* (foxtail pine), *Nama rothrockii* (Rothrock's fiddleleaf), *Erythranthe barbata* (bearded monkeyflower – shown in photo), *Orochaenactis thysanocarpha* (mountain pincushion), and *Erythranthe angulosa*.



Erythranthe barbata. Photo by Steve Matson

We encourage carpooling. Bring the usual field equipment—lunch, water, sun hat and sunscreen.



Eriogonum nudum var. *westonii*.
Photo by Charles Boissavy

August Program: Wednesday, August 20th at 7pm at the White Mountain Research Center in Bishop

2024 DeDecker Grant recipient presentations

Speakers: Matthew Yamamoto, Charles Boissavy, Allison Autry

Students will discuss their work from this past year. Matthew Yamamoto will share notable finds with “Mysteries in the Mountains: the Flora of the McGee Creek Watershed”. Other speakers include Charles Boissavy and Allison Autry. Charles has been doing a deep dive on the Phylogeny and Taxonomy of the Latifolia clade of Eriogonum – yay buckwheats! Allison has been working on rare and disjunct orchids. We may have one additional speaker, schedule pending. Please join us to hear about all the interesting botanical research being done in our area!

Native Plant Sale News

Fall Plant Sale! Saturday, August 16, 9am-11am

White Mountain Research Center 3000 E. Line St., Bishop

There were a slew of gardening events in May. We had the pollinator garden workshop, the spring plant sale at Gardenfest and the pollinator garden tours. Also during that month a cadre of volunteers and I planted and transplanted seedlings for the fall sale.

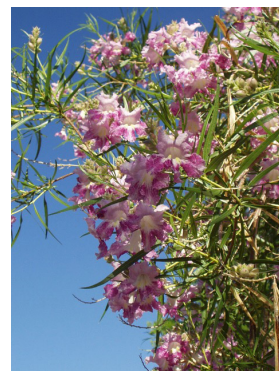
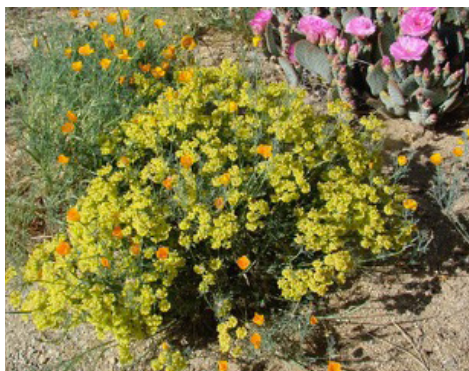
Gardenfest was a big success. Four volunteers and I served 110 customers who bought 678 plants. People started lining up at 8am and the gate opened at 9am. For the first hour we were making two sales a minute. I have to thank and commend my volunteers—Maria, Gary, Julie and Sue — for being so efficient.

Out at the propagation center it has been a real battle with the mice and rats. Before I realized how bad they were, in one night they had eaten 48 milkweed plants and 32 blue flax. On the tables with the restoration plants they ate all the Arrowleaf balsamroot and green ephedra. I had worked all winter to get those plants going! There are now water bucket traps under every table and four to five snap traps mixed in with the mice's favorite plants. At first I was catching 15–17 mice a night but now, a month later it seems we are down to one–two. Despite the battle with the rodents, the plants that got munched are recovering and the rest are doing well and looking good.

The fall sale will be on Saturday, August 16th. Members will get in at 8am, so renew your membership now because it takes a few weeks for that information to get to us from the state office. The general public will get in at 9am. The sale goes until 11am. There are more plants and more varieties at the fall sale than the spring. Ever since we have had the members come an hour early the fall sale has become more civilized and calm. If you found the Gardenfest sale too hectic and had to negotiate with rude and inconsiderate people, try the fall sale. It is a great time to run into old friends and visit while you shop. The list of plants and quantities that will be available will be posted [on the website by the end of July](#).

Plant prices:

Small tree pot \$6.00; Cactus pot \$6.00; 1 gallon \$9.00; Tall tree pot \$11.00; 5 gallon \$26.00; 10 gallon \$36.00



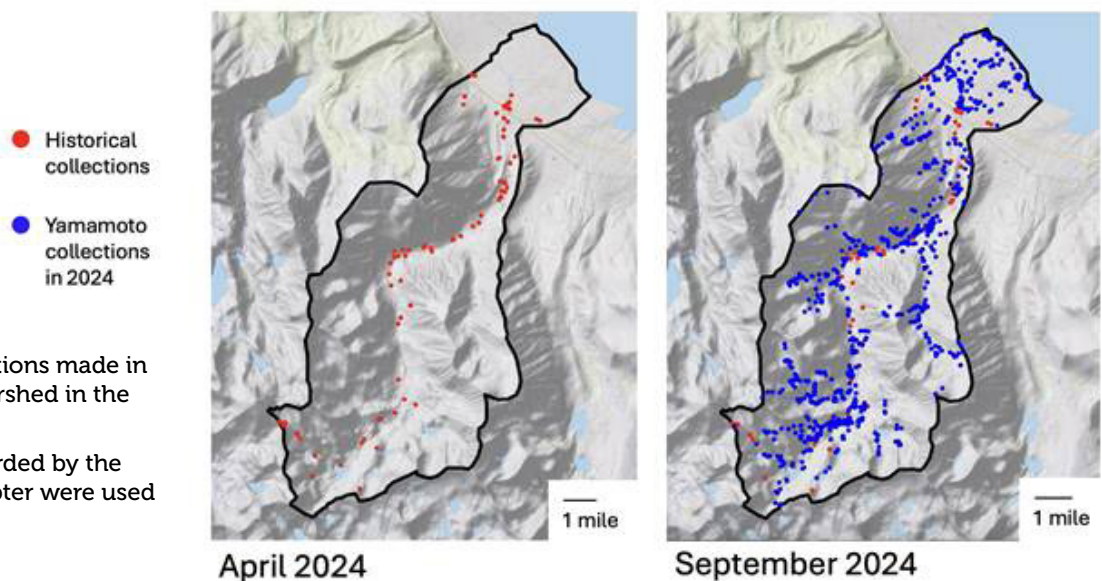
DeDecker Grant News

Progress Report from 2024 DeDecker Grant recipient Matthew Yamamoto, MS Botany Student, California Botanic Garden and Claremont Graduate University: A Flora of the McGee Creek Watershed, Mono County, California

Abstract: While there has been significant botanical exploration of the eastern Sierra Nevada in the past two decades, major collection gaps still exist. Gaps in the knowledge of the distribution of Sierra Nevada plants limit our ability to understand the biogeographical history of this remarkable mountain range and hamper conservation efforts. As global warming threatens ecosystems at California's highest elevations, we risk losing biodiversity without knowing it without more botanical exploration. Thus, for my master's thesis, I am conducting a collections-based floristic inventory of the McGee Creek watershed in Inyo National Forest, Mono County, California. This poorly documented, high elevation site is particularly important to study because its plant life is thought to be threatened by climate change and because its geologic diversity may allow it to host rare and/or unusual plants. In addition, this study provides a more complete picture of current plant distributions north and south along the Sierra Nevada, facilitating large-scale studies of how mountain ranges could act as a corridor for Southern California plants to shift north and upslope as temperatures rise. Over the course of two years, I will collect plant specimens from the watershed with the aim of producing a complete checklist of the area's plants. Through this study, I will produce a baseline dataset to understand the impacts of climate change in high elevation ecosystems, provide data on the distributions of rare and invasive plants for immediate conservation action, test hypotheses about how geology impacts plant distributions, and produce herbarium specimens which are invaluable for future botanical research.

Summary of 2024 Progress:

I spent a total of 70 days in the field collecting specimens for this project, including 30 days of backpacking. In total, I made 1,518 specimen collections (1240 vascular plants, 278 non-vascular) representing at least 623 species and infraspecific taxa (many collections have not yet been identified). These collections include at least 33 rare taxa and 6 county records. Some notable finds include *Erythranthe laciniata* and *Potamogeton amplifolius* (county records) and *Botrychium minganense*, *Botrychium crenulatum*, *Botrychium ascendens*, and *Utricularia minor* (rare taxa). iNaturalist observations of most of the plants collected for this project can be found [here](#).



Plant of the Season

Sierra Juniper (*Juniperus grandis*)

by Stephen Ingram



The majestic and sometimes gnarled pose of Sierra junipers is always a welcome sight. Their broad-based trunks that taper into irregular canopies give these trees a special appeal. Sierra juniper trunks may reach over 7 feet in diameter and achieve a height of up to 80 feet.

Dense, ascending limbs support scale leaves glazed with dried, white resin. This dioecious species has female trees with bluish “berries,” or seed cones, that smell like gin. Before the seed cones dry and drop through the fall and winter, they can give a frosted appearance to berry-laden trees. Townsend’s solitaires can often be seen perched above their precious juniper berries in the fall and winter months. Fibrous, cinnamon-colored bark is another attractive character of Sierra juniper.

Sierra Junipers inhabit rocky slopes with thin soils that are generally too dry for most other conifers, but they are often found with Jeffrey and/or lodgepole pine. Old specimens have been dated to over 2,000 years. The Bennett Juniper is the largest Sierra juniper known and grows in the Stanislaus National Forest west of Sonora Pass. It has a trunk diameter of over 12 feet and stands around 85 feet tall. It has been estimated at around 3,000 years old, but a complete core sample cannot be made because this tree has rotten wood and is partially hollow.

Sierra junipers are found throughout the range from 6500 to 10,000 feet near and often east of the Sierra Nevada crest. This conifer is also found in the San Gabriel Mountains and the mountains of western Nevada. Some fine specimens can be seen along Highway 120 around Olmstead Point, in Rock Creek Canyon above the road to Rock Creek Lake, along the Pine Creek and Gable Lakes trails, Valentine Lake trail, and many other places in the Eastern Sierra.