
Obispoensis

Newsletter of the San Luis Obispo Chapter of the California Native Plant Society



ISLAND BUSH-SNAPDRAGON
Galvezia speciosa

February 2015

Island Snapdragon *Gambelia (Galvesia) speciosa*

About the Cover: Bonnie's cover for this Obispoensis was used for a newsletter cover back in September 1980. We would welcome a note from anyone who might remember it (drwalters@charter.net). Back then, the covers often were either not accompanied by articles or by minimal ones. So it is in this case. I found it interesting to peruse what else was in that issue. It had the usual president's letter written by then president Lela Burdett, an extensive "Endangered Plant Report" by Malcolm McLeod, updates from the photographic and conservation committees by Craig Cunningham, and quite complete reports of field trips to Coreopsis Hill (Kathleen Jones), Lopez Lake and Morro Bay Sand Spit (Eileen Pritchard). (Note, all mentioned are Hoover Award recipients.) Of course there were notices of upcoming events such as the October Member Slide Show Meeting and Fall Plant Sale. There apparently were no field trips scheduled. One last bit of remembrance is that the newsletter master was hand typed by Alice Meyer using an "old-fashioned" typewriter on 8½ by 14 in. sheets folded in half. Each folded sheet contained 4 - 8½ by 7 inch pages front and back. That newsletter contained six very thickly typed pages, that is, little white space. Alice really deserved her Hoover Award. Note to the youngsters, personal computers were just beginning to spread to the masses and hadn't reached our chapter yet.

The plant is the island snapdragon *Gambelia (Galvesia) speciosa*. Back in the 1970s and early '80s this species was relatively common in plantings on the Cal Poly campus and in the city of SLO. It seemed to have disappeared by the mid 1980s. I think I saw a few pots of it in our last chapter Fall Plant Sale. Maybe it is making a comeback. This half-shrub adapts to the garden quite readily. However, it is not a plant for small areas. It produces long, spreading and arching canes from the base. The yellow-green oval leaves are borne opposite each other. The bright red flowers are bunched at the tips of the canes. A look at Bonnie's drawing shows why it's called a snapdragon as its flowers closely resemble the common garden variety. Why "island"? That's because it's only found growing wild on chaparral slopes of three of the Channel Islands (Santa Catalina, San Clemente and Guadalupe).

Back in 1980, the plant was known as *Galvesia speciosa*. Was the name changed just to force oldsters like me to learn a new name? Note that the second part of scientific name was not changed. That is, *Galvesia speciosa* became *Gambelia speciosa*. What this tells taxonomists

is that the species moved from one genus (*Galvesia*) to another genus (*Gambelia*) without a redefinition of the species. This would indicate that *Galvesia* had been reinterpreted. Those of you wading through these articles might remember that there has been a lot of classification work lately, resulting in major realignments of species within and among genera and genera within and among families. One such major realignment occurred in the plants with corollas that are fused (corolla falling as a single unit) and displaying irregular or bilateral symmetry. Before this reclassification, most California native plants with this type of corolla were found in the snapdragon or figwort family (*Scrophulariaceae*). When taxonomists began looking at this family they found it to be polyphyletic, which is forbidden in modern classifications. Polyphyletic groups (families, genera, etc.) are ones that contain sub groups that are derived from different ancestors. With so much work being done on the old *Scrophulariaceae*, it shouldn't be surprising to find the species in its genera being shifted around as well. Such is the case with *Galvesia*. The California species were found to be distinct from the South American *Galvesia* so there had to be a new genus name because the South American species were named earlier (had priority), thus *Gambelia*. Oh, what family is the island snapdragon in? It's in the superficially highly unlikely family, *Plantaginaceae* or plantain family. Why unlikely? Back in the 1980s before modern DNA sequencing, along with other updated characters combined with extra fast and sophisticated computer analysis, the plantain family contained a single California genus, *Plantago*. These California plantains were all small to tiny herbs with flowers that required a microscope to study.☼

Dirk Walters, Illustration by Bonnie Walters

President's Notes

These are my last notes to this column, as the President's position has passed into the capable hands Of Bill Waycott. Similarly, Dr. David Keil is replacing Dr. Matt Ritter in the Vice-President's position. Matt has done a fantastic job of bringing speakers to our meetings and will continue to be a great resource for our Chapter. We welcome David and consider ourselves lucky to have recruited such a world-recognized talent. I am not going away, as I will retain my Conservation position on the Board. David Krause will continue his excellent service as Treasurer, and Kristie Haydu as Secretary. Although I was seven years in this position, it was made easy by the wonderful people on the Board who are some of the greatest people I have known. Bill has lots of ideas and will welcome your input as we build our plans for the rest of 2015 and into 2016. Thanks you everybody for your kind support.☼ David Chipping

Conservation

January has been busy, with the Oster Quarry EIR going before the Planning Commission. I have given my greatest attention to some massive changes to Inland Zoning that will allow fast tracking of wind and solar projects that are up to 160 acres in size. While CNPS supports clean energy, the County is attempting to make these projects subject to ministerial approval, completely removing the current process of using the California Environmental Quality Act's EIR process as a means of gaining public opinion and criticism. They are using a so-called Programmatic EIR that lacks any data on the locations of plant resources, but has the nerve to claim there will be no significant impacts to plants or animals. This has no foundation. They will ask developers to do a biological review and submit it with the project, but the County does not have the in-house breadth of life scientists to enable much of a critique. Such egregious errors as Sunpower's initial submission of a Draft EIR for their Carrizo Plain project in which all plant surveys had been done in a year of hard drought, and which were revealed in the Draft EIR, will now go directly to the County staff without any chance of CNPS or Agency comment. I have already made comments on the Draft EIR and addressed the Planning Commission, but I will be asking for support from CNPS members. The documents are on the SLO County Planning Department website (<http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/planning/RESP.htm?>). ❁ David Chipping

We are so happy to welcome all these wonderful new and renewing members!

<i>Kathy Cinowalt</i>	<i>Patricia Cullinan</i>
<i>Lois & Peter Richerson</i>	<i>Madeline Fay</i>
<i>Linda Robertson</i>	<i>David Gurney</i>
<i>Jason Johns</i>	<i>Neil & Ann Havlik</i>
<i>Thomas Becker</i>	<i>Scott Loosley</i>
<i>Wendy Brown</i>	<i>Kathleen McCarey</i>
<i>Patricia Buscher</i>	<i>Wallace McCray</i>
<i>Meg Crockett</i>	<i>Thomas & Elise Wheeler</i>



Chapter Meeting

Thursday, February 5, 7 p.m. at the Veterans Hall, 801 Grand Avenue, San Luis Obispo

Program: Natalie Rossington, a Master's student at Cal Poly. Natalie is studying how rare species are able to exist near common and widespread relatives by investigating reproductive barriers between *Layia jonesii*, a rare serpentine endemic, and *Layia platyglossa* in Reservoir Canyon. She investigated both pre-zygotic and post-zygotic barriers using a combination of field and greenhouse experiments. She will present her results and discuss how these results help us understand how rare, serpentine endemics survive and persist.

Natalie Rossington (below) received an undergraduate degree in Soil Science at Cal Poly. She is a Malcolm McLeod Scholarship awardee. She enjoys botanizing in the spring, photography, and cooking in her free time. She grew up in Santa Barbara and currently lives in Morro Bay.



Field Trips

Sunday, February 1, 9 a.m., Lopez Lake.

Join Audubon, California Native Plants, and Sierra Club on a bird and plant walk. Expect to hike about 4 miles with a 200 foot elevation gain. We will be looking for waterfowl, which should be plentiful and visible along the trail, as well as an abundance of early spring flowers. A continuation hike to the top of the Duna Vista lookout is an option. Directions: From Arroyo Grande, follow the signs towards Lopez Lake. After crossing the dam, but before entering Lopez Lake County Park, turn right on Hi Mountain Road and proceed 0.8 miles to the junction of Upper Lopez Canyon Road. Bear left on Canyon Road and proceed 3.6 miles to the old entrance of the Boy Scout Camp (now closed). At this point, park along the side of the road. Restrooms are available. No day use fees will be charged as parking is outside of the fee area. Bring water and snacks, and dress in layers for changing weather. A hat, sunscreen, and sturdy shoes are recommended. For more information, call Bill at (805) 459-2103 or email: bill.waycott@gmail.com. Rain or the threat of rain cancels.

Sunday, February 22, 9:00 a.m., Coon Creek - two years after the burn, Montaña de Oro State Park, a four-mile walk with a 500 ft. elevation gain. Explore how quickly the California landscape regenerates itself, even during periods of low rainfall. Come

and help identify the major components of the chaparral and riparian (creek side) plant communities as they rejuvenate and fill the blackened void created by the fire of 2012. It is quite surprising. There will be many species in boom. Meet at the Coon Creek parking area (south end of the paved road at Montaña de Oro SP). Duration about 3 hrs. Bring water, snacks, sturdy shoes, sunscreen, hat, and jacket. Rain or threat of rain cancels. Leader: Bill Waycott, (805) 459-2103 or bill.waycott@gmail.com.



Saturday, February 28, 2015, 9 a.m. Late Winter Burton Mesa Chaparral at the La Purisima Mission. The California Native Plant Society and Lompoc Valley Botanic and Horticultural Society will hold their annual winter field trip to the Burton Mesa Chaparral on the La Purisima Mission grounds Saturday the 28th. Meet at the east end of Burton Mesa Boulevard (1550 E) in Mission Hills at 9 a.m. for a chance to see the early bloomers and interesting scenery. To reach Burton Mesa Boulevard, go to SR 1 north of Lompoc. At the signal where SR 1 turns down hill towards Lompoc, take Harris Grade Road north to Burton Mesa Boulevard and turn right (east). For more information call Charlie Blair at 733-3189.

The SLO chapter of CNPS plans to form a committee to coordinate the activities for Native Plant Week (April 11 to 19, 2015). If you would like to be involved and have suggestions for Native Plant Week activities contact Bill Waycott, bill.waycott@gmail.com.

Possible activities include:

- community native garden tours
- regional plant nursery tours
- joint activity with the Master Gardener program
- displays at local libraries
- local wild flower field trips
- joint activity with the Cal Poly Ornamental horticulture program
- other activities



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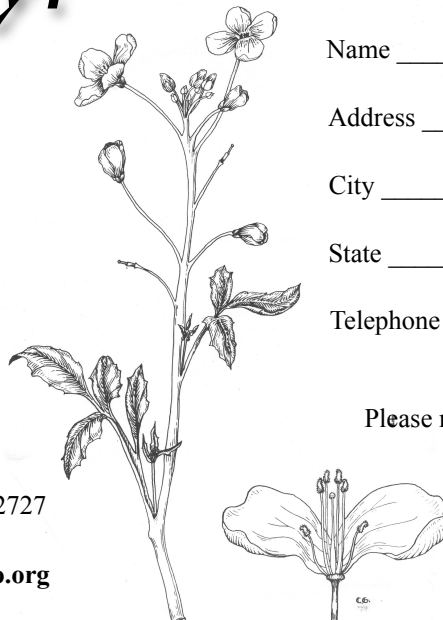
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Dedicated to the Preservation of the California Native Flora

The California Native Plant Society is a statewide 501(c)(3) non-profit organization of amateurs and professionals with a common interest in California's plants. The mission of the Society is to increase understanding and appreciation of California's native plants and to preserve them in their natural habitat through scientific activities, education and conservation. Membership is open to all. Membership includes the journal, Fremontia, the quarterly Bulletin, which gives statewide news and announcements of the activities and conservation issues, and the chapter newsletter, Obispoensis.



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