Sanhedrin Chapter Fall Presentation - October 16th at 7 pm

Ken Montgomery:  
Native Plant Gardening for the Drought

Ukiah Garden Club House, 1203 W. Clay St. Ukiah  
Free and open to all

Ken Montgomery is the longtime owner of the Anderson Valley Nursery in Boonville, specializing in California native plants. He is a delightful, enthusiastic and knowledgeable presenter. Ken brings a wealth of practical knowledge in all aspects of gardening, including native plants. He has spoken with other groups and has been instrumental in restoration work, including involving students in these projects. In this time of drought and lawns drying up, come find out how native plants can save on water use, be low maintenance and enhance our environment. Hedgerow uses will also be discussed.

Fall Events

Potter Valley Oak Restoration; Public Workshop, September 20
The workshop will highlight the protection and restoration of oaks in Potter Valley, a topic pertinent to all of Mendocino County. Interested residents, especially from Potter Valley, are cordially invited to this free event. Speakers will discuss the status of oaks in California and in Potter Valley followed by a fun and beautiful presentation about wildlife in the oaks, a story of incredible productivity and diversity. Park Steiner (463-4265) or Jackson Ford (463-4622) * Mendocino Co. DOT.

Orr Creek Clean-up, Saturday, September 20
Love your rivers? The Russian and its many tributaries such as Orr Creek are in need of help. This is a good time to get involved in one of the many river clean-ups scheduled this fall. The Orr Creek Clean-up is sponsored by the Friends of Gibson Creek. For further information on the Orr Creek Clean-up call 463-2721 or kaderli@juno.com.

Upper Russian River Walk and Clean-up – Saturday, September 27
Last year, this effort removed 500 lbs. of trash, 250 lbs. of recyclables, and 15 tires from the Russian River. Expanded coverage of Orr Creek and Ackerman Creek netted an additional 4,500 lbs. of trash removed. The clean-up had a huge impact.

Volunteers and team leaders are needed to clean sections of the river between Redwood Valley and The Forks. These sections are all walkable. Meet at Taylor’s Tavern on Saturday morning at 9:00 am. Walkers will need to bring drinking water, and wear clothes and shoes appropriate for encountering lots of sunshine, blackberries, rough gravel beds, biting water bugs, and slippery rocks. No flimsy sandals! A hat, backpack, gloves, and sunscreen are advised. All teams should be completed with their section of the river by 1:00. This walk offers a great opportunity to visit and appreciate a great local riparian habitat. Hope you can save the date and join us! Let us know if you would like to become a team leader and help scout out the clean-up area ahead of time. Contact Cathy Monroe 485-8249 cathymonroe@gmail.com or Deborah Edelman 462-3664 x 106 deborah.edelman@mercd.org.
Oak Identification Walk, Low Gap Park - Saturday, October 11
We'll wander the trails through woodland, forest, and chaparral observing the high oak diversity found in the park and observe as many as 9 oak species and several hybrids. Meet at the picnic tables next to the parking lot at 10am. Leader: Kerry Heise, 462-4533 (kheise@copper.net).

Hopland Area Russian River Clean-up - Saturday, October 25
Ken Johnson is organizing a Hopland area cleanup along sections of the Russian River. Volunteers will meet at the Real Goods parking lot at 9 am. They will meet back at the Real Goods Pond around noon where free lunch and beverages will be provided by the cleanup’s sponsors. The Hopland Cleanup will provide bottled water, garbage grabbers and bags, but encourages volunteers to bring gloves. For more information contact Ken at ken@ncfems.com or 570-0226.

Geology - Plant Habitat Walk, Low Gap Park - Sunday, November 9
We’ll look at two major geological units in the park that reveal how the Coast Ranges were formed and see the different plant habitats growing on them. Several minor rock habitats will be pointed out and most local types of rocks identified. Meet at picnic table near tennis courts at 10am. Leader: Chuck Williams, 462-8984.

Time for tarweed – Kerry Heise
To the naturalist there is no off-season, just another opportunity to observe and wonder. Over the past couple hot, dry months the brown grasslands and roadsides have been accented with surprising color due to the blossoms of several different tarweed species common to our area. A walk through these areas can be a rather pungent multi-sensorial experience telling you summer is in full swing, evident by yellow, white, and orange-hued blossoms; the spicy aroma of sticky glands covering stems and leaves; the plastering of seeds onto trousers and unprotected legs.

California’s tarweeds comprise at least a dozen native genera in the aster family (*Asteraceae*) and include a diverse group of annual, perennial, and shrub species. Many are summer or fall-flowering xerophytes and owe their name and distinctive aroma to the pungent exudates that are produced on the stems, leaves, and involucres. These viscous coatings naturally inhibit water-loss making tarweeds and other late-season gland-covered plants such as turpentine weed (*Trichostema laxum*) or vinegar weed (*T. lanceolatum*) extremely drought tolerant.

For a thorough explanation of tarweed exudates dig out your old collection of *Fremontia* or read the Boerig and Norris (1988) article online. They point out that terpenes in the exudate give the plants their distinctive smell. They also suggest that exudates protect these summer-growing plants from desiccation, predation (likely due in part to flavinoids, which can be toxic to animals), and possibly also from ultraviolet radiation (flavinoid compounds in the exudate absorb ultraviolet radiation).

Although many species of tarweed occur in our area, three are especially conspicuous during the late summer and early fall along roadsides, disturbed fields, and serpentine grassland. These include the common tarweed (*Madia elegans*) with large showy heads of yellow ray flowers tinged maroon in the centers, hayfield tarweed (*Hemizona congesta* subsp. *luzulifolia*) with numerous white-rayed heads, and *Calycadenia fremontii* with yellow rayed flowers emerging from involucres sticky with tack-shaped glands. The latter two often grow together producing a surprising splash of color.

Go out and experience these heavy-scented, hardy native plants. Good locations are the lower Mansonite Road, the serpentine field next to the outdoor theater in Low Gap Park, and along Airport Road just east of the runway.

In Praise of Coyote Brush – Cathy Monroe

It often comes as a surprise, almost an olfactory mirage, that sweet scent of spring in a dusky evening of late September. But then I’ll look around and follow my nose to those coyote bushes, forgotten in the background, covered with inconspicuous blooms. Returning midday, I’ll find the bushes a buzz with insects such as bees, predatory wasps, ants, and flies taking advantage of this abundant and rare nectar source in early autumn, a source providing valuable energy for overwintering. Over 50 species of pollinators visit the flowers of coyote bush including charming skipper butterflies and the alien looking predatory tachinid fly that looks like a bristly bumblebee. But this mini-habitat supports vastly more insect activity including gall producers. A study by Tilden in 1951 identified over 221 species of insects associated with coyote brush, which in turn hosted 62 species of parasites for a total of 291 species. And with this kind of insect activity you can expect lots of other opportunistic visitors such as birds and lizards.

Coyote brush is dioecious, having separate male and female plants, both with nectar bearing flowers, but if you look closely, you can see a difference in the flower forms and recognize why it is listed as a member of the sunflower family (Asteraceae). The female flowers will be the ones that produce the tiny seeds attached to fluffs of papery hairs ready to bear them away in the wind. At this stage you can see why some pioneers named this plant the fuzzy wuzzy. The female plants can look like they are covered with snow, ready for winter decorations along with the bright red berries of our native toyon. These inspired my dad to make a magnificent holiday wreath one year which fortunately was outside as it flew apart all over the yard! But more importantly, coyote brush seeds are another food source for birds such as bushtits and goldfinches.

Coyote brush is a valuable wildlife plant, not only providing food but also important shelter and cover. Judith Lowery writes in her book, Gardening with a Wild Heart, “Some birds, like wrentits and white-crowned sparrows, live their entire lives in coyote bush, finding all they need for perching, nesting, breeding, eating, and resting.” And somewhere I read that coyote brush, or coyote bush, got its name because a coyote could hide so well among its shrubbery. An important refuge plant for wildlife, it provides welcome islands of shade in summer baked open areas. Also called chaparral broom, this bushy plant is an important pioneer plant that assists in the recovery of areas damaged by fire, grading, or other disturbances. Its invasion of grasslands leads the way for the return of coastal shrub species and oak woodlands. When jays cache acorns in its shelter, coyote brush protects young seedlings from grazing and intense heat. I think the use of coyote brush in oak regeneration projects deserves some study.

Coyote brush (Baccharis pilularis) is a small leaved evergreen shrub found only slightly beyond the borders of California, most commonly among the Coast Ranges. Its generic name Baccharis refers to the Latin: Bacchus, god of wine. It is gaining recognition as a valuable landscaping plant since it can grow in different kinds of soils, is drought tolerant, generally deer proof, and apparently resistant to gophers. A waxy coating on its leaves helps it retain moisture and also acts as a fire retardant. Coyote brush is much less flammable than commonly used Mediterranean plants such as lavender. It comes in a variety of forms, some upright ones growing close to 3 meters tall and prostrate varieties that make great ground covers. Its naturally rangy growth can be pruned into various forms or hedges and makes an effective visual barrier with its evergreen foliage. As a hedge row plant it can provide important forage for our beleaguered native pollinators and honey bees at a time they really need a boost of energy, and, if you eventually want a row of trees it can serve as a nursery plant for those vulnerable saplings. Most nurseries sell only male plants started from cuttings since many gardeners don’t want fluffy seed storms and a proliferation of unwanted seedlings. Plants grow only in sunny areas, waning if over shaded. They establish a substantial taproot and live for about 10 – 15 years. This is a plant well worth considering in landscape plans.

I hope you can find time to check out all the action around a coyote bush this fall, and maybe catch its sweet reminder that the darkening days ahead will eventually lengthen again back to spring.
Book Review

You know how we’d like to see more open space and land preserved to support biodiversity and we know that it’s not likely to happen very often, because the money is not there to do that?

Well, this book points out that we all are sitting on lots of land around our houses. If our yards were restored to their native habitats, we would have made whole much of our ecosystems. It’s called Restoration Gardening. This concept opens a whole new way of thinking and realizing what we can do.

Our library systems have a lot of great books on native plants and such topics as restoration gardening for you to discover and explore. ~ Gail Johnson


With the accelerating pace of development and subsequent habitat destruction, the pressures on wildlife populations are greater than they have ever been in our nation's history.

There is an unbreakable link between native plant species and native wildlife. When native plants disappear, insects disappear, impoverishing the food source for birds and other animals. In many parts of the world, habitat destruction has been so extensive that local wildlife is in crisis and may be headed toward extinction. But there is an important and simple step toward reversing this alarming trend: Everyone with access to a patch of earth can make a significant contribution toward sustaining biodiversity.

By favoring native plants, gardeners can provide a welcoming environment for wildlife of all kinds. This doesn't necessarily entail a drastic overhaul of existing gardens. The process can be gradual and can reflect both the gardener's preferences and local sensitivities. To help concerned gardeners, this clearly reasoned account includes helpful lists of native plants for different regional habitats.

Source for this review:  http://www.powells.com/biblio/9780881928549

Native Plant Books and Posters for Sale — available at most events

*Or email us at sanhedrcnps@gmail.com or call 462-2018, if interested in getting a copy.

Books:
- California Native Gardening: A Month by Month Guide
- California Native Plants for the Garden
- California Wildlife Habitat Garden
- Oaks of California
- Wildflowers of Northern California's Wine Country & North Coast Ranges

Posters:
- Native and Non-native Grasses of California - Placemat sets, laminated (4 per set)
- Spring Wildflowers
- Wildflowers of the Coast
- Wildflowers of the Redwood Forest
- Wildflowers of the Desert
- Shrubs of the Coast Ranges
- Sierra Nevada Wildflowers
Mendocino College Department of Agriculture’s Annual Fall Plant Sale
Friday October 3 and Saturday October 4. Friday hours are 9 to 5 and Saturday hours are 9 to 3.

Arbutus menziesii – Pacific Madrone
Acer macrophyllum – Big Leaf Maple
Acer negundo – California Boxelder
Aesculus californica – Buckeye
Arbutus menziesii – California Mugwort
Arctostaphylos (obispoensis x pajaroensis) – Manzanita ‘Lester Rowntree’
Arctostaphylos uva ursi – Bearberry Manzanita ‘Woods Red’
Arctostaphylos (uva-ursi x nummularia) – Manzanita ‘Emerald Carpet’ (groundcover)
Arctostaphylos edmundsii – Little Sur Manzanita ‘Bert Johnson’
Arctostaphylos densiflora – Vine Hill Manzanita ‘Howard McMinn’
Arctostaphylos insularis – Manzanita ‘Canyon Sparkles’
Arctostaphylos – Manzanita
Asclepias speciosa – Showy Milkweed
Carex pansa – Dune Sedge
Carex barbarae – Santa Barbara Sedge
Ceanothus thyrsiflorus – Blueblossom ‘Skylark’
Cercis occidentalis – Redbud
Cornus stolonifera – Red Twig Dogwood
Cornus stolonifera – Yellow Twig Dogwood ‘Flaviramea’
Cornus nuttalii – Pacific Dogwood
Epilobium septentrionale – Humboldt County Fuchsia ‘Select Mattole’
Epilobium canum var. latifolium – California Fuchsia ‘Everett’s Choice’
Epilobium canum – California Fuchsia ‘Calistoga’
Eriogonum fasculatum – California Buckwheat
Eriogonum giganteum – St. Catherine’s Lace
Eriogonum rubescens – Red Buckwheat
Festuca californica – California Fescue
Frangula californica – Coffeeberry ‘Mound San Bruno’
Frangula californica – Coffeeberry ‘Eve Case’
Frangula californica subsp. tomentella – Coffeeberry
Fraxinus latifolia – Pacific Ash
Garrya fremontii – Bear Brush, Fremont’s Silk Tassel
Garrya eliptica – Coast Silk Tassel
Juncus patens – California Gray Rush
Lavatera assurgentiflora – Channel Islands Lavatera, Island Mallow
Rhododendron columbianum [syn. Ledum glandulosum] – Western Labrador
Lonicera hispidula – Pink Honeysuckle
Lonicera villosa – Coyote Mint
Myrica californica – Pacific Wax Myrtle
Phacelia californica – California Phacelia
Philadelphus lewisii – Lewis’ Mock Orange ‘Double Blossom’
Pinus torreyana – Torrey Pine
Prunus ilicifolia – Holly Leaf Cherry
Quercus wislizenii – Interior Live Oak
Quercus kelloggii – Black Oak
Quercus douglasii – Blue Oak
Ribes sanguineum – Pink Flowering Currant
Ribes aureum – Golden Currant
Ribes viburnifolium – Evergreen Currant
Salvia spathacea – Hummingbird Sage
Salvia apiana – Smudge Sage, White Sage
Salvia leucophylla – Purple Sage ‘Point Sal’
Sequoia sempervirens – Coast Redwood
Symphoricarpos albus – Snowberry
Umbellularia californica – California Laurel
Vaccinium ovatum – California Huckleberry
Woodwardia fimbriata – Giant Chain Fern

Fall is the best time to plant California native plants and now is the best time to plan and prepare. There are many reasons to grow native plants: natives require less water, need little maintenance, and reduce the need for pesticides and fertilizers. Native plant gardens attract birds, bees, butterflies and other wildlife and provide refuges and links to nearby wild land habitat.

Whether you are looking for only a specimen or two, wish to convert your lawn to a native meadow, or are working on a full “habitat garden,” you will find selections that do well in our area at a reasonable price.
~ Diana Jeffery
The Sanhedrin Chapter Needs You

The past several months have brought exciting changes for the Sanhedrin Chapter. We have new board members, an updated website, and a new venue for monthly meetings. We invite you to join us in building our chapter. Several board positions are open to chapter members:

- Field Trips
- Horticulture
- Outreach and Publicity
- Programs
- Rare Plant Coordinator
- Sales (books, poster, etc.)

We are also seeking individuals to assist our present board members with a variety of tasks. If you would like to serve on the board and/or take part in growing our chapter, please contact us at sanhedrincnps@gmail.com. Or visit us at our new meeting space at the Ukiah Garden Club House, 1203 West Clay Street in Ukiah at 7 PM on Thursday, October 16, 2014, where Ken Montgomery will give a special presentation, Native Plant Gardening for the Drought.

Attention Sanhedrin Chapter Members

The Sanhedrin Chapter Newsletter is available as a pdf document for those who would like to receive it via email. Please contact us at sanhedrin.cnps.org and let us know if you would like to receive the newsletter electronically, as a hardcopy, or both. Receiving only an electronic copy saves paper, chapter revenues, and gas. In addition to the newsletter, occasional announcements of local native plant events and field trips will be emailed out.

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CNPS – Sanhedrin Chapter – Fall 2014 Newsletter

If you have an interesting article, photo, or idea for a fieldtrip, please send to the newsletter editor: Kerry Heise (kheise@copper.net)