Monday, March 14, Marin Chapter Meeting

“David Douglas in the New World 1823–1834”
by guest speaker Jack Nisbet

After making landmark collections of flora and fauna in the Pacific Northwest, Scottish naturalist David Douglas sailed south to California, where he collected from the Bay Area south to Santa Barbara. Although his journals for this period were lost in a canoeing accident, a survey notebook tracks his extensive travels, and the specimens he sent back had a major impact on English gardening and forestry. This slide presentation will follow Douglas’s adventures and compare his working methods in the Columbia drainage with what he accomplished in Spanish California.

March meeting:
5:45 p.m. Join friends and meet our speaker for a no-host dinner at Gira Polli of Mill Valley, 590 East Blithedale Ave. at Camino Alto. Please call Gerd or Kristin Jakob at (415) 388-1844 at least one day ahead to be assured of a seat with our group.
7:30 p.m. Meet at the Redwoods retirement home, 40 Camino Alto, Mill Valley. Books, posters, and cards will be for sale before as well as after the meeting. Lecture starts at 8 p.m.

PROPAGATING NATIVES

For the last several months we’ve been busy potting up seedlings that volunteer in my raised beds and pathways. My garden pathways are simply pea gravel and basalt stepping stones laid into the native clay soil. I love the crunchy sound of the gravel as I walk and consider it a huge bonus that the pathways are also a terrific seedbed! Working carefully with a hori hori knife, I’m able to gently loosen and extract the whole root system intact. The process is most successfully done before wildflower seedlings get too big; Clarkia, no more than a few inches tall; Madia and Oenothera with no more than six to eight true leaves.

January is also the time to take tip cuttings of Mimulus aurantiacus and Monardella villosa. I watch for a spurt of new growth, and then carefully cut vigorous greenwood tips that include some nodes in semi-ripe wood from last year’s growth. The tip cuttings are nicely rooted within two months; so we’ll be potting them up soon!

The deer are also aware of the new growth; they browse the monkeyflower for a month or so, helping a bit with pruning and shaping the shrub, and then leave

Propagating Natives continued on page 2
it alone as the leaves mature and become stickier, and the flower buds develop. I find it interesting that this new growth was included in the diet of the native peoples. The shrub also supports the larvae of the variable checkerspot, and the flowers are an important nectar source for hummingbirds.

At our first workshop date, we packaged nearly the whole seed collection; that’s 44 native species, including a wildflower mix! They will be offered for sale on April 9th along with the dozens of native wildflowers and perennial plants we’ve been potting into 4-inch containers.

Propagation Workshops

We’re still transplanting seedlings and rooted cuttings, and tending them for the April 9th native plant sale. I’d like to invite interested CNPS members to come to my house and work with us. All supplies are on hand, and we have a nice outdoor workspace set up. We usually work for a couple of hours, and then break for a cup of tea; if it’s raining we’ll sit indoors and write plant labels.

We’ll be working on the following days: March 8th and 22nd (Tuesdays), from 1 to 4 p.m. On April 5th, we’ll need lots of help writing labels! Please let me know if you can help. Labels could be written at home, too! Please call or email first to let me know that you’d like to join us.

—Charlotte Torgovitsky, (415) 892-9148 or torgovitsky@comcast.net.

GARDENING AT THE AUDUBON CENTER

Saturday, March 19, 9 a.m.–12 noon

Marin CNPS is embarking on an exciting partnership with the Richardson Bay Audubon Center and Sanctuary. The Audubon at Home Program is a nationwide program that assists homeowners in becoming “responsible caretakers of their piece of the earth.” Native plants play a vital role in the program. As part of the partnership, we look forward to conducting workshops at the Richardson Bay Audubon Center and Sanctuary on various aspects of native plant and wildlife gardening.

We can practice good stewardship on Saturday, March 19 by giving the native plant garden at the Center a spring sprucing-up. Over the years since the garden was installed by CNPS, our maintenance of the garden has fallen off. We would like to help the garden really showcase native plants by looking their best for our plant sale on April 9. If you are able to help out, bring gloves, a kneeling pad, hand tools, and a bag lunch. Please let Renee Fittinghoff (reneef94941@gmail.com) or Kristin Jakob (388-1844) know that you will be joining us. The planet will thank you, the plants will thank you, and we will too!

WIN A FREE CNPS MEMBERSHIP!

The California Native Plant Society is the only organization in California dedicated solely to the conservation of its native flora. All those interested in this important effort are encouraged to join.

In honor of California Native Plant Week, the Marin Chapter of CNPS is offering to donate five memberships to the statewide CNPS to interested Marin County students. This will include field trip opportunities and monthly lectures on different aspects of California native plants.

Students of all levels are encouraged to apply. If you are interested, just send a one-page essay on the topic “What Marin County native plants mean to me” to:

Dr. Paul G. da Silva
Dept. of Life and Earth Sciences
College of Marin
Kentfield, CA 94904

Essays are due April 1, 2011. Awards will be announced by the Marin chapter by April 23, 2011.

CNPS 2011 WORKSHOPS

Visit cnps.org/cnps/education/workshops/index.php or contact Josie Crawford at (916) 447-2677 or jcrawford@cnps.org for more information.
ARE WE WINNING OR LOSING?
PAMPAS GRASS IN INVERNESS

by Julie Monson

This article is about pampas grass (Cortaderia jubata): not about how invasive it is, that it has spread along California’s coast from San Diego to the Oregon border, is choking out other native vegetation, is a fire hazard, and is difficult to eradicate. You may already be aware of those facts. This is about a small pampas grass control effort that a few of us in Inverness are working on, how it began, and what we accomplished.

In the summer of 2009, Jerry and Barbara Meral and I began to talk about the incidence of spreading pampas grass along Sir Francis Drake Blvd. in Inverness. Because I sit on the board of the Inverness Association (IA), a local organization primarily focused on local building and land use projects, we proposed that the IA sponsor a modest eradication project. We targeted a stretch of Sir Francis Drake Blvd. from Balboa to Sea Haven, a stretch of about 10 miles. The IA agreed to support the project with an initial grant of $5,000 to cut back the blooming stalks to prevent further spread of this invasive plant.

The work of cutting back the blooming stalks was far too arduous and dangerous for volunteers. Many of the largest pampas grass plants were 20 to 30 feet above the roadway on a very steep embankment, with only a narrow band consisting mostly of a drainage ditch between the embankment and the street. We contracted with Inverness Garden Service, a well-respected local landscape contractor, to do the work. But this was only the beginning.

Because it was impossible to determine where the roadway easement ended and the adjacent property owners’ boundaries lay, we had to contact every potential property owner to obtain permission for this work, which might be on their land. The Inverness Public Utility District came to our rescue; with maps and their customer roster, I had names and addresses and sent a letter to each that explained the project and requested their permission. All but one (the State of California) returned the simple permission form.

The next hurdle was getting permission from Marin County to work on the road’s easement. This seemed impossible until we contacted Pete Maendel with the County’s Public Works operations in Nicasio. He was familiar with the work of Inverness Garden Service, arranged approval of our project, and even offered the Nicasio landfill as a repository for the flowering stalks. This was critical, because we wanted to be sure they were secure and prevented from spreading their seeds once they were removed. At the same time, I began to raise money for the second stage: actually killing/removing the pampas grass plants still on the embankment.

I was also researching information on how to kill pampas grass. Marin County has a “no herbicide” policy along County roadsides; residents of the Inverness Ridge were adamant about not using herbicide for weed control. Removing large clumps of pampas grass from the steep embankment mechanically would be expensive, require huge equipment, and create large open holes, sure to erode with the next rain. I contacted a number of experts and found Ellen Hamingson, restoration biologist with the Point Reyes National Seashore, most helpful. She suggested the method which we used: cut the stalks and fronds back to the ground, completely encase cut stalks with black plastic fiber (she recommended a product), secure the fabric with wire, and tuck the edges into the ground around the cut stalks. Again, a project for professionals. Inverness Garden Service did the work in the summer of 2010. Again, Pete Maendel with the County of Marin helped smooth the way with the County and provided a place for the refuse.

So far this winter, the black plastic “nubbins” on the embankment are holding together, despite rain, wind and the brush clearing of the County’s work crews. In the spring, we’ll review the entire embankment to determine whether this method actually killed the plants and note any new ones (small plants can easily be removed mechanically).

In the meantime, I’ve been promoting pampas grass control with local organizations, agencies, our West Marin radio station (KWMR), and articles to local papers. I’ve noticed an increased awareness by my neighbors of the incidence of pampas grass. They understand that it is invasive to the point that it can replace native vegetation and increase our local fire hazard. Not all pampas grass grows on public lands, so it is important to inform private land owners and managers on ways to control pampas on lands they control.

This was my initial immersion into the vast territory of invasive plants in California. I am not a biologist. It’s been fascinating, frustrating, and rewarding, far beyond my initial response to Jerry Meral almost two years ago: “Yes, Jerry. That’s a great idea. Let’s do it.” It’s astonishing that removing an invasive plant from 10 miles of roadway in Inverness could be so convoluted and expensive. This project has taught me how staggeringly difficult it is to address control of the really invasive plants in our midst.

CHAPTER NEWSLETTER AVAILABLE ONLINE!

You can find a color PDF edition of this newsletter on the Marin chapter website by visiting www.marin.edu/cnps/newsletters.html.
MARCH 2011 NATIVE PLANT WALKS
Marin Chapter Field Trip News and Policies

Make some seedy pals with the Marin chapter of the California Native Plant Society. All hikes are free and open to the public, so please invite your friends. Beginning plant enthusiasts welcome on all hikes. Come prepared for any type of weather or conditions, dress in layers, have non-slip footwear, and bring rain/wind protection just in case. Although it may be sunny and warm when you leave home, the weather could be cold and foggy when we reach our destination. Bring lunch and plenty of water, binoculars and/or hand lenses, and your favorite field guides. Contact Brad Kelley, Field Trip Coordinator, at fieldtrips@bradkelley.org, for trip requests or suggestions. Contact hike Leaders with any questions about individual hikes.

Field Trip Plant Lists
Plant lists compiled by Marin CNPS for many Marin localities are available on the Marin Chapter CNPS website at http://www.marin.edu/cnps.

Barnaby Mountain
Saturday, March 6, 10 a.m.–3 p.m.

Another peak bagging trip! We’ll start out slow by checking out the endangered western leatherwood in bloom along Devil’s Gulch and then begin the climb through mixed evergreen forest. Along the way we will see the painful California nutmeg and, with luck, the beautiful calypso orchid.

Seven footbridges later, we reach the top for grand views next to the fire lookout and then descend quickly via the fire road past Taylor’s grave site to our cars. Strenuous; about seven miles and 1,200 foot altitude gain. This hike is especially suitable for beginning plant enthusiasts. Meet at the Devil’s Gulch parking area along Sir Francis Drake Blvd. in Samuel P. Taylor State Park. Rain cancels; call Dabney if in doubt.

Leader: Dabney Smith—(415) 320-9229

Bolinas Ridge from Olema Hill
Saturday, March 12, 10 a.m.–2 p.m.

The north end of Bolinas Ridge is mainly rolling hills, meadow flowers, and grassland with occasional Douglas fir forest. We’ll walk in view of the San Andreas Fault as far as we want and return by the same route. This hike is especially suitable for beginning plant enthusiasts. Meet at the parking area at the top of the hill on Sir Francis Drake Blvd. midway between Platform Bridge and Olema. Rain cancels; call Dabney if in doubt.

Leader: Dabney Smith—(415) 320-9229

Loma Alta from Big Rock
Sunday, March 20, 10 a.m.–2 p.m.

For the first day of spring, let’s visit a lesser-known but bountiful serpentine area in Marin. The lower part of the trail has many native wildflowers typical of this unusual soil. We’ll climb about 2.5 miles and gain 1000 feet in altitude to reach the top of Loma Alta and return by the same route. This hike is especially suitable for beginning plant enthusiasts. Meet at the Big Rock trailhead. From Highway 101 in San Rafael, take Lucas Valley Rd. west about five miles. The trailhead is beside the big rock at the crest of the hill. Rain cancels; call Dabney if in doubt.

Leader: Dabney Smith—(415) 320-9229

Cascade Canyon to the “Well”
Thursday, March 31, 10 a.m.

Join us for a stunning early wildflower hike through Cascade Canyon up to the “Well,” a pool surrounded by flower-covered banks and outcrops. On the way, we will pass through oak woodlands, serpentine grassland, chaparral, and streamside habitats. Last year at this time the bloom was amazing. The hike will start at the entrance of Elliot reserve in Fairfax.

Parking is limited; hikers should meet at Doc Edgar Park at 9:30 a.m. to carpool. To get there, turn onto Bolinas-Fairfax Rd. in downtown Fairfax. At the second stop sign, bear right onto Cascade Dr. There is a small park immediately on your right. The hike is five miles long, with an elevation gain of 700 feet. We should be back by 4 p.m.

Leader: Ashley Ratcliffe—(415) 868-0681

MILO BAKER CHAPTER HIKE
Montgomery Woods (Mendocino County)
Saturday, March 26, 9 a.m.

We’ll look at trees, shrubs, and vegetation types, using the recent revision of A Manual of California Vegetation to learn more about the structure and composition of plant communities. With winter rains and warming soils to our benefit, we’ll also explore the “Franciscan barrens,” rocky outcrops that are home to numerous spring-blooming annual wildflowers. We’ll meet at the Pruitt Creek trailhead gate (Orr Springs Road, about one mile east of the main Montgomery Woods parking lot) for a full day of spring revelry.

Leader: Peter Warner—(707) 829-1183; phytopagan@gmail.com

OPEN SPACE DISTRICT HIKES
For information, visit the Marin County Open Space District website at http://www.co.marin.ca.us/depts/PK/Main/mcosd/os_walks.asp or contact David Herlocker at (415) 499-3647.

Field trip information continued on page 5
MTIA ANNUAL WILDFLOWER WALK WITH BOTANISTS

The Mt. Tamalpais Interpretive Association (MTIA) is in the planning stages for the annual spring wildflower walk. Botanist preview and wildflower flagging on Friday, April 29 at 10 a.m. Hike is on Saturday, April 30 at 9:30 a.m. Botanists are needed either or both days. Meet at the Rock Spring parking lot/trailhead at the intersection of Pantoll Rd. and Ridgecrest Blvd.

Contact Jordan Herrmann, MTIA Event Chair, at herrmann48@comcast.net.

JOE KOHN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIPS

The Marin Chapter of the California Native Plant Society is pleased to announce the Joe Kohn Memorial Scholarships, in honor of a past president of the chapter who exemplified both the inquisitive spirit and the dedication to preservation of our local flora that our chapter wishes to encourage. Two scholarships will be awarded to students doing research on plants native to Marin at any accredited institution of higher education in the San Francisco Bay Area. A scholarship of $500 will be awarded to an undergraduate student and a scholarship of $1,000 will be awarded to a graduate student. Awards will be announced during California Native Plant Week.

Prospective applicants are encouraged to send the following to:

Joe Kohn Scholarship Committee

c/o Dr. Paul G. da Silva

Dept. of Life and Earth Sciences

College of Marin

Kentfield, CA 94904

1. Cover letter with a brief description of the research project, including research goals and methods and how it will contribute to understanding and/or conservation of a California native plant species

2. Recommendation/Statement of Qualifications from major Advisor

3. Copy of official transcript from the applicant’s institution.

Applications are due April 1, 2011. Awards will be announced by the Marin chapter by April 23, 2011.

SHOWY WEEDS OF THE MONTH

Text and photos by Doreen Smith

Every year someone contacts us about the identification of this showy weed; fortunately (or more likely unfortunately), Sparaxis tricolor is common in Marin. It is a perennial from South Africa in the Iris family that grows from a crocus-like corm. The color-form pictured is the most usual—a large, stunning, bright orange-red flower with black and yellow markings. If you Google the Latin name, other colors are shown there. The best (worst?) place to see multiple plants and different color-forms is the Bobcat fire road trail up from Rodeo Lagoon in the Marin Headlands. There are lots of native flowering plants along this trail as a consolation prize for putting up with the several South African species there, including Arctotheca prostrata (perennial capeweed), blamed upon “Klaus,” a rogue planter of such things. This trail also leads to marvelous views of the ocean from the top of the hill.

The other common showy weedy wildflower from South Africa is Romulea rosea. It’s also in the Iridaceae and similarly it will spread vegetatively from budding corms. Most often it is taken to be some rare Brodiaea.

Above: Sparaxis tricolor (harlequin flower)

Above: Romulea rosea (pink crocus)

WITH APPRECIATION

Thanks to the following members who worked to mail out the January–February 2011 newsletter!

Thelma Arlom, Gerd Jakob, Kristin Jakob, Carol Weiske, and Paul Kryloff
BOARD NEWS

We welcome our newest board member-at-large David Long. David has been interested in native plants for over 40 years and is a long-time member of CNPS. When he moved to Mill Valley in 1985, he took a number of botany and plant ID classes at Strybing Arboretum from Glen Keator and others. When Strybing ended its education program a few years ago, he had nearly enough courses for a certificate in ornamental horticulture. After a number of general courses on subjects like perennials and ground covers, and the creation of a front yard rock garden with mostly non-native plants, he lost interest in exotic plants and found that his only interest was California natives. This resulted in developing a back and side yard garden exclusively with California natives—about 200 species, over 90% of which are native to Marin. He has become an advocate for California natives in the garden and has used the garden to educate gardeners and others about the benefits of natives. Every year since its creation six years ago, the garden has been on garden tours (Eco-Friendly and National Garden Conservancy).

Board of Directors

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<td>Program Co-Chair</td>
<td>Charlotte Torgovitsky</td>
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<td>Amelia Ryan</td>
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<td>Daniel Kushner</td>
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<td>Doyleen McMurtry</td>
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<td>Conservation Chair</td>
<td>Eva Buxton</td>
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<td>Education</td>
<td>Paul da Silva</td>
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<td>Field Trips Coordinator</td>
<td>Brad Kelley</td>
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<td>Gardening with Natives Chair</td>
<td>Renee Fittinghoff</td>
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<td>Historian</td>
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<td>Invasives Chair</td>
<td>Open—Volunteer Needed</td>
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<td>Sandy Ross</td>
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David is also responsible for managing about four acres of open space owned by the Community Congregational Church of Tiburon. The property had become infested with broom, thistle, and exotic annual grasses. A team of volunteers from the church has made substantial progress in eliminating large stands of broom.

Last year, Joe Kohn, shortly before his death, recruited David to be a candidate for an open at-large seat on the Marin Integrated Pest Management Commission. However, because he was associated with CNPS, which has adopted a policy that balances the potential harm from herbicide use with the threat of invasive weeds to the ecosystem and natural environment, his candidacy drew opposition from those opposing the use of herbicides under any circumstances, and he was not selected for this position.

Until recently, he had an active legal practice representing children, parents, and school districts seeking equal and adequate educational opportunities, but he now limits his legal work to advice.

Joe Kohn Estate Book Donation

The Marin Chapter has been the recipient of Joe Kohn’s native plant book collection, and these will be brought to meetings and offered for sale. Joe was thirsty for knowledge on a wide range of plant and ecological subjects, and this is reflected in the scope of his library.
CNPS MEMBERSHIP/DONATIONS
The mission of California Native Plant Society is to conserve California native plants and their natural habitats, and increase understanding, appreciation, and horticultural use of native plants. Membership is open to everyone.

Join CNPS Now!
Membership includes informative publications, field trips, monthly programs, and discounts on books and posters. Also included are Fremontia (a journal with articles on all aspects of native plants published three times/year), the Bulletin (a quarterly statewide report of activities and schedules), and the chapter newsletter. Please call the membership chairperson, Ashley Ratcliffe, for more information.

Join or Renew Online
Renew your CNPS membership online using a credit card. As an option, set it to renew automatically year after year. It’s quick, easy, convenient, and reduces renewal mailing costs.

Join or Renew by Mail
Yes! I wish to affiliate with the Marin Chapter.
☐ New Member  ☐ Renewal

Membership Category:
☐ Mariposa Lily $1,500
☐ Benefactor $600
☐ Patron $300
☐ Plant Lover $100
☐ Family, Group, or Library $75
☐ Individual $45
☐ Student or Limited Income $25

Name
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Address
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Please mail application and check payable to CNPS to:
California Native Plant Society
2707 K St., Suite 1
Sacramento, CA 95816-5113

The IRS considers dues in excess of $12.00 per year and all gifts to CNPS Tax Deductible.

Newsletter Only
If you wish to receive only the newsletter, please make a $10 check payable to CNPS Marin and mail to: Daniel Kushner, 201 Ross St., San Rafael, CA 94901.
☐ Newsletter Subscription only  $10

Tax-Deductible Contributions
Tax-deductible contributions to the Marin Chapter are always welcome, either as memorial or honorarium donations or regular contributions. You may designate your contribution for a specific purpose of your choice. Unless otherwise designated, all contributions will be placed in the general fund, which will enable the Chapter to extend our efforts to plant conservation and education. Our regular, ongoing program and operating expenses are largely covered by our plant sales and book and poster sales.

A contribution of $_______ is made in honor of:
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Mail check payable to CNPS to: Daniel Kushner, 201 Ross St., San Rafael, CA 94901.

CNPS Contact Information
Phone  (916) 447-2677 (state)
Fax  (916) 447-2727 (state)
Email  cnps@cnps.org (state)
Web  www.cnps.org (state) The state CNPS site is a resource for a wealth of materials, including promotional materials such as banners and posters.
Visit us at www.marin.edu/cnps!

ANNUAL MARIN CHAPTER PLANT SALE

Saturday, April 9, 9 a.m.–1 p.m.

The sale will take place at the Richardson Bay Audubon Center & Sanctuary, 376 Greenwood Beach Rd., Tiburon. Plants will be delivered to, and donated plants accepted at the Center on Thursday April 7, between 12 noon and 3 p.m. If you have any special plant requests, are growing plants for the sale, would like to volunteer to help set up on the 7th, or can help in any way on the 9th during the sale, please contact Kristin Jakob at kristinjakob@pacbell.net, (415) 388-1844 or Renee Fittinghoff at reene94941@gmail.com.

GGNRA RARE PLANT MONITORING

Help gather crucial data on rare plant populations in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) while enjoying some of the most spectacular areas of the park. Monitoring sessions are limited to 20 participants, so please RSVP at least two days in advance by calling (415) 561-2857 or sending an email to michael_chasse@nps.gov. Open to events to park staff, interns, and CNPS members only.

- Thursday, March 3, 9:30 a.m.–3 p.m.: Olema Valley (Fritillaria lanceolata)
- Thursday, March 24, 9:30 a.m.–3 p.m.: Tennessee Valley (Cirsium andrewsii)

GET YOUR COPY OF THE REVISED MARIN FLORA!

Now available: the long-awaited, 2007 revised edition of John Thomas Howell’s classic Marin Flora (originally published in 1949). Copies of the book are available at chapter meetings and most field trips. You can also print out an order form at the chapter website (www.marin.edu/cnps).

Prices: Hard cover Soft cover
Retail $45 (plus $3.49 tax) $35 (plus $2.71 tax)
CNPS members (20% off) $36 (plus $2.79 tax) $28 (plus $2.17 tax)

CNPS ONLINE INVENTORY OF RARE AND ENDANGERED PLANTS

CNPS has released an updated version of the Online Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants, a primary data reference for information about the conservation status of over 2,200 of California’s rare and endangered plants. The new Online Inventory is available for use at www.rareplants.cnps.org.