Native Plant Horticulturist to Speak at Chapter Meeting

Jepson Chapter and the Solano College Horticulture Club are cohosting a program featuring Bart O'Brien, one of the State’s leading experts on native plant horticulture. Bart will discuss horticultural practices for California native plants, with an emphasis on drought tolerant natives. The program is scheduled for September 10 at 6:00 PM at Solano Community College, Horticulture Building 1000, 4000 Suisun Valley Road, Fairfield, CA. This program is free and open to the public.

Chapter Seeks Grant for Native Plant Nursery

In 2017, the California Native Plant Society initiated a grant program to provide matching funds to Chapters who wish to upgrade their native plant nurseries to be consistent with CNPS-recommended clean nursery practices. In July, the Jepson Chapter completed the first step in the grant application process by meeting with CNPS representative Vivian Neou at the native plant nursery in Vallejo to discuss the proposed upgrades. Vivian is manager of the Santa Clara Valley Chapter’s native plant nursery and has recently completed upgrades to that nursery to be consistent with CNPS’s best management practices for growing pathogen-free nursery stock.

The Jepson Chapter is growing more plants from seed, which is a cleaner production process but requires plants to be held by the nursery for a longer time period until they are ready for sale. As a result, the nursery needs a larger shade structure to accommodate the young plants. A grant is sought to help purchase a larger shade structure and install a new irrigation system to water the plants more efficiently.

The Jepson Chapter Board of Director is hoping to complete the grant application process in the next month and begin work on the nursery upgrades after the October 6th Plant Sale at Heritage Presbyterian Church in Benicia.
Wild Delights: Cooking with Blue Elderberries

The August 2018 Newsletter by the Friends of the East Bay Regional Parks includes a feature story by Anne Wingings, a naturalist, gardener and writer, on how to harvest and cook with wild elderberries. Blue elderberry, or Sambucus nigra spp. Caerulea, is a native shrub commonly found in riparian ecosystems and associated open savannas in California’s Great Central Valley. As the sole host for the federally-threatened Valley elderberry longhorn beetle (VELB), blue elderberry is a protected plant species in California. A variety of regulations have been established to protect the two species from further declines in the Central Valley. Fortunately, Blue elderberry is a common component of riparian ecosystems along Putah Creek between Solano and Yolo counties.

Save the Date: Coastal Clean-Up, September 15th

Solano County  COASTAL CLEANUP DAY is nearly here! Please join your neighbors on Saturday, Sept 15th across the county, and at Lake Berryessa, to clean up our land and waterways. The Solano Resource Conservation District and others are working to get 3,000 volunteers this year and YOU are needed to help make that happen. Information on how to sign up will be provided on the Jepson Chapter website.
Plant of the Month: Festuca californica, ‘California fescue’

This semi-evergreen cool-season perennial bunch grass is good for slopes and under trees. Grows in part shade and sun, its stiff arching blades of green or blue-gray form a graceful clump 2’ or more in height. This cool-season grass grows quickly through winter and early spring before large airy flower spikes rise 1’ to 3’ above the foliage, blooming from April through June and then maturing a golden yellow hue. Drought tolerant near the coast because of its deep fibrous root structure, it will stay green year-round inland with some supplemental watering. It prefers fertile soil but will tolerate serpentine. Clean it up in late fall with a stiff rake, or cut to the ground to promote new growth. F. californica can be propagated by seed, but is best propagated by division. Native stands grow primarily on north slopes or under deciduous oaks in Mixed Evergreen and Yellow Pine Forest communities of the coast ranges from Monterey county north. This bunch grass will be available at the October 6 plant sale.

Volunteer Event at Jepson Native Plant Nursery
September 8th, 10AM to Noon, Vallejo

Meet at the Vallejo Flood and Wastewater District gate at 47 Solano Avenue. The tasks involve getting our plants ready for the Native Plant Sale in October. No prior experience is needed. Tools, instructions and snacks will be provided. The nursery is located in the Wastewater District’s corporation yard, which is a secured area. All volunteers must wear closed-toe shoes and hardhats. We have hardhats. Please RSVP to Barbara at breiley45@yahoo.com because we need to provide the Wastewater District with the names of all guests on their property, and we need to give you directions for getting through the gate.