

Gardening with Natives Symposium: Creating Native Landscapes

The typical suburban backyard has an area of groomed lawn, flower beds which follow the fence line and a tree or three to provide shade. In contrast, native habitats have free-flowing lines and often random, organic distributions of plants located in the exact spot which best favors their growth. Native habitats are home to pollinators such as native bees and support a wide variety of wildlife. They can bloom profusely and can also provide dramatic contrasts in textures and form. They can be self-sustaining through periods of summer drought and are refreshed during our cool, wet California winters.

Are you interested in adding native plants to your garden? Do you wish to “weather-proof” your landscape? Want to attract native pollinators to an organic garden? Interested in attracting and supporting wildlife? Would you like to be able to garden in a way that’s evocative of our sense of place in the Sierra Nevada foothills? Are you curious? If so, then “Gardening with Natives: Creating Native Landscapes” is for you. The Sierra Foothills Chapter of the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) will present its annual Gardening with Natives Symposium on Saturday, September 9, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Sierra Building of the Mother Lode Fairgrounds on Stockton Street in Sonoma, CA.

The keynote speaker this year is Bonnie Bladen of Intermountain Nursery. Bonnie collected seeds while hiking in the Sierra to give to her future husband, Raymond Laclergue, who started Intermountain Nursery in 1980 in Prather, Calif. Raymond has a horticulture degree from UC Davis and studied propagation with a local Mono Indian woman. Bonnie has a forestry degree from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. After they were married 25 years ago, Bonnie and Raymond attempted to grow every native plant they could find by seed or cuttings just to see if they could. Intermountain Nursery has 11 demonstration gardens where they test out California native plants to see how they grow and to showcase the various native species at their full size. Besides a full line of low water use plants, they currently specialize in four species of local native milkweed, *Carpenteria californica*, which is endemic to Fresno County, and pine trees for homeowners wishing to replant. They also grow site-specific plants for Yosemite National Park, PG&E, the Forest Service, and land conservation organizations. They practice forestry on 240 acres of conservation land they own in the Sierra. More information about Intermountain Nursery can be found on their website, <http://www.intermountainnursery.com> and on their Facebook page.

Bonnie’s talk is titled ‘California Native plants for Landscapes in Valley locations, the Sierra Foothills and Mountains.’ She’ll have photos and a plant list showcasing California native plants appropriate for landscape use over a wide range of locations. Her talk will include plant requirements, planting tips, plant combinations and communities.

John Whittlesey operated Canyon Creek Nursery - a mail order nursery specializing in uncommon perennials - for twenty years. A graduate of the California School of Garden Design, he is now a garden designer/landscape contractor with an emphasis on drought-tolerant/wildlife-friendly gardens. John’s talk is titled ‘Keeping Company with Flowers - Native Plants for the Garden and the Pollinators They Attract.’

Meteorologist Rob Carlmark has been forecasting weather in California for the majority of his decade-long career. You can watch Rob Monday through Friday on ABC10 early in the morning.

His talk is titled “Gardening's Green Future in the Mother Lode: Adapting to Change.” He describes it this way: The last 5 years in California have been truly historic in the weather world. From record rain and snow, to drought, to another round of record rain it's been tough to figure out which California we will get in any given year.

Registration is \$40 for CNPS members; \$50 for non-members and includes lunch, morning and afternoon snacks, and program hand-outs. Participants will also receive a list of native plants that will be available at the upcoming October native plant sale, thus allowing you to plan additions to your garden recommended by symposium speakers.

More information and a down-loadable registration form are available here:

http://www.sierrafoothillscnps.org/cnps_wp/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/2017-Garden_Natives_Symposium-Brochure_061417_Final.pdf

The Sierra Foothills Chapter of the California Native Plant Society sponsors the Gardening with Natives Symposium, with support and assistance from University of California Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners of Tuolumne County and the UCCE Central Sierra Natural Resources program. Author of this article is Francie McGowan who is a California Cooperative Extension Master Gardener of Tuolumne County.