

Loasa – *The Newsletter*

March 2006



Trifolium macrocephalum - Big-head Clover - Little City of Rocks

Our bloom has begun!
Now is a great time to enjoy our early spring wildflowers. The INPS Rare Plant Conference was held in February, and I am pleased to report that Sage Notes will again be produced and distributed to INPS members (such as yourself). This is important because it gives you additional opportunities for participation with other chapters, and Loasa will be holding our 1st board elections ever! Truly our bloom has begun!

Calendar

- Mar 16th, 2006 Monthly Meeting – Julie Regula – Nativescape design
ELECTIONS – Please come and vote!
Room 258 of the Taylor Building at CSI 7-9 pm
- Apr 20th, 2006 Monthly Meeting – Shane Claborn –
Water conservation, Twin Falls and native plants.
Room 258 of the Taylor Building at CSI 7-9 pm
- Apr 29th, 2006 Field Trip – Cotterel Mountains – all day
Details inside – contact Kent (420 4914) to RSVP
- May 18th, 2006 Monthly Meeting – to be announced
Room 258 of the Taylor Building at CSI 7-9 pm
- May 20th, 2006 Field Trip – Cotterel Mountains – all day
- Jun 15th, 2006 Field Trip – Cotterel Mountains – all day
- Jun 23-25, 2006 INPS Annual meeting – Farragut state park
- Jun 28th, 2006 Field Trip – Mt Harrison – after work

Elections

Elections will take place at the March meetings. The nomination committee has developed the following slate to be voted upon:

President – Kelvin Jones Vice-president – no candidate
Secretary – Lois Rohay Treasurer – Steven Paulsen
Newsletter – Kent Fothergill
Members at large (choose two) –
Shane Claborn John Meyer Julie Randell

This is a very exciting time in our chapter's development, as we are finally achieving the level of growth to be able to offer some really wonderful benefits to our membership.

Cotterel Mountain Field Trips

The Cotterel Mountains offer some of the most spectacular high desert botany in our area. Incredible views, *Pediocactus*, and so much more await us. These trips will explore the easily accessed center of the range from which we can explore low sage, big sage, juniper, mountain mahogany, and other communities. The trips will start from CSR World HQ in Kimberly where we will arrange car pools and then proceed to the Cotterels. The trip will consist of botanizing on foot the area near where we park, and then enjoying our brown bag lunches at the BLM picnic area in the aspens. After our luncheon, the group will split into those who wish to continue botanizing and enjoying the mountains on foot (or go home) and those who wish to mountain bike into much less accessible areas to do some extreme botany! Please contact Kent Fothergill (420 4914 or kent@csr-inc.com) to RSVP.

Recent Meetings

Our January Meeting with Lane Hall was extremely informative and interesting. In addition to vast amounts of Penstemon knowledge, Lane also shared very generous quantities of Penstemon seed. The board meeting had nine attendees and as you can see from our calendar, newsletter, and upcoming elections was extremely successful. Our February meeting was changed to a fun presentation on how to shoot flowers – digital photography basics for plants.

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Systematic Botany Workshops (Sys-bot Lite)

Systematic botany is the process through which by understanding plant structure botanists are able to place plants within families, genera, species, and varieties or subspecies. It is nothing mystical, given the correct information most people will find themselves able to utilize this process to identify the majority of the plants they encounter. This is not the memorization of individual species; it is learning how to utilize observation skills and plant keys to arrive at species identification. A rose may smell as sweet regardless of name, but knowing whether the rose is *Rosa nutkana* or *woodsii* may prove useful. These workshops will be highly participatory. Maximum benefit will be achieved by coupling the workshops with the upcoming field trips (see our calendar). Workshop participants will be encouraged to make collections (these can be physical, photographic, written or ??) and engage in projects that will further the participants knowledge of botany and also help further Idaho's knowledge of native plants. Workshop times and places are currently being developed and will be available in the next newsletter.

Why Native Plants for Arid Gardens?

Native plants are exquisitely adapted to Idaho climates and soils, and as such are a large part of what makes our Magic Valley magical. This botanical richness is diminished by invasions of non-native weeds that disrupt native plant communities and the ecosystem services they provide. Often even our land and wildlife management agencies will utilize non-natives to accomplish their goals for reasons of expediency or cost or because use of non-natives has become a standard operating procedure.

Russian olive and salt cedar were invited into our place, and we continue to invite even more plants into South-central Idaho. As arid gardening begins to sweep the Magic Valley be aware that the same characteristics that make a plant desirable in a home landscape (easy to grow) may also predispose this plant for invasion into Idaho's rangelands.

Myrtle spurge, a beautiful, but non-native plant that is currently being sold and planted as an arid gardening solution in Idaho is also an "A" listed noxious weed in the state of Colorado and currently invading the Boise foothills. Please consider your plant choices as you begin your gardening this spring...

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