

Special Interest Articles:

- NRCS California Plant Material Strategic Plan
- Summary of the Elkhorn Slough Watershed Grass Trial
- Lessons learned about people and living with plants
- Seed company trials in Los Alamos

Individual Highlights:

PMC Meeting
Trial Notes
Ethnobotany
California Brome



Friends of Manzanita Park weed workers

*United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service
California State Plant Material Committee, Central Coast Cluster Newsletter
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NRCS Plant Material Committee Meets in Salinas

On May 2nd and 3rd the California Plant Materials Committee held its annual meeting in Salinas. Discussion topics included the draft California PMC Strategic Plan, the status of the new Vegetative Guide, now available through the Calflora website (ask your PMC or Area Office representative for assistance), Conservation Field Trials and reports from Area Office representatives about local activities. Presentations and updates were given by Plant Material

Center Managers for the Lockeford, CA, Corvallis, OR and Fallon, NV. Randy Paris presented an Oak Woodland brochure which she has developed

The group went on a tour to North Monterey County to Manzanita Regional County Park and met with Sally Childs for a walk around to look at endangered Yadon's rein orchid and Pajaro and Hooker's Manzanita. Diane Holcomb presented Sally and the Friends of Manzanita Park with a certificate of appreciation from the NRCS

for their exceptional work in protecting the park and Monterey County from invasive plants such as jubata grass, French broom and yellow star thistle. WOW!



State Plant Material Committee learns about Monterey Pine and pitch canker at Manzanita Park

Elkhorn Slough Watershed Conservation Field Trial

During the tour of North Monterey County the State Plant Materials Committee visited the Elkhorn Grass Trials at the Agriculture and Land Based Training Association's (ALBA), Triple M Ranch in Las Lomas.



Twenty seven native and introduced species of grass where tested on the farm over a three year period to

collect information on percent cover, height and persistence in a coastal environment. Results will be used to recommend grass species for conservation practices to prevent soil erosion, wildlife habitat uses, water quality protection and grazing management. Several native grass species performed well in the trial due to their growth habit, persistence or weed competition. Some of the top performers included 'Blando' brome, 'Zorro' annual fescue, 'Rio' creeping wildrye, 'Berber' orchardgrass, Intermediate wheatgrass, Deer grass, Idaho fescue,

'Molate' red fescue, and Pacific fescue. The Triple M Ranch is a farm training center where local limited resource farmers learn about sustainable agricultural practices. Some vegetative practices that are planted at the Triple M include Hedgerows, Contour Buffer Strips, Grassed Waterway, Wetland Enhancement, Streambank Protection and Cover Cropping. The trial has helped ALBA and other land managers make decisions about which grasses will work in a typical sandy slope farming environment in the Elkhorn Slough Watershed.

Ethnobotany on the Central Coast



Eth-nō-bot'-a-ny:

The study of the relationship between plants and people.

Highlights at a symposium of the 60th Annual Meeting of the Society for Range Management (SRM) held in Sparks, Nevada, in February. Acknowledging the strong ties Native Americans have with the land, their viewpoints and traditions served as a primer about the complex spectrum of ways in which people have historically and traditionally used, managed, and interacted with landscapes and their various plant communities. The large gathering of over 200 learned that lands commonly viewed or economically valued as livestock grazing areas are actually held in a broader perspective by Native Americans. Native Americans view landscapes and their plant communities not only as essential to their lives,

but also as integral and inseparable from their ways of life.

Lucy Parker of the California Indian Basketweavers Association showcased how Native Americans use reeds, shrubs, grasses and trees to make baskets, mats and other woven products, while Burton Pete and Ken McAdoo showcased plant materials used in weaponry, such as bows and arrows, and techniques employed to make them.

"These traditional techniques are often viewed as primitive", according to Reina Rogers, "but symposium participants learned that they are actually quite sophisticated and elegant, in that they reflect unique plant characteristics such as tensile strength, power or durability."

The recent ethnobotany symposium was one way for SRM to engage traditional American Indians in sharing their experiences and knowledge with others, according to Rogers. "Our goal for this symposium was to spark an interest in people to better understand a broader view of people's traditional connection to plants in their own local work areas." By Lisa Hokholt, NRCS California Outreach Specialist



S and S Seeds Field Trials and California Brome



On April 20, 2006, S & S Seeds held its annual Growing Grounds Tour at Rancho de las Flores in Las Alamos. The BBQ was served in the barn, and more than 100 participants got a wagon ride through the fields of native plants, flowers and grasses. The fields were primed to perfection, and the group got a first-hand

glimpse of the garden beds of perennials and annuals led by S & S staff members Ben Miller, Bruce Berlin and other seed experts. One of the surprises on the tour was a trial planting of California brome, *Bromus carinatus*, that is being tested on the Central Coast and at other northern and southern California locations.

The brome trials are part of the Lockeford, PMC study for plant selection and release. California brome is widely used in restoration plantings on the west coast. The planting is a cooperative effort between the NRCS and S & S Seeds to collect and produce seed with exceptional performance traits and genetic integrity.

Newsletter Information

The Central Coast Cluster Newsletter is an employee publication that is intended to provide a forum for posting projects, activities and information about plant material topics. To submit articles please contact Cheryl.lambert@ca.usda.gov

The 2007 NRCS State Plant Material Committee



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