



OAK LEAVES

A PUBLICATION OF THE LOS OSOS / MORRO BAY CHAPTER OF SMALL WILDERNESS AREA PRESERVATION
P.O. BOX 6442, LOS OSOS, CALIFORNIA 93412-6442 ❖ (805) 546-1199 ❖ AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 1999

Alien Invasion, Part 1:

Smilax

By *Pete Sarafian, Conservation Chair*

This is the first in a series of articles on alien plant species that are invading the Elfin Forest. Unchecked, the aliens will take over and destroy the plants which have been part of the Elfin Forest for centuries. It is hoped that these aliens may be made more recognizable to members of SWAP and the Los Osos community. We hope that community members who enjoy the Elfin Forest will want to sign up to assist SWAP and San Luis Obispo County Parks Department in controlling these pests. Community involvement could make a big difference in restoring and maintaining the health of the park for the long term.

Smilax (*Asparagus asparagoides*) is a member of the lily family which originated in South Africa. The plant can be recognized readily by its blanketing of oak groves, particularly those near 11th through 13th Streets. A flourishing example can be seen currently in the large grove just to the left as one faces the bay at the west end of the boardwalk (Bush Lupine Point).

It is a vine that rises and spreads from underground tuberous roots, reaching up to available host vegetation and entwining its way to the top of the leaf canopy in groves of pygmy oaks or other native plants. The smilax vine can be recognized by its small (1/2 to 3/4 inch long), shiny green leaves. The leaves alternate on opposite sides of the stem. Crushing the plant between the fingers leaves a pungent, disagreeable odor. The vine grows and spreads so rapidly that it

The vine grows and spreads so rapidly that it smothers ground cover such as hedge nettle, bee flower and bracken ferns, etc. It also smothers the overlying oak, holly-leaf cherry or manzanita groves in a dense blanket of smilax foliage. Competing for moisture, nutrients and sunlight, the fast-growing vine can devastate the slower growing natives. It also

Smilax *continued on page 7*

The Boardwalk Plant Monitor: Stephen Dreher

By *Yolanda Waddell*

Whether in the jungles of Central America or the oak groves and manzanita thickets of the Elfin Forest, Stephen Dreher is completely at home anywhere there are plants.

While living in Los Angeles, Dreher managed a native plant nursery for the Theodore Payne Foundation. Interestingly, he was a PBS television producer and editor before that, with a bachelor's degree from the New York University Film School. Currently, he is working toward a master's degree in plant ecology at Cal Poly, and is keenly interested in the great variety of plants and plant communities in the Elfin Forest. He has been hired by County Parks, under the auspices of Dr. V.L. Holland, to minimize the impact of boardwalk construction on the plants of the Elfin Forest.

We sat down on the edge of the boardwalk for an interview after a weed pulling session one Saturday. Stephen had discovered yellow star-thistle, a very invasive plant, in the Celestial Meadow, and the SWAP weeding team was called out. Stephen came out to direct us to the star-thistle, and to collect seeds for revegetation of disturbed areas in the Elfin Forest.

I asked Stephen what he does as the boardwalk plant monitor. He gave me quite a list. His job involves: redirecting the boardwalk if it will impact sensitive plants; making the decision whether to narrow the walk where a greater width would cause plants to be destroyed (most of the boardwalk which passes through the lower part of the Elfin Forest has been narrowed to around 3 feet wide); trimming vegetation if needed to direct the walk; trimming oak trees if needed — he is the only person authorized to do this.

He has also written a Revegetation Plan, assessing the health of the Elfin Forest and making long-term recommendations for controlling invasive plants and replanting disturbed areas. As mentioned, he is currently collecting site-specific native plant seeds as they ripen. The Revegetation Plan has three phases. Phase 1 includes monitoring the boardwalk construction and collecting seed; Phase 2 will involve planting seed and cuttings during the winter of 1999-2000; and Phase 3 is a long-term plan for controlling invasive plants and eliminating most of the "short cut"

Dreher *continued on page 2*

Elfin Forest Update

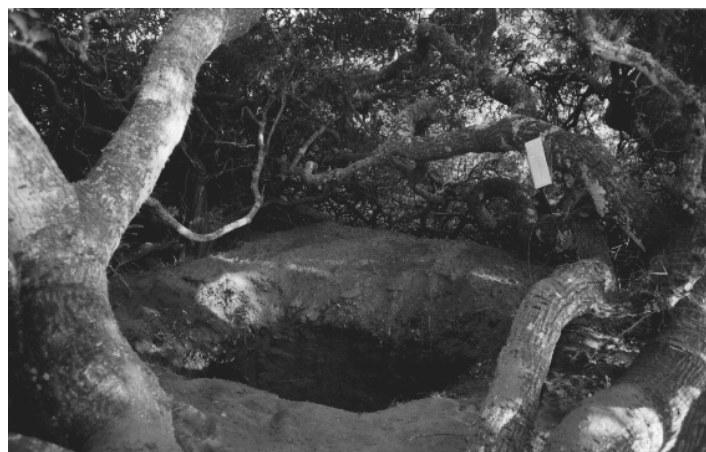
By Jan DiLeo, County Parks Planner

The California Conservation Corps (CCC) is now working on the Celestial Meadow portion of the boardwalk and completing the Bush Lupine Lookout. The Celestial Meadow portion of the boardwalk is fairly narrow, having a width 3 feet to 3.5 feet. Sections of the Celestial Meadow boardwalk are located under a pygmy oak canopy, providing a different walking experience than the Ridge Trail portion. To protect vegetation, the CCC has been working with Stephen Dreher, the project's onsite biologist. Dreher reviews the boardwalk corridor determining what and how vegetation may be trimmed. This ensures that plants such as pygmy oak and Morro manzanita are not damaged, and that the County is staying consistent with United States Fish and Wildlife Service requirements. Dreher has also been busy collecting seeds and preparing an Elfin Forest restoration plan. The seeds collected onsite will be used to restore degraded areas within the forest.

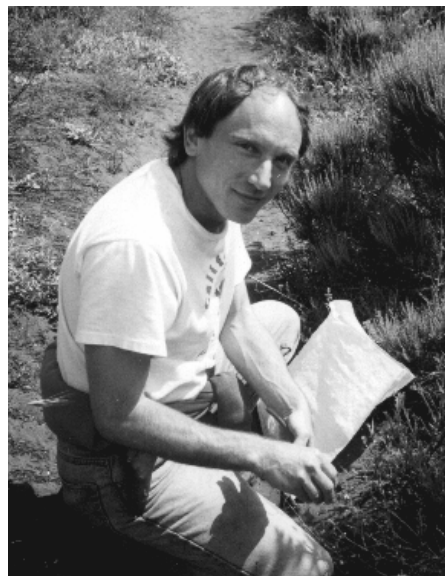
In late June the County received notification that construction may begin on State Parks property. State Parks owns the northern portion of the Elfin Forest including the lookout area known as Mayhem Point. Once the Celestial Trail portion is completed, the CCC will start construction on the boardwalk segment connecting the Celestial Trail to Mayhem Point (renamed Siena's View). This section will also be narrow (3 feet to 3.5 feet wide) since it contains sensitive plants and dense vegetation.

County staff and the Elfin Forest Sign Committee will be meeting in July. The Sign Committee is responsible for all signs proposed for the Elfin Forest (including interpretive displays, monuments, and informational signs). Five interpretive displays are planned within the forest. In addition, other signs are proposed. These signs will direct boardwalk users to stay on the boardwalk, keep their dog on a leash, and to pick up after their pet. According to the biologist, dog feces are having a negative impact on the forest. Reminding patrons to keep their dogs leashed and having users pick up after their animals will significantly help the Elfin Forest habitat.

Recently some vandalism was noticed in the forest. It appears that some local youths were involved. County staff is working with the families of the youth to mitigate forest impacts. More details on this issue will be provided at a later date.



Dreher continued from page 1



Stephen Dreher, botanist for the Boardwalk Project, is collecting seeds from native plants in the Elfin Forest for revegetation of disturbed areas.

trails. Stephen expressed great concern about the invasive plants in the Elfin Forest, especially smilax, a fast-growing vine which is destroying some of the mature oak groves. As explained in a related article in this issue (by Conservation Chair Pete Sarafian), the smilax climbs into the oak canopy and cuts off light, thus inhibiting growth. The vine also “steals” water from the oaks. Smilax plus other three other invasives: veldt grass, cape ivy,

and slender-leaved iceplant (see Dr. Dirk Walter's article in this issue) can destroy the Elfin Forest if left unchecked. However, through the dedication and work of active SWAP members, and the energetic guidance of Stephen Dreher, this is not likely to

Where To Call, Where To Write

If you have questions about SWAP activities or want to volunteer, please call our phone message service at 546-1199.



A recorded message will have information about the Third Saturday Walks and other current events.



If you have questions, concerns or comments about anything that's happening in the Elfin Forest, call or write:

Pete Jenny, SLO County Parks Facilities Manager,
1087 Santa Rosa Street, SLO, CA 93408, (805) 781-5930.

Summer time is fort-building time — but NOT in the Elfin Forest!

Fortunately this hole was discovered before the young fort builders were able to continue any further with their project.

However, in digging the hole, they cut through some roots of the oak tree near it, which is estimated to be 150 years old. This will shorten the tree's life, perhaps killing it within 5 to 10 years.

The young miscreants will be assigned to community service instead of being charged and fined. (*\$25,000 per infraction for destroying County Parks trees*)

The Boardwalk Archaeology Monitor: Dr. John Parker

By Sandra Beebe

Dr. John Parker is the archeologist who took on the task of examining the finds during the on-going construction of the Elfin Forest Boardwalk. I met him in the archaeology lab in an old building on the Cal Poly campus where he spends his weekends uncovering the history of the Chinese in San Luis Obispo. It would be difficult to encounter anyone with more enthusiasm for his work than Dr. Parker.

Dr. Parker is a Californian who grew up in the San Jose area. After earning his B.A. from Sonoma College, he did graduate work at U.C. Davis. He became very interested in the history of the Chumash Indians in California and became, gradually, more and more involved in that area of study. After receiving his M.A. he continued his research. UCLA was very impressed by his accomplishments and invited him to do his graduate work for his Ph.D. there.

As someone who does not like the congested cosmopolitan life, he moved to the beautiful and less populated area of San Luis Obispo in 1992. His philosophy is that you should find some place you love, move there, and then find a way to make your living. He has done just that. Since moving here he has taught at Cuesta College, been a docent at Hearst Castle, and worked as a private consultant for projects such as the Elfin Forest Boardwalk.

He describes an archeological site as a volume in a set of encyclopedias. Archeologists read some of the pages, and even though their excavations destroy some of the pages, their documentation registers some of the mysteries of past civilizations. By studying a site, he feels we can better understand the effects of population, land area, natural occurrences, and illnesses on a society. He wants to understand the "big picture" so that future cultures can learn from the experiences of the past.

The Elfin Forest Boardwalk is an interesting challenge.. Dr. Parker inspects the area ahead of the CCC crew's construction 2-3 times each week, and is present at all times when they dig for footings. He takes some samples from each hole for Carbon 14 dating.



Dr. John Parker, archaeologist for the Boardwalk Project, examining an artifact and shells gathered in the Elfin Forest for carbon dating.

The crew working on the boardwalk has been given information by him, to help them understand what they are finding and its possible significance. They bag up any findings, which he brings back to his archeology lab for examination. In addition, he is accompanied by a Native American monitor, Leilynn Odom, because any human remains which are found must be returned to the "local most likely descendant." Many environmental changes have taken place where Elfin Forest is now located. By examining his findings, Dr. Parker is learning about these changes – where did the shoreline use to be, how old is the dune system, and what effects did these changes have on the Chumash Indian population? These questions are not only of academic interest, they will help us make better decisions for our future.

Dr. Parker is an absorbing lecturer and any opportunity to

North Coast SWAP Chapter Making Progress

The newest chapter of SWAP, located in Cambria, California, will be known as North Coast SWAP. Their current project - which prompted the chapter's formation, is raising funds for purchase of the East West Ranch, so called because it occupies land both east and west of Highway One. The American Land Conservancy has been negotiating with the current owners of the ranch during the past year, and in July the State Attorney General approved the ALC's property appraisal which is also satisfactory with the owners. This is good news for North Coast SWAP, which now can begin putting together the funds to purchase the ranch.

More news about the new chapter and the ranch will appear in a future Oakleaves.



O A K L E A V E S

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Contributors to this issue:

Sandra Beebe, Katie Davis, Jan DiLeo,
Bob McDougale, Pete Sarafian, Yolanda Waddell,
and Dirk Walters

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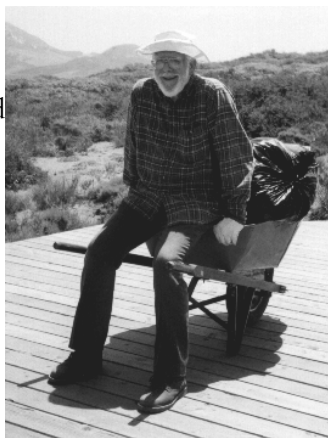
From the Chair

By Bob McDougale

Your SWAP Board of Directors has been reconstituted with new bylaws, new committee definitions and a new slate of officers and board members. There are several board and committee positions yet to be filled but the core of the organization is in place and working well. I am very pleased with the quality of new board and committee members and with the enthusiasm with which they have embarked upon their responsibilities.

I may be somewhat over-optimistic but I have great hopes that we will soon be able to start on a search for additional land to set aside for the future. We still have our hands full with responsibilities at the Elfin Forest, but this may be the time to continue the SWAP mission as stated in the bylaws, "...to protect small but significant natural areas from adverse impacts of increasing urbanization."

There are other organizations in our area with a similar purpose and it may be in our best interest to ally our efforts with them. MEGA has recently been successful in the acquisition of some prime coastal dune scrub in Los Osos. Your Board will be considering the opportunities and our capabilities in future meetings, and will keep you informed as events unfold.



Bob McDougale, recently elected Chair of the Swap Board of Trustees, finds that a wheelbarrow makes a comfortable chair after a morning of pulling

Help Wanted (And Really Needed!)

In the past few months, SWAP has been blessed with a wonderful new group of volunteers who are working hard to carry on SWAP's dual missions of conservation and education. However, for our chapter to function efficiently and without causing our committee members to burn out, we are asking for your help. Here are some of the more urgent needs:

Pete Sarafian, Conservation Chair, along with Ann Calhoun who telephones the folks who have helped with weeding and other projects, would like to hear from you. Beginning in August, there will be a monthly Elfin Forest work morning on the first Saturday of each month, from 9:00 a.m. to noon. Meet Pete Sarafian at the north end of 15th Street. Phone 528-5465 or 528-3194 to be added to the phone list for First Saturdays.

Jim Weldon, Volunteer Chair, wants to re-start some of our dormant committees, such as Community Outreach; Nominating; Property, Records and Archives; and Resource (fund raising and grant writing).

Would you like to:

Design, set up or work at booths?

Give talks about the Elfin Forest and SWAP?

Organize special fund raising events?

Write grant applications?

Organize files and set up our storage unit for easier access by board and committee members?

Organize and label the SWAP history photo albums?

Organize our slides and set up slide trays for our slide talks?

Help to produce a trail guide and docent training manual?

Give school walks in the Elfin Forest?

Help to set up neighborhood "Adopt-A-Grove" teams?

Volunteer for something that we haven't mentioned?

Then call Jim Weldon, 534-1834, and chat with him about what's involved in volunteering for SWAP.

New SWAP Officers and Committee Chairs

At the first SWAP Board meeting after the special May 3rd election meeting, the board elected officers for the remainder of 1999.

They are: Bob McDougale, Chair; Jim Weldon, Vice Chair, Bob McDougale, Treasurer; and Beth Wimer, Secretary. Other members of the Board are Katie Davis, Membership Committee Chair, Pete Sarafian, Conservation Committee Chair; and Yolanda Waddell, Walks Committee Chair. Jim Weldon also chairs the Volunteer Committee and Beth Wimer is Chair of the Education Committee.

SWAP BOARD MEETINGS

The SWAP Board of Directors generally meets on the second Monday of each Month at 7 p.m. However our August Board meeting will be held on August 16th, the third Monday, and in September we will return to the regular schedule, meeting on Monday, September 13. The SWAP Board meets at the NEP Office, 3rd and El Moro Streets in Baywood Park. All Board meetings are open to the public. To confirm the date, time and location (which are subject to change), phone 528-4540.

august 16

september 13

THIRD SATURDAY WALKS

August 21 – 9:30 a.m.

Join biologist Stephen Dreher for a walk and talk about habitat restoration. Steve has been surveying plants and collecting seeds from native plants in the Elfin Forest in order to plan and carry out restoration along the boardwalk route. He will also talk about the insects, invertebrates, birds and animals which depend upon the plants in the Elfin Forest for food and cover.

September 18 – 9:30 a.m.

Les Bowker, Cal Poly ecology instructor, will conduct a delightful "how things work" tour of the Elfin Forest. He will share his fascination with the way soil, sun, fog and wind affect the plants, animals, birds and insects of the forest, and how all have developed unique survival methods in their dry and sandy environment. Join this special walk and learn about the "bump-bump" plant.

October 16 – 8:00 a.m.

This walk will begin at 8:00 a.m. because walk leader Jim Royer, an avid birder and active Audubon member for almost 20 years, knows that the early birder sees the most birds. Jim will guide bird enthusiasts to places in the Elfin Forest where they can see the striking Spotted Towhee, hear the ping-pong sound of the Wrentit and look at shorebirds and ducks through a spotting scope. Bring binoculars.

Walks in the Elfin Forest begin at 9:30 a.m. (unless otherwise noted) at the north end of 15th Street off Santa Ysabel in Los Osos.

*Wear comfortable shoes,
long sleeves and pants to avoid poison oak.
Please park carefully, avoiding driveways and mailboxes.
We ask that you not bring dogs or other pets.*



On the last day of "mulch hurling" for the Land Conservancy's Veldt Grass Control Project, coordinator Mark Skinner (left) and some of his crew – (l. to r.) Tyler Lowman, Ann Calhoun, Javier Sanchez, Al Barrow, and Noah Alder – are delighted that the project has been successfully completed, and they will no longer have to sift wood chips through the large screens seen in the rear. SWAP provided volunteer mulch makers, and water and soft drinks for the crews. Watch for more information about this project in the October Oakleaves.

THANK YOU FOR RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

Our 3-person Membership Committee has gone into full gear: sorting names of members who haven't received renewal reminders in awhile; folding and stuffing a cheerful reminder letter into envelopes; then stamping them and sending them off.

Thanks to the many members who responded so quickly. They are:

Arthur Armstrong, Robert J. Ball, Jean P. Boyd, Shirley M. Boydston, Ray and Sonya Bracken*, Robert Braun, M.D., Eleanor Brown, Doug and Lee Buckmaster, Barbara Burke*, Andrew Chermak*, Victoria, George and Doris Croy*, Alice L. Cushing, John L. Dilworth Jr. and Carole Maurer*, Margaret M. Gates, Mel and Marian Gautier*, Myron Graham, Larry and Pat Grimes*, Jeff and JoAnn Grover*, Mr. and Mrs. Burton Harris*, Vivian L. Hodge*, Eileen Kengel, Mr. and Mrs. James Landreth*, Barbara Machado*, Jean and Marlene Mathias, Wendy Brown and John Mottmann*, Mr. and Mrs. R. J. Mountain, Peggy and Gerry Peterson*, Billy R. Pewitt*, Flo Ross*, Dr. Jan William Simek*, Lisa Wallender*, Bonnie Wamsley, Judith Whitmire*, and Wilbur G. Wurster

**Thanks to those listed above who donated more than the \$12 membership dues. The additional donations will be used for special projects in the Elfin Forest.*

... And an Estuary Day Walk in September

In celebration of the 6th Annual Estuary Day, SWAP invites you to join Cuesta College Biology instructor Michelle Roest on Sunday, September 12 at 1 p.m. for a walk and talk about the Morro Bay Estuary. From the Elfin Forest overlooks which provide a sweeping view of the bay, she'll explain how the complex ecosystem of the bay works, providing food for bay plants, fish, invertebrates, birds and humans as well. This walk will begin at the usual meeting place at the north end of 15th Street off of Santa Ysabel. See the information at the end of the 3rd Saturday Walk announcements.

Watch for information about the other Estuary Day events that are also being planned!

Narrow (or Slender) Leaf Ice Plant

By Dirk Walters, Ph.D.

The plant highlighted this month is not a California native. It is an alien. This short-lived perennial from South Africa is narrow leaf ice plant (*Conicosia pugioniformis*). Various wildflower books identify this plant as *Conicosia elongata* or *Mesembryanthemum pugioniformis* or even mistakenly *Mesembryanthemum elongatum*. The plant belongs to the family Aizoaceae which is particularly well represented in Africa and Australia and is characterized by very succulent leaves; California probably has no native members of this family.

Some closely related species include the New Zealand spinach (*Tetragonia tetragonioides* or *T. expansa*) and "freeway" ice plant. This latter plant is *Carpobrotus edulis* which bears the common names of fig-marigold or Hottentot fig. Both the spinach and the fig-marigold can be found in the Elfin Forest.

The accompanying picture illustrates the basal cluster (rosette) of alternate, bright gray-green leaves produced by the narrow leaf ice plant. The leaves are more or less round in cross section and can be up to 8 inches long and 1/2 inch in diameter. Several to many short stems which produce solitary flowers arise from the rosette. The flowers are large (up to 2-3 inches) and pale yellow in color. Each flower produces many narrow petals.

In California, narrow leaf ice plant grows primarily in disturbed sandy soils and is especially common along the paths in the drier parts of the Elfin Forest. Because it grows along the paths it seems to be much more common than it really is. If one looks beyond the disturbed surface of the path edge, this plant is not much in evidence. It is occupying a habitat that botanists call disturbed or pioneer. It is able to tolerate the loose, unprotected and unstable sand and actually stabilizes the sand making it possible for other dune species to germinate and grow. After an area gets covered with plants, the narrow leaf ice plant tends to disappear. Therefore, this alien species appears to me to be providing a service to the overall dune plant community.

However, narrow leaf ice plant is definitely an alien and therefore must be considered a weed which should be eliminated from the Elfin Forest. A recent stroll along the boardwalk indicated to me that this is in fact being done. The inconsistency between this statement and the previous paragraph leads to a number of good questions: What is a weed? What harm do alien weeds do to native species? Is this harm really sufficient to cause humans to worry? Can a plant considered an alien ever become a native? Should all aliens be removed without question? Are all alien weeds equally destructive? Can some weeds actually play a positive role in a plant community? Do some weeds tend to "fit in" while others aggressively take over a community? For now, I'll consider only two of these questions.

First, what is a weed? I suspect we all have an idea of what a weed is. I also suspect that most of us would differ slightly as to



Conicosia pugioniformis has several common names: *Narrow leaf ice plant*, *Slender-leaved ice plant*, or *False ice plant*. This photo, by Beatrice F. Howitt of the California Academy of Sciences, was located on UC Berkeley's CalPhotos web site.

which plants we would consider weeds. In other words, questions that seem at first simple can turn out to be quite difficult. Two of the more common definitions that I've heard, "a weed is a plant that grows where humans wish it didn't" or "weeds are plants whose virtues have yet to be discovered" are both too subjective. They both depend on the perception of humans.

A more scientific definition, "a weed is an organism able to tolerate conditions created by human beings," is certainly definable, but doesn't speak to the situation in the Elfin Forest where there is a conscious effort to create a "natural" habitat in which man is only a visitor. That is, it is hoped that the Elfin Forest will be a habitat that minimizes the effects of man. Unfortunately, we know that eliminating human activity from a habitat doesn't automatically eliminate the "weeds" from that habitat.

Can we have weeds in a natural community? Let us try another definition. Some have defined a weed as "an organism adapted to disturbed habitats." This definition has problems because many native species are also adapted to a disturbed habitat. Maybe for now, we can accept that a weed is an organism that research has shown to be out of place in a particular habitat. Using this definition and the knowledge that narrow leaf ice plant is a relatively recent introduction into our dune habitat should be enough to declare it a weed and expect that it should be eliminated from the Elfin Forest.

How do weeds affect native vegetation and how might this be bad for humans are related questions. The most obvious way weeds affect native plants is that they use space, light, and

Ice Plant continued on page 7

Elfin Forest Sightings

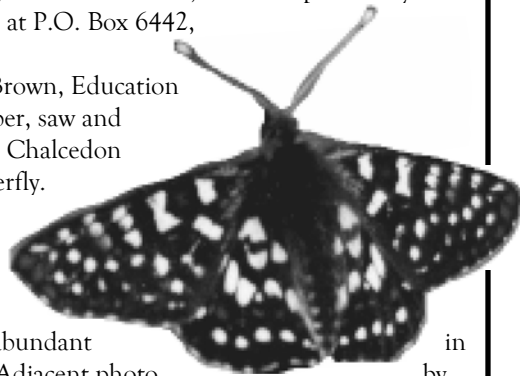
By Yolanda Waddell



From time to time, SWAP members tell me about some of the marvelous things they have seen in the Elfin Forest. It occurred to me that other SWAP members would enjoy hearing about them as well. "Elfin Forest Sightings" will be an occasional item in the Oakleaves. We encourage members to phone our message line at 546-1199, or mail a photo of your sighting to SWAP at P.O. Box 6442, Los Osos 93412.

In May, Pat Brown, Education Committee member, saw and photographed the Chalcidon Checkerspot butterfly.

These butterflies lay their eggs on Sticky monkeyflower plants which are abundant in the Elfin Forest. Adjacent photo



in by Pat Brown.

In May and June, participants in our 3rd Saturday walks spotted several Velvet Ants scurrying over the sand in search of prey. The "ants" are actually wingless wasps. They are covered with two tufts of light-colored hairs which look like fluff from a Coyote bush. Watch for them and don't touch – they sting!

In June, Stephen Dreher, our boardwalk botanist, found a "new" plant in the Elfin Forest (one not listed in our Pocket Guide): *Lotus heermanii*. It is a small prostrate plant (lies on the ground) with hairy leaves and flowers, not easily seen.

Smilax continued from page 1

smothers ground cover such as hedge nettle, bee flower and bracken ferns, etc. It also smothers the overlying oak, holly-leaf cherry or manzanita groves in a dense blanket of smilax foliage. Competing for moisture, nutrients and sunlight, the fast-growing plant can devastate the slower growing natives. It also can prevent native plant seeds under the canopy from sprouting and growing.

The smilax vine grows during the winter and spring rainy season, flowering in the winter and early spring with small, fragrant white blossoms. By summer the plant begins to dry and turn yellow. Round, bright red berries form before the plant dies. By autumn, the vines die off and become dormant. The stems remain in place as a dense tangle or mat of woody debris. The dead vines provide an avenue for the next generation of smilax to climb back to the top of the leaf canopy even faster.

The seeds spread by soil and water movement. Birds that eat the berries can also disperse them.

Controlling smilax is best done during the growing period in winter and spring. Uprooting is difficult and seldom is successful permanently except on widely scattered, small plants. The root system is tenacious and extensive. Tearing down the mat and crushing it before berries form is somewhat effective in slowing that season's growth. It can help the oaks compete for sunlight as well. Tearing down the dried debris in late summer or fall might

help slow the climb of the next season of plants, but it also could encourage Smilax seed germination. Additionally, just tearing down the vine does not help the low growing vegetation inside groves. For that reason, the vine debris should be removed and disposed of.

Anyone interested in helping to eradicate smilax is encouraged to contact the SWAP Conservation Committee. Phone 546-1199 and leave a message. Your call will be



Smilax, Asparagus asparagoides, grows quickly and can cover an oak tree during the spring growing season.

Photo by Pete Sarafian.

Ice Plant continued from page 6

nutrients that otherwise would be used to produce native vegetation. This is why gardeners remove weeds from their gardens. Resources used by weeds are not available for producing prize-winning cabbages. But native plants aren't cabbages, you say. Most native plant species have no value to humans, you say. So why even worry about native plants?

The classic answer to this question is that most species of organisms, certainly most native plant species, have not been tested for food, drugs, genes, or many other products humans might find useful. Here, nature serves as a "bank" of resources that we humans might use in the future when we have discovered the need. I would like to add one last reason to remove weeds from native plant habitats. It is also a good reason to preserve wild species in general. Why must humans place the burden of providing something of value to human beings on every other living species? Aren't we humans culturally mature enough to

The 6th Annual Estuary Day is Sunday, September 12!

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Is it time to renew your S.W.A.P. membership?

To find out, check the RENEWAL DUE DATE located next to your name on the address label. You can use the adjacent membership form for your renewal. Select your membership category and mail off the form along with your check as your anniversary date approaches. Joining S.W.A.P. for the first time is just as easy.

Our basic membership is \$12 which covers our operating costs and brings you our bimonthly newsletter, Oak Leaves. Memberships above the basic level provide our all-volunteer organization with funds for habitat restoration and weed control projects.

Thank you for your membership and support of S.W.A.P. We look forward to hearing from you!

– Katie Davis, Membership Committee Chair

**RENEW YOUR COMMITMENT
TO THE ELFIN FOREST TODAY!**

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

- New Member Renewing Member
- Member \$12 Defender \$100
- Steward \$25 Champion \$250
- Protector \$50 Life Member \$1000
- I want to help, please call me!

Have you renewed your membership on time?
Check the label on this newsletter
for your renewal due date.

EVERY membership counts!!

Make checks payable to SWAP,
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P.O. Box 6442, Los Osos, CA 93412 - 6442

