



Lompoc Valley Botanic and Horticultural Society



Conium
photo Warren Arnold

Conium and its Cousin Anthriscus by Warren Arnold

At first glance one may not recognize the difference in these two members of the Parsley Family, *Umbelliferae*, or as it is now known, *Apiaceae*. (The generic name was changed because *Umbelliferae* is too easy to remember, as the flower heads look like opened umbrellas). Hopefully, it will be the difference in the flowers that will bring about a second look.

There are about 15 “ribs” of *Conium*’s umbrella, each ending in a cluster of tiny white flowers. Similar flowers are also at the ends of *Anthriscus*’s ribs, but there are only four or five

ribs, and as few flowers in each cluster.

If you rub the leaves of *Anthriscus* between thumb and finger and smell the resulting juice, it will be pleasant...like a flavoring herb, and indeed, *Anthriscus*’s common name is Bur Chervil. And why the Bur? Examination under the microscope will show minute hooks covering the calyx. Smelling the juice of *Conium* is not pleasant, unless one has an addiction to mouse urine. Using *Conium* as a flavoring will result in your death, as our local *Conium* is *Conium maculatum*, *Poison Hemlock*...like

poor Socrates had to drink.

Poison Hemlock has purple blotches on its stems, grows twice as tall as Bur Chervil, and has the larger flower clusters, as mentioned previously. Bur Chervil has no purple blotches. The problem is, they both grow together where I found them, on the river side of River Park here in Lompoc.

Am I confident enough in my identification to pick some Bur Chervil and put it in my soup? Eh, no, maybe it would be Poison Hemlock which hadn’t got its purple spots yet.



King Billy Pine
see article on page 2
photo Jan Keller

Meeting September 19th, 2:00 (finally!)

Easy Native Nectar Gardens for Pollinators

Speaker Bebhinn McIlroy-Hawley will tell us about super-easy, economical gardening to attract birds, bees, and especially butterflies - using native plants that thrive in the Lompoc area. Bebhinn’s undergraduate Capstone project centered around constructing pollinator gardens for public

Special Education programs. She is invested in the many benefits of gardening with native species.

Bebhinn graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies from Antioch University in Santa Barbara, California. She previously studied writing, contemporary literature, and art at the University of Alaska Southeast in her hometown of

Juneau, Alaska. She is now enrolled in the Creative Writing MFA program at AULA.

The program will begin at 2:00, Stone Pine Hall, 200 South “H” Street, next to the Lompoc Museum.

Light refreshments are provided. All garden and botany enthusiasts are welcome.

Tasmania, Part 1 *by Jan Keller*



Telopea truncata
Photo Jan Keller

This past December and January, [2019-2020] I had the opportunity to spend five weeks in Australia and New Zealand. Yes, it was the time when the fires were raging, but, for the most part, my travels were not impacted. It was a fun trip in a beautiful place. In almost every city we visited, there was a well-maintained botanic garden, a nature preserve, and/or large city parks. I was familiar with some of the vegetation as the summer climate (remember, December and January are in the summer down under) near the Pacific coast of Australia is similar to ours. However, there were many plants I had not seen previously, and I enjoyed the newness immensely.

We started our tour in Tasmania, Australia, a large island to the south of mainland Australia which the Tasmanian sometimes call the north island. The first place we visited was St. David's Park in Hobart. From 1804 until 1872, the site was the main burial grounds for the city. When a new cemetery was created outside of the central city, the church-owned site was left unattended. In 1919, a move was made to purchase the site which still contained the remains of over 900 people. Several of the bodies were moved, but the rest remain under the now carefully tended gardens and lawns. One of the major features of the park is a memorial wall made up of some of the original headstones, many of them being for "First Fleeters". The First Fleet was the group of eleven ships

carrying convicts, officers, marines, their wives, and children from England to Australia in 1787-88.

One of the most striking plants seen in Hobart was the Kangaroo Paw (*Anigozanthos*). Although endemic to the dry sandy, siliceous areas of southwest Australia, it grows well elsewhere.

From Hobart, we travelled to Port Arthur Historic Park located on the southern part of the east coast of Tasmania. Port Arthur was established as a penal colony in 1830. By 1833, it was used to house recidivists, those who had served their sentence and then again committed a crime. The crimes ranged from stealing a handkerchief to homicide. In addition to the prisoners, many held in isolation, there was a full military and civilian staff. Facilities included staff housing, churches, a school, courtrooms, and a government garden. The latter was laid out in a very formal style and contained a wide variety of plants.

Another place visited in Tasmania was Cradle Mountain-Lake St. Clair National Park in the Central Highlands area. This park was the dream of Gustav Weindorfer, an Austrian born (1874-1932), Australian amateur botanist. In addition to wombats, pademelons with joeys, and wallabies, the Park was home to many endemic plant species, including the King Billy Pine (*Athrotaxis selaginoides*). The tree is an evergreen, coniferous tree, though

not a true pine. It grows up to 65-100 feet tall, with a trunk up to five feet in diameter. These trees were spectacular in their beautiful mountain setting.

Also seen was the endemic Tasmanian waratah (*Telopea truncata*), a plant in the family Proteaceae. It is found on moist acidic soils at altitudes of 2000 to 4000 feet. *Telopea truncata* is a component of alpine eucalypt forest, rainforest, and scrub communities.

A common ground cover at Cradle Mountain was the alpine coral-fern (*Gleichenia aplina*), a favorite food of the wombats. It occurs in Tasmania and New Zealand and grows in alpine and sub-alpine areas with moist soil.

From Cradle Mountain, we headed northeast toward Launceston. On the way, we made several stops. One was to see the native lemon or yellow bottlebrush (*Callistemon pallidus*). This bottlebrush is a shrub that grows up to 10 feet high and seven feet wide. It can withstand salt-laden winds and does well in full-sun or part shade. Another stop was Railton, a town of topiaries.

Very near Launceston, we went for a walk in the Cataract Gorge Reserve along the South Esk River, the longest river in Tasmania. As an interesting piece of history, a little further up the South Esk from the Reserve, a turbine-driven power station was constructed in the late 1800s resulting in

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Alpine Coral Fern
Photo Jan Keller

President's Message by Charlie Blair

We are looking forward to resuming our regular meetings after the COVID hiatus. Bebhinn's (Bevin's) presentation on planting for pollinators should be interesting and informative. My thanks to Julie for finding her. Our publications and the Burton

Mesa Chaparral (BMC) will be available.

The 21 November program will feature our usual plant exchange and tool sharpening. We have some topics in mind for future programs and welcome any suggestions. Hopefully we will be

able to work on the Burton Mesa Chaparral Interpretive Area at Allan Hancock College.

It will be good to see folks again, with the necessary precautions, immunization, masks, and distancing.



The Spirit and Flesh are Willing by Al Thompson (April 2020)

As some of you know, I have returned to my native state of Ohio after a sojourn of 56 years on the West Coast in Lompoc. I am now living not all that far from where I was born and reared; from where I had enlisted in the United States Army, participated in the last year of the Korean War and then some, including a second stint as an American army sergeant in Germany.

I reflect on this past part of my life, since through it all and still to this day, which happens to be Easter Sunday, I maintain a sense of curiosity toward the natural world of plants which borders (for the lack of a better term) on wonderment! Ever since my childhood days, a sort of excited anticipation has led me to, in more modern terms, "check-out" what's growing out from the earth.

Yesterday I awoke to a white world; about an inch of snow had fallen over-night. By late afternoon it had complete-

ly melted into the water table with no harm having been done to the blossoming trees and spring plants and blooms of the nearby woodland floor wherein I venture almost daily.

While living in Lompoc, the two main areas of my checking-out were the Burton Mesa and Miguelito Canyon, though I would always explore the sprawling fields westward to the Pacific Ocean, especially in the days when Burpee Seeds, Bodger and Denholm contributed to the statistic that read "60 % of the flower seeds of the world were grown in the Lompoc Valley."

Burpee was a familiar name for me. We planted Burpee seeds in Ohio when I was growing up. And it was to Burpee's that I turned to during my first full summer of 1965 when I realized I'd need a summer job in order to earn money to pay my rent, since the Lompoc Unified School District which employed me as a teacher, had yet to change its

pay schedule into a 12-month period from a 10-month period. I became a plant roguer for Burpee's that summer which added greatly to my floral knowledge as well as my general knowledge of botany.

Membership and friendships through the Lompoc Valley Botanic & Horticultural Society which followed suit became one of the shining treasures of it all. Though my flesh has returned to the state of my birth and youth, and I am returning to my earlier habit of checking-out what's going on in the woods, my spirit remains divided between east and west. I would be happy to hear from any LVBHS friend. Mimi will have my postal address, but my email address is althom1@verizon.net



Eastern Trout Lily
Erythronium Americanum

Common Eastern woodland spring plant, blooming before shaded by overhead tree canopies

photo Al Thompson

Moving by Rosemary Holmes (May 2020)



Bountiful peaches in Julie Levy's yard

I have moved to Friendship Manor, an active retirement community at the edge of UC Santa Barbara. It is a nice place featuring a pool, nice landscaping, and has a very friendly and relaxed ambience. In case you are ever in the area and wanting to stop by, it is at 6647 El Colegio Road. I am at A124 in a cluster of four buildings.

This is an area I lived in for many years during my career at the Education Abroad Program at UCSB and before moving to Lompoc. I must admit to excitement at visiting and getting to know again some of the places I remember with great fondness such as hikes, museums, the botanical garden, and some fine beaches.

I will miss you all as well as the

Lompoc Film Club, which had a long run of 22 or so years. And likewise, I will always remember the Lompoc Democratic Club, the Lompoc Valley Botanic and Horticultural Society and the Arguello Group of the Sierra Club.

Thank you all for being in my life. I look forward to hearing from you if you are inclined. Not such a long way and I hope to be back from time to time.

Best wishes in these challenging but interesting times.

Rosemary Holmes

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Editor's note:

I apologize for the lateness in getting time sensitive articles like Rosemary's move into print and out to members. I realize now that our newsletter would have enabled us to keep connected this past year and a half, since we were not able to gather for a meeting, or even a garden walk. I want to thank all of the contributors of articles that have built up in my email. All of you were kind and didn't complain.

There will be a few catch-up articles from last year in the November issue, but by January we will be current.

Many thanks to Julie, Charlie and Carol for the regular emails to keep members informed.

Mimi



Gooseberry

Photo Warren Arnold

A Wild Goose (berry) Chase by Warren Arnold

Local birds planted three shrubs in my yard last year. Two Fuchsia-Flowered Gooseberry (*Ribes speciosum*) and one Pink Flowering Currant (*Ribes sanguineum*). As the birds had little idea of proper landscaping, I transplanted their contributions into pots for later relocation. If you are familiar with the fruit of wild gooseberries, I think you will recognize a similarity in appearance with the pictures shown on T.V. of the COVID 19 virus. They look like old WWI naval ship mines!

Fuchsia-Flowered Gooseberry fruits are liberally covered with prickles and are too small to bother collecting for food. However, in the Sierra, I have often collected gooseberries (*Ribes roezlii*). I even had the cooks at YMCA camp make a mess of gooseberries into a pie! You can singe off the prickles in your campfire and then eat the toasted sour fruits...it's like eating Rattlesnake, you try it once and then say to yourself "is it really worth the trouble?"

My ability to put a scientific name to many of the native plants comes from courses taken while in college, and the common names came from my dad, who showed me many local plants while we fished the creeks "back in the day." Clifton Smith, in his book, A Flora of the Santa Barbara Region, lists ten (10) different species of Gooseberries. I have identified my three "volunteer" plants not by any botanical means, but by knowing their

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Newsletter Articles Welcome

This newsletter is published 5 times per year by the Lompoc Valley Botanic and Horticultural Society. Its purpose is to increase public awareness of native and cultivated plants.

Subscription is free of charge to all members.

Articles written by members are welcome and heartily encouraged. Photos of all sorts of

plants are also needed to enliven the pages.

Manuscripts can be sent to Mimi Erland, Editor, at: MimiErland1@gmail.com

Volunteers needed to help with planning for the drought tolerant garden, publicity for the Society and Board decision making as an "At Large" rep.

LVBHS *founded June 5, 1977*

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Dicksonia antarctica

Photo Jan Keller

...berry Chase *by Warren Arnold*

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parents who live on the hill nearby (the apple doesn't fall far from the tree).

I confess that I am not a gardening enthusiast, a landscape designer, or any kind of horticulturalist. In fact, most of the plants in my yard are survivors of neglect, including those *Ribes* species in the pots. I was certain that one of the gooseberries had slowly died as its leaves turned red, then

brown and then fell off, leaving barren spiny twigs. However, yesterday I noticed tiny green leaves coming out at the nodes, so maybe my gooseberry was just resting, and will make a full recovery. Maybe it had the Wuhan virus? I hope you can see the tiny leaves appearing in the enclosed picture.

Gooseberry

Photo Warren Arnold



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Salvia 'Hot Lips'

Photo by Dorene Wellck

Tasmania, cont.

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Launceston being the first City south of the Equator to be lit by electricity generated by waterpower. In the Reserve, there are over 70 plant species native to the area as well as nine species of birds endemic to Tasmania. One of the plants we saw was the Tasmanian Tree Fern or Man Fern (*Dicksonia Antarctica*). It is a species of evergreen tree fern native to eastern Australia, ranging from south-east Queensland, coastal New South Wales, and Victoria on the mainland to Tasmania. They were absolutely exquisite and plentiful.

From Launceston we flew to Melbourne on the "North Island". Look for the next installment for more about Australia and New Zealand.



Kangaroo Paw

photo Jan Keller



Wombat

photo Jan Keller