



California Buckeye
(*aesculus californica*)



Desert Willow
(*chilopsis linearis*)

June in the Conejo Valley Botanic Garden

California Buckeye

In the native section of the garden, you will find several California Buckeye. One is in full bloom. The California Buckeye can be a shrub or small tree and is very wide spreading. Striking sight in May when fragrant, creamy flower plumes make it a giant candelabrum. Large, pear-shaped fruits with green covering splitting to reveal large, brown, shiny seeds - are favorites for fall flower arrangements. A good view of a flowering California Buckeye can be seen from Lillian's Meadow - looking down towards the entrance.

Desert Willow

Located in the Bird Habitat area of the garden there are two Desert Willows in full bloom. Native to desert washes and stream beds. Open and airy when trained as small tree. The Desert Willow holds a heavy crop of catalpa like fruit through winter, and can look shaggy. Pruning can make it very handsome. Flowers are very pretty with pink, white, rose, or lavender flowers. Can be invasive.

-Jean Reiley-

How About Using Gravel and Rock to Conserve Water

Recently I read about using coarse gravel as a groundcover. Certainly, it beats dry dirt and for that matter, retains moisture where bare soil is already unsightly. Emily Green's column in a recent L. A. Times covered a multitude of creative reasons from practical to esthetic of how this medium can enhance the landscape and conserve water while sheltering the roots of trees and plants. At the CVBG we are expanding the use of gravel, rocks and boulders to use as fillers where it is not feasible to introduce more plant material and where they can also serve to discourage weed growth. In our Bird Habitat, the recently remolded recirculating water feature received a major uplift by adding some handsome large boulders that border the waterway and scaled down smooth stones to line the pond. Many home gardens have an area where a rock garden could be featured with succulents for a lush look that makes a grand display with very little water use. The desert garden at the top

of the garden's hill survives without extensive irrigation as it is almost entirely landscaped with a rock covering and natural boulders as accents.

Next month green groundcovers!

-Barbara Song-



Knife Acacia
(*acacia cultriformis*)

What's In a Name?

by Diane Conejo

Knife Acacia
(*acacia cultriformis*)

Up at the far edge of the Australian garden, you'll walk past the Grevilleas ('Spider Flower') and the Banksias (flowers shaped like something from Dr. Seuss), and follow a scent that draws you forward, until you are at the trail's end. There you'll breathe deeply as you near a massive bush covered in sulfur yellow 'puffs' and triangular pale, silvery-green leaves. It's name is *Acacia cultriformis* (uh-KA-see-uh kul-tre-FOR-miss) and it is in lavish bloom right now, so hurry in to visit!

Now, we are no strangers to the genus *Acacia* here in Southern California, we even have a school named *Acacia Elementary* in Thousand Oaks. I can think of at least five species that are found here in the Conejo Valley, but I still think that this *Acacia* is one that you would enjoy getting to know. The name *Acacia* means "a thorn or sharp point" from the Greek word, *akakia*. Just the fact that the common name is "Knife *Acacia*" tells you something. Try touching it, but do it gently. This is the reason that it makes a good barrier planting. The specific epithet *cultriformis* comes from *cultratus* which means 'knife'. The tri- syllable tells us: three-sided, and *-formis* means 'shape'. Now, why they didn't include a mention of the petite flower puffs is beyond me, but the fact that it is late-winter flowering is also very nice. Don't miss it.

Birthday Parties: The birthday parties held at the KAG on Saturdays have become very popular. So popular that Betty needs more volunteers to give her some help. It is a lot of fun and not too much work. Sometimes the kids come in costumes, depending on what the 'theme' of the party may be. The adults set up and take down the tables and chairs. There is a donation to use the garden. You help keep your eyes on the kids as they get excited about having a party at the KAG. Sometimes you even get a piece of birthday cake. If you are willing to help by giving a few hours of your time, give Betty a call at 1-818-889-0560.

What's in Bloom
photos by Pat Carlson



Penstemon
(penstemon spectabilis)



Prickly Pear Cactus
(opuntia)



Gaillardia
(gaillardia pulchella)

Web Master Needed: We have sad news. Our web master is leaving us. Do you have skills in this field? Do you have time and want to volunteer to be the garden's web master? Call Jean at 805-374-8255.

Coat Hanger Stand Needed: The Plant Sales area in the Kids' Adventure Garden would like a donated coat hanger stand for the T-shirts display. If you have one, please e-mail Irene at ibenyoung@yahoo.com.

Thank you,

-Irene Benyoung-

Want to Help us Grow?

Do you love Conejo Valley Botanic Garden and would like to help, but just don't have the time to volunteer? Even though much of the work you see going on in the garden is done by volunteers, we still have expenses for planting, heavy pruning and new improvements. These projects are funded through grants and donations from the community. If you would like to help us grow, tax deductible donations are always welcome and may be made out and sent to Conejo Valley Botanic Garden, PO Box 6614, Thousand Oaks, CA 91359. Thanks for all your support!

Conejo Valley Botanic Garden Needs You!

The Garden is managed and maintained by community volunteers. Without your help, the garden cannot thrive. None of the volunteer positions at CVBG has a minimum number of volunteer hours attached. If you can help for a few hours a month, great! For more information on any of our volunteer opportunities, please go to our web site at www.conejogarden.org and click "Volunteers."

WE CURRENTLY NEED VOLUNTEERS FOR THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS:

Assistant to the Volunteer Coordinator: Help recruit new volunteers and match them with garden jobs they might enjoy.

Adopt A Garden: We have an ongoing need for volunteers to join the teams working in our theme gardens. Days and hours are flexible so give us a call.

Garden Nursery: There is no better way to learn about California native and water wise plants than to join the teams working in the propagation and sales nurseries.

The Kids Adventure Garden: KAG is open from 11:00 to 3:00 each Sunday. Docents welcome families to the garden, answer questions and ensure everyone is safe and has fun. You will train with an experienced Docent. You can sign up for one shift a month or as many as you want. Contact Jean Reiley at 805 374 8255.

For information and directions to the garden, visit our web site at www.conejogarden.org.

June 2011

