



The Multicultural Native Garden: A New Paradigm *by Glenn Keator, PhD*



California native garden in Hayward Hills

Pete Veilleux, East Bay Wilds

Imagine a native garden as dynamic as a natural ecosystem, with beautiful plants adapted to your local environment, and filled with bird song, the humming of bees, the soaring flights of butterflies and dragonflies, bursting with beautiful flowers and wholesome fruits, and filled with the fragrance of herbs.

Gardens have always served many purposes aside from providing beauty. It's time to remind ourselves that those other purposes can be readily fitted to native gardens just as to conventional gardens. How about creating a garden for wildlife? For beneficial insects? For pollinators? For birds and small creatures?

Or consider the garden as a source of useful and beneficial plants. We only have to look at California Indian lifestyles to realize how fundamental native plants were in everyday life, from food to medicine, fiber to building materials, dyes to kindling—the list goes on. Everyday life revolved around plants in every conceivable way.

While we “moderns” don’t necessarily grow wood for construction or fibers for weaving baskets, we still depend on plants for beverages, food, and yes—medicines. These ancient tried and true uses can be applied to make our lives richer, more varied, and

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MANZANITA

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Your membership in the *Friends* of the Regional Parks Botanic Garden supports the important work of the garden in educational programs, conservation, and horticultural experimentation. Funds raised by the *Friends* help provide long-term financial security for the garden as well as new facilities and programs.

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FOR INFORMATION:

About the *Friends* and membership: 510-544-3169,
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A Matter of Taste by Bart O'Brien

We are creatures with multiple senses, and most of us tend to think of our relationship with California's native plants in these ways. For most, it is their visceral visual appeal—the captivating look of our wildflowers and landscapes. Others speak of the evocative nature of scents of flowers and foliage. A few will reference the distinctive sounds of our flora—the flutter of cottonwood and aspen leaves or the pop of an exploding poppy or lupine seed pod, or the sensuous aspect of touch—the velvet of Palmer mallow foliage (*Abutilon palmeri*) or the cool, smooth trunks of manzanitas and madrones in summer.

But what about taste? California's indigenous peoples have long enjoyed the myriad flavors presented by our flora, but relatively few of us recent immigrants ever think of California native plants as food, let alone dietary staples. We are so wrong! Today, many of us consume California native plant food crops (or California native plant-enabled food crops) on a nearly daily basis without a clue about this vital connection to our native flora.

Here are just two stories of economically important agricultural crops that wouldn't exist in California without our native plants.

Just about every strawberry grown and consumed in California is derived from our two native strawberry taxa: *Fragaria vesca* and *Fragaria chiloensis*. These two native species were hybridized with non-native strawberries because of their adaptability to California's climate and soil conditions and their distinctive sweet flavor. California's strawberry crop of 2.3 billion pounds of fruit in 2014 was valued at \$2.6 billion dollars, and the economic impact of strawberry farming was \$3.4 billion dollars that same year. California produces about 90% of the strawberries grown in the U.S. Strawberries are farmed commercially from San Diego to Santa Cruz and Santa Clara counties on 40,000 acres of prime real estate near the coast. The names of many of our recent commercial strawberry cultivars honor their California heritage: 'Sequoia', 'Benicia', 'Albion', 'Mojave', 'Seascape', and many more.

Many people know that California has two species of native walnuts (*Juglans hindsii* and *Juglans californica*), but few realize that all commercial walnuts (cultivars of the so-called Persian or "English" walnuts, *Juglans regia*), grown in California are grafted onto a hybrid walnut rootstock named 'Paradox' that was created by Luther Burbank in 1878. When Burbank first



introduced 'Paradox', he reported that its parentage was *Juglans hindsii* x *Juglans regia*, but recent molecular studies have shown that 'Paradox' is primarily derived from *J. hindsii*, *J. californica*, *J. nigra*, and *J. major* are also involved with at least some of the plants currently produced and sold as 'Paradox'. Why is 'Paradox' so important? Virtually all walnut orchards in California are planted with 'Paradox' as the rootstock for grafted commercial cultivars of *Juglans regia*. Orchardists go to the trouble of grafting because 'Paradox' is resistant to a number of pathogens and is well adapted to California soils whereas *J. regia* is susceptible to these diseases and generally does not like the rich heavy soils found in California's flat agricultural lands.

Nearly all walnuts are interfertile, so here in California we have created a very unusual situation: some geneticists have theorized that our native walnuts will cease to exist as separate biological entities after one or two more walnut generations due to hybridization with exotic commercially grown walnuts. This is a most provocative situation—our native species are being used to grow an exotic species that may be leading to the extinction of our native species. The paradox of growing 'Paradox' in California.

In 2014, California's 'Paradox'-enabled walnut production was estimated to be 545,000 tons of nuts that were grown on 290,000 acres of land. California's 2013 crop of walnuts was valued at nearly \$1.8 billion dollars. Worldwide, China currently produces the most walnuts by far. California and Iran compete for the second and third positions in walnut production.

Other compelling agricultural California native foods? Blackberries, gooseberries, hazelnuts, and even (perhaps especially) grapes have fascinating stories to tell—but these will have to wait for a future column. 🌿

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more interesting. What better way to stop squandering energy for transport, for buying foods from dubious sources or foods that have lost their flavor and nutrients because of breeding transportable, long-lived fruits and vegetables?

We can begin in small ways. The list of native edibles is long; however, several factors make these sources more difficult to use—for example, having enough space to grow a reasonable quantity, processing the foods for edibility, and finding varieties that bear heavily and are easily harvestable. None of these attributes were important in the way of life before the European influx, but current life styles demand improvements in these areas. Few people realize that our everyday food plants have been selected over centuries—even millennia—so that today they produce practical and bountiful crops.

Despite these concerns there is a place for planting useful natives and a special fascination that we can harness them for our personal use. Why not start with plants that are easy to grow, easy to incorporate into meals, and easy to enjoy, even for modern palates.

Starting Out

Where to start? With an established garden, first evaluate the species you already grow; many popular ones have surprising uses. Manzanitas provide medicines and edible fruits for drying,

jellies, and ciders; ceanothuses bring in all manner of bees for pollination, have medicinal roots, and lather into a soap by wetting the flowers. Most of the native bulbs and many of the spring-flowering wildflower seeds can be eaten: the bulbs roasted or sautéed, the seeds toasted and ground into flour, or sprinkled as a topping on favorite foods.

After assessing your already-established garden, dream about other possibilities—plants you find appealing for their various useful attributes, making choices based on availability, beauty, maintenance, water requirements, and compatibility with plants already on site. Would you like to attract beneficial wildlife like birds and insects? Would growing interesting edibles inspire you to try new recipes? Would gathering your own medicinal herbs make sense?

But now a note of caution: many native plants are toxic and, if misused or misidentified, could lead to dire consequences. Any gardener interested in medicinals and edibles needs to be sure of their source and familiar with methods of preparation. People often forget that familiar foods like rhubarb, lima beans, and potatoes are seriously toxic if not properly prepared—rhubarb's leaf petioles but not leaf blades are edible, lima beans need a thorough cooking, and green potatoes are poisonous. Users must always exercise caution. Even with the best edibles, people may be allergic:

Few people realize that our everyday food plants have been selected over centuries—even millennia—so that today they produce practical and bountiful crops.

Emerald Canary



California fuchsia (*Epilobium canum*)

HUMMINGBIRD FLOWERS

PLANT NAME	KIND OF PLANT	HABITAT / GARDEN USE
<i>Aquilegia formosa</i> , red columbine	Winter-dormant tap-rooted perennial	Shaded stream-sides in many communities Shade garden; hummingbird garden
<i>Arctostaphylos</i> spp., manzanitas	Evergreen shrubs	Chaparral & other dry habitats Chaparral garden; hummingbird garden
<i>Delphinium nudicaule</i> , scarlet larkspur	Small summer-deciduous perennial herb	Mostly rocky slopes on the edge of woodlands & forests Bright shade garden (need some sun in order to flower well); hummingbird garden
<i>Epilobium canum</i> & vars., hummingbird fuchsias	Woody rhizomatous perennials	Rocky slopes in foothills Chaparral garden; dry meadow
<i>Lobelia cardinalis</i> var. <i>psuedosplendens</i> , scarlet lobelia	Winter-dormant perennial	Rare in seeps in the mountains of Southern California Wetland garden; hummingbird garden
<i>Oenothera elata</i> subsp. <i>hookeri</i> , Hooker's evening-primrose	Herbaceous biennial	Temporarily moist ditches Edge of wetlands garden; moist meadow
<i>Penstemon centranthifolius</i> , scarlet bugler	Woody perennial	Chaparral Chaparral garden; hummingbird garden
<i>Ribes sanguineum</i> var. <i>glutinosum</i> , pink-flowering currant	Deciduous fast-growing shrub	Border of coastal forests & woodlands Shade garden; hummingbird garden
<i>Ribes speciosum</i> , fuchsia-flowered gooseberry	Summer deciduous spiny shrub	Oak woodlands Shade garden; hummingbird garden
<i>Salvia spathacea</i> , hummingbird sage	Perennial herbaceous ground cover	Oak woodlands, Shade garden
<i>Silene californica</i> , Indian pink	Winter-dormant sprawling perennial	Woodlands & forest edges throughout the foothills Shade garden; hummingbird garden
<i>Trichostema lanatum</i> , woolly blue curls	Small evergreen shrub	Chaparral & coastal sage scrub in Southern California Chaparral garden; hummingbird garden

Scarlet larkspur (*Delphinium nudicaule*)

think of people who can't eat gluten, chocolate, or strawberries!

While there is a broad knowledge about Indian uses of native plants, sadly, much of the original wisdom has been lost. And although plants had their special roles in everyday life, the ways plants were used depended on long-held practices based on a word-of-mouth system. Not all foods the Indians were fond of may appeal to our palates and not all plants were utilized to their maximum. For example, it was rare to flavor food with herbs and spices, so fragrant native plants still go unsung and untried.

Plants that served everyday life for the Indians, like mush and cakes made of acorn meal, may have to be re-imagined to make them tempting in our own cuisines. Growing useful plants involves not only growing, selecting, and harvesting appropriate plants, but using those plants in new and exciting ways. One way to approach creating useful gardens is to imagine various possible scenarios, for example, a grassland meadow, a woodland setting, a dryland chaparral planting, a pond-centric design, or an area devoted to hummingbirds.

A Hummingbird Garden

Starting with hummers, a garden devoted to these flying jewels should embrace plants that bloom at different times of the year, providing a near constant supply of nectar. The year would start with

BUMBLEBEE & BUTTERFLY FLOWERS

PLANT NAME	KIND OF PLANT	HABITAT / GARDEN USE
<i>Chlorogalum pomeridianum</i> , soap plant	Summer-dormant bulb	Woodlands & grasslands (bumblebees only) Meadow; open shade garden
<i>Cirsium</i> spp., native thistles	Tap-rooted & rhizomatous perennials	Many habitats Front of chaparral garden; hummingbird garden
<i>Lilium</i> spp., lilies	Winter-dormant bulbs	Moist woods & forests Border or wetland garden; some for shade gardens
<i>Madia elegans</i> , elegant tarplant	Summer-flowering annual	Dry grassy fields & open woodlands Chaparral & meadow garden
<i>Monardella</i> spp., coyote mints	Sub-shrubs	Edge of drylands Chaparral garden
<i>Rudbeckia californica</i> , coneflower	Winter-dormant perennial	Moist mountain meadows Moist meadow; edge of wetland garden
<i>Salvia</i> spp., sages (some)	Semi-deciduous shrubs	Coastal sage, chaparral Chaparral garden
<i>Trichostema lanatum</i> , woolly blue curls	Small evergreen shrub	Chaparral & coastal sage scrub in Southern California Chaparral garden; hummingbird garden

a couple of beautiful currant bushes—chaparral currant (*Ribes malvaceum*) in winter, followed and enhanced by pink flowering currant (*R. sanguineum* var. *glutinosum*) and our best gooseberry (*R. speciosum*) with lines of red fuchsia-like blossoms. Intermingled with these medium sized shrubs could be manzanitas (*Arctostaphylos* spp.) of varying heights, most flowering from January to March. After the last of these shrubs have faded, smaller flowers fill the role: scarlet flowers like red columbine (*Aquilegia formosa*), scarlet larkspur (*Delphinium nudicaule*), and scarlet bugler (*Penstemon centranthifolius*). To tide things over between lapses in nectar availability, several bushes of island snapdragon (*Gambelia speciosa*) or its close relative from Baja California, *G. juncea*, would serve well. Both of these are evergreen and bloom a good part of the year.

Continuing into summer, prominent plants could include woolly blue curls (*Trichostema lanatum*), a small bush with delightful woolly blue and purple flowers with long curled stamens; the southern scarlet larkspur (*D. cardinale*), a tall perennial to 5 feet that is drought tolerant; and later in summer the scarlet lobelia (*Lobelia cardinalis* var. *pseudosplendens*). Just as summer is passing from long to shorter days, California fuchsia (*Epilobium canum*) could keep things going through mid-fall.

Pete Veilleux, East Bay Wilds



Bumblebees on cobweb thistle flower



California sister on coyote mint flowers

BEE FLOWERS

PLANT NAME	KIND OF PLANT	HABITAT / GARDEN USE
<i>Ceanothus</i> spp., wild lilacs	Mostly evergreen shrubs	Chaparral & other habitats Chaparral garden
<i>Eriogonum fasciculatum</i> & other spp., California and other wild buckwheats	Woody perennials to small shrubs	Main species widespread in chaparral and scrub throughout Southern California, including deserts Chaparral garden
<i>Eriophyllum</i> spp., lizard-tail and golden yarrow	Sub-shrubs	Coastal scrub, chaparral Front of chaparral garden; rock garden
<i>Eschscholzia californica</i> , California poppy	Mostly tap-rooted annual	Widespread in foothill grasslands Meadow
<i>Gilia capitata</i> & <i>G. tricolor</i> , globe and birdseye gilias	Annuals	Widespread in foothill grasslands Meadow
<i>Lasthenia</i> spp., goldfields	Annuals	Grasslands & woodlands Meadow
<i>Limnanthes</i> spp., meadowfoams	Annuals	Vernal pools & grassy areas Meadow; edge of wetland garden
<i>Romneya coulteri</i> , Matilija poppy	Woody giant perennial with spreading roots	Chaparral especially after burns in Southern California Chaparral garden
<i>Salvia</i> most spp., native sages	Mostly small semi-deciduous shrubs or woody ground covers	Chaparral & coastal scrub from North Bay south, mostly in the Coast Ranges Chaparral and rock gardens



Honey bee on ceanothus flowers



Honey bee on buckwheat flowers

A Wetlands Garden

For wetland gardens centered around water features like ponds, a whole different set of useful plants can be utilized. Principal of these is the genus *Typha* (cattails), a group of rhizomatous winter-dormant grass-like perennials to 8 feet high that some have dubbed nature's supermarket. Rhizomes can be lifted and the starch beaten from them to make flour; young shoots in mid-spring are tender and eaten as a vegetable; the young male spikes can be cooked like corn on the cob and, when mature, beaten to remove the nutrient-rich pollen. Accompanying this cupboard of food, tules (*Schoenoplectus californicus* and *S. acutus* var. *occidentalis*) provide elevated seed heads on the tips of long green stems, an excellent food source for seed-eating birds. The smaller plants like beethistle (*Eryngium articulatum*), a winter-dormant perennial with thistle-like spikes of blue flowers in late summer, is an excellent medicinal plant along with yerba mansa (*Anemopsis californica*), a companion winter-dormant perennial with long red runners and alluring white summer blossoms that resemble large anemones. Or install a patch of our yellow pond-lily (*Nuphar polysepala*) to provide summer color from its waxy yellow flowers, while the seeds that follow can be heated to produce a popcorn-like food.

An outstanding outlier to the pond periphery might feature California sunflower (*Helianthus californicus*), a giant winter-dormant rhizomatous perennial that bears bee-attracting yellow sunflowers in summer and, in fall, edible seeds that attract goldfinches and other seed eaters. Or border the pond with copses of willows (*Salix* spp.) for a supply of supple branches, bark with medicinal properties, and a nesting place for birds.

A Dry Chaparral Garden

At the opposite extreme, a dryland chaparral planting typically features useful and widely available shrubs like the wild lilacs (*Ceanothus* spp.), which range from low ground covers to treelike shrubs, all offering fragrant clusters of blue, purple, or white spring blossoms that are bee magnets. Ceanothus blossoms also provide soap when lathered in water and their roots are often used by herbalists. Their natural companion shrubs, manzanitas, not only attract a wide range of pollinators but provide edible berries useful for making jellies and cider and leaves used in herbal medicines. Like the ceanothuses, manzanitas come in many forms and shapes, all with early-blooming



Beautiful Ithuriel's spear has edible corms.

white or pink urn-shaped flowers and red to purple berries. The fremontias (*Fremontodendron* cultivars) provide a beautiful counterpart to ceanothus with their star-shaped yellow or orange flowers and also offer bark that produces an emollient when crushed and agitated in water. A good dryland planting like this demands lower-growing plants in front of the shrubs, plants like the California fuchsia mentioned above, along with coyote mints (*Monardella villosa* and others), whose pincushion heads of purple flowers in summer attract a host of butterflies and bumblebees. The fragrant leaves also enhance the garden experience. Other low-growing fragrant plants include the artemisias, most with sage-scented gray leaves that are sometimes used medicinally or, in tiny amounts, to flavor food. Further spectacular adjuncts to our chaparral include the giant woody perennial, Matilija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*) with huge saucers of white petals and an eye of yellow stamens—a bee flower and source of herbal substances—and angel's trumpet or thorn-apple (*Datura wrightii*) with enormous trumpet-shaped white flowers that open in evening, scenting the night air and attracting hawk moths. The main caveat for this habitat plant is its extreme toxicity, inappropriate for gardens with children and pets. Both produce reliable summer color.

EDIBLE BULBS

PLANT NAME	KIND OF PLANT	HABITAT / GARDEN USE
<i>Allium</i> spp., wild onions	Mostly summer-dormant bulbs	Grasslands, woodlands, meadows Meadow; edge of shade garden (some)
<i>Brodiaea</i> , <i>Triteleia</i> , & <i>Dichelostemma</i> spp., brodiaeas & relatives	Summer-dormant corms	Mostly woodlands & grasslands in foothills Meadow; edge of shade garden (some)
<i>Calochortus</i> spp., mariposa-, star-, & globe-tulips	Summer-dormant bulbs	Many habitats including woodlands, grasslands, & meadows Meadow dry in summer; containers
<i>Camassia</i> spp., camas	Winter-dormant bulbs	Wet meadows Moist meadow
<i>Lilium</i> spp., lilies	Winter-dormant bulbs	Streamside & dry woods Edge of wetland garden; shade garden (some)
<i>Perideridia</i> spp., yampahs	Mostly tuberous, winter-dormant perennials	Widespread in rocky areas & woodlands from the foothills into the mountain meadows Meadow



Yampah produces edible tubers.

Grassland Meadows

The grassland meadow is one of the most popular designs for a native garden. Anchored by native perennial bunchgrasses, some of which have edible seeds (*Elymus* spp., for example), a plethora of colorful spring- and summer-blooming annuals, perennials, and bulbs can be inter-planted. Among these are numerous bee-attracting flowers along with a good measure of edibles. Two categories of edibles stand out: the seeds of many annuals including chia (*Salvia columbariae*), tidy tips (*Layia platyglossa*), globe gilia (*Gilia capitata*), meadowfoam (*Limnanthes douglasii*),



Fruit of the evergreen huckleberry is delicious.

EDIBLE FRUITS

PLANT NAME	KIND OF PLANT	HABITAT / GARDEN USE
<i>Amelanchier</i> spp., service or June berries	Deciduous shrubs	Edge of woodlands & forests at many elevations Edge of shade gardens
<i>Arctostaphylos</i> spp., manzanitas	Mostly evergreen shrubs	Chaparral & other habitats Chaparral garden; edge of shade garden (some); hummingbird garden
<i>Berberis</i> spp., barberries (some sour, some sweet)	Woody evergreen shrubs	Many habitats from moist to desert-dry Edge of shade garden
<i>Fragaria</i> spp., wild strawberries	Herbaceous perennials spreading by runners	<i>F. chiloensis</i> in coastal dunes, <i>F. virginiana</i> in meadows, forest openings, <i>F. vesca</i> partial shade in forests Ground cover at the front of rock garden; woodland garden; chaparral
<i>Opuntia</i> spp., prickly pears	Woody-based stem succulents	Mostly deserts Chaparral garden; rock garden
<i>Ribes</i> spp., gooseberries and currants (some better than others)	Mostly deciduous shrubs	Woodlands, forests Shade garden; some for hummingbird garden
<i>Rubus</i> spp., black-, thimble-, and raspberries (some invasive)	Woody deciduous ground covers & shrubs with prickles	Forests, woodlands, & coastal situations (for some) Shade garden with room to spread
<i>Sambucus</i> spp., <i>S. nigra</i> subsp. <i>caerulea</i> , blue elderberry, <i>S. racemosa</i> red elderberry	Large deciduous trees & shrubs	Blue elderberry in canyons and semi-shaded slopes; Red elderberry in shaded coastal canyons Woodland garden
<i>Vaccinium ovatum</i> , evergreen huckleberry	Evergreen shrub	Edge of coastal conifer forests Shade garden (some summer moisture)
<i>Vitis</i> spp., wild grapes	Deciduous woody vines	Riparian forests & woodlands Trellis behind wetland garden; edge of shade garden



Thimbleberry (*Rubus parviflorus*)

goldfields (*Lasthenia gracilis*), clarkias (*Clarkia* spp.), and, particularly for summer, elegant tarplant (*Madia elegans*). Pinole is a mix of these and other annual wildflower seeds that are roasted and ground into a nutritious flour. The other group is the bulbs, foremost of which are the spring-flowering brodiaeas (many species in the genera *Triteleia*, *Dichelostemma*, and *Brodiaea*), with blue, purple, white, or yellow flowers from early to late spring and the yampahs (*Perideridia* spp. except *P. kelloggii*), blooming mostly in summer with airy umbels of tiny white flowers and edible tubers. Included in this group are also the wild onions (*Allium* spp.) and the beautiful but more difficult fritillaries (*Fritillaria* spp.) and mariposa-tulips (*Calochortus* spp.). These bulbs should be in a garden that receives little summer water. Bulbs also need to be protected from gophers, with either wire baskets (replace every few years) or pots plunged into the soil.

A Woodland Shade Garden

For woodland gardens, there is a whole range of different plants of different sizes. The very trees that create shade are excellent for other purposes: California bay (*Umbellularia californica*) has highly fragrant leaves used in small amounts to flavor stews and sauces and seeds that can be roasted and ground into a condiment; gray pine (*Pinus sabiniana*) provides huge heavy cones loaded with delicious pine “nuts”; and the oaks (*Quercus* spp.) including the tanbark oak (*Notholithocarpus densiflorus*) produce an abundance of nutritious acorns, which, although requiring processing to remove bitter tannins, are usable in recipes calling for flour. For most palates, oak flour needs to be combined with other flours for best flavor. Note that all of these are large trees requiring considerable space and sending out roots that soak up a lot of water. The shrubby currants and gooseberries produce winter flowers that attract pollinators and provide edible berries for jams and jellies. The best for human consumption include the golden currant (*Ribes aureum*) and the Sierra gooseberry (*R. roezlii*). Many other berry-producing shrubs prefer partial shade, some needing supplemental watering in summer. Among these we have evergreen huckleberry (*Vaccinium ovatum*) with some of the best tasting fruits, its companion salal (*Gaultheria shallon*), the rather aggressive rubuses like salmonberry and thimbleberry (*Rubus spectabilis* and *R. parviflorus*), and the sour but edible barberries like Oregon



Chia produces seeds in spring.

grape and long-leaf barberry (*Berberis aquifolium* and *B. nervosa*). California hazelnut (*Corylus cornuta* subsp. *californica*) is another shrub that favors part-shade; it bears delicious nuts, but unfortunately, only a sparse crop in the Bay Area. Several shade-loving ground covers are useful: redwood sorrel (*Oxalis oregana*) has sour-tasting leaves that add a piquant accent to salads, yerba buena (*Clinopodium douglasii*) provides delightful mint-scented leaves for an herbal tea, and woodland strawberry (*Fragaria vesca*) bears some of the tastiest fruits but requires a massive planting to be a practical food source. Don't forget the absolutely bullet-proof miner's lettuce (*Claytonia perfoliata*), whose greens make a delightful spring salad. These are but a sampling of the possibilities; other themes can include a desert garden in the hotter inland areas with prickly pears (*Opuntia* spp.) for fruit, mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa* var. *torreyana*) for protein-rich seeds, yuccas for soap and edible flowers, agaves (*Agave deserti*) for tough fibers and sweet syrup, jojoba (*Simmondsia chinensis*) for its excellent oil, and California fan palm (*Washingtonia filifera*) for its datelike fruits. There are no limits to creating a truly unique garden with multiple and fascinating uses. The accompanying tables describe some, but by no means all, of the many uses provided by our versatile native plants. 🌱

Glenn Keator is the chairman of the Friends Advisory Council. He is a popular instructor of botany and field trip leader in the Bay Area, and he teaches the docent training course at the Regional Parks Botanic Garden. He is the author of a number of books on native plants. Photos by the author except as noted.

EDIBLE SEEDS (PINOLE)

PLANT NAME	KIND OF PLANT	HABITAT / GARDEN USE
<i>Calandrinia menziesii</i> , red maids	Spring annual	Grasslands Meadow
<i>Clarkia</i> spp., godetias & clarkias	Spring & summer annuals	Grasslands & woodlands Meadow; edge of shade garden (some)
<i>Gilia</i> spp., gillias	Spring annuals	Grasslands & deserts Mostly meadow
<i>Helianthus</i> spp., sunflowers	Summer annuals & perennials	Seeps, roadsides, & other Chaparral garden (some); back of wetland garden (some)
<i>Lasthenia</i> spp., goldfields	Spring annuals	Grasslands Meadow
<i>Layia</i> spp., tidy tips	Spring annuals	Grasslands Meadow
<i>Limnanthes</i> spp., meadowfoam	Spring annuals	Vernal pools Meadow
<i>Madia</i> spp., tarplants	Spring & summer annuals	Grasslands Meadow
<i>Salvia columbariae</i> , chia	Spring annual	Drylands & desert margins Dry meadow; front of chaparral garden
<i>Wyethia</i> spp., mule's ears	Summer-dormant perennials	Grasslands, woodlands Shade garden; dry meadow



Acorns of tanbark oak (*Notholithocarpus densiflorus*)

EDIBLE NUTS AND LARGE SEEDS

PLANT NAME	KIND OF PLANT	HABITAT / GARDEN USE
<i>Corylus cornuta</i> subsp. <i>californica</i> , California hazelnut (may bear sparingly)	Deciduous large shrub	Edge of coastal forests & ponderosa pine forests Edge of woodland garden
<i>Juglans hindsii</i> & <i>J. californica</i> , black walnuts	Small-to-moderate sized deciduous broadleaf trees	Riparian areas Edge of shade garden; back of wetland garden
<i>Notholithocarpus densiflorus</i> , tanbark oak	Evergreen tree	Coastal & conifer forests Woodland garden
<i>Pinus monophylla</i> , pinyon pine	Evergreen conifer	Desert uplands Rock garden; desert-type garden
<i>Pinus sabiniana</i> , gray pine	Evergreen conifer	Foothill woodlands Back of chaparral garden
<i>Prosopis</i> spp., mesquites	Deciduous small trees & shrubs	Desert oases & washes Back of rock garden; desert-type garden
<i>Quercus</i> spp., oaks (some better than others)	Deciduous & evergreen trees	Woodlands, open forests Woodland garden; edge of meadow
<i>Umbellularia californica</i> , California bay (seeds may be bitter)	Large evergreen sometimes multi-trunked tree	Riparian areas, mixed evergreen forests, coastal forests Back of woodland garden

Two Special 75th Anniversary Celebrations *by Rosie Andrews*

John Tennler



Garden Director and Emcee Bart O'Brien in front of two of the donated silent auction items

BRAZILIAN ROOM DINNER

On July 22nd, garden supporters, including district and garden staff, members of the *Friends*, and the California native plant community-at-large, filled the Brazilian Room in Tilden Park for an evening of festivities. Summer weather reverted to old habits for the occasion as the fog drifted in with the guests in the early evening. Accompanied by tunes from the Irish band, The Elderberries, guests mingled on the patio and placed their bids on a variety of silent auction items. A camera crew on hand for the occasion recorded as people shared memories of the garden (the video can now be viewed on the garden's website at www.nativeplants.org) while a slide presentation of photos spanning most of the garden's 75 year history looped in the background.

Over dinner in the "great room" of the Brazilian Building, Garden Director Bart O'Brien passed the microphone among current and former staff, who regaled the guests with reminiscences of special people and special times spent in the garden over many decades. The evening's program highlighted how, since James Roof's first plantings, knowledge has been handed down from each garden director to his successor and to another generation of gardeners and volunteers, instilling a deep love for this special place. In the words of former gardener Bert Johnson, "This garden has always been in good hands."

The evening came to a close with a spirited distribution of auction and raffle prizes.

John Tennler



Retired gardener Bert Johnson was on hand to share stories of his years in the garden.

John Tennler



So was retired Garden Director Steve Edwards.

AUGUST 29TH OPEN HOUSE

A drizzly start to the day failed to dampen spirits as people gathered at the garden early on August 29th to set up for a public 75th Anniversary celebration. More than fifty garden staff, docents, *Friends* members, and volunteers showed up to occupy stations of their choosing in the garden and offer visitors a chance to explore the wonders of the garden's vast collection of California native plants.

At sites throughout the garden marked by orange balloons, visitors of all ages were treated to a wide variety of activities and presentations. Kids young and old colored drawings of native plants, mashed acorns in a grinding stone, learned how to clean flower seeds, and examined redwood rings under a microscope.

Green balloons marked stops on a self-guided tour developed by gardener Liz Bittner, highlighting some of the garden's original plants. At each stop a placard described a nearby heritage plant, often with a pithy, poetic quote from Roof's 1959 *Guide to the Plant Species of the Regional Parks Botanic Garden*. (The self-guided tour remains available in the Visitor Center.)

At noon the crowd gathered for comments from General Manager Robert Doyle, Garden Director Bart O'Brien, and *Friends* President Rosie Andrews, then headed to the giant sequoia grove for cake and refreshments. Activities continued until the gates closed at 5:30 pm. 🌿

Rosie Andrews has been a docent at the garden since 2009 and is currently President of the Friends and Managing Editor of the Manzanita.

Marcia Nybakken



Rosie Andrews, Sue Rosenthal, Bart O'Brien, and Alan Harper

MANY THANKS TO ALL OUR 75TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION VOLUNTEERS AND SUPPORTERS

Howard Arendtson, H. Julien Designs
Cactus Jungle Nursery and Garden
Chez Panisse
DTC Lighting & Grip
East Bay Nursery
The Elderberries, Traditional Irish Music
in County Alameda, California
Foley Family Wines
Luke Hass, Luke Hass Fine Gardens
Saxon Holt, Saxon Holt Photography
Stephen Joseph, Stephen Joseph Fine Art Photography
Glenn Keator
Lalime's Restaurant
Meritage at the Claremont,
The Claremont Hotel Club & Spa
Mount Diablo Nursery and Garden
Bart O'Brien
Piedmont Grocery
Rivoli Restaurant
Elizabeth Rohner
Silver Leaf Sweets
Skates on the Bay
Dan and Elizabeth Songster
Michael Uhler
Westbrae Nursery

EVENT PLANNING COMMITTEE

Rosie Andrews
Joe Dahl
Teresa LeYung-Ryan
Laura Miller
Ashika Narayan
Jim and Marcia Nybakken
Bart O'Brien
Sue Rosenthal

EVENT VOLUNTEERS

Gert Allen
Liz Bittner
Linda Blide
Bob Case
Kate Ferroggiaro
Don Fuller
Aki McKinzie
Anne Olsen
Liz Rottger

And to all the staff, docents and volunteers
who made these events possible.



Teresa LeYung-Ryan

Docent Liz Rottger wows visitors with an introduction to the versatile soap root plant. "Our visitors are always surprised that there is a plant that produces soap. Then, to hear that the California Indians also roasted it as food, made brushes and glue from it, and stunned fish with it, leaves them dumbstruck."

Teresa LeYung-Ryan



At her station near a patch of our showy milkweed (*Asclepias speciosa*) in the Sierra section of the garden, docent and plant chemist Greti Séquin described how bright yellow aphids feed on the plant despite the toxic milky latex sap it produces, then warn away predators with their color. Some of the adventurous younger visitors enjoyed the experience of aphids marching up and down their arms.

Teresa LeYung-Ryan



Gardener Michael Uhlner and his wife Ellen enjoyed the day's festivities.

Rosie Andrews



Rosalie Gonzalez taught visitors how to prepare acorn meal.

FRIENDS OF THE
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Save these Dates—

Annual Spring Plant Sale **April 16th** in the Garden

California Native Plant Symposium: “Useful Plants for the Garden,”
to be held at Tilden Environmental Education Center, **May 14 and 15**

Watch www.nativeplants.org for more information!