

Oak Notes

Volume 40
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December 2021

NEWSLETTER OF THE CALIFORNIA BOTANIC GARDEN VOLUNTEERS

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Oak Notes

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FROM THE PRESIDENT Lynn Miller, Volunteer President

Hello Volunteers,

By now, we've finished the leftover mashed potatoes, pumpkin pie, and enjoyed the last of the turkey sandwiches. After all that, who knew a brisk walk at CalBG could feel so good? Right now, there are plenty of reasons to enjoy the Garden beyond getting some fresh air. A unique sculpture exhibit, *(Re)place*, by Brandon Lomas opened to the public on November 13th. These sculptures vary in stages from fully fired to seed-embedded green works waiting for nature to trigger their return to the soil. Also, look forward to enjoying Luminaria nights again. The dates are: December 10, 11, 17, and 18 from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.



Brandon Lomas and Karen Kuo



(Re)Place ceramic installation.

Recently, we said farewell to Danielle Wildasinn as she begins her career in forensic lab work. We will miss her cheerful spirit and "can do" attitude, and we wish her the best. In November, Jennifer Scerra, joined the Garden as the new CalBG Public Relations and Events Coordinator. Though not the Volunteer Manager, Jennifer will interact closely with the Garden Guides. Welcome, Jennifer!

In November, the Garden Guides started their revised school tours. Now 1.5 hours, students will still have an informative experience in the Garden. Though not as "hands-on," the new tours will enrich their classroom curriculum while raising the students' awareness of native plant life and its role with the surrounding fauna.

Mark your calendars! Plans are underway to hold a Volunteer Quarterly Meeting on Thursday, December 9th from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the Outdoor Classroom. We look forward to getting together, COVID compliant, and to catch-up on the Garden updates as well as with friends. Details coming soon.

The deadline for articles to be submitted for the January 2022 issue of OAK NOTES is **Wednesday, December 15**. Thank you for your prompt submission!

Volgistics reminder:
Please submit your monthly volunteer hours to Volgistics. Every volunteer minute counts.

Many of you have asked about Volunteer shirts and Garden wear. A small committee has heard your questions and is looking into several sources to move this forward. We should have an update at the Quarterly Meeting.

As activities in the Garden ramp up, please watch for Volunteer opportunities on Volgistics.

See you on the pathways,

—Lynn



FROM THE DIRECTOR

**Lucinda McDade, CalBG
Executive Director**

Hello volunteers!

The short, dark days of our southern California fall-into-winter season are upon us! Although we are experiencing a warm, dry Santa Ana event as I write this Oak Notes piece, I imagine that many of you are watching the weather forecast, wondering whether and when the season will bring us much needed rain. Our horticulture staff respond to the season by beginning to plant: fall is for planting! They have just completed work at the Courtyard—specifically,



around the rain garden to the south and also to the southeast and southwest of the paved area. We intend to have the landscaping at the Forest Pavilion

installed before the season again turns. It will be wonderful to see the Sally and Skip Prussia Sun Garden, the Scaff Arroyo Garden, and the Faucett Shade Garden take form at the Mary K. Pierson Center for Sustainable Gardening.

You may or may not remember the “Winter Stroll” event that we held over one weekend in December of last year as a seasonal substitute for *Luminaria*. Remember that no one was vaccinated and we were headed into the largest peak of the pandemic in terms of rates of infection (although we did not fully appreciate that at the time). We are a little more relaxed this year and are planning a somewhat more typical event. Details remain to be firmed up,

but the basic plan is as follows. Two music venues: the Forest Pavilion and the Outdoor Gallery. The main Southern California Gardens pathway* will be lit with luminaria as will be the ADA path up to the Mesa. The Mesa will be lit by a combination of the string lights and luminaria, and the main ramp (southernmost) to the Mesa will be lit with luminaria as well. We are still working on the plan for refreshments, and volunteers have been invited to participate as well. Karina and I are recruiting musicians for the four nights and I am beginning to look forward to hearing them play. It will be fun! There will be many opportunities for volunteers to be involved both in helping with the event and in supporting your volunteer organization with sales of snacks and merchandise (assuming that your leaders decide to do something like that).

I hope you have had the chance to see the new sculpture show—*(Re)place* by Brandon Lomax—up now through spring. Brandon’s circle of anthropoid forms on pedestals has been exhibited at the western entrance to the Cultivar Garden since *Clayifornia* opened—it is one of my favorites! For *(Re)place*, Brandon has added many more fired sculptures to the Cultivar Garden in various assemblages that he refers to as ‘families,’ ‘populations’ and ‘communities.’ In addition, Brandon has created—and visitors will be creating—additional sculptures that are not fired and are embedded with seeds of California native plants that were collected right here at the Garden. These unfired sculptures are being placed out in the habitats area of the Garden and (by Lomax himself) in select additional locations on the mesa. These seed studded, unfired sculptures are to respond to winter weather and gradually dissolve, thus dispersing their seeds all around them. Imagine! sculptures that gradually disintegrate to become lovely patches of wildflowers! It will be very fun to watch the new plants replace the sculptures. Those who participate in a workshop are invited to make two sculptures—one to place here at CalBG and the other to take home. Bring the youngsters in your life and sign up!

Did you notice the asterisk (*) way up in the middle of the second paragraph? If you think about the asterisked statement for a minute or two you will

probably be wondering how on earth we are going to send visitors down the So Cal Gardens trail in the dark given how rough it is in places. The answer? We are planning to fix a large portion of it starting quite soon. Watch for developments by the end of November! Want to help with that project? Please do! Please be in touch with the advancement office to help us extend the repaved area.

Onward in to the holiday season! I hope to see many of you around the Garden and at one or more of the Luminaria events!

Thanks as always for all that you do!



VISITOR EXPERIENCE COORDINATOR

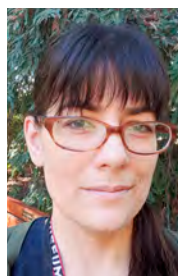
Danielle Wildasinn

The Admissions Kiosk welcomed new Visitor Experience Associate Sabrina Alvarado in early November. Stop by and say hi when you see any new faces!

In other news, by the time you are reading this, I moved on from the Garden. I started working at the Garden in the Admissions Kiosk in the fall of 2016. In the fall of 2019, I received a promotion and moved up to the Administration Building to take over social media and PR. I supported Visitor Experience and Community Education public programming until the pandemic hit Southern California in the spring of 2020; then we shifted our strategy to online engagement. In the summer of 2020, I also took over supervision of the Admissions Kiosk. The last 20 or so months have been interesting and challenging to say the least, but I like to think we did our best and made it through.

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank each and every volunteer who helps the Garden thrive. The hours you put in—be it greeting crowds during public events to maintaining the grounds and everything in between—exemplify your dedication to

the Garden's mission and to preserving our location as a destination for everyone to enjoy for years to come. It has been a pleasure to work alongside you and get to know you over the last five years. I look forward to watching our Garden grow!



COMMUNITY EDUCATION **Jennifer Scerra, Visitor Engagement**

Hello California Botanic Garden volunteers!

My name is Jennifer Scerra and I am pleased to be joining the Garden as the new Assistant Director of Visitor Engagement, Community Education. I haven't had a chance to meet many of you yet in person, but I am very much looking forward to the opportunity. I feel like I am arriving at a very exciting time, just as things are really starting to bloom again after the



A Very Happy December Birthday to:

Stephanie Andrews	Carol Lerew
Barbara Booth	Susan Lominska
Judy Bryson	Lisa McCarter
Marcela Cathcart	Arlene Medina
Grace Clark	Alice Oglesby
Nadja Cole	Mary Lee Otto
Hal Croulet	Michael Tschudi
Linda Battram Dorosh	Yvonne Wilson
Rich Griffin	Deborah Woo

long summer and just as educational programs are rumbling to wake up after a long pandemic hiatus.

Before coming to the Botanic Garden, I worked at the *Homestead Museum* in City of Industry, CA, and before that at the *Museum of Science* in Boston, MA. Even though I grew up in the Inland Empire, I spent 15 years in Boston and Philadelphia and I like to think that the time away made me especially appreciative of Southern California. Now, after an exciting science center and a beautiful historic site, I am charmed to be able to join an inspiring Garden devoted to outdoor education and specifically to California's native plants.

So what do I hope to do while I am here?

There is so much exciting work to do while we restart, recreate, and reinvent the different kinds of educational programming that the Garden offers. I've spent my first week reading, reviewing, learning names (of people, places, and things!), taking inventory, writing down my questions, and hunting for answers. I still have a lot to learn from all of you, but I hope to soon be contributing to a Garden that welcomes and informs people who already know they are interested in California native plants, and inspires people who will soon find out that they are, too. So do you have a favorite program or experience here? I would love to hear about it.

AND INTO THE HERBARIUM: THE PROCESSING AND IMPORTANCE OF HERBARIUM SPECIMENS

**Mare Nazaire, Herbarium Administrative
Curator, Research Assistant Professor,
Claremont Graduate University**

In October's *Oak Notes*, J. Travis Columbus highlighted how botanists collect plant specimens as part of fieldwork (see "Out in the Field"). Where do these plants go after they are collected? What is the process of preparing a specimen? And why would anyone want to do this?

A plant press made up of layers of cardboard (i.e., ventilators) sandwiched between two wooden frames is used to press collected plants. Once dried, botanists then identify the specimens to determine the species. A collection label that includes the plant's identification, collection location, collector, date of collection, and a collection number (a botanist's sequential numbering system to track collections) is included with each specimen.

Specimens are then deposited into the herbarium. Once received, herbarium staff freeze the specimens to ensure that the specimens are free from insect pests. In CalBG's Herbarium volunteers mount specimens onto archival paper by painting archival glue on to each specimen and carefully placing it on the paper. Our volunteers mount ~14,000 specimens each year (pre-pandemic averages).

All newly mounted specimens are barcoded, databased, and imaged. Images and corresponding data are served on the Herbarium's online database through the Consortium of California Herbaria 2 (CCH2) portal (<https://cch2.org/portal>), where they are readily available to researchers, students, and the public. The physical specimen is filed into the herbarium. The herbarium is organized to allow for easy retrieval, access, and for long-term archival storage of the specimens.

Herbarium specimens are an essential resource for many disciplines in the plant sciences, including systematic, evolutionary, and ecological research. Specimens are critical for understanding global biodiversity and its loss, phenological change, invasive species and their impact on diversity, and for informing conservation management decisions. Importantly, herbarium specimens offer a lens into the past and a means to envision the future. This is especially critical now as we try to assess how biodiversity will change with global shifts in climate and land use.

With over 1.25 million specimens and the 3rd largest herbarium in California, the CalBG Herbarium [RSA] is an invaluable resource for better understanding California's flora and implementing

the best strategies for conserving and protecting the native plants of this exceptionally diverse state.



A specimen of *Argemone munita* collected by former graduate student Nick Jensen. Note the collection label placed in the bottom right corner of the herbarium sheet. Specimens are imaged in the herbarium and images are hosted on the CCH2 portal. Photo credit: RSA Herbarium

Nazaire



Curatorial Assistant Bryana Olmeda files specimens into the main collection of the herbarium. Photo credit: M. Nazaire



Plant presses in the herbarium drier. Light bulbs and fans push heat through the cardboard ventilators to quickly dry the plant specimens. Photo credit: M. Nazaire



Volunteer Christopher Jarosz mounts a plant specimen to archival paper. Photo credit: M.

ASTERACEAE: STARS OF THE PLANT WORLD—ANNUALS

by Steve Bryant

Formerly the Composite family, many Asteraceae have yellow flowers and are sometimes difficult to identify, hence “DYC” (damn yellow composite). This article will cover ten annuals, the next will cover ten perennials.

Baileya multiradiata (Desert marigold): to about 1 m wide and 0.5 m tall; grayish-white leaves and bright yellow flowers, mostly in spring. May volunteer; easy to overwater.

Eriophyllum confertiflorum (Golden yarrow): to about 1 m wide and 0.5 m tall. Neon yellow flowers cover plant in spring. Perennial but sometimes difficult to keep alive more than one season; seeds fairly freely.

Lasthenia spp. (Goldfields, 19 species): low-growing (10–20 cm) spring ephemerals covering moist flats

with bright yellow. Try at the edge of your vernal pool or winter-wet place. Keep fairly moist.



Layia platyglossa (Tidy-tips): grow with *Lupinus nanus* for gold and blue in February–March.

Malacothrix glabrata (Desert Dandelion): covers medians of I-10 between Hwy 62 and Palm Desert in good rain years; pale yellow flowers on 20–30cm plants. Seems better in

heavier soil.

Palafoxia arida (Spanish Needle): desert plant with small (~1 cm) pinkish flowers that give way to interesting seeds that volunteer freely. Sometimes perennates. A large form grows near the Algodones dunes. Attracts insects.

Perityle emoryi (Emory's Rock Daisy): small, ~5–8 mm-wide daisy-like flowers on a plant that may ramble to 2 m wide and 1 m tall.



Rafinesquia californica (Desert Chicory) and *R. neomexicana* (Calif. Chicory): Weak-stemmed, dandelion-sized white flowers on

stems that may grow to 1 m. Grows best near something it can climb through for support.

Trichoptilium incisum (Yellowdome): desert annual to 0.5 m wide and 15 cm tall; may bloom through Fall.



Uropappus lindelyi. (Silverpuffs): flowers small, yellow, and unremarkable; when in fruit, a pretty silver puffball. Seeds (too!) freely.

FOUND/RECYCLED WINNER

A recent issue of Claremont's weekly *Chamber Newsletter* honored our Native Designs group for winning the Found/Recycled category with their

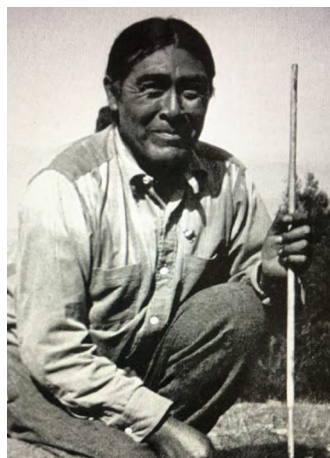
entry, "Garden Family." Thanks to Carol Petty and the Native Designs team for their never-ending creativity.



Cultivation and acquisition: Start from seed in Nov-Jan. Weekly water until germination, then weekly or so for *Lasthenia*; water every two weeks or so for others. Seeds, and sometimes plants, usually only from specialists.

ISHI

by Shaunna Gygli



In 1911, near Orville, California, a Yahi Indian, near starvation, took refuge in a barn. His hair had been singed to show he was in mourning. Most of his group, about 35, had been massacred when he was a young boy. His mother and another relative survived by remaining hidden in the

Mill (Deer) Creek area for forty years. When his relatives died, Ishi walked out of the Stone Age and into the 20th Century. He became known to the world as “The Last Wild Indian.” Due to genocide, disease, and starvation during the mid to late 1800’s, it was believed that there were no Indians living completely out of the white man’s influence.

Alfred Kroeber, a young anthropologist at the University of California, Berkeley, wanted to describe native cultures before the elders and traditions died. Thomas Waterman, at the same University, was a linguist with some knowledge of the Yahi-Yana language. The two of them brought Ishi (“man” in Yahi), to the anthropology museum at Berkeley and gave him a room and a janitorial job. There he interacted with the public while making tools and recording songs and stories. Sexton Pope, a teacher at the medical school, was concerned about Ishi’s health. These three men became his friends.

Ishi lived at the museum for the rest of his life. He was intrigued by trolley cars, the crowds of people, and the buildings. In December 1914 he developed tuberculosis and was hospitalized several times. When it became clear he was not going to get better, his friends moved him back to the museum for the

rest of his life. He died March 25, 1916. An autopsy was performed against his known wishes. His brain was removed and sent in a jar to the Smithsonian Institute. His body was cremated and buried in a cemetery in Coloma, California. On August 10, 1999, Ishi’s brain and his cremated remains were given to his descendants at the Redding Rancheria and the Pit River Indian Tribe where they were reinterred at an undisclosed location.

To anthropologists and linguists, the information Ishi was able to share was invaluable. But for me, the important story is the character of the man himself and the impact he had on Kroeber, Waterman, and Pope.

Thomas Waterman, could communicate with Ishi best. At his death, Waterman wrote, “He had an inborn considerateness that surpasses in fineness most of civilized breeding of which I am familiar. He was the best friend I had in the world. I would have liked to have more time with him. I always thought there was something there that I should know, that I would like to know.”

Alfred Kroeber was in Europe when Ishi died. He sent a telegram to try to stop the autopsy, in respect Ishi’s wishes. “Science can go to hell. We propose to stand by our friend.” His letter was too late. After Ishi’s death Kroeber went into psychoanalysis for two years, seriously considering the ethics of his work. He eventually went on to become California’s first great anthropologist, but he never published another word about Ishi.

Saxton Pope, the medical doctor, was also an outdoor enthusiast. Ishi taught him how to make bows and arrows. On hunting trips Pope learned some of the Yahi language, stories, and traditions. He wrote, “Ishi looked upon us as sophisticated children, smart but not wise. We know many things and much of that is false. He knew nature, which is always true. His were the qualities of character that last forever. He was kind, he had courage and self-restraint, and though all had been taken from him, there was no bitterness in his heart. His soul was that of a child, his mind that of a philosopher.”

Alfred Kroeber’s wife, Theodora, wrote *Ishi in Two Worlds*. It is in our volunteer library.

CHILDREN'S BOOK OF THE MONTH

**Barbara Nakaoka,
Volunteer Library Committee**



The Boy Who Grew a Forest, The True Story of Jadav Payeng by Sophia Gholz. Sleeping Bear Press; illustrated edition. 2019. 32 pp.

There is a section in the *Trees of North America*

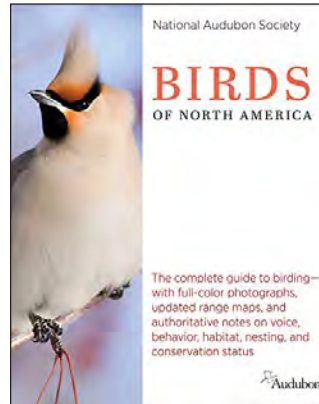
(National Audubon Society) on Threats to Trees and Forests. This section mentions the inspiring children's book by Sophia Gholz. In this book, Jadav Payeng is quoted as saying, "Only by growing plants, the Earth will survive." The book starts with his sadness over the deforestation and erosion of India's Brahmaputra River region. This sadness motivates him to do something, so he grows a thicket of bamboo that eventually covers 1,300 acres, larger than 900 football fields. As a boy and as an adult, he was not without problems to solve or trees and animals to protect. The author has included a biography of Jadav "Molai" Payeng and a bonus for children on "How to Plant a Forest of Your Own" Daunting? No, just follow the instructions throughout the book. This is not just a story of the life's work of Jadav Payeng, but of determination and dedication, of resilience, of what one person can do, and of hope. This book would be an excellent holiday gift for nature-loving children.

BOOK OF THE MONTH

**Barbara Nakaoka,
Volunteer
Library Committee**

Both of the following guides have been updated for the first time in decades. The two books have something for those who are at the beginning stage of their interest in birds or trees, and those ready to move on to a more in-depth study either in their own area, or on their travels. They are coffee-table worthy

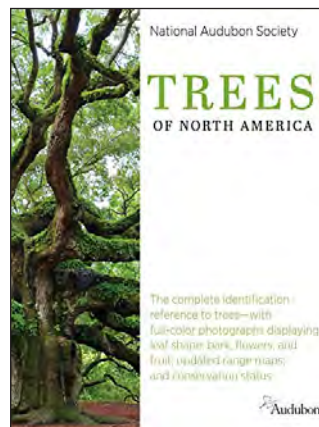
and would make an excellent holiday gift for any nature enthusiast.



National Audubon Society, Birds of North America. Knopf, 2021. 912 pp.

The *National Audubon Society Birds of North America* covers more than 800 species with over 3,500 color photographs of birds in their natural habitat. The book is arranged according to the

American Ornithological Society's latest Checklist of North and Middle American Birds. It is helpful that related species are presented together. The Table of Contents clearly presents the structure of the book and helps find and understand bird-related terminology. For each bird, there is a conservation section that gives its status as designated by the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List of Threatened Species. The book concludes with reflective writings by leading experts that give insights into the world of birds.



National Audubon Society Trees of North America. Knopf, 2021. 592 pp.

The *National Audubon Society Trees of North America* includes more than 540 species with nearly 2,500 full-color photographs. The photographs are beautiful and capture details of

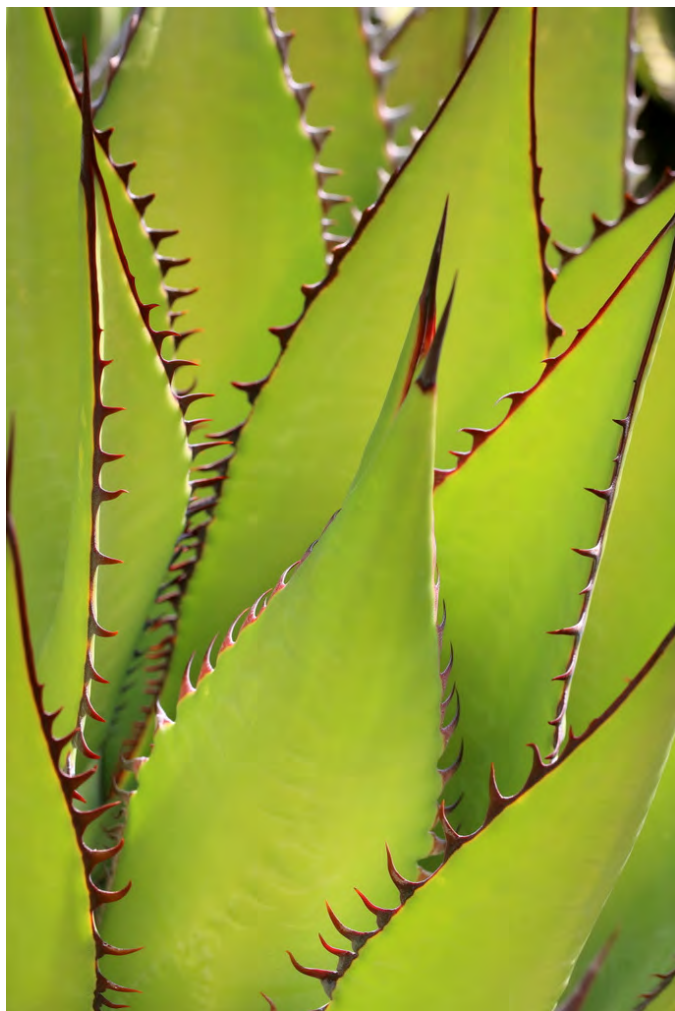
various tree parts as well as specific attributes. Essays by leading scholars provide a deeper understanding of each tree. Trees are sorted by taxonomic order and grouped by family. For each tree there are range maps, physical descriptions, uses, fruits, and habitats. The guide includes a new category on conservation status that is important information for any reader.

FALL IN THE GARDEN

Below, top to bottom: *Agave shawii*, *Vitis* sp.

Right, top to bottom: *Splidago* sp., *Diplacus* sp., *Epilobium* sp., *Rhus ovata*.

Photos by Deb Woo.





**The pleasure of your company
is requested at the volunteer's**

WELCOME BACK

Holiday Luncheon

**Come and reconnect with your fellow volunteers and
meet Jennifer Scerra, our new Assistant Director of
Visitor Engagement and Community Education**

Thursday December 9, 2021, 11:30 AM
Tram service will start at 11:00 AM

Lantz Outdoor Classroom
(dress for weather; masks optional)

**Those attending are asked to please bring their own
lunch. Dessert, chips, and drinks will be provided.**

Drawing for Prizes!

**Please wear your name badge and bring your
holiday cheer!**

Staff welcome, too!

RSVP at susanwstarr52@gmail.com