

Oak Notes

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NEWSLETTER OF THE CALIFORNIA BOTANIC GARDEN VOLUNTEERS

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Oak Notes

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FROM THE PRESIDENT Lynn Miller, Volunteer President

Spring is here, but wait, doesn't it feel like spring started in January? Lots of sunshine, not so much rain, wind—yes wind, lots of wind—and flowers showed up ahead of schedule. Yes, spring has been here awhile. Most of us would agree that the Garden is at its best this time of year. Trees are leafing out, the Garden is in bloom, and the animals are skittering about. When I go for a walk, what strikes me is how the color of each flower is in tune with its neighbors. It's no wonder we can hit the "pause" button when we go for a walk at CalBG.

As the Garden is bouncing back, so are the volunteers. Thanks to Betsy MacLaren, Yvonne Wilson, and Katy Douglass, the volunteers will soon be sporting the updated CalBG logo wear. With plenty of options, we will soon see new polo shirts, vests, and denim shirts everywhere we look. Garden Guides are leading tours again, and to prepare for our visitors, they've joined together for refresher walks that are especially helpful after the January wind damage. On March 17th, harvesters were busy trimming grapevines for volunteers to twist around jigs and create wreaths. To raise funds for the Volunteer Organization, the Native Designers will decorate the wreaths and then sell them at the Fall Plant Sale. When all was done, the volunteers enjoyed a baked potato luncheon with all the goodies we love to pile top of a potato. Our thanks to Linda Prendergast for organizing the harvest and the wreath making, and Susan Starr and the Hospitality Committee for arranging the luncheon and desserts. Thank you to all the Volunteers who came to help!

Please check the Volunteer calendar for opportunities to serve, and then sign up on Volgistics.

Thank you for generously giving your time to CalBG.

—Lynn

CALLING ALL ASPIRING POETS!

April is National Poetry Month and we invite you try your hand at writing a poem. Poetry uses language to form an image in the mind of the reader, and it does not have to rhyme. Interested? Send your poems to pbrooks2409@gmail.com by April 15th for publishing in upcoming issues of *Oak Notes*.

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

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



FROM THE DIRECTOR

**Lucinda McDade,
CalBG Executive Director**

SPRING! It is spring at California Botanic Garden and we are popping with flowers. I hope you are visiting frequently and have seen the barberries, the California lilacs, the redbuds. The latter are at their showiest as I write this article for the April Oak Notes in mid-March; unfortunately, redbuds do not last very long and so I hope you have gotten to see them! Not to be outdone, our deciduous oaks—emphasis on the Valley oaks—are exuberantly green with new leaves. If we had to endure the monster of a windstorm that hit us, I am glad that it was before the Valley oaks leafed out as I think they would have been a lot more vulnerable if they had been cloaked in leaves.

Speaking of the windstorm....After five weeks of all-out effort to clear out the fallen and severely damaged trees, our assessment was that we'd done the major things and could move into mop-up phase. Thus, we "excused" the heavy machinery and will now be taking it one or a few 'issues' at a time. We also have a fair bit of infrastructure work to do. The roof on the nursery must be entirely replaced and the Spanish tile roofs on the Outdoor Classroom and the main building (3rd floor) are damaged and require repair. Insurance will help with that but will not cover anywhere near the full cost, as those roofs were already old and largely depreciated. Our greenhouses are damaged and, here, in the spirit of making lemonade (though I've never understood why lemons get such a bum rap), we are asking whether we need three greenhouses versus two plus a different kind of growing space (native plants generally don't like greenhouses although some of the plants grown by our research staff and students benefit from a somewhat controlled environment). Stay tuned for the decision and the planning. There are also LOTS of fence runs that need to be replaced.

Overall, the windstorm is going to cost us something in excess of \$200k, of which we have thus far raised about 75%. We must move beyond crisis mode, however, and are thus back to raising money under the umbrella of 'Sponsored Spring.' If you don't already know all about it, you soon will and thanks for helping as you are able!

We are in what seems to be a definitive decline of the plague of Covid (*for now!* I harbor no illusions.) and, among other things, that means that we are welcoming back volunteers to indoor work posts. I have been so happy to see those of you who volunteer in the herbarium back about that big table busily mounting plant specimens. Also, the nursery volunteers—so important to our plant production line—are back. Of course, the Wednesday work group has been back for a while. Whether you are just coming back or have been with us for the long haul, thank you so very much for sticking with *your* Garden through all of this! (For indoor gigs, please work with your area's supervisor regarding whether masks are required or optional. For now, we must respect the concerns of those who are vulnerable and/or have vulnerable people in their lives.)

I wanted also to mention that we are working on a new map of the grounds. We have gotten a fair bit of negative feedback on the current map, notably that the Communities area is not to scale which makes the area even more confusing than it is already. Also, no one understands that the parallel lines around the mesa are intended to indicate elevation change. As important as those points, the 'new' map is already outdated. It does not show the Forest Pavilion nor restrooms associated with that facility and it still shows the gift shop and restrooms as being in the administration building.

About the gift shop: I have said often that we were losing money annually from the shop when it was in the lobby—it is just a terrible location and sales could not cover the staff time required to keep it open. (Parenthetically, we are already making money at the little Poppy Shop!) Going forward, we will certainly admit visitors needing to use the restrooms to the lobby of the Administration Building, and

will also arrange for those restrooms to be open during special events going forward (as we did during *Luminaria* and *Magical Mondays*) but we are not planning to reopen the building to the general public for the foreseeable future. Absent the gift shop, there are no public spaces in the building.

Hence the need for a revised map and we welcome your feedback on that. I will pose a simple question that I'd love to have all of you answer (email to me: lmcdade@calbg.org): how would you feel about rechristening the Outdoor Gallery as the Sage Gallery? We get feedback that calling it 'outdoor' is hopelessly confusing given that we already have the Outdoor Classroom and they are not the same. The gallery is adjacent to Jessica's Sage Garden and so Sage Gallery seems nicely apt. Also, it is short and will be easily understood. **Your** thoughts are welcome!

Between when I began writing this column and now, as I am finishing it, we have learned that the box that we thought had hundreds of maps in it, in fact is full of something entirely different! That is, we are almost out of maps and it is—as noted at the beginning of my article—Spring! Lots of visitors. As a result, we are doing a quick redo of the current map to make the essential changes that I've mentioned to you here. BUT, we are waiting for YOUR opinions on the Sage Gallery idea so please chime in!

Thanks as always volunteers and I look forward to seeing you around the Garden!

CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS!

by Lynn Miller, Volunteer President

You signed up to volunteer; you were ready to launch into an area where you wanted to serve and then "Boom!" Covid hit. We all know the story, now two years old and counting. The good news is that our CalBG Volunteer activities are opening up again! Two positions you might consider are serving on a Volunteer Committee or on the Volunteer Board. Over the years, Volunteers have enjoyed the Garden in numerous ways, but behind each one is a group that makes it happen. The Hospitality Committee hosts our Quarterly luncheons, the Enrichment

Committee plans monthly speakers, the Library Committee keeps track of our reading selections in the Volunteer Library and reviews books in *Oak Notes*. The Visitor Education Committee works with the Garden Guides to keep our tour guides current and to make sure our curious visitors enjoy their time here. The Horticulture and Research Committee works on the grounds. The Public Relations Committee works with the Advancement Department and supports the Garden's community outreach.

It has been a privilege for me to work with each of the volunteers who serve on these committees—I cannot thank them enough for their dedication. Last year we weren't sure where Covid would take us, so the Board members agreed to serve another year beyond their terms. This was a generous offer, and we are deeply grateful for their commitment. Now, however, we need you to think about how you can help the Volunteer Organization. Maybe it's serving on or chairing a committee that piques your interests. If you enjoy taking notes, the position of Board Secretary will be open after June.

Serving on a committee or on the Board is rewarding because you will learn much more about the Garden and your Volunteer Organization. You will work alongside other lifelong learners who want to make sure our volunteer experience at CalBG continues to be meaningful. The best part is it's fun! If you would like to learn more, contact me at: volunteers@calbg.org.

THE "CLAREMONT ECLECTIC" GARDEN TOUR RETURNS!

by Dorcia Bradley

So happy to be back. Six local gardens are ready to provide visitors with an afternoon of awe and relaxation as nature and the creativity of the hosts welcome you. It's a wonderful opportunity to see the varieties of plants that can be grown in this area (especially if they are native to California!), to talk with the owners, get inspiration for your own gardens,

and to discuss with others what works and what doesn't. Or you can just visit and enjoy!

From the beginning of these tours in 2014, CalBG (or RSABG as it was known then), has been of significant assistance in their success by providing a place for the tour to begin. And most of the greeter docents at the various gardens are CalBG volunteers. It's an easy post and comes with free admission to the tour. And as a thank you, The Garden Club makes a donation to the CalBG Volunteer Fund, which supports the Garden. If you are interested in being a greeter docent, you may contact dorciabradley@msn.com.

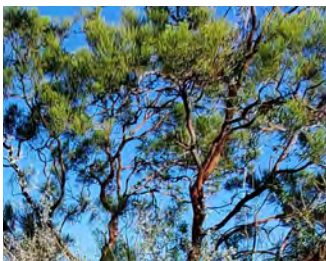
This year's tour is Sunday, April 24, 2022, from 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tickets are only \$20, and as a special bonus, they include a one-time admission to CalBG, to be used within 30 days of the tour.

Tickets can be purchased one of three ways: with cash or check, payable to Sustainable Claremont, at Garner House in Memorial Park, or at Rio de Ojas at 250 Harvard Avenue; by cash or check from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the day of the event at the Garden Club table in the CalBG parking lot; or by credit card until the day of the event at www.claremontgardenclub.org.

We hope to see you there!

TREES AND LARGE SHRUBS, SCENTED AND UNSCENTED by Steve Bryant

Bursera microphylla (Littleleaf Elephant Tree). To 4 m tall and wide. Finely divided, strongly scented foliage. Primarily from the Anza-Borrego area.



Adenostoma sparsifolium (Redshanks). To 6 m tall, 4 m wide. Finely divided foliage with scent most noticeable in hot weather and after rain. Very shreddy red-brown bark.

Calycanthus occidentalis (Spicebush). To 3 m tall and wide. Deciduous. Large, spice-scented leaves and

purplish 2 to 3 cm flowers that smell like old wine barrels. Best in part shade.



Larrea tridentata (Creosote). To 4 m tall, 3 m wide, this plant is *the* scent of the desert after a rain. Small leaves and small yellow flowers followed by little fuzzy white fruits. Flowers attract bees.



Rhus/Malosma (Sugar Bush, Laurel Sumac). *Rhus ovata*, *R. aromatica*, and *Malosma* (formerly *Rhus*) *laurina* are all large shrubs, with *R. ovata* and *M. laurina* to 10 m tall, 4 m wide. Foliage scented, less so in *R. ovata*. Fairly fast growing. *R. aromatica* deciduous, others

evergreen. Too much water may produce weak growth.



Condea (formerly *Hyptis*) *emoryi* (Desert Lavender). To 4 m tall, 3 m wide. Silvery, lavender-scented foliage, clusters of small purple flowers that attract bees. May sprawl, but can

be pruned to shape.

Fraxinus velutina (Velvet Ash). Dioecious, deciduous. To 15 m tall, 10 m wide. Female trees shed copious seed. Several other native *Fraxinus* spp.

Purshia tridentata, *P. stansburiana*. (Bitterbush, Cliffrose) To 4 m tall, 2 m wide. Small, divided leaves. Rose family plants with whitish flowers several cm in diameter, followed by plumed fruits. Mountain plants, with *P. tridentata* to the north and *P. stansburiana* in the desert mountains.

Eriodictyon (Yerba Santa). Many species; in Calif. shrubs ranging from 1 to 4 m tall. Flowers small

to medium in size and whitish to purplish. May be invasive.



Simmondsia chinensis (Jojoba). To 4 m tall, 3 m wide, dense evergreen with leathery leaves. Can be pruned to size and shape. Good screening shrub. Nuts eaten by many animals.



Prunus ilicifolia (Holly-leaved Cherry). To 15 m tall, 5 m wide. Foliage scratchy; can be pruned. Bees attracted to masses of flowers. Thin-pulped fruit is sweet when almost black.

Acer negundo (Box Elder) and *A. macrophyllum* (Big-leaf Maple). Deciduous. To 20+ m tall, 10 m wide. Copious seed. Attracts Western Box Elder bugs that may swarm on buildings in late fall.

Cultivation and acquisition: *Acer*, *Calycanthus*, and *Fraxinus* need moisture; others may survive on rainfall once established, but do better with a little summer water. Specialists often have many of these species.

AN EXCEPTIONAL HUMMINGBIRD

by Joan Sweeney

The only birds I saw after the January windstorm were hummingbirds at the feeder in our front yard. When the weather warmed in early February, sparrows and finches returned and an Anna's Hummingbird started a nest on our patio. We had removed a light fixture from the patio last fall and replaced it with a hummingbird "house" I found online. A bird is now using the house, but it is not the hummingbird I knew from past nesting seasons.

Previously, on April 17, 2017, a hummingbird constructed a nest on a wire outside our patio door. I know the exact date because I took a video of her. She left the nest unfinished and then flew to a neighbor's and nested in a camellia bush near her front door.



She returned each year to that nest. We recognized her "collar" of white feathers and her assertive, friendly personality. After the first year she laid two or three clutches of eggs each season. Most of her babies thrived, but when they didn't, we were heartbroken for her—she worked so hard. I called

her "Ladybird" and did some online research about hummingbirds. In 2019, she built a nest on our wire when the neighbor was having remodeling done. The next year, a different hummingbird built a nest in the same spot on the wire while Ladybird was raising her second clutch of the season next door. It meant a lot to us to watch the little birds grow and fly away while we were confined to our homes by the pandemic.



It's believed a typical Anna's Hummingbird lives three to five years and lays 12 eggs; they don't reuse their nest. After I showed my neighbor, LaVon, our new hummingbird nest, she told me a

hummingbird was sitting on the nest in her camellia bush. I had seen the bird LaVon was talking about at our feeder, but I couldn't believe it was Ladybird. She is at least six years old now. All of the 20 eggs she laid over the years hatched, and 16 offspring fledged and flew away.

When I wished LaVon a happy 91st birthday on March 3, she said she could see her bird feeding two little beaks in the nest. We've watched her together and are sure it's Ladybird. She is a wonderful exception to what is "typical." The bird on our patio began feeding two babies a week later. If all goes well, the nestlings at both of our houses should fledge and fly away by April.

BOOK OF THE MONTH

**Amy Baumann, Volunteer
Library Committee**



**FINDING THE
MOTHER TREE**
Discovering the
Wisdom of the Forest
SUZANNE SIMARD

*Finding the
Mother Tree:
Discovering
the Wisdom
of the Forest*
by Suzanne
Simard.
Alfred A.
Knopf, New
York, 2021.
368 pp.

Suzanne Simard was born and raised in British Columbia as part of a multigenerational logging family. Her early life inspired a deep interest in the trees of the forests and the underground networks that help them to grow and flourish. Her childhood fascination with the layers of the forest floor led to questions about why the seedlings of many trees planted to replace those commercially logged looked sickly and did not establish strong roots. Her family had logged trees for generations and the seedlings had always taken root. Simard's studies revealed that trees are "in a web of interdependence, linked by a system of underground channels, where they

perceive and connect and relate with an ancient intricacy and wisdom that can no longer be denied." She found that when logging practices involved clear cutting and removal of ancient trees, including Mother Trees, there was limited support for struggling new seedlings to develop into healthy trees. Simard's studies lead to profound discoveries about "biodiversity, carbon storage, and a myriad of ecological goods and services that underpin our life-support systems."

Simard is a professor of forest ecology at the University of British Columbia. *Finding the Mother Tree* was included as one the *Wall Street Journal's* Ten Best Books of the Year. It also received the Banff Mountain Book Competition's grand prize and numerous other recognitions. Simard's excellent scientific research of the forest and her powerful personal story make this a memoir difficult to put down. The book leaves the reader with a sense of hope and a desire to deepen their understanding of the amazing capacities of nature. Additional information is available through the Mother Tree Project.



A Very Happy April Birthday to:

Isaiah Becaria	Bev Jack
Jordyn Brase	Betsy MacLaren
Zoe Carlson	Al Noreen
Tim Constantine	Michael Shelley
Maggie Davis-Bowers	Ingrid Spiteri
Katy Douglass	Janice Tsuma
Alegria Garcia	Joe Vlietstra
David Gish	Emory Wolf

HEARD IT ON THE GRAPEVINE...

by **Linda Prendergast**

We thank all who came out for The Great Grapevine Harvest and Wreath-making Event on St. Patrick's Day. Harvesters made short work of the very long and supple vines, and wreath-makers wove those vines into large and small circles, stars, and hearts.

Have you ever wondered what happens to all those wreaths? They will shortly be hung in the rafters of my garage to dry over the summer. Come Fall, the Native Designs crew (and others!) will meet for a week-long "wreath workshop" to hand decorate each wreath. We use dried material, silk flowers and greens, and novelties to create captivating, one-of-a-kind wall and door décor. There are no two alike!

Each artist gives a title to her wreath depending on the theme she crafted. There are autumn themes, Christmas themes, forest scenes, multi-colored or monochromatic, ocean and beach, fuzzy animals . . . There is no end to our designers' imaginations!

The wreaths are sold at the Fall Plant Sale—but where does the money go? You might not be aware that the Wreath Sale generates the lion's share of income for the volunteer treasury. Native Designs contributes much of the volunteers' yearly gift to the Garden. Last year, Native Designs made \$1,640 from wreath sales and the year before \$1,240. This allowed the Volunteer Organization to donate \$5,000 toward the windstorm clean-up in the Garden.





GRAPEVINE HARVEST LUNCHEON

by **Susan Starr**

Over 40 grapevine harvesters and wreath-makers enjoyed a baked potato luncheon under the oak canopy in the parking lot picnic area on St. Patrick's Day. Spuds with all the "fixins" was hosted by Susan Starr and her St. Paddy's Day leprechaun helpers and bakers. Volunteers for the Hospitality Team included: Patricia Brooks, Marla White, Lynn Miller, Shauna

Gygli, Emy Lu Weller, Judy Moffet, Betty Butler, and Paul Donatelli.

This annual event is terrific because it celebrates the Garden community in harvesting the grapevines and making the wreaths, which will go on sale in the fall. This project, in turn, provides a significant portion of the volunteers' annual budget in support of the Botanic Garden. We would love to have more of you join us next year. All are welcome.



