

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

In the Fall, I recall hearing that California was in for another La Niña year. Not about to be counted out, Mother Nature had other ideas; hence, we've enjoyed an endless drenching. Short of the destructive element of heavy rain, we can be grateful that the drought levels are no longer dire. I picture our Garden plants and trees singing, and if they could, dancing with joy. We can look forward to a wide array of color as the Garden perks up after a much-needed deep drink. Spring at CalBG will be a showstopper.

In staff news, Julie Scheuermann, Volgistics aficionado, has graciously agreed to work as the volunteer liaison until the Garden hires a new volunteer manager. Julie is a longtime volunteer, Garden Guide, Native Designer, and go-to person whenever the volunteers need help, so she is a welcome addition. She has already made some useful suggestions to the Board, and we appreciate a new set of eyes and ears in the Volunteer Organization. Welcome Julie!

Good news! Bird Fest will be held on Sunday, February 19th, so be sure to watch Volgistics for volunteer opportunities. Years ago, my station was about woodpeckers and acorn storage. I was quite surprised to learn how a woodpecker protects its brain from all that hammering. On March 17th, we will get together for the Grapevine Harvest and Great Potato Feed. Join us as we harvest the grapevines, twist them into wreaths, and then celebrate with good food, music, and lots of blarney. We especially welcome our new volunteers.

Going forward, I recommend watching for emails from the Garden and Volgistics regarding upcoming opportunities to serve. That said, please don't stop there. The Garden website is full of Garden news, upcoming classes, events, blogs, and other Garden information, and I encourage you to explore it to learn more about CalBG. The Garden is so much more than a beautiful and healthy place to go for a restorative walk.

Be well and thank you for your dedication to the Garden.

—Lynn

The deadline for articles to be submitted for the OAK NOTES is the **15th** the month **prior** to publication. 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

RAIN!

Greetings volunteers! As I write this column for Oak Notes, we are briefly between storms in this amazing late December/early January atmospheric river that we've been experiencing. Of course, our hearts are with those whose homes, livelihoods and even lives have been damaged by the storms. At the same time, what a relief to get some real rain! We are over 17" for the rain year (i.e., July 1–June 30th) as I write, and we can hope for at least a bit more rain given that three or so months of the normal rainy season are yet in front of us.

Plant response to the rain has been spectacular! I am hearing so many comments that the Garden looks gorgeous! Certainly, all of our plants have gotten washed off and well-hydrated. Of course, we are dealing with our normal rainy season weeds that spring up with such enthusiasm. Chartreuse 'peplis' (i.e., *Euphorbia peplis*) — our usual nemesis — grows nearly knee-high in these conditions. Thanks in advance to the Wednesday work group and others who will lend a hand to fight the chartreuse wave back. Of course, there are other weeds to be attacked as well.

I want to make sure that you are all aware that, as beautifully green as the hillsides to the north of Claremont and other foothill communities are, that verdancy is owing almost entirely to invasive grasses. The same is true of the luxuriance of the SE 'corner' of the field station (W of Mills and N of Foothill). These grasses no doubt impede the establishment and growth of native plants. Once dried down in the summer, they will also burn although that is probably not their worst ecological impact. I am sad that the brilliant green is not good news but we all need to be aware of the ecological reality of our world!

Will we have a "Superbloom" year? Only time will tell. We will be helping our community to mind their manners in the event that there is a superbloom

by reminding flower peepers that picking flowers is worse than bad, trampling them is unforgiveable, and sitting down to immerse oneself in flowers is unconscionable. Images posted to social media constitute terrific evidence of terribly destructive behavior. Make sure everyone in your life knows and sets a good example!

Here at CalBG, we are preparing to move ahead with three capital projects: First, I expect that, within a month, the decrepit greenhouse structure north of Maintenance will be demolished. This is the first step toward establishing secure storage in that area. We really need such storage areas for a number of our departments and, equally, we need to reclaim some spaces in the admin building and perhaps elsewhere. Sincere thanks to an anonymous Garden supporter for making this project possible financially.

Second, we expect Braeger Construction on site reasonably soon and they will help us with a number of projects including:

- paving of the path to the east of Fay's meadow (more engraved pavers are coming!),
- redo of the DG path N of the snake's tail and S of the Forest Pavilion (it has suffered considerable erosion in several storms beginning in Dec of 2021 when it was redone: anyone remember the heaved up, uneven asphalt paving in that area?),
- placement of the monument sign on that small pad at the SE corner of the California Courtyard,

Third, we will be moving ahead with the new kiosk plus gift shop plus restrooms at the entrance, beginning with phases that you will not see as we finalize construction documents and send the project to contractors for bidding. Exciting!

Amanda and I are also working hard to wrap up the funding for a fourth critical project: Phase I of the Herbarium Expansion project which will install an elevator and ADA restrooms on the back of the admin building. Specifically, we are working on proposals to two foundations for the project. MANY thanks to faithful volunteer Barbara Booth for her unflagging enthusiasm and support for this project.

Additional contributions to any of these capital projects are very welcome! Join us in building an ever-better CalBG!

Events are coming! School tours are happening, Bird Fest is moving forward, Poetry in the Garden, Wildflower month. Thanks in advance for your help with as many of these as you are able to manage!

And thanks, as always, for all that you do for our Garden! We could not do what we do without you!

SCHOOL TOURS HAVE RAMPED UP

by Katy Douglass



As COVID restrictions have lifted and life as we once knew it is starting to resume, the Garden's School Tours Program has ramped up. In the past few months, the excited sound of children's voices

has been heard once again echoing the trails and pathways of the Garden on Thursday mornings. The one-hour and half-hour tours of Adaptation and Survival and Web of Life, respectively, have been the most popular, with occasional one-hour and multi-age private tours being conducted as well. December tours were fully booked for the Web of Life and January and February slots have filled fast. Due to the much-needed rain, some of the school tours have been cancelled or rescheduled. Because of this, Jennifer Scerra and Elene Kalamanis have been working on a new rainy-day, hands-on format where tours will take place in sheltered areas during inclement weather.



Garden Guides have indicated that they are happy to be back in the Garden conducting tours. They are especially enjoying the flexibility of the one-hour and half-hour tours that utilize keystone trees, plants, and taxidermy observed in four California habitats: Oak Woodland, Riparian, Palm Oasis, and Redwood Forest.

The Garden is always in need of new Garden Guides. If you are someone who enjoys sharing your enthusiasm of the natural world with others, we would love to have you join our ranks. New Garden Guide classes started this past December. If you are interested please contact: Jennifer Scerra at jscerra@calbg.org.

MEET THE CALBG HORTICULTURE STAFF

Oak Notes is currently featuring CalBG's Horticulture Staff. In this issue, we introduce Chip Grubbs, Horticulturist. If you see him in his work area, say "Hello!"



HORTICULTURIST Chip Grubbs

Hello Volunteers,
Some of you may have met me already, or seen me around the Garden, but I would like to introduce myself to those who have not, and talk a little about my background and current role at CalBG. I am Chip Grubbs, and have been a full-time Horticulturist here for just over four years. I take care of the area from the parking lot, through the east alluvial gardens, up to the Tongva Village. Within my section are the Front Welcome Garden, Fay's Meadow, desert plant community beds, riparian beds, the Percy Everett Garden, the Palm Oasis, coastal and Channel Island beds, the Grafton Garden, the new Forest Pavilion, and the Tongva Village.

I have been working with plants professionally and recreationally for almost 20 years. I got my start

in high school at a wholesale landscape nursery in my hometown, St. Louis, Missouri. I moved to California in 2007 and since then have worked at Orchard Supply Hardware in the garden and nursery department and received my Bachelor's degree in Plant Science at Cal Poly, Pomona. In the fall of 2018, I began an internship here at CalBG and joined the Garden full-time as a Horticulturist in January 2019.

Working with California native plants over the past few years has changed my life and outlook in ways that are difficult for me to explain, but I will try. My love for ornamental horticulture has evolved into a love for habitat gardening and restoration. The relationship between flora and fauna is intertwined to a point where there is not one without the other. Educating the public, building their confidence, and making native-plant horticulture fun and accessible is my main mission. The key to accomplishing this horticultural and gardening mission is through advanced horticulture techniques, tactics, and procedures; Planting, pruning, watering, weeding, and whole-landscape organization create a foundation for native plant gardening and a much-needed renaissance. Having the right plants in the right place and knowing how to care and maintain them is my life's work.

Thanks for reading,
Chip Grubbs

INDIAN TRADING ROUTES AND CALIFORNIA'S FIRST HIGHWAYS

by Shaunna Gygli

Many California highway and road systems were indigenous routes long before European contact. For thousands of years, California had been crisscrossed by hundreds of routes, many going far beyond the state's present borders.

Anthropologists report that trade routes spanned the continent and that California shells, asphaltum, and obsidian flowed to New Mexico, Oklahoma,

the Great Plains, and Mississippi while textiles and pottery flowed back to the west.



Anthropologist Michael Fauvelle writes, "Prehistoric inhabitants of North America lived in a world that stretched from Canada to Panama. We look to the past, and we tend to think everything was local and small scale. Actually, people were traveling all over the place. And these were highly developed civilizations."



Manufactured goods including baskets, steatite bowls, textiles, and rabbit skin blankets were traded. Alfred Kroeber wrote about the discovery of woven cloth imported from the Pueblo Indians to what is now Kern County and chronicled the long-distance trade of manufactured articles. As an explorer travelling with Juan Bautista de Anza from Arizona to California, he saw woven cotton blankets from the

Southwest being worn by Chumash Indians from the Santa Barbara area. Natural resources including: fish, pine nuts, shells, meat, tobacco, beads, feathers, birds, and paint were also extensively traded.

Many of these routes became California's highways: US 101 from Oregon to Ventura; State Highway 1 from Rockport to Bodega Bay; US 99 from Oregon to Los Angeles, and US 50 from Oakland to Manteca and from Sacramento to the Nevada border.

In 1769, Junipero Serra, a Franciscan Friar, founded San Diego Mission. Twenty more were established in the next 54 years and the road connecting them was called El Camino Real (the King's Highway). The California Mission Foundation seeks to nominate El Camino Real as an international corridor and historical site. Native Californians also want all their traditional pathways and trade routes recognized by UNESCO, and not just the route the Spanish used to conquer them.

FAMILY BIRD FESTIVAL

by Lauren Stoebel



The Family Bird Festival is back! After a two-year hiatus, CalBG public programs staff is thrilled to be reintroducing “Bird Fest” to the Garden’s calendar on Sunday, February 19, 2023, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. This dynamic event is co-produced with Pomona Valley Audubon and includes educational activities and crafts developed by CalBG’s community education program, as well as booths and activities featuring guests from Wild Wings bird rescue,

California Condors Wild and Free, and International Bird Rescue. It’s a wonderful opportunity to celebrate our feathered friends and to draw connections for visitors between the birds they enjoy in the Garden and elsewhere and the native plant ecosystems they depend upon.

Like many of our larger Garden events, a successful Bird Fest depends on our wonderful CalBG volunteers in many different ways: from setup/cleanup to welcoming visitors at the entrance to leading craft projects to guiding families through educational activities (with ample training and support). Volunteer slots are available on Volgistics, but if you’d like to help out and aren’t sure what to sign up for, feel free to reach out to Jennifer Scerra (jscerra@calbg.org; x206) or Lauren Stoebel (lstoebel@calbg.org; x251).

SCENTED PLANTS

by Steve Bryant

Cultural conditions and diverse genotypes can influence the scents of plants, but the following are generally noted for their scent in either foliage or flowers. Plants whose scent may be objectionable to some are marked with an asterisk (*).

Plants with scented foliage:



All conifers, but especially *Calocedrus decurrens* (Incense Cedar, left) and *Pinus jeffreyi* (Jeffrey Pine)
Lamiaceae—mint/sage family (*almost all*)
Achillea millefolium
Adenostoma sparsifolium (Red Shanks)
Anthoxanthum occidentale (California Sweetgrass)
Artemesia (Sagebrush)
Brickellia

(*Brickellbush*—several)
Bursera microphylla (Elephant Tree)—same family as Frankincense and Myrrh

Calycanthus occidentalis (Spicebush)
Cucurbita foetidissima (Buffalo Gourd*)
Encelia farinosa (Incienso, Brittlebush*)
Eriodictyon (Yerba Santa, Holy Herb)
Fragaria vesca (Wood Strawberry—flowers and fruit also fragrant)
Funastrum (vining milkweeds*)
Galium triflorum (Sweet-scented Bedstraw)



Larrea tridentata
 (Creosote Bush, left)—
 this is the scent of the
 desert after a rain
Malosma laurina
 (Laurel Sumac*)
Myrica californica
 (California Wax Myrtle)
Osmorhiza (Sweet
 Cicely)
Peritoma arborea

(Bladderpod*)
Peucephyllum schottii (Pygmy Cedar)
Psoralea schottii and *P. arborescens/fremontii*
Ribes viburnifolium, *R. malvaceum*, *R. sanguineum*
glutinosum (Currants)
Sambucus (Elderberry*)
Thamnosma montana (Turpentine Bush)—host for
 Black Swallowtail butterfly
Umbellularia californica (California Bay, “Oregon
 Myrtle” to Oregonians)—oils toxic to some people

Plants with scented flowers:



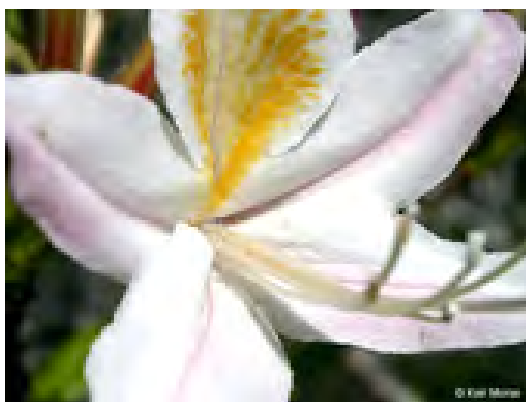
Abronia villosa (Sand
 Verbena, left)
Aesculus californica
 (Buckeye)—large
 fragrant inflorescences
Bebbia juncea
 (Sweetbush, above
 right)—aptly named,
 attracts bees and small
 butterflies
Carpenteria californica

(Tree Anemone)
Ceanothus (some)
Chilopsis linearis (Desert Willow)



Cryptantha utahensis
 (Scented Cryptantha)—
 generally fragrant
 flowers
Datura wrightii—esp.
 ‘Evening Fragrance’
 (Sacred Datura)
Fritillaria liliacea
 (Fragrant Fritillary)—
 faint scent to flowers
Heliotropium

amplexicaule (Fragrant Heliotrope)—generally
 fragrant flowers
Keckiella antirrhinoides (Yellow Bush Penstemon)
Lilium parryi (Lemon Lily)
Lonicera (Honeysuckle)
Lupinus excubitus (Grape-Soda Lupine)—some
 populations have grape-soda scented flowers
Oenothera caespitosa (Fragrant Evening Primrose)
Penstemon palmeri (Palmer’s Penstemon)—our only
 really scented Penstemon
Petasites frigidus (Sweet Coltsfoot)
Philadelphus lewisii (Mock Orange)
Rhododendron occidentale (Western Azalea, below)—
 my favorite native flower scent
Romneya coulteri (Matilija Poppy)
Rosa (Rose)—native roses generally don’t have the
 strong fragrance of store-bought roses
 Rutaceae—*Ptelea crenulata* and *Cneoridium dumosum*
 (Bushrue)
Solanum (Nightshade)—especially at dusk
Symphoricarpos longiflorus (Fragrant Snowberry)—
 generally fragrant flowers
Tidestromia suffruticosa var. *oblongifolia* (Honeysweet)



BOOK OF THE MONTH

by Joan Sweeney



The Hummingbird Handbook: Everything You Need to Know about These Fascinating Birds
By John Shewey and
Birds and Blooms
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John Shewey. All rights
reserved. Published in
2021 by Timber Press,
Inc. 240 pp.

The Hummingbird Handbook is divided into six chapters and may live up to the subtitle that it contains “everything you need to know” about hummingbirds. The numerous photographs are the book’s greatest strength. In his acknowledgements, John Shewey thanks the photographers who “contributed their amazing images making the entire project tenable.” The photo credits cover two pages.

Photography also plays a role in scientific research about hummingbirds. High-speed motion photography allowed scientists to measure the speed of the tiny bird’s wings, which move so quickly they appear as a blur to the human eye. In the last 20 years high-speed photography, sometimes studied frame by frame, has let researchers determine exactly how hummingbirds lap nectar, and how they catch insects in midair.

These facts, along with others that “often prove more fascinating than fiction,” are in the first chapter, “Hummingbird Trivia: Facts, Fictions and Folklore.” This chapter combines information about hummingbirds with history of how humans have interacted with the more than 340 species that inhabit North and South America.

The next chapter, “Hummingbird Basics,” surprised me by focusing on hummingbird feeders. This chapter and the next, “Planting and Landscaping for Hummingbirds,” was written in collaboration

with Birds and Blooms Magazine. This is a national magazine published in Wisconsin for an audience of gardeners and birders. John Shewey is a nature writer and photographer based in Portland, Oregon. These chapters have useful information, but some reviewers on Amazon thought they were too commercial.

“Hummingbirds of the United States” describes how to identify species of hummingbirds that breed in the United States. The range maps showing areas where the birds migrate and breed are courtesy of The Cornell Lab of Ornithology. The Ruby-throated Hummingbird is the only bird commonly found in the eastern half of the continent. We who live in Southern California are lucky; five of the eight species listed in this chapter can be spotted in our neighborhoods.

The last chapter discusses “ecotourism,” with dazzling photographs of hummingbirds from Central and South America. This book is available in the Volunteer Library.



A Very Happy February Birthday to:

Dorcia Bradley	Brittany Pan
Antonio Camaraza	Vanessa Perez
Talula Clark	Julie Scheuermann
Richard Davis	Barbara Shelley
Sofia Flores	John Turner III
Phoebe Frankeberger	Amanda Vliestra
Carol Hopping	Emy Lu Weller
Nimrah Khan	Sandy Wilson
Ann LeVangie	Betsy Zimmerman
Donna Nicholson	

BIRDS IN THE GARDEN

photos by Deb Woo

Left, top to bottom: Coopers Hawk, California Quail, Mallard Duck.

Below: Bushtit, California Scrub Jay

