

S l o a t



G a r d e n C e n t e r

YOU'VE DECIDED TO GO NATIVE, NOW WHAT?

**Sloat Seminar April 16, 2021
Joan Pont, avid gardener**

Lilac originally from eastern Europe to Asia

YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW THE PLAYERS

Native plants account for 3%
of nursery plant sales
currently

Emotional ties to the
non-natives: your mother
loved roses, your aunt loved
lilacs



Ceanothus, common name California Lilac

BENEFITS OF NATIVE PLANTS

Drought tolerant

Evolved with our
Summer Dry Climate

Supports native
wildlife

Stunning



Manzanita, *Arctostaphylos manzanita*

MANY CAN EVEN MITIGATE FIRE

Junipers and eucalyptus are fire prone

Oaks actually resist fire, survive, and catch embers

Having **no** vegetation around your home is not protective, ironically. Embers need to be intercepted by lightly irrigated shrubs and trees

Michael Ellis, Bay Nature, protective bark and ability to regrow leaves if necessary protected this oak from the Mendocino Complex Fire in 2018



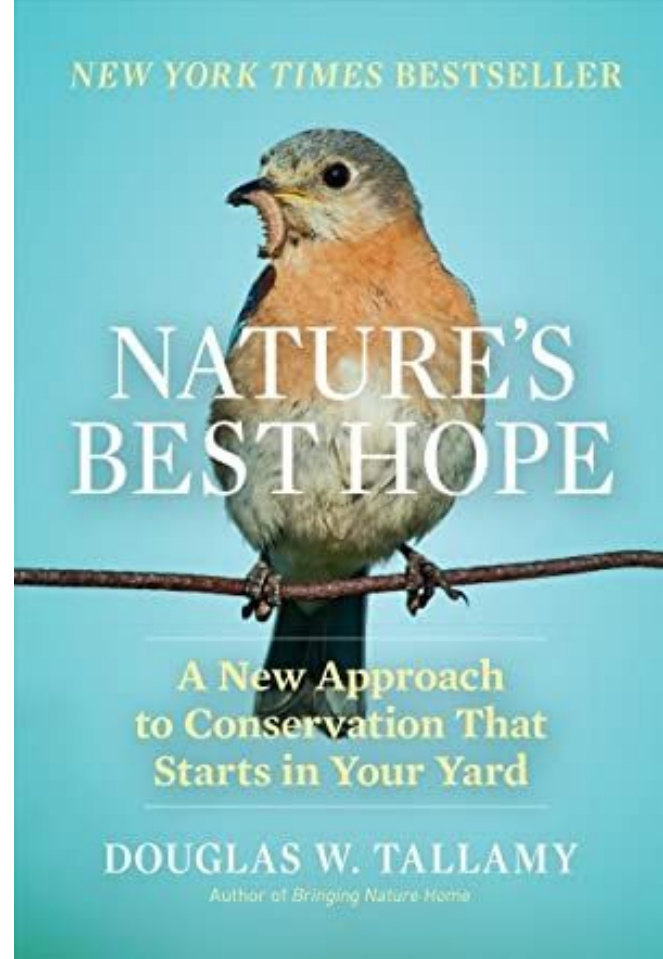
[Ask the Naturalist | How Do Oak Trees Survive Fire? - Bay Nature](#)

INSECTS AND BIRDS ARE PICKY

But so are we. Look at your vegetable purchases over the last year. Maybe 20 species?

Insects coevolved with local plants and depend on them, rarely nibble on non-native imports

Birds depend on insects



An entomologist's look at restoring our environment

YOU ACTUALLY WANT INSECTS NIBBLING AWAY

Tired of pulling weeds?

Weeds are non-native naturalized plants brought here without their own predators, exhibiting “enemy escape”

Not every non-native plant escapes, but many have and cause local extinction of native plants, which cascades to insects and birds and beyond



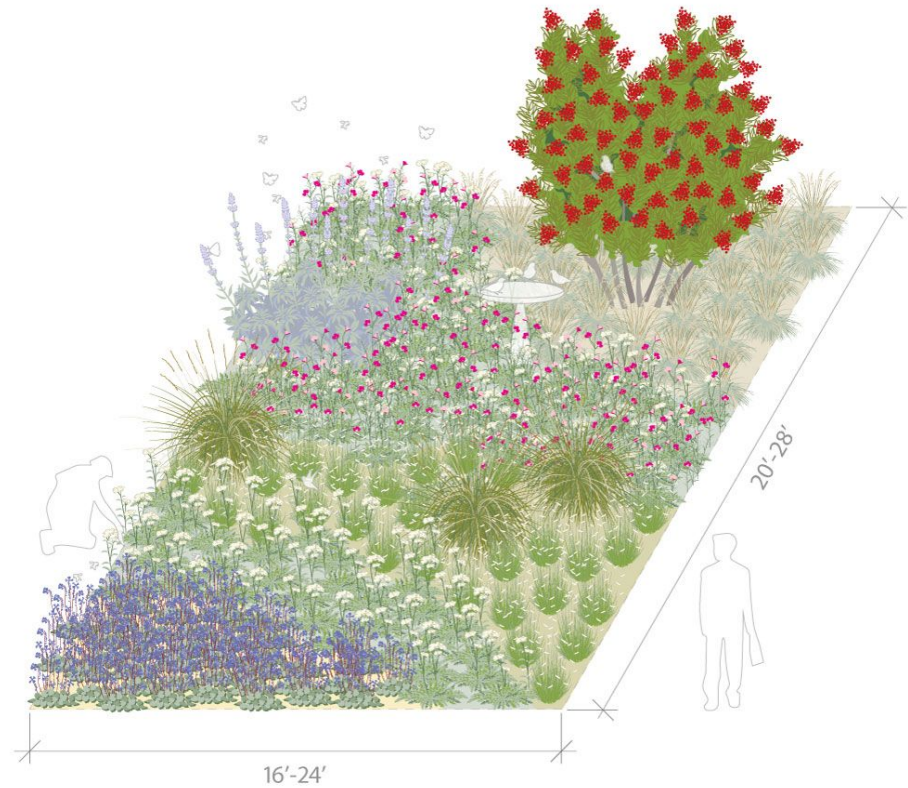
Phacelia tanacetifolia, fiddleneck, an annual you can start from seed in October with other wildflowers

SO TAKE A BACK SEAT THIS TIME

Instead of deciding what YOU want, learn which plants are adapted to your site

Learn which plants support insects and birds

Okay, also learn which plants you find beautiful!



Sunny Pollinator Patch from Bloom! California Native Plant Society

FLIP DECISIONS AROUND, PLANTS FIRST

Location: sun, shade, dry (meaning intermittent watering, we're not talking miracles here), moist

Size: Use story poles to show the expected natural height, which gives the best shape with less pruning. It is tempting to crowd starting with one-gallon squirts

A Lifetime of composing color, texture, leaf size, architecture of the plant, beauty of the flowers.

Go wild (literally)



Hummingbird sage (*Salvia spathacea*) in bloom under native oak

OK, ARTISTS, HERE'S YOUR PALETTE

Ceanothus

Stupid common name:
California lilac. It is
really much prettier!

That's the genus, multiple
species ranging in size from
ground cover to
neighbor-hiding screens



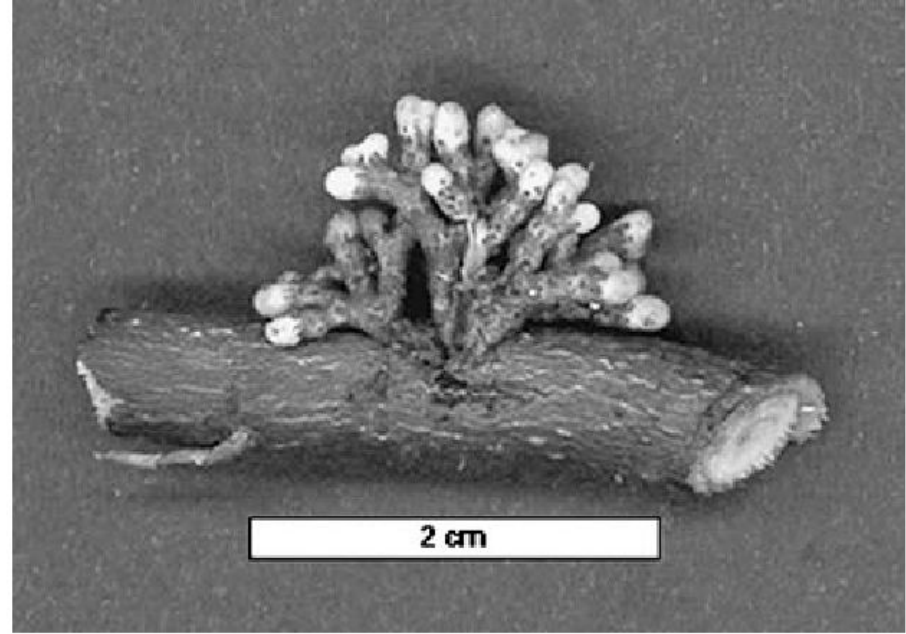
Photo from a formerly vacant lot in San Francisco
gardenfortheenvironment.org

CEANOTHUS HIDDEN CHARMS

Flowers make soap

Seeds feed quail

Nitrogen fixing like
bean plants with root
nodules harboring
microorganism Frankia



Frankia nodule cluster on *Ceanothus jepsonii* root. Nodule sample was collected from a serpentine chaparral community near the McLaughlin Reserve in the California Coast Ranges.

- February 2006 [Plant and Soil](#) 280(1):49-64

NEXT PAINT

Myrica californica

Pacific Wax Myrtle is found from LA to Vancouver, hugging the coast

15-30 feet, great small tree or hedge/hedgerow/screen

Host to 22 species of native moths and butterflies



PACIFIC WAX MYRTLE HIDDEN CHARMS

Famous for its wind tolerance, either natural or near freeways with 18-wheelers bearing down

Fruit actually has wax, but it's cousin the Northern Bayberry is more practical for candle making

Another nitrogen fixer! Shares water, nitrogen and nutrients with neighbors



Flickers and warblers enjoy the fruit

JUST 5 SYLLABLES LONG...

Arctostaphylos

60 fabulous species in the genus

Manzanita, the more familiar moniker, is one species

Low growing or sizable shrub or small tree, they are the masters of drought tolerance. Stop watering the second summer!



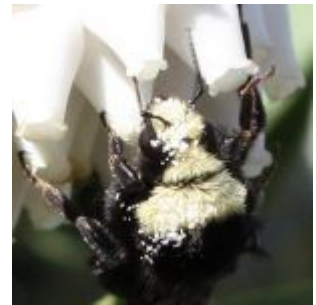
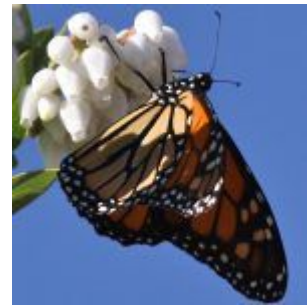
Pink, down-facing bell-shaped flowers protect pollen from February rains

ARCTOSTAPHYLOS HIDDEN CHARMS

3 species are circumpolar, found in every continent in the Northern Hemisphere, all the way to the arctic (*A alpina*, *rubra* and *uva-ursi*)

Manzanitas bloom in winter, regardless of weather, providing pollen and nectar to hummingbirds and native bees

They required “buzz pollination” where the native bees grab the flower and shake out pollen like a salt shaker with holes that are too small



CNPS blog: **Feeding Frenzy-Manzanita and Friends**

SPIKEY OPTIONS

Grasses, Sedges, Rushes

Festuca californica

Juncus patens

Carex tumulicola

Funny names, great options



300 grass species native to California, many support wildlife like caterpillars

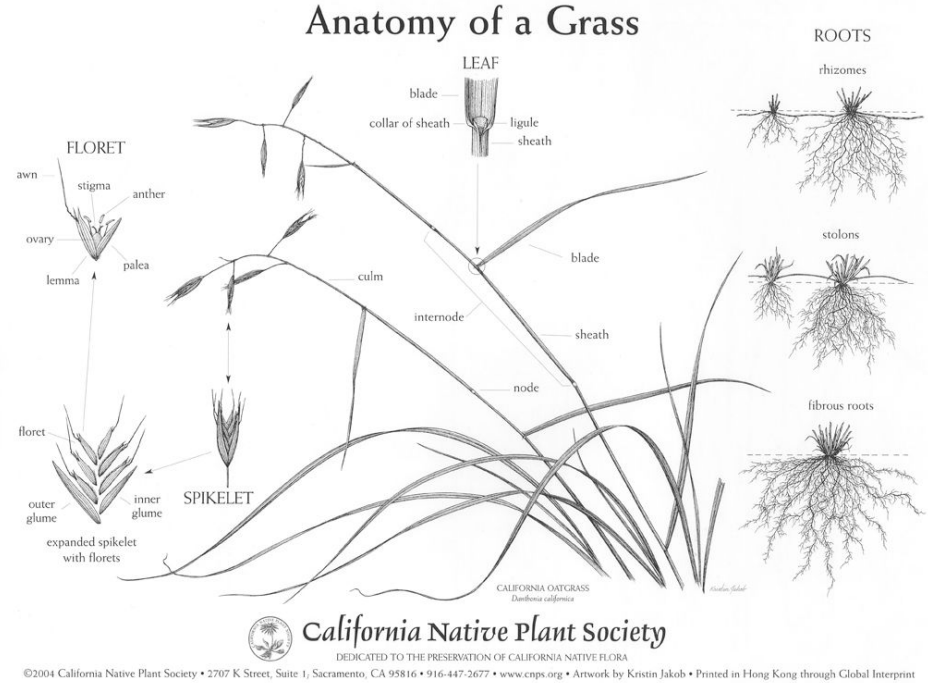
GRASSES HIDDEN CHARMS

You can walk on it - lawn substitute

Your dog can run on it

Your delivery person won't break branches cutting corners

Deep roots (they evolved here before the invention of sprinklers) make them drought tolerant



Plus you can learn a who new branch of botany by becoming an expert!

SAGEBRUSH VERSUS SAGE - IS THERE A DIFFERENCE?

Completely different! They just smell similar. Like lemongrass and lemon

Sagebrush, *Artemisia californica*, is in the sunflower family, Asteraceae. Sage is a mint

Exuberant, grey blue green foliage and no summer irrigation. Did I mention no irrigation? Meaning no watering once established, past its first summer



Range from calflora.org

ARTEMISIA CALIFORNIA HIDDEN CHARMS

Aromatic, one nickname is
Cowboy Cologne

Provides critical habitat for
the federally threatened
California gnatcatcher and
the endemic Bell's sage
sparrow



Sagebrush providing cover for the oak seedling.
Deer avoid with its aromatic terpenes

SAGES - MANY GREAT OPTIONS

Salvia leucophylla

Purple Sage

Sunny option

Stunning grey to almost white foliage

Quails and butterflies adore – who could ask for cuter visitors?



Not watered for 30 years. In fact, grows “rank” if irrigated

SALVIA SPATHACEA - THE SALVIA THAT LIKES SHADE

Hummingbird sage - need I say more

Great under oaks because neither want summer irrigation

Sage family
characteristics: square stem, opposite leaves, aromatic leaves



LEPECHINIA FRAGRANS - MINT FAMILY, SAGE RELATIVE

Fragrant Pitchersage

Large flowers invite bumblebees

Smells like minted grapefruit peel

Cleverly develops large leaves in winter with low light, and small ones in summer to reduce water loss



In my garden

CALYCANTHUS OCCIDENTALIS - FIRST ONE TO PREFER MOIST HABITAT

Western Spice Bush

Seep - base of north facing hill where moisture is present long after the last rain trickling through the soil

Otherwise, prefers watering like more traditional garden plants



CALYCANTHUS OCCIDENTALIS HIDDEN CHARMS

Large shrub can screen
out the uglies

Deciduous so lets in
winter light

Tepals - petals and
sepals alike in color
and texture



FREMONTODENDRON - NO SUMMER WATER, PLEASE!

Flannel bush - fuzzy leaves

Remarkable flowers

Evergreen shrub to small tree

After the first year,
irrigation shortens its life

Butterflies visit the flowers,
in the Malvaceae family, like
Hibiscus and cotton

Cultivar 'California Glory'
won First Class Certificate
from Royal Horticultural
Society



Flannel bush image from Gardenia.net

SOME PLANTS LIKE TO WALK

Epilobium canum

California Fuchsia or
Zauschneria

Fall flowers for
hummingbirds, cut down in
January for fresh regrowth

And watch it walk to new
spots via rhizomes



Going for the Georgia O'Keeffe look

EPILOBIUM CANUM

I try to plan the right spot

But figure if it goes elsewhere, I was wrong

Offspring are running up the edge of a low stone wall, and out of reach of any irrigation



Gone to seed, but I see more vegetative propagation in my garden

TOYON - WHO REMEMBERS THIS FROM MY LAST NATIVE PLANT TALK?

Heteromeles arbutifolia

Only species in this genus

Rose family, fruit like
miniature apple

Evergreen shrub, stellar
for habitat

Can be found in beach sand
to half way up the Sierras



In the 1920s, collecting toyon branches for [Christmas](#) became so popular in Los Angeles that the State of [California](#) passed a law forbidding collecting on public land or on any land not owned by the person picking any plant without the landowner's written permission (CA Penal Code § 384a).^{[25][26]}

BUT WHO AM I TO TALK?

"Any plant that encourages bird life, supplies the bees with an unexcelled source of honey, gives food to man, furnishes tannin from its bark, protects arid slopes from erosion, paints the landscape with vivid colors and carries joy into the home at Christmas time, when no other berries are available to most Californians, surely deserves the protection of man, whom it serves so well."

Ralph Cornell, *Conspicuous California Plants* written in 1938

In 1919, he began developing his "campus in a garden" at his alma mater, [Pomona College](#), a project that would last 40 years.



PENSTEMONS - GUARANTEED TO MAKE YOU SMILE

Beardtongue

This genus has 270 species worldwide, Toyon only one

“Penta” “stamon” 5 stamens, one sticks out and is hairy

Think of them like sun-loving drought-tolerant foxgloves, but native!



Penstemon Margarita BOP, for “Bottom of the Porch” where it was found

NOW FOR THE JURASSIC PARK LOOK - NATIVE FERNS

Woodwardia fimbriata

California Chain Fern

Largest American fern, fronds 5+ feet long

Shade and moisture, but let the surface dry before watering

Cut back to the ground late winter just as new fiddleheads emerge

Sori contain the spores for reproduction, appear like chain-stitching



POLYSTICHUM MUNITUM - WESTERN SWORD FERN

Tropical look with only average water

Base of pinna bulges like hilt of a sword, but that seems like a stretch

One escaped cultivation in Belgium!



Figure 1. Western swordfern in the forest understory. Photo courtesy of Hansen's Northwest Native Plant Database (<http://www.nwplants.com>).

NOW IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO EXPLORE - QUESTIONS?

Sloat Garden Centers

CalScape.org

Hike/Photograph/Repeat

CNPS.org

**Bloom! California:
Native Plants for a
Bright Tomorrow**



Helianthus annuus - probably mixed with random cultivars as they reseed