

Armstrong Paints Plant List

Arctostaphylos manzanita 'Dr. Hurd'

Description:

A selection of the common manzanita of California, a magnificent evergreen shrub, usually 8 to 15 feet high, with highly polished, mahogany-colored branches and berries. The fruit is not much more than a third of an inch in diameter, but is produced in very large quantities. The Spanish priests are the ones who first called it manzanita, or "little apple" because of the shape of the fruit. The word *Arctostaphylos* comes from two Greek words meaning "bear" and "grapes." Bears are exceedingly fond of the berries and they were hunted in manzanita patches in the summer.

Historical Use:

The ripe fruit is dry, mealy and very nutritious. The green fruit is very tart and indigestible, but when eaten in small quantities is very thirst quenching. A delightfully spicy and acidic drink was made from the pulp of the fruits. Sometimes the drink was allowed to become a vinegar, or even fermented to the point of making an alcoholic drink. Pioneers and Native Americans used the berries for beverages, jellies, pies and cobbler and sometimes wine. The wood was prized for woodwork, for making wood carrying packs, for pipes, for tools and utensils and much more. A wash or lotion made from the leaves was used as a cure for inflammation caused by poison oak.

Wildlife Value:

Pink urn-shaped flowers offer early nectar source for insects. Bees gather large quantities of nectar from the flowers from January through March. Anna's hummingbird will stay around all year to feed on nectar and insect protein. Black-chinned, Rufous and Allen's hummingbirds will all utilize the manzanita as they migrate through the area. Attracts small birds, mammals, butterflies and beneficial insects.

Propagation:

Seeds will germinate after scarification by fire, nicking or acid, but hybridization is common, so if a particular shrub is desired, cuttings taken in early winter before flowering occurs works best.

Ribes malvaceum – Chaparral Currant

Description:

Winter deciduous shrub growing 3 to 12 feet tall. The flowers are dense hanging racemes of pale pink flowers. This is a highly drought tolerant shrub which will take full sun or light shade under oaks.

Historical Use:

Fruits were eaten for food. Roots were used for toothaches.

Wildlife Value:

Excellent nectar plant for hummingbirds, beneficial insects and butterflies. Larval host for the Tailed Copper Butterfly.

Attracts small birds and beneficial insects to the flowers and fruits.

Propagation:

Seeds collected in fall can be cleaned and cold stratified for three months and then sown in late winter for spring germination. Cuttings can be taken of springy wood in late spring when new wood begins to harden off.

***Mimulus aurantiacus* – Sticky Monkey Flower**

Description:

A tall species of Monkeyflower with smallish but fine orange flowers. It is widespread along the coast of central and northern California. Recently, the Jepson Manual of Higher Plants of California has lumped many of the different monkey flowers including *M. logiflorus*, *M. puniceus* and *M. bifidus* all together as the same plant although they differ in flower color and size from the typical *M. aurantiacus* small orange flower.

Historical Use:

A decoction of leaves and flowers was taken for stomach aches. A decoction of the plant was used for kidney and bladder problems. A strained decoction of the flower, stem and leaves was used as eyewash for sore eyes.

Wildlife Value:

All of the monkey flowers are visited by pollinating insects including butterflies and bees. Small native bees can often be seen way down inside the flower collecting pollen.

Attracts nectar feeding and pollinating insects and hummingbirds and butterflies, including the common Buckeye Butterfly.

Propagation:

Seeds can be collected in late summer. Seedpods will remain closed in sharp tipped capsule until physically forced open, or when the first rains come and the sides of the pods split open to eject the seeds. Cuttings can also be taken in late spring after the new growth begins to harden off and the cuttings become springy, but not yet woody.

***Rosa gymnocarpa* – Wood Rose**

Description:

Dense shrub to six feet or more that takes deep shade. Small, dark pink sweet smelling flowers and small sepal-less hips along with fine prickles help distinguish this one from *R. californica*.

Historical Use:

Rosehips, although very high in vitamin C, were rarely used by humans for food. The “hips” were used in decoctions for rheumatism, for colds, as a wash for scabs and sores, for fevers, for indigestion, for kidney ailments and for sore throats.

Wildlife Value:

Thickets provide excellent sites for ground nesters such as quail and towhees, great forage sites and cover for all birds. Rose hips are prized by gold finches and pine siskins.

Propagation:

Seeds collected in the fall can be cleaned and cold stratified for three months and then sown in early spring for late spring germination. Cuttings can be taken in late winter prior to onset of new growth or in late spring after new growth has hardened off a bit and before the next round of flowering begins.

***Fragaria vesca* – Woodland Strawberry**

Description:

Woodland strawberry grows in meadows, on stream banks and in light woods across the United States. The berry is much like that of the cultivated variety, but smaller and a bit more tart.

Historical Use:

It was never gathered in quantities, but rather was eaten directly off the runners by mostly children. If in abundance it could be gathered and jarred for later use as jams and preserves, or dried to be eaten later. Leaf powder was applied to any open sore as a disinfectant. Roots were used for stomach ailments. Young leaves were use to make a tea like beverage.

Wildlife Value:

Small berries are eaten by rodents and especially small ground foraging birds. Flowers are pollinated by insects and bees.

Propagation:

Dividing the plant is the easiest way to propagate this groundcover. Runners shoot out in all directions from the mother plant and stems root as they go. New plantlets can be gently separated from the mother plant and moved to a new location or small pot for planting later.

***Quercus agrifolia* – Coast Live Oak**

Description:

The Coast Live-oak was once described as having holly-like leaves, much like the Oregon Grape and thus was given the name *Quercus aquifolium* after *Berberis aquifolium*, or Oregon Grape. But alas, they name was scribbled on a sheet of paper and when transcribed into the official records, it was misspelled *agrifolia* instead. Either way, this evergreen tree is one of the most recognizable trees along the coast and coastal mountains of California. Some trees live to be 400 years old or more, with trunks 4- 6 feet in diameter. It usually grows wider than tall, with a head ranging from 30-100 feet or more across and 30-50 feet tall.

Historical Use:

Acorns made up a great bulk of the vegetable foodstuffs of many Native Americans. There are many different oak species to choose from and in good years they will offer up an abundance of acorns, which are not edible in the raw condition, but are converted through a simple process into a very satisfying and

wholesome diet. The acorns were ground into a fine meal using a mortar and pestle and used to make bread, mush, pancakes, or soup. Acorns meal was exchanged for pinyon nuts, mesquite beans and palm tree fruit with other tribes. The wood was considered ideal for cooking and heating and firing pottery.

Wildlife Value:

This is the best plant for all around bird use. Acorns provide food for woodpeckers, ducks and jays; insects are available all year round for birds to feed on. Oaks provide nesting sites for owls, hawks and small cavity nesters like titmouse, wren, woodpecker and nuthatch. The berries and mistletoe feed cedar waxwings, orioles, and western bluebirds. The leaf litter offers excellent foraging sites for towhee, thrush and quail.

According to the California Oak Foundation, 331 wildlife species of birds, mammals, amphibians and reptiles use oak woodlands for food, cover and reproduction. Over 5000 species of insects, including 7 butterflies are part of this extensive, but fragile, web of life.

Propagation:

Acorns collected in the fall should be tossed into a bucket of water to see which acorns are viable. Those that float should be discarded, those that sink can be used to grow more trees. Acorns should be planted point down into and buried only 3/4 of their length or so in the fall after the first rains, or into small pots anytime and watered periodically. Too deep and they will most likely rot. Too shallow and they are too easy for rodents and birds, which love to steal freshly planted acorns, to find. Small plants need to be protected from grazing animals and possibly from gophers.

***Iris douglasiana* – Douglas Iris**

Description:

Growing in clumps only a foot or so high, colonies of Douglas' Iris can reach diameters of 15 or more across. White to purple flowers in spring. Usually occurs in wooded areas where there is some shade, or on the coast where summer fog keeps them cool and moist.

Historical Use:

The edges of the leaves are as fine and as strong as silk and used to be gathered for the purpose of making the strongest kinds of ropes. As the margins of the leaves alone are used for this purpose, the work was tremendously laborious. The silky strands were separated from the leaf and thoroughly cleaned from other tissues using small pieces of shells attached to the fingers. It would take as long as six weeks to make a rope 12 feet long. The rope was very strong and pliable and used to snare deer, and thus was called "deer rope." Another use of the leaves was to wrap infants in the moist leaves to retard perspiration and save the babies from extreme thirst whilst collecting manzanita berries, which would take all day sometimes during late summer and early fall.

Wildlife Value:

Deer and bear like to use large patches of irises for bedding when the grasses have all dried up in late summer.

Propagation:

Clumps increase rapidly and can be divided in late winter, prior to the new roots emerging on the leading edge of the plant. Care must be taken when doing this, as the new roots only emerge once a year and they are easily broken. Look for little white nubs, which are the start of the new root shoots and divide before they start to grow in length. Seeds can be collected in the summer and fall and put into a bag of leaf litter in a damp spot to mold. The hyphae on the mold help to break down the seed coat, which allows the seed to imbibe water and germinate. Seeds should be allowed to mold for a few months and then sown into flats or individual pots. Seedlings should not be transplanted until the second year.

Aesculus californicus* – California Buckeye*Description:**

The California Buckeye, or horse chestnut is a more or less shrubby tree growing 10-40 feet tall and as wide as tall. It bears a great abundance of fragrant clusters of white flowers from May to July, which in autumn are partially replaced by large fruits 1 to 2 inches in diameter. The 3 to 6 fingered leaves drop off the tree a month or two after flowering to expose the fruit and the attractive grey bark and multi-trunked form of the tree. The fruit hang on the tree until the beginning of winter.

Historical Use:

Native Americans ate the fruit in abundance and even called it the "fruit tree." The fruit is poisonous in its fresh state. Two or three methods are used in preparing the food, but they consist essentially in roasting and then washing out the poison. The fruit was placed in a pit, lined with rocks, where a fire was previously burning, and covered on all sides with willow leaves. The hole is covered with hot ashes and dirt and allowed to cook for 1 to 8 or even 10 hours. The fruits are then removed and are the consistency of cooked potatoes. They are sliced or mashed and soaked in water or wet sand for a period of time from 2 to 5 days, much the same as with acorns, to remove the bitter tannins. After this they are ready to eat as a paste or gravy, often cold and without salt.

Wildlife Value:

Provides a long supply of nectar for butterflies and is the caterpillar food source for the Spring Azure butterfly. Orioles, black-headed Grosbeaks and migrating warblers use the Buckeye for food and cover, feeding on the insects the flowers attract. The large chestnut colored seeds are poisonous, but deer will eat them after they have dropped and decomposed a bit in the leaf litter. Flowers are poisonous to bees.

Propagation:

Seeds can be collected just before or after they drop of the tree and stored in a cool place until spring, or sown directly into the ground or containers immediately after collection. New sprouts emerge in early spring. Growth is fast to 3 feet or so and then slows down somewhat, but is still considered fast growing.

***Ribes californicum* – California Gooseberry**

Description:

The common thorny gooseberry has light red fruit from 1/4 to 1/2 inch in diameter and is thickly covered with sharp bristles or thorns. It is common on dry, rocky hillsides.

Historical Use:

The fruit has a very agreeable, acid taste. It requires some skill though to remove them from the bush while avoiding the thorns. Children ate the fruit directly from the bush, others would gather the fruits in a basket and singe off the thorns in red-hot coals before eating them.

Wildlife Value:

A good nectar source for butterflies and other pollinating insects. Fruits provide food for small birds and mammals.

Attracts many small birds and beneficial insects.

Propagation:

Seeds collected in fall can be cleaned and cold stratified for three months and then sown in late winter for spring germination. Cuttings can be taken of springy wood in late spring when new wood begins to harden off.

***Cornus sericea* – Redtwig Dogwood**

Description:

Winter deciduous shrub growing 6-16 feet tall. Small white flowers appear late spring in flat-topped clusters. Needs moist soil and some shade for best results. This is a less floriferous version of its cousin the flowering dogwood of the eastern states. Forms large rounded shrubs quickly and suckers or self layers easily to form longer hedges or thickets along streams, borders, or anywhere there is sufficient water to keep it happy.

Historical Use:

A decoction of the bark was used as an emetic for coughs, colds and fevers. The bark was smoked for various ceremonies. The sap was used on arrow tips for its poisonous effect on animals. Flexible branches were used in construction of basketry and homes. An infusion of bark shavings was taken for colds and to stop bleeding. The inner bark was used for sties and other eye infections.

Wildlife Value:

Provides nest sites, fruit and insects for as many as 20 bird species including Bullock's oriole, thrashers, grosbeaks, tanagers and thrushes.

Attracts beneficial insects and butterflies whose larvae feed on the new foliage.

Propagation:

Propagate from cuttings in early spring just before new leaves emerge, or layer stems by burying a long stem in a pot or in the ground and then severing stem once it has rooted and moving wherever it is desired in the landscape or garden.

***Heteromeles arbutifolia* – Toyon**

Description:

The common Toyon or Christmas berry of California is an evergreen shrub or tree, growing 10-25 feet high. It is characterized by rigid, sharply serrate leaves and large clusters of holly-like fruit. Hollywood, California was once called Hollywoodland, or Holly Woodland, after all the Toyon in the hills that was thought to look like Christmas holly.

Historical Use:

The fruits were eaten sometimes straight off the tree, but usually they were boiled or roasted over open coals. Or, they could also be cooked by tossing them in a basket with hot coals. The cooking is said to change the disagreeable acid taste to a sweet one. A decoction of leaves was taken for various aches and pains. An infusion of leaves and bark was used as a wash for infected wounds.

Wildlife Value:

Berry clusters provide good winter food source for many birds such as hermit and swainson's thrushes, purple finches, cedar waxwings and mockingbirds.

Propagation:

Seeds collected fresh can be sown directly, or stored and then stratified for three months before sowing. Seedlings are easy and fast to grow.

***Carex tumulicola* – Berkeley Sedge**

Description:

A clumping evergreen sedge that grows 1 foot high and sometimes can be as much as 3 feet across. Nice in borders and individually in clumps. Stays green all year with some regular water and/or some shade. Plant will die back to the ground if water is scarce, with new shoots waiting for the next rains. Cut back in the late winter for greener more lush plants in the spring.

Historical Use:

Leaf blades were used in baskets and as strainers for some of the crops that were being leached of tannins, such as oak and buckeye. A layer of leaves would be placed at the bottom of the basket and then the mashed oak or buckeye meal would be placed on top and water ran over the mixture.

Wildlife Value:

Used by grass skippers and California Ringlets as a caterpillar food source. Small birds use it for cover and nesting materials. Small mammals will gather the greenery for nesting material and use the plants for cover in foraging and nesting.

Propagation:

Easily propagated from divisions or seed.

***Salix lasiolepis* – Arroyo Willow**

Description:

A tree, which can reach 40-60 feet in height, with smooth bark and lance-like leaves 4 to 6 inches long. It grows along streams in moist to wet soils.

Historical Use:

The branches were often used in construction of walls, roofs, and structures of all types. The fibrous, inner bark was collected in spring and manufactured into rope, and into crude garments, consisting of a number of vertical strands fastened together by another band, which ran horizontally at each end and served to girdle the garment over the loins. A portion of the inner bark was also used as a substitute for tobacco. It was dried and stored for later use, some even preferring it to tobacco. Aspirin, or salicylic acid, is derived from the willow. Chewing on a branch or new bud was said to ease toothache and headache, or whatever aches one had.

Wildlife Value:

Western Tiger Swallowtail, Lorquin's Admiral and Morning Cloak all use the arroyo willow as a caterpillar food source. The early bloom attracts many insects (beneficial and not), which are fed on by small birds. Sparrows, finches, warblers and thrushes use the arroyo willow for nesting sites and feed on the unripe capsules.

Propagation:

Propagates easily from stem cuttings or pole cuttings stuck directly into moist ground or containers with ample water. Seeds only remain viable until they dry. They need to reach a wet source within minutes of leaving the tree, or they dry up and are useless.

***Physocarpus capitatus* – Ninebark**

Description:

A member of the rose family, this fast growing, water loving shrub grows to a height of 3- 8 feet and much wider than tall. Small white attractive flowers appear in spring and form little clusters similar to dogwood. New growth is bright lime green and very attractive. Bark splits as stems grow thicker revealing layers and exposing new and old layers of bark, thus the name. In some places it may need to be cut back to keep it in check and prevent a leggy appearance. Good as an informal or seasonal hedge, a barrier, behind ponds and water features, or at the edge of woodland gardens. Needs summer water to keep it looking green.

Historical Use:

The raw berries were eaten for food. Young shoots, peeled of bark, were used as an emetic. A decoction of bark was taken as an antidote for poisoning; it caused vomiting. Bark could also be chewed and the juice swallowed, which would induce vomiting. Infusion of macerated roots was taken as a quick laxative.

Wildlife Value:

Flowers are attractive to insects and butterflies. Seeds are sought after by songbirds and finches. Thickets provide good cover for forage and nesting sites.

Propagation:

Can be easily propagated by layering stems or taking cuttings in late winter, just prior to new leaves emerging.

Rhamnus californica* – Coffeeberry*Description:**

A bush or small tree 4 to 20 feet in height, with thin, herbaceous, narrowly elliptical leaves, small green flowers and black, berry-like fruit 1/3 to 1/2 inch in diameter. It grows on rocky hillsides, sandy areas, streamsides and just about anywhere birds drop the seeds. The fruits and seeds bear striking resemblance to those of coffee. Neither fruit nor seed is edible by humans.

Historical Use:

The bark was made into a tea and used as a valuable cathartic and for kidney remedy. It is also said to have helped with mania.

Wildlife Value:

Many birds, including the Band-tailed pigeon, feed on black berries in the fall. Grey Hairstreak and Pale Swallowtail use the shrub for their caterpillar food source. Nectar in the spring attracts many small birds and beneficial insects as well as some butterflies.

Propagation:

Seeds collected in late summer and cleaned are cold stratified for 3 months and then sowed into a seedling mix in which they sprout 2 weeks to a month later. Cuttings taken at the end of May or beginning of June also work well and is a fast way to reproduce one, or select specimens.

Lonicera involucrata* – Twinberry*Description:**

A twining somewhat vine like shrub that is a good choice for behind a pond or water feature. Naturally occurs in stream and riverbeds mixed with willow, elderberry, blackberry, nettle and cottonwood. Grows up and over and through all the other plants using them as support to get closer to the sunlight. Yellowish flowers and dark red, almost black, fruits are in pairs and look a little like Mickey Mouse ears.

Historical Use:

Fruit is considered poisonous to humans. A decoction of bark was taken for cough. Leaves were chewed and used for itchy skin, or as an emetic when poisoned. An infusion of berries was used as a cathartic and emetic to cleanse the body and for chest troubles. A poultice of leaves was applied to open sores and a decoction of leaves was used to bathe sore eyes. Fresh juice of berries, or infusion of inner bark used in sore eyes. Compound infusion of bark used as footbath for painful legs and feet. Chewed leaves rubbed on sores. Decoction of bark applied to women's breast to make milk flow. Bark used for infection, burns and wounds. Mashed berries boiled to make a purple paint and as a dye for baskets.

Wildlife Value:

Flowers are attractive to hummingbirds and finches, which also eat the fruit later in summer. Crows and other birds, as well as bears eat berries.

Propagation:

Propagate from seed or cuttings. Cuttings are taken in late spring, seeds are collected in late summer and sowed in winter for spring germination.

***Sambucus mexicana* – Blue Elderberry**

Description:

A winter deciduous shrub or small tree with white flowers and blue, sometimes powdery berries, which hang in attractive clusters. Tall straight stems can be encouraged by cutting down to the ground every winter. Grows to heights of 8-20 feet and likes to be somewhat near water. A good choice for a quick slope stabilizer near streams and lakes.

Historical Use:

Berries, once eaten raw, are not eaten so much anymore due to their high acidity. Since the white man introduced sugar to the Native Americans, now the berries are made into jellies and jams and pies. Dried flowers are used in a variety of remedies to cure everything from sprains and bruises, as an antiseptic and even for consumption. The wood was used as fire starters, for flutes and musical “clappers.”

Wildlife Value:

A favorite of many bird species, the creamy flowers attract insects. Tanagers, grosbeaks and many others birds love the fruits. Elderberry will grow back vigorously when cut back hard in the winter.

Propagation:

Seeds are collected in late summer and cleaned and stratified for 3 months before sowing them . Seedlings start to emerge almost immediately and continue to germinate for months to come.

***Symphoricarpos mollis* – Creeping Snowberry**

Description:

A low growing species of the snowberry genus, which roots abundantly as it grows and appears to creep. The common name is on account of the small white berries that form on the thin wiry branches. Leaves are small, almost round and thin.

Historical Use:

The wood was prized for its durability. The smallest stems were bound together and made into brooms. The thicker stems were used for arrows and pipes. And the largest stems were used to make drills for the holes in shells of the shell necklaces used for currency. Leaves were used as a trail nibble and made into a tea. Berries were used fresh and in baked goods. An infusion of berries used as a wash for sore and tired eyes.

Wildlife Value:

Birds eat the white berries and flowers are pollinated by beneficial insects. Birds also hang around to pick off the insects that are looking to feed on the leaves and fruits.

Propagation:

Stem cuttings and divisions work well for propagating this plant

***Vitis californica* – California Wild Grape**

Description:

The native grape climbs over trees in canyons and in damp places to a height of 30 feet or more. The fruit is purple, about one third of an inch in diameter and is borne rather abundantly in large clusters, which ripen in late summer. The berry is full of seeds and usually very sour.

Historical Use:

The flexible stems were used for the rims of larger baskets. The wood was gathered, soaked in water and ash, stripped of bark and broken into smaller strands, or threads. Roots used as basketry material for the basket bottoms. The berries that grow on laurel and willow are said to produce ore tart fruit, whereas those on white or black oak are said to be sweet. The latter grow on drier soils and so it is most likely the sugar content that creates these taste differences. Vines were used to moor boats; smaller vines were twisted into ropes. Leaves were placed over bulbs while cooking in earthen ovens.

Wildlife Value:

Berries attract mockingbirds, waxwings, thrush and many others. Wild grape is the larval host of the Sphinx moth.

Propagation:

Seeds stratified for three months after collecting in late summer can be sown and easily grown. Cuttings taken in the winter when canes are dormant are also an easy way to increase numbers. Stick one to two foot pole cuttings directly into a well drained but moist media, like sand or perlite.

***Rosa californica* – California Wild Rose**

Description:

One of the easiest of the native roses to grow, it has stout curved thorns, larger flowers than the other native roses and grows to nine feet. It will take full sun or mixed shade and sun.

Historical Use:

Rosehips, although very high in vitamin C, were rarely used by humans for food. Infusion of blossoms used for infant pain. A decoction of fruit "hips" used for fevers, indigestion, kidney ailments and sore throats. An infusion of seeds was taken for painful congestion and stomach fevers. Blossoms were soaked in water to make a beverage. Un-split stems were used as rims in twined basketry.

Wildlife Value:

Thickets provide excellent sites for ground nesters such as quail and towhees, great forage sites and cover for all birds. Rose hips are prized by gold finches and pine siskins.

Propagation:

Seeds collected in the fall can be cleaned and cold stratified for three months and then sown in early spring for late spring germination. Cuttings can be taken in late winter prior to onset of new growth or in late spring after new growth has hardened off a bit and before the next round of flowering begins.

***Artemisia californica* – Mugwort**

Description:

An herbaceous perennial growing to a height of three feet or more each year and then dying back at the end of the summer. Foliage is grey-green, aromatic with an almost sage smell; the flowers and seeds are borne at the top of the plant at the end of summer. It is native to stream banks, roadside ditches, disturbed, and wet areas. This plant spreads by rhizomes and will fill in an area quickly, especially if it is cut back close to the ground in the fall to encourage new growth.

Historical Use:

Leaves were used for colds. A decoction of plant was taken to start menstrual activity, for easy childbirth and for postnatal recovery. A decoction of plant was given to newborn babies one day after birth to flush out their system. Plant used in sweatshouses for various cures. A decoction of plant was used as a bath for coughs and colds. A poultice of leaves was applied to wounds and to the back for asthma. Leaves chewed fresh or dried and smoked after mixing with tobacco and other leaves. Plant and white sage used to build ceremonial fire before hunting. It is also said to ease the itch of poison-oak, if applied to the infected area soon after symptoms occur.

Wildlife Value:

Many small birds and mammals use Mugwort for cover for nesting and foraging sites. The flowers are pollinated by many insects, which attract birds to feed on them.

Propagation:

Seeds or cuttings are both easy ways to propagate this plant. Seeds can be collected in late summer or fall and stored until desired. Cuttings should be taken from springy wood in late spring or early summer.

***Ribes sanguineum* var. *glutinosum* – Pink-flowering Currant**

Description:

The species of this plant has bright pink flower clusters, but the variety has only light pink flowers. It does well in woodland gardens and responds well to some summer water in the garden. Flowers appear at the end of winter with fruits ripening in late summer. It is native to canyons and north slopes in the coast ranges of California.

Historical Use:

The fruits were collected and eaten raw, made into jams, jellies and preserves, or dried for later use.

Wildlife Value:

This is an excellent nectar plant for butterflies, hummingbirds and pollinating insects. It is the larval host plant for the Tailed Copper butterfly. Fruits provide food for many small and large mammals, as well as birds.

Propagation:

Seeds collected in fall can be cleaned and cold stratified for three months and then sown in late winter for spring germination. Cuttings can be taken of springy wood in late spring when new wood begins to harden off.

***Carex barbarae* – Whiteroot Sedge**

Description:

A creeping rhizomatous sedge growing in shaded woodland areas. Plants are 1-3 feet tall and individual leaves have been found as long as 11 feet, but this is very rare. The leaves shoot up directly from the creeping rootstock and form tufts.

Historical Use:

The rootstocks are often employed in basket making, being used for the white or creamy groundwork of baskets. Rootstocks were dug up using crude implements such as a stick and a shell. Long strands were placed in a shallow water and left overnight. They were removed in the morning and the bark of the root was stripped away to leave a white, flexible, long strand about one-half the original diameter of the root. They were arranged into small coils and carried off to camp to be used in baskets.

Wildlife Value:

Grass skipper and California Ringlet use it as a larval host plant. Small birds and rodents will use the sedges for nesting materials and cover for foraging and nesting.

Propagation:

Division of rootstocks is the easiest way to increase numbers. Care must be taken to insure some is left to regenerate for later harvests. Divisions are taken in late winter before new growth starts in plants. Seeds can also be collected in late summer, but they are much slower to start and get to a transplantable size.

***Arbutus menziesii* – Madrone**

Description:

The common Madrone of the Pacific coast is a superb and stately tree, growing 80-100 feet at maturity. Similar to manzanita, around July every year, it exfoliates a layer of bark in cinnamon-like quills, exposing a new surface, which changes in the course of a few weeks, from green to light brown. In February and March, the tree is covered with white, globular, wax-like flowers, followed in late fall by an abundance of small round fruit.

Historical Use:

The berries are sometimes eaten, but not in great quantity and none is stored as it does not keep well. The wood is used for lodge-poles, saw handles, stirrups, and various tools. It is valued commercially for the production of charcoal for gunpowder. As a fuel, it burns very hot and fast and should be combined with other slower burning wood.

Wildlife Value:

The flowers are a good source of nectar for birds and insects alike. The fruit is a favorite food source of doves, wild pigeons and turkeys. Deer also are very fond of the fruit once it falls to the ground.

Propagation:

Seeds collected in the fall can be sown directly if fresh, or stratified and sowed three to five months later for better germination.

***Nassella pulchra* – Purple Needlegrass**

Description:

This bunchgrass is one of the major components of California grasslands. It grows 1-2 feet tall with seed heads bearing long-awned seeds at 2-3 feet. Appears to move in waves with the wind when in mass in open grasslands. Has a bit of a purple hue to it, which gives it its name.

Historical Use:

Not used for much else than fattening up livestock. The so-called grass baskets are actually made up of sedges, or saw grasses.

Wildlife Value:

Grass skipper and California Ringlet use grasses as a larval host plant. Small birds and rodents will use the grasses for nesting sites, nesting materials and cover for foraging.

Propagation:

Seed is the easiest way to obtain large quantities of new plants, however, division of established plants in winter works also.

***Elymus glaucus* – Blue Wild Rye**

Description:

Native throughout much of California, below 8500 feet, this grass is common in foothills and lower mountain slopes, usually in association with open stands of oaks and conifers. A tufted perennial grass growing in culms 3-6 feet high. It is a tall, erect to spreading grass with green or glaucous blades 1/4 to 1/2 inch wide.

Historical Use:

Not used very much for anything other than the grazing of livestock. Good in the early season for forage, but becomes too “stemmy” in the late season.

Wildlife Value:

Grass skipper and California Ringlet use grasses as a larval host plant. Small birds and rodents will use the grasses for nesting sites and materials, as well as for foraging areas out of site of predators (or so they think).

Propagation:

Seeds collected when ready in the fall can be stored and sown with no treatment. Or, divisions can be taken any time, with the preferred time being late winter before new growth starts in the spring.

***Stachys ajugoides* var. *rigida* – Pink Hedge Nettle**

Description:

A petite rhizomatous perennial hedge nettle with pale, to rose, to purplish-pink flowers and fuzzy grey-green leaves. It grows in many plant communities, preferring serpentine and clay soils with a little extra moisture. Mixes well with other moisture loving woodland species, such as *Mimulus guttatus*, *Ranunculus californicus*, *Satureja douglasii*, *Eleocharis* sp. and *Juncus* sp..

Historical Use:

Not known.

Wildlife Value:

Flowers are attractive to butterflies and other pollinating insects.

Propagation:

Can be propagated fairly easily from cuttings, or divisions. Cuttings should be taken from springy newer growth, divisions can be made almost any time and is the preferred method.

***Deschampsia cespitosa* – Tufted Hairgrass**

Description:

This densely tufted perennial grows 1-3 feet tall with erect and widely spreading habit. It is a principal constituent of mountain meadows, but also occurs in lower elevations and along the coast in springy areas, seeps, marshes and bogs. It was once the most important range species in the western United States since all classes of livestock forage on the plant. It can withstand close grazing and recovers well. It is also a valuable grass used to control soil erosion.

Historical Use:

Used primarily for grazing.

Wildlife Value:

Grass skippers and California Ringlet use the grasses as a larval host plant. Small rodents and birds will use the grass for nesting sites and materials, as well as for foraging sites.

Propagation:

Dividing culms, or sowing seeds are both easy methods to increase numbers with most grasses.

***Festuca californica* – California Fescue**

Description:

Usually a robust perennial in clumps, with culms rather stout growing 3-5 feet or more in height and width. The tall stems and drooping panicles are quite attractive. As a forage it is fair to good depending upon its maturity. Sometimes it can be the dominant bunchgrass, which is quite spectacular to see.

Historical Use:

Used mostly for forage.

Wildlife Value:

Grass skipper and California Ringlet use grasses as a larval host plant. Small birds and rodents will use the grasses for nesting sites, nesting materials and cover for foraging.

Propagation:

Dividing culms, or sowing seeds are both easy methods to increase numbers with most grasses.

***Fragaria chiloensis* – Beach Strawberry**

Description:

Beach strawberry grows on bluffs and sand dunes along the Pacific coast from Alaska to South America. The *chiloensis* is indicative of its occurrence in Chile. The plant has hairy runners connecting plants and has thick leathery leaflets that turn reddish in winter. Berries appear April through June

Historical Use:

Not enough berries appear ever at one time to make this plant useful for food. The fruit of beach strawberry is considered tastier than the woodland species, but both are eaten as they are found, a few at a time.

Wildlife Value:

Birds and small mammals eat the berries when they can be found. The flowers are attractive to small bees, and other beneficial insects.

Propagation:

Dividing the plant is the easiest way to propagate this groundcover. Runners shoot out in all directions from the mother plant and stems root as they go. New plantlets can be gently separated from the mother plant and moved to a new location or small pot for planting later.

***Epilobium latifolium* – California Fuchsia**

Description:

A low, spreading, branched evergreen and somewhat woody perennial growing to a height of 1-3 feet. It has grayish-green, lanceolate leaves and large bright red tubular flowers. The flowers bloom profusely from August to October. It likes to grow on dry, rocky or gravelly places in many plant communities, from Sonoma and Lake counties to Baja California.

Historical Use:

Not known.

Wildlife Value:

Hummingbirds and butterflies love the late summer tubular flowers and the plant attracts many beneficial nectar-feeding insects.

Propagation:

It can be propagated from seed or cuttings, but the easiest method is to dig up and separate some of the underground runners that help this plant to spread. This is most successfully done in late winter or early spring as the new growth starts.

Carex globosa* – Round-fruit Sedge*Description:**

A dark green mounding sedge that always appears to have just been watered. Round fruit or globe sedge grows throughout the redwoods, conifer forests and oak woodlands all along the California coast

Historical Use:

Roots of most *Carex sp.* were dug up and stripped to make long threads for baskets and ropes. The roots were dug up with primitive tools, carefully pulling up sections as long as possible. They were then placed in water and soaked overnight. The soaked sections could then be stripped of the outer part of the root to reveal the inner white portion, which was sought after for basketry and rope making materials.

Wildlife Value:

Grass skipper and California Ringlet use it as a larval host plant. Small birds and rodents will use the sedges for nesting materials and cover for foraging and nesting.

Propagation:

Seed or division works equally well for this sedge. Divisions are faster and a much quicker way to get many new plants. Divide the plant by digging up sections, pruning back top growth and root growth, then gently teasing apart the plant into smaller sections. Re-pot these divisions and water them until they are fully rooted and ready to go into larger containers, or into the ground.

Mimulus guttatus* – Creek Monkeyflower*Description:**

A succulent, very showy yellow-flowered plant, which grows abundantly in water courses and especially on level land near springs.

Historical Use:

The plant is used to some extent as a substitute for lettuce along with Miner's lettuce (*Claytonia perfoliata*), both by Native Americans and white settlers. The ash from the leaves was also said to have been used as a salt.

Wildlife Value:

Attracts nectar feeding and pollinating insects and hummingbirds and butterflies, including the common Buckeye Butterfly.

Propagation:

Very tiny seeds can be collected after flowers fall and seedpods turn brown. Seed is almost dust-like, so take care in collecting. Sow seeds into moist media and keep watered. Plants can also easily be divided from creeping stems.

Achillea millefolium* – Yarrow*Description:**

Yarrow is a spreading perennial that spreads by rhizomes and grows to a height of 1-4 feet. It has white to cream colored flat flower clusters and green to grey-green aromatic foliage. It is native to most of the western United States and is drought, swamp and somewhat alkali tolerant. It grows nicely in full sun or part shade and looks better when periodically cut back to allow new growth to fill in. Can also be used as a nice lawn substitute.

Historical Use:

A decoction of plant was used as a wash for sores, a poultice of heated leaves was applied to wounds to prevent swelling, a decoction of plant was taken for stomach aches, and the leaves were held in the mouth for toothaches.

Wildlife Value:

A good nectar source for butterflies, it also attracts many beneficial insects.

Propagation:

Seed or divisions work well for this plant and both are very fast. For large quantities, use seed. For small gardens, or selected flower colors or plant sizes, just divide a section of the plant and put it where it is desired.

Erigeron glaucus* – Seaside Daisy*Description:**

This perennial is commonly found on coastal bluffs. It makes a dense mound of blue-green leaves and cheerful, lavender, daisy-like flowers with yellowish-green centers appearing throughout the year. It takes full sun, will bloom longer with moderate watering and is an easy plant for coastal gardens. Nice companion plant with *Armeria*, *Artemisia*, *Fragaria* and *Eriogonum*.

Historical Use:

Not known.

Wildlife Value:

Attracts many beneficial insects to the garden.

Propagation:

Seeds collected in the late summer or fall can be sewn any time. Cuttings can also be taken if a desired form or flower color is found.

***Salvia spathacea* – Hummingbird Sage**

Description:

This low growing, rhizomatous perennial has sticky, fragrant, lance-shaped leaves and fuchsia colored flowers on flower spikes reaching 1-4 feet in height. Plant will make dense colonies or clumps of many flowering heads. Best with little summer water and part shade, although it will tolerate full sun with water. Cut back old flowering stalks for a cleaner appearance and to encourage more root growth and more flowering next spring.

Historical Use:

Not known.

Wildlife Value:

This is a hummingbird and butterfly favorite. It attracts hummingbirds and goldfinches, as well as other seedeaters, pollinating insects and butterflies. Provides winter cover for sparrows and towhees.

Propagation:

Fresh seeds can be sewn in the fall when there is sufficient diurnal fluctuation to trigger seed germination. Divisions are easier and should be done in the winter or early spring when the plant is dormant or just starting to push new growth. Divide out small rooted pieces with pink, fleshy new growth.

***Equisetum hyemale* ssp. *affine* – Western Scouring Rush**

Description:

This ancient plant is found throughout North America along streams and in sandy areas. It has slender, jointed, 4-foot stems. It takes full sun or part shade and needs moisture or it will die back to the ground in hot months. It is an attractive in containers or next to ponds, but has invasive roots, which needs to be considered, as it will wander on you.

Historical Use:

The highly siliceous stems of Scouring Rush are used to some extent, even at present time, as a substitute for sandpaper in finishing off arrows and other woodwork. They were also used to “scour” pots cooking pots, implements, tools and even teeth. In their practice of medicine the Indian doctors would toss the hollow stems into the fire to and delight in their exploding and crackling, stimulating their patients to renewed vigor.

Wildlife Value:

Horses would sometimes graze on the stems; however, grass was abundant and much preferred.

Propagation:

Scouring Rush along with all *Equisetums* can be divided from creeping rhizomes, which is easiest, in the winter before the onset of new growth. Stem cuttings can be taken and rooted, which takes longer, but provides smaller starts.

***Juncus patens* – Blue Rush**

Description:

The leafless plant with numerous wiry flower stalks which shoot up directly from the ground and forms clumps two to four feet high. Related to and sometimes used for the same purposes as *Juncus effuses* it's greener and taller cousin. Sometimes called "wiregrass" or "spring grass" it is common in areas with seeps and springs in open grasslands.

Historical Use:

The wiry stalks are used in various ways to make temporary baskets and for teaching children how to make baskets. *Juncus* was also used to make fish traps, but probably only for sport and not for catching many fish.

Wildlife Value:

Ducks utilize this plant for besting sites and materials as well as for food. Large clumps, or masses of rush can provide excellent cover for many birds and mammals, large and small. Cows and horses will graze them in the springtime when the new growth is still soft and tender.

Propagation:

Seeds are fairly slow and inconsistent, so the preferred method for this plant is divisions. Plants are dug up and teased apart into small sections which are then re-planted into smaller containers or into a moist spot where they can grow into new specimens.

Muhlenbergia rigens* – Deer Grass*Description:**

A warm-season grass found in sandy or gravelly places in canyons and stream bottoms from southern California's foothills north to Monterey County along the coast and in the Sierra Nevada foothills to Shasta County. A stunning grass, it reaches 3 feet tall and wide with panicles rising 4 feet or more; blooming in late summer. Takes drought conditions fairly well and will stay green without summer water in many areas. This is an excellent grass when used in mass plantings.

Historical Use:

The seeds were ground into a meal that was mixed with corn meal and water and made into a mush. The grass was used for hay in some instances. The stalks of the plant were used as the horizontal, or foundation around which the coils were wrapped in basket making. Long stems were used for coiled, conical baskets and hats. The grass was used as a thread, which was very long, white and fine.

Wildlife Value:

Grass skippers and California Ringlet use the grasses as a larval host plant. Small rodents and birds will use the grass for nesting sites and materials, as well as for foraging sites.

Propagation:

Either seeds or divisions work well with this grass. Divisions are much faster, but seeds yield genetic diversity which should always be encouraged.

***Aster chilensis* – California Aster**

Description:

A common species found in many habitats, often seen along roadsides. Reaches 1-3 feet high and spreads to create small colonies. Lavender, daisy-like flowers appear in spring through fall. Tolerates sun or shade, does best with some water and is a good erosion control plant.

Historical Use:

Not known.

Wildlife Value:

Excellent nectar plant for beneficial insects and butterflies. It is the larval host of the northern Checkerspot and Field Crescent butterflies. Attracts many small birds, which feed on the insects feeding on the nectar and foliage.

Propagation:

The aster can be grown from seeds, which are ready to collect in late summer, or from divisions, which are much easier. Plants spread quickly to fill out a garden area and divisions can be taken any time. Just dig up and separate a section with stems and roots and place it wherever it is desired.

***Potentilla glandulosa* – Common Cinquefoil**

Description:

Common Cinquefoil in many habitats throughout California, this low, tufted rose relative has leaves covered with glandular hairs and small, white flowers on long stalks. Takes sun or part shade and moderate water.

Historical Use:

A poultice of the plant was applied to swollen parts of the body to reduce swelling. An infusion of the plant, or leaves was taken as a stimulant and as a tonic, for an “out-of-sorts” feeling.

Wildlife Value:

Not used much by animals. Small insects are attracted to its small white flowers, especially small native bees. Birds will feed on the insects, which feed on the pollen.

Propagation:

Plant produces many seedpods all with many tiny seeds that are easy to propagate. Collect seeds in late spring or summer.

***Eriogonum nudum* – Naked Stem Buckwheat**

Description:

This tall, gangly perennial is abundant in dry slopes; open places and has many intergrading varieties. It can be found in rocky or sandy areas in chaparral mixed with Black Sage and Sticky Monkeyflower. Tall slender stalks bearing rose pink

flowers rise from gray green leaves. Plant ranges from 2-3 inches tall and wide to 2 feet tall and wide depending upon nutrients and water availability.

Historical Use:

The sour tasting, young stems were eaten raw as a source of greens. The twigs and leave were used as a brush to clear ground under manzanita bushes before knocking off berries. The hollow stems were used as drinking tubes and as pipes for smoking. The roots were used for abdominal ailments. An infusion of the roots was taken for colds and coughs.

Wildlife Value:

Caterpillar food source for Acmon Blue, Green Hairstreak, Purplish Copper and Gorgon Copper butterflies. It is an exceptional nectar source for butterflies in the spring. It is attractive to many small birds and beneficial insects.

Propagation:

Cuttings can be taken, but seed is much easier. Seeds can be collected in late summer or early fall when the flower heads have just begun to dry up. Seeds sewn in flats in winter will germinate next spring. Small seedlings can be dug up gently and re-potted also.

***Salvia clevelandii x leucophylla* 'Allen Chickering'**

Description:

A second-generation hybrid between Cleveland Sage and Purple Sage, this floriferous shrub can reach 4 or 5 feet tall and as wide. Gray-green foliage, fragrant leaves and lavender flowers cover this plant in late spring and summer. It takes full sun and occasional to no water once established. Too much water will cause salvias to grow too fast, get heavy branches and crack in the center of the plant, leading to an unsightly appearance.

Historical Use:

Not known.

Wildlife Value:

This is a hummingbird and butterfly favorite. It attracts hummingbirds and goldfinches, as well as other seedeaters, pollinating insects and butterflies. Provides winter cover for sparrows and towhees.

Propagation:

Propagation is solely from cuttings, as this is a hybrid selection. Cuttings do take easily and are fairly fast if taken from springy green wood in the spring or early summer.

***Artemisia californica* – California Sagebrush**

Description:

A dominant member of the Coastal Sage Scrub habitat, this shrub grows 3 to 5 feet tall and as wide. It takes full sun exposure and is drought tolerant once established. The gray foliage is good for perennial color. The main attraction of

this plant is the scent, especially on a hot afternoon or after a hard rain. It is fast growing and needs good drainage and occasional watering.

Historical Use:

The leaves were used for colds. A decoction of the plant was taken to start menstrual activity, for easy childbirth and for post-natal recovery. A poultice of leaves was applied to teeth for pain. A decoction of the plant was used for rheumatism, coughs, colds, wounds, and asthma. Leaves were mixed with tobacco for smoking. The plant was also burned with white sage for a sacred fire prior to hunting.

Wildlife Value:

Attractive to many small insects, which feed on the flowers, which in turn attract many small birds to feed on them. Also provides excellent cover for foraging or nesting, for large and small mammals and birds.

Propagation:

Cuttings taken in late spring as new growth begins to harden off and become springy will root fairly easily. Seeds collected in late summer or fall will germinate with no treatment and provide many new plants.

***Cercis occidentalis* – Western Redbud**

Description:

The common redbud is a magnificent wide branching shrub, 8 to 20 feet high, which is conspicuous in early spring for its wealth of small reddish blossoms and in Summer and Fall for the beauty of its large, thin, kidney-shaped leaves and its abundance of thin, green and red seed pods. It is very common on brushy hillsides and the margins of valleys.

Historical Use:

Both the bark and wood from the young sprouts were gathered in the fall and used for strands of some of the finer baskets. Wood was used both as frames for baskets and for the finer threads in woof and twine baskets. Does not hold up as well as baskets made from grasses and sedges.

Wildlife Value:

Not known.

Propagation:

Seeds are cleaned and cold stratified for three months and then sown. Germination is usually fast and continues for at least a month or two. Small plants can be transplanted when first true leaves appear.