

Why Garden with Natives? *Because Life Depends On It.*

Local birds & insects need our help. They are in severe decline because “traditional” gardens filled with exotic ornamentals and lawns are “dead zones” for nature. **Why?** Because most insects need the native plants they have evolved with to thrive and reproduce. Birds, in turn, need insects, especially caterpillars, to feed their young.

You can make a difference when you plant natives, especially the “keystone species” - those that many moths and butterflies can lay their eggs on because they are the right food for the emerging caterpillars.



Image: Two caterpillars and a worm © Julie Falk (CC BY-NC 2.0)

A Must-Have California Native Plant!

Coast Live Oak

Quercus agrifolia

Description: Coast Live Oak is a beautiful evergreen oak that grows predominantly west of the Central Valley and can reach 30-80 feet tall.

Light: Full Sun / Part Shade

270 species of butterflies and moths can lay eggs on this plant.

Fun Fact: “Oaks support more life forms and more fascinating interactions than any other genus in North America.” Doug Tallamy

Featured Butterfly: In its caterpillar stage, the elegant *California Sister* dines exclusively on oaks and is a vital food source for many species of birds.

Keystone Plant: This California native is a “must have” (host) plant for caterpillars, which, in turn, are the “must have” food for baby birds.

Discover more at BringingBacktheNatives.net

Images: Coast Live Oak © Mike May; California Sister caterpillar © Michael A. Voelz; California Sister © zachmalley (all Creative Commons some rights reserved (CC-BY-NC via Wikimedia.org)
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Three Ways You Can Help:

- 1) **Check out** the Keystone Species plant signs and learn more about these must-have plants that are not only beautiful but also support insect and bird life in your garden. You can download and use these signs for free using the QR code below.
- 2) **Grow** keystone species in your garden and encourage neighbors and friends to do this too. Together we can bring back the butterflies, bees and birds by growing the native plants that feed them.
- 3) **Discover** resources by visiting BringingBacktheNatives.net. These include local native plant nurseries, seed sources, native plant gardening videos, virtual and live garden tours, and much more!

“By including native plants in our gardens we can create life, and by using nonnative plants, we can prevent it.”
Doug Tallamy



Keystone Species Sign