

FIGR Culturally Significant Plants



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Angelica Plant



Scientific Name: *Angelica californica*

Species Description: A tall, stout very ornamental and aromatic plant with large white flowers, growing to a height of 4 to 6 feet or more. It has a smooth, dark purple, hollow stem 1 to 2 inches round. The leaves are dark green, divided into three parts, each of which is again divided into three serrated leaflets, sometimes lobed. The lower leaves are larger sometimes 2 feet wide. All leaves have flattened, inward curved, stalks with clasping bases or sheathing to form an elongated bowl which holds water. The root is branched, from 3 to 6 inches long, thick and fleshy with several small rootlets.

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Habitat Description: Perennial/Biennial herb that grows in thickets, bottomlands, moist cool woodlands and stream banks. It requires a deep moist fertile soil in dappled shade.

Native American Use: see next page



Harvest Season: Fall

Coast Miwok Name: hutuu

Southern Pomo: ba? cowa

Angelica Root

Native Use: The burning root is used in many sacred ceremonies.

Angelica is edible and medicinal, the young shoots are edible in salad or boiled as a pot herb. It has a sweet taste similar to celery. Angelica root, leafstalks and stems are often candied.

The main constituents of Angelica are volatile oils making it useful in the treatment of fevers, colds, coughs, flatulent colic and other stomach disorders. A medicinal infusion is made from stems, seeds, and the root relieves flatulence. It is a sedative, stomachic and tonic.

Angelica is used for obstructed menses and should not be taken in large quantities by pregnant women.

Angelica is a very good tonic herb for women and children, the elderly or general debility, it is said to strengthen the heart. Powdered root is said to cause disgust for liquor. It has an antibacterial action, preventing the growth of various bacteria.

Externally it is used as a medicinal gargle for sore throats and mouths and as a medicinal poultice for broken bones, swellings, itching and rheumatism. An infusion of Angelica root, used as a wash for the face, is said to prevent acne. A powder made from the dried root is used for athlete's foot, as well as an insecticide and pesticide.

California Bay Laurel



Harvest Season: Fall **Coast Miwok Name:** sow'-las (tree) sotok (nuts) tcisa (cakes) **Southern Pomo:** bahsa beh e (nut)

Bay Laurel

Scientific Name: Umbellularia californica

Species Description: California laurel is a perennial, evergreen tree or shrub. The trees have many slender erect branches and a dense crown that can be rounded to pyramidal in shape. The height is variable depending on conditions and the plants can grow from 3 to 45 meters tall. The smallest forms are found under dry conditions and they reach their greatest size on deep alluvial soils near rivers.

Habitat Description: California laurel trees are abundant near water sources in alluvial flood plains as well as shady hillsides and canyons below 1600 meters. The trees occur in oak woodlands, mixed evergreen forest, redwood forest, and chaparral. In chaparral communities they grow in canyons, valleys, and sometimes in high rocky areas where they are able to tap into moisture.

Native American Use: All parts of the plant, but especially the leaves, contain an aromatic camphor-like volatile oil that has cooling, irritant, insecticidal and germicidal qualities. Laurel leaves were tucked into and under hats or into headbands made of laurel twigs to relieve headaches. Some tribes treated sudden fits and probably headaches by making a headband of the aromatic laurel leaves. The Pomo made a poultice of laurel leaves that was used to treat rheumatism and treated headaches by placing a single leaf in the nostril or bathing the head with a laurel leaf infusion. Laurel leaf tea was drunk to treat stomach aches, colds, sore throats, and to clear up mucus in the lungs. The leaves were steeped in hot water to make an infusion that was used to wash sores. Laurel leaves were steeped in baths for rheumatic patients. Infusions of the leaves were used to rid the head of lice. Leaves and branches were placed around the yard to discourage fleas. Both the flesh and the inner kernel of the olive-like fruit (pepper nuts) were used as food.

Black Oak



Harvest Season: Fall

Coast Miwok Name: kotis

Southern Pomo: yohsiy (nut)

Black Oak

Scientific Name: *Quercus californica*

Plant Description: The California black oak is a deciduous, hardwood tree with a broad rounded crown from 10-25 m. high. It is the largest mountain oak in the West and surpasses all other California oaks in volume, distribution, and altitudinal range. The trunk bark is dark and covered with small plates. The bright green leaves are distinctly six-lobed ending in one to four bristle-tipped teeth, and the leaves are 7 to 20 cm. long. The acorns are 2.5 to 3.5 cm. in length and mature in the second year. The nut is deeply set in the cup and the cup is covered with thin, flat and scales that overlap in a regular pattern.

Habitat Description: It spans an elevation of 200 to 2400 m. and takes a shrubby form at higher elevations. It can be found in northern oak woodlands, mixed conifer forests and mixed evergreen forests.

Native Use: The black oak provided food, medicine, dyes, utensils, games, toys, and construction materials.

Large quantities of young, supple sprouts were utilized for myriad items. An abundance of acorns were gathered and formed a staple food -eaten in the form of a soup, mush, bread, or patties.

The tree and its uses are important touchstones for maintaining tribal ethnicity to this day.

California Blackberry



Harvest Season: Fruit in the fall **Coast Miwok Name:** wate

Southern Pomo: tiꞑbahqay

California Blackberry

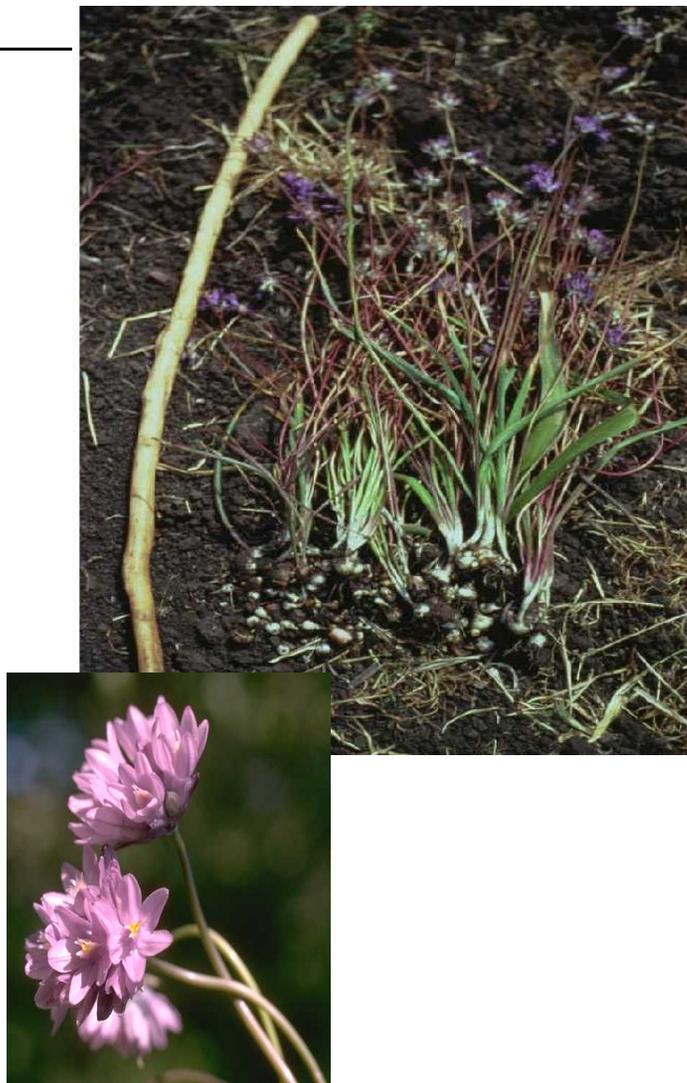
Scientific Name: *Rubus ursinus*

Plant Description: A mounding shrub or vine with bristly, running stems; large, trifoliate leaves; and clusters of white flowers near the tips of lateral shoots. The flowers differ from those of other blackberries because of their widely spaced, narrow petals. Flowers are followed by edible, black berries. Ranges from 2-5 ft. high and more than 6 ft. wide.

Habitat Description: California blackberry is found in a wide range of habitats from warm, open areas to dense woodlands. It is particularly common in disturbed soils and on river terraces.

Native Use: The berries were eaten fresh. The roots of California blackberry to treat skin infections and to help cure dysentery and diarrhea.

Bluedicks



Harvest Season: Spring, Summer and Fall

Coast Miwok Name: waila (Tomales) putcu (Bodega)

Southern Pomo: hi?bu?la

Bluedick

Scientific Name: *Dichelostemma capitatum*

Species Description: The bluedick is an herbaceous perennial. Major identifying features of blue dicks include a dense cluster of purple-blue or occasional white flowers with six fertile stamens, a twisted and fleshy stem, two basal leaves and angular black seeds

Habitat Description: The bluedick occur from sea level up to 2,100 meters. It inhabits a wide variety of plant communities including vernal pools, coastal strand, mixed evergreen forest, chaparral, valley grassland, desert scrub, coniferous forests, oak woodlands, and on the fringe of coastal salt marsh and redwood forest.

Native American Use: These corms formed an important starch source in the diet. Natives dug and continue to dig the corms before flowering, during flowering.

Traditional gathering sites were visited annually, over long periods of time and there are references to gathering tracts of different kinds of corms and bulbs specifically owned and maintained by particular families.

California Buckeye



Harvest Season: Fall **Coast Miwok Name:** yawi (tree) 'uunu (fruit) 'ulem (mush) **Southern Pomo:** bah sa

California Buckeye

Scientific Name: *Aesculus californica*

Species Description: This native, deciduous shrub or tree reaches 12 m in height with a broad, rounded crown. The cluster of flowers, arising from the main stem axis has many showy flowers in a branch like arrangement. Each individual flower has 4-5 petals and these are white to pale rose. The fruit is pear-shaped and smooth. The large, shiny light-brown seeds are 2-5 cm.

Habitat Description: The California buckeye occur on shady hillsides, usually at the edge of forests containing oaks and California bay laurel.

Native American Use: The seeds have been crushed and added to steam pools to stun the fish, making for easy capture. The seeds have been eaten, but only after a careful leaching process. Pomo's have boiled the nut and eaten it with baked kelp, meat and seafood. The wood is known to work well as a material for making drill sticks and blocks for starting fires, as well as for carving bowls and bows.

Buckeyes are considered good luck charms.

California Bulrush (Tule)



Harvest Season: Summer and Fall **Coast Miwok Name:** looko (big) sappa (small) **Southern Pomo:** siw'is

California Bulrush

Scientific Name: *Schoenoplectus californicus* (Other names are tule and black root tule.)

Species Description: California bulrush, a perennial herbaceous plant, is distinguished by long triangular stems from 5 to 8 feet tall. The leaves are slender, v-shaped blades that are sheathed around the long stem. The flowers are arranged in a spikelet and resemble orange-brown scales.

Habitat Description: Bulrushes are often dominant emergent vegetation found in marshes and wetlands. California bulrush is abundant in freshwater marshes along the coast

Native American Use: Bulrush is similar to the cattail in edibility, although it is purportedly sweeter. Young shoots coming up in the spring can be eaten raw or cooked. Bulrush pollen is eaten as flour in bread, mush or pancakes. Later in the season, the seeds can be beaten off into baskets or pails, ground into a similar meal and used as flour. The large rhizomes are eaten raw or cooked; sometimes they were dried in the sun, then pounded into a kind of flour.

The rhizome (underground stem) is used for the black element in basket design. Tules and cattails were used as insulating thatch for structures, matting, bedding, and roofing materials. Shredded tule was used for baby diapers, bedding, and menstrual padding. Women made skirts from tule.

Buttercup



Harvest Season: Spring

Coast Miwok Name: sitilla

Southern Pomo: qaʔbaja

Buttercup

Scientific Name: *Ranunculus californicus* Benth.

Plant Description: The perennial plant grows 1 to 2 feet in height; the flower is about 3/4" in diameter. Stems and leaves are usually hairy and erect. The leaves are 1 to 3 inches in length and are sometimes smooth on the underside.

Habitat Description: It grows on bluffs and in open grasslands along the coast. This species grows at an elevation of 15 to 50 ft (4 to 15 m) in open grassy areas, rocky slopes along the shore, and in rocky wooded areas. The plant prefers light (sandy), medium (loamy) and heavy (clay) soils. The plant prefers acid, neutral and basic (alkaline) soils. It can grow in semi-shade (light woodland) or no shade. It requires moist soil. The plant can tolerate strong winds.

Native Use: The leaves of this plant were used in "pinole". Tea was also made from the leaves.

California Poppy



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Harvest Season: Spring

Coast Miwok Name: munkai

Southern Pomo: si' do' to tok le

California Poppy

Scientific Name: *Eschscholzia californica*

Species Description: California poppy is a covered in a grayish, whitish, or bluish waxy or powder, freely-branched, erect to spreading annual or perennial growing to 2' tall with leaves that are several times a compound leaf dissected into rounded, lobed segments. The flowers are solitary on 2-6" long stems and are a showy bright yellow to orange color. This is a species which folds up its petals when the light begins to fail, and sometimes does not open on a cloudy day. It is often found after burns.

Habitat Description: California poppy is found in grassy and open places in many plant communities up to 6500' in much of California and can bloom from February to September.

Native American Use: The plant was used as a painkiller, especially for toothaches, and as a poultice for sores and ulcers. Women used it to charm unresponsive lovers. It has been used as a root extract as an external cleanser, an internal cure for stomach aches, and a headache and open sore liniment. It has rubbed boiled or mashed seed pods on a nursing mother's breasts to help stop milk production.

Coast Live Oak



Harvest Season: Fall

Coast Miwok Name: saata

Southern Pomo: sa can

Coast Live Oak

Scientific Name: *Quercus agrifolia*

Species Description: The leaves of the coast live oak are dark green and resembles those of the evergreen holly. They form a thick, evergreen canopy among the large, wide-spreading, crooked branches which spread out horizontally, some just inches above the ground.

Habitat Description: This large, majestic tree, which can live over 250 years, may be found on protected slopes and valleys and in mixed evergreen forests and woodlands. It grows in well-drained soils on bluffs, gentle slopes, and canyons, and can be found up to 1400 m in elevation. This species is adapted to relatively warm, wet winters and dry summers moderated by fog and cool temperatures.

Native American Use: Coast live oaks have historically been one of the most important resources for humans within the area. People collected and ate the coast live oak's acorns in various ways. With unlimited worth as a timber tree, its wood has a high heat value, thus used by many for fuel.

Coffeeberry



Harvest Season: summer and fall **Coast Miwok Name:** po'tah or ko'tah **Southern Pomo:** sa? Bas bak le

Coffeeberry

Scientific Name: Rhamnus californica

Species Description: Evergreen shrubs, from low spreading to upright, sometimes a small tree, 4-8(20) ft (1.2-2.4(6) m) tall, often in rounded clumps. The buds are naked, brown and 3 mm long. Leaves alternate, simple, 4-6 cm long, oblong-elliptical with a rounded base and margins finely serrate to entire, sometimes rolled under (revolute). They are dark green above, paler and smooth below. Flowers small, greenish, few per cluster. Fruit clusters are 8 mm across, ripening from green to red then purple-black, contain 2 seeds which resemble the commercial coffee bean. They grow in sun or shade. They are not particular about soil and grow with limited or no moisture.

Habitat Description: A shrub component of chaparral, woodland, and forest communities. It thrives in sun or shade and is not particular about the soil it is in.

Native American Use: Coffeeberry's laxative effect upon people has limited its consumption to medicinal purposes. People have made an extraction from the crushed bark that, in addition to its purgative effect, caused nausea and dizziness. Other tribes have made a powder from the bark by drying it and grinding it in a stone mortar or have seeped the berries in water to make a laxative tonic.

Coyote Brush



S. Peterson

Harvest Season: Spring

Coast Miwok Name: tcu'u

Coyote Brush

Scientific Name: *Baccharis pilularis*

Species Description: Coyote brush, also called chaparral broom, is a woody, erect to rounded, perennial shrub that is much branched and grows to 12' tall. The herbage is evergreen and is resinous, and the branches are longitudinally grooved. The numerous small leaves are alternate, light green, oval to egg shaped, entire-margined to 5-9-toothed, and mostly 1/2" to 1-1/2" long. Coyote brush has staminate and pistillate flowers on separate plants. There are many flowering heads in clusters.

Habitat Description: Coyote brush is commonly found in coastal sage scrub and chaparral on hillsides and in canyons below 2500' and will bloom from August to December.

Native American Use: Coast Miwok heated coyote brush leaves and applied them to swellings. Some tribes have used limbs of coyote brush for building houses and for making arrow fore shafts.

Silver Cudweed



Harvest Season: Fall

Coast Miwok Name: unknown

Silver Cudweed

Scientific Name: *gnaphalium canescens*

Plant Description: A perennial herb. Stalks are branched and diffused. The flowers are crowded with leaves and elliptical, tapering into a long foot-stalk. It is slightly downy and greenish above, whitish and more downy underneath. The ends of the branches crowded with numerous heads of flowers attached directly to the stem which appear in August.

Habitat Description: It requires sun or partial sun and needs dry or semi-dry soil.

Native Use: It is a diuretic when made as a tea.

Currant



Harvest Season: Fall

Coast Miwok Name: kawisu

Currant

Scientific Name: *Ribes victoris*

Plant Description: A deciduous shrub. The flowers are hermaphrodite (have both male and female organs) and are pollinated by insects. The stems are sticky and sparsely bristly. The fruit is 8-10 cm in size and bristly.

Habitat Description: The “Hillside Gooseberry” is generally not found along the beach, but on sunny hillsides as the common name implies. The plant prefers light (sandy), medium (loamy) and heavy (clay) soils and requires well-drained soil. The plant prefers acid, neutral and basic (alkaline) soils. It cannot grow in the shade. It requires moist soil. It is found in the outer coast range.

Native Use: It was gathered for food in the spring and summer.

Dogbane (Indian hemp)



Harvest Season: Spring (Leaves) and Fall (Fiber) **Coast Miwok Name:** tsopogo **Southern Pomo:** mahsa

Dogbane (Indian hemp)

Scientific Name: *Apocynum cannabinum*

Species Description: The plant stem can be 0.61-1.83 m (2-6 feet) tall, and contains milky juice. The elliptical leaves are small, about 5.0-7.6 cm (2-3 inches) long, and opposite. The flowers are small and inconspicuous, cylindrical to urn-shaped, and greenish pink. The fruit is 6 - 9 cm (2.4-3.5 cm) long and pendant, slender and cylindrical. When the fruit matures and splits open, the seeds are wind dispersed with long tufts of silky hairs.

Habitat Description: Indian hemp or dogbane proliferates in moist places near riparian areas along streams, springs, levees, roadsides, and waste places. This well-known source of fibers is found in damp places, below 5,000 feet altitude through most of California. Indian hemp is found near the borders of woods, along paths, in clearings, or in disturbed, waste places like ditches. It is no longer very common in California, and many traditional gathering sites are gone. One site is near Santa Rosa

Native American Use: (see next page)

Dogbane (cont.)

Native American Use: Indian hemp is mainly harvested for fiber. The stems are cut in the fall; they are then split open and the long, silky fibers removed. The fibers are then twisted into string, which provides cordage. String, thread, rope, baskets, snares, netting, and clothing were made from the fibers of the plant because they are so silky, yet strong. Cordage was then used to make straps, belts, netted bags, hairnets, and ceremonial regalia (capas, skirts, and head-dresses).

Indian hemp could be dried, crushed, and then snuffed for coughs in head colds. The root was made into a tea and was used to help a baby's cold, earache, headache, nervousness, dizziness, worms and insanity. This tea was also taken for heart palpitations, but care should be observed if using it for cardiac disorders. It raises blood pressure. The root could also be used as an emetic, diaphoretic, antispasmodic, cathartic, anodyne, hypnotic, laxative, treats vomiting, diarrhea, hydrocephalus, urinary difficulties, dropsy, jaundice, liver problems, and stimulates the digestive system.

A wash made of crushed root can be shampooed into the hair to stimulate growth, remove dandruff and head lice. The milky juice can remove warts. A poultice of the leaves reduces tumors, hemorrhoids, and inflammation of the testicles. The poultice placed over the eyelids works on eye diseases. The leaves ground into powder can dress wounds, sores and ulcers.

Dogwood



Harvest: Fall

Coast Miwok:

Southern Pomo: mo'o zit

Western Dogwood

Scientific Name: *Cornus nuttallii*

Plant Description: This dogwood is a woody deciduous shrub generally 1.4-6 m tall. The bark and twigs are reddish to purple and fairly smooth from autumn to late spring; after the leaves have fallen. The bark, twigs, and leaves are bright green in spring through summer. The simple, opposite leaves are 5-10 cm (2-4 in) long, dark green above and hairy and lighter-colored below, with smooth margins, rounded bases, pointed tips. Flowering occurs from June to August. The flowers are white to cream-colored. The white berries are smooth on the faces, furrowed on the sides. Sometimes called red willow, both *Salix* species and *Cornus sericia* are used interchangeably.

Habitat Description: It generally grows at elevations below 2500 m. Dogwood grows in soils that are saturated for at least a portion of the growing season and is common on the edges of lakes, ponds, within wetlands, and along streams. It is not as tolerant of long-term root saturation as are some other shrubs,

Native Use: The peeled twigs were used as toothbrushes for their whitening effect on teeth. Bows and arrows were made from the shoots. The inner bark is used for tanning or drying animal hides. This dogwood is sometimes used for basket weaving. The differences in stem colors create a multi-hued design element. The berries were eaten raw or made into a mush.

Elderberry



Harvest: Fall

Coast Miwok:

Southern Pomo: bat ink le

Elderberry

Scientific Name: Sambucus caerulea

Plant Description: Native shrubs growing 2-4(-8) m tall, less commonly small single-stemmed trees, young twigs are soft and pithy but the wood hard. The bark is thin, grayish to dark brown, irregularly furrowed and ridged. The compound leaves are deciduous, opposite, about 15-35 cm long, often with a long stalk, often asymmetrical at the base.

Habitat Description: Common elderberry is common along stream banks, river banks, and open places in riparian areas lower than < 3000 m. Elderberry grows on moist, well-drained sunny sites, usually occurring in openings in moist forest habitats (slopes, canyons, cliff bases, streamsides, streambanks) and moist areas within drier, at elevations of 3-3000 meters. This species flowers from May to September and fruits from July to October. Common elderberry is more common on warmer sites than red elderberry (*Sambucus racemosa*), although they overlap in habitat.

Native Use: The red berries of other species are toxic and should not be gathered. Only the blue or purple berries of elderberry are edible. Edible berries and flower are used for medicine, dyes for basketry, arrow shafts, flute, whistles, clapper sticks, and folk medicine. The wood is hard and has been used for combs, spindles, and pegs, and the hollow stems have been fashioned into flutes and blowguns. Elderberry twigs and fruit are employed in creating dyes for basketry. These stems are dyed a very deep black by soaking them for a week or so in a wash made from the berry stems of the elderberry. Flutes and whistles were constructed by boring holes into stems hollowed out with hot sticks. Clapper sticks were made by splitting the stem and clapping the two halves against each other. Clapper sticks were used ceremonially in the round-house to accompany singing and dancing. The pith of the stems was used as tinder, and the stem itself was employed as a twirling stick for starting the fire.

Iris (Douglas)



Harvest Season: Fall

Coast Miwok Name: lawik

Southern Pomo: si'wi'ta

Iris (Douglas)

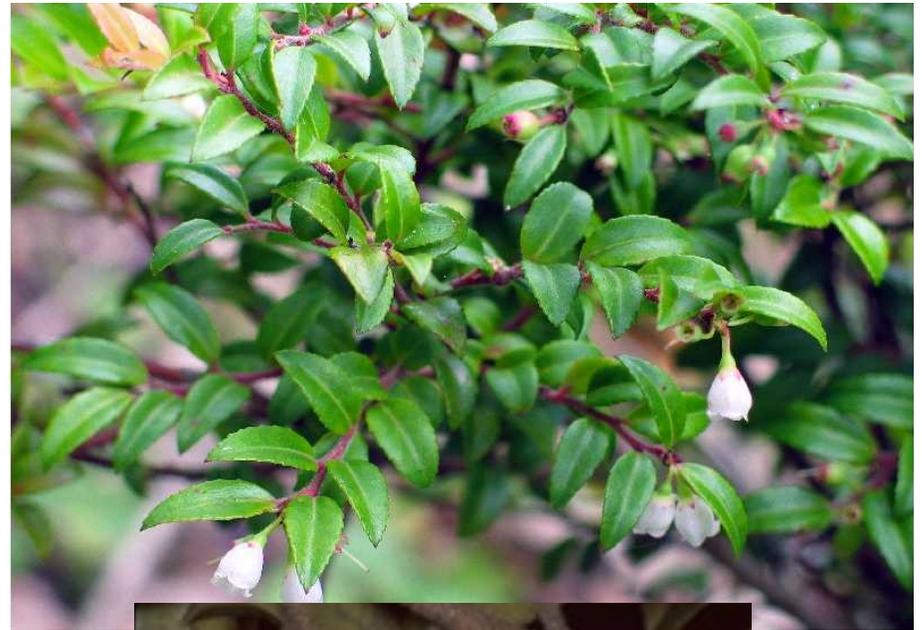
Scientific Name: *Iris douglasiana*

Species Description: The native irises are perennial herbs, usually evergreen and growing from a creeping, tuberous rhizome. Irises can be identified by their double row of leaves, which overlap like praying hands. The leaves are long and linear with parallel venation. Flower stems are erect and simple. Blossoms vary somewhat in spacing of the parts, width of sepals, and the inner, erect petals. It has pale cream to light, dark lavender or deep reddish purple flowers that bloom from May to June.

Habitat Description: It is found in shade with moist soils with ample organic matter. This plant is common in grassy places, especially near the coast, at elevations generally less than 100 m. It grows naturally in the coastal prairie and mixed evergreen forest communities.

Native Use: Iris makes some of the finest cordage; the fibers are particularly strong and flexible. Only two fibers can be taken from each iris leaf margin. Huge bunches of leaves were harvested in the fall and stored until needed. Iris cordage was used for fishing nets, string, rope, snares, hairnets, and regalia. The fibers are fine like silk, but surprisingly strong. A poultice of the raw rhizome is especially effective against sores

Huckleberry



Harvest Season: Fall

Coast Miwok Name: po'-te

Southern Pomo:

California Huckleberry

Scientific Name: *Vaccinium ovatum*

Habitat: This erect, evergreen shrub is stout, from 0.5-3 m tall. The glossy green leaf blades are 2-5 cm, ovate, leathery with serrated edges and hairs on the lower surface. Urn-shaped flowers are bright pink. The berries are 6-9 mm, purplish-black.

Species Description: It grows in edges and clearings of coniferous woods, at elevations from 3-800 m. Evergreen huckleberry can also be found near beaches in the salt spray zone. This huckleberry grows in moist to slightly dry soils. It will grow in full sun to full shade, although the plants prefer some shade.

Native American Uses: The berries ripen late in the year, around October or November. They are the last fruits to be gathered in the season round. The berries are eaten fresh. The berries are also sun or smoke dried, partly mashed, pressed into cake form, and wrapped in leaves or bark. The leaves and berries are high in vitamin C. The leaves have been widely used to lower or modify blood sugar levels, as in cases of diabetes. The leaves are believed also to stimulate appetite, and have astringent and antiseptic qualities that are useful in urinary disorders.

Hairy Gumweed (Gumplant)



Harvest Season: All year

Coast Miwok Name: unknown

Southern Pomo: q̣aqạhwe

Hairy Gumweed (Gumplant)

Scientific Name: *Grindelia hirsutula*

Species Description: Low-growing evergreen shrub usually under 0.5 m (1.5 feet) tall, never exceeding 1 meter (3 feet) tall at maturity.

Habitat Description: Grows mostly in tidal flats, marshes, dunes, sea bluffs. It prefers full to partial sun.

Native American Use: Plant used for itching skin eruption caused by poison oak. The sticky sap was used as glue. Mixture of leaves and stems were used as a blood concoction.

Ithuriel's spear



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Harvest Season: Fall

Coast Miwok Name: putcu

Southern Pomo: bim'u

Ithurriel's spear

Scientific Name: *Triteleia laxa* Benth.

Plant Description: It is from 12 to 20 inches tall. The flower color varies in appearance depending on light exposure. The flower stalks are produced in summer.

Habitat Description: The plants are found in open forest, woodland, and grassland in clay soil in a wide elevation range from 0 to 1500 m.

Native Use: The corms were gathered with a digging stick and cooked in an earth oven. They dug a pit, lined it with rocks, and built a fire in it. As soon as the fire had gone out, the ashes were removed and the cleaned corms were put on a mat of fresh leaves and covered with another mat. Madrone leaves were laid over this, then hot rocks. The hot rocks were covered with earth and on this a fire was built. The bulbs were eaten the next day when the pit was opened.

The Pomo's boil the "potatoes" and eat them.

Jimson Weed



Harvest Season: Fall

Coast Miwok Name: monoy

Southern Pomo: qa'lqasia

Jimson Weed

Scientific Name: *Datura stramonium* L.

Plant Description: Jimson Weed is an annual, 5-15 cm tall. The stems are smooth, green, hollow and branching. The leaves alternate on stout leaf stalks, and are large. The flowers are white and solitary on short stalks in the forks of the branches: the corolla is trumpet shaped, 7-10 cm long, 5 cm wide at the mouth, and 5-lobed; and the stamens, five in number, are attached to the tube slightly below the middle. The fruit is a spiny, green, 4-celled capsule about 5 cm long. The fruit develops rapidly, splitting open at the top when mature. The seeds are many, dark brown, wrinkled and pitted on the surface. It is in flower from July to October, and the seeds ripen from August to October.

Habitat Description: The plant prefers light (sandy) and medium (loamy) soils and requires well-drained soil. The plant prefers neutral and basic (alkaline) soils. It cannot grow in the shade. It requires dry or moist soil.

Native Use: A narcotic. The leaves should be harvested when the plant is in full flower, they are then dried for later use. The leaves, flowers and seeds can be used as a very powerful mind-altering drug.

Externally, it is used as a poultice or wash in the treatment of abscesses or wounds.

Lupine



Harvest Season: All year

Coast Miwok Name: soppoko

Southern Pomo: galgas'a

Lupine

Scientific Name: *Lupinus chamissonis*

Plant Description: There are several varieties found in Sonoma and Marin counties, *Lupinus albifrons* var. *collinus* and *Lupinus arboreus* in addition to *Lupinus chamissonis*. The wandering branches of the silver leaf lupine, *albifrons*, form large, circular patches on rocky banks and grassland areas. This small shrub is a deciduous perennial plant with a woody, trunk-like base. It is prostrate (low growing) and mat forming.

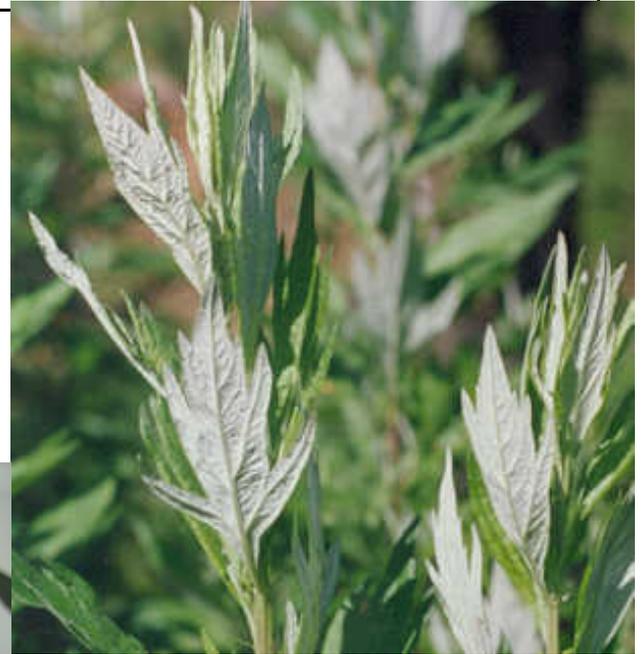
Chamisso lupine is a medium-sized bush that only grows in sand. Flowers from March through July, numerous flowering stalks bear blue-purple or violet spike flowers in the shape typical of the flowers in this family.

Habitat Description: It is found in sandy, marine locations. Lupines grow in every habitat of California except for salt marshes. The wandering branches of the silver leaf lupine form large, circular patches on rocky banks and grassland areas. This small shrub is a deciduous perennial plant with a woody, trunk-like base. It is prostrate (low growing) and mat forming. Chamisso lupine is a medium-sized bush that only grows in sand.

Native Use: Root fibers used to make string for fish nets, deer and rabbit nets, gill nets and carrying nets. The flowers were used in wreaths for the spring ceremonies.

Some native people have steamed the chamisso leaves and flowers in an earth oven and then eaten them with acorn soup.

Mugwort (Sage)



Harvest Season: All year

Coast Miwok Name: kicin

Southern Pomo: qa?phula

Mugwort (Sage)

Scientific Name: *Artemisia douglasiana*

Species Description: When grown to full height, stands anywhere between 3 and 7 feet tall. Each individual leaf grows about 1-2 inches long. They grow along a few dominant stems of the plant. It is related to the sage brush and so is generally low to the ground and bush like. The leaves range in size from very small and are generally less than an inch wide. The overall shape of the leaves are almost hand like. The leaf coloring is different from the topside to the underside. The sun-side of the leaves is a dark green with brown hair dormant veins running along it. It is a deep green because it receives lots of nutrients from the habitat that it grows in; that being along the river corridor. The underside of the leaves are a silver toned light green color. The underside of the leaves sparkle they are so silver greenish. It flowers in summer.

Habitat Description: Native on stream banks, ditch banks, road cuts or other disturbed areas. It is mainly found along riparian corridors in low lying lands. It is part of the sunflower family and so will be found in bright sunshine areas.

Native American Use: Mugwort played a large role in native folklore (as did a lot of other sages). It was smoked, drunk and burned for rituals. The smoke from it would purify a person or object. It was believed if one were to rub their bodies with the leaves that the odor would keep away ghosts. It was rubbed on one's body to keep ghosts away or by wearing a necklace to prevent dreaming of the dead.

Mugwort has the reputation of removing the ill effects of poison oak if you rub a leaf on the area as soon as possible.

Tea is made to relieve stomach ache.

Redbud



Harvest Season: Spring and Fall **Coast Miwok Name:** ta pa' tapu **Southern Pomo:** ?ah'ay?ta

Redbud

Scientific Name: *Cercis orbiculata*

Species Description: A shrub that grows from 7 to 20 feet tall with a dense rounded crown that almost reaches the ground. The leaves are simple, thick, round and have from seven to nine prominent veins. They are winter deciduous; their autumn display of yellow turning to red and brown rivaling that of some eastern hardwoods. The striking pea-shaped flowers appear before the leaves, in small bunches along the branches.

Habitat Description: Redbud is found in oak woodland, chaparral, mixed conifer forest, riparian woodland, and closed cone forest. It grows at elevations of 4,000 ft. or less, in canyons and on rather steep slopes, in gravelly, and rocky soils along streams, where it is never flooded. It also grows in the bottom of ephemeral streambeds in little pockets, benches, or crannies of boulder outcroppings. The plant is drought tolerant, sun-loving, and grows in a wide variety of soils, but it is usually found in rather harsh environments with coarse, nutrient-poor soils that are well-drained.

Native American Use: Redbud is highly valued by basket weavers for their young, wine-red branches, harvested in the fall and used in the warp, weft, and designs of baskets. If the branches are harvested in the spring when the bark slips, the white inner sapwood may also be used as the weft or lacing in baskets.

Redwood



Harvest Season: All year

Coast Miwok Name: lume

Southern Pomo: kas'in

Redwood

Scientific Name: *Sequoia sempervirens*

Plant Description: The tree grows to 60-100(110) m tall and 300-460(900) cm in circumference.. Trunk much enlarged and buttressed at the base and often with rounded swellings or burls, slightly tapering. The bark is red-brown, to 35 cm thick, tough and fibrous, deeply furrowed into broad, scaly ridges; inner bark cinnamon-brown. Branches downward sweeping to slightly ascending. Twigs slender, dark green, forking in a plane, ending in a scaly bud.

Habitat Description: It is confined to coastal areas (within 60 km of the sea) experiencing a great deal of fog; at elevations generally below 300 m, occasionally to 1000 m. Mostly found in alluvial soils, where it forms pure stands.

Native Use: A poultice of heated leaves was applied for earaches and the gummy sap taken for rundown conditions.

The bark was leaned together, in a circle, to make a house. Pieces of shredded bark were made into dolls and used by young girls to play.

Rush



Harvest Season: All year

Coast Miwok Name: katce

Southern Pomo: ci? ba

Rush

Scientific Name: *Juncus textilis*

Plant Description: Annual or perennial (mostly perennial and reproduces by rhizomes) grass-like rushes of wet areas, forming dense clumps. Upright, cylindrical, hollow, glabrous stems are usually pale or bright green and needle-like.

Rush is a perennial, rhizomatous wetland plant. It is a grass like, usually tufted herb 10-20 dm tall, with stout, rigid, pale green culms. The leaf sheaths clustered at the base, 2-15 cm long, multi-colored from red to tan to dark brown and are bladeless.

Habitat Description: It is commonly found in moist areas and along creeks and rivers. It forms large clumps along the edges of ponds, lakes, marshes and wet fields. Many plants have adapted to growing in seasonal wetlands or even in saline conditions.

Juncus textilis grows below an elevation of 1800 m.

Native Use: The stems are used to make baskets and the plants from high elevations are used for dye. Stems can be harvested all year.

Salmonberry



Harvest: Fall

Coast Miwok:

Southern Pomo:

Salmonberry

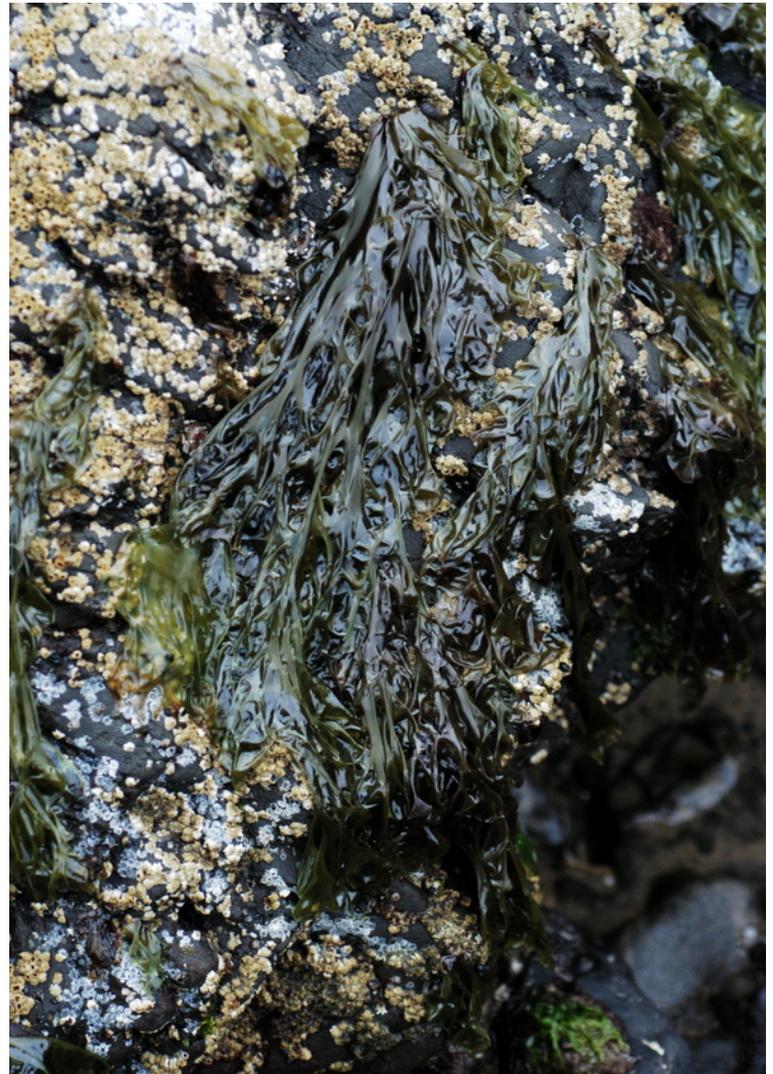
Scientific Name: *Rubus spectabilis* Pursh

Plant Description: Salmonberry is a deciduous shrub, usually 1-4 m tall, with erect or arching stems. The stems are often densely prickly on the upper portions of new growth. The twigs in winter tend to have a distinctive golden-brown to rust-red color. The flowers are large (about 1.5 inches across) and borne singly. Salmonberry blooms in early spring with beautiful deep pink rose-like flowers. The fruits are raspberry-like, round, and yellow to orange to deep red.

Habitat Description: Salmonberry grows in moist places and wetlands, and is especially abundant along streamsides and riparian areas at elevations below 1400 m. It can form dense thickets or grow individually. Salmonberry grows well in full or partial shade.

Native Use: Salmonberry fruits are edible, but are considered too soft to dry. Both the large, raspberry-like fruit and the young shoots were widely eaten by coastal peoples. The young growing sprouts are harvested from April to early June. They are snapped off with the fingers before they become woody, then peeled, and eaten raw or, more commonly cooked by steaming or boiling.

Seaweed



Harvest: Spring **Coast Miwok:** haškula **Southern Pomo:** 'o t ono

Seaweed

Scientific Name: *Porphyra abbottae* (formally *P. perforata*)

Plant Description: Edible seaweed is a very thin, membranous alga that ranges in colour from olive-green to brownish-purple. It grows attached to rocks in the intertidal and upper subtidal zones along the coast.

Habitat Description: It grows attached to rocks in the intertidal and upper subtidal zones along the coast.

Native Use: Seaweed is a good source of food. Edible seaweed is gathered from the rocky places where it grows, dried and eaten as an important sea vegetable.

Sedge (White Root)



Harvest Season: Fall

Coast Miwok Name: kissi

Southern Pomo: co'sink_hle

Sedge (White Root)

Scientific Name: Carex barbarae

Species Description: White root is a grass-like plant with long horizontal rhizomes. The common name white root is based on these long horizontal rhizomes used by Indian people for basket weaving. Stems are 12 to 40 inches long Leaf blades are light green and triangular shaped 0.25 to 0.75 inch in width.

Habitat Description: Sedge grasses are various species of Carex and grow in gravel-soil wetlands all over the world. Plants grow in riparian areas; moist places along streams or on slopes, occasionally bordering marshes, and on open or brush slopes and valley flats that are wet in the spring. Sandy, moist soils are the preferred locations for production of long rhizomes. Plants grow from sea level to 3,000 feet elevation.

Native American Use: White root is a significant basketry material gathered for the long white rhizomes for the sewing strand in coiled baskets. Traditionally tended white root plants may have rhizomes as long as 4- 6 feet in length; untended plants have short, twisted rhizomes.

Other uses of white root include gathering the shoots into a loose knot to hold worms for fishing or to gather eggs.

Burning white sage and “smudge sticks” (gathered sage stems, tied together and partially burned) were used for cleansing and purification prior to specific ceremonies.

Showy Indian Clover



Harvest Season: Spring

Coast Miwok Name: kaali, saal

Southern Pomo: kali

Showy Indian Clover

Scientific Name: *Trifolium amoenum*

Species Description: This annual plant, hairy, erect 4 to 27 inches high has leaves that resemble a feather in appearance and structure, especially in having a central axis or stem with parts branching off it compound, widely oval with the narrow end at the base, purple flowers with white tips and occur from April to June

Habitat Description: It grows in valley and foothill grass lands, sometime on serpentine soil, in open and sunny sites or sometimes swales.

Native American Use: The leaves were picked and eaten in the spring, prior to the plant flowering.

Shore cinquefoil or Silverweed



Harvest Season: Spring, Summer and Fall

Coast Miwok Name: citila

Southern Pomo

Shore Cinquefoil or Silverweed

Scientific Name: *Potentilla anserina*

Plant Description: Silverweed is a low-growing herbaceous plant with creeping red long stem or shoot that arises from the central rosette that is up to 80 cm long. The leaves are 10-20 cm long in a scalloped edge leaflet 2-5 cm long and 1-2 cm broad, covered with silky white hairs, particularly on the underside. These hairs are also present on the stem. These give the leaves the silvery appearance from which the plant gets its name. The plants vary in height from a few inches to about 3 feet.

Habitat Description: It is most often found in moist meadows, marsh edges, usually not too far from the coast, sandy beaches and dunes; and from low to middle elevations.

Native Use: Silverweed is known for its antispasmodic activity and it has been used frequently to treat menstrual cramps. Also, its high tannin content makes it a useful treatment for sore throat, oral and skin ulcerations, bleeding, and diarrhea.

The starchy root, which is said to taste like parsnips, sweet potatoes, or chestnuts, has served as a human food, while its leaves have served as a healthful tea.

Soaproot



Harvest Season: Summer and Fall **Coast Miwok Name:** hakka **Southern Pomo:** ha?an

Soaproot

Scientific Name: Chlorogalum pomeridianum

Species Description: This perennial herbaceous plant reproduces both by black, rounded seeds and bulbs. The bulb has a brown fibrous outer coat and the bulb can become quite large--from 7-15 cm across. The leaves are linear and basal with strongly wavy margins. The leaves are 2-7 dm. long and shrink to scarious bracts in the flowering stage. The flowers open in the evening and the inflorescence is highly branched and can grow up to 3 m in height. The flowers are white with green or purple midveins.

Habitat Description: Populations of this species are found in multiple habitats including bluffs, grassland, chaparral, coastal sage scrub, and dry open oak woodland below 1500 m elevation. They periodically burned areas where soaproot grew, probably to recycle nutrients and keep vegetation from encroaching into collection areas.

Native American Use: This plant has multiple uses. The bulb was gathered historically in large quantities with a digging stick and it is still harvested today.

Traditionally the bulbs were highly valued for soap for washing the body, hair, baskets, and utensils. It also served as an important fish poison: the bulb being mashed and placed into quiet pools of water to cause fish to become immobilized and float to the water surface.

If the bulb is boiled or roasted, and mashed, the paste is a good adhesive and is used as a glue for soaproot brush handles, and attaching feathers to arrows. The brushes are made by using the coarse "horsehair-like" fibrous coats for the brush bristles and the moist and sticky like glue-like bulb makes the handle. These brushes are used to sweep acorn meal into the mortar or basket hopper when acorns are pounded and for brushing the hair.

The bulb, if baked in an earth oven for a lengthy period, usually overnight, becomes caramelized and sweet-tasting and was a significant food.

The young shoots were traditionally harvested, before flowering, roasted, and eaten. They rubbed the fresh bulb on the body for cramps and for rheumatism. They also used a decoction of the bulb as a diuretic and laxative and for stomach aches.

Pacific Beach Strawberry



Harvest Season: Spring

Coast Miwok Name: i'yum

Southern Pomo: muhway?mi

Pacific Beach Strawberry

Scientific Name: *Fragaria chiloensis pacifica*

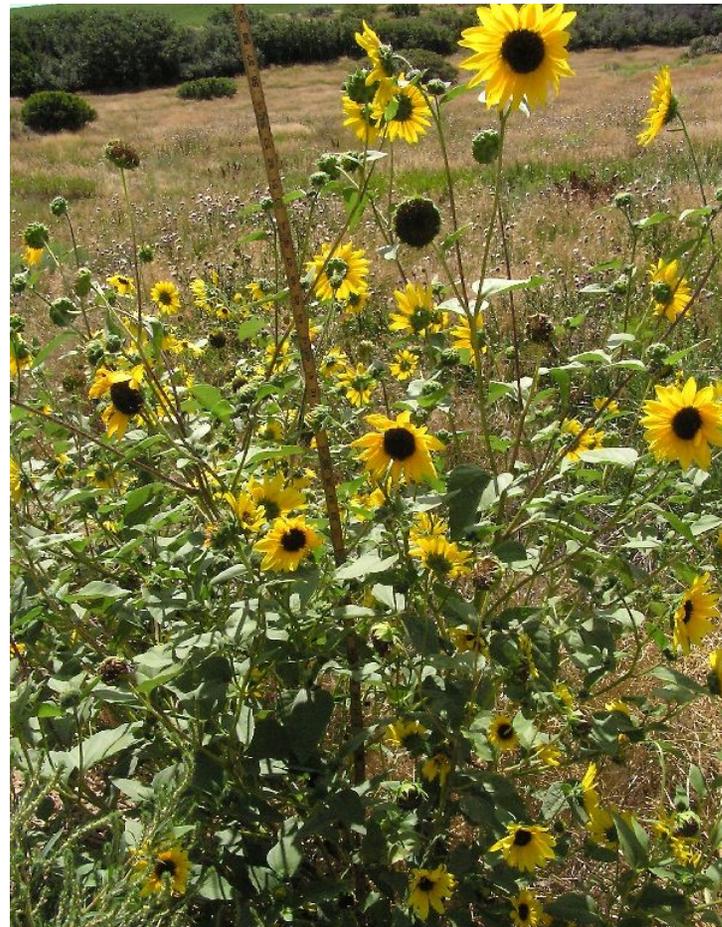
Species Description: This herbaceous perennial plant spreads by seed and also by short rhizomes

Habitat Description: This plant is found below 200 m, in dune and grassland communities of coastal California.

Native American Use: This strawberry produces many more fruits than the wood strawberry and has a great flavor. It was gathered and eaten raw. Typically the fruits are eaten fresh, being too juicy to dry like other berries. The fresh leaves are used to make a clear, sweet tea. Often thimbleberry and trailing wild blackberry leaves are added to this tea. Some chewed the leaves and applied them as a poultice on burns. Strawberry leaves are well known for their use in anti-diarrhea medicines, especially for children.

Some tribes took the leaves of strawberries and dried them by a fire until brown, powdered these leaves in a bag, and applied the powder to the navel of a newborn baby to heal it and keep it from becoming infected. It was used several days in succession, until the navel had healed. Strawberry leaf powder was also dusted into a baby's mouth when it was sore and was applied to any open sore as a disinfectant. The sore was washed, the powder was applied and deer fat was smeared on over it.

Sunflower



Harvest Season: Summer and Fall

Coast Miwok Name: hii pakas

Southern Pomo:

Sunflower

Scientific Name: Helianthus annuus

Plant Description: The sunflower is an erect, coarse, tap-rooted annual with rough-hairy stems 6-30 dm tall. The leaves are mostly alternate, egg-shaped to triangular, and entire or toothed. The flower heads are 7.5-15 cm wide and at the ends of branches. Ray flowers are yellow and disk flowers are reddish-brown.

Habitat Description: The sunflower (is a common and widespread roadside weed. It is common in open sites in many different habitats throughout North America, southern Canada, and Mexico at elevations below 1900 m. It is highly variable as a species, and hybridizes with several other species. The heads and plants are very large cultivated forms. Sunflowers need full sun

Native Use: During the last 3,000 years, Indians increased the seed size approximately 1,000 percent. They gradually changed the genetic composition of the plant by repeatedly selecting the largest seeds. Originally cultivated by North American Indians, it has a long and interesting history as a food plant for many Tribes. Sunflower seeds were eaten raw, roasted, cooked, dried, and ground, and used as a source of oil. Flower buds were boiled. The roasted seeds have been used as a coffee

Tobacco



Harvest Season: Summer and Fall

Coast Miwok Name: kayaw

Southern Pomo: ka'wakʷle

Tobacco

Scientific Name: *Nicotiana bigelovii*

Plant Description: This annual plant is up to 1 m. high with branched and hairy stems. The leaves are attached directly to the stem. They are egg shaped. The irregular, two-lipped flowers are blue or white, 6-8 mm

Habitat Description: This plant is found in open woods or in sunny locations. It needs highly organic soil.

Native Use: The dried leaves used as tobacco and in simple ceremonies. Is was smoked in pipes. It was never used for medicinal purposes as with other Tribes. It was most often gathered near Santa Rosa Creek or near Healdsburg.

Toyon



Harvest Season: Fall

Coast Miwok Name: puyla (berries) or pulak

Southern Pomo: bu'du

Toyon

Scientific Name: *Heteromeles arbutifolia*

Plant Description: This evergreen shrub reaches up to 10 meters in height. It has a grayish trunk and branches covered with fine down. The elliptic to oblong leaves are simple and short leaf stalks. They have spines along the margins and are thick and leathery. The small, white flowers are arranged in large terminal clusters and each flower has 5 petals, 5 sepals, and 10 stamens. The fruits are bright red or yellow drupe-like fruit with dry pulp and contain 3 to 6 seeds. They persist through winter.

Habitat Description: The shrub is found in chaparral, oak woodland, and mixed evergreen forest below 1300 m.

Native Use: The fruit was gathered for food. It is important to wait until the red fruits are very ripe before picking and eating them. They are boiled or roasted before consuming or sometimes they are eaten raw. The fruit was boiled and baked in a deep narrow earth oven. Another preparation technique was to store the fruits in a basket for two months until they had softened and then they were parched with coals in a basket and eaten.

Valley Oak



Harvest Season: Fall

Coast Miwok Name: hakya **Southern Pomo:** sunk le (acorn)

Valley Oak

Scientific Name: *Quercus lobata*

Plant Description: California white oak, sometimes referred to as valley oak, is a deciduous tree, 12 to 30 m tall, with a rounded spreading crown. The mature bark is gray, scaly, and often vertically fissured in a checker-like pattern. Leaves are 5 to 10 cm long. The upper surface is green and shiny; the lower surface is grayish green. The one-seeded nuts are 3 to 5 cm long, oblong to ovoid, and mature in one year. Flowering takes place from March to April. Fruits mature between August and October.

Habitat Description: California valley or white oak now occurs primarily in the inner Coast Ranges and bordering foothills and low elevation riparian forests. It grows in deep, fertile soils of flats and bottomlands below 1200 m.

Native Use: It's acorns were a food staple.

Wax Myrtle



Harvest: Fall

Coast Miwok:

Southern Pomo:

Wax Myrtle

Scientific Name: *Morella californica*

Plant Description: It is a large evergreen shrub or small tree, 3-10 m high. The leaves are

alternate, simple, five to ten centimeters long with resin dots, and are slightly sticky and fragrant when crushed. The fruit are purplish, single seeded berries, coated with a white wax, ripening in the early autumn and usually falling during the winter. The bark is smooth, compact, dark gray or light brown on the surface and dark red-brown internally

Habitat Description: The wax myrtle occurs in canyons and hill slopes of the coastal region. It thrives in wet soil conditions and is drought tolerant. It grows best in full sun in an open position and can tolerate light shaded areas. This species prefers a peaty soil or lime free loamy soil.

Native Use: The wax was used in making soups. A gray-brown and a maroon-purple dye was obtained from the fresh or dried berries. This species was valued on the Pacific Coast for its berries and evergreen leaves

Grey Willow



Harvest Season: Fall

Coast Miwok: luma

Southern Pomo: kha'lan

Willow

Scientific Name: Salix lasiandra

Species Description: The willow is a tall, slender, large shrub or small tree, fifteen to forty-five feet high. The leaves are long, thin, shiny, 5-10 centimeters long with finely toothed edges. The fruits are thick catkins that are hairless, light reddish-brown, and six to eight millimeters long. The bark is furrowed with broad flat scaly plates.

Habitat Description: It is a fast growing but short-lived tree. This species prefers a damp heavy soil but will succeed in most soils. This species is often found in riverbanks, floodplains, lakeshores, and wet meadows often standing in quiet river backwaters. It grows best in a sunny position scattered at low elevations along rivers and streams.

Native American Use: The inner bark was dried, ground into a powder, and then added to flour for making bread. The stems and bark were used in basket making. The stems for bow making and the bark for fabric making and tea. Willows produce “salicin”, which is closely related to acetylsalicylic acid, commonly known as aspirin. Various preparations from willows are used to treat stomach ache, sore throats, colds, diarrhea, and dandruff. The inner bark is haemostatic and has been applied externally to bleeding cuts.

Yarrow



Harvest Season: Spring, Summer and Fall

Coast Miwok Name: kickin

Southern Pomo: sunam ?ketey?

Yarrow

Scientific Name: *Achillea millefolium* L. var. *californica*

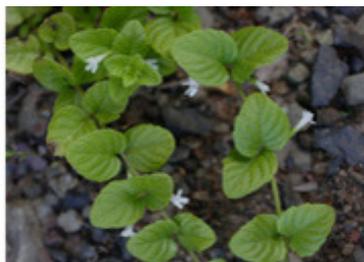
Species Description: Yarrow grows from 10 to 20 inches high in a single stem, fibrous and rough. The leaves alternate, 3 to 4 inches long and 1 inch broad, larger and rosette at the base, clasping the stem. The segments very finely cut, fern-like and dark-green, giving the leaves a feathery appearance. The flowers are several bunches of flat-topped clusters consisting of numerous small, white flower heads. Each tiny flower resembling a daisy. A perennial herb.

Habitat Description: Prefers a well-drained soil in a sunny position. A very good companion plant, it improves the health of plants growing nearby and enhances their essential oil content thus making them more resistant to insect predations also improves the soil fertility.

Native American Use: The stalk was used in a treatment for pain relief. They used the leaves in a steam inhalant for headaches. They also chewed the roots and applied the saliva to their appendages as a stimulant.

Some drank a tea of common yarrow to reduce fever and aid in restful sleep

Yerba Buena



Harvest Season: Spring, Summer and Fall

Coast Miwok Name: yerba beenu

Southern Pomo: mihse qhale

Yerba Buena

Scientific Name: *Satureja douglasii*

Species Description: Yerba Buena is an aromatic herb with long, oval leaves that are oppositely arranged. They have bluntly toothed margins and sunken, resin filled dots on its surface. Blooming in summer, the whitish-purple flowers are tubular with two lips. They grow where the leaves join the stems.

Habitat Description: Yerba Buena is usually seen trailing into open, shady areas of many habitats, commonly chaparral and woodland communities. Needs good drainage.

Native American Use: This herb is well known for its medicinal value. Several strengths of tea - mild for general purposes and strong for toothaches - is thought to make for good health. An alternate remedy for toothaches is wrapping warmed leaves on the outer jaw.

Notes

- Thanks to the FIGR's Coast Miwok language class, especially Isabelle James, for their assistance and help with this project.
- If you have information on other plants used by the Coast Miwok and Southern Pomo, please let me know so they can be added to this list.
- This project is only the beginning of the story. The ceremonies and rituals used to gather plants are another phase of the work, as are the methods and specifics of harvesting the plants and their preparation for use. I hope to see these phases completed some day.
- Mapping the location of these plants and permission for Tribal members to harvest them will be an important next step for us.