

Books on Gardening with Native Plants

(compiled by members of the North Coast Chapter, CNPS) February 2016

There are many books available on the native flora of this region, gardening with wildlife in mind, or developing a more sustainable approach. The list below represents some of the most current work on these subjects. All the books listed are available through the Humboldt County library system.

Bauer, Nancy. *The California Wildlife Habitat Garden: How to Attract Bees, Butterflies, Birds, and Other Animals*. University of California Press, 2012. Filled with tantalizing photographs, this book provides an inspiring overview of the “why” and “how” of wildlife habitat gardening as well as specific information on attracting birds, bees, butterflies, and other beneficial insects. The author advocates using a diversity of plants—predominately natives—combined with environmentally-friendly garden practices.

Bormann, F. Herbert, Diana Balmori, and Gordon T. Geballe. *Redesigning the American Lawn, a Search for Environmental Harmony*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001. Breathes new life into Rachel Carson. Includes a history of, and alternatives to, contemporary lawns.

Bornstein, Carol, David Fross, and Bart O'Brien. *California Native Plants for the Garden*. Los Olivos, CA: Cachuma Press, 2005. A comprehensive resource describing over 500 California native plants. Authored by leading native-plant horticulturists, this book covers landscape design, installation, and maintenance, includes 450 color photos, and contains information on where to view and purchase native plants.

Bornstein, Carol, David Fross, and Bart O'Brien. *Reimagining the California Lawn: Water-Conserving Plants, Practices, and Designs*. Los Olivos, CA: Cachuma Press, 2011. After a brief discussion of problems associated with lawns, the authors describe a variety of landscape alternatives such as meadows, rock gardens, succulent gardens, and edible gardens. The following section covers managing, reducing or removing lawns. The bulk of the book profiles a wide variety of drought-tolerant landscape plants—both native and non-native—and includes helpful lists of plants that are attractive to bees or hummingbirds; fast- or slow-growing; useful in coastal conditions; etc..

Francis, Mark and Andreas Reimann. *The California Landscape Garden: Ecology, Culture and Design*. University of California Press, 1999. An informative integration of garden design considerations and habitat types.

Keator, Glenn and Alrie Middlebrook. *Designing California Native Gardens: The Plant Community Approach to Artful, Ecological Gardens*. University of California Press, 2007. Divided into 12 chapters based on communities of plants that naturally occur together. The book provides examples of conceptual and applied landscape designs for each community, including plant lists, descriptions and color photos, as well as practical advice for maintaining native gardens. Also includes a plant source list.

Pettinger, April. *Native Plants in the Coastal Garden*. Portland: Timber Press, 2003. An excellent guide for gardeners in coastal areas of the Pacific Northwest. Includes descriptions of plants and habitats, plant propagation techniques, natural plant combinations, and some design ideas.

Popper, Helen. *California Native Gardening: A Month-by-Month Guide*. University of California Press, 2012. Detailed information on sowing wildflower seeds and bulbs, planting, pruning, dividing, garden clean up, and dealing with pests on a month-by-month basis. A valuable reference, with good color photographs and vivid descriptions of native plants in bloom every month.

Robson, Kathleen A., Alice Richter, and Marianne Filbert. *Encyclopedia of Northwest Native Plants for Gardens and Landscapes*. Portland: Timber Press, 2008. This comprehensive reference—illustrated with nearly 600 color photographs and drawings—describes plants native to the Pacific Northwest. Discusses growing conditions, propagation, and much more.

Schmidt, Marjorie G., and Katherine L. Greenberg. *Growing California Native Plants*. University of California Press, 2012, 2nd ed. A recently-updated workhorse on native plant propagation and gardening in California.

Smith, M. Nevin. *Native Treasures : Gardening With the Plants of California*. University of California Press, 2006. Provides practical cultural advice on CA native plants, including propagation, and design suggestions for varied garden styles. Includes gorgeous color photos and line drawings.

Stark, Eileen M. *Real Gardens Grow Natives*. Seattle: Skipstone, 2014. Presents a strong case for using native plants to support birds, bees, butterflies, and other insects. Covers design considerations, site preparation, gardening practices, and plant propagation. The heart of the book is a portfolio of 100 garden-worthy Pacific Northwest native plants, with color photographs and useful information on the growth habit and wildlife value of each plant.

Tallamy, Douglas. *Bringing Nature Home: How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife in our Gardens*. Portland: Timber Press, 2007. A passionate treatise that explains why using native plants is not just a nice idea but crucially important for the survival of wildlife. A must read for native plant lovers and all gardeners.

Water Conservation Staff, East Bay Municipal Utility District. *Plants and Landscapes for Summer-Dry Climates of the San Francisco Bay Region*. Oakland: East Bay Municipal Utility District, 2004. Although written with the Bay area in mind, the information in this 320-page volume applies equally to other Mediterranean-climate areas. Enjoy striking color photos of both native and non-native plants in climate-appropriate garden settings, plant lists, charts, descriptions, and practical advice on water conservation.

Books for identification of native plants (and insects)

Baldwin, Bruce, convening ed. *The Jepson Manual: Higher Plants of California*. University of California Press, 2012. A technical reference for professional botanists, this comprehensive text is written for those with knowledge of botanical terminology. A bit heavy to tote into the field, it includes natives and common exotic weeds.

Haggard, Pete and Judy Haggard. *Insects of the Pacific Northwest*. Portland: Timber Press, 2006. Over 600 beautiful close-up photographs of more than 450 common insects and non-insect invertebrates highlight the natural history text in this introductory field guide written and photographed by local authors. A “must have.”

Horn, Elizabeth L. *Coastal Wildflowers of the Pacific Northwest*. Missoula, MT: Mountain Press Publishing Company, 1993. 200+ color photos of common wildflowers and flowering shrubs (including exotics and invasives) found along coastal British Columbia to Mendocino, CA. Organized by habitat, it allows beginners to identify plant communities.

Kauffmann, Michael E. *Conifers of the Pacific Slope: California, Oregon, and Washington*. Kneeland, CA: Backcountry Press, 2013. A field guide for identifying the conifers of the Pacific slope, including Idaho, Nevada, and parts of British Columbia and Baja California. Includes color plates and range maps for 65 conifer species. Produced in association with the North Coast Chapter of the California Native Plant Society and the Humboldt State University Redwood Science Project.

Lanner, Ronald M. *Conifers of California*. Los Olivos, CA: Cachuma Press, 1999. Beautiful color photos and illustrations bring our state’s 52 native cone-bearing trees and shrubs to life. Includes tips on identifying conifers both from a distance and up-close, as well as information on habitats, natural history, and state-wide distribution of species.

Pojar, Jim, and Andy MacKinnon. *Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast*. Vancouver, BC: Lone Pine Publishing, rev. ed., 2004. Although described as a guide to plants found from British Columbia to Oregon, it applies equally well to our portion of the state. Includes photos of mosses, lichens, grasses, and aquatics, in addition to trees, shrubs and wildflowers, and their historical uses.

Stuart, John D., and John O. Sawyer. *Trees and Shrubs of California*. University of California Press, 2001. A California Natural History Field Guide to the more common native shrubs and trees of our state. Written for both amateur plant enthusiasts and professional botanists (some knowledge of botanical terminology is helpful). Includes vegetative keys, clear descriptions and illustrations, and sixteen pages of color photos. It's also small enough to toss in a backpack.

Turner, Mark and Phyllis Gustafson. *Wildflowers of the Pacific Northwest*. Portland: Timber Press, 2006. This comprehensive field guide describes and illustrates 1,220 commonly-encountered species, both native and nonnative, including perennials, annuals, and shrubs. It encompasses the Pacific Northwest from southern British Columbia to northern California, from the coast to the mountains and high desert. Organized by flower color and shape, and including a range map for each plant described, it is as user-friendly as it is informative.

Young, Dorothy King. *Redwood Empire Wildflowers*. Happy Camp, CA: Naturegraph Publishers, 1989. This is a locally classic handbook of 132 wildflowers of the Redwood Empire listed alphabetically by common names, with scientific names following. A brief description of each flower identifies characteristics, size, habitat, and the general locality and time that the flower may be found. Additional information includes a short discussion on conservation of wildflowers and suggested wildflower trips.