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Ecological Concerns Incorporated

# Central Coast Wilds

*Restoring the habitats that sustain us*



CCW-Newsletter

Winter 2012

*"Our mission is to nurture ecological relationships, cultivate community partnerships and build sustainable business practices in order to protect and restore biological diversity."*



## Winter at the Nursery

Here are some pictures from this season:



Soon *Corylus cornuta* will be available in TP!

## Happy Solstice from Central Coast Wilds



Winter is nearly upon us and the long nights are.....almost over! It always feels a bit anticlimactic that just as winter arrives the days are already getting longer. Well Spring is still a long way off, yet we are very busy sowing seeds and taking cuttings for next year's plants.

Winter is also a fine time to plant natives and in the Bay area is really only limited by saturated soils. Many plants have gone dormant, however there is a good selection of young plants that are growing strong. *Mimulus auranticus*, *Eriophyllum confertiflorum*, *Artemisia pycnocephala*, *Marah fabaceous*, and *Iris douglasiana* are all looking verdant and ready to plant.

2012 marked the 20th Anniversary for Central Coast Wilds. Thank you to all who joined us for our plant sale and party in September. We appreciate the support and look forward to another 20 years of growing native plants.

Best wishes for the holidays and have a Happy New Year!

## Plant of the Month:

Elk Clover, California Ginseng  
*Aralia californica*, Araliaceae

To get to know *Aralia californica* in the Santa Cruz Mountains,



you have to climb down into the depths of the redwood forest, into the old flowing watersheds. Down here, the water moves along its own eroded ocean-bound crevice, held in by walls of cross-sectioned forest floor, which have been carved sometimes 5 meters deep by centuries of rainwater flow.

Heavy curves of redwood roots hold up the soil, and five-fingered ferns root into humid corners of the creek bank. From a chunk of limestone sitting in the creek, you can look up and see ambitious California blackberry shoots hanging down from the edge of the bank, leaves poised at the tip where adventitious tissue is preparing to sprout roots into the rich humic soil. Above, big leaf maple trees provide a patchwork canopy. The sunlight reaches in, first through high redwood branches, then through the big maple leaves, to send slanted tubes of light through the active, gnat-filled atmosphere and onto the rocks in the creek.



This is *Aralia*'s domain. With big, gnarled storage roots, it holds onto the close edges of the creek bed-on a spit of sandy land dividing the creek, or up around the banks.

For horticultural uses, *Aralia* is the plant you can count on in deep shade, in a variety of soil types, as long as there is some moisture. *Aralia* is deer resistant, and like many redwood riparian plants, dies back each winter. Its hardy root insures verdant leaf growth to welcome the next spring. Propagation is straightforward; the fresh berries are distributed in soil, and watered. Stratification is not necessary.

*Aralia* is in the Ginseng family, and is one of our strong medicinals on the central coast. A cough syrup made by infusing the fresh root in honey is anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial, good for soothing deep winter coughs. Tinctures of the root or berry will sooth particularly heavy stress, and will help to cope with the veil of depressed low energy that comes in times of



## Featured Products:

**Native Sod:** Six Different Blends of Drought Tolerant Sod from \$1.99 SF.

**Custom Native Seed Blends** for landscape, revegetation & erosion control

**Root Guard:** Gopher Protection Plant

**Baskets:** 1 - 15 Gallon Sizes

**Organic Fertilizer and Mycorrhizal Packets** @ \$0.50/packet

## CCW Employee's Favorite Trail:



persistent darkness-winter rain, the fog that doesn't lift, that sort of thing (Moore 1993). If you are interested in pursuing these concoctions, now is the time to collect the root, when all of the plant's energy is focused underground.



## References

Moore, Michael. *Medicinal Plants of the Pacific West*. Santa Fe, New Mexico: Museum of New Mexico Press, 1993.

## Winter on the Coastal Prairie:



Big Sur, CA

Photo by Donna Sutton

Fog lingers atop rolling hills overlooking the ocean, seeds are sprouting and climbing their way out from underneath last season's dead stalks. The hush in the grasslands during these winter months offer a rare glimpse into plant and animal communities that are not often appreciated as much as the wildflower shows of Spring but that can be equally rewarding. It's quiet and not rushed.

See the starts of your favorite plant species and take your time to enjoy the views of wildlife that become more active during the cooler months.



## Hilary - Nursery Assistant

"My favorite trail is Whitehouse Ridge Trail in the Cascade Ranch Unit of Ano Nuevo State Park. Take the dirt road (Whitehouse Creek Rd.) next to Costanoa and go for a few miles. There are several trails in the area but Whitehouse trail has everything: Redwoods, Oak Woodlands, and great views."

Coastal prairies are the grasslands stretched along the western slopes of the coastal ranges from southern California to Oregon and are as much as 65 miles inland. The coastal prairies along the west coast have a different seasonal growth pattern than most temperate grasslands inland. Coastal grasslands go dormant in the summer, when most of the grasses will wither back to ground and release their seeds. The winters are when the growing season happens, when all the seeds that have been patiently waiting for rain sprout, and the hills turn a lime green.



Fog is a large part of coastal prairies' success and unique biodiversity. During the summer, pillows of fog cover the California coast and distribute moisture to the surrounding plant communities. The moisture in fog condenses on the leaves and falls to the ground. This fog is a big help to those living near the coast and that want to support native landscapes. People who have landscaped their home or business with native coastal plants can rely on this distribution of moisture to sustain their landscapes without long term irrigation. There is the initial irrigation for newly transferred plants followed by a beautiful self reliance, as the plants root into the habitats their genes evolved for.

## GET MORE INFORMATION

[Central Coast Wilds Home](#)

[Driving Directions](#)

For a list of the California Natives we have in stock, check out our:

[Online Plant Inventory](#)

[Sale Flyer](#)

(Call to Confirm Availability)

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

## Luscious Central Coast Lupines:

Lupines were named after Lupus, the wolf, at a time when wolves robbed sheep from their flocks, and people thought that Lupines robbed nutrients from the soil, because they were frequently found growing on poor ground. Now we know that the opposite is actually true: lupines feed the soil where they grow. Special swollen nodules on their roots



Lupinus nanus in Big Sur.

# Seasonal To Do List: Winter Landscape Maintenance

**Prime time for planting** - From mid October through February is the best time to get those trees and shrubs in the ground. Root systems go through shock and stress during planting. During the cool season, the stress is less harmful. Broken roots have more time to grow without the risk of bacterial or fungal infections.

## Sow Seeds -

Now is the time to sow Acorns, iris seeds, and annual wildflower seeds.



**Divide** your perennials, including cool season grasses, rushes, and sedges. Turn your individuals into populations! Below is an example of the resilience of sedges such as *Carex pansa*:



*Carex pansa*  
before division



4 Plants from 1!

**Prune Your Deciduous Trees** - The winter season offers a great look at your bare trees and large shrubs. The

house cooperative bacteria, which pay for their room and board by "fixing" nitrogen: transforming atmospheric nitrogen, which plants cannot absorb, into ammonia, which the plant can convert into energy. The bacteria break the triple bonds between the pairs of nitrogen atoms that form atmospheric nitrogen, and then use an enzyme to combine the nitrogen with hydrogen, creating ammonia. For this reason, you will not need to fertilize your lupines. Doing so may promote excessive and weak growth, and can lead to death by assorted root rots, especially if combined with frequent watering.

Here near the Central Coast of California we have over 20 species of native lupines, from diminutive annuals to robust shrubs. Most have very attractive flowers, some are sweetly scented, and many are easy to bring into the garden, where they will be attended to by bumblebees, hummingbirds,



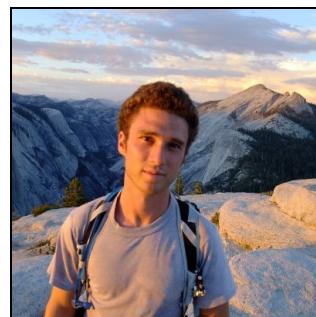
*Lupinus albifrons* Photos by Ellen

and other wildlife. The following chart includes easy to grow and readily available species as well as those that are neither. The sizes are rough estimates; different gardens and sources of seeds may produce widely varying results. Flower colors also vary, often due to natural hybridization, so that it is not uncommon to see a purple-flowered yellow bush lupine. Most species want as much sun as possible, and are best started winter through early spring. Our nursery usually has several different lupines in stock, and can even contract grow the more "interesting" ones, if you would like to give them a try!

[Native Lupine Species Diversity Chart](#)

## New Staff Member : Michael Friedman

Michael is joining us this winter as marketing director and project manager. He oversees various types of ecological projects with a focus on sustainable landscape maintenance. He has a BS degree from Texas State University in Mass Communication and Horticulture, and has continued his training in horticulture through various professional certificate programs including CLCA's Certified Water Manager program and Ecology Action's Grow Biointensive training. He has also attended various forums on



structure can be properly evaluated and you can plan for the desired growth form.



Pruning Plan

**Pull weeds early** - Along with your own seeds, there are weeds germinating and it is easier to get them pulled while they are young, and the soil is wet.

**Mulch** - Lay mulch down to avoid muddy situations, prevent weed germination, and to give your garden a fresh clean look during the dormant season.

**Pick Snails and Slugs** - These critters thrive during the wet months! Stay on top of your slug traps and remove them from your plants when you see them.

sustainable design offered through UC Berkeley. Before joining ECI, Michael was a project manager for a large commercial landscape company in Silicon Valley where he oversaw quality control on multiple project sites. Michael was drawn to California's rich ecosystems after college and has been exploring and learning about California's natural history ever since. He is especially drawn to hiking the high Sierra wilderness in search of a glimpse of rare trout species.

## Upcoming Events:

**December 12, 2012 - California Native Shrubs with Ted Kipping**

**Location: UCSC Arboretum: Horticulture 2 Building**

Potluck starts at 6 pm, Lecture at 7 pm. Great photographs and commentary by a very entertaining walking encyclopedia! For directions visit the Arboretum [website](#).

**December 18, 2012 - Native Plants in a California Garden**

**Location: Vineland Branch Library, San Jose**

Patrick Pizzo, former SJSU professor, shares his experience with Native Gardening.

Free and open to the public. Further details [here](#).

**January 14-15, 2013 - Northern California Botanists Symposium**

**Location: Chico State University**

*"From the Redwoods to the Sagebrush: Botany Ranging Far and Wide"*

Registration and details [here](#).

## Other Services Available From Ecological Concerns Incorporated:

- Complete Landscape Design & Installation Services
- Irrigation System Design, Installation & Service
- Erosion Control Plans: CPESC on Staff
- Grey Water Treatment Systems: Certified Installers on Staff
- Sustainable Landscape Maintenance Service

## Contact Central Coast Wilds

### Come visit us!

Nursery: Open 10am - 3pm M-F or by appointment  
336A Golf Club Dr.  
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