"Restore Nature one garden at a time"

Plant a wide range of native plants in your yard to support biodiversity and resilience in our ecosystems

Hawks and owls provide gopher and rodent control

Gardening to support…
SUPERBIRDS!

Midstory of common manzanita growing with pine and oak

Getting started with native plants in your garden

When incorporating native plants into your landscape look to nature for inspiration. Combine layers of trees and shrubs with an understory of compatible perennials, grasses and wildflowers. Each layer accommodates different species of native insects, birds and bees. Packing in a diversity of native plants supports your ecosystem all year long.

Research the requirements of the native plants you choose. Plant in fall and protect from deer initially. Then be patient for a few years because your native plants are developing deep, deep roots. They will eventually far exceed your expectations!

Essential websites

Redbud Chapter of California Native Plant Society Inspiration and information on gardening with native plants

Calscape Search by zip code for lists and descriptions of native plants from California Native Plant Society

California Oak Foundation Compatible Plants Under and Around Oaks

National Wildlife Federation Native plant finder by zip code—lists native plants in order of their importance to ecosystems

Cornell Lab of Ornithology All About Birds Information on birds, online courses, Cornell Lab's Introduction video (8:43) and free birding apps: Merlin and eBird

Audubon Society Creating Bird Friendly Communities and free birding app

Doug Tallamy resources

Video Why Native Plants Matter (4:09)

Books *The Nature of Oaks, Nature's Best Hope, Bringing Nature Home*

UC Master Gardeners
of Nevada County
ncmg.ucanr.org

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Agriculture and Natural Resources

Decomposing leaf litter supports beneficial soil bacteria, fungi and nematodes working in concert to enhance soil quality

Native birds require plants with shared evolutionary history

Summer watering and improper pruning harm our native oak trees

Bluebirds make a comeback with our help!

In 1977 the bluebird populations across the country, including the Eastern Bluebird, Mountain Bluebird and **our local Western Bluebird**, were in decline. Their natural nesting sites—cavities in trees—were disappearing fast due to urban sprawl and competition from non-native, invasive birds.

A dedicated activist, Dr. Lawrence Zeleny, created the North American Bluebird Society to mobilize ordinary people to take action. Within a year, 600 dedicated new members were building nest boxes, installing them wherever feasible and monitoring them.

Photo by Sylvia Wright

As a result, this brave little bird has made a comeback! Since then, as natural habitats continue to disappear, the effort remains ongoing.

A success story for all beings

A small group of concerned citizens took action and helped to strengthen an important link in our ecosystem! We gardeners have the power right now—using our collective actions across this country—to take small steps that can make a big difference in preserving and protecting entire ecosystems.

Bluebird nestlings need to eat 500 caterpillars a day

Leave dead trees for cavity nesters such as the bluebird, swallow and oak titmouse

---

Photo by Sandy Follett

As gardeners, we have the power to save ecosystems!

4 easy steps anyone can take

■ **Avoid spraying pesticides** especially during spring when birds need bugs to feed their babies! During this time, you will only have to put up with a little bug damage because birds and other ecopartners will soon be feasting on them. *Think of insects as the glue that holds ecosystems together—any pesticides you spray can break up the entire food web birds rely on to reproduce.*

■ **Whenever safe, leave dead trees** standing and fallen tree trunks, branch piles and leaf litter in place. These provide, feed, cover, perches and nesting sites for birds and the bugs they eat and support the biological activity needed to create healthy soil.

■ **Learn to identify native plants,** and find ways to save them.

■ **Plant more natives** to compensate for ecosystems lost due to development or taken over by non-native or invasive plants.

Understory of native trilliums in a riparian setting

Benefits of saving native plants and planting more

- Native plants require **low to no watering** and are low maintenance once established.

- Also, once established, most native plants are **deer resistant** because they have evolved to thrive in spite of nibbling.

- A diverse mixture of native plants provides **beauty year round**. Their flowers provide nectar for vital pollinators such as bees, butterflies, moths, bats and hummingbirds.

- Healthy native spaces **reduce the need for fertilizers and pesticides**, which damage and disrupt ecosystems.

- **Mature native trees support entire ecosystems**. They also feed themselves when fungi, bacteria and insects convert their leaf drop into compost.

- Native plants **significantly improve the ability of birds to reproduce**— because native birds have evolved in lock step with native plants that host the native insects they eat. *This food web has evolved and managed to stay in balance long before humans came along.*

Superstory of majestic oak tree in our county

"Superhero" native plants

Long live our mighty oaks & pines

Oak woodlands and pine forests are the primary drivers of our local ecosystems. Preserve native trees suited to your specific ecoregion, such as willows, oaks, pines, cottonwoods, chokeberries or alders. *These are hugely important hosts to the insects that many birds require during breeding season.*

Hard-working native shrubs

Photo by Nancy Gilbert

Our native drought-tolerant **manzanitas** are a bird powerhouse! They provide early nectar and shelter plus winter berries.

Toyon stays green year round and requires no watering. Robins and others depend on its bounty during the lean months of winter.

Simulate natural environments with lush, wild growth, thickets, hedges and leaf litter

Jays help by planting oak trees