



Butterfly and Moth Foodplants for Inland Mendocino and Sonoma Counties

Baby birds need caterpillars, and caterpillars need native plants. It's time to create caterpillar paradises!

Common Name of Plant	Botanical Name of Plant	Evergreen/Deciduous WD=winter deciduous SD=summer deciduous	Locally Native? Y=yes N=No	Exposure SH = Shade PS = Part Shade FS = Full Sun	Water VL=Very Low L=Low M=Mod. H=High	Max Height	Flower Color/ Fragrant? Y=Yes (Y)=Mild	Bloom Time	Birds Y=yes N=No	Bees Y=Yes N=No	Butterfly and Moth Caterpillars (# of species known to feed on plant)	Other Wildlife and Ecosystem Benefits (FP=Foodplant; BB=bumblebee; B'fly=butterfly; HB=hummingbird)
LARGE TREES												
Big-leaf Maple	<i>Acer macrophyllum</i>	WD	Y	PS/S	M-H	30-114'	Yellow, Pink	March-June	Y	N	Very Many 34 moths, 2 b'flies	Nectar for butterflies. Leaves for deer, rodents, and insects. Seeds for small mammals and birds (finches, grosbeak).
Coast Live Oak	<i>Quercus agrifolia</i>	WD	Y	S/PS	L	25-82'	Cream, green	Early spring	Y	N	Throng 70 moths, 7 b'flies	<i>All oaks, incl. tanoak, are excellent FPs. Collectively, CA's oaks feed at least 239 caterpillar spp. Oak canopies, cavities, bark crevices, and leaf litter provide exc. food, cover and foraging substrate for birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, insects, and spiders. Mistletoe and epiphytes on oaks also provide important food, cover and foraging sites.</i>
Oregon Oak	<i>Quercus garryana</i>	WD	Y	FS/PS	L	20-90'	Cream, green	Spring	Y	N	Throng 85 moths, 3 b'flies	
Fremont Cottonwood	<i>Populus fremontii</i>	WD	Y	FS	M-H	39-114'	White, cream	Winter, Spring	Y	N/A	Very Many 29 moths, 6 b'flies	Good foraging/nesting substrate for birds, esp. migrants. Bark for porcupines, beavers; twigs, buds for deer etc. Stabilizes soil. Leaves turn yellow in fall. Contains salicin.
Western Hemlock	<i>Tsuga heterophylla</i>	E	Y	?	L, M-H	40-175'	N/A	Spring	Y	N	Throng 65 moths, 3 b'flies	Cavities for cavity-nesting birds. Browse for deer and elk; stems for rabbits and hares; seeds for rodents; cover for many animals.
SMALLER TREES												
California Buckeye	<i>Aesculus californica</i>	SD-SSD	Y	PS/S	VL/L	12-60'	White Y	May-June	Y	Y	Some 7 moths, 1 b'fly	Nectar for 59 b'flies and myriad other native insects; toxic to honeybees, but OK if other nectar is plentiful or if tree is far from hives. Seeds for squirrels. Beautiful all year!
California Hazel	<i>Corylus cornuta californica</i>	WD	Y	FS,PS, SH	?	18'	Yellow, red	Winter/ Spring	Y	Y	Very Many 39 moths	Imp. winter-spring pollen for bees. Seeds, buds, catkins for birds (finches, jays, chickadees, grouse). Seeds & nuts for squirrels, chipmunks, especially when acorn crops fail.
Holly-leaf Cherry	<i>Prunus ilicifolia</i>	E	N	FS/PS	VL	15-20'	Cream, white	Winter-Spring	Y	Y	Many 23 moths, 5 b'flies	B'flies love early sticky fruits. Many birds and some mammals eat lovely red fruits. Beautiful flowers!
Madrone	<i>Arbutus menziesii</i>	E	Y	PS	L	15-50'	White, red	Mar-May	Y	Y	Very Many 47 moths, 2 b'flies	Pollen for bumblebees, nectar for hummingbirds. Flowers and fall berries for birds and mammals (including humans). Graceful, smooth reddish-orange limbs and bark.
Arroyo Willow	<i>Salix lasiolepis</i>	WD	Y	FS	M-H	7-35'	Cream, yellow	Winter-Spring	Y	Y	Very Many 27 moths, 3 b'flies	Nectar for bees, other insects. Extremely important source of insect protein. Vital cover for migrating birds. All native willows are good foodplants! (As are alders).

*To learn more about these plants, including the nurseries that carry them, go to www.calscape.org. The caterpillar numbers shown here have been taken from an unpublished manuscript, "California Plants for Lepidoptera," by Jeffrey Caldwell. To report observations or request Caldwell as a speaker: j.a.caldwell71@gmail.com. This chart was created by Kate Marianchild with help from Emily Allen, Marisela de Santa Anna, and other Sanhedrin CNPS members. To request Marianchild as a speaker, or to buy her book, *Secrets of the Oak Woodlands: Plants and Animals among California's Oaks*; close-focusing binoculars; or oak identification charts, go to www.katemarianchild.com.*

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LARGE SHRUBS												
Blood Currant	<i>Ribes sanguineum var glutinosum</i>	WD	Y	FS/PS	L/VL	13'	Pink, purple Y	Feb-April	Y	Y	Very Many 39 moths, 3 b'flies	Nectar for hummingbirds); winter pollen for BBs. Birds eat the fruit and seeds. Beautiful showy flowers! Does well under oaks. Other <i>Ribes</i> spp are also good hostplants.
Blue (Mexican) Elderberry	<i>Sambucus nigra ssp caerulea</i>	WD	Y	SH/PS/FS	L/VL	20-30'	Cream, yellow, purple	Mar-Sept	Y	?	Many 15 moths, 1 b'fly	Berries for at least 36 birds as well as woodrats, ringtails, foxes, squirrels, chipmunks. Nectar for hummingbirds, honeybees, native bees, and other insects. Valuable cover, foraging, perching, nesting sites.
California Scrub Oak	<i>Quercus berberidifolia</i>	E	Y	FS/PS	VL	3-10'	Cream, green	Winter-Spring	Winter-Spring	N	Very Many 28 moths, 1 b'fly	This small oak is a good option where space is limited. It supports a surprising number of moth and butterfly species for its size.
Common Manzanita	<i>Arctostaphylos manzanita</i>	E	Y	FS	VL/L	8-12'	White, pink	Jan-Mar	Y	Y	Many 17 moths	Pollen for bumblebees; nectar for hummingbirds and bees; berries for birds, bears, foxes, coyotes. Nesting substrate. All <i>Arctostaphylos</i> spp are good foodplants.
Coyote-bush	<i>Baccharis pilularis</i>	E	Y	FS	VL/L	4-7' (+)	Cream, white Y	October (Fall)	Y	Y	Very Many 29 moths	Important nectar in October (when nectar is scarce) for >200 beneficial insects, incl. many b'flies. Valuable cover for birds, small mammals. Fast-growing, deer-resistant. Exc. For erosion control. Attractive if pruned.
Creek Dogwood (aka Red-Twig)	<i>Cornus sericea</i>	WD	Y	SH, PS, FS	M-H	4-13'	White, purple, red	May-July	Y	?	Very Many 35 moths, 1 b'fly	Extremely important wildlife food. Feeds 47 bird species, plus deer, elk, beavers, rabbits... Glossy red fall fruits. Seeds feed bears, small mammals. Known as "ice cream tree."
Deerbrush	<i>Ceanothus integerrimus</i>	E	Y	FS/PS	VL	3-13'	White, blue, lavender (Y)	March-June	Y	Y	Very Many 39 moths, 6 b'flies	Nectar for b'flies, bees, other insects. Seeds for birds, small mammals. Browse for deer. Nesting substrate for birds, woodrats. Fragrant! All ceanothus spp are good foodplants.
Mountain Mahogany	<i>Cercocarpus betuloides</i>	E	Y	PS/FS	L/VL	8-15'	Yellow (Y)	March-May	?	Y	Many 23 moths; 2 b'flies	Host to large, beautiful, ceanothus silkmoth. Fixes nitrogen. Resprouts vigorously after fire. Excellent deer browse.
Ocean Spray	<i>Holodiscus discolor</i>	WD	Y	FS/PS	L, M-H	3-16'	White, green, Y	May-August	Y	Y	Thongs 62 moths, 5-6 b'flies	Nectar for bees, and 15 butterflies. Food and cover for deer and small mammals. Resprouts after fire. Flowers are edible for humans.
Saskatoon Service-berry	<i>Amelanchier alnifolia</i>	WD	Y (Willits)	FS/PS	L	15-35'	White Y	Mar-June	Y	Y	Thongs 57 moths 5 b'flies	Important wildlife plant. Pollen for bees. Bark, twigs, foliage, fruit for black bears, beavers, hares and other animals. Fruits and buds for birds and rodents.
Western Choke-cherry	<i>Prunus virginiana var demissa</i>	WD	Y	FS, PS, SH	VL	3-20'	White Y	May-June	Y	Y	Thongs 111 moths; 8 b'flies	Amazing FP! Excellent foraging substrate for insectivorous and frugivorous birds. Fruit also edible for humans, esp. in jam. Toxic to deer, sheep. Fragrant pendulous flowers.

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SMALL SHRUBS/LARGE PERENNIALS												
California Goldenrod	<i>Solidago velutina</i> spp <i>californica</i>	E	Y	FS, PS, SH	VL, L	1.5-5'	Yellow-gold	May-Nov	Y	Y	Many 20 moths, 2 b'flies	Nectar for 26 b'flies; also for bees, including BBs. Seeds for birds. Many healing properties. All native goldenrods are good for lepidoptera spp (moths and butterflies).
Common Snowberry	<i>Symphoricarpos alba</i> var <i>laevigatus</i>	WD	Y?	SH/PS	L	4-6'	Pink, red, white	May-July	Y	?	Very Many 33 moths, 1 b'fly	Nectar for hummingbirds. Cover and food for birds, including grouse, kingbirds, bluebirds, and small mammals, including squirrels. Browse for deer. Resprouts after fire.
Spreading Dogbane	<i>Apocynum androsaemifolium</i>	E	Y	FS, PS	?	?	Pink	May-October	?	Y	Some 7 moths	Nectar for at least 96 b'flies; also honeybees. FP for several day-flying moths. Nests for crab spiders; forage for forest-dwelling ground squirrels.
Narrowleaf Milkweed	<i>Asclepias fascicularis</i>	WD	Y	FS, PS	L	2-4'	Pink, white	Summer-Fall	N	Y	Few 1 moth, 1 b'fly	Milkweeds are the only FPs used by monarch b'flies. Narrow-leaf provides nectar for 48 b'flies, 3 moths, & bumblebees. Showy, woolly pod, and heartleaf m'weeds also native here.
Silver Lupine	<i>Lupinus albifrons</i>	E	Y	FS	VL	3-5'	Blue, purple	March-June	Y	Y	Some 8 moths, 4 b'flies	Nectar for hummingbirds, 8 b'flies, & several types of bees (bumble, mason, miner, and carpenter). Seeds for birds and small mammals. Fixes nitrogen.
Western Swordfern	<i>Polystichum munitum</i>	SD, E	Y	FS	L	6'	N/A	N/A	Y	N	Some 5 moths	Key FP for <i>Taylor's Thallophaga (moth)</i> . Foliage for elk, mountain beavers, & deer. Imp. habitat element for at least 16 bird spp.
SMALL PERENNIALS												
Bee Plant	<i>Scrophularia californica</i>	E	Y	PS	L?	4'	Red	Mar-July	Y	Y	Many 11 moths, 2 b'flies	Along w/other figworts, important FP for Variable Checkerspot b'fly. Nectar for hummingbirds, bees, and 1 small wasp.
Cobweb Thistle	<i>Cirsium occidentale</i>	E	Y	Various	?	2-10'	Red, purple, pink, white	Feb-Sept	Y	Y	Some 6 moths, 2 b'flies	Nectar for butterflies, bees, beetles, & many other native pollinators, as well as hummingbirds. Birds eat the seeds (esp goldfinches) and use the fluffy chaff in their nests.
Coyote Mint	<i>Monardella villosa</i>	E	Y	FS/PS	VL	1-2'	Purple	May-Aug	Y	Y	Some 8 moths	Nectar for 39 b'flies, 2 moths (including Snowberry Clearwing), and many bumblebees.
Pacific Hound's Tongue	<i>Cynoglossum grande</i>	D	Y	FS/PS	VL, L	1-3'	Blue, purple	Feb-May	Y	Y	Few 4 moths	Foodplant for Hound's Tongue Woolly Bear, a striking black-and-white day-flying tiger moth. Nectar for 7 b'flies and native bees, including BBs; also for HB's & Large Bee Fly. Also known as Western Hound's Tongue. Showy in bloom!
Pearly Everlasting	<i>Anaphylis margaritacea</i>	Stress-deciduous	Y?	S/PS	L	4'	Yellow, white	July-October	?	Y	Many 9 moths, 2 b'flies	Foodplant for Painted Lady, Common Buckeye. Nectar for 47 b'flies, 3 moths, and numerous other insects.
Sulphur Buckwheat	<i>Eriogonum umbellatum</i>	E	Y	FS	VL	.5-5'	Yellow	June-Sept	Y	Y!	Many 12 moths	Nectar for 60 (+) butterflies. Birds eat the leaves, flowers, and seeds. All buckweats are excellent plants for lepidoptera.
Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	E	Y	FS/PS/FS	L	1-3'	White	Apr-Sept	N	Y	Many 15 moths, 2 b'flies	Nectar for 91 b'flies, 8 moths, and many other insects.

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GRASSES-LIKE SPECIES, GROUNDCOVERS, VINES

American Bird's-foot Trefoil	<i>Acmispon americanus</i>	WD	Y	S	L/M-H	H: 1' W: 1'	Pink, white	May-Sept	Y	Y	Some 6 b'flies	"The most useful summer annual in our grasslands" for butterflies. (Art Shapiro)
Beach Strawberry	<i>Fragaria chiloensis</i>	E	N	FS, PS	VL, L	1'	White, red	Feb-Nov	Y	Y	Many 19 moths	Nectar for butterflies. Berries for birds and woodrats. Nectar and pollen for bees. Excellent for erosion control. Deer and gopher resistant. Possible lawn replacement.
California oatgrass	<i>Danthonia californica</i>	E	Y	S/PS	L/M	H: 1' W: .5-2'	Brown	Spring	Y	N	Few 3-4 b'flies	<i>Native bunchgrasses (BGs) provide seeds, nest material, and cover for songbirds and small mammals, and browse for deer. Some species send roots down as far as 20'. Their deep roots enable them to anchor soil, survive drought, fire, and grazing, and avoid competing for groundwater with more shallowly rooted plants. When there is sod-free space between BGs, a diverse array of plants can establish themselves. Before the arrival of invasive, sod-forming annual grasses from Europe, BGs dominated CA's grasslands and supported numerous and often endemic animal species.</i>
Purple Needle-grass	<i>Stipa pulchra</i>	E	Y	FS	VL, L	3'	Cream	Spring	Y	N	Few 1 moth	
Spike Bentgrass	<i>Agrostis exarata</i>	E?	Y	FS		1-3.3'	Yellow	June-August	Y	N	Some 3 b'flies, 2 moths	

NON-NATIVE FOODPLANTS THAT HOST SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS OF CATERPILLARS

Cork Oak, Apple(!), Plum (!), Common Pear (!), Pecan, American Linden, American Elm, Western Red Cedar, cherries, maples (red, sugar, silver), birches (esp Paper Birch!), willows, ashes, walnuts, viburnums; onions, celery, tomato, potato, eggplant, pea (*Pisum sativum*), kidney bean, radish, grapes, corn; Queen Anne's Lace, Common Lilac, Mexican Evening Primrose, clovers (red, white), Common Hollyhock, and more.

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