

UC Santa Barbara

Educational Materials

Title

Ethnobotanical Walking Tour: University of California, Santa Barbara

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Author

Cheadle Center for Biodiversity and Ecological Restoration

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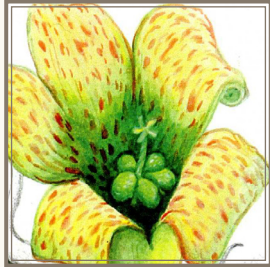
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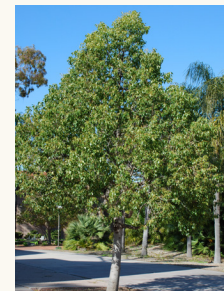
ETHNOBOTANICAL WALK



The University of California, Santa Barbara is an institution that prides itself on diversity. This commitment extends to the ornamental horticulture found throughout the campus. UCSB is home to several interesting palm species. This tour provides an opportunity to see eleven palms that provide a distinct landscape on the UCSB campus.

This tour starts at Snidecor Hall and continues around the south western end of the main campus. It concludes at the Student Resource Building. Each plant has a corresponding numbered point and picture.

1. **HORSETAIL** • *Equisetum arvense*. Dating back to the Devonian period (375 mya), this ancient plant is rich in silicon, potassium and calcium, giving it diuretic properties. It can also be used for the treatment of conjunctive tissues or kidney and bladder problems. The silica content also makes it useful as an abrasive agent for polishing and cleaning. The Chumash tribe used it as a polish for wooden bowls and arrows. The Blackfoot tribe used the crushed stems as a pink dye for porcupine quills while the Japanese eat the buds as a spring vegetable.



2. **MAIDENHAIR** • *Ginkgo biloba*. This 'living fossil' has been preserved throughout the centuries for its ethnobotanical uses. It can be used for Bonsai and the leaf is a symbol for the Japanese tea ceremony. Nut-like gametophytes are eaten as a snack and are often in a common Asian porridge called congee. Health benefits have not been proven but are used for memory enhancement, improved blood flow and protection from free radicals.

3. **COAST LIVE OAK** • *Quercus agrifolia*. This tree was an important species for California native peoples. The acorn mush of the coast live oak was the preferred edible species despite the long leaching period required for removing the bitter tannins. The dried, unleached acorns contain 4.4% protein, 20.4% fat and 52.7% carbs. The wood was used for firewood, made into bowls and jars and the inner bark was used for dyeing hides. Different parts of the plant were used as an astringent and to treat pustules and hemorrhoids.

4. **WHITE ALDER** • *Alnus Rhombifolia*. As a California native tree, the Chumash, Costanoan, Karok and other Californian tribes harvested many resources from this species. The wood was used as a preservative to smoke salmon, eels and deer meat. It was also useful for making wood bowls, trays and spoons. The bark was used as a dye that could become bright orange if the bark was chewed and set with the help of enzymes in the saliva.

5. **KURRAJONG** • *Brachychiton populneum*. The 'kurrajong' fiber from the bark of this tree was used by aboriginal people for making nets, fishing lines and rope. Since the wood is soft and spongy, the bark is also useful for making shields. The tuberous roots have a sweetish taste and the roasted seeds can be eaten plain or made into cakes. The Dharawal people told their children the Watun Goori legend about scary hairy men who lived inside the trees that may escape and come after them if they did not behave.

6. **ENGLISH YEW** • *Taxus baccata*. Before the Common Era, this plant was used as a poison for those who would rather die than surrender to their enemies. In 1021, it was coined "Zarnab" and was used as a cardiac remedy. From the late 1300's to the Mid-1500's in Europe, demand for yew for the production of bows heightened to such an extent that deforestation became a major problem. Today, extracts from the plant are used in ovarian cancer treatments.

7. **DRAGON'S BLOOD** • *Dracena draco*. This tree is famous for producing "Dragon's Blood," the dark red sap that was used in alchemy for protection and empowerment. It is also documented as being used for medicinal purposes, painting and jewelry crafts in medieval Europe. Today, the resin can be used for stain and wood polish and producing incense that is burned for love, strength and courage.

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8. **DEVIL'S HAND** • *Chiranthodendron pentadactylon*.

The Aztecs regarded this tree with so much awe and wonder that an individual tree became the focus of a religious cult. During the Spanish Conquest, the tree was cultivated in the gardens of royalty. Today, the dried flowers, called “flor de manita” in Mexico, are mixed with other plant material to make a tea that is said to alleviate irregular blood pressure and heart ailments. The flavonoides and other active ingredients may also contribute to treatment for smooth muscle tension.

9. **BUNYA-BUNYA** • *Araucaria bidwillii*. Since this tree was sacred to the Aboriginal people of Australia, the “Bunya season” promoted a peaceful gathering of rival tribes for a great feast of the bunya nuts, a chestnut-flavored delicacy.

The germinating seed also produces underground tissue that has a coconut-like flavor. The wood is resinous and straight grained so it has become an important source of timber.

10. **CHUMASH GARDEN** • This garden was started in 2007 as a demonstration garden of the ethnobotanical uses of native plants by the local Chumash tribe who once thrived in the Santa Barbara area. Please read the interpretive signs for interesting facts.



AN OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

Dr. Vernon Cheadle, Chancellor of UCSB from 1962 until 1977, recognized the special opportunity and favorable circumstances of this botanically rich and unique environment. He had a vision of developing the campus into an outdoor classroom, which would not only serve as an educational tool but would also create an environment of great beauty. Art, Biology, Environmental Studies, Geography, and Geology classes make use of the unique and beautiful plants in UCSB’s landscape.

We hope you will enjoy this tour.

Visit our Campus Flora Project Interactive Map
<http://earth.geog.ucsb.edu/CampusFlora>



Cheadle Center for Biodiversity
& Ecological Restoration
Dept. of Ecology, Evolution
and Marine Biology
University of California
Santa Barbara, CA 93106-9615
Phone 805.893.4211
Fax 805.893.4222
<http://ccber.lifesci.ucsb.edu/>

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Campus Flora Committee
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