

Some Native Plants

Including:
Northern (N)
Central (C)
& Southern (S)

Sierra
Miwok
Names



Notes

“To survive off the land required
hard work and much patience.”

-Brown Tadd

Me-wuk Language Alphabet

Vowels

Example

a	father
e	led
i	spaghetti
o	cone
u	due
ü	mud

Consonants

ch	chip
h	hat
k	kit

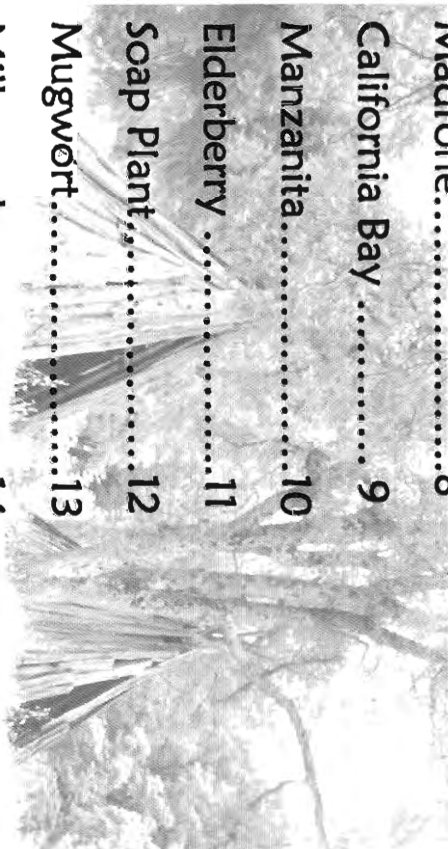
Special Symbols

l	long	'	glottal stop as in uh-oh
m	man		
n	not	:	hold the sound longer, this applies to both consonants and vowels
ng	sing		

p	pin
s	sit
sh	ship
t	top
t̚	talk (back t)
w	win
y	yes

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Tele:li

[N^(NSM), C^(CSM), S^(SSM)]

Black Oak

Quercus Kelloggii

Ø Acorns were a staple food for the Sierra Miwok (Mewuk) people.

Ø A tree must be at least 30 years old before it will start to produce acorns; the older the tree, the more acorn produced.

Ø Acorns require various stages of preparation before they can be consumed. After preparing, acorns can be made into soups and breads.



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“Those who are unfamiliar with these plants are warned
against picking and ingesting them without the guidance
of a knowledgeable...native plant specialist. Some plants
are toxic without proper preparation or have look-a-likes
that are poisonous!” (FG)

Sources and Recommended Reading

B&C

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FG

Field Guide to Plants Important to the Central Sierra Me-Wuk Indians: With Traditional Uses. Compiled by Helen McCarthy, PhD, The California Department of Transportation.

CSM

L.S. Freeland, and Sylvia M. Broadbent. *Central Sierra Miwok Dictionary With Texts*. University of California Press Berkeley And Los Angeles. 1906.

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Tadd, Brown. *Miwok: On Miwok's View of Native Food Preparations and the Medicinal Uses of Plants*. Three Forests Interpretive Association. 1988.

* Descriptions of plants come from *The Field Guide to Plants* (FG).



Sak:u

[N^(NSM), C^(CSM), S^(SSM)]
California Gray Pine

Pinus sabiniana

Ø Large edible seeds. Also used for jewelry.

Ø Twigs and rootlets used as sewing materials for coiled baskets.





Sang:akü

[N^(NSM), C^(CSM)]

Sang:ak [S^(SSM)]

Sugar Pine

Pinus lambertiana

Ø Nuts can be eaten whole or pounded into butter.
 Ø Sap can be used as candy or chewing gum.
 Be careful though, in large quantities it is a laxative.



So'so or Hiw:ü [N^(B&G,NSM)]

Lima: or Sakal:ü [C^(B&G,CSM)]

Sakahi [S^(CHM)]

Gray Willow

Salix exigua

Ø Thick and heavy shoots are used for burden baskets.
 Ø Fine shoots are used for finer baskets.
 Ø Tea from the bark of the Willow can be used for aches and fevers. Willow bark contains a natural pain reliever.





Chu'lpü [N^(B&G)] Sulpanü [C^(B&G)]

Hu:lup or Hu:lum [S^(B&G,SSM)]

Deer Grass

Muhlenbergia rigens

Ø Perennial bunchgrass is utilized by at least twenty California tribes for its flower stalks in making baskets.

Ø The stems are used as the foundation for coiled baskets.



Mo:noku' [N^(NSM)] Cha'pa:ha or Mo'nogu [C^(CSM & CHM)]

Mo:nok [S^(SSM)]

Incense Cedar

Calocedrus decurrens

Ø Bark is used as siding for 'umu:cha.

Ø Finely—pounded Bark can be used for starting fires.

Ø Large boughs are used for the leeching process of preparing acorns.

Ø Bow-makers used straight, close grained, not free staves from high branches to make bows.





Yaw'le:le:pa' [N^(CHM)]

Lo:to [C^(CHM)]

Madrone

Arbutus menziesii

- Ø Berries can be used to make cider. They can also be used to make necklaces and as a bait for fishing.
- Ø The bark can be made into a tea to treat stomachaches, cramps, skin ailments and sore throats.



Su'lay [N^(B&G)]

Suli or Su'lay [C^(CHM, B&G)]

Pe:wisa or Pa'iwa [S^(SSM, B&G)]

Sedge

Cyperaceae (Sedge Family)

- Ø Sedge is also known as "white root".
- Ø The roots are split and used as the sewing element in coiled basketry.





Soso:loyu' [N^(NSM)]

Sosoliyu [C^(CHM)]

Hoho:loy [S^(SSM)]

Stinging Nettle

Urtica dioica

- Ø Nettle can be used to treat rheumatism. The root is steeped in hot water and the afflicted joint or painful area is bathed in it.
- Ø Alternatively the powered leaves can be rubbed on the sore area.



Lakola or Lakalak [N^(CHM)]

Lo:ko [C^(B&G)]

Lokoti [S^(CHM)]

California Bay

Umbellularia californica

- Ø Leaves are steeped and the steam is inhaled to treat congestion and respiratory illness.
- Ø Leaves can be crushed and rubbed on the skin to repel mosquitos and other insects.
- Ø Leaves are used as seasoning.
- Ø Nuts can be roasted and eaten.





Muk:a:su' [N_(CHM)]

Mok:oshu [C_(CSM)]

Muk:o or 'E:ye [S_(CHM)]

'E:ye [N & S_(NSM, SSM)]-Berries

Manzanita

Arctostaphylos

Ø Cider can be made from berries.

Ø The cider can be used as a wash for poison oak.

Ø The leaves can be chewed to relieve stomach aches.



Tabatabü or Lu:li' [N_(CHM, B&G)]

Tapa:tapü [C_(B&G)]

Täpa:tapa [S_(CHM, B&G)]

Redbud

Cercis occidentalis

Ø Redbud shoots are used in basketry making.

Ø Shoots collected in the spring are used for the white element of the basket due to the fact that the bark is easily peeled off.

Ø Shoots collected in the fall with the bark left intact are used for the red design element of the basket.





Po'po (Broad) **Su:ken:a** (Narrow) [N (CHM)]

Su:kanu (Broad) **Is:owa** (Narrow) [C (CHM)]

Su:kanu (Broad) **Huken** (Narrow) [S (CHM)]

Milkweed: Narrow and Broad Leaf

Asclepias fascicularis/speciosa

Ø Stalks are used to make cordage.

Ø The sap can be applied to warts and other skin problems.

Ø It is the main food source for the Monarch butterfly caterpillar.



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'Angtay:u [C, N (CHM, NSM)]

Angtay or Kaw:ach [S (CHM)]

Elderberry

Sambucus nigra

Ø Fresh leaves can be used as poultice (pastes made of mashed leaves) to reduce swelling from bee stings.

Ø Ripe berries can be eaten fresh.
Ø Stems are used to make musical instruments.



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Sop:a or Sa:ka:'ne [N^(NSM, CHM)]

Pala:wi or Sa:ka:'ne [C^(B&G, CSM)]

Pala:wi or Saka:ni [S^(CHM)]

Soap Plant

Chlorogalum pomeridianum

Ø Mashed bulbs can be used as soap, adhesive and spread into quiet water to stupefy fish— making them easy to catch.

Ø Fibers surrounding the bulbs are used to make brushes.



Kichi:ng:ü or Kitching'a [N^(CHM)]

Kitch:ingü or Kachino [C^(CHM, FG)]

Kitche or Ke'ching [S^(CHM)]

Mugwort/Wormwood

Artemisa douglasiana

Ø Sacred plant to the Sierra Mewuk people. It is used for ceremonies and other purposes.

Ø Fresh juice from plant is said to relieve itching from poison oak.

Ø Leaves are made into a tea that reduce swelling in any part of the body.

