

A Gardener's Guide to RARE PLANTS



*Information on rare plant conservation
at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden*

California is an important place for plant conservation

California is globally significant for plant diversity. In fact, much of the state has been designated as a biodiversity hotspot which means that, compared to other parts of the world, it is considered very diverse in plant life. Did you know that nearly 40% of the plant species in California are endemic to the state, which means they occur here and nowhere else in the world? And with more than 6,000 kinds of native plants, California has the richest flora of any state in the United States. Unfortunately, more than 1600 plant species are considered rare or endangered in California; these plants require special attention if we are to share them with future generations. As the largest botanic garden dedicated to California native plants we have important roles in helping to protect the diverse plant life in our region. Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden (RSABG) has had a long and successful history working to conserve and restore native plant diversity. To learn more about what Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden is doing to conserve California's native plants, visit www.rsabg.org/conservation.

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Why is plant conservation important?

There are many factors contributing to the endangerment of plant species. In California, urbanization, agriculture, mineral extraction, and global climate change all play significant roles. One of our goals at RSABG is to conserve plants in their native habitats for future generations. Our lives are dependent and highly connected with plants: they provide clean air, food, medicine, clothing, shelter, and clean water, not to mention the beauty we enjoy in gardens and wildlands.

In California there are 22 plant species thought to be extinct in the wild. The loss of even a single species is a lost opportunity to understand all the ways in which we can benefit from plants.

What can gardeners do to help conserve rare plants in California?

There are many ways that you can help! At RSABG we are working to conserve native plant diversity in California, but we need the help and collaboration of the public and gardeners like you. Below are some ways that you can help conserve California plants and habitats.

- 1. Avoid growing invasive non-native plant species** that may escape into the wild and crowd out vulnerable native plants. The California Invasive Plant Council has more information on plants that can be problematic in your area. Visit the "Don't Plant a Pest" website: www.cal-ipc.org/landscaping/dpp. Also visit our Grow Native Nursery (GNN) to find beautiful native plant alternatives for your garden.
- 2. You can help inform others** about the importance of saving our native flora. Many citizens and leaders do not realize the great value of our native plants and relatively few dollars are allocated to fund native plant conservation. Decision-makers need to know you care about preserving our native plants.
- 3. In your own garden, you can be a care-taker and ambassador** for California native plants by growing them and telling others about them. Each rare plant has its own interesting story. To learn more about the plants you are growing, come visit Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden.
- 4. We can learn from you too!** Make observations in your garden and share them with us. Information on pollinators (flower visitors), seed production, and germination of seedlings is helpful in understanding the requirements needed to conserve rare species. Please send your observations to conservation@rsabg.org.
- 5. Please do not collect seeds, roots, or cuttings from rare plants in the wild.** It is illegal to collect rare and endangered plants on public land, and casual collecting can dramatically harm plants that are already at risk! Over-collection of lemon lily (*Lilium parryi*) and many cactus species by enthusiasts has been a major cause of population decline.
- 6. Be an informed consumer.** Please do not buy plants or seed from nurseries that sell plants that are collected directly from the wild.
- 7. Volunteers are critical to advancing our mission** at the Garden. There are many opportunities to volunteer at

RSABG. Specific opportunities in our conservation program include working in our Conservation Seed Bank, and caring for plants in the nursery and living collection. For more information on volunteer opportunities, please visit www.rsabg.org and click on the volunteer link.

8. Support the Garden and its conservation program. The Garden's conservation program has had a long and successful history advancing conservation of California's native plants through research, education, restoration, and collections. Please make a donation that will help us continue our work. Public support is always needed for long term success! You can make a secure donation online at www.rsabg.org/give.

Where do the rare plants for sale at GNN come from?

The rare plants and seeds we have for sale are suitable for gardeners to cultivate ornamentally because they were propagated from plants growing in gardens or nurseries; these are not plants collected from the wild. Many of these plants have been in cultivation for years and their ornamental use predates their endangerment status. Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden is permitted by agencies to have these plants available for commercial sale.

No longer in the wild but living in our gardens

Did you know that some plants in our gardens are so rare that they are extinct or nearly so in the wild? Having saved these rarities in gardens gives us a chance to learn about what we have lost.

San Francisco manzanita (*Arctostaphylos franciscana*) has been in cultivation since the late 1930s. It was thought to be extinct for nearly 70 years before one individual was rediscovered in San Francisco in 2009. Much



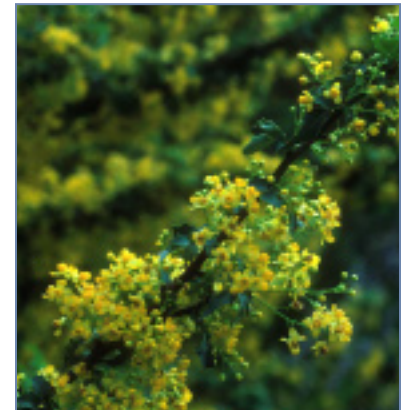
of our knowledge about this plant comes from years of cultivation in botanic gardens.



Catalina Island mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus traskiae*) is restricted to Catalina Island and is known to occur naturally in only one canyon. It is considered to be one of the rarest trees in North America with fewer than ten individuals known. This species was highly impacted by introduced herbivores

to the island such as goats, pigs, bison, and deer. Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden is a steward of this plant and maintains mature plants of several individuals.

Nevin's barberry (*Berberis nevinii*) is a large and long-lived (more than 50 years) evergreen shrub native to southern California. It was introduced into horticulture as an ornamental plant around 1920 because of its striking appearance in full bloom and in fruit. This species produces canary yellow blossoms in early spring and bright red berries that mature in the summer. *Berberis nevinii* has been impacted by loss of habitat from development and also has problems reproducing by seed in the wild. In addition to living plants on the grounds, the Garden maintains several conservation seed collections in our Conservation Seed Bank to safeguard this species against extinction.



Grow Native Nursery Claremont

1500 North College Avenue, Claremont, CA 91711
(909) 625-8767 ext 404 | gnnclaremont@rsabg.org

Open Wednesday - Sunday, November - May. Hours vary.

www.rsabg.org/grow-native-nursery

Grow Native Nursery in the Veterans Garden

100 Davis Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90049
(424) 234-0481 | gnnwestla@rsabg.org

Open Wednesday - Sunday year-round. Hours vary.

Grow Native Nursery is a not-for-profit nursery helping to support the conservation work of Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden. Grow Native Nursery in the Veterans Garden works with the VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System to maximize veterans' opportunities in the sustainable horticulture industry.