

MANZANITA



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This Year in the Garden *by Rosie Andrews*

Bart O'Brien

Bart O'Brien



Jeanne Panek

In August, the new crevice garden begins to take shape. Mojave milkweed (*Asclepias nyctaginifolia*), a new collection. John Helms introducing soap plant during the Garden's Indian Uses of Native Plants Tour.

In previous years, we've raised funds for the *Friends* through a single "tis the season" Annual Donation Letter appeal to our members, but this year we've chosen instead to devote this entire issue of *Manzanita* to articles about some of the many projects and activities receiving our support. We hope you

are inspired by reading about this year in the garden! Please consider using the envelope inserted to make a donation to the *Friends*, so we can continue to support the work of this beautiful place, and provide educational programs to the public, in the year ahead.

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MEMBERSHIP

Your membership in the *Friends* of the Regional Parks Botanic Garden supports the important work of the garden in educational programs, conservation, and horticultural experimentation. Funds raised by the *Friends* help provide long-term financial security for the garden as well as new facilities and programs.

GENERAL

Individual \$50 Limited Income/Student \$30 Family/Dual \$75

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP PLUS (Includes subscription to *The Four Seasons*)

Individual Plus \$75 Limited Income/Student Plus \$55 Family Plus \$100

SPECIAL GARDEN FRIEND (Includes subscription to *The Four Seasons*)

California Poppy \$125

Buckwheat \$250

Ceanothus \$500

Manzanita \$1000

Members receive *Manzanita*, a quarterly publication of the *Friends*, as well as discounts on classes and field trips offered by the *Friends* and early admission to the garden's plant sales. *Friends* members gain free admission to participating gardens through the American Horticultural Society's Reciprocal Admissions Program. Contact the individual garden to verify this benefit.

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GIFTS AND ENDOWMENTS

Donations to the *Friends* are welcome and may be designated for special projects or given in honor or in memory of someone. Contributions to the Regional Parks Botanic Garden Endowment Fund assist in providing financial security for the garden. Please make all checks payable to the Regional Parks Foundation; note whether for *Friends* membership, gift, or Endowment Fund; and send to: *Friends* of the Regional Parks

Botanic Garden

P.O. Box 7551

Berkeley, CA 94707

Friends volunteers develop and oversee many of the garden's educational offerings and its website, produce the *Manzanita* and much more! New volunteers are always welcome.

For information about the *Friends*, membership, and becoming a garden volunteer or docent, contact info@nativeplants.org, visit www.nativeplants.org, or call 510-544-3169

Urban Kids in the Botanic Garden—The California Native People and Plants Program

Jeanne Panek, Renee Cohen, Rosalie Gonzales, John Helms, Ingrid Madsen, and Rosalinde Westil

It's a simple concept. Everyone should have access to nature. And that breathtaking moment when the human heart is touched by something greater than itself is so universal, so inspiring. It should be there for all people—gigantic redwood trees, hillslopes carpeted in brilliant orange California poppies, the vast darkness of the night sky. These can make our

most popular offering, as it supports the 3rd and 4th grade curriculum content of Science (environmental dependencies) and Social Studies (California Indian heritage). Any afternoon during the week you might see a 10-year-old's eyes widen in surprise as she lathers her hands with soap plant. Or a boy reaching eagerly for the stone pestle to grind acorns. Or hear the squeal of excitement when the sticks from the staves game fall in a young team's favor.

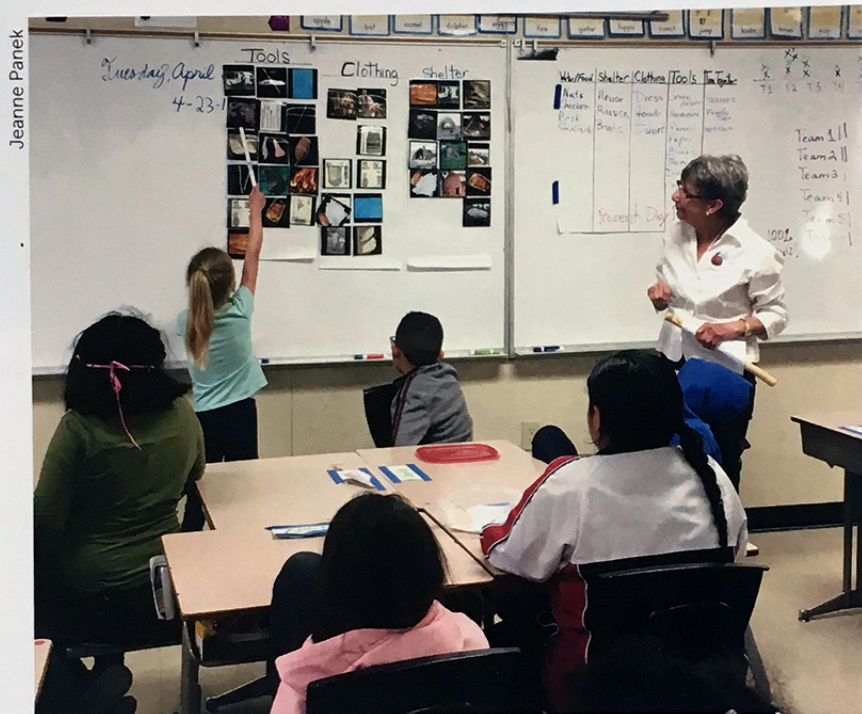
While classrooms from the more affluent school districts in the East Bay have been frequent visitors for many years, the cost of bus travel has long kept many low-income schools from participating. A group of Botanic Garden docents recognized the imbalance, and in 2016, we began to brainstorm ways to address the problem.

The California Native People and Plants Program

Six docents, including an elementary school teacher, a UC Berkeley professor, a research ecologist, and the lead docents of the Indian Uses tour, designed the California Native People and Plants (CNPP) program, in order to bring low-income elementary schools to the garden for the popular Indian Uses tour entirely for free (including bus fare), to gain the educational benefits of the tour, as well as the health benefits of spending time in nature.

Program content

In addition to funding bus transportation, we developed and teach a 50-minute interactive classroom unit to prepare students for their garden visit. Students learn how California's diverse climate and landscape have created a variety of plant life that California Indians used, and continue to use, for everyday living. When students arrive at the garden, they already understand that, in a single tour, they will traverse all the California climates. They've already played a game using sun, heat, snow, rain, fog, and drought stickers to build climates on a California map. They already know that California native people in the past had the same needs as they do—food, water, clothing, tools, shelter, time together—and had to meet those needs with the plants growing around them. They recognize manzanita, acorns, and agave from a classroom activity that matched picture cards of native



Student presents tools made with native plants.

hearts sing no matter who we are. It may be a basic concept, but in practice it can be difficult to achieve. Access to nature for kids in an urban landscape is particularly challenging. But when we see that aha! moment lighting up a young face, no one can doubt the challenge has been worth it.

The Regional Parks Botanic Garden is a gem nestled in a quiet valley amid the Bay Area's urban concrete, in the country's fifth largest megalopolis. The challenge of keeping the Botanic Garden available to everyone is taken very seriously. Garden entry is free. Docent-led tours are free. The Garden's Indian Uses of Native Plants Tour is its

CNPP IMPACT 2016–2019

9 Schools
15 Classrooms
412 Students
92 Chaperones

plants with their everyday uses. Together, the classroom unit and the subsequent tour create an important synergy.

The CNPP docents continue to fine-tune the program. We attend local presentations about native California peoples, participate in similar tours at neighboring botanic gardens and parks, and actively invite local experts to visit, offer feedback, and provide guidance to our program.

Health benefits from time in nature

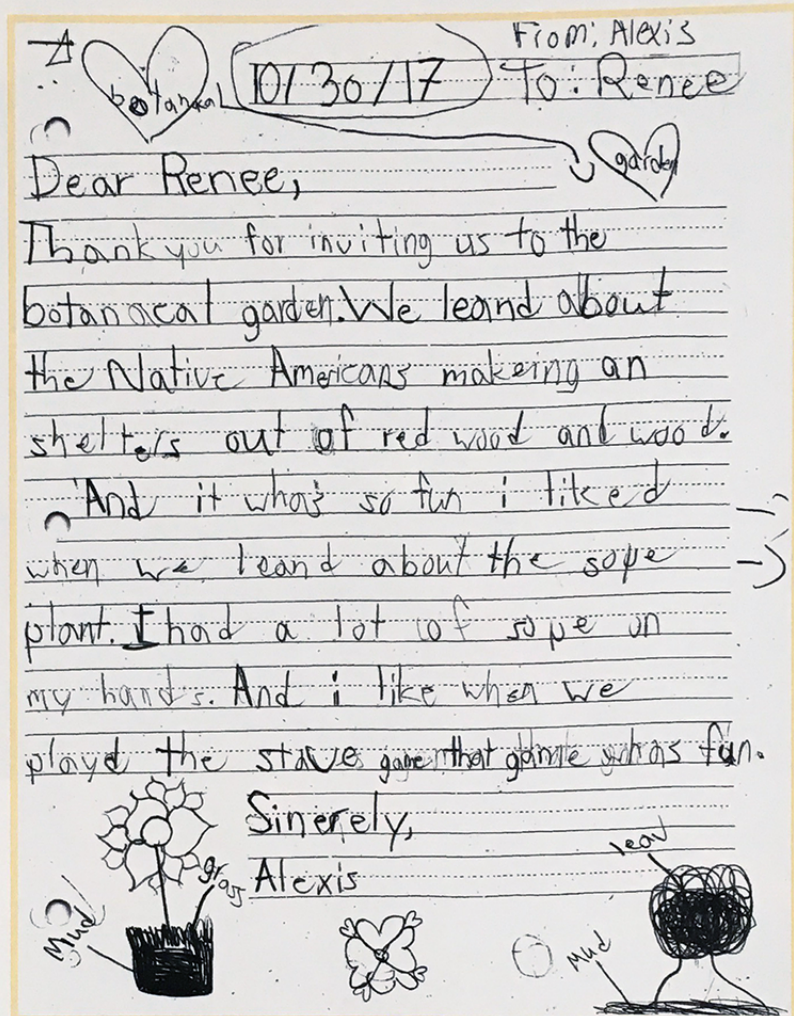
A primary CNPP program goal is to expose kids to nature, particularly children that are cut off from the natural outdoors because of urban housing conditions, traffic congestion, and lack of neighborhood parks. When kids lose contact with nature they lose out on important, healthy development. Given various names: *Vitamin N* by Richard Louv, *The Nature Fix* by Florence Williams, and forest bathing, it is clear that time in the natural outdoors enhances awareness and attention span, invigorates physical activity, improves brain function, increases immunity, and decreases stress. "Nature-deficit disorder" steals these benefits from today's youth, as well as undermining ecological literacy and stewardship. Our CNPP program recognizes the lack of access to nature as a social justice and health issue.

Qualifying classrooms from Alameda and Contra Costa Counties are invited to apply for the garden's California Native People and Plants program. For more information, contact the Regional Parks Botanic Garden: bgarden@ebparks.org, (510) 544-3169.

Thanks to our sponsors

The initial pilot program in 2016–17 was made possible with generous funding from the *Friends* of the Botanic Garden. A grant from The Barrios Trust allowed the CNPP program to double participation for the 2017–18 year. Both the *Friends* and The Barrios Trust continue to be important funders and the program is steadily growing. The unwavering support of the Botanic Garden's director has been invaluable in the success of the program. 🌱

The authors are all Botanic Garden docents, enthusiastic about utilizing the Garden's marvelous collection of California native plants in order to help young people at our local schools appreciate the connection of native plants to native cultures.



Jeanne Panek

Students learn mortar and pestle technique for grinding acorns.