

May 2006 Newsletter

Why We Call Them Quercus

All oak trees, everywhere in the world, belong to the genus called *Quercus*. This is the Latin name that is used for oaks. It comes from two Celtic words, which combine to make one: *Quer*, meaning fine and *cuez*, meaning tree.

There are 9 varieties of California native oak trees, but in the San Fernando Valley, the two you will see are the coast live oak and the valley oak, sometimes called the white oak. The big difference between them is that the valley oak, *Quercus lobata*, has larger leaves and is deciduous, meaning that it drops its leaves in the winter. The coast live oak, *Quercus agrifolia*, has smaller, more prickly leaves and stays green all year.

If you are among the fortunate ones who have an oak on your property, you should know that a qualified professional should prune your oak. Check for arborist certification, continuing education and experience. Companies providing tree work in California are required to hold one of three licenses: C-27, C-61 or D-49. Also check for liability insurance. Pruning practices of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) should be followed. Demand that topping NOT be performed. Topping can make trees unsafe. California Code 5.3067 discourages tree topping.

Newly planted oaks may be watered weekly through the dry season until established (about 2 years). Deep soaking will encourage a deep root system.

Oaks in their natural habitat receive rain only during the wet season, usually October through May. It's best to follow this natural cycle with existing oaks in the landscape. Summer water may promote disease in your oak trees, so don't water during the summer unless your arborist recommends it. Sprinklers should NEVER spray the trunks of oaks. Use drip irrigation with spot emitters to water any plantings near your oak trees.

Oak trees growing under natural conditions are very healthy trees. But oaks in gardens are often put under stresses that make them more vulnerable to diseases and pests. The fungal diseases caused by *Phytophthora* and *Armillaria* are the

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SSMPA General Meeting Monday, May 15, 2006

"What would our lives be like if earth's wild and beautiful creatures were not a part of it?"

Alan Pollack

Alan Pollack, M.D., of Wildlife Care of Ventura County, will present a slide show and talk about creating backyard wildlife habitat and sustainable gardening practices.

Alan has been a long-time member of the Sierra Club and the Nature Conservancy. After retiring from the practice of psychiatry, his interest in woodworking led to volunteer work with Habitat for Humanity for several years. For the past 8 years, he has been a volunteer with Wildlife Care of Ventura County, a non-profit all-volunteer organization whose mission is to rescue, rehabilitate and release injured and orphaned wild animals, primarily birds and small mammals. It was through them that he learned about the training given by the National Wildlife Federation to become a Backyard Wildlife Steward. Having been a life-long gardener, he was delighted to be able to wed two of his passions: the love of gardening and the love of wildlife. His yard immediately qualified as a wildlife habitat site and for the past 2 years he has given free consultations and landscape designs to homeowners, churches and schools who wish to create a garden that is attractive to wildlife as well as to humans. More recently, he has been giving presentations to various groups who are interested in the goal of preserving and restoring wildlife habitat.

SSMPA General Membership Program... meetings take place every 3rd Monday September through November and January through May at the Rockpointe Clubhouse, 22300 Devonshire, Chatsworth, on the south side, 1 block before entering Chatsworth Park South. Our program meetings begin at 7:15 p.m. and conclude at 9:00 p.m.

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most common cause of oak tree death. Raising the soil level near the root crown at the base of the tree, and summer watering, will definitely trigger these fungal diseases. Most insect damage is not fatal to oaks, unless there is already stress caused by too much water, root compaction, poor pruning or other problems.

Avoid construction under and around oak trees. Oak tree roots provide the oxygen your tree needs to grow. Extensive root damage may mean losing your tree. Protect the root zone during construction by erecting a temporary fence outside the drip line of your oak. Trenching and excavating should be done by hand. Don't build planters, mound soil, or install tightly crowded stonework or paving under the drip line of your oak tree. The grade or soil level of the existing soil around an oak tree should not be changed at any time.

Oaks in a garden setting do best with little or no planting directly under the canopy. If you do wish to plant near your tree, use these guidelines: Choose plants with similar water requirements as your oaks (little or not summer water). Don't plant any closer than 10' from the trunk of your oak. Avoid groundcovers like ivy, vinca, lawn, or others, which develop thick root mats. If you do plant under your oak, use plants as accents.

Best of all, fallen oak leaves become a natural mulch containing a microorganism that is needed by the tree. So put away your rake and let oak leaves lie where they fall!

Q: "Lately I've been seeing small caterpillar type bugs at lizard's mouths that glow at night. They are about an inch long and they make a bright LED type green glow from their backmost segment. Does anyone know what these insects are?"

A: As shown at BugGuide.Net, they are female *Microphotus angustus* (Pink Glowworms, though they glow green). Fairly common in California in late May and early June & July, the female never metamorphosizes into an adult beetle. The male becomes an adult beetle and glows only very faintly. The female has just 10 days in which to attract a male.



Public Hearing Required for Solid Waste Disposal Application

Citizens and voters want to know exactly what has been occurring at the property adjacent to Sage Ranch Park. Answers are hard to come by. Many nearby residents have complained about the daily parade of many covered trucks (for several years) going up Woolsey Canyon Road to privately owned property and dumping their contents. Concerns revolve around the unknown material being deposited there, on the slopes and in the canyon. Nearby neighbors want to know: Is the material hazardous? Is the dump operating in compliance with applicable laws and regulations? Calls have been made to the Ventura County Supervisor's office.

Will the property be delineated as a solid waste operation? The property owner's compliance with the Public Resources Code, California Code of Regulation and the Ventura County Ordinance Code would serve to benefit the safety and well being of everyone involved.

Ventura County's Local Enforcement Agency (LEA) of the Environmental Health Division sent a determination letter to the property owner, and an application for a Registration Permit is pending. According to the LEA, the operations constitute an Inert Debris Type A Disposal Facility requiring a Registration Permit to operate. The process to issue a registration permit for this type of operation requires a public hearing. The LEA would provide due notice to the surrounding community in accordance with California Code of Regulations, Title 14 (14 CCR), Section 17388.6. There are several steps of regulatory due process afforded, should the determination be contested. Therefore, the outcome and/or any predictable scheduling of a public hearing are uncertain at this point.

Become Informed

As American citizens, we are fortunate to have a right, obligation and duty to choose our political leaders. Let's choose them wisely. Jim Dantona is running a hotly contested campaign against incumbent Judy Mikels for the 4th District Supervisor seat in Ventura County. The 4th District includes Moorpark, Simi Valley and surrounding unincorporated areas. The election is scheduled for June 2006. This election is of interest to SSMPA and its members because of the ever-decreasing amount of open space in the unincorporated areas of the Simi Hills.

County supervisors make crucial decisions about the future of open space in their districts and, under their influence, decisions are made regarding road building, removal of oak trees, grading and dumping, etc. Members are invited to research for themselves how open space in their area has been regarded and treated by their supervisor.

More and more people are coming to believe the person best suited for the Ventura County supervisor position is Jim Dantona. Members are strongly urged to make up their own minds on this subject and vote accordingly.

U P C O M I N G H I K E S

Bring water, lunch, lugsoles, hat, sunscreen. Rain cancels.

Weds., 5/10: Johnson's Motorway to Rocky Peak - 8:00 a.m. Moderately-paced, 10 mi, 1500' gain hike on picturesque trail in Santa Susana Mtns. Meet outside Indian Oaks Gate (from N end Topanga Cyn Blvd in Chatsworth, just N of 118 Fwy exit, L onto Poema Pl, ¼ mi, park along curb outside gate). Be sure to bring 2 qts. water, as well as lunch, lugsoles, hat & sunscreen. Ldrs: Bob Galletly, Nancy Krupa *Sierra Club (SFV) Outing.*

Tues., 5/16: Palo Comado's China Flats - 8:30 a.m Moderate, 4-6 mi easy pace, 1000' gain hike. Oak grasslands, some steep uphill flats. Meet King James Ct. (Ventura Fwy 101, exit Lindero Cyn Rd., N 3 mi just past Kanan Rd, park on Lindero Cyn Rd). Ldrs: Pixie Klemic, Ramona Dunn. *Sierra Club (SFV) Outing.*

Sun., 5/21: Stagecoach Trail - 9:00 a.m. Interpretative hike into history in Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park. Meet 9:00 am for 4 mi (700' gain) loop up Stage Coach Trail. From Topanga Canyon Blvd., turn W on Devonshire, drive into Chatsworth Park S to 2nd parking lot. Ldr: Lee Baum (818) 341-1850. *Sierra Club (Santa Susana Mtns Task Force) Outing.*

Tues., 5/23: Johnson's Motorway to Rocky Peak - 8:00 a.m. Moderately-paced, 10 mi, 1500' gain hike on picturesque trail in Santa Susana Mtns. Meet outside Indian Oaks Gate (from N end Topanga Cyn Blvd in Chatsworth, just N of 118 Fwy exit, L onto Poema Pl, ¼ mi, park along curb outside gate). Be sure to bring 2 qts. water, as well as lunch, lugsoles, hat & sunscreen. Ldrs: Marcia Harris, Ramona Dunn *Sierra Club (San Fernando Valley - Wilderness Adv) Outing.*

Thurs. 5/25: East Canyon to Mission Pt - 8:00 a.m. Moderately-paced 8 mi, 1400' gain hike. Follow E Cyn of Santa Clarita Woodlands to ridge, then along newly acquired thoroughfare connecting Mission Pt, with great view of SFV; then return. Meet E Cyn trailhead, Newhall (take Calgrove exit from N I-5, L (W) under fwy, take The Old Rd S 1 mi to parking entrance after church on R, continue past trailhead sign to parking area; \$3 parking fee). Ldrs: Lee Baum, Bob Galletly, Nancy Krupa. *Sierra Club (SFV) Outing.*

Tues., 5/30: Newton Cyn/Backbone Trail - 8:30 a.m Moderate, 4-6 mi easy pace, 800' gain hike on scenic trail through oak woodlands and chaparral. Meet Newton Cyn trailhead (take Kanan Rd off 101 Fwy L, trailhead is just before the 3rd tunnel, sign is on R side, possible parking fee). Ldrs: Pixie Klemic, Ramona Dunn. *Sierra Club (SFV) Outing.*

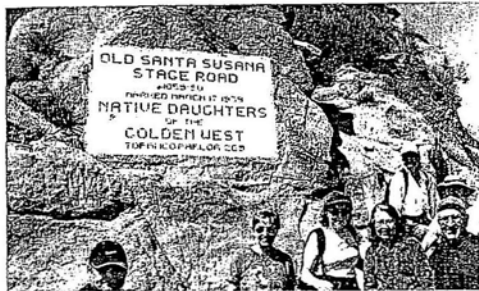
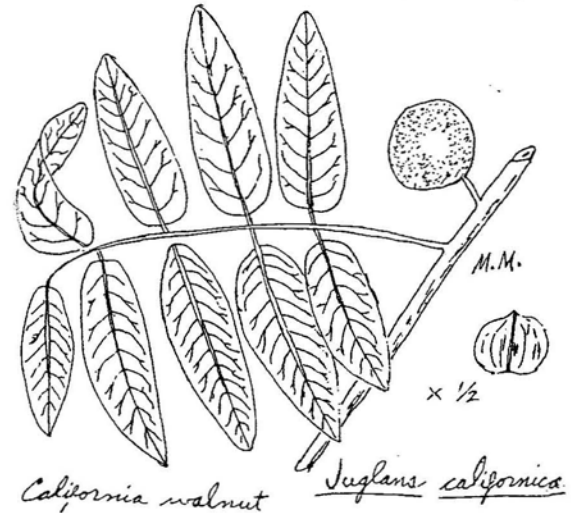
Quote of the Month:

"Don't wait to be pushed, JUMP!" *Al Knight*

Thank you for renewing your SSMPA membership, Liliana Haro, Marie Burdick, Jeff Burkhart, John Schillo, Georganna Beurman, Kathleen Nicholson.

Thanks for the extra donation, Liliana Haro & Sandra Fernandez.

We greatly appreciate your generous donation toward saving Zorro's Cabin, Mark & Vanessa Watters!



Santa Susana Mountain Park Association

invites you to JOIN / RENEW (circle one).

Investing in the future of our communities and its resources is probably one of the best expenditures of our time and efforts. Return this cutoff with your contribution lend your support. Make your check payable to SSMPA and send to SSMPA, P.O. Box 4831, Chatsworth, CA 91313-4831.

- Senior or Student (\$10.00)
 Individual (\$15.00)
 Family (\$20.00)
 Life Member (\$150.00)
 Business / Organization (\$30.00)

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Street Address: _____ E-mail: _____

City / State / Zip: _____

Special Interest / Expertise: _____

Ways To Avoid Harming Wildlife

- ❖ Never trim trees and clear vines in the spring or summer when they are filled with nesting birds and mammals.
- ❖ Only put as much birdseed out as the birds will finish in a day. Excess attracts rodents, rodents attract predatory mammals, and they may not be welcome.
- ❖ Check grassy areas for bunny nests before mowing.
- ❖ Tie plastic bags in knots before discarding.
- ❖ Cut plastic rings from soda cans.
- ❖ Drive slowly around winding roads to avoid hitting animals trying to cross.
- ❖ Never attempt to raise wildlife yourself; always contact a rehabilitator.
- ❖ Never feed wildlife. It creates a dependency on an unnatural food source that is often unhealthy. Animals lose their fear of humans and can fall prey to less caring neighbors. Numbers of animals will increase as food supply determines their breeding habits.
- ❖ Keep cats indoors. Cats kill thousands of migratory birds each year, they themselves may become food, could be hit by a car or catch one of many feline diseases rampant in the wild.
- ❖ Never trap wildlife. Your problem will exist with the next animal that comes along. Contact a rehabilitator for deterrents instead. Animals caught in traps are often severely injured. They often die when illegally dumped in a foreign area where they are attacked by the animals that have already claimed that spot.

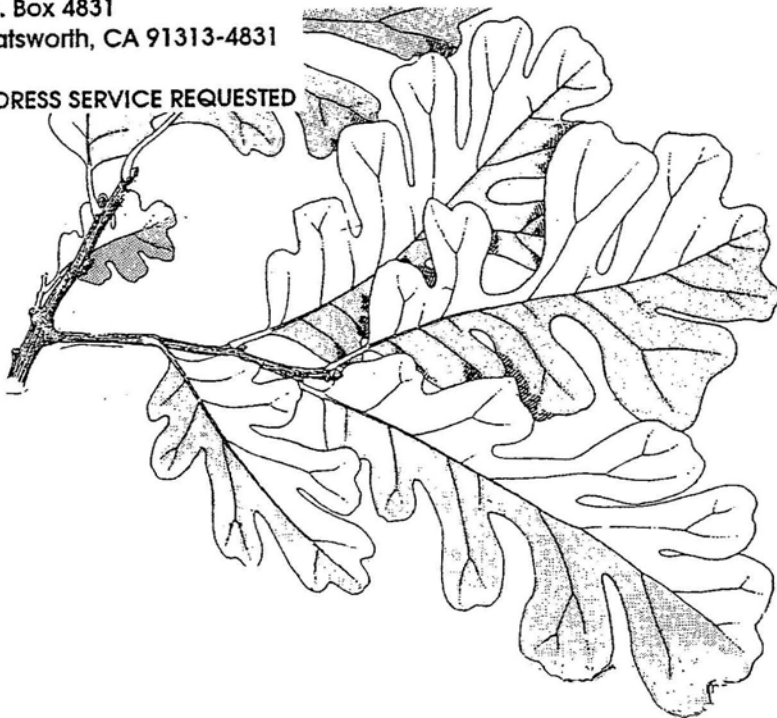


Great Egret

The purposes of the Santa Susana Mountain Park Association are the protection, preservation, restoration, and enhancement of the Santa Susana Mountains and Simi Hills as open space lands and wildlife corridors linking the Los Padres National Forest and San Gabriel Mountains, including the Angeles National Forest, to the Santa Monica Mountains; as habitats for plants and animals native to the Santa Susana Mountains and the Simi Hills; as locales of unique geologic formations; as sites of ethnological, archaeological and historical interests; to provide passive recreational opportunities and environmental education opportunities; and, to support the acquisition of new public parks, open space and conservation easements, the expansion of existing parks, participate in the planning of park infrastructure and programs, and support said programs.

Santa Susana Mountain Park Association &
Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains
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