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# The Botany of Monterey County

Barnett  
P.F.  
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from the  
History of Monterey County - illus. 1881 -  
page 89 - (by P. L. Anderson, M.D.)

The number of plants is so great that to make a full catalogue of them would only be of interest to the professional botanist. I shall not attempt much more than a general description, except to give a list of the trees. They will indicate somewhat the character of the smaller plants. They will also indicate to the horticulturist the kind of plants that may be successfully grown here for fruit, ornament or other uses.

## Forest Trees of the County.

In making this list it has been a question sometimes where to draw the line between trees and shrubs. Some of what might be called shrubs in less favored climates, grow to be trees here. There is quite a list of shrubs not included in this list, but several shrubs, properly so called, will be found here.

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Buckthorn Family.

1. *Rhamnus Californica* - Alder Buckthorn -  
Ten to twenty feet high, forming thickets;  
wood soft like Alder. The fruit contains  
a seed like the coffee grain, hence it is  
called "Wild Coffee," and the seeds have  
been used as coffee, but the plant is quite  
distinct from the Coffee plant.
2. *Scaevola Thyrsoformis* - California Lilac -  
Six to eighteen feet high; borders of forest;  
wood hard, makes good fuel; flowers  
fragrant and handsome.
3. *C. Papillosa* - Resembles the last, not  
quite as large; six to ten feet high.
4. *C. Anconus* - Hardly a tree, but a large,  
straggling shrub along creeks.
5. *C. Crassifolia* - Six to twelve feet high.

Staff-Tree Family.

*Enonymus occidentalis* - Spindle tree -  
Eight to fifteen feet high; not abundant.

Maple Family.

- 1. *Acer creens Californica* - Buckeye Horse Chestnut - Ten to thirty feet high. A really handsome and ornamental tree when properly trained.
- 2. *Acer macrophyllum* - Big leafed maple - Fifty to ninety feet high; wood soft but valuable.
- 3. *Aegundo Californicum* - Box Elder - Fifty to sixty feet high; abundant

Sumac Family.

*Rhus diversiloba* - Poison Oak - Form a small shrub three or four feet high, to quite a tree, twenty to thirty feet high, and six inches in diameter. A great pest on account of the poisonous qualities.

Pebe Family.

*Lupinus arboreus* - Tree Lupine - Four to ten feet high, with a variety of fragrant flowers. Serves as an excellent windbreak.

Rose Family.

- 1. *Prunus Chickasota* - Wild Cherry - An evergreen, 15 to 40 feet high.

2. *Nuttallia Cerasiformis* - Osage Berry - Two to fifteen feet high.
3. *Heteromeles arbustifolia* - Photinia - Four to twenty feet high, with beautiful red berries, ripening in December.
4. *Amelanchier alnifolia* - June or Service Berry - Eight to twenty feet; berries edible.
5. *Adenostoma Fasciculatum* - Chaparral, Chamisal - eight to twenty feet high.

#### Currant Family.

1. *Ribes speciosum* - Wild Currant - Six to ten feet high; has beautiful Fuchsia-like flowers.
2. *R. sanguineum* - Growing to be a small tree, twelve feet high; beautiful flowers.

#### Dogwood Family.

1. *Cornus Nuttallii* - a small tree, 20 ft. high; resembles the "Flowering Dogwood" of the East, but more showy; (northern part of county)
2. *C. Californica* - on stream banks; ten to fifteen feet high.

#### Honeycuckle Family.

*Sambucus glauca* - Elder - grows to be quite a tree, ten to 30 ft. high, & often a foot or two in diameter.

Compositae Family: Of this very large family of plants, so abundantly represented in this county, only one or two assume anything like the proportions of a tree.

*Bigelovia leucorencens* - A shrub four to eight feet high, but growing with the habit of a tree, on dry hills with Pines & Manzanitas.

*Baccharis pilularis* - Groundsel Tree - The California Botany says, "two to four feet high; we have it eight to twelve feet high."

Heath Family.

1. *Arbutus Menziesii* - A handsome tree, called "Madrona" by the Spaniards, because it resembles the Strawberry Tree of the Old World. One of our most attractive trees.

2. *Arctostaphylos tomentosa* - Manzanita - Six to twelve feet high; berries abundant, edible.

3. *A. Adersonii* - A small tree, ten to fifteen feet high. So far only found in the vicinity of "Big Tree Grove," near Santa Cruz, by the author of this paper, but probably will be found in Monterey county.

4. Rhododendron Californicum - The California Rhododendron is a beautiful shrub or small tree, six to eight feet high.

5. R. Occidentale - Madia - Ten to fifteen feet high, flowering all the year, giving fragrance & beauty to the woods; everywhere about springs.

Laurel Family.

Quercodaphne Californica - Bay tree or Mountain Laurel - A valuable tree for cabinet & furniture work, thirty to one hundred feet high, & one to three feet in diameter. Beautiful for inside finish of houses.

Plane tree Family.

Platanus Racemosa - Sycamore or Buttonwood - In valleys bordering the coast; fifty to 100 ft. high; wood valuable, receives good polish; durable.

Oak Family.

1. Quercus Lobata - White oak - In open mountain spaces; timber useful; 50 to 75 feet.
2. Q. agrifolia - Live oak; evergreen oak - abundant; forming groves near the ocean; 30 to 90 ft high.
3. Q. densiflora - Chestnut Oak - Furnishes tan bark of the best quality.

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4. *Q. Crysolepis* - Canyon Live Oak - valuable timber tree; tough; next to Eastern White Oak.
  5. *Castanopsis Chrysophylla* - California Chestnut - Generally shrubby, but sometimes 50 ft. high. A variety called *Pumila*, shrubby, on sandy hill sides; "Chincapin."
  6. *Corylus Rostrata* - Hazelnut - Eight to ten feet high, bearing abundance of nuts.

#### Sweet Gale Family.

*Myrica Californica* - Bayberry or Wax Myrtle - Moist places; fifteen to twenty feet high; evergreen.

#### Willow Family.

1. *Salix Bigelovii* - Bigelow's Willow - ten to fifty feet high; common.
2. *S. Lasiantha* - Shining Willow - with preceding; forty to fifty feet high.
3. *S. Laevigata* - Smooth Willow - with the preceding; a handsome tree, especially when in bloom; 20 to 40 feet high.

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4. *P. Sitchensis* - Sitka Willow - Has a beautiful silky leaf underneath; near the running streams; 10 to 15 ft. high; generally reclining.
  5. *P. Brachystachys* - On hill-sides, where the male plant lights up the borders of openings with white woolly catkins, early in February; eight to twenty feet high.
  6. *Populus Monilifera* - Cottonwood, Poplar - Large trees along the creeks; there are probably two or three species, as yet not fully decided.

### Pine Family.

1. *Pinus Insignis* - Monterey Pine - Well known as the most common cultivated Pine; of rapid growth, reaching sixty feet high in a few years. Only found about the Bay of Monterey.
2. *P. Tuberculata* - Knotty Pine - A handsome little Pine, forty to sixty feet high, with symmetrical clusters of cones.
3. *P. Ponderosa* - Yellow Pine - High sandy ridges; a valuable timber, reaching one hundred feet.
4. *Abies Douglasii* - Douglas Spruce - Next to the redwood for size & valuable for lumber.



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5. *Sequoia sempervirens* - redwood - sometimes reaching as high as three hundred feet.

6. *Torreya Californica* - Nutmeg Tree - is valuable timber. The nuts are not like the Nutmeg, except in appearance, outside. The meat is edible, but the squirrels usually get it; 50 to 60 feet; - 2 or 3 feet in diameter.

7. *Taxus brevifolia* - Western Yew - Rare; 30 ft. high. At Laguna Falls

8. *Cupressus macrocarpa* - Monterey Cypress - very abundant; in cultivation as an ornamental tree; 30 to 100 ft. Nowhere in the world as yet found save about this Bay.

### Flowering Plants

The herbaceous flowering plants are so numerous that we can only speak briefly of the members of a few families.

The butter cups are represented by *Ranunculus Californicus*, which during the whole year, may be seen with its yellow flowers, in moist grassy places.

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A clematis may be seen climbing over trees and bushes along our creeks. When the white, silky flowers are gone, the fruiting with its long white hairs (one to two inches), gives the tree over which it twines, a beautiful appearance during the winter months.

We have the little wind flower *Anemone nemorosa*, so much loved in the East. With us it grows larger, none the less beautiful.

The columbine, *Aquilegia truncata*, has a beauty not inferior to any of its relatives, and the barberris, of which there are four or five species, all perennial, have great beauty.

Of the barberries, we have three or four shrubby plants, all worthy members of that family. Some are used in medicine.

The poppy family is represented by three or four beautiful species, the *Eschscholtzia* and two species of *Platystigma* being among them.

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There are four species of beautiful violets, three in the woods and one in the fields.

Two species of "Spring Beauty," Paysonia, are found in abundance. Also a beautiful mallow flowering early in the spring fields, quite attractive, and among the first spring flowers.

The lupines are numerous, and nearly all handsome - about ten species of the forty to fifty belonging to California. We have also a large proportion of the clovers - ten out of twenty six credited to California. Many of them are showy & singular in shape; besides they furnish good forage for horses & cattle. Wild peas abound and cattle get fat on them in the mountain ranges.

### Wild Flowers and Vines

Two wild roses, one in the woods and the other on the open lands are found. Both fragrant, but not so showy as cultivated roses.

Evening primroses, are worth cultivation, especially Gauschneria, Parkia, + Alnothera + Godetia.

Trimming over trees and undergrowth, there is a vine somewhat like a cucumber. It is Megarrhiza commonly known as big root. It bears a fruit about the size of a peach, covered with prickles. Often the root is 12 to 15 inches in diameter, while the vine may be 50 feet long.

Another vine, often found with the above, is a Convolvulus (C. occidentalis). It has large white flowers.

Conspicuous along the shaded streams & moist hillides, are several species of Monkey Flower, Minulus douglasii, M. luteus, M. moschatum (the musk plant) and on dry grassy hills, the M. glutinosus.

### The Sea Mosses.

But if we choose a different scene, we may find it in all its strangeness on our beaches at low tide. There we shall at all seasons find abundance of sea plants, — the algae. The coasts abound in the greatest variety of sea moss, and other marine plants. First of organic forms these grew in the sea where there was no place for flora of the land. These are the pioneers of the vegetable kingdom.

## Custom House

According to "Pioneer," the foundation, or rather the central portion of the Custom House was laid when the flag of Old Spain waved over Upper California, and after lying for years in that state, the walls were raised under Mexican rule, and a tiled roof put over the central part. At the end were built two small towers, shingled over, though one of them was not completed until 1844-5.

At the Mexican time the Custom House could boast a boat and crew, but now Uncle Sam is too poor to support one in the third harbor of California, though it is the only port where a vessel can lay in safety during south-easters, between San Francisco and San Diego. In early days it used to support four Custom House officers, for Monterey was the port where the duties were paid by vessels trading with the Mexican department or territory of Upper California.

At the latter part of 1844 the Custom House, or central part of it, was turned into a ball-room by the officers of the U.S. frigate Savannah, they lying at anchor in the bay. The Savannah

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were commanded at that time by Capt. Armstrong -  
not a bad kind of a man, but too fond of the  
cats, the crew thought, and they not only thought so  
but felt them occasionally when applied to their backs.  
The officers and citizens of Monterey had given balls  
or Jan dangoes to the officers of the frigate, and  
in return they gave one at the Old Parson House  
before the frigate left. It was quite a grand affair,  
and lasted until sunrise. . . .

from History of Monterey County - Elhott & Moore,  
San Francisco, 1841 - p. 120 -

## Schools - of Monterey City in 1843

There was but little chance for children to go to school, says "Pioneer," when I first came to Monterey in 1843. Now, how different! Many parents, native, as well as foreign, if they had the funds, sent their children to the Sandwich Islands to be taught by the Protestant missionaries, as there were but few facilities for them to be taught near home. Among those thus sent away were Romualdo & Mariano Pacheco, stepsons of Capt. John Wilson, of San Luis Obispo, Felipe Gomez, John B. H. Cooper, Thomas O. Larkin, Jr., David Spence Jr., John Kimlock and his sister, at present Mrs. Bird. Books were scarce in Monterey, as well as in other parts of Calif. and newspapers were generally several months old before they reached here from the East. Few people had many books. W. E. P. Hartnell had the best library, next was that of Thomas O. Larkin. A few books were occasionally procured from whalers, men-of-war and merchant vessels that called. Then, with the exception of the foreign population from different parts of the world, Spaniards from Old Spain and a few of Spanish blood from Mexico, Peru and Chili, there were not many here could read or write much, not from want of ability, but from the few facilities they had of learning to do so. Now many of the schools in the country have better libraries than any of the

large land owners possessed. Children now, whether  
their parents are rich or poor, have admirable  
opportunities of learning if they will try to do so,  
and have no excuse for signing their name with a  
cross, as many of their parents had to do. —  
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