



PAW PRINTS

Volume 40, Number 12 Newsletter of the Eaton Canyon Nature Center Associates December 2022

PUBLIC CALENDAR

Eaton Canyon Natural Area Park

Winter Hours: 8 am - 5 pm.

Nature Center Hours: 9 am - 5 pm
(includes restrooms)

Docent-Led Family Nature Walk

Every Saturday at 9 am. Meet in front of the Nature Center. No dogs please.

Nature Tails Story Hour

Every Saturday at 10:30 am on the Outdoor Patio. Stories and activities for children.

Saturday Nature Center Discovery

Saturday mornings on the Outdoor Patio. Animal Ambassadors: 10 am and 12 pm. Nature Discovery Tables: 10:30 am to 12:30 pm

Eaton Canyon Gardening Group

Every Wednesday at 9:30 am and second Sundays of the month at 10 am. Current volunteers only. Meet by Nature Center garage door.

Meetings:

Pasadena Audubon Society Meeting

Monthly meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month at 7:30 pm in the Eaton Canyon Nature Center Auditorium. No meeting in December.

California Native Plant Society Meeting

Meetings are held in the Eaton Canyon Nature Center Auditorium, the fourth Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm, except for November and December.

Pasadena Group Sierra Club Meeting

Program meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month, 7 times a year, at 7:30 pm in the Eaton Canyon Nature Center Auditorium. Check their website for more information: www.sierraclub.org/angeles/pasadena

Plant of the Month

Southern California Black Walnut

Botanical Name: *Juglans californica*

Family: Juglandaceae (Walnut)

(aka Southern Black Walnut, Southern California Walnut)

Blooms: February, March

Lifeform: Tree, single or multi-trunked

Habitat: Oak Woodland and mixed Riparian areas



Our native walnut can live approximately 100 years and is winter deciduous. The trunk is blackish brown and becomes deeply furrowed as it matures. Adapted to summer drought and mild winters, along with an ability to survive periodic fires, it's fed by an extensive root system with a deep taproot that can grow and recover from fires by spouting again with many new trunks. The roots help anchor the ground, preventing mudslides. At Eaton Canyon you can find multi-trunk California Walnut trees adjacent to the parking area opposite the Nature Center facing the Arroyo.

Southern California Black Walnut is endemic to California and takes the form of a large shrub or tree (commonly up to 50 feet tall). Trees in mixed riparian woodlands may develop multiple trunks, however where the trees are dense, they are more apt to display a single trunk. Because this tree grows in Southern California, we have communities with names like Walnut, and Walnut Creek.

This tree was historically widespread but is now being threatened in Southern California due to urban growth and development. As a result, the City of Los Angeles lists the California Walnut tree as a protected species to minimize any removal and encourage replacement planting. It is a foundation tree that supports nearly 30 species of birds, many species of moths and butterflies, the ground squirrel, and Western Gray squirrel. Owls use the upper branches as roosts and nesting places. Ground squirrels dig burrows at the base of the older walnut trees.

This tree is a good choice for wildlife gardens where it's commonly used for bank stabilization plus it is deer resistant. This plant needs moisture, so it's good to plant near stream edges or a canyon bottom.

Can you eat these walnuts? Cracking open one of these walnuts requires force and skill. There is little meat in these shells compared to the varieties you find in a store. The Chumash Indians ate the walnuts and used the nutshells for dice (plural for dice) in a dice game. The bark of the walnut tree was used to add a finishing touch to baskets. Also, the walnut hulls can be used as a dye. Kat High has submitted the black walnut dye instructions to us for inclusion in this issue. *Cal Walsten*

Black Walnut Dye Instructions

By Kat High

Use as a Dye: The outer husk of the nut is the source of dye. The colorant is juglone. It is a direct dye, which means that no mordant is necessary when

Black Walnut Dye continued on page 2



Paw Prints is a monthly publication of the ECNCA.

Articles and photographs are welcome on topics related to natural history and Nature Center activities. If you see something interesting in the canyon, please share it with us! The deadline for submissions to the January 2023 issue is December 15, 2022. Send submissions to Brenda Hurst eatonmember@gmail.com.

Contributors: Kim Bosell, Kat High, Brenda Hurst, Gabi McLean, Cal Walsten, Helen Wong

Paw Prints Production

Content Editor: Brenda Hurst

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DOCENT AND MEMBER CALENDAR

Bag Lunch and Mini-Inservice:

Wednesday, December 7th at Noon in Classroom 1. **Madeline Schleimer** will present: "**Working With Yucca Cordage**"

Guided School Tours

School tours are conducted from October to the end of the school season. For reservations call the office 626-398-5420.

ECNCA Board Meetings

The ECNCA board meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month at 7 pm via Zoom. If you are interested in joining a meeting, please send an email to eatonmember@gmail.com, at least 2 days prior to the meeting.

Black Walnut Dye continued from page 1

used with a protein fiber. Cellulose may be dyed as well, but that requires a mordant. Black Walnut provides a rich brown or tan on color of protein fibers.

The best time to gather the nuts is when they are still green—newly fallen or ready to fall off the tree. If the nuts rot and turn black on the ground the dye may be damaged or contain less dye.

Walnuts can be used fresh or preserved in the freezer for year-round dyeing. **NOTE THAT WALNUTS WILL STAIN SKIN. WEAR GLOVES WHEN HANDLING!**

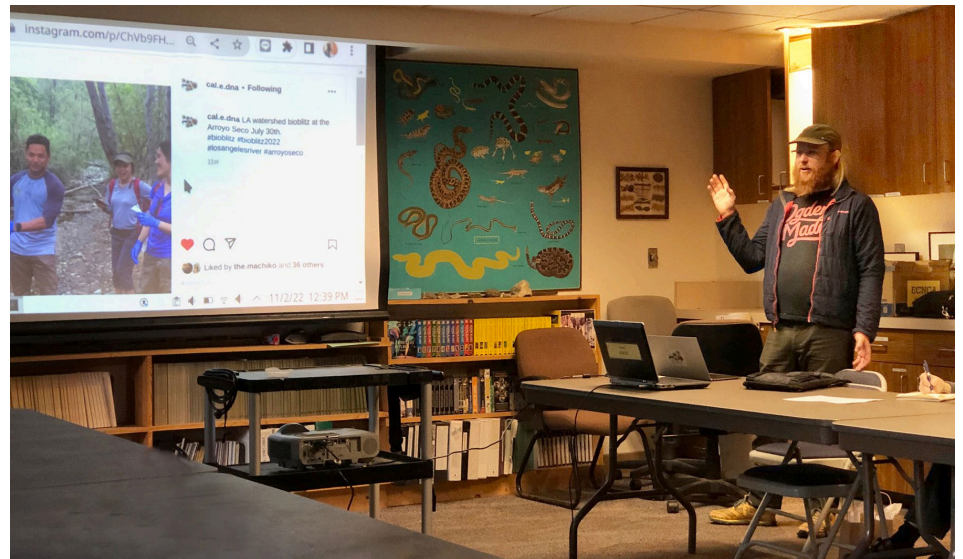


Dyeing: Place the whole hulls in a pot of water to soak, preferably at least 2 days. About half way through the soaking process, cut slits in the hulls and "smoosh" to allow the juiciness to ooze out. The water should be a deep brown.

Using a strainer, pour the contents over another bucket or pot to strain the large chunks of walnut from the soaking water. Discard the solids and save the dye "liquor."

Optional: Strain the liquid one more time through cheese cloth. This will remove any residual small pieces from the liquid. Straining is important, as any remaining bits of hull will make dark spots on the fiber.

Add wetted fiber to the dye bath, bring it to a simmer, and keep at a gentle simmer for at least 30 minutes for silk (other fibers may take longer). Remove the dyed fiber and rinse well. Hang to dry.



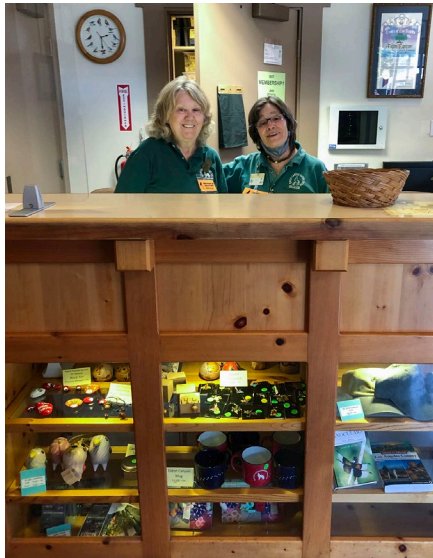
The November 2nd Bag Lunch Mini-Inservice

Maxwell Yasuda (Docent Class 2022) presented Urban Wildlife Research From Occidental College and the UC CALeDNA Project, to a well-attended November 2nd Bag Lunch Mini-Inservice at the Nature Center. He discussed, "Environmental DNA or eDNA as a method of measuring biodiversity using DNA technology by sampling streams and soil in an environment. The California eDNA project or CALeDNA studies rare and diverse habitats in California including an ongoing study of the LA River and the Arroyo Seco."

WHAT'S NEW

Gift Shop and Information Desk Opens!

The indoor Gift Shop and Information Desk officially opened the first week of November! Our "soft opening" hours are now Wednesday and Friday 10:30 am - 2:30 pm and Saturday 10 am - 2 pm.



Gift shop volunteers Mary Foltyn and Madeline Schleimer

We Have A New ECNCA.ORG Website Look!

Yes! We have redesigned the ECNCA.ORG website and it is now live! Most importantly, note that you can now become a new member, renew your existing membership, and give donations on line!

So check out the site and let me know what you think. Brenda Hurst eatonmember@gmail.com.

Park Steward Training

Come join us at 2:00 pm on December 4th, by the pond at Eaton Canyon for training to become a Park Steward. This is open to all qualified docent naturalists and volunteers. Take your volunteering to another level on the park's trails. Be the face of ECNCA, interact with canyon visitors, and share your knowledge and love of the canyon. For more information contact the Park Steward chair, Susan Hopkins at susanhopkins@



"Creatures of Halloween" - October 29

Photos: Kim Bosell and Helen Wong





Photo: Carol Scurlock

ECNCA BOARD MEMBERS

President: Brenda Hurst

Vice-President: Diane Marcussen

Recording Secretary: Marge Mayotte-Hirn

Corresponding Secretary: Mary Veselich

Treasurer: Terry Ginsberg

Membership Chair: Brenda Hurst

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Weekend Docent Chair: Ramie Case

Twilight Program Chair:

Bus Grants Committee Chair: Marge Mayotte-Hirn

Gardening Group Chair: Marilyn Hildebrandt

Conservation Group Chair:

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Bag Lunch Chair: Mary Foltyn

Moonlight Hike Co-chairs: Ramie Case, Teresa Kirkland

Members-at-Large: Judy Jenkins, Rose Haig, Susan Hopkins

Nature Center Director: Helen Wong

NCA President: Laura Nicholson

NCA Representative: Terry Ginsberg

Eaton Canyon Nature Center Associates (ECNCA) is a chapter of the Nature Center Associates (NCA), a non-profit support group of the natural area park system of Los Angeles County. Founded for educational and scientific purposes, its primary mission is to develop in children and adults an appreciation of the natural world and to preserve Eaton Canyon as a natural area for future generations.

The Eaton Canyon Nature Center and Natural Area Park are located within the unincorporated area of Los Angeles County in the Supervisorial district of Kathryn Barger. The Natural Area and Nature Center are operated by the County of Los Angeles, Department of Parks and Recreation, in partnership with the Eaton Canyon Nature Center Associates.

Become A Member of the ECNCA (Eaton Canyon Nature Center Associates)

Membership benefits include the ECNCA newsletter, program announcements and a 10% discount at the gift shop. To join the Eaton Canyon Nature Center Associates, fill out the form below and mail with your check, payable to the ECNCA, 1750 North Altadena Drive, Pasadena, CA 91107.

Name: _____ Email _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Please check appropriate box and mark return envelope "Membership"

☐ Individual \$30 ☐ Family \$45 ☐ Senior \$15 ☐ Senior Family \$30 ☐ Student \$15

☐ Friend of the Canyon \$75 ☐ Sage Saver \$100 ☐ Chaparral Contributor \$250 ☐ Riparian Guardian \$500

☐ Oak Woodlands Protector \$750 ☐ Wildlands Angel \$1000 ☐ NEW ☐ RENEWAL

Enclosed is my MEMBERSHIP in the amount of \$_____

Enclosed is my additional DONATION in the amount of \$_____

Please make checks payable to the ECNCA. All contributions are tax deductible.