habitat corridor project

**UNEDITED!  For use only FYI.**

**Hello, I am April Owens - the executive director of the Habitat Corridor Project. Nancy Bauer and I co-created HCP five years ago.  We are a not for profit landscape design firm as well as educators in the use of California native plants to encourage and support biodiversity.**

**Our mission is to create restoration gardens in the urban environment.  We do this by planting California native plants, designing landscapes throughout California and helping clients and our nonprofit partners to transition unused water thirsty (and boring) lawns to habitat gardens FULL of life!**

I am a landscape architect with over 20 years experience with California native plants - I'm pretty much obsessed with them and can be called a purist at times - which is a great compliment to me.  I owned a landscape design firm for ten years before launching an installation business where we installed over 100 gardens small and large - residential and industrial.  We have contracts with the ccc, dwr, cnps etc.  It's quite exciting.  Please check out our website we have a lot going on from the installation at the chamber of commerce that is about two years old now and gorgeous to the Center for the Arts here in Sebastopol where we will be planting in the Fall.  Come talk to me after if you are interested in getting involved.

But let's get to why you are here:  I'm going to tell you about my favorite, hardy and beautiful plants plants that get the MOST pollinators that I see.  Please ask questions anytime or tell us about what you love.

**I know there are plants from other places in the world that are great for pollinators - but back to my "purist" title - I will be speaking to the amazing co-evolution of California's flora with our insects which is one of the most**

**compelling reasons for growing California native plants in your garden and supporting their continued presence in our wildlands. BIODIVERSITY**

Though many commonly used garden plants can supply nectar to bees, butterflies, and other insects, native plants do it just right - the right timing, the right nutritional content, the right floral structure.  The only plants we use that are non native are fruit trees and masses of herbs if a client desires that.

**I will get to these plants in a minute - but let's also talk about the wonderful native pollinators of California!**

## Bee society and nesting

Solitary bees usually nest in the ground, in holes they excavate themselves or in old rodent holes. A single female will prepare her earthen nest, build a few cells, lay her eggs, and collect pollen for them. Sound familiar?  Although they nest alone, many females may lay in the same area. So if the area is good for native bees you may end up with bumblebee, digger bees and mier bees all living next to each other.  Because many bees nest in the ground, don't disturb the soil by tilling or scraping. These actions will also encourage more weeds. You want clean bare ground with no European grasses, Mustard, Star thistle, etc. Native wild flowers are Ok. See also Digger Bee

## California Native bees are excellent pollinators.

**European weeds are preferred by European bees. European honey bees will pollinate your weeds and help them proliferate!**

**A couple of fun facts about California native bees - I am a plant junkie but I'm going to start paying attention more.**

**Most don't sting - i had this great interaction with one of the staff at the Chamber of commerce that was allergic to European Honey Bee's and after we had installed that garden she was terrified to walk out the front door.  The plants in front of her office were covered with wonderful bumblebees - completely safe for her.  We only know when we know!**

**There are one thousand species of California native bees, 26 of these are bumblebees and most of the rest are solitary bees. That is, they do not live in a hive with drones and all the rest. Some bee species are very specific in their needs. Andrena limnanthis Hesperandrena, a native solitary bee, visits only specific species of the vernal pool**

**flower, Meadow Foam, Limnanthes sp. The native bees will prefer natives from their area. Some bees are very restricted in their range and may not know what to do with stuff that is too far removed from their home, even if it is native to California. Many other native bees will work the available flowers that are in the families of flora they are used to. (las pilitas.com)**

**Shrubs are an amazing way to get a ton of pollinators happy, out of my office window are 3 5 year old coffeeberry shrubs and they are absolutely covered with pollinators for months!** A really attractive shrub year round that takes a remarkably wide range of spots in your landscape. We will get back to that later. Another wonderful one is Globe Mallow a fast growing spreader that delights with apricot colored flowers for an amazing amount of time in the garden. Mine seem to never stop. The combination of Mallow and Matillija Poppy is wonderful but give it a lot of space.

**For perennials**

**Talk about plants**

**Create an ecosystem: food, cover and water Pollinators love a gentle water feature - I often place boulders with a shallow well in them - great if you have a fountain with an edge, pollinators don't like deep water as much as a shallow source.**

**Tips for Success:**
**Plant in 4" containers / 1 gallon at the largest**
**Deep soak every few days the first 2 summers then once a month or so after that**
**Don't use drip if you have it already still give a rain shower every once in a while in summer**

**STORIES OF A FEW SELECTED PLANTS:**

**RHAMNUS CALIFORNICA**
**'MOUND SAN BRUNO' San Bruno Mountain in San Mateo County, this is one of the most reliable coffeeberries. Grows 6 ft tall and wide, with narrow leaves and a compact habit. For full sun to part shade, will accept water, but is quite drought tolerant once established. Flowers are loved by pollinators,**

**especially bees. A larval food source for the pale swallowtail butterfly. Provides black juicy fruit in the fall for thrushes, jays, mockingbirds, robins, bandtailed pigeon and purple finch. May grow to as much as 8 ft. tall with moderate water and good drainage in cooler areas.**

www.habitatcorridorproject.org