

Larner Seeds

May Newsletter 2008



You're Invited...

The Larner Seeds Native Plant Demonstration Garden is free and open to the public! Please visit the garden to experience possibilities for your own garden. See stunning displays of native California wildflowers, blooming shrubs, trees and grasses. In our Garden Shop you may find unique seeds of over 100 native California species, a variety of books and tools, as well as selected plants we use for our seed grow outs,

many rarely available in the trade. Visit on Tues, Thurs from 10 - 2 pm and Saturdays from 12 - 4. Or, call ahead for an appointment! **415.868.9407 235 Grove St, Bolinas** (directions available at www.larnerseeds.com)

Starting Seeds, Going Deeper

To know a plant from seed stage to seedling deepens the relationship between gardener and garden. What so many seek these days is an enhanced sense of connection with the earth and its nonhuman inhabitants...to participate in the progression from seed to seedling to mature plant adds an extra dimension to the human/plant interaction. (From "Seed Propagation Techniques" by Judith Lowry).

Annual wildflowers are good PR for native plants, as butterflies are for the insect world. Many dedicated native plant lovers are first drawn in by showy fields of annual wildflowers, and learning how to grow California wildflowers is a great teacher of the ecology of our place and a honer of horticultural skills. If you've been watching the wildflower displays, flowering shrubs and trees this spring, you may have noticed species that would complement your own garden or landscaping plan. Check the Larner Seeds website: we may carry the species you want. Seed can be ordered now with fall in mind.



There is nothing hard about growing plants from seed. Here is our challenge: Take one step further in, and try your hand at your own grow-outs of California native perennials and bunchgrasses from seed in early summer. With the goal of planting in the ground in fall, many perennials can be started in flats in the summer. Trees, shrubs, and vines may be planted later in the year, as seed is collected.

Our simple method involves a semi-shaded table, plastic flats obtainable from nurseries, and 4" pots. Seeds are sown in potting soil in the flats, which are kept evenly moist and

protected from afternoon sun. When 3 or 4" of growth is obtained, seedlings are lifted from the flat and placed in 4" pots, where they will wait, kept moist till days shorten, the power of the sun lifts, and rain is expected.

That seeds with their varied colors and shapes are beautiful and fascinating becomes evident to anybody who works with them. The attraction in a flat of newly-germinated seedlings, fresh in their recent emergence from the seed, must be experienced to be understood.

For more detailed explanations, we offer two books: "Seed Propagation Techniques," by Judith Lowry, part of our "Notes on Natives" series, \$4.00, and Dara Emory's classic *Seed Propagation of Native California Plants*, \$14.95.

New Seed Listings

One of our passions at Lerner Seeds is to make available seed of species never or rarely available in the trade. The above technique is basically a description of how we do grow-outs for seed stock. While planting these species out in our garden, we continually enhance the richness and diversity of the Lerner Seeds Demonstration Garden, while we learn how to use these plants in the landscape. A win/win for biodiversity and for you, our gardening customers.

"Limited Edition" new seed offerings available now are:

Golden Yarrow (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*). Drought tolerant, semi-evergreen sub-shrub, 1- 2' tall found in many plant communities. Covered with golden flower clusters May – July. Showy in dry border. \$6.00 pkt.

Pitcher Sage (*Lepechinia calycina*). Are you a true Californian? Your reaction to the fragrance of pitcher sage tells all. Fast-growing semi-evergreen shrub with felted pale-green leaves of unique pungency. Showy bell-shaped flowers are white to lilac, in spring. Grows 3-4' tall. Likes full sun, good drainage. Once you become accustomed to it, the odor is good medicine. \$6.00 pkt.

Foothill Meadow-rue (*Thalictrum fendleri*). Shade-loving perennial 2-3 ft. tall with delicate fernlike leaves resembling maidenhair fern. Small white flowers. Excellent for woodland border, under oaks. Fall/winter dormancy. \$6.00 pkt.

Hound's Tongue (*Cynoglossum grande*). Wonderful deep blue-flowered perennial for shade gardens. Large lush leaves. Blooms early spring, easily grown from seed. Cut to ground in late summer. Always a treat to see in the wild, great under oaks. \$6.00 pkt.

Sale Items (Read below for our Used Book Selections)

Many customers have found our popular 40 page pamphlet "Notes on Natural Design" to be extremely useful in planning a harmonious, peaceful, pleasing native garden. Based on 25 years of experience, we describe some easy tricks that make a big difference in the evolution of a native plant garden. As printing costs have risen, we are offering **a special at \$6.50**. In July it will be going up to \$8.00. Graced by the beautiful drawings of Kathleen O'Neill.

Our very popular **Beginners Wildflower Sale** must end soon! To begin your wildflower education, we have chosen 1/2 ounce each of four of our customer favorites: Baby-Blue-Eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*), Tidy Tips (*Layia platyglossa*), Globe Gilia (*Gilia capitata*), and Farewell-to-Spring (*Clarkia amoena*). Beautiful and easy to grow, these four make a great beginning, with early spring to midsummer bloom! To insure success, we include our informative pamphlet Notes on Growing California Wildflowers. A great value of \$24.50 for **only \$20.00**.

Phacelias

A genus with 80 species in it, many of them are wonderful garden subjects, both annuals and perennials. Pollinators adore phacelias.



Desert Bluebells (*Phacelia campanularia*) Stunning deep blue flowers with white dots at the base of the petals grace this heat-resistant California annual. Grows to 12" Blooms in eight weeks from seed. Striking contrast with California Poppy or golden Blazing Star.

Tansy leaf phacelia (*Phacelia tanacetifolia*). Showy annual phacelia growing from 2-4' tall depending on fertility of soil. Large arching purple flowers, likes sun or shade. Used in agriculture to attract beneficial insects. (Note lady bug).



Bolander's phacelia (*Phacelia bolanderii*). Extremely easy to grow, this biennial phacelia is adaptable to sun or part shade, has attractive large furry leaves and lilac flowers. Makes a lovely ground cover under oaks, returns year after year.



Summer Reading Sale – Used Books

For a number of years, we have carried a selection of used and hard to find books, SOME OUT OF PRINT, some available only here at the shop. In preparation for summer reading, we are offering these books at bargain prices. Shipping is \$3.99 for the first book, \$2.00 per second, third, or fourth. Peruse this list, and get your order in as soon as possible.

Books listed have only one copy unless otherwise indicated. These books are NOT listed on the website...to order, add a note at the bottom of your web seed order (we will adjust the totals) or if ordering only books, send us an email (info@larnerseeds.com) or mail a check with your order to PO Box 407, Bolinas, CA 94924. You can also fax your order to 415-868-2592.

NATIVE WAYS

The Education of Little Tree, by Forrest Carter. The story of a young boy who is taken in

and raised by his grandparents on their rural homestead. His upbringing is intriguingly colored by his grandmother's Eastern Cherokee heritage. Engaging book is a riveting read. Fiction. **\$4.00 NEW PAPERBACK**



The Good Red Road. by Kenneth Lincoln and Al Logan Slagle. Road trip with the author, his four year old daughter and 4 students to search for the core of the Indian experience in modern America. **\$4.00. Photos, PAPERBACK**

As Long as the River Shall Run. by Martha Knack and Omer Stewart. An ethnohistory of Pyramid Lake Indian Reservation. This book is described as “A milestone in American Indian History. A brilliant inter-disciplinary volume that will be of intense interest to both historians and anthropologists.” **\$6.00 . Photos, HARDBACK.**

The Indians of Southern California in 1852. B. D. Wilson. Originally published in the Los Angeles Star newspaper as a serial in 1868, the author was one of the first white settlers in Southern California. Wilson was instrumental in creating the reservation system. Valuable historical document reprinted by University of Nebraska Press. **\$5.00 (3 copies available) PAPERBACK**

Mirror and Pattern: George Laird's World of Chemeuhuevi Mythology. Carobeth Laird. The author, formerly married to the eccentric anthropologist, John Peabody Harrington, divorced him to marry Chemeuhuevi George Laird. This book recounts the tribal stories he shared with her, from the days “when animals were people.” This book is both a tribute to her husband and an invaluable treasure trove of indigenous perspective and story. **\$30.00 (Lists for \$45) HARDCOVER**

MARINE LIFE

California Marine Food and Game Fishes. From University of California Press' Natural History Guide series, by John Fitch and Robert Lavenberg. Photos, line drawings. **\$4.00 PAPERBACK**

Neptune's Apprentice. Adventures of a Commercial Fisherwoman. Marie Santis. The author, a naturalist and excellent writer, follows her dream to find herself captain of a commercial fishing boat, surviving many almost unbelievable adventures. Published in 1984. **\$6.50 HARDCOVER**

California Currents: An Exploration of the Ocean's Pleasures, Mysteries and Dilemmas. Marie Santis. This book is for “anglers, boaters, beachcombers, whale watchers, birders, surfers and divers – anyone who is drawn to the water's edge and wonders what's beyond. Black and white illustrations. Out of print, **3 copies, \$10.00, HARDBACK.**

PLANTS, SEEDS AND WILDFLOWERS



As California Wild Flowers Grow. Katherine Chandler. Charming 1922 edition with photos, by the author of “Habits of Ca. Plants” and others. Out of Print. **\$10.00 HARDCOVER**

Plants from Seed. A. J. Macself, color and black and white illustrations and photos, 1926. How to grow from seed, indoors and out. Vegetables as well as trees, shrubs and flowers. First Edition, **\$5.00 HARDCOVER**

Wildflowers of the West. Mabel Crittenden and Dorothy Telfer. How to key plants, field guide to western wildflowers. Black and white line drawings. **\$4.00 HARDCOVER**

Faith in a Seed. Henry D. Thoreau. Inspirational work from the master, this is Thoreau’s last manuscript. “Though I do not believe that a plant will spring up where no seed has been, I have great faith in a seed. Convince me that you have a seed there, and I am prepared to expect wonders.” And there are wonders in this book, as Thoreau’s deep nature as a botanist emerges. Many wonderful line drawings by Thoreau himself, supplemented by drawings by artist Abigail Rorer. New, **\$15.00 HARDCOVER**

Plant Propagation: Principles and Practices. Hudson Hartmann and Dale Kester. A classic in the field of plant propagation, written by two professors from UC Davis. A required text in many horticultural classes. 700 pages, many photos. **\$15.00 HARDCOVER**

The Ecology and Management of Rare Plants of Northwestern California. CNPS symposium. Many writers contributed to this compilation. James Smith, Kyle Wear, Brenda Grewell and many others. Photos, line drawings. **\$5.00 PAPERBACK**

MISCELLANEOUS

The Birds and the Beasts Were There. Margaret Millar. The joys and adventures of bird watching and animal feeding in a Santa Barbara canyon. Answers the question: How can humans learn to live with nature? **\$3.00 HARDCOVER**

How to Grow your Deer Free Vegetable Garden without a Fence! Videotape. The title says it all. **\$5.00**

The Summit of the Years. John Burroughs. first edition in fine condition, published in 1913. "From youth to age I have lived with nature more than with men. I saw nature as a standing invitation to come forth and give play to myself. The world was good; it tasted good, it delighted all my senses." **\$15.00 HARDCOVER**

The Spinners Book of Fiction. Gertrude Atherton et al. Long out of print, this reprint (now also out of print) is a short story collection which includes famous authors like Jack London, Mary Austin, W.C. Morrow and others. The Spinners Club encouraged creative genius in women at the turn of the century San Francisco. **\$15.00 HARDCOVER**

Turfgrass: Science and Culture. James Beard. Everything you've always wanted to know about turfgrass, including the effects of air pollution, seasonal cultivation and more. Textbook. **\$5.00 HARDCOVER.**