

# TREES FOR LAFAYETTE

The Master Tree Plan  
Lafayette, California





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Lafayette, California

By Russell A. Beatty

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- |  |   |
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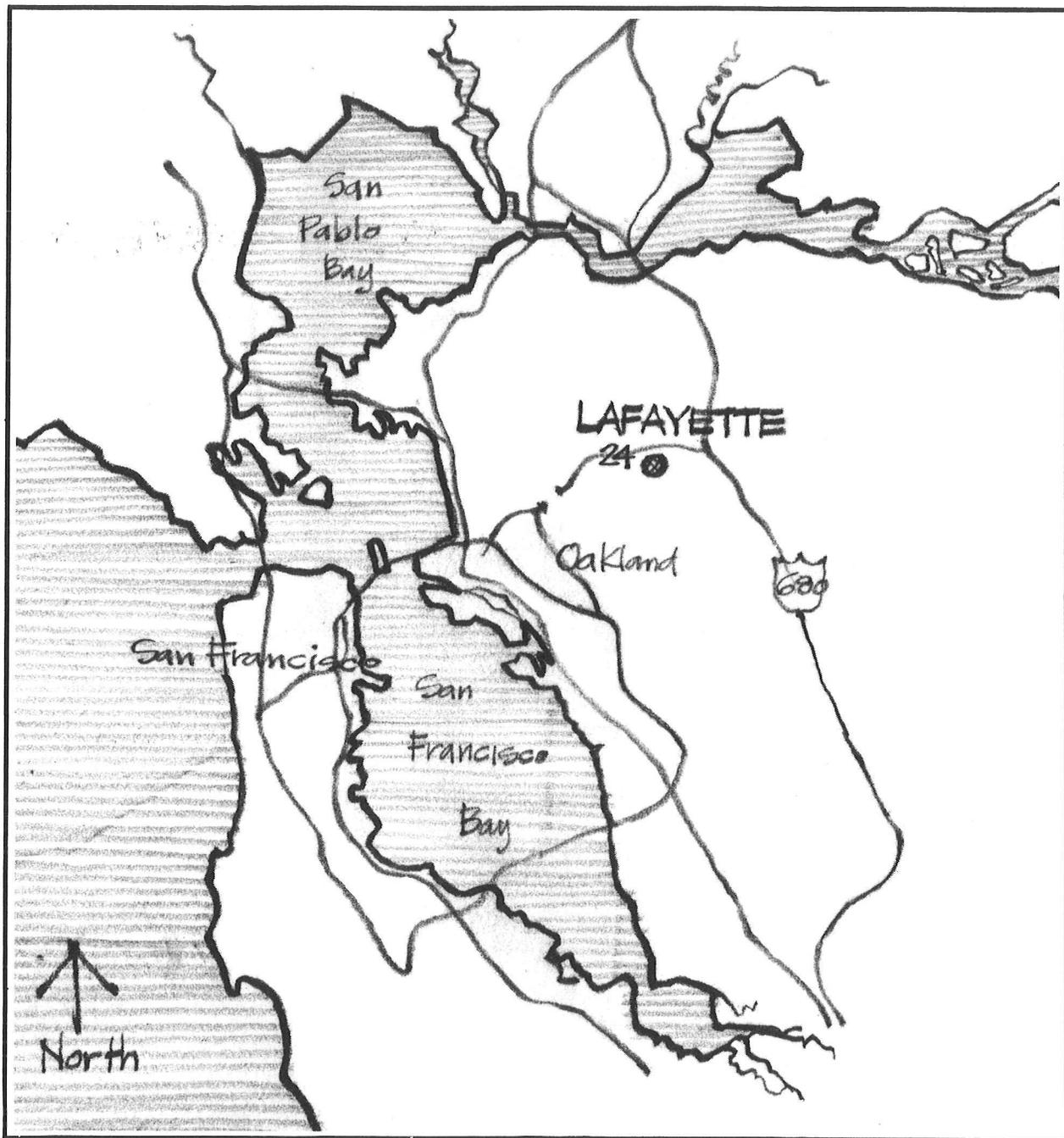
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# TREES FOR LAFAYETTE



## INTRODUCTION

Trees have always been a common part of our daily lives, so much so that we have sometimes taken them for granted. We are becoming increasingly conscious of the importance of trees, yet they are baffling to most of us. How many of us can name the trees in our gardens or on our street? How often are we puzzled over the selection of a new tree to plant? How often are questions left unresolved about pruning or feeding our young trees? How often do we draw a blank when an old tree appears to be dying?

This dilemma exists at the community level as well. Questions about tree selection, maintenance and preservation are raised continually in the governing of a city. We are riding on a wave of rising concern about our environment and trees are an important element of this concern. Tree plantings are becoming a requirement in the development of both public and private land. Communities are assuming greater responsibility in the maintenance of street trees, parks and open spaces. Tree preservation is a paramount issue in new construction.

The City of Lafayette is blessed with an abundance of trees. The lush creeks and wooded hillsides are the framework and backdrop of the Lafayette environment. They are the City's heritage and define much of its rural character. The choice of trees to be planted is an important one. New trees planted today affect the quality of the environmental heritage for years to come. The maintenance and preservation of fine old trees links the past with the present, binding this heritage to the future.

The City of Lafayette is keenly conscious of its trees. The adoption of Ordinance 38 which established the City's Tree Commission and its Grand Tree Program is evidence of this concern for an environmental heritage. This Master Tree Plan is dedicated to these ends—that today's decisions and actions about trees are a part of tomorrow's environmental heritage. This Plan is intended to answer some of the questions asked about trees both individually and collectively as a community and to offer design and technical information to assist decision making.

**A discussion of Lafayette's natural vegetation and historic development is presented to highlight the community's important treescape. The relationship between climate and the natural vegetation types is explained and the distribution of plant associations is mapped. Guidelines for tree plantings complimentary to the natural landscape are developed.**

**The many different types of streetscapes of the community are discussed with examples of fine street and neighborhood plantings located on a map. Design guidelines for future tree planting are presented along with lists of trees for specific situations.**

**Unique or prominent tree groves are located on the Lafayette Tree Guide. The criteria for selecting these important features of the community are discussed. In addition, individual trees worthy of special community recognition are mapped. An expansion of the City's Grand Tree Program is offered to designate these unique specimens.**

**Tree planting, maintenance and preservation techniques are explained and illustrated with diagrams. The techniques outlined apply to existing as well as new trees.**

**As an individual self-study reference, the Lafayette Tree Guide is included. This is a map locating fine specimens of trees which have been discussed or recommended in the Plan.**

In the text, tree names are given using the common name with the botanical name in parentheses. Because common names vary and are undependable (there are at least two versions of a Tulip Tree), plants on the lists are given in alphabetical order by botanical name. Botanical names are also used on the maps.

The characteristics of each recommended tree are not discussed here. Several excellent publications have complete descriptions of all the trees. These books are listed in the References and are readily available at local libraries or book stores.

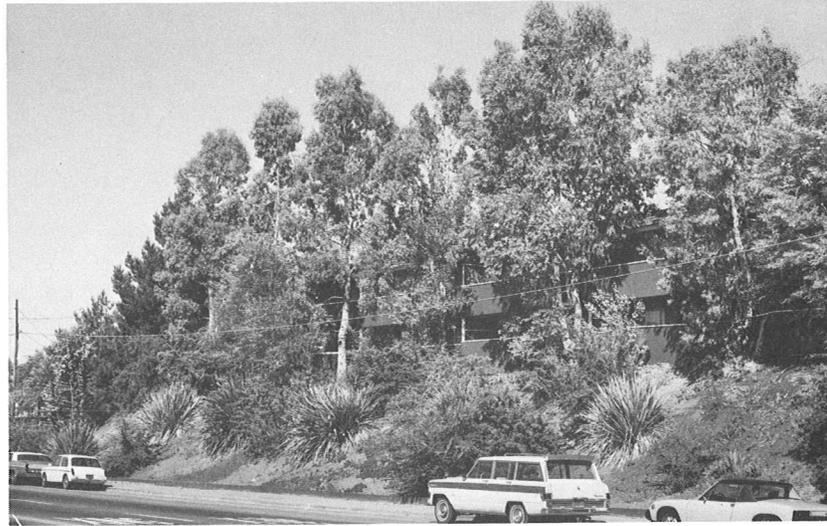
In any discipline, a vocabulary of specific and perhaps unfamiliar words is used. The plant-related professions (landscape architecture, horticulture and botany) are no exceptions. The meanings of these words or terms are included in a Glossary at the end.

Becoming more familiar with the trees of our community adds a new dimension of understanding and enjoyment of the surroundings. This Plan is designed for all the citizens of Lafayette, old-timers and newcomers alike. It is intended to become a useful reference for residents, public staff and officials and developers of Lafayette, both now and in the years to come.



Environmental control functions of trees have created great interest recently. These include climate control (air conditioning), acoustical control (noise buffering) and atmospheric purification. Of these, climate control is one of

the most effective uses of trees. In Lafayette, the use of trees for summer cooling is an important consideration in any planting. In this regard, size and form are important selection criteria.



*Narrow, upright Eucalyptus trees form an excellent screen and shade this apartment house.*



*Broad, round-headed trees provide a shade canopy for an intimate space.*

Although research has concluded that plants can be used to reduce noise, a few trees do little more than block the noise source (out of sight, out of mind!) and are not effective unless used in great quantities. All plants help purify the air through filtration of dust, absorption of carbon dioxide and other pollutants and generation of oxygen. This alone is sufficient reason to plant masses of trees in urban areas.

### **Cultural Criteria**

The ultimate test of the success of any tree planting depends upon the survival of the plants. Each tree has its own set of tolerances and preferences which determines its horticultural suitability. Ecologically, plants adapt to more or less specific habitats based primarily upon climate and soil types. By matching these habitats as closely as possible in a new environment, greater success is assured.

We can modify a plant's environment horticulturally to better suit its needs. Water is the most common modification. Irrigation broadens the range of plants we grow in California. Nevertheless, this device must be used sensibly—we cannot afford to irrigate the entire State. As a general principle, drought tolerant species should be used in public plantings such as streets, highways and open spaces and in peripheral portions of private properties. Trees with higher water requirements should be confined to smaller public areas and private patios.

Maintenance is another aspect of cultural criteria. If the degree or quality of maintenance can be determined ahead of time, trees can be selected to suit. This is an essential criteria to be carefully considered in the design of public landscape plantings. In essence, the trees used should be selected to match the growing conditions and degree of maintenance to be anticipated.

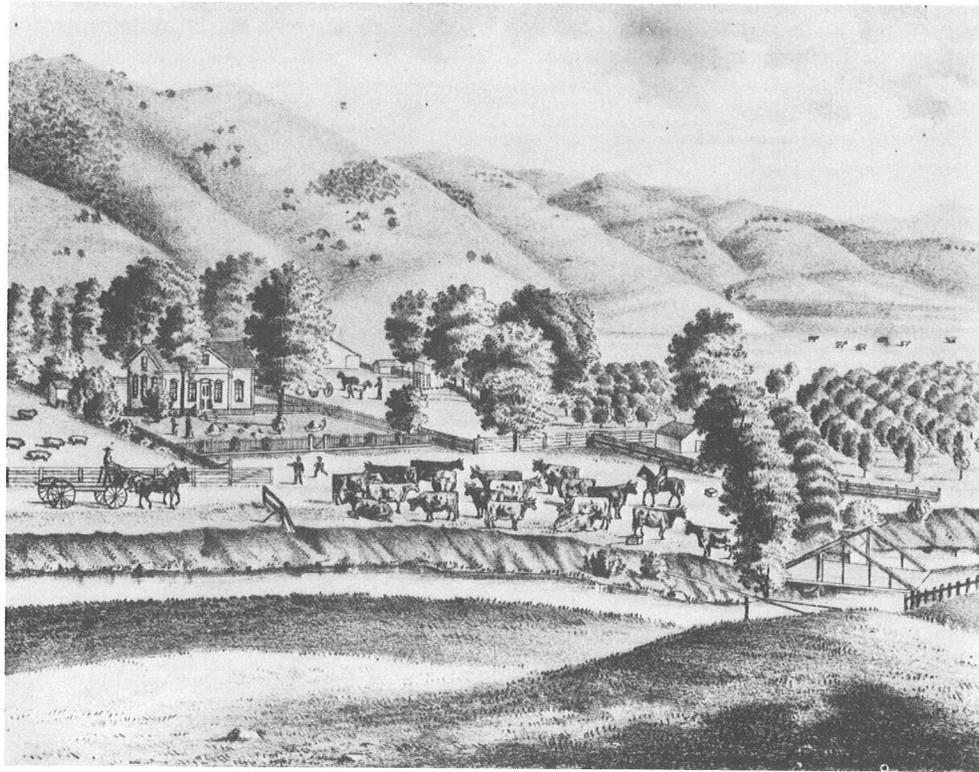
This brief introduction to the selection of trees will be expanded in later sections of this Plan. These three basic elements of plant selection will be related to specific tree selection for various situations in Lafayette.

## HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

At this historic point in time with the celebration of this country's Bicentennial, it is significant to note that the only present-day inhabitants of Lafayette which existed 200 years ago are the trees. A few of those individuals have persisted and are epitomized by The Grand Tree of Lafayette, a Valley Oak at the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church. These remaining old trees are a living heritage of the early landscape of Lafayette.

The landscape of Lafayette has changed remarkably over the years. It would be difficult to reconstruct the landscape of 200 years ago when this nation was founded, but we do know from early photographs that 100 years ago there were fewer trees than today. The Oak Woodlands on the hillsides were rather sparse, probably due to cattle grazing and summer grass fires. However, the thickly wooded streams and water courses have changed little, if any. Meandering ribbons of Oaks, Cottonwoods and other Riparian trees are still predominant in today's landscape.

In that early landscape, the Indians lived in close harmony with the land and its trees. Their symbiotic relationship with nature lasted centuries. Their interdependence on the native vegetation for food, fuel, shelter and materials is well documented. However, a significant aspect of the Indian tenure on the land was the stability of the tree cover. In the Lafayette area as well as elsewhere in California, grass fires were common. Many were deliberately set by the Indians. One member of the Vancouver Expedition in 1792 observed: "All night great fires burned on the land at the back of the harbor (San Francisco); the natives were accustomed to burn the grass to further its growth." And Dr. Alfred Louis Kroeber confirms such observations: "The usual California practice was followed of burning the country over in order to clear out the underbrush for facilitating acorn gathering and to foster the growth of seed bearing annuals." Other records show that the Indians would hunt deer by driving them with grass fires to narrow spaces where they could be easily shot with arrows.



*"Locust Farm"—residence of Nathaniel Jones on Rancho Acalanes.*

The result on the landscape was a more open woodland and a predominance of grassland. Brush, such as Poison Oak, Coyote Brush, and young tree seedlings was controlled by the burning—an effective method no longer used. Thus the large Oaks we see today were carefully preserved and, in fact, encouraged in the Indian days as a principal source of food.

Under the Mexican control of California, the landscape changes were slight. In an effort to reinforce boundaries, a planting requirement was imposed upon Mexican landowners. As a provision of ownership, rancho boundary

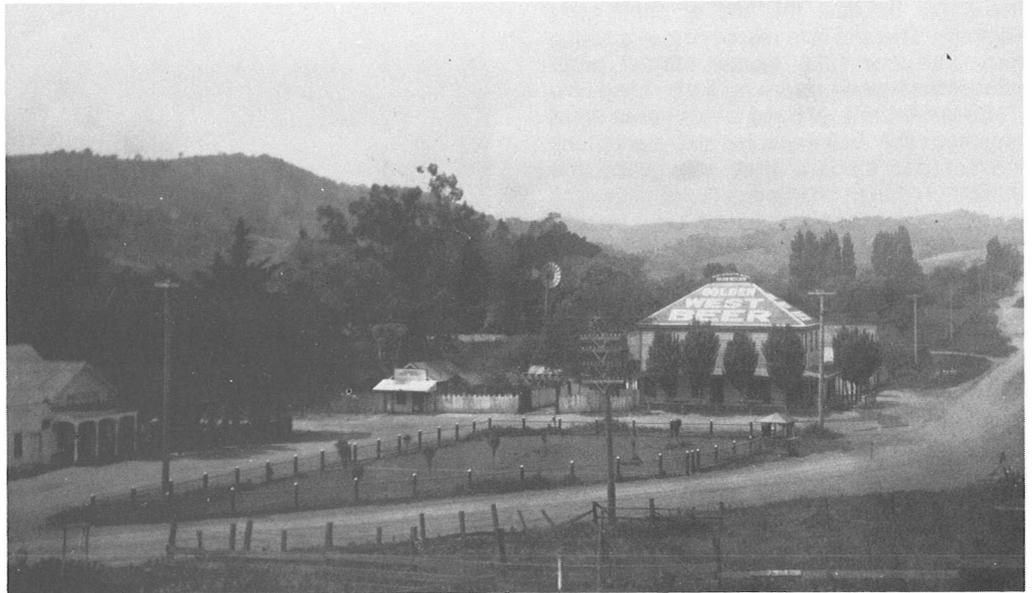
limits were to be marked with "some fruit trees or wild trees of some utility." Such a requirement was made by the Mexican Governor, Candelario Valencia, when he received Rancho Acalanes in 1834. There is little, if any, evidence that this requirement was adhered to in the Lafayette area. The mere size of those early ranchos, let alone the difficulty of establishing trees during the searing hot summers, made this provision almost impossible to fulfill.

Thirty years later as the ranchos were being settled, a tree protection provision was imposed by Horace W. Carpentier on nearly all of the parcels of land he sold within Rancho Laguna de los Palos Colorados. In the deeds to the new landowners he stated that "the Walnut trees shall not be cut down, wasted or destroyed." One of the parcels covered the present Glenside area. This deed restriction might be considered Lafayette's first Tree Ordinance.

When the emigrants from the East arrived, tree planting began in earnest. One of the first trees planted here and in many other early California settlements was the Black Locust. This rugged, spiny native of the East and Midwest was conveniently carried to California as seed. As a valuable source of fence posts on eastern farms it was naturally one of the favorites of the west-bound farmers.

Nathaniel Jones introduced the Locust to Lafayette. Coming West in covered wagons with Elam Brown, the two men eventually settled on Rancho Acalanes which Brown purchased in November, 1847. At some time thereafter, Jones selected 372 acres in what is now Happy Valley and he reportedly planted a great number of Black Locust trees on his farm, naming it "Locust Farm." Jones or those claiming the area around the early settlement near present-day First and Second Street, also planted a number of Locust seeds, on the banks of Lafayette Creek. Apparently these trees became a significant grove for which the Locust Grove Ice Cream Store was later named. A third planting was made around Elam Brown's home near the creek on what is now Hough Avenue.

*Cottonwoods planted as street trees in front of the Wayside Inn.*

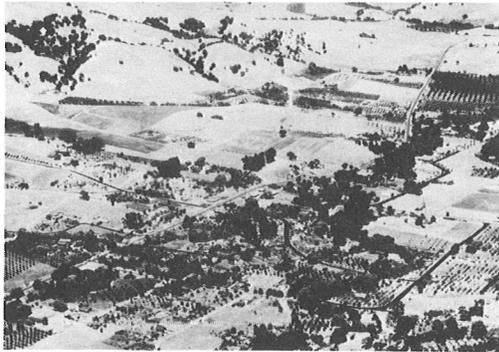


*First trees planted in The Plaza around 1900 by Robert McNeil.*



The Plaza became the site of other early plantings. There is little record of tree planting there until after 1900. Robert McNeil, proprietor of the Pioneer Store (in the building now "The Handlebar"), planted a number of small trees, probably fruit trees. He also planted the two Deodar Cedars that still grace the Methodist Church on Moraga Road. About the same time, the first street trees were planted in front of businesses for shade. Photographs of the Wayside Inn and the Lafayette Hotel, both fronting the Plaza, show these early plantings.

Only a few remnants of the early trees exist today. Several of those Black Locusts and their numerous progeny can still be seen in Happy Valley and along Lafayette Creek between First and Second Streets. These old patriarchs serve as a living link with the early settlement of Lafayette.

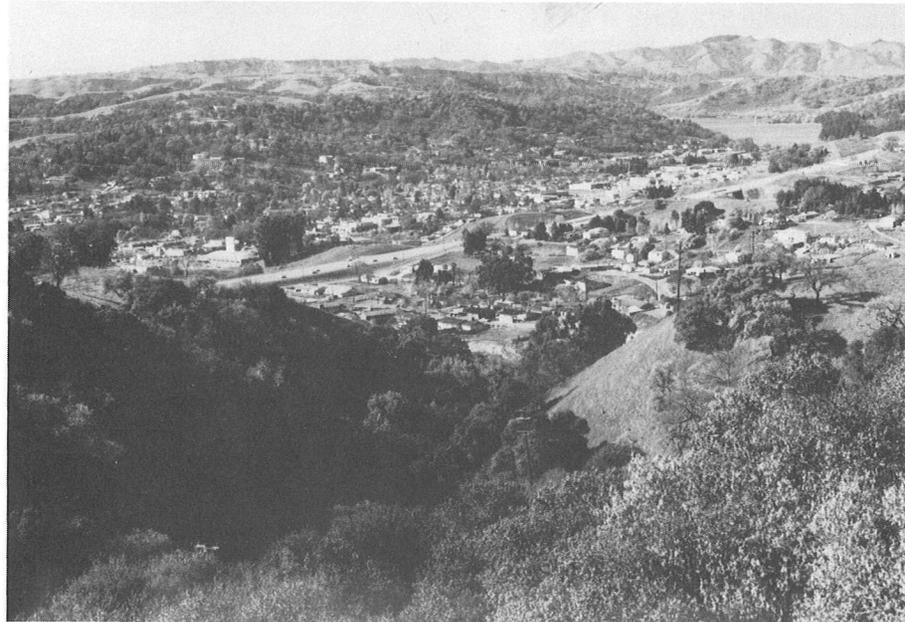


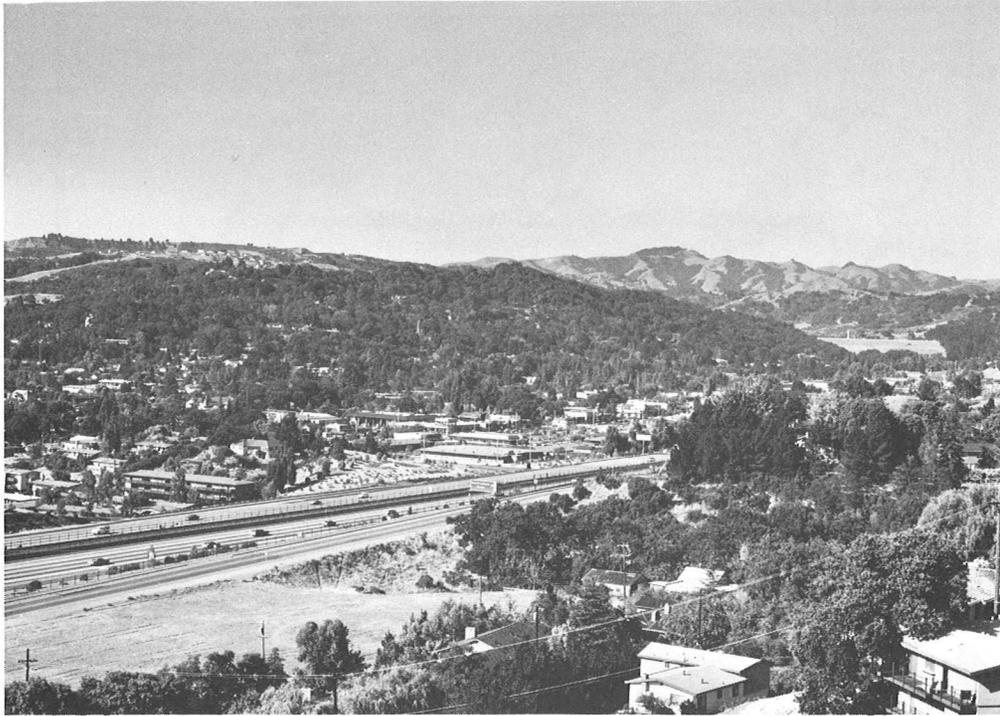
*Orchards provide a patchwork mosaic in Lafayette around 1936.*

Orchards were the next and most prominent tree plantings in the Lafayette area. The pioneers all had orchards for family use. Commercial orchards later dominated the valley bottoms. Fruit trees are generally short-lived and disappear after a few decades unless replanted. Walnut trees last longer, but unless carefully maintained, decline after about 40 years. Today those orchards have all but disappeared with the residential expansion of the City.



*Lafayette from Brown Avenue in 1940 and 1958 showing increased tree cover as well as development.*





*Lafayette from Brown Avenue in 1975*

Suburban development, the last phase of transformation, has been the most rapid and most dramatic, covering a period of only 35 years. Unprecedented tree planting has occurred. With the lack of cattle grazing and increased fire control, the native trees have also increased in numbers. Today the City is a mosaic of many kinds of trees, both native and introduced. Remnants of orchards interspersed within residential housing and occasional livestock ranches studded with Oaks remind us of our agrarian heritage.

Perhaps it is this agricultural heritage which influences the desire of the community to maintain a rural character. The predominance of the natural landscape, woodlands and streams, certainly enhances this ruralism.

The trees, their types and patterns of occurrence, define landscape character. However, with the increasing development of the hills and valley lands, the character is changing.

The growth of the nursery industry and the discovery of new plants from other lands has had a dramatic influence on the landscape of urbanized areas of California. The combination of a mild climate and modern irrigation has extended the range of plant materials. Trees from all parts of the world can be grown in Lafayette. Among the numerous trees from Northern Europe, we have the London Plane Tree and the White Birch. Olive, Oleander, Stone Pine and Lombardy Poplar are a few of the many trees from the Mediterranean—an

area with a climate similar to ours. From Asia come the Crape Myrtle and Chinese Pistache. Japanese imports include more than cars and radios! The Japanese Maple, Flowering Cherries, Evergreen Pear, Ginkgo, several deciduous Magnolias and the Zelkova comprise a few of the many trees from the rich flora of Japan. The Eucalyptus and Acacias from Australia are familiar to the California landscape. The California Pepper, dating back to the Mission Period, is actually from Chile, as is the Mayten Tree.

Emigrants, as well as horticulturists, have introduced a host of North American natives to California. Added to the Black Locust are the Silk Tree, the Southern Magnolia, Sweetgum or Liquidambar and Tulip Tree. Redwoods and Monterey Pines are native to limited areas of California, but have been introduced widely throughout the State. Combining all these species with the increasing selection of cultivated varieties, we have a bewildering array of trees from which to choose for our gardens, streets, parks and other open spaces.

Collectively the planting of trees on both private and public land can change the character of the landscape, whether it is a neighborhood or street or a whole community. The abundance of native trees, primarily the Oak Woodlands and the streamside woods comprise a large part of the rural charm of Lafayette. Most people cherish the many qualities of this landscape. Yet the character of the native landscape can be altered quickly with the large-scale introduction of contrasting trees. The change is usually unintentional—individual plantings of favorite trees which collectively dominate the native trees, especially the slower growing ones. Before long the rural charm that attracted so many people can be transformed into a potpourri of exotic (introduced) trees. Trees planted today affect the quality and character of the community for years to come. The planting must be done sensitively so that the fine qualities of the natural landscape are preserved and enhanced, not obliterated.

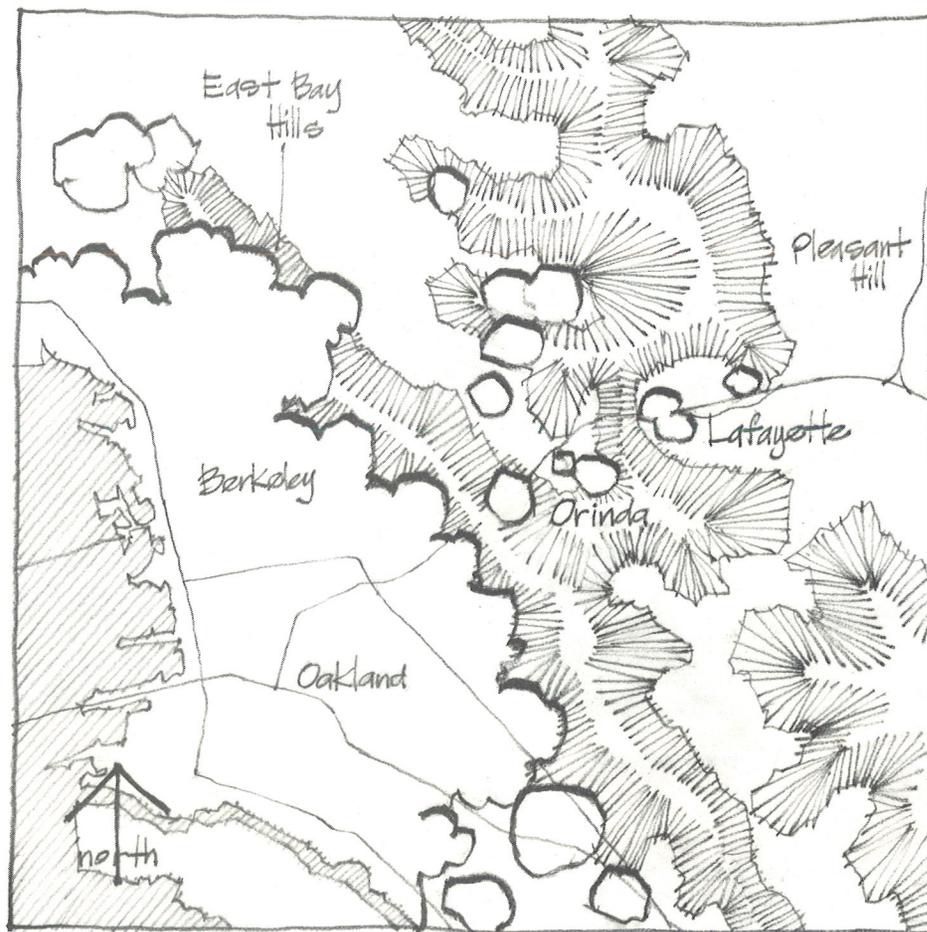
## CLIMATE

Climate more than any other environmental factor determines what plants will grow where. In the natural landscape, the distribution of trees is determined primarily by the amount of precipitation and the temperature range. Wind and wind patterns play a lesser role. The interrelationship of these factors is complex, but a few figures can help to interpret the climate of Lafayette.

The *Sunset Western Garden Book* places most of Lafayette in a zone of cold winter valley floors and land troughs—Zone 14. The warmer hill areas above the valley floors are placed in the milder Zone 15. Typically this area is hot in the summer and cold in the winter. The summer high may reach 112° F (46°C). Frequent, short duration winter frosts can cause temperatures to drop to 17° F (-12°C). Annual rainfall is generally limited to the winter months (November through March) and ranges from 25 to 30 inches (63.5 to 76.2 centimeters).

The East Bay Hills which form a barrier to the ocean's influence are the key to Lafayette's climate. The City is situated in a transition zone between the maritime coastal climate and the continental climate of the Central Valley. Summer fog which prevails on the coast only partially penetrates into the valleys just east of the ridge.

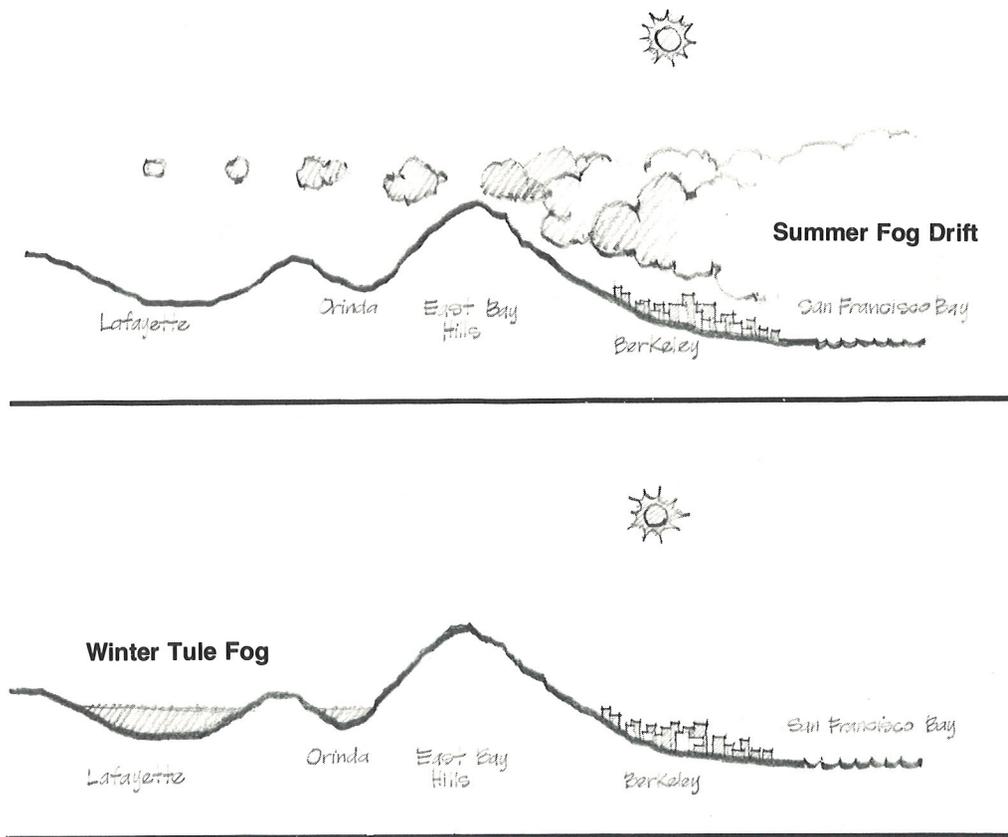
The most important aspects of these rather general data are the extremes. These are limiting factors in relation to plant growth. The lowest temperature on record establishes the cold hardiness limit. The summer extremes indicate the amount of heat stress to be expected. Compared to San Francisco, these extremes are remarkable. A new resident in Lafayette probably has a difficult time understanding the dramatic temperature and fog differences that occur when passing through the Caldecott Tunnel. In a distance of less than 10 miles, there are two very different microclimates.



When selecting plants for Lafayette, temperature differences are extremely important. The handsome Victorian Box (*Pittosporum undulatum*) lining the streets of San Francisco and Berkeley will most certainly freeze out on this side of the East Bay Hills. Thus the more tender, subtropical broadleaf evergreen trees are not well-suited to Lafayette. A list of tender, subtropical trees to avoid in Lafayette is given on page 62. Conversely, heat tolerant trees such as Chinese Pistache (*Pistacia chinensis*) and Silk Tree (*Albizia julibrissin*), both of which are deciduous, grow better in Lafayette than in Berkeley.

East Bay summer fog patterns showing cooling effect from fog drift.

Summer fog cools the coast and increases the amount of precipitation in the form of condensed air moisture. The Crape Myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*) which prefers hot summers is a good indicator of cooling fog. In Walnut Creek it performs very well. In Orinda and parts of Lafayette it tends to mildew (a leaf fungus favored by moist air) and in Berkeley it cannot be successfully grown at all.



Fog patterns over East Bay Hills.

The natural vegetation is a far more reliable indicator of climate patterns than introduced trees. The native trees have survived centuries of weather patterns and have adapted to this locale with the ability to tolerate the cyclical patterns of precipitation and temperature change. Introduced trees may be quite young (less than 50 years old) and may not

have been exposed to any real extremes, especially low temperatures. The Big Freeze of 1972 proved this point. Eucalyptus which have been growing for 70-100 years and thought to be "hardy" were severely damaged or killed. Other less dramatic plant kills also occurred in 1972. Many 20 year old Citrus and Acacias were lost.

Clearly the climate of Lafayette is more suitable for deciduous trees than broadleaf evergreens. Of the thirteen trees native to the area, only three are broadleaf evergreens. These are: Madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*), Coast Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) and California Bay (*Umbellularia californica*).

The Madrone is rarely found in Lafayette due to high summer heat and drier air and soils. It is a coastal tree thriving in the cooler, foggy Redwood belt. The Coast Live Oak reaches its eastern limit near Lafayette on the western edge of the Central Valley. In Lafayette the Live Oak occurs near streams, and on east or north facing slopes while the Madrone is limited to occasional distribution on the cooler east or north facing hillsides where fog may linger a little longer. By comparison Orinda's hills are thickly covered with Madrone and Live Oak.

The valley bottoms and especially the water courses are the coldest winter areas due to cold air drainage. Here deciduous trees predominate; they include the Buckeye (*Aesculus californica*), Cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*), Willows (*Salix species*) Alder (*Alnus rhombifolia*), Boxelder (*Acer negundo*), Valley oak (*Quercus lobata*) and Black Walnut (*Juglans hindsii*). The ridges and hillsides, especially south and west facing slopes, are warmer and drier. On these slopes, tree cover is sparse and grassland predominates with patches of chaparral.

Thus the climate of Lafayette is a composite of many microclimates with subtle variations based upon elevation, slope exposure and fog patterns. Tree selection should coincide with these differences, using the natural tree cover as an indicator. The temperature extremes are the critical factors in determining what trees will thrive here. Because of irrigation, rainfall is a less important factor.

All trees recommended for use in Lafayette in this Plan are capable of tolerating these climatic conditions. This common denominator of climate, along with a sensitivity to the character and composition of the natural landscape, are the underlying themes for tree selection in this Master Tree Plan.

## THE NATURAL LANDSCAPE

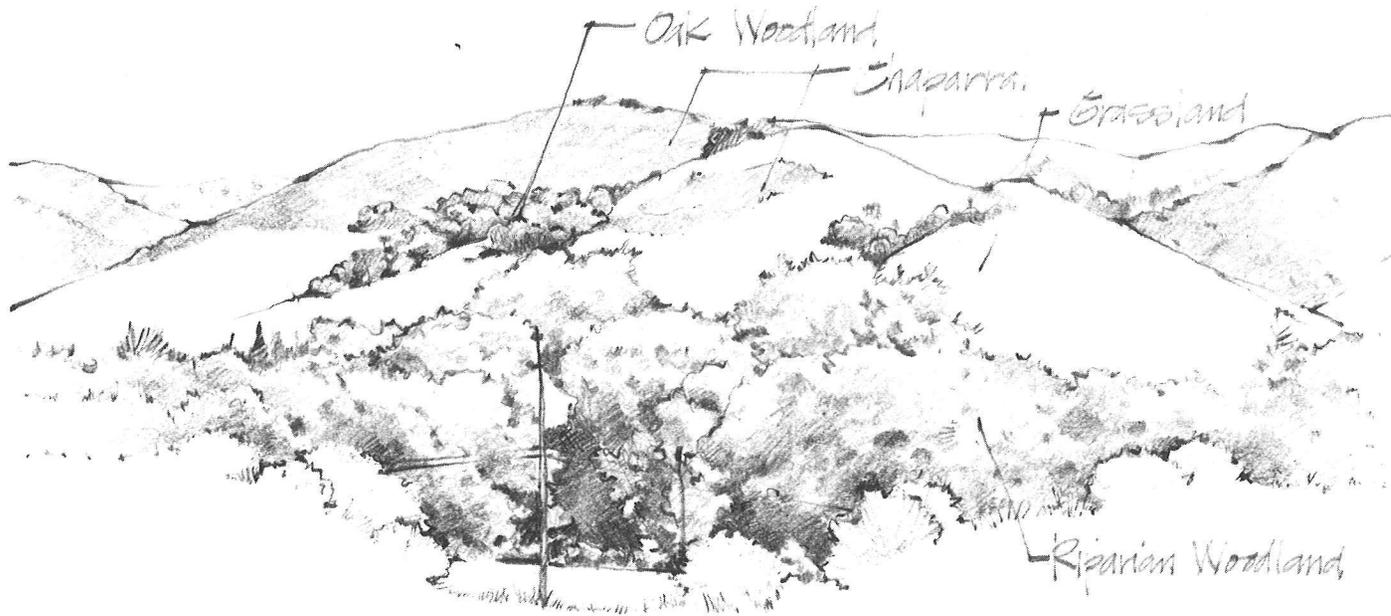
The natural vegetation of Lafayette contributes immeasurably to its rural quality. The two predominant plant communities which lend this charm are the Oak Woodlands and the Riparian (streamside) Woodlands. Grassland is a third plant community which sets off the woodlands with a sharply contrasting color and texture. Together they form handsome patterns of greens and browns. Chaparral, the fourth plant community, exists in relatively few areas and is composed of primarily shrubby plants. The accompanying sketch shows the general distribution of these plant communities in Lafayette.

If the rural qualities of Lafayette are to remain, the woodlands must also remain. Much of the Oak Woodland is developed and nearly all the creeks located in flat valley bottoms are bordered by residential property. With develop-

ment of the land, new trees are planted and through time these trees mature and have an effect on the character and quality of their settings. Unfortunately, few of the plantings we see today are sensitively related to the natural woodlands. Cedars, Pines, Birches and other exotic trees are being planted beneath towering Oaks or are mixed in the woodlands. Ultimately they grow up into the overhead trees or against the woodland edge, destroying the charm of the woodland character. Lawns or heavily irrigated plantings are installed under the trees and not only disrupt the visual quality, but may cause disease and eventual death of the Oaks.

Similarly along creeks, especially where flood control work has caused the removal of the native trees, new plants are installed with total disregard for either the visual or ecological order. Ornamentals such as Oleander, Twisted Juniper, Podocarpus and Bamboo sharply contrast the lush Riparian Woodland and disrupt its continuity. In time these woodlands can lose their charm and one of the most important qualities of Lafayette will be gone.

To help understand how to plant in these natural areas, let us first describe the ecological elements that contribute to their existence and examine their visual components.



*The four plant communities of Lafayette represented on the hills north of Happy Valley.*

## Oak Woodland

Situated in a series of interior valleys between the East Bay Hills and the Diablo range, Lafayette is in a transitional vegetation zone as discussed in the section on Climate. The combination of ample rainfall, some maritime cooling and warm summers favor the lush growth of Oaks and other trees. In the Coast Range, the hills and valleys typically run north and south. The cooler, moister east facing slopes are heavily wooded and the warmer, drier west facing slopes more barren, frequently covered by only grasses. In Lafayette this pattern is somewhat modified by the occurrence of northeast—southwest running hills such as Lafayette Ridge to the north of the City and Lafayette Heights south of the town center. These ridges, especially Lafayette Heights, create expanses of cooler north facing slopes which are thickly wooded. The

resulting landscape displays the predominance of the Oak Woodlands. Drier than similar slopes nearer the coast (Orinda or parts of Marin County), these hillsides are dominated by the Valley Oak (*Quercus lobata*) with occasional occurrences of Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) and Black Oak (*Quercus kelloggii*). The Black Oak is found only in the coolest canyons and is rarely seen in the eastern part of the City. Canyon Live Oak (*Quercus chrysolepis*) is sometimes found in the drier canyons and Blue Oak (*Quercus douglasii*) occurs on a few of the driest ridges. The Valley Oaks extend into the valley bottoms where they attain great size because of deeper soils and an ample underground water supply. Both California Bay (*Umbellularia californica*) and Buckeye (*Aesculus californica*) accompany the Oaks adding complementary contrasts near ravines.



Oak Woodland.

These native Oaks regenerate easily. Anyone who has cultivated the soil near an Oak can attest to this. A multitude of seedlings sprout effortlessly and in a surprisingly short time become small trees. Oaks are often scorned as slow growers and frequently are not planted as a result. Both the Valley Oak and the Live Oak grow relatively fast—1 to 2 feet a year—if properly managed.

Proper management is the key to survival and encouragement of the Oak Woodlands. The following horticultural pointers are outlined here as a part of the design guidelines for tree plantings in or near natural Oak Woodlands:

**Competition**—The great Oaks we see today grew to that size because competition from other plants was controlled by either fire or grazing. When Oak seedlings are thinned out, those remaining grow more quickly and robustly.

**Pruning**—For vigorous growth, the tops of Oaks should be thinned and the lower branches gradually removed. The very top branches of an Oak should never be headed back.

**Watering** — Irrigation around the base of an individual Oak or Oak grove should be minimal. Use drought tolerant shrubs and groundcover as an understory and keep lawns away from the tree trunks. Water runoff from lawns located upslope from an Oak usually kill the tree. The soil around the trunks must be kept dry during the summer to prevent root and crown rotting diseases. Occasional deep watering can benefit young Oaks and help increase their growth rate.

**Shade Tolerant Understory**—Oaks cast a dense shade under their canopy. Sun loving shrubs and groundcover do not perform well if planted as an understory. Sun seeking trees planted beneath Oaks tend to grow tall, blocking out the sculptural elegance of trunks and branches. Choose low growing, shade tolerant plants for planting beneath Oaks.

## COMPATIBLE TREES FOR OAK WOODLANDS

Plant Name	Deciduous/ Broadleaf Evergreen	Shade Tolerance	Drought Tolerance
*Acer circinatum— Vine Maple	deciduous	good	fair
*Aesculus californica— California Buckeye	deciduous	good	good
A. carnea— Red-flowering Horsechestnut	deciduous	poor	fair
Arbutus unedo— Strawberry Tree	broadleaf	fair	good
*Ceanothus arboreus— Feltleaf Ceanothus	broadleaf	fair	good
C.a. 'Ray Hartman'— Ceanothus Variety	broadleaf	fair	good
Ceratonia siliqua— Carob	broadleaf	fair	good
*Cercis occidentalis— Western Redbud	deciduous	poor	good
Crataegus 'Autumn Glory' Hawthorn Variety	deciduous	poor	good
*Heteromeles arbutifolia— Toyon	broadleaf	good	good
Photinia serrulata Chinese Photinia	broadleaf	good	good
Pistacia chinensis— Chinese Pistache	deciduous	poor	good
*Prunus ilicifolia— Hollyleaf Cherry	broadleaf	good	good
*P. lyonii— Catalina Cherry	broadleaf	good	good
Pyrus kawakami— Evergreen Pear	deciduous	good	fair
*Quercus agrifolia— Coast Live Oak	broadleaf	fair	good
Q. coccinea— Scarlet Oak	deciduous	fair	fair
Q. ilex— Holly Oak	broadleaf	fair	good
*Q. kelloggii— Black Oak	deciduous	fair	good
*Q. lobata— Valley Oak	deciduous	fair	good
Q. rubra— Red Oak	deciduous	fair	fair
Quercus suber— Cork Oak	broadleaf	fair	good
Robinia pseudoacacia— Black Locust	deciduous	good	good

Visual as well as horticultural guidelines apply to the perpetuation of Oak Woodlands. An Oak Woodland has qualities which can be described in words—rounded forms, dark green color, fine texture, sculptural trunks, spreading shade. The “look” of an Oak Woodland can be achieved by using trees and plants other than Oaks. The important element of visual continuity lies in the selection of compatible plants having similar visual qualities.

**Form — Select trees or understory shrubs which repeat the rounded forms. Avoid conical tree forms that disrupt the inherent harmony of the rounded woodland.**

**Color — Select plants with medium to dark green foliage. Bright light green foliage sharply contrasts the dark green values of Oaks.**

Grass, Poison Oak and Snowberry together with Buckeye, California Bay and occasionally Toyon comprise the main understory plants found in an Oak Woodland. A number of other California natives also satisfy the horticultural and visual design guidelines for understory planting. Exclusive use of natives might be ecologically desirable, but highly limiting. Many natives are difficult to grow commercially and are touchy to transplant. The list of compatible trees for Oak Woodlands includes both natives and other suitable plants from similar climate zones. Conifers have been omitted from the list because of both visual and ecological incompatibility.

The asterisk (\*) indicates a California Native.