



Wild grapes can become raisins right on the vine.

Although these were planted along a wall, lush tangles of native vines including grapes, clematis, and honeysuckle flourish along California streams.



Rose hips, rich in Vitamin C, are another wild fruit you may see along Codornices Creek in winter.

Can you find creekside plants that bear native strawberries, blackberries, currants, or elderberries in summer? (Don't eat what you don't know!)



The song sparrow and black phoebe, over, stay all year. The (female) Audubon's warbler, above, is a winter visitor. Others pass through in spring and fall.

The song sparrow, right, hops and scratches along the ground. The black phoebe, below, loops out to catch insects.



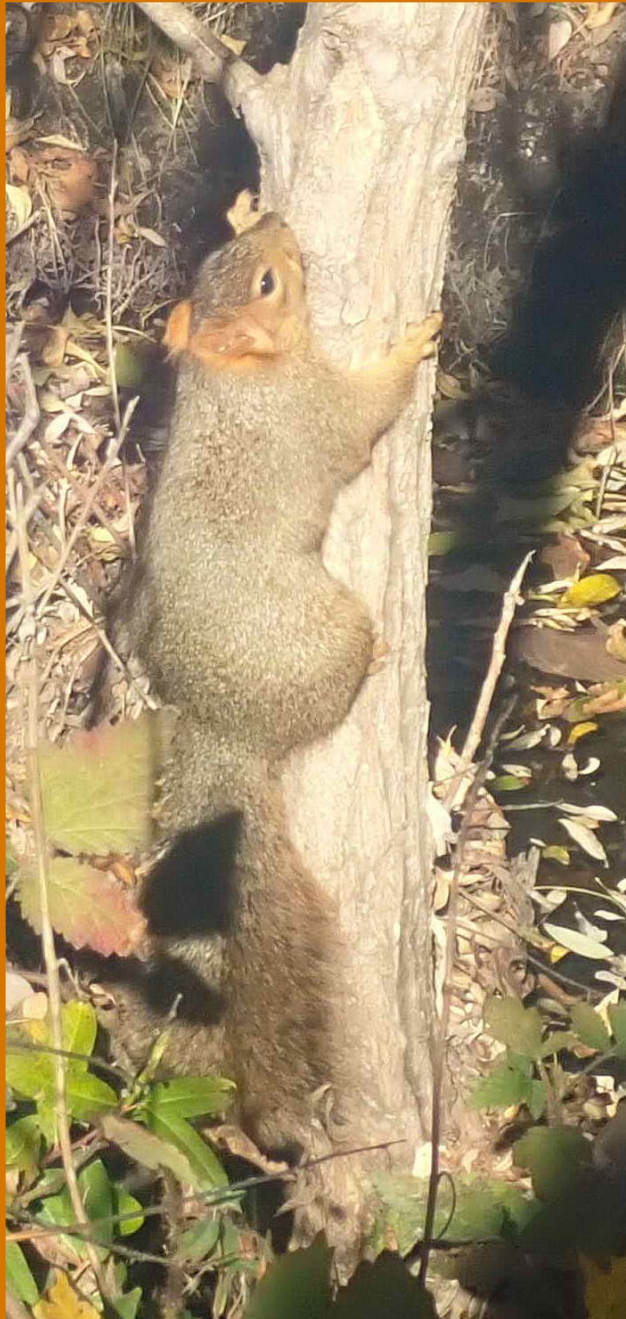
You can get to know the calls, shapes, sizes, markings, and flying styles of the little birds along the creek, even without knowing their names.





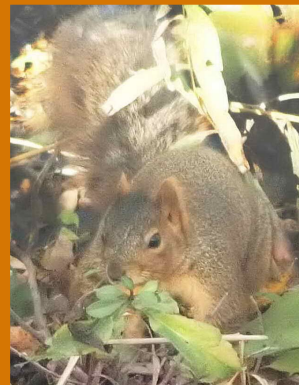
Squirrels' nests, built of sticks and leaves, look like bushy basketballs high in trees.

How many can you spot along the creek?



**Fox squirrels,
brought from
Eastern states,
now rule city
parks
on the West
Coast.**

**Named for
their rusty
colors, they are
the continent's
largest tree
squirrel.**





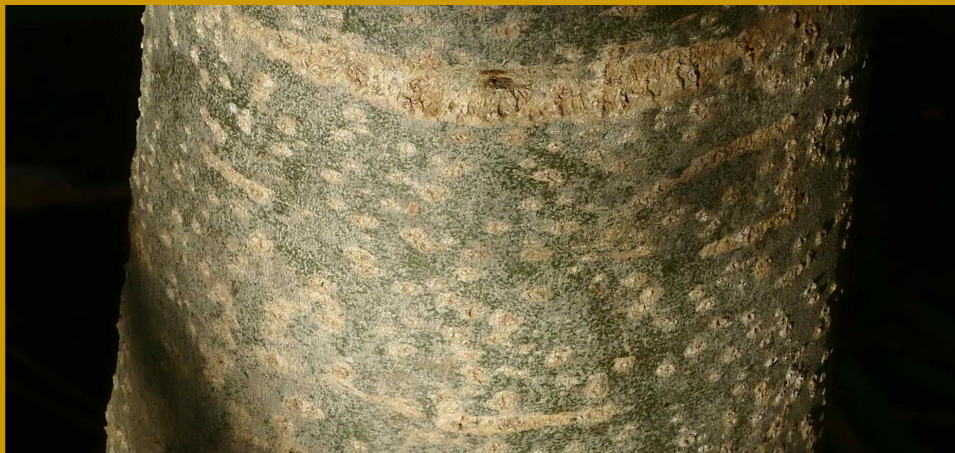
Like many trees, blue elderberry develops vertical ridges. As limbs thicken, new bark grows just above the inner wood. Old bark splits and builds up in layers.

Joints, where leaves once branched from twigs, strengthen these branches. They are filled with soft pith, hollowed out by Native Americans to make flutes and clappers.



You can find stories in the patterns of bark.

Dots in young bark, called lenticels, are pores that let the tree “breathe.” As the tree grows, these sometimes stretch into horizontal lines.





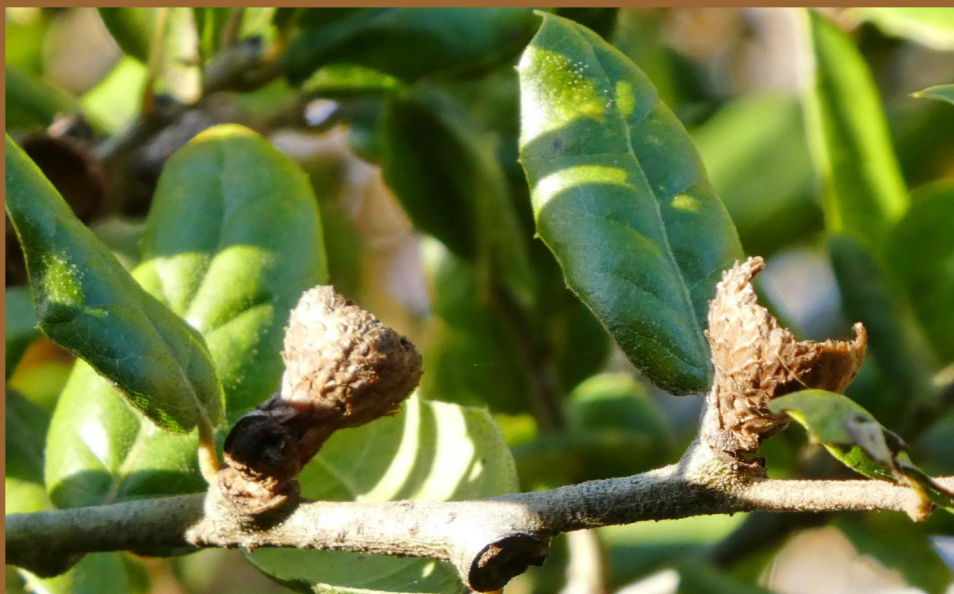
**Plumed clematis seeds
waft from pom-poms
hanging from vines.**

**How many ways for
seeds to travel can you
spot?**





**Maple seeds spiral away like little helicopters.
Squirrels bury and forget acorns, which sprout.**





The monarch butterflies you see may be lost. The great West Coast monarch migration crashed two years ago. Remnants may not find each other to cluster for warmth and mating. Where and how would others insects spend winters?



With wings folded, monarchs can be surprisingly well camouflaged.



**Sedges have edges,
rushes are round,
grasses have joints right down to the ground....**

Especially along creeks, many grass-like plants are something else, like the gray rush, above, and the paniced bulrush, really a sedge, over. You don't need to know the fine points of identification to appreciate their beauty. How many different kinds can you see near here?



Seasons fade into one another in our climate. Buds of California buck-eye, right, and willow, below, swell even as leaves fall.

New alder catkins sprout alongside last year's cones (over).

Can you find other signs of spring?



