

Tongva Plant Tour

White Sage/ Kasili/ *Salvia apiana*/ Lamiaceae

Food: use it in salads raw or in cooking, however it must be washed very carefully. Wash until there is no longer a sticky texture. If there is a sticky texture, don't use. The reason being that there is a chemical found in the plant, called Thujone, which can cause epileptic shock.

Spiritual: Sage can be smoked with tobacco. It has a wonderful taste and scent. It can also simply be burned at the tip. Once burnt wave the smoke around the room, and there will remain a wonderful aroma. Sage can be used for smudging. Native Americans, including the Tongva people, used to smudge the oils of plants on friends, family, the elderly. They smudge as a sign of friendship. They also smudged the sage on armor because it brought good luck and prevented bad luck

Coastal Sagebrush/ Pawots/ *Artemisia Californica*/ Asteraceae

This plant is not actually a sage, but is rather in the same species as a sunflower, although it is a bush

Basketry: can use its thin wire like branches for basket making.

Medicinal: Put on cuts as a sort of bandage. This plant can also be used to make a tea, which all young native American women drank during the days of their first menstrual cycle to purify themselves. The tea was also given to new babies to purify them.

Spiritual: The blossoms and leaves were hung in sweathouses so that their aroma would fill the air.

Buckwheat/ Wilakal/ *Eriogonum fasciculatum*/ Polygonaceae

The flowers are three different colors: white, pink, and brown. The bee cannot see the white or brown and therefore only pollinates the pink flowers. These flowers then turn brown.

Food: Shoots and seeds are ground with other seeds and can be made into mash. The seeds can also be created into a meal that you can use for all sorts of things such as pancakes, cupcakes, etc. But you'd need to collect many many seeds in order to do so, and this work is time consuming.

Medicinal: A tea can be made that helps with breathing problems, the roots help headaches.

Spiritual: Women spread the seeds about in ceremonies.

Other: The stems of this bush can be sharp enough to pierce one's ears with.

Black Sage/ Kasili/ *Lamiaceaesalvia mellifera*

Food: You can use this sage the same ways as white sage, and they require the same washing precautions.

Medicinal: You can mash up the sage with white sage for smudging. You can also mash it up on its own and put in your ear to heal an ear ache. It may also be used in teas for helping a cough.

Chamise/ Hu'utah/ *Adenostoma fasciculatum*/ Rosaceae

In appearance it is a big bush with white flowers.

Medicinal: A strong tea or oil may be made from the bark to cure skin infections.

Construction: The bushes were maintained well by native people so that their thick branches might grow straight and then be used to build huts for Shamans. It is also great fire wood, so good that it tends to explode if you burn too much.

Basin Sagebrush/Wikwat/ *Artemisia tridentate*/ Asteraceae

This plant was and is the most sacred of all plants for the native Americans of California. These people came from the Great Basin after the ice age, when everything dried up. This plant reminded them of their homeland in the basin, hence the name Basin Sagebrush. They had the bush here in CA, however shamans would travel all the way up to Oregon, Nevada, etc. to have some of the original plant, and

bring it back. Our own here on campus is shriveled up and almost dying despite the good rain we've had recently.

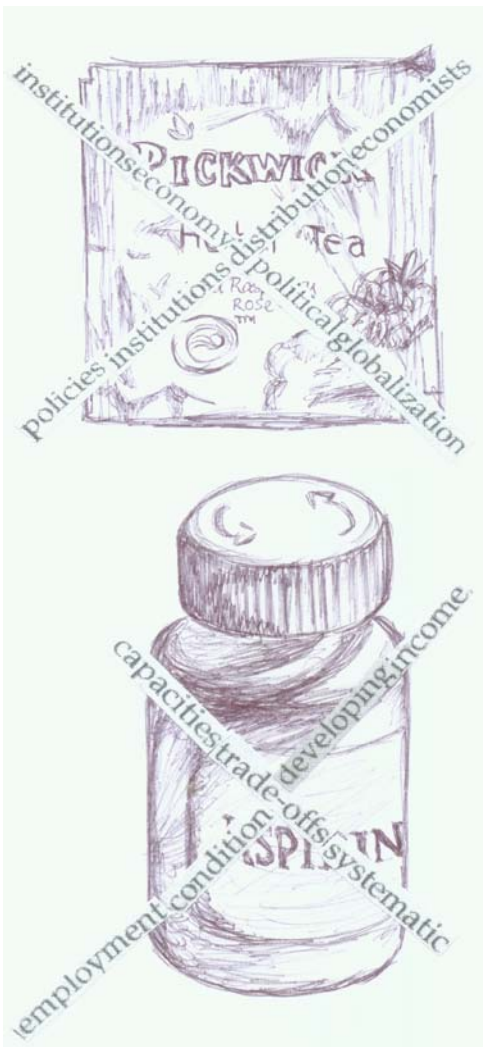
Food: The seeds of the bush may be mashed into thuat (sp?) to get oils out and then put together in cakes- no water, no animal fat. Just oil and seeds.

Medicinal: Leaves were burned in sweatshouses to disinfect the hut and the surrounding area. Teas may be made for stomach aches and fever.

Spiritual: The plant is used for smudging, and the sharp leaves may be used for tattooing with many dyes. Green colors used in tattoos were only for chiefs. There are also black, blue, red, and yellow. Yellow was seen as a very mysterious and eerie color because it was used on the dead.

MONOCULTURE IN QUESTION

(Because It Should Be)



Vandana Shiva describes Monoculture as, “The disappearance of local knowledge through its interaction with the dominant western knowledge, which takes place at many levels, through many steps.”

Have you ever noticed or rather considered the many ways in which you’re dependent on the western knowledge? Have you thought about the fact that we’ve forgotten the knowledge and traditions of the indigenous peoples that once lived on Pitzer College’s campus?

For example, plants on our campus such as Laurel, Chamise, Buckwheat, Sage, etc, can be used as teas, foods, medicines, and spiritual items. They’re all around. So why grab a Pickwick Tea bag or an Aspirin when you’re sick? There *are* ways in which we can resist Monoculture in our own way every day.

For More Information

See my email, “Monoculture in Question” on Student-Talk

