

UC SANTA BARBARA

# THE *Current*

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Eileen Conrad

## **Self-Guided Exotic Flora Walking Tour of UC Santa Barbara Is 'A Walk Through Six Continents of Plant Life'**

Octopus Tree.

Senegal Date Palm.

Montezuma Cypress.

These are examples of the unusual and prized tree specimens visitors will see on a new self-guided Exotic Flora Walking Tour of UC Santa Barbara created by the Cheadle Center for Biodiversity and Ecological Restoration on the campus.

UCSB's diverse and botanically rich ornamental horticulture includes plants from six continents.

A few plant species are unique to the campus and are found nowhere else in Santa Barbara County.

The free, illustrated brochure is the first in a series of Exotic Flora Walking Tours to be produced by the center's Campus Flora Project.

Copies are available from the UCSB Visitor Center, the Bookstore, and the Cheadle Center, which is located in the Harder Stadium Building near Storke Field.

Additional walking tours focusing on palms and edible plants are planned.

"Each plant on campus has a wonderful story to tell," explains Bree Belyea, project manager.

Belyea and her colleagues are cataloging UCSB's plant species and compiling their rich histories for an interactive new web site.

For the first time, UCSB's extraordinary horticultural history and preservation efforts -- including the notes of the botanical collectors -- will be accessible to students, educators, and enthusiasts.

"Using the site's interactive map, everyone will be able to design their own botanical tours of UCSB based on their specific interests in a particular species or a desire to see red flowering plants in April, for example, using their preferred mode of transportation," said Belyea.

Many of the campus' exotic plants were propagated from seeds or grown from specimens gathered decades ago by UCSB botanists, including the late Vernon I. Cheadle, UCSB chancellor from 1962-1977.

He recognized the special opportunity and favorable circumstances of this botanically rich coastal environment, said Jennifer Thorsch, Katherine Essau director of the Cheadle Center.

Cheadle had a vision of developing the campus into an outdoor classroom that would serve as an educational tool and also create an environment of great beauty.

Today, biology, art, geology, geography, and environmental studies classes make use of the extraordinary plants in UCSB's landscape.

The cover of the brochure includes an illustration produced by Oriana Connolly, a student in a College of Creative Studies botanical illustration class.

The exotic tree tour, which begins and ends at the Visitor Center, is an hour-long loop.

The brochure's map identifies the location of 11 species.

Each description provides the common name, species, origin, history, and cultural use.

For example, the dawn redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*), near South Hall, "was originally described from fossil specimens and thought to be extinct for millions of years until living specimens were found in China in 1944.

In 1947, a botanical expedition to China brought back seeds and later distributed living plants to various U.S. botanical gardens."

The Jurassic Park area on the west side of Webb Hall is home to various plants whose ancestors were present when *T. rex* roamed the planet.

These plants have evolved minimally over millions of years.

They include *Araucaria bidwillii* from Queensland, Australia, and *Araucaria rulei*, from New Caledonia.

Some of the oldest trees on campus are the massive windrow of Tasmanian blue gum (*Eucalyptus globulus*) next to Noble Hall.

The row of eucalyptus was planted to provide a windbreak for bean crops in the 1940s or earlier.

Other remnants of windrows are found throughout the campus.

In addition, the Cheadle Center recently published the third edition of its immensely popular pocket guide, "Native Plants & Habitats of the UCSB Campus" (see cover at right).

The 135-page booklet, featuring seven habitats and 57 California native plants, includes a photograph of each plant, and information about cultural and wildlife use.

It is a great resource for anyone interested in learning about California Native Plants, said Ben Reder, restoration coordinator at the center.

Reder first prepared the guide as a teaching tool for Kids in Nature, an educational outreach program at the center.

Demand has steadily grown, and the book has been redesigned and reprinted twice.

"Native Plants & Habitats of the UCSB Campus" is available for purchase from the Cheadle Center, the UCSB Bookstore, the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, and the Isla Vista Food Co-op.

Beautiful greeting cards with photographs of local plants and wildlife taken by the center's staff (see sample at right) are also for sale at the center and the campus bookstore.

Proceeds from the sale of the guide and the cards support the center's student internship and restoration programs.

A walking tour of UCSB Campus Lagoon Area has also been produced by the center.

Both the exotic tree tour and the lagoon tour are available online.

(Please see link below.)

The Cheadle Center for Biodiversity and Ecological Restoration houses over 350,000 botanical and zoological specimens.

For over 60 years, these valuable collections have contributed to the research and educational missions of the university.

It is responsible for managing and restoring many of the biologically diverse natural areas on campus including the Lagoon, North Bluff, Storke Wetlands, Manzanita Village, and most recently the San Clemente Housing project.

The Cheadle Center's collections are available for use by UCSB faculty, researchers, staff, and students as well as community members, including biological consultants, government agencies, and K-12 educators and their students.

The Campus Flora Project is funded by a grant from the Elvenia Slosson Foundation at UC Davis.

For more information about the Cheadle Center visit: [ccber.lifesci.ucsb.edu](http://ccber.lifesci.ucsb.edu) or call (805) 893-4211.

The center is open Monday through Friday, between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.

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The UCSB Exotic Flora Walking Tour brochure is available [here \[3338k PDF\]](#).

The Campus Lagoon Area Tour brochure is available [here \[550k PDF\]](#).

Related Links

[Cheadle Center for Biodiversity and Ecological Restoration](#)

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## **About UC Santa Barbara**

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.