

Huckleberry Botanic Regional Preserve is an ecological jewel. The native plant community found here is seen nowhere else in the East Bay and represents a relic plant association found only in certain areas in California where ideal soil and climatic conditions exist.

The vegetation association of this Preserve finds its roots in past climates and geologic history. The plants originated in the distant past along the southern coast of California when the climate was more moist and tempered by the cool coastal fog. Today, similar vegetation is found on the islands off the Santa Barbara coast and in isolated pockets on the mainland coast from Point Conception to Montara Mountain, south of San Francisco. Huckleberry Preserve has a year-round display of blossoming plants, many rare to the East Bay.

Stroll along the narrow, winding self-guided Huckleberry Interpretive Loop Trail to explore the heartland of the Preserve. Many plants that you encounter are usually confined to the immediate north coast region. Notable here are the dense thickets of shrubby chaparral, including species such as coast huckleberry, coast silktassel, and chinquapin.

The unusual geology of the Preserve, belonging to the Claremont shale/chert formation, owes its origin to the stratified skeletal, siliceous remains of microscopic diatoms and radiolaria, interspersed with thin bands of shale. This formation was laid down in a deep ocean basin, solidified and later uplifted and exposed to erosion probably about 12 million years ago. Today it is exposed as hard, brittle bands of interbedded chert and shale.

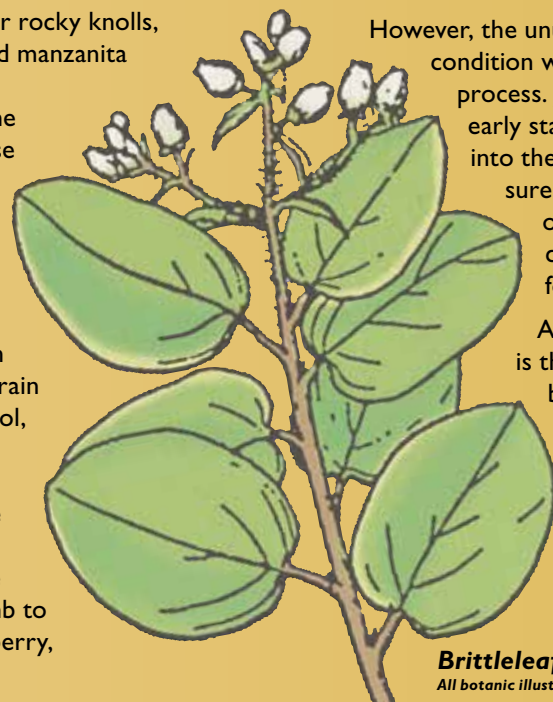
Besides the extremely poor water holding capacity of this soil due to its fractured and gravelly texture, the nutrient values are low relative to other local soils. This unusual edaphic (soil-influenced) condition favors pioneering chaparral species and precludes the immediate intrusion of other local species.

On the most barren “rises” or rocky knolls, brittleleaf manzanita and pallid manzanita dominate. These manzanitas, particularly the former, are the true shrubby pioneers of these knolls, and actually require these barren sites for their continued health and survival.

The Preserve’s location due east of the Golden Gate, with resulting exposure to winter rain and summer fog, results in cool, moist conditions which aid in natural succession in which plant species thrive for a time but are gradually replaced by other species. In this way, the manzanitas eventually succumb to other species such as huckleberry, silktassel, and chinquapin.

All this time, and in the absence of fire, leaf and branch litter is deposited, soil development becomes richer and deeper, and each succeeding species’ leaf canopy continues to develop upward, eventually shading over and killing the previous species. Over time, this succession – a natural part of the evolution of California’s landscape – will progress toward oak/bay forest, in which bay laurels and live oaks move into the chaparral areas to shade out the chamise and manzanitas.

In the past, fire played an important role in maintaining the early, pioneer stages of this successional process. An adaptation to fire by these “pioneering” chaparral species are the swollen basal trunks, or burls, from which new healthy shoots sprout prolifically and develop into maturity in the years following a fire. Other species of this chaparral community will re-seed themselves in the burn sites. This early pioneer plant succession will develop toward maturity, and the whole process of species replacement will continue until fire returns.



Brittleleaf manzanita
All botanic illustrations courtesy of the Jepson Herbarium, UC Berkeley

However, the unusual edaphics of this shale/chert condition will greatly slow this successional process. Just how long it takes for the early stages of its succession to develop into the latent stages, no one knows for sure. These early successional stages, or the presence of these unique chaparral species, are the basis for the Preserve.

An unusual feature of the Preserve is the year-round display of plants in bloom. The rare pallid manzanita is clothed in clusters of small, white- to rose-tinged, urn-shaped flowers as early as November. Coast silktassel is adorned with long, draping

silky catkins in late December. The rare western leatherwood dangles golden blooms in early January, and the pink-flowering currant displays pink blooms somewhat later. Creamy-white and pinkish floral sprays of creambush, and ripening thimbleberries appear from May through July. The bush monkey flower’s orange, funnel-shaped blossom contrasts against the silvery-gray foliage and sky blue blossoms of the silver bush lupine. Late summer and fall bring ripening huckleberries and the red-berried clusters of the Pacific madrone.

As winter approaches, the bare twigs of deciduous shrubs emerge with hints of new life as young leaves unravel and silken catkins glisten in the morning dew. There is an endless array of color and form in leaves, twigs, flowers, and fruits year-round along the Huckleberry Interpretive Loop Trail.

Ours to Explore, Enjoy & Protect

Please enjoy the Regional Parks safely and help protect and preserve the parklands by following all park rules and regulations.

Safety

- Stay on trails. Shortcuts are dangerous and damage natural resources.
- Bring plenty of water to prevent dehydration.
- Be prepared for sudden changes in weather conditions.
- Keep parks clean. Pack out what you pack in.
- Inform someone where you are going and when you will return.
- Save our 24/7 Dispatch Center number on your cell phone: Emergency (510) 881-1121; Nonemergency (510) 881-1833.

PLEASE STAY ON TRAIL

Rules

- Visitors are responsible for knowing and complying with park rules (Ordinance 38), available online at ebparks.org/rules.
- Dogs and horses are not allowed but they can pass through Huckleberry on the Skyline National Trail.
 - Bicycling, camping, wading and/or swimming is not allowed.
 - Alcoholic beverages are not permitted within 50 feet of roadways or parking lots, or in posted areas.



East Bay Regional Park District
2950 Peralta Oaks Court
Oakland, CA 94605
ebparks.org
Tel: 1-888-EBPARKS or 1-888-327-2757 (TRS 711)



To Reach Huckleberry:

7087 Skyline Blvd, Oakland, CA 94611

From Highway 24 in Oakland, take the Fish Ranch Road exit just east of the Caldecott Tunnel. Continue .8 miles to Grizzly Peak Blvd. Turn left and go 2.4 miles on Grizzly Peak to Skyline Boulevard. Turn left and drive approximately one-half mile to the park entrance on the left, past Sibley Volcanic Regional Preserve.

Public Transit: Call AC Transit: 511, or visit 511.org.



A Hiking Interlude: Botanic Stops along the self-guided Huckleberry Interpretive Loop Trail

The self-guided tour is a 1.7-mile loop. Allow two hours to hike the loop and read the numbered botanic interpretive panels.

If you prefer a less strenuous trail, skip the loop's descent into the bay forest. Just take the Upper Huckleberry Loop Trail following panels one-through-15, then return.

Park Stats

- Year opened: 1973
- Acres: 240
- Access to the 15+-mile-long Delta de Anza Trail.
- Originally acquired to connect the Skyline National Trail from Sibley to Reinhardt Redwood regional parks.



Douglas Iris (*Iris douglasiana*)

Interpretive Panels

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| 1. Pink-flowering Currant (<i>Ribes glutinosum</i>) | 10. Jimbrush (<i>Ceanothus soledatus</i>) |
| 2. Ocean Spray (<i>Holodiscus discolor</i>) | 11. Canyon Live Oak (<i>Quercus chrysolepis</i>) |
| 3. Pallid Manzanita (<i>Arctostaphylos pallida</i>) | 12. California Bay (<i>Umbellularia californica</i>) |
| 4. Chinquipin (<i>Chrysolepis chrysophylla</i> var. <i>minor</i>) | 13. Douglas Iris (<i>Iris douglasiana</i>) |
| 5. Brittleleaf Manzanita (<i>Arctostaphylos crustacea</i>) | 14. Manzanita Barren Habitat |
| 6. Manzanita Burl | 15. Manzanitas Barren |
| 7. Intermediate Successional Stage | 16. Bay Trees Take Over |
| 8. Coast Huckleberry (<i>Vaccinium ovatum</i>) | 17. Wood Fern (<i>Dryopteris arguta</i>) |
| 9. Western Leatherwood (<i>Dirca occidentalis</i>) | 18. Fern Species |
| | 19. Western Sword Fern (<i>Polystichum munitum</i>) |
| | 20. California Hazelnut (<i>Corylus californica</i>) |
| | 21. Pacific Madrone (<i>Arbutus menziesii</i>) |

