



San Luis Obispo

Botanical Garden

## Discovery Trail Self-Guided Tour

A walking  
adventure  
(about  $3/4$  mile)  
to look for  
animals,  
flowers,  
volcanoes, and  
spectacular  
views!

Recycle this brochure by  
placing it in brochure box at  
other end of trail.

Brochure: Interpretation Committee,  
Ron Kindig ed., 4/15

### Discovery Trail Self-Guided Tour

Look for signs along this trail. They have tour stop numbers on them. These numbers match those on the map to the left and the descriptions below. You can start from either end of the trail.

First, look at the signs. They have interesting information on them. This brochure adds more details.

#### Stop 1: The Sundial

This sundial has no *gnomon*, the object in the middle of a sundial that casts the shadow. It usually has the shape of a triangle.

This sundial uses *you* as the gnomon. You need to move to the month to put your shadow on the right time.

#### Stop 2: The Future Garden

This sign shows our future garden plan. Note where you are. Then look for all the features in our future garden. This beautiful garden will add a stunning attraction to the central coast, and it will be one of the largest botanical gardens in the west. It will be completed in stages as funds become available.

#### Stop 3: Raptors

Raptors are birds of prey that feed on other animals. Most of the time, you will see one of these birds soaring overhead. Other raptors in this area are the white-tailed kite, kestrel (a small falcon), and owls. Some of them nest up in the tall eucalyptus trees next to the Present Garden.

#### Stop 4: Invasive Plants

Many plants were brought into California from other areas either accidentally as stowaway seeds, or on purpose for livestock, gardens, or soil conservation. Some of these turned out to be aggressive plants that invaded the areas around them and overcame native plants. University and government advisors help ranchers, farmers, and gardeners, along with botanical gardens and native plant societies, to substitute more desirable plants for grazing and gardens where appropriate.

#### Stop 5: Wildflowers

Look below for the months the sign's wildflowers might be in bloom, depending on rain and temperatures. Some may be found in one area, but not in others. Some of them will be near the trail, some farther away, and some in the middle of the trail!

blue dicks

February, March, April



California peony

February, March, April



Johnny jump-up

February, March, April



SLO morning glory

April, May, June



California poppy

May, June, July



clubhair mariposa lily

May, June, July



#### Stop 6: Soap Plant

If you are here in fall or winter, you probably won't see this plant. It has lost its leaves and retreated underground into its bulb where water is stored. It will come back next spring or summer. This is one good example of how mediterranean-climate plants survive the dry summers.

#### Stop 7: Coyotes

Coyotes are good examples of animals that help protect gardens. They eat smaller animals that eat garden plants. Unfortunately, they also eat pet food and small pets left unprotected outdoors. People near coyote areas need to secure garbage barrels, pet food, and compost piles, so that they are not an easy source of coyote food.

#### Stop 8: Reptiles

With luck, you may see the blue belly of a western fence lizard doing its push-ups on a rock here. Reptiles are cold-blooded, so they rely on rocks to warm their bodies. As another garden friend, they eat small insects and rodents that damage plants.

#### Stop 9: Lichens

Look for these colorful growths on the rocks here. These are the Foliose and Crustose lichens. Look for the Fruticose lichens growing up in the oak tree near the top of the trail. Lichens can release chemicals that break down rocks and help make soil.

### **Stop 10: Volcanoes**

The peaks you see in the distance may look like old volcanoes, but they are not. They are the ancient lava plugs left after the magma cooled inside ancient volcanoes millions of years ago. Volcanoes were here, but they could have been 1000 ft. higher and surrounded by the old rock and debris field called the Franciscan Formation. All this wore down to what you see here today.

### **Stop 11: Plant Communities**

Plant communities give clues to the type of soil and amounts of sun and water where they are found. Certain plants are clues to each plant community. These typical plants are shown on the sign.

One plant community missing from the Garden but common all along the coast is **chaparral**. It is mainly found on steeper slopes with coarse, well-drained soils. Manzanitas with their sharp tough leaves are typical.

### **Stop 12: Sticky Monkey Flower**

Look for this plant here and in several other spots along the trail. Its bright orange-yellow blooms last a long time with little water. This and other species of *mimulus* and their cultivars provide a variety of colors and sizes of this hardy plant for garden use.

**Cultivar:** A CULTIVATED VARIETY bred and selected for unique features such as size and flower color. Cultivars can be consistently and accurately reproduced and maintained over time.

### **Stop 13: Coast Live Oak**

If the conditions are right, you may find acorns here. Usually, coast live oaks drop their acorns in the fall, but some stay on the tree until spring.

Also look for mistletoe up in the tree. Unlike lichen, it is a parasite that takes minerals from the oak. Fortunately, its green leaves contain high levels of chlorophyll that produce organic nutrients it shares with the oak.

### **Stop 14: Sagebrush and Sage**

These plants are sure clues that you are looking at the **coastal sage plant community**. Their soft leaves allow you to walk through safely.

On the other hand, the hard sharp leaves and stiff branches and twigs of **chaparral** plants may scrape your legs!

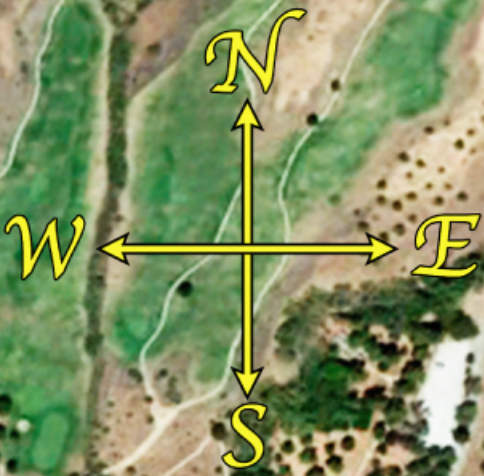
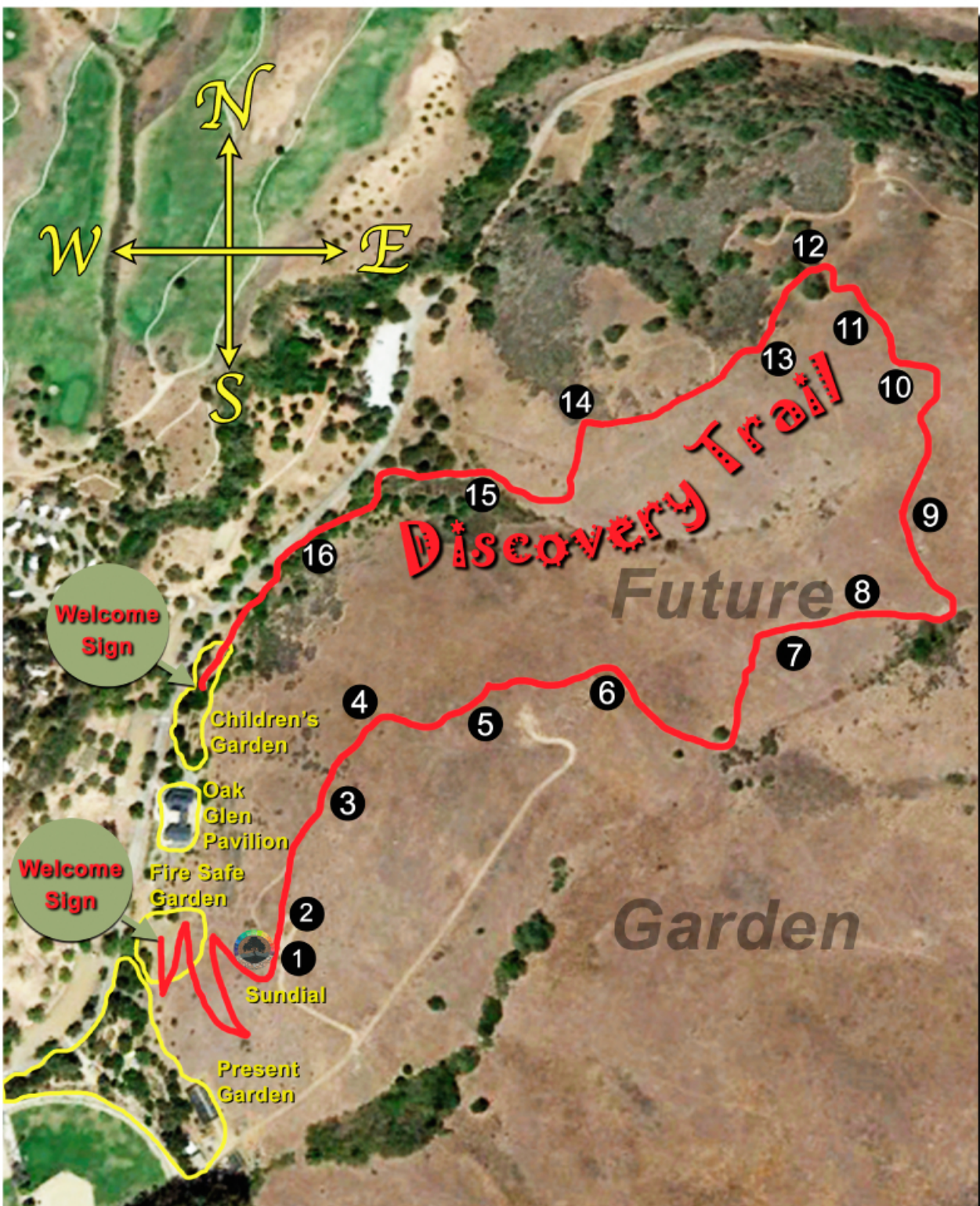
### **Stop 15: Sycamores and Willows**

These plants are sure clues that you are looking at the riparian plant community. Come back during a heavy rain (if you dare!), and you may see a little water running in this stream bed. Otherwise, the water is underground for the roots of these trees to find.

### **Stop 16: Poison Oak**

The best remedy for contact with poison oak is to wash your skin with strong soap as soon as possible. If a rash breaks out, it may require medical attention.

In spite of its irritations, the leaves and berries are food for many animals, such as deer, birds, and rabbits.



# Discovery Trail

## Future Garden

Welcome Sign

Children's Garden

Oak Glen Pavilion

Fire Safe Garden

Sundial

Present Garden

Welcome Sign

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16