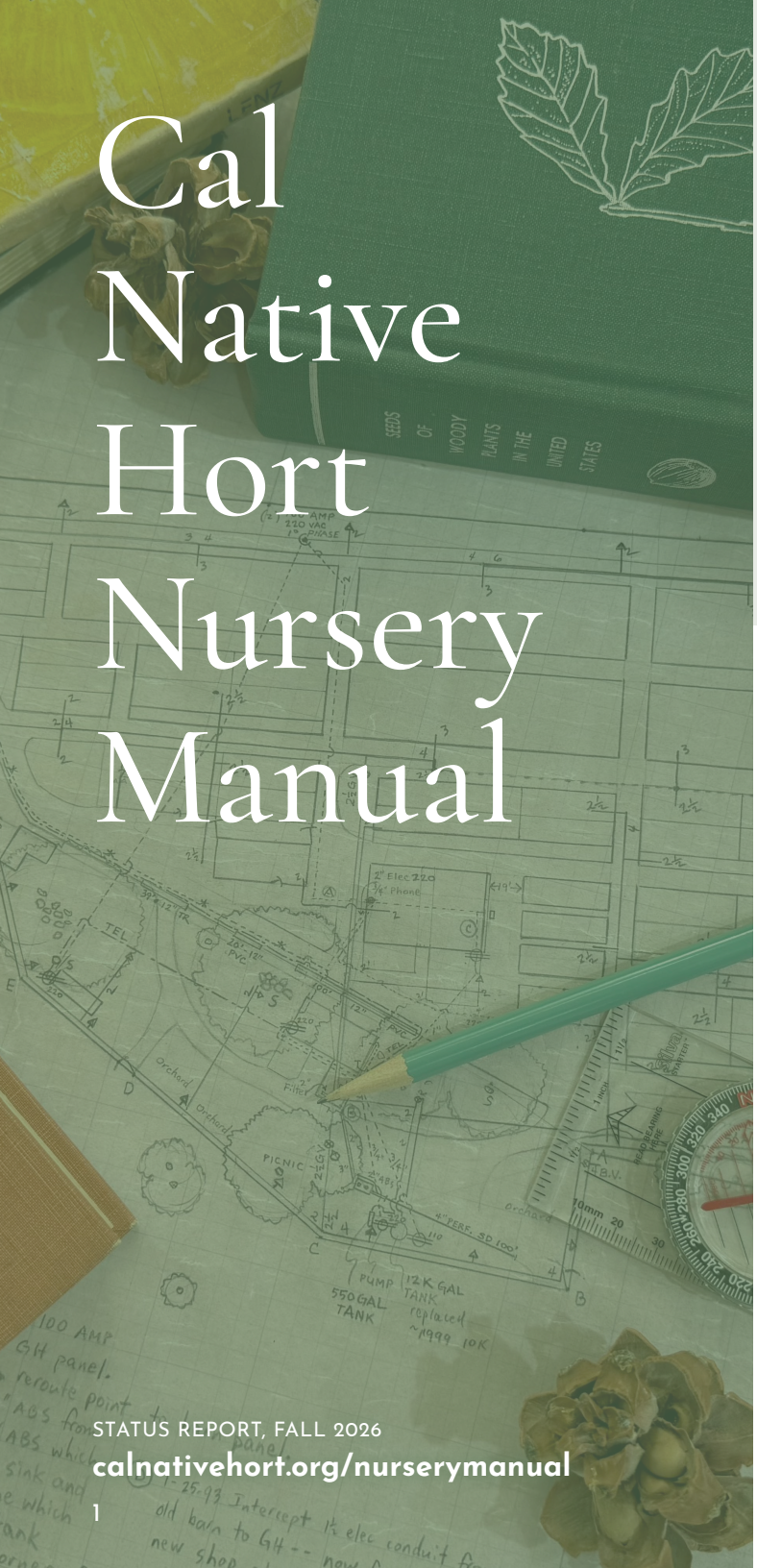


Cal Native Hort Nursery Manual

STATUS REPORT, FALL 2026

calnativehort.org/nurserymanual

California Native Horticultural Foundation *(CalNativeHort or CNHF) is producing a comprehensive manual for anyone desiring to build and operate a nursery to grow native plants in southern California. Designed to meet the needs of professional growers as well as people just starting out, the user-friendly language and pragmatic approach will allow everyone to obtain exactly the information they need at any given time to successfully propagate and grow native plants. We anticipate the total content to be 100-150 pages, including text, charts, graphs, illustrations and photographs.*

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Manual is to increase the availability of California native plants for southern California landscape gardens and ecological restoration projects, which in turn will lead to increased water savings, biodiversity benefits, and educational opportunities in our region. Nurseries, agencies, schools, tribes, communities, and individuals throughout southern California have lacked such an accessible, regionally-specific resource until now.

CONTENT

The CalNativeHort Nursery Manual will cover site design, nursery construction or modification, facilities and equipment, best management practices, nursery hygiene, seed collection, propagation strategies, crop protection, disease prevention and control, and business/inventory basics. In addition, the Manual will provide the specific propagation and growing techniques for approximately 100 native plants, the species and varieties most important for the marketplace and for our local ecosystem. The goal is for the Manual to be printed for distribution as well as made available free of charge as a PDF download.

TIMELINE

Writing for the Manual is currently underway. We are seeking sponsorship funding starting in the Fall/Winter 2026/27. The anticipated final date of publication is Winter/Spring 2028.

CALIFORNIA NATIVE Horticultural Foundation

ABOUT CNHF

The California Native Horticultural Foundation (CNHF) fosters transformative connections between people, place, and nature through native horticulture. Founded in 2025 by Mike Evans, whose 50 years of experience include founding and leading Tree of Life Nursery for 48 years in San Juan Capistrano, CNHF carries a horticultural legacy forward into a new era of statewide impact.

Cal Native Hort will serve as California's definitive resource for native plant horticulture, promoting climate-resilient landscapes, restoring biodiversity, and building a statewide culture of environmental stewardship through education and innovation.

Cal Native Hort works in collaboration with nurseries, botanic gardens, schools, agencies, community organizations, and individuals to expand access to California native plants, cultivating a community of knowledgeable advocates and expert practitioners.



FUNDING

CalNativeHort is currently offering sponsorship opportunities for producing the Nursery Manual. All major sponsors (water districts, agencies, organizations, non-profits, commercial concerns, or individuals) will be recognized with their name and logo, and all sponsors at every level will be appropriately acknowledged. The total budget for writing and producing the 100-150 page Nursery Manual is $75,000. A breakdown of the anticipated costs and expenses, with timeline and funding milestones is available upon request. Thank you for your consideration.

AUTHORS

Katherine Pakradouni (Co-author)



- Founder of ecological horticulture and nursery consulting business Seed to Landscape (established 2020)
- Founding nursery manager of the Wallis Annenberg Wildlife Crossing Project Nursery (2022-2024)
- Nursery consultant for UCLA's Stunt Ranch Reserve, SAMO Fund, LA Parks Foundation, Northeast Trees, Tataviam Land Conservancy, Nature Nexus Institute, and others
- Recipient of the Pathmaker Award, SoCal Horticultural Society (2025)
- Backyard native plant grower and ecological horticulturist
- Ecological horticulture educator and speaker
- Designer of LA's first Miyawaki-inspired micro-forests

Mike Evans (Co-author)



- Founder and President California Native Horticultural Foundation (established 2025)
- Founder and President Tree of Life Nursery (1980-2025)
- President International Plant Propagators Society (2004) and Western Region President in 1994
- President California Society for Ecological Restoration (2008)
- Horticulturist of the Year, Southern California Horticultural Society (2019)
- Recipient of various awards and honors involving native plants, water conservation, and horticulture
- Nursery professional, writer, instructor, speaker, hiker, camper, musician, husband, father, grandfather

CALIFORNIA NATIVE Horticultural Foundation

DRAFT TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. NURSERY DESIGN
- Site Basics
- Zones, Equipment, and Components

2. GROWING PLANTS
- Growing Materials
  - Containers
  - Planting Media
  - Beneficial Microorganisms
  - Fertilizer
  - Sourcing Materials
- Propagation
  - Target Inventory
  - Seasonal Implications
  - Seed Propagation
  - Vegetative Propagation
- Production / General Operations
  - Work Flow
  - Transplanting
  - Watering and Water Quality
  - Weeding
  - Pruning
  - Mechanization
  - Pest and Disease Management
  - Best Management Practices
  - Keeping Records

3. THE BUSINESS OF PLANTS
- New Business How-Tos
- Technology
- Work Force
- Making Sales
- Deliveries
- Projecting future inventory
- Upgrades

4. Top 100 GROWING PROFILES by species/variety

STATUS REPORT, FALL 2026

calnativehort.org/nurserymanual

A LEGACY IN NATIVE PLANTS

Tree of Life Nursery (TOLN), operated by business partners Jeff Bohn and Mike Evans, grew to become the largest and most successful native plant nursery in the state. Located on 40 acres in San Juan Capistrano, TOLN consistently produced over 400 varieties and propagted an estimated 1200 taxa during its 45 year existence. TOLN is attributed to providing around 15,000,000 native plants to southern California landscape jobs, restoration projects and homeowners. The CNHF Nursery Manual will tap into 45+ years of experience, records, and notes involving all aspects of native plant propagation and production.

RELEVANCE

The CNHF Nursery Manual will reach wide audiences due to the range of experiences and approaches of its authors. Other manuals currently available in print and online are often too technical, general, outdated, or inaccessible for the person just getting started. Unfortunately, this tends to create unintended barriers of entry for many beginners. The CNHF Nursery Manual will emphasize a tone that is approachable and personal. The authors aim to assist and inform users at every level, whether in the context of a large-scale commercial grower who is expanding their operation to include more native plants, or a passionate self-starter on a limited budget converting their relatively small space into a pilot micro-nursery. The information presented will be applicable and practical for every level and scale of native plant propagation and production.





CALIFORNIA NATIVE Horticultural Foundation