

# Friends of Tecolote Canyon



## Four Ways to Help Bees In our Neighborhood

By Hillary Kearney ~ Girl Next Door Honey

*Hey neighbors! I thought I would share some ways to help bees and pollinators in our neighborhood.*

**1. Plant bee friendly flowers:** We are so lucky to be in San Diego where the weather is nice and almost anything can be grown, but a new report on our city showed that we don't have many flowers- especially when you compare us to other major cities. I know a lot of people are trying to reduce water use because of the drought. The bees are really struggling in this drought because they need nectar from flowers to survive and with three years of almost no rain, there just aren't enough plants flowering! If you plan to replace your lawn, consider planting bee friendly shrubs and plants. There are tons to choose from that also require very little water.



Consider making a pollinator garden for the bees. I just planted a ton of sunflowers and I am collecting the excess water from my showers to water them. Sunflowers are easy to grow. The best variety for bees is Lemon

Queen! The native California and San Diego sunflowers are good picks too. Bees also especially love herbs, so planting an herb garden is a great way to help bees, as well as your cooking.

**2. Go organic!** When you buy plants for pollinators, make sure you are buying plants that have not been treated with pesticides, in particular neonicotinoids. Most of the nurseries are selling plants that have been pre treated. This pesticide lives inside the plants vascular



*Continued on page 2*

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Bees .....1
- Bee Resources .....2
- Opossums.....3
- Notes .....4
- Events ..... 5
- Contact ..... .7



Friends of Tecolote Canyon is a non-profit community organization committed to sponsoring nature education and restoration activities in Tecolote Canyon Natural Park. Our education program, supported by SDGE's "Environmental Champions Initiative", is dedicated to bringing children into Tecolote Canyon and fostering connection through enjoyable, memorable, and meaningful experiences in our unique and precious local

*"..even the insects in my path are not loafers, but have their special errands".*

*– Henry David Thoreau, 1906*



system and causes it to produce poison nectar and pollen. Many believe this pesticide is what is killing the bees globally. Lowes and Home Depot now label their plants if they are treated. Ace Hardware and Anderson nursery do not. The safest option is to buy organic seeds or seeds that specifically say untreated, but if you need plants that are established, ask the nursery about their growing practices. Las Pilitas in Escondido grows without pesticides. Most pest problems people have in their gardens have to do with soil health. You don't need pesticides. If you feel you do need to use them, please don't apply to plants that are flowering. Wait until the bloom passes to protect our pollinators.

**3. Water for bees:** As the summer heats up, bees need water more than ever. A great way to help them is to make a bee waterer. You can do this really easily if you already have a bird bath. Just put some stones in it so the bees can land safely. You can also try putting out a dog bowl like in the picture and fill it with stones. If you want to have fun with it, making a small water garden is the best way. You can do this with a half wine barrel, the city will give you mosquito fish for free and then just drop some floating plants in. It doesn't require much work to maintain once you get everything balanced. You can get everything including the free fish from City Farmers Nursery.

**4. Don't Exterminate!** If a swarm of bees lands in your yard, don't have them poisoned. Call a beekeeper! Lots of us do live removals. My business is called *Girl Next Door Honey*. If you have a bee problem, we will match the price of any exterminator who will kill them for less.

Visit [http: girlnextdoorhoney.com](http://girlnextdoorhoney.com) for information about Beekeeping classes for kids and adults, a beehive tour, and for bee swarm removal.



## ***Opportunities to partner with Friends of Tecolote***

### **Videographer**

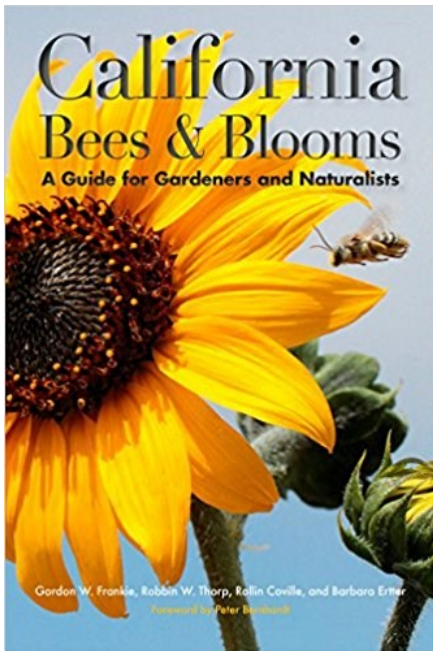
FTC is looking for a volunteer who would be interested in producing a 2-3 minute video of some of our education programs.

### **Donation/Wishlist for our Nature Center and Environmental Education Programs**

- ☺A single person pop-up tent
- ☺Wine corks (real cork)
- ☺Half-coconut shells
- ☺A Jenga Game
- ☺Zoonooz magazines
- ☺Geodes
- ☺Gift Cards from Amazon for the purchase of books.

If interested in this volunteer opportunity or in donating to our education programs please email Joan at [friendsoftecolotecanyon@gmail.com](mailto:friendsoftecolotecanyon@gmail.com)





## ***Did you know there are over sixteen hundred species of undomesticated bees in California?***

**T**hey populate and pollinate our gardens, fields, and urban green spaces. In this absorbing guidebook, some of the state's preeminent bee and botany experts introduce us to this diverse population. *California Bees and Blooms* holds a magnifying glass up to the twenty-two most common genera (and six species of cuckoo bees), describing each one's distinctive behaviors, social structures, flight season, preferred flowers, and enemies. Enhancing these descriptions are photographs of bees so finely detailed they capture pollen scattered across gauzy wings and iridescent exoskeletons.

Drawing from years of research at the UC Berkeley Urban Bee Lab, *California Bees and Blooms* presents an authoritative look at these creatures, emphasizing their vital relationship with flowers. In

addition to opening our eyes to the beautiful array of wild bees in our midst, this book provides information on fifty-three bee-friendly plants and how to grow them. Just a few square feet of poppies, sage, and phacelia are enough to sustain a healthy population of wild bees, transforming an urban or suburban garden into a world that hums and buzzes with life. *(From the inside flap ~ This is a book I thoroughly enjoy having using as a resource~ Linda Stafford, editor)*

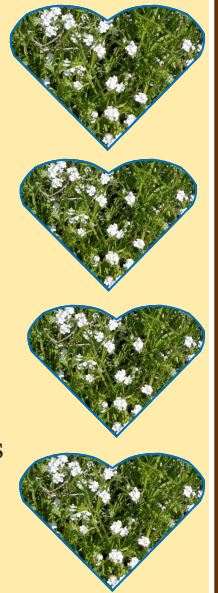
***“A 'must-have' for every gardener and naturalist or would-be gardeners and naturalists.” --Bug Squad***

### ***Letters from Friends***

Thanks so much for the adorable photos!! Olive and Saoirse had a blast at your Halloween crafting event and were so excited to show me their creations. Very creative and fun projects you put together and organized-wow! They really loved your volunteers as well! Thanks to you all we now have some fantastic Halloween decorations adorning our house and front yard!

Hi Niki,

Thank you so much for the wonderful hike and art activity! All of the kids had a fabulous time, and the Girl Scouts were able to complete one badge (Art in the Outdoors), and start another (Outdoor Adventurer). It was a wonderful way to learn more about such an important resource in our own backyard. I really appreciated how you explained the plants and other concepts in a way the kids could understand, and you treated them all with such respect (which is not always the case with some adults). It was truly a pleasure working with you



### ***We have a website!***

***Friendsoftecolotecanyon.org is a new resource that you can visit for newsletter archives, Tecolote Canyon background, images, and contacts. Please send questions, comments, user issues, and feedback to [nikiahrens@gmail.com](mailto:nikiahrens@gmail.com).***

# Virginia opossum or North American opossum ~ *Didelphis virginiana*

~ by Niki Ahrens

Not native to the west coast, the North American opossum was intentionally introduced here during the Great Depression, likely as a food source. Opossum mating season lasts from December to October, when female opossums may birth 8-100 babies (joeys) per year. Having one to three litters per year, it's common for 8-13 joeys to survive in each litter. These numbers come with some surprising capacities.

The opossum is about the size of a pet cat and leaves a track with five finger-like toes including a hind opposable thumb. It's a nocturnal, pacing animal like a skunk or raccoon. Our only marsupial north of Mexico, joeys live in the mother's pouch for about two-and-a-half months, following birth. Commonly known as a possum in parts of the US, this omnivore is not to be confused with fellow marsupial, Australia's native possum. Neither hangs upside down from their tail, for more than a very short while.



An opportunist like a coyote, the opossum eats snakes, mice, a variety of plants, insects, snails, as well as carrion or dead animals. Its main predators include owls, hawks, coyotes, bobcats, and domestic dogs and cats. Opossums have 50 teeth but few defenses to ward off predators. One of their greatest threats is humans in automobiles.

Their adaptation referred to as "playing possum" is involuntary. When they experience great fear, opossums reflexively enter a coma-like state to feign death, or appear to be dead, for up to six

hours. They're highly resistant to both rabies and snake venom, yet have an unusually short lifespan of two years in the wild. Researchers have named the opossum an ecological trap for ticks, finding it limits the spread of Lyme disease by eating most of the ticks trying to parasitize it.

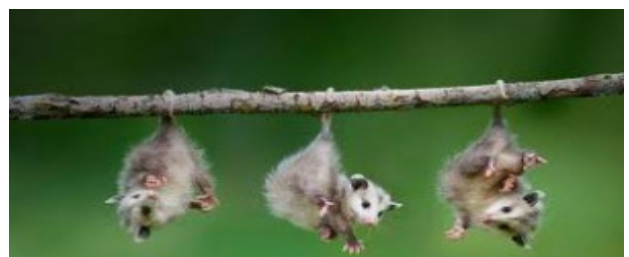


Male opossums are called jacks and females are called **jills**.

The **young** are referred to as **joeys**, just like their Australian cousins.

A group of opossums is called a **passel**.

*Opossums have a prehensile tail. This means it can grip branches. Opossums can hang upside down by their tails for a little while, but they can't sleep this way.*



*credit: easyscienceforkids.com/all-about-opossums/*





## EVENTS IN THE PARK

**Tecolote Nature Center**

**5180 Tecolote Road San Diego, CA 92110**

**858-581-9959**

**Monday – Closed, Tuesday –Saturday 9:00-4:00, Sunday 9:00-2:00**

### **Special Events**

**March 10 ~ 1:30 -2:45**

52 weeks of Science with the Fleet Science Center will be providing a free workshop on hydroponic gardening.

**March 17 ~ 9:00-12:00**

Coffee with Todd Gloria

Meet the 78<sup>th</sup> District Assemblymember at this free community event.

### **Monthly Events**

**Weed Warriors ~ Saturday, Feb 17th & Mar 17th**

Work with a Park Ranger to clean up your canyon. Come and get some exercise taking your frustrations out on invasive and non native plants, plant natives, trash, debris, and other unsightly canyon enemies! Make new friends and satisfy community service credits for school. When the day is done you will feel good knowing you are a canyon soldier. The few, the proud, the Weed Warriors!

**Art and Activities ~ Wednesday, Feb 21st & Mar 21st**

1:30 – 3:00 Art & Activities for Kids- Free

Make and take a variety of winter inspired nature crafts. Meet a critter, learn a little and create a lot!

**Bird Walks ~ Saturday, Feb 24th & Mar 24th**

8:00 Audubon Society Birding Walk

All skill levels welcome – Meet at the Tecolote Nature Center

***Updated activities are posted at:***

**<http://www.meetup.com/Friends-of-Tecolote-Canyon-Natural-Park-and-Nature-Center/>**

**Like us on**

**[www.facebook.com/friendsoftecolotecanyon](http://www.facebook.com/friendsoftecolotecanyon)**

**Tecolote Nature Center ~ 5180 Tecolote Road San Diego, CA 92110**

**Hours of operation: Tues.-Saturday; 9-4:00, Sunday: 9-2:00, Closed Monday**

**For information call 858-581-9959**



**Like us on Facebook – Friends of Tecolote Canyon**

*Activities are free of charge.*

**Donations to the “Friends of Tecolote Canyon  
are always appreciated!**



*Friends of Tecolote Canyon and the ESCAPE team gratefully  
acknowledge a generous grant from **SDGE** supporting  
another year of our Escape program.*



*We want to thank **Scott Chambers and Filmetrics** for  
their donation, providing 5 years of wifi to the nature center*

## **Volunteer Opportunities ~ Something for Everyone!**

***Docents \* Interpretive Guides \* Art and Crafts***

***Tecolote Canyon Advisory Committee \* Native Plant Garden***

***Weed Warriors \* Park Patrol \* Jr Volunteers (community service)***

***Environmental Stewards Canyon Program (ESCAPE)***

**If you are interested, come in and speak with any staff member.**

**SD City Council Community Project and Services**

