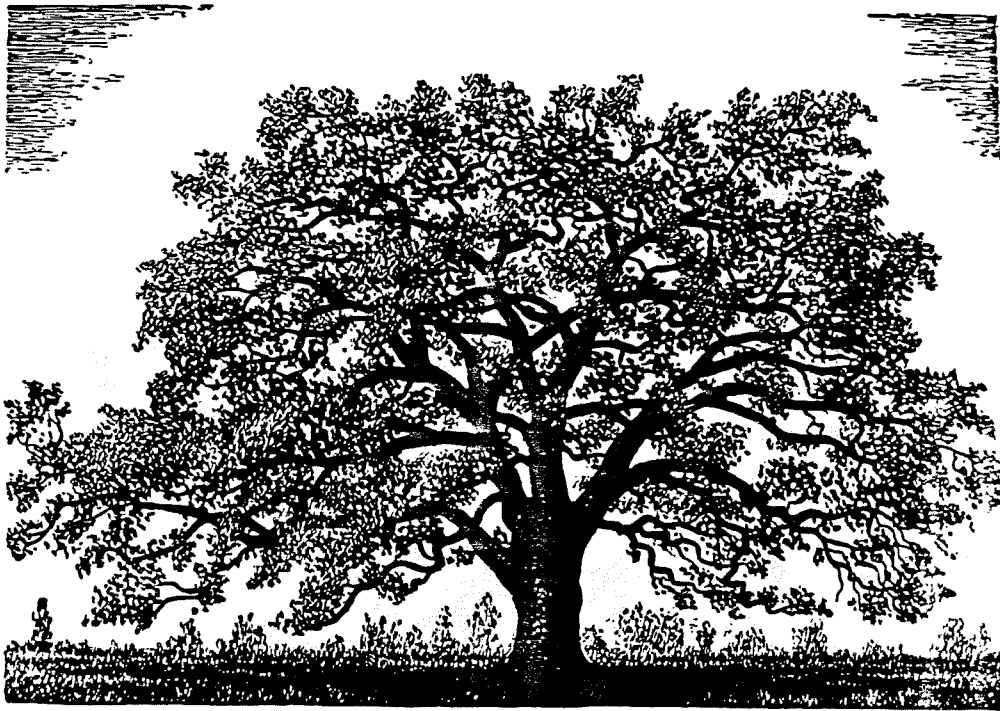


FOOD IN THE FOREST

A Nature Treasure Hunt



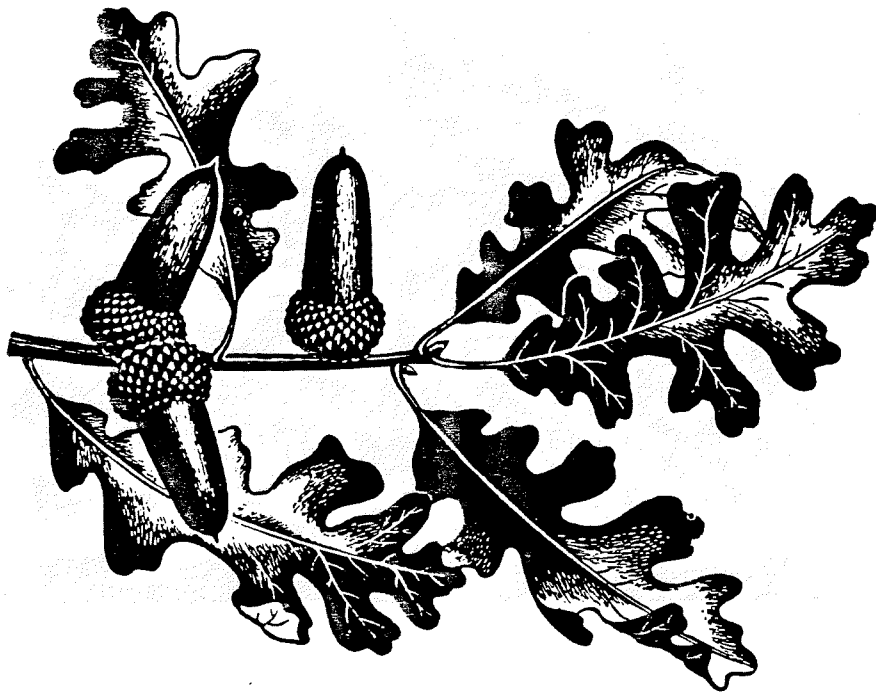
Directions For The Treasure Hunt

The purpose of the treasure hunt is to get you to look at the details of nature at the 4-h camp and to learn a little about it's history. Also, to have some fun!

If you read and follow the directions carefully you can find the treasure without any special knowledge.

On this treasure hunt we are going to find some trees that have nuts that are good to eat. But they are good only after they have been prepared in a special way. Otherwise, they can make you sick. Never eat anything you find in the forest.

Read the page of directions for each step of the treasure hunt. They will tell you how to find a number tag. This is a small, square of wood on a stake with a number on it. Write the number on your score sheet and continue with the next step of the hunt. If you return to camp with all the correct numbers on your score sheet, you can collect your treasure. Have fun!!!



Treasure Hunt, Step #1

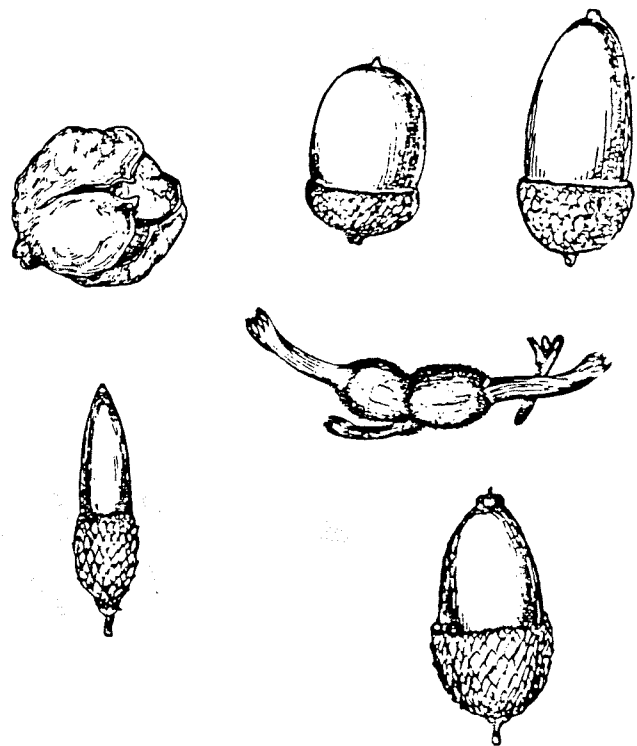
The first step in this hunt is to find an INDIAN ROCK. The Wappo indians lived in the area of Las Posadas for at least the last 1,500 years, probably much longer.

Their main food was the ACORN from the many OAK trees growing in the forest. The most important tree was the BLACK OAK but they also ate nuts and seeds from many other trees, shrubs and even grasses.

These acorns, nuts and seeds were dried, shelled and ground into a flour. This was boiled in plain water and eaten like mush. Sometimes they would add salt or even honey.

All of this required lots of GRINDING and that's what the INDIAN ROCK was for. They would find a large flat rock, sit on it and using another small rock would grind the acorns, nuts and seeds between the two rocks. In time this would make deep holes in the rock.

Go to the craft circle and behind it, go towards the creek. You will find the INDIAN ROCK there at the side of the creek. It is a large, flat rock with many holes in the top. The number tag for this step in the treasure hunt is next to the rock.



Treasure Hunt, Step #2

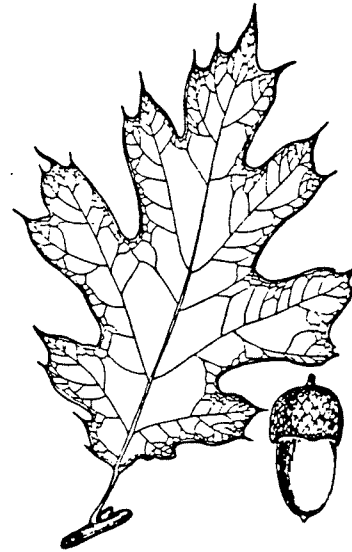
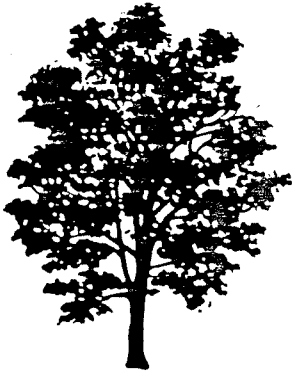
Now that we have found the INDIAN ROCK we are going to find some of the trees from which the indians gathered acorns and nuts.

The most important tree was the BLACK OAK. This tree is very common in the forest and has the largest of all acorns. This tree has a large, dark green leaf that has deep lobes. These lobes are indentations in the edge of the leaf at least half way to the middle. The leaves also have soft points at the tips.

The acorn was very large, almost the size of a walnut. But there is just one problem. They usually only grow at the tops of the trees. The indians knocked them off the tree with long poles. The acorns also had a lot of bitter TANIN. This made them more work to prepare and cook but it also saved them from rotting so they could be stored a long time.

Leave the INDIAN ROCK and go to the New Chapel. From there go to the beginning of the Metcalf Trail. There you will find two BLACK OAK trees growing to the right of the trail.

On your left across from the two BLACK OAKS, there is a LIVE OAK. This tree also has acorns but they are so small they can not be eaten. Behind this tree you will find the number tag for this step in the treasure hunt. But be careful, there is a POISON OAK vine growing around and up this tree.



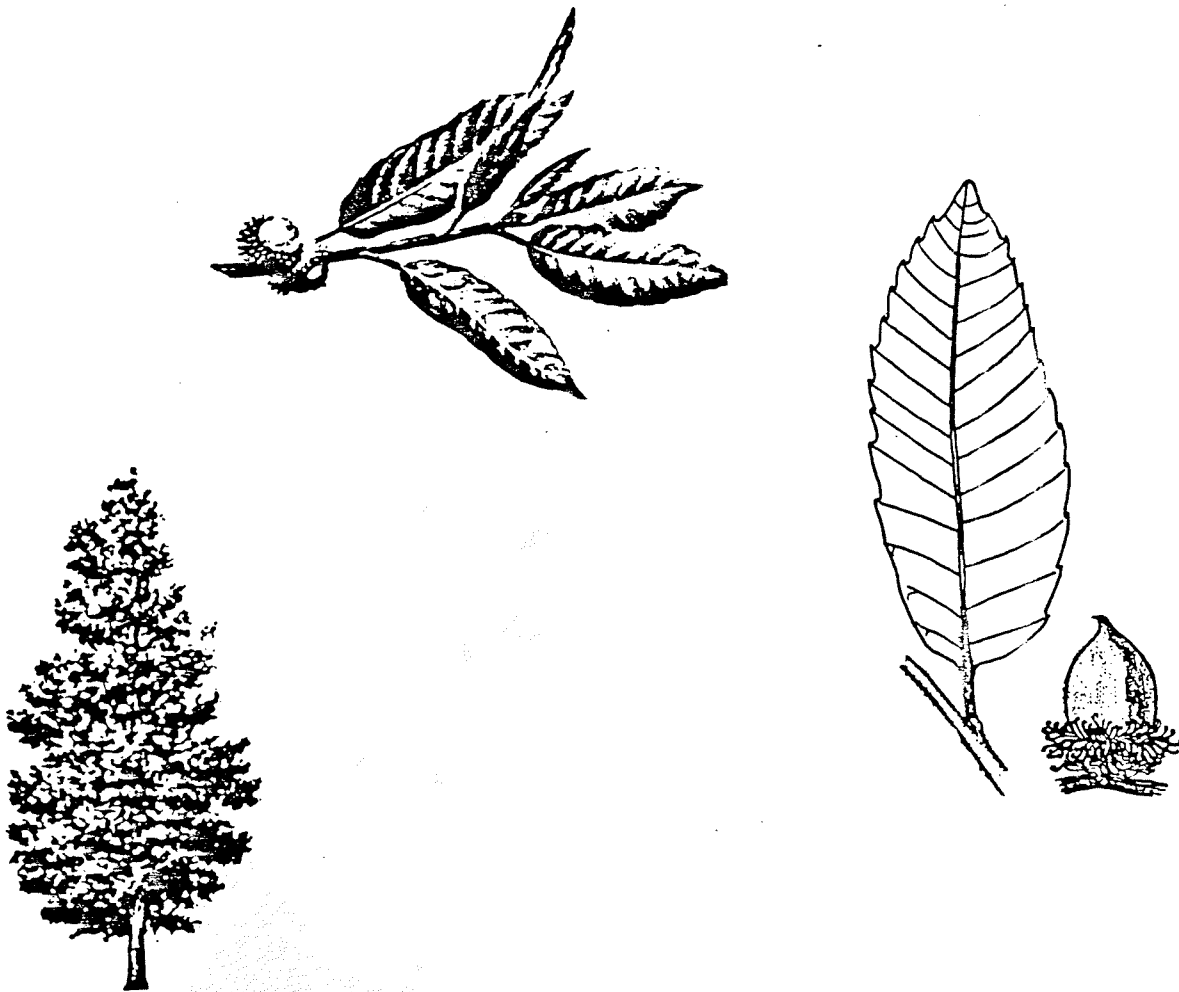
Treasure Hunt, Step #3

Another important food tree with large acorns was the TANBARK OAK. The leaf of this tree is large, thick, oval, with sharp spines or points on the edge. The veins on the bottom of the leaf are raised and go straight from the middle to the edge with a sharp point at the tip. These trees grow commonly with the REDWOODS.

The bark of this tree is also useful. The indians made a tea for medicine from the bark. It worked like a laxative. The strong chemical in the bark called TANIN was also used to tan or prepare animal hides for use as clothing or shoes.

Continue down the Metcalf Trail. When you get to the steps down to the Old Chapel, stop and stay on the main trail. The tree ahead of you on the right is a REDWOOD. It has red, shaggy bark. The next tree is a TANBARK OAK. It is a young tree with smooth gray bark.

The number tag for this step in the treasure hunt is at the base of this tree.



Treasure Hunt, Step #4

The next tree we are going to find is the CALIFORNIA BUCKEYE. This tree is not in the oak family, so it does not have an acorn. But it does have a large seed the indians used to eat.

Without proper treatment the seed can be poisonous! The seeds were picked, cracked open and dried, then ground into a rough flour. The flour was soaked in water and washed as many as 10 times. This removed the bitter TAMIN that makes the seed poisonous.

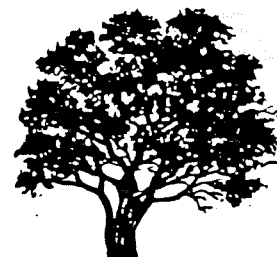
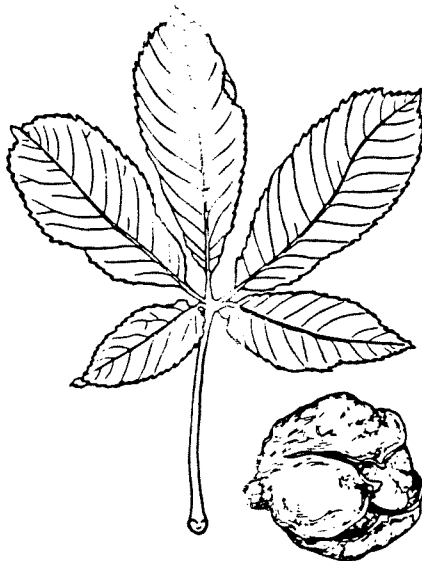
The seeds were also used as a fish poison. A small part of the creek was dammed. The green seeds of the BUCKEYE were thrown into the water. The poison in the seeds would paralyze the fish so they would float to the surface and could be gathered by hand. No fishing poles or nets were needed!

Go down the Metcalf Trail. The trail crosses a sometimes dry stream, turns and goes past some fallen logs. Just ahead, the trail leaves the trees and goes into the open sun. First, you will pass some MAPLES, the next tree is a CALIFORNIA BUCKEYE. It is on the right. Its limbs will almost hit you as you pass.

This is a small tree. The leaves are compound, that is, they have up to five leaflets in one leaf and spread out from one point, kind of like the fingers on your hand. The leaves in summer are light green, almost yellow. At this time of the year the seeds are small.

The tree might look like it is sick. But it's not! The tree leafs out early in mid-winter and the leaves fall in mid-summer (August). In this way, the tree can grow in drier places in the forest.

The number tag for this step in the treasure hunt is near the large rock, at the side of the trail, on the right, just beyond this tree.



Treasure Hunt, Step #5

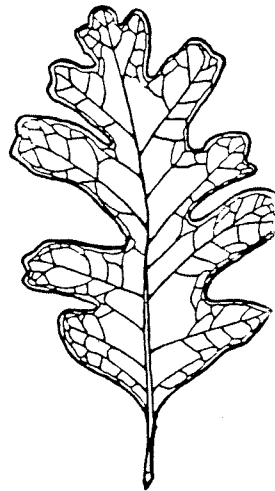
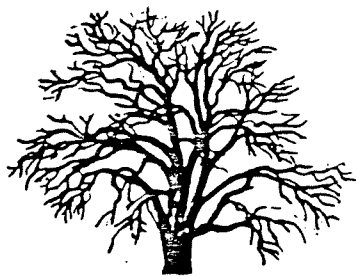
Now we are going to find one last indian oak tree, the WHITE OAK. The indians liked this oak because its acorns did not have very much bitter tannin and could be eaten without a lot of work. But there was a problem, of course, what else! Because they were not bitter, they would spoil quickly and could not be stored very long.

The WHITE OAK has large leaves that are lobed like the BLACK OAK but they are light green instead of dark green and have rounded tips instead of soft, pointed tips.

The WHITE OAK also has different bark. The BLACK OAK has bark that is dark, thick and broken into blocks. The WHITE OAK has bark that is light, thin and more in long strands than blocks.

Go on down the Metcalf Trail. Go past the next sharp turn in the trail and head toward the dam. Before you get to the dam while you are still on the trail, there are three WHITE OAKS on the left and just beyond two more on the right. These two on the right have lots of long, curly, dark green MOSS. Between these two trees you will find the last number tag for the treasure hunt.

Go on down and sit in the shade by the dam. You have found the treasure!



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by

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Alameda County 4-H
March 1990

