

PUBLIC WORKS AND GANG REDUCTION COMMITTEE REPORT relative to adding the Mexican Elderberry and the Toyon to the list of protected trees.

Recommendation for Council action, pursuant to Motion (O'Farrell - Martinez):

DIRECT the Department of City Planning (City Planning), with the assistance of the Bureau of Street Services (BSS), to report with recommendations on protecting the Mexican Elderberry and the Toyon to include the feasibility of adding these two shrubs to the list of protected trees as set forth in Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) Section 46.01.

Fiscal Impact Statement: Neither the City Administrative Officer nor the Chief Legislative Analyst has completed a financial analysis of this report.

Community Impact Statement: None submitted.

(Planning and Land Use Management Committee waived consideration of the above matter)

Summary:

On December 4, 2013, your Committee considered a Motion (O'Farrell - Martinez) relative to directing the Department of City Planning, with the assistance of the Bureau of Street Services, to report with recommendations on protecting the Mexican Elderberry and the Toyon to include the feasibility of adding these two shrubs to the list of Protected Trees as set forth in LAMC Section 46.01. According to the Motion, on February 28, 2006, the Council adopted Ordinance No. 177,404, which added three native trees to the list of protected trees in the City. Any removal of a protected tree requires a permit from the Board of Public Works, with replacement required. Any removal of a protected tree in a project that requires environmental review is required to mitigate the removal of the tree.

On April 17, 2012, the City Council designated the Toyon, *Heteromeles arbutifolia*, as the official City native plant, in conjunction with the re-landscaping of the City Hall grounds to feature water-wise plants. The Toyon, known also as Christmas berry and California holly, is a common shrub native to California which typically grows from two to five meters and has a rounded to irregular top. The plant attracts butterflies, and its berries provided food for local Native American tribes, such as the Chumash, Tongva, and Tataviarn.

The Mexican Elderberry, *Sambucus mexicana*, is a tree or large shrub that is native to California and is also found elsewhere in North America and beyond and it can grow from 4 to 25 feet in height. Fruits ripen from late July into September. At least 50 species of songbirds, upland game birds, and small mammals relish the fruit of the elderberry during summer and early fall. White-tailed deer browse the twigs, foliage and fruit during the summer. Elderberries are outstanding as nesting cover for small birds. During summer, the partial shade under elderberries promotes a dense ground cover of grasses and forbs that offer good loafing or feeding areas for broods of young pheasants and quail. The elderberry is also of well-known value and highly prized to the Indians of North America for the many purposes it serves. Frequently, the elderberry was so greatly enjoyed that families would live for weeks on little else. Many were dried for use in the winter, and were either re-cooked or eaten raw. Elderberries are still highly prized for food by modern Native Americans.

After consideration and having provided an opportunity for public comment, the Committee moved to recommend approval of the Motion as detailed in the above recommendation. This matter is now submitted to Council for its consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

PUBLIC WORKS AND GAND REDUCTION COMMITTEE

MEMBER VOTE

BUSCAINO: YES

PRICE: ABSENT

CEDILLO: YES

ARL

1/20/15

-NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL COUNCIL ACTS-