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## Council File 13-1339: Mexican Elderberry / Toyon Adding to Protected Tree List

1 message

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Sun, Dec 1, 2013 at 1:38 PM

To: Gilbert Cedillo <[councilmember.cedillo@lacity.org](mailto:councilmember.cedillo@lacity.org)>, councilmember.price@lacity.org, councildistrict15@lacity.org

Cc: Michael.Espinosa@lacity.org, christine.peters@lacity.org

Dear Public Works and Gang Reduction Committee Members:

I am writing to support Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell's motion to add the Mexican Elderberry and Toyon to the list of Protected Trees in the City of Los Angeles. (File No. 13-1339, Agenda Item 2, Public Works and Gang Reduction Committee, December 4, 2013.)

The significance of these two species in the local environment can not be overemphasized.

In addition to the qualities of the Toyon mentioned in the original motion, it should be noted that the fruits provide food for native birds (Northern Mockingbird, American Robin, Phainopepla), as well as for Cedar Waxwings and Hermit Thrushes, which feed on the fruits during their winter visits to the Los Angeles area.

An even more important but often overlooked attribute of these two native plants is that they are fed upon by native insects (primarily caterpillars of moths and butterflies), which in turn provide food for both resident and overwintering birds.

Introduced, non-native, ornamental and horticultural plants are usually devoid of insects, because insects are very host-specific in which plants they eat--and non-native plants have been introduced and propagated with the goal of NOT importing the insects that feed upon them in their native land. (Insects that feed on our native plants have their own suite of predators, parasites, and diseases to keep their populations in check, while non-native insects that feed on non-native plants can become serious pests, because they arrive in this country in the absence of their native predators, parasites, and diseases. Recent examples of serious imported insect pests that feed on introduced plants include the Asian Citrus Psyllid, Red Palm Weevil, Emerald Ash Borer, and a number of exotic fruit flies.)

As a biologist, entomologist, and birdwatcher who is proud to have both of these plants on his property, I fully appreciate their value to our natural environment, and I urge that their presence be ensured with the passage of this motion.

Sincerely yours,  
Julian P. Donahue

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