

Encinitas City Council Meeting - 6/9/10 - Oral Communication

Good evening mister mayor, councilpersons. I'm Keith Shillington, and I reside on Leucadia Scenic Court.

I hope in the next 140 seconds to dramatically increase your knowledge of native flora.

For reference, I have handed you a list of the plant species that are predominant in my garden. You will note that 41 of the 47 species listed are native Californian plants. Many of them annual and perennial herbs. As I am certain you are aware, Bob and I worked very hard to transform our thoughtlessly landscaped tract home into a native xeriscaped showcase. I have highlighted the seeds from the samples from today's harvest.

I had thought to build a presentation with lots of pictures of each of these plants, and then realized that in three minutes, I won't be able to do any of them justice. Instead, I provide you with a list, and a link to my website where each of these species are listed, as links into the Calflora database. The Calflora Database is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing information about California plant biodiversity for use in Education, Research and Conservation. It contains a great wealth of information on all plants found in California, including a very extensive photo library.

As you also aware, we had a wonderful rainy season this year. The result for me was a huge crop of Lacy Phacelia, California Poppy, California Sweetpea and Elegant Clarkia. The Clarkia were really spectacular, several specimens grew to five feet, and the blooms ranged from the palest of pinks to deep mauves with all manner of reds and purples between.

In order for annual wildflowers to be annual wildflowers, it's rather important to allow the plants to stay in the ground through full maturation, which means allowing them to set and deliver seeds.

For a period of a few weeks, for each species (which is on it's own schedule), the plants die off, sending the last of their energies into the developing seed pods, which dry, on the plant, and then depending on the species, distribute by bursting pods, or allowing little puffs to carry the seed on the winds.

Now to my point.

You have contracted "Fire Prevention Services, Inc." to keep our city fire safe; and I think this is a really good thing. We've had some pretty scary fire events in the past few years, and this year is going to be even more so, referencing our heavy rains. The courtesy notice I received indicating that I was in violation of code section 11.12.010 came as a bit of a surprise to me. Then I looked at my front yard through the filter of someone who was unfamiliar with the less common native annuals. This was not a storehouse of seeds for a floral extravaganza, this was a yard that had been left to go totally wild and out of control.

So, I apologize for not thinning my wildflower crop this year; and I hope that we can educate the contracted inspectors to understand the progressions of, notably, California Poppy, Lacy Phacelia, Elegant Clarkia, and Lathyrus vestitus.

Thank you for your time and attention. The website is www.bobservations.com.