

Five Boulders in Ring of Native Plants

Chia Boulder: [Note to Spanish translator: Spanish word for this species is chía.]

from an Ohlone Story

KAKNU, PEREGRINE FALCON, HERO OF THE EARLY PEOPLE,
KILLED BODY OF STONE, LORD OF THE UNDERWORLD,
MAKING THE WORLD SAFE.
KAKNU PROVIDED FOOD.
“THIS IS FOR THE PEOPLE TO EAT,” HE SAID, THROWING IT FROM HIS NOSE.
FROM THEN ON, THERE WERE PATCHES OF CHIA TO HARVEST.

Oak Boulder: [Note to Spanish translator: Spanish word for this species is encino.]

*Every day, my ancestors would
pound acorns to make into a
hot mush to eat. I do this once
a year at the Ohlone gathering.*

Ruth Orta, Ohlone descendant

Pine Boulder: [Note to Spanish translator: Spanish word for this species is piñon.]

FARMING WITH FIRE

The fires cleared away the chaparral and other bushes so that grasses and trees with edible seeds and nuts could grow.

During the fires, delicious pinenuts would burst out of the fallen pinecones, making them easy to gather.

Every autumn for thousands of years, people living along the California coast set fire to the landscape.

Soaproot Boulder: [note to Spanish translator: Spanish word for this species is Amole]

Using fibers from the soaproot bulb, people throughout California made brushes to clean the rocks where they prepared food. Ramona Garibay, Ohlone descendant, made the brushes pictured here.

In 1772, people in an Ohlone village served soaproot bulbs to father Crespí, a Spanish priest. He described “a sort of small barbecued onion with a very agreeable sweet-sour flavor.”

Wormwood Boulder: [Note to Spanish translator: Spanish word for this species is estafiate.]

My mother taught me that wormwood smoke
cleans the air. When I found out we were Ohlone,
I understood where her knowledge of herbs came
from.

Awareness of my Ohlone identity has helped me deal
with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, which I have had
ever since I came home from the Korean War.

Ted Bonillas, Herbalist