

**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **Chumash Ethnobotany Book Back by Popular Demand**

- One of SBMNH's most popular publications now back in print
- Chumash names and traditional uses for about 175 species
- New edition coincides with increasing interest in Indigenous plant knowledge
- Second edition to launch at July 16 book signing with author Jan Timbrook

**SANTA BARBARA, CA—** One of the most popular books by staff at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History (SBMNH) is finally back in print. *Chumash Ethnobotany: Plant Knowledge Among the Chumash People of Southern California* by Jan Timbrook is now available in a second edition published by the Museum. SBMNH is celebrating with [a reception, talk, and book signing on July 16 at 5:00 PM.](#)

“During thousands of years of observation and practice, Chumash ancestors developed deep knowledge of the plants around them,” explains author and Curator Emeritus of Ethnography Jan Timbrook, Ph.D., whose book was first published in 2007 by Heyday Books in collaboration with the Museum. Over the years, it was reprinted three more times before the last copies were sold in 2022. “Today, understanding the long-term relationships between people and the natural environment is more important than ever.”

Timbrook's writing blends clear, engaging prose with academic rigor as she shares the names by which each plant was reportedly known to different Chumash groups, followed by in-depth information about traditional uses. Watercolors by local artist Chris Chapman and ink drawings by the author illustrate highlighted species and cultural practices.

This rich index of knowledge—covering some 175 species of plants—weaves together a variety of sources with Timbrook's original research. She deciphered thousands of pages of field notes by the prolific ethnographer J.P. Harrington. *Chumash Ethnobotany* frequently cites Harrington's consultants: Chumash Elders Luisa Ygnacio, Lucrecia García, Mary Yee, Juan Justo, María Solares, Rosario Cooper, Fernando Librado, Simplicio Pico and Candelaria Valenzuela. Together, these individuals covered a wide range of ancestral lands, cultures, and languages in the Chumash language family. Timbrook's diligent attributions bring home to the reader the wide cultural variety often collapsed under the term of convenience “Chumash”—and how much is owed today to these individuals who passed their knowledge along.



“Chumash people today are renewing many of the traditions of their ancestors,” Timbrook writes in the preface to the new edition. “I am grateful to the many people who continue to find value in this book.”

Kaswa’ Chumash Elder Ernestine Ygnacio DeSoto—whose mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother provided information to Harrington—says: “Jan’s book has opened people’s eyes to what once was here. This book has been an inspiration to some of us to bring back as much as we can into our diets by incorporating the past and present.”

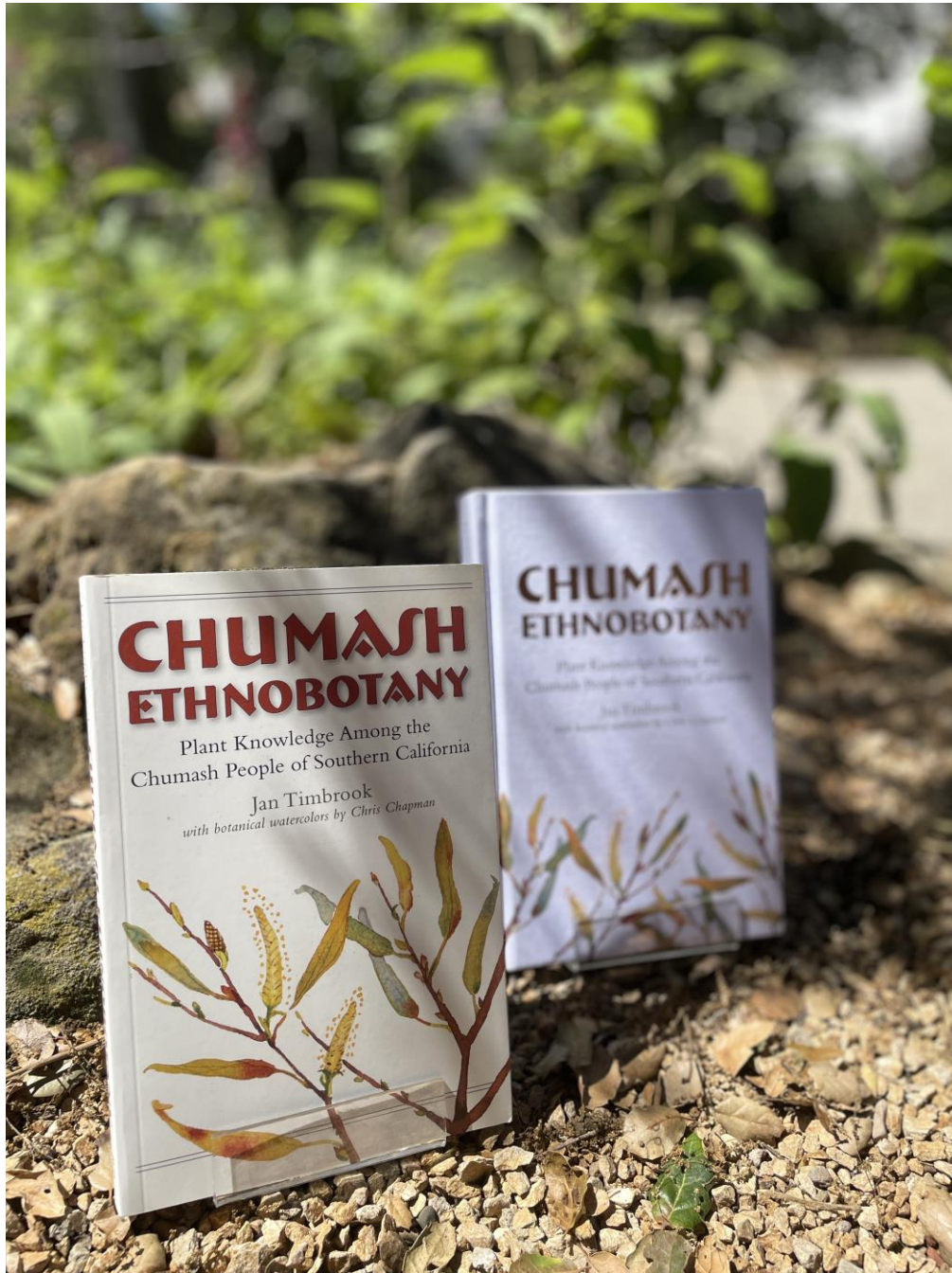
Chumash Elder Julie Tumamait-Stenslie—who has advised the Museum’s anthropologists for decades—encouraged Timbrook in her research and writing. Tumamait-Stenslie comments on the second edition, “Jan has brought us information about the natural world that goes beyond academia . . . *Chumash Ethnobotany* will continue to guide people to the beautiful world of plants and the relationships that Chumash people continue to have with them. It can also teach the non-Indigenous person to gain a richer and deeper knowledge and relationship to our natural world.”

Tickets for the book signing (Members \$14, non-members \$20) are available at [sbnature.org/calendar](http://sbnature.org/calendar). The ticket price includes refreshments and \$10 off the purchase of a book.

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### **About the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History**

*Inspiring curiosity for over 100 years.* Founded in 1916, the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History inspires a thirst for discovery and a passion for the natural world. The Museum seeks to connect people to nature for the betterment of both, and prides itself on being *naturally different*. For more information, visit [sbnature.org](http://sbnature.org).



Paperback and limited-edition hardcover copies of the second edition



Jan Timbrook. The author holds a c. 1820 Chumash serving tray woven from Basket Rush (*Juncus textilis*), the plant in the background.



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