

# Larner Seeds

July 2008 Newsletter



## Order Now! Prices Go Up August 15.

Order annual wildflower seeds now for fall sowing, and perennial and grass seed for sowing in flats in order to plant out in the fall: On August 15, our seed prices, which we have kept constant for over two years, will be going up. We wanted to give you ample time to take advantage of our current prices. Most wildflower and grass seeds do not decline in germination ability for years.

[Annual](#) and [perennial](#) packets are now \$4.50 and will be going up to \$5.50. 1/2 ounce size is currently \$5.00 - going up to \$6.00

Our [Wildflower Mixes](#) are now \$5.50 - going up to \$6.50

[Grass](#) seed is \$4.00 per packet, with prices going up to \$5.00

Please check the website for bulk and other rate changes after August 15.

## The "We Try" Department

Here's a letter we received from Lanna Seuret, a California customer.

*Hi Larner Seeds-*

*I must have been one of many who wrote you - my letter about 6-8 weeks ago - requesting symbols for butterfly and hummingbird attractions, and to my delight and surprise, today, 3 June, there they were!!! Wow! Fast manifestation!! Thank you very much.*

*Sincerely, A satisfied and happy home gardener/customer*



We appreciate the appreciative note, and we do our best to provide the information you need. It's good to know that many folks are interested in promoting our local butterflies and hummingbirds.

Let me say here, though, that our focus is still on restoring appropriate local habitat, which will follow as the day the night with the appropriate insects. Here at Lerner Seeds, we do not value more the dazzling hummingbird or colorful butterfly (though enjoying them mightily) than the less recognized or colorful bee-fly, lacewing, or crawling beetle.

Therefore, we have gone a step further and added a new icon, "*pollinator*" to the plant listings on our website, - one for *insectary plants*. Unless a plant is wind-pollinated, as the grasses are, it requires pollination by some known or unknown insect (or, less frequently, bird), some insect which may be longing for the return of its either required (*obligate*) host plant, or favored (*ice cream*) nectar source. Perhaps it only heard of this delicious treat from its parents, a tale of the good old days before invasive species crowded the menu offerings.

Some of the annual wildflowers are not of suitable build to work for hummingbirds or butterflies, yet they are abuzz with pollinators, including, for example, the 1600 different solitary bee species native to California, many of which are threatened, rare, or endangered. With devastating losses in European honey bee populations, our native bees are more important than ever. Here's a [link](#) to some recent useful articles with resources on this topic.

## It's Seed Collecting Time!

Many of our seed species are not easily found in the wild and are not available commercially. Did you know that almost all of our perennials, shrubs, vines, and trees seeds are hand-collected? Many are grown out in our greenhouse and in our garden so that we can provide seed for your garden; others are wild-collected (with permit on public land or permission on private land). A new icon indicates which seeds are hand-collected (see above).



Hand-collected seed takes a long journey before it reaches a packet with a Lerner Seeds label on it. First, we enjoy the profuse blooms in the garden, noting bloom time, pollinators, and the onset of seed development. When seed is ripe, we gather, using hands, badminton racquets, machetes. The seed is dried in racks, trays, bowls, and bags, then winnowed, cleaned, and stored, some saved for future grow-outs, some placed in packets and shelved. Continued engagement with this process is a deeply satisfying part of life.

This seed becomes this meadow (below), the image from our bulk packaging for Hills of California Wildflower Seed Mix. 1/2 ounces are \$5.50 -- a good gift. [Hills of CA Wildflower Mix](#)



## Our Ever Changing Motto

Motto of the month (we change mottos frequently). "You can't go wrong restoring habitat."

Suggest a new Lerner Seeds "Motto of the Month," and win a \$25.00 gift certificate.

Our first motto, a guideline for our business, thirty years old this year, was taken from a quote by landscape architect Russell Beattie: "Providing a link between the ecologist and the home gardener."

The next motto, used for eight years, was "A plant is not a couch." It was recently amended by Phil Van Soelen of Calflora Nursery after seeing our Most Interesting Non Horticultural Use of a Native Plant Award in the last newsletter to "But It Can Be A Clothesline." If you missed that newsletter, [click here](#).

## Summer at Lerner Seeds



Please note current shop and garden hours below. All orders will be mailed out by US Mail on Tuesdays through the Summer.

As always, we encourage you to stop by our demonstration garden with its ever evolving colors and blooms. The garden shop is full of books, tools, seeds and other interesting garden items for sale.

Image to the left, blooming profusely in Lerner Seeds Demonstration Garden, is *Clarkia amoena*, Farewell-to-Spring.

## Summer Hours at Larner Seeds

We are open on Tuesdays 10- 2:00 pm, and Saturdays from 12 pm to 4 pm. The Larner Seeds [website](#) is always open! Feel free to call us at **415-868-9407**.

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## Sign Up a Friend to Receive This Newsletter

You can reach the sign up form by clicking on the "[Contact Us](#)" section of the website. At the bottom of the page, you will find a link to signing up for the newsletter.