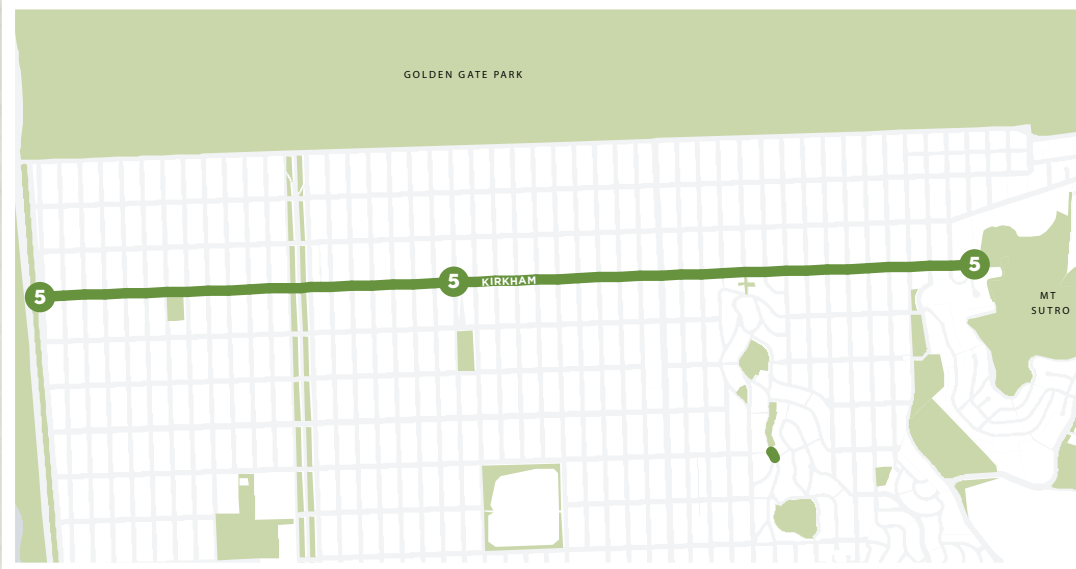


# KIRKHAM, SUTRO TO BEACH

## SPECIES: COYOTE BUSH



### ROUTE HIGHLIGHTS

- » The Sunset, UCSF Parnassus Campus, Mount Sutro Open Space Preserve, 15th Avenue Steps Park



Credit: Wikimedia Commons

### COYOTE BUSH – *Baccharis pilularis*

#### The motherplant!

Common and widespread in various San Francisco locations, this plant supports no less than 29 species of spiders, 7 mites, and 221 species of insects (of these, 56 are only loosely associated, leaving 165 species as its true associates). The evergreen, insect haven coyote brush also provides shelter and insect forage for birds such as bushtits, hummingbirds, and white-crowned sparrows. With its late season and honey-sweet scented bloom, *coyote bush* is an indispensable source of nectar (August – December) for hundreds of insects. Flowers are not particularly showy, and it is dioecious, meaning that male and female flowers are borne on separate shrubs. The yellowish male flowers are stubbier, short, and flattish, with a creamy white color; and the female flowers are whitish green, fluffy, long, and glistening.

#### ✓ FUN FACTS

The insect associates of *Baccharis pilularis* (*coyote bush*), a common plant of the dunes and other coastal shrub communities, are legion, supporting no less than 29 species of spiders, 7 mites, and 221 species of insects (of these, 56 are only loosely associated, leaving 165 species as its true associates). Several of these, including several abundant moth species that play a keystone role in the insect economy, are apparently specific to coyote bush. *Baccharis* is an excellent habitat plant offering food and cover to a wide variety of wildlife, including most of the predatory wasps, small butterflies and native flies. With its late bloom, it is an indispensable source of autumn nectar for hundreds of insects. It provides shelter for small animals and birds such as wrentits and white-crowned sparrows.

Flowers are not particularly showy and the male and female flowers are borne on separate shrubs, as *Baccharis* is a dioecious plant. Blooming between August and December, the white fluffy female and yellowish male flowers grow on separate shrubs. The male flowers are stubbier, short, flat, with a creamy white color. The female flowers are long, whitish green and glistening.

#### 🌿 ASSOCIATED PLANTS & ANIMALS

*Coast Strawberry* – *Fragaria chiloensis*, *Coast Buckwheat* – *Eriogonum latifolium*, *Pink Sand Verbena* – *Abronia umbellata*, *Dune Tansy* – *Tanacetum bipinnatum*.