

MUTSUN RELEARNING PROJECT



Fritillaria affinis, a California native, is depicted in one of Claudia Stevens' botanical works. It is also known as the Checker Lily. It has bulbets that look like grains of rice and Indians called it 'rice root.' The plant is a tall herbaceous perennial, growing 3 to 4 feet high.

CONTRIBUTED

Aptos botanical painter lands \$40,000 grant

Sentinel staff report

ATPOS — A botanical painter in Aptos has been awarded \$40,000 from the Creative Work Fund in San Francisco to help finance a collaboration with the UC Santa Cruz Arboretum.

Claudia Stevens will lend her artistic services during the next two years to the university's Mutsun Relearning Project. Still in the development stages, the project will highlight Native Americans' use of local plants for food, fiber, tools and medicine — biotic and cultural knowledge lost through the centuries.

Signage at the eventual Mutsun Relearning Gardens on the Arboretum grounds will feature Stevens' traditional illustrations, which she paints from real-life specimens. She expects to complete her portion of the

project by 2012.

"But (the grant) gives you much time as you need, which I thought was nice," said Stevens, the first time visual artist recognized by the foundation in Santa Cruz County since its inception in 1994.

The Filoli Gardens in Woodside, the McPherson Center in downtown Santa Cruz, Stanford University and the Cooper-Molera Adobe grounds in Monterey will each take a turn hosting her finished works as a traveling exhibit.

Collaborating with the artist for the Mutsun Relearning Project are Sara Reid, a Native American ethnobotanist; Chuck Striplen of the Mutsun Tribal Council; and botanist Brett Hall, the Arboretum's manager.

For more information on Stevens' paintings, visit www.cstevensstudios.com.