



June 4th 2020

Dear Members of the California Botanical Society,

The scientific study of plants — as all of science — is based on openness, inclusivity, and mutual respect, and so science cannot thrive in a society that is riven with racism, bigotry, or injustice.

We – the Council of the California Botanical Society – are writing today in solidarity with the Black community to acknowledge and to condemn our country’s long-standing, collective failure to create, support, and maintain a society that is in alignment with its stated commitment to peace and justice for all. We are appalled, repelled, and horrified by the racism and brutality that resulted in the recent murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor and we recognize that these are just the latest examples of a long and escalating history of state-supported dehumanization of marginalized citizens and residents of the United States. We support the calls for justice to be brought to the perpetrators of these crimes.

The links between our professional lives, our love for Botany, and our political and social beliefs become impossible to ignore when the lives of our community members are not equally valued by the federal- and state-supported agencies designed to protect them, to ensure their health, and to hear their voices. When our country’s political environment puts the personal safety of any member of CBS, our families, our colleagues and students, our broader social networks, and communities of color at risk while destroying their economic stability, we, as a society, must speak out.

The California Botanical Society is but one of thousands of self-organized communities in which many members are in distress due to a global pandemic, political unrest catalyzed by vicious brutality and divisive leadership, and economic ruin. As a diverse and inclusive organization, we pledge to help find a path forward, not only for our members, but as an example to other formal and informal non-governmental organizations whose members face similar obstacles to their personal and professional well-being.

We affirm that Black Lives Matter, and we have the responsibility to work against racism in all its forms. We welcome input from members who have suggestions for how we can broaden our Society’s inclusiveness and light the way for a more equitable, promising and sustainable future. You can [provide anonymous feedback here](#). We hope to hear

from you about the actions we can take to ensure that the next generation of botanists is as stunning and as diverse as our incredible flora.

With our best wishes,

The Council of the California Botanical Society
Susan J. Mazer, President
Joshua Der, First Vice President
Brett Hall, Second Vice President
Amy Litt, Member at Large
David Margolies, Treasurer
Nancy Morin, Secretary
Rachael Olliff Yang, Membership Chair
Nishi Rajakaruna, Member at Large
Sula Vanderplank, Corresponding Secretary
Lorena Villanueva-Almanza, Outreach Coordinator
Josie Lesage, Nemophila Editor
Muriel Poston, Member at Large
Brett Hall, Second Vice President
Justen Whittall, Madroño editor
Andrew Doran, Member at Large

Additional Information, Reading, and Resources:

UC Berkeley Graduate student Kat Magoulick has compiled an excellent list of resources and action items for individuals who wish to participate in the fight against racism beyond protesting and direct action, and to support those who are on the front lines.

1. Reach out to the Black people in your life

As this article headline reminds us: [Your Black Colleagues May Look Like They're Okay — Chances Are They're Not](https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/2020/05/9841376/black-trauma-george-floyd-dear-white-people?fbclid=IwAR3zNltRsiHjwSP9RIL82HzqUT2CtWVBwq48rbz-ouJTkj-UCBBUBiq-e2Y). Let your friends know that you are there to support them. <https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/2020/05/9841376/black-trauma-george-floyd-dear-white-people?fbclid=IwAR3zNltRsiHjwSP9RIL82HzqUT2CtWVBwq48rbz-ouJTkj-UCBBUBiq-e2Y>

2. Educate Yourself:

[Anti-racism resources for white people](#)
[75 Things White People Can Do for Racial Justice](#)
[Anti-racism Resource Guide](#)
[A Guide to Allyship](#)
Learn about [unconscious bias](#)

Police Violence and Bias on Berkeley Campus:
[East Bay Express investigative piece](#)
[Washington Post piece](#)
[UC Berkeley Police arresting Black children](#)

3. Sign a petition

[Justice for George Floyd, change.org](#)

[#JusticeforFloyd, colorofchange.org](#) (This website has many other petitions and great resources).

[UC-wide petition](#) for ending of UC police contracts

4. Contact those in power

To demand justice for George Floyd:

- You can call (612-348-5550) or email (citizeninfo@hennepin.us) District Attorney Mike Freeman
- You can contact Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey [here](#) or by phone (612-673-2100).

To demand change from your local representatives, you can find them [here](#).

5. Donate

There are many ways to support the cause monetarily. A few that you can donate to:

- Bail Funds - You can donate to help bail out protestors in [the Bay Area](#) and [around the country](#)
- [Black Lives Matter](#)
- [Official George Floyd Memorial Fund](#)
- [The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund](#)

6. Hold your friends, family, and yourself accountable

It is important to challenge the racism and injustice that you encounter. Here is a guide to [Anti-racism resources for white people](#) and here's [an article on how to be a white ally](#).

7. Hold your professional societies accountable

Sara Kahanamoku, along with many others, called out The Paleontological Society on Twitter for their silence. They responded with a message of solidarity and said that a more formal statement is on the way. You can reach out to your field's societies and associations to hold them accountable and ask what steps they are taking.

8. Help with protest kits

Many people have been working to disseminate supplies (hand sanitizer wipes, masks, etc) to those who are protesting. If you are interested in getting involved with this effort you can reach out to local groups doing this work.

9. Amplify Black voices

This week is #BlackBirdersWeek on Twitter. I encourage you to scroll through some of the hashtags to like and retweet.