



A Nature Hike

On your hike with WildCare's Terwilliger Nature Guides, you may find yourself stepping on lots of acorns! You might see hundreds of acorns around you, but only a few of these special nuts will take root and grow into strong oak trees!



Acorns are an important meal for many different animals, including Gray Squirrels, Acorn Woodpeckers, and even people! Each kind of animals has found a different way to storing the acorns to keep them safe through the winter. You might already know that Gray Squirrels will bury their acorns in the dirt and leaves all around them, but did you know Acorn Woodpeckers and the Coast Miwok people had a similar way of storing acorns?



The **Coast Miwok** had to store their foods in a place safe from animals and bad weather. Their solution is building large granaries off the ground. A **granary** is a place to store grains like seeds. To protect their acorns from bugs, the Coast Miwok children collect branches from the bay laurel trees and place them in the granaries. Bugs do not like the taste or smell of the leaves, and would avoid the granary.

Acorn Woodpeckers are also masters at creating natural granaries! You might see an old tree with lots of small holes in its sides. The Acorn Woodpeckers will work together to drill the holes, fill up these holes with acorns, and then protect them from other animals that might want to steal them!



Acorn Woodpeckers are busy birds– not just collecting the acorns but moving them all around their granary. As the acorns dry, they shrink and could fall out of the holes the woodpeckers drilled in their granary tree. So the woodpeckers will go back, grab the acorn, and move it to a hole with a tighter fit. They really do not want anything to steal their food!

Draw your own granary tree for the Acorn Woodpecker to stash his acorns!

