

# Summer Heat

## Surviving Without a Cooler

The hot summer sun bakes the surrounding hills to a golden brown by early June. The first areas to dry are the hills facing south, exposed to the direct rays of the sun. Only seasonal wildflowers and grasses, and blue oaks can survive on these slopes. Here on the north-facing hillside, additional soil moisture and cooler ground temperatures support other types of plants. An overstory of interior live oaks, blue oaks and California buckeyes shade the twining vines of the Dutchman's pipevine and clematis. Poison oak, Himalaya berry and even ferns thrive on these cooler slopes.

### Try This:

Compare the oak woodland on the south-facing slope across the ravine to the surrounding area. Notice the differences in plant varieties, space between trees and lushness of plant growth. Is there a difference in the types and numbers of wildlife species as well?

