



## Sugarplum Retreat

at the Mariposa Institute- Ukiah, California

Dear Friend,

Thank you for registering for a retreat with the Sugarplum Sangha at Mariposa. Please read the enclosed information carefully so that we may practice together in harmony.

### **Being There**

**Arriving:** Please plan to arrive between 3 pm and 5 pm. In order to help establish a calm, cohesive and joyful retreat, we expect that you will be able to attend the entire time. Upon arriving at Mariposa, continue down the drive way past the courtyard and yurt. You can park in a space near the barn or Moon Garden. Check in will be in the Barn Office, where a Sugarplum Resident will ask you to sign some forms, share the schedule, and direct you to your dorm. Space is limited, road maintenance is costly, and carbon emissions are harmful to the environment, so we encourage carpooling. Also to conserve space, please don't be shy about pulling in tight and double parking.

**Preparedness:** The weather in Ukiah is very unpredictable. We could be quite warm and dry, or cool with showers. Please come prepared for all eventualities. Even when it is really hot during the day, the evenings cool down considerably. Layers are advisable. There is a seasonal creek that will still be running with a few dunking pools for cooling and play. Footpaths may require sturdy shoes depending on your surefootedness.

### **To Bring:**

- Bedding, i.e. pillow and pillow case, blankets or sleeping bag. Bed sheets are provided.
- Layers of clothing
- Towel and washcloth
- Flashlight
- Alarm clock
- Sunscreen and/or hat
- Non-scented biodegradable toiletries when possible

### **Optional:**

- Music/poems/instruments or other creative offerings for joyful time together
- A tent and bedding including sleeping pad if outdoor camping

**Dorms:** Two rooms will be used for sleeping indoors (men's dorm, women's dorm). These are all near the bathrooms.

**Outdoor Camping:** There are two areas for camping. One area is by the creek and close to the buildings and

bathroom facilities. The other is more out of the way and wild. Both areas are quite safe and accessible by car for dropping things off. Please avoid having food in tenting area as it can attract large wildlife (not-so-good occurrences for humans or 4 legged friends).

**Fire Awareness and water conservation:** Fire awareness is crucial in the woodlands beginning in May. As a precautionary measure, please do not bring candles or camp stoves for personal use. There is a kitchen available should you need something special. There are bathrooms and a porta potty. Please listen to suggestions regarding flushing so that we may ensure water for the coming season. Anything we can do to conserve water is appreciated.

**Showers and Bathing:** There are two showers available. With awareness of limited water availability, you are invited to shower before the retreat and then upon returning home.

Emergency Phone: There is no way to receive an incoming call on the grounds. Incoming messages may be left at the Mariposa Institute Office: (707) 462-1016. We will check for messages daily. Be aware that your cell phone probably will not receive a signal out here. There is an emergency outgoing phone.

Departure: The retreat concludes at 12:30pm on Monday with a closing circle after a group clean up of the facilities. Mariposa's resources to hire cleaning crews after retreats are very limited, so please make it a part of your practice to contribute to a communal clean up on the last morning of the retreat so that future groups may use the facilities with ease and comfort.

**Resiliency:** Mindfulness is a practice that puts us directly in touch with our bodies, feelings, minds, and perceptions, opening us up to a vivid awareness of sensations, emotions, and cognitions in the present moment. Though the long-term benefits of mindfulness practice can include stress reduction, a greater capacity for self-regulation, and increased self-awareness, it can also bring to the surface pain and stress that have been operating in the background. We should be prepared, then, for the possibility of some experiences of distress intensifying during our practice, especially if we are holding unresolved trauma.

Sugarplum Sangha understands that people can only practice mindfulness productively when they are within their resilient zone. The resilient zone is where we have the best capacity for flexibility and adaptability in body, mind, and spirit. In the resilient zone, we have access to our higher executive functioning; we can think rationally and employ strategies for regulating emotions and physical sensations. These functions are necessary for mindfulness practice to be healing and beneficial.

It is normal for everyone to get triggered out of their resilient zone once in a while, and mindfulness is one practice that can help center us again. Triggers may be sights, sounds, smells, sensations, or memories that remind us (consciously or unconsciously) of traumatic or stressful events. When triggered, the nervous system is sounding the alarm that danger is present even when the present moment is safe. For that reason, we may be confused about how the body is responding to the environment.

Signals that you're triggered out of your resilient zone may include intolerable experience of:

- Flashbacks
- Ambient fear or anxiety
- Trouble sleeping
- Disturbing thoughts
- Stomach pain
- Racing heart
- Numbness
- Panic
- Difficulty with attention
- Dissociating from the body or physical senses

- Anything else that feels dysregulating or destabilizing

If you notice any of these experiences during your retreat with Sugarplum Sangha, some things you can try doing to bounce back in your resilient zone are:

- Talk to a retreat facilitator. It is ok to break noble silence to do so.
- Attend to your immediate visual experience by taking note of the colors or shapes in the environment. It is ok to open your eyes during meditation to do so.
- Ground in your body by focusing on your weight on the floor or pushing against a wall. It is ok to get up from meditation to do so.
- Attend to the sounds in the environment
- Take a drink of water
- Count the number of a particular item or shape in the room
- Count in intervals of three up to one hundred.
- Bring to mind a person, object, place, or event that has a sense of security and wellness. With that thing in mind, scan the body for and hold attention on pleasant sensations
- Return to the mindfulness practice only once the body and mind are regulated again.

### **Directions to Mariposa Institute:**

3800 Low Gap Road, Ukiah:

Google Maps and other such apps offer directions through step 6.

You might lose electronic directional assistance while on Low Gap Road!

#### **From the South:**

1. Take Hwy 101 N. to Ukiah.
2. Take Central Ukiah Exit (also called Perkins St./ Vichy Springs—the exit after the Gobbi Street Exit).
3. Turn left and go over the overpass on Perkins Street.
4. Go west on Perkins to the second stop light which is State Street. You will be in front of the Courthouse.
5. Take a right and go about one mile to the third stop light. This is called Low Gap Road to the west and Brush Street to the East.
6. Turn LEFT onto Low Gap Road and go 3.5 miles. The road will be paved for the first 2 miles, then turns to dirt.
7. After about a mile and a half of dirt road, turn down the driveway on the left into the Mariposa Center.
8. Once you start down our unpaved driveway park near the barn or garden and check in at Barn Office.

#### **From the North:**

1. Take Hwy 101 to Ukiah and exit on North State Street.
2. Turn right as you enter State Street. Proceed south on State three stop lights to Low Gap Road.
3. Turn RIGHT onto Low Gap Road and go 3.5 miles. The road will be paved for the first 2 miles, and then turns to dirt.
4. SEE STEPS 7 & 8 above