



Spring Wildflowers



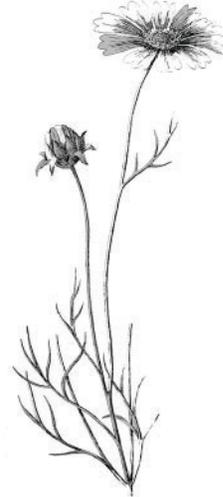
California Poppy
(*Eschscholzia californica*)



Checkerbloom
(*Sidalcea malviflora*)



Douglas Iris
(*Iris douglasiana*)



Coastal tidytips
(*Layia platyglossa*)



Lupine
(*Lupinus* spp.)

Overview

During April and May, much of Point Reyes National Seashore is carpeted in wildflowers. Although some plants bloom in the Douglas fir woodlands, the best displays are in the coastal areas where steady winds have prevented the sun-blocking conifers from becoming established. Here, the flowers have easy access to the increasing sunlight of spring days. Following are descriptions of a few of the most commonly seen flowers in the park. A list of all 860 species (17% of all species found in California) found in the Point Reyes area is available to purchase at Park visitor centers.

Chimney Rock, Abbotts Lagoon, and Tomales Point trails and the Limantour Beach/Muddy Hollow area are some of the best places in the park to view wildflowers. A variety of field guides to flowers is available at the Bear Valley Visitor Center if you wish to explore on your own. You can also join a park naturalist on a wildflower walk on some spring weekends to learn more about the flowers of Point Reyes. And remember as you wander through this spring extravaganza: take only pictures! Please leave the flowers for future visitors to enjoy.

California Poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*)

The four-petaled orange blossoms of our state flower are familiar to most Californians. The buds are covered with

a tight green cap that pops off when the flower is ready to bloom.

Checkerbloom
(Sidalcea malviflora)

This wild cousin of the hollyhock has pink to red-purple flowers with prominent white veins. In areas where it is protected from the wind, it may have

wands of flowers up to a foot high. On the stationary dunes of Point Reyes's beaches, the same plant is flattened into a low turf by the constant Pacific winds.

Douglas Iris
(Iris douglasiana)

Douglas iris may be found along the coast or growing in the shade of the tall bishop pine and Douglas fir forests. The flowers vary from deep purple to

pale lavender. Iris is one of the species that marks the start of the spring flower season, often beginning to bloom as early as late February.

"DYG's"
("Darn Yellow Composites")

The composite, or sunflower family includes many plants such as daisies, thistles and dandelions. The yellow daisy-and sunflower-like blossoms of many composite species are difficult to tell apart. Rather than spend frustrating hours keying them out, casual flower lovers may simply lump them under the generic name "DYG's." It is possible

to identify some composites without resorting to botanic keys, however. Gumplant (*Grindelia* spp.) grows on stable sand dunes and in the salt marsh, and may be recognized by the stickiness of its buds and flowers. Coastal tidytips (*Layia platyglossa*) have one-and-a-half inch-wide flowers whose yellow petals are tipped in white.

Lupine
(Lupinus spp.)

These plants range from the low, prostrate shore lupines that creep along the bluffs and dunes to the shrubby bush lupines that color the coastal hills. They come in a variety of colors from white to yellow to lavender. Whatever their size or color, all lupines have

stalks of fragrant flowers and leaflets that radiate from the end of the leaf stem like the spokes of a wheel. If you come upon a lupine after it is finished blooming, its furry seed pods will tell you that it is a member of the pea family.

Wild Radish
(Raphanus raphanistrum)

A member of the mustard family, this flower is related to such familiar plants as broccoli and cabbage. Like the yellow mustard that colors so many of California's fields in the spring, wild radish is not native to North America. Seeds from this and many other plants

were imported from Europe, either intentionally or accidentally by livestock and their feed. The flowers which range from white and pale pink to yellow and lavender, now decorate many of the fields and roadsides of Point Reyes in the spring.
