



# WILDFLOWERS-NOW & FOREVER

## Sierra National Forest

### IS IT OK TO PICK WILDFLOWERS?

**NO.** For many of us it is a natural instinct to pick a bouquet of wildflowers to display in a vase in our homes or in our campsite. Wildflowers often appear abundant, and it seems like such a harmless thing to take just a few for our enjoyment and appreciation. Many people that visit the Sierra National Forest are not aware that they are breaking the law when they pick wildflowers. There are ecological and legal reasons to consider before reaching for those lovely posies and to remember instead to take a photograph or draw a picture.

### ECOLOGICAL REASONS NOT TO PICK WILDFLOWERS:

1. Flowers are more than beautiful structures that appeal to humans; they exist so the plant can reproduce itself. Many of the most spectacular blossoms are specially designed to attract certain pollinating animals. The number of flowers pollinated combined with their arraignment of the stem can make a difference between reproductive success or failure for the entire year.
2. Removing wildflowers from annuals, plants that bloom for only one year and then die, means the seeds of the plant would have made will not be there for next year's wildflower season.
3. Many species of wildflowers have already suffered great reduction in numbers over the last 100 years because of increasing alterations of their habitat.
4. It is often difficult to distinguish between common, rare and endangered species of wildflowers. Species that are in danger of extinction may look abundant to the casual observer who is possibly looking at one of the few remaining areas where the plant is located.

Collecting wildflowers for educational and scientific purposes is legitimate and allowable. Contact the local forest botanist or California Native Plant Society chapter for information.

### LEGAL PROTECTION OF WILDFLOWERS

**Federal Lands:** On National Forests, Parks or Monuments, it is illegal to pick or collect plants without a permit. National Forests issue permits for scientific and educational purposes. Permits must be carried while collecting; law enforcement personnel may ask to see the permit.

**State and Private Lands:** It is illegal to cut, destroy, mutilate, or remove any native tree, shrubs, fern, herb, bulb, cactus or flower from public lands. It is also illegal to take plants from private land without written permission from the owner.

**State or County highway rights-of-way:** It is illegal to cut, destroy, mutilate, or remove plants growing upon State or county rights-of-way. This means no collecting along the side or in view of a road.

### ENFORCEMENT:

Any of the following can issue citations for illegal collection of wildflowers or plants:

- County or State fire warden
- Personnel of the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection as designated by the Director of Forestry
- Personnel of the U.S.D.A. Forest Service as designated by the Regional Forester
- Or any peace officer of the State of California

### SOMETHING RARE

The tree anemone (*Carpentaria californica*) is one of California's rarest shrubs and is found only in the foothills of eastern Fresno and Madera Counties on the Sierra National Forest and on adjacent private land. Tree anemone can be seen in bloom April through July, along 168 on the way to Shaver Lake. The showy white flowers are well worth a drive to the foothills in the spring. **Be sure to bring a camera!**

This species is a remnant from ages past when central California still received summer rains. The plant is protected and under management to ensure its long-term survival. The use of fire has been incorporated into this management because seedlings only germinate following a fire.

## SOME FLOWERS YOU MIGHT SEE

The flowers and flowering plants you may encounter Sierra National Forest are abundant year-round. This Forest is very special as it spans multiple vegetation zones and has one of the largest vertical reliefs – from 900 feet elevation to 13,986 at the top of Mount Humphreys.

**Foothill Woodland and Chaparral Zone** (500-3500') - Blue Oak, Dogwood, California Buckeye, California Pink, Yarrow, Miner's Lettuce (tasty treat on the trail!), Lupine, and Mariposa Lily

**Lower Montane Forest** (3500-6000') – Ponderosa Pine, California Black Oak, Manzanitas, wild currents, Mountain Misery, Bracken fern, monkeyflower, Sierra onion, Western Columbine

**Upper Montane Forest** (6000-8000') – Red Fir, Lodgepole Pine, Asters, Western Bistort, Harvest Brodiaea, Clarkia, Fireweed, California Fuchsia, Scarlet Gilia, variety of Lupines

**Subalpine** (8000-9500') – Western White Pine, Whitebark Pine, Foxtail Pine, Sierra Columbine, Dwarf Alpine Daisy, Subalpine Onion

**Alpine** (9500-1300'+) – above tree line. Alpine Gold, Alpine Aster, Alpine Buttercup, Crimson Columbine, Western Blue Flax, Sky Pilot, Phlox,

## WHERE TO GO TO SEE WILDFLOWERS

On the Sierra National Forest, wildflowers begin to show as early as February in the low elevations. A great trail to see wildflowers would be the Bear Wal- low Trail along the Kings River. The Bear Wallow Trail follows the Kings River, past Pine Flat Reservoir, a few miles beyond Bailey's Bridge.

As snow melts, spring continues into summer at higher elevations, maintaining a wildflower display almost until the snow begins to fall again. Check with local ranger stations where the best elevation is for finding wildflowers. Many varieties bloom at different times, so it's almost a sure thing to find something blooming somewhere. So, grab your camera, sketch pad and wildflower guide and go for it!

## CALIFORNIA WILDFLOWER QUIZ

1. What is California's state flower?
2. Can you name the parts of a flower? (Answers are listed below)
3. Roughly how many species (flowers, shrubs, trees, grasses) are native to California?

1. California Poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*)  
2. Stigma – receives pollen; Style – elevates stigma to receive pollen; Ovary – contains ovules which become seeds after fertilization; Anther – releases pollen; Filament – elevates anther; Petal – all petals together are the corolla; Sepal – all sepals together are the calyx; Receptacle – holds the flower on the pedicel; Pedicel – the stalk of the flower  
3. Roughly 7,000 species