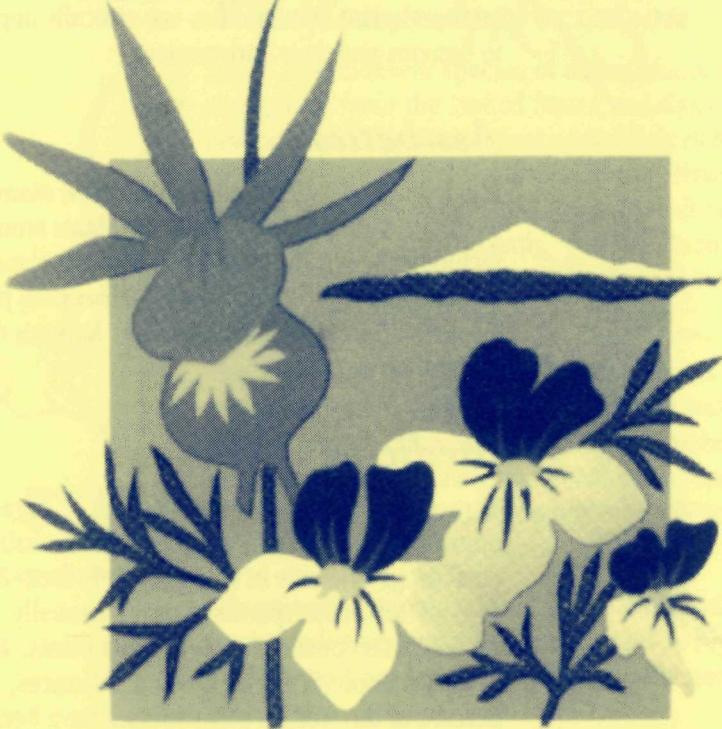


# Take A Look!



## VARIETY-IN-BLOOM

*Now Appearing on the  
Public Lands Near You!*

The national forests, national parks, national wildlife refuges, grasslands, and millions of acres of public lands are truly America's wildflower gardens. Celebrating Wildflowers - National Wildflower Week in May is an annual event. Throughout the year many programs feature the important role that the Nation's public lands, over 630 million acres, play in providing diverse habitats for much of America's flora.

Celebrating Wildflowers, a collaborative commemoration between the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Park Service promotes the importance of conservation and management of native plants and plant habitats and emphasizes the aesthetic, recreational, biological, medicinal, and economic values of wildflowers.



Aase's onion  
(*Allium aaseae*)

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**Wild Hot Line**  
**1-800-354-4595!**

**April - July**

*Celebrating Wildflowers*

# Importance of Plants and Plant Communities

P

lants and plant communities are critically important to humans and their environment.



Green-banded  
mariposa  
(*Calochortus  
macrocarpus*)

## Aesthetics

Plants have great aesthetic value. How many of us would be willing to live without the plants around us, including the forests, woodlands, and grasslands surrounding our towns and cities? Native plants provide a spiritual link with nature and our Nation's diverse cultural history.

## Medicine

Throughout history plants have been of paramount importance to medicine. Eighty percent of all medicinal drugs originate in wild plants. In fact, 25 percent of all prescriptions written annually in the United States contain chemicals from plants. In spite of the technological and medical advances, only 2 percent of the world's plant species have been analyzed even for one group of plant chemicals, the alkaloids. Many more such drugs remain to be found. Any one could be as useful as vincristine, derived from the Madagascar periwinkle, which has increased the survival rate of children with leukemia from 20 percent to 80 percent. Most plants remain untested for their medical potential. Another extremely promising anti-cancer drug is taxol, derived from Pacific yew which has worked against a broad range of cancers.

## Food

Although some 3,000 species of plants have been used by humans for food, 90 percent of the world's food comes from only 20 plant species. Three species of grasses - rice, wheat, and corn - are by far the most important food plants. Plants are also the real source of the animal products we consume such as beef, milk, and fish. Native plants have great untapped potential as sources of improved genetic traits such as disease resistance and drought tolerance.

## Industrial Products

Plants are immensely important for the consumer goods they provide. Fibers from plants provide clothing. The paper for this document and the wood used to build our homes depend on plants. Future fuel needs may also be met by plants, whether it be hydrocarbons derived from such species as the



Layne's butterweed  
(*Senecio layneae*)

## Recreation

Plant communities form the basis for many important recreational activities, including hiking, fishing, hunting, photography, and nature observation.

## Air Quality

The oxygen in the air we breathe is derived from the photosynthesis of plants. The quality of the air can be greatly influenced by plants. Vegetation can restrict the movement of dust and pollutants, and plants - through their intake of carbon dioxide - can moderate the greenhouse effect resulting from the burning of fossil fuels.

## Water Quality

Plants are extremely important to the quality of the water we use. A diverse cover of plants aids in maintaining healthy watersheds, streams, and lakes by holding soil in place, regulating stream flows, and filtering sediments from water.

## Soil Maintenance

The delicate wildflowers that dot the hillsides through spring and summer protect the soil from rampaging rains as they have done for thousands of years. Without adequate plant cover, wind or water erodes the thin mantle of soil upon which our existence depends.

## Climate

Regional climates are influenced by plant cover. Forest and marshes, for example, can greatly moderate local climates. Natural disasters, such as drought, have been attributed to the destruction of forests and other critically important plant communities.

## Fish and Wildlife Habitat

Plants and plant communities provide the habitat necessary to sustain wildlife and fish populations. Plant communities are the basis for virtually all terrestrial animal life.

## Ecosystem Stability

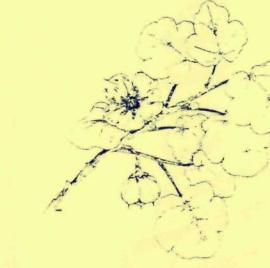
As described above, diverse plant communities are extremely important for sustaining healthy ecosystems. Every species counts. Plant habitats must be protected before species become critically endangered. With your support, we can conserve the more than 520 threatened and endangered plants and the 2,400 other plant species which are at risk of extinction.

## Wildflower Conservation and Etiquette

W

ildflowers are the jewels of the public lands. Like any treasure, they must be protected for all to enjoy. You can join the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Park Service in the stewardship of these priceless resources.

- Take a hike and stop to smell the fragrant wild roses.
- Take only photographs and memories when you leave.
- Please, don't pick the flowers.
- Tread lightly and stay on the trail.
- Don't be afraid to ask for information on wildflowers.
- Get involved! Explore volunteer opportunities on your public lands.



Pine Hill flannelbush  
(*Fremontodendron  
decumbens*)



# GOING WILD

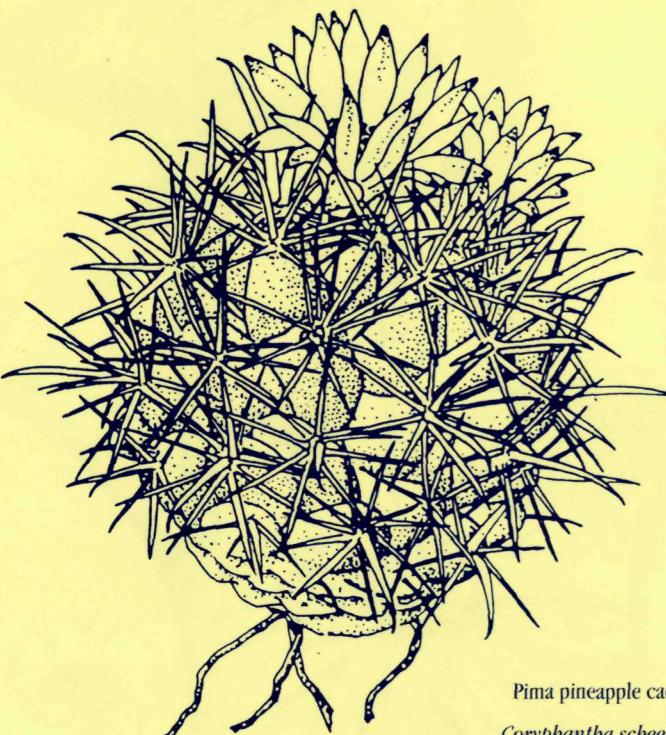
## Wildflower Appreciation

Over 15,000 different species of native plants are recognized from the United States and Canada. Several areas of the country are particularly rich in plant species, including California, Florida, Hawaii, and the Southwest. Many new species are discovered each year. Just recently, the Shasta snow wreath, an attractive shrub, was discovered in the hills of northern California.

The first step to appreciate wildflowers is to explore the public lands. Numerous guided walks, displays, presentations, and guidebooks have been developed to aid in public appreciation and interpretation of the values and wonders of wildflowers right under your nose.

Educational materials include plant identification books, coloring books, and trail guides to highlight the best ways to learn and enjoy our native wildflowers.

But please, again, do not pick the wildflowers.



Pima pineapple cactus  
*Coryphantha scheeri* var.  
*robustispina*

# Celebrating Wildflowers

## Volunteer Opportunities- Make a Difference

If you are interested in learning more about native flora, or would like to share your appreciation with others, the Nation's public lands - over 642 million acres - offer many volunteer opportunities. You can help by:

- Surveying lands to discover new plant species.
- Monitoring known plant populations to determine their health.
- Building fences to protect plant populations.
- Removing weedy alien plants to restore plant populations and their habitats.
- Visiting a local school to share knowledge and appreciation of wildflowers to students.
- Becoming a host at a local visitor center, park, or forest.
- Serving as a guide or gardener at local arboreta or public gardens.

For a Calendar of Events and other information contact the Bureau of Land Management, Public Affairs, MS 504 LS, 1849 C Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20240, (202) 452-5125; USDA Forest Service Public Affairs Office, P. O. Box 96090, Washington, D.C. 20090-6090, (202) 205-1760; USDA Agricultural Research Service, ARS Information Office, 6303 Ivy Lane, 4th Floor, Greenbelt, Maryland 20770, 301-344-2340; National Biological Service, Public Affairs Office, Room 3070, 1849 C Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20240, 202-482-3048; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Publications Unit, 4401 North Fairfax Drive, MS 130 Webb, Arlington, VA 22033, 703-358-1711; National Park Service, Public Affairs Office, Room 3424, 1849 C Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20240, (202) 208-6843.

**Wild Hot Line 1-800-354-4595!**  
April-July



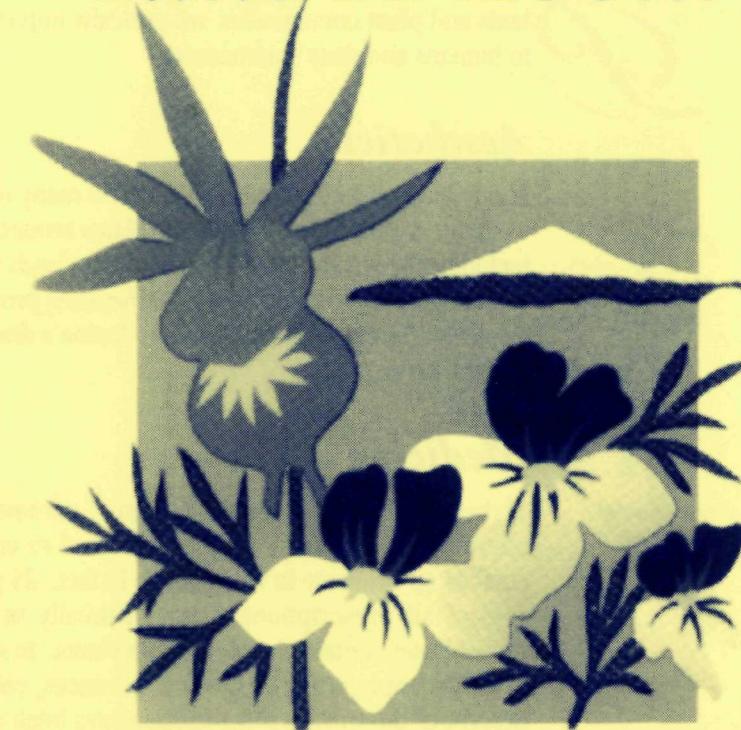
Dwarf bear-claw poppy  
*Arctomecon humilis*

The Celebrating Wildflowers logo (cover) consists of the Calypso orchid (*Calypso bulbosa* (L.) Oakes) which is a rare find in openings of most conifer forests of the Pacific Northwest and Rocky Mountains. The Hall's violet (*Viola hallii* Gray) brings color to grasslands, open forests, and parks on the west side of the Oregon Cascades.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL BIOLOGICAL SERVICE

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