



Douglas Iris (Iris Family)

Iris douglasiana, blooms February to May

Douglas Iris is widespread - found in grassland, mixed woodlands, and chaparral. You can see it at Bull Point, Chimney Rock and the Estero Trail at Point Reyes.

Neither deer nor cows seem to like to eat Douglas Iris. Large clumps of it can be found in grazed grassland at Point Reyes.

Douglas Iris flowers may be purple, lavender, yellow or white. It has no scent (Ground Iris is fragrant).

Pomos Indians used Iris flowers in dance wreaths. The Coast Miwok made a tea and used it as an emetic.

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Milk Maids (Mustard Family)

Cardamine californica, blooms December to June

Milk Maids is one of the first flowers to bloom in shady woods. It also occurs in open wet places, where it blooms later.

Early leaves are round, like a Milk Maid's stool. Leaves near the flower are more pointed.

The Maidu Indians ate the root. The root is shaped like a tooth.

Veined White and European Cabbage White butterflies pollinate Milk Maids. Veined White caterpillars eat them.

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Yarrow (Sunflower Family)

Achillea millefolium, blooms April to July

Yarrow is widespread in Marin County grasslands. You can see it in Ring Mountain Open Space and Point Reyes.

The plant is named for the Greek hero Achilles who, according to legend, carried the plant with him to staunch the flow of blood from a wound. A Chinese proverb says that eating yarrow brightens the eyes and promotes intelligence.

Miwok Indians used dried or green leaves to reduce pain. They also made a tea from the leaves and flowers for bad colds.

Painted Lady caterpillars use Yarrow for food.

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Buttercup (Buttercup Family)

Ranunculus californicus, blooms February to April

Buttercups appear on brushy hills, wooded slopes, and low fields all around Marin. Its name, *Ranunculus*, means "little frog", because many species grow in wet places.

Marin has several species of buttercups. The bright yellow petals sometimes turn white with age.

Miwok Indians dried Buttercup seeds with hot coals, and then ground them into flour to make pinole.

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