

Purple Clarkia (Evening Primrose Family)

Clarkia purpurea, blooms in May

Also called Ruby Chalice Godetia, this plant grows in dry open places. You can find it in serpentine areas in Tamalpais Valley south of Stinson Beach, on Mount Burdell, and on Ring Mountain.

Clarkia is in honor of Captain William Clark of the Lewis and Clark expedition.

Native Americans parched the seeds and ate them in pinole.

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Tomcat Clover (Pea Family)

Trifolium willdenovii, blooms in April

Tomcat Clover grows in grassland. You can find it on Big Rock Ridge, and at Rock Spring on Mount Tamalpais.

As the flower goes to seed, it looks like cat's claws. The three-leafed clover was considered a symbol of the Trinity.

Native Americans ate a variety of clovers.

The Orange Sulfur butterfly uses several species of clover.

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White Rein Orchid (Orchid Family)

Platanthera leucostachys, blooms in June

Also called the Marsh Orchid, this plant grows in coastal freshwater marshes. You can see it at Point Reyes.

White Rein Orchids are fragrant, and are pollinated by moths.

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Baby Stars (Phlox Family)

Leptosiphon androsaceus, blooms April to May

Also called Showy Linanthus, this plant grows in grassland, and the edges of woods. It is often found in serpentine areas. You can find it at Big Rock Ridge and at Olompali State Park.

Most populations have a mix of pink, white, and lavender flowers. Look for a purple throat in the center of the flower.

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