

NEWS



Forest Service

*United States
Department of
Agriculture*

Lassen National Forest

*2550 Riverside Drive
Susanville, CA 96130*

*Contact: Christina Veverka
(530) 252 6449, or
Leona Rodreick
(530) 252-6605*

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For TDD assistance, please dial (530) 252-6624.

Celebrate National Wildflower Week

National Wildflower week begins May 3rd, and in honor of this special week, the Forest Service, in collaboration with the Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, will hold its annual commemorative event entitled Celebrating Wildflowers. This special program promotes the importance of native plant conservation with an emphasis on the beauty and value of wildflowers. Celebrating Wildflowers also highlights how the nations' forests, national parks, and millions of acres of public lands are America's wildflower gardens.

During Wildflower Week, the public is invited to stop by the Lassen National Forest office in Susanville, where a variety of free materials will be available. These will include packets of wildflower seeds, attractive posters, and guides to some of the wildflower viewing spots within the Lassen National Forest. The public is also invited to view wildflower displays at the Hat Creek, Eagle Lake, and Almanor Ranger Districts during the week of May 24th.

“The best way to take advantage of Wildflower Week is simply to take a walk and enjoy the variety of spring blooms that are sprouting up along roads, trails, and stream banks. In the Lassen National Forest, one does not need to travel far to find areas that abound with wildflowers,” said Christina Veverka, Assistant Forest Botanist for the Lassen National Forest. Outings can happen just by walking along the Bizz Johnson trail, where a variety of showy flowers are along the trail. Hikers along the trail are likely to see the hillsides dotted with the sunflower-like blossoms of Arrowleaf Balsam root, and the trail edges colored with the scarlet blossoms of Canyon Larkspur. Other native wildflowers

that can be seen along the trail are Purple Lupine, Sagebrush Buttercup, and Yellow Biscuit root. For those serious plant lovers, the BLM office in Susanville has a plant checklist and identification guide for plants found along the Bizz Johnson Trail.

A number of areas throughout the Lassen National Forest are also good for wildflower viewing. This includes Hog and McCoy Flat Reservoirs, both located along Highway 44 west of Susanville. During late April and early May the wet margins of these reservoirs come alive with wildflowers such as common Camas, a plant that historically was a staple food for Native Americans. Another attractive area for spring wildflower viewing is Lost Creek Trail, which is located off of highway 89 in the Hat Creek Ranger District. By walking up this short and scenic trail, one can see a variety of showy blooms like Applegate's Paintbrush, Spurred Lupine, and Brodiaea.

In addition to wildflower spots, the Lassen Forest boasts some unique botanical areas that are home to unusual and rare plants. One such area is the Willow Lake Bog, located north of Chester at the end of road 312. The bog is a fragile place with floating mats of sphagnum moss that support a host of unusual plants that are rare in California. One such plant is the Roundleaf Sundew, an insectivorous plant that catches small insects on sticky glands on its leaves, then "eats" them by absorbing their juices through their leaves. Another carnivorous plant found at Willow Lake Bog is the Bladderwort, which catches tiny insects in the pod-like traps, then devours them through digestive juices. For those interested in visiting Willow Lake Bog later in the summer, there will be a field trip hosted by the California Native Plant Society on August 14th.

Whether it is a short walk or a hike in the forest, everyone is encouraged to enjoy the natural beauty of wildflowers that are seen in the Lassen National Forest. For more information about Celebrating Wildflowers, or local plant outings, contact Allison Sanger, Lassen Forest Botanist, at 252-6662, or visit the Forest Service's Nature Watch website at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/outdoors/naturewatch/wildflowers/celflwr.html>.

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