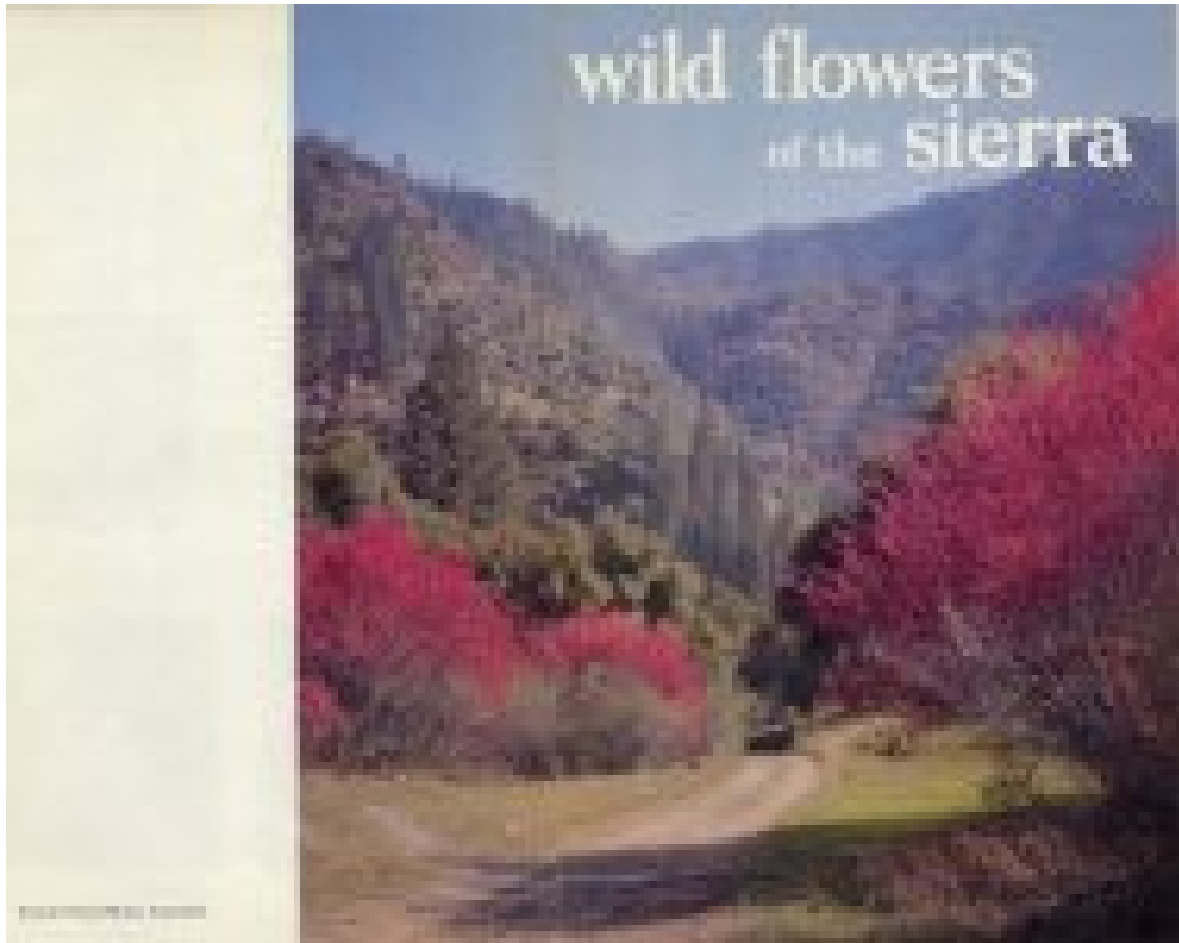


# *Wild Flowers of the Sierra* (1958) by Douglass H. Hubbard

Next: Introduction

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  - The Foothills
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## About the Author



*Doug Hubbard* (YRL)

For biographies about Douglass Hubbard, see

- John Bingaman, *Guardians of the Yosemite* (1961), p. 114.
  - Allan Shields, (PDF) "Whatever Happend to Doug Hubbard," *Yosemite Association* (Spring 2003), pp. 8-11.
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## Bibliographical Information

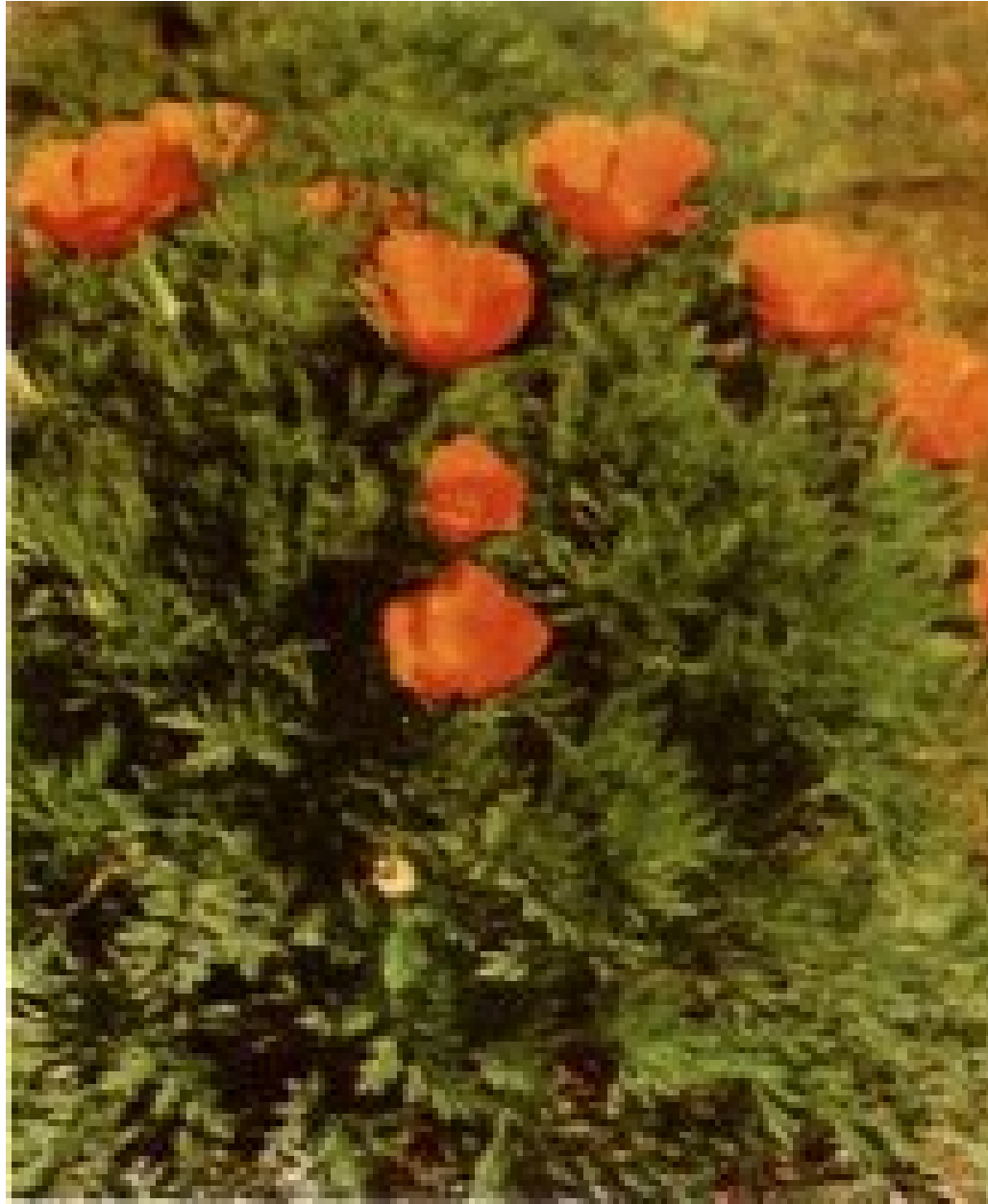
Douglass H. Hubbard (Douglass Hopwood Hubbard) (1918-), *Wild Flowers of the Sierra* (Yosemite: Yosemite Natural History Association: 1958). Special issue of *Yosemite Nature Notes*, 37:6. 23 pages. 88 color illustrations. 24 cm. Bound in green cloth cover.

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—Dan Anderson, [www.yosemite.ca.us](http://www.yosemite.ca.us)

## Introduction

why wild flowers?



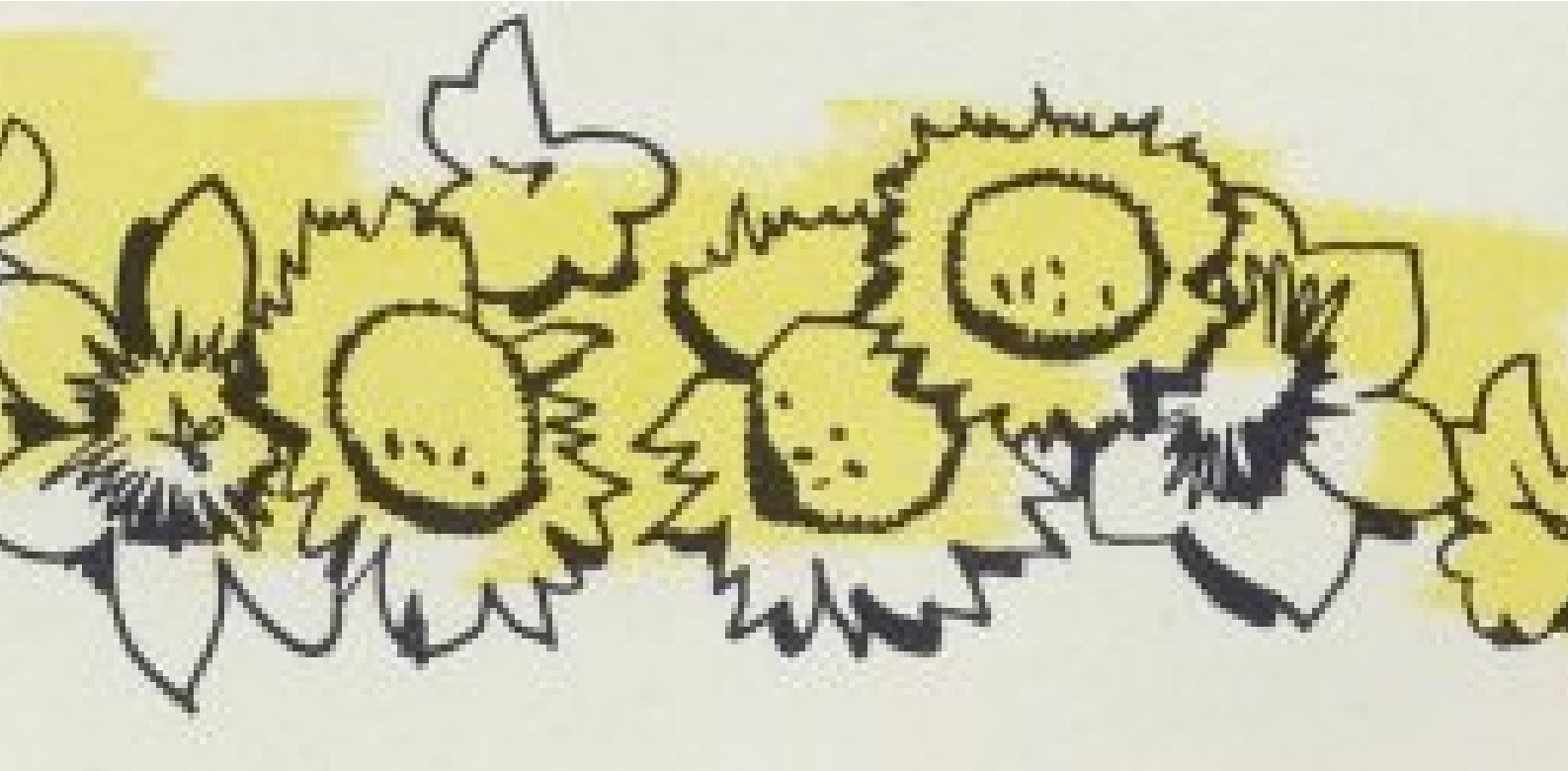
CALIFORNIA POPPY  
*Eschscholtzia californica*

California—"the Golden State" was named for the fields of golden poppies which blanket its valleys and foothills in springtime.

Flowers appeal to everyone: the delight of a child in a field of wildflowers will be reflected when the child becomes adult and gazes again upon familiar flowers—the finest examples of Nature's skill.

But our expanding civilization has drastically changed the face of the earth. Where a colorful blanket of wildflowers once lay, factories and freeways have sterilized the soil forever.

America's National Parks were set apart by our government to preserve for all time small portions of our country unchanged and unspoiled. In the National Parks all is protected, from the great cliffs to the most minute flower.



In this booklet are but a few of the hundreds of flowering plants of California's Sierra Nevada range. All color reproduction material in this book has been supplied as a public service by Richfield Oil Corporation and is taken from its annual publication, *Wild Flowers of the West*.

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yosemite nature notes, v37, n6  
compiled by douglass hubbard, chief park naturalist,  
yosemite national park

wild flowers  
of the sierra



in cooperation with the national park service

published by the  
yosemite natural history association  
yosemite national park  
california

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The flowers in this booklet are divided into three groups according to where they are most commonly found—*foothills, meadows and valleys, and the high country.*

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## the foothills

The foothills of the Sierra are the first to be carpeted with wildflowers of countless varieties. As the foothills turn golden brown, flowers are in bloom in the meadows and valleys higher in the range. By summer's end the flowers of the high country will be at their prime.



One of the largest groups of flowering plants is the sunflower family. Many California wildflowers belong to it, including the Gold Fields (*Baeria sp.*), a common foothill flower.



**RED MAIDS**

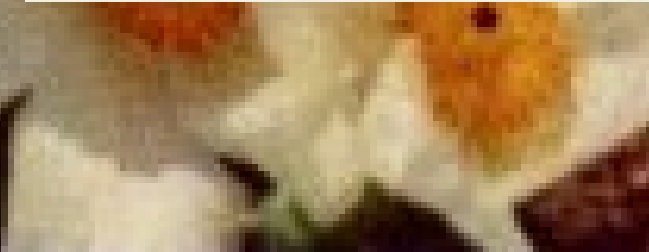
*Calandrinia ciliata*

In late afternoon these small (3/4") , bright flowers open. Common western wildflower 6" to 2 ft. high. March-April.

**YELLOW-AND-WHITE MONKEY FLOWER**

*Mimulus bicolor*

Monkey flowers come in many colors and sizes in the Sierra. This species is 6 to 10" high, has 1/2" flowers.



**PRICKLY POPPY or CHICALOTE**

*Argemone platyceras*

The Prickly Poppy, well-named for its thorny exterior, prefers dry areas. Plants to 3 ft. high with 4" flowers.

April-July.





**RABBIT BRUSH**

*Chrysothamnus nauseosus*

A shrub common on the east side of the Sierra, 1 to 5 ft. tall. Rabbit Brush flower heads up to 3" in diameter.



**CALIFORNIA BUCKEYE**

*Aesculus californica*

A foothill species 10 to 20 ft. tall with bright green leaves. The showy flowers grow in clusters up to 6" long. June.



**FIVE SPOT or CALICO FLOWER**

*Nemophila maculata*

The attractive Five Spot is an abundant flower in foothill meadows. Stems 5 to 10", flowers up to 1" across. April-August.

**FREMONTIA or FLANNEL BUSH**

*Fremontia californica*

The furry underside of the leaves of the Flannel Bush gave it its name. Flowers 2" on shrubs usually 6 to 10 ft. tall.



**BLUE-EYED GRASS**

*Sisyrinchium bellum*

Small (1/2") flowers on stems 10 to 20" high, Blue-eyed Grass is found in many parts of the West. March-May.

**CHAPARRAL YUCCA**

*Yucca whipplei*

“The Candle of Our Lord” is the Spanish name for the Yucca. This member of the Lily family grows 8 to 14 ft. high. May-June.



More than one hundred kinds of Lupine brighten California's fields.





**CHAPARRAL YARROW**  
*Pickeringia montana*  
This spiny, evergreen shrub adds a  
bright color to the foothills.  
3/4" on plants 3 to 8 ft. high. May-June.

**GOLDEN YARROW**  
*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*  
The flowers of the Golden Yarrow grow in  
clusters which average 1 1/2" in diameter.  
Dry area shrub 9 to 24" high. June-July.



**WESTERN REDBUD**

*Cercis occidentalis*

The Redbud is an attractive foothill shrub 8 - 15 ft., with clusters of 1/2" flowers. It is also called Judas Tree.

(See cover) March-April.



**OWL'S CLOVER**

*Orthocarpus purpurascens*

A bright wildflower common in open fields and hillsides, Owl's Clover grows 4 to 15" high. April-May.



**AMADOR DUDLEYA**

*Dudleya cymosa*

An attractive perennial herb with flowering stems, this succulent grows to 12". Usually found in rocky places. June-July.

**INDIAN PAINT BRUSH**

*Castilleja sp.*

The Indian Paintbrush is a common wildflower in many parts of the West. Sometimes called *Castilleja*, its Latin name, it grows 1 to 2 1/2 ft. high.





**MOUNTAIN LILY**

*Leucocrinum montanum*

The beautiful and fragrant flowers of the Mountain Lily grow in a central cluster close to the ground.



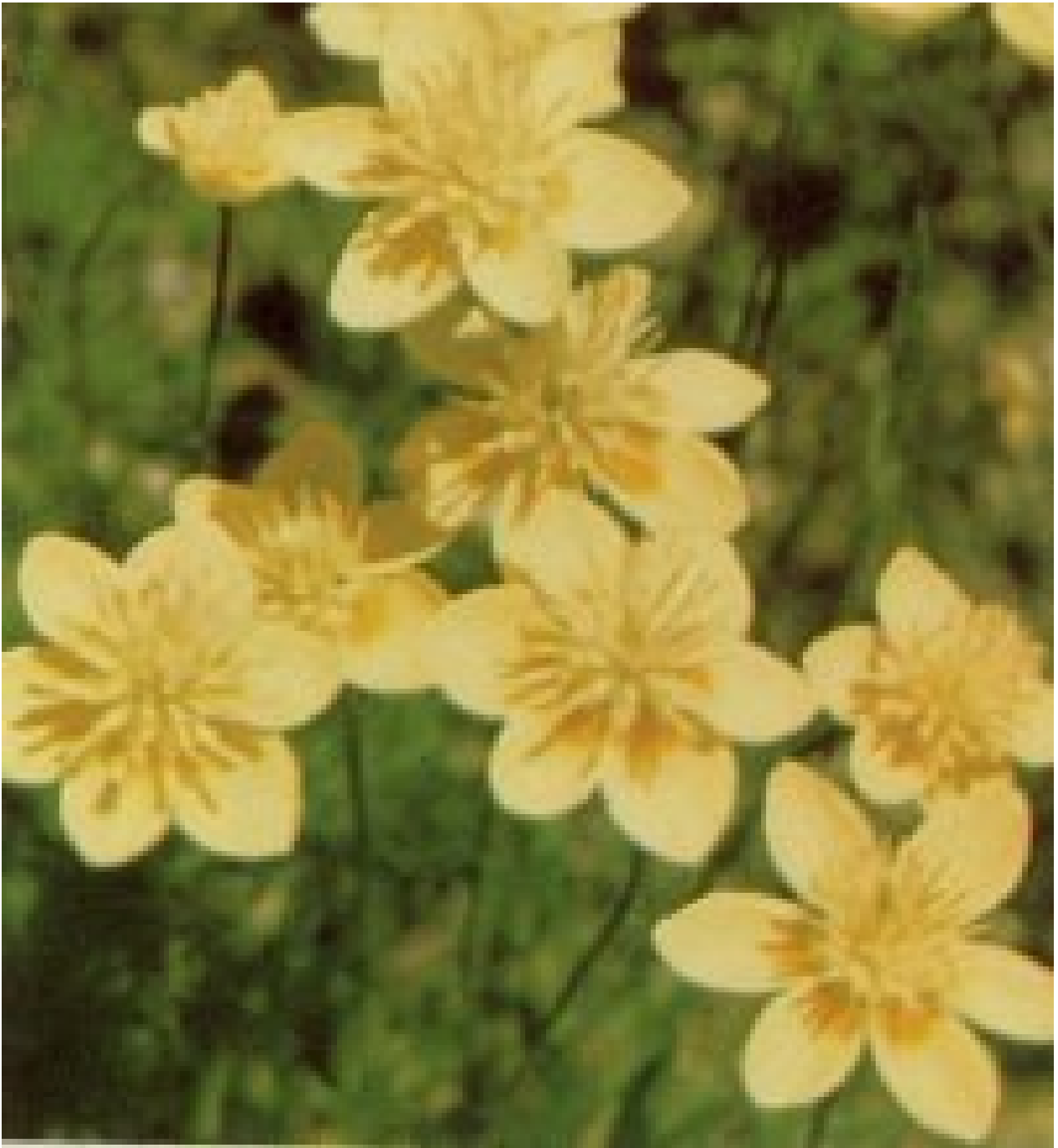
**SYRINGA or MOCK ORANGE**

*Philadelphus lewisii*

The fragrant Syringa, 4 to 11 ft. tall, will be found in many parts of California. Shoots were used by Indians for making arrow shafts.



Many species of flowers including Purple Owl's Clover and Popcorn Flowers combine to make a colorful blanket.



**CREAM CUPS**

*Platystemon californicus*

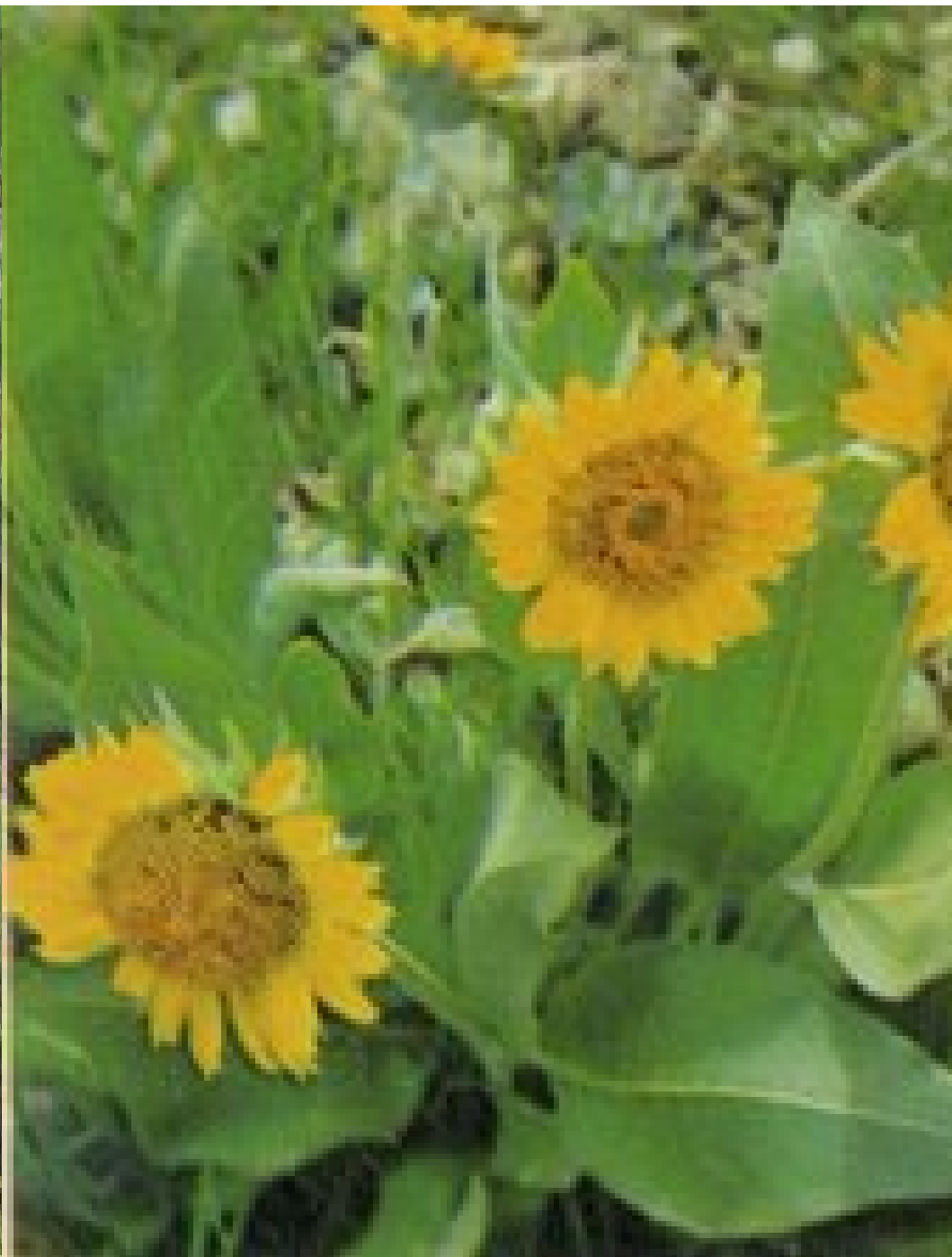
These flowers grow on stems 3 to 12" high with leaves on lower portion only. In clay or sandy soils.



**BUSH LUPINE**

*Lupinus sp.*

One of the largest lupines, the Bush Lupine, may grow to 6 ft. high. Common along foothills of central and southern Sierra.



**WYETHIA**

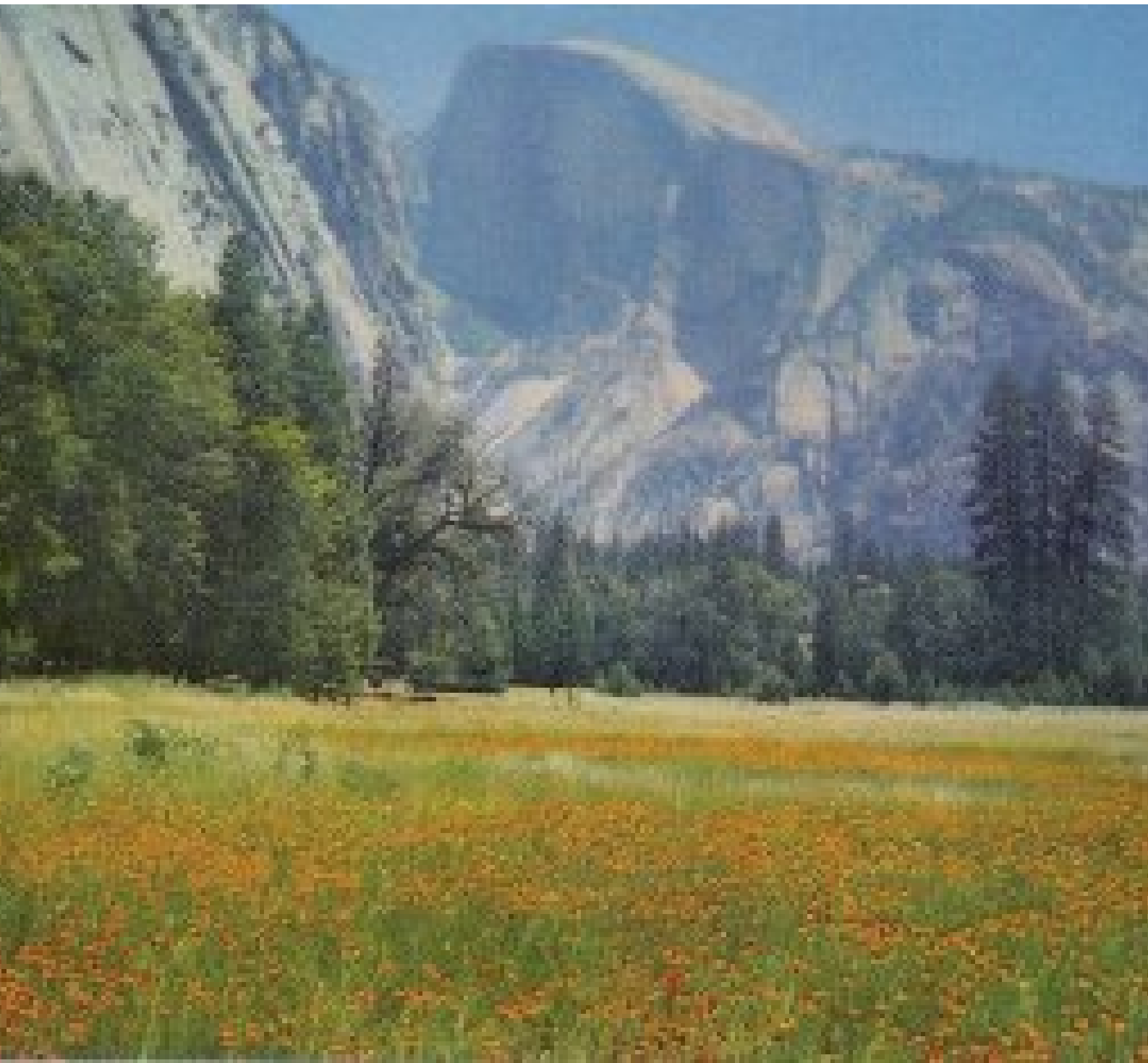
*Wyethia helenioides*

A common perennial along the lower slopes of the Sierra, the Wyethia has flowers up to 4" in diameter on stems 1 to 2 ft. high.

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## meadows and valleys



Half Dome overlooks Yosemite Valley and a field  
of Sneezeweed.

Many kinds of wildflowers grow in the middle elevations of the Sierra. In traveling from the San Joaquin Valley to the crest of the range, you will pass through six life zones—the Lower Sonoran, Upper Sonoran, Transition, Canadian, Hudsonian, and Arctic-Alpine. Each zone has plant and animal “indicators” which tell the visitor that he is in that particular climatic belt.



**WESTERN AZALEA**

*Rhododendron occidentale*

The fragrant Western Azalea grows along stream sides and in moist meadows in many Sierran regions. Shrubs 3 to 10 ft. tall, flowers to 2". May-July.



**BUTTERCUP**

*Ranunculus sp.*

Many kinds of buttercups are found in the West. Their Latin name means "little frog", since some species grown in marshy places.



**EVENING PRIMROSE**

*Oenothera hookeri*

A showy Sierran flower which bursts rapidly into full bloom early in the evening. Stems 3 to 6 ft., flowers 2 to 4" across. June-September.





BEAR GRASS *Xerophyllum tenax*  
This 2 to 6 ft. high plant was important to the Indians. The roots, roasted, were eaten and leaf fibres used in making clothing. May-July.



PACIFIC DOGWOOD *Cornus nuttallii*  
Modified leaves of white, usually 6, surround a small crowded head of flowers on this spectacular Sierran plant, which grows 10 to 30 ft. high.



**RED RIBBONS** *Clarkia sp.*  
A colorful annual, Clarkia is found in many parts of California. It was named for Captain Clark of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.



**TIGER LILY or LEOPARD LILY**  
*Lilium pardalinum*  
Wet meadows are the usual home of the beautiful Tiger Lily, which may grow to heights of 7 ft. June-August.



**PITCHER PLANT or COBRA PLANT**

*Darlingtonia californica*

This unique plant can trap and digest small insects. Grows to 18" with 2" flowers. In moist areas. May-July.



**TIDY-TIPS**

*Layia platyglossa*

A bright member of the sunflower family, abundant in many parts of California. Stems 4 to 16" high, flowers to 2". April-May.



**BITTER ROOT**

*Lewisia rediviva*

These beautiful flowers may be red or white. This 3/4" to 2" high plant was named for Captain Lewis of Lewis and Clark. April.

**MONKEY FLOWER**

*Mimulus sp.*

Monkey Flowers are among the most attractive of California wildflowers. Their Latin name, *Mimulus*, means a comic actor, because the flowers appear to be grinning.

**MAHALA MAT or SQUAW MAT**

*Ceanothus prostratus*

The branches of this plant often root and form a dense mat 2 to 10 ft. wide. In pine woods of the Sierra.



Tahoe, one of the world's largest high lakes, is shared by California and Nevada. The red Indian Paint Brush (*Castilleia*) is a common western wildflower.



Ponderosa or yellow pines form a backdrop for the fragrant Western Azaleas (*Rhododendron occidentale*).  
These shrubs, common also along streamsides in the Sierra, bloom during early summer.



PINK MONKEY FLOWERS

*Mimulus lewisii*

The beautiful Pink Monkey Flowers grow on stems 1 to 2 ft. high in moist places of the Sierra and Cascades.

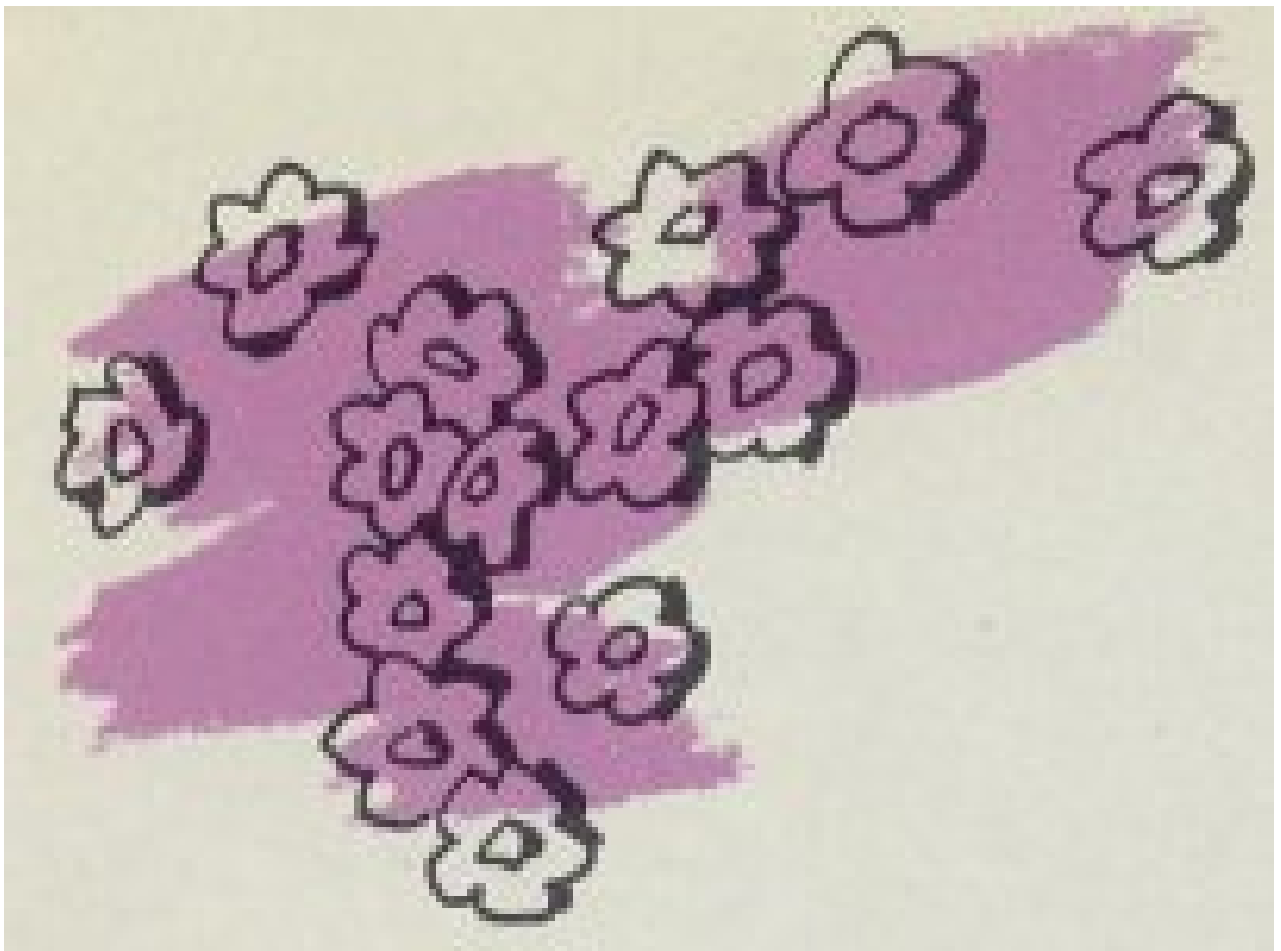


INDIAN RHUBARB,  
UMBRELLA PLANT

*Peltiphyllum peltatum*

Sturdy plant 1 to 4 ft. tall, frequently growing along streamsides. The fleshy leaf stalks, peeled, were considered a delicacy by Indians. June-July.







WESTERN WALLFLOWER  
*Erysimum asperum*  
Common on rocky hillsides and mountains in much of California. Western Wallflower grows 1 to 2 ft. high. March-April.



LADY'S SLIPPER  
*Cypripedium californicum*  
Beautiful showy orchids on stems 1 to 2 ft. tall, flowers 1 to 6. Grows in many places, Central California to Oregon.



**MOUNTAIN VIOLET**

*Viola purpurea*

Grows from 2 to 6" high on short stems from a sturdy root. Common from Southern California to Modoc County. March-July.



**WESTERN BLUE FLAG**

*Iris missouriensis*

Many moist meadows in the Sierra and the northwest are brightened by these flowers. Height 10 to 24", flowers to 3" long. July.



A forest of giant trees looks down on a meadow of blue Camass and yellow Wyethia.



**THIMBLEBERRY**

*Rubus parviflorus*

Common along streams and open forests, the Thimbleberry grows 3 to 6 ft. high. Flowers to 2" across. Leaves often velvety beneath.

**INDIAN PINK**

*Silene californica*

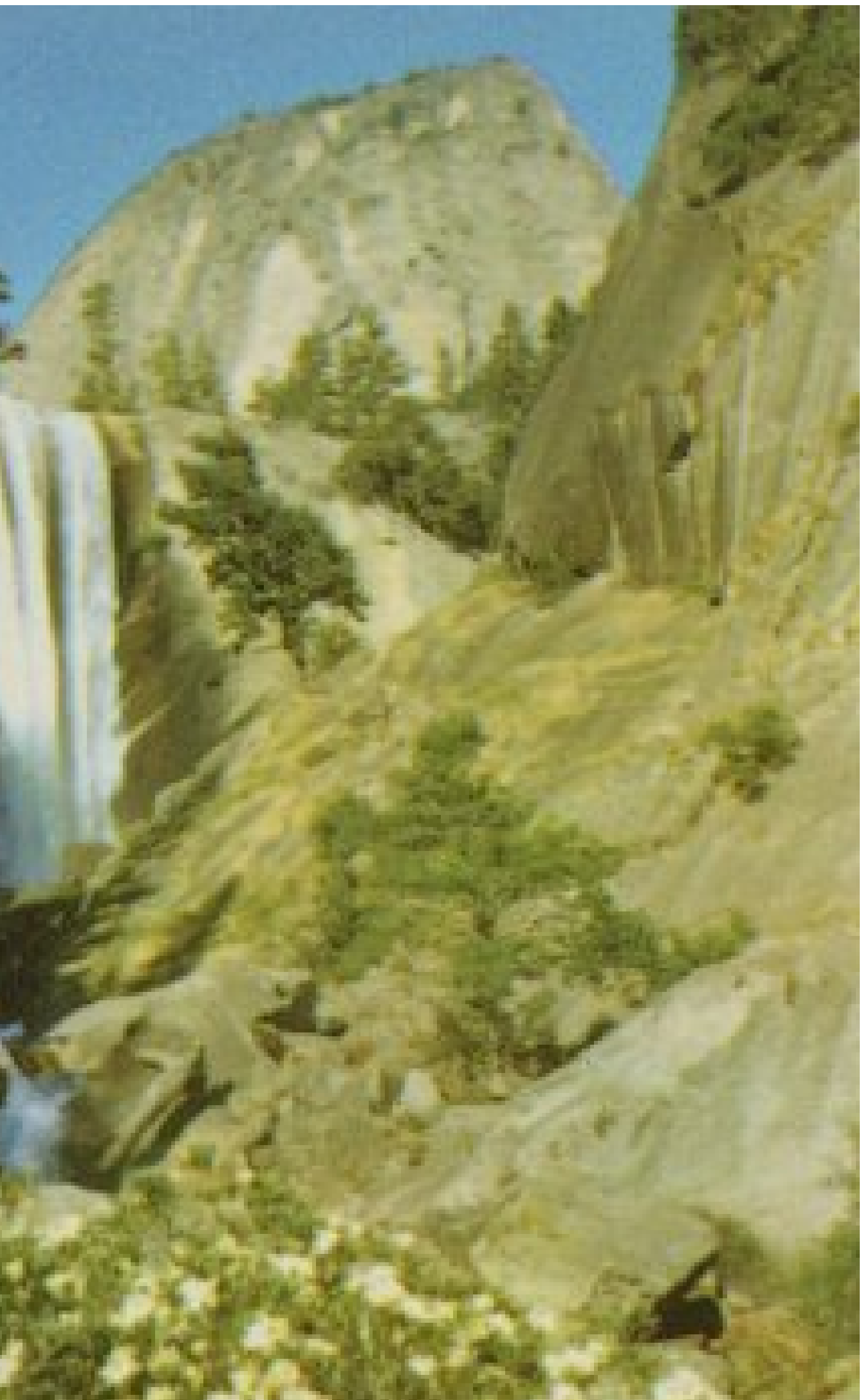
In open woods of canons. Plants up to 12" high, flowers to 1 1/4" broad. An abundant genus in the west. May-June.



**MOUNTAIN PRIDE**

*Penstemon newberryi*

On rocky ledges, 4,000 to 10,000 ft., both  
in Sierra and Coast Ranges. Stems 8 to  
20" high, flowers to 1 1/8" long. June-July.



Vernal Fall in Yosemite National Park was named for the lush vegetation at its base. Western Azaleas blossom in the foreground.



**BABY BLUE EYES**  
*Nemophila menziesii*

Found frequently in moist places on valley floors and hillsides. Stems 3 to 18" long, flowers to 1 1/2" wide. April-July.



**SNOW PLANT**

*Sarcodes sanguinea*

One of the most spectacular Sierran plants, the snowplant grows 6 to 15" high. Numerous fleshy flowers on a single stem. June-July.





VIRGIN'S BOWER or

*Clematis lasiantha*

The profuse flowers of this plant often brighten an entire hillside. Flowers to 2 1/4" in diameter. In both Sierra and Coast Ranges. April-May.



YELLOW BELLS

*Fritillaria pudica*

The stems of Yellow Bells are 3 to 9" high, may bear 1 to 3 flowers 3/4" in diameter. April-May.



**CALIFORNIA DUTCHMAN'S PIPE**

*Aristolochia californica*

A deciduous climber, Dutchman's Pipe may twine 5 to 12 ft. high on other plants. Flowers to 1 1/2" long. March-April.

**MOUNTAIN MISERY**

*Chamaebatia foliolosa*

A common ground cover in the Yellow Pine belt, rarely taller than 2 ft. with 1" flowers. Extremely pungent, also called Bear Clover. May-July.



**BLEEDING HEART**

*Dicentra Formosa*

In shady forests of Sierra and Coast Range; 8 to 18" high, leaves at base of stems. Flowers to 3/4". April-June.



**SPICE BUSH**

*Calycanthus occidentalis*

Often growing in moist places in the Coast Range and Sierra, also called Sweet Shrub from fragrant wood. Height 5 to 9 ft., flowers 3"



Rugged Sierran scenery is framed by Mountain Mahogany.



**BLAZING STAR**

*Mentzelia laevicaulis*

Well-named, Blazing Stars grow on shiny white stems, 2 - 3 1/2 ft. high in dry stream beds. Flowers 3 to 4" broad, in clusters.



**WESTERN ASTER**

*Aster sp.*

Asters are profuse and colorful in many parts of the west. Their star-like flowers make them easy to recognize.



#### FALSE SOLOMON'S SEAL

*Smilacina amplexicaulis*

These shade-loving plants are members of the lily family. Stems leafy, 1 to 3 ft. high. Undersides of leaves usually rough with short hairs.



**LANGUID LADY or M**

*Mertensia ciliata*

Tube-like flowers are about 1/4" long on stems 2 to 5 ft. high. In mountains 5,000 to 8,500 ft. June-August.



**WESTERN CHOKECHERRY**

*Prunus demissa*

Usually grows as a deciduous shrub 2 to 10 ft. high. Flowers 1/2" across in clusters 2 to 4" long. In Coast Range and Sierra.



Quaking Aspens (*Populus tremuloides*) prefer moist areas as do many wildflowers such as Shooting Stars.

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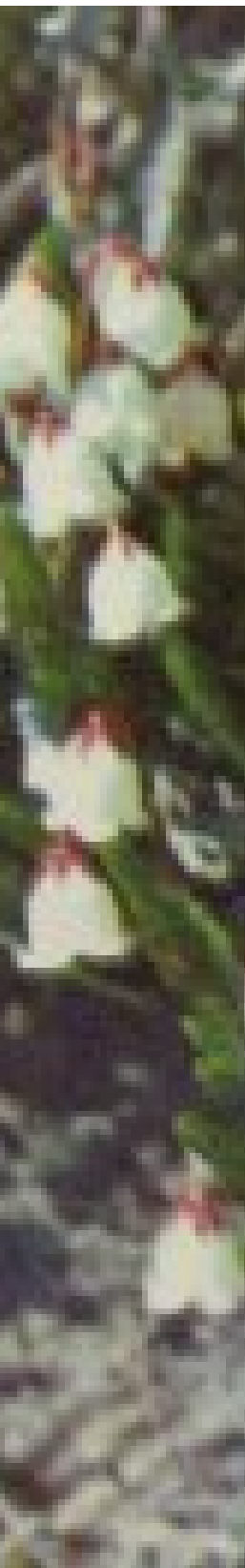


### the high country

Some of the most beautiful scenery in the Sierra is at the crest of the range. Here near timberline are species which know only a few short weeks of sunshine. In late summer when the flowers of the foothills and meadows have bloomed and faded, the hanging gardens of the high country bring a touch of color and a saying that there is springtime all summer in the Sierra.



On the east side of the Sierra, Sulphur Flowers and Indian Paint  
Brush brighten a promontory. Minarets in distance.



**WHITE HEATHER**

*Cassiope mertensiana*

The bell-shaped white flowers of this beautiful alpine plant grow on stems up to 12" high. Rocky ridges and under ledges near timberline.

**ELEPHANT'S HEAD**

*Pedicularis groenlandica*

The "trunks" of the Elephant's Head grow to 1/2" on stems 6 to 14" high. In wet meadows of the high Sierra, northward to B. C.

**MOUNTAIN LAUREL**

*Kalmia latifolia*

This diminutive shrub is 1 to 2 ft. high with flowers to 3/4" wide. Found on edges of wet meadows or swamps, 7,000 to 12,000 ft.



Close to timberline Western Wall Flowers and Whitebark Pines overlook  
Gaylor Lakes near Tioga Pass in Yosemite National Park.



**MOUNTAIN BUTTERCUP**

*Ranunculus eschscholtzii*

A bright perennial with erect stems 4 to 6" high. Flowers to 3/4" across. Grows in gravelly streamlets on cool slopes. July-August.

**DOUGLAS PHLOX**

*Phlox diffusa*

Grows in low mat 3 to 10" across. Flowers may be white, lavender or lilac, terminal on short (3 to 4") branchlets. On gravelly slopes and summits.



PURPLE ASTER,  
MOUNTAIN DAISY  
*Erigeron salsuginosus*

Usually a single flower up to 1 3/4" across on a stem to 1% ft. high. Over much of the West, 6,200 to 10,000 ft. July-August.



ALPINE COLUMBINE  
*Aquilegia pubescens*

The showy Columbine is one of the most beautiful of western flowers. Stems 9 to 18" high, flowers nodding, with slender spurs to 1" long.



**ALPINE DANDELION**

*Hulsea algida*

The high country from 11,000 to 14,000 ft. is the home of the Alpine Dandelion. Stems 2" to 7" high. Leaves and stems sticky, with soft hairs.



**SHRUBBY CINQUEFOIL**

*Potentilla fruticosa*

Many branches 1 to 4 ft. high bear flowers up to 1" across. Grows at or near timberline 8,000 to 12,000 ft., Sierra north to sub-arctic.



**FIREWEED**

*Epilobium angustifolium*

Named because it often comes up in moist burned-over places, Fireweed has erect stems 2 to 6 ft. high with flowers to 1" across.



**BLUE GENTIAN**

*Gentiana sp.*

Several species occur in moist or boggy places throughout the west.





**STEER'S HEAD**

*Dicentra uniflora*

Leafless stems 1 to 3" high with 1 or 2 flowers up to 5/8" long with tips of outer petals recurved 1/4". Rocky slopes 6,000 to 12,000 ft.

**STICK-SEED,  
SIERRA FORGET-ME-NOT**

*Hackelia velutina*

Erect, velvety stems 1 to 2 ft. high with flowers blue or pink about 1/2" across. Name "Stick-Seed" from prickly fruits. June-July.

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*To Mary Curry Tresidder, whose interest and love of Sierran wild flowers has extended over a lifetime, this booklet is dedicated.*

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[http://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/wild\\_flowers\\_of\\_the\\_sierra/](http://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/wild_flowers_of_the_sierra/)

