

Backcountry Press Presents

# **Wildflowers of the Trinity Alps**

Including the Marble Mountain Wilderness,  
Russian Wilderness, & Trinity Divide

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In association with  
**THE CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY**



Alpine spicy wintergreen (*Gaultheria humifusa*)

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First Edition

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All photos by Kenneth DeCamp

Front cover, clockwise from top: Waterfall in Canyon Creek, California bog asphodel (*Narthecium californicum*), false Solomon's seal (*Maianthemum racemosum*), Firecracker Flower (*Dichelostemma ida-maia*)

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***Wildflowers of the Trinity Alps***

***Including the Marble Mountain Wilderness, Russian Wilderness, & Trinity Divide***



The view westward from the Stony Ridge Trail between Stonewall Pass and Echo Lake in the Trinity Alps Wilderness.



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WHITE or WHITISH FLOWERS - herbs, shrubs, trees & vines



Bear grass - *Xerophyllum tenax*

**INSIDE-OUT FLOWER, REDWOOD IVY**

3 or 6 petals

*Vancouveria planipetala*  
Barberry family

Plants range to 2' tall and are loosely branched. The leaves are compound, with angular heart-shaped leaflets, each about 1 to 1½" across. Flowers grow in loose panicles, with six petals, and are ¼" across or smaller. Each petal has two small yellow anthers near the base. It prefers dry, shaded areas at lower elevations. The leaves of the inside-out-flower are beautiful in autumn when they turn bright red and yellow. The flowers on this plant are so tiny and delicate that people often pass by without ever seeing them, and that's a shame. I photographed the flowers along the Canyon Creek Trail in late May and the leaves at the Stewart's Fork Trailhead in November.

**WHITE TRITELEIA, WHITE BRODIAEA, FOOL'S ONION**

3 or 6 petals

*Triteleia hyacinthina*  
Brodiaea family

This is a flower of wet meadows, vernal pools, and seeps which grows from low to mid-elevations. It is a tall plant, often reaching 24" in height, topped with a dense cluster of white, bowl shaped flowers with prominent green mid-veins. Occasionally, the flowers are tinged with light purple. The leaves are long and narrow with a prominent ridge extending the length of the back. I photographed these on Musser Hill just off Highway 3 west of Weaverville in June.

**WESTERN BISTORT, AMERICAN BISTORT**

3 or 6 petals

*Bistorta bistortoides*  
Buckwheat family

A tall plant found in alpine and subalpine meadows throughout the area covered by this guide. The white to pinkish flowers grow in dense clusters at the tops of tall stems and, perhaps, the most noticeable things about them are the protruding anthers which give the flowers a decidedly hairy look. I photographed this one on Scott Mountain in July. I've also found it around Lower Albert Lake in the Russians.



**INSIDE-OUT FLOWER**

*Vancouveria planipetala*  
Barberry family



**WHITE TRITELEIA**

*Triteleia hyacinthina*  
Brodiaea family



**WESTERN BISTORT  
AMERICAN BISTORT**

*Bistorta bistortoides*  
Buckwheat family



### **NAKED-STEM BUCKWHEAT**

*Eriogonum nudum*

Buckwheat family

3 or 6 petals

Here is a buckwheat you don't have to get out of your car to see. The white and yellow versions are common alongside roads and highways everywhere. It is tall (2' or more), loosely branched, with small rounded flowering heads. It prefers dry, open and exposed sites. Stems often turn red in the fall. I photographed the white ones along Highway 3 near Lewiston in early October and the yellow ones near Buckeye Ridge in June.

### **GREENE'S BUCKWHEAT**

*Eriogonum strictum* var. *greenei*

Buckwheat family

3 or 6 petals

It was the clusters of ball shaped, creamy white flowers that first caught my eye while driving the Salmon River Highway just west of Callahan. They appeared to float above the low rounded mats of small, fuzzy, egg shaped, and fleshy leaves in typical buckwheat fashion. This species favors dry, open, rocky sites. For the amateur, buckweats can be maddeningly difficult to identify but this one is a no brainer. It is the most common mid to high elevations. Look for a mat-forming buckwheat with cream to pink colored flowers and densely white-wooly leaves.

**Note:** Another small, white wooly-leaved mat forming buckwheat, *E. ovalifolium*, is also present in the Klamath Mountains.

### **BEAR VALLEY BUCKWHEAT, BEAR BUCKWHEAT**

*Eriogonum ursinum*

Buckwheat family

3 or 6 petals

The creamy—sometimes yellow—flowers of this pretty buckwheat bloom in a compact head atop long stalks and some may be lightly tinged with pink. The leaf stems in the population I photographed were predominantly red and the slightly hairy leaves were green tinged with red. It grows on a wide range of substrates in exposed dry rocky or gravelly sites. I photographed this population below Hirz Mountain Lookout near Shasta Lake in late May.

**Note:** *Eriogonum ursinum* var. *erubescens*, or blushing wild buckwheat, also occurs in this area. The plant structure is the same but the flowers are tinged pink or maroon. It is a Klamath Mountain endemic which was discovered and described by Julie Knorr (co-author) and James Reveal both of whom are buckwheat experts. It is confined to an area west of I-5 from the Scott Bar Mountains north of Yreka south along the Trinity divide to Bully Choop—a peak just south of Shasta Bally.



**NAKED-STEM BUCKWHEAT**  
*Eriogonum nudum*  
Buckwheat family



**GREENE'S BUCKWHEAT**  
*Eriogonum strictum* var. *greenei*  
Buckwheat family



**BEAR VALLEY BUCKWHEAT, BEAR BUCKWHEAT**  
*Eriogonum ursinum*  
Buckwheat family

## **WESTERN SOLOMON'S SEAL**

*Maianthemum racemosum*

Butcher's-broom family

3 or 6 petals

I have included two different photographs of this wildflower found commonly across North America. One image is from the higher elevations and another from lower elevations found in the foothills to the coast.

The flowering stalks in higher elevations are 8" to 10", leaves are more compact, shorter, thicker, and leathery. The flowers are larger and bloom in thick bunches on the end of the shorter, often upright stalk. I photographed this above Upper Albert Lake in the Russian Wilderness in September.

In lower elevations the species prefers shaded areas where it blooms in early spring. The elegant long stems and large, alternate, parallel veined leaves are diagnostic. Some plants reach 3' or more in length and become droopy the longer they are. The loosely clustered flowers bloom at the ends of long stalks. In the fall the leaves turn a beautiful gold accentuated by satin red berries. I photographed these along the Dog Creek Road (the old Delta Toll Road) near Clear Creek Campground on the Trinity Divide.

## **STARRY FALSE LILY OF THE VALLEY, STARRY SOLOMON'S SEAL**

### **STARRY SOLOMON'S PLUME**

*Maianthemum stellatum*

Butcher's-broom family

3 or 6 petals

This species enjoys streamsides, swampy meadows, and springs but can also be found under a shaded forest canopy. The flowers are white with lance shaped petals that usually curve slightly downward from the calyx along an unbranched stem. Bright green leaves up to 6" long clasp the stem and are folded along the mid-rib. The plant can be up to 2' tall. This one was photographed along the Bowerman Meadows Trail.

## **WHITE HASTINGSIA, RUSH LILY**

*Hastingsia alba*

Century plant family

3 or 6 petals

White hastingsia is a flower common in damp open spaces like meadows where it stands head and shoulders above the rest. On the grassy slopes around Papoose Lake I've actually seen flowering stalks approaching 5'. Its leaves are elongated and basal and 1' to 3' in length. The flowers grow along a slender axis up to 18" long that can be branched or not. They are a beautiful translucent white with purplish central vein that lends them a silvery look. I photographed this one in Van Matre Meadows but you will find them in mid to high elevation meadows throughout the Trinities.

**Note:** *Hastingsia* was named for Serranus Clinton Hastings (1814–1893) first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of California.





**WESTERN SOLOMON'S SEAL** - low elevation  
*Maianthemum racemosum*  
 Butcher's-broom family



**WESTERN SOLOMON'S SEAL** - high elevation  
*Maianthemum racemosum*  
 Butcher's-broom family



**STARRY FALSE LILY OF THE VALLEY**  
*Maianthemum stellatum*  
 Butcher's-broom family



**WHITE HASTINGSIA, RUSH LILY**  
*Hastingsia alba*  
 Century plant family