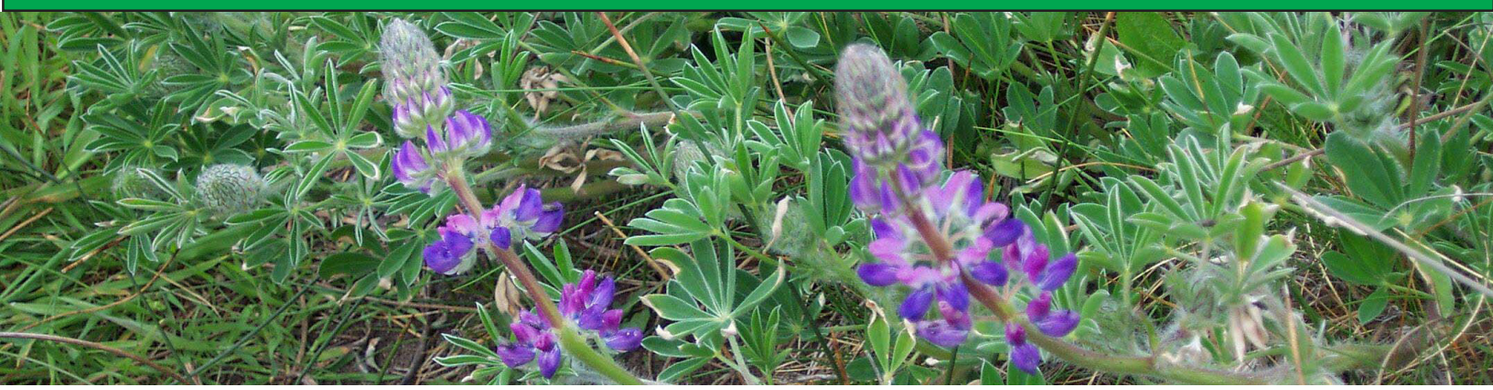
San Juan Island National Historical Park



Native Wildflowers of American Camp

Welcome to American Camp, one of the region's last remaining prairies. Here is a sampling of some of the native wildflowers you may see along the trails. Keep in mind that bloom times vary from year to year. Please remember that it is unlawful to gather flowers in the park. We want to preserve them for all visitors for generations to come.

Camas
(Camassia leichtlinii var. suksdorfii)
Locals celebrate the appearance of these abundant purple blooms on one- to two-foot stems. The bulbs were highly prized by Northwest Indians for their creamy potato/baked pear taste.
Blooms: Spring

Death camas *(Zigadenus venenosus)*
Look for these tall spikes of small white flowers near the purple camas, but beware: the black-coated bulbs and foliage are poisonous. To 24 inches tall.
Blooms: April-June

Few-flowered shooting star
(Dodecatheon pulchellum)
This may take honors as the most exquisite of the prairie wildflowers, with pink/purple petals sweeping up theatrically from a purple dart with a gold and white collar.
Blooms: March-May

Miner's lettuce
(Montia perfoliata)
The tiny white flowers aren't the highlight here, although one round leaf encircling the stem just below the blooms showcases them rather tenderly. Indians harvested this wild salad green.
Blooms: Spring

Seashore lupine
(Lupinus littoralis)
Littoralis means "of the beach," and you'll find these purple and white, pea-like flowers growing on the bluffs, low to the ground. See how the morning dew settles into the center of the star-shaped leaves.
Blooms: May-August

Hyacinth brodiaea
(*Brodiaea hyacinthina)*
Solitary and stately at two to three feet tall, these clusters of white bells seem too regal to be commonly found in roadside ditches as well as on the prairie.
Blooms: June and July

Harvest brodiaea
(Brodiaea coronaria)
Narrow leaves set this brodiaea apart from the others. Loose clusters of violet-purple flowers with purplish midveins grow in groups of three to five to 10 inches tall.
Blooms: May-July

Howell's triteleia
(Brodiaea howellii)
Solitary and two to three feet tall, this delicate plant features large, deep blue trumpet flowers with thin, grass-like leaves about half the height of the plant.
Blooms: June-July

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Western buttercup
(Ranunculus occidentalis var.occidentalis)
California buttercup
(Ranunculus californicus)
You'll find these two species growing side by side in the meadows, and sometimes hybridizing as well. six inches to two feet.
Blooms: Spring

Chocolate lily
(Fritillaria lanceolata)
Yes, these daintily nodding bells atop 1- to 2-foot stems are the color of chocolate, complete with purple and chartreuse speckles. Their bulbs, valued by Coastal Indians, taste somewhat like rice, only bitter.
Blooms: April-May

Spring gold
(Lomatiium utriculatum)
Sprays of yellow blooms to 12 inches tall carpet the meadow and rocky outcrops in early spring. The dark green leaves are soft and feathery, much like a carrot.
Blooms: April-May, sometimes later

Barestem biscuitroot
(Lomatium nudicaule)
Small clusters of lemony yellow flowers form umbrellas on stems to 24 inches tall. A staple food source for the Indians, the leaves taste like celery, and seeds were used in stews, teas and tobacco.
Blooms: Early to mid-April

Field chickweed
(Cerastium arvense)
Get close to see the ornate, deeply notched petals on tiny, half-inch-wide blooms. Flat-topped clusters have fuzzy little leaves and stems up to 12 inches. Found in meadows and on the bluffs.
Blooms: April-June, or even July

Pearly everlasting
(Anaphalis margaritacea)
Because it's so common, it's easy to overlook the simple beauty of these clusters of pearly white flowers. Woolly leaves and stem are green above and white below.
Blooms: July-September

Hookedspur violet
(Viola adunca var. adunca)
There is something undeniably sweet about a violet, as nectar-seeking butterflies know well. The most common of the San Juan species, it's surprisingly abundant.
Blooms: Spring

Smallflower woodland-star
(Lithophragma parviflorum)
These demure little pale pink or white, star-like flowers grace two-foot stems. Also found in moist meadows.
Blooms: Early spring

Small-flowered blue-eyed Mary
(Collinsia parviflora var. parviflora)
Look carefully for these tiny blooms, then get down on your hands and knees to inspect the lovely periwinkle blue lower and lavender upper lips.
Blooms: March-May

Tapertip onion
(Allium acuminatum)
The meadows and hillsides of San Juan Island glow with the rosy blooms of this perennial herb. Inside each flower you'll see three inner petals with ruffled margins. To 12 inches tall.
Blooms: May-July

Blue-eyed grass
(Sisyrinchium augustifolium)
Actually a member of the iris family, these appealing little bluish purple flowers with yellow eyes grow on stems up to 18 inches tall.
Blooms: April-May.