Wildflowers of San Juan Island National Historical Park

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San Juan Island is a rare place.

So rare, in fact, that the British and American governments coolly maintained a 12-year joint military occupation here over a border dispute, rather than disrupt the pastoral landscape and escalate international tensions. Their respective encampments today compose San Juan Island National Historical Park: English Camp on the island's northwest coast and American Camp on the Cattle Point peninsula to the south. The landscape of both units is typical of the northern Pacific coast, with thick stands of conifers, mingled with rocky outcroppings, salt marshes and ponds, a topography resulting from the last ice age. However, glacial impact is most evident at American Camp on more than 600 acres of prairie, one of the last in the Puget Sound-Salish Sea region and the rocky bald areas of Young Hill. The park is committed to maintaining and preserving these grasslands, and the annual parade of wildflowers that are eagerly awaited each spring to the delight of islanders and non-islanders alike. In using this guide, bear in mind that bloom times vary from year to year and that it is unlawful to collect flowers in the park. We want to preserve them for generations to come.

San Juan Island National Historical Park and Discover Your Northwest are partners committed to providing programs that inspire stewardship and preservation of English and American camps.
www.nps.gov/sajh
www.discovernw.org

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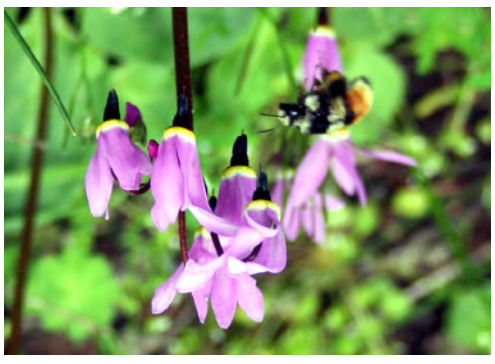
This sampling of wildflowers should help identify species at American and English camps, and hopefully instill an appreciation for their simple beauty and the park's concerted efforts to save their rare habitat, most especially the American Camp prairie. Fire suppression, farming and development that arrived with the European occupation of the island have spawned growing numbers of invasive and exotic species that contribute to the destruction of this and other fragile ecosystems. We must act now to protect and restore what is left.

For more information, visit our website at www.nps.gov/sajh, or write: Superintendent, San Juan Island NHP, PO Box 429, Friday Harbor, WA 98250

Common Camas
(Camassia quamash)
Blooms: April - June
Habitat: Open, moist areas, often where dry by late spring, at low to mid-elevations in the mountains.
Notes: Not always first to bloom, locals view its arrival as the first sign of spring. Cultivated as an important food source by Native Americans.

Checker or Chocolate Lily
(Fritillaria affinis)
Blooms: April - June
Habitat: Prairies and grassy bluffs to woodlands and coniferous forests, sea level to fairly high elevations in the mountains.
Notes: Coastal Native Americans valued the large, succulent bulbs which when cooked, taste like bitter rice.

California Buttercup
(Ranunculus californicus)
Blooms: April - June
Habitat: Grassy slopes.
Notes: California deviates from the typical buttercup pattern of five petals by having from eight to sixteen petals on each flower.



Henderson's Shooting Star
(Dodecatheon hendersonii)
Blooms: March - June
Habitat: Woodlands and prairies, at lower elevations on San Juan Island.
Notes: With bold, pink flowers, it may very well be the most striking of the prairie wildflowers. Also known as Broad-leaved Shooting star. Common on Young Hill.

Large or Great Camas
(Camassia leichtlinii)
Blooms: April - May
Habitat: Meadows, prairies and hillsides where moist, at least in early spring.
Notes: The bulbs were highly prized by Northwest Indians for their creamy potato or baked pear taste. Blooms much later than Common Camas.

Small-flower Woodland Star
(Lithophragma parviflorum)
Blooms: March - June
Habitat: Prairies and forest openings, sea level to mid-elevations in the mountains
Notes: These star-like flowers are quite distinctive with their unevenly shaped petals. The stem bears up to 14 flowers. The five petals are bright white.

Spring Gold
(Lomatium utriculatum)
Blooms: April - May
Habitat: Low elevations; somewhat moist, open, often rocky areas.
Notes: Yellow blooms carpet meadows and rocky outcrops in early spring. The dark green leaves are soft and feathery, much like a carrot. Also known as Fine-leaved Desert Parsley.

Death Camas
(Zigadenus venenosus var. venenosus)
Blooms: May - July
Habitat: Coastal bluffs and prairies, and moister areas of shrub-steppe and mountain meadows.
Notes: Beware. The black-coated bulbs may resemble (but not smell like) onions, but as with the foliage, they are poisonous.

Field or Native Chickweed
(Cerastium arvense)
Blooms: April - July
Habitat: Rocky hillsides, meadows and bluffs.
Notes: Get close to see the ornate, deeply notched petals on these tiny blooms. This perennial is an important nectar plant for butterflies. The fruit capsule contains tiny brown seeds.

Barestem Biscuitroot
(Lomatium nudicaule)
Blooms: April - June
Habitat: Dry, open areas; common in shrub-steppe, but found in mountain meadows.
Notes: A staple food source for Native Americans. Leaves taste like celery, and the seeds were used in stews, teas, and tobacco. Also called Barestem Desert Parsley.

Hookedspur or Blue Violet
(Viola adunca var. adunca)
Blooms: April - August
Habitat: Dry to moist meadows and open woods, moderate to high elevations in the mountains.
Notes: Violets are popular with nectar-seeking butterflies. The most common of the San Juan species.

Idaho Blue-eyed Grass
(Sisyrinchium idahoense)
Blooms: April - July
Habitat: Habitat: Moist grasslands.
Notes: Blue-eyed grass is not really a grass but is actually an Iris. While most Irises prefer wet lands, this one is native to prairie grasslands such as American Camp.

Miniature or Bicolor Lupine
(Lupinus bicolor)
Blooms: April - July
Habitat: Open meadows, grasslands and prairies at low to moderate elevations.
Notes: Once thought to deplete or "wolf" soil minerals; hence the genus derived from the Latin *lupus* or "wolf." It actually enhances soil fertility by fixing nitrogen into a useful form.

Menzies' Fiddleneck
(Amsinckia menziesi)
Blooms: April - August
Habitat: Dry, open areas at low elevations.
Notes: The stem closely resembles the neck of a fiddle, unrolling as the yellow blooms emerge from the bottom up. Be aware: the leaves and seeds are toxic.

Small-flowered Blue-eyed Mary
(Collinsia parviflora var. parviflora)
Blooms: March - May
Habitat: Lowlands to alpine meadows in vernally (springtime) moist areas.
Notes: You'll have to get down on your hands and knees and look carefully for these tiny blooms. Found especially on recently burned areas.

Giant White Fawn Lily
(Erythronium oregonum)
Blooms: April
Habitat: Low elevations.
Notes: Viewed in abundance on the upper reaches of the main trail to the Young Hill summit**.** The green leaves are speckled much as the coat of a fawn. Faint perfume. Flowers are usually single.

Large-flowered Triteleia
(Triteleia grandiflora var. howellii)
Blooms: June - July
Habitat: Coastal grassy bluffs and prairies to sagebrush desert and ponderosa pine forests.
Notes: Solitary and two to three feet tall, this delicate plant features deep blue trumpet flowers. The bulbs were a food source

Crown or Harvest Brodiaea
(Brodiaea coronaria)
Blooms: May - July
Habitat: Gravelly prairies, grassy slopes, and rocky bluffs at low elevations.
Notes: At one time, coastal tribes gathered these bulbs as a food item.

Hyacinth Brodiaea
(Triteleia hyacinthina)
Blooms: June - July
Habitat: Prairies and disturbed areas.
Notes: Solitary and stately, these clusters of white bells seem too regal to be commonly found in roadside ditches as well as on the American Camp prairie.

Seashore Lupine
(Lupinus littoralis)
Blooms: May - August
Habitat: Near the shore along the coast.
Notes: Littoralis means "of the beach," therefore these purple and white, pea-like flowers are found low to the ground on seaside bluffs, especially near Grandma's Cove at American Camp.

Rough Canada or Meadow Goldenrod
(Solidago canadensis var. salebrosa)
Blooms: July - October
Habitat: Dry to moist areas in meadows and riparian areas, from low to middle elevations.
Notes: Goldenrod flowers have been used as a source of permanent dye.

Fairy Slipper
(Calypso bulbosa)
Blooms: March - June
Habitat: Mostly in cool, deep shade of moist forests, sea level to mid-elevations.
Notes: Orchid family. Named after the sea nymph, Calypso. Found on Bell Point, Young Hill, and Mitchell Hill.

Taper-tip or Hooker's Onion
(Allium acuminatum)
Blooms: May - July
Habitat: Dry, open, rocky areas, lower to moderate elevations in the mountains.
Notes: The meadows and hillsides of San Juan Island glow with the rosy blooms of this perennial herb.

Golden Paintbrush
(Castilleja levisecta)
Blooms: May - July
Habitat: Low elevation meadows.
Notes: Listed as threatened, the park is participating in a recovery plan at American Camp using plants propagated from San Juan Island populations.

Nootka Rose
(Rosa nutkana var. nutkana)
Blooms: May - July
Habitat: Open or wooded areas, low to moderate elevations in the mountains.
Notes: The rinds of the hips (buds) are edible, but bitter. The seeds are irritating when taken whole.

Harsh (Indian) Paintbrush
(Castilleja hispida)
Blooms: April - August
Habitat: Open, rocky places.
Notes: There are over 200 species of Indian Paintbrush in western North America. At San Juan Island NHP, the Paintbrush is found only at English Camp.

Common Pepperweed
(Lepidium densiflorum)
Blooms: April - June
Habitat: Dry, open areas.
Notes: Pepperweed flourishes in disturbed areas. Flowers have no noticeable scent. Also known as Miner's Pepperwort.

Pearly Everlasting
(Anaphalis margaritacea)
Blooms: July – September
Habitat: Dry fields and roadsides.
Notes: Because it is so common, it's easy to overlook the simple beauty of these clusters of pearly white flowers. Flowers dry and keep well, hence the name.