

Early Wildflowers at Bridgeport

The common name in **bold** is likely the name most frequently used at Bridgeport. If the flower you are looking for is not here, refer to the Mid-Season and Late tables to see if the flower was placed there. The references used in compiling this table are listed on the last page. The blooming dates are merely guidelines; flowers may appear earlier and extend later. The dates were observed by a Bridgeport wildflower docent and the span of months was listed in the Jepson Manual. Many of the Native American uses were taken directly from the research paper by Vicki Macdonald. [Name changes are in blue, in agreement with The Jepson Manual, Second Edition, 2012.](#)

Common Name	Scientific Name	Date	Family	Native	Type	Flower Color	Description	Interesting Facts
Bedstraw, Climbing Bedstraw , Narrowleaf Bedstraw	<i>Galium porrigens</i> var. <i>tenu</i>	Early Feb. to July	Rubiaceae Madder Family	Native 500-3,500'	Perennial Dioecious (male and female flowers on separate plants)	Yellow-green	A climbing vine up to 5' tall with a woody base and small linear leaves in whorls of 4. Insignificant yellowish-green flowers. Small downward-facing prickles make the plant feel rough to touch.	Grows in brushy, shady places, climbing on other shrubs or a rock. Found in California and slightly beyond California borders. Feels rough to the touch. There are 46 species of bedstraw found in California. This is the only one with a woody base found below 2,400'. The leaves are much smaller than those of Common Bedstraw.
Bedstraw, Common Bedstraw, Goose Grass , Cleavers, Catchweed or Stickywitty	<i>Galium aparine</i>	Early 2/27-4/21 Mar. to July	Rubiaceae Madder Family	Native, but also native in Eurasia 100-5,000'	Annual	White	6-8 leaves are in whorls on brittle, weak 4-angled hairy stems with small greenish-white flowers in the nodes. Sprawls up to 3' and often climbs on other plants for support. The plant feels rough to touch due to the small hairs on the stems. They have hooked tips like minute Velcro, which aid in seed dispersal.	Grows in half-shady and rocky places in California, North America and beyond. It is a weed in cultivated fields and a problem in agriculture because it clogs machinery and its seeds can be mixed with cereal grains. Since the seeds are not toxic, this is not a serious problem. Galium was likely used to stuff mattresses, where the hooked hairs helped prevent matting. Years ago it was fed to penned geese in Europe, hence the name "Goose Grass." Distantly related to coffee, the bean-shaped seeds can be used for a coffee substitute but lack caffeine. Herbalists make tea from the leaves as a diuretic and to lower blood pressure. The plant juice soothes burns and skin irritations.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Date	Family	Native	Type	Flower Color	Description	Interesting Facts
Bittercress or Little Bittercress, Western Bittercress, Shotweed	<i>Cardamine oligosperma</i>	Early Mar. to July	Brassicaceae Mustard Family	Native Up to 3300'	Annual or biennial	White	3 to 12" tall with several smooth branched stems rising from a basal rosette of pinnate leaves with rounded leaflets, ending with a larger round leaflet. 2 to 10 small white flowers grow at the tops of the stems, with ascending 1-in. linear seedpods.	Grows in open damp areas and shady banks. Found in the northern part of California and its range is expanding. Desirable in natural settings, but a weed in landscaped areas, crop gardens, orchards and nurseries. The seedpods split open to explosively project the seeds up to several yards away. Gardeners will be peppered with tiny seeds as they reach to pull up the dry plants.
Blue Dicks or Wild Hyacinth	<i>Dichelostemma capitatum</i> subsp. <i>capitatum</i>	Early 2/18-4/28 Mar. to June	Thermidaceae Brodiaea Family Previously Liliaceae, Lily Family	Native Below 7500'	Perennial	Violet/Purple	12-24" tall with a weak, leafless stem topped by a crowded umbel of blue- purple urn-shaped flowers subtended by purplish bracts. The 2 to 3 long, ½-2' grasslike leaves often wither before the flowers appear. The long stem means that the flower waves even with a gentle breeze.	Grows in open woodlands and grassy sites throughout California and in Arizona, Oregon, Utah, New Mexico and northern Mexico. <i>Dichelostemma</i> means "toothed crown" referring to the forked stamen appendages. May be confused with Forktooth Ookow, which blooms later and has no bracts. The edible corms are sometimes called "grass-nuts." They were an important Native American food, one of the "Indian potatoes," sweeter when baked but also eaten raw, especially by the children.
Bowl-tubed Iris or Ground Iris	<i>Iris macrosiphon</i>	Early 2/27-4/28 Mar. to May	Iridaceae Iris Family	Native Below 3,200'	Perennial	Violet/purple, cream, yellow, lavender	Less than 10" tall with slender leaves. The flowers are generally pale with colored veins. Named for the long corolla tube above the ovary. The pedicel below the ovary is very short. Iris naturalize in the landscape, needing little attention. The flowers attract insects, while hummingbirds feed on both the nectar and the insects. Related irises grow at higher elevations and along the coast.	Grows on open to partly-shaded slopes, preferring oak woodlands and grasslands in the Sierra Nevada foothills and the inner coast ranges. Endemic to California. Its habitat is decreasing with population growth. <i>Iris</i> is the Greek goddess of the rainbow and the oldest cultivated flower, which has been found in ancient Greece. The flower shape inspired the French fleur-de-lis. Iris plants were used in many ways. Leaves were stored in the fall and the strong, fine silk-like fibers were extracted for baskets, fishing nets, string, rope, hairnets and regalia. Fresh roots and rhizomes were used in poultices for infection, also to remove freckles. Fresh roots may be toxic, so dried roots were used internally as a diuretic and to stimulate the pancreas, bile, saliva and sweat. The root was stuffed into a tooth cavity to kill the nerve, which worked — until the tooth fell out.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Date	Family	Native	Type	Flower Color	Description	Interesting Facts
Buttercup or Western Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus occidentalis</i> var. <i>occidentalis</i>	Early 2/19- 5/2 Mar. tp July	Ranunculaceae Buttercup Family	Native Below 5,000'	Perennial	Yellow	4-24" tall with thin, usually hairy stems and three-parted, lobed leaves. The ½ to 1-inch flowers have 5 or 6 shiny, broad, rounded, yellow petals. Western Buttercup likes "to keep its feet wet" and will bloom as long as cool weather lasts.	Grows in meadows, along streams and in forest openings in Alaska and British Columbia to central California. <i>Ranunculus</i> means "little frog," referring to the plant's preferred wet locations. Native Americans ate the roots and roasted the seeds to add them to pinole (a floury gruel; seeds of Red Maids and Elegant Clarkia were also used). Raw seeds can be poisonous, although birds eat them. The sap is toxic. The yellow flowers make a yellow dye. Young flowers can be pickled in vinegar.
Chickweed or Common Chickweed	<i>Stellaria media</i>	Early 2/15- 4/3 Feb. to Sept	Caryophyllaceae Pink Family	Non-native from sw Europe Below 5,000'	Annual	White	6-12" tall with slender, weak trailing stems and opposite, smooth-edged oval leaves, shiny green and hairless. The stems have a line of hairs on one side and the oval buds are hairy. The 1/8" flowers grow in the leaf axils and have 5 deeply-lobed petals that appear to be 10. The plant fades away in summer heat.	Grows in both sunny and shady locations in grasslands, cultivated fields, brushy or rocky places and gardens. It is common in Europe and North America. Sometimes considered a weed. <i>Stellaria</i> refers to the star-like flower. Chickweed can be cooked like spinach or added raw to salads. It is used in herbal medicine for rheumatism, skin problems and healing of wounds. Equally common and similar in growth, Mouse-ear Chickweed (<i>Cerastium glomeratum</i>) has many more hairs. It doesn't seem to grow at Bridgeport, but it too grows in the foothills.
Creeping Wood Sorrel, Yellow Sorrel	<i>Oxalis corniculata</i>	Early and all year	Oxalidaceae Oxalis Family	Non-native from Medit. Europe	Perennial	Yellow	4-8" mound with taproot, stems that root at the nodes. 3 clover-like leaflets, green or purple, heart-shaped, folded in the middle. Yellow ½" flowers. Seed capsules open explosively.	Considered a weed in turf, agricultural fields, nurseries and home gardens. Remove all parts of the plant as it will regenerate easily. 1 plant produces 5,000 seeds. Oxalates may be toxic in quantity to sheep. Used by herbalists for ailments. Rich in Vit. C, the plant may be eaten in small doses. Quantities may inhibit calcium in the body. The boiled plant yields yellow dye. Some ornamental forms of Oxalis grow from bulbs.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Date	Family	Native	Type	Flower Color	Description	Interesting Facts
Fiddleneck or Common Fiddleneck , Small-flowered Fiddleneck, Rancher's Fireweed	<i>Amsinckia menziesii</i> var. <i>intermedia</i>	Early 1/14-5/30 May to July	Boraginaceae Borage Family	Native Below 5,600'	Annual	Yellow orange	6-36" tall with rough, hairy foliage and small trumpet-like orangey-yellow flowers in a coil that gradually unwind. The fruit is 4 brown nutlets. It is self-pollinated. Bristly plant hairs can irritate skin.	Grows in open, grassy and disturbed areas in the grasslands, forests and deserts of the western states. One of our earliest flowers to bloom. Toxic to horses, cattle and pigs due to alkaloids that cause liver damage. Avoid hay bales that may contain dried fiddleneck plants and seeds. Host for the Painted Lady butterfly larvae.
Filaree or Redstem Filaree , Cutleaf Storksbill, Scissor Plant	<i>Erodium cicutarium</i>	Early 3/7-5/16 Feb. to Sept	Geraniaceae Geranium Family	Non-native from Eurasia Below 6,500'	Annual	Red/Pink	3-10" with usually red and decumbent stems. The compound leaves, with 9 to 13 leaflets, are fern-like with sharp lobes. 1 to 9 small rose-colored flowers appear in a terminal cluster. The sepals have bristly tips. The seedpods (storksbills) are 1 to 2" long. At the base of each seed there may be a pit subtended by 1 to 2 non-hairy ridges.	Filaree grows worldwide in open, disturbed sites and grasslands. It is highly regarded as forage. <i>Erodium</i> means "heron's beak." The Spaniards introduced it to California during the mission period with seeds clinging to the wool of imported sheep. It was abundant when John C. Fremont was here in the 1800s. Young plants may be eaten cooked or raw and have a sharp parsley-like flavor. Erodium species have been used as a diuretic, astringent and anti-inflammatory herb. Chinese medicine used the tea as a kidney tonic and to control urinary bleeding. In Mexico it has been used to control afterbirth bleeding and prevent postpartum infection.
Filaree or Long-beaked Storksbill or Broadleaf Filaree	<i>Erodium botrys</i>	Early 2/20-5/16 Mar. to July	Geraniaceae Geranium Family	Non-native from s. Europe Below 3,300'	Annual	Red/Pink	6-24" with leafy stems branching from the base, starting with a flat rosette of red stems with lobed to dissected leaves. The flowers are pinkish lavender to purple and may have wine-colored veins. The sepal tips are bristly and may be red. The cranesbill up to 4" long has no or a little pit at the base of the seed, subtended by 2 to 4 furrows.	Common in dry open, grassy, and disturbed sites. This storksbill has the longest "beak" of all filarees. See the above entry for native uses. Docents can show that the geranium cranesbill divides into separate seeds with long tails that spiral as they dry. The spiraling can be demonstrated with divided mature green seeds held in the hand or stuck onto a T-shirt. The tails untwist when damp and recoil when dry, gradually drilling into the soil to plant themselves. Children like to make "scissors" from the cranesbills. Use a fingernail to cut a slot and slip another cranesbill through it, forming an X that looks like scissors.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Date	Family	Native	Type	Flower Color	Description	Interesting Facts
Filaree or Whitestem Filaree	<i>Erodium moschatum</i>	Early Feb to Sept	Geraniaceae	Non-native from Europe	Annual or biennial	Pink	4-24" with decumbent or ascending stems. Lobed compound leaves with 11-15 leaflets. Pink flowers.	Grows in open, disturbed sites. This is the third filaree that grows at Bridgeport. It may be difficult to differentiate from the other two, although there are differences. The sepal tips are non-bristly. The base of the seed has 1 to 2 glandular ridges.
Groundsel, Common Groundsel, Old Man of Spring	<i>Senecio vulgaris</i>	Early Feb- July	Asteraceae Sunflower Family	Non-native from Europe Below 4,300'	Annual	Yellow or whitish	4-24" tall with clusters of disk flowers only. The flower head bracts (phyllaries) are black-tipped. Pinnately lobed leaves grow along the stem. Tap-rooted.	Grows in gardens, farmlands and disturbed areas. It is considered a weed. It is used unofficially by herbalists as a poultice and purgative, but it is unsafe because the plant is toxic to the liver. Rabbits and birds can eat it safely. It is one of the earliest plants to bloom in the spring. Called "Old Man of Spring" because its white seed head looks like an old man's grey hair.
Lace Pod or Fringepod	<i>Thysanocarpus curvipes</i>	Early 1/27- 4/15 Feb. to June	Brassicaceae Mustard Family	Native Below 8,200'	Annual	White	6-36" slender, erect herb with basal, toothed leaves and a tall stalk with white 4-petal insignificant flowers at the top. Seedpods develop from the bottom upward. Papery ¼-½-in. round, flat, winged fruit with a wavy or perforated margin look like small wheels, especially beautiful when backlit.	Grows in washes, open areas and meadows in the western states from British Columbia to Baja California. It is frequent along the Buttermilk Bend Trail. <i>Thysanocarpus</i> means "fringed fruit." While the seedpod is the outstanding feature, viewing the tiny flowers through a hand lens reveals an unexpected beauty. Native Americans cooked and ate the seeds or ground them into flour. A tea was made from the whole plant for stomachaches and from the leaves for colic. Unopened flowers can be boiled and eaten. High in vitamins A, B, and C.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Date	Family	Native	Type	Flower Color	Description	Interesting Facts
Larkspur or Zigzag Larkspur, Spreading Larkspur	<i>Delphinium patens</i> subsp. <i>patens</i>	Early 1/27-4/28 Mar. to June	Ranunculaceae Buttercup Family	Native 260-3,600'	Perennial	Violet/Purple	4-20" tall with a usually hairless, usually zigzagged stem growing from a tuberous root. The stem is easily detached from the root. Leaves have 3-5 wedge-shaped lobes. The spurred flower has white upper petals with blue lines and 5 dark blue sepals that look like petals. The spur points upward. Zigzag stems are not a reliable identifier.	Found in grasslands, chaparral, oak woodlands and forests in California and the western states. Zigzag is the first larkspur to bloom in our area. <i>Delphinium</i> was named "dolphin plant" by the Greeks, who thought the flower buds resembled a dolphin. A Greek story relates that the flower sprang up from the blood of the Greek hero Ajax when he killed himself. The <i>Iliad</i> tells of Ajax's colossal stature and strength as a fighter in the Trojan War. Larkspur is the most toxic plant on our walk All plant parts of all larkspur species are toxic to livestock, second only to locoweed. Early growth of the plant is more toxic than later. A tincture is used carefully by herbalists to destroy human parasites such as lice and itch mites, to treat insomnia, poor appetite and fluid retention. Makes a good blue ink.
Lomatium or Foothill Lomatium, Biscuit Root, Wild Carrot	<i>Lomatium utriculatum</i>	Early 2/18-5/22 Feb. to May	Apiaceae Carrot Family	Native 150-5,000'	Perennial	Yellow	4-20" tall with thin dissected leaves and a slender taproot. Small yellow flowers in a compound umbel. Related to Queen Anne's Lace and Poison Hemlock.	Grows on grassy slopes and flats in many habitats and many soil types. Native Americans fried the leaves and sometimes the flowers in grease and salt or ate them raw. The roots were chewed for headaches and stomachaches. Some species were used for birth control. One of the host plants for the Anise Swallowtail butterfly larvae.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Date	Family	Native	Type	Flower Color	Description	Interesting Facts
Manzanita or Whiteleaf Manzanita , Sticky Manzanita	<i>Arctostaphylos viscida</i> subsp. <i>viscida</i>	Early Feb. to April	Ericaceae Heath Family	Native 100-6,500'	Shrub	White	Up to 15' tree-like shrub with crooked mahogany-red branches and erect, round to oval, gray leaves with vertical leaves (an adaptation to withstand summer heat.) No basal burl. Urn-shaped pink or white flowers nod in terminal clusters. Sticky, round red-brown fruit are "little apples." There are many native manzanitas in CA and many cultivars of manzanita for the garden.	Found on rocky slopes in chaparral and coniferous forests. Can grow on stony soil with low fertility. The plant is poor forage but may be eaten by cattle. Some people still use manzanita in cooking today. For recipes using the blossoms and berries see <i>Living Wild</i> by Alicia Funk and Karin Kaufman. Native Americans used dried berries ground to a fine flour to make pinole (gruel) and thin cakes which were baked over fire. Green mature fruits were soaked in boiling water to make juice for a drink or jelly. Fruits and leaves were used medicinally for astringent to treat bronchitis, dropsy and other diseases. A tea of the berries was used as a wash for poison oak. Ground leaves were dried and mixed with tobacco for smoking. Some tribes used the wood to make huts. Karok Indians used the wood for spoons, scraping sticks, tobacco pipes and reels for string.
Miner's Lettuce or Streambank Beauty , Narrow-leaved miner's lettuce	<i>Claytonia parviflora</i> subsp. <i>parviflora</i>	Early 3/8-4/4 Mar. to June	Montiaceae Miner's Lettuce Family Previously Portulacaceae, Purslane Family	Native Below 7,500'	Annual	White or pink	1-14" tall and growing in a clump. Basal leaves are long and linear, which differentiate this species from <i>C. perfoliata</i> . A cluster of many small flowers tops round or squarish leaves.	Grows in moist, cool areas in the western North America from southwestern Canada to northwestern Mexico. Often found in disturbed areas. The uses for Streambank Beauty and <i>C. perfoliata</i> are the same. Miners ate the leaves as lettuce to prevent scurvy. High in Vitamin C. The species of Miner's Lettuce may cross-pollinate and therefore are highly variable.
Miner's Lettuce or Winter Purslane	<i>Claytonia perfoliata</i>	Early 1/14-4/28 Mar. to July	Montiaceae Miner's Lettuce Family Previously Portulacaceae, Purslane Family	Native Below 6,500'	Annual	White or pink	1-14" tall. Circular leaves (actually 2 fused leaves) topped by cluster of small white or pink 5-petal flowers. Highly variable.	Grows in cool, damp locations in the western and coastal regions of North America to Central America. Miner's Lettuce is a Vitamin C source. Native Americans ate the leaves fresh or cooked. They made a tea to use as a laxative. Miners ate the leaves as lettuce to prevent scurvy. It is gathered for cooking and salads today. Some sources say to avoid eating it after the flowers form, as they might cause an upset stomach.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Date	Family	Native	Type	Flower Color	Description	Interesting Facts
Morning Glory or Western Morning Glory	<i>Calystegia occidentalis</i>	Early 3/22 May to June	Convolvulaceae Morning Glory Family	Native 1,000-9,000'	Perennial	White or creamy	40" long or more, a sprawling or climbing woody plant. Alternate, arrowhead-shaped leaf with two basal lobes, which may be rounded or 2-tipped. Funnel-shaped white or creamy flowers age purplish.	Grows on dry, open slopes in chaparral, foothill woodland and pine forest, in California, Oregon and the Great Basin. There are other native species of morning glory growing in other parts of CA. Morning Glory may be confused with the smaller-flowered, non-native bindweed (<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>), a weed that grows in disturbed areas and orchards. Sometimes used to treat various mental disorders.
Nemophila or Canyon Nemophila , Variable Leaf Nemophila, Small White Nemophila	<i>Nemophila heterophylla</i>	Early 1/27-5/30 Feb. to June	Boraginaceae Borage or Waterleaf Family Previously Hydrophyllaceae, Waterleaf Family	Native 100-5,600'	Annual	White or bluish	4-12" tall. Bristly-hairy stems break easily. The lobed leaves are opposite lower on the stem and alternate on the upper part. The ½" bell-shaped white or bluish flowers have 5 overlapping petals and grow singly in the leaf axils. There are reflexed auricles between the sepals.	Found on grassy slopes in shade under oaks or shrubs, from central California to Oregon. <i>Nemophila</i> means "woodland loving." Related to Baby Blue Eyes (<i>N. menziesii</i>), a native often grown in cultivated gardens. Although Baby Blue Eyes prefer sun, Canyon Nemophila prefers moist shade.
Osage Orange , Hedge-apple, Horse-apple, Bois D'Arc, Bodark	<i>Maclura pommifera</i>	Early to Mid April to June	Moraceae Mulberry Family	Native to south-central U.S., especially the Red River drainage. Naturalized widely. Below 1,500'	Tree Dioecious	Green	20-65' tall with up to 1 inch axillary thorns. Male flowers in racemes and female flowers in heads are on different plants (dioecious). Deciduous 3-5" leaves are simple and alternate. The 4-5" pale green, spherical, bumpy fruit is made up of many fused ovaries and filled with milky sap. The bitter fruit drops to the ground in Sept. to Oct. and is rarely eaten by animals, but sometimes squirrels eat it. Dry, brown fruit is often found on the ground by visitors.	Planted by settlers, especially on the Great Plains, as a windbreak and for its termite-proof wood used for fence posts and tool handles. Used for hedges before barbed-wire became available. The Osages used its wood for war clubs and excellent bows, which were reported to be valuable—worth a horse and a blanket. The wood is mostly heartwood with little sapwood. It is used today in making custom furniture and wood turnings. A yellow-orange dye can be extracted from it. Higher in BTUs than any common North American wood, it burns long and hot, but pops too much for firewood. A thornless male form is used in landscaping. Osage orange has been planted to reclaim strip mines. Additional uses are being studied. It is not related to the oranges we eat. The sap can cause a rash. The fruit is not poisonous to livestock.

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Peppergrass or Shining Peppergrass	<i>Lepidium nitidum</i>	Early 3/7-4/10 Feb. to Mar.	Brassicaceae Mustard Family	Native Below 3,300'	Annual	White	2-15" tall. Linear leaves have sharp points. Tiny white flowers with spoon-shaped petals. Seedpods are shiny ovals with a narrow notch at the outer tip.	Grows in open places, alkaline soils, flats and slopes and also in wetlands. Confined to western America. Used for flavoring and for greens. Individually the plant in bloom is not showy, but many of them in bloom on Table Mountain created a field of white haze. The shiny seedpods of this little plant give it distinction.
Pipevine or Dutchman's Pipe, Birthwort	<i>Aristolochia californica</i>	Early 2/18-4/10 Jan to April	Aristolochiaceae Pipevine Family	Native Below 2,300'	Perennial	Green	Up to 12' vine winds through shrubs. Alternate soft-hairy heart-shaped deciduous leaves. 2-4" greenish flowers with purple veins are U-shaped like the bowl of a Dutchman's pipe. The foul-smelling flowers attract fungus gnats, which are the pollinators. The fruit looks like star fruit.	Grows in moist woods and riparian areas in northern and central California. Prevalent along the South Yuba River part of the Point Defiance Trail. Some are also on the Buttermilk Bend Trail. Pipevine is the host plant of the larvae of the blue-black Pipevine Swallowtail butterfly. The black, bristly and red-spotted caterpillars appear in May. Deer and drought resistant, it does well in the garden, especially with summer water. It was used as a medication for sores and in childbirth.
Plectritus, Long-tubed or Long-spurred Plectritus	<i>Plectritus ciliosa</i>	Mar to May	Valerianaceae Valerian Family	Native Below 6,890'	Annual	Pink	2- 12" tall. Erect plant with simple, narrow, opposite leaves, topped with a headlike cluster of small, light pink, 2-lipped flowers. There are 2 red dots on the lower lip and a slender, pointed spur extending from the tube base.	Grows on open, partly shaded or moist slopes. Found in the western states, from Washington to northern Baja, including California and Arizona. This delicate herb isn't easily noticed at Bridgeport, but it has been seen along the Buttermilk and Pt. Defiance trails. White Plectritus, (<i>P. macrocera</i>) might also grow in the area, but it has not been identified. It has white flowers and no red dots.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Date	Family	Native	Type	Flower Color	Description	Interesting Facts
Poison Oak or Western Poison Oak or Pacific Poison Oak	<i>Toxicodendron diversilobum</i>	Early 3/22-4/28 April to June	Anacardiaceae Sumac or Cashew Family	Native Below 5,400'	Perennial Dioecious (male and female flowers on separate plants)	Yellow	Shrub or climbing vine with 3 leaflets: "leaves of three, leave it be" or "two kissing, one running away." Red leaves in early spring become glossy green, and then turn bright red in fall. The leaves may be lobed or not; the plant may be a bush or vine. In spring, insignificant cream-colored flowers may be fragrant. The berries are greenish-white. Poison oak spreads by creeping rootstocks or seed. An oil, urushiol, is on all surfaces. Humans can get dermatitis from the amount that would fit on a pinhead, although some people seem to be immune. The deciduous winter stems are hard to identify and avoid, but they also can cause dermatitis. Smoke and pet fur can carry urushiol. Deer and cattle can browse on it without harm.	Grows in damp, semi-shady places but also in direct sunlight. Found in many plant communities from valley grasslands to pine forests. Exists only on the Pacific Coast of the United States and Canada. There is no "poison ivy" in CA. It is said that full-blooded Native Americans (not mixed-blood) are immune to the oil. This is debated. It may be that young children were fed small portions of the leaves to build immunity and they also learned to avoid the plant. Various tribes in CA used poison oak in many ways: (continued on next page) stems for basketry, leaves to wrap around bread while baking and to cover soap plant bulbs for pit roasting, twigs for skewers to smoke salmon, juice for a black dye. The burned plant provided charcoal for tattoos. Medicinal uses: roots in a decoction for treating small sores in the eyes and to improve vision; leaves for a snakebite poultice; spring leaves for a prophylactic and contraceptive; juice to cure warts and ringworm. If you touch the plant, rub the oil off with an alcohol-based wipe. Flushing with lots of fresh water may help. Regular soap may simply spread the oil around, but Technu and other brands work well. Squaw Bush (<i>Rhus trilobata</i>) is a related non-poisonous 3-leaved plant.
Popcorn Flower , Rusty Popcorn Flower, Foothill Snowdrops	<i>Plagiobothrys nothofulvus</i>	Early 1/27-5/28	Boraginaceae Borage Family	Native Below 2,500'	Annual	White	6-24" erect plant with basal rosette. Spreading hairs on the stem and pale yellow hairs on the leaves. Small white flowers on a branching coiled raceme at tips of the stems.	Grows in many plant communities from grassland to forest, on hillsides and along roadsides. Common in spring. There are 14 additional species in Placer and Nevada counties and it is hard to distinguish them from each other. One southern CA tribe painted their faces with the reddish juice from the base of the stem. Deer, ground squirrels, turtles and insects forage on the plant.

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Poppy or Tufted Poppy, Collarless California Poppy	<i>Eschscholzia caespitosa</i>	Early 1/27-6/18 Mar. to May	Papaveraceae Poppy Family	Native Below 5,900'	Annual	Yellow/orange	2-12' high with finely dissected, whitish blue basal leaves. Several stems bear orange to yellow flowers with 4 petals less than 1' long. The seedpods rupture when ripe, projecting the seeds.	Found on dry flats and in chaparral in western North America. Often mistaken for the larger California Poppy (<i>E. californica</i>), the CA State Flower. Note that the Tufted Poppy lacks a spreading outer rim or platform below the petals and tends to have smaller flowers. Native Americans used the leaves to relieve toothache and the plant for headaches and a sedative for sleep. Used today for anti-anxiety extract and gentle antispasmodic, analgesic actions. Leaves may be cooked, but be sure to identify the plant well because similar ones are poisonous.
Red Maids	<i>Calandrinia ciliata</i>	Early 2/15-5/1 Feb. to May	Montiaceae Miner's Lettuce Family Previously Portulacaceae, Purslane Family	Native Below 7,200'	Annual	Red	2-15" tall with spreading stems and narrow, fleshy ½-3" leaves. Stem tips have several small ½" bright magenta flowers with 5 petals, white-streaked centers and bright orange anthers. The flowers open fully in mid-day, close each evening, and never open when cloudy.	Grows in open grassy areas in western North America. It is widespread and an early colonizer in disturbed areas and after a fire. At Bridgeport, look in the grass at the north end of the parking lot and in the big field and on the mound on the left along the beginning of the trail. Many grow along the lower rocks edging the extended parking lot. Red Maids are difficult to find when closed in the morning or on cloudy days. Around noon the striking color may draw visitor attention and they will ask about them. The shiny black seeds with their high oil content are a valuable food for mammals and birds. Native Americans used the seeds in pinole and ate the leaves as greens. Contain oxalic acid.
Redberry or Hollyleaf Redberry	<i>Rhamnus ilicifolia</i>	Early 2/17-4/6 Mar. to June	Rhamnaceae Buckthorn Family	Native Below 3,700'	Shrub Evergreen	Green	Up to 12' tall, the shrub has stiff, spreading branches with small evergreen leaves similar to holly or scrub oak. Insignificant unisexual flowers are followed by small red berries.	Grows on dry slopes in chaparral and montane forests in California, Arizona and Baja California. Related to Coffeeberry (<i>Rhamnus californica</i>). Another redberry with much smaller leaves, called Spiny Redberry (<i>R. crocea</i>), is found in California mostly along the coast. The shrub grows well in a semi-dry garden. Western blue birds eat the berries.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Date	Family	Native	Type	Flower Color	Description	Interesting Facts
Redbud or Western Redbud	<i>Cercis occidentalis</i>	Early Mar. to May	Fabaceae Pea Family	Native 300- 5,000'	Shrub or small tree Deciduous	Red/ Pink	Pink-purple bilateral flowers (pea-like) appear along the bare branches before the 1 to 4" heart-shaped leaves appear. The leaves emerge with a bronze tint, then turn green. Trees at higher elevations show red fall color. Brown seedpods hang on the branches all winter.	Grows on dry, shrubby slopes, in ravines and along stream banks in California to Utah. Native Americans used the bark of young shoots in making baskets and to produce a reddish dye to color baskets. The bark is astringent and was used to treat diarrhea and dysentery. The flower buds are edible in salads or can be pickled. It is a decorative garden shrub. Springtime visitors often see it along Highway 20 as they drive to Bridgeport. There is a striking example near the beginning of the Buttermilk Bend trail.
Resurrection Plant	<i>Selaginella</i> sp. Probably <i>S. hansenii</i> .	Early and all year	Selaginellaceae Spike Moss Family	Native Below 6,000'	Ground cover	Yellow or orange spores	A low-growing mat clinging to a rock face on a slope. It looks brown and dead when it is dry and it can be dormant for months. As soon as rain comes, it turns green and resumes growth. It reproduces by spores. The plant has a vascular system, but no flowers, fruits or seeds. As primitive plants, spike mosses fit somewhere between mosses and ferns.	Grows in open to shady sites in oak woodland and coniferous forest. <i>S. hansenii</i> is endemic, only found in California. <i>S. wallacei</i> is found in CA and other western states. Both are in Nevada County. Related species are found worldwide in mostly tropical and warm places. Some grow in the western U.S. deserts and are sold commercially as oddities that come to life with moisture. Selaginella plants, called lycophytes, first appeared 400 million years ago, whereas flowering plants appeared only about 90 million years ago. Some of the early Selaginellas were tall trees, which later decomposed into the fossil fuels we use today. Smaller relatives, like the Resurrection Plant, managed to adapt and survive.
Sanicle or Purple Sanicle , Pincushion or Shoe Buttons	<i>Sanicula bipinnatifida</i>	Early 2/15- 5/2 Mar. to May	Apiaceae Carrot Family	Native 60- 6,000'	Perennial	Violet/ Purple or yellow	6-24" tall with a leafless branching stem topped by simple, round dense umbels of purple-red flowers with conspicuous stamens. Pinnately divided leaves with broad serrated edges sometimes have a purple rib, thus the name. The leaf petiole is winged.	Grows in open to partly shaded sites in many habitats on the west coast of North America. Often found on serpentine. <i>Sanicula</i> comes from a Latin word meaning "to heal." The Miwoks concocted an infusion from the leaves to apply to snakebites. A root extract was a cure-all. Don't confuse it with Poison Sanicle. Most Carrot Family members have compound umbels. The <i>Saniculas</i> have simple umbels. Their fruit is covered with tubercles and prickles. Peterson says the yellow flowered form is more common in the western Sierra Nevada, but Buttermilk Bend has both.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Date	Family	Native	Type	Flower Color	Description	Interesting Facts
Saxifrage or California Saxifrage	<i>Micranthes californica</i> Previously <i>Saxifraga californica</i>	Early 2/15-4/28 Feb. to May	Saxifragaceae Saxifrage Family	Native Below 4,000'	Perennial	White	4-12" tall. The oblong basal leaves have no lobes. The slender leafless stem is reddish, glandular and hairy, topped with many ¼ to ½" white flowers with 5 separate rounded petals. The sepals and stamens are reddish. The pistil is split into two curving beaks all the way down to the ovary. The fruit has two beaks.	Grows in moist shade, on ledges and grassy slopes in California west of the deserts, southern Oregon and northern Baja California. <i>Saxifraga</i> means "stone-breaker." Some may have been used in dissolving gallstones, but the name most likely refers to the way roots work into the crevices in rocks. There are 400 species worldwide. Saxifrage is summer dormant: the plants disappear in summer heat. Look for it on the slope above the trail just before the bridge at French Corral Creek.
Shepherd's Purse	<i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i>	Early 2/18-3/23 Jan. to Oct.	Brassicaceae Mustard Family	Non-native from Europe Below 9,000'	Annual	White	4-20" tall. Erect with small white flowers clustered at the top of the growing stem. Flat heart-shaped seedpods develop along the stem underneath the flowers. Basal lobed leaves. May be confused with Shining Peppergrass, which has oval seedpods with a small notch at the tip rather than heart-shaped.	Grows in disturbed sites and gardens worldwide. <i>Capsella</i> means "little box." The seedpods look like shepherds' purses. Native Americans parched the seeds with hot rocks in a basket, then ground them up and made them into mush. Herbalists use the plants in many ways: for poor eyesight, urinary problems, bleeding disorders, menstrual problems. Young leaves can be eaten raw or used as a potherb. They taste like cabbage. The Redbud book suggests the possibility that the seeds are carnivorous. When wet, they attract protozoans, trap them by secretions and absorb their nutrients. This would be a first for seeds.
Shooting Star or Henderson's Shooting Star, Mosquito Bills, Sailor Caps	<i>Dodecatheon hendersonii</i>	Early 2/18-3/13 Mar. to July	Primulaceae Primrose Family	Native Below 6,200'	Perennial	Violet/Purple	5-16" tall with a cluster of rounded basal leaves and several tall flower stalks topped with an umbel of magenta or lavender flowers. The 4-5 reflexed petals are yellow and white at the base. The pointed anther tube is always dark.	Grows in shade to semi-shade in open woodlands in California to southern British Columbia and Idaho. One of the earliest wildflowers to bloom, it goes dormant by early summer. Shooting Stars are sometimes called "Mosquito Bills" because the exerted stamens (anther tube) look like the needle-nose of mosquitoes. The flowers nod before pollination and point upward after pollination. The roots, stems and leaves are said to be edible after boiling or roasting.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Date	Family	Native	Type	Flower Color	Description	Interesting Facts
Sow thistle or Common Sow Thistle	<i>Sonchus oleraceus</i>	All year	Asteraceae	Non-native from Europe Below 8,200'	Annual	Yellow	1-6' tall plant with smooth branched stems clasped by large arrowhead-shaped, lobed leaves. Multiple small yellow dandelion-like flowers produce puffy white seed heads. The sap is milky.	Grows in gardens, along roadsides and in other disturbed places. Some people use the leaves in salad or cook them like spinach. Herbalists use the plant medicinally, including using the latex to treat warts and as a cure for the opium habit and the leaves as a poultice for inflammation. Internal use can cause problems. Prickly Sow Thistle (<i>Sonchus asper</i>) is similar to Common Sow Thistle, but the leaf edges are much more bristly. "Sow" is in the name because the leaves look like the ear of a pig and swine eat the plants.
Speedwell or Persian Speedwell	<i>Veronica persica</i>	Early 2/18-4/18 Feb. to May	Plantaginaceae Plantain Family Previously Scrophulariaceae Figwort Family	Non-native from Asia Minor Below 3,600'	Annual	Blue	1" tall spreading, prostrate plants with scattered 3/8" blue, 4-petal flowers with deep blue lines and white centers. The small leaves are hairy and rounded with toothed margins. Heart-shaped fruit.	Grows in disturbed areas, lawns and gardens widespread throughout North America and east Asia. One of the first flowers to bloom in the spring. It may be seen edging the pathway in the Bridgeport Native Plant garden in late February and early March and in the lawn near the entrance to the north parking lot. The fruit with seeds inside has one style at the pointed end with two lobes in a heart shape that is wider than it is long.
Spring Vetch	<i>Vicia sativa</i>	Early 2/15-4/28 Mar. to June	Fabaceae Pea Family	Non-native from Europe Below 4,200'	Annual	Violet/Purple	1-3' tall sprawling, variable plant with 4 to 8 pairs of blunt-tipped leaflets that have tiny bristles. 1" reddish-purple sweetpea-like flowers occur singly or in twos at the base of leaves. Some flowers are two-toned with the lighter tone in the banner.	Grows in grassy, open and disturbed places. Introduced from Europe as livestock forage and now an invasive weed in the garden and grain field. Sometimes used as a cover crop in agriculture. Not usually a problem at Bridgeport, but occasionally the population explodes. Spring Vetch has 1 or 2 flowers in the leaf axils and Winter Vetch has 10 to many flowers dangling from an upright raceme or stem, also growing from leaf axils. Winter Vetch usually blooms later than Spring Vetch, but both may be in bloom at the same time.
Whitlow Grass or Spring Whitlow Grass, Spring Draba, Shadflower, Nailwort	<i>Draba verna</i>	Early 2/18-3/8 Feb. to May	Brassicaceae Mustard Family	Non-native from Eurasia Below 8,200'	Annual	White	1-3" tall with a single flower stalk up to 6" tall. The basal rosette has 1-2" hairy leaves. Tiny white flowers with 4 petals are grouped at the top of the leafless stalk.	Grows in open or disturbed areas. The four deeply-divided petals appear to be 8 petals arranged in a cross. The seeds are elongated ovals, like a football. Although named a "grass," it is not a grass.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Date	Family	Native	Type	Flower Color	Description	Interesting Facts
Wild Cucumber or California Man-root , Common Manroot	<i>Marah fabacea</i>	Early 2/15-4/3 Feb. to April	Cucurbitaceae Cucumber Family Monocious (male and female flowers on the same plant)	Native Below 5,250'	Perennial Monoecious (separate male and female flowers on the same plant)	White	6-20' long vines with tendrils and rounded leaves that have 5-7 lobes. The flowers are white to yellow-green, with the larger, fewer female flowers growing singly close to the main stem and the many male flowers in a vertical raceme. The female flower has a swollen base. The large 4 to 5 cm fruit is globe-shaped with many soft spines and 4 or more seeds. Water pressure in its covering causes it to burst dramatically to expel the seeds with enough force to hurt.	Grows in washes and open areas. It is endemic to California, but some sources say it is also found in Baja California. Manroot is one of the earliest plants to bloom in the spring or to grow after a fire. It can grow in full sun or partial shade. There were many uses for Manroot. Native Americans roasted the seeds and ate them for kidney trouble. Seeds provided an oily substance for pictograph paints and to treat falling hair. Seeds were also used as marbles. Crushed roots were mixed with sugar and put on saddle sores of horses. Mexicans used the plant for tanning. A tea was made to treat venereal diseases. A red dye from the seed can be mixed with turpentine and iron oxide to make paint. The Kumeyaay tribe threw crushed manroot tubers into streams and lakes to stun fish (due to glycosides). Tubers could also be used for soap. The huge water-storing root underground (up to 200 lbs.) is said to look like a man's torso, hence the common name "manroot."

Resources for Wildflower Information

- Baldwin, Bruce G. and others. *The Jepson Manual, Vascular Plants of California*. University of California Press, Second Edition, 2012. Somewhat complicated, but useful once mastered. The authoritative source for scientific names.
- Balls, Edward K. (Researched with Phillip A. Munz). *Early Uses of California Plants*. University of California Press, 1962. 1. Food Plants 2. Drink Plants 3. Fibers and Basketry Plants 4. Medicinal Plants 5. Soap and Fish Poison Plants 6. Dye, Gum, and Tobacco Plants 7. Present-Day Uses of Some California Plants (Donated by Barbara Pixley to the Docents Reference Library at Bridgeport.)
- Bornstein, Carol, David Fross and Bart O'Brien. *California Native Plants for the Garden*. Cachuma Press, 2005. Useful descriptions of gardening with native plants.
- Funk, Alicia, and Karin Kaufman. *Living Wild, Gardening, Cooking and Healing with Native Plants of California*. Flicker Press, Second Edition, 2013. Written by local authors and full of interesting information.
- Lindberg, Herb. *Wildflowers of Bridgeport*. Herbert E. Lindberg, 2009. Excellent photography of the flowers at Bridgeport. A smaller brochure is available.
- Niehaus, Theodore, and Charles Ripper. *Peterson Field Guides: Pacific States Wildflowers*. Houghton Mifflin Company, Second Edition, 1998. Easy to use with pertinent information on most of the flowers in California.
- Papers presented to the Wildflower Committee, South Yuba River State Park. "Blooming Dates" compiled by Mary Miller, updated through June 2002, and "Interesting Plant Facts"—A research paper by Vicki Macdonald on Native American plant uses.
- Redbud Chapter, California Native Plant Society. *Trees and Shrubs of Nevada and Placer Counties, California*. Redbud Chapter, 2014. Comprehensive text and definitive photos for plant identification.
- Redbud Chapter, California Native Plant Society. *Wildflowers of Nevada and Placer Counties, California*. Redbud Chapter, 2007. A comprehensive guide to local wildflowers with good photos and text to help with identification. Very extensive.
- Schmidt, Marjorie G. *Growing California Native Plants*. University of California Press, Second Edition, 2012. An updated classic source for growing natives.
- Sweet, Muriel. *Common Edible and Useful Plants of the West*. Naturegraph Publishers, 1976. A classic source still useful today.
- Ward, Darlene. "Bridgeport's Springtime Treasures." A 23-minute DVD that can be viewed at the South Yuba River State Park Visitor Center. All photos were taken at Bridgeport. Darlene Ward has been a docent since 2008 and was mentored by Vicki Macdonald.

The following are some useful Internet sites:

- http://arboretum.ucdavis.edu/arboretum_all_stars.aspx Helpful information on growing a garden of native and drought-tolerant plants.
- <http://www.calflora.org/> A search on a plant's name leads to a map showing the distribution of the plant in California, verification of name changes, location suitability for growing the plant and links for more information.
- <http://calphotos.berkeley.edu/> Displays many photos of a plant species to aid with a tentative wildflower identification.
- <http://www.cnps.org/cnps/grownative/> Extensive information on gardening with native plants from the California Native Plant Society.
- <http://herb.umd.umich.edu/> Native American Ethnobotany, naming tribal use and source of information. Search on the genus alone if genus and species fails to elicit information. Not all plants or local Native American tribes are listed.
- <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/menu.homegarden.html> A good source of information on weeds and other pests in the home garden.
- www.laspilitas.com Las Pilitas Nursery, CA. Useful for plant descriptions and uses in the garden. Also "Incredible Edibles" (Edible native plants)
- <http://www.naturalmedicinalherbs.net/herbs/latin-names/> Interesting site explaining modern uses of plants and warning about toxicity.
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page Search on a plant's name for plant characteristics. Compare with other sources for accuracy.