

Rare Plants in Your Backyard

If you mention rare or endangered species to the average Californian, he or she will probably think of lions and tigers and bears. "Oh my," you exclaim, because you know that these misguided residents of the Golden State have neglected all 2108 species of plants that are endemic to (found only in) California. In fact, you are probably about to boast proudly of the 79 endemic species that we have right here in the Central Valley. If you weren't, however, then read on. By the end of this poster, you will have greater appreciation for the unique organisms that are right in your backyard.

Most people don't appreciate the extent to which we live amongst endangered species. In fact, whether in your home or at a wildlife refuge, if you are in Yolo or Solano county, you are likely within ten miles of an endangered plant. According to the Environmental Literacy Council, there are 1010 threatened or endangered species, and of those, 509 are plants. Despite the large proportion of endangered species that are plants, they receive only two percent of the funding set aside for the protection of endangered species.

After reading this poster, you will be more aware of the endangered plants in the area. The cool thing about endangered plants is that any plant that grows on private land belongs to the landowner. You might own your very own endangered species! With this knowledge, however, comes the responsibility to protect these species from extinction. As citizens of the Central Valley, we should feel proud of, nurture, and cherish the unique species that live in our neighborhood.

Mt. Diablo fairy-lantern (*Calochortus pulchellus*) Lily Family



Mt. Diablo Fairy-Lantern is a bulb that blooms a vibrant yellow in mid to late spring. It grows at fairly low altitude in chaparral, woodlands, and valley and foothill grassland. Its numbers are decreasing due to grazing and urbanization.

Carquinez goldenbush (*Isocoma arguta*) Sunflower Family



Carquinez goldenbush is a shrub that grows in valley grasslands. It is endemic to California, and has an undocumented sighting in Contra Costa County and a documented sighting in Solano County. It blooms between August and December and grows at sea level. It is threatened by development and agriculture.

Suisun Thistle (*Cirsium hydrophilum* var. *hydrophilum*) Sunflower Family



Although many California thistles are introduced noxious weeds (like yellow star thistle), the Suisun Thistle is a rare native perennial that is endemic to California. It was federally listed as endangered in 1997, and is found in only four places in the world—all of these occurrences are in Solano County! Suisun Thistle was thought to be extinct until it was rediscovered in 1989.

Hall's Harmonia (*Harmonia hallii*) Sunflower Family



Hall's Harmonia is a native California endemic annual herb that grows in Chaparral and blooms between April and June. Currently, it is threatened by mining and found only in Colusa, Lake, Yolo, and Napa counties.

Glossary

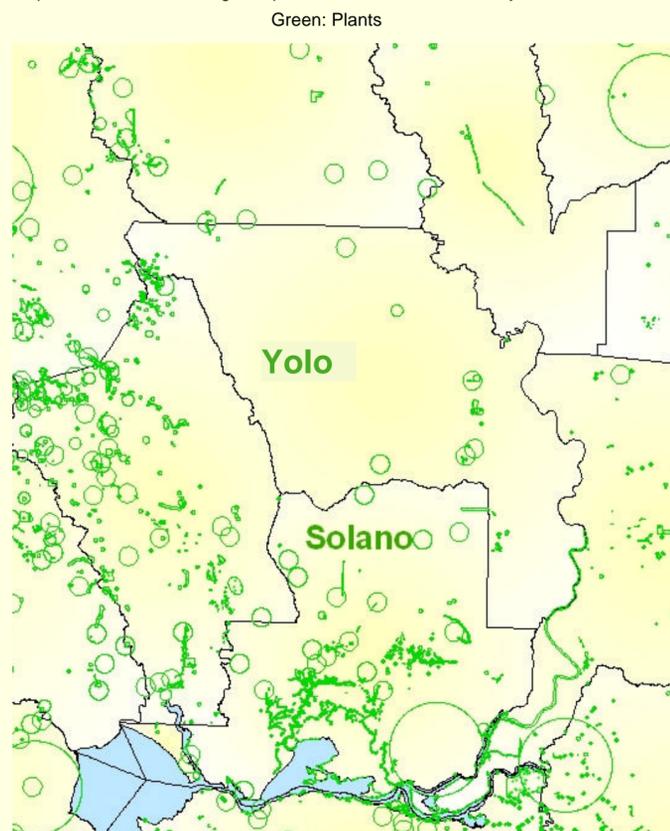
Endemic: Found only in a certain area. i.e. something that is endemic to California is found only in California.

Native: A plant that grows naturally in its current location without human interference.

Chaparral: A habitat of very dense shrubs and short trees. Usually found in dry climatic conditions. Occurs most often on shallow soil such as on slopes.

Rhizomatous: A rhizomatous plant has underground horizontal stems that produces roots and other stems.

Map of locations of endangered plants in Yolo, Solano and adjacent counties.



Crampton's tuctoria or Solano grass (*Tuctoria mucronata*) Grass Family



Crampton's tuctoria or Solano grass is an extremely rare species of annual grass that has been found only in Solano and Yolo counties. Threatened by non-native plants, it grows in vernal pools. There are believed to be only two present-day occurrences in the entire world; one on land south of Davis in Yolo County and the other in Solano County. It blooms between April and August.

Bearded popcorn-flower (*Plagiobothrys hystericulus*) Forget-me-not Family



Bearded popcorn-flower is a very special plant. It has been found in only one place in the world, and that place is in the Central Valley's own Solano County! It grows in vernal pools at low elevation. Rediscovered in 2005, it blooms between April and May and is threatened by plowing and development.

Purdy's Onion (*Allium fimbriatum* var. *purdyi*) Lily Family



Purdy's Onion is a perennial bulb that is native and endemic to California. There have been sightings of Purdy's Onion in Colusa, Lake, Napa, and Yolo counties. It tends to grow in chaparral and foothill woodlands. To find it in bloom you should look between June and April.

Heckard's peppergrass (*Lepidium latipes* var. *heckardii*) Mustard Family



Heckard's peppergrass is an annual herb that grows in valley and foothill grasslands at low elevation. It blooms between March and May, and is found in Glenn, Solano, and Yolo counties. In the entire world, there are 11 known occurrences, and six of them are in Yolo Co.

Deep-Scarred Cryptantha (*Cryptantha excavata*) Forget-me-not Family

Deep-scarred cryptantha is an annual herb that blooms between April and May. It grows in woodlands that are between 100 and 500 meters above sea level. It is endemic to California and has been found in Yolo, Colusa, and Lake counties. (No photo available)

Mt. Diablo buckwheat (*Eriogonum truncatum*) Buckwheat Family



Mt. Diablo buckwheat is a highly threatened California endemic herb that grows at low elevation in chaparral, coastal scrub, and valley and foothill grassland; it blooms between April and September. The only recorded observations of the plant have been in Alameda, and Contra Costa counties. It was rediscovered in 2005 and suffers from competition with non-native plants, trampling, and habitat elimination due to urbanization.

Hoover's lomatum (*Lomatium ciliolatum* var. *hooveri*) Carrot Family



Hoover's lomatum is a perennial herb that grows in chaparral and woodland at elevations of 300-885 meters. This relative of wild parsley and wild cilantro blooms from April to June, and has been found in Colusa, Lake, Napa, and Yolo counties.

Napa lomatum (*Lomatium repostum*) Carrot Family



Napa lomatum is a perennial herb that grows in chaparral and woodland at elevations of 90-830 meters. It blooms from March to June, and has been found in Sonoma, Lake, Napa, and Solano counties.

Poster by Eli Strauss, Oct. 2006

Data from California Natural Diversity Database, CalFlora, Jepson Manual and California Native Plant Society.