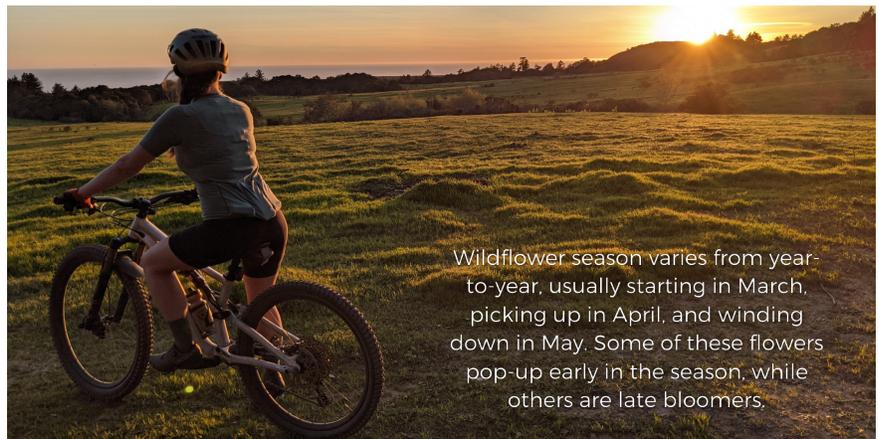


A CYCLIST'S GUIDE TO THE WILDFLOWERS OF SANTA CRUZ

Add a little color to your bike ride with this mobile wildflower guide from the Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History.

This flower field guide and bike route map will help you on your treasure hunt. Wildflowers can be fleeting so keep these routes on rotation to avoid missing the show!



Wildflower season varies from year-to-year, usually starting in March, picking up in April, and winding down in May. Some of these flowers pop-up early in the season, while others are late bloomers.

This guide was created in honor of Bike Month (May 2021) in partnership with Ecology Action. Learn more at <https://ecoact.org/bikemonth/>

For more detailed descriptions, view the full guide at <https://www.santacruzmuseum.org/a-cyclists-guide-to-the-wildflowers-of-santa-cruz/>



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COASTAL CRUISING

EASY | ARANA GULCH TO SANTA CRUZ MUSEUM OF
NATURAL HISTORY TO UCSC COASTAL SCIENCE CAMPUS



This easy route takes you through some of the best wildflower viewing in the heart of town. You might think wildflowers belong in the wild, but with habitat loss such a huge threat to plant diversity, creating space for native plants in our urban areas is more important than ever.

Getting There

All Trails Route | Distance 14.10 mi | Elevation Gain 420'

This route cuts through town and along the coast, starting at Arana Gulch, then heading to the Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History, and ending at the UC Santa Cruz Coastal Science Campus. Distance and elevation include doubling back to Arana Gulch.



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Santa Cruz Tarplant
Holocarpha macradenia
Location: Arana Gulch



California Poppy (Maritime)
Eschscholzia californica var. *maritima*
Location: Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History



California Buttercup
Ranunculus californicus
Location: Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History



Common Self Heal
Prunella vulgaris
Location: Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History



Western Blue Eyed Grass
Sisyrinchium bellum
Location: UC Santa Cruz Coastal Science Campus



Gumplant
Grindelia stricta
Location: UC Santa Cruz Coastal Science Campus

MEADOW MILES

MODERATE | DESTINATION MIMA MEADOW



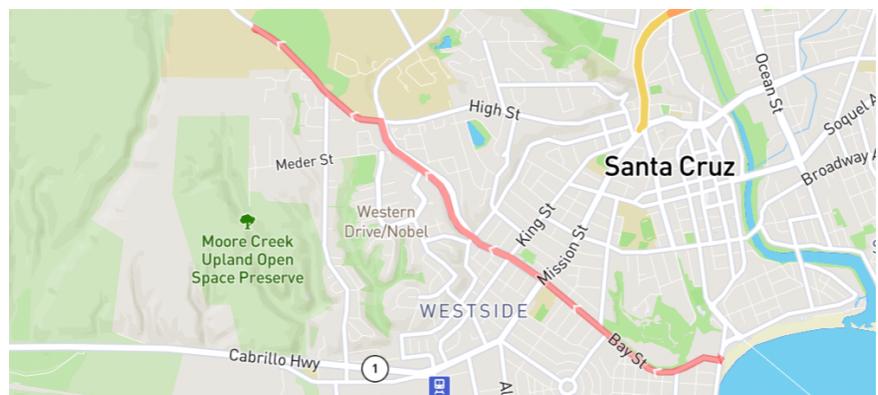
Sometimes you have to work a little for flowers, especially the really good ones. This route has you summiting one of our biggest in-town hills by biking up Bay St. towards campus. Part of the UC Santa Cruz Campus Natural Reserves, Mima Meadow is a coastal prairie featuring geologically interesting mima mounds and some of our most sought after flowers.

Getting There

All Trails Route | Distance 5.71 mi | Elevation Gain 427'

This route has you starting at the coast side of Bay St., taking it all the way to the top, then turning left on High St. and continuing on Empire Grade until you reach the closed gate to Mima Meadow on your left (just past the Arboretum). To get into the Meadow, you will need to use the steps in the fence at the fire road. Either lock your bike up at the Arboretum across the street, along the fence, or walk with it along the trails.

From here you can look down on your starting location along the Monterey Bay as you walk the trails. Stop by the UC Santa Cruz Arboretum and Neary Lagoon on your way back!



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Monterey Mariposa Lily
Calochortus uniflorus

The genus *Calochortus* contains some of our region's most sought-after flowers. This rare species has grass-like leaves and upright flowers shaped like a bowl, which bees often rest in.



White Brodiaea
Triteleia hyacinthina

Also known as fool's onion, this plant has an edible bulb, though it lacks the familiar onion smell.



Yellow Mariposa Lily
Calochortus luteus



Harlequin Lotus
Hosackia gracilis



Sky Lupine
Lupinus nanus



Yellow Brodiaea
Triteleia ixioides subsp. *ixioides*

BONNY DOON

STRENUOUS | MIMA MEADOW TO BONNY DOON
ECOLOGICAL RESERVE VIA SMITH GRADE

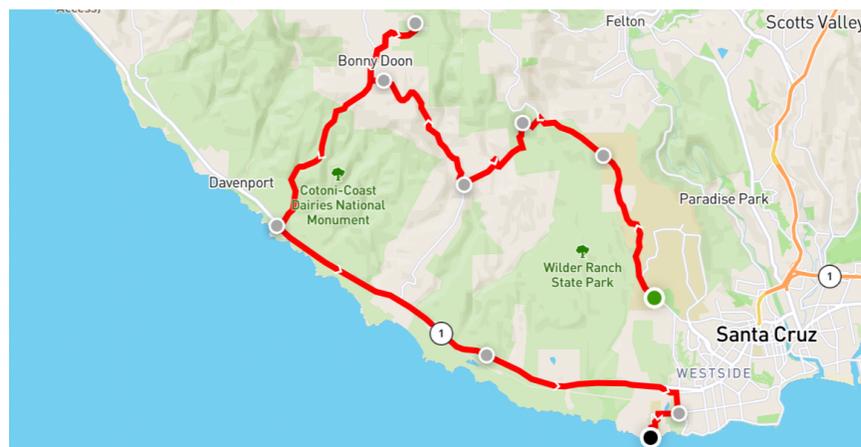


The Bonny Doon Ecological Reserve is a spectacular location for exploring nature. An example of the rare Santa Cruz sandhills habitat, the soil is comprised of ancient seabed deposits and is very nutrient poor. For that reason, highly specialized plants grow here and nowhere else. It also burned partially in the CZU Lightning Complex fires, as well as during the Martin Fire of 2008.

Getting There

All Trails Route | Distance 24.85 mi | Elevation Gain 2,612'

From Mima Meadow, continue on Empire Grade. Turn left onto Smith Grade. You'll meander through parts of the CZU Lightning Complex Burn Zone before reaching Bonny Doon Rd. Turn right and continue onto Pine Flat Rd. before taking a slight right onto Martin Rd. When you're done, double back down Bonny Doon Road to Highway 1 and take that back to the Coastal Science Campus for a relaxing view.



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Ben Lomond Spineflower
Chorizanthe pungens var.
hartwegiana



You really have to see this flower in person to understand just how tiny it is. This rare member of the buckwheat family is found only in our local Santa Cruz sandhills habitat. You don't have to travel far along the trail to find dense mats of this flower when in bloom.



Bush Poppy
Dendromecon rigida

This shrub offers a pop of color to the Reserve when in bloom and can reach many feet high.



Ben Lomond Buckwheat
Eriogonum nudum var.
decurrens

Belonging to the same family as the spineflower, this variety of naked buckwheat is also rare and endemic to the Santa Cruz sandhills. Its leaves form dense basal rosettes and the tiny flowers sit atop long spindly stems.

WILDERIN' OUT

MOUNTAIN BIKING | ENGLEMAN'S LOOP TO LONG MEADOW TRAIL

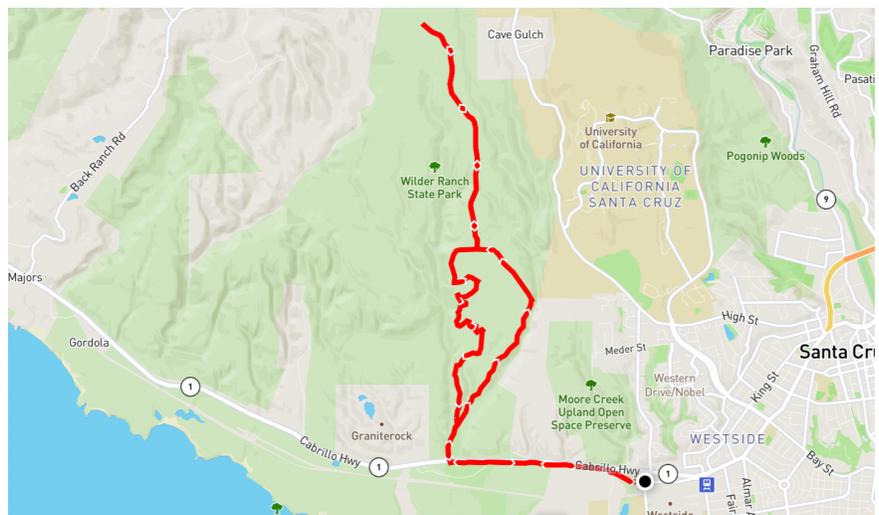


For those who prefer dirt to pavement, there's great wildflower peeping along the trails of Wilder Ranch State Park. There's not a bad trail for finding flowers, but this simple route takes you straight up towards the top of the park, passing through some of the best coastal prairie grasslands in the County. On the way back you'll pass through redwood forest and woodland habitats.

Getting There

All Trails Route | Distance 11.75 mi | Elevation Gain 1,286'

This route takes you along the coastal bike path past invasive plants like wild radish, marigold, acacia, and french broom. When you get to the end of the trail, turn right and head up! You'll take Engelman's Loop to Long Meadow Trail, then double back and take the Wild Boar Trail for a change of scene and some fun twists and turns.



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Common Fiddleneck
Amsinckia menziesii



Western Heart's Ease
Viola ocellata



Fairy Lantern
Calochortus albus



Purple Owl's Clover
Castilleja exserta



Fremont's Deathcamas
Toxicoscordion fremontii

This perennial plant grows back year after year from bulbs underground. It's referred to as deathcamas because all parts of the plant contain a toxic alkaloid that some consider more potent than strychnine.

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There are so many more wildflowers to see in Santa Cruz than are included here. If you find something you don't recognize, consider taking its picture and uploading it to iNaturalist.

The app will suggest potential species and your observations will be recorded as biodiversity data, helping us better understand our natural world.



These routes traverse the traditional and unceded territories of the Awaswas-speaking Uypi and Cotoni tribes. Today these lands are stewarded by the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band who are working hard to fulfill their obligation to Creator to care for and steward Mother Earth and all living things through relearning efforts and the Amah Mutsun Land Trust.



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