



California Natives: Poppy and Lupin

IT'S SPRING AND THE VALLEY IS FULL OF COLOR: POPPIES AND LUPIN ABOUND!

California State Floral Society chose the golden poppy as the state flower in 1890, and the state legislature made it official in 1903. At that time, it became a misdemeanor to cut or remove any plant growing on state or county highways or public lands, unless authorized by the government, when they may be considered *invasive* or may need to be disturbed for construction, etc. The *Eschscholzia californica* is a species of flowering plant native to the US and Mexico, according to wikipedia.org : “It is a perennial or annual growing to 5–60 inches tall, with alternately branching glaucous blue-green foliage. The leaves are ternately divided into round, lobed segments. The flowers are solitary on long stems, silky-textured, with four petals, each petal 0.79 to 2.36 inches long and broad; flower color ranges from yellow to orange, with flowering from February to September. The petals close at night or in cold, windy weather and open again the following morning, although they may remain closed in cloudy weather. The fruit is a slender, dehiscent capsule (.2 to 3.5 inches long, which splits in two to release the numerous small black or dark brown seeds.” These seeds are edible and are often used in cooking. The Native Americans used the leaves medicinally and the pollen cosmetically. According to wikipedia: “An aqueous extract of the plant has sedative and anxiolytic action. The extract acts as a mild sedative when smoked. The effect is far milder than that of opium. California poppy contains a different class of alkaloids.”

Lupinus, commonly known as lupin or lupine in North America, is a genus of flowering plants in the legume family, *Fabaceae*. The genus includes over 200 species, with centers of diversity in North and South America, where the seeds have been used as a food for over 6000. Smaller centers occur in North Africa and the Mediterranean, where the seeds have been used as a food for over 3000 years, according to wikipedia.org : “Users soaked the seed in running water to remove most of the bitter alkaloids and then cooked or toasted the seeds to make them edible...or else boiled and dried them to make kirku...However, Spanish domination led to a change in the eating habits of the indigenous peoples, and only recently has interest in using lupins as a food been renewed...high in protein, dietary fibre and antioxidants, very low in starch and, like all legumes, are gluten-free. Lupin beans are commonly sold in a salty solution in jars (like olives and pickles) and can be eaten with or without the skin. Lupini dishes are most commonly found in Europe, especially in Portugal, Egypt, Greece, and Italy...In Portugal, Spain, and Spanish Harlem, they are popularly consumed with beer.

Lupins have soft green to grey-green leaves which may be coated in silvery hairs, often densely so. The leaf blades are usually



California natives : Poppy and Lupin, frequently seen together due to similar needs



palmately divided into five to 28 leaflets... The flowers are produced in dense or open whorls on an erect spike, each flower 1–2cm long. The pea-like flowers have an upper standard, or banner, two lateral wings, and two lower petals fused into a keel. The flower shape has inspired common names such as bluebonnets and quaker bonnets. The fruit is a pod containing several seeds.” In California, we typically see purple, white or yellow lupin.