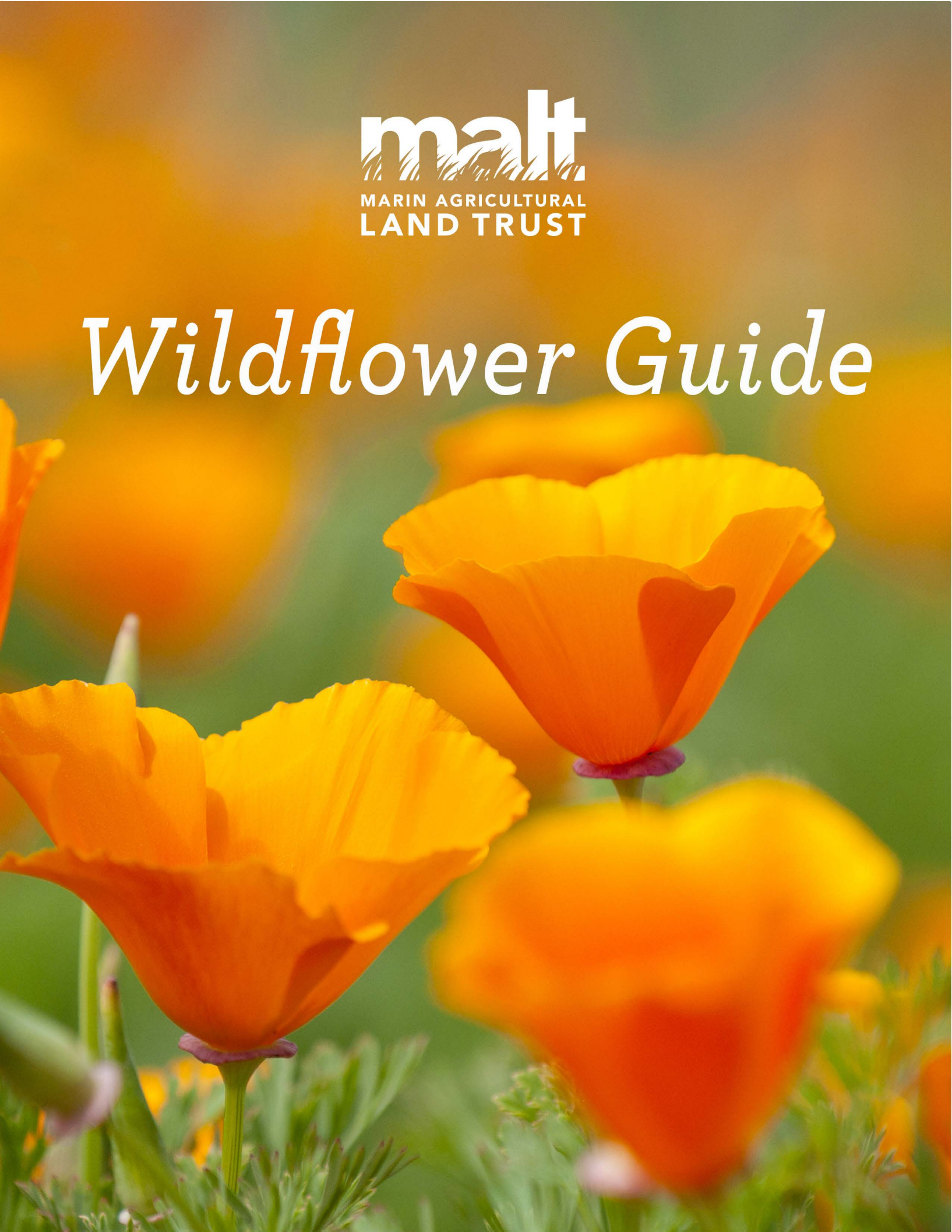




# *Wildflower Guide*



# *Explore* West Marin wildflowers with us!

Do you love wildflowers and the rolling hills of West Marin?  
Then this is the guide for you!

This user-friendly booklet will help you explore the amazing wildflowers of West Marin, from bright orange California poppies to delicate California goldfields.

When most people think of Marin Agricultural Land Trust (MALT) — or of West Marin — they imagine historic farms and ranches, beautiful barns, pastures dotted with cows or the amazing cheeses and meats produced in the region.

But, each time MALT protects a farm or ranch forever, we protect so much more — ancient redwood trees, habitat for coho salmon and red-tail hawks and an amazing array of wildflowers.

This guide will provide a glimpse of the many flowers to be found in West Marin.





# Wildflowers

# Wildflowers

# *Wildflowers*



We have all been dazzled by wildflowers — from riotous purple carpets of lupines on a green hillside, to the delicate paintbrush patterns found on a Douglas Iris at the side of a well-walked trail. Whether it is the color or the scent that speaks to your senses, wildflowers bring a certain joy.

Wildflowers signal changing seasons and embody the vibrant cycle of life on our planet. We know that every part of a healthy ecosystem is connected. Healthy wildflowers play a critical role supporting pollinators — the bees, butterflies and birds — which in turn contribute to agricultural production and the food we eat.

Here in Marin, just like elsewhere on Earth, particular sets of environmental factors—temperature, soil, latitude and elevation—determine which can thrive.

**For us at MALT, wildflowers are a beautiful reminder that it is our job to steward this land and to care for it as it cares for us.**

# Early Bloomers

Wildflowers help us mark changes in the seasons. And the most spectacular displays, especially in West Marin, are in the spring when early blooming flowers are abundant.



*I've loved wildflowers all my life because of my mother's love for them. I enjoy spring because of the flowers. I've even made a book documenting over 250 different wildflowers found on Leiss Ranch."*

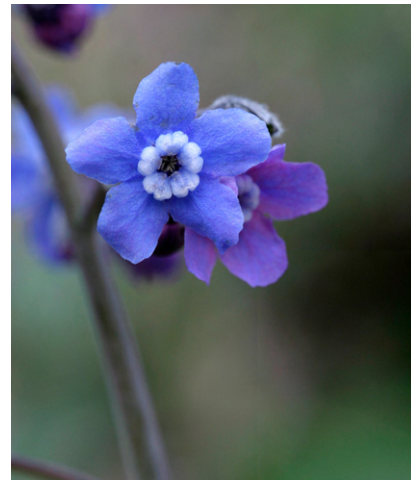
— Nancy Chaffin, Leiss Ranch, MALT protected since 2003



**California buttercup**  
*Ranunculus californicus*



**Footsteps of spring**  
*Sanicula arctopoides*



**Hound's tongue**  
*Cynoglossum grande*



**Milkmaids**  
*Cardamine californica*



**Red maids**  
*Calandrinia menziesii*



**Sun cup**  
*Taraxia ovata*



# Serpentine Soils

Wildflowers are connected to place. And one of the key components of place is the soil beneath our feet. In West Marin, the serpentine soil, rich in magnesium and surprisingly poor in nitrogen, that snakes through our hillsides provides a unique environment in which certain native wildflowers thrive.



*When I was a child, I played the 'do you like butter' game with buttercups held under our chins more times than I can count. Between their yellow color and purple wild irises, our fields are spectacular."*

— Vivian Straus, Straus Home Ranch, MALT protected since 1992



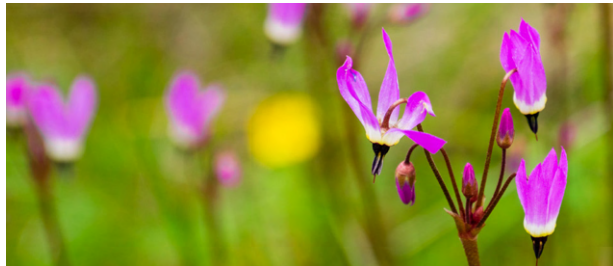
**California goldfields**

*Lasthenia californica*



**Butter 'n' eggs**

*Triphysaria eriantha*



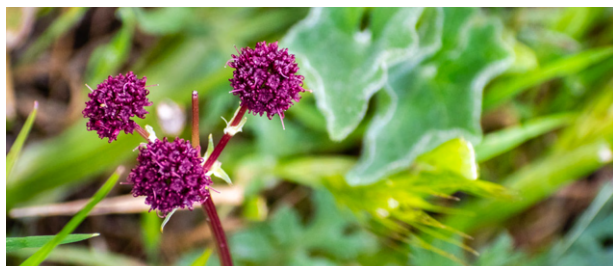
**Shooting star**

*Primula hendersonii*



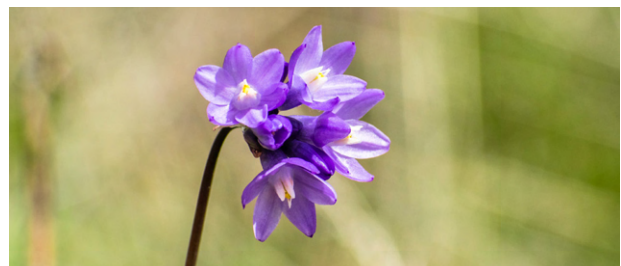
**Purple owl's clover**

*Castilleja exserta*



**Purple sanicle**

*Sanicula bipinnatifida*



**Blue dicks**

*Dipterostemon capitatus*

# Pollinators

“ I always look forward to the spring when the bumble bees appear on the fresh flowers. So fun! And then I go out to see how many kinds of bees and butterflies I can count.”

— Sally Gale, Chileno Valley Ranch,  
MALT protected since 2000

Wildflowers play an important role in healthy ecosystems, providing nectar to robust populations of bees, butterflies and hummingbirds. Farmers and ranchers know better than anyone that these pollinators are crucial to California’s agricultural food economy playing a key role in the production of food, fiber and edible oils.



**Tidy tips**  
*Layia chrysanthemoides*



**Pacific bleeding heart**  
*Dicentra formosa*



**California poppy**  
*Eschscholzia californica*



**Blue eyed grass**  
*Sisyrinchium bellum*



**Cream cups**  
*Platystemon californicus*



**Western yarrow**  
*Achillea millefolium*



# PROTECTING *Working lands*



**Bicolored lupine**

*Lupinus bicolor*



**Checker mallow**

*Sidalcea malviflora*



**Sticky monkey flower**

*Diplacus aurantiacus*



**Cream sacs**

*Castilleja rubicundula*



**Douglas iris**

*Iris douglasiana*



**Indian paintbrush**

*Castilleja affinis*

Wildflowers are an integral part of working landscapes, increasing diversity and promoting healthy soils. Healthy soils in turn enrich grasslands, improve farm and ranch productivity and curb climate change by sequestering carbon.

“

*By adding perennials, such as chicory, to our pastures we're able to decrease compaction, add air to the soil, store more water in the soil and, by default, increase carbon sequestration by having a living root photosynthesizing and growing year round!"*

— Loren Poncia, Stemple Creek Ranch, MALT protected since 1992

# Look, Don't Touch

## Viewing Wildflowers Responsibly

We encourage you to view wildflowers responsibly. You can do so by following a few simple guidelines.

1. Never pick wildflowers. Please leave them in place.
2. Do not illegally dig up wildflowers to transplant to your garden.
3. Do not enter private property to view wildflowers. This especially includes private ranches and farms.
4. Be aware of sensitive, overused areas and stay on trails and roads during hikes.



### Want to learn more about the wildflowers of Marin County?

Here are some great additional resources for you to learn more about flowers and plants in our region:

- [Marin Chapter of Native Plant Society of California](#)
- [CalFlora](#)
- [Point Reyes National Seashore](#)



# ABOUT MALT

Help protect the land that sustains us.

Across the country, we lose a staggering 175 acres of farmland every hour. But here in Marin, we're writing a different story.

The first farmland trust in the nation, MALT was founded in 1980 by a coalition of environmentalists and ranchers to protect the future of farming in Marin County from mounting pressures for development.

To date, MALT has protected approximately half of Marin farmland, forever. We invite you to join us in protecting Marin's farmland for farming.

[DONATE](#)

Join us online to learn more about wildflowers and the innumerable benefits of farmland protection!



Photo credits: Denise Rocco-Zilber, Autumn Fuentes, Paige Green, Vernon Smith

