The California Poppy
Eschscholzia californica
4 to 8 petals, deep orange to yellow to white and variegated:
6" to 18" high. Annuals, perennial and biennial

The California Poppy was named the State Flower in 1903. Prior to that time great fields of poppies were found throughout the State. Today, while poppies grow in many areas, the only large fields left are here in the western Antelope Valley.

La Sabanilla de San Pasqual (The Altar-cloth of St. Pascal) is the name Spanish sailors gave the glorious fields of poppies which blanketed the California shores in the late 1700’s. They were referring to the shepherd saint who tended his flock far from church and village and knelt in fields of wildflowers to commune with God. It seems to be no coincidence that the area in which the most spectacular fields of poppies grew came to be known as Rancho San Pasqual which is now known as Pasadena, Altadena and Sierra Madre. Spanish sailors described these fields as rivers of gold which flowed some 25 miles toward the ocean.

Other names for the California Poppy have been Copa de Oro (Cup of Gold), Amapola and Dormidera (meaning the “sleepy one,” because the flowers close up at night, when it is cloudy or when the cold wind blows). The botanical name Eschscholzia was given to the plant by poet-naturalist Adelbert Von Chamisso of the Russian scientific expedition which visited California in 1816. The name honored his lifelong friend and surgeon to the ship, Dr. Johann Eschscholtz.

Owl’s Clover
Camillea erecta
Papilionaceae Family. 4" to 8" stalks with maroon branches having white tips. If you look closely at the tips you might see two eyes and a beak.

Davy Gilia
Gilia davyi
Papilionaceae Family. 5 petal flowers; blue on outside, pink and white on inside with black throats; 8" to 14" tall; leaves basal notched.

Bigelow Coreopsis
Lapathosme bigelowi
Sunflower Family. Ray flowers (apparent petals) have nearly square tips and have 2 tones of yellow; grows 12" to 30" high.

Ophelia
Dichrocephalum capitatum
Several tiny 6 petal flowers grow on top of a one to two foot reedy stem. Grows from a bulb.

Fiddleneck
Antirrhinum californicum
Tiny yellow-orange flowers grow on the curved end of a hairy stalk, up to two feet tall. Considered by many to be an unwanted weed.

Cream Cups
Ptilotus spectabilis
Flower Family. Tiny yellow-orange flowers grow on long stems; many stamens; hairy stems. 4" to 12" high.

Slender Keel Fruit
Tropidospermum gracile
Tiny 4 petal, yellow flowers, barely 1/4" across. Common name comes from the slender, curved seed pod. Up to 6" in height.

Red Stem Filaree
Erodium cicutarium
A very common weed seen throughout the Antelope Valley. 5 petal flowers are pink or magenta; spreading plant is 2" to 10" in height with fernlike leaves.

Red Maids
Calandrinia menziesii
Ragged yellow flowers on long stems from a silver-green leaved bush from two to four feet high.

Goldfields
Lasthenia californica
Pea Family. Tiny, pale yellow flowers with violet tips, large yellow hollow seed pods; 12" to 24" tall.

Slender Keel Fruit
Tropidospermum gracile
Tiny 4 petal, yellow flowers, barely 1/4" across. Common name comes from the slender, curved seed pod. Up to 6" in height.

Acton Daisy
Acton eucalyptus
Pea Family. Tiny, pale yellow flowers with violet tips, large yellow hollow seed pods; 12" to 24" tall.

Hairy Lotus
Acmispon argyrantherus
Pea Family. Tiny yellow flowers barely 3/8" in diameter, turning red as they mature. Tends to form a mat on the ground, rarely over 3" high.

Douglas Locoweed Seedpods
Astragalus douglasii
Pea Family. Tiny, pale yellow flowers with violet tips, large yellow hollow seed pods; 12" to 24" tall.

Douglas Locoweed Bloom
Acmispon douglasii
A crown of tiny yellow flowers top a 4" to 18" stalk; green, lacy leaves cover the stalk.

Lacy Placelia
Placelia cryptantha
Waterleaf Family. Tiny blue or lavender flowers grow from curling pods at ends of the stalk; 8" to 32" in height; deeply notched fernlike leaves.

Pygmy-Leaved Lupine
Lupinus bicolor
Pea Family. Flower is up to 2" in height; plant grows low to the ground and may cover large acreage.

Antelope Valley. 5 petal flowers are pink or magenta; spreading plant is 2" to 3" in height.
Life in the Poppy Reserve

The Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve

Located in the Antelope Valley of southern California, the Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve (AV CPR) is a 2,000-acre state park dedicated to the protection and preservation of the native wildflowers that bloom in the spring. The reserve is known for its stunning displays of California poppies, along with other wildflowers such as lavender mist, goldfields, and desert gold. The park offers seven miles of trails, including the Rim Trail, which is wheelchair accessible. The reserve is also home to a variety of wildlife, including bobcats, coyotes, and several species of lizards and snakes. The Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve is a popular destination for nature lovers and outdoor enthusiasts.

California State Parks Mission Statement

The mission of California State Parks is to provide for the health, inspiration, and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.

Jane S. Pinheiro Interpretive Center

The Jane S. Pinheiro Interpretive Center, located in the Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve, offers educational programs and exhibits about the natural history of the area. Named for Jane Pinheiro, a longtime Antelope Valley resident who dreamed of a poppy park where the state flower could be preserved for future generations, the center is a valuable resource for visitors to learn about the flora and fauna of the reserve. The center also features a display of wildflower art created by local artists, showcasing the beauty of the natural world.

Maps

Location Map

Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve Trailhead Map