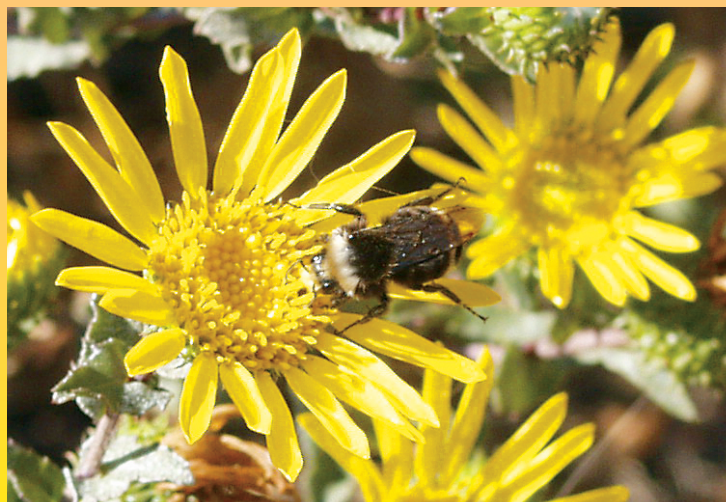




# **PLANT FINDER**

Native & Invasive  
Plant Identification  
**GUIDE**



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## NATIVE PLANTS

### **Poison Oak** (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*)

**Habitat:** Poison Oak grows in many habitats and can be found in almost all areas of Mt. Sutro. It grows out of rock outcrops, on the ground, or as a vine climbing up other plants. Bees enjoy the nectar from the flowers and birds eat the fruit produced from this plant.

**Flowers:** The flowers are small, white and have five petals.

**Leaves:** The leaves are deeply to shallowly lobed and in sets of three. In full sun and dry conditions the leaves take on a red color. When this plant is in more shade, the leaves are deep green. The leaves usually appear shiny or often have dust stuck to the oily surface.

**Other:** This plant can cause a severe rash when the oil the plant produces makes contact with skin. All parts of the plant, including the roots and bare winter stems contain the oil, so it is important to wash with soap and cold water as soon as possible whenever working in an area where contact with Poison Oak is possible.



Late season colors



New, young growth



Flowering

## BLACKBERRY

### Native California Blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*)

**Habitat:** Shrubs will grow low in coastal strand, chaparral, mixed evergreen forests, and many other plant communities and provide berries that feed wildlife.



**Flowers and Fruit:** White with narrower petals than most related species. The sweet, very aromatic, edible fruits are dark purple, dark red, or black.

**Leaves:** Green underside. Leaves usually have 3 leaflets but sometimes 5 or only 1.



**Stems:** Round with numerous very fine thorns.

**Other:** Needs consistent amounts of moisture to set large fruit.

### Invasive Himalayan Blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus*)

**Habitat:** Widespread, aggressive, 10'-15' high when receiving water.



**Flowers and Fruit:** White to pinkish flower with 5 petals larger than on the native blackberry. Fruit is edible.

**Leaves:** Larger and sometimes darker green or purple, with white underside.

**Stem:** Much larger than native blackberry, with distinct edges appearing square, fewer thorns that are larger and curved like a cat claw.



**Other:** Largely replaced the native blackberry. Berries can be used for dye and roots boiled for tea.



## Bee Plant (*Scrophularia californica*)

**Habitat:** This perennial plant grows in part shade to full sun and is found on almost every habitat on Mt. Sutro.

**Flowers:** Flowers are tiny, about 0.5 inch long and .25 inch wide and deep red to brown in color.

**Leaves:** The leaves are opposite and dark green and can take on tones of red as the plant ages. The margins of the leaves are serrate and the shape of the leaves is triangular.

**Other:** Annual. Flying insects seeking nectar love this species. Single stocks can grow up to 5 feet but most grow about 2-3 feet.



## California Pipe Vine (*Aristolochia californica*)

**Habitat:** It is a vine and can be found climbing up trees and shrubs. It is found in shady moist areas.

**Flowers:** Most petals of this flower are fused making a hollow tube that resembles the end of a pipe. The non-fused tips of the petals are deep red to brown in color and the fused portion is white to cream with red veins.

**Leaves:** The leaves are green, heart-shaped and fuzzy.

**Other:** This plant is rare and a host plant for the Black Swallowtail butterfly. This plant contains toxins.



## California Rose (*Rosa gymnocarpa*) Wood Rose (*Rosa californica*)

**Habitat:** The California Rose is planted and grows only in Rotary Meadow, while the Wood Rose grows wild on Mt. Sutro along the Historic and North Ridge Trails.

**Flowers:** The fragrant flowers range from pink to almost white to deep magenta attracting bees and butterflies.

**Leaves:** Green but can get red in full sun and have serrate margins.

**Other:** The rose hips that contain yellow seeds provide food for wildlife during the winter when little forage is available.



## Cow Parsnip (*Heracleum maximum*)

**Habitat:** This species most often grow in part shade and can handle harsh conditions such as high winds. It is often found on the coast and is very popular with butterflies.

**Flowers:** The white flowers grow in clumps on tall, hollow stalks.

**Leaves:** The leaves are light green, large, palmate and covered in hairs.

**Other:** This plant is perennial and contains low levels of phototoxins that can cause severe sunburns when contact is made with skin. Because the levels are so low there is usually no reaction but it is good to be aware.



## Douglas Iris (*Iris douglasiana*)

**Habitat:** Perennial that grows in coastal prairies ranging from Santa Barbara to Oregon. On Mt. Sutro it can be found on steep slopes that get a fair amount of moisture.

**Flowers:** Single, purple and yellow to white flower on each stalk attracting hummingbirds and potential pollinators, such as butterflies or long-tongued, nectar collecting bees.

**Leaves:** Long, flat, and pointed at the tip resembling large blades of grass.

**Other:** New leaves sprout from a thick underground stem called a rhizome, and can be salvaged and replanted.



## Elderberry (*Sambucus racemosa*)

**Habitat:** Widespread in temperate climates. The Red Elderberry is a dominant shrub on Mt. Sutro. It bears red berries that feed a diversity of birds.

**Flowers:** Small white or cream-colored flowers that bloom in dome-shaped clusters.

**Leaves:** The opposite leaves are compound with 3-9 leaflets that are bright green at maturity. Each leaflet has an oblong shape and serrate margins.

**Other:** As it dies back the center of the wood becomes spongy and soft. This plant and fruit is toxic and contains cyanide.





## FERNS

### Bracken Fern (*Pteridium aquilinum*)

**Habitat:** Native to Mt. Sutro and can be found in the understory, typically in partially to mostly shaded habitats. Ferns provide cover for wildlife and sword fern serves as a host for some butterfly species.



**Flowers:** Ferns do not have flowers and reproduce by underground rhizomes and spores, which travel by wind.



**Leaves:** Bracken fern sends up a tall stem and can grow up to 4 feet tall and 6 feet wide; leaves are triangular fronds with three leaflets growing from the main stem and are brighter green. SALVAGE FOR RE-USE.

### Leather Fern (*Polypodium scoleri*)

**Habitat:** Native to Mt. Sutro and can be found in the understory, typically in partially to mostly shaded habitats. Leather fern is a special fern that can be found growing from trees in crooks where moisture collects. Ferns provide cover for wildlife.



**Flowers:** See Bracken Fern.

**Leaves:** Leather fern, like its name, has leathery fronds that are stiff, glossy, and dark green. They grow triangular to oblong in shape and up to about 2 feet long and 10 inches wide; leaves edged with shallow, rounded teeth.



**DO NOT SALVAGE.**

## FERNS

### Western Sword Fern (*Polystichum munitum*)

**Habitat:** Native to Mt. Sutro and can be found in the understory, typically in partially to mostly shaded habitats.

**Flowers:** See Bracken Fern.

**Leaves:** The Sword Fern has dark green fronds that grow in a tight clump, spreading out radially from a round base; leaflet edges are serrate.

SALVAGE FOR RE-USE.



### Wood Fern (*Dryopteris arguta*)

**Habitat:** Native to Mt. Sutro and can be found in the understory, typically in partially to mostly shaded habitats.

**Flowers:** See Bracken Fern.

**Leaves:** Wood fern grows 1 to 2 feet tall, the main stem growing from the ground is shaped like a narrow triangle, and toothed leaflets grow from main stem and may have bristles at their tips; fronds are brighter green with shaggy reddish hair growing along the lowest parts of the stems.

SALVAGE FOR RE-USE.





## Elk Clover (*Aralia californica*)

**Habitat:** Likes a fair amount of shade and moisture. For example, it grows along the lower portion of the Historic Trail.

**Flowers:** The flowers of this species are white, tiny and grow in an umbel. The petals are small which allows the stamens and pistil to extend beyond the rest of the flower.

**Leaves:** The leaves are compound and each leaflet can grow up to 6-7 inches. The margins of the leaflets are serrated.

**Other:** Deciduous, mature stems are brown-red in color. Dies back to the root every winter.



## Fringecup (*Tellima grandiflora*)

**Habitat:** This species can be found in shady habitats on Mt. Sutro and grows well along trails and on steep slopes. The cup-like flower structure houses nectar which makes it popular with pollinators.

**Flowers:** The flowers grow on one side of a tall narrow leafless stalk. When mature, the flowers have delicate looking pink to white or green petals.

**Leaves:** The leaves are basal, and dark green with darker green venation. If dry or exposed to too much sun the leaves can take on a reddish brown color. Each leaf is shallowly lobed.

**Other:** Perennial herb.



## Hawk Weed (White) (*Hieracium albiflorum*)

**Habitat:** Widespread on Mount Sutro, common understory plant, grows on slopes in shade to part-sun.

**Flowers:** White flowers, similar to dandelion. It can have several flowers on multiple stalks. The singular flowers are actually many small flowers packed into a head.

**Leaves:** Distinct basal rosette of dark green hairy leaves.

**Other:** Can often be mistaken for related species like dandelion or sow thistle.



## Honeysuckle (*Lonicera hispidula* var. *vacillans*)

**Habitat:** Honeysuckle grows best in part shade. It is a type of vine so it is often found climbing over shrubs and up trees. The flowers are full of nectar, which makes it popular with hummingbirds.

**Flowers:** These flowers are light pink and have slender petals that roll back on themselves.

**Leaves:** The opposite leaves are small, oval-shaped, and hairy. They are dark green in color but can become partially red to brown under stress.



## Mugwort (*Artemisia douglasiana*)

**Habitat:** It grows in many plant communities such as chaparral, valley grassland, and wetland-riparian. Mugwort provides cover and seeds for birds.

**Flowers:** The flowers are small yellow, and grow directly on the stem. Since they flower late in the season, they are an important food source for local wildlife.

**Leaves:** Its leaves are green on top and silvery on the bottom and have a strong fragrance.



## Osoberry (*Oemleria cerasiformis*)

**Habitat:** Osoberry is found in canyons and riparian areas and likes partial shade. The fragrant flowers attract many different kinds of pollinators.

**Flowers:** White flowers, each about 0.5 to 0.75 inches long. The arrangement of flowers droops towards the ground.

**Leaves:** The alternate leaves are dark to gray-green with lighter colored venation. They have a leathery texture and smooth margins.

**Other:** This shrub can grow from 3-20 feet tall and the leaves are deciduous. The fruit resembles a plum.





## Pink Flowering Currant (*Ribes sanguineum*)

**Habitat:** This shrub grows in many forest communities and likes lots of sun.

**Flowers and Fruit:** Small flowers are red to pink and have five petals. The pink flowering currant provides nectar for hummingbirds and butterflies, forage for the larvae many species of moths and butterflies, and nesting sites or cover for songbirds and small mammals.

**Leaves:** The leaves are light green, shallowly lobed and have a strong smell when the oils are released.



## Slim Solomon (*Maianthemum racemosa*)

**Habitat:** Slim Solomon grows in the shady understory of wooded areas. The fruit and nectar provides food for animals and insects.

**Flowers and Fruits:** These small white star-shaped flowers have six petals and grow out of the top of this plant. The fruit on this species is white to green with red-purple stripes.

**Leaves:** The dark green leaves grow out of a single stock. They are shaped like a narrow egg and come to a point at the tip.



## Snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*)

**Habitat:** The shrub grows in shady and moist mountain and forest habitat, in woodlands and on floodplains and riverbanks. It is an important food and cover source for many birds and small mammals. Pocket gophers dig burrows underneath it during the winter.

**Flowers and Fruits:** Its flowers are tiny, bright pink and are filled with white hairs. The flowers are a great nectar source for butterflies and native insects. The fruit of this species is a large white berry.

**Leaves:** The leaves are small, round and gray-green.



## Sweet Cicely (*Osmorhiza occidentalis*)

**Habitat:** Sweet Cicely is found in shady habitats. On Mt. Sutro it can be found along the Historic Trail.

**Flowers:** This species has small yellow flowers arranged in round clusters.

**Leaves:** The leaves are dark green, compound, and each leaflet has serrate margins.

**Other:** The seeds from this flower taste like anise.





## Thimbleberry (*Rubus parviflorus*)

**Habitat:** Found in forest understories and forest clearings with typical flora associates including coastal woodfern.

**Flowers:** Flowers are .79 to 2.36 inches in diameter, with five white petals and numerous pale yellow stamens. Flower of this species is among the largest of any *Rubus* species

**Leaves:** Leaves are palmate, with five lobes that are soft and fuzzy in texture.

**Other:** Dense shrub up to 8 ft. tall with canes; often growing in large clumps.



## Twinberry (*Lonicera involucrata*)

**Habitat:** Generally found in moist forest openings.

**Flowers:** Produced in pair and are yellow, tubular, hairy.

**Leaves:** Leaves are bright green, elliptical, and paired opposite each other on the stem.

**Other:** Deciduous shrub that grows up to 12 ft tall, with shoots with a quadrangular cross-section.



## THISTLES

### Indian Thistle (*Cirsium brevistylum*)

**Habitat:** Found on Mt. Sutro in Woodland Canyon and Fairy Gates Trail. Grows in moist areas in many types of habitat.

**Flowers:** White to pink flowers with several flower heads with cobwebby, bristly spines.

**Leaves:** Leaves are deeply cut into many lobes lined with twisted teeth.

**Other:** Annual or biennial and can reach 10 ft. tall, usually a single stem sometimes branching toward the top.



### Brownie Thistle (*Cirsium quercetorum*)

**Habitat:** Grows clumped low to the ground, less than 8" tall; occasionally grows up to 36".

**Flowers:** Spiny flower heads with brownish ivory-tan white to purple disc florets but no ray florets.

**Leaves:** Spiny lobed toothy leaves.

**Other:** Very difficult to distinguish from the Indian thistle and can be easily confused with the invasive Italian thistle.



## Woodland Sanicle (*Sanicula crassicaulis*)

**Habitat:** This species can be found in many communities such as pine forests, valley grasslands, and chaparral. Small insects enjoy nectar from these tiny flowers.

**Flowers:** Very small yellow flowers are arranged in many small round clumps.

**Leaves:** The leaves are basal, deeply lobed and have jagged edges. The surface of this dark green leaf is glossy.



## INVASIVE PLANTS

### **French Broom** (*Genista monspessulana*)

**Habitat:** Native to Mediterranean region and found in coastal ranges and around Mt. Sutro.

**Flowers:** The flowers are yellow, grouped 3-9 together in short racemes.

**Leaves:** The leaves are evergreen, trifoliate with three narrow obovate leaflets.

**Other:** A woody perennial shrub and a legume and often outcompetes native vegetation. To remove small broom, pull up complete with roots; large broom, cut plant 10" above ground and completely remove bark from remaining stem.



### **Scotch Broom** (*Cytisus scoparius*)

**Habitat:** Found in sunny sites, usually on dry, sandy soils at low altitudes; common on rocky slopes. Grows like a shrub.

**Flowers:** Golden small, yellow, pea-like flowers.

**Leaves:** Dark green and covered in tiny hairs. At first glance the shape of the leaf looks similar to a lupine.

**Other:** Care should be taken to avoid disturbing the ground or the seeding plants during its seed cycle. Preferred times are late fall, through winter, to mid spring.



## Cape Ivy

**Habitat:** Grows in coastal areas and thrives in shade. On Mt. Sutro it covers most of the Interior Green Belt.

**Flowers:** Small, yellow, grows in small clusters.

**Leaves:** Light to bright green and glossy on top. Mature leaves are shallowly lobed and have five points.

**Other:** This looks similar to the native plant Manroot. The difference is that Manroot has star shaped white flowers and delicate leaves. It is important to remove all parts of the plant when clearing an area.



## English Ivy

**Habitat:** Grows everywhere on Mt. Sutro but thrives in shade.

**Flowers:** Small, white flowers; grows in small clusters. Blooms and fruits only when climbing upright.

**Leaves:** Dark green, shallowly lobed or not lobed, glossy surface. Can have white to dark green venation.

**Other:** This plant grows vegetatively so it is important to remove all parts of the plant when clearing an area.





## Ehrharta (*Ehrharta calycina*)

**Habitat:** Perennial grass found on Mount Sutro and thrives in shade. Invades oak woodland, coastal sage scrub with deep roots allowing it survive during dry periods.

**Flowers:** Looks like small seeds that grow on stalks. It is a grass so there are no showy or colored petals.

**Leaves:** Narrow, linear blades that are light green to reddish purple.

**Other:** Its seeds spread and grow easily! When removing it is important to separate the plants with seeds from other green waste so that it does not have the chance to grow back in conserved habitats.



## Forget-me-not (*Myosotis scorpioides*)

**Habitat:** Grows in mats with a widespread root system. Found on Mt. Sutro especially in shaded areas. Birds like these seeds which is why they are spread all over Mount Sutro.

**Flowers:** Light purple to blue with yellow, cream colored center and five petals.

**Leaves:** Round, dark green, and a glossy surface. Grows in alternate pattern along the stem and are lance-shaped.

**Other:** Both the leaves and stem are covered in fine hair. Its seeds spread and grow easily! Separate the plants with seeds from other green waste so that it does not have the chance to grow back.



## GERANIUMS

### Herb-Robert, Storksbill, Stinky Bob (*Geranium robertianum*)

**Habitat:** Widespread and common along trails; prefers shady and moist environments.

**Flowers:** Small, pink, five petalled flower 8-14 mm in diameter.

**Leaves:** The leaves are green to reddish, and are deeply dissected, ternate to palmate and the stems are often reddish.

**Other:** The foliage has a fragrance some people find unpleasant.



### Canary Island or Giant Geranium (*Geranium canariense*)

**Habitat:** Grows along shady and moist trails on Mt. Sutro. Prefers shade to part-sun.

**Flowers:** Has a showy pink, five-petalled flower.

**Leaves:** Leaves are deeply dissected, ternate to palmate larger than *Geranium robertianum*.

**Stem:** Sometimes appear purplish.

**Other:** This plant is very similar to Herb-Robert but is much larger and tends to grow in clumps.



## THISTLES

### Italian Thistles (*Carduus pycnocephalus*)

**Habitat:** Grows in rosettes and found in disturbed areas, often in soils with relatively high pH around Mount Sutro. Grows in full sun.

**Flowers and fruit:** Flower heads are pink to purple and grow in clusters on a single stalk. Fruits are brown to gold, and have bristly barbed pappus.

**Leaves:** Silvery vegetation that is covered in small thorns.

**Other:** Multiple stems are winged with spines. Wear thick gloves when removing this species.



### Sow Thistle (*Sonchus oleraceus*)

**Habitat:** Prefers full sun but can grow in shade all over Mt. Sutro. Tolerates most soil conditions

**Flowers:** Yellow with many petals. Common pollinators include bees and flies.

**Leaves:** Basal with thorns.

**Other:** Member of the dandelion family, looks similar to the native dandelion. The native plant has very narrow leaves. It spreads by seeds being carried by wind or water.



## White Nightshade (*Solanum douglasii*)

**Habitat:** Grows in part to full shade everywhere on Mt. Sutro except for the summit.

**Flowers:** Small, white, star shaped flowers with yellow centers.

**Leaves:** Leaves alternate and are dark green and triangular. Looks similar to Bee Plant but lighter green.

**Other:** Easy to confuse with Bee plant. Differences are that the mature stems of Bee Plant have edges and grows in a single stalk. Nightshade usually grows like a small shrub and has round stems.





# Natives Continued

(Updated Oct.2023)

## **Common Yarrow** (*Achillea millefolium*)

**Habitat:** This plant is native to California and is an important medicinal plant. It is durable and can grow in a wide range of soil types.

**Flowers:** Clusters of small white flowers form at the top of the stem, attracting insects such as bees and butterflies.

**Leaves:** Fern-like, feathery fronds. Soft to the touch with a pleasant mint-like scent when rubbed.



## **Sagebrush** (*Artemisia californica*)

**Habitat:** Grows in coastal sage scrub, coastal strand, chaparral, and dry foothill communities, from sea level to 1000 meters (3300 feet). It is native to California and Baja California. Extremely drought tolerant

**Flowers:** The flowers of this plant are leafy, and sparse. They can range from yellow to red.

**Leaves:** The leaves of the coastal sage brush are divided into thread-like strands, whose margins fold under themselves. They are hairy and grayish green.





## Nootka Reed Grass (*Calamagrostis nutkaensis*)

**Habitat:** Native to western North America from Alaska to San Luis Obispo County, it is mainly a coastal species growing in moist areas such as beaches, dunes, coastal woodlands and wetlands.

**Flowers:** Narrow and thin flower clusters form at the top of the plant.

**Leaves:** Long, flat leaves shooting from the base of the plant. Greyish-green and brown when dry.



## Western bleeding heart (*Dicentra formosa*)

**Habitat:** Generally found in moist wooded areas. Prefers shade in warmer climates, and more sun in cooler climates.

**Flowers:** Dawns four petaled flowers when blooming, with the outer two forming a pouch in the shape of a heart. Colors range from red to pink to nearly white.

**Leaves:** Leaves a serrated and fern-like, thin and deep green.



## Woodland Strawberry (*Fragaria vesca*)

**Habitat:** Found in the shady wooded areas of the state, as well as along the coast.

**Flowers:** Small, five petaled white flowers that have yellow centers.

**Leaves:** The leaves of the woodland strawberry are oblong and serrated. Notably, they are more tender and thin than Beach strawberry leaves.



## Beach strawberry (*Fragaria chiloensis*)

**Habitat:** Found along the coast growing in large sprawling mats. Prefers drier sandy soil.

**Flowers:** The flowers of the beach strawberry are similar to that of the woodland variety, with five white petals surrounding a yellow center.

**Leaves:** The coast strawberry can be distinguished by tough, leathery leaves. Less sharply serrated and rounder than those of the Woodland strawberry.



## Pacific pea

(*Lathyrus vestitus*)

**Habitat:** Found along the western parts of California in wooded areas, and forests.

**Flowers:** Bright violet to light purple pea flowers that bloom in dense clusters.

**Leaves:** Round leaves that grow alternately along long thin stems. They put out coiling tendrils that will bind to nearby substrate supporting the plant as it grows.



## Manroot (*Marah fabacea*)

**Habitat:** Found in many different soil types, but thrives along streams and in seasonally wet soil. Can tolerate dryer chaparral environments as well.

**Flowers:** Vines bloom with white greenish flowers. Male flowers grow in clusters while the females sprout individually. The fruit can cause vomiting and diarrhea. Can be used to stun fish to make them easy to catch.

**Leaves:** Its leaves typically have five lobes with individual plants showing wide variation in leaf size and lobe length.





## Goldback fern (*Pentagramma triangularis*)

**Habitat:** Prefers shaded areas and can be found growing in rocky crevices and along north facing slopes.

**Flowers:** Ferns do not have flowers and reproduce by underground rhizomes and spores, which travel by wind.

**Leaves:** Deep green with a light yellow protective coating on the underside. In dry conditions, the leaves curl up with the spore bearing side outward.



## Fairy bells (*Prosartes hookeri*)

**Habitat:** Grows in the shady understory of woodlands and forests

**Flowers:** Forming at the tips of branches produce one to three drooping, hanging flowers which may be hidden in the cover of the large leaves. The flower is bell-shaped with thin wispy petals and stamens. Produces fruit that is an orange to bright red colored berry.

**Leaves:** Wide, oval-shaped, pointed leaves up to 15 centimeters long and hairless to hairy, often with hairs along the edges and on the veins underneath.





## Red elderberry (*Sambucus racemosa*)

**Habitat:** Grows generally in moist areas such as riparian zones, and woodlands. It is an important medicinal plant.

**Flowers:** White and clustered at the ends of branches, they are numerous. They are also commonly visited by pollinators.

**Leaves:** Each individual leaf is composed of five to seven leaflets, ranging from lance-shaped to narrowly oval, and irregularly serrated along the edges. The leaflets have a potent odor when crushed.

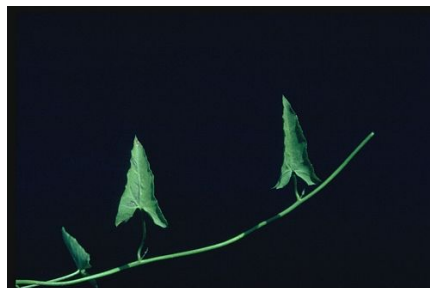


## Pacific bindweed (*Calystegia purpurata*)

**Habitat:** It grows in the seaside scrub of the coastline and the chaparral of the coastal and inland valleys.

**Flowers:** The flower is a morning glory, in color white, pink, purple, or white or cream with purple stripes.

**Leaves:** Arrow shaped triangular leaves grow along a coiling stem. It grows up along branches and stems of neighboring plants.



## Invasives Cont.

### **Nasturtium** (*Tropaeolum majus*)

**Habitat:** Originating from the Andes from Bolivia to Colombia, this plant has been introduced into North America.

**Flowers:** Flowers are a deep fluorescent orange but can range in brilliance and hue.

**Leaves:** Leaves of this plant are disk shaped and grow along a trailing vine-like stem. They are edible along with the flowers and stems and have a strong peppery taste.



### **Fumaria** (*Fumaria officinalis*)

**Habitat:** It is native to the temperate regions of North Africa, Europe, and parts of western Asia.

**Flowers:** The flowers resemble cigars, hence the name fumaria, and are tubular. They grow in rows at the top of the stem and range from light purple to pinkish in hue.

**Leaves:** The leaves are small, slender, and green

