

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANTS

Soon after a nice rain in the Spring, venture out in the Menifee Valley and look for these native plants.



Chia *Salvia hispanica*
The chia is a coveted plant of the Luisenos. They used chia seeds for endurance purposes. One teaspoon of the high protein chia was sufficient to sustain an individual for twenty-four hours.



Monkey Flower
Mimulus diplacus
The stems and leaves of monkey flowers are edible. They can often be found growing in almost solid rock with very little moisture. They are very drought tolerant.



Wild Cucumber
Marah fabaceus
The fruit is pod-like and is covered with spines. Each pod holds four black seeds which were pulverized and used as a paint pigment for petroglyphs.



Fiddleneck
Amsinckia
The stems bear many small flowers which curl over at the top in a manner reminiscent of a fiddle. This plant is known to be toxic to horses and cattle.



Black Sage
Salvia mellifera
Black Sage is a small, highly aromatic, evergreen shrub. This photo shows Snakehead Rock in the background and black sage plants growing in the foreground.



Wild Buckwheat
Arctostaphylos glauca
These berries, called "little apples" can be harvested when they ripen to make a refreshing drink. Coyotes relished the drink as much as the Luisenos.



Miners Lettuce
Claytonia perfoliata
Miner's lettuce refers to its use by California gold rush miners who ate it to get their vitamin C and to prevent scurvy. It can be eaten as a leaf vegetable. Most commonly it is eaten raw in salads.



California Poppy.
Eschscholzia Californica
California poppy leaves were used for both food and medicine. The leaves could be boiled or steamed and used to treat toothaches, sores and as a sedative for babies. It became the state flower in 1903.



Manzanita
Arctostaphylos glauca
These berries, called "little apples" can be harvested when they ripen to make a refreshing drink. Coyotes relished the drink as much as the Luisenos.



Indian Paintbrush
Castilleja
Also known as Prairie-fire, Painted Cup or Painted Lady, these flowers are edible and were eaten by the Luisenos with other fresh greens.