

UC SANTA CRUZ CAMPUS NATURAL RESERVE

MONTEREY MARIPOSA



Tiernan Boyd

Scientific Name: *Calochortus uniflorus*

Common Name(s): Monterey Mariposa,
jLarge-flowered Star-tulip

Global Rarity: Apparently Secure

State listing: Apparently Secure; CNPS 4.2=
Limited Distribution

UCSC Rarity: Rare



General Description

The Monterey Mariposa, also known as the large-flowered star-tulip, is a perennial flowering plant native to western California and southern Oregon. They prefer moist meadows and coastal prairie. Monterey Mariposas have three petals and three smaller sepals that range from white to pink and light purple in coloration. The petals and sepals form a cup or bell shaped flower, each plant having 1-5 flowers. Each flower also has six anthers that can be white, violet, or light blue in color and a violet-colored stigma in the center. Their stems are up to 5 cm tall and they have leaves up to 40 cm long near the base though shorter higher up the stem.



Identification

Flowers: white to pink/light purple; cup or bell-like in shape with three petals 3 cm long and 3 smaller sepals; anthers white, violet, or light blue; stigma violet/blue

Leaves: grass-like, somewhat fleshy, ~10-40 cm long, sometimes with a purplish tinge along margins

Geographic Range

The Monterey Mariposa occurs in moist meadows along the coast and in low-elevation mountains from southern Oregon to western California down to San Luis Obispo County.





UCSC Distribution

The Monterey Mariposa is found in some of the Upper Campus coastal prairie grasslands, where it can be seasonably common in some areas.

Life History

The Monterey mariposa is part of the Lily family (Liliaceae). A perennial plant, its flowering season is throughout the springtime, from approximately March through May or early June. The plants can get to be a height of approximately 5 cm when mature and blooms 1-5 flowers white to pink/purple flowers which make it easily identifiable. The leaves can persist after flowers fade, but the plant dies back to its underground corm during the dry season until resprouting the next spring.

Threats

Statewide

1. Habitat loss, degradation, and fragmentation from development, agriculture and grazing
2. Competition with non-native and invasive plants
3. Significant drought or dry conditions due to climate change

UCSC campus

1. Reduction of coastal prairie habitat through succession
2. Off trail travel/trampling
3. Future development projects

Conservation Status

Apparently Secure in California; Limited Distribution

The California Native Plant Society 4.2 (Limited Distribution) ranking places this species on a Watch List. Though this plant isn't rare on a state-wide level at this point, they warrant close monitoring.

Ways you can help

In your community:

1. Buy and plant responsibly sourced California native plants at your home.
2. Support the California Native Plant Society and volunteer with habitat restoration projects.
3. Don't hike or bike off-trail in fragile coastal prairie ecosystems.
4. Raise awareness of rare native plants by talking about them with your family and friends!

References and Photo Credits

Calflora. n.d. *Calochortus uniflorus*. Retrieved from https://www.calflora.org/cgi-bin/species_query.cgi?where-calrecnum=1312 on 25 May 2021.

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Plants profile for *CALOCHORTUS Uniflorus* (Monterey mariposa lily). (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://plants.usda.gov/core/profile?symbol=CAUN> on 25 May 2021.

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