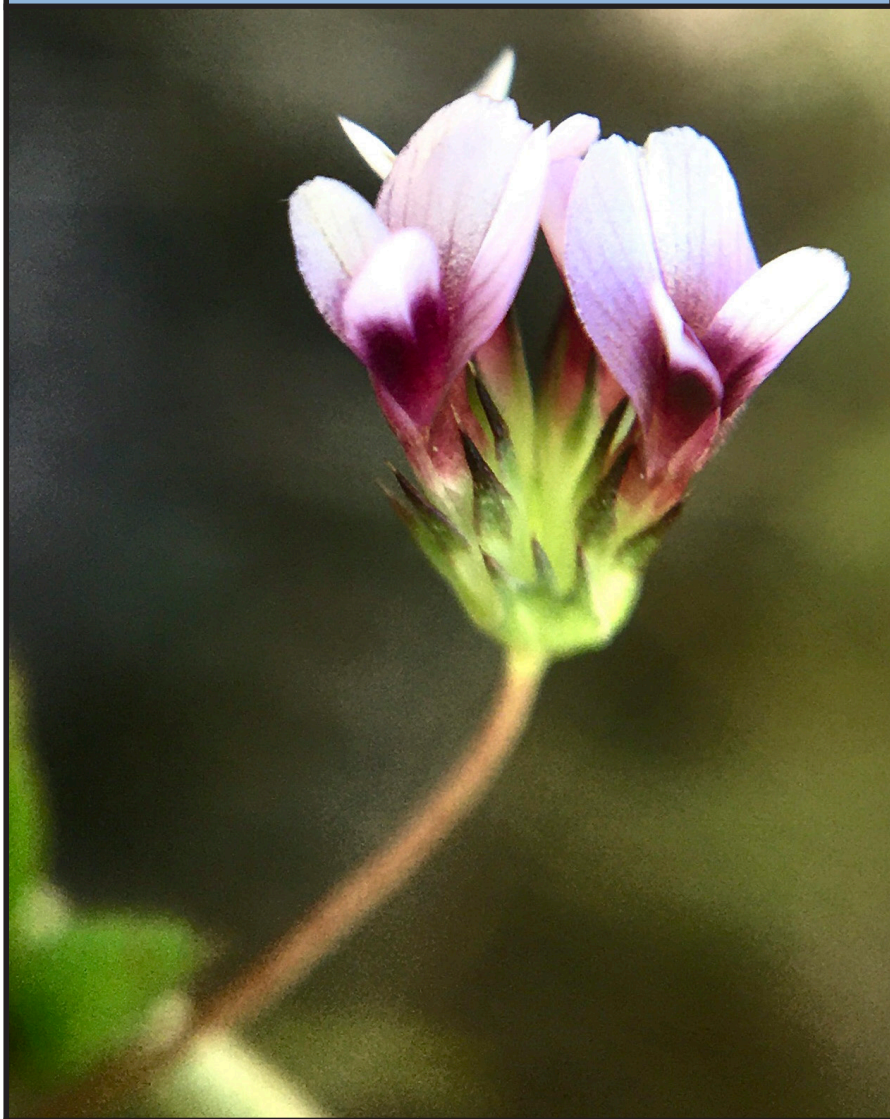


**UC SANTA CRUZ CAMPUS NATURAL RESERVE**

# **PACIFIC GROVE CLOVER**



**Brandon Sanchez**

**Scientific Name:** *Trifolium polyodon*  
**Common Name:** Pacific Grove Clover  
**Global Rarity:** Critically Imperiled  
**State listing:** Critically Imperiled;  
CNPS 1B.1  
**UCSC Rarity:** Very rare



## General Description

The Pacific Grove Clover is an herbaceous plant that is native and endemic to California. This low-growing annual can be found sprawling among coastal prairie wildflowers and grasses, with its 0.5-2.5 cm wide head of one-to-many pea-like flowers held atop ascending stems. It has well-developed stipules growing up to 1 cm long from the nodes where their compound leaves branch off of the thin stem.



## Identification

**Flower Color:** Pink/lavender with pale tip

**Flower Shape:** Bilateral “pea”-like

**Bloom Period:** April-June

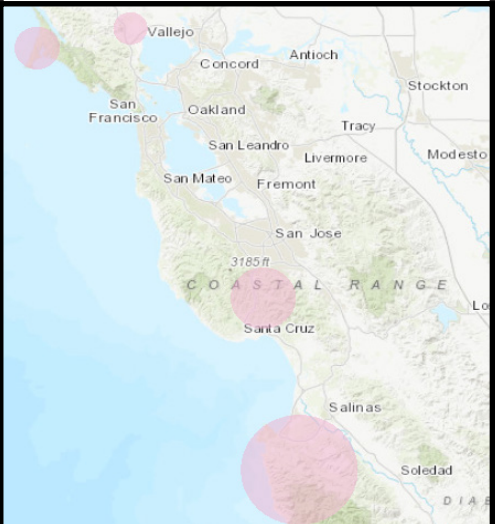
**Leaf Shape:** Stem leaves widely ovate with deeply incised upper leaves; leaflets 5-20 cm long with rounded tips; 1 cm long stipules

**Leaf Arrangement:** Alternate

**Habit:** Low, spreading to ascending

## Geographic Range

The Pacific Grove clover is endemic to Sonoma, Marin, Santa Cruz, and Monterey counties in California.





## UCSC Distribution

Pacific Grove Clover has been identified at a single location in UCSC Upper Campus coastal prairie.

## Life History

The Pacific Grove Clover is typically found in coastal prairie, wet meadows, closed cone pine forest, and riparian areas where it blooms annually between April and June. This habitat often has shallow soils underlain by claypans which make the soils subject to saturation in rainy seasons and desiccation during the summer. As an annual plant, it completes its entire life cycle in one year.



## Research Highlights and Fun Facts

- Some botanists believe the Pacific Grove Clover is a hybrid, others place it within *Trifolium variegatum*, while others consider it a distinct species.
- Known to grow at various elevations from 5 meters to 425 meters.
- Very little research has been conducted on this species other than taxonomic work.



## Conservation Status

**Critically Imperiled;  
California Native Plant  
Society Rank 1B.1=Rare,  
Threatened, or Endangered in  
CA or Elsewhere**

Pacific Grove Clover is considered seriously threatened in over 80% of its occurrences.

## Threats

### Statewide

1. Habitat destruction from urbanization
2. Recreation impacts
3. Trampling from people exploring off-trail
4. Competition from non-native plant species
5. Grazing
6. Road maintenance

### UCSC campus

1. Competition from non-native plants
2. Disturbances from recreation

### Ways you can help

1. Stay on paths when walking or riding bikes near UCSC Upper Campus meadows



## References and Photo Credits

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