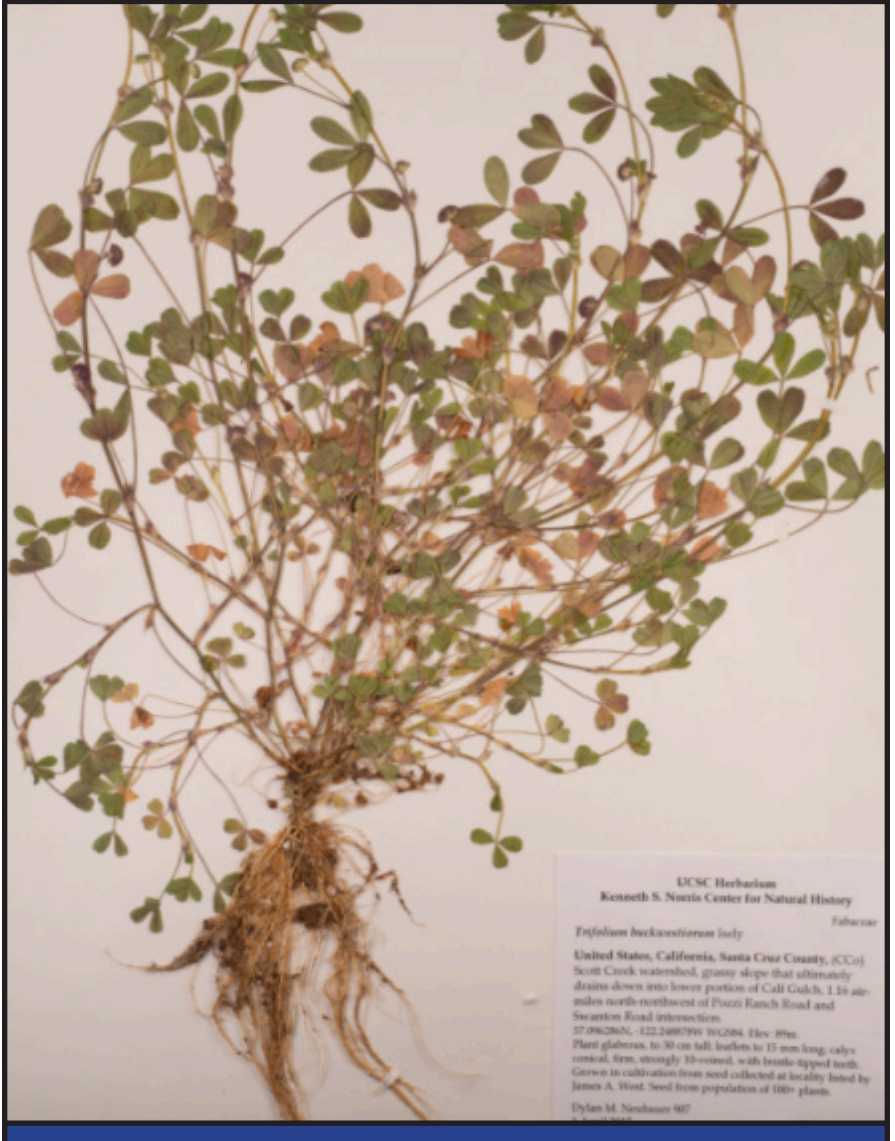
UC SANTA CRUZ CAMPUS NATURAL RESERVE

SANTA CRUZ CLOVER



Zane Hiatt

Scientific Name: *Trifolium buckwestiorum*

Common Name: Santa Cruz Clover

Global Rarity: Imperiled

State Rarity: Imperiled; CNPS 1B.1

UCSC Rarity: Possibly extirpated

UCSC Distribution

There are few records of this species in UCSC Upper Campus coastal prairie, though it has not been located in several years.

General Description

The Santa Cruz Clover is small, hairless annual herbaceous plant that can be found in few, very small populations around the Bay Area. These plants can lay low to the ground or stems can grow more upright. Their leaves, composed of three elliptic to ovate and toothed leaflets, grow along red stems. Their white to pink flowers are held within small heads featuring serrated and bristle-tipped calyx tubes (fused sepals). The species is distinguished from similar species by these calyx tubes and the fact that its first flowering heads develop enclosed in the stipules, where they are hidden and considered cleistogamous (non-opening, self-pollinating flowers). The Santa Cruz Clover can be found in relatively moist habitats grassland, dune hollows, or openings within forest. The clover is considered to be rare and threatened (CNPS 1B.1).

Life History

Habitat: The Santa Cruz Clover is endemic to California and grows in moist, clay-rich soils within coastal prairie, dune hollows, and some forest openings. It thrives moist soil.

Flowering Period: April to October

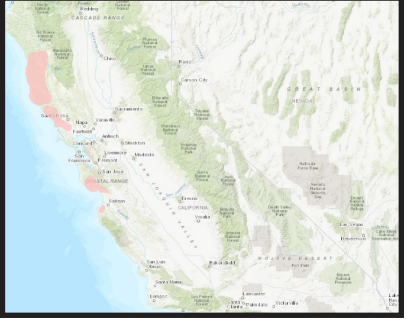
Identification

Color: Red stem with green trifoliate leaves and flowering head outlined in red.

General Dimension: The flower is 1 cm long, the stem can range between 1-5 cm and the leaves are up to 1.5 cm long.

Geographic Range

Santa Cruz Clover is endemic to portions of northern and central California, where populations have been found in Monterey, Santa Cruz, Santa Clara, San Mateo, Sonoma, and Mendocino counties.



Conservation Status

Imperiled

CA Native Plant Society Rare Plant Rank 1B.1: Rare and Threatened in CA

It is estimated that 80% or more of the occurrences of this species are highly threatened.

Threats

Statewide

1. Grazing
2. Land clearing
3. Non-native plants
4. Development
5. Feral pigs

UCSC campus

1. Overgrazing
2. Persistant drought
3. Impacts from recreation

Research Highlights and ~~Fun~~ Facts

- It was discovered by a botanist named James A. West in the Scott Creek watershed.
- The Scott Creek population has since vanished.
- There is a small population in the City of Santa Cruz's Pogonip park that is very vulnerable.
- A dwarf form of the species is endemic to Monterey County.

References and Photo Credits

Calscape, “Santa Cruz Clover, Trifolium Buckwestiorum.” California Native Plant Society, calscape.org/Trifolium-buckwestiorum-().

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