

Rare Plants in Blue Heron Park

Here is a little bit of information about some of the rare plants in the Blue Heron Park butterfly garden. These plants were sourced by Kevin Alison, the head of rare plant propagation for the Catalina Island Conservancy. He went around Catalina by boat finding rare plants and taking cuttings to help propagate and continue these species and bring awareness to them. All of the plants in the butterfly garden have been grown by hand in specialized conditions with organic soil.

Below is a photo of one of the rare and endangered plants in the Blue Heron Park Butterfly Garden West area. This is called a Woolly Sunflower and we have two of these. We also have four endangered San Clemente Mallows - two are on the Monument area and two are on the West garden area. Less than 10 were found to remain in the wild.

Here is some information about the San Clemente Island Bushmallow:

About San Clemente Island Bushmallow (*Malacothamnus clementinus*)

Malacothamnus clementinus is a rare species of flowering plant in the mallow family known by the common name San Clemente Island bushmallow. It is endemic to San Clemente Island, one of the Channel Islands of California, where it is known from fewer than ten occurrences in the steep, rocky seaside canyons. The plant became a federally listed endangered species in 1977 when it was limited to a single population nearing extinction due to herbivory by the feral goats which once infested the small island. The goats have since been removed and the plant is recovering well, but many threats still remain, including competition with introduced species of plants, wildfire, erosion, and damage to the landscape by United States Navy bombing exercises.

See below for information and photos of the Woolly Sunflower in situ on the West slope butterfly garden area.



About Nevin's Woolly Sunflower (*Constancea nevinii*)

It is endemic to three of the Channel Islands of California, where it grows in coastal scrub habitat. The flower cluster is a cluster of 10 to 50 or more small flower heads, each on a short peduncle. The flower head has a center of hairy, star-shaped yellow disc florets and a fringe of four to nine yellow ray florets each about 2 millimeters long.

Like many Channel Islands endemics, this plant was threatened with extinction by the herbivory of the feral goats living on the islands; the goats have since been removed. However, it is still included on CNPS list 1B.3 as a rare plant. The yellow flowers contrast nicely with the silvery-gray foliage. This plant would be good for coastal gardens in southern California where temperatures are moderate and it would receive some fog drip.

We also have Island Pitcher Sage which is rare in the wild, together with many other beautiful species.

The Blue Heron Park butterfly garden is a specialized habitat with plants that will not be found elsewhere in community or public parks. We are so happy to be able to bring these species to the park at this time when they have just become available after years of effort from Kevin while he worked at Tree of Life Nursery. He recently left the nursery having been head hunted to lead a rare plant propagation incentive on San Clemente Island.

It's so exciting to be part of this effort in bringing endangered plants to Blue Heron Park!

Many thanks,

Laura and Michael

Laura Ford

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