



## LOS TRANCOS WOODS & VISTA VERDE Newsletter – April/May 2016

### Spring Splendors

Anyone else noticed that the wildflowers this year are “splendorful”!? Greeting you at the beginning of the trail off of Old Spanish Trail is purple lupine (*Lupinus*) peeking out of the grass. If you keep walking you will just start to notice displays of yellow California buttercup (*Ranunculus*). Further on down the trail you get the small white woodland star (*Lithophragma*), the flower petals really look like a bursting star, and the wild iris (*Iris douglasiana*) has started to open its flowers in a lovely cream color. Scattered about are patches of miner’s or Indian lettuce with their small white flowers (*Claytonia or Montia perfoliata* –leaf surrounds the stem), so named, because the Native Americans and the early settlers commonly ate it. Since miner’s lettuce is high in Vitamin C, it helped the miners prevent scurvy.

You may notice a flowering bush with small clusters of lavender flowers, California lilac (*Ceanothus*); note that we have a couple of species here with different intensities of flower color. The bush is starting to be used more in native landscape gardening, since it is drought tolerant and can put on quite a spring display of flowers. In the same type of habitat, mixed chaparral/woodland you will find the tall white flowering spike of star lily (*Zigadenas fremontii*). Scattered throughout the trail system the tight purple heads of flowers on the brodiaea or blue dicks spike (*Dichelostemma pulchellum*) let the Native Americans know where the bulbs were underground. This was one of their favorite foods when the bulbs were boiled or roasted. (Please do not try it, as we need every bulb in the ground for future flowers.)

In the meadow just as you enter the Portola Valley Ranch trails you will notice dots of blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium* – unknown to me why they call it blue-eyed, as it sure looks purple to me). There are also a few lupines (*Lupinus*) scattered about. Look closely as we have several different kinds of lupines on our trails. Continue on down the Old Spanish Trail to the water tank, and just before you get there, a lovely bright yellow, low growing flower evening primrose (*Oenothera*) jumps out at you.

If you take the Toyon trail back up, be alert for the deep purple flowers of the larkspur (*Delphinium*). As stunning as they are, they are poisonous to humans, cattle and horses. Ranchers will delay taking the cattle up to rangelands that support these flowers until the flowering season is past. Hiding out among all the green foliage that we have this year, and in the shade are the unusual three leaves, three petals, deep maroon trillium (*Trillium* – *tri* referring to the three parts of the plant). I do not know about you, but this year my walks take my breath away with all the variety and beauty of the season. Let it rain!

*Submitted by Linda Drey-Nightingale, with references to multiple botany books and online sites*

Here is a sampling of photos for the wildflowers mentioned above.



Douglas' Iris



Star Lily



Lupine



Blue-eyed Grass



Buttercup



Trillium



California Lilac

### **2016 Community Picnic**

The 2016 picnic will be held in Los Trancos Woods in late August or mid September. We are currently forming the committee and looking for people to join in who are fun loving and want to be part of the neighborhood happenings. Please consider participating. Fun opportunities include: publicity, facilities, permits (yes, there are some people who enjoy accomplishing this), food, drink, music, kids activities, and day-of volunteer recruitment.

*Submitted by Kim Acker, President of LTWCA*

### **LTW Community Association Board**

It's finally time to remit your community association dues once again! Although dues were meant to be collected every other year, it has been several years since you were last asked to support your community association's activities. These activities include organizing the community picnic, which this year will be held in the Woods, maintenance of emergency preparedness and medical supplies, and the Community Resource Guide. Minutes and other recent activities of the community association can be viewed at our website: <http://lostrancoswoods.org/>

Your copy of the 2016-17 updated Community Resource Guide is now available. The LTWCA Board will distribute the Resource Guides over the coming weeks. Please remit \$60 per household via our PayPal direct link [paypal.me/ltwca](https://www.paypal.me/ltwca) . Alternatively, if you prefer checks, make them out to **LTCA**, and mail or drop them off at:

Cameron Smith

*Submitted by Cam Smith, Your LTWCA Treasurer, [camsmith@alumni.stanford.edu](mailto:camsmith@alumni.stanford.edu)*

### **Neighborhood Notes**

- Take photos, not flowers! Remember that all those wildflowers are the purveyors of seeds for next year. Typically wildflowers do not survive the trip home to a vase and will wilt quickly and permanently. Better to soak up their beauty in their natural setting.
- Wait breathlessly no longer for Gene Hunner's **rainfall figures**: February - 1.8", March - 13.1", season-to-date (from 7/1/15) - 37.9"

### **2016 Community Resource Guide**

It is here; it is here, our **NEW 2016 Guide!** After months of work, it should finally be in your hands. Of course, as many of you may know, before it even hits the printing presses, there are changes/updates. If you have any changes to the 2016 listing please contact Linda, 851-1787.

#### **Community Associations' Web Sites**

The web site addresses are:  
<http://lostrancoswoods.org/>  
<http://www.vistaverdepv.org>

The group e-mail list is:  
[VistaVerdeLTW@yahoogroups.com](mailto:VistaVerdeLTW@yahoogroups.com)  
[VistaVerdeCommunityAssoc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:VistaVerdeCommunityAssoc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com).

*Thank you, Jerry Jensen & Rob Kalman for maintaining web sites*