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By: Walter Fry, In Charge
Nature Guide Service,
Sequoia National Park.

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SEQUOIA NATURE GUIDE SERVICE

Those who contemplate a trip to Giant Forest, Sequoia National Park, during May will find it an ideal month for the study of wild flowers up to an altitude of about 5500 feet. This is practically the dividing line between the Upper Sonora and Transition zones of plant habitation; and within this area will be found a variety of species with beautiful and fragrant blossoms.

The zones for plant life in this neighborhood roughly are:

Lower Sonora Zone: From Fresno, Visalia and other valley points, through Lemon Cove and Three Rivers to a point on the Giant Forest Road about at Bear Flats, 1200 ft. altitude.

Upper Sonora Zone: From Bear Flats, 1200 feet altitude to Colony Mill at 5500 feet altitude.

Transition Zone: From Colony Mill at 5500 feet altitude to Giant Forest at 6500 feet altitude.

Many of the species of the Lower Sonora Zone have lived out their seasonal life and are taking their annual rest preparatory to bursting forth in glory again next spring. But some are even now at their best.

While passing through the first foothills at Lime Kiln Hill just beyond Lemon Cove at an altitude of 500 feet the following species may now be noted: California Buckeye, with racemes of white blossoms, one of the chestnut family; Blue Sage; Blue Lupine; Yellow Bush Monkey Flower; Yellow Senecio or Ragwort; Yellow and Variegated Blue and Pink Gilijs; Yellow Indian Broom.

At Three Rivers, altitude 800 feet, additional species appear: Lavender Bee Plant; White, Blue and Yellow Brodiaeas; Mariposa Lily; Harebell; Chinese Houses; Western Purple Larkspur; two species of Dandelions; California Poppy; Yellow Wallflower; Common Yellow Monkey Flower and the Wine-colored Godetia. Practically all these species will be found along the Giant Forest Road as far as Colony Mill which marks the dividing line between the Upper Sonora and Transition Zones.

Above Bear Flats, 1200 feet altitude, the Upper Sonora Zone is entered and the following new species begin to appear. White, Blue and Variegated Pink Lupine; Yuccas with their glorious waxen white blossoms and candelabra effect; Hawks Beard Dandelion; Black Throated Yellow Daisies; White and Pink Phlox; Yellow Raisin Weed; Blue Yerba Santa; White Buckthorn; Blue Iris; White Morning Glory; White Chamise; Pink Twining Brodiaea and Blue Wood Nightshade.

Farther up the road at Maple Creek other flowers appear: Yellow and Purple Bleeding Heart; Yellow Bush Poppy; Lavender Indian Pink; Black Throated Shirley or Fremont Poppy; White Syringa; White Bladdernut; Blue Skull Cap; White and Purple Nemophila and the Tree Fremontia Californica with its gorgeous yellow waxen flowers.

All these species at present end near Colony Mill and beyond that point only one or two species have yet appeared, including the clusters of the whitish green blossoms of the Pacific Dogwood, always a splendid spring show on the Giant Forest Road.

The fine work of the newly organized Tulare County Hill and Mountain Club in protecting the flowers and shrubs of the foothills and mountains is already evident on the approaches to the park. Visitors are respecting the Yucca and Fremontia and no longer are great armfuls of abandoned flowers to be seen on the roads. It is certain that a better acquaintance with the names and the beauty of our flowers will result in further protection. And it is with that idea that this and future bulletins of the Sequoia Nature Guide Service will be issued.