



The California Poppy: A Brief History of California's State Flower

Eschscholtzia californica, or, the California poppy is native to California but is found along the entire western coast of the United States. It is found as far north as Washington state, and as far south as Mexico. It has also established itself in southern France, Australia and Chile.

The flower is usually golden orange, and is referred to as “golden poppy,” hence its designation as the California (Golden State) flower. It was selected as the state flower by the California State Floral Society in December 1890, but the state legislature did not make the selection official until 1903. April 6 is designated as California Poppy Day.

Horticulturalists have produced many cultivars with a range of colors, blossoms and stem forms. However, these cultivars will typically not breed true on successive reseeding and will need to be replanted to see the cultivar's unique features.

California Poppy is drought-tolerant, self-seeding, and easy to grow in gardens. It is best grown as an annual, in full sun and sandy, well-drained, poor soil. Under irrigation it can act as a Perennial.



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