



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
Sacramento Fish & Wildlife Office  
Species Account  
SHOWY INDIAN CLOVER  
*Trifolium amoenum*



CLASSIFICATION: Endangered

Federal Register 62-54791 (PDF); October 22, 1997 ([ecos.fws.gov/docs/federal\\_register/fr3169.pdf](https://ecos.fws.gov/docs/federal_register/fr3169.pdf))

The California Native Plant Society has placed the species on List 1B (rare or endangered throughout its range).

Although it has not been officially listed by the State of California, the Department of Fish and Game considers showy Indian clover to be "very threatened."

CRITICAL HABITAT: None designated

RECOVERY PLAN: None

#### DESCRIPTION



Showy Indian Clover  
Valery Bloom, FWS  
Larger photo below

Showy Indian clover (*Trifolium amoenum*) is an annual plant in the pea family (Fabaceae). It is erect with hairy stems and leaves. It grows from 10-69 cm tall. (4 to 27 inches)

Flowers, which are purple with white tips, grow in dense round or ovoid heads that are approximately 2.5 centimeters in diameter. (1 inch) They bloom from April to June. The flowers are not subtended by the circular toothed bract present in many other clovers.

See Hickman (1993) in [California Plant References](#) for a detailed description of the species (which was considered extinct when his volume was written).

#### DISTRIBUTION

Showy Indian clover was extirpated from all of its 24 historically known locations, which occurred in seven counties. Originally, it ranged from Mendocino County south to Sonoma, Marin, Alameda and Santa Clara counties, and east to Napa and Solano counties.

The species was found in a variety of habitats including low, wet swales, grasslands and grassy hillsides. It typically grows in moist, heavy soils below 100 meters altitude. (328 feet)

The species was considered extinct until 1993, when a single plant was discovered on privately-owned property in Sonoma County. That site has since been developed and the species is no longer present. Another natural population, consisting of about 200 plants, was discovered in 1996 in Marin County on privately owned property.

Seeds of the single plant discovered in 1993 were germinated in a greenhouse. Seeds from the resulting plants are being collected for future reintroduction efforts.

## THREATS

The soil seed bank in the remaining natural habitat within the species' historical range may contain viable seeds. Should the species be found in these areas, it is likely to be threatened by urbanization, competition from nonnative plants, land conversion to agriculture and livestock grazing.

## REFERENCES FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Connors, P. 1994. Rediscovery of Showy Indian Clover. *Fremontia*. 22(2):3-7

Knapp, E., and P. Connors. 1999. [Genetic Consequences of a Single-Founder Population Bottleneck in \*Trifolium amoenum\*](#) (Fabaceae). *American Journal of Botany*. 86(1):124-130.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. 1997. Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; [Determination of Endangered Status for Nine Plants From the Grasslands or Mesic Areas of the Central Coast of California](#). Portland, Oregon.

California Plant References [www.fws.gov/sacramento/es/plant\\_spp\\_accts/plant\\_references.htm](http://www.fws.gov/sacramento/es/plant_spp_accts/plant_references.htm)

Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office  
2800 Cottage Way, Room W-2605  
Sacramento, California 95825  
Phone (916) 414-6600  
FAX (916) 414-6713  
[www.fws.gov/sacramento](http://www.fws.gov/sacramento)



Showy Indian Clover, Valary Bloom, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Last updated June 13, 2007