



LEAVE NO TRACE – ENJOYING WILDFLOWERS SUSTAINABLY

When we go on vacations, we frequently purchase a souvenir to keep and display as a reminder of our visit. Outdoor enthusiasts are often equally tempted to collect and take home interesting natural and cultural objects, but such acts are rarely sustainable if *everyone* did the same. Such collecting has the potential to do substantial harm so resist the urge to collect and teach others to do the same.

Consider the adage: *“Take only photographs and leave only footprints.”* Substitute a photograph or sketch to share or display your “find,” and allow you to identify and learn more about it after your trip. Take home memories instead of souvenirs to ensure that those who follow have the same high-quality experience you enjoyed.

There are many reasons for leaving special objects behind. Consider the cumulative effect of millions of visitors to our public lands. If we each picked a few flowers the cumulative effect would be devastating.

Instead, load your camera and not your pack. Let photos, drawings, and memories comprise your souvenirs. People come to public lands to enjoy them in a natural and pristine state. Allow others a sense of discovery by leaving flowers, plants, artifacts, and other objects of interest as you find them.

Bring and introduce children to the wonders of nature but help them to understand the interconnectedness of plants, animals, and natural environments. For example, teach youth that picking flowers prevents the development of seeds, which produce next year’s plants and flowers.

A study in Great Smoky Mountains National Park found significantly fewer pink lady slipper orchids flowering along park trails than away from trails. Teach youth about stewardship and their personal responsibility to preserve these important resources by leaving them where they are found so that others may discover, experience, and enjoy them as they did.

LEAVE NO TRACE – SUPERBLOOM

Know Before You Go – Plan your trip to avoid the crowds if possible. Weekends are usually busiest so going during the week can result in a less crowded experience, and will help minimize impact on local resources (bathrooms, parking lots, trails) and the flowers you're there to see. Contact local land managers about less busy times to visit, amenities, and good locations for viewing flowers in a sustainable way.

Stick to Trails – Flowers flourish when they're left untouched by visitors. Stay on designated trails when viewing flowers, and avoid trampling flowers as they can take years to recover, if ever.

Pack it In, Pack it Out – Plan to pack out all your trash, leftover food, and any trash left behind by others. Be sure and pack out those biodegradable items too as they can impact wildlife and may take many months to decompose.

Restrooms – Use restroom facilities where they are available. If none exist where you're headed, prepare to dig a cathole for properly disposing of human waste. Bring a lightweight trowel for digging a 6-8" deep hole at least 200 feet from water sources and trails. Once you've done your business, either bury the toilet paper deeply in the hole or pack it out, then cover the hole with soil, leaving no trace.

Be Considerate of Others – Given the magnificence and infrequency of superblooms, think about the impact you might have on others. Extend courtesy to those around you, and remember that a friendly greeting goes a long way towards promoting a pleasant outdoor experience. Remember – we're all trying to enjoy a finite resource. Do your part to protect the flowers and the overall experience.

About Leave No Trace

The Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics is a national nonprofit organization that protects the outdoors by teaching people how to enjoy it responsibly. The Center's [Leave No Trace in Every Park](#) campaign incorporates Leave No Trace programs and educational opportunities nationwide including public education initiatives, interpretive materials, staff and volunteer training, onsite education, junior ranger programs and Leave No Trace Hot Spots events. For more information, visit: www.LNT.org