

DRAWING FROM NATURE
Science and Art Lessons for Kids
Los Angeles Times Kids' Reading Room Page



By Carol Felixson
Special to the Times

February 19, 2003

Have you ever thought of food when looking at a plant? The flowers of the [matilija poppy](#) look just like fried eggs -- sunny side up! A clump of plants can have up to 100 flowers.

The flowers have broad, flat, pure-white petals with domed yellow centers. Their petals look like used crepe paper because they are crumpled in the bud and never lose their folds. The scientific name for this native California plant is *Romneya coulteri*.

Rio, 12, shows us what a single flower looks like using a technique called "mixed media." That means she used different art materials to create her illustration.

Rio first researched the plants. She tells us they "can grow from 5 to 8 feet tall, and the flowers can get up to 9 inches wide."

She then viewed the plants in a garden environment, studying the color of the flowers and how they appeared on the plants. She noted the pattern of the petals to each other, and the size of the petals compared to the center of the flower.

"I made a pencil sketch of the flower while still in the garden," said Rio. "Then at home, I darkened it with a gray marker and painted the stem and flower with acrylic paint."