

# Mt. Helena Wildflowers



## *Celebrating Wildflowers Partners*

Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest,  
Kelsey Chapter Montana Native Plant Society,  
Montana Discovery Foundation

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## *About Celebrating Wildflowers*

The Celebrating Wildflowers program was created in 1991 by the USDA Forest Service in response to a public request for information about native plants and their conservation. Other agencies soon joined as botanists, interpreters and the public became enthusiastic about the Celebrating Wildflowers program.

The Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest, in cooperation with the partners of the Montana Discovery Foundation and the Kelsey Chapter of the Montana Native Plant Society, have been Celebrating Wildflowers for many years. The partners, working with area teachers, encourage 4th grade students to read myths and legends about native flora and then illustrate the stories. The winners from the art competition are displayed in a publication, the overall winner has their art turned into a billboard, and the top three receive pillows designed from their artwork.

Also, participating students join us on this hike on Mt. Helena to view first hand the unique and beautiful range of native plant species found virtually in their backyard. Education stations are also set up to inform students about pollination and botany.

This publication was created to make your jobs as volunteers easier as you mentor students on this hike. The Celebrating Wildflower Partners thank you for your time, energy and knowledge as we fulfill our mission of encouraging everyone to learn more about native plants, their habitat and conservation.

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***Flower, shrub and tree photography provided by Drake Barton,  
Samsara Chapman and others.***

Although there are notes for medicinal and nutritional uses for many of the plants, please do not allow the students to sample any of the flora while under your supervision.

Plant description and information excerpted from a variety of guide books to assist you in plant identification. For more detailed information see PLANTS OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN, WILDFLOWERS OF MONTANA, CENTRAL ROCKY MOUNTAIN WILDFLOWERS, ROCKY MOUNTAIN WILDFLOWERS POCKET GUIDE or go online to find additional resources.

# SHAPE & ARRANGEMENT



**Acicular**  
needle shaped



**Falcate**  
hooked or sickle shaped



**Orbicular**  
circular



**Rhomboid**  
diamond-shaped



**Acuminate**  
tapering to a long point



**Flabellate**  
fan shaped



**Ovate**  
egg-shaped, wide at base



**Rosette**  
leaflets in tight circular rings



**Alternate**  
leaflets arranged alternately



**Hastate**  
triangular with basal lobes



**Palmate**  
resembles a hand



**Spatulate**  
spoon-shaped



**Aristate**  
with a spine-like tip



**Lanceolate**  
pointed at both ends



**Pedate**  
palmate, divided lateral lobes



**Spear-shaped**  
pointed, barbed base



**Bipinnate**  
leaflets also pinnate



**Linear**  
parallel margins, elongate



**Peltate**  
stem attached centrally



**Subulate**  
tapering point, awl-shaped



**Cordate**  
heart-shaped, stem in cleft



**Lobed**  
deeply indented margins



**Perfoliate**  
stem seeming to pierce leaf



**Trifoliate/Ternate**  
leaflets in threes



**Cuneate**  
wedge shaped, acute base



**Obovate**  
heart-shaped, stem at point



**Odd Pinnate**  
leaflets in rows, one at tip



**Tripinnate**  
leaflets also bipinnate



**Deltoid**  
triangular



**Obovate**  
egg-shaped, narrow at base



**Even Pinnate**  
leaflets in rows, two at tip



**Truncate**  
squared-off apex



**Digitate**  
with finger-like lobes



**Obtuse**  
bluntly tipped



**Pinnatisect**  
deep, opposite lobing



**Unifoliate**  
having a single leaf



**Elliptic**  
oval-shaped, small or no point



**Opposite**  
leaflets in adjacent pairs

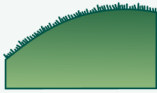


**Reniform**  
kidney-shaped



**Whorled**  
rings of three or more leaflets

# MARGIN



**Ciliate**  
with fine hairs



**Crenate**  
with rounded teeth



**Dentate**  
with symmetrical teeth



**Denticulate**  
with fine dentition



**Doubly Serrate**  
serrate with sub-teeth



**Entire**  
even, smooth throughout



**Lobate**  
indented, but not to midline



**Serrate**  
teeth forward-pointing



**Serrulate**  
with fine serration



**Sinuate**  
with wave-like indentations



**Spiny**  
with sharp stiff points



**Undulate**  
widely wavy

# VENATION



**Arcuate**  
secondary veins  
bending toward apex



**Cross-Venulate**  
small veins connecting  
secondary veins



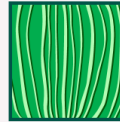
**Dichotomous**  
veins branching  
symmetrically in pairs



**Longitudinal**  
veins aligned mostly  
along long axis of leaf



**Palmate**  
several primary veins  
diverging from a point



**Parallel**  
veins arranged axially,  
not intersecting



**Pinnate**  
secondary veins  
paired oppositely

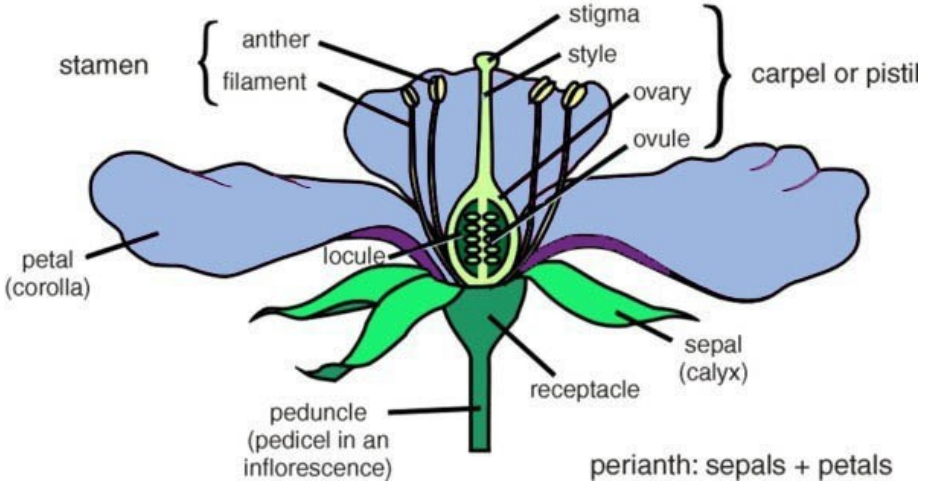


**Reticulate**  
smaller veins  
forming a network

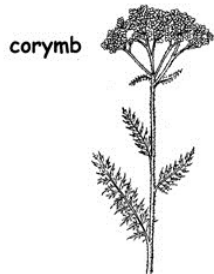
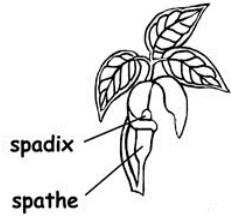
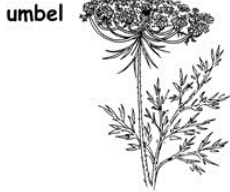


**Rotate**  
in peltate leaves,  
veins radiating

# Basic Flower Structure



# Flower Shapes







**Fuzzytongue penstemon—*Penstemon eriantherus*—*Plantaginaceae***

**General:** Stands out among the many penstemons because of its wide-open, hairy throat with an extended sterile stamen covered with yellow hairs—the fuzzy tongue. The stems bear hairy narrow leaves that may be toothed. Color varies—pale lavender to deep violet.

**Flowers:** May to July  
*3 lower lobes of flower have purple veins serving as guidelines for pollinators.*



**Ground Plum—*Astragalus crassicarpus*—**

**General:** Numerous faded, alternate and compound, short-stalked, green leaves contain 13 to 27 short leaflets with round tips. The leaflets are arranged featherlike along the axis with one at the tip. Flowers are pale violet to white with a keel petal tinged with purple.

**Flowers:** April to May  
*Native Americans and pioneers ate the young, juicy green pods of this plant, which taste like peas.*



**Harebell—*Campanula rotundifolia*—*Campanulaceae***

**General:** Five lavender-blue petals joined into bell shaped blossoms, which hang from the top of a tall thin stem. The leaves are thin, alternate along the stem and occasionally a few oval basal leaves.

**Flowers:** June- September  
*The Navajo rubbed it on their bodies for protection from injury while hunting and for protection from witches.*



**General:** A low perennial, leaves with long, woolly hairs that form a tuft at the leaf tips. The pale green leaves form a dense cushion or mat. The pale to deep blue flowers, with yellow or white centers, have 5 petals that are fused at the base to form a small tube.

**Flowers:** June to July



**Howard's Alpine Forget-me-not—*Eritrichium howardii*—Boraginaceae**

**General:** A sky-blue flower with five fragile petals atop a thin, tough stem. There are many narrow, linear leaves alternate along the stem.

**Flowers:** May to August  
*Petals drop off after one morning, but another bud will bloom the next day.*



**Lewis's Blue Flax—*Linum Lewisii*—Linaceae**

**General:** Slender, commonly branched, erect stems are topped with reddish-lavender flowers in loose coils. Corolla broadly bell-shaped. Leaves narrowly lanceolate, hairy;

**Flowers:** April-June  
*Some American Indians prepared a tea from this plant to treat colds.*



**Linear-leaved Phacelia—*Phacelia linearis*—Hydrophyllaceae**



**General:** Deep blue flowers with 5 showy sepals, one forming a conspicuous rear spur. Flowers are loosely clustered on a smooth stem. The leaves are deeply palmately divided into narrow leaflets with a long stem, mostly basal.  
**Flowers:** May to July  
*Larkspur contain poisonous alkaloids.*

**Little Larkspur—*Delphinium bicolor*—*Ranunculaceae***



**General:** Has pinnately compound leaves with oval, dark-green leaflets on spreading stems. The 4 flowers are showy, purplish-blue pea-like flowers. Plants in northern states have fewer flowers per cluster than southern states. The fruit is short, fat, fuzzy pod.  
**Flowers:** April to June

**Missouri Milkvetch—*Astragalus missouriensis*—**



**General:** A round cup formed by six hairy, light blue to mauve sepals and many bright yellow stamens, nestled in a cluster of furry bracts. Basal leaves are narrowly divided which appear after the flower appears.  
**Flowers:** March to June  
*These are among the first flowers to bloom in the spring. Native people made a tea from the plant to speed delivery in child birth.*

**Pasque Flower—*Anemone patens*—*Ranunculaceae***

**General:** An unmistakable blue-purple flower, with three erect petals and three drooping orange-streaked sepals. The leaves are basal, narrow, tough and pointed, nearly as tall as the flower stalk.

**Flowers:** May to July.

*This is the only native iris in the Central Rocky Mountains.*



**Rocky Mountain Iris—*Iris Missouriensis*—Iridaceae**

**General:** Flowers vary in color from blue-purple to pink, yellow or white. There are 5 stamens: 4 fertile ones bearing pollen, plus a sterile one. The anthers of the fertile stamens are hairless and split open full length upon maturity. The end of the sterile stamen is covered with yellow hair that can be seen just inside the mouth of the petal tube.

**Flowers:** June to August.



**Sulphur Penstemon—*Penstemon attenuates*—Plantaginaceae**

**General:** Gray-hairy, cushion-like, perennial herb; stems absent from branched crowns of well-developed taproots. Flowers: White/purple with 15-30 white ray florets around a yellow button disc florets.

**Flowers:** March to June

*While giving birth some native women chewed the plant, swallowed some and rubbed some on abdomen to ease labor.*



**Townsendia, Hooker's—*Townsendia hookeri*—Asteraceae**



**Bitterroot**—*Lewisia rediviva*—*Portulacaceae*

**General:** Each large flowers has 12-16 rose or pink, and occasionally white, rounded or pointed petals. The short, narrow, fleshy leaves appear in fall in a basal rosette, renew growth in early spring, and then wither when the flowers bloom.

**Flowers:** May to July

*Montana state flower.*

*Native Americans harvested the roots and boiled them for food.*



**Cliff Anemone**—*Anemone multifida*—*Ranunculaceae*

**General:** The basal leaves are divided into several elliptical leaflets. A whorl of leaves is found at mid-stem. The leaf blades are not completely ternate. The flowers are actually 5-9 white to purplish, occasionally yellow, orange or red sepals. The numerous yellow stamens and greenish pistils are centrally located.

*The fruits are a silky plume, allowing for wind dispersal of seeds.*



**Douglasia**—*Douglasia montana*—*Primulaceae*

**General:** A low, spreading cushion plant with small lance-shaped leaves that are tightly grouped into mats. Each stem that arises from the mat supports a single bright pink to violet, wheel-shaped flower, consisting of a funnel-shaped tube with five flaring lobes.

**Flowers:** June to August

*The lack of a conspicuous stamen distinguishes this plant from Moss Campion and members of the phlox family.*

**General:** A forest ground-cover; leaves are leathery green and have smooth margins (no teeth), flowers are pink with petals that are fused into an urn shape. The red berries persist throughout winter.

**Flowers:** April to June  
*Kinnikinnick is from an American Indian word meaning "what you smoke." Both wild animals and humans eat the berries.*



**Kinnikinnick—*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*—Ericaceae**

**General:** Low-mat-forming perennial; leaves are gray, equally woolly-hairy on both surfaces and spatula shaped. Surrounding flower heads are several series of overlapping bracts. The color of bracts varies from white to rosy red

**Flowers:** June to August  
*This is a mild astringent herb, useful in quieting simple intestinal and liver inflammations.*



**Rosy Pussytoes—*Antennaria Microphylla*—Asteraceae**

**General:** The leaves are hairy, fernlike, mostly basal. There are usually 3 bell-shaped flowers per stem, each with light yellow or rosy petals that are nearly hidden by the pink or reddish sepals. Five bracts curve outward after fertilization and display feathery styles that aid in wind seed dispersal.

**Flowers:** April to August  
*Also called "Old Man's Whiskers."*



**Prairie Smoke—*Geum triflorum*—Rosacea**



**Rabbitfoot Crazyweed—*Oxytropis lagopus*—*Fabaceae***

**General:** A low, tufted plant with leafless, hairy stems and basal leaves that are also densely covered with fine silky hairs. The pinnately compound leaves are shorter than the flowers and have 7-15 oval leaflets. The pea-like flowers are blue to lavender purple and are arranged in crowded racemes at the top of a leafless stalk.

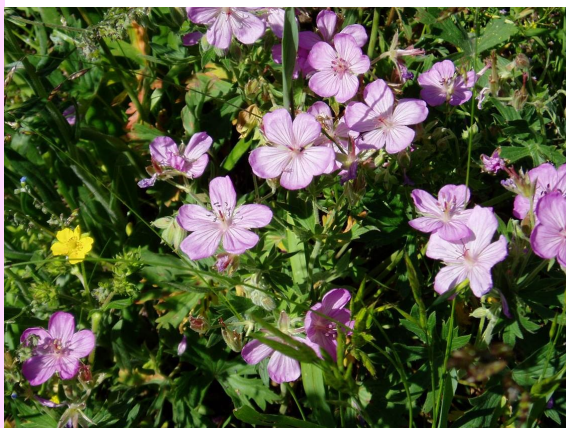
**Flowers:** May to June



**Slimpod Shooting Star—*Dodecatheon conjugens*—*Primulaceae***

**General:** The leaves are a basal rosette with erect stem. The leaves are lanceolate to spatulate, usually several times longer than wide, with entire margins and a smooth surface. The 1-10 flowers have floral parts in fives. The tube at the base of the petals is yellowish with a wrinkled red ring. The reflexed petals are purplish.

**Flowers:** April to June



**Sticky Geranium—*Geranium viscosissimum*—*Geraniaceae***

**General:** Slightly hairy multiple stems of sticky geranium bears mostly basal palmate leaves that are deeply divided into 5-7 segments having sharp irregular teeth along the edges. The brilliant flowers have five broad petals, hairy on the inner surface, varying from pinkish lavender to violet or purple and having dark reddish purple veins.

**Flowers:** May to August

**General:** Large, showy, rose-purple flower heads. Leaves and stems are whitish gray because of a covering of woolly hairs. Sharp yellow spines project from the leaves of the flower heads and wavy leaf margins.

**Flowers:** May-September  
*Thistledown is relished by birds for food and nest linings.*



**Wavyleaf Thistle—*Cirsium undulatum*—*Asteraceae***

**General:** Egg-shaped basal leaves on long petioles and small, finely toothed stem leaves that are stalkless and alternate. The small flowers are arranged in a dense spike at the top of the single stem. The flowers have no petals but have two hairy sepals and two long stamens with red-dish purple filaments that give the prominent color.

**Flowers:** May to July

**Wyoming Kittentails—*Besseyia wyomingensis*—*Plantaginaceae***





**Missouri Ball Cactus—*Coryphantha missouriensis*—Cactaceae**

**General:** A barrel-shaped stem growing singly or in mounds. The spines are in clusters; 3-10 spines in the center are colored on the tip and surrounded by 12-40 shorter, white ones. The bright reddish purple, waxy flowers have many short, pointed petals.

**Flowers:** May to June

*Adapted to survive in areas where there is little moisture.*



**Scarlet Globemallow—*Sphaeralcea coccinea*—Malvaceae**

**General:** A low, spreading perennial, it often forms patches of flowers. It has small leaves, yellowish green above and gray below. Saucer-shaped, short-stalked flowers, vary from orange to brick red. The flower has 5 broad petals that have small notches at their tips.

**Flowers:** May to August

*Native Americans chewed this plant then used it to treat wounds.*



**Wyoming Paintbrush—*Castilleja linarifolia*—Orobanchaceae**

**General:** The leaves and stems are yellow to gray-green in the early life of the plant, turning somewhat purplish as plant ages. Leaves are linear and may be lobed. The plants are hemiparasitic—they produce their own nutrition, they also get nutrients from roots of other plants.

**Flowers:** May to August

*Various species were used for dyes and decorations.*



**General:** A low, dense, tufted perennial, it is covered with star-shaped hairs. The many stems bear narrow, silver basal leaves. The small, four-petaled, yellow flowers arise from the center of the leafy mat.  
**Flowers:** May to July



**Alpine Badderpod—*Physaria curvipes*—Brassicaceae**

**General:** Soft-hairy, perennial herb; stems several from a branching base, from a stout, woody, aromatic taproot.  
**Flowers:** April to July  
*An important source of food for many native peoples. Young leavers were eaten raw or steamed, immature flower stems were peeled and eaten raw and the tough roots were roasted*



**Arrowleaf Balsamroot—*Balsamorhiza sagittata*—Asteraceae**

**General:** A stemless sunflower—has no true stem, leafless flower stalk supports each solitary flower. Bright yellow flower head includes ray flowers, with 3-toothed tips, and many yellow disk flowers. Linear basal leaves form a snarled cluster, are covered with woolly, silky, gray hairs.  
**Flowers:** July to August  
*Native Americans used the leaves of this plant as a local anesthetic.*



**Butte Marigold—*Tetranneuris acaulis*—Asteraceae**



**General:** This strange parasitic plant is often overlooked. The stout main stems appear much shorter because about 2/3 of its length is buried.

**Flowers:** April to August

*The plants are root parasites, attaching themselves to the roots of various species—especially sagebrush. Native people used for both food and medicine.*

**Clustered Broomrape—*Orobanche fasciculata*—*Orobanchaceae***



**General:** Low, mat-forming cushion plant with a single, bright yellow flower head on an apparently leafless stem. The plant has a few small leaves on flower stem.

**Flowers:** May to August.

*Cushion goldenweed often grows with cushion milkvetch and other mat plants.*

**Cushion Goldenweed—*Stenotus acaulis*—*Asteraceae***



**General:** Has a heavy root-crown that branches from a thick perennial taproot. First appears as a one-inch tall tuft of hairy leaves that are silvery on one side and greenish on the other. Each leaf is composed of five leaflets. A few short stems bearing several flowers form a few days later. The five petals are lemon yellow.

**Flowers:** May to June

**Early Cinquefoil—*Potentilla concinna*—*Rosaceae***

**General:** Six species of yellow-flowered cushion *Drabas* grow in alpine sites in Montana. These species have numerous bright yellow flowers growing in a loose to tight, matted cushion on rocky and windswept sites. ID of individual *Draba* species requires knowledge of the types of hairs on the leaves and characteristics of the fruit.



**Flowers:** June to July **Few-seeded Draba—*Draba oligosperma*—*Brassicaceae***

**General:** Yellow flower heads are composed of ray flowers only. Outer rays are long—inner ones are short with brown styles. Long green bracts extend beyond the outer rays. Flower matures into a round white seed head like a huge dandelion.



**Flowers:** May to July  
*Flowers close tightly at noon earning them the name of "Jack-go-to-bed-at noon."*

**Goat's Beard or Salsify—*Tragopogon dubius*—*Asteraceae***

**General:** Perennial herb, sparsely white-hairy; densely white-hairy just below flower head; from slender, widely spreading rhizomes.



**Flowers:** June to August  
*Some native groups used the leaves as plasters on swellings cuts or bruises. The Okanagan considered heart-leaved arnica a love charm perhaps because of the heart-shape of its leaves.*

**Heartleaf Arnica—*Arnica cordifolia*—*Asteraceae***



**Lance-leaf Stonecrop**—*Sedum lanceolatum*  
—*Crassaceae*

**General:** Has narrow, fleshy, linear leaves that are mostly basal and vary from green to reddish brown. They have a sharp ridge and taper to a slender point. Short stem leaves are alternate, fleshy, and lance-shaped and drop off shortly after flowering. The bright yellow, star-shaped flowers, sometimes with a purple tinge, have 5 sepals, 5 pointed petals.  
**Flowers:** June to August



**Leafy Musineon**—*Mussaenda divaricata*—*Apiaceae*

**General:** Grows from a thickened taproot. Stems branching in pairs. Leaves are basal, deep green and deeply divide, lobes again divided into smaller rounded lobe segments. Small, bright yellow flowers gather in flat topped clusters.  
**Flowers:** May to June



**Nine-leaf Lomatium**—*Lomatium triternatum*—*Apiaceae*

**General:** Smells like parsley, the leaves are mainly basal, divided 2-3 times into long, linear segments, usually finely hairy. Flowers are yellow; tiny, in compact, twice-divided, flat-topped clusters (umbels) with several slender bracts at base.  
**Flowers:** May to June  
*The Blackfeet used the roots to make a medicinal tea to treat coughs.*

**General:** Low shrub with distinctive hollylike evergreen leaves. The bright yellow flowers give way to a grapelike cluster of purple berries with a whitish coating. In fall, some of the leaves often turn bright red or orange.

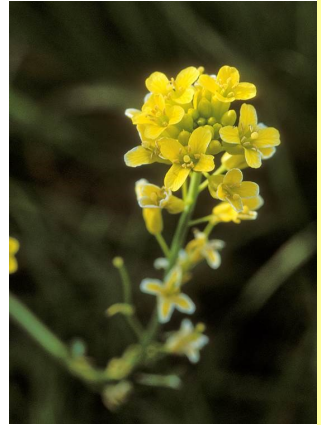
**Flowers:** April to June  
*The tart berries make a refreshing lemonade-like drink and fine jelly or wine. American Indians used the yellow inner bark as a yellow dye and as medicine with many applications.*



**Oregon Grape**—*Berberis repens*—*Berberidaceae*

**General:** A native forb, the stems arise from a simple or branched caudex. The leaves are linear, pinnate at the stem base and becoming entire up the stem. The inflorescence is a raceme of 4-petaled flowers.

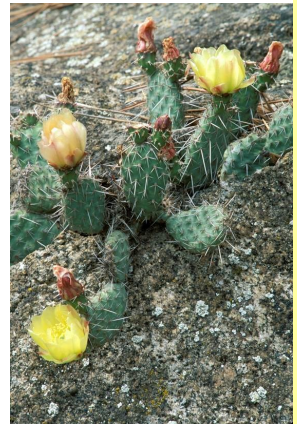
**Flowers:** May to July  
*It reproduces by seed and by resprouting from the rhizome. The latter helps it recover quickly from wildfire.*



**Plains Mustard**—*Schoenocrambe linifolia*—*Brassicaceae*

**General:** The succulent, jointed, flat stems grow in a mound and spread out. The needle-sharp spines grow in bundles of about 10 from woolly nodes on the stem. The flowers vary from lemon yellow to peach.

**Flowers:** May to June  
*Widely used for food, either raw or dried for storage.*



**Prickly Pear Cactus**—*Opuntia polyacantha*—*Cactaceae*



**Sagebrush Buttercup—*Ranunculus glaberrimus*—*Ranunculaceae***

**General:** Yellow, saucer shaped flowers with 5 showy, waxy petals and 5 smaller purplish sepals (soon dropped); the leaves are mainly basal, egg-shaped to round.

**Flowers:** March to June  
*One of the first flowers to bloom in spring—just as the snow cover begins to disappear.*



**Silky Crazyweed—*Oxytropis sericea*—*Fabaceae***

**General:** Grows in dense tufts of basal leaves from a woody taproot. The leaves are pinnately compound, with 5-10 pairs of leaflets attached to the main leaf axis. Soft, silky hairs cover the surface of the leaflets, giving them a grayish appearance. 10-30 flowers are arranged in a raceme on the end of a leafless stem. Color varies from yellow to white.

**Flowers:** May to July



**Small Wallflower—*Erysimum inconspicuum*—*Brassicaceae***

**General:** Elongating clusters of stalked flowers at the ends of stems arising from leaf axils in the upper part and at top of stem—yellow with 4 rounded petals/6 stamens. Leaves are linear, toothless or with a few widely spaced teeth.  
**Flowers:** May to August

**General:** A bushy plant, with many unbranched, hairy stems that bear many narrow, stalkless, hairy, dark green leaves but are smaller near the base of the stem. The tiny, pale yellow flowers grow in small clusters.

**Flowers:** April to July  
*Puccoon, another common name, is a Native American word referring to a plant that contains a dye.*



**Western Gromwell—*Lithospermum ruderale*—Boraginaceae**

**General:** Has leafy, hairy stems and grow in a clump. The narrow, alternate dark green leaves have entire margins, and small hairs pressed close to the surface. The bright yellow, trumpet-shaped flowers emerge from the axils of the upper leaves.

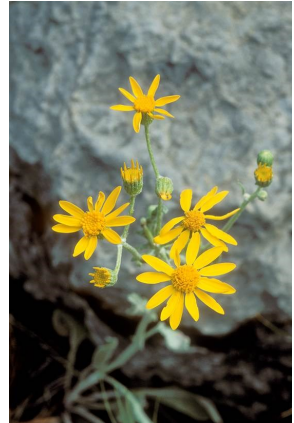
**Flowers:** April to July  
*The stems, leaves, and roots have been used to make teas with stimulating effects.*



**Yellow Gromwell—*Lithospermum incisum*—Boraginaceae**

**General:** Silvery-gray, woolly-hairy, perennial herb; stems clumped from a branched base, sometimes tap rooted. Flowers are a deep yellow with few ray florets around a rounded, yellow button of disc florets.

**Flowers:** May to August  
*Common name derived from the Anglo-Saxon for "ground-swallowing" because of the rapid spread.*



**Woolly Groundsel—*Senecio canus*—Asteraceae**



**Yellow Bell**—*Fritillaria pudica*—*Liliaceae*

**General:** Has long linear leaves, usually a pair or sometimes a whorl of 3, either basal or located midway up the unbranched stem. A single nodding, bell-shaped flower has 3 petals and 3 petal-like sepals, which are bright yellow to orange.

**Flowers:** April to May  
*Several tribes gathered the roots and boiled them alone or with bitterroot which was collected at the same time.*



**Yellow Prairie Violet**—*Viola nuttallii*—*Violaceae*

**General:** The leaves are conspicuously veined, slightly toothed and are oval to lance-or heart-shaped, and have long petioles. The lower three of the five bright yellow petals have purplish veins on their inner surface, and the upper petals are tinged with red on the back.

**Flowers:** May to August  
*Violets are nutritious, edible herbs, high in vitamins A and C.*



**Yellowish Paintbrush**—*Castilleja lutescens*—*Scrophulariaceae*

**General:** Unbranched stems covered with stiff short hairs bearing narrow, lance-shaped leaf with mostly entire margins. The bracts are yellowish to greenish.

**Flowers:** June to August  
*The dense flower clusters of these plants resemble paintbrushes that have been dipped in pots of paint--red, purple or yellow, depending on species.*



**General:** Forms dense, low cushions of silvery gray leaves, each with 3 leaflets. The plants are stemless. The long, white flowers are erect, facing upward from thin, translucent stipules at the base of the leaves. The keel petal is normally white with a lilac tip, but it may be purple or blue.

**Flowers:** April to May



**Cushion/Plains Milkvetch—*Astragalus gilviflorus*—Fabaceae**

**General:** The basal leaves of this daisy consist of many branching segments. The few leaves on the stems are small and often unbranched.

**Flowers:** May to August  
*Compositus* is a Latin word meaning “compound,” of many parts, referring to the many-divided leaves. The leaves are the distinguishing feature of this species.



**Cutleaf Fleabane/Daisy—*Erigeron compositus*—Asteraceae**

**General:** Erect, unbranched stems about 2' tall with numerous leaves that clasp the stem. Egg-shaped, mostly oblong leaves have pointed tip. Numerous tiny flowers are arranged in a branching panicle that is upright on the end of branches. Fruit is red berry.

**Flowers:** April-July



**False Solomon's Seal—*Smiacina racemosa*—Liliaceae**



**Starry Solomon's Seal—*Smilacina stellata*—Liliaceae**

**General:** Has an unbranched, leafy stem. The lance-shaped, stemless leaves have prominent parallel veins and alternate on the stem. 5-10 star-like flowers are arranged in an unbranched inflorescence at the top of the stem.

**Flowers:** May to July  
*The fruit is a red berry flecked with purple becoming uniformly red.*



**Field Chickweed—*Cerastium arvense*—Caryophyllaceae**

**General:** Slender leaves are arranged opposite on the stems, often with clusters of secondary leaves crowded in the axils of the larger, primary leaves. White flowers have 5 deeply notched petals.

**Flowers:** April to August  
*Plants of this genus were often fed to chickens, goslings and caged birds, especially if the birds were ill, hence the name "chickweed."*



**Hayden's Cymopterus—*Cymopterus nivalis*—Apiaceae**

**General:** Leaves are blue-green compound; finely divided into many small narrow segments. Old leaf stalks from previous years are persistent. Leafless stems with several clusters of white flowers arranged in compound umbels on the end.

**Flowers:** May to July

**General:** The leaves are alternate and basal, lance shaped with fine, freely branching hairs, often felted; basal leaves taper to stalks. The flowers are white to pinkish-purple, cross-shaped with 4 petals.

**Flowers:** May to August  
*All rockcresses are edible, with the typical sharp flavor of the plants in the mustard family.*



**Holboell's Rockcress—*Boechea retrofracta*—Brassicaceae**

**General:** This is somewhat shorter than many rockcresses, with small stem leaves and a rosette of basal leaves covered sparsely with long stiff hairs. 5-20 white, 4-petaled flowers are arranged in a somewhat open inflorescence.

**Flowers:** May to July



**Nuttall's Rockcress—*Arabis nutallii*—Brassicaceae**

**General:** Tiny, narrow, needle-like wooly leaves cover the stems. Flowers are pink or bluish to white, with 5 broad, flat spreading lobes at the tip of a slender tube.

**Flowers:** April to June  
*Blackfeet Indians used Hood's phlox as a laxative and to relieve chest pains. A yellow dye was prepared from the plant.*



**Hood's Phlox—*Phlox hoodii*—Polemoniaceae**



**Meadow Death Camas—*Zigadenus venenosus*—Lilliaceae**

**General:** A star-shaped blossom formed by six pointed creamy-white sepals, each with a green spot at its base. Flowers are loosely distributed near the top of the stem. The leaves are long, linear, basal, sparse.

**Flowers:** June to August  
*Contains an alkaloid that is extremely toxic and has been responsible for the death of cattle, sheep and humans.*



**Miner's Candle—*Cryptantha celosioides*—Boraginaceae**

**General:** Numerous small, five-petaled, white flowers spread along a tall, hairy, strong stem. Leaves are narrow, tough and prickly, standing perpendicular to the stem.

**Flowers:** May to July  
*Often called the "white forget-me-not" for its resemblance to the closely related blue forget-me-nots.*



**Pale Toadflax—*Comandra umbellata*—Santalaceae**

**General:** The alternate leaves are thick and covered with a whitish substance that gives them a gray-green color. The floral parts are attached to a greenish tube from the top of the ovary. Flowers have 5 white to purple lobes that extend out from the top of the tube. Each floral lobe has a stamen at the base and a tuft of hairs behind each stamen.

**Flowers:** April to August

**General:** Silvery-gray, woolly-hairy, perennial herb; stems clumped from a branched base, sometimes tap rooted. Flowers are a deep yellow with few ray florets around a rounded, yellow button of disc florets.

**Flowers:** May to August  
*Common name derived from the Anglo-Saxon for "ground-swallowing" because of the rapid spread.*



**Pussytoes—*Antennaria* spp.—*Asteraceae***

**General:** The basal leaves often form large, flat mats. The leaves are green on upper surface. Dense wooly hair on lower surface gives it a grayish-white color. The woolly flowering stems have an umbel flower arrangement in a range of colors from creamy white to yellow, tinged with red or purple especially as they age.

**Flowers:** June to August



**Sulphur Buckwheat—*Eriogonum umbellatum*—*Polygonaceae***

**General:** Mainly basal leaves, rather soft, linear, tapered to slender points fringed with fine hairs; The flowers are white with 5 showy petals and 5 small, egg-shaped sepals.

**Flowers:** July to August  
*These plants make an attractive addition to a rock garden.*



**Threadleaf Sandwort—*Arenaria capillaris*—*Caryophyllaceae***



**Wart-Berry Fairy Bell—*Prosartes trachycarpa*—Liliaceae**

**General:** Flowers hang down from the ends of branches, often concealed under the broad leaves. There are usually 2 creamy white, bell-shaped flowers per branch. The leaves are egg-shaped, abruptly pointed with parallel leaf veins conspicuous.

**Flowers:** May to July

*Fruit is a round, bright red berry, which is edible, mild and tastes faintly like cantaloupe.*



**Wild Strawberry—*Fragaria virginiana*—Rosaceae**

**General:** The basal leaves are divided into three sharply toothed leaflets that are hairless on top and often have a bluish white cast. White flowers grow in clusters on slender stalks with five broad, egg-shaped petals, five green sepals and 20 yellow stamens.

**Flowers:** June to August

*Most cultivated strawberry plants were developed from this plant.*



**Yarrow—*Achillea millefolium*—Asteraceae**



**General:** Many tiny flowers with five white rays and yellow disks, clustered in a dense flat-topped umbel on a thin stem. Leaves are narrow long pinnately dissected in thin leaflets resembling a feather.

**Flowers:** June-September

*A medicinal wonder, it has been used to stop bleeding from wounds, a poultice on burns, treats fevers and colds, alleviates toothaches. Called Chipmunk's Tail because the leaves resemble a chipmunk's tails.*

**General:** Strongly aromatic, perennial herb, tufted, from a stout, woody root crown, often forming mats.

**Flowers:** July to October  
*An aromatic plant that can be used as a spice, but only in small amounts, because bitterness is overpowering. Native peoples used the leaf tea to correct menstrual irregularity. Also used as smudge for mosquitoes.*



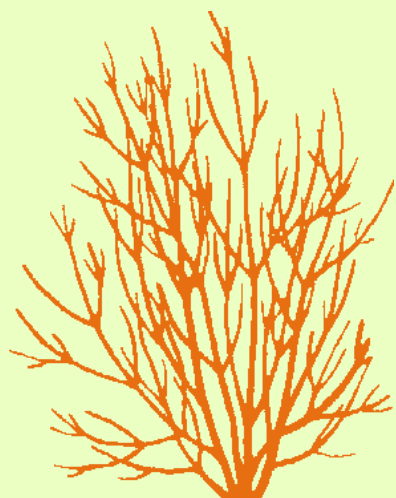
**Fringed Sagewort—*Artemisia frigida*-Asteraceae**

**General:** Often noticed for its silvery-white to greenish foliage and stems that are covered with a dense mat of woolly hairs.

**Flowers:** July to October  
*Native people called this plant “Man Sage.” It was used in religious ceremonies. They believed this plant had the power to drive away bad spirits.*



**Prairie Sagewort—*Artemisia ludoviciana*-**





**General:** Highly branched shrub, it resembles sagebrush in color and growth form. Flowers are bright yellow to cream, with pale lemon color most common. Long hair surrounds the flowers. Leaves are alternate, blades narrow, lance-shaped. The margins are entire and the leaf has a prominent midvein. Surface is woolly, giving the new leaves a silvery look.

**Flowers:** May-September



**Gray Horsebrush—*Tetradymia canescens*—Asteraceae**

**General:** A shrub with a rounded crown and several erect stems from the base. The flowers are a yellowish-green, arranged in an umbrella shaped head. The leaves are alternate, linear to spatula shaped blades with entire margins.

**Flowers:** June-September

*American Indians made chewing gum from pulverized wood and bark. It was also used as tea, cough syrup, and dye.*



**Rubber Rabbit Brush—*Ericameria nauseosus*—Asteraceae**

**General:** One of 22 species of sagebrush in Montana is a highly branched leafy shrub, with white shedding bark. Older plants appear twisted. The numerous alternate leaves have silvery hairs on both sides. The leaves have entire margins, are stalkless and pointed at both ends.

**Flowers:** July-October

*Meriwether Lewis collected a specimen of silver sagebrush in 1804.*



**Silver Sagebrush—*Artemisia cana*—Asteraceae**



**General:** Deciduous shrub or small tree, clumped; branches opposite, with greyish bark and reddish twigs. Flowers are yellowish-green with 5 petals and 5 sepals. Fruits are v-shaped pairs of wrinkled, winged seeds. It is tolerant of shade, often growing under the canopy of conifer trees.  
**Flowers:** April to June

**Mountain Maple—*Acer glabrum*—Aceraceae**



**General:** The flowers are arranged in a spike, directly attached to the stem. The fruit is a red, berrylike, flesh, one-seeded fruit. The leaves are compound, with 3 oak-like leaflets. These shrubs are great cover for rabbits and small birds.  
**Flowers:** May to June  
*Native American tribes powdered the dried berries and applied them to smallpox and other open sores.*

**Skunkbush Sumac—*Rhus aromatica*—Anacardiaceae**



**General:** Deciduous shrub, erect to spreading, branches numerous, without thorns. The flowers are golden yellow and the tube is funnel-shaped. The berries vary in color from yellow and orange to red.  
**Flowers:** April to May  
*Meriwether Lewis wrote in his journal—“a great abundance of red yellow purple & black currants and service berries now ripe—particularly the yellow currant which I think vastly preferable to those of our gardens.”*

**Golden Currant—*Ribes aureum*—Grossulariaceae**

**General:** Deciduous shrub, erect to spreading, branches numerous, without thorns. The leaves are alternate, kidney-shaped to broadly fan-shaped. Flowers are white, tinged greenish or pinkish, tubular, with 5 tiny, erect petals and 5 small, spreading sepals. Fruit is a red berry. **Flowers:** May to July  
*Flowers provide a source of nectar for hummingbirds early in the year.*



**Wax Currant—*Ribes cereum*—Grossulariaceae**

**General:** Erect shrub, densely branched. The leaves are in pairs, opposite each other on the stems. Each flower has 4 petals, many stamens, 4 styles, and a sweet orange-blossom aroma. **Flowers:** May to July  
*Mockorange is the state flower of Idaho, where it is often called syringa. This plant was named in honor of Meriwether Lewis.*



**Lewis's Mock Orange—*Philadelphus lewisii*—Hydrangeaceae**

**General:** Coniferous, evergreen shrub, spreading, often forms mats. The leaves are mostly in whorls of 3, sharp needles, whitish above, dark green below. Seed cones (female) are berry-like, dark blue, often with a grayish bloom. Pollen cones (male) round to egg-shaped. *The Blackfeet boiled or burned needles like incense to purify homes and as protection from disease and evil spirits.*



**Common Juniper—*Juniperus communis*—Cupressaceae**



**General:** Coniferous, evergreen shrub to small tree, usually erect with an irregularly rounded crown, small branches slender, scale with overlapping leaves, cedar-like. Trunks twisted and knotted. Male and female cones on separate shrubs, scattered among leaves; pollen cones egg-shaped. Seed cones (female) berry-like bluish-purple often with grayish bloom.

**Rocky Mountain Juniper—*Juniperus scopulorum*—**



**General:** Woody shrub is densely and rigidly branched. The leaves are wedge-shaped with 3 lobes, like big sagebrush, but without the pungent aroma. The upper leaf surface is green, while dense hair under gives it a gray cast. The yellow flowers are highly fragrant to attract pollinating insects.  
**Flowers:** April to June

**Antelope Bitterbrush—*Purshia tridentata*—*Rosaceae***

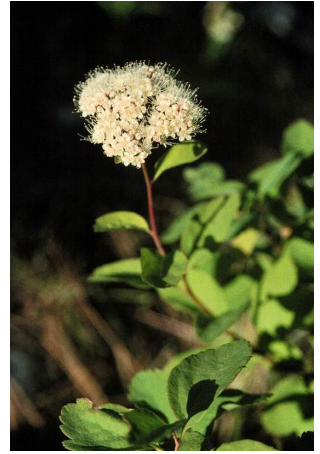


**General:** The white flowers are arranged in long racemes of 15 or more on the ends of leafy twigs. The fruit is a round, dark purple to black cherry with a single round pit. The leaves are alternately arranged, egg-shaped to more oval.  
**Flowers:** May to July  
*The astringent cherries can cause a puckering or choking sensation when they are eaten, hence the name "choke-cherry."*

**Chokecherry—*Prunus virginiana*—*Rosaceae***

**General:** A deciduous shrub, spreading from rhizomes. Leaves are alternate, oval, often widest above middle, irregularly coarse-toothed towards tip. The flowers are white often tinged pink to purple, saucer-shaped with 5 tiny petals in flat-topped clusters.

**Flowers:** May to July  
*Native Americans used various Spiraea to treat diarrhea and to stop bleeding.*



**Birchleaf Spirea—*Spiraea betulifolia*—Rosaceae**

**General:** Deciduous shrub or small tree, erect to spreading, often forms thickets. Leaves are alternate, oval to round, rounded at tip, coarsely toothed on upper half. The flowers are white, star-shaped with 5 slender petals in leafy clusters near branch tips.

**Flowers:** April to July  
*An important food source for native peoples, they were eaten fresh, dried, or mashed.*



**Western Serviceberry—*Amelanchier alnifolia*—Rosaceae**

**General:** Deciduous shrub, erect to spreading, branches covered with thorns at its nodes. The leaves are alternate, pinnately compound, sharply double-toothed, somewhat hairy beneath. The flowers are pink, saucer-shaped with 5 broad, single petals. Fruits are red, round to pear-shaped, berry-like hips.

**Flowers:** June to August  
*Rose hips are rich in vitamins A, B, C, E and K.*



**Wild Rose—*Rosa woodsii*—Rosaceae**



**General:** Coniferous, evergreen tree, often gnarled and twisted, trunk short and stout, branches thick in whorls, plume-like. Evergreen needles in bundles of 5, dark yellowish green, 3-sided, smooth-edged, stiff, slightly curved, crowded at branch tips. Male and female cones on same tree, pollen (male) cones reddish, seed cones (female) light green when young, light brown later.



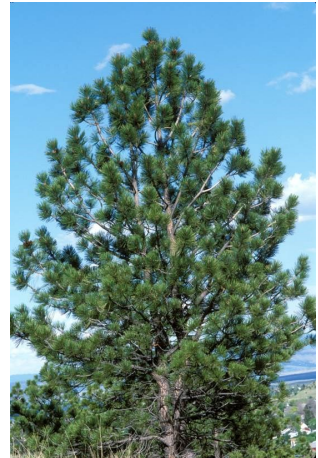
**Limber Pine—*Pinus flexilis*—*Pinaceae***

**General:** Coniferous, evergreen tree, trunk straight, largely bare of branches in closed stands, branches usually curved upwards, crown open, pyramidal. Needles in bundles of 2, deep green to yellow-green. Male and female cones on same tree. Pollen cones (male) reddish to yellow-green, seed cones (female) egg-shaped, often asymmetrical. Some open to shed seeds, many remain closed.



**Lodgepole Pine—*Pinus contorta*—*Pinaceae***

**General:** Coniferous evergreen tree, trunk straight, branches numerous, stout, lower ones often drooping crown open irregularly cylindrical. Needles in bundles of 3. Male and female cones on same tree, pollen cones (male) reddish-purple to yellow, seed cones (female) broadly egg-shaped in groups of 1-3, reddish purple when young, dull brown when mature.



**Ponderosa Pine—*Pinus ponderosa*—*Pinaceae***



**Douglas Fir—*Pseudotsuga menziesii*—*Pinaceae***

**General:** Coniferous, evergreen tree, trunk straight, branches irregular spreading or drooping, tipped with pointed, shiny, reddish-brown buds, crown compact, pyramidal. Flat evergreen needles, spirally arranged, dark yellow to blue-green, not sharp to touch, aromatic when crushed. Male and female cones on same tree, pollen cones reddish to yellow, seed cones narrowly egg-shaped, hanging greenish when young, reddish brown later.









# Celebrating Wildflower Honorees



Kaitlyn Hiltunen, Rossiter Elementary



Kayleona Key, Jim Darcy Elementary



Brina Germaine, Jim Darcy Elementary

## Celebrating Wildflowers Partners

Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest,  
Kelsey Chapter Montana Native Plant Society,  
Montana Discovery Foundation

For more information about Celebrating Wildflowers or about this booklet, please contact the Montana Discovery Foundation, 2880 Skyway Drive, Helena MT 59602 or phone 406-495-3711.