

# Soapstone Prairie Natural Area September Plants



## Prairie sunflower

*Helianthus pumilus* (Sunflower family) native

The most common sunflower blooming this time of year. The foliage has short bristly hairs that make leaves and stems feel like sandpaper. Seeds were a favorite food with some Native American tribes.

## Hairy goldenaster

*Heterotheca villosa* (Sunflower family) native

This and prairie sunflower look very much alike, but the leaves on this plant are small, narrow and covered with fine hairs (feel soft to the touch). The goldenaster also has more abundant and smaller ray flowers (what look like yellow petals) than the sunflower. Substances in this plant are used as an insect repellent.



It is OK to touch the leaves of these plants, but look carefully for creatures below you put your hand down.



## Curlycup gumweed

*Grindelia squarrosa* (Sunflower family) native

The phyllaries (green parts below the yellow flower head) curve back and down like velcro. These plants contain a very sticky sap that makes them unpleasant to touch. A yellow dye can be produced from them.



## Opposite leaf bahia

*Picradeniopsis oppositifolia* (Sunflower family) native

These are smaller plants than those above and have only a few short yellow rays (yellow "petals") around the edge of the flower head. These plants are often found along roads and trails.

## Yellow spine thistle

*Cirsium ochrocentrum* (Sunflower family) native

This shrubby, fiercely spiny thistle is not a weed but a native that provides important food for birds (seeds), for butterflies and bees (nectar and pollen in flowers). It is abundant and thriving this year



## White prairie aster

*Symphiotrichum falcatum* (Sunflower family) native

Common white aster. One of the few white flowers in a sea of yellow



## Hopi tea greenthread

*Thelesperma megapotamicum* (Sunflower family) native

Tea can be made from flowers and stems. Brown dye can be made from the flowers and orange-yellow dye can be obtained from the roots



## Rubber rabbitbrush

*Ericameria nauseosa* (Sunflower family) native

These large rounded shrubs dominate the road below the North parking lot . They look like they belong in an Impressionist painting. They have been particularly lush and beautiful this year. This species has been investigated as a source for natural rubber.

These sheets are also available online at : [fcgov.com/natural\\_areas](http://fcgov.com/natural_areas) (then go to “native plants” and to “wildflowers in Natural Areas” —> [wildflower handouts for Soapstone Prairie](#))