

Wildflowers in the Park

by Andee Johnson
and John Rankin

There are many wonderful trails, valleys and mountains to hike in Park County. The high peaks and open spaces allow for breathtaking, far-reaching views.

Some of the most beautiful sights are often right under your feet, or even under your kitchen window. Park County holds an abundance of plantlife, and much of it produces beautiful flowers.

Here are a very few of the wildflowers found in Park County, and the areas or hikes where they were found. You might find that there are new places to go and new things to see on your next hike.

Monkshood

All parts of the plant are extremely poisonous. It is safe to handle these flowers but only a small amount ingested will cause death. Mountain and Columbian Monkshood both grown in Colorado. (Buttercup family)

Tim Balough in the background, is not a flower.

Found above 8,000 feet in moist areas. Photo taken in Placer Valley on July 28, at 10,700 feet.



Heart Leaved Arnica (yellow flower)

Although toxic, Arnica in liniment will reduce swelling and hasten the healing of bruises. (Never use Arnica liniment or wash on broken skin).

Tansy Yarrow

Yarrow is toxic in large doses, but holding the soft, feathery leaves between the cheek and gum will stop a toothache. Rubbing the leaves on skin will repel insects and the plant can also be used as a styptic. People with sensitive skin may have a reaction to Yarrow.

Grow above 6,000 feet. Photo taken in Placer Valley on July 28, at 10,700 feet.



Star Gentian

There are more than 400 varieties of gentians. Gentians were used long ago in Europe instead of hops to brew beer.

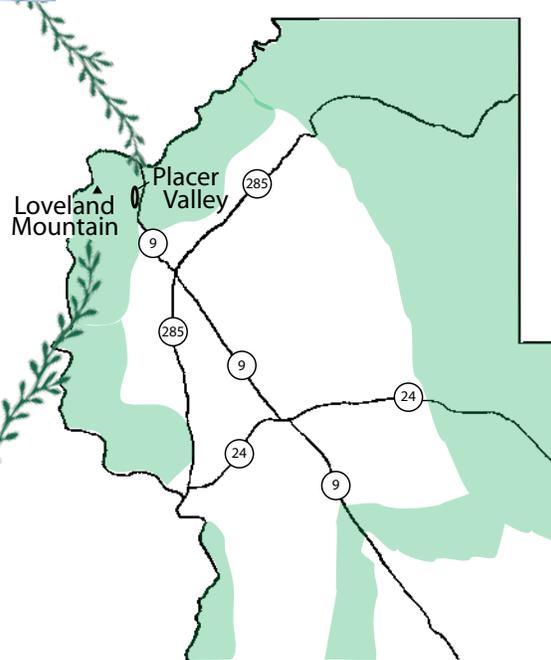
Grow above 8,000 feet in moist areas. Photo taken on Loveland Mountain on August 28, at 11,800 feet.



Wax Currant

Although the raw fruit of the wax currant are said to be bitter, they are safe to eat.

Pink petals; found 6,000 to 10,000 feet in canyons. Photo taken on Ridgeview Trail on June 25, at 10,400 feet.



King's Crown
 Sedums, of the Stonecrop family, are excellent choices for xeriscape and the whole plant of each variety turn lovely hues of reds in autumn.
 Found above 10,000 feet. King's Crown naturally occurs in moist areas, but sedums are drought-resistant and can be added to xeriscape gardens. Photo taken above Boreas Pass at 11,800 feet on July 4.



Snow Buttercup
 Buttercups are poisonous with varying degrees of toxicity.
 Growing where snow had recently melted and in bogs above 10,000 feet. Photo taken at the top of French Pass on July 16, at 12,000 feet.

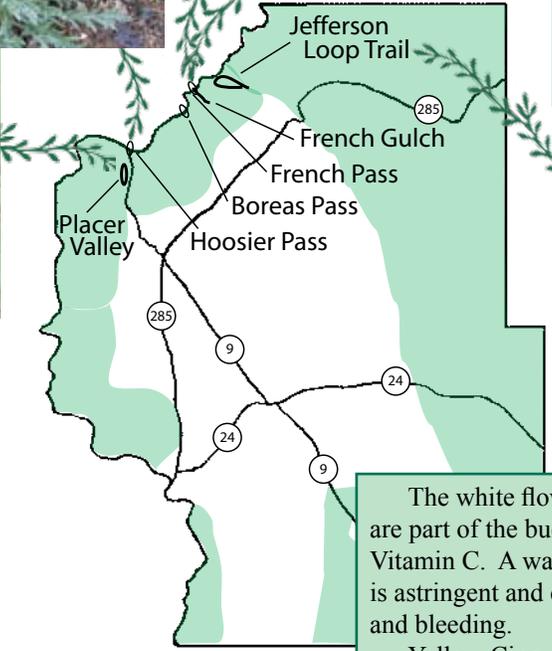
Purple Fringe
 AKA Silky Phacelia. Grow in clusters, and flowers can grow two feet tall.
 Found above 8,000 feet. Photo taken west of Hoosier Pass on June 22, at 12,500 feet.



Sky Pilot (Phlox family)
 Cultivated for use in gardens, a relative of the skunkweed. You'll notice a foul odor if you touch Sky Pilot.
 Cinquefoil (probably Leafy) on the left. Cinquefoils' leaves remain throughout winter and wildlife graze on it all year long.
 Mostly found between 10,000 to 11,500 feet. Photo taken in French Gulch on July 16, at 11,700 feet.



Mariposa Lily
 Edible, but should be a last resort, as taking the bulb kills the plant.
 Bigelow's Senecio buds in the bottom left and (aka) Bigelow's Groundsel blossom in the upper left. You'll see a reddish-purple bud one day and come back the next day to find a bright yellow flower!
 Grows 8,000 to 11,500 feet, in meadows and on open slopes. Photo taken in Placer Valley on July 28, at 10,700 feet.



The white flowers are American Bistort. Bistorts are part of the buckwheat family, are edible and rich in Vitamin C. A water or alcohol infusion with a bistort is astringent and can be used to treat stings, bites, cuts and bleeding.
 Yellow Cinquefoil, a Potentilla, part of the Rose family, is most likely the Leafy Cinquefoil.
 Usually found between 10,000 – 11,500 feet on moist, open slopes. Photo taken on Jefferson Loop Trail on June 28, at 11,000 feet.

Little Pink Elephant aka Elephant Head aka Elephantella
Purple flowers look like heads with trunks and are a favorite snack of elk.

Grow above 8,000 feet in moist areas. Photo taken July 23 in Handcart Gulch, elevation 11,400 feet.



Northern Rockjasmine
Primrose family, AKA Rock Primrose. The tiny flowers of the primrose family are among the first plants to pop up and blossom following snowmelt.

Found above 6,000 feet. Photo taken on Rosalie Peak above 12,300 feet, on June 15.



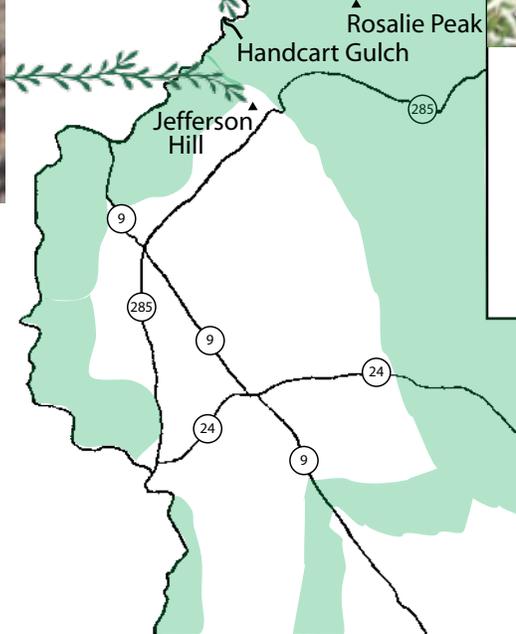
Yellow Stonecrop (Sedums thrive in rocky soil and hot, sunny spots.)

Found from the lowest elevations of Colorado to above tree line. Photo taken on Rosalie Peak above 12,300 feet, on June 15.



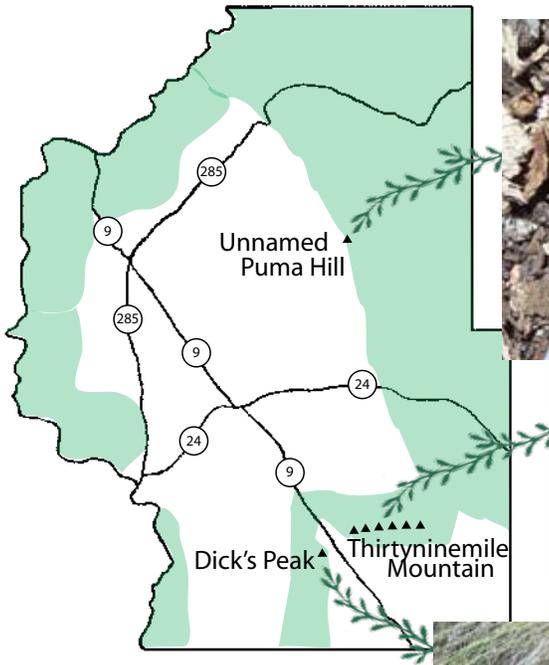
Blue Flax (Part of the family of plants from which linen is made. On bright, sunny days, the Blue Flax loses its petals early. On cloudy, cool days, the blooms open in the morning and shed their leaves in the evening.)

Found from the lowest elevations of Colorado to about 11,500 feet. Photo taken August 23 at the foot of Jefferson Hill, elevation 10,000 feet.



Dame's Rocket
A member of the Mustard family, this plant is on Colorado's Noxious Weed list.

Found from the plains to the mountain, usually near water or in well irrigated areas. Photo taken on Rosalie Peak above 12,300 feet, on June 15.



Northern Rockjasmine
 Primrose family, AKA Rock Primrose.
 The tiny flowers of the primrose family are among the first plants to pop up and blossom following snowmelt.
 Found above 6,000 feet. Photo taken on an unnamed peak in the northern Puma Hills, on June 1, at 11,000 feet.
 The car key gives an indication of how tiny the blossoms are.



Fringed Gentian
 Tea made from the roots of any gentian will stimulate appetite and aid digestion. Overdose will cause an upset stomach. Pregnant women and those with high blood pressure or ulcers should avoid consuming gentian.
 Found above 8,000 feet in moist areas. Photo taken on Thirtyninemile Mountain on August 30, at 11,200 feet.

Pineywoods Geranium
 Cultivated for sale by nurseries for gardens.
 Grows from 6,000 to 11,500 feet.
 This Photo taken on Dick's Peak, July 20, at 10,700 feet.

