

Seasonal Wildflowers – A Beautiful Landscape

Many kinds of wildflowers occur in the natural areas within Running Y Ranch Resort. Start to look for wildflowers along the edges of roads and trails where sunshine and water runoff sustain successional plants. Next visit the Skillet Handle peninsula to view a preponderance of naturally occurring wildflowers.

Spring soaking rains bring out many showy flowers by May; however, wildflower displays hit their peak by June. Most native flowering plants start going to seed by late July, while many nonnative plants (such as thistles) are just starting to flower. The Asteraceae Family, a huge group of plants, includes Oregon sunshine (a sunflower), which remains in bloom through late August and rabbitbrush until October.

Conspicuous Flowering Plants Next to Any Roadway

Visitors frequently ask what are the white-flowering shrubs along the road. There is no single answer, because there are many large flowering shrubs at the Running Y. Two of the more common flowering shrubs are in the genus “Prunus”.

Chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*) is described by “puckering mouth” when tasted; however, cooking can make a palatable jam. Butterflies and bees pollinate the flowers.



Chokecherry

Bitter Cherry (*Prunus emarginata*) produces an astringent and bitter fruit, that is quite edible by birds and humans. Leaves are harvested by leaf-cutting bees.



Bitter Cherry

***Additional white flowering shrubs at
Running Y Ranch Resort include:***

Serviceberry

(Amelanchier alnifolia)

Ocean Spray

(Holodiscus discolor)

Mock Orange

(Philadelphus lewisii)

Birch-leaf Mtn. Mahogany

(Cercocarpus betuloides)

Blue Elderberry

(Sambucus Mexicana)

Three important forest understory shrubs



Desert Gooseberry

Desert gooseberry (*Ribes velutinum*): Desert gooseberries have bitter fruit that is eaten by small seed-eating birds.



Oregon grape (*Berberis aquifolium*): Ubiquitous Oregon grapes provide food and cover for Cedar Waxwings and California Quail.

Oregon Grape - Oregon State Flower



Common Snowberry (*symphoricarpos albus*): Bell-shaped flowers develop in soft white berries.

Snowberry

Conspicuous nonnative “invasive” plants germinate in substantial numbers and grow to a large size by mid-summer. Invasive weeds sometime threaten the health of natural plant communities and can impact human agricultural activities. These plants introduced from Eurasia over the centuries often produce beautiful flowers that attract pollinating insects and seed-eating birds. Some troublesome nonnative plants sprout in gardens and lawns producing an abundance of seeds that remain viable for years in the soil. Most are described in the “Klamath County Noxious Weed Identification Booklet”. Some notable invasive weeds are illustrated below.



Yellow Sweet Clover

Yellow sweet clover, a pea-like plant, had been planted as forage in fields – now it occurs in unwanted places.



Tumble Mustard

Tumble mustard has skeleton stems that breakaway, like “tumbleweed,” it may show up in your yard.



Common Mullein

Common mullein is a nonnative weed that often invades old fields with one redeeming quality – wildlife loves it.



Dalmatian Toadflax

Dalmatian toadflax invades roadsides, but an imported boring weevil has been released to help control their spread.



White-Top Mustard

White-top mustard, an invasive “competitive” weed, grows in dense monoculture where it out-competes grasses.



Bull Thistle

Bull thistle is one of several nonnative thistles that flower in July. It is listed as a noxious weed for obvious reasons.



Woolly Vetch

Woolly Vetch (*Vicia villosa*), a blue plant in the pea family, flowers throughout summer along the bike trail near the driving range.

Nonnative plants are opportunistic and can spread rapidly into native plant communities. These invasive plants generally make their entrance at disturbed sites. The plants, listed below, are small-sized invasive weeds, but are none-the-less tenacious.

Field pennycress (*Thlaspi arvense*), a yellow mustard, emerges in shady gardens.

Pineapple weed (*Matricaria discoidea*), invades gravel roads, even in tight space.

Storks bill (*Erodium cicutarium*), a red geranium, is abundant in gravelly sites.

Oxeye daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*) white flower clusters.

Alfalfa (*Medicago sativa*), a.k.a. “hay”, stems and blue flowers spread over lawns.

Goat’s beard (*Tragopogon dubius*), similar to common dandelion

Wildflowers to Know on the Skillet Handle

Native wildflowers worth mentioning include several forbs that can germinate and grow on gravelly road shoulders. They must compete with nonnative successional flowering plants and grasses which are highly adapted to colonizing disturbed sites. Successional plants tend to germinate on open ground after natural events: floods, landslides or fires. Three native colonizers commonly seen along roadways are:



Small-Flowered Fiddleneck

Small-flowered fiddleneck (*Amsinckia menziesii*), a native plant with irritating alkaloid hairs, invades disturbed sites with poor soils.



Lemon Tarweed

Lemon Tarweed (*Madia citriodora*), a small lemon scented composite, favors gravelly roadsides in great abundance throughout the summer.

First to announce spring:



Yellow bell
(*Fritillaria pudica*)
Lily Family



Blue-headed gilia
(*Gilia capitata*)
Phlox Family

Spring groundcover:



Blue-Eyed Mary

Small-flowered
Blue-Eyed Mary
(*Collinsia parviflora*)
Figwort Family



Spring Draba

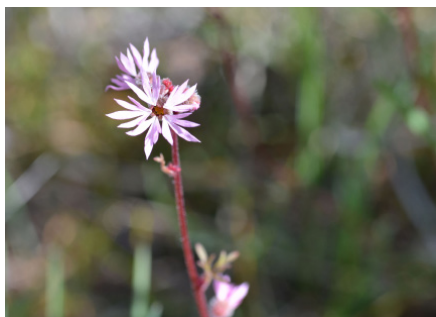
Spring drapa (nonnative)
(*Draba verna*)
Mustard Family



Miner's Lettuce

Miner's lettuce
(*Claytonia rubra*)
Purslane Family

Spring standouts:



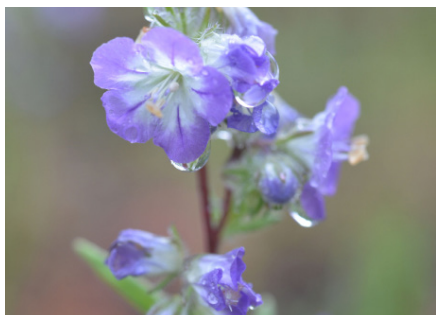
Woodland Star

Woodland star
(*Lithophragma* spp.)
Saxifrage Family



Tower Butterweed

Tower butterweed
(*Senecio integerrimus*)
Sunflower Family



Threadleaf Phacelia

Threadleaf phacelia
(*Phacelia linearis*)
Waterleaf Family

Late-Spring Showy Flowers:



Bicolor Triteleia

Bicolor Triteleia
(*Triteleia grandiflora*)
Lily Family



Showy Penstemon

Showy penstemon
(*Penstemon Speciosus*)
Figwort Family



Silvery Lupine

Silvery lupine
(*Lupinus argenteus*)
Pea Family

Summer holdovers:



Western Flax

Western flax
(*Linum lewisii*)
Flax Family



American Vetch

American Vetch
(*Vicia Americana*)
Pea Family



Indian Paintbrush

Indian paintbrush
(*Castilleja angustifolia*)
Figwort Family

Sun-loving plants (June-July):



Nine-Leaved Biscuitroot

Nine-leaved biscuitroot
(*Lomatium triternatum*)
Parsley Family



Northern Black Snakeroot

Northern Black Snakeroot
(*Sanicula graveolens*)
Parsley Family



Yarrow

Yarrow
(*Achillea millefolium*)
Asteraceae Family

Summer Sunflowers:

The Asteraceae Family goes by several common names including: composite, sunflower or aster family – take your pick. What looks like a “really” big flower is actually composed of numerous tiny flowers clustered in a “head”. These tiny florets consist of two kinds, “disk” (inner) florets and “ray” (periphery) florets. Very aromatic perennial woody composites, such as big sagebrush and green rabbitbrush, are predominate on sunny, open sites on the Skillet Handle.

A1: Oregon Sunshine



A1: Oregon Sunshine

(*Eriophyllum lanatum*), a bunching sunflower, covers sunny dry habitats in “great” profusion.

A2: Pale Agoseris (*Agoseris glauca*), a native flower, is sometimes confused with the nonnative “European” dandelion.



A2: Pale Agoseris

A3: Slender Hareleaf (*Lagophylla ramosissima*) are locally common with their flowers opening in the evening and closing by late morning.



A3: Slender Hareleaf

Late summer blooming flowers:



Goldenrod

Goldenrod (*Solidago spp.*) flowers grow in tight clusters on erect stems. Visible in midsummer in meadows along trails.



Sagebrush

Sagebrush (*Artemisia spp.*) produces many small and inconspicuous flowers heads. Cabbage butterfly (an introduced European species) feed on agricultural crops - as its name implies.



Green Rabbitbrush

Green Rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus viscidiflorus*) is often covered in different kinds of insects including butterflies. Rabbitbrush blooms late into October providing nectar to active insects – especially bees.

More Native flowering plants in select sites at Running Y Ranch:

Wood rose (*Rosa spp.*) in open pine forests and near developed sites

Slender clarkia (*Clarkia gracilis*) an evening primrose in dry areas

Western blue iris (*Iris missouriensis*) in moist soils, somewhat invasive

Rosy pussytoes (*Antennaria rosea*) a button-like flower at disturbed sites

Western morning glory (*Calystegia occidentalis*) a weedy vine in grassy areas

Nettleleaf horsemint (*Agastache urticifolia*) on rocky slopes and in canyons

Mountain snowberry (*Symphoricarpos oreophilus*) on bike trail near lodge

Vari-leaf phacelia (*Phacelia heterophylla*) a tall plant in Ponderosa Pine woods

Midget phlox (*Microsteris gracilis*) present near “disturbed” vernal wet areas

Sulphur Flower (*Eriogonum umbellatum*), a buckwheat on dry roadcuts

Gay penstemon (*Penstemon lateus*) A bright blue figwort

Fireweed (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*) Fall flower abundant after fire

Some native plants are easier to identify by their seeds than by their tiny flowers:

Short-fruited tansy (Mustard Family) produces small yellow flowers with erect-linear pods.

Northern bedstraw (Madder Family) produces hock-hairy nutlets distributed by passing animals, including human pant legs.

Goose grass (Madder Family) develop sticky leaves and seeds that attach to animals or anyone walking in an open field.

See “Wildflowers of the Pacific Northwest” by Mark Turner and Phyllis Gustafson” for more information.

Butterflies and Bees – Flower Power of Attraction

Flowers opens their blossoms each summer to insect pollinators. Bees, the most proficient pollinators, fill the airways above nectar producing flowers. Butterflies flutter between flowering plants stopping to drink nectar (concentrated sugar) with their long tube-like tongue (proboscis). In return, pollinators deliver genetic material - sticky pollen for cross-fertilization of neighboring plants.

There are over two dozen kinds of butterflies on the Skillet Handle. “A Guidebook to Insects of the Pacific Northwest” will help you to identify these fascinating insects. There are thirty kinds of bumble bees in Oregon, but they are difficult to tell apart. Bumble bees are part of a complex food web as they go about their business collecting pollen. Shown below are some butterflies and bugs one might see on a Skillet Handle wildflower walk.



Western Tiger Swallowtail

Western Tiger Swallowtails are widely distributed afield attracted to nectar on thistle, phlox and phacelia (shown). Bright coloration of adults serves as a warning to predators of their bitter taste.



Painted Lady

Painted Ladies are fast and flighty. Adults nectar on a variety of plants, such as rabbitbrush, thistle and chokecherry. Host plants for their caterpillars include thistle, lupine and others.



Lorquin's Admiral

Lorquin's Admirals are a boldly colored species, while its caterpillars mimic the appearance of bird droppings. Caterpillars feasts on willow, plum and cherry leaves. Adults nectar on mustards, yarrow and other summer flowers.



Mourning Cloak

Mourning Cloak adults overwinter on the woody stems of deciduous trees. They are usually the first active butterfly to be spotted in spring. These woodland butterflies are dark in color to absorb sunlight to stay warm.



Clouded Sulphur

Clouded Sulphur males are yellow in color from mustard oils, a poison to birds. Females often lack yellow pigments but otherwise look similar to males.



Silvery Blues

The stunning Silvery Blues are a widespread butterfly that fluoresces under UV light. UV reflective light is something our unaided eye can't detect. The larval stage utilizes a broad number of host plants, including lupines.



Monarch Caterpillar

Monarch butterflies' principle host plant is milkweed. Their caterpillar, just as recognizable as the adult, voraciously feeds on milkweed plants.



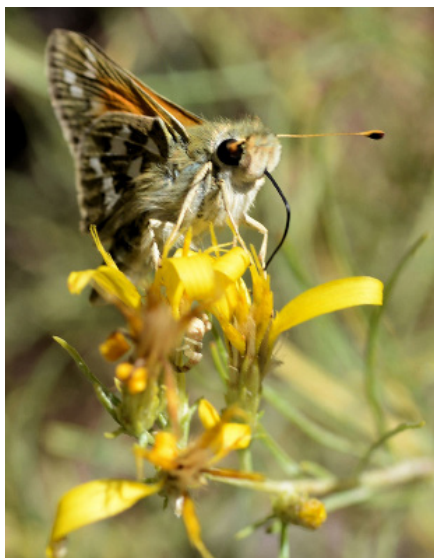
Monarch

Second and third generations of monarchs emerge in the southern Cascades with the last generation taking a long southern flight to overwinter in California.



Mylitta Crescents

Mylitta Crescents, referred to as a “thistle crescent”, can be ubiquitous in weedy fields where larvae feed on host plants, such as the Canada thistle. Males (orangish with dark lines) fly in low erratic flight patterns seeking compliant females (yellowish bars).



Juba Skipper

Juba Skipper is a butterfly that can easily be mistaken for a moth. It shows up in spring but is most numerous in fall when it feeds on nectar of rabbitbrush.



Bumble Bee

Bumble bees are social creatures that cooperatively forage for food and protect their colony. Overall numbers of bumble bees have been in decline, impairing pollination services for native wildflowers. On the Skillet Handle bumble bees seem quite abundant.



Hoverfly

Is it a bee or a fly? In this case it is a harmless hoverfly that resembles a wasp. It is frequently misrecognized by its striped body and nectar feeding behavior – a classic case of insect mimicry.



Spotted Flower Beetle

This spotted flower beetle feeds on parts of flowers and pollen. Its eggs hatch into wood-boring larvae – a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde life cycle. Spend time in flowering meadows to discover insect mysteries.