

# Wildflowers of Medicine Bow

Flowers and Nature



LIBBY FLATS - a garden of diversity









Old man of Mountain  
Alpine sunflower  
Tetraneuris grandiflora  
Perennial  
Mid spring brilliant  
flower of high alpine  
areas





Old man of the Mountain

White = *Cerastium arvense*  
ssp *strictum*

Prairie mouse ear

Stitchwort

chickweed





**White spotted Midget moth**  
***Eutricopis nexilis***



Hover Fly / Flower fly





Rocky Mtn  
Jacobs ladder  
Or  
Sky Pilot

*Polemonium* sp



Sky pilot and  
various potentilla







Libby lake Marshes  
early spring

*Trollius albiflorus*  
Globeflower  
Buttercup  
/ranunculus family  
The leaves are  
divided





Streamside early  
spring  
Marsh Marigold  
*Caltha leptosepala*

Yes its white – leaves  
are heart shaped.





Marsh Marigold - left

Globeflower – right

These are the first  
spring flowers in high  
Snowies





Snowy range marsh

White are Marsh  
Marigolds

Pink are Parry's  
Primrose


*Primula parryi* -  
Said to have a  
“rankly aromatic  
skunky smell”




Parry's  
Primrose





A close-up photograph of a dense patch of alpine stitchwort (Arenaria obtusiloba). The plant consists of numerous small, white, five-petaled flowers with yellow centers, growing in a low, mat-like arrangement. The foliage is a dense, green, needle-like carpet. The plants are growing on a rocky, light-colored substrate, with some larger, flat, grey rocks visible on the right side of the frame.

Alpine stitchwort  
*Arenaria obtusiloba*

A photograph of a red anemone (Anemone multifida) growing in a rocky, alpine environment. The plant has several upright, slender stems with multiple buds and some open flowers. The buds are a vibrant pinkish-red color. The leaves are green and finely divided, appearing fern-like. The plant is growing on a rocky surface, with large, flat, grey rocks visible in the background and foreground. Some orange lichen is visible on the rocks.

*Anemone multifida*  
Libby flats/ vedauwoo  
“cutleaf anemone”  
Red anemone





Glacier lilies  
Avalanche lily

Beautiful in early  
spring and found  
next to melting  
snow in summer.

*Erythronium*  
*grandiflorum*

Picnic loop  
Mirror lake





These lilies are among the first alpine flowers and are VERY plentiful

Apparently, the bulbs are a preferred food for Grizzly bears and bears in general. Grizzlies dig / plow the ground and change the ecology.







Native American also enjoyed eating these.





Libby flats is a botanical paradise of diversity. Alpine plants.

Various Erigeron (asters) daisies

Potentilla – yellow

Bistort – polygonum-  
a type of buckwheat-  
white on stalks

Blue – Sky Pilot





Marsh near  
telephone lake

Yellow paintbrush  
White orchids  
Erigeron daisies  
Arnica - /sunflower  
And many more





White bog orchids

*Platanthera dilatata*

These are found in wet places throughout snowy range and also Vedauwoo





Twinflower – *Linnaea borealis*  
Found alpine moist forests circumpolar

After famous Swedish Botanist and physician  
Carl Linnaeus ( 1707 – 1778 )  
Binomial nomenclature

CAROLI LINNÆI  
EQUITIS DE STELLA POLARI,  
ARCHIATRI REGII, MED. & BOTAN. PROFESS. UPSAL.  
ACAD. UPSAL. HÖGEMENS. PEROPOL. BEROL. INFER.  
LOND. MONSIE. TOLOS. FLORENT. SOC.

**SYSTEMA  
NATURÆ**

PER  
REGNA TRIA NATURÆ,  
SECUNDUM  
CLASSES, ORDINES,  
GENERA, SPECIES,  
CUM  
CHARACTERIBUS, DIFFERENTIIS,  
SYNONYMIS, LOCIS.

TOMUS I

EDITIO DECIMA, REFORMATA.

~~~~~  
Cum Privilegio Sæ Rœ Mâit Sveciæ.

HOLMIÆ,  
IMPENSIS DIRECT. LAURENTII SALVII,  
1778.





Moose by Little Brooklynn Lake





Little Brooklyn Lake  
Diverse flowers  
The Blue is mostly  
Lupines and  
Penstemon  
whippleanus

Whipples Penstemon





By Little Brooklyn lake,  
next to Willows

Lucy – my partner  
Mostly Erigeron daises but  
many more (potentilla plus  
)





Looking up to road by St  
Albans chapel.

Penstemon, lupines and  
Erigeron





“short styled onion”  
*Allium brevistylum*

Quite common in spring  
/summer





Short styled onion is an Allium

Allium do very well in our climate and many garden varieties are introduced from the dry mountainous areas of Asia, Turkey, Iran and the “stans” plus Himalayas.





Elephant heads  
*Pedicularis groenlandica*

Parasitic and non specific ,  
mostly sedges but any plant  
will do. Most pedicularis are  
parasitic

. Lousewort (*Pedicularis*)  
got its name because of the  
belief that livestock grazing  
on the plant would get lice  
(and possibly transmit them  
to humans). There seems  
to be little evidence to  
support this claim, but it did  
not prevent Linnaeus from  
using the Latin  
word *Pediculus* (louse) for  
the plant's genus name.





Little Pink Elephant  
*Pedicularis groenlandica*  
A marsh plant - very recognizable







The high alpine areas have numerous “mat forming” plants. For many reasons this promotes their survival.

These two are often found growing in large clumps together ( and apart) along with many other species especially near or above tree line. Tundra.

Blue phlox and alpine pinks





Phlox pulvinata  
Cushion phlox

With a few pinks left side





Cushion phlox

Moss Campion -*Silene acaulis* “ distinctive  
tundra plant found in the far north  
In the Caryophyllaceae “ Pinks and Champions”





*Eritrichium nanum*  
Alpine forget me not

Official flower of Grand Teton  
Park

Grows up on Libby flats and high  
snowies.  
Circumpolar  
Scented.





The mat forming tundra plants in a good year can meld together  
Here is Stitchwort , sedum and a vetch looking pretty.





Not all violets are blue , although there are many blue violets found in the Medicine bows.

This alpine variety is common early spring both in the Snowies and at Happy Jack  
Yellow montane Violet  
*Viola nuttallii*







Columbines  
can vary in  
color



Columbines have a long flowering season







Columbine  
*Aquilegia coerulea*

And *Phacelia sericea* - Silky Phacelia

Columbine is state flower of  
Colorado







Mid July  
Snowies





Bog Laurel  
*Kalmia microphylla*  
Very pretty

Especially common  
near South Gap lake  
trail.

Grows 6-8" tall  
Likes wet areas





Rosy paintbrush / Alpine paintbrush - *Castilleja rhexifolia*



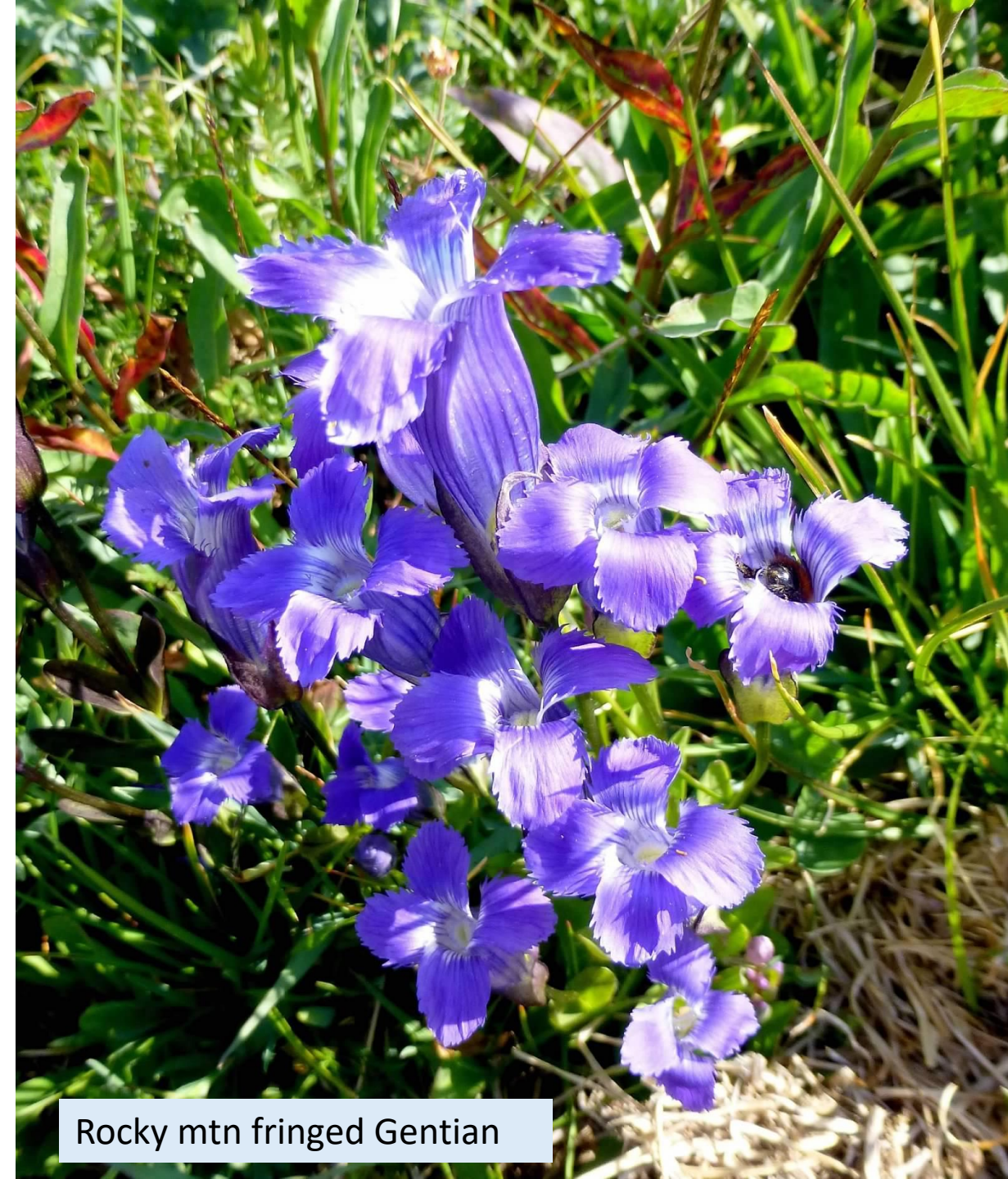


Fringed Gentian  
*Gentianopsis detonsa*

Floral emblem of  
Yellowstone park

Late summer common  
up in snowies and along  
roadsides





Rocky mtn fringed Gentian



Northern Gentian  
*Gentianella amerella*



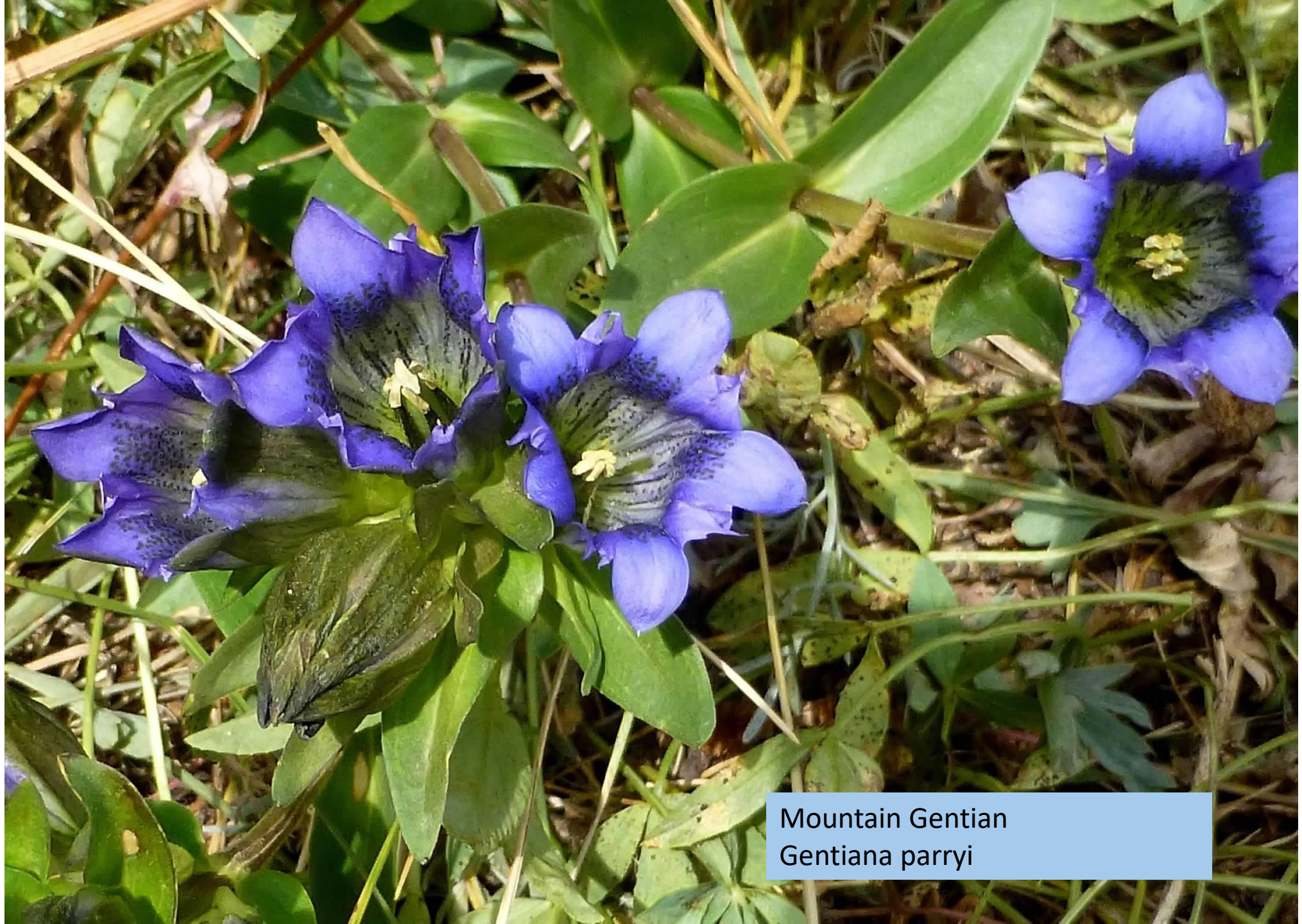


Arctic Gentian  
*Gentiana algida*

Circumpolar

Late summer  
Esp along Lewis lake and  
up trails





Mountain Gentian  
*Gentiana parryi*





Star Gentian  
*Swertia perennis*  
Found in wet areas







White shouldered Bumble bee on Gentian

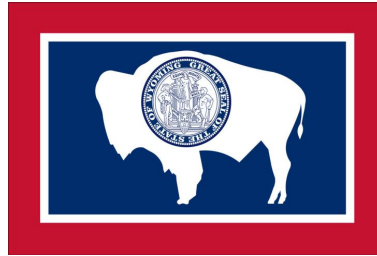






Left  
Wyoming Paintbrush  
*Castilleja linarifolia*

State flower of  
Wyoming (1917)



Hemiparasitic

Host for Ediths  
Checkerspot  
Butterfly .

Right  
Rosy Paintbrush  
*Castilleja rhexifolia*

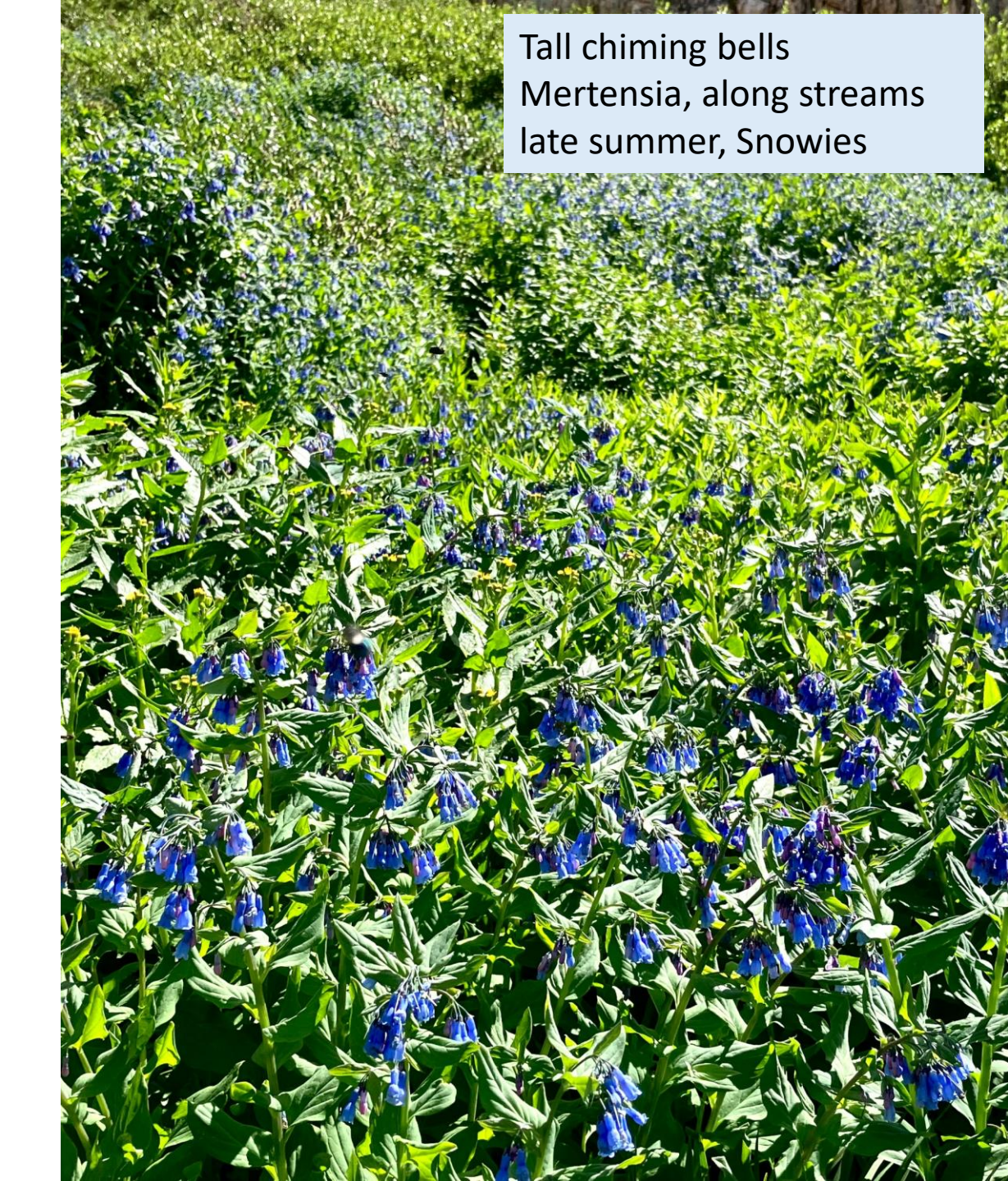






Mertensia – also called “Bluebells”  
Many species – adapted to different environments





Tall chiming bells  
Mertensia, along streams  
late summer, Snowies



Prairie Bluebells  
*Mertensia lanceolata*





Rhodiola rhodantha- **Rose crown**  
Along streams  
Stone crop family - crassulaceae

**Crassulacean acid metabolism**, also known as **CAM photosynthesis**, is a [carbon fixation](#) pathway that evolved in some [plants](#) as an adaptation to [arid](#) conditions<sup>[1]</sup> that allows a plant to [photosynthesize](#) during the day, but only exchange gases at night





Penstemon whippleanus

Whipple's Penstemon

Varies in color across its range in the alpine areas

Common in the snowies





Later summer in wet areas  
BLUE- mountain larkspur  
*Delphinium ramosum*  
Cowparsnip - white





Milberts Tortoiseshell

*Nymphalis milberti*

Often seen in the snowies  
and occasionally Happy Jack  
and in Laramie.

A large distinctive butterfly.

There are others especially  
Checkerspots and Parnassians  
are found in the Snowies  
Happy Jack has a large and  
diverse butterfly population.





Nodding little Sunflower- *Helianthella quinquenervis*





There are 6 types of large ground squirrels called MARMOTS in N America. This is Yellow bellied or *Marmota flaviventris*. They hibernate.





## BIRDS

There are many birds in the Medicine bows.

Many elusive warblers esp Wilsons and yellow.

This is a RED CROSSBILL  
Found on Brooklyn lake road.

Specialized beaks for  
foraging on ponderosa and  
lodgepole pine cones





White crowned Sparrow  
Easy to see in Snowies

also lives in Laramie  
town – eats bugs in my  
garden.





American Pipit

*Anthus rubescens alticola*

Rocky mtn birds said to be paler than  
arctic ones

Alpine/ tundra bird





Lewis lake in the Fall  
Fireweed





Fireweed – known to be one of the first to colonize after forest fires.

Mullen Fire

Aka Greater Willowherb

*Epilobium angustifolium*

Spread by rhizomes aggressively .

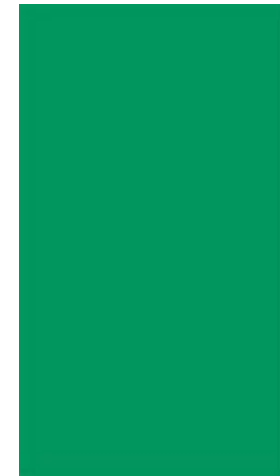
VERY Loved by pollinators

Makes excellent honey

Circumpolar.

Edible – they say.

The territorial flower of The YUKON









# Eastern Medicine Bow forest

- Today that includes the Happy Jack and Vedauwoo areas
- Which are higher and wetter than the pole mtn area







Mountain Ball Cactus  
*Coryphantha vivipara*  
Wide range - Canada to  
Mexico





First week May

Easter daisies  
*Townsendia hookeri*





Several small flowers can be found in May  
Left – Easter daisies

Below Prairie phlox –Phlox hoodii







Spring beauty  
*Claytonia lanceolata*  
Happy jack area in spring





Snowball saxifrage  
Not conspicuous but  
common HJ



Sagebrush Buttercup  
*Ranunculus glaberrimus*  
Very early flowering





Wallflower-Erysimum asperum



Mertensia "bluebells"





Mid spring flower  
carpets at HJ  
Wild parsley –yellow  
Pink Parry's clover



Paintbrush  
*Castilleja angustifolia*





Pasque flower  
( from Pasque / Pasqua  
meaning Easter)  
Anemone patens  
Or  
Pulsatilla patens





Pasque flower – *Anemone patens* or *Pulsatilla patens*





Pasque flower – *Anemone patens* or *Pulsatilla patens*

In some places called “ prairie crocus” it is not a bulb or corm.

Flowers early : is state flower of South Dakota

Provincial flower of Manitoba (1906 )

This a different variant as it does not look like the local Laramie Pasque flowers and indeed somewhat resembles a crocus .





Mertensia



Other early flowers are the common Phlox – a mat former and Mertensia various species

Phlox







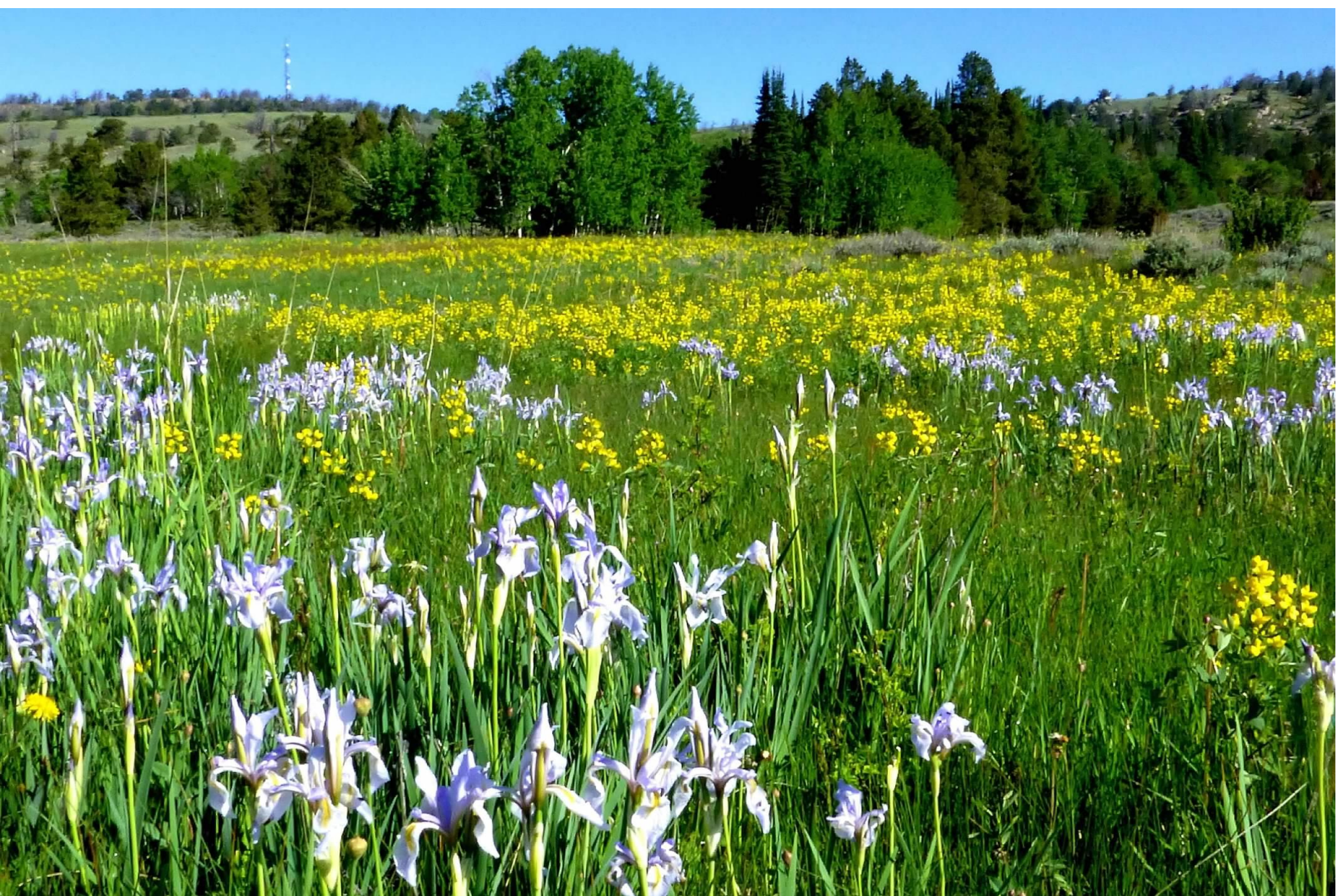
Parnassian Butterfly on Lanceleaf Stonecrop ( *Sedum lanceolatum* )  
And its caterpillar on same.





Parnassian – male has only 1 red spot on hind wing  
*Parnassius phoebus* / *smitheus*





Moist meadow  
near parking lot  
at old ski area.

Iris and  
“prairie golden  
Banner “  
Thermopsis  
and others



*Thermopsis rhombifolia* - Golden Pea,  
Golden Banner, prairie Goldenbean.



*Iris missouriensis*  
Quite variable in color even  
in same place





Iris missouriensis Common in wet meadows



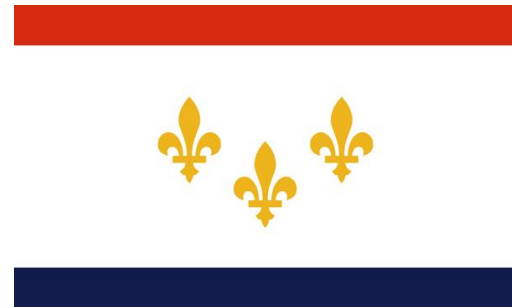
The provincial flag of Quebec shows the French Fleur de lis which lost its r in history .

After discussion in 1999 Quebec chose an iris

The blue flag iris

Iris versicolor which actually grows in Quebec

The flag of New Orleans shows the original European yellow flag iris



Iris versicolor  
Also state flower of  
Tennessee



Quebec







Western Blue Virginsbower  
*Clematis occidentalis*



Bee Balm- *Monarda fistulosa*





Clump of the diminutive  
Pink Lady's slipper  
*Calypso bulbosa*

Needs deep old soils of  
evergreen woods.  
They do NOT transplant

Found at HJ and lower  
trails of the Snowies





Close up of the tiny slipper orchids





Checkerspot on Sage  
*Euphydryas anica*  
Relatively common with  
large range in most of  
Rockies

Also called variable  
Identified by the white  
spots on abdomen

Larvae – penstemon and  
paintbrush

Thin knobbed antennae



Lilac bordered Copper  
*Lycaena nivalis*



Fritillary- identified by spots on underwing







Mid Spring especially in a wetter year the meadows are full of Lupines and more . Usually the common *Lupinus argenteus* Silvery Lupine - varies in color





Spring Beauty

Harebells aka Bluebell. Circumpolar and adaptable  
*Campanula rotundifolia*  
The Scottish Bluebell



Miners candle- there are 22 species in Wyoming various sizes , seasons and habitats. But all have the same overall color and shape  
*Cryptantha* species







*Gnophaela vermiculata*  
Aka Police car moth  
Western Rockies Canada to New Mexico  
On Erigeron

It is a moth –NOTE feathery antennae

Some moths are seen in daytime although most prefer evening/ night







Sagebrush and Paintbrush which is hemiparasitic. The Paintbrush is State flower of Wyoming



The sagebrush is state flower of Nevada.







Yellow Paintbrush *Castilleja flava*



Yellow Owl clover – *Orthocarpus luteus*





Western Yellow Paintbrush, there are MANY species of paintbrush throughout N America and especially the WEST with many variable names and variable colors depending on location.





Coral root – *corallorrhiza maculata*. Saprophyte  
Complex interaction with roots and mycorrhizae and more  
Pine forests.







Larch leaf Penstemon. *Penstemon laricifolius*  
Mid July HJ . Limited range .







Sulfur buckwheat

*Eriogonum umbellatum*

Long lived, drought tolerant perennial

Makes great xeric garden plant

Favored by many pollinators

Variable in form





Sulphur Buckwheat  
*Eriogonum umbellatum*

With a “Blue”  
Possibly Buckwheat  
Blue  
Buckwheats are larvae  
source for many of the  
“Blues”

Buckwheats 30 sp in  
Wyoming are an  
important ecosystem  
plant.  
They also grow well in a  
relatively dry home  
garden.



Hover fly – pollinator and beneficial  
bug on Buckwheat







One of the best ways to find butterflies is when they are “puddling”

Here a

Branded Skipper

*Hesperia nevada* sucks it up ( water /minerals )  
big looped proboscis

Note Knobbed antenna

Larvae - grasses





A “ Blue” – there are VERY many-identified by spots under wing as well as top side

This is most likely an Acmon Blue  
*Plebejus acmon* male.

The females are brown to blackish with spots.

Larvae - buckwheats





Common Ringlet  
*Coenonympha tullia*  
Larvae grasses





A “Blue” may have no top spots and some especially the females are actually brownish and unidentifiable from above. This Blue looks like “Silvery Blue” – has no marks on the wing fringes.







Leopard Lily  
*Fritillaria atropurpurea*  
Seems to bloom more  
in wetter years  
Spring with lupines







Common Alpine  
*Erebia episodea*

Larvae – grasses

Flower is Bistort  
*Polygonum bistortoides*  
Widespread mountain plant  
Roots edible





Common Alpine  
On Agoseris  
False Dandelion





In a wet year the flax is blooming  
massively by roadsides. *Linum lewisii*





## Blanket flower

*Gaillardia aristata*

Grows well in gardens – very variable in color and size

Native entire rocky mountains

Has a special relationship with the “flower moth” known as fire moth or blanket flower moth

*Schinia masoni* which spends its entire life with the plant

The moth hangs out on the flower

The caterpillars live on the disk flowers

The chrysalis live in the ground next to plant

Some say it is dependent on forest fires ?

The area I find them does not have recent forest fires

Endemic to front range and Laramie mtns











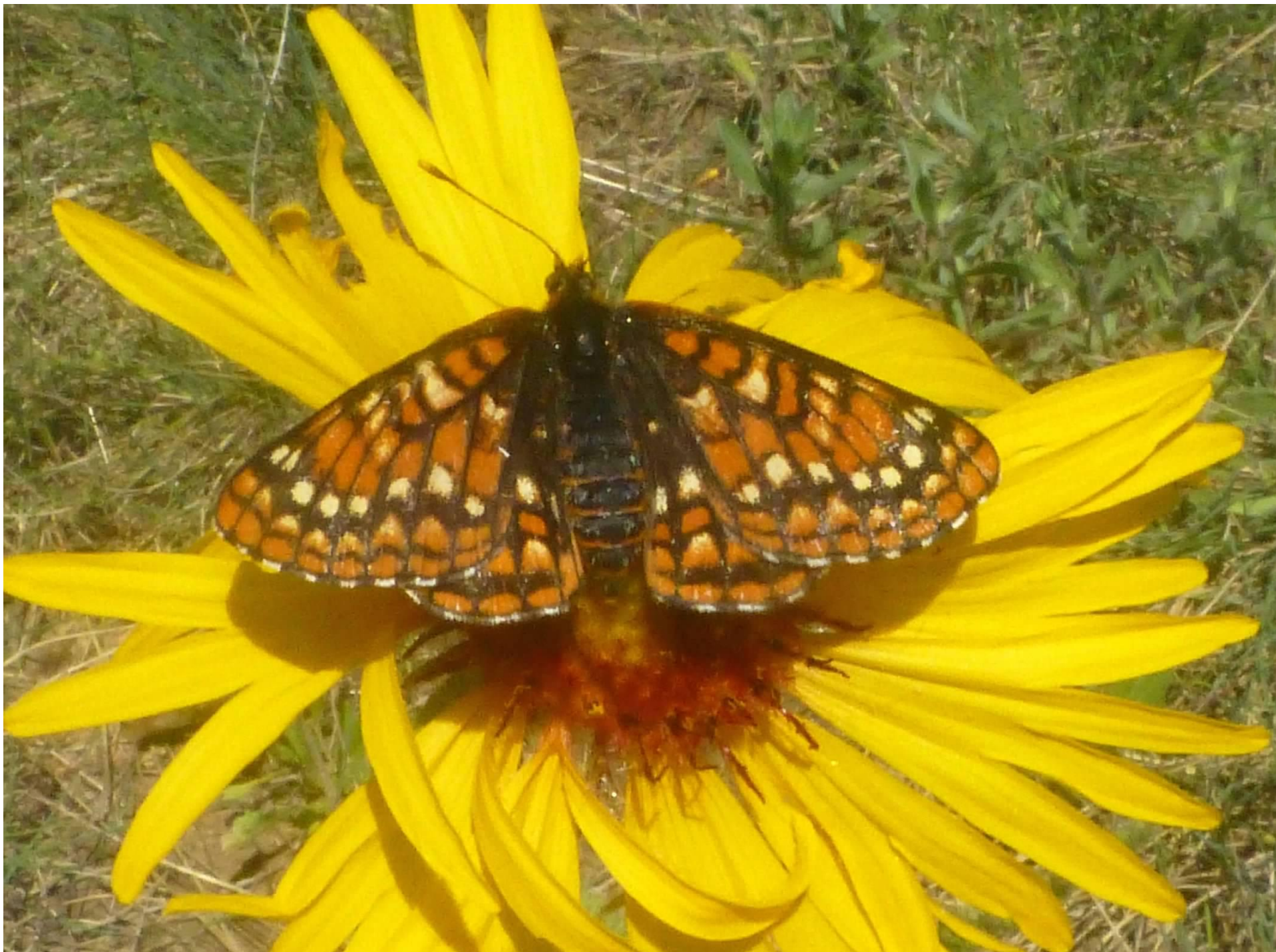






Blanket flower moth is small





Checker spot butterfly  
Probably Anica a variable  
species  
It is not a large butterfly  
but bigger than flower  
moth.  
The larvae eat penstemon





A "Blue" on sagebrush  
Probably Boisduvals

Host plant lupines





Knapweed is invasive weed but loved by pollinators because it produces masses of nectar.

Fritillaries





Usually sulfur butterflies are skittish. This one was pigging out on the nectar and allowed me to get close.

This is most likely a Clouded sulfur

Larvae – clovers and legume family



Two “Blues” puddling . The one below is probably Acmon blue





Melissa Blue  
Double set of pretty  
underwing spots

Larvae lupines







Fuzzy tongued Penstemon  
*Penstemon eriantherus*





Green Gentian  
Monument plant  
Elkweed

*Frasera speciosa*

Obvious on dry  
upland prairie with  
low mat formers – it  
has a large black tap  
root.

There is the common  
Ornate checkered  
flower beetle  
*Trichodes ornatus* at  
lower right  
Often found on  
buckwheat they eat  
pollen





Fossil records suggest that beetles, along with flies, were probably the first insect pollinators of prehistoric flowering plants in the late Jurassic era, around 150 million years ago way before bees, 30 million years later.

Here an ornate checkered flower beetle is on Gaillardia.





There are at least two geraniums up at HJ  
This is sticky Geranium  
*Geranium viscosissimum*

There is a white one that grows in the moister areas  
Richardsons.







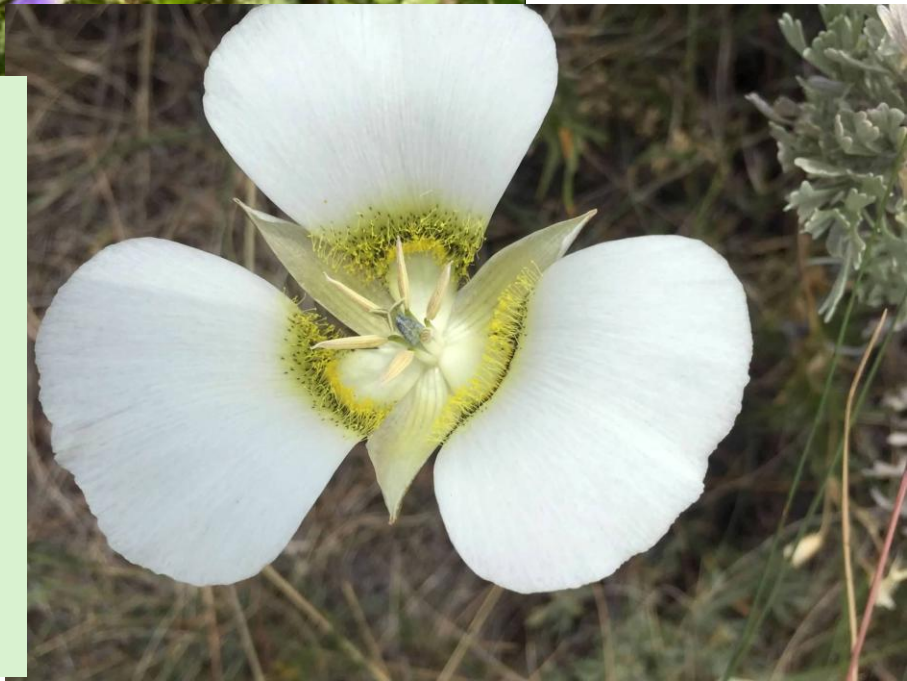
The Sego Lily is a sacred plant in Native American legend. Sego is a Shoshonean word thought to mean “edible bulb”

Sego lily  
State flower of  
Utah

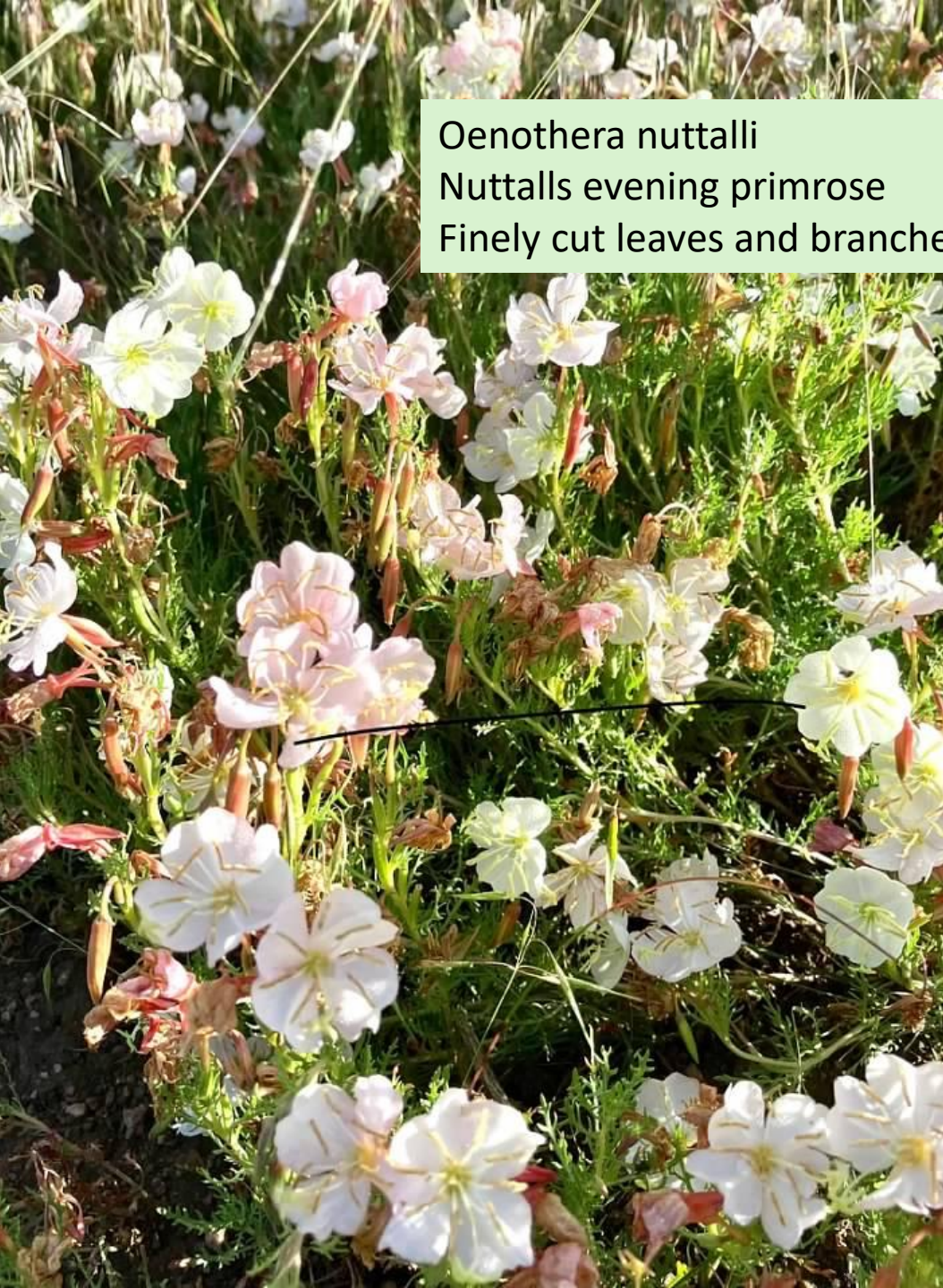


Mariposa lily – *Calochortus nuttallii*  
Mariposa = butterfly

The pioneers of 1848–49 ate the sego lily bulb to help ward off starvation. Some bulbs were as large as walnuts, but most were the size of marbles. The bulbs were best fresh-cooked because they turned thick and ropey when cool.







*Oenothera nuttalli*  
Nuttalls evening primrose  
Finely cut leaves and branches

Both of these are  
found in drier  
areas HJ



*Oenothera caespitosa*  
Tufted Evening primrose  
Many subspecies.



Evening primroses attract  
night flying hawkmoths  
and others





Prairie Smoke – *Geum triflorum* Has long feathery seed heads in clusters – hence the name, can grow in large groups





Anemone multifida – comes in all red shades, does great in garden.  
Grows at Libby flats and Vedauwoo.



Blue eyed grass, *Sisyrinchium montanum*  
Wet areas – these were by beaver pond.





Shooting Star

*Dodecatheon pulchellum* and other sp

Moist meadows

Emblem of the North American Rock Garden Society



A very pretty spring flower up at  
Vedauwoo and Happy Jack.





Western Tiger swallowtail  
*Papio rutulus*

Larvae eat willows aspens etc

Eastern has an orange spot (first spot on hindwing).

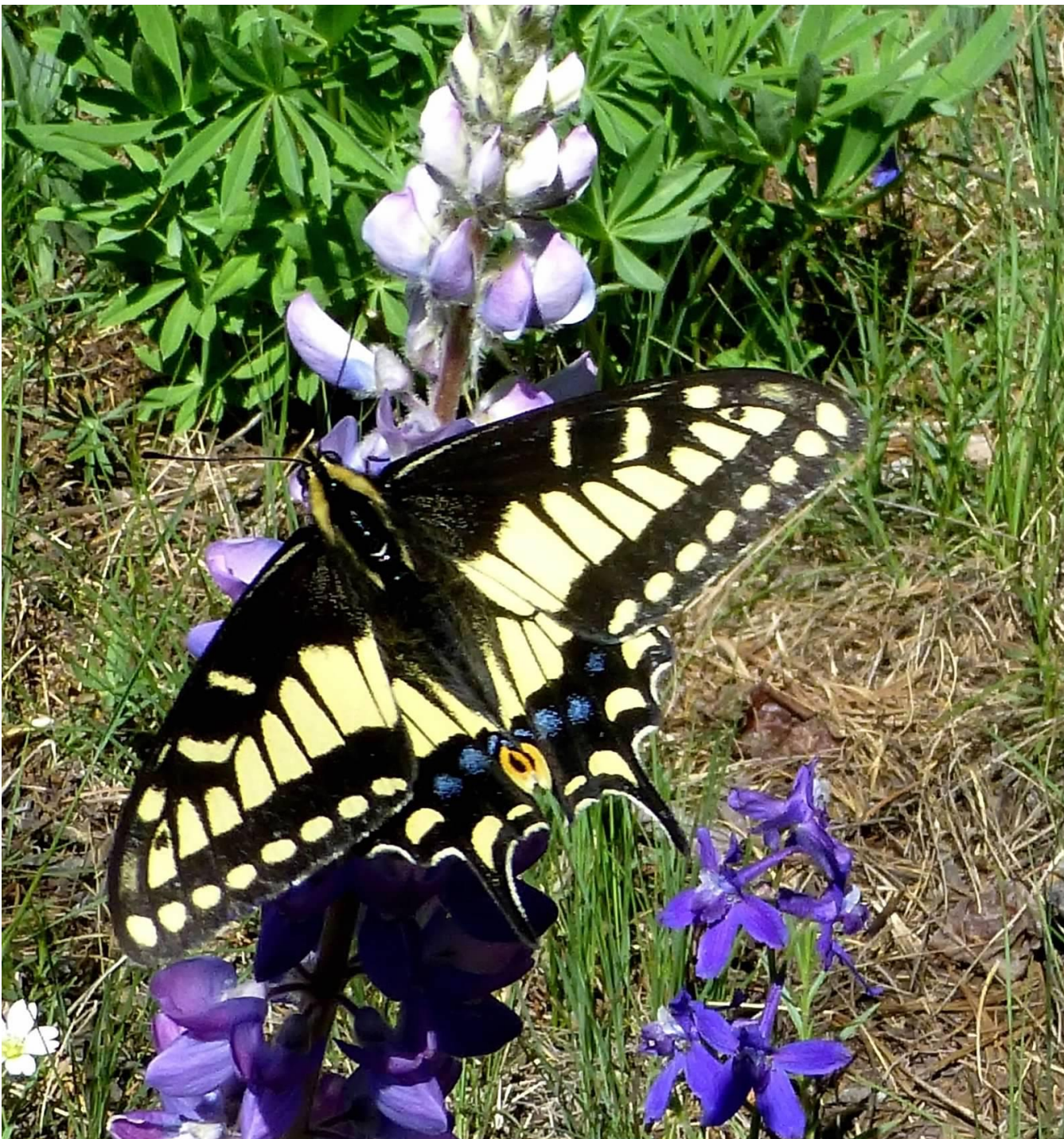
This is probably a female as they show more blue ( true of most swallowtails)





Western Tiger Swallowtail  
Probable male on probably lamberts  
locoweed -*Oxytropis lambertii*





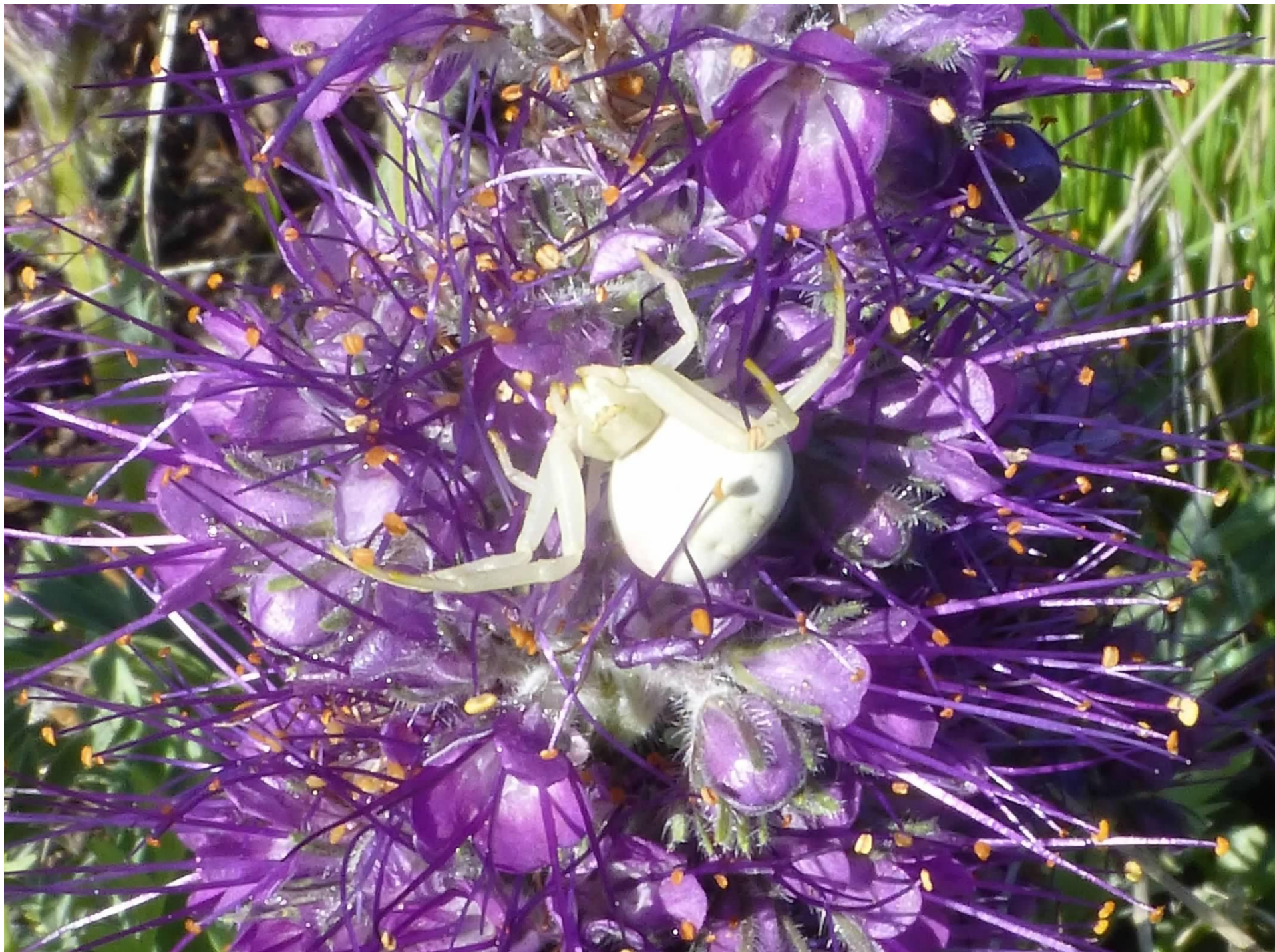
Anise swallowtail

Papio zelican

Larvae eat parsleys etc, love Dill plants

Here on lupine with nearby larkspur .





Misumena vatia  
Golden crab spider

Can change color slowly to yellow and likes golden rod.

Here on a phacelia – insect pollinator magnet.

Its fangs cannot penetrate human skin so it is harmless to humans except for the fear factor

I have seen several of these on different plants up at HJ etc





Allium texile - prairie onion  
Grows in dry sagebrush areas



Death Camas  
*Zigadenus venenosus*  
Toxic







Oregon Grape    *Mahonia repens*

Has clusters of dark blue berries in the Fall

Grows plentifully HJ

Edible but bitter and has side effects in large quantities.





Antelope Bitterbush- *Pushia tridentata*  
Common in H<sub>2</sub>O scrub and throughout Rockies  
Browse plant for deer, antelope.  
Has separate male / female plants.





Mid July Pole mtn  
Fritillaries

The flowers are Erigeron  
daisies.

























































































































































































































































































































































































































































































































































































































































































