

NATIVE PLANTS of the Dry Forest

Ponderosa Pine. Ponderosas thrive in very dry, sunny forests. They are resilient in other ways: they can survive low-intensity wildfires and grow their thick roots into many types of soils. Some live to be hundreds of years old. Their needles are long and grow three to a bundle. The bark of mature trees can be more than 3 inches thick, which helps protect large trees from wildfires spreading at ground level.

Heart-leaf Arnica. A wave of yellow flowers in the dappled shade under a pine tree may be a group of Arnica. Each plant is connected to the others by an underground system of roots ("rhizomes"). If wildlife browse the top of the plant, it will often sprout again from its roots. The roots do not easily survive trampling by our human feet, however.

Yarrow. Yarrow flowers provide nectar for many insects and butterflies. The Painted Lady butterfly larvae need to eat yarrow leaves to grow into their butterfly stage. Some birds use the soft leaves to line their nests. Later, the stem and its 'umbrella' of dried flower parts stay erect, even when surrounded by deep snow.

Paintbrush. The bright colors displayed by Paintbrush are modified leaves, called "bracts". They are not true flower petals. The colors attract butterflies, bees, and hummingbirds to the nectar in the flower parts hidden close to the stem, beneath the bracts and leaves. Paintbrush can also get energy from the roots of other nearby plants. This ability gives paintbrush the additional label "hemi-parasite" – sometimes a freeloader, but not always.

Columbia Lily. A bright orange flower, rising tall above the grass in a forest meadow, encourages a closer look. The petals are dotted with brown spots, and curl upwards. Hanging stamens emerge below, exposing their pollen. We are attracted to this bright beacon of color, and so are the pollinators.

Wolf Lichen. Wolf lichen can appear to engulf bare branches and bark, but it is not known to harm the tree at all. It grows abundantly where it gets plenty of sun, away from the shade of needles and cones. Lichens are a combination of fungi and algae and sometimes types of special bacteria ("cyanobacteria"), working together.

Pipsissewa. This plant has shiny evergreen leaves, using sunlight all year to make energy ("photosynthesis"). But it also gets energy from fungi which lives on the roots of trees which tower above. Pipsissewa blossoms are waxy and firm

Glacier-lily. A showy ribbon of yellow blossoms at the edge of melting snow may be glacier-lilies, one of the first flowers to emerge in the spring. Their leaves die back in the summer, after they have gathered energy from the sun, storing the energy in their underground bulb, until the next spring.

Oceanspray. This shrub can look like a fountain, with white flower sprays plunging downward. Parts of these tiny flowers can survive a snowy winter as a light-weight brown cluster. The arching branches shelter animals and birds. The younger, straight woody stems are tough enough to have been used by indigenous people for digging sticks.

Kinnikinnick. This low, spreading plant forms a mat, sending its reddish branches over rocky or sandy areas. Kinnikinnick flowers can attract hummingbirds to within an inch of the ground. Bright red berries keep their color through the winter, if not eaten by birds or animals. 'Bearberry' is another name for this plant.

Red Columbine. Most columbine flowers offer lots of nectar to pollinators such as hummingbirds, moths, bees, and butterflies. The nectar is found in the five red spurs at the top of the hanging flower. To reach the nectar, a pollinator brushes against the long yellow stamens which hang below, dusting the visitor with pollen grains.



Many of these plants bloom at different times of the year.
You probably will not see all of them on the same day.



Please don't pick the flowers - Take only pictures!



Washington Native Plant Society



Ponderosa Pine



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Yarrow



Paintbrush



Columbia Lily



Wolf Lichen



Pipsissewa



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