

Nature Notes

Sun, Water and Wildflowers



Many of us enjoy the wildflowers blooming along the trails in the Kimberley Nature Park. From mid April through September, we're delighted when we find an orchid, clematis or violet flowering as we huff and puff to climb Myrtle, Bear, or Bump Mountain. It is a legitimate reason to stop, catch our breath, and notice the beauty of nature that surrounds us!

Some wildflowers can be fussy about where they bloom and others are adaptable to a variety of habitats. Those that love a hot, dry exposure will thrive on Sunflower Hill. The first flowers of the park grow here in April, starting with Spring Beauties, Shooting Stars, and Yellow Bells. By mid May, the sunflowers, which are actually Balsamroot, cloak the hillside in large, yellow blossoms with Silky Lupine adding just the right touch of purple. The last flowers of the season also enjoy this hot, dry hillside, Rabbit-Brush.



Mertensia photo by K. Goodwin



Glacier lilies photo by K. Goodwin

On shady, moist trails such as Creek Trail or Summer Trail in Horse Barn Valley, Bunchberry, Single Delight, and Sweet Cicely thrive. Add some sun to a wet trail such as the Army Road through White Tail Valley, and Baneberry, Sarsaparilla, and Bracted Lousewort are just a few of the wildflowers that await your admiration!

While wet and dry conditions along with sun and shade help determine what plants grow where, consideration to rather the plants prefer north or south facing slopes or thick humus to rocky outcroppings are all considerations in knowing where to look for a specific flower.

The next time you're hiking or biking in the Nature Park, add some wildflower hunting to your outing! Throughout the summer, in different parts of the park, look for the nearly two hundred different kinds of wildflowers that have been identified!

Visit www.rockies.net/kimberley/naturepark for a hard copy or more information about Nature Park events.