



A FEW SPRING WILD FLOWERS ON THE MOUNTAIN



When the Arrow-leaved Balsamroot (*Balsamorhiza sagittata*) appears all over the sloped grassy knolls, you know spring has sprung. Due to the unusually mild and sunny conditions this year, the Balsamroot has bloomed and bloomed. Like most wild flowers, it's difficult to replant, possibly because the root may go as deep as 2 metres underground. Deer and elk enjoy munching on this plant and several elk have indeed been spotted on the high grasslands of the park this spring.



The Shooting Star (*Dodecatheon pulchellum*) has turned back petals which do give the flower the appearance of a shooting star. Several patches of this flower have been observed on the mountain.

The Early blue violet (*Viola adunca*) also has a white version that can be seen on the mountain. The expression “shrinking violet” refers to a shy introvert, who some would compare to the way the violet petals fold in on themselves.

Adunca means hook and *uncus* refers to the hook Romans used to drag away people who had been executed. Quite a gruesome name for such a pretty little flower!



Ballhead Water Leaf (*Hydrophyllum capitatum*) The flower peaks from under its leaves and was found in a clearing of an underground stream on the mountain.



The Lilies

So elegant and fragile looking, it is a wonder that they survive at all in the wild. But, survive they do. These are 3 lilies you might come across in the park.

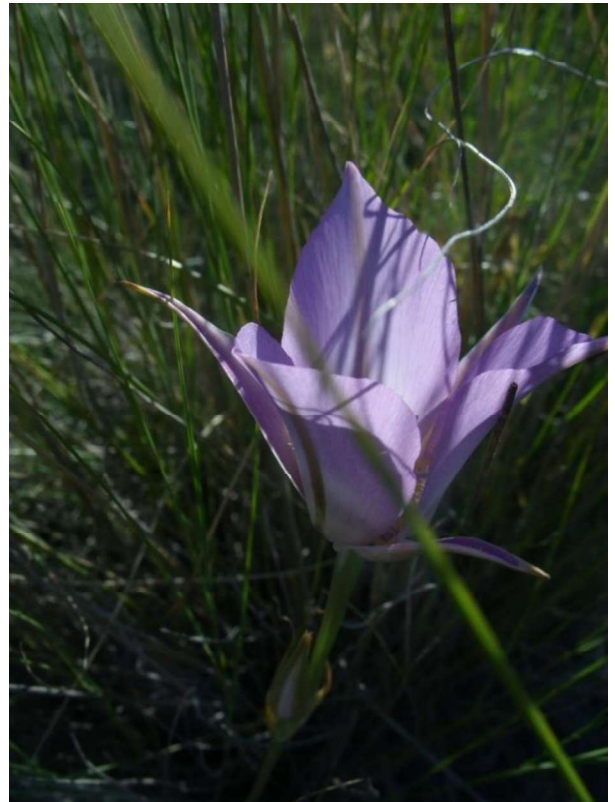


Tiger Lily or Columbia Lily (*Lilium columbianum*) is a small lily unique in that its petals curl back some say like a Turkish hat. Picking the flower will kill the plant as the bulb needs nutrients from the flower. The bulb will then starve and die. Just enjoy.

Mariposa Lily (*Calochortus macrocarpus*) is such a feathery and delicate looking plant, it's hard to believe it is a wild flower. It may not come out until June, so I've not seen it yet, but I'll be looking for it. The word mariposa is a Spanish word for butterfly. Such an apt name for this little mauve flower that seems to flutter in the wind.



Chocolate lily or Mission bells (*Fritillaria affinis*) is an unassuming dark plant. But if the sun is shining on it, peak inside for a burst of orange colour with spots. Be warned though, if you get too close you will detect a smell of rotten meat or dirty socks.



Saving the best for last, here is a rare beauty hikers have seen on Black Mountain. What a treat to come across the Calypso Orchid or Fairy Slipper (*Calypso bulbosa*). According to the *National Audubon Society Field Guide to Wildflowers: Western Region*, this orchid, “was named for the sea nymph Calypso of Homer’s *Odyssey*, who detained the willing Odysseus on his return from Troy; like Calypso, the plant is beautiful and prefers secluded haunts.” The reason this plant will not survive transplanting is because it needs a very specific fungi in the soil for it to flourish.



Central Beauty; Jennings, Neil L., Rocky Mountain Books, Surrey, B.C. 2008

National Audubon Society Field Guide to Wildflowers: Western Region, Spellenberg, Richard; Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 2001

Wild Flowers of British Columbia; Clark, Lewis J., Gray’s Publishing Ltd., Sidney, British Columbia, 1973

Wild About Wildflowers, Darrow, Katherine. Wildkat Publishing Co. Glendale, Arizona. 2006

Life and Death in the Grasslands

With five boxes for Bluebird nests, we were thrilled to discover 4 nests inside, two of which were inhabited by Western Bluebirds. The first batch of eggs were whitish in colour and produced 5 young. When Doreen went to check on them, the young in the first box were gone,