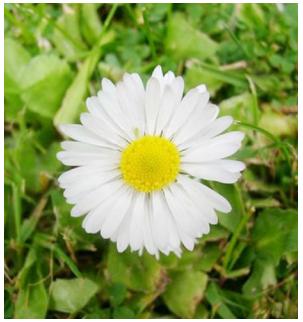
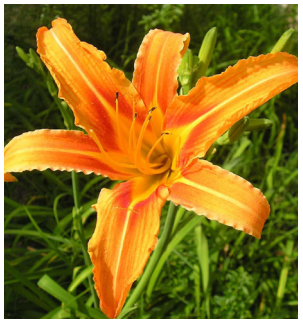
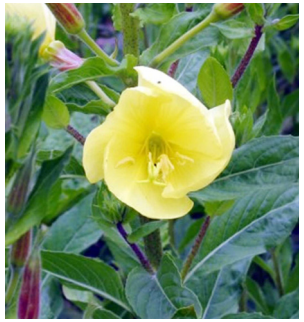
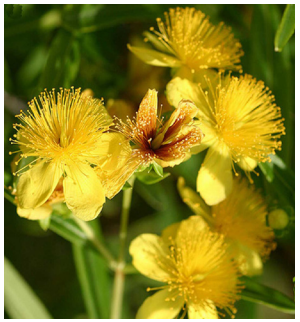



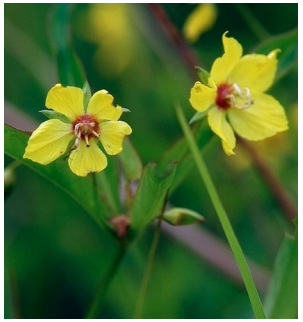
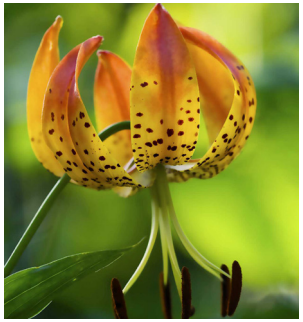
West Virginia Department of AGRICULTURE
PROTECTING HEALTH
animal - plant - environment

Walt Helmick,
Commissioner
1900 Kanawha Blvd., East
Charleston, WV 25305
www.wvagriculture.org





West Virginia Mid-Summer WILDFLOWERS

Contact Information

Plant Industries Division
Phone: 558-2212
Fax: 558-2435

Regulatory & Environmental Affairs
Phone: 558-2208
Fax: 558-3594
Pesticides Regulatory Unit
Phone: 558-2209
Fax: 558-2228

Communications Division
Market Bulletin
Phone: 558-3708
Fax: 558-3131
marketbulletin@wvda.us

Executive Division
Phone: 558-3200
Fax: 558-2203
www.wvagriculture.org

Walt Helmick,
Commissioner of Agriculture

Table of Contents

Introduction 1

Daylily, Turk's Cap Lily, Purple-Fringed Orchid,
Smartweed 1

Bladder Campion, Bouncing Bet, Deptford Pink,
Meadow Buttercup 2

Black-Eyed Susan, Tall Meadow-Rue, Thimbleweed
Black Cohosh, Wild Senna 3

Red Clover, Sticktights, St. John's-Wort,
Evening Primrose 4

Water Hemlock, Water Parsnip, Wild Carrot,
Fringed Loosestrife, Morning Glory 5

Common Milkweed, Blue Thistle, Mullein,
Wild Teasel 6

Iron Weed, Early Goldenrod, Daisy,
Additional Information 7

Flower Parts 8

Contacts 9

West Virginia Mid-Summer Wildflowers

Most of West Virginia's fields and meadows have been artificially created through the removal of primitive forests and the plants that now occupy them have been introduced from other regions. Some came from the prairies farther west, but many were introduced from Europe. These plants bring to pastures and roadsides a blaze of color from early summer until late fall and most belong to very different families from those of springtime.

Daylily *(Hemerocallis)*

Found mostly about dwellings and roadsides, this plant grows about 3 feet tall. Its large, tawny-orange flowers remain open only a single day, then falls off to be succeeded by another one somewhere else on the plant the next day. Strangely, no seeds are ever produced in this country, and the plants spread only by the fleshy fibrous roots.

There are many kinds of lilies found in the State, several of them among our common spring flowers. The daylily is one of the best known mid-summer flowers. It is an introduction from Europe for ornamental purposes.

Turk's Cap Lily *(Lilium superbum)*

Grows to be more than six feet tall, arising from scaly bulbs in swamps and meadows. Its English name refers to the shape of its flowers, six large perianth-parts recurved in a fashion fancied to resemble a turban. They are yellow or orange in color and thickly dotted with purple.

Among the native mid-summer lilies none is more showy, as is indicated by its scientific name, meaning the superb lily.

Purple-fringed Orchid *(Habenaria fimbriata)*

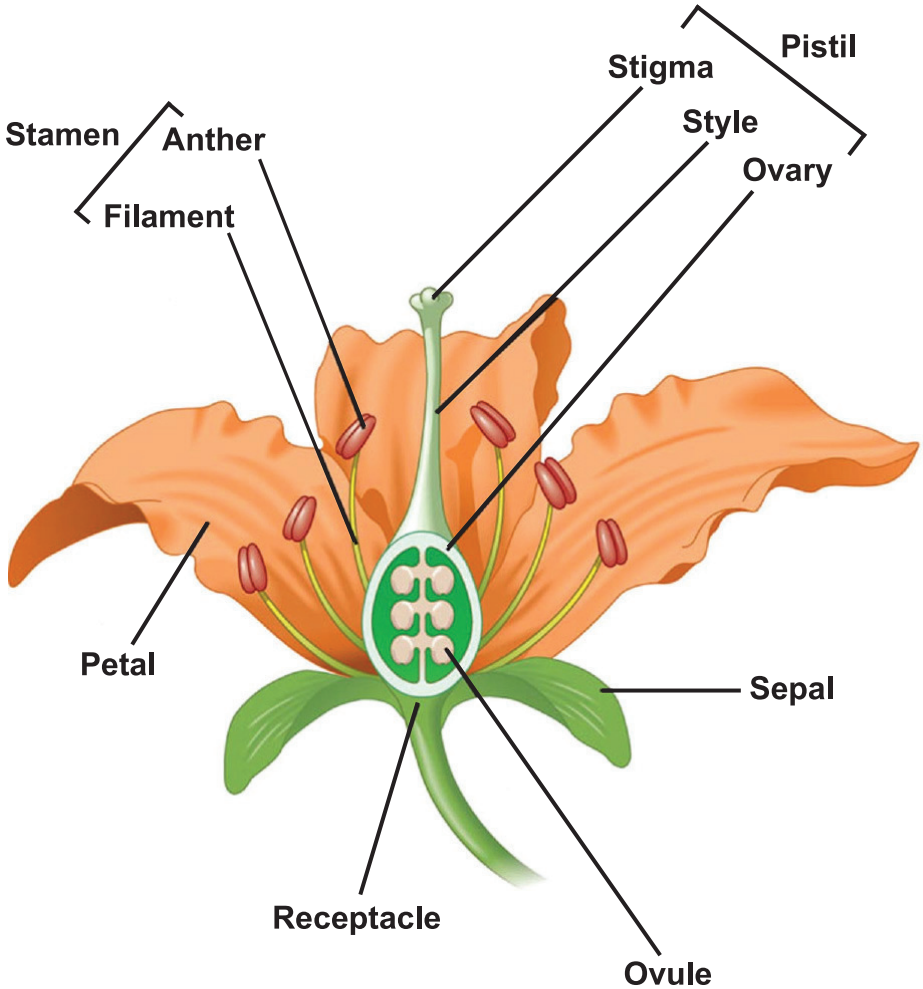
Grows in wet meadows but is restricted to mountain counties. It has brilliant magenta-purple flowers.

Approximately three dozen orchid species are known to dwell naturally in the State, many of them flowering in summer. However, they are not all as large and brightly colored as are florist's orchids, nor do they grow on branches of trees, as do many tropical orchids.

Smartweed *(Polygonum persicaria)*

Grows in damp waste places throughout the state. The name *"persicaria"* refers to peach (Persica) and alludes to the shape of the leaves. Another common name is Lady's Thumb, a name suggested by the slender spikes of pink or purple flowers. It has a biting acid juice which causes a stinging sensation if it touches

FLOWER PARTS



fresh cuts in the skin.

Approximately 20 species of smartweeds grow wild in the State, several including this one grows as common weeds introduced from Europe.

Bladder Campion

(Silene vulgaris)

Grows in open fields and roadsides. Its white flowers may be seen all summer long and are a half-inch to nearly an inch broad, each petal with a notch at the apex. Its calyx is at first tubular, then after the petals fall, it becomes conspicuously inflated and globose (bladder-like), with prominent greenish veins.

This plant is a native of Europe, perhaps introduced into American flower gardens and escaping from cultivation.

Bouncing Bet

(Saponaria officinalis)

Introduced from Europe, perhaps as an ornamental, this plant has spread to waste places throughout the State. One of the most common sites is in the lag along railroad tracks. It produces an abundance of pink flowers, often until far into autumn.

Another common name for this familiar plant is soapwort; this name, and the Latin name *Spaonaria,* refer to property of the juice, which forms a lather when mixed with water.

Deptford Pink

(Dianthus armeria)

Grows in fields and roadsides. It has long narrow leaves and is almost hidden by the grass until the flowers come in bloom. The pink family was named, not for the color of the flowers, but from the "pinked" (notched) petals. However, some species have flowers which are pink in color and this is one of them.

It was introduced from Europe and is a close relative of the Carnation, one of the most ancient of cultivated ornamentals.

Meadow Buttercup

(Ranunculus acris)

Grows in almost every State county, being especially abundant in the mountains. It is perhaps the most common of the approximately 15 mid-summer Buttercup species found wild in the State. The English name Buttercup refers to its glossy-yellow cup-shaped flowers. Its Latin name *Ranunculus*, meaning "little frog" (Rana is Latin for frog), implies that the habitats of many of the species are also those of "little frogs" (i.e., tadpoles), namely, roadside ditches and wet meadows.

Black-eyed Susan

(Rudbeckia hirta)

A very common plant, growing in fields throughout the State. Its disk flowers are brownish-purple and its ray flowers are orange-yellow.

The most common variety was found on the Great Plains and spread eastwards as the forested land was cleared. It is Maryland's state flower.

Tall Meadow-Rue

(Thalictrum polygamum)

Grows in open sunny swamps, wet meadows and along streams throughout the State. Its foliage somewhat resembles (although not in color) that of the true Rue. The flowers are small, very numerous, without petals, and form dense clusters, the white sepals giving a showy effect in the mass.

The plants are polygamous (suggesting the Latin name), meaning there are some perfect and some imperfect flowers.

Thimbleweed

(Anemone virginiana)

Grows in open woods and meadows throughout the State. It grows 1½ to 3 feet tall and the many achenes ripen into an oblong-cylindric head, shaped like a thimble.

Some species bloom in the spring, a windy season of the year. *Anemone* means wind, and another common name of this plant is windflower.

Black Cohosh

(Cimicifuga racemosa)

Grows abundant at edges of woods (or in woodlands) in all parts of the State. It has distinctive tall white spires. Its flowers are supposed to be distasteful to insects. Its long roots, somewhat snake-like in appearance, were once supposed to cure snake bites.

Cohosh is an American Indian name for several kinds of medicinal plants. This species is also called Blake Snakeroot or Rattletop. (Its seeds rattle in the dry fruits in winter.) *Cimicifuge* is from two Latin words, cimex, a bug, and fugere, to drive away.

Wild Senna

(Cassia marilandica)

Grows chiefly in dry, often graveley soil, mostly west of the mountains. Its leaves are compound. This tall yellow-flowered plant is a member of the vast legume family, members of which have bacteria growing in nodules on their roots, taking nitrogen from the air and adding it to the soil in the form of nitrates. The true Senna, a medicinal plant of the Old World, belongs to the same genus.

Ironweed

(Vernonia noveboracensis)

Grows mainly in rich moist soil of bottomland fields throughout the State. Among the State's most familiar plants, it grows up to 6 feet or more in height. It is tall and stiff with a large cluster of deep purple flowers, quite conspicuous when in bloom, from July to September.

The great composite family includes more species of plants than any other in the State and most of them are late bloomers from mid-summer into autumn.

The word *noveboracensis* is from novum, new, and Eboracum, the ancient name for York; hence, New York.

Early Goldenrod

(Solidago juncea)

Grows in fields and meadows of the State. One of approximately 29 species of goldenrods, most of which flower in late summer and autumn. It is regarded by some to be synonymous with autumn. It is mistakenly regarded as causing hay fever, however, probably most of the hay fever of late summer is caused by ragweed. It is easy to recognize a goldenrod, but very difficult to tell the many species apart.

Daisy

(Chrysanthemum leucanthemum)

Grows in pastures and meadows throughout the State. Fields are often dominated by it and it is quite showy, but is generally regarded by farmers as a pernicious weed. The central disk flowers of its heads are yellow, while the outer ray flowers are white; this is reflected in the Latin name, *Chrysanthemum* meaning golden flower and *leucanthemum* meaning white flower.

The Daisy is a native of Europe.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. Flora of West Virginia by P. D. Strasbaugh and Earl L. Core.

2. Spring Wild Flowers by Earl L. Core. W.Va. University and W.Va. Dept. of Natural Resources.

3. Wild Flowers of the Alleghenies by Joseph E. Harned. (This book is out of print, but available in most libraries).

Red Clover

(Trifolium pratense)

Is one of the most valuable of the soil-improvement legumes as it has great value as forage for farm animals. Its presence in a field is a good sign. *Trifolium* means three leaves and refers to its three-parted leaf. Like many other field plants, however, it is not a native of this part of the world, since few if any open fields existed here before the coming of the white man.

Approximatley 10 clover species grow wild in the State.

Sticktights

(Desmodium canadense)

Another legume, somewhat resembling Clovers, but without the economic value. It has a flat seed pod composed of rounded or three-cornered segments which adhere to the hair of animals or clothing. Its flowers are mostly pink.

Another common name is Tick-Trefoil, the plants being like wood ticks in having pods adhering closely to animals and like Trifolium in having three-parted leaves. There are approximately 18 species native to the State.

St. John's-Wort

(Hypericum perforatum)

A common and widely distributed yellow-flowered weed introduced from Europe. Its leaves bear transparent dots ("perforate") and its petals are black-dotted along the margin. Its name refers to the fact that its flowers bloom on St. John the Baptist's Day (June 24). It could hardly miss that day since it blooms all summer long.

Until the development of chemical weed-killers, this was a very difficult plant to eradicate.

Evening Primrose

(Oenothera biennis)

A common yellow-flowered weed that is found growing everywhere in the State. Its flowers open in the evening and are pollinated by night flying insects. It flowers until late autumn.

Unlike St. John's-Wort, this is a native American plant, having probably moved into this State from the western prairies and plains after the removal of our forests.

There are approximately nine or ten species which are often difficult to distinguish.

Water Hemlock

(Cicuta maculata)

A tall white-flowered plant of the carrot family with very poisonous roots. In early spring, when this plant is just coming up through the soft ground cattle are likely to pull up the roots as they graze on the foliage, with fatal results. Other common names are Spotted Cowbane and Beaver Poison, both names alluding to the poisonous properties of this plant.

Wild Parsnip

(Pastinaca sativa)

A common weed in fields and roadsides throughout the State, it is the original of the familiar garden vegetable. It is a tall biennial with yellow flowers. Although this belongs in the same family as Poison Hemlock, the roots are not poisonous, as is sometimes thought.

Wild Carrot

(Daucus carota)

Like the Wild Parsnip, this is the original of the familiar garden vegetable and was introduced from Europe by the early settlers. Members of the carrot family are characterized by having many small flowers produced in a flat-topped cluster known as an umbel. Its flowers are white, but the central flower of each umbel is usually dark purple.

Fringed Loosestrife

(Lysimachia ciliata)

Grows in rich moist soil of meadows and low ground along streams in the State. A common tall yellow-flowered weed of mid-summer, it is a member of the primrose family. It can be recognized by the fringes on the petioles. There are approximately nine species of Loosestrife in the State.

According to Greek mythology, King Lysimachus of Thrace, chased by a maddened bull, seized a plant of Loosestrife and pacified the bull by waving the plant in front of him.

Morning Glory

(Ipomoea pandurata)

A trailing or climbing vine common in fields and even more abundant and obnoxious in cultivated ground, where it is often called Wild Potato Vine. It is regarded as one of the State's worst weeds. In spite of this, it has a beautiful white flower with a purple center or bluish-purple flower with a white center, properly regarded as the Glory of the Morning. Its flowers are open at night and close quickly in bright sunlight.

Several related species introduced from tropical America, are grown as cultivated ornamentals and the Sweet Potato is a member of the same group.

Common Milkweed

(Asclepias syriaca)

Among the best known of mid-summer wildflowers, it grows wild in the State. It has a milky juice that yields a low-grade rubber and many flat seeds, each with a tuft of silky hairs. The hairy seeds have been used to fill life preservers. The pollen masses of adjacent stamens are connected in structures resembling old-fashioned miniature saddlebags and are transported hanging across the legs of insects.

Approximately 11 different kinds of milkweeds grow wild in the State.

Blue Thistle

(Echium vulgare)

This is perhaps the most distinctive weed on soils of limestone origin and is exceedingly abundant in the eastern counties of West Virginia, from Berkeley south to Mercer. It is not a true thistle but the plants are covered with stiff bristles which discourage cattle from grazing in fields where the weeds abound. Thus they tend to become more numerous, as other plants are crowded out. Despite the attractive color, farmers dislike them and refer to them as Blue-devil.

Mullein

(Verbascum thapsus)

One of the tallest and easily recognized of the weeds of State pastures and meadows. It grows 6 to 7 feet and is densely covered with wooly hairs, especially the leaves. Its flowers are pale yellow.

It is a native of the Mediterranean regions and in ancient times was known as Thapsus, from a town in North Africa where it was presumably abundant.

Wild Teasel

(Dipsacus sylvestris)

Another tall and conspicuous weed introduced from Europe. It grows 5 to 6 feet and is rough-hairy or prickly, with a dense head of lilac-colored flowers. At the base of its flower head and below each flower are stiff bracts, tipped with sharp barbed awns.

A related European species, it was formerly used to tease (raise a nap on) woolen cloth.