

Sagebrush. The Shrub-steppe can also be called “Sagebrush Country”. This special shrub can grow as tall, and live as long, as humans do – if not damaged by wildfire. Look for last year’s upright flower stalks, which stretch up to catch the wind. Meadowlarks may perch there, singing.

Balsamroot. Look closely to see many tiny flowers grouped together in the center. Deep underground, the taproot can be as big as a human wrist. This helps the plant regrow, if it is eaten by deer or other animals, or burned in a wildfire.

Lupine. Lupines are part of the Legume or Pea family. You will see a twisted “peapod” if you find this plant after its seeds have formed. Members of this family have roots with special bumps or nodules. In these nodules live “renters” (bacteria) who “pay rent” by fixing nitrogen - converting it from the air into the soil.

Tapertip Onion. If you have seen chives or onion flowers in a vegetable garden, you may recognize the rounded spray of this cluster of flowers. Underground, onions have a fragrant bulb. The bulb is not a root: it is actually made up of thick, moist specialized leaves which store energy for the future.

Phlox. These flowers have 5 petals, spreading open to look like a flat blossom. A peek under the petals’ surface, however, will show that the petals rise up and outward from a single tube. A butterfly or moth must have a long tongue to be able to reach down through the flower’s tube to reach the nectar inside.

Prairie-star. These plants share their “stars” as a flower cluster, each with deeply split petals, rising above a straight stem. The stem may seem bare, but a closer look may show tiny fine hairs along the surface of the reddish stem. Most flowers are white or pale pink; some say the pinker versions are more fragrant.

Bitterbrush. With dark, stiff branches, this shrub can grow taller than sagebrush and live longer than a century. It usually cannot survive a hot summer or fall wildfire. The yellow blossoms spread spring fragrance in the air, attracting pollinators. Seeds have the shape of a smooth rounded pyramid.

Bitterroot. This showy flower may be a surprise, appearing to pop out of thin, rocky soil on a hilltop or ridge. Months ago, in the fall, a cluster of leaves emerged from the soil, preparing to make flowers in the spring. Even under the winter snow, those leaves were able to use filtered sunlight to photosynthesize.

Desert Parsley. These flowers spread an umbrella of round balls - each ball is made up of tiny flowers. The flowers bloom close to the ground for warmth, and then the stems stretch higher as the seeds ripen, giving the seeds a chance to sprout farther away from the parent plant.

Serviceberry. These fountain-shaped shrubs can grow as tall as a house. They can usually grow back with lush growth after wildfire. New, tender shoots are food for deer, moose, and elk. Hard wood sticks have been used by Indigenous people for digging sticks, arrows, and spears.

Yellow Bell. Watch these downward-hanging bells for a color change: as they age, the yellow petals turn orange. Some think this change is a way to signal to pollinators that others got there first. After the petals wither away, the ripening fruit capsule will grow as the stem straightens, turning the seed capsule to face upwards.

How many
can YOU
find?

NATIVE PLANTS of the Shrub-Steppe



Washington Native Plant Society



☐ **Sagebrush**



☐ **Balsamroot**



☐ **Lupine**



☐ **Tapertip Onion**



☐ **Phlox**



☐ **Prairie-star**



☐ **Bitterbrush**



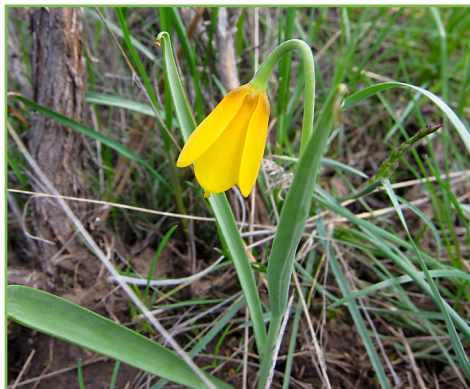
☐ **Bitterroot**



☐ **Desert Parsley**



☐ **Serviceberry**



☐ **Yellow Bell**

