

# Community Forest Plant Talk

Content provided by resident Theresa Schuller and High Country Apps

Hopefully you may have noticed that flowers are beginning to bloom along the forest trails at Tehaleh. Washington State is blessed with a lengthy wildflower season, thanks to a diverse geology that includes ocean beaches, forests, arid desert-like regions, and mountain meadows. Wildflowers begin to bloom in the forested lowlands like Tehaleh as early as March. The arid parts of Eastern Washington put on a beautiful display of wildflowers in April and May. Our mountain meadows start to bloom as soon as the snow melts. With the deep snow pack this year, it might be late July before the high mountain meadows begin to bloom.

How can you determine the name of a plant that's in bloom along a beach, in a forest, a desert area or mountain meadow? The Washington Wildflowers app, created by High Country Apps, will help! It's easy to use and has great photos and illustrations. Also, you don't need a cell signal or internet connection in order to use the app. It currently sells for \$9.99 and is available for iPhone/iPad and Android devices. Visit the High Country Apps website to find out additional information: <http://www.highcountryapps.com>



Mystery Plant

How do you use the app to identify the pink-flowered Mystery Plant in the photo? You need to provide the app with details about the plant. The Mystery Plant photo was taken in early April here at Tehaleh. The Mystery Plant is fairly common along the Tehaleh trails. You might notice that it is especially numerous near wet areas in Tehaleh's forests. It has many long branches that are covered in prickles. At Tehaleh, some of these Mystery Plants are over 10' tall.

Image 1 is the app's Home Screen. Tap the second icon down, the one that says **Search by Characteristics**. Image 2 is the Search by Characteristics screen. You enter characteristics of the Mystery Plant on this screen. For **Growth Habit** tap the middle icon that looks like a shrub. For **Main Flower Color** tap the red/pink icon. For **Flowering Period** tap April. For **Region** tap the map that shows where you are. The plant is growing in Tehaleh, so you tap the second map from the left. And since the Mystery Plant is growing in the forest, tap Forest under **Habitat** characteristic. That's about all the characteristics you need enter when there are only a few different species of plants in bloom. However, as the wildflower season progresses, it will be helpful to enter additional characteristics related to the botanical features of the plant you want to identify. This will narrow down the list to a more reasonable number of plants.

As you enter characteristics, near the top of the screen there's a display that tells you the number of plants that have the characteristics combinations that you've entered. To the right of that number, you'll see the word **Show**. Tap that button. Image 3 is an example of the app screen that lists plants that meet search characteristics. You scroll through the list to see if you can find a photo of a flower that looks like the flower that you are trying to identify. Once you find a photo, tap it to select it. A new app screen (not shown) displays more photos of the selected plant. You can then access a **Description** screen (not shown) that provides a written description of the plant, along with the search characteristics combinations for the plant.

Image 1

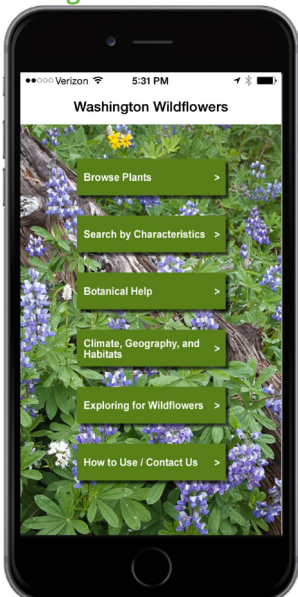


Image 2

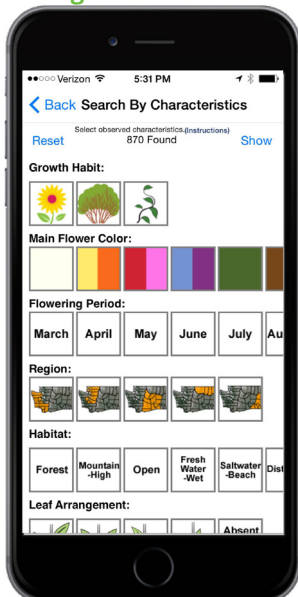
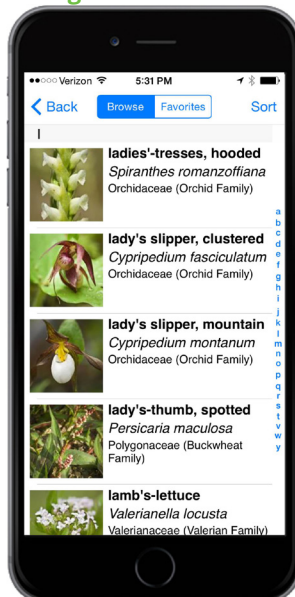


Image 3



Hand Lens



### Tips for Using the Washington Wildflower App:

1. Turn your cell phone's Airplane Mode "on" while you are away from cell service to help avoid draining your cell phone battery.
2. If you are with others who are not particularly interested in flowers, take some quick photos of the plant and research it with the app later on. Take photos of the front, back, and sides of the flower. Take photos of the leaves and the stems too.
3. Sometimes it's better to enter fewer search characteristics than more. You might unintentionally exclude a plant from the **Show** list if you make a mistake selecting search characteristics, especially those related to the botanical characteristics of the plant.
4. To help learn botanical terms, select a plant that you are already familiar with using the **Browse Plants/ Favorites** icon on the Home screen. The **Description** screen for the plant shows the correct botanical search characteristics. You can then compare these botanical search characteristics to the app's glossary and illustrations.
5. If you are going to explore a new area, search the internet beforehand to find a plant list that is specific to the area you will visit. The Washington Native Plant Society has prepared lists of plants that are found in specific locations. National Parks sometimes have lists of plants that grow in locations within the park. Look up the plants on the app, and mark them as **Favorites**. You may more easily recognize a new plant if you've already seen a photo of it.
6. Bring a hand-lens (see photo) with you when you want to study wildflowers. They are inexpensive, and a 10x magnification is usually sufficient to help correctly identify botanical features that require magnification.

As mentioned, when more plants start to bloom it helps to enter additional search characteristics. **Symmetry/Flower Type** and **Number of Petals** are important characteristics of flowers that help narrow down possibilities. Does your mystery plant's flower have "regular" symmetry? The app says this means "Flower parts similar in size and arrangement around a central point." Or, does your mystery plant's flower have "irregular" symmetry? The app says this means "Bilateral, where only a vertical line drawn through the flower center produces a mirror image." Symmetry is more easily understood by looking at a flower or photo of a flower.

Salmonberry and Indian Plum have regular symmetry. Both have 5 petals. Pioneer Violet and Pacific Bleeding Heart have irregular symmetry. Pioneer Violet has 5 petals and Pacific Bleeding Heart has 4 petals. The photos of these native plants were taken this April along Tehaleh's forest trails.

Next month's article will cover additional botanical characteristics related to **Leaf Arrangement** and **Leaf Shape**. These characteristics can be very helpful in identifying wildflowers.

If you're interested in seeing our state's desert wildflowers in bloom, register for one of the upcoming PSE Wild Horse Wind & Solar Facility's guided wildflower walks, scheduled for April 29th and May 13th. You must pre-register to participate. Visit

<https://www.pse.com/inyourcommunity/ToursandRecreation/WildHorse/Pages/default.aspx> for more information.



Salmonberry



Indian Plum



Pioneer Violet



Pacific Bleeding Heart