



Kelseya uniflora, ill. by Bonnie Heidel

Summer Field Trip Guide 2019

MONTANA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

"...to preserve, conserve and study Montana's native plants & plant communities."

mtnativeplants.org

MNPS Field Trip Guidelines

Enjoy a wide variety of fabulous Montana field trips this summer with the Montana Native Plant Society. Led by ecologists, botanists and natural scientists, these trips offer enriching and fun opportunities to get out and explore Montana's abundant beauty.

This guide is arranged by date so you can coordinate your summer Montana travel with an outing near your destination. You might even want to target a destination.

Always call the listed trip leader for the most current information. This guide, prepared in early spring, cannot anticipate the many changes that may occur throughout the summer due to weather, fires or other unforeseen events.

The trips vary from easy to difficult. Please read each description and contact the trip leader with your questions to ensure the trip meets your expectations, physical abilities and circumstances.

Please leave dogs and firearms at home in fairness to other participants and wildlife.

Some field trips have size limits. If the leader requests that you call to reserve a spot, call again if you must cancel.

Some trips are more child-friendly than others. Check with your trip leader.

Be prepared for Montana's instantaneous weather changes. Wear appropriate clothes and shoes. Bring food, water, extra clothes, rain gear, sunscreen, insect repellent, sunglasses, hat and any other personal gear you might need. You also may want to bring your favorite field guides and a notebook for recording species you see.

If you have a health condition, including allergies, that could affect you during the field trip, tell the trip leader and carry necessary medications.

Be aware of wildlife you might encounter and know how to behave to avoid conflicts. You may encounter bear, deer, elk, moose, snakes, mountain lions, bees and other species.

MNPS assumes no liability for personal injury or loss of property on MNPS-sponsored field trips. Each participant may be required to sign an attendance sheet and liability waiver before starting the field trip.



May

Thursdays, May ONLY – Swan River Nature Trail (Bigfork)

10:00 am. Join Anne Morley for a gentle, two-hour birding and wildflower-identification stroll, accompanied by the sounds of the Swan River rumbling next to the trail. We will wander two miles along the Old Swan River Road, right in Bigfork's backyard. Meet in front of Showthyme Restaurant. Info: Anne Morley at 886-2242.

Sunday, 5/5 – Downtown Native Garden Care (Dillon)

10:00 am. Help keep the Calypso Chapter's native garden weed free and looking nice, starting today and continuing through the summer. The garden is located in the median strip on Helena Avenue (left at the first light on Montana St., coming from the north). Bring gloves and a digging tool, and spend a couple of hours weeding out non-native perennials and encouraging the native plantings in their fifth year. Info: Catherine Cain at 498-6198, nativeplants@montana.com.

Wednesday, 5/8 – Wildflower Walk at Milltown State Park (Milltown)

5:30 pm. Join Clare Beelman on this walk through Milltown State Park in celebration of National Wildflower Week. We'll identify and catalog plant species in bloom along the Overlook Trail. This trail begins at the cliff above the confluence of the Clark Fork and Blackfoot rivers, and works its way through mixed ponderosa forest down to the flood plain of the Clark Fork River. Meet at the Overlook parking area on Deer Creek Road, or visit facebook.com/MNPSClarkForkChapter/events for a map and details. Info: Clare Beelman at 728-0189, clare.beelman@gmail.com.

Thursday, 5/9 – Spring Potluck and Plant Label Party (Missoula)

6:30 pm. Bring a dish to share and your nimble fingers for preparing the plastic plant labels for our upcoming plant sale. We'll hope to enjoy a warm spring evening at the Pineview Park Pavilion, near Rattlesnake School, and view the spring flora along Rattlesnake Creek. Bring your own plate and utensils. No alcohol please. Info: Peter Lesica at 728-8740 or Clare Beelman at 728-0189.

Saturday, 5/11 – Early Spring Wildflower Walk at the Matador Ranch (Malta)

1:00-5:00 pm. Take a walking tour of The Nature Conservancy's Matador Ranch and see the first prairie wildflowers of the year – prairie crocus, yellow fritillaries, Townsend's daisy, milkvetches, and more. Meet at the Matador bunkhouse at 12:30 pm. We'll drive to a few locations from there; hiking is easy to moderately difficult. The Ranch is located 35 miles south of Malta on Highway 191; turn east down the driveway at mile marker 119. Info: Kelsey Molloy at 654-4566, kelsey.molloy@tnc.org.

Wednesday, 5/15 – Grasses of Missoula Valley (Missoula)

5:30 pm. Grasses are the foundation of many local habitats. Jim Romo leads this walk along the Waterworks Hill Trail to understand the difference between natives and non-natives, and to learn about their growth, life cycles and role in local plant communities. Meet at the Waterworks trailhead on Greenough Dr., just north of Vine St. Info: Paul Buck at (970) 901-2418, paul7703@gmail.com, or visit facebook.com/MNPSClarkForkChapter/events for a map and details.



Monday, 8/5 – Bird-Friendly Gardens Walk (Bozeman)

6:30 pm. Join Paulette Epple from Sacajawea Audubon on this unusual tour of two, in-town yards that have been designed to attract birds, pollinators, and other wildlife, and to create inviting outdoor living spaces. One example features an entire front yard beautifully planted with native drought-tolerant plants that are also pollinator and bird friendly. The other boasts a mature landscape of trees, shrubs, vines, berries, gardens, perennials, and ground covers that combine to create the multi-layered, dense habitat so valuable to birds. Meet on the north side of Beall Park (E. Short Street). Info: Paulette Epple at 580-6186, conservation@sacajaweaaudubon.org.

Wednesday, 8/7 – Story Mill Park Wetland Walk (Bozeman)

7:00 pm. Stalk wily wetland plants in Story Mill Park during prime wetland plant ID season with retired NRCS biologist Pete Husby. After meeting at the trailhead, we'll take a look at willows, sedges, rushes, and forbs growing in wetland habitat. Bring a hand lens and a Montana flora guide, if you have them, and enjoy a leisurely stroll as we share our knowledge and appreciation of these valuable plants. Meet at the Story Mill Park trailhead parking lot on Story Mill Road, approximately 0.2 miles south of the old Story Mill Elevators and next to the new West Paw Dog Park. Info: Pete Husby at 451-1521, peterohusby@yahoo.com.

Saturday, 8/10 – Late Summer Wildflowers of the Montana-Idaho Divide (Superior)

9:00 am. Hike up the Lost Creek Trail with Peter Lesica to just below the Montana/Idaho Divide. This is a three-mile journey with 1,800 feet elevation gain. The trailhead is about 50 miles from Missoula on I-90, then 12 miles on a gravel road. Meet at MacKenzie River Pizza parking lot (I-90 & Grant Creek Rd.) to carpool or caravan. There is a 20-person limit for this outing. Info and to sign-up: Peter Lesica, lesica.peter@gmail.com or visit www.facebook.com/MNPSClarkForkChapter/events for a map and details.

September

Saturday, 9/21 – Trees of the Bitterroot Valley (Stevensville)

9:00 am. With leader Steve Arno we'll take a short hike along the Bass Creek Trail to look at a variety of native trees, including some big, old-growth conifers, and observe the effects of fire exclusion and recent restoration forestry using prescription fire. We'll only go about a half-mile of very easy walking to have time to concentrate on discussion. This site is accessible via a paved road and is only about 45 minutes from Missoula. Meet at the southwest end of Walmart parking lot (Highway 93 and Miller Creek Road) at 8:15am to carpool, or at the Bass Creek trailhead. Info: Paul Buck at (970) 901-2418, paul7703@gmail.com; or visit facebook.com/MNPSClarkForkChapter/events for a map and details.

October

Sunday, Date TBD – Dyeing with Native Plants (Dillon)

Time TBD. This is your chance to learn about using native plant materials to dye yarns and fabrics. There will be several native dyes available for free at the event; participants also are encouraged to bring in their own concoctions. And we'll have a limited number of silk scarves for sale that you can work with. Anyone is welcome to spend a morning at this season-ending Calypso Chapter event, presented by Jessie Salix, Beaverhead-Deerlodge forest botanist. Info: Jessie Salix at 683-3749.



Saturday, 6/1 – Big Eddy Trail #999 (Heron)

9:00 am. This trail is located above the Clark Fork River on the south end of the West Cabinet Mountains, near the Montana-Idaho border. Recently the Cabinet Ranger District and Friends of the Scotchmans reconstructed trail tread along a historic trail that switchbacks through an extensive system of balds and rock outcrops. The balds start a short distance above the highway and continue up about 1,500 feet on the south facing slope of Star Peak. This is the area we will explore as there should be a variety of flowers blooming about this time. Above the balds, the trail continues through forest to Star Peak Lookout at 6,167 feet. The lookout will not be our objective as it likely still will have quite a bit of snow in early June. This trail is located near Heron, MT on Hwy 200, near Milepost 6. The trailhead is several miles west of the junction with Bull River Road (Hwy 56) and is 0.4 miles west of the Big Eddy Campground entrance. Park on the south side of the highway along a wide turnout. We will walk a short distance up Forest Service Rd. #2292 to the trailhead. Info: Eric Dickinson at 295-1813, ericdickinson99@gmail.com.

Saturday, 6/1 – Pryor Mountains Field Trip (Bridger)

9:00 am. Join us for a field trip to explore wildflowers on the south side of the Pryor Mountains. If time permits, we will go up to Dry Head Vista via the Crooked Creek Road. Bring water, lunch, any botany gear that you would like to have along, and clothing appropriate for the weather. We will meet in Bridger at the parking lot of the Maverick gas station on the north side of town to carpool or caravan. Info: Jennifer Lyman at 426-1227, jencylyman@gmail.com. Text messages are fine.

Saturday, 6/1 – Blooming at the Buffalo Jump (Bozeman)

9:30 am. Join Kelly Ranch owner and Montana Land Reliance Greater Yellowstone Manager Kathryn Kelly to explore the Kelly Ranch along the Gallatin River. This private ranch includes lush cottonwood gallery forest, grassland, and sagebrush/juniper steppe habitats. The functioning ranch, which includes well preserved historic buildings and a pre-historic buffalo jump, is protected by a conservation easement with MLR. This will be an easy two to three- hour walk on two-tracks and cattle trails. Meet in the southwest corner of the Gallatin Valley Mall parking lot (behind the pet store) to carpool. Info: Jeff Copeland at 539-6029, jouselcopeland@gmail.com.

Sunday, 6/2 – Johnson Terraces (Whitefish)

10:00 am. Take an excursion to Johnson Terraces with Lynn Smith and Viktoria Wagner, vegetation ecologist at the University of Alberta. This is a gentle hike through species-rich bedrock meadows on argillite bedrock. The shallow, moss-covered soils are flooded by seepages in spring and give rise to a unique flora, including the rare native plant *Idahoia scapigera* (scalepod, MT rank S1S2). Viktoria will share insights from her research project on this unique habitat (supported by a Small Grant from the Montana Native Plant Society). This outing includes a two-mile round-trip walk and a one-hour drive each way. Bring your hand lens, water, and anything else you need for the weather. Meet at the Grouse Mountain Lodge tennis court rest area parking lot, Hwy 93, Whitefish. Info: Lynn Smith at 250.2307, calypsolyynn@gmail.com.



Wednesday, 6/5 – Whitefish Trail Wildflower Walk (Whitefish)

6:00 pm. Meander through the woods with Whitefish Legacy Partners and Diane Lundgren of the Montana Native Plant Society to learn about the various colorful wildflowers that line the Whitefish Trail. Identify local flowers and noxious weeds using hand lenses and field guides that will be provided during this two to three-mile hike. This event is free and suitable for all ages and abilities. Meet at the Lion Mountain trailhead. Info: visit whitefishlegacy.org; or call 862-3880, margosia@whitefishlegacy.org.

Wednesday, 6/12 – Montana Native Botanic Garden, University of Montana (Missoula)

5:30 p.m. Kelly Chadwick leads this tour of UM's native gardens; we'll see what's blooming and the wide diversity of plants that can be grown in the Missoula area. This is a great way to identify and learn about our native flora. Refreshments provided. The garden is located west of the University Center, north of Main Hall, surrounding the old botany greenhouse. The closest parking is north or south of the UC and is free after 5:00 pm. Info: Paul Buck at (970) 901-2418, paul7703@gmail.com, or visit facebook.com/MNPSClarkForkChapter/events for a map and details.

Saturday, 6/15 – Buffalo Lakes Naturalist Hike (East Glacier)

9:00 am. Join Lou Bruno and Rachel Potter on a beautiful, leisurely hike through the foothill country of the Badger-Two Medicine. Our destination is the top of Lubec Ridge, where we'll have stunning views of the northern Badger, southern Glacier National Park, and the vast prairie grasslands to the east. Along the way we'll stop at Buffalo Lakes – a rich complex of large beaver ponds and wetlands – and pause frequently to identify wildflowers and birds by sight and sound. Hiking is moderately difficult; four to six miles with approximately 500 feet of elevation gain. Participants who chose to eat breakfast first at the Two Medicine Grill can arrive at 8:00 am. This outing is tri-sponsored with the Montana Wilderness Association and the Glacier-Two Medicine Alliance. Registration is required and opens April 29 at wildmontana.org/walks. Act early; this hike will fill up fast! Info: Lou Bruno, wilderlou1@gmail.com.

Saturday, 6/15 – Bitterroot Knob Hike (Libby)

9:30 am. Come along on a hike to visit Montana's state flower! The site is about 1,600 feet above the Kootenai River, between Libby and Kootenai Falls. We'll carpool to a parking spot about an hour from Libby and hike off-trail about a half mile down the gentle ridge. The bitterroots are spread along the crest of the ridge in an open, shallow-soiled area. Bring binoculars; the views up and down the Kootenai River and into the Cabinet Mountain Wilderness Area are fantastic. If the timing is right, we'll see eagles and hawks soaring below us as they search for prey. Bring plenty of water and sun protection along with your lunch. Note: the date of the outing is subject to change based on seasonal conditions. Meet at the Riverfront Park in Libby, on City Service Road, off the Hwy 37 bridge. Info: Jon Reny at 334-0459, jreny@kvis.net.

Sunday, 6/16 –North Fork Dupuyer Creek (Choteau)

8:15 am. This three-mile hike, led by Dave Shea, is through prairie and foothill wildflowers, across the Old North Trail and grizzly country on the Boone & Crockett Club's Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Ranch. Dave will help with plant and wildlife identification, and discuss the history and spectacular geology of the area. We'll expect to see more than 75 species



of wildflowers, as well as tipi rings and features of the Old North Trail. Meet at the Chateau Information Center, near the Old Trail Museum. This hike is co-sponsored by the Montana Wilderness Association; registration required, opens April 29 at www.wildmontana.org/walks. Act early, this hike fills up fast! Info: Dave Shea at 466-2161.

Tuesdays, 6/18-8/27 – Volunteer at Glacier National Park Nursery (Glacier Park)

9:00 am. Help with seeding, transplanting, weeding, and cleaning, or work on a research or experimental project. Bring a sack lunch, your favorite work gloves, and clothes that can get dirty. Drop in and work an hour or stay the entire day. Meet at the GNP Native Plant Nursery. Info: GNP Nursery at 888-7835.

Thursday, 6/20 – Sprunger-Whitney Nature Trail (Swan Lake)

10:00 am. Naturalist and botanist Anne Morley guides this walk to identify plants, birds, trees, and wildlife. The two-mile loop trail meanders through a low elevation, old-growth forest with interpretive and plant identification signs en-route. Meet at trailhead off Hwy. 83, approximately seven miles south of Swan Lake. Turn right at the Point Pleasant and Sprunger-Whitney Nature Trail signs (1/2 mile south of mile marker 64). Co-sponsored by the Friends of the Wild Swan; please sign up to attend. Info: Anne Morley at 886-2242, or www.wildswan.org.

Friday-Sunday, 6/21-23 – Montana Native Plant Society Annual Membership Meeting

The Kelsey Chapter is hosting this year's meeting in the Cypress Hills of southern Saskatchewan. Members and non-members are welcome. For details about the meeting and tips on traveling to Canada, go to www.mtnativeplants.org. Info: Karen Porter at 494-0606, karenporter44@gmail.com.

Sunday, 6/23 – Lichen, Mosses, and Fungi of the Flathead: Medicinal Properties and Identification (Whitefish)

11:30 am. Discover the small wonders of northwest Montana forests with student researchers from the Flathead Valley Community College Antibiotic Potential of Flathead Fungi and Flora research project. Before hearing about their unique findings, Skye Hatfield and Raser Powell will teach us about lichens, mosses, and fungi that inhabit the southern Whitefish Range; introduce us to some new and rare species that have been discovered; and describe the medicinal properties of these diminutive creatures. This will be a family and wheelchair friendly, short hike with several stops; we'll plan to be back at the trailhead after about two and a half hours of exploring. Meet at the Swift Creek trailhead. Sponsored by the Montana Wilderness Association; registration required, opens April 29 at www.wildmontana.org/walks. Act early, this trip will fill up fast! Info: Grete Gansauer at 284-1747, ggansauer@wildmontana.org.

Saturday, 6/29 – Big Sheep Creek-Nicholia Basin (Dell)

Time TBD. Join Mike Garverich, retired NRCS geologist/biologist, to explore the basins and benches of southwestern-most Montana, west of Dell. This all-day adventure, across both Forest Service and BLM land, will include a variety of ecological niches that support specific flora. Optional overnight primitive camping and return via Medicine Lodge Creek may be considered in advance by the group. A minimum number of participants will be needed to make this trip a go. Info and to register: Mike Garverich at 491-0887.



July

Saturday, 7/13 – Alpine Plants of the Beartooth Mountains (Red Lodge)

9:00 am. Join us for a field trip to enjoy alpine plants of the Beartooth Mountains south of Red Lodge. Bring water, lunch and appropriate clothing for alpine walking on uneven ground. Raincoats are a good idea in case of afternoon storms. We will meet at the US Forest Service parking lot (Highway 212) on the south end of Red Lodge. Info: Jennifer Lyman at 426-1227, jenclyman@gmail.com.

Saturday, 7/13 – High Plains Habitats and Plant Communities (Three Forks)

9:00 am. Join MSU plant ecologist Tad Weaver on a visit to the Headwaters State Park vicinity, an area representative of Montana's High Plains. We will see and compare plant communities/vegetation types with respect to composition, processes, and environmental differences (water, temps, soil, disturbance). We will observe plant communities, including shortgrass prairie, greasewood, mountain mahogany, and cottonwood. During short walks at a few sites we will observe dominant species, and environmental and successional relationships. We can discuss system dynamics and management, and identify lesser species. The tour will take much of the day – and could extend to the nearby Madison Buffalo Jump – so bring water, lunch and appropriate clothing. Meet at the Museum of the Rockies parking lot at for carpooling. Info: Tad Weaver at 586-3270 (near 8:00 am), tweaver@montana.edu.

Saturday, 7/13 – Medicinal Plants of Lone Pine State Park (Kalispell)

10:00 am. Join Robyn Klein, medical botanist, and Derrick Rathe, park ranger, on this one-of-a-kind hike. Meander along the trail, learning about the edible and medicinal plant history of the park's flora. Expect an easy, two-hour stroll with frequent stops for discussion. Robyn is a western herbalist trained in the tradition of Michael Moore, Southwest School of Botanical Medicine. She teaches plant identification and ethnobotany at Montana State University. Meet at Lone Pine State Park Visitor Center. Registration required; participation is limited to 30. Info and to register: hailey@centerfornativeplants.com.

Sunday, 7/14 – Whitebark Pine Ecology (Bigfork)

8:00 am. Whitebark Pine is a fascinating keystone species that provide several benefits to alpine ecosystems. However, these long-lived, silent sentries are under threat, which could be detrimental to several other species that depend on them as a source of shelter and food. Join Julee Shamhart, of the Whitebark Pine Ecosystem Foundation, and silviculturist Melissa Jenkins on this hike to discuss Whitebark pine ecology and restoration on the way to the summit of Mount Aeneas. Expect a strenuous, seven-mile trek with approximately 2,000 feet of elevation gain. We'll stop for lunch at the summit and enjoy the fantastic views! This trip is co-sponsored by Montana Wilderness Association and the Whitebark Pine Ecosystem Foundation. Registration required; opens April 29 at wildmontana.org/walks. Info: Julie Shamhart at 203-0012, julie.shamhart@whitebarkfound.org.

Wednesday, 7/17 – Tour of the Cannery District Landscape (Bozeman)

6:00 pm. Linda Iverson, landscape designer for the Cannery, will walk us through areas of the landscape that were seeded with native grasses and forbs and look at plantings of natives in



beds and bioswales. Meet in front of the Daily Coffee Bar at Oak and Rouse. After the tour we are planning to have dinner at one of the restaurants in the Cannery District. Info: Linda Iverson at 930-1682, lilandscape@mtintouch.net.

Thursday and Friday, 7/18 and 7/19 – Weed Blitz (Glacier National Park)

10:00 am-4:00 pm. Join fellow citizens in removing invasive plants from priority sites in Glacier National Park. Park biologist Dawn LaFleur will train participants on identification and effective hand-pulling techniques for targeted weed species. The morning will focus on learning about invasive plant ecology, issues and identification. We will head into the field during the afternoon. Bring some muscles, water and gloves. Lunch will be provided by the Glacier National Park Conservancy. Info and to sign up by 7/15: Dawn LaFleur, dawn_lafleur@nps.gov, or glac_citizen_science@nps.gov, or call 888-7986.

Saturday-Sunday, 7/20-7/21 – High Altitude Flowers in the Snowcrest Range (Dillon)

Time TBD. This is an overnight trip (if desired), led by Wayne Phillips, with a Saturday afternoon hike for those who arrive by noon and a Sunday morning hike for all, led by Wayne Phillips. Our excursions offer tremendous wildflower diversity, from the sagebrush up to the alpine on the summit of Sunset Peak (10,581 feet). Going all the way to the summit may or may not be part of our experience, but for those in shape the summit is easy to reach in a walk-up type climb. Info and to sign up: Paul Buck at (970) 901-2418, paul7703@gmail.com. Visit www.facebook.com/MNPSClarkForkChapter/events for a map and details.

Saturday-Sunday, 7/20-7/21 – Centennial Valley Explorations (Lakeview)

9:30 am. In preparation for hosting the 2020 MNPS Annual Meeting, Valley of Flowers Chapter members will be camping and exploring in the Centennial Valley. Those who might lead a field trip during next year's event are especially encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to do some scouting. For field trips, we will meet at Red Rocks Lake National Wildlife Refuge headquarters at 9:30 am both days for carpooling. Overnight accommodations are up to you. Some people plan to camp at Red Rocks Lakes NWR; there is also lodging/camping at Elk Lake Resort. Be prepared for the remoteness of the valley and fill your vehicle's fuel tank before leaving the paved highways – it's nearly 50 miles to the nearest gas station. Dirt and gravel roads are rough; flat tires are a possibility. Drive slowly and carry a good spare tire. Info: Beth Madden at 224-1012, bethmadden64@gmail.com.

Sunday, 7/21 – Ear Mountain Natural Area and Yeager Flats Hike (Choteau)

9:00 am. This moderately difficult, five-mile round-trip hike led by Dave Shea passes through limber pine savannah, narrow-leaved cottonwood groves, sagebrush, Douglas-fir/Englemann spruce forest, and a portion of the 2000 lightning-caused Ear Mountain fire. In these varied habitats grow a great variety of shrubs, grasses, and forbs, including bitterroot and several orchids. Clark's nutcrackers and other birds are common, and prairie falcons nest on cliff faces. This is also good mule deer, elk, mountain sheep, and black and grizzly bear country. Some archeology and history, as well as Rocky Mountain Front geology, wildlife, and management issues, will be discussed. Meet at the Choteau Information Center parking lot at the north end of town on Hwy 89. This hike is co-sponsored by the Montana Wilderness Association; registration required, opens April 29 at wildmontana.org/walks. Act early, this hike fills up fast! Info: Dave Shea at 466-2161.



Sunday, 7/21 – Red Meadow Lake/ Lake Mountain (Polebridge)

9:00 am. Join the search for the rare slim larkspur (*Delphinium depauperatum*) in subalpine meadows near Red Meadow Lake in the Whitefish Range. If we are lucky, we may even relocate a population of sweetgrass (*Hierochloa odorata*) that was found in the same location more than 35 years ago. After we have explored the wet meadows, we will hike to the Whitefish Divide and climb Lake Mountain where we will enjoy scenic views into Glacier National Park and the North Fork of the Flathead. Join plant ecologist Maria Mantas to search for these species of concern and document their occurrences. Hiking will be moderately difficult. This trip is limited to 12 people. Info and to sign up: Maria Mantas at 407-2045, mariamantas@centurylink.net.

August

August, Date TBD – To Bee or Not to Bee? Creating Pollinator Habitat (Kalispell)

Time TBD. Join the Flathead Conservation District for a free workshop about pollinator conservation in your backyard. During this two-hour program we'll focus on how you can use native plants to provide forage, nesting, and overwintering habitat for our native pollinators – no matter how big or small your garden is! This workshop will take place at the Flathead Conservation District's newly constructed demonstration garden that showcases a variety of native, pollinator-friendly plants and different design methods. Meet at Flathead Conservation District Office, 133 Interstate Lane, Kalispell. Info: Hailey Graf at 752-4220, hailey@flatheadcc.org.

Saturday, 8/ 3 – Introduction to Native Solitary Bees (Whitefish)

11:00 am. Join Leah Grunzke at the Center for Native Plants for an introduction to native solitary bees. Leah will show us the types of solitary bees and explain how they differ from honeybees and bumblebees. She'll give us gardening tips to encourage native pollinator conservation and on how to establish and care for wild bee nesting sites. Leah is a botanist and educator based in Lewistown, Montana. She has spent the past two decades studying native plants and pollinators, working with nonprofit organizations on conservation outreach, developing curriculum for schools and informal science education programs. She also builds wild bee houses to accompany her workshops on backyard pollinator conservation. For more information about Leah visit <http://montanafloa.blogspot.com>. Bring your lawn chair as seating is limited. Co-sponsored by and located at Center for Native Plants, 5605 US HWY93 S, Whitefish. Info: Hailey at 862-4226, hailey@centerfornativeplants.com.

Sunday, 8/4 – Deep Creek, Paradise Valley (Livingston)

9:00 am. We will visit habitats along the South Fork of Deep Creek via a Forest Service trail that starts in the foothills of the Paradise Valley. We'll begin our day with a moderate, half-mile climb through open grassland and shrub-dotted hills. The trail then drops into a forested canyon as it crosses the South Fork of Deep Creek and heads into the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness, climbing from approximately 6,000 to 9,600 feet over five miles, reaching an alpine pass into Davis Gulch. This area was thoroughly burned during the 2012 Pine Creek Fire so we will be observing the continuing post-fire plant succession and ecology. This hike is rated moderate to difficult, depending on how far we make it toward the pass. Meet in the Albertson's parking lot in Livingston to carpool or caravan. Info: Jeff Copeland at 539-6029, jouselcopeland@gmail.com.



Sunday, 5/19 – Wild About Wildflowers (Belgrade)

10:00 am-2:00 pm. Join Ryan Quire, botanist for Confluence Consulting, for a stroll through the lush spring wildflower display in the sagebrush steppe and forested slopes of the Bridger Mountains. The North Cottonwood Trail offers a diversity of spring blooms and spectacular views of the Tobacco Root, Gallatin, and Bridger mountains. The approximately four-mile loop is moderately strenuous, starting at 5,600 feet and climbing to 7,000 feet. There will be a small creek crossing along the trail that may soak your hiking boots. To avoid wet feet for the remainder of the hike, we recommend folks bring a pair of sandals, a walking stick, an extra pair of socks, or whatever other attire is preferred for fording the creek. Meet at 10:00 am at the north end of the old Kmart parking lot (across Oak St. from the Bozeman Walmart) to carpool, or meet Ryan at the North Cottonwood trailhead around 10:15 am. Bring water and a lunch to enjoy among the wildflowers! Info: Ryan Quire at (502) 330-8433, rquire@confluenceinc.com.

Tuesday, 5/21 – Columbia Mountain Wildflowers (Columbia Falls)

6:00 pm. The Columbia Mountain Trail is a flower-lover's paradise. Join Grete Gansauer and Ellen Horowitz for a three-hour evening wildflower walk that travels through many habitat types – from moist, damp sites to dry, open slopes – where we're sure to find balsamroot in bloom. We'll travel at an easy pace and make lots of stops to view big, bold blossoms and beautiful, unobtrusive ones. Hiking is easy to moderately difficult (about three miles with less than 500 feet elevation gain). Meet at the Columbia Mountain trailhead. This walk is co-sponsored by the Montana Wilderness Association; registration required, opens April 29 at www.wildmontana.org/walks. Act early, this hike fills up fast! Info: Grete Gansauer at 284-1747, ggansauer@wildmontana.org.

Thursday, 5/30 – Plant Sale Labeling (Missoula)

6:30 pm. Nosh on hors d'oeuvres and sweets while preparing this year's plants for sale. Bring your labeling fingers and a savory or sweet dish to share. Meet at Clare Beelman's house, 2 September Dr., in Lincoln Hills. Info: Clare Beelman at 728-0189, clare.beelman@gmail.com.

June

Saturday, 6/1 – Annual MNPS Plant Sale, Clark Fork Farmer's Market (Missoula)

8:00 am.-1:00 pm. Help with the sale of many Montana native plant species at this one-day event. Come early for the best selection for your garden. Info: Clare Beelman at 728-0189, clare.beelman@gmail.com.

Saturday, 6/1 – Spring Wildflower and Bird Walk at the Matador Ranch (Malta)

8:00 am.-noon. This is a great opportunity to see a variety of grassland spring wildflowers – penstemons, milkvetches, blanketflower, and others – as well as native grasses. Additionally, we can learn about, hear, and see endemic grassland songbirds. If there is interest, we can also look at and learn how to ID grasses with vegetative characteristics. Easy to moderate hiking. Binoculars and/or hand lenses helpful. Meet at the ranch bunkhouse at 7:45 am. The ranch is located 35 miles south of Malta on Highway 191; turn east down the driveway at mile marker 119. Info: Kelsey Molloy at 654-4566, kelsey.molloy@tnc.org.

