

Common Name: Bitter Dock

Scientific Name: *Rumex obtusifolius*

Description: The bitter dock is a perennial herbaceous flowering plant that grows to a height of 16 to 59 inches. It is easily recognizable by its very large oval leaves with cordate bases and rounded tips, some of the lower leaves having red stems.

About: A perennial plant in the family Polygonaceae, bitter dock is native to Europe, but is found on all temperate continents. It is a highly invasive species in some zones, resulting from its abundant seed dispersal, adaptability to reproduce, aggressive roots, ability to tolerate extreme climates, and hardiness.

Fact: Leaves of the plant can be used as salad, to prepare a vegetable broth or to be cooked like spinach.

Common Name: Black-Eyed Susan

Scientific Name: *Rudbeckia hirta*

Description: The black-eyed susan has composite flower heads with deep yellow to orange ray flowers (flattened flowers that resemble petals) and dark conical centres of numerous disk flowers (tubular flowers).

About: The black-eyed susan is a North American flowering plant in the sunflower family, native to Eastern and Central North America and naturalized in the Western part of the continent as well as in China.

Fact: The plant is a traditional Native American medicinal herb in several tribal nations.

Common Name: Bottlebrush Buckeye

Scientific Name: *Aesculus macrostachya*

Description: The bottlebrush buckeye has long fluffy white flower clusters in early July, and dark green compound leaves turn yellow in the Fall. It has bottlebrush-shaped clusters of white flowers up to 12 inches long, and smooth pear-shaped nuts (buckeyes) in Fall with bright yellow husk. Buckeyes should not be eaten.

About: This plant is rarely grown, although it has won numerous awards for its garden beauty and usefulness. The species is native to the southeastern United States, where it is found primarily in Alabama and Georgia.

Fact: Bottlebrush Buckeye is grown as an ornamental plant in gardens, where its August flowering attracts butterflies.

Common Name: Common Buttonbush

Scientific Name: *Cephalanthus occidentalis*

Description: The common buttonbush is a shrub or small tree that grows up to 6 meters in height with tubular white to reddish flowers that form in dense clusters at the end of branches. Long styles on the flowers give them a pincushion appearance.

About: The plant is native to North America and common in swamps, floodplains, marshes, and bogs.

Fact: Common buttonbush contains the poison cephalathin which induces vomiting, paralysis, and convulsions if ingested.

Common Name: Common Cow Parsnip

Scientific Name: *Heracleum maximum*

Description: Cow parsnip is a tall herbaceous plant reaching heights of over 2 meters (7 feet). The genus name *Heracleum* (from Heracles) refers to the very large size of all parts of these plants.

About: The thick flower stems, coming into season in early summer, can be peeled and eaten cooked when young. Caution should be taken as the flowers resemble those of the extremely poisonous *cicuta maculata*.

Fact: The flowers of cow parsnip attract a large diversity of insects because of its easily accessed nectar and pollen.

Common Name: Common Selfheal

Scientific Name: *Prunella vulgaris*

Description: The leaves of common selfheal are lance-shaped, serrated and reddish at the tip, about 2.5 cm (1 inch) long and 1.5 cm broad, and growing in opposite pairs down the square stem. Each leaf has 3-7 veins that shoot off the middle vein to the margin.

About: *Prunella* is derived from 'Brunella', a word which is itself a derivative, taken from 'die Bräune', the German name for quinsy (a type of throat inflammation), which it was historically used to cure.

Fact: Selfheal is edible. The young leaves and stems can be eaten raw in salads; the plant in whole can be boiled and eaten as a potherb.

Common Name: Culver's Root

Scientific Name: *Veronicastrum virginicum*

Description: This perennial plant grows up to 5 feet tall and is unbranched, except near the inflorescence. The central stem is round and smooth. Scattered along this stem are 3-7 whorled leaves. These leaves are up to 6 inches long and 1.5 inches across with serrated margins.

About: While in bloom, this plant has an elegant appearance, although the white flowers rapidly turn brown. Its common name refers to the medicinal usage of the bitter root, which has purgative properties.

Fact: The surname 'Culver' probably refers to a pioneer physician who advocated the use of this plant for the treatment of various ailments.

Common Name: Eastern Skunk Cabbage

Scientific Name: *Symplocarpus foetidus*

Description: Eastern skunk cabbage spathes are 10-15 cm and range in color from mottled maroon and yellow to solid maroon, while spadices are 5-10cm and can be pure yellow or dark purple. The leaves are impressively large, 40-55 cm long and 30-40 cm wide.

About: The leaves contain crystals of calcium oxalate, making them toxic to most animals. Hungry snapping turtles and bears have been observed eating the leaves in spring.

Fact: Various parts of the plant were prepared in different ways to treat conditions ranging from headache, earache, bleeding, to skin and mouth sores.

Common Name: False Solomon's Seal

Scientific Name: *Maianthemum racemosum*

Description: False Solomon's Seal has plume-like clusters 3 to 5 inches long and about 2 inches across of up to 80 star-shaped flowers. Leaves are up to 6 inches long and 3 inches across, oval and pointed at the tip. Fruit is a cluster of waxy berries, each 1/8 inch across, that turn bright red when ripe.

About: The most robust and profuse occurrences of this plant are typically found in partial shade and deep, moist, soft soils in the western part of North America.

Fact: The ripe fruits are edible raw or cooked and are very sweet with a hint of bitterness in the skin. They can be laxative if consumed in large quantities.

Common Name: Lily of the Valley

Scientific Name: *Convallaria majalis*

Description: The fruit is a small orange-red berry 5-7 mm diameter that contains a few large whitish to brownish colored seeds that dry to a clear translucent round bead. The stems grow to 15-30 cm tall, with one or two leaves 10-25 cm long.

About: It is native throughout the cool temperate Northern Hemisphere in Asia and Europe. Though some non-medical sources claim it is highly poisonous, there are no published cases of deaths due to this plant in humans.

Fact: All parts of the plant are potentially poisonous, including the red berries.

Common Name: Opium Poppy

Scientific Name: *Papaver somniferum*

Description: The opium poppy is an annual plant and can reach about 1-5 meters (3-16 feet) tall. The seeds are borne in a spherical capsule topped by a disk formed by the stigmas of the flower.

About: Opium poppies, while not a native plant, are in fact naturalized in Monterey County and much of the rest of coastal California, meaning that they are quite capable of growing pretty much anywhere they please without the need for anyone to plant them.

Fact: The seeds escape from pores beneath the disk when the capsule is shaken by the wind.

Common Name: Panicked-Leaf Tick Trefoil

Scientific Name: *Desmodium paniculatum*

Description: The flowers of the paniculate inflorescence are light pinkish to lavender and appear June through September. The fruit is a small orange-red berry 5-7 mm in diameter that contains a few large whitish to brownish colored seeds that dry to a clear translucent round bead. The stems grow to 15-30 cm tall, with one or two leaves 10-25 cm long.

About: The panicked-leaf tick trefoil is a common native to Eastern North America, ranging from Quebec to Florida and as far West as Texas, Nebraska, and Ontario. The sticky loment can be found in disturbed areas that receive plenty of light, such as roadsides and parks.

Fact: The panicked-leaf tick trefoil can be a good source of protein-based fodder for livestock during the warmer months of the year.

Common Name: Prairie Fleabane

Scientific Name: *Erigeron strigosus*

Description: Flowers are 1/2 to 3/4 inch across with 50 to 100 short, narrow white rays. The flower stalk is 3/4 to 1 inch long and hairless or sparsely hairy. Leaves are 1 to 6 inches long, 1/4 to 1 inch wide, mostly toothless or with a few small teeth.

About: The prairie fleabane has up to 200 small daisy-like flowers in an open branching cluster at the top of the plant. Petals may sometimes be pink or bluish tinged, and yellow center disk. Occasionally flowers have very short or nearly no petals.

Fact: Bees collect and flies and beetles feed on pollen or nectar from the prairie fleabane.

Common Name: Purple Coneflower

Scientific Name: *Echinacea purpurea*

Description: The purple coneflower blooms throughout summer into autumn. Its cone-shaped flowering heads are usually, but not always, purple in the wild. Its individual flowers (florets) within the flower head are hermaphroditic, having both male and female organs in each flower.

About: Purple coneflowers are quintessential prairie plants. They are hardy, drought-tolerant, and long-blooming, and they are cultivated in an ever-widening range of colors.

Fact: Native Americans used the plant to treat many ailments, including wounds, burns, insect bites, toothaches, throat infections, pain, cough, stomach cramps, and snake bites.

Common Name: Red Baneberry

Scientific Name: *Actaea rubra*

Description: Flowers of the red baneberry are in a round cluster about 2 inches tall at the end of a long flower stem rising above the leaves. Leaves are twice compound with 3 or 5 leaflets in each group. The fruit is a glossy red berry about 1/3 inch long on a slender green stalk.

About: Eating one single berry can burn the mouth and throat. This, combined with the extremely bitter flavor, tends to discourage people from sampling more than one berry – good examples of nature's built-in protective strategies. However, birds and animals eat the berries with no apparent problems.

Fact: Eating just six berries can result in dangerous symptoms, including respiratory distress and cardiac arrest.

Common Name: Rose of Sharon

Scientific Name: *Rumex obtusifolius*

Description: Rose of Sharon is a hardy deciduous shrub. It is upright and vase-shaped, reaching 2-4 meters (7-13 feet) in height, bearing large trumpet-shaped flowers with prominent yellow-tipped white stamens.

About: The plant is not really a rose at all; instead, it is a member of the Malvaceae or mallow family. Nor is it native to Syria, as is suggested in its species name *Hibiscus syriacus*. This plant's origins hail from India and China.

Fact: The Rose of Sharon is a biblical term.

Common Name: Scarlet Beebalm

Scientific Name: *Monarda didyma*

Description: Scarlet beebalm is a perennial herb that grows from shallow, slender, creeping rhizomes that grows 2 to 3.5 feet tall. Leaves are opposite, 3 to 6 inches in length, coarsely toothed, glabrous to sparsely pubescent on the upper leaf surface and with spreading hairs on the lower leaf surface.

About: Flowering starts in late June to early July and ends in late August. Scarlet beebalm's large, red, scentless, nectar-rich flowers are pollinated primarily by ruby-throated hummingbirds and butterflies, especially fritillaries. The dense flowering heads turn from green to brown when ripe.

Fact: The common name beebalm refers to the use of a resin derived from the plant that may be used for healing and soothing, particularly of bee stings.

Common Name: Spider Flower

Scientific Name: *Cleome hassleriana*

Description: The spider flower plant grows to a height of 150 cm, with spirally arranged leaves. The leaves are palmately compound, with five or seven leaflets, the leaflets up to 12 cm long and 4 cm broad and the leaf petiole up to 15 cm long. The flowers are purple, pink, or white, with four petals and six long stamens.

About: As the seed pods ripen and burst open, the seeds scatter about the garden. So if you plant it once, you may be blessed with new spider flower plants for years to come—without any extra effort.

Fact: Spider flowers have been a garden favorite since the 1800s.

Common Name: Sweet Joe-Pye Weed

Scientific Name: *Eutrochium purpureum*

Description: This perennial plant is 3-7 feet tall and usually unbranched. The central stem is light green, except where the whorls of leaves occur, where it is purple. There are 3-4 leaves in each whorl along the stem. The leaves are about 6 inches long and 3.5 inches across, or sometimes larger.

About: Habitats include open woodlands, savannas, woodland borders, thickets, partially shaded seeps, and partially shaded riverbanks. This plant can survive in wooded areas that are somewhat degraded. However, populations have a tendency to decline when the shade of overhead canopy trees becomes too dense.

Fact: The flower nectar attracts primarily long-tongued bees, butterflies, skippers, and moths.

Common Name: Wild Bergamot

Scientific Name: *Monarda fistulosa*

Description: The plants are typically up to 3 feet tall, with a few erect branches. Its leaves are about 2-3 inches long, lance-shaped, and toothed. Its compact flower clusters are solitary at the ends of branches. Each cluster is about 1.5 inches long, containing about 20-50 flowers.

About: This plant, with showy summer-blooming pink to lavender flowers, is often used as a honey plant, medicinal plant, and garden ornamental. The species is quite variable, and several subspecies or varieties have been recognized within it.

Fact: As a honey plant, it is popular with a variety of pollinators, including bees, hummingbirds, and lepidoptera.