

Soapstone Prairie Natural Area Early September Plants

Conditions are very dry so blooms are scarce. Note that everything on this sheet is in the Sunflower family, even though some do not look at all like sunflowers.

Prairie sunflower

Helianthus pumilus
(Sunflower family) native. Leaves have short stiff hairs that make them feel like sandpaper.



Curlycup gumweed

Grindelia squarrosa
(Sunflower family) native.

Each head has multiple green bracts that curve downward and are very sticky (hence the common name). Livestock avoid it for its bitter taste. A yellow dye can be made from the flowers.



Hairy goldenaster

Heterotheca villosa (Sunflower family) native.

Low and bushier with smaller flowers than the Prairie sunflower and with hairy, woolly foliage.



Broom snakeweed

Gutierrezia sarothrae (Sunflower family) native. Small rounded clumps, much smaller than rabbitbrush.



Rubber rabbitbrush

Ericameria nauseosa or *Chrysothamnus nauseosus* (Sunflower family) native. These grow into large woody shrubs. They line the road below the north parking lot. Small quantities of rubber can be extracted from them.



Dotted gayfeather *Liatris punctata*

(Sunflower family) native

One of the few flowers this time of year that is not yellow. “Dotted” name from glandular dots on leaves. This has a deep taproot making it very drought tolerant, so is doing very well this year.



Yellowspine thistle

Cirsium ochrocentrum (Sunflower family) native. Named for its very visible yellow spines. Non-invasive.

Fringed sage

Artemisia frigida (Sunflower family) native. Leaves grayish densely woolly, divided into 3-5 linear segments. Drought tolerant; good forage for sheep and important winter food for deer and elk. Now flowering.



young plant



flowering stem



single flower head



Winterfat *Krascheninnikovia lanata*

(Goosefoot family) native

Gray needlelike leaves with very woolly flower clusters.

Good forage for elk, deer, pronghorn and sheep especially in winter, hence its name.

These sheets are available online at: fcgov.com/anturalareas (then go to “native plants” and to the wildflowers in Natural Areas —> [wildflower handouts for Soapstone Prairie](#))