

Castilleja linariifolia

Castilleja

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Above: Ripe Chokecherry fruits, by Jacqueline White

The drupe fruits also surround pits containing cyanogenic glycosides that release the bitter almond-scented poison hydrogen cyanide when crushed (O' Brien and Vail 2015). However, dozens of North American tribes have long known how to rid chokecherry of these compounds, transforming this potentially dangerous fruit into a sacred food and powerful medicine. Sun-drying or cooking the whole pulverized fruit properly reduces the enzymatic reaction that releases hydrogen cyanide. On the medicinal side, the anthocyanins that give the drupes their dark wine color have been shown to kill several cancer cell types in laboratory studies of similar fruits (Télliez-Pérez 2020) **cont. p. 6**

April is Wyoming Native Plant Month!

For the third consecutive year, Governor Mark Gordon has proclaimed that April is Wyoming Native Plant Month. See the Wyoming Native Plant Society (WYNPS) website for the complete proclamation. The text concludes:

I encourage all Wyoming residents to participate in the recognition and celebration of the importance of native plants to Wyoming's rich biological heritage and as a source of food and habitat for native wildlife by planting native trees and flowers in their yards, removing non-native invasive plants from their communities, and educating themselves about the many benefits of native plants."

You can also follow plant related events across the state, including chapter events, by viewing the [new online calendar](#) on the WYNPS website!

Chokecherry Memories:

Community Harvests Keep Tradition Alive

Sienna Wessel, incoming *Castilleja* Editor,
WYNDD Botanist

Close your eyes and imagine the taste of tart dark cherry with complex undertones of red wine and a subtle, warning hint of almond. This is the unmistakable flavor of jelly produced from chokecherries (*Prunus virginiana*), shrubs of the Rose (Rosaceae) family that are native across most of North America (NRCS 2002). In Wyoming, chokecherries are found along riparian areas and draws, and in shaded, moist pockets within otherwise semi-arid montane landscapes. There are two varieties separated by the Rocky Mountains. The western variety primarily found in Wyoming is *Prunus virginiana* var. *demissa* (FNA 2015). Chokecherry is an apt common name, referring to the puckering, drying sensation that follows eating a few fresh, young fruits straight off the shrub, thanks to tannins.

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WYNPS News

Announcing: Registration for the 2026 Wyoming Native Plant Society Annual Meeting, **29-31 May**, is *open!* This spring we gather at the Flaming Gorge Natl Recreation Area – see pp. 3-5 for agenda and registration information.

WYNPS Board – 2026

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homepage (<https://tetonplants.org/>) for events.

Follow WYNPS on Social Media!



Search Wyoming Native Plant Society

Treasurer's Report: Balance as of 7 Feb:

Scholarship = \$1928; General = \$12,381.47;

Total = \$14,309.47

Next issue: Please send articles and announcements for the next newsletter by 15 April to the editor at

swessel1@uwyo.edu

Looking for more plant related events in Wyoming? Check out our new live calendar at www.wynps.org/calendar

Email the editor @ swessel1@uwyo.edu if you have an event to feature.

New members: Please welcome the following new members to WYNPS: Carolyn Carothers, Moran; Samantha Gerlach, New Orleans, LA; Deborah Martin, Boulder, CO; Hailey Moore, Whitefish, MT; Camellia Okpodu, Laramie; Barbara Potenzano, Laramie; Hope Sieck, Jackson; Kathryn Sorensen, Thermopolis.

Message from the Secretary/Treasurer: Thanks everyone for your donations during the past year. Donations make it possible for us to support budding young artists through the poster contest, and budding scientists through the scholarship program. In addition, donations of time and expertise are what keep the Society functioning. *-Dorothy Tuthill*

Message from the Incoming Editor: With the new year comes a changing of hands for WYNPS. For many years now, *Castilleja* has satiated my hunger pangs during the darker months as I awaited field season. I'm honored to now steward its continuation and the tradition of Wyoming Natural Diversity Database botanists serving as editor.

Many thanks to outgoing editor Bonnie Heidel for her decades of service and for remaining as co-editor during the transition. I look forward to connecting more closely with members, sharing unique botanical stories from across the state, and encouraging first-time writers to contribute—please reach out with ideas for future submissions. *-Sienna Wessel*

Once again we are seeking items to include in our silent auction at the annual meeting. Please consider donating items made by you or people you know, including books, photography, fine art, woodwork, fiber art, etc. All proceeds will go to the scholarship fund. Bring your items to the meeting with your minimum bid. Bidding will start Friday and end Saturday evening. If in doubt as to appropriateness of a donation, please contact wynps@wynps.org. (Remember this is an outdoor event—so nothing fragile or perishable.)

**2026 Wyoming Native Plant Society
Annual Meeting/ Wildflower Weekend**



Above: Flaming Gorge landmarks, by Charmaine Delmatier

Come to the Green River and Firehole Canyon, **29-31 May**, for an ample helping of Wyoming's southwestern flora! Advance registration is encouraged (see p. 5) but not required. On-site registration opens Friday pm, with hikes on Saturday and Sunday. Hike options offer stunning wildflower displays along the Flaming Gorge on the Green River. In addition, a Friday mine tour offers a deep look at local geology. The Wildflower Weekend is open to the public. WYNPS Membership is not necessary, but registration is required to attend. Register via mail and check or online by May 19 at <https://www.wynps.org/annual-meeting-wildflower-weekend/>

Location: We reserved camping sites at the Firehole Canyon Campground (Ashley National Forest) to ensure space. The Campground is 30 miles south of Rock Springs (~40 min travel time). All events start at the Campground. *This information is also available on our homepage (www.wynps.org).*

Schedule at a Glance

Thursday, May 28

Participants attending a Trona tour option will need to arrive on Thursday. Advance registration is required and online only. Group size is limited to 9 attendees, so register early!

Friday, May 29

6:30 am or earlier —Leave from Campground to drive to Solvay Trona Mine Hdqtrs. Tour starts @ 7:30 am (estimated return time by 3:00 pm if stopping in Green River)

3:00-6:00 pm—On-site registration, silent auction bidding opens

6:00-7:00 pm—Dinner on your own

7:00-7:30 pm—WELCOME, Allen Huber, Plant Ecologist, Ashley National Forest (includes Flaming Gorge Natl Rec Area). He and our Saturday speaker co-authored *Uinta Flora: A Guide to the Vascular Plants of the Uinta Basin and Uinta Mountains*.

Saturday, May 30

7:00-8:30 am—On-site registration

8:30-5:00 pm—Two local hikes will be offered in both am and pm by different leader teams:

- Firehole Canyon panorama
- Razorback above Gorge

6:00-7:00 pm—Catered dinner, in Campground, by Madi's Tasty Creations, Rock Springs

7:00-8:30 pm—Unique Flora of Flaming Gorge, Sherel Goodrich, U.S. Forest Service, ret. Silent auction winners announced

Sunday, May 31

7:00-8:00 am—Annual business meeting with continental breakfast

8:30 am-12:00 pm—Two Green River Greenthread visits (Note: Campsites must be vacated by 11 am)

Flaming Gorge offers a stunning spring display, associated with a colorful geology expressed in towering pillars and geologic chimneys. It is a unique opportunity to see exposed layers of ancient white and red sandstone, limestone, and shales deposited from Eocene Lake Gosiute. We have a very unusual opening event option, a "deep dive into Lake Gosiute" to view trona mining belowground on the same geologic formations we will see adorned with plants the rest of the weekend (Trona mine tour visitors MUST reserve online! Saturday hikes are in the Firehole Canyon area and Sunday hikes are to the north near Green River (town) featuring a bright calcareous shale that hosts the state endemic Green River greenthread (*Thelesperma caespitosum*).

Camping and Hotels: We have reserved eight campsites in Firehole Canyon Campground. Each campsite has a firepit, table and shelter, and can accommodate one camper (35' max.) and multiple tents. The cost to use these as SHARED sites is included in the registration fee. There are additional fees for more than one car per site that are not included. Bring your federal land passes to waive vehicle fees or be prepared to pay on site. The campground has flush toilets, showers and potable water. No hookups or kitchen facilities. Participants can register for 2- or 3- nights of camping. If you prefer a private site, camping is

\$33/site/night for additional first-come-first-use sites; not guaranteed. Or you may reserve your own campsite through recreation.gov with an additional \$8 service fee. Nearest motel options in Rock Springs: <https://business.rockspringschamber.com/list/category/lodging-84>

Other Information: No dogs on any hikes. Please make sure to arrive at hikes with shoes clean of mud and weed seeds so we don't accidentally introduce weeds. Carpooling is recommended.

Questions? Reach us by email at wynps@wynps.org.

DETAILED SCHEDULE

THURSDAY—Participants attending the Friday trona tour will need to arrive on Thursday. **Advance online** registration is required. Campers staying at the Firehole Canyon Campground can arrive as early as 2:00 pm. Sites 5 and 6 are reserved for our use Thursday night.

FRIDAY—Solvay Trona Mine Tour will depart shortly before 6:30 am from the Campground to see trona mining 1600 ft belowground, the same geology that we'll see the rest of the weekend adorned with plants. Attendees limited to 9 max. We will meet at the Solvay Minerals headquarters at 7:30 am, located at 400 Co. Rd. 85, Green River, app. 30 min west of Green River (town), south of I-80. **Advance online** registration for the tour and full weekend registration required.

Wildflower Weekend Registration runs from 3:00-6:00 pm in the Firehole Canyon Campground—look for the WYNPS banner at the reserved campsites. Silent auction bidding begins.

6:00-7:00 pm—Dinner on your own

7:00-7:30 pm—Welcome to Ashley National Forest, Allen Huber, U.S. Forest Service Plant Ecologist

SATURDAY—registration at 7:30-8:30 am. Half-day hikes depart from the Campground and are offered twice each: once in the AM and again in the PM, with two groups rotating accordingly.

Firehole Canyon Panorama Hikes

A series of short hikes off the Firehole Canyon Road (BLM Rd 33), with additional stops at the head (a pullout along Hwy 191), and at the head of Little

Firehole Canyon. Est. 25 mi roundtrip. We will see *colorful cushion plant displays, state and regional endemics, and Great Basin plants at northern limits.*

Difficulty: Series of short hikes from car

Required: 2wd conditions. Bring good hiking boots, sunscreen, and water.

Razorback Overlook Hike

Explore the early-season flora along the rim of a high bench overlooking Flaming Gorge.

Difficulty: Easy, Park and walk, Level terrain on top

Required: 2wd vehicle **unless wet.** Bring good hiking boots, sunscreen, and water.

8:30 am-12:00 pm—First hike groups depart

12:00-1:30 pm—Lunch at Campground on your own

1:30-5:00 pm—Second hike groups depart

6:00 pm—Catered Dinner, in Campground, by Madi's Tasty Creations, Rock Springs. Bring your own dishes, please.

7:00-8:30 pm—Unique Flora of Flaming Gorge, Sherel Goodrich, U.S. Forest Service, ret.

SUNDAY—Annual business meeting at 7:00-8:00 am, continental breakfast provided.

8:30 am—depart for hikes. Note: All campers must be checked out of the campground by **11 am.**

Green River Greenthread Hikes

Two morning stops, leaving by 8:30 am from Campground to Green River (town). Distance between Campground and Green River is 33 mi (one-way). We'll consolidate carpooling in Green River; hikes finish by noon. Green River greenthread is a state endemic known only from the Green River area. It grows in highly exposed rocky habitat. We'll visit two of its three populations worldwide! Difficulty: The first stop has less than 0.5 mi hiking. The second stop is park and walk.

Required: The 2nd stop is 4wd and good clearance. Bring good hiking boots, sunscreen, and water.

Look for an article on Green River greenthread in the May issue!

2026 WYNPS Annual Meeting/Wildflower Weekend Registration Form

Advance registration required by **May 19**, via mail or online, for attendees wanting the catered dinner. Registration does not include the cost of \$8.00/vehicle/site THAT YOU WILL NEED TO PAY SEPARATELY, or that is waived if you have the America the Beautiful pass or the Flaming Gorge NRA annual pass. *If you are going on the Solvay Trona Mine Tour - you must pre-register online! The first nine people to register for this Trona Tour will secure their slot and others put on a waiting list in case of cancellation.* Pre-registration can be made by mail or online, and paid by check or credit card. On-site registration can also be paid by cash.

Registration fee for the weekend is \$25/person. Children 12 and younger are free.

Name(s) _____ Email _____

Address _____

Number in party: Adults _____ Children 12 and under _____

Saturday evening dinner cost is \$12/person, including children under the age of 12

Dinner will consist of food platters. Please indicate your dietary preference with a check mark. If there are additional people in your party, include the number in front of each option.

____ Meat ____ Vegetarian ____ Gluten-free

____ Other dietary restrictions; please specify: _____

Please bring your own plates and utensils!

Firehole Canyon Campground has campsites divided between reservation-only and first-come-first-use. Camping at **shared** campsites that have been pre-reserved by WYNPS is included in the registration fee (\$25 for the weekend). Note: Otherwise, the fee is \$33/per campsite/day if you prefer first-come-first-use or to reserve your own campsite (with additional \$8 fee for advance online reservations).

Which nights do you plan to use a shared site? ____ Thurs. ____ Fri. ____ Sat.

Camping accommodations: ____ Tent ____ Camper (limited to 8)

FEES

Registration @ \$25/person Number of people _____ Total registration fee _____

Saturday Dinner @ \$12/person Number of people _____ Total meal cost _____

TOTAL FEES _____

Please mail this form and your check to Wyoming Native Plant Society, P.O. Box 2449, Laramie, WY 82073 - UNLESS YOU REGISTER FOR THE TRONA MINE TOUR, WHICH HAS TO BE ONLINE.

You may pay online via PayPal (www.wynps.org). Send registration FOR RECEIPT BY MAY 20.

Please indicate the number of people attending each of the following hike events:

_____ **Saturday.** Two half-day Firehole area hikes (both hikes will run in both the am and pm.)

_____ **Sunday.** Two Green River Greenthread visits (We will not return to the Campground, and 4wd carpooling will be set up for the second stop.)

Chokecherry Memories - Continued from p.1

Many Wyomingites recall the flavor of chokecherry as a signal of autumn harvest and winter preparation, but for elders of the Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone tribes, chokecherry jelly use signals something far more significant- a flavor that takes them back to childhood and closer to times when such foods were still primary dietary staples. Chokecherry is also essential for the cultural ceremony known as Sun Dance, reflecting how traditional Native foods carry both medicine and memory (Habermann 2024).

No one knows the importance of chokecherry to the preservation of tribal culture and health in Wyoming better than Te3oo Niibeisei (Singing Crane Woman in the Arapaho language), whose English name is Jacqueline White. She sees food distribution as a unique opportunity to return traditional and ceremonial foods to her community, honor elders, and teach youth about their culture. As the Tribal Relations Specialist for the Wyoming Food Bank, she has brought together many organizations that focus on food security and sovereignty in the Rockies, including the Wind River Food Sovereignty Project, Sweetgrass Food Lodge, Wildlands Restoration Volunteers, and Community Fruit Rescue. Together, they have recruited volunteers to harvest chokecherries for the tribal community and have provided supplies and hands for jelly processing. Last year alone, Jacqueline's initiative collected over 300 pounds of fresh chokecherries, which were turned into 80 jars of jelly for distribution and ceremonial use across the Wind River Reservation (Food Bank of Wyoming 2025)!

Unfortunately, out-of-season overharvest has become a major issue around Sinks Canyon, where most previous collections occurred, and chokecherries are no longer abundant enough there to



Above: Jacqueline White harvests chokecherry with the next generation, by the Wyoming Food Bank

fully support ceremonial use (Habermann 2024). Jacqueline aims to establish a second Wyoming collection site on the Medicine Bow National Forest and release a call for volunteers mid-summer. Details will be added to the (new!) WYNPS website calendar and shared via email and social media. To learn more about the work of the Wyoming-based organizations involved, go to: www.sweetgrassfoodlodge.org and www.windriverfoodsovereignty.org

References – cont. on p. 10

were in response to Federal Register calls for comments having keywords that included “Wyoming” and “Environmental Impact Analysis.” The other two addressed actions going through other evaluation processes.

Members are invited to convey local and regional calls for comments that could set precedent for Wyoming native plants. Please feel free to convey them to the Conservation Committee at: wynps@wynps.org with “CONSERVATION” in the subject line. At least once a year, a summary report of Committee activities goes to WYNPS Board members and they are open for member review. **cont. p. 7**

Conservation Corner:

Part 1. Off and Running!

Bonnie Heidel, Conservation Committee

Wyoming Native Plant Society has plant conservation embedded in its mission statement. Now it also has a Conservation Committee as commitment to conservation and a venue for member collaboration, first announced in Oct 2025 issue of *Castilleja*. Since the Committee formed last June, we submitted five comments (Table 1) and prepared an article on designated natural areas in Wyoming (Dec 2025 issue of *Castilleja*). Three of the five comments

Off and Running!- Continued from p. 6: Look for short announcements or else full articles in future issues.

Table 1. 2025 Conservation Committee comments on behalf of Wyoming Native Plant Society

Topic	Document	Native plant relevance
State Wildlife Action Plan	Wyoming Game & Fish Dept 5-year planning document with anticipated 2027 release	The draft plan proposed recognition of plants among “Species of Greatest Conservation Need” for first time
U.S. Forest Service Roadless Rule	In June 2025, the Secretary announced intent to rescind the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule, later opening it for public comment. A draft EIS and proposed rule is expected in 2026.	Roadless areas are 33% of all natl forest lands in Wyoming and we called for a “Wyoming Plan” to address their mngmt
BLM Rock Springs Resource Management Plan – amendment to final	BLM environmental assessment plan that sets resource management framework for the next decade; amendment to final	Addressed one Area of Critical Environmental Concern as named in 1997 for six sensitive species at multiple locations
Bridger Teton National Forest – Draft Forest Plan	U.S. Forest Service planning document that sets resource management framework for the next decade	Addressed Species of Conservation Concern (SCC) and ecosystems
Endangered Species Act standards	Released as multiple separate documents that change the basic terms of the Act	Proposed change to ESA re critical habitat, measures for newly-listed Threatened species, and decision-making framework

WYNPS and WYNDD: Long-Time Allies

Bonnie Heidel, *Castilleja* Co-Editor,
WYNDD Botanist, ret.

Two organizations feature native plants of Wyoming as central to their missions, so it’s no wonder that they collaborate! ...*Who besides Wyoming Native Plant Society (WYNPS) focuses on native Wyoming plants?* Answer: Wyoming Natural Diversity Database (WYNDD). Here is a big difference, we (WYNPS) are a member-based non-profit organization encompassing any and all native plant interests with a mission that includes native plant advocacy and general public education. By contrast, WYNDD is a non-regulatory professional information clearinghouse. Ever since its beginning in 1979, when named Wyoming Natural Heritage Program, WYNDD has employed botanists and ecologists to collect and synthesize field data on plant, animal and vegetation diversity across the state. The program operates in an impartial, academic setting with a focus on driving data to inform rare species conservation in Wyoming.

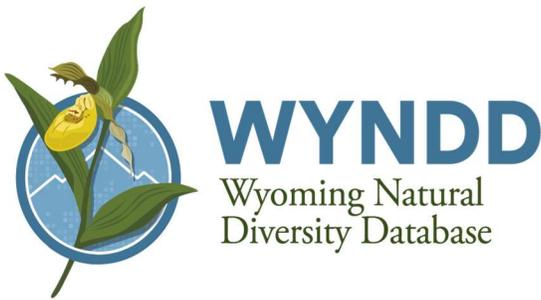
WYNDD offers the most complete information for species and habitats of conservation concern in the state, including precise maps of species locations. WYNDD data, analyses, and staff expertise are all wrapped into user-friendly data products to support effective natural resource management strategies and efficient regulatory compliance. Ever since its beginning in 1979, WYNDD has employed botanists and ecologists to collect and synthesize field data on plant, animal, and vegetation diversity across the state. And almost ever since the founding of WYNPS in 1981, WYNDD botanists and ecologists have worn various hats in the WYNPS organization, in a long-term collaboration.

The WYNDD mandate to document state biodiversity is a ticket and wonderful opportunity to communicate and collaborate with botanists and ecologists across the state and measure a pulse on how plants are doing at the statewide level. This is a unique role in Wyoming as a state with no plant conservation authority and no botanists employed by state government. In its earliest years, WYNDD was located in the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ; 1979-1984) as partnering with (**cont. p. 8**)

Long-Time Allies- Continued from p. 7

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and based in Cheyenne, later directly under TNC (1985-1998) based in Laramie. It most recently became part of the Research Office at the University of Wyoming (1998-present) based in Laramie.

Right from the start, its botanists took active roles in seeking out rare species in the field and compiling rarity information. Results of this work were presented in study reports, and in regular updates to the Wyoming Plant Species of Concern list, which highlights species of the highest conservation priority in the state, first compiled in 1983 and recently updated in 2024). Results built on the quantum strides of Robert Dorn who published the first 1977 manual of Wyoming's vascular plants and three editions of Vascular Plants of Wyoming by Robert Dorn. The former included an appendix as the first rigorous enumeration of Wyoming's rare and endangered plants. Dorn was also advisor to WYNDD in DEQ.



Above: Indeed, it is a plant, Yellow lady's-slipper (*Cypripedium parviflorum* var. *pubescens*) that adorns the WYNDD logo

The works of WYNDD and WYNPS are complemented and greatly benefited by that of the Rocky Mountain Herbarium (RM), that predates both WYNPS and WYNDD. It was established in 1893. RM has been part of the University of Wyoming from its start as a repository for specimens and information on plant distributions for the entire flora (both native and nonnative) across Wyoming and the greater region. It posts current checklists of the Wyoming flora. The Wyoming flora publications of Dorn drew from it, as do other state floras and Flora of North America. It is the largest herbarium among all Rocky Mountain states with a geographically and botanically broader mission and more specialized activity than either WYNPS or WYNDD. WYNDD has drawn from RM records as the single largest information source and, conversely, WYNDD regularly contributes new rare and noteworthy plant specimens to RM, including additions to the state flora or new county records.

Starting in the late 1970s floristics research was conducted through RM across the state (and beyond) largely as part of grad student theses. This generated major upheavals in what was known for the state flora and rarity within the flora at the time. By no coincidence, the first three lead WYNDD botanists did their theses as floristics research at RM, including Robert Lichvar, Hollis Marriott and Walter Fertig. WYNDD computers stored vast amounts of species data with those reports and lists but were inaccessible outside of WYNDD. A milestone was reached in 1994 with publication of the "Red Book" as treating 91 of the rarest species known at the time by Walter Fertig in 1994. Then in 1998 WYNDD began posting species' information online, first in static "species abstract" pdfs - it took years to get the rest of the Species of Concern and accompanying graphics online. Plant species are now represented in the Wyoming Field Guide (<https://fieldguide.wyndd.org/>) with live connections to the report database and the Data Explorer. The latter is an online lookup tool and mapping application that allows users to search by geographic area or by species. Though rare species remain the emphasis for the WYNDD Botany Program, work has also involved collaboration with the RM to represent the entire state flora in data products, including development of an online Photo Gallery for the entire flora and broader collaboration.

Over time, WYNDD botanists and ecologists have also volunteered their time for WYNPS roles that included editor, author and Board throughout much of WYNPS history. While not part of their jobs, it was part of their avocation. In turn, WYNPS has been the *de facto* organization for professional botanists in the state and interested public, official sponsor of important state events that had legwork by WYNDD and others. These included two Wyoming Plant Conferences with workshops and four Wyoming Rare Plant Workshops. The *Castilleja* newsletter has never been a mouth organ for WYNDD. So this article has background to explain the relationship. ...With that, I'd like to thank everyone in WYNPS who I had a chance to meet and work with in preparing *Castilleja* issues. This article barely skims the history of WYNPS - see the 20th and 40th Anniversary issues in May of 2001 and March of 2021. I'll be phasing out my Editor role for a new Conservation Committee role and hope you'll give Sienna Wessel the same support as the new *Castilleja* Editor (and new WYNDD Botanist!).

Ethnobotany - Part 17

Edible valerian (*Valeriana edulis*)

By Meredith Taylor, Certified Wyoming Naturalist

Edible valerian (*Valeriana edulis*) is a dicotyledonous, perennial plant of the Honeysuckle family (Caprifoliaceae) that is found in diverse environments of damp meadows and open foothills with marshy sites. This species is found in riparian mountain areas throughout the North America from Canada to Pacific NW, California, Montana, Wyoming, and Colorado to Mexico.

The basal leaves are 1.5 - 3" (1-4 cm) by about 12" (30 cm), and pinnately lobed with nearly parallel veins. The flower stem is 1-3 ft (30-100 cm) tall—a first sign of spring in May to June. Male and female flowers are found on separate plants (dioecious); in both cases the flowers bloom in cream to white compact clusters that later open up with 5 petals. Native to North America, this perennial reproduces both sexually and asexually by seed



Above: *Valeriana edulis*, by Bonnie Heidel

germination and root suckering. The roots are a popular medicinal and food source once cooked or treated in hot water or alcohol. Caution is advised, since raw valerian roots are considered poisonous.

Edible valerian has long been considered a valuable medicinal plant as an anti-anxiety and calming sedative for insomnia before bed. It is easily taken as a cup of tea with the root and leaves steeped in hot water or a low dose of tincture with the root in ethanol, since a little drop goes a long way. The root may be crushed to apply topically to ease the pain of bruises and minor injuries. Sacagawea is said to have shown valerian to Meriwether Lewis on the Corps of Discovery for the men to use as a sedative.



Above: Inflorescence closeup by Ben Legler

This author showed edible valerian flowers to a psychiatrist friend on an ethnobotany hike. He was excited to have the plant identified to him as he said he had treated his patients with it many times, but he had never seen it growing in the wild. He picked a plant to use as a “sleepytime” tea. (It should be noted that the commercial source of valerian is a Eurasian species, *V. officinalis*.)

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This article is for educational purposes and does not condone collecting of plants that readers can't identify with certainty or dose correctly. The ethics of wild plant collecting is to tread softly through the plant's habitat and only pick the occasional leaf or flower to protect plant sustainability.

Check directly with the agency about their policy if you want to harvest native plants on public land.

Chokecherry Memories - Continued from p. 6

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