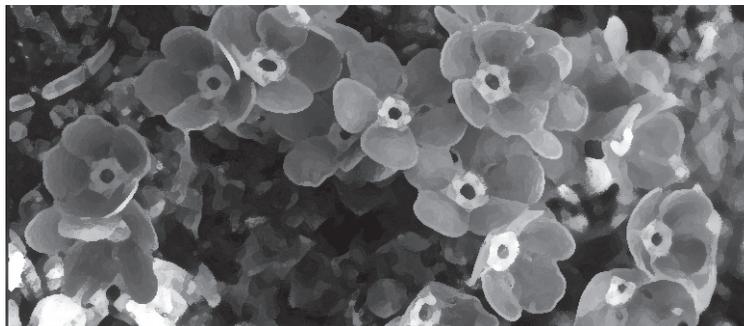




Common Plants



Alpine forget-me-not
Official park flower

Wildflowers color the Tetons as the snow melts. As the snow level gradually retreats up the mountain canyons, wildflowers of every color blossom, brightening valley then canyon. The diverse communities of the park give rise to different wildflowers at different times at different elevations throughout the summer. While valley flowers may have faded by July, blooms are just opening at the higher elevations. Learn more about the flowers and communities found here in Grand Teton National Park.

Growing Zones

Valley (6,400 - 7,000 feet)

Porous, rocky valley soils support plants able to tolerate warm, dry conditions. In addition to abundant sagebrush, numerous wildflowers and grasses grow. During June and July, a profusion of color enlivens the valley: yellow balsamroot, blue lupine, and red gilia. During August, sunflowers replace balsamroot.

Canyons (7,000 - 10,000 feet)

Between the crags of the Tetons, ice age glaciers carved deep canyons. Today, the canyons contain dense conifer forests and open meadows of

wildflowers. As elevation increases, wildflowers abound while trees become stunted and eventually shrub-like. “Krummholz” (German for “crooked wood”) plants are dwarfed forms that are treelike at lower elevations.

Alpine (above 10,000 feet)

Above treeline, plants adapt to wind, snow, and lack of soil by growing close to the ground. Alpine plants take advantage of a brief growing season by flowering soon after the snow melts. Some species grow only in the alpine area; others grow taller at lower elevations, but are dwarfed in the alpine.

Trees

Most of the trees in the park are conifers because of the short growing season. Conifers retain their leaves (needles) throughout the year and can produce food (photosynthesize) on warm spring days. Deciduous trees shed their leaves in the fall and grow new ones each spring before they can photosynthesize. Aspens and cottonwoods have chlorophyll in the bark and so they can photosynthesize before producing leaves.

Lodgepole pine, the most abundant conifer, grows on the lower mountain slopes and in well-drained glacial soils throughout the valley. Needles are 2-3 inches long, clustered in bundles of 2; cones are 1-2 inches long.

Douglas-fir, not a true fir, inhabits dry south- to east-facing slopes. Large diameter trees have coarse, furrowed bark. Needles are flat and 1 inch long; cones have a 3-pointed bract

Subalpine fir grows on wetter north-facing valley sites and at higher elevations. Smooth bark and spire-like growth identify subalpine fir. Needles are flat and 1 inch long. Cones are purple grow upright on branches.

Engelmann spruce occurs with subalpine fir. Rough bark and abundant cones hanging down from upper branches identify Engelmann spruce. Needles are sharp, four-sided and occur singly and cones are 1.5 inches long with papery scales.

Blue spruce lines rivers and creeks in the valley. Cones have papery scales and are twice as large as those found on Engelmann spruce. Spruce needles are sharp, four-sided, and occur singly.

Limber pines grow individually on open, dry valley sites. Needles grow in bundles of 5. Cones are 4-8 inches long.

Whitebark pine grows above 8,000 feet. Needles are in bundles of 5. Cones are purple and smaller than those of limber pine.

Aspen grows in stands on level, moist sites and on dry slopes. Aspen bark is smooth and greenish, cream-colored. Reproduction is primarily from shoots sprouting from horizontal roots.

Cottonwoods, close relatives of aspens, grow along rivers and creeks in the valley. Bark on mature trees is heavily furrowed. The species here hybridize freely so identification of individual species may be difficult.

Shrubs

Big sagebrush thrives in dry habitats and carpets most of the valley floor. Plants are one to five feet tall; leaves are grayish green. Tiny yellow flowers bloom in August.

Antelope bitterbrush occurs with sagebrush in the southern half of Jackson Hole. Bitterbrush grows to three feet tall. Cream-colored flowers bloom in June.

Huckleberry grows two to four feet tall in lodgepole pine forests in the valley and mountain canyons. Purple berries are produced in August.

Serviceberry grows to ten feet tall. Showy white flowers bloom in spring, producing purple berries by late summer.

Chokecherry grows to twenty feet tall. Cylindrical clusters of showy white flowers bloom

in spring, and turn to dark red berries by August.

Utah honeysuckle grows in open lodgepole pine forests. Leaves are opposite. Paired cream-colored flowers bloom in early June, producing red unpalatable berries.

Mountain ash grows as a tall shrub on lower mountain slopes. Flat-topped clusters of white flowers bloom in June. In fall, bright orange fruits complement vivid red compound leaves.

Willows occur in moist areas, especially along stream banks. Twenty species are found in the park and parkway.

Snowbrush ceanothus thrives in burned areas. Shiny, leathery leaves are retained through winter. Clusters of aromatic white flowers bloom in June.

Huckleberry	June	July	
Mountain Ash		July	
Birchleaf Spirea	July	July	
Chokecherry	June		
Woodland Star	June		
Richardson Geranium	June - August	June - August	
Thimbleberry		June - July	
Green Gentian	June - July	July - mid August	
Snowbrush Ceanothus	June - July		
Cow Parsnip	late June - mid August	July - August	
Serviceberry	June		
American bistort	June	July	August
Ladies-tresses	August - September	August - September	
White Bog-Orchid	late June - mid August	July - August	
Manyflowered phlox	June - mid July	mid June - July	
Colorado columbine		late June - August	
Marsh marigold		June - mid July	June - July
Yampah	July - mid August	mid July - August	
Engelmann aster		July - August	
Yarrow	July - early August	mid July - late August	August
[REDACTED]			
Mules-ear wyethia	mid June - July		
Hymenoxys			July - August
Sunflower	mid July - August		
Balsamroot	June - mid July		
Rabbitbrush	mid August - September		
Heartleaf arnica	mid June - mid July	late June - late July	
Shrubby cinquefoil	June - September		
Yellow monkey-flower	June - mid July	late June - late July	
Lance-leaved stonecrop	June - August		
Glacier lily		June - July	July
Western wallflower		June - July	
Subalpine buttercup		July - August	
Death camas	June	mid - June - early August	mid July - August
Oregon grape	May - June		
Sulfur buckwheat	mid June - mid August		
Bracted lousewort	late June - mid July	July	
Yellow columbine	late June - July	July - late August	
Yellow fritillary	mid May - mid June		
Butterweed groundsel	late July - September		
[REDACTED]			
Spring beauty	May	June - mid July	
Sticky geranium	June - August		
Parry's primrose		July - August	August
Prairiesmoke	June - early July		
Globemallow	July - mid August	mid July - August	
Steer's head	late May - mid June	late June - mid July	
Subalpine spirea		mid July - late August	
Shooting star	June	late June - late August	
Ladysthumb knotweed	August		
Lewis monkeyflower		late June - August	
Mountain snowberry	June - July	July	
Spreading dogbane	July - August		
Mountain heather		July - August	August - September
Fireweed	mid July - August		
Moss campion		July - mid August	
Calypso orchid	June		
Elephant head	late June - July	mid July - August	
Indian paintbrush	June - July	July - August	mid July - early September
Striped coralroot	June - July		
Skyrocket gilia	mid June - July		
[REDACTED]			
Wild blue flax	July - August		
Rock clematis	June	July	
Sky pilot			July - August
Monkshood	late June - mid July	mid July - mid August	
Low larkspur	mid May - June		
Mountain bluebell		mid July - early September	
Fringed gentian	late July - mid August	August - early September	
Harebell	mid June - early September		
Lupine	June - July		
Mountain bog gentian		late July - early September	
Silky phacelia	late June - July	mid July - late August	late July - early September
Blue camas	June		
Alpine foreget-me-not			July - early August