

# The *Wildflowers* of Iron Mountain



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United States  
Department of  
Agriculture



Forest Service  
**Pacific Northwest  
Region**

Willamette National Forest  
Sweet Home Ranger District

# What is it about Iron Mountain?

Iron Mountain's unique natural history and rich community of native flowers affords visitors the opportunity to learn while enjoying nature's beauty. Nearly every wildflower found in the Western Cascades—over 300 species—can be found along the Iron Mountain Trail! Five main factors combine to create specific habitats for wildflowers: soil depth and type, moisture, amount of sunlight, daytime temperature ranges, and elevation. These special conditions produce one of the most spectacular wildflower displays in Western Oregon.

**Early July is generally the best time to view wildflowers on Iron Mountain.** Continue reading this guide to learn more about five unique wildflower communities found on Iron Mountain—the forest, meadow, rock garden, snowbed, and rocky seep.



Mountain Cat's Ear  
(*Calochortus subalpinus*)

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**On the cover** (from top to bottom): Harsh Paintbrush (*Castilleja hispida*), Matted Saxifrage (*Saxifraga bronchialis*), and Flax (*Linum perenne*).

Woolly Sunflower  
(*Eriophyllum lanatum*)



## A Message About the Trail...

Proper preparation and a good trail ethic will ensure fun and safety for everyone visiting Iron Mountain. The one-mile trail has many switchbacks and, in some places, runs along the edge of nearly vertical slopes. There is no water available on the mountain. Be prepared for sudden changes in weather conditions.

Please observe the following guidelines to help protect the wildflowers of Iron Mountain:

- Keep dogs leashed at all times.
- Stay on the trail! Do not cut switchbacks.
- Do not throw rocks.
- Do not cut, remove, or disturb the flowers.
- Keep your footwear clean of seeds and other debris to avoid transporting weeds.

# The Forest

Iron Mountain features a diverse forest community. Douglas-fir dominates at the base and subalpine fir at the top. Noble fir, Pacific silver fir, mountain hemlock, and Alaska yellow-cedar can be found along the trail. Wildflowers that grow on the forest floor are often white to attract insect pollinators.



Western Trillium  
(*Trillium ovatum*)

Windflower  
(*Anemone deltoidea*)



Wild Ginger  
(*Asarum caudatum*)

# The Meadow

Many different meadows can be found on Iron Mountain. The plant community found in each of these meadows depends on soil depth and moisture. Meadows are usually maintained by natural disturbances, or environmental factors, that prevent trees from growing on the site. Mountain beaver, pocket gophers, snow pack, and fire are examples of factors that help maintain meadows.



Coneflower  
(*Rudbeckia occidentalis*)

Where are the petals? A single coneflower contains hundreds of tiny flowers with no petals.

Tiger Lily  
(*Lilium columbianum*)



# The Rock Garden

The colorful array of wildflowers found in the rock garden are adapted to dry, shallow soils. Here the deep pink of owl's-clover and brilliant blue of flax mix with scarlet gilia and creamy stonecrop to form a delicate carpet of color. Penstamons of blue, purple, cream, and magenta can also be found in this community.



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Owl's Clover  
(*Orthocarpus imbricatus*)



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Flax  
(*Linum perenne*)



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Oregon, Creamy, and  
Spreading Stonecrops  
(left to right)

(*Sedum oregonum*,  
*Sedum oregonense*, and  
*Sedum divergens*)



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Cinquefoil  
(*Potentilla gracilis*)

Scarlet Gilia  
(*Ipomopsis aggregata*)



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Larkspur  
(*Delphinium menziesii*)



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Cardwell's Penstemon  
(*Penstemon cardwellii*)



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Spreading Phlox  
(*Phlox diffusa*)

# The Snowbed

The snowbed community is found where snow remains late in the year. The flowers emerge as the snow melts and then quickly go to seed. You must visit Iron Mountain in June to catch these beauties in flower!



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Steer's Head  
(*Dicentra uniflora*)



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Glacier Lily  
(*Erythronium grandiflorum*)



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Turkey Pea  
(*Orogenia fusiformis*)

# The Rocky Seep

A rocky seep forms where water moving through the soil below ground meets a solid rock layer and is forced to the surface. Water from snowmelt often feeds the seep; once the snow has melted, the seep dries out. Rocky seeps feature species adapted to abundant spring moisture that disappears by early summer. Most wildflowers found in this community only live for a single year, producing seed by early July.



Shooting Star  
(*Dodecatheon jeffreyi*)



Threeleaf Lewisia  
(*Lewisia triphylla*)



Yellow Monkeyflower  
(*Mimulus guttatus*)

## Want to learn more?

The following sources were consulted for information contained in this publication. They may be helpful if you are interested in learning more about the wildflowers of Iron Mountain.

*Peterson Field Guides: Pacific States Wildflowers.* Theodore F. Niehaus and Charles L. Ripper. Houghton Mifflin Company, 1976.

*Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast.* Jim Pojar and Andy MacKinnon. Lone Pine Press, 1994.

*Wildflowers of the Western Cascades.* Robert A. Ross and Henrietta L. Chambers. Timber Press, 1988.

A list of plant species found on Iron Mountain can be obtained at the Sweet Home Ranger Station.



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Cascade Lily  
(*Lilium washingtonianum*)



Monkeyflowers along Cone Peak Trail.

## Directions to Iron Mountain

From Sweet Home, drive 34 miles east on Highway 20 to Road 15, then turn south. The trailhead is located 1/4 mile down Road 15. The top of Iron Mountain is a 1.8 mile hike from this lower trailhead. The Iron Mountain Trail can also be accessed by turning off Highway 20, about 33 miles east of Sweet Home onto Civil Road (Road 035). Travel 2.6 miles to the trailhead. The top of Iron Mountain is a one-mile hike from this upper trailhead.

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# *Iron Mountain*

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