

Our Amazing Prairie Plants



Pasque Flower, *Pulsatilla patens*



often called “twin flower” or “old man of the prairie” because flowers usually appear in pairs and the seed heads resemble the gray hair of an elder person





Ground Plum, *Astragalus crassicarpos*



the little pea-like fruits were used as a seasonal indicator for corn planting schedule





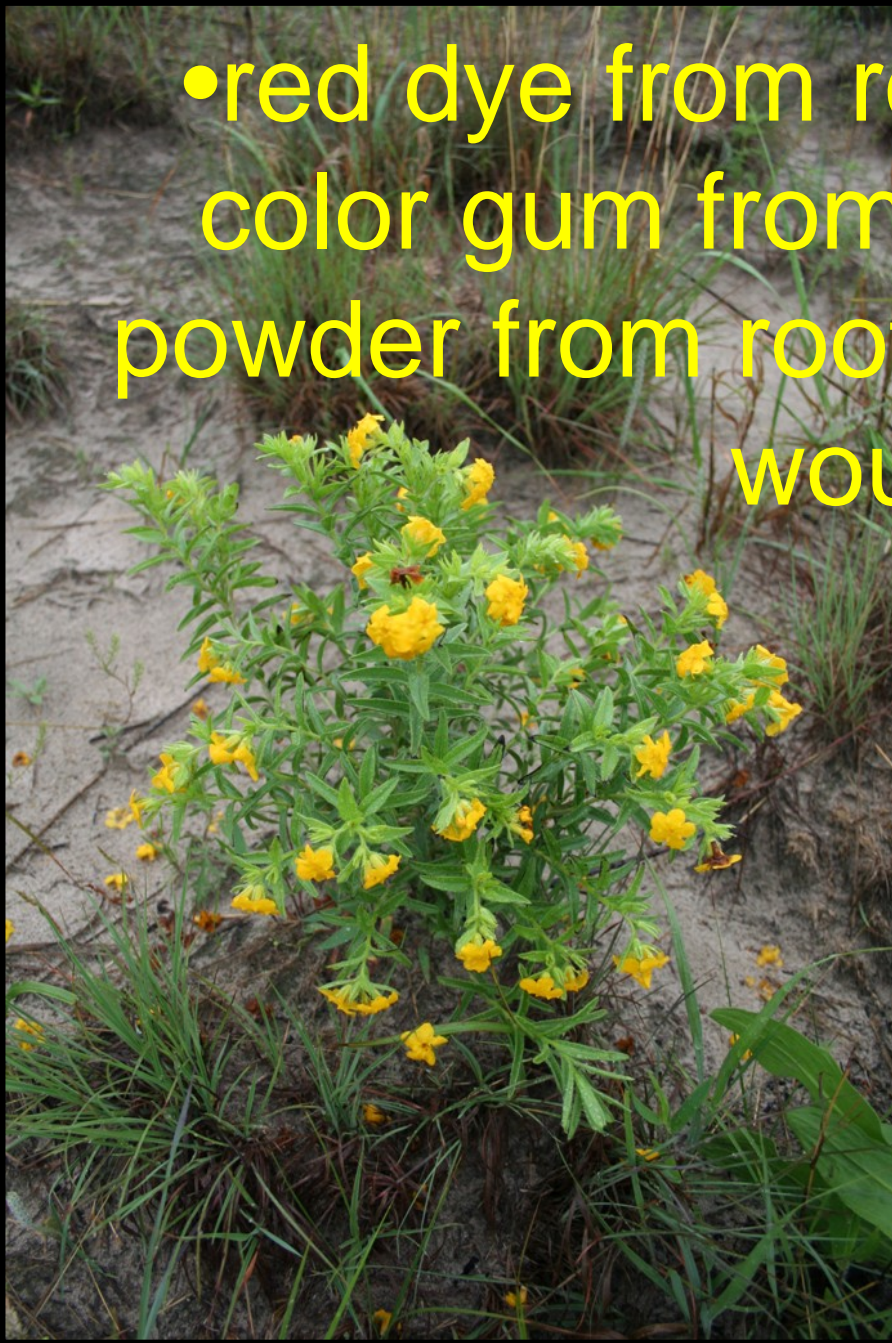
“used as a remedy for colds; dried tops
burned as incense.

Fringed Puccoon, *Lithospermum incisum*

Hoary Puccoon, *Lithospermum canescens*



- red dye from roots and used to color gum from compass plant; powder from roots to treat gunshot wounds.





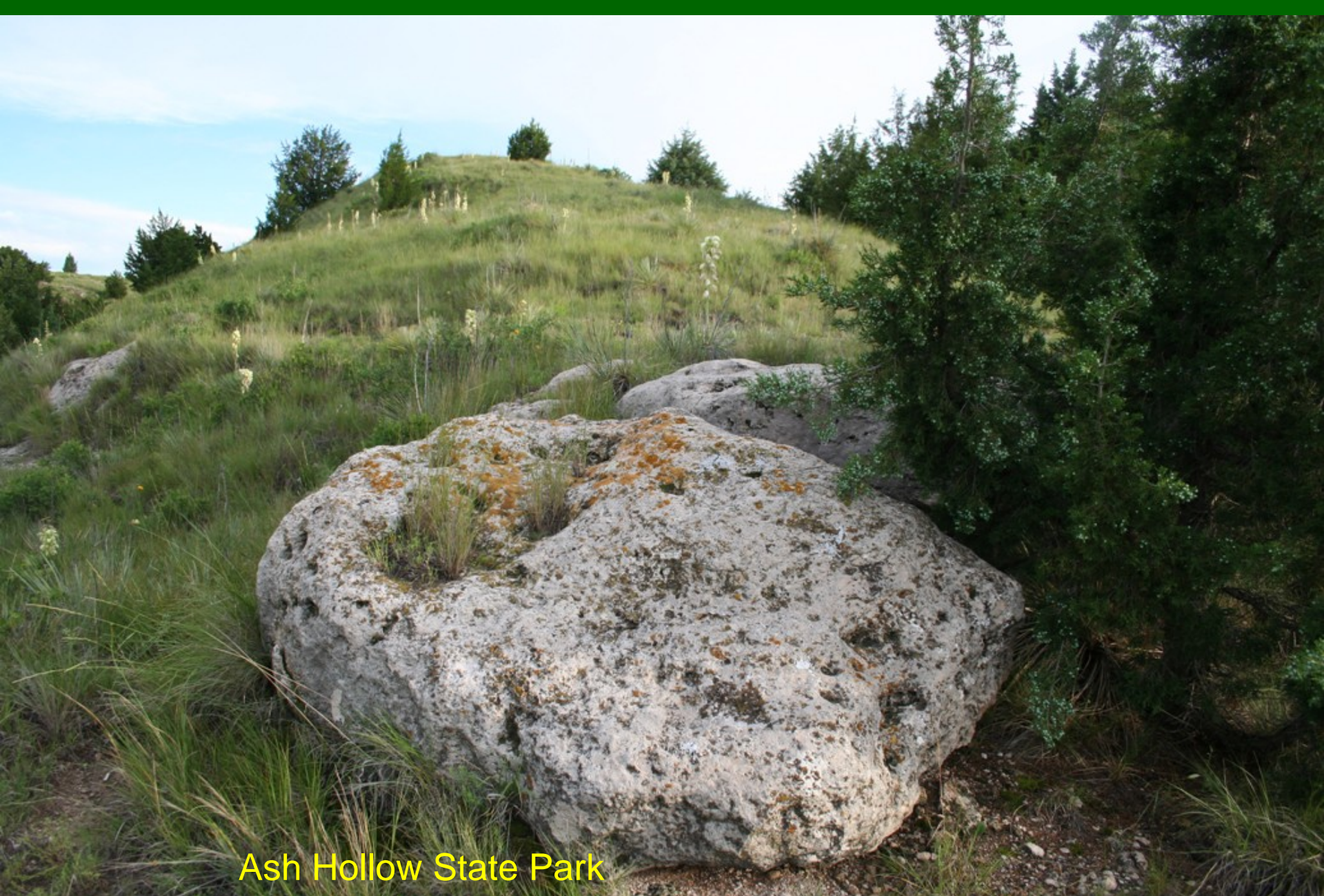
Bitterweed, *Hymenoxys scaposa*



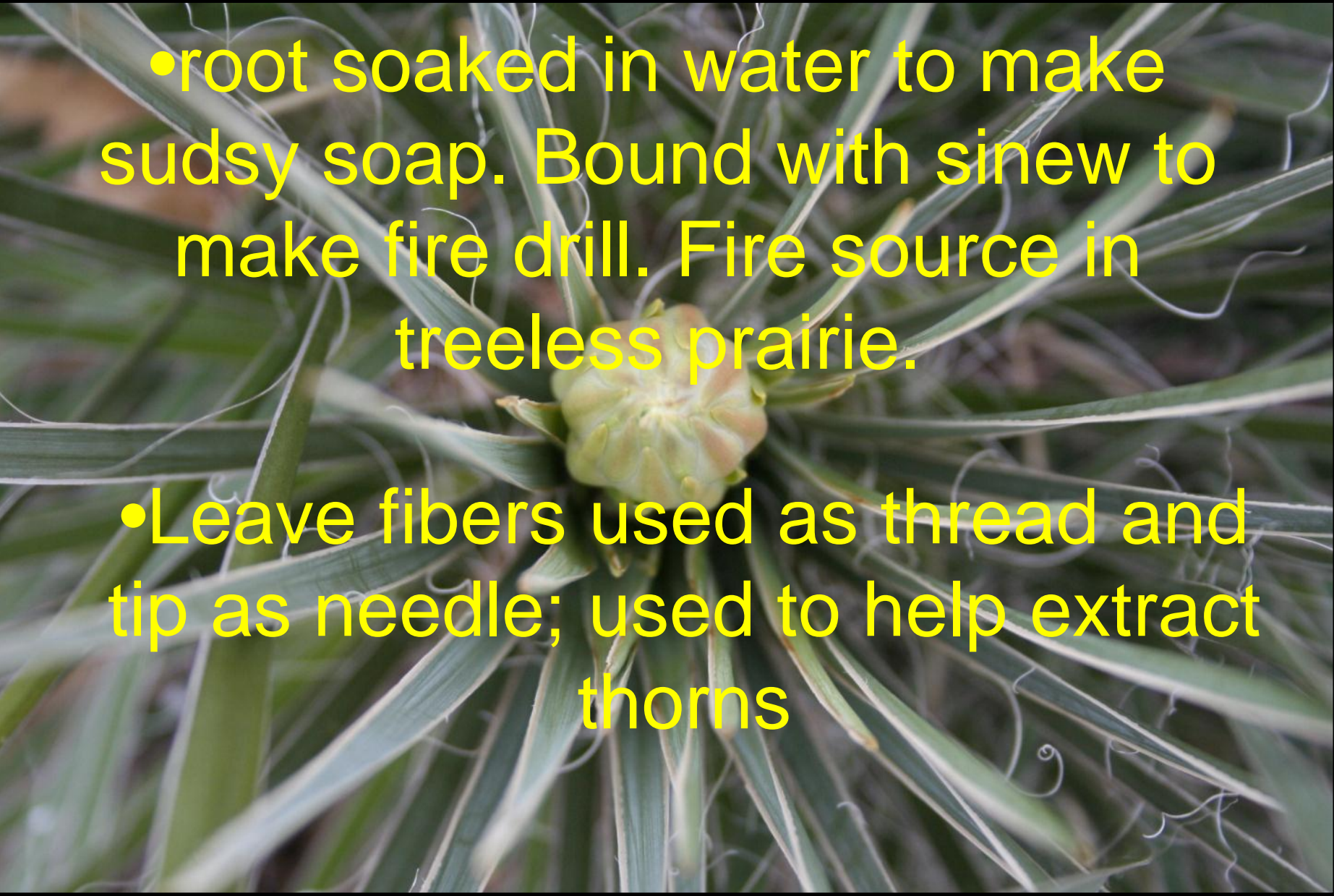




Soapweed, *Yucca glauca*



Ash Hollow State Park



- root soaked in water to make sudsy soap. Bound with sinew to make fire drill. Fire source in treeless prairie.

- Leave fibers used as thread and tip as needle; used to help extract thorns

Desert Globe Mallow, *Sphaeralcea coccinea*



“the most arresting color on the Plains from early May to July...its brilliancy is set off by the gray-green, rough-hairy leaves. Strong ground-gaining roots, to be well considered when placing in the garden.” –Claude Barr





Prairie Ragwort,
Senecio plattensis



“it wins an honored place by bearing at the apex of each stem
an ample, flat-topped cluster of inch-wide heads, all in
deep, rich yellow and centered about a disk of intense,
glowing orange” –Claude Barr

Prairie Ragwort, *Senecio plattensis*






Slender Wild Parsley, *Musineon tenuifolium*






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- All parts are edible, leaves, flowers, stalks & roots.
 - When steamed the stalks compare to asparagus. Young leaves & flowers used in salads
 - The Lakota made a blue paint from the flowers that they used to decorate their clothing, hence the name Indian Paint

Prairie Spiderwort, *Tradescantia ohioensis*



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- Local names include “snotweed” and “cow-slobbers”
 - A poultice made by crushing the leaves of the plants was used as a treatment for insect bites and stings.
 - mucilaginous juice resemble spider’s silken strands.



“has four wide, heart-shaped petals, like an open parachute landing upside down.” –Claude Barr

Gumbo Lily, *Oenothera caespitosa*



Calylophus serrulatus, Toothed Primrose



Calylophus lavandulifolius, Lavenderleaf Primrose

Violet Wood Sorrel, *Oxalis violacea*



- called “sour herb”; Pawnee say the buffalo were very fond of this plant; children ate leaves and flowers.

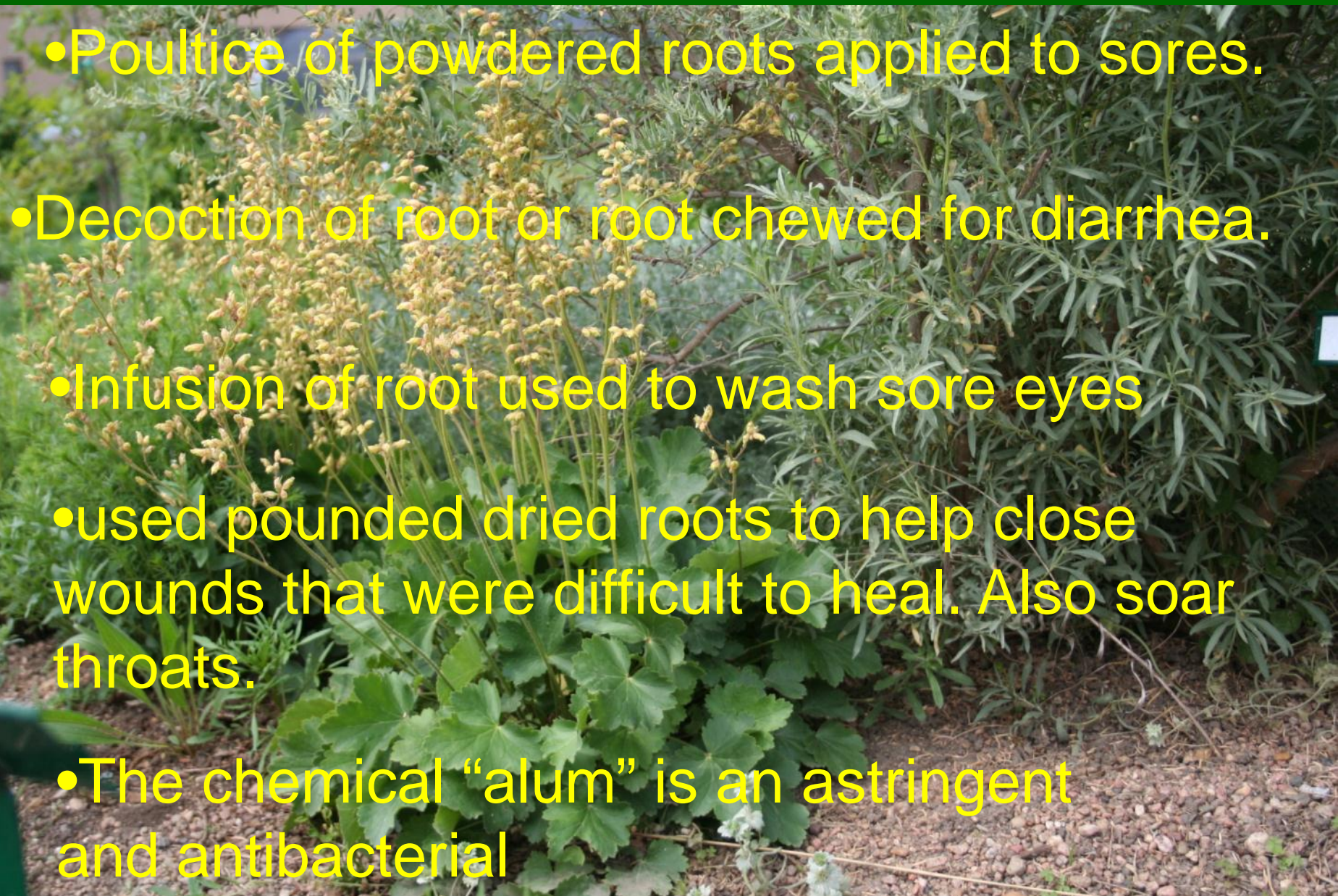
Meadow Anemone, *Anemone canadensis*



- The root is one of the most highly esteemed medicines. eye wash.
- The right to use this plant belonged to the medicine men.
- Pulverized root for wounds taken internally and applied externally; “eye wash medicine”

Prairie Alumroot, *Heuchera richardsonii*





- Poultice of powdered roots applied to sores.
- Decoction of root or root chewed for diarrhea.
- Infusion of root used to wash sore eyes
- used pounded dried roots to help close wounds that were difficult to heal. Also soar throats.
- The chemical “alum” is an astringent and antibacterial

Dwarf Blue Indigo, *Baptisia minor*









White Wild Indigo, *Baptisia lactea*





Red Root, *Ceanothus ovatus*



The leaves were used by all the tribes to make a drink like tea. The taste is something like that of the Asiatic tea and is much better than that of the South American yerba mate.



Narrow-leaf Penstemon, *Penstemon angustifolia*



“plump columns of wide trumpets, more intensely brilliant than any sky, above long and narrow, channeled, blue-green leaves.” —Claude Barr

Shell-leaf Penstemon, *Penstemon grandiflorus*



A close-up photograph of a plant with several upright stems. Each stem is covered with small, purple, bell-shaped flowers. The leaves are green and lanceolate. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the same plant.

•called “butterfly flower”; root boiled
used for pains in the chest or
stomachache;

A close-up photograph of a single purple bell-shaped flower. The flower is fully open, showing its five petals and a central stamen. The background is a dense field of green grass.

•tea from leaves for fever.

Showy Penstemon, *Penstemon cobaea*



Pale Purple Coneflower, *Echinacea pallida*







Culver's Root, *Veronicastrum virginicum*









Leadplant, Amorpha canescens



Hoary Vervain, *Verbena stricta*



Prickly Poppy, *Argemone polyanthemus*







Purple Meadow Rue, *Thalictrum dasycarpum*



Canada Milkvetch, *Astragalus canadensis*







Butterfly Milkweed, *Asclepias tuberosa*



Swamp Milkweed, *Asclepias incarnata*





Smooth Milkweed, *Asclepias sullivantii*





Common Milkweed, *Asclepias syriaca*

Whorled Milkweed, *Asclepias verticillata*





“each of the several to many trailing or clambering, little-branched stems carries its compliment of flowers...inch-wide balls of fluff of a lovely rose-pink.” –Claude Barr

Sensitive Briar, *Schrankia nuttallii*



- Purple Poppy Mallow, *Callirhoe involucrata*

- Called “smoke treatment medicine” by the Teton Dakota

- Dried root fired , the smoke was inhaled for cold in the head; the aching parts bathed in it.

- The large tapering root is edible and was eaten raw, boiled or roasted; the leaves were used as a thickener in soups and stews.





“the thick cones, which attain a length of two inches, are dark green, a bit silvery hairy, and the circles of flowers are a beautiful purple-red from light to deep in hue....a gay atmosphere is added by the many long-filamented anthers of gold or burnt orange.” –Claude Barr

Purple Prairie Clover, *Dalea purpurea*



White Prairie Clover, *Dalea candida*



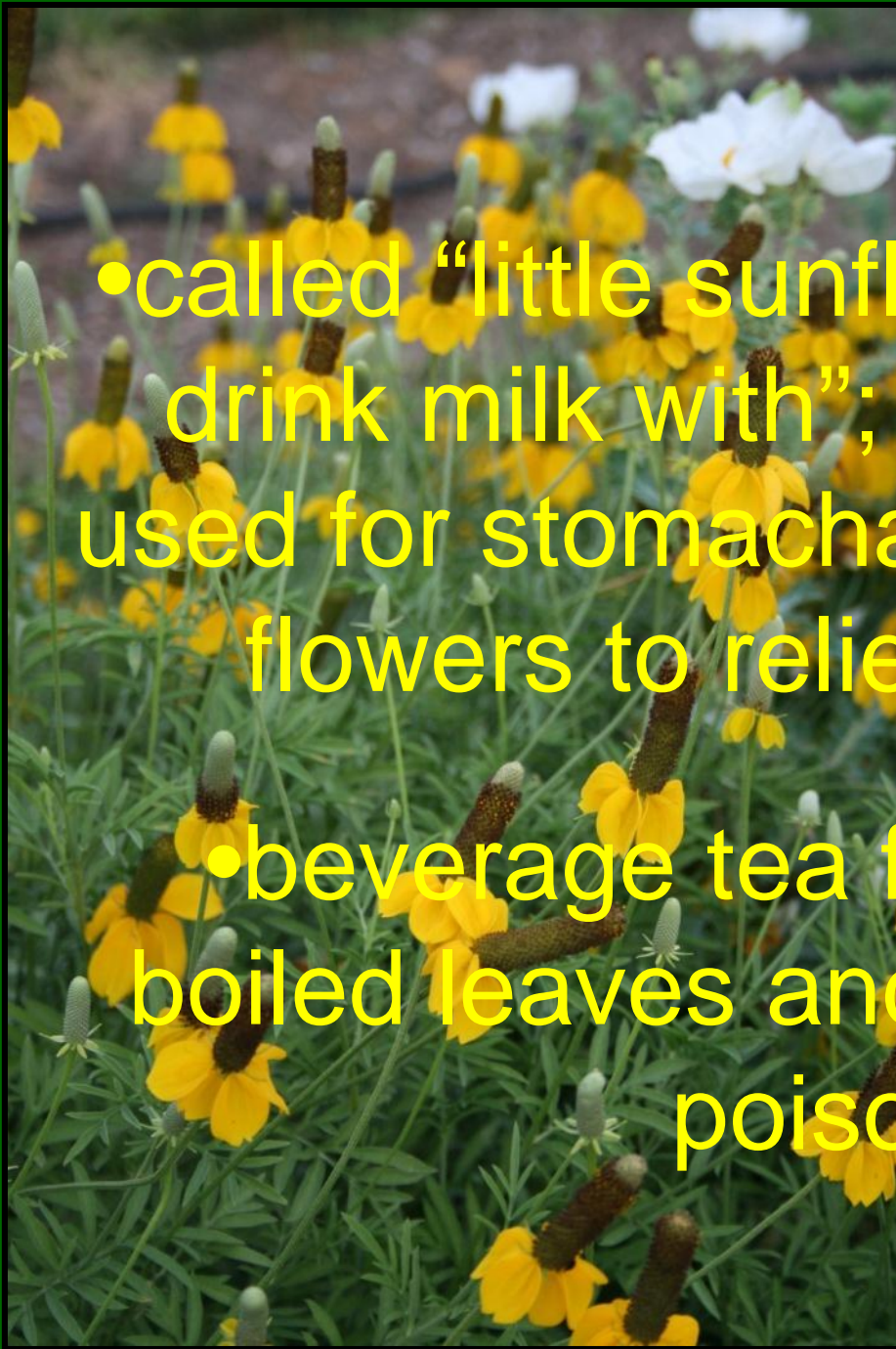




Rocky Mountain Beeplant, *Cleome serrulata*



Upright Prairie Coneflower, *Ratibida columnifera*



- called “little sunflower” or “used to drink milk with”; tea from leaves used for stomachache and tea from flowers to relieve headache.
- beverage tea from the leaves; boiled leaves and stems to relieve poison ivy.

Dotted Gayfeather, *Liatris punctata*





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Scaly Blazing Star, *Liatris squarrosa*



Yellowdicks, *Helenium amarum*





“children gathered chewing gum from the upper parts of the stem, whee the gum exudes, forming large lumps.”

Compass Plant, *Silphium laciniatum*



- “Ponca say where this plant abounds lightning is very prevalent, so they will never make camp in such a place.”

Wild Beebalm, *Monarda fistulosa*





Grassleaf Goldenrod

Solidago graminifolia





Downy goldenrod

Solidago petiolaris





- If you like pollinators and birds, goldenrod is one of the best plants to have.
- Research shows that plants in the *Solidago* genus serve as a host plant for at least 115 different species of butterflies and moths, more than any other perennial plant. Goldenrod's late blossoms open during the migration of fall butterflies, including monarchs.
- The pollen and nectar in goldenrod also supports native bees and other pollinators and songbirds eat the seeds in winter.

Stiff Goldenrod

Solidago rigida



Showy Goldenrod

Solidago speciosa









Plains Prickly-Pear Cactus, *Opuntia polyacantha*



- The fruits were eaten fresh after the bristles had been removed, or they were stewed.
- The mucilaginous juice of the stem was utilized as a sizing to fix the color painted on hides.
- The mucilaginous juice was rubbed on moccasins as a natural sizing agent.



How's It Growing?

Wednesdays 11:00am - Noon

- Hosted by
- Bob Henrickson, Nebraska Statewide Arboretum, Inc.
- Bertine Loop, Horticulture Instructor at Southeast Community College.
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“Dedicated to answering your growing questions”



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Bob Henrickson

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