

A Spring Wildflower Tour of the Oregon Country Fair

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This flower guide will take you past about twenty-eight flowering plants. Flower season starts in January with snow queen and ends in late summer. Peak season is the latter half of April. When you get to the property turn into Chickadee lane and park at the warehouse. Many of these flowers you will find all over the eight, but I've picked out particularly good places to observe them. Waterproof boots are only needed if you venture into the wetland parking areas. Remember to enjoy the flowers and leave them in place to re-seed.

The first flower to look for is actually a Pacific dogwood tree (*Cornus nuttallii*) thirty feet from Chickadee Lane at the entertainer camp, across from the water tower. The dogwood has large white flowers. Now walk down Chickadee Lane towards Dahinda's acres. This is the Douglas-fir upland habitat of the Oregon Country fair, which does not flood. When you get to a split in the road stay right on Chickadee. About 50 feet before Chickadee Gate, opposite the refer units, is a trail into Alice's Wonderland. Walk on this trail, take the right fork, and walk a few more steps. You will find star-flowered Solomon seal (*Maianthemum stellatum*), fairy lanterns (*Prosartes smithii*), and fairy bells (*Prosartes hookeri*). You can tell the fairy lanterns and fairy bells apart as the flowers of the fairy bells have stamens that are longer than the rest of the flower parts and the upper side of the leaves is hairy. Inside-out flowers (*Vancouveria hexandra*) are also found here, but bloom later in May.

Go back into Dahinda's Acres and look around the base of the Douglas-fir trees. Here you will find the four-inch tall, purple calypso orchid (*Calypso bulbosa*). On the lower side of Dahinda's acres where the cleared glassy area meets the woods are Oregon Iris (*Iris tenax*) flowers. These are purple and about a foot tall. Now leave Dahinda's walking towards Snivel Lane. Just as you approach the sharp left hand turn leaving Dahinda's thimbleberry (*Rubus parviflorus*) shrubs grow on the upper side of the road and has white flowers. On the inside corner of Snivel, past a stump, the Yellow Pea plant (*Thermopsis gracilis*) should be flowering in early May, and is about two feet tall.

Hike down Snivel Lane and to the edge or into Miss Piggy's lots depending on how wet it is and your footwear. Here at least three wetland meadow species are blooming. The white Willamette Valley bittercress (*Cardamine penduliflora*) grows only in Willamette Valley wetlands. The yellow plantain leaved buttercup (*Ranunculus alismaefolius*) has entire leaves and the yellow straight beak buttercup (*Ranunculus orthorhyncus*) has dissected leaves and the backside of the flower petals have an orange tinge to them. Frog tadpoles may be found in the shallow puddles.

Walk back into the forest wetland of the eight and head to Jill's Crossing. Between the bridge and the Spirit Tower is a stand of evergreen tall Oregon grape (*Berberis aquifolium*) that has yellow clusters of flowers. Cross the bridge to the Left Bank side

and walk 30-40 feet to the fence and benches. Here is a nice stand of checker lily (*Fritillaria affinis*) (also called chocolate lily or mission bells), which is a subtle color combination of green, brown, or purple.

Continue your journey to the junction of the eight. About half way to Shady Grove on next to booth 760 is a good example of red elderberry shrub (*Sambucus racemosa*) with pyramidal clusters of white flowers. Walk back to the Junction and find booth 149. Here the delicate pale yellow fawn lily flowers (*Erythronium oregonum*) grow. Go a short distance towards main stage and find the pink-purple toothwort flowers (*Cardamine nuttallii*) abundant in booth 202. Double back through the Community Village where another red elderberry grows next to the blue crocodile in Community Village, and head to Shady Grove. In 2002 several white woodland star flowers (*Lithophragma parviflora*) grew up in piles of brush downed by the windstorm. This year that same area has been flagged off to avoid mowing and hopefully the flowers will return.

From Shady Grove, walk towards Ark Park and Shady Lane. Before the Thai food booth and Wally's log bench and past the R3 recycle station you should be able to find the white false Solomon seal flowers (*Maianthemum racemosum*) behind a short bench next to the Long Tom River. The Thai food booth is famous for its blue Columbia or trollius larkspur (*Delphinium trolliifolium*) growing behind the counter, as well as further up the path. At the Ark Park intersection there is a bed of low growing, pink bleeding heart (*Dicentra formosa*) between a bench and fallen tree trunk, opposite booth 575. Also prolific in this area are the yellow stream violets (*Viola glabella*) near the outhouses and booth 402 walking towards main stage. Head towards the Daredevil Palace stage on the upper river loop. Adjacent to the entrance and next to booth 492 are large clumps of the tall salmonberry shrub (*Rubus spectabilis*) with its pink/purple flowers.

Now stroll towards main stage and along Abbey Rode at booths 388 and 390 are both species of Trillium. The western trillium (*Trillium ovatum*) has flowers with stems between the leaves and flowers, while the Giant trillium (*Trillium albidum*) are sessile, without stems. Continue your hike towards the sauna and stop along the lowest part of Sesame Street, past booth W11. This is a very wet area that used to be the bed of Indian Creek. Here you will find abundant blue camas (*Camassia quamash*), and maybe some straight beak buttercup. Head back towards the main stage. On the left hand side is a large Pacific serviceberry shrub or small tree (*Amelanchier alnifolia*) surrounded by benches and booths 286, 294 and 298. This large shrub has flowers in white clusters. Lastly walk into the White Bird booth 243 or adjacent booths 235, and 244. Here is the beautiful, pink shooting star (*Dodecatheon hendersonii*). Finish the trail circuit by walking past main stage, up Moz Road and to the Warehouse.

You've now concluded your hike past the most colorful flowers at the fair. By fair time none of these flowers will be found. A few species including the white mock orange shrub next to Jill's Crossing and the blue king's gentian on the edges of the field at The Labyrinth out in Kermit's Lot will be in flower. Pictures of all these flowers can be found from a link on the Oregon Country Fair web page.