



Pussypaws (or Pussy Toes)

Calyptridium umbellatum
Portulacaceae (Purslane) family
May-August

The flower head clusters are reminiscent of fuzzy kitten paws. The stems and flower heads are often almost prostrate (lying on the ground). Pussypaws are widespread and somewhat variable.



Rabbitbrush

Ericameria sp.
Asteraceae (Sunflower or Aster) family
August-October

This shrub is common throughout the Tahoe Donner area. The tips of the branches look yellow throughout the blooming season.



Ranger's Buttons

Sphenosciadium capitellatum
Apiaceae (Carrot) family
July-August

Often found in wet or swampy places. Though there are many other members of the carrot family, ranger's button is the only species in the Sphenosciadium genus.



Sierra Gooseberry

Ribes roezlii var. roezlii
Grossulariaceae (Gooseberry) family
April-June

Gooseberry is a shrub with pretty foliage and flowers. The blossoms seem to hide, hanging downward in the shade below long horizontal branches. The fruits are spherical with many long spikes radiating outward.



Sierra Larkspur

Delphinium glaucum
Ranunculaceae (Buttercup) family
July-September

A distinctive characteristic of larkspurs is the tail, or spur, at the back of the blossom. Most larkspurs are fairly intense blue-to-purple in color. Sierra larkspur, also called mountain larkspur or tower

larkspur, has an especially tall inflorescence (the part of the plant where the flowers are located), with many blossoms.



Sierra Morning Glory

Calystegia malacophylla
Convolvulaceae (Morning Glory) family
July-August

There are over 1,000 species of morning glory worldwide. Many bloom in the early morning hours, giving the family its name. Tahoe Donner is near the upper elevation of the range for Sierra morning glory.



Snow Plant

Sarcodes sanguinea
Ericaceae (Heath) family
May-June

Appears almost as soon as snow melts. Saprophytic plant: obtains nutrients from decaying organic matter in the soil (no photosynthesis).



Varileaf Phacelia

Phacelia heterophylla
Hydrophyllaceae (Waterleaf) family
April-July

Many phacelias grow in the characteristic shape shown here, with the flowers on a coiled cyme and with double, symmetrical cymes. Flowers can be white/cream to light purple for different species.



Wallflower

Erysimum capitatum
Brassicaceae (Mustard) family
May-August

With a dense cluster of brightly colored flowers atop a relatively long stem, wallflowers are notable. The four petals on each blossom are characteristic of the mustard family.



Western Buttercup

Ranunculus occidentalis
Ranunculaceae (Buttercup) family
April-June

This early bloomer announces the arrival of spring. It prefers to grow in wet meadows and along streams.



Western Peony

Paeonia brownii
Paeoniaceae (Peony) family
May-June

This flower's petals are maroon to brownish and the flower usually nods, or points downward, so it can be easy to miss.



Willow

Salix spp.
Salicaceae (Willow) family
March-June

There are several types of willow in the Tahoe Donner area, with blooming seasons that extend from March at least through June. The picture shows typical early-spring catkins (buds) that are

getting ready to bloom, and gives the smaller types of willow the familiar name pussy willow.



Woolly Mule Ears

Wyethia mollis
Asteraceae (Sunflower or Aster) family
June-July

The most common species of mule ears around Tahoe Donner, woolly mule ears are easily identified by touching the leaves: they do feel woolly!



Woolly Mullein

Verbascum thapsus
Scrophulariaceae (Figwort) family
June-September

Also called common mullein, this distinctive plant is a non-native considered by some to be invasive. With its tall flower stalk it can grow up to six feet tall.



Photos and plant descriptions courtesy of Susan Kelso.
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While pretty to look at, please do not take home wildflowers. Help prevent the spread of invasive species and keep ecosystems natural.





Alpine Breeches
Hydrophyllum capitatum
var. alpinum
Boraginaceae (Borage) family
May-June

The flower head is very close to the ground, beneath the leaves, giving the plant kind of an upside-down appearance. Delicate stamens extend from each flower.



Alpine Shooting Star
Primula tetrandia
Primulaceae (Primrose) family
June-August

Shooting stars, also called mosquito bills, typically grow in wetlands such as Euer Valley. The “bill” points downward until the flower has been pollinated, after which it points upward – a clear signal to pollinators not to bother visiting.



Anderson's Thistle
Cirsium andersonii
Asteraceae (Sunflower or Aster) family
July-August

Although there are several species of thistles in the Tahoe Donner area, Anderson's thistles are noted for attracting hummingbirds.



Aster
Symphyotrichum sp.
Asteraceae (Sunflower or Aster) family
July-August

In some cases several wildflowers look very similar and are difficult to distinguish. This is one example, since some asters and daisies look similar from the top/front side, with differences on the

bottom/back side. Fairly common in Tahoe Donner, this is most likely Eaton's aster (*S. bracteolatum*).



California Rayless Daisy
Erigeron inornatus
Asteraceae (Sunflower or Aster) family
July-September

Flowers in the aster family are composites, consisting of ray flowers and disc flowers. The California rayless daisy has only disc flowers, hence the name rayless.



Camas Lily
Camassia quamash
Liliaceae (Lily) family
May-July

Although famously found in the meadow at the east end of Sagehen Creek Trail, there are camas lilies in Tahoe Donner also, not far from Intersection 15 in Euer Valley. The bulbs of these beautiful, deep

blue flowers were utilized by Native Americans.



Checkerbloom
Sidalcea glaucescens
Malvaceae (Mallow) family
June-August

Several species of checkerbloom, or checkermallow, are found in the area around Tahoe Donner.



Common Yarrow
Achillea millefolium
Asteraceae (Sunflower or Aster) family
June-August

The name *millefolium* means “thousand leaves,” a great description of the finely divided, feathery leaves. Yarrow is found widely across the Americas, Eurasia and Australia. A yellow form is found in Tahoe Donner landscaping.



Corn Lily
Veratrum californicum
var. californicum
Liliaceae (Lily) family
July-August

Sometimes called false hellebore, corn lily is fairly widespread above 4,000 feet elevation. It typically grows in meadows and other wet locations, and can grow up

to seven feet tall. The flower stalks develop later in the summer.



Coulter's Daisy
Erigeron coulteri
Asteraceae (Sunflower or Aster) family
July-September

Coulter's daisy is a native daisy, with numerous white ray flowers. A similar flower with fewer ray flowers is oxeye daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), a non-native common in Tahoe Donner

landscaping. The name *vulgare* means common.



Foxglove
Digitalis purpurea
Plantaginaceae (Plantain) family
June-August

A non-native plant, foxglove is native to temperate Europe. It is often grown as an ornamental plant due to its many color variations, from white to pink to purple, and interesting spots on the inside of the

flower tube. All parts of the plant are considered toxic.



Great Basin Violet
Viola beckwithii
Violaceae (Violet) family
April-June

This is perhaps the most colorful violet in the region, with light purple lower petals (with yellow and white bases to the petals) and darker purple upper petals. The leaves are oblong to linear and are fleshy.



Lupine
Lupinus sp.
Fabaceae (Pea) family
June-August

Lupines are recognizable by their leaves, which have so-called palmate shapes, resembling an open hand with five or more fingers spread out. The flowers are on stalks and bloom from the base toward the tip of the stalk. Most lupines are blue-purple, but some are

white and some are yellow.



Mahala Mat
Ceanothus prostratus
Rhamnaceae (Buckthorn) family
May

Common in Tahoe Donner, growing in large patches or masses. Leaves stay green all summer after the (relatively brief) blooming season. Also called squaw carpet. Whenever *prostratus* is

the species name, look for a low-growing plant!



Manzanita
Arctostaphylos sp.
Ericaceae (Heath) family
May-June

The most common shrub-like manzanita in the Tahoe region is greenleaf manzanita (*Arctostaphylos patula*). There is also a lower, mat-like manzanita called pine-mat manzanita (*Arctostaphylos nevadensis*).



Monkshood
Aconitum columbianum
Ranunculaceae (Buttercup) family
June-August

The distinctive upper part of the monkshood flower looks like a monk's cowl. The reproductive parts are greenish-yellowish. Flowers are pollinated by a specific bumblebee species with the

correct size, weight and anatomy. All parts of the plant are toxic.



Mountain Violet
Viola purpurea
Violaceae (Violet) family
April-June

Violets are yellow, purple, or white. Mountain violet is the most common yellow violet in the Tahoe Donner area. In addition to the maroon veins on the lower petals, the back of the two upper petals is purple.



Paintbrush
Castilleja sp.
Scrophulariaceae (Figwort) family
June-August

Of the several species of paintbrush found in the Tahoe Donner area, the most common is Applegate's paintbrush. Paintbrush come in a variety of colors and have differing shapes (number of

lobes) of the bracts, the colorful part of the plant people usually notice.



Pennyroyal
Monardella odoratissima
Lamiaceae (Mint) family
June-August

A minty odor, square stem and opposite leaves are characteristic of the mint family. Flowers can be pale purple, white or lavender.



Penstemon
Penstemon sp.
Scrophulariaceae (Figwort) family
June-August

This is one of the several species of blue-to-purple penstemons found in the area around Tahoe Donner.