

# Wachusett Wildflowers

Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation  
Wachusett Mountain State Reservation



Henry David Thoreau, a famous lover of wildflowers, wrote: “*And so the seasons went rolling on into summer, as rambles into higher and higher grass.*”

Wachusett Mountain State Reservation is home to a wide variety of wildflowers thanks to a protected environment comprised of several different habitats, including fresh-water beaver ponds, vernal pools, rocky ledges, upland mixed deciduous forest, and dense stands of conifers in shady ravines.

With an open eye and an inquisitive mind, you can learn to identify these beautiful wildflowers while strolling along the park’s many trails. Please enjoy, sketch, and take pictures, but leave them in their place, so that everyone can enjoy our beautiful wildflowers!

A few places where you can walk and observe wildflowers are:

- Echo Lake Road
- Old Indian Trail
- High Meadow Trail
- The Summit Road (please do not park along the roadway)

This is only a small sample of wildflowers that can be found at Wachusett Mountain. Call the Visitor Center at 978-464-2987 for an update on what is blooming and where.

## Evening Primrose

### **Evening Primrose** (*Oenothera biennis*)

This wildflower grows from 1 to 5 feet high in sunny areas and produces 4-petaled yellow flowers with a distinctive cross-shaped stigma as seen in the photo. The lemon-scented flower, opening near twilight and closing in the morning before noon, attracts pollinators including hawk moths, and later produces a seed pod that is sought by birds. You will find it in many places at Wachusett Mountain, including the shore of Echo Lake and in sunny spots along the sides of the Summit Road.



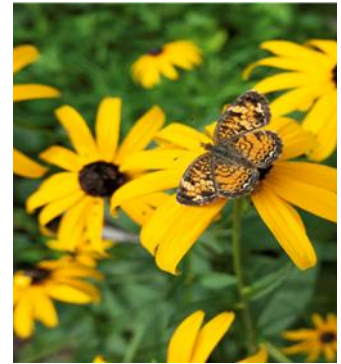
**Fireweed**

**Fireweed** (*Epilobium angustifolium*)  
A magenta-colored wildflower 4 to 6 feet high that makes a spectacular show, growing in large masses. It often grows in burnt-over areas, hence its name. Although it is more common in western areas of the continent, it is also found in New England, especially in more northerly areas or at higher altitudes in our area. When in bloom, it is obvious on 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Trail, the second ski slope on the left as you drive, walk, or bike up the Summit Road.



**Black-eyed Susan**

**Black-eyed Susan** (*Rudbeckia serotina*)  
Often quite common and familiar to many people, this beautiful native wildflower never fails to delight the observer. It also attracts the attention of pollinators, including the Pearl Crescent butterfly seen here. Look for it in open sunny spots.



**Tall Meadow Rue**




**Tall Meadow Rue** (*Thalictrum polygamum*)  
This is a tall plant from 3 to 8 feet high, with showy clusters of white flowers a little less than 1/2 inch wide with thin white stamens that form delicate bursts like tiny fireworks. It is popular with bees and butterflies seeking nectar. At Wachusett you may find it near Echo Lake or along the middle section of Old Indian Trail where it crosses grassy open areas.



**St. John's-wort**

**St. John's-wort** (*Hypericum perforatum*)  
This low herb stands 1 to 2 1/2 feet high with bright yellow flowers which have bushy stamens, and black dots on the edges of the petals. Originally from Europe, it is now established throughout much of the United States. This plant was given its name because it was said to bloom on Saint John's Eve, June 24<sup>th</sup>. You can find it growing in sunny areas such as Echo Lake Road and the Summit Road



<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>Common Milkweed</b></p>	<p><b>Common Milkweed</b> (<i>Asclepias syriaca</i>)  Common Milkweed and other members of the Milkweed family exude a milky sap when the stems or leaves are broken or crushed. It is perhaps best known as the primary food for Monarch butterfly larva, which feed on the plant and concentrate the poisonous sap in their bodies, making the caterpillars inedible to most birds who might otherwise eat them. It is found in Reservation fields along Westminster Road; enjoy it from a distance – there may be ticks in the tall grass.</p>	
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>Trout Lily</b></p>	<p><b>Trout Lily</b> (<i>Erythronium americanum</i>)  Also called Dogtooth Violet because of the toothlike shape of the root. The name Trout Lily arises from the similarity between the mottling on the leaves and the markings on native Brook Trout. It blooms in May before leaves are fully formed on trees and can be seen while hiking along High Meadow Trail.</p>	
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>Yellow Loosestrife</b></p>	<p><b>Yellow Loosestrife</b> (<i>Lysimachia terrestris</i>)  Also called Swamp Candles or Bog Loosestrife, this native member of the Primrose family forms a slender spike-like cluster of small star-shaped flowers. This showy wildflower grows in damp conditions and can be found in some of the wetter meadows and trail sides at Wachusett Mountain.</p>	
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>Northern Blue Violet</b></p>	<p><b>Northern Blue Violet</b> (<i>Viola septentrionalis</i>)  The blue-violet flowers of many species of violets are a familiar colorful sight in the spring woods before the leaves on trees unfold. There are about 800 species of violets, and many have been cultivated for use in gardens. Found throughout the park, especially in damp, semi-shaded spots on nearly all hiking trails.</p>	