

Chia *Salvia columbariae* (Mint Family)



No, this is not the same species as the chia seed that you can buy, but yes, you can use them in the same way. Like all mints, chia has a square stem and purple flowers. The flower head is

beautiful and spiky. Find them by the Headworks!



Common Plants of Deep Springs Valley

by Mo Katz-Christy DS18

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Mormon Tea *Ephedra nevadensis* and *viridis* (Mormon Tea Family)



True to its name, this shrub was used by the Mormons (and many other groups) to make tea. They are about 2' tall and grow among the saltbush, as well as in the rocks. They have tiny yellow flowers that litter the ground around them after they fall. Find them on the way to the Cabin!

5 Hopsage *Grayia spinosa* (Amaranth Family)



This member of the Amaranth family has beautiful pink flowers that are similar to Saltbush's. It is less abundant than Saltbush but similarly can be found among the dry shrubs on the valley floor. It is a shrub, approximately 3' tall. Find them as you walk to the Upper Reservoir!

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Around the Main Circle

These plants are abundant in irrigated areas around the Main Circle.

Mullein *Verbascum thapsus* (Figwort Family)



Mullein is biennial. In its first year it forms a rosette of fuzzy leaves, and then the next year forms a flowering stalk. Drink tea from the leaves for a cough or sore throat, but be

sure to strain the leaves out before drinking as the hairs can irritate the throat. The leaves can also be smoked. The flowers can be infused in oil to treat ear infections. Find them between the Museum and the Main Building!

2

California Evening Primrose *Oenothera californica ssp. avita* (Evening Primrose Family)



These large, delicate white flowers open, as their name suggests, in the evening. They do not preserve well as cut flowers, but grow low to the ground, especially on roadsides. Find them along the highway!

Bonus/Challenge

These are rarer plants for the more keen observer to search for!

Mariposa Lily *Calochortus kennedyi* (Lily Family)



Padraic's favorite wildflower, these only flower in wet years, though every year they produce a curly leaf that looks (but does not smell) like an allium. The flower has three orange petals and three orange sepals. Find them by the Headworks, or on the way to Gilbert Pass!

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Rocky Areas

These plants grow in the rocks—on the way to the Cabin, past the Upper Reservoir, or above Wyman on Bitterbrush Flats. Some can also be found on the valley floor.

Beavertail Cactus *Opuntia basilaris* (Cactus Family)



A variety of Prickly Pear, this cactus has pear-shaped pads and beautiful pink

flowers. The fruit is edible and can be used to make a reddish-purple dye. The flower has hundreds of stamen and one white pistil. Find them on the way to the Upper Reservoir!

Prince's Plume *Stanleya pinnata* (Mustard Family)



This mustard is identifiable by their tall stalk that remains standing dry long after the plant has died. The lush leaves, which stand out in the desert in their size and color, have a similar nutritional value to spinach, and were cultivated by the Paiute. Try them—they're

slightly horseradish-ey. Find them by the Cabin!

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Coyote Willow *Salix exigua* (Willow Family)



These grow abundantly along the drainages and by the lower reservoir. The coyote willow is one of the first plants to leaf out in the spring and the last to drop its leaves in the fall. It is fast growing, with 1-year rods up

to 4' long. The rods can be harvested once the leaves fall and used for weaving (see *Willow Basketry* by Bernard Verdet-Fierz and Regula Verdet-Fierz for weaving instructions). The bark can also be used similar to aspirin—chew on some next time you're out walking, or make a tea or tincture (an infusion of the herb in alcohol). It is best harvested during its dormant season (when the leaves have fallen). Stop as you brush past them on the path to the lower reservoir!

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Lemon Balm *Melissa officinalis* (Mint Family)



Lemon Balm, like all mints, has a square stem and opposite leaves. The tea from the leaves can be made fresh or dried, and calms both the nervous and digestive systems. It is quite mild, yet fragrant. Find them in the garden!

3

Indigo Bush *Psoralethamnus arborescens* var. *minutifolius* (Pea Family)



This beautiful plant flowers whenever it gets enough water, whether May or September. The purple flowers are unmistakable and dot the whole valley. Unfortunately, they are not the same indigo bush that is used for dyeing. The flowers are distinctly pea-like—asymmetrical, with a banner, wings, and peel. Find them as you walk to the Upper Reservoir!

7

Dry Valley Floor

These are some of the most common shrubs and wildflowers that grow on the valley floor around the college.

Fourwing Saltbush *Atriplex canescens* (Amaranth Family)



One of the most abundant plants in the valley, Saltbush is also one of the first plants after Tumbleweed to reclaim an area that has been tilled. The plants are neither male nor female, but can have male

flowers, female flowers, or both, and can change year to year. The seeds are edible but slightly salty. Find them as you walk to the Upper Reservoir!

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Wetter Valley Floor

These plants also grow on the valley floor, but in slightly wetter areas, such as along the drainage ditch and by the reservoirs.

Rabbitbrush *Chrysothamnus Greenei* and *viscidiflorus* (Aster Family)



This is one of the larger shrubs of the valley at up to 4' tall and, like sagebrush, needs slightly more water. Their brilliant yellow flowers smell slightly citrus-y and can be used to dye cotton

a light yellow with an alum mordant or a green with iron. Find them outside the library!

Antelope Bitterbrush *Purshia tridentata* var. *glandulosa* (Rose Family)



This is the largest shrub that grows abundantly in the valley, and is recognizable by their slightly sticky, mitten-shaped leaves. They usually grow at a

slightly higher elevation than the valley floor, and are the namesake for Bitterbrush Flats. The flowers make a strong tea with a slightly bitter aftertaste, and the leaves can make a brilliant orangey-gold dye. The Paiute use the bark for rope, string, skirts and sandals, and boil the leaves into an antiseptic tea for measles, venereal diseases, colds, and for use as a laxative. Find the big one on the way to the Upper Reservoir!

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Sagebrush *Artemisia tridentata* ssp. *tridentata* (Aster Family)



While their smell is omnipresent, there is actually less sagebrush around here than most people think. They need slightly more water than the saltbush and grow in areas that get that bit

of extra water—in drainages, low areas, and by water. They can grow at a huge range of elevations, including up at Cow Camp! The leaves retain their smell well with drying, and can be used to infuse soaps or just make your room smell nice. Find them on the west side of the road to the lower reservoir!