

Nature Alberta May Plant Count (May 25-31, 2021)



The Alberta May Plant Count is an annual event sponsored by Nature Alberta.

This year, the dates for Count Weekend are May 29 and 30, but since count weekend dates vary from year to year, all data collected during Count Week, May 25-31, are valid.

History of the May Plant Count

- Suggested by Loran Goulden, respected Alberta naturalist, in 1974.
- First count initiated by Chip Weseloh and Julie Hrapko in 1976.
- Conducted province-wide annually since 1976 and compiled by Nature Alberta volunteers including Derek Johnson, Elaine Gordan, and Suzanne Visser.

Objectives:

1. To record all species of vascular plants in bloom throughout Alberta during the last week in May.
2. Determine the flowering stage (phenology) of each species in bloom using a standardized approach.

Importance of the May Plant Count:

- Provides valuable information on the distribution and phenology of flowering plants in Alberta

- Important for monitoring spread of non-native species (invasive plants)
- Provides insight into response of plant species to variations or long-term changes in climate
- Increases knowledge of native plants and improves expertise in plant identification
- Encourages appreciation and conservation of native plants and habitats

Who Can Participate:

Anyone who is interested in, and familiar with, Alberta wildflowers. Expertise in wildflower identification is valuable, but not mandatory.

How You Can Participate:

1. Select your favorite natural area(s).
2. Contact the Count Compiler or your local natural history society to obtain a checklist of plants in your area, if available.
3. During Count Week (May 25-31, 2021), survey your area and record on your checklist any species that are in bloom. Plant names (common and scientific) as described by the Alberta Conservation Information Management System (ACIMS) are preferred.

Thank you for your participation!

All photos © Suzanne Visser



4. Include both native and exotic plants (weeds) in your list.
5. If surveying more than one location, record observations on separate checklists.
6. If possible, document the flowering stage of each plant in bloom using the following codes:
3 = in bud but not flowering
4 = in bloom up to 10%
5 = in bloom up to 25%
6 = in bloom up to 50%
7 = full bloom (100%)
8 = fading
9 = completely faded
7. Record date, participant(s) names, location, and site details. Unusual observations, comments, and comparisons with previous years are extremely valuable. If necessary, obtain photographs for identification purposes.
8. Forward checklists, observations, and photos to the Count Committee. Lists in electronic format (Excel spreadsheet) are preferred but we also accept scans or photos of datasheets. Send data to:

**May Plant Count
Committee**

email:
mayplantcount@outlook.com

Please submit May Plant Count results by **June 30, 2021** to the Count Compiler.

Do not collect plant samples in protected areas! Photographs of unknown plants are the preferred method of identifying or verifying plant species.

Further details can be obtained from the Count compiler.
A summary of your observations will be made available through Nature Alberta and the Alberta Native Plant Council.

