

Native Plants of the Oak Openings Region

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The sandy soil and oak forests of the Oak Openings region of Northwest Ohio provide habitats not found elsewhere in the state. Plains puccoon and wild lupine produce the region's classic late spring display, covering open areas in bright yellow and blue flowers.

Plains Puccoon

Lithospermum carolinense

HABITAT Dry, open woods and prairies.

DESCRIPTION 1-2 ft. tall.
Clusters of bright orange-yellow flowers from late May to July.

NOTES Habitat loss has contributed to its decline.



Lupine

Lupinus perennis L.

HABITAT Dry, open woods and clearings.

DESCRIPTION 8-24 in. tall.



Prairie Thimbleweed

Blue flowers in late spring and early summer.

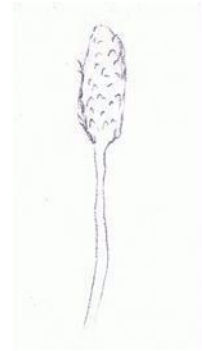
NOTES This plant is the only food of the Karner Blue butterfly's caterpillar. The butterfly is close to extinct over much of its range.

Prairie Thimbleweed

Anemone cylindrica

HABITAT Dry areas and open sandy woods.

DESCRIPTION 1-2 ft. tall.
Flowers about 0.75 in. across begin to bloom in early summer.
The green cone in the center of the flower grows up to 1.5 in. long.



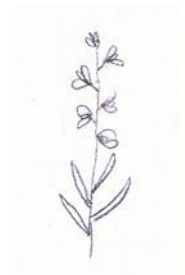
NOTES Seeds in the cones are scattered by the wind in fall or winter.

Racemed Milkwort

Polygala polygama

HABITAT Sandy woods and clearings.

DESCRIPTION 4-12 in. tall.
Pink to lavender flowers about 0.25 in. long bloom in summer.



NOTES Since 1960, the plant has been recorded in Ashtabula, Fulton, Geauga, and Lucas counties.

Summary

The following table summarizes some properties of the native plants.

TABLE 1. Native Plants

Name	Habitat	Description	Notes
Plains Puccoon <i>Lithospermum caroliniense</i>	Dry woods and clearings	1-2 ft. tall Yellow flowers	
Lupine <i>Lupinus perennis L.</i>	Open woods, clearings	8-24 in. tall Blue flowers	Food of the Karner Blue caterpillar
Prairie Thimbleweed <i>Anemone cylindrica</i>	Open sandy areas	1-2 ft. tall Green cone to 1.5 in. long	No scent
Racemed Milkwort <i>Polygala polygama</i>	Sandy woods, clearings	4-12 in. tall Purple flowers	

References

The Green Ribbon Initiative.
<http://www.oakopen.org>.

Newcomb, Lawrence. *Newcomb's Wildflower Guide*. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1977.

United States Department of Agriculture. *Plants Database*.
<http://plants.usda.gov/>.