

***Claytonia perfoliata*, Miner's Lettuce**

General Botanical Characteristics

Claytonia perfoliata is a native winter or spring annual. It is branched from the base with stems growing up to 14 inches tall. Leaves are mostly basal, simple, and 2.4 inches to 8.0 inches long, including the stalk. Miner's lettuce has two stem leaves that fuse to form a disc just below the flower stalk. The elongate stalk bears numerous small flowers. Fruits are tiny, three-valved capsules containing one to three seeds.



Seasonal Development

The time from germination to flowering varied from 33 to 90 days in a Columbia River Gorge population. Miner's lettuce flowers from February to May in Arizona and California. In Utah, it flowers from June to July.

Distribution/Habitat

Miner's lettuce is distributed from British Columbia south to Guatemala and east to North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, Utah, and Arizona. Miner's lettuce usually occurs on moist or vernal moist sites

Interesting Facts

- The blossoms, leaves, and stems of miner's lettuce may be eaten by humans at any time during the growing season. They are eaten raw or cooked, and are a good source of vitamin C.
- Miner's lettuce is a shade tolerant species and is more prominent under a canopy than in openings, in oak savanna, or western white pine communities.

References

US Forest Service Shrub Database, November 2002,
<http://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/index.html>

Photo from University of Maryland Life Sciences, November 2002,
<http://www.life.umd.edu/emeritus/reveal/pbio/LnC/LnCpublic.html>