

Weekly MSU Extension Service column, James Shannon, MSU Extension Agent, for release June 3, 2020.

During the spring and early summer, many Mississippi roadsides are decorated with a bouquet of wildflowers. Knowledge of some basic characteristics of wildflowers can lighten the burden of travel. The ability to identify wildflowers at 65 miles an hour can make a routine trip much more interesting.

I will focus on four common wildflower species of that blanket the thoroughfares of Mississippi. The flowers to be discussed include Queen Anne's Lace, coreopsis lanceolata, oxeye daisy, and fleabane.

The sources for this article include Mississippi State University Extension Service Southern Gardening publications by Dr. Gary Bachman including: "*Queen Anne's Lace Thrives in Landscapes*", "*Plant State Wildflower Coreopsis in Landscapes*", "*Neglect and Enjoy Oxeye Daisies*," and "*Ditch Flowers*"

Queen Anne's Lace

Queen Anne's lace is easily identified by its umbrella shaped flowers that often sway in the breeze. Each flower head contains approximately one-thousand individual flowers that provide a lace like appearance. They actually look like a crocheted doily.

Queen Anne's lace is a biennial plant that grows to a height of approximately four feet. It is a non-native plant that was originally brought the United States by European settlers. Queen Anne's lace is also known as wild carrot. Modern carrot varieties were selected from this plant. Unlike modern carrot varieties, the edible roots of Queen Anne's lace are colored white or pale yellow.

Coreopsis Lanceolata

Coreopsis lanceolata is a perennial native wildflower that is commonly known as lanceleaf coreopsis. It is not hard to understand why it is the state wildflower of Mississippi. It has eight yellow flower petals with toothlike edges. The flowers are one to two inches in diameter with a golden center. They grow to a height of approximately two feet. They are often called lanceleaf tickseed in reference to their tick shaped seeds.

Oxeye Daisy

Oxeye Daisy is a nonnative perennial that was introduced to the United States from Europe. It grows to a height of approximately two feet in height with a two-inch flower. The flowers have twenty to twenty-five white petals with a slightly raised yellow center.

Fleabane

Fleabane produces the smallest flower discussed in this article. Each stem will produce a cluster of five or more flowers that are approximately ¼ inch in diameter. They are native summer annual wildflowers that produce numerous white petals with a yellow center.

Wildflowers are in full bloom in Mississippi. On your next excursion use the information provided to see how many wildflowers you can identify. Good luck!



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