



## Green Thumb & Years of Experience Goes Into Plant Identification

*Take Only Photos and Memories – Remember Every Plant Plays A Role in the Park*

**STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, COLORADO-June 29, 2020**-With nearly 400,000 different plants known to science, determining what might be an exotic and rare perennial versus a non-native weed takes not only a green thumb but years of experience and training.

“Every plant within the Botanic Park is meant to be there,” commented Executive Director Jennifer MacNeil. “The beauty of the park is that we’re able to share numerous plants and flowers from the Yampa Valley and Colorado, but also often rare or special species from around the globe.”

As people enjoy the Botanic Park and its surrounding gardens, please refrain from disturbing plants or helping by removing what you think might be a weed. The gardening team identifies plant types within the park, understands the difference between species and maintains the surroundings and gardens daily.

Recently, isolated instances have taken place where plants have been pulled, and in some cases, sprayed with an herbicide or something to kill the plant possibly thought to be a weed by someone. While plants may look similar during different phases of their life, every plant has been hand-selected to be within one of the gardens.

For example, *Morina longifolia*, the Whorl Flower, is a very rare perennial native to the Himalayas that looks like a thistle early in the season when it is leafing out. Likewise, *Echinops ritro* are not thistles despite their common name, Globe Thistle. And if you’ve ever stopped and talked with Facilities Team Member Jeff Morehead, you’ll know the Pink Dandelion in Jeff’s Garden is not the common garden weed Dandelion, but *Taraxacum pseudorozeum* a Russian native. This unusual plant was a gift from the Denver Botanic Gardens.



While some weeds are kept on site, Lead Horticulturist Gayle Lehman says, “I do keep a couple of Mullen in the garden for education purposes as they were utilized by Native Americans. However, I never let them go to seed, so they don’t spread.”

If you have a question or concern about a plant in the Botanic Park, please call 970.846.5172 or ask one of our gardeners on site. If you would like to volunteer to help with maintaining the park, visit [www.yrbp.org](http://www.yrbp.org) and register for Socially Distant Gardening under the direction of the gardening team.

Once a sprawling horse pasture, the six-acre Yampa River Botanic Park is now home to more than 50 unique gardens, thousands of plant and animal species and hosts special events of all shapes and sizes. An innovative experiment in private/public partnerships, the Botanic Park is free and open to the public from dawn to dusk, through October 31.

-WeServeTheCity-

### Contact

Jennifer MacNeil, Executive Director, Yampa River Botanic Park, 970.846.5172 or email  
Emily Hines, Marketing & Communications Coordinator, 970.871.7031 or [email](mailto:emily@yrbp.org)  
Michael Lane, Communications Manager, 970.871.8220 or [email](mailto:michael@yrbp.org)