

Common stonecrop

Scientific name: ***Sedum lanceolatum* Torrey**

Common names: Common stonecrop, Lanceleaf stonecrop, Yellow stonecrop

Common stonecrop can be found throughout Uinta County in open areas with shallow, gravelly or rocky soils. This plant flowers from May to August. A tight basal rosettes of reddish, succulent leaves appear throughout the spring and early summer. As the flowering stems develop these lance-shaped leaves become smaller. The leaves are shed by the time the yellow flowers bloom. The flowering stems are rarely more than 10-15 cm tall.

Common stonecrop evolved for high elevation and dry, rocky conditions. Its succulent leaves are an adaptation for water storage when little water is available to the roots. CAM photosynthesis is another adaptation this plant uses to conserve water. Like cacti, stonecrop opens the stoma (pores) on their leaves during the night to take in and store carbon dioxide. The plants use the sunlight during the day to convert the carbon dioxide to carbohydrate energy but leave their stoma closed to prevent water loss from evaporation.

It is said that Native Americans used the young fleshy leaves medicinally as a laxative. Many native pollinator species are attracted to this plant. This plant produces a chemical called sarmentosin that deters herbivores from grazing on it.

