

Death camas



Three species of Death camas (genus *Zigadenus*) are found in Uinta County. Some species are found in wet and drying meadows or along stream sides while other species are found in more arid areas in sagebrush, mountain brush and juniper communities. Growing and maturing early in the spring, Death camas enters dormancy early in the summer with declining soil moisture.

As its name implies, Death camas is an extremely poisonous plant. Toxic alkaloids occur in all parts of the plant, including the underground bulb, at all stages of growth.

This plant is responsible for many sheep losses throughout the West in the early spring. Other livestock, such as horses and cows can be poisoned by this plant, as can humans, but sheep are mostly likely to be affected because of grazing timing.



Death camas is one of the first plants to grow in the spring. Its leaves, which can be mistaken for grass, may be heavily grazed if sufficient other forage is unavailable. The plant, which can grow to 16 inches tall, produces clusters of cream to white flowers bloom atop a stalk which usually rises above the leaves. The deep underground bulb can cause severe illness in humans if mistaken for an edible liliaceous bulb.

