

Evening primrose



Scientific name: *Oenothera casepitosa* Nutt.

Common names: Evening primrose, Tufted evening primrose, Handkerchief plant, Sand-lily

Evening primrose is a perennial forb native to the Western U.S. with beautiful, fragrant flowers that open toward evening and wilt the next day. Each flower has four showy white, notched petals (2 to 6 cm long) which turn pink with age. Evening primrose is most often acaulescent; meaning it does not have stems. The flowers grow solitary from the axils of the leaves. Each flower is preceded by a 3 to 14 cm floral tube which may be mistaken for a stem. Sweet scented nectary glands lie at the base of each floral tube. Evening primrose is adapted for pollination by hawkmoths who come to the flower for the nectar.



When in bloom, the flowers of this plant cannot go unnoticed, especially in open areas on hillsides, along roads or around ant hill mounds. Two varieties of this species occur throughout Uinta County in sagebrush, mountain brush and juniper communities on well drained soils.

The growth form of Evening primrose is casepitose, meaning it grows in dense tufts, thus the specific epithet 'casepitosa'. This plant is known as Handkerchief plant by some because of the flower petals' resemblance to dainty handkerchiefs.

