

Arrowleaf balsamroot



Scientific name: ***Balsamorhiza sagittata* (Pursh) Nutt.**

Common names: Arrowleaf balsamroot, Oregon sunflower, Breadroot, Graydock

Arrowleaf balsamroot is a perennial forb that grows in sagebrush and juniper communities up to about 9000 ft in elevation. It is widespread in the Western U.S. Growing usually in well drained, deep soil, this plant has large tap roots that can be 4 inches in diameter and reach 8-9 feet deep.



As a member of the Composite family, each flowering head on this plant consists of 8-25 ray flowers and many disk flowers. The bright yellow flowering heads are 2-5 inches wide and grow solitary at the top of a leafless stock. The arrow-shaped leaves, with downward directed basal lobes, can grow up to 18 inches long and 6 inches wide.

The common name corresponds directly with the scientific name, *Balsamorhiza sagittata*. 'Balsam' is the name of a tree species and may refer to the residue within the roots of this plant. 'Rhiza' is Greek for root. 'Sagitt' is Latin for an arrow.



This plant is top killed by fire but can regrow after fire from the surviving root. It is a valuable forage for livestock and other animals, being most nutritious and palatable in spring and early summer. Some animals find the flowering head especially tasty. Native Americans used this plant for food and medicines. All parts of this plant are edible; the seeds can be ground into flour and the roots can be eaten raw or cooked.

