



© Kent Valentine

common name	Narrow-leaf Mule's Ear
scientific name	<i>Wyethia angustifolia</i>
family	Asteraceae (sunflower)
habitat	grassland
size	plant up to 3 feet tall; flower 5 to 8 cm across
fun facts	Narrow-leaf Mule's Ears are particularly tasty to cattle and cannot survive in areas which are heavily grazed.

description Member of the sunflower family. Each **flowerhead** is actually made up of 20-100 individual flowers. The outer ray flowers look like petals while the inner disk flowers are tiny and tubular (tube-shaped).

Narrow-leaf Mule's Ears is a very **distinctive** plant with large golden sunflowers. No other species at Mather Field has flowers quite this big.

life cycle Narrow-leaf Mule's Ears are **perennial** plants. They live for many years. Each year the above-ground foliage may die back. The large **taproot** stores energy for the next year's growth. Narrow-leaf Mule's Ears bloom in late April and May.

ecology This plant is very uncommon in the Central Valley because of year-round cattle grazing. Every time a plant puts up a new leaf, it gets eaten. The plants are never allowed to get big enough to bloom and make seeds. Eventually the taproot uses all of its stored energy and the plant dies. Narrow-leaf Mule's Ears does well at Mather Field because this land has not been used as cattle pasture.

Wyethia make large, highly nutritious seeds which are used by burrowing rodents and insects such as ants. If you break apart a seed head, you will see that the seeds resemble and smell like sunflower seeds but are much smaller.

