

Flowering parts in 3s (or multiples)

Leaves with parallel veins

Lily, Orchid, & Iris

Flowering parts in 4s

Leaves with veins in branching pattern

Evening Primrose
Mustard

Flowering parts in 5s (leaves with branching veins)

Flowers with **bilateral symmetry**

Petals fused

Mint
Figwort

Pea
Violet
Buttercup - some

Petals free

Flowers with radial symmetry

Many **small flowers in tight bunches**

Buckwheat
Parsley
Waterleaf
Valerian
Rose - some

Flowers not in tight bunches

Buttercup
Rose
Sunflower – technically belongs with “Many small flowers in tight bunches”

Flowers with **central clusters** or seemingly so
(more than 10 stamens crowding the center)

Normal flowers (10 or fewer stamens)
(or just use the “handles” to Id. these 7 Families)

Petals fused

Heath
Phlox
Primrose
Borage

Petals free (or nearly so)

Pink
Purslane
Saxifrage

Key to common plant families



Lily Family

- Flowers: radial
- 6 tepals & 6 stamens

Iris Family

- Flowers: radial
- 6 tepals & 3 stamens
- Leaves: basal in flat plane

Orchid Family

- Flowers: bilateral
- Lower petal forming lip or bowl

Leaves

Parallel veins

- Lily Family
- Iris Family
- Orchid Family

Flower parts in 3s

Flower parts in 4s



- Flowers: petals 4
- Ovary inferior & elongate
- Leaves: often opposite
- Long seed pods & 4 sections

Evening-Primrose Family

- Flowers: petals 4
- Ovary superior.
- 6 stamens – 4 long, 2 short usually
- Leaves: alternate
- Seed pods in many shapes. 2 sections

Mustard Family



Figwort Family

- Flowers: bilateral symmetry
- Petals fused
- Leaves: opposite or alternate

5s Bilateral..... Fused

Mint Family



- Flowers: bilateral symmetry
- Petals fused
- Leaves: opposite
- Square stems
- Aromatic usually

Pea Family

- Flowers: bilateral symmetry
- Petals free or nearly so
- Upper petal the largest
- Leaves: compound



5s Bilateral.....Free

Buttercup Family (some)



Violet Family

- Flowers: bilateral symmetry
- Petals free
- Lower petal the largest
- Leaves: simple





Buckwheat Family

- Flowers: small & in tight bunches
- 6 tepals form small flowers
- Leaves: basal or on stem
- Leaves entire & usually not toothed

Rose Family (some)



Parsley Family



- Flowers: small & in true umbels
- Leaves: usually compound & often fern-like or carrot-like

5s Radial Bunches

- Flowers: small - forming bottlebrush or oval clusters
- Stamens long exerted
- Leaves: usually pinnately compound

Waterleaf Family

(In Borage Family now)



- Flowers: small & in dense clusters
- Petals fused into narrow 5-lobed tube
- Small family

Valerian Family





Buttercup Family

- Flowers: petals 5 to 12
- Flowers radial or bilateral
- Flowers simple to elaborate
- Leaves: compound or deeply divided



Rose Family

- Flowers: petals 5
- Flowers radial
- Leaves: often oval & serrated



Sunflower Family

- Flowers: appear many "petaled"
- Central cluster present or appears to be absent entirely.
- A compound flower: tiny flowers with 5 fused petals. All flowers packed into a single head.

**5s Radial Not bunches
Central clusters**



Heath Family

- Flower: Petals fused into bells or urns

Primrose Family

- Flower: petals fused & sometimes reflexed
- Leaves: often basal



Phlox Family



- Flower: petals fused forming a tube with nearly perpendicular lobes
- Leaves: often narrow or like ladder

5s Radial Not bunches
Normal Flowers Petals Fused

Borage Family

(Includes Waterleaf now)

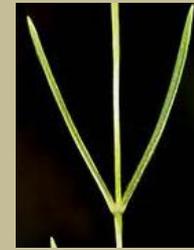
- Flower: petals fused
- Some flowers with central ring
- Fiddlenecks often
- Plant often hairy





Purslane Family

- Flowers: petals free, pink strips often, 2 sepals
- Leaves: often succulent



Pink Family

- Flowers: petals free, often notched or divided
- Leaves: opposite, often narrow & borne on enlarged nodes

5s Radial Not bunches
Normal Flowers Petals Free

Saxifrage Family

- Flower: petals free, stigmas 2 & often flaring apart
- Leaves: often basal



Appendix Unique Plants

Sedum Family

- Small very succulent plants with short fleshy leaves
- Flowers: petals free & yellow



Current Family

- Medium sized shrub to about 6'
- All have maple shaped leaves
- All have berries
- Flowers: petals fused

