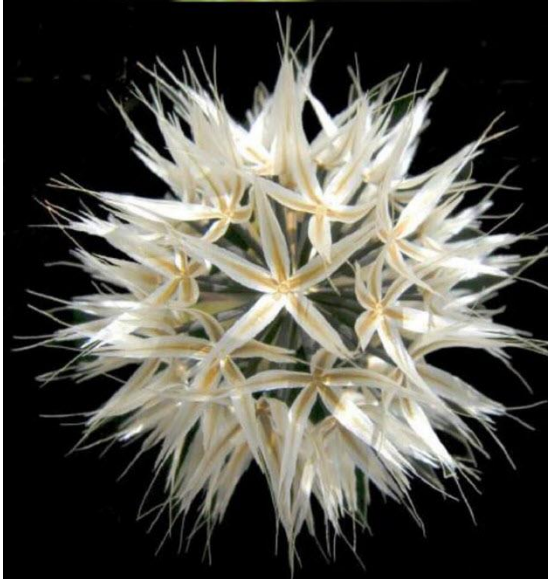


Field Key to the Edgewood Preserve Dandelion Tribe



Introduction

Edgewood Preserve has 22 species in the Dandelion Tribe (the *Cichorieae*). As you can see above, their flower and seed heads present a wide variety of beautiful patterns. Stems and leaves also grow to species-specific designs.

This field guide uses a simple key to introduce you to those patterns and their variations. If you're not already an expert with asters, you might like to start with "What's a Dandelion?"

Have fun with it!

Table of Contents

What's a Dandelion?



An introduction to dandelion parts, how they work and how dandelions relate to other asters.

Field Key

Section 1: Bare stems

These plants have bare flower stalks (scapose) that rise from near the ground. They have only basal leaves.

If your plant has stem leaves or branches, skip to Section 2.

These genera hybridize:

Plant Name / Things to Look For	Flower Head	Basal Leaves	Pappus
Group 1: Bare stems; narrow, rising basal leaves; pappus looks like a papery starburst. These genera hybridize:			
Coast Microseris <i>Microseris bigelovii</i> CA native	Medium head (1/2") Yellow or orange rays Sometimes purple-marked phyllaries.	Basal leaves long Narrow, opposite leaves	Papery starburst Columnar fruits tipped w/ 5 papery scales, each tipped with a bristle.
Bare stem 1/2-2" Yellow/Orange rays Found near the coast. Long basal leaves with narrow, opposite lobes. Pappus a papery starburst.			
Douglas' Silverpuffs Small head (1/2")		Basal leaves mid (4")	Papery starburst

Designed to take in the field, this key organizes plants by similar characteristics.

Check out these useful references when using the key:

[Distribution Maps](#)
[Terms Used in the Key](#)

Interactive Guide

If you have an internet connection, use PlantID.net to choose "Looks Like" Dandelions and search by what you know.

Once you find a species, read illustrated stories about your plant.

What's a Dandelion?

Dandelion Flower Heads

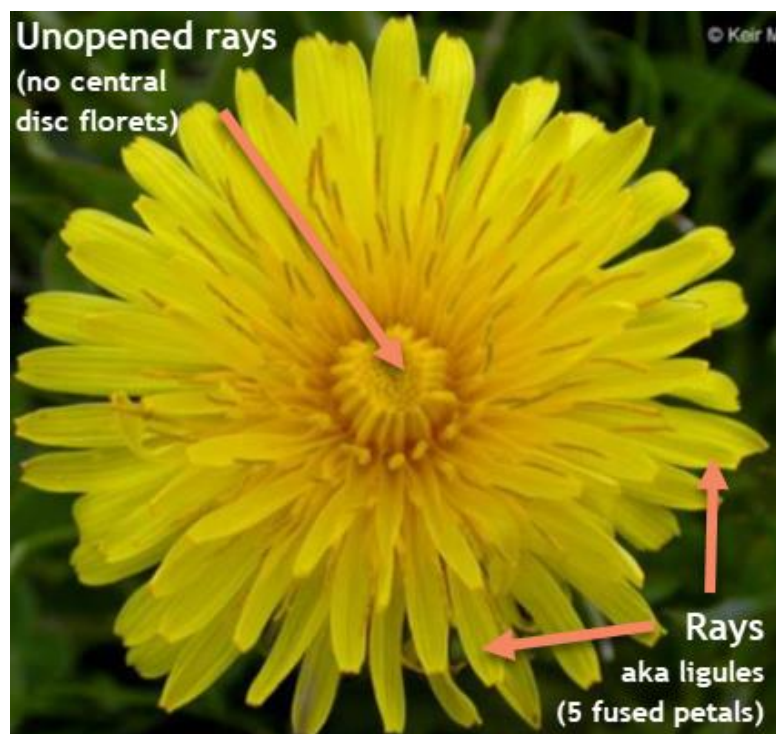
Dandelions are a tribe in the **Aster Family**. Aster blooms are organized in **flower heads** which hold many **florets**.

With dandelions, a flower head contains florets that radiate out from a central base, so they're called **rays**. You might suppose that each ray is a petal but it's actually a complete floret, containing not just fused petals but reproductive parts at its base.

Other Asters may also have ray florets, but dandelion flower heads are distinct in a couple of ways:

- Other Aster flower heads **always** have central **disc florets** in addition to possible ray florets. Disc florets are held in the center of the flower head and have no obvious petals. Dandelions **never** have central disc florets.
- Also, a dandelion ray floret has **5 fused petals**, called a **ligule**. Other aster rays have only 3 fused petals.

Dandelion flower heads have no disc florets.



Common Dandelion – Keir Morse

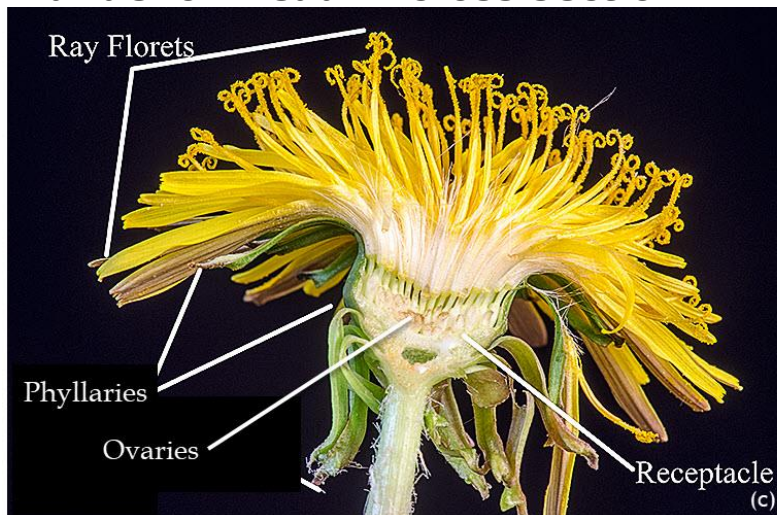
Other aster flower heads have disc florets.



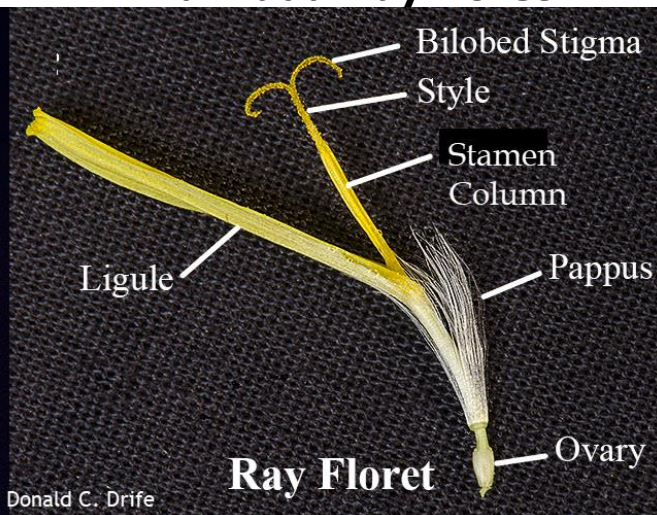
Diffuse Daisy – Ron Vanderhoff.
This is not a dandelion.

Here's how dandelion heads and rays are organized.

Dandelion head in cross section



An individual ray floret



Images © Donald C. Drife, michigannatureguy.com/blog

The flower head has a **receptacle** at its base that sits at the top of a stem. Each **ray floret** connects to a spot on the receptacle. An involucre of leaf-like **phyllaries**, often green, wraps around the flower head, providing protection to the head, especially when it is young. These phyllaries are often distinctive, making a good ID characteristic.

Each ray floret has an **ovary** at its base that sits on the receptacle. When pollinated, the ovary develops into a **fruit** containing a single **seed**, a thin covering, and **pappus** that will help the seed float away on the wind when it's mature.

Several structures grow out of the top of each ovary. 5 fused petals extend outward, creating a visual display that attracts pollinators. Remember that there are many ray florets on the head, so the flower head looks like a many-petaled flower.

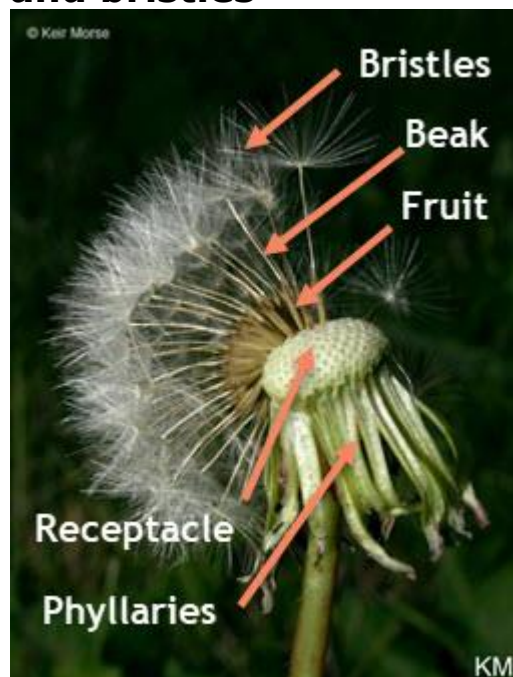
Growing up from the ovary is a hollow **column of 5 fused stamens** covered with male **pollen**. Inside the column, a female **style** grows, pushing pollen out as it extends beyond the **stamen column**. After the pollen is spent, the style opens up a receptive bi-lobed **stigma**, ready to receive pollen from other flowers of its species.

Dandelion flower heads vary by the number of rays they produce. For instance, chicory and wire lettuce produce only a handful or a couple dozen rays, making them easy to distinguish from heads of over 100 rays.

Pappus – a Dandelion Parachute

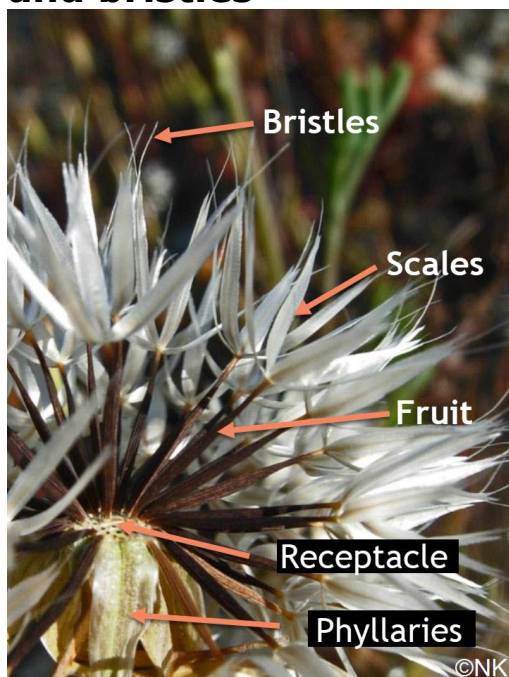
Also growing out of the top of each ovary, and outside the base of each floret's 5 fused petals, is **pappus**. It's made up of **bristles**, and sometimes **scales** as well. During flowering, pappus parts are small but once the floret is pollinated, pappus grows in species-specific patterns.

Fruit, narrow beak and bristles



Common Dandelion – Keir Morse

Elongated fruit, scales and bristles



Silver Puffs – © Neil Kramer

Plumose bristles



Bristly Ox Tongue
© Neil Kramer

When an ovary is pollinated, it becomes an emerging fruit. The fruit begins a complex generation of cells as it starts to develop a new living thing. For instance, the fruit often grows a narrow column at its tip, called a **beak**. Pappus scales and bristles grow from the top of the fruit, preparing an effective parachute for when the fruit and its seed are mature and ready to fly to a new location.

Almost every dandelion grows pappus, but with different materials and in different patterns. This makes pappus a useful character to check when figuring out what species you have.

- Many times, an inverted cone of dozens of **bristles** grows on top of each fruit (see the first picture above). The individual bristles are hair-like, forming a light parachute to catch the wind. Some bristles are **plumose**, with fuzz along their length, increasing their wind resistance (see the third picture above).

- Another pappus arrangement includes **scales**. Scales are thin and long but also have width. They create a papery surface, making a sail to catch the wind. They often end in a hair-like bristle (see papery starburst below).

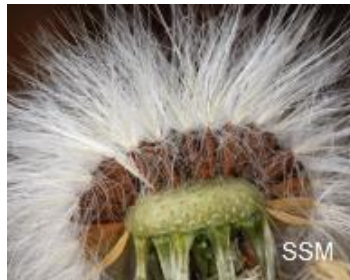
Pappus components combine to create several distinctive looks which I refer to in the key:

Fluffy sphere



Fruits have beaks that end in many bristles. The overall effect is a fluffy sphere, with space on the inside.

Dense sphere



Fruits do not have beaks, so bristles grow closely to them, creating a dense sphere without space on the inside.

Brush shape



Fruits do not have beaks. There are only a handful of fruits, so the overall effect is spaced bristles, rather than a dense sphere.

Papery starburst



Fruits connect to triangular, flat, papery scales that end in a bristle. I call this distinctive look a papery starburst.

Beautiful pappus is a hallmark of dandelions. Use the key to have fun looking at it closely.

Dandelion Leaves



Douglas' Silverpuff



Hairy Cat's Ear



Bristly Ox Tongue



White flowered
Hawkweed

Dandelion leaves vary a lot, which makes them a great identification tool.

- Most species have basal leaves, either lying along the ground in a rosette, or reaching up like blades of grass.
- Stem leaves tend to get smaller as you go up the stem. Some wrap around the stem.
- Leaves are generally long ovalish shapes or narrower, and often have **lobes** along their edges. The shape and pattern of these lobes is often useful in identification.

Dandelion Stems

Most dandelion stems have a milky white sap which you can see if a stem or branch is broken. Other asters typically do not.

Several dandelion species have stems that are bare, free of leaves or branches. They support a single flower head at their top, often drooping when in bud and becoming erect in flower.

Other dandelion stems are full of leaves and often branched.

Field Key to the Edgewood Dandelion Tribe (Cichorieae)

Find a group description that best describes your plant, and click it.

If you don't have flowers, leaves and pappus to look at, you may have to check out more than one group.

Don't know what a word means? For instance, don't know what a "papery starburst" is or don't know what I mean by "ovalish"? See ["Terms Used in the Key."](#)

Bare Stems

- 1 Basal leaves **narrow**; pappus a **papery starburst**.
- 2 Basal leaves **narrow**; pappus a **fluffy** or **dense sphere**.
- 3 Basal leaves **ovalish**, in a **rosette**; pappus a **fluffy sphere**.

Leafy/Branched Stems

- 1 Flower heads of a **few rays, along the stem**.
- 2 Lots of **ovalish, prickly-bristly** stem leaves.
- 3 Lots of **ovalish, not-prickly-bristly** stem leaves.
- 4 Stem leaves **tiny**; stem often **branched**; basal rosette **flat**.
- 5 Few or no branches; **rising** basal leaves.

Bare stems

These plants have bare flower stalks (**scapose**) that rise from near the ground. They have only **basal leaves**.

If your plant has stem leaves or branches, skip to **Leafy Branched Stems**.









California Dandelion



Douglas' Microseris



Annual Agoseris

	Flower Heads	Basal Leaves	Pappus
Group 1: Basal leaves narrow; pappus a papery starburst.			
<p>Douglas' Silverpuffs <i>Microseris douglasii</i> <i>ssp. douglasii</i> <i>ssp. tenella</i> CA native</p> <p>Bare stem, 1/2-2'. Small Yellow/White head. Phyllary < ray length. Basal leaves rising, narrow. Pappus varies by ssp.</p>	<p>Small head (1/2"). Yellow or white rays. Nodding in bud. Phyllary < ray length. Minute scales on stem.</p> 	<p>Basal leaves long, (4-6"). Rising, narrow.</p> 	<p>Big Papery starburst (1 1/4"). Columnar fruits w/ 5 bristle-tipped papery scales. ssp. <i>tenella</i> smaller (<1") shorter fruits, bristle but no scales.</p> 
<p>Grassland Silverpuffs <i>Stebbinsoseris heterocarpa</i> CA native</p> <p>Bare stem, 1/2-2'. Small Yellow/White head. Phyllary = ray length. Long, narrow, rising basal leaves. Pappus a papery starburst.</p>	<p>Small head (1/2") Yellow or white rays. Phyllary = ray length.</p> 	<p>Basal leaves long (6-10") Rising, narrow. Not hairy.</p> 	<p>Big papery starburst (1 1/4") Columnar fruits tipped w/ 5 papery scales with a notched tip. A bristle extends from the notch.</p> 

Bare Stems

Flower Head

Basal Leaves

Pappus

Continued: Basal leaves **narrow**; pappus a **papery starburst**.

Silverpuffs

Uropappus lindleyi

CA native

½-2' tall.

Small, yellow head
nestled in **long green**
phyllaries.

Narrow leaves with **soft**
hair.

Pappus a big, bright
papery starburst.

Small head (½").

Many **yellow rays**.

~8 **Phyllaries** >> rays.



Basal leaves medium
(4-6").

Rising, narrow.

Soft hairy.



Biggest **Papery**
starburst (2").

Columnar fruit tipped w/
5 **papery scales**.



Group 2: Basal leaves **narrow**; pappus a **fluffy** or **dense sphere**.

California Dandelion

Agoseris grandiflora

var. *grandiflora*

CA native

Tall, bare stem, 2-3'.

Big, yellow head.

Phyllaries can be hairy,
and/or marked.

Rising, narrow basal
leaves.

Pappus a big fluffy
sphere.

Big head (1½").

Many **yellow rays**.

Several rows of large
phyllaries.

Green phyllaries with
rose-colored centers.



Basal leaves long (8")

Narrow, rising leaves.

Narrow, **pinnate**
lobes.

Stem hairy near base.



Big fluffy sphere

(1-2")

Many **long beaks** (½"),
each tipped with dozens
of **bristles**.



Annual Agoseris

Agoseris heterophylla

CA native

Bare stem 1'.

Yellow head.

Annual, slender taproot.

Rising, narrow basal
leaves.

Pappus a fluffy sphere.

Small head (⅓") var.

heterophylla, or

Big head (1") var.
cryptopleura.

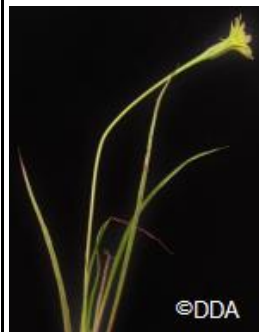
Many **yellow rays**.



Basal leaves med (4")

Rising, narrow.

Hairy, smooth edges.



Fluffy sphere (1").

>100 **beaks** (⅓"),
each tipped with **2 or 3**
sets
of **bristles**.



Bare Stems

Flower Head

Basal Leaves

Pappus

Group 3: Basal leaves **ovalish**, in a **rosette**; pappus a **fluffy sphere**.

Common Dandelion

Taraxacum officinale

CA not native

Short, bare stem < 1'.

Big, yellow head.

The dandelion we all know.

Dense rosette, lobes pointing backwards, **not hairy**.

Large, fluffy pappus.

Common/widespread.

Big head (1½").

Many **yellow rays**.

Often, stamen columns are **darker yellow** and **ray backsides** are **pale brown** up the middle.



Long (7") .

Lobes generally **point backwards**.

Not hairy.

Tangled rosette.



Fluffy sphere >1" dia.

Many **long beaks** (½"), each tipped with dozens of bristles.



Leafy/Branched Stems

These flowers share a stem with leaves and branches. Sometimes, the leaves are merely bumps on the stem, but the stem is not unmarked.

If your plant has bare stem, skip to [Bare Stems](#).









White Hawkweed

Nipplewort



Smooth Cat's Ear

	Flower Head	Leaves	Pappus
Group 1: Flower heads of a few rays, along the stem.			
<p>Tall Stephanomeria <i>Stephanomeria virgata</i> <i>ssp. pleurocarpa</i> CA native</p> <p>2-6' tall.</p> <p>Medium pink/white heads.</p> <p>Wirelettuce look – flower heads of few rays along a mostly bare, wiry stem.</p> <p>Phyllaries, in two series, lie flat.</p>	<p>Medium head (3/4"). ~7 Pink or white rays. Heads along stem.</p> <p>Phyllaries, in two series, lie flat.</p> 	<p>Basal leaves short (2") and narrow. Stem leaves tiny.</p> 	<p>Brush shape. ~7 fruits, each tipped with plumose bristles.</p> 
<p>Willow Lettuce <i>Lactuca saligna</i> CA not native</p> <p>1-3' tall.</p> <p>Medium, yellow heads of few rays along a mostly bare stem.</p> <p>Long narrow leaves clasp stem.</p>	<p>Medium head (3/4"). Yellow rays (6-12). Heads along stem.</p> 	<p>No basal leaves. Stem leaves narrow, sometimes prickly-bristly.</p> 	<p>Brush shape. ~9 fruits each tipped with white bristles.</p> 

Leafy/Branched Stems

Flower Head

Leaves

Pappus

Continued: Flower heads of a few rays, along the stem.

Skeleton Weed

Chondrilla juncea

CA not native

To 4' tall, w/ branches.

Big, yellow heads of **few rays** on short stalks along a **mostly bare** stem.

Downward pointing bristles at stem bottom.

Pappus soft brush shape.

Big head (1").

9-12 yellow rays.

Head base columnar.

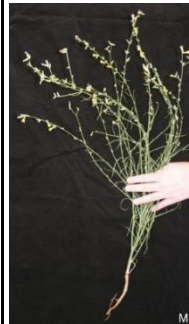
Narrow, green phyllaries.



Basal leaves medium (4").

Lobes highly variable.

Stem leaves smaller.



Brush shape.

Short fruit, **long beak** (1/2"), each tipped with dozens of white **bristles**.



Chicory

Cichorium intybus

CA not native

2-6' tall. Erect.

Big, blue heads of about a **dozen rays** along the stem are distinctive.

Many large, ovalish, clasping stem leaves.

Big head (1 1/4").

Blue rays (~15).

Heads along stem.



Long leaves below, smaller higher up.

Variably lobed, hairy.



No noticeable pappus.

Whole plant:



Group 2: Lots of **ovalish, prickly-bristly** stem leaves.

Bristly Ox Tongue

Helminthotheca

echioides

CA not native

3-7' tall. Stout stem.

Big, yellow heads.

Distinctive white bumps on leaves.

Bristles throughout.

Big, triangular phyllaries make a cup below the flower head.

Common/widespread.

Big head (1 1/4").

Many **yellow rays.**

Big triangular phyllaries.

Outer rays are often purple underneath.



Basal leaves medium (~4").

Obvious white bumps.

Bristly.

Stem leaves smaller higher up the stem.



Fluffy sphere (1").

1/4" **beaks**, each tipped with **dozens of 1/4" plumose bristles.**



Leafy/Branched Stems

Flower Head

Leaves

Pappus

Continued: Lots of **ovalish, prickly-bristly** stem leaves.

Prickly Sow Thistle

Sonchus asper ssp. *asper*

CA not native

1-4' tall.

Large spiny leaves.

Medium, yellow heads of many rays.

Stem **not hairy.**

Leaves clasp stem w/ rounded, curling ends.

Common/widespread.

Medium head (3/4").

Many **yellow rays (>100)**.

Stem not hairy.

Vase profile.



Long leaves (6-9").

Lobes/teeth soft spined.

Clasp stem; rounded, curling tip.



Dense sphere.

No beaks.

Fruits are flat.

Bristles 3x fruit length.



Prickly Lettuce

Lactuca serriola

CA not native

1-4' tall. Stiff, thick stem, **prickly-bristly.**

Small yellow heads.

A **handful** of **wide** rays.

No basal leaves.

Sometimes prickly-bristly near stem base.

Common/widespread.

Small head (1/3").

Yellow rays (~15), wide at tip.

Heads on branching stalks.



No basal leaves.

Leaf margins are **prickly-bristly**, as well as the central vein.

Clasp stem, pointed tip.



Open sphere.

~15 beaks (1/4"), each tipped with whitish bristles.



Group 3: Lots of **ovalish, not-prickly-bristly** stem leaves.

Common Sow

Thistle *Sonchus oleraceus*

CA not native

1-4' tall. Thick stem.

Big, yellow/white heads.

Large leaves, not bristly, clasping.

Not hairy.

Common/widespread.

Big head (1").

Many **yellow** or **white** rays.

Vase-shaped head.



Big leaves (3-9").

Big lobes, end in a wide arrowhead.

Leaves **clasp stem** w/ **flat, pointed tip.**



Dense sphere.

No beaks.

Many fine, white bristles grow from the end of each fruit.



Leafy/Branched Stems

Flower Head

Leaves

Pappus

Continued: Lots of **ovalish, not-prickly-bristly** stem leaves.

California Chicory
Rafinesquia californica
CA native

2-4' tall, erect.

Big, white heads in an array near the top..
Often rose-tinged.

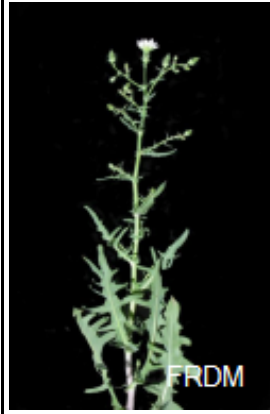
Involucre a long narrow cylinder (½" or more).
Stem leaves claspings.
Not hairy.

Big head (1")
White rays (~20)
Often rose-tinged.

Long, narrow phyllaries
+ short, recurving ones.



Basal leaves med (4")
Stem leaves claspings
Smaller higher up.



Open sphere (1") .
~20 beaks (¼"),
each tipped with a cone
of ¼" plumose **bristles**.



Crete Weed
Hedypnois rhagadioloides
CA not native

Prostrate stems to 1'.

Small yellow heads.

Distinctive rough pappus
with woody, incurved
phyllaries.

Disturbed, sandy spots.

Small head (½").
Yellow rays (~30).
Heads on stalks near
top and in leaf axils.



Basal leaves medium (3") .
Shallow lobes,
scattered hairs.

Stem leaves claspings



Brush shape.
No beaks.
Mature phyllaries are
incurved and woody.



Group 4: Stem leaves **tiny**; stem often **branched**; Basal rosette **flat**.

White Hawkweed
Hieracium albiflorum
CA native

1-4' tall; erect.

Taller than others in this
group.

Small, white heads in
an open cluster.

Coarse hairy.

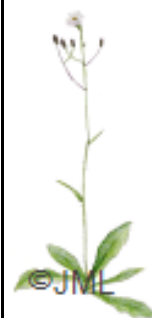
Smooth-edged basal
leaves.

Small head (⅓").
White rays (~25).
Heads form an open
cluster at the top of the
stem.



Basal leaves med (4")
Smooth margin.
Coarse hairs.

Small, narrow leaves
on the lower stem.



Brush shape.
No beaks.
Bristles form a brush at
the end of the fruit.



Leafy/Branched Stems

Flower Head

Leaves

Pappus

Continued: Stem leaves **tiny**; stem often **branched**; Basal rosette **flat**.

Smooth Cat's Ear

Hypochaeris glabra

CA not native

1-2' tall, often branched

Small yellow heads with about 30 rays.

Scale-like stem leaves.

Small basal leaves are **smooth-edged**, like a cat's ear.

Not hairy.

Common/widespread.

Small head ($\frac{1}{3}$ ").

Yellow rays (~ 30).



WL

Small basal leaves

(2-3") in a **rosette**, often **shallowly lobed**.

Stem leaves not obvious, scale-like.



WL

Fluffy sphere (1") .

~ 20 **beaks** on inner fruits, each tipped with about 12 bristles.

Outer fruits no beaks.



WL

Hairy Cats Ear

Hypochaeris radicata

CA not native

1-2' tall, often branched

Big yellow heads ($1\frac{1}{4}$ ") with ~ 25 rays.

Scale-like stem leaves.

Big basal leaves have **large, uneven "bites"** taken out of them, like a cat after a fight.

Short, **coarse hairs**.

Big head ($1\frac{1}{4}$ ").

Yellow rays (~ 25).

Common/widespread.



WL

Big basal leaves (3-6") in a **rosette** with

deep, pinnate lobes.

Stem leaves not obvious, scale-like.



ZAB

Fluffy sphere (1").

~ 25 **beaks** ($\frac{1}{4}$ "), each tipped w/ ~ 12 bristles.



©FRDM

Beaked Hawksbeard

Crepis vesicaria ssp.

taraxacifolia

CA not native

1-4' tall, many branches.

Stem **hollow, ribbed**.

Sometimes hairy.

Large lower leaves, deeply and irregularly lobed.

Medium head ($\frac{3}{4}$ ").

Many **yellow rays**.

Many branches, tipped with flower heads.



WL

Long basal leaves (to

14") have deep, irregular lobes, the largest at the tip.

Leaves diminish rising up the stem.



BHS

Fluffy sphere.

Short fruit = **short beak** ($\frac{1}{8}$ "), tipped with an inverted cone of white bristles.



ZAB

Leafy/Branched Stems

Flower Head

Leaves

Pappus

Group 5: Few or no branches; **rising** basal leaves.

Silverpuffs

Uropappus lindleyi
CA native

½-2' tall. Stem may be branched and leafy.

Small, yellow head nestled in **long green phyllaries**.

Unlike other Microseris/Silverpuffs, bud/head is **never nodding**.

Narrow leaves w/ soft **hair**.

Pappus a **papery starburst**, brighter and bigger than other Silver Puffs.

Small head (½").

Many **yellow rays**.

~8 phyllaries >> rays

Phyllaries green, narrow, pointed.



Basal leaves medium (4-6").

Narrow, pointing up.

Soft hairy.



Papery starburst.

Bigger scales than others.

5 papery scales, each notched and tipped with a bristle.



Salsify

Tragopogon porrifolius
CA not native

1-3' tall; erect.

Big, purple head nestled in **long green phyllaries**.

Not Hairy.

Pappus a **fluffy sphere**, **bigger** than other dandelions (3").

Big head (2").

Purple rays (~50).

Bulge at bottom.

~8 phyllaries >> rays

Phyllaries green, narrow, pointed.



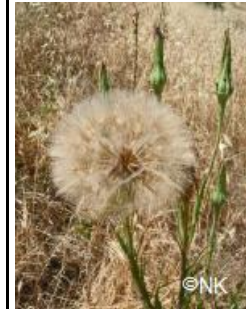
No basal leaves.

Stem leaves long (8"), grass-like, clasping stem.



Very big fluffy sphere (3").

~50 long beaks (1"), each tipped with **dozens of plumose bristles**.



Distribution Maps

Maps courtesy of iNaturalist.org



California Dandelion



Annual Agoseris



Skeleton Weed



Chicory



Hawksbeard



Crete Weed



Bristly Ox-Tongue



White Hawkweed



Smooth Cat's Ear



Rough Cat's Ear



Willow Lettuce



Prickly Lettuce



Douglas' Microseris



California Chicory



Prickly Sow Thistle



Common Sow Thistle



Grassland Silverpuffs



Tall Stephanomeria



Common Dandelion



Salsify



Silverpuffs



Prickly Goldenfleece

Terms Used in the Key

> - greater than

>> - much greater than

Bare stem (scapose) – Flower stalks are separate from the rest of the plant. The stalks have no leaves or branch and arise from near the ground. These plants have only basal leaves.

Basal leaves emerge from the root area at the base of the plant, as opposed to stem leaves. A **rosette** is basal leaves forming a circle (pointing in all directions), running along the ground. Other basal leaves point upward from the ground – a useful distinction when identifying a plant.

Beak – a narrow neck that grows at the top of a pollinated fruit. The beak extends the reach of the **pappus**, making a bigger parachute to catch the wind.

Bristle – a hair-like growth. Pappus is often made up of many bristles.

Flower Head – All asters, including dandelions, have their florets arranged in flower heads. When you look at what looks like a many-petaled dandelion flower, you're actually looking at a collection of many florets, each pointing outward, gathered into a flower head.

Fruit – When an **ovary** is fertilized by a pollen grain, it starts to grow as a fruit. The fruit changes in shape and grows a skin around a single seed. In some cases, the fruit grows a narrow **beak** at its outer tip.

Hairy is used when a plant is obviously hairy, either on the stem, leaves or flower head. If a species varies in hairiness, hairiness isn't mentioned.

Hybridize – In general, plants reproduce sexually with members of their own species. However, some plants are also able to hybridize - reproducing with members of one or a few other species. If the resulting hybrids are fertile, they form a new species. *Stebbinsoseris* and some *Microseris* dandelions are hybrid species.

Leafy/branched stem – Flower heads don't have separate ground-based stalks but are connected to the main plant stem.

Linear – a shape that's very narrow, compared to its length, like a line.

Lobe – a protruding shape at the side of a leaf. The lobes in this picture are **pinnate**, typical of dandelion leaves, with a series of lobes on both sides of the central leaf vein.



Bigflower Dandelion

Med – abbreviation for medium.

Narrow & Ovalish – Narrow leaves are generally more than 10 times as long as they are wide, ignoring any side lobes. Ovalish leaves are the traditional dandelion shape, often with lobes or teeth along the margins.

Ovary – Located at the base of a floret, the ovary contains female genetic material. The ovary is pollinated if a grain of pollen reaches it. The genetic material of the pollen and ovary combine to create a new individual, which starts growing as a fruit.

Pappus - [bristles](#) and [scales](#) at the top of a fruit/seed that will catch the wind and carry it to a new location. The key refers to overall pappus looks. Here are links that describe them:

- [Fluffy Sphere](#)
- [Dense Sphere](#)
- [Brush Shape](#)
- [Papery Starburst](#)

Persistent – a part that stays on the plant a long time, such as persistent phyllaries or leaves that stay on the plant when it goes to seed.

Phyllaries – green bracts that surround the base of an aster flower head. They often form 2 or more layers, with the inner phyllaries longer. Each bract is called a phyllary.

Prostrate – lying along the ground.

Ray – a single floret of a dandelion, consisting of 5 fused petals (a ligule) and reproductive parts, connected to the flower head base.

Scale – a scale is flat. In pappus, scales have a narrow triangular shape, are often white, and have a papery texture. Generally, 5 scales will attach to the end of a fruit, each with a bristle coming out of its other end.

Scapose – describes a leafless flower stalk that arises from near the base of the plant.

Stamen Columns – 5 fused stamens form a column rising from the ovary. Inside, a pistil grows and becomes receptive to receive pollen after this plant's pollen is dispersed.

Waif – Individual plants, unlikely to permanently naturalize in the wild.

Wiry – smooth, stiff and slender – the look of a Wirelettuce stem.

Notes on This Key

Thanks to the [many artists and photographers](#) that have contributed images to this key. Cover paintings and pictures are by John Muir Laws, Keir Morse, Wilde Legard and Zoya Akulova-Barlow.

This is intended to be a complete list of members of the Dandelion Tribe found at Edgewood Preserve.

Nature almost never completely cooperates with the lines we draw in keys. My first criteria – bare stems vs. leafy – runs into trouble with Silver Puffs, *Uropappus lindleyi*, which sometimes shows leaves on the stem and sometimes doesn't. I put it in both sections.

If you see any stem leaves at all, even just scales, or there are stem branches, look for your plant in the Leafy/Branched stem section.

I've designed this key to show you the best ways to distinguish these plants in the field:

- It displays well on a phone or tablet (assuming you're wearing glasses). You can also print it out.
- The ID characters I present are easily observed and the most useful I've found for distinguishing between similar plants.

If you know of a good ID character I've left out, please write me at bruce@plantid.net. I'll republish the key with your improvement.

Although an internet connection is not required, if you're lucky enough to have one, you can learn much more about each plant by linking to its [PlantID.net](#) page.

Have fun with this! Please let me know how it works for you.