



## Bitter Root

*Lewisia rediviva*

Purslane Family, *Portulacaceae*



Consider yourself lucky when you come across this very low growing perennial. It grows in rocky areas, on loose gravelly slopes, and sometimes serpentine. The flowers are large, 5-8 cm, 1-3 in, across, with 10-19 pink or white petals. The reddish green leaves are linear, low to the ground and nearly hidden when the flower is in bloom. The leaves die back soon after the plant flowers.



In August, 1805, Captain Lewis, of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, first tasted Bitter Root, which he found "naucious to my pallate." On the return trip through Bitter-root Valley, Montana, in July, 1806, he collected a sample. Frederick Pursh (1774-1820) classified the plant and named it for Captain Lewis.

Native Americans used this extremely nutritious root as a diet staple.

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3-10 cm, 1-4 in