

Native Plant List

Most of the plants listed are perennials. Forbs are herbaceous perennials. Shrubs are woody, usually less than 20 feet tall with multiple trunks. Trees are taller and usually do not form thickets. Wildlife value includes any special features of the plant which supply food or improve the habitat for birds, mammals, and beneficial insects such as parasitoids, predators and butterflies.

Zones

- zone 1 upland areas, prairie, dry, sun or woodland, shade
- zone 2 wet meadow, wet soil
- zone 3 emergent, lake margin, shallow water
- zone 4 submerged or floating leaf, aquatic

Light requirements (Sun)

○ = full sun, ◐ = part shade, ● = shade

Growth form

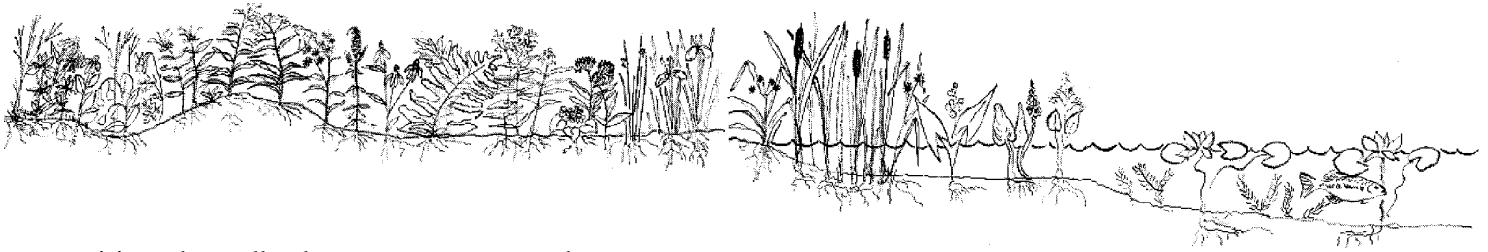
fern, forb (herbaceous perennial), grass, rush, sedge, shrub, tree

Easy to grow?

y = yes

Height

maximum height in feet



prairie and woodland

wet meadow

emergent

submerged or floating leaf

| Common name | Species name | Zone | Sun | Growth | Easy? | Height | Wildlife Values | Other |
|--------------------|--|------|--------|--------|-------|--------|-----------------------------|--|
| maidenhair fern | <i>Adiantum pedatum</i> | 1 | ● | fern | | 2 | | |
| ostrich fern | <i>Matteuccia pensylvanica</i> | 1 | ● | fern | | 5 | | |
| sensitive fern | <i>Onoclea sensibilis</i> | 1 | ◐ | fern | y | 3 | | |
| interrupted fern | <i>Osmunda claytoniana</i> | 1 | ◐ | fern | | 4 | | interesting leaves |
| yarrow | <i>Achillea millefolium</i> | 1 | ○ | forb | | 2 | butterfly | may be weedy, medicinal, small white flowers |
| anise hyssop | <i>Agastache foeniculum</i> | 1 | ○ to ◐ | forb | y | 3 | bee, butterfly | blue flowers, long-blooming, licorice-scented leaves |
| prairie onion | <i>Allium stellatum</i> | 1 | ○ | forb | | 2 | | white or pink flowers, slender leaves |
| lead plant | <i>Amorpha canescens</i> | 1 | ○ | forb | y | 3 | bee, butterfly | purple flowers during the buffalo mating season |
| thimbleweed | <i>Anemone cylindrica</i> | 1 | ○ to ◐ | forb | y | 2 | | white flowers in mid-spring |
| pasqueflower | <i>Anemone patens</i> (<i>Pulsatilla nuttalliana</i>) | 1 | ○ | forb | | 0.5 | bee | signal for spring celebrations among the Dakota, mature plants difficult to transplant |
| wild columbine | <i>Aquilegia canadensis</i> | 1 | ○ to ◐ | forb | | 2 | bee, butterfly, hummingbird | red and yellow flowers with long spurs, self-sows |
| Canada wild ginger | <i>Asarum canadense</i> | 1 | ◐ to ● | forb | y | 0.5 | | ground cover, roots taste like ginger, strange brownish-red flowers |
| butterfly milkweed | <i>Asclepias tuberosa</i> | 1 | ○ to ◐ | forb | | 3 | butterfly | bright orange flowers, roots once used medicinally |
| heath aster | <i>Aster ericoides</i> | 1 | ○ | forb | | 2 | bee, butterfly | small white flowers in late fall, heather-like leaves |
| calico aster | <i>Aster lateriflorus</i> | 1 | ◐ to ● | forb | | 4 | | blossoms once used to treat insanity |
| New England aster | <i>Aster novae-angliae</i> | 1 | ○ to ◐ | forb | | 4 | | spreads rapidly, purple flowers in late summer, cut flower |
| sky-blue aster | <i>Aster oolentangiensis</i> | 1 | ○ to ◐ | forb | | 2.5 | bee, butterfly | blue flowers in early fall |

| Common name | Species name | Zone | Sun | Growth | Easy? | Height | Wildlife Values | Other |
|----------------------------|---|------|--------|--------|-------|--------|----------------------------------|---|
| silky aster | <i>Aster sericeus</i> | 1 | ○ | forb | | 1.5 | bee, butterfly | purple flowers, silky gray-green leaves, once used to treat arthritis |
| blue false indigo | <i>Baptisia australis</i> | 1 | ○ to ► | forb | | 3 | bee | blue flowers |
| golden asters | <i>Chrysopsis villosa</i> (<i>Heterotheca villosa</i>) | 1 | ○ | forb | | 2 | | yellow aster-like flowers |
| coreopsis | <i>Coreopsis palmata</i> | 1 | ○ | forb | | 3 | | yellow flowers, short-lived but self-sows |
| white prairie clover | <i>Dalea candida</i> (<i>Petalostemum candidum</i>) | 1 | ○ | forb | | 3 | butterfly | |
| purple prairie clover | <i>Dalea purpurea</i> (<i>Petalostemum purpureum</i>) | 1 | ○ | forb | | 3 | terrific bee and butterfly plant | little purple flowers with orange pollen, leaves fragrant when crushed |
| showy tick-trefoil | <i>Desmodium canadense</i> | 1 | ○ to ► | forb | y | 5 | | pink flowers |
| dutchman's breeches | <i>Dicentra cucullaria</i> | 1 | ► | forb | | 0.5 | | leaves die back in summer |
| shooting star | <i>Dodecatheon media</i> | 1 | ○ to ► | forb | | 1 | | early to bloom, slow to germinate, leaves die back in summer |
| purple coneflower | <i>Echinacea purpurea</i> | 1 | ○ to ► | forb | y | 4 | butterfly | root once used for toothache, now thought to stimulate immune system |
| boneset | <i>Eupatorium perfoliatum</i> | 1 | ○ to ► | forb | y | 3 | bee, butterfly | cut flower |
| queen-of-the-prairie | <i>Filipendula rubra</i> | 1 | ○ | forb | | 6 | | fluffy bright pink flowers, spreads rapidly, once used as a love potion |
| bottle gentian | <i>Gentiana andrewsii</i> | 1 | ○ | forb | | 2 | bumblebee | blue flowers, seeds are slow to germinate |
| wild geranium | <i>Geranium maculatum</i> | 1 | ► | forb | y | 2 | | pink flowers, spreads but is not invasive |
| prairie smoke | <i>Geum triflorum</i> | 1 | ○ | forb | y | 1 | | early red flowers followed by fluffy seedhead "smoke," groundcover |
| showy sunflower | <i>Helianthus laetiflorus</i> | 1 | ○ | forb | y | 4 | bee, butterfly, bird | self-sows, cut flower |
| ox-eye | <i>Heliopsis helianthoides</i> | 1 | ○ | forb | y | 3 | butterfly | yellow flowers, cut flower, long blooming season |
| round-headed bush clover | <i>Lespedeza capitata</i> | 1 | ○ | forb | | 4 | bee, seeds eaten by bird | |
| blazing star | <i>Liatris species</i> | 1 | ○ to ► | forb | | 4 | bee, butterfly, bird | pink spikes, cut flower, once fed to horses to make them run faster |
| Michigan lily | <i>Lilium michiganense</i> | 1 | ○ to ► | forb | | 4 | | orange flowers, bulbs are edible |
| wild lupine | <i>Lupinus perennis</i> | 1 | ○ | forb | | 2 | bee | showy blue flowers in spikes, early-bloomers, self-sows |
| Virginia bluebells | <i>Mertensia virginica</i> | 1 | ○ to ► | forb | y | 2 | | blue flowers, plants die back after blooming |
| wild bergamot; beebalm | <i>Monarda fistulosa</i> | 1 | ○ to ► | forb | y | 2 | bumblebee, butterfly | lavender flowers, leaves used to make tea, leaves tend to mildew |
| large-flowered beardtongue | <i>Penstemon grandiflorus</i> | 1 | ○ to ► | forb | | 2 | bumblebee, hummingbird | early showy pink flowers, will not tolerate competition |
| mayapple | <i>Podophyllum peltatum</i> | 1 | ► | forb | | 1 | | spreading ground cover, white flowers, edible fruits |
| Jacob's ladder | <i>Polemonium reptans</i> | 1 | ○ to ► | forb | y | 1 | | blue flowers |
| true Solomon's seal | <i>Polygonatum biflorum</i> | 1 | ► | forb | | 4 | | green flowers, blue berries, roots used medicinally |
| mountain mint | <i>Pycnanthemum virginianum</i> | 1 | ○ to ► | forb | | 1.5 | | fragrant when crushed, white flowers |
| gray-headed coneflower | <i>Ratibida pinnata</i> | 1 | ○ | forb | y | 3 | bee, butterfly | yellow flowers |
| black-eyed Susan | <i>Rudbeckia hirta</i> | 1 | ○ | forb | y | 2 | bee, butterfly | yellow flowers with black center |
| bloodroot | <i>Sanguinaria canadensis</i> | 1 | ● to ► | forb | | 1 | | white flowers are short-lived, groundcover, red dye from rhizomes |

| Common name | Species name | Zone | Sun | Growth | Easy? | Height | Wildlife Values | Other |
|-----------------------------|--|------|--------|------------------|-------|--------|---|---|
| compass plant | <i>Silphium laciniatum</i> | 1 | ○ | forb | | 6 | bee, butterfly, bird | yellow flowers, deeply cut leaves |
| cup-plant | <i>Silphium perfoliatum</i> | 1 | ○ to ◐ | forb | | 6 | bee, butterfly | shaggy yellow flowers, prairie moths bore into stems, roots used medicinally |
| false Solomon's seal | <i>Smilacina racemosa</i> | 1 | ◐ | forb | y | 3 | | white flowers followed by red berries |
| gray goldenrod | <i>Solidago nemoralis</i> | 1 | ○ to ◐ | forb | | 2 | bee, butterfly | yellow flowers in late summer, graceful form |
| showy goldenrod | <i>Solidago speciosa</i> | 1 | ○ to ◐ | forb | | 4 | bee, butterfly | yellow flowers in spikes |
| spiderwort | <i>Tradescantia ohiensis</i> | 1 | ○ to ◐ | forb | | 1 | | pink or purple flowers liquefy by noon, once used as a cure for spider bites |
| bellwort | <i>Uvularia grandiflora</i> | 1 | ◐ to ● | forb | y | 1 | | nodding yellow flowers in early spring, pioneers used early shoots for greens |
| blue vervain | <i>Verbena hastata</i> | 1 | ○ to ◐ | forb | | 4 | bee, butterfly | blue flowers in spikes |
| hoary vervain | <i>Verbena stricta</i> | 1 | ○ to ◐ | forb | y | 4 | cover | purple flowers in spikes, tolerant of disturbance |
| Culver's root | <i>Veronicastrum virginicum</i> | 1 | ○ to ◐ | forb | | 6 | bee, butterfly | white flowers in spikes, cut flower |
| common blue violet | <i>Viola papilionacea</i> | 1 | ○ to ◐ | forb | y | 0.5 | wild turkey eat the roots | groundcover, may be invasive |
| bird's-foot violet | <i>Viola pedata</i> | 1 | ○ | forb | | 0.5 | butterfly | purple flowers in early spring, not a good competitor, leaves are food for caterpillars |
| golden alexanders | <i>Zizia aurea</i> | 1 | ○ | forb | y | 2.5 | | yellow flowers in spring, glossy leaves |
| big bluestem | <i>Andropogon gerardii</i> | 1 | ○ | grass | y | 8 | cover, seeds | king of native grasses, red-brown in winter, leaves once applied to infected wounds |
| sideoats grama | <i>Bouteloua curtipendula</i> | 1 | ○ | grass | | 2 | cover, seeds | |
| switchgrass | <i>Panicum virgatum</i> | 1 | ○ | grass | | 5 | cover, seeds | golden or reddish in fall |
| little bluestem | <i>Schizachyrium scoparium/ Andropogon scoparius</i> | 1 | ○ | grass | | 3 | cover, seeds | reddish purple winter color |
| Indian grass | <i>Sorghastrum nutans</i> | 1 | ○ | grass | y | 6 | cover, seeds | |
| New Jersey tea | <i>Ceanothus americanus</i> | 1 | ○ to ◐ | shrub | | 3 | bee, butterfly | white flowers in June and July, leaves once used as tea |
| American hazelnut | <i>Corylus americana</i> | 1 | ○ | shrub | | 9 | nuts | |
| wild plum | <i>Prunus americana</i> | 1 | ○ to ◐ | shrub | y | 20 | bee, berries | fragrant white flowers, use fruit for jam |
| common chokecherry | <i>Prunus virginiana</i> | 1 | ○ to ● | shrub | y | 20 | berries | fragrant white flowers, use berries for jam |
| smooth sumac | <i>Rhus glabra</i> | 1 | ○ | shrub | y | 9 | | fall color, plant on steep slopes to prevent erosion |
| wild rose | <i>Rosa arkansana</i> | 1 | ○ | shrub | y | 3 | winter food for birds | pink flowers, red hips containing vitamin C, spreads by suckers |
| American elderberry | <i>Sambucus canadensis</i> | 1 | ○ to ◐ | shrub | y | 9 | berries | fragrant white flowers, use purple berries for jam or in muffins |
| American highbush cranberry | <i>Viburnum trilobum</i> | 1 | ○ to ◐ | shrub | | 12 | berries | white flowers, leaves turn red in fall, red berries persist through winter |
| climbing prairie rose | <i>Rosa setigera</i> | 1 | ○ | shrub or vine | | 6 | bee, butterfly winter food for birds | pink flowers, red hips |
| white oak | <i>Quercus alba</i> | 1 | ○ | tree | | 60 | acorns, nesting sites | best fall color of the oaks, plant acorns as soon as they fall |
| bur oak | <i>Quercus macrocarpa</i> | 1 | ○ | tree | | 60 | acorns, nesting sites | fine shape |
| red oak | <i>Quercus rubra</i> | 1 | ○ | tree | | 75 | acorns, nesting sites | susceptible to oak wilt |
| black locust | <i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i> | 1 | ○ | tree | | 60 | bee | fragrant white flowers |

| Common name | Species name | Zone | Sun | Growth | Easy? | Height | Wildlife Values | Other |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|------|--------|-------------|-------|--------|---|---|
| mountain ash | <i>Sorbus americanus</i> | 1 | ○ to ● | tree | | 30 | berries | white flowers, orange berries, the rowan tree of Celtic mythology |
| basswood | <i>Tilia americana</i> | 1 | ○ to ● | tree | y | 120 | | tiny green fragrant flowers, inner bark used to make rope |
| Jack-in-the-pulpit | <i>Arisaema triphyllum</i> | 1,2 | ○ to ● | forb | | 1.5 | | distinctive green flowers and red berries, tubers are edible but must be cooked |
| wild white indigo | <i>Baptisia alba (lactea)</i> | 1,2 | ○ to ● | forb | y | 2 | bee | white flowers on spikes, once used for blue dye |
| turtlehead | <i>Chelone glabra</i> | 1,2 | ○ to ● | forb | | 2 | bee, butterfly | white or pink flowers |
| Joe pye weed | <i>Eupatorium maculatum</i> | 1,2 | ○ to ● | forb | | 5 | bee, butterfly | fragrant fuzzy pink flowers, Joe Pye was a Native American herbalist |
| prairie cord grass | <i>Spartina pectinata</i> | 1,2 | ○ | grass | | 4 | cover, muskrat eat roots | burned as fuel during the "Long Winter" (Laura Ingalls Wilder) |
| bottlebrush sedge | <i>Carex comosa</i> | 2,3 | ○ | sedge | | 4 | cover | |
| red maple | <i>Acer rubrum</i> | 1,2 | ○ | tree | | 45 | nesting sites | red or yellow leaves in fall |
| blue flag | <i>Iris versicolor</i> | 2,3 | ○ | forb | | 3 | bee, butterfly, cover | blue or lavender flowers |
| swamp white oak | <i>Quercus bicolor</i> | 1,2 | ○ to ● | tree | | 60 | acorns | tolerates wet soils, acorns once eaten by Native Americans |
| jewelweed | <i>Impatiens capensis</i> | 2 | ● | annual forb | y | 4 | bee | orange flowers, seed pods pop open, juice relieves itching |
| crested fern | <i>Dryopteris cristata</i> | 2 | ● | fern | | 2 | butterfly, wild turkey eat the roots | |
| royal fern | <i>Osmunda regalis</i> | 2 | ○ to ● | fern | | 5 | | young fiddleheads are edible |
| marsh fern | <i>Thelypteris palustris</i> | 2 | ● | fern | | 2 | | |
| swamp milkweed | <i>Asclepias incarnata</i> | 2 | ○ to ● | forb | | 4 | bee, butterfly | rose to pink flowers, cut flower, edible flowers, roots used medicinally |
| scouring rush | <i>Equisetum hyemale</i> | 2 | ○ to ● | forb | | 3 | | best in sandy soils, a primitive plant from the age of dinosaurs |
| purple avens | <i>Geum rivale</i> | 2 | ○ | forb | | 1.5 | | |
| sneezeweed | <i>Helenium autumnale</i> | 2 | ○ | forb | | 4 | | cut flower |
| cardinal flower | <i>Lobelia cardinalis</i> | 2 | ○ to ● | forb | | 4 | butterfly, hummingbird | bright red flowers, roots used as love charm |
| great blue lobelia | <i>Lobelia syphillica</i> | 2 | ○ to ● | forb | | 3 | bee, butterfly | blue flowers in spikes, used medicinally |
| fringed loosestrife | <i>Lysimachia ciliata</i> | 2 | ○ | forb | y | 3 | bee, butterfly | small green flowers with cut leaves, roots may contain an anti-cancer drug |
| tall meadowrue | <i>Thalictrum dasycarpum</i> | 2 | ○ to ● | forb | y | 4 | | |
| prairie ironweed | <i>Vernonia fasciculata</i> | 2 | ○ | forb | y | 5 | bee, butterfly | pink flowers in late summer, cut flower |
| swamp saxifrage | <i>Saxifraga pensylvanica</i> | 2 | ○ | sedge | | 3 | | green flowers in spike |
| smooth alder | <i>Alnus rugosa</i> | 2 | ○ to ● | shrub | y | 25 | | |
| Saskatoon | <i>Amelanchier alnifolia</i> | 2 | ○ to ● | shrub | y | 20 | birds love the fruit | white flowers |
| meadowsweet | <i>Spirea alba</i> | 2 | ○ | shrub | | 6 | bee, butterfly | showy white flowers, cut flower |
| black ash | <i>Fraxinus nigra</i> | 2 | ○ to ● | tree | y | 75 | seeds | pleasant aroma |
| black spruce | <i>Picea mariana</i> | 2 | ○ | tree | y | 45 | dense cover for nesting bird | prefers acid soil |
| cottonwood | <i>Populus deltoides</i> | 2 | ○ | tree | y | 50 | | yellow in fall |
| black willow | <i>Salix nigra</i> | 2 | ○ to ● | tree | y | 60 | bee, butterfly | |
| northern white cedar | <i>Thuja occidentalis</i> | 2 | ○ | tree | y | 30 | dense cover for nesting birds, winter cover | |
| sweet flag | <i>Acorus calamus</i> | 2 | ○ | forb | | 6 | | rhizomes have sweet fragrance when cut or bruised |

| Common name | Species name | Zone | Sun | Growth | Easy? | Height | Wildlife Values | Other |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|------|--------|---------|-------|----------|---|---|
| marsh marigold | <i>Caltha palustris</i> | 2 | ○ | forb | | 1.5 | | shiny yellow flowers in May, foliage dies back in summer |
| spike rush | <i>Eleocharis species</i> | 2,3 | ○ | rush | | 1.5 | cover | |
| soft rush | <i>Juncus effusus</i> | 2,3 | ○ | rush | | 3.5 | cover, muskrat eat roots | |
| rice cutgrass | <i>Leersia oryzoides</i> | 2,3 | ○ | grass | | 3 | | |
| pickerelweed | <i>Pontederia cordata</i> | 2,3 | ○ | forb | y | 3 | | deep blue flowers in spikes |
| arrowhead | <i>Sagittaria latifolia</i> | 2,3 | ○ | forb | y | 3 | cover, food | |
| hard-stem bulrush | <i>Scirpus acutus</i> | 2,3 | ○ | rush | | 8 | cover, food | |
| Canada bluejoint grass | <i>Calamagrostis canadensis</i> | 2,3 | ○ | grass | | 4 | cover, food | stands up well in water |
| giant manna grass | <i>Glyceria grandis</i> | 2,3 | ○ | grass | | 5 | cover | |
| lake sedge | <i>Carex lacustris</i> | 2,3 | ○ | sedge | | 3 | cover, food | |
| tussock sedge | <i>Carex stricta</i> | 2,3 | ○ | sedge | | 2 | cover | forms hummocks |
| green bulrush | <i>Scirpus atrovirens</i> | 2,3 | ○ | rush | y | 4 | cover | |
| wool grass | <i>Scirpus cyperinus</i> | 2,3 | ○ | rush | | 5 | cover, food | fuzzy nutlets |
| river bulrush | <i>Scirpus fluviatilis</i> | 2,3 | ○ | rush | | 6 | cover, food for muskrat | |
| black chokeberry | <i>Aronia melanocarpa</i> | 2,3 | ○ | shrub | | 9 | berries | white flowers in June followed by black fruits, glossy leaves |
| buttonbush | <i>Cephananthus occidentalis</i> | 2,3 | ○ to ► | shrub | | 9 | butterfly | |
| red osier dogwood | <i>Cornus sericea (stolonifera)</i> | 2,3 | ○ to ► | shrub | y | 18 | berries | red stems add winter color, twigs used to make baskets |
| marsh cinquefoil | <i>Potentilla palustris</i> | 2,3 | ○ to ► | shrubby | | 1.5 | | red or purple flowers |
| pussy willow | <i>Salix discolor</i> | 2,3 | ○ to ► | shrub | | 20 | bee | fuzzy catkins are a sign of spring, cuttings can be rooted |
| water plantain | <i>Alisma plantago-aquatica</i> | 3 | ○ | forb | y | 2.5 | | |
| bur-reed | <i>Sparganium americanum</i> | 3 | ○ to ► | forb | | 5 | duck, muskrat | poor germination from seed |
| cattail | <i>Typha latifolia</i> | 3 | | forb | | | | |
| American lotus | <i>Nelumbo lutea</i> | 4 | ○ | forb | | floating | food | yellow flowers, need a rich muddy bottom, rhizomes and seeds were Native American foods |
| water celery | <i>Valisneria americana</i> | 4 | | forb | | | | |
| spatterdock | <i>Nuphar advena</i> | 4 | ○ | forb | | floating | food for muskrat, deer, beaver, moose and porcupine | cup-shaped yellow flowers, plant the rhizomes in mud, rhizomes are edible |
| white waterlily | <i>Nymphaea odorata</i> | 4 | ○ | forb | | floating | food | pure white fragrant flowers, plant rhizomes in fall in fertile mud |