



Using Native Plants in Landscaping

The benefits and beauty of going local



Why Choose Native Plants?

- ✓ Ecologically friendly
- ✓ Positive effect on your environment
- ✓ Beauty that naturally thrives

Using plants native to your area is a fantastic way to make your landscape a beautiful and ecologically friendly environment. Global warming, loss of species, and the disappearance of natural resources have outlined how important it is to be responsible citizens in the ecological community. Utilizing native plants in your landscape can have a positive and extremely effective impact on your own personal environment, and the region as a whole. They help preserve the natural ecosystem, and can help reverse the trend of species loss. They have the advantage of being adapted to local conditions, which allows them to thrive but prevents overpopulation. In fact, rarely do native plants become invasive. (Think about the time you'll save on weeding!)

Native plants are those that grew naturally in the area before humans introduced foreign or exotic species. They have adapted over thousands of years to the specific soil type, moisture content, and weather conditions of the area. Nebraska has a particularly harsh climate, and their heartiness ensures they can survive the bitter cold winters and blazing hot summers. Instead of dying off, they flourish in their best, native environment. Using plants that easily and naturally thrive in your particular area adds beauty to your space, and saves you valuable time and money.

Save Time and Money

- ✓ Easier and cheaper to maintain
- ✓ More resistant to pests and disease
- ✓ Save money on fertilizer, pest-control, irrigation

Because they're optimal for the local ecological system, native plants are easier and more cost-effective to maintain. Many help to enrich the soil, and reduce erosion and runoff. This cuts irrigation costs significantly, and even helps improve water and air quality. The roots grow deep into the soil, enriching it and making it ideal for sustenance. This reduces the amount of money spent on fertilization. Pest-control costs are reduced as well, as the plants are in their natural habitat and therefore more resistant to pests and disease. This leaves more freedom to enjoy your landscape, instead of spending valuable time and money on trying to make your plants adaptable to environmental conditions.

Responsible Beauty

- ✓ Reap the benefits of a balanced ecological system
- ✓ Help desirable wildlife thrive

Few things are more beautiful than a natural landscape. The use of native trees, grasses, and flowers not only saves money and improves the ecological system, it looks great. The plants are in their best environment, optimal for beauty and quality. They also provide shelter and food for desirable wildlife, adding another layer of natural beauty to your landscape. Your personal environment can be so much more than grass and a patio. It can be an entire ecological system where the flora and fauna work together seamlessly to provide you with a lovely, relaxing space.

**Enjoy the list of local plants we've provided, and talk to your landscape designer about bringing them into your design.

Native Nebraska Trees*

Common Name	Scientific Name	Ht.	Description
Silver Maple	<i>Acer saccharinum</i>	75-100'	Lace-like leaves with white bloom on the underside
Ohio Buckeye	<i>Aesculus glabra</i>	50-75'	Greenish-yellow flowers (spring); yellow to orange (fall)
Shagbark Hickory	<i>Carya ovata</i>	75-100'	Yellow to golden-brown fall color; squirrels eat nuts
Hackberry	<i>Celtis occidentalis</i>	60-100'	Mild yellow fall color; warty trunk is interesting in winter
Redbud	<i>Cercis canadensis</i>	15-30'	In April, clusters of rosy-pink flowers line branches, trunk
Downy Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus mollis</i>	35-50'	White spring flowers become red fruit; yellow fall color
White Ash	<i>Fraxinus americana</i>	75-120'	Yellow, maroon-purple fall color; butterfly larval plant
Green Ash	<i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i>	50-75'	Grows rapidly; yellow fall color
Kentucky Coffee Tree	<i>Gymnocladus dioica</i>	75-100'	Pinnate compound leaves; male, female separate plants
Black Walnut	<i>Juglans nigra</i>	99-125'	Edible nuts in fall; beautiful, wildlife-friendly tree
Eastern Red Cedar	<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>	30-80'	Good for screening; attracts birds
Prairie Crabapple	<i>Malus ioensis</i>	20-30'	Fragrant pink flowers become very tart fruit; suckering
Ironwood	<i>Ostrya virginiana</i>	30-50'	Cream-colored fruit looks like hops; yellow fall color
Sycamore	<i>Platanus occidentalis</i>	75-100'	Leaves drop all summer; mottled white bark
Eastern Cottonwood	<i>Populus deltoides</i>	100'	Modest fall color; can be messy
Wild Plum	<i>Prunus americana</i>	20-35'	White, fragrant flowers (spring); red, yellow fruit (sum.)
Black Cherry	<i>Prunus serotina</i>	50-60'	Messy tree; small edible berries in summer attract birds
White Oak	<i>Quercus alba</i>	80-100'	Brown, red, wine fall color; acorns eaten by wildlife
Bur Oak	<i>Quercus macrocarpa</i>	80-100'	Mild yellow-brown fall color
Red Oak	<i>Quercus rubra</i>	75-100'	Russet to bright red fall color; grows rapidly
Basswood	<i>Tilia americana</i>	60-125'	Wood for carving; nectar makes honey; birds like seeds

Native Nebraska Shrubs*

Common Name	Scientific Name	Ht.	Description
Downy Serviceberry	<i>Amelanchier arborea</i>	15-30'	Yellow, orange, red fall color; white flowers in April
Leadplant	<i>Amorpha canescens</i>	1-3'	Iridescent purple flowers on silvery foliage; fixes nitrogen
Fragrant False Indigo	<i>Amorpha nana</i>	1-3'	Dense tufts of fragrant purple flowers in late spring
New Jersey Tea	<i>Ceanothus americanus</i>	2-3'	Short spikes of tiny white flowers in June
Buttonbush	<i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i>	10-15'	Hanging golf ball-like clusters attract butterflies
Swamp Dogwood	<i>Cornus obliqua</i>	8-10'	Fruits different colors at different stages for pleasing effect
American Hazelnut	<i>Corylus americana</i>	6-12'	Edible yummy nuts; suckering
Sand Cherry	<i>Prunus besseyi</i>	4-6'	White spring flowers; tart edible cherries; purple fall color
Chokecherry	<i>Prunus virginiana</i>	30-50'	White flowers become barely edible fruit loved by birds
Smooth Sumac	<i>Rhus glabra</i>	10-20'	Velvety red fruit on female plants persist into winter
Buffalo Currant	<i>Ribes odoratum</i>	10-12'	Yellow flowers in spring emit clove scent; birds eat berries
Early Wild Rose	<i>Rosa blanda</i>	2-5'	2-3" pink to white flowers; practically thornless!
Illinois Rose	<i>Rosa setigera</i>	2-6'	Soft pink flowers with yellow centers bloom in July
Elderberry	<i>Sambucus canadensis</i>	10-12'	Showy white flowers (July); edible fruit in September
Silver Buffaloberry	<i>Shepherdia argentea</i>	6-20'	Silvery leaves; thorns; edible berries that birds like
Coralberry	<i>Symphoricarpos orbiculatus</i>	4-6'	Large purple-pink berries ripen in fall, persist thru Spring

Native Nebraska Flowering Perennials*

Common Name	Scientific Name	Ht.	Description
Red Baneberry	<i>Actea rubra</i>	1-2'	.5" puffy white flowers become red poisonous berries
Wild Garlic	<i>Allium canadense</i>	8-12"	Upright and topped with white or pink flowers
Prairie Onion	<i>Allium stellatum</i>	1-2'	Single cluster of lavender flowers on a single stalk
Canada Anemone	<i>Anemone canadensis</i>	1-2'	Green foliage with white flowers late spring-early summer
Columbine	<i>Aquilegia canadensis</i>	1-2'	Unique red, white flowers attract hummingbirds in spring
Jack-in-the-Pulpit	<i>Arisaema triphyllum</i>	1-2'	Spathe appears Mar-May; red berries late summer and fall
Swamp Milkweed	<i>Asclepias incarnata</i>	2-4'	Pink to white flowers in the spring
Butterfly Weed	<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	1-2'	Brilliant orange flowers attract butterflies June-August
Whorled Milkweed	<i>Asclepias verticillata</i>	1-3'	Fine textured foliage; white flower clusters; deer resistant
Heath Aster	<i>Aster ericoides</i>	1-3'	Profusion of tiny white flowers in fall
New England Aster	<i>Aster novi-angliae</i>	6'	Lavender flowers with yellow centers late summer into fall
Sky Blue Aster	<i>Aster oolentangiensis</i>	1-3'	Spreading branches with 1" blue flowers bloom sum-fall
Silky Aster	<i>Aster sericeus</i>	1-2'	Distinct curved pale pinkish-purple flowers, pointed petals
White False Indigo	<i>Baptisia alba</i>	2-5'	Spikes of creamy white flowers above sea-green foliage
Cream False Indigo	<i>Baptisia leucophaea</i>	1-3'	Cone-shaped cream colored flowers
Purple Poppy Mallow	<i>Callirhoe involucrata</i>	6-24"	Striking! Deep magenta flowers cover plant thru summer
American Bellflower	<i>Campanula americana</i>	3-4'	Spikes of 1" blue flowers on upright branching stems
Partridge Pea	<i>Chamaecrista fasciculata</i>	1-3'	1-1.5" flowers with 5 bright yellow petals bloom sum-fall
Prairie Larkspur	<i>Delphinium virescens</i>	1-4'	Interesting white flowers June-July
Tick-trefoil	<i>Desmodium canadense</i>	2-6'	Branches covered with pink-purple pea-like flowers (sum)
Shooting Star	<i>Dodecatheon meadia</i>	6-20"	White-pink petals shoot back from red and yellow center
N.L. Purp. Coneflower	<i>Echinacea angustifolia</i>	1.5-3'	Purple flowers with brown centers attract butterflies
Rattlesnake Master	<i>Eryngium yuccifolium</i>	4-6'	Yucca-like foliage; flowers in spherical thistle-like heads
Boneset	<i>Eupatorium perfoliatum</i>	3-6'	Flat-top clusters of small white flowers in the fall
Joe-Pye Weed	<i>Eupatorium purpureum</i>	2-6'	Large pink flowers attract butterflies in dorves (Aug-Sept)
Flowering Spurge	<i>Euphorbia corollata</i>	1-3'	Small white flowers with green, yellow centers (Jun-Sept)
Wild Strawberry	<i>Fragaria virginiana</i>	3-6"	Spring flowers become tasty fruit in early summer
Blanket Flower	<i>Gaillardia aristata</i>	2-4'	3-4" flowers are red with yellow accents at petal edges
Wild Geranium	<i>Geranium maculatum</i>	1-3'	1" lavender-purple flowers in spring and summer
Common Sneezeweed	<i>Helenium autumnale</i>	2-5'	Daisy-like flowers with red, yellow petals in late summer
Ox-eye Sunflower	<i>Heliopsis helianthoides</i>	3-4'	Clump forming; gold flowers (sum); birds, butterflies like
Virginia Waterleaf	<i>Hydrophyllum virginianum</i>	1'	White or dark violet blooms May-August
Great St. John's Wort	<i>Hypericum pyramidatum</i>	2-6'	Large bright flowers give contrast with dark green foliage
Blue Flag Iris	<i>Iris shrevei</i>	1-3'	Deep blue markings with yellow flowers June-July
R.H. Bush Clover	<i>Lespedeza capitata</i>	2-4'	Bronze seedheads attract and feed birds
Rough Blazing Star	<i>Liatris aspera</i>	1-4'	Pinkish-purple stalks of interesting flowers Aug-Sept.
Prairie Blazing Star	<i>Liatris pycnostachya</i>	2-5'	Rounded fluffy rose-purple flowerheads on long spikes
Turk's Cap Lily	<i>Lilium michiganese</i>	2-5'	Large flowers with yellow-orange spotted, curved petals
Great Blue Lobelia	<i>Lobelia siphilitica</i>	2-3'	Elongated clusters of pale-dark blue flowers late sum-fall
Wild Bergamot	<i>Monarda fistulosa</i>	2-5'	Intricate lavender flowers attract butterflies July-Sept.
Evening Primrose	<i>Oenothera biennis</i>	2-4'	Lemon-scented yellow flowers open at dusk, close by noon
Beardtongue	<i>Penstemon digitalis</i>	2-5'	Long-blooming pure white flowers June into midsummer
Large-flo. Penstemon	<i>Penstemon grandiflorus</i>	2-3'	Resembles lavender foxglove; attracts hummingbirds

White Prairie Clover	<i>Petalostemum candidum</i>	1-2'	Dense white 1-3" cylindrical flower spikes on 1-3' stalks
Purple Prairie Clover	<i>purpureum</i>	1-2'	Dense bright purple cylindrical flower spikes on 1-3' stalks
Blue Phlox	<i>Phlox divartica</i>	1-2.5'	Covered with 1.5" rosy lavender to pink flowers in spring
Prairie Phlox	<i>Phlox polosa</i>	1-2'	Bright pink spring flowers make strong visual impact
Obedient Plant	<i>Physostegia virginiana</i>	2-4'	Resembles pink foxglove; flowers can be moved, stay put
Solomon's Seal	<i>Polygonatum biflorum</i>	1-5'	.5" bell-shaped greenish-white flowers hang from leaf axils
Mountain Mint	<i>Pycnanthemum virginianum</i>	2-3'	Mint aroma; clusters of white flowers attract butterflies
Prairie Coneflower	<i>Ratibida columnifera</i>	1.5-3'	Black cone-shaped head, drooping red or yellow petals
Black-eyed Susan	<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	1-2'	2-4" flower heads with 10-20 bright yellow petals, sum-fall
Blue Sage	<i>Salvia pitcheri</i>	2-4'	Tall, lanky; blooms in fall; butterflies, hummingbirds like
Rosinweed	<i>Silphium integrifolium</i>	2-6'	Bright, yellow daisy-like flowers in late summer
Compass Plant	<i>Silphium laciniatum</i>	3-12'	Sunflower-like flowers; basal leaves orient North-South
Cup Plant	<i>Silphium perfoliatum</i>	3-6'	Sunflower-like flowers; pairs of cup-forming leaves
White-eyed Grass	<i>Sisyrinchium campestre</i>	8-15"	Iris-like foliage topped with delightful 5" light blue flowers
Gray Goldenrod	<i>Solidago nemoralis</i>	6-20"	Arching stalks of golden yellow flowers bloom in fall
Stiff Goldenrod	<i>Solidago rigida</i>	1-5'	Bright yellow flat-topped flowers loved by birds, butterflies
Showy Goldenrod	<i>Solidago speciosa</i>	1-5'	Foot-long wands of blazing yellow in early autumn
Tall Meadow Rue	<i>Thalictrum dasycarpum</i>	3-5'	Branched sprays of tiny purplish-white flowers (May-July)
Blue Verbena	<i>Verbena gastata</i>	2-5'	Small blue flowers crowded into terminal spikes (Jun-Oct)
Ironweed	<i>Vernonia fasciculata</i>	2-5'	Blast of crimson color in fall; plant has good posture
Common Blue Violet	<i>Viola papilionacea</i>	4-8"	Excellent groundcover with purple flowers in the spring
Golden Alexanders	<i>Zizia aurea</i>	1-3'	Bright yellow color can brighten up a shady spot

Native Nebraska Grasses*

Common Name	Scientific Name	Ht.	Description
Western Wheatgrass	<i>Agropyron smithii</i>	1-2.5'	Stiff bluish prominently ribbed blades
Big Bluestem	<i>Andropogon gerardii</i>	3-8'	Lower stems are purplish or bluish; stems are .5" wide
Sand Bluestem	<i>Andropogon hallii</i>	3-5'	Hairy seedheads on tall stalks; blades 8-12" long, .25" wide
Sideoats Grama	<i>Bouteloua curtipendula</i>	1-3'	Bluish-green, sometimes with purplish cast
Blue Grama	<i>Bouteloua gracilis</i>	1'	Fine textured grass with light green color
Buffalo Grass	<i>Buckloe dactyloides</i>	3-12"	Native turfgrass; soft blue-green color
Bluejoint Grass	<i>Calamagrostis canadensis</i>	3-5'	Thin stems covered with thin, flat leaves
Awl-fruited Sedge	<i>Carex stipata</i>	2-3'	Provides wildlife food, cover in wet meadows, woods
Canada Wild Rye	<i>Elymus canadensis</i>	2-4'	Also called nodding rye; flowers resemble wheat July-Aug
Bottlebrush Grass	<i>Hystrix patula</i>	3'	Exquisite seedheads resemble bottlebrush June-Aug
June Grass	<i>Koeleria macrantha</i>	1-2'	Eye-catching upright chartreuse summer flower spikes
Switch Grass	<i>Panicum virgatum</i>	3-6'	Bluish cast in summer; reddish fall color
Little Bluestem	<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	1-3'	Bright green-light blue leaves turn copper-orange, red
Indian Grass	<i>Sorghastrum nutans</i>	3-8'	Foliage varies from drooping, green to upright, blue
Prairie Cordgrass	<i>Spartina pectinata</i>	5-6'	Aquatic; graceful; weeping form; gold in autumn; spreads
N. Prairie Dropseed	<i>Sporobolus heterolepis</i>	2'	Seeds smell like buttered popcorn
Porcupine Grass	<i>Stipa spartea</i>	2-4'	Golden horizontal banding on leaves; golden in fall
Cattail	<i>Typhya latifolia</i>	4-8'	Strong vertical foliage with a fuzzy brown catkin

* Native plants listed may also be considered "nearly native".

Sources

All plants listed were sourced at [plantnative.org](http://www.plantnative.org). For more information, visit them at <http://www.plantnative.org/rpl-neks.htm>.

Resources

Other great resources exist for Nebraska native and nearly native plants at the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum and the Nebraska Extension Offices.

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