

Suggested Cheyenne Native Plant List

Written by Master Gardener, Nancy Loomis September, 11, 2022

Forbs (blooming plants)

1. **Iris missouriensis** (Blue Flag or Rocky Mountain Iris). Spring bloomer. This plant grows in areas that are moist in the spring but typically dry out by summer. Successful locations for growing this plant would be drainages, near building downspouts, detention ponds or infiltration basins (rain gardens) around the water inlets. This plant has rhizomatous roots which slowly spread creating a larger plant patch. Fairly easy to find through commercial nurseries.
2. **Antennaria parvifolia** (Small-leaf Pussytoes). Late spring/early summer bloomer. This tolerates dry conditions. It is a low ground cover which can spread to create fairly large patches. In drought conditions the grey/blue leaves with curl shut. The leaves will uncurl when moisture increases. Withstands drought conditions but thrives in seasons of a little extra moisture or in an area where there is a little bit of run-off such as near small hardscape areas such as sidewalks, ornamental rocks etc. Available through specialized nurseries such as High Plains Environmental Center out of Loveland CO. or Piney Island Nursery in Sheridan. Occasionally commercial nurseries will also have it.
3. **Tradescantia occidentalis** (Western Spiderwort) Late spring early summer bloomer. This plant has leaves similar to day lilies with a striking 3-petal blue flower. This plant likes dryer conditions, however, if it gets too hot and dry the plant will go dormant and leaves will reappear when moisture levels improve. Fairly easy to find through commercial nurseries.
4. **Campanula rotundifolia** (Harebells) This is the native Campanula species and should not be confused with Campanula rapunculoides (Creeping Bellflower) which is a problem plant. The native plant only spreads through seed and is not aggressive. This plant will start blooming in late spring and can bloom through late summer/early fall in the right conditions. It prefers dryer conditions. Fairly easy to find through commercial nurseries.
5. **Oenothera caespitosa** (Fragrant Evening Primrose). This plant grows low to the ground and produces a large white flower. Prefers dry conditions and spreads through seed but not aggressively. This plant is available through specialty nurseries such as High Plains Environmental Center in Loveland and High Country Gardens out of New Mexico. Sometimes the *Oenothera caespitosa* var. *marginata* can be found in Colorado nurseries but *marginata*'s native range is found in the southern part of the eco-region and not in Laramie County. *Marginata* behaves like a bi-annual in Laramie County. **Oenothera biennis** (Evening Primrose) This plant blooms in the summer (yellow flower) and is a tall plant that is spread by seed. It tolerates dry conditions which keep it in check but it spreads into areas that receive a little bit of extra moisture from hardscape run-off and may become weedy.
6. **Asclepius speciosa** (Showy Milkweed). This plant blooms in the summer and has rhizomatous roots. If conditions are right it will create a large plant patch. This plant prefers a little bit extra moisture that can come from run-off from hardscape such as sidewalk etc. Because of its rhizomatous nature this plant is not often found in commercial nurseries but is found in specialty nurseries and easy to grow from seed. It is prevalent in Cheyenne and will "just show up" if the conditions are right. **Asclepias incarnata** (Marsh Milkweed). This plant requires more water especially during its bloom time. This plant is good in drainages that receive significant amounts of run-off such as detention ponds or bioswales.
7. **Yucca glauca** (Plains Yucca) This plant likes it dry and is rhizomatous allowing it to create small plant colonies if the conditions are right. Available commercially.
8. **Callirhoe involucrata** (Prairie Winecup) This plant is a branching ground cover that dies back to the crown in winter. Purple/pink flowers bloom throughout the summer. Available commercially. Prefers dry conditions.

9. **Dalea candida** (White Prairie Clover) and **Dalea purpurea** (Purple Prairie Clover) Both of these plants are mid-late summer bloomers. Both plants prefer dry conditions but will thrive with a little bit of extra moisture i.e. runoff from hardscape such as curbing or sidewalks. Both plants are commercially available. *Dalea candida* is much more prevalent in natural areas around Laramie County and I have had much better luck with this plant rather than *Dalea purpurea*.
10. **Amorpha canescens** (Leadplant). This plant blooms in the summer and is considered a sub-shrub. It creates woody stems but often times dies back to the crown in winter, particularly if the winter is severe. It is a great substitute for Butterfly Bush. Commercially available.
11. **Achillea millefolium** (Western Yarrow). This plant has white flowers in the summer. Tolerates dryer conditions but thrives with a little extra moisture such as runoff from curbing or sidewalk. It's a plant that tolerates drought conditions and dry land conditions will keep it in check but if it is adjacent to areas that receive extra moisture such as turf grass or manicured gardens Western Yarrow will spread into that area and can be perceived as a weedy species in those conditions. This is a plant that tolerates mowing and weed whacking. Commercially available.
12. **Verbena stricta** (Hoary Vervain). This plant blooms in summer and prefers dryer conditions. **Verbena hastata** (Blue Vervain) blooms in the summer but prefers moister conditions such as those found near a downspout or in the bottom of a detention pond or rain garden. Both of these plants are found commercially.
13. **Solidago rigida** (Stiff Goldenrod). This plant blooms in late summer to early fall. Unlike most Goldenrod this plant spreads only by seed. It has a deep tap root so it tolerates very dry conditions but it is also adapted to moister conditions. It will seed into areas where there is supplemental irrigation and may become weedy if it is planted near areas of turf grass etc. Commercially available.
14. **Artemisia frigida** (Fringed Sage). This plant spreads through seed. It likes dry conditions and will tolerate a little bit of extra water I.e. runoff from hardscape such as sidewalk but it does not tolerate consistent supplemental irrigation well. This is a plant that tolerates mowing and weed whacking. Commercially available.
15. **Monarda fistulosa** (Bee Balm). This plant is in the mint family so it spreads rhizomatous and can be aggressive in the right conditions. It prefers a little more moisture and so it would be good near a downspout or near an inlet to a detention basin or rain garden. It can develop powdery mildew so it doesn't good to have the plants near sprinklers. Commercially available.
16. **Artemisia ludoviciana** (Silver Wormwood) Blooms late summer but the flowers are not significant. It's known for the foliage and can get 2 to 3' tall and is rhizomatous. Water requirement is very low. Cultivars are commercially available. Species plant is found in specialty nurseries such as High Plains Environmental Center.
17. **Liatris punctata** (Dotted Blazingstar) is a native *liatris* that has a low water requirement and is very drought tolerant. It is found commercially. **Liatris ligulistylis** (Blazing Star) is a native *liatris* that likes more water and is a good plant for drainages that will receive run-off from a large roof, parking lot etc. Can be found in specialty nurseries such as High Plains Environmental Center or Prairie Moon Nursery.
18. **Erigeron compositus** (Cut-leaf Fleabane) and **Erigeron speciosus** (Alpine Fleabane) Both of these plants are found in western Laramie County, but they do well in Cheyenne. Cut-leaf Fleabane is a very small plant with white daisy like flowers blooming late spring to early summer and Alpine Fleabane is a larger plant with purple/blue flowers blooming in early to mid-summer. Both plants have low water requirements. Both plants are commercially available.
19. **Gaillardia aristata** (Native Blanket Flower). Blooms mid-summer with daisy-like flowers in yellow or bicolor yellow w/bronze. Low water requirement. Commercially available as plants, bulk and small batch seed.
20. **Geranium viscosissimum** (Sticky Geranium). This plant is found natively in west Laramie County. It has a low water requirement but tends to do better with a little extra run-off from hardscape such as sidewalk etc. Commercially available.

21. **Eriogonum umbellatum** (Sulphur Flower) Blooms in early to mid-summer. It has a very low water requirement and is drought tolerant. It tolerates some extra run-off from hardscape such as a sidewalk but supplemental irrigation will kill this plant. Commercially available
22. **Helianthus maximiliani** (Maximillian Sunflower) This is a native perennial sunflower that gets quite tall. It enjoys having more water so it's good in a drainage area like a detention pond or infiltration basin that receives run-off from a large hardscape area such as a parking lot. Another native perennial sunflower that likes wetter conditions is **Helianthus nutallii** (Nutall's Sunflower). Maximillian can be found commercially. Nutall's can be found in Specialty Nurseries. **Helianthus pumilis** (Little Sunflower) is also a native perennial sunflower but it likes very dry conditions. Little Flower Sunflower can be found in the Specialty nurseries.
23. **Linum lewisii** (Wild Blue Flax). Blooms in late spring to early summer. Low water requirement. Can tolerate a little bit of extra run-off from hardscape such as a sidewalk but will not tolerate regular supplemental irrigation. Plants, bulk and small batch seed are commercially available.
24. **Lupinus argenteus** (Silvery Lupine), Its native range is typically in west Laramie County but has adapted to the Cheyenne area. Blooms in summer. Low water requirement. Thrives with a little bit of extra run-off from hardscape such as sidewalk or a natural low lying area in the landscape. Doesn't tolerate heavy amounts of run-off. Commercially available. **Lupinus plattensis** (Nebraska Lupine) is found growing natively around Cheyenne. This plant occasionally can be found in specialty nurseries. It has low water requirements.
25. **Machaeranthera tanacetifolia** (Tahoka Daisy). This is a self-seeding annual that produces blue/purple daisy like flowers throughout the summer. It's a great cover-plant for a newly seeded area. Plants are available through specialty nurseries. Bulk and small batch seed are available through seed companies.
26. **Potentilla hippiana** (Wooly Cinquefoil). This plant blooms in summer and has a low water requirement. It thrives with a little bit of extra run-off from hardscape like a sidewalk. Commercially available.
27. **Ratibida columnifera** (Prairie Coneflower). It can have either yellow or burgundy/bronze flowers. Sometimes the flowers are bi-colored. Blooms early through late summer. Requires very little water but it will spread into an area that receives supplemental irrigation. The only environmental conditions it can't tolerate is heavy shade or an area with standing water (wet feet). Because of its ability to thrive in a large number of environmental conditions some people view it as weedy. Plants and bulk and small batch seeds are available commercially.
28. **Argemone polyanthemus** (Plains Prickly Poppy). Blooms in summer. Requires little water and prefers dry conditions. Available through specialty nurseries.
29. **Erigeron vetensis** (Early Blue Top Fleabane)- Blooms early summer and prefers a little bit more water such as run-off from hardscape such as sidewalk or near a building downspout. This plant can create a large mat which could be used as a ground cover. Available through specialty nurseries.
30. **Erysimum capitatum** (Western Wallflower) Biennial native producing a yellow/orange flower in late spring. Requires little water but will thrive with a little extra water run-off from hardscape such as sidewalk. Plants and small batch seeds are available through specialty nurseries.
31. **Lobelia siphilitica** (Great Blue Lobelia) This plant blooms in late summer and prefers moist to wet conditions and tolerates wet feet. This plant is great in a drainage area that has a hard time draining water completely I.e., near a swale inlet, low lying area close to groundwater etc. Plants and small batch seed can be purchased through specialty nurseries.
32. **Senecio spartioides** (Broom Groundsel). Blooms in late summer with small yellow daisy-like flowers. Extremely drought tolerant and requires little water. The plant has a vase type shape in dry conditions. If the plant receives extra water from run-off the plant will develop a rounded shape and can become quite large approx. 2' tall x 3' wide. It can spread by seed into irrigated areas. Dry conditions are what keep this plant in check. Available through specialty nurseries.

- 33. *Penstemon angustifolia*** (Narrow-leaf Penstemon). This native penstemon blooms in late spring to early summer and has beautiful blue flowers. This penstemon is native to the short grass prairie and is excellent with short grass prairie grasses. Available through specialty nurseries.
- 34. *Oenothera serrulata*** (Prairie Sundrops). This plant blooms in summer with yellow flowers. Water requirements are low and it is drought tolerant. Commercially available.
- 35. *Stanleya pinnata*** (Prince's Plume). This is a hit-or-miss native plant. If it finds itself in an ideal conditions it will produce stunning upright spears of yellow flower stalks that have a very long bloom time. (mid-spring through summer). In less than an ideal conditions the flower stalks tend to flop over. It prefers dry conditions and soils that are high in selenium. The plant is available sporadically in the commercial nursery trade.
- 36. *Mentzelia decapetala*** (Ten Petal Blazing Star). This plant is a biennial that blooms in summer with very showy white flowers. The flowers are fragrant and open at night and attract hawk moths. This plant has a low water requirement but thrives with a little extra run-off from a hardscape like a sidewalk. This plant is available through specialty nurseries.

Grasses

The grasses in this list are mainly bunch grasses but a few are rhizomatous.

Short grasses:

- 37. *Buchloe dactyloides*** (Buffalo Grass). This grass is rhizomatous and can be used as a turf grass in low traffic areas in full sun. This grass has low water requirements. This grass will tolerate some mowing. This grass is available in plugs, plants, bulk seed and small batch seed commercially.
- 38. *Schizachyrium scoparium*** (Little Bluestem). This bunch grass has low water requirements and will tolerate only a minimal amount of supplemental irrigation or run-off from hardscape. This grass is available in plants, bulk seed and small batch seed commercially.
- 39. *Bouteloua gracilis*** (Blue Grama). This bunch grass has low water requirements and will tolerate only a minimal amount of supplemental irrigation or run-off from hardscape. This grass is available in plants, bulk seed and small batch seed commercially.
- 40. *Bouteloua curtipendula*** (Sideoats Grama) This bunch grass has low water requirements and will tolerate only a minimal amount of supplemental irrigation or run-off from hardscape. This grass is available in plants, bulk seed and small batch seed commercially
- 41. *Achnatherum hymenoides*** (Indian Ricegrass) This bunch grass has low water requirements and will tolerate only a minimal amount of supplemental irrigation or run-off from hardscape. This grass is available in plants, bulk seed and small batch seed commercially

Tall grasses:

- 42. *Andropogon gerardii*** (Big Blue Stem Grass). This grass is rhizomatous and can create a large clump in ideal conditions. This grass prefers extra water and is good in a drainage areas or in the bottom of detention ponds or infiltration basins (rain gardens). This grass is available in plants, bulk seed and small batch seed commercially.
- 43. *Distichlis spicata*** (Inland Salt Grass). This grass is rhizomatous and prefers extra water. This grass tolerates saline conditions and would be good grass in drainages that receive run-off from roadways or parking lots that utilize salt as a de-icing agent in winter. This grass is available in plants and bulk seed commercially
- 44. *Panicum virgatum*** (Switchgrass), This grass prefers extra water and so it is good in a drainage area that receive extra run-off from a large amount of hardscape such as a detention pond or bioswale. This grass is available in plants commercially.

45. *Leymus cinereus* (Great Basin Wild Rye). This grass prefers extra water and so it is good in a drainage area that receives extra run-off from a large amount of hardscape such as a detention pond or bioswale. It could possibly be used as a substitute for the very popular cultivar Karl Forester Grass that is utilized in most commercial landscaping in Cheyenne. Great Basin Wild Rye is available in plants commercially.

Shrubs:

There is only a minimal amount of shrubs on this list. Many shrubs native to this area have aggressive rhizomatous root systems that allows them to create a “thicket” in natural conditions. This is a survival mechanism for many of our native shrubs but this tendency makes them difficult to control in an urban/suburban setting and so I did not include them in this list.

46. *Ericameria nauseosa* (Rubber Rabbitbrush). This shrub tolerates dry conditions and is drought tolerant. However, it is also found in nature in drainage areas as well. It can and will seed into areas that receive supplemental irrigation such as turf areas. It can be managed in a turf area through mowing but some people may perceive this shrub as weedy. This shrub is available as plants, bulk seed and small batch seed commercially.

47. *Krascheninnikovia lanata* (Winterfat). This is a small shrub that thrives in dry conditions and is drought tolerant. It will tolerate some supplemental irrigation or run-off from small hardscape areas such as sidewalks. This shrub is available in plants and bulk seed commercially.

48. *Amorpha fruticosa* (False indigo bush). This shrub prefers wetter conditions and is a good shrub to add to drainage areas that receive significant amount of run-off from larger hardscape. It would be a good shrub in a detention pond or infiltration basin. This shrub is available commercially.

49. *Amorpha canescens* (Leadplant) See #11

50. *Atriplex canescens* (Fourwing Saltbush). This shrub prefers dry conditions. It will tolerate a little extra water run-off from hardscape such as sidewalk. The shrub is available commercially.

51. *Prunus pumila* (Western Sand Cherry). This shrub prefers dry conditions but will tolerate a little extra water from run-off from hardscape such as sidewalk.