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Recommended Species for the Western Great Plains

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**Recommended Species
for the
Western Great Plains**

Perennials for Full Sun



Achillea , yarrow – feathery leaves grow on stems 1-2' tall; flowers rise above in flat-topped clusters; easily cultivated in any garden soil; drought tolerant; 'Appleblossom' has soft pink flowers on compact plants; 'Debutante' has a wide variety of colors in dense, 6" flower heads; 'Hoffnung' has antique yellow flowers on 18" stems.

Amsonia , bluestar – easy to grow with light blue, star-like flowers atop thin stems growing to 3' h. in spring; Tabernaemontana tolerates wet sites, has willow-like leaf; shining bluestar tolerates drought, has glossy leaf; threadleaf bluestar has narrow leaves that turn yellow in fall.

Anaphalis , pearly everlasting – silvery-white, yellow-centered flowers highlight linear silver-gray foliage; drought-tolerant; great for dried arrangements.

Arabis , rock cress – compact 6" plants with dense masses of snow white flowers in early spring; 1" leaves have soft hairs and are evergreen; excellent when combined with spring bulbs; best in full sun and well-drained soil; 'Variegata' has striking cream-edged leaves with white flowers.

Armeria , sea thrift – dense tufts of grass-like, evergreen leaves; 8" stems are topped with 1" rounded, rosy-pink flower heads; prefers moist, well-drained soil, drought tolerant once established, perfect for rock gardens; 'Alba' has pure white flowers; 'Rubrifolia' has shiny, reddish-purple foliage.

Artemisia , sagebrush – soft, gray foliage a must for the hot, sunny border; performs best in a well-drained site; fringed sage is an 18" native similar to 'Silver Mound'; 'Sea Foam' has a frothy appearance; 'Silver Brocade' forms a dense ground-hugging mat; all benefit from a summer or late winter pruning.

Aster – easy to grow for the fall garden; combines well with grasses; pinch stems in early summer for compact habit; alpine aster is perfect for the rock garden growing up to 1' h. with spring blooms; 'Woods' is clean, compact, mildew- and rust-resistant.



Aurinia , basket-of-gold – nice gray-green mounds of foliage to 15"; clusters of bright yellow flowers appear in early spring; requires full sun and good drainage; shear back to half after flowering.

Boltonia , doll's daisy – blue-green bushy plants with topped with white daisy-like flowers in early fall; 'Snowbank' is an excellent 4' selection; 'Pink Beauty' has soft pink flowers; full sun and deep, organic soils are best; easy to grow and combines well with Russian sage and Autumn Joy sedum.

Centaurea , bachelor button – prefers full sun and good drainage; 18-24” tall; knapweed has deeply fringed lavender to pink flowers; mountain bluet has deep blue flowers with a reddish-tinged center; blooms late spring to early summer; shear after blooming to remove seed for new flush of growth.

Cerastium , snow-in-summer – small, silvery, woolly leaves form a dense 8” h. carpet; plant is covered in late spring by 1” white flowers; the five petals are deeply notched, giving the appearance of a 10-petaled flower; shear after flowering to promote new compact growth; needs full sun and excellent drainage.



Dianthus , pink – compact, sun-loving plants; blooming late spring to early summer usually in shades of white to red with a spicy fragrance; easy to grow when provided great drainage; 'Prairie Pink' has large double, bright pink flowers on 18” stems and blooms all season; 'First Love' has flowers changing

from pure white to deep rose from April-frost.

Erigeron , fleabane – daisy-like flowers with many, slender petals of white, blue or pink; makes an excellent groundcover with fine, hairy, silvery leaves; 'Alpine Snow' has large sparkling white blooms on 6” stems.



Gaillardia , blanket flower – coarsely toothed, gray-green leaves; 3-4” solitary flowers of yellow and maroon; seedheads form lovely red spheres; nice dwarf selections; prefers well-drained soil; can be short lived, allow to reseed.

Geranium , bloody cranesbill – dependable workhorse; use massed as a groundcover or accent; prefers wet or dry soils in full sun to part shade; shear back by half after flowering to promote a new flush of growth; foliage often has excellent fall color remaining semi-evergreen in winter; 'Biokovo' has delicate pink flowers; 'Bevan's Variety' has deep magenta flowers; 'Johnson's Blue' is long blooming with bright blue flowers; 'Album' has snow white flowers.

Heliopsis , false sunflower – a large perennial up to 5' h. and 2” w.; flowers have orange centers surrounded by yellow petals; grows well in sunny areas and tolerates drought.

Iberis , candytuft – attractive, dark evergreen, needle-like leaves; nice groundcover to 15”; a profusion of cute 4-petaled white flowerheads in spring; prune in spring and after flowering for new growth; ‘Autumn Snow’ blooms on a 12” plant in spring and fall; ‘Compacta’ is a 4-6” dwarf.



Limonium , sea lavender – leathery, shiny green leaves form 18” mounds; slender 3’ branches give rise to airy clusters of tiny lavender flowers in late summer; grows best in average, well-drained soil, drought tolerant; easy to grow; ‘Violetta’ has dark purple-blue flowers.



Linum , blue flax – azure blue flowers emerge in spring on 18” wiry stems and needle-like leaves, making the blooms appear to be floating from a distance; prune back after flowering; will not return if winter drainage is poor; ‘Lewisii’

is a light blue native flax; ‘Album’ is white flowered.

Nepeta , catmint – spreading mass of dark green to grayish green foliage, spiked blue flowers bloom mid to late summer; leaves are aromatic when crushed; cut back when flowers fade to encourage another flush; ‘Walker’s Low’ is a compact mound 10-12” with long flowering stems; ‘Sweet Dream’ has large, two-tone soft pink flowers on 18” stems.

Penstemon , beardtongue – beautiful summer blooming perennials with erect flower spikes; tubular flowers and showy seed heads; allow to reseed to perpetuate in the garden; needs well-drained, dry soils; shell-leaf penstemon is a 2-4’ native with light pink, purple or white flowers; hairy penstemon is a 8” dwarf covered with long-lasting violet flowers, fuzzy all over!

Perovskia , Russian sage – 4’ spikes of lavender-blue flowers arise from silver foliage from mid to late summer; prefers average to rich, well-drained soil, drought tolerant; tough and dependable; pinch back in spring for more compact blooming habit.



Phlox , garden – panicles of flowers in various colors top this plant mid to late summer; upright plant growing up to 3-4' h.; requires well-drained, fertile soil; avoid top watering plants during hot, humid months; deadhead after flowering for repeat blooming; 'Alpha' is a mildew-resistant variety with bright rose flowers, 'David' has fragrant snow white flowers and is also highly mildew-resistant.

Platycodon , balloon flower – 2' h. plants are covered in with flowers in shades of purple, pink, and white that look like expanding balloons that eventually open to a bell-shape.



Salvia , sage – slender stalks reach 4' in late summer; topped with clusters of bright, clear blue flowers; can get lanky, pinch by early summer for compact habit; very drought tolerant; a rare white flowered

strain exists and is available through the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum from a native seed source.

Saponaria , soapwort – 10" groundcover with dark green leaves; masses of small bright pink flowers cover the plant for a full month in late spring; shear back by half after flowering for new compact growth; works well as an edger and in rock or wall gardens; 'Rubra Compacta' has brilliant red flowers over 2" clumps of foliage; 'Snow Tips' is a nice white selection.

Scabiosa , pincushion flower – ruffly petals in shades of blue, pink, white, and yellow edge the mounded heads of this 2-3" flower; 1-2' stems are loosely clothed in lance-shaped to three-lobed leaves; grows best in average, well-drained soil; deadheading promotes new blooms; Lucida has reddish-lilac flowers on 10" plants with glossy leaves, excellent for rock gardens; 'Mongolian Mist' has dark purple-blue flowers above deep green textured mounds.

Scutellaria , skullcap – 'Smoky Hills' is a native prairie skullcap, with mouse-eared leaves and deep purple flowers on 10" plants; 'Mongolian Skies' has shiny leaves and bluish-purple flower spikes in early summer; shear back by ½ after flowering for a new flush; very drought tolerant.

Sedum , stonecrop – fleshy, dark green to blue-gray leaves; starry flower clusters of red, pink, or yellow top the plants; prefers average, well-drained soils; durable groundcover or rock garden plant. 'Himalayan Skies' is a more robust and showy sedum growing to 2" with blue-gray foliage and pink flowers;

'Autumn Joy' has rosy-salmon flowers on 2' stems.

Stachys, lamb's ear – 6" h. mats of velvety white, woolly leaves; can spread aggressively, but can be controlled by dividing; fuzzy flower spikes with small pink flowers arrive in late spring, can be removed as they develop; 'Silver Carpet' is a non-flowering variety.

Tanacetum, snowy tansy – fragrant, lacy, silvery leaves grow to 18" h.; covered with ½" white daisies in late spring; grows well in a wide range of soil types and is very drought tolerant; short lived, allow reseeding.

Thymus, thyme – attractive ground covers or cushion plants with purple to pink flowers for the rock or herb garden; woolly thyme and mother of thyme are best suited as ground cover; English and French thyme are the hardiest for the Midwest; excellent drainage or raised beds are essential for survival.



Tradescantia, spiderwort – clumps of green, grass-like foliage topped with three-petaled flowers; plant in full sun with well-drained soils; many colorful hybrids are available that perform best in moist soils; cut back hard after flowering for a new flush; Ohio spiderwort and

Western spiderwort are more drought tolerant and have lavender-blue flowers.

Verbascum, mullein – large leaves form basal rosettes of dark green or silvery, woolly leaves; grows upright 2-6' h.; dense clusters of 1" yellow flowers with dark reddish-purple eyes; blooms second year then dies, allow to reseed; 'Jackie' is a 16-18" dwarf with pale peachy-pink flowers; 'Violetta' has dark purple flowers on a 3' plant; 'White Bride' has snow white flowers on a 2' plant.

Veronica, speedwell – excellent perennial selections available as mat-forming ground covers or sturdy plants up to 2' tall; flowers in spike form; all need well-drained, sunny sites for best growth; moderately drought tolerant; woolly veronica is a 2-3" h. rock garden plant with white fuzzy serrated leaves; Turkish veronica is a 1-2" h. mat-forming plant covered with dark blue flowers April-June.

Yucca – erect, sword-like, bluish-green leaves form handsome clumps to 30" wide; leafless flower stalks rise to 5' in late spring with many creamy-white nodding flowers; drought tolerant plants thrive for many years with little care; 'Bright Edge' and 'Variegata' are beautiful yellow and white variegated leaf forms; soap tree is a 7-8' plant with creamy-white flowers tinged green to rose.

Native Wildflowers for Full Sun



Allium , ornamental onion – clumps of grasslike leaves; blooms spring to fall; grows best in full sun with well-drained garden soil; especially nice in rock gardens; nodding allium has nodding flowers in shades of pink to white; prairie onion is topped by rounded lavender-pink flowerheads.

Amorpha , dwarf false indigo – tiny, grayish leaves form a bushy 2' plant; attractive pink flower spikes with a honey fragrance; tough and drought tolerant native; a gem for the rockery.



Amorpha , leadplant – native shrubby plant with small gray-white leaves forming 4' h. bushy plants; topped with rich, blue-purple flower spikes in early summer; very drought tolerant; prune hard in early spring for compact growth.

Anemone – candle anemone has small white flowers rise to 2' above finely dissected foliage in July-August; cottony seedheads follow; multifida anemone is similar with white to rosy flowers on 1' stems in June.

Antennaria , pussytoes – tiny, silver-green leaves in low-growing rosettes are covered with pink-tipped, off-white flowers in early spring; grows well in rock gardens, as it prefers poor soil areas that are dry and sandy; 'Rubra' has silver-white foliage with wine-red flowers.

Artemisia , fringed sage – soft, silver-gray foliage with arching stems growing to 30" h.; a must for the hot, sunny border; needs a well-drained site for best performance; cut back after flowering for a new flush; a native similar to 'Silver Mound'.

Artemisia , Silver King – bright white leaved plant growing to 3' tall; prefers a sunny, well-drained site; 'Valerie Finnis' is a more compact form with wide, white, jagged leaves.

Atriplex , saltbush – a western Great Plains shrub to 2' with silvery gray foliage; insignificant flowers are followed by conspicuous four winged seed pods; drought-resistant plant; needs sharp drainage.

Asclepias , butterfly milkweed – vibrant orange flowers top 2' tall plants in late spring; ornamental seed pods follow; plant in late spring and water sparingly to establish; grows well poor to average, sandy soil; once established, plants are extremely drought tolerant and thrive with little care; 'Hello Yellow' has showy yellow flowers from June-August.



Asclepias , swamp milkweed – 2-4' native plant is covered with dusty pink flower heads in summer; followed by interesting seed heads; extremely drought tolerant; 'Ice Ballet' has long-lasting white flowers on 40" plants

Aster , aromatic – mounded form with narrow leaves covered with sky blue flowers in fall; native to dry, upland prairies; looks great with little bluestem and goldenrod; spreads by rhizomes; 2' high; pinch in early summer to prevent flopping; 'October Skies' is nice.



Aster , Fendler's – the flowers are commonly light lavender; 'My Antonia' has pure white flowers with yellow centers in fall on 12" plants with glossy, dark green leaves; pinch in late spring to encourage compact habit and more flowers; tough as nails.

Aster , smooth – 3½' h. native with narrow leaves; covered with masses of sky blue flowers in fall; 'Bluebird' has large, cone-shaped clusters of violet-blue flowers with golden centers; tolerates a wide range of moisture levels and soil types; does not require staking.

Astragalus , ground plum – showy pink to bluish-purple pea-like flowers appear atop 4-12" h., comb-like foliage in April-May; followed by red plum-like fruit in June; prefers full sun and well-drained soil.

Baptisia , wild indigo– gray-green, usually 3-parted leaves; dwarf blue has spikes of indigo-blue, pea-like flowers in spring; white wild has spikes of white, pea-like flowers in June; flowers are followed by 2-3", showy, black seed pods; 1-2' h.; full sun, deep soils; slow to establish.

Callirhoe , poppy mallow – low growing, cut-leaf native to 12" tall and 4' wide; dies back to crown each year; bright purple, cup-shaped flowers all summer; easy to grow, drought tolerant; 'Logan Calhoun' has bright white flowers.



Calylophus , sundrops – ‘Prairie Lode’ is an outstanding native plant that blooms butter yellow flowers all summer long; flowers are borne on a 6” subshrub ground cover.

Ceanothus , New Jersey tea – Handsome, durable, 18-36” shrub with clean foliage; abundant clusters of white flowers in late spring; slow to establish but worth the wait; limit competition from aggressive plants; grows best in well-drained soil; dried leaves make an excellent prairie tea.

Chrysopsis , prairie goldenaster – fragrant, golden-yellow flowers top 1-2’ h., silvery-green plants in fall; grows well in poor soil; drought-tolerant.

Clematis , Fremont's – bush type (non-vining) clematis quickly emerging to 15” in early spring; purple, urn-shaped, nodding flowers appear in late April followed by silky seedheads; needs dry, well-drained site and several years to reach maturity; long lived if planted in the proper location.

Coreopsis , lanceleaf – bright yellow flowers float above 2-3’ native plants from June-frost; easy to grow; prefers sunny areas with well-drained soil; ‘Sterntaler’ is a 16” plant with brown-ringed yellow flowers.



Coreopsis , threadleaf – fine, thread-like leaves create an airy quality for this 1-3’ h. plant; starry, butter-yellow flowers bloom in masses throughout the summer; grows best in rich, well-drained soil, drought tolerant once established; ‘Moonbeam’ has pale yellow flowers; ‘Zagreb’ is a compact 15” plant.

Dalea , prairie clover – erect prairie plant with tiny, bright purple or white, cylindrical heads blooming in summer; thin, stiff stems grow 2-3’ h.; fernlike foliage; ‘Stephanie’ is a compact plant growing 15-18” h.; foliage is darker green; bright purple flowerheads are more abundant.

Echinacea , narrow coneflower – 2’ plant covered from July-August with long, narrow, drooping petals in shades from pink to white; black seedheads remain attractive throughout the winter; prefers sunny areas with well-drained soils native to Nebraska; pale purple coneflower is similar except larger overall; growing to at least 4’ h.

Eriogonum , sulphur flower – long flowering, 10” alpine plant with gray-green foliage, rounded yellow flowers appear in early summer; grows best in full sun with well-drained soil, and will also tolerate drought; long lived plant;

combines well with snow-in-summer and dianthus; also called buckwheat.



Eryngium , rattlesnake master– 4' blue-gray, sword-like foliage is very similar to that of yucca; bristly, greenish-white flower heads appear from mid- to late-summer.

Geum , prairie smoke – nodding pink flowers are followed by fluffy, pink seedheads covering 12" plants with deeply cut leaves; thrives in rich, well-drained soil and poor, dry soil.

Hymenoxys , bitterweed – bright yellow, daisy-like flowers cover 1' plants all summer long; habit is similar to that of Armeria; drought-tolerant.

Ipomoea , bush morning glory – 2-4', bush-like plant; large, lavender-pink flowers cover the plant all summer long; site in dry sand only.

Liatris , dotted gayfeather – lavender flower heads appear in 6-30" spikes; leaves are 6" long and grass-like; blooms in September; prefers well-drained soils, drought tolerant.



Liatris , rough gayfeather – buttons of lavender flowers bloom along stems growing up to 2½' h.; prefers well-drained sandy soils in open areas, drought tolerant.

Monarda , beebalm – 3-4' h. plants with aromatic foliage; large, spidery flower heads in shades of pink and purple top the plants in summer; drought-tolerant.

Oenothera , evening primrose – Missouri is a 6" creeping plant with glossy, dark green leaves; bright yellow, saucer-shaped flowers bloom late spring-early summer; Fremont's has light yellow flowers on a 10" plant; tufted has white flowers on 6" plant; all are extremely heat- and drought-tolerant once established.

Oxytropis , locoweed – gray-green compound leaves are covered with fine hairs; purple or white pea-like flowers cover the 12” stems all summer long; prefers well-drained soils.

Parthenium , wild quinine – wide, green leaves are grown on 2-4' stems topped by huge, flat-topped clusters of flowers; rounded, star-like flowers bloom white in mid-summer; this native prefers dry, sunny areas.



Penstemon , cobaea – beautiful 1-2' perennial with erect flower spikes; large tubular flowers bloom in May in shades of purple, pink, and white; followed by showy seed heads; allow to reseed to perpetuate in the garden; needs sunny, well-drained to dry soils.

Penstemon , shell-leaf – tubular spike flowers bloom in early summer on a 2-4' plant; showy seedheads help penstemon perpetuate in the garden; needs sunny, well-drained, dry soils; 'Prairie Snow' has large white flowers; 'War Axe' has blooms in shades of white, pink, red, maroon and purple.

Phlox , prairie –1-2' h. plant with soft, hairy stems; fragrant, pink, star-like flowers bloom from May-July; grows best full sun with dry to moist soils; 'Eco Happy

Traveler' has an abundance of fragrant flowers on 12” stems.

Physostegia , obedient plant – clusters of tubular pink flowers top 3-4' stems; grows best in sunny areas with moist to wet soil; control the spreading habit of this plant by dividing it every couple of years; 'Alba' has white flowers on a 2' h. plant.

Pulsatilla , pasque flower – silky, hairy leaves emerge in early spring; delicate, cup-shaped, lavender flowers top 18” stalks; feathery seed heads follow.



Pycnanthemum , mountain mint – fragrant minty foliage forms bushy 2' h. plants; white or lavender flowers with purple spots top the plants in summer; easy to grow, does not spread by runners; pinch for compact habit.

Rudbeckia , black-eyed susan – large, yellow, daisy-like flowers with black cones; 18” stems over a 12” mound of fuzzy leaves, prefers almost any well-drained, dry soil.

Ruellia , wild petunia – 1-2' h. native plant; small, petunia-like, lavender flowers are long-blooming; slightly hairy all over; prefers sunny areas in dry to slightly moist soils.

Salvia , pitcher sage – slender stalks reach 4' in late summer; topped with clusters of bright, clear blue flowers; can get lanky, pinch by early summer for compact habit; very drought tolerant; 'Nekan' is a native with sky blue flowers.



Scutellaria , prairie skullcap – 'Smoky Hills' is a native with 4-12” square stems and mouse-eared leaves; deep purple flowers with two white patches are somewhat similar to snapdragon flowers; slightly hairy all over; shear back by ½ after flowering for new flush; very drought tolerant.

Senecio , prairie ragwort – buttery yellow petals with bright orange centers cover 18” plants from May-June; white, fluffy seedheads follow; prefers dry soils in full sun.

Silene , royal catchfly – upright stems to 3' h.; brilliant red flowers with fringed tips bloom in summer; needs well-drained, sunny location for best growth; allow plant to reseed to perpetuate; great for rock gardens.

Silphium , compass plant – large, deeply cut leaves to 15” long, somewhat resembling an oak leaf; upright stalks to 6' with many yellow sunflower-like flowers in late summer; bold, long-lived prairie native.

Solidago , goldenrod – showy golden-yellow plumes from late summer-fall; fluffy seedheads follow; easy-to-grow perennials botanically cannot cause hay fever; 'Fireworks' has lacy, golden blooms from mid September-October; grows up to 4' h.; 'Wichita Mountains' long rods on a 2' plant.

Sphaeralcea , globemallow – 4-8” h. plants with hairy, gray-green leaves; coral-red saucer-shaped flowers are large for the plant's size; grows well in full sun, drought tolerant.



Stanleya , prince's plume – stately yellow plumes above delicate foliage in early

summer on 2-4' tall plants; native to dry short grass prairies; must have excellent drainage for longevity.

Talinum , fame flower – thin, succulent-leaves resemble moss rose; grows best in dry conditions, drought tolerant, perfect for rock gardens; reseeding forms a colony of plants; Rock rose has 1” purplish-pink flowers on a 4” plant, native to the Nebraska Sandhills; Okanoganense has white flowers on a gray-green, cushion-forming, 2-3” plant.

Thermopsis , false lupine – yellow, pea-like flowers appear on bushy plants growing 1' h.; followed by long, dark, curved seedpods; dark green leaves are parted into three leaflets; prefers well-drained, sunny locations.

Tradescantia , spiderwort – green, grass-like foliage grows to 1' h.; plant in full sun with well-drained soils; cut back hard after flowering for a new flush; prairie spiderwort has multi-colored, three-petaled flowers that are long-blooming; western spiderwort has lavender-blue, three-petaled flowers.



Verbena , Dakota – small purple flowers cover 1' h, finely textured foliage mounds in spring and summer; grows best in sunny areas, heat- and drought-tolerant.

Yucca – erect, sword-like, bluish-green leaves form handsome clumps to 30” wide; leafless flower stalks rise to 5' in late spring with many creamy-white nodding flowers; drought tolerant plants thrive for many years with little care; 'Bright Edge' and 'Variegata' are beautiful yellow and white variegated leaf forms.

Zizia , golden alexanders – yellow flowers arranged like umbrellas rise above dark green foliage from spring-early summer; 30” tall prairie native.

Perennials for Part Shade

Alchemilla , lady's mantle – gray-green, 18” mat-forming foliage covered with tiny yellow-green flowers in spring; shear back after flowering for a new flush of growth; best in rich, moist soils, but tolerates dry soils.



Anemone , snowdrop – pure white nodding flowers bloom fragrantly in spring above finely dissected foliage; woolly seedheads follow; best in rich, evenly moist soils.

Aquilegia , columbine – bright green deeply lobed leaves; beautiful “spurred” flowers in all colors in late spring; best in rich, well-drained soil; many excellent cultivars and hybrids available.

Campanula , bellflower – bell-shaped flowers in various shades of blue, plus white and pink; with a wide variety of species, there's a campanula for almost any garden situation; *C. carpatica* has violet-blue bell-shaped flowers atop 15” h. heart-shaped foliage from June-August; *C. elatinooides* is perfect for rock garden with starry blue flowers above 4” h. plants; *C. persicifolia* has large bells in a variety of colors on 40” stems.



Dicentra , bleeding heart – old-fashioned bleeding heart has lovely dissected leaves and heart-shaped flowers in rosy red or white in spring; goes dormant in heat of summer; fern-leaf bleeding heart grows 12” h. with rosy-pink blooms and persistent foliage.

Hemerocallis , daylily – clumps of grass-like foliage growing around 2' h.;

trumpet-shaped flowers bloom a day at a time from early summer to early fall in a wide variety of colors; tolerates heat, drought, and shade; 'Catherine Woodbury' has long-lasting, 6”, mauve flowers on 30” plants; 'Happy Returns' is early and continuously blooming with 3” pale yellow flowers on a 18” plant.

Heuchera , coral bells – mostly evergreen leaves form basal mounds of foliage to 12”; naked stalks topped with cherry red to pale pink flowers in spring; many new and exciting selections; purple leaf selections prefer 2 / 3 shade and green leaf forms prefer 2 / 3 sun.

Lilium , oriental lily – trumpet-shaped flowers on upright stems in a wide variety of colors, shapes, and sizes; prefers well-drained, fertile soil in sunny to lightly-shaded areas.

Lobelia – stiffly, erect plant to 3' high with lance-shaped leaves; hardy, undemanding native woodland plant that grows along streams; cardinal flower has spikes of scarlet flowers; great blue has bright blue flower spikes; both bloom in late summer.

Lysimachia , gooseneck loosestrife – pure white flowers appear in widely arching spikes from July-September; foliage turns a lovely burnished color in fall; prefers moist, cool soil in full sun, will tolerate drier soil in part-shade.

Polemonium , Jacob's ladder – cup-shaped flowers in shades of blue, white, and pink bloom above finely divided foliage in spring-summer; taller species grow well in moist, average garden soil; dwarf species need well-drained, gravelly areas.

Viola , violet – fragrant flowers in shades and combinations of blue, purple, yellow, pink, and white; plants to 3-6” h.; spreads by seeds and creeping stems; prefers cool, moist soil in part-shade.

Perennials for Shade

Actaea , baneberry – native woodland perennial with coarse, dark green leaves; topped with pearl white berries on red stalks in fall; easy to grow in rich, organic soils.

Adiantum , fern – attractive, soft, tropical-looking woodland perennials; cultivate in a humus-rich soil, out of the wind, mulched with leaf mold for the best results; excellent in full or dappled shade.

Aegopodium , bishops weed – dense-foliaged groundcover that spreads aggressively; best confined to restrict growth; beautiful creamy-white variegation on leaves; flat-topped white flowers in summer are not significant; grows to 18” h.



Aquilegia , columbine – bright green deeply lobed leaves; beautiful “spurred” flowers in all colors in late spring; best in rich, well-drained soil; many excellent cultivars and hybrids available.

Bergenia , heartleaf – large, glossy, dark green leaves with clusters of showy rosy-pink flowers in early spring to 15” h.; foliage has reddish tones in fall; grows best in rich, organic soils.



Carex , sedge – many different grass-like plants in wide variety of color, form, and size for wet or dry soils, sun or shade; there is a Carex for any garden situation; too little known and too little used.

Convallaria , lily-of-the-valley – nice, old-fashioned groundcover with lush, 8” leaves; flower stalks arch with fragrant, white blossoms in early spring; too

aggressive to plant in a confined space, keep the site dry to deter spreading.

Dicentra , bleeding heart – old-fashioned bleeding heart has lovely dissected leaves and heart-shaped flowers in rosy red or white in spring; goes dormant in heat of summer; fern-leaf bleeding heart only 12” h. with rosy-pink blooms and persistent foliage.

Euonymus , wintercreeper – a classic evergreen groundcover that spreads rapidly; leaves are dark green, green and white, or green and gold; bright accent for shade; 18” h.

Galium , sweet woodruff – dark green whorled leaves give rise to loose clusters of fragrant white flowers in spring; leaves are aromatic when crushed; pairs nicely with ajuga or Solomon's seal.

Geranium , wild geranium – five-petaled flowers in various shades of pink and purple appear atop deeply divided leaves from April-June; grows up to 2' h. in moist, humusy soil and will tolerate poor soils.

Hosta – tough, lovely plants with blue-green, dark green, variegated or gold leaves that are narrow, broad, wavy or twisted; grows in dwarf forms to giant 3' plants; nice flower spires in summer to early fall.

Lamiastrum – ‘Herman's Pride' has handsome foliage with dapples of silver on dark green leaves forming 10” upright clumps; small yellow flowers whorl around the stems in spring; shear back by ½ after flowering.

Lamium , deadnettle – pink or white flowers bloom atop bright silvery-white leaves in

spring; prune back by ½ after flowering for new growth; if plants repeatedly dry out, bare patches will appear.

Mahonia , creeping – a holly-like evergreen grows up to 1' h. and spreads by underground stems; foliage is bluish-green turning purplish in winter; golden flowers appear in spring, followed by clusters of dark bluish-purple fruit maturing in late summer; grows best in average, well-drained soil.

Phlox , woodland – showy 2-3” clusters of lilac-blue to white flowers in spring on 12” plants; it goes dormant in early summer after scattering seeds; it's an excellent weaver between hostas.



Polygonatum , Solomon's seal – an attractive woodland native that forms colonies with dark green leaves arranged along arching stems; small, pendulous white flowers hang below the 2-4' stems in spring; variegated forms are showy and brighten a shady corner of the garden; tolerates wet or dry soils.

Pulmonaria , lungwort – long, lance-shaped, dark green leaves with silvery spotting grow to 12” h; clusters of blue tubular flowers top plants in spring; combines nicely with spring bulbs.

Stylophorum , celandine poppy – light green, deeply lobed leaves emerge in early spring to 20” h.; bright yellow, 2” flowers emerge in April; an excellent woodland wildflower from Missouri that may reseed.

Symphytum , comfrey – hairy stems and oval leaves form 15” clumps; tubular blue flowers top the plant in spring; ‘Variegata’ has cream and green foliage; ‘Hidcote Blue’ is a rich blue selection.

Vinca , periwinkle – glossy, evergreen leaves form a dense groundcover; the leaves can be dark green, or variegated with white or gold; blue, purple or white flowers appear in early spring; it's aggressive, so plant in confined space.

Waldsteinia , barren strawberry – a native to Siberia; glossy, dark green, strawberry-like leaves form 8” mounds of foliage in early spring; yellow flowers in loose clusters bloom from April-May; tough and dependable; combines nicely with bleeding hearts. .

Plants for wet sites

These perennials perform best with consistent moisture, in boggy soils or shallow water.

Aster, New England (*Aster novae-angliae*) excellent for the fall garden; combine well with grasses; selections like ‘Purple Dome’ (compact, purple) and ‘Alma Potschke’ (rose-pink, tall). 18” to 4’ tall.



Beebalm (*Monarda didyma*)-attractive dark green, fragrant foliage and topped with red, lavender or pink flowers in summer; tolerate any garden soil; grow mildew resistance varieties; spreads by rhizomes.

Bugbane or Black Snakeroot (*Cimicifuga racemosa*)- deeply cut leaves give airy appearance; tall, white spires in early summer to 6’ tall; best in rich, organic soils; full sun if soil is moist.

Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*)- 3-4” long dark green foliage; forms 3’ spikes topped with brilliant red flowers in August; best in rich, organic soils and consistent moisture to boggy soils.

Carex or Sedge- forms dense clumps of grass-like foliage; excellent for pond edge or boggy soils; many species do well in normal garden sites; palm sedge and gray’s sedge popular.

Cordgrass, Variegated (*Spartina pectinata*) aggressive spreader best used for erosion control or planted in pots; attractive comb-like seed heads top plants in late summer; foliage turns yellow in fall; sharp foliage hard to cut back in spring; ‘Aureomarginata’ selection has leaves with white stripe.



Culver's Root (*Veronicastrum virginicum*) lance-shaped leaves whorl around upright stems to 4' tall; pinkish-white flower spikes in summer; needs full sun and consistent moisture for best growth but tolerates moderate drought; pinch in spring for compact habit; native to the Great Plains

Feather Reed Grass (*Calamagrostis* species) clump forming grass grows quickly in the spring; feathery seed heads rise above foliage to 5' in early summer; 'Karl Foerster' has fluffier seed heads, 'Overdam' has variegated foliage; Korean reed grass (*C. brachytricha*) has beautiful plumes in the fall.

Gentian, Bottle (*Gentiana andrewsii*)- easiest to grow provided consistent moisture, rich, organic soils; beautiful deep blue flowers clustered on tips of 18" plants; tubular flowers never open; blooms fall.

Helen's Flower or Sneezeweed (*Helenium autumnale*) –serrated, lance-shaped leaves; abundant yellow or red & gold flowers in late summer; pinch in late spring for more compact habit; full sun.

Hibiscus, Hardy or Rose Mallow- giant saucer-like flowers in white, red, or pink in August on plants to 5' tall; late to

break dormancy in spring, usually around Memorial Day; tolerates wet or dry.

Houttuynia 'Chameleon' - bright pink, white and green leaved plant can spread aggressively; nice ground cover to 15"; tolerates sun or shade; easy to grow and dependable for pond edge.

Iris-native blue flag iris (*Iris shrevei*) and *Iris versicolor* have attractive, narrow foliage and thin flower petals; yellow flag (*I. pseudacorus*) has butter yellow blooms, aggressive; Japanese iris look like butterflies on top of vertical plants; easy to grow in dry to very wet soils.

Joe-Pye Plant (*Eupatorium purpureum*)- attractive leaves in whorls topped with large clusters (up to 12") of mauve to purple in early fall; favorite of butterflies; 'Gateway' more compact to 5'; 'Chocolate' a selection of white snakeroot (*E. rugosum*) with purple foliage to 4'.



Loosestrife, Garden (*Lysimachia punctata*) – whorled leaves around stems to 3' tall; lemon-yellow flowers in summer; 'Alexander' a nice variegated selection; full sun with consistent moisture or bog

Loosestrife, Gooseneck (*Lysimachia clethroides*) attractive foliage and pure white arching flower spikes in summer;

spreads by rhizomes, best confined; foliage turns red in fall.

Marsh Marigold (*Caltha palustris*) bright yellow flowers on this wetland native to 2' that goes dormant in mid-late summer; handsome glossy leaves; best in boggy soil or shallow water.

Milkweed, Swamp (*Asclepias incarnata*) 3-6" linear leaves on bushy plants to 4' tall; topped with rosy-pink flower clusters in summer; interesting seed heads follow; dependable, easy to grow.

Monkey Flower (*Mimulus ringens*)- upright plants to 2' h with shiny, lance-shaped leaves; lavender blue flower spikes in summer; easy to grow in moist soil or water to 6" deep.

Moor Grass, Autumn (*Molina caerulea*)- graceful grass tufts with upright leaf blades to 18"; stiff flower stalks have airy appearance to 5'; requires consistent moisture to perform its best; rich, organic soils.

Obedience Plant (*Physostegia virginiana*)- upright plants; tubular flowers lined along the top 12" in late summer; large clumps form and can spread vigorously, best confined; 'Vivid' is vibrant pink, compact; 'Summer Snow' has pure white flowers; very adaptable to wet or dry soils and heavy clay; native.

Persicaria or *Polygonum*- dark green oval leaves and thin, cylindrical flower spikes in late summer; 'Rosea' has pink flowers, 4' h; 'Painter's Palette' leaves splashed with white, 2' h and thin red flowers.

Pickerel Rush (*Pontederia cordata*) shiny heart shaped leaves on stems to 2' high; lavender-blue flower spikes in summer;

one of the easiest and finest perennials for the water's edge or up to 6" of water.



Queen of the Meadow (*Filipendula ulmaria*)- handsome dark green foliage with creamy white flowers resembling cotton candy held above the foliage in summer; honey scented; 3-4' h.

Rush (*Juncus* species) corkscrew rush has green corkscrew-like leaves to 1'; Torrey's rush is fine-textured native topped with attractive seed heads to 18"; great for bog or shallow water containers.

Sweetflag- (*Acorus calamus*) long swordlike leaves resemble iris; strong rooted plant spreads by rhizomes; 'Variegata' is a variegated selection well suited for the water garden or moist soil.



Turtlehead (*Chelone* species) smooth, dark green leaves remain attractive all season with clusters of white to pink flowers crowded towards the tips in early fall; the interesting flowers resemble a turtles head; tolerates full sun if moisture is present or grows well in up to 2/3 shade; 'Hot Lips' is a popular selection with deep rose flowers.

Hardy Ornamental Grasses

Ornamental grasses come in a variety of soft and subtle colors, from forest green to lime and from gray-green to powder blue to light yellow, all complementing brightly colored perennial flowers.

Grasses provide movement in the garden, dancing in the slightest summer breeze.

As they move, the stems and leaves rustle together to add sound to the garden. The flowers and foliage of grasses are highly

translucent and are often at their best when back-lit or side-lit by the sun. The long linear leaves and fine stems of large grasses provide a soft, fine-textured backdrop and shorter grasses compliment broad-leaf perennials in front.

Ornamental grasses are easy to grow when provided a well-drained soil and sunny conditions.

Bluestem, Big (*Andropogon gerardii*)

impressive native of the tall grass prairie; rich, green leaves to 2' by the end of June; flowering stalks in August up to 6' high; seed heads resemble turkey's foot; reliable fall color in copper, rich orange, with maroon tones; may grow floppy if shaded; wet or dry soils.

Bluestem, Little (*Schizachrium scoparium*)

dependable native bunch grass with fine-textured bright green or light blue leaves to 2' tall in summer; the late summer flowers dry in fall, becoming silvery and remain attractive through winter; avoid highly fertile soils or excessive moisture, heavy mulching.

Bottlebrush Grass (*Hystrix patula*) cool

season bunch grass with shiny, green foliage to 2' topped by bottle-brush like seed heads in June to 3'; self sows but easily managed when allowed to weave between perennials; grows well in dry shade too; best in informal settings.

Carex or Sedge-forms dense clumps of

grass-like foliage; prairie sedges native to dryland and wetland soils; combine with warm season grasses for early spring color and weed competition; many exciting yellow and white variegated forms selected from plants native to Japan and China.

Cordgrass, Variegated (*Spartina pectinata*) aggressive spreader best used for erosion control or confined space; attractive comb-like seed heads top plants in late summer; foliage turns yellow in fall; sharp foliage hard to cut back in spring; 'Aureomarginata' selection has leaves with white stripe.



Dropseed, Prairie (*Sporobolus heterolepis*) native bunch grass with thin, ribbon-like leaves form 2' mounds; delicate seed heads appear in late summer and remain attractive through fall; attractive when back lit and scented; foliage turns deep orange to light copper; likes it dry and never needs dividing.

Fescue, Dwarf Blue (*Festuca* species) tufted plants with attractive silvery-blue foliage; dainty seed heads held above foliage on thin stems; cool season native

to Europe; often sulks in hot, humid summers.

Gramma, Blue (*Bouteloua gracilis*) native to dry prairies; tufted with thin, wiry leaves to 8"; 1" eyelash-like seed heads top thin stems to 18" in late June; nice decorator plant or mass for prairie style lawn.

Gramma, Sideoats (*Bouteloua curtipendula*) mounds of gray-green foliage; numerous narrow flower stalks with oatlike seed heads held on one side of the stems, to 3' h; bronze-orange fall color; straw in winter.

Hairgrass, Tufted (*Deschampsia caespitosa*) look like tufts of long, thin hair topped by masses of loose, airy seed heads in late spring; consistent moisture for best performance; full sun to part shade; 15-18" high and wide; native to Europe.

Indiangrass (*Sorghastrum nutans*) clump former with blue-green leaves and golden, feathery seed heads held above leaves in fall to 6' high; provide moisture retentive soils for best results; they will reseed.

Junegrass, Prairie (*Koeleria pyramidata*) dryland native, cool season bunch grass with gray-green leaves; blooms early June with narrow, erect inflorescence; needs well-drained, dry soils; short-lived but will reseed making them ideal for naturalizing.

Lovegrass, Sand (*Eragrostis tricoides*) native to sandy soils with leafy upright flowering stems to 4' h; masses of airy, fine-textured seed heads in August; self sows manageably in loam and readily in sand but easily managed; early spring

green appreciated; will be floppy in shady conditions or excess water

Lyme Grass, Blue (*Leymus arenarius*) native to European coastal sand dunes; impressive bright bluish foliage to 2'; spreads very aggressive in loose soils; best contained; tolerates wet or dry soils.

Miscanthus- showy grasses of many shapes and sizes, ranging from 3 to 12' tall; feathery plumes top plants in fall with new cultivars providing colorful foliage and better flowers; cut back to ground in spring; prefers full sun and will topple if planted in too shady of conditions.

Moor Grass, Autumn (*Molinia caerulea*)- graceful grass tufts with upright leaf blades to 18"; stiff flower stalks have airy appearance to 5'; requires consistent moisture to perform its best; rich, organic soils.

Oatgrass, Blue (*Helictotrichon sempervirens*) a western Mediterranean native; clump-forming grass with intense blue leaves to 2'; delicate flower stalks appear in late spring; suffers in poorly drained soils.

Pennisetum, Chinese (*Pennisetum alopecuroides*) narrow-leaved bunch grass with foxtail-like silvery-white plumes in late summer; typically 2-3' high; stunning in groups or masses; native to China.

Ravennae Grass (*Saccharum ravennae*) native to the Mediterranean region; clumping grass forming 4' wide gray-green mounds of foliage by August; large plummy flower heads are produced in late August on stalks up to 12' tall; excess moisture or fertility encourages lax growth; cut to ground in spring.

Reed Grass, Feather (*Calamagrostis x acutiflora*) deep green, lustrous foliage with loosely feathered flowering stalks in early summer; they constrict to narrow buff-colored plumes by fall and remain attractive all winter; easy to grow in most soils, but best in well-drained fertile soils; native to Europe.



Reed Grass, Korean (*Calamagrostis brachytricha*) native to woodland edge in Asia; glossy green foliage and red tinted feathery flower heads in September create strong vertical plant; prefers consistent moisture but is easy to grow in most soils; excellent in containers; 3-4' high.

Ribbon Grass (*Phalaris arundinacea* var. *picta*) a popular favorite for years with creamy-white stripes on leaves to 18" high; cool season aggressive spreader; plant in confined space and part shade.

Sea Oats, Northern (*Chasmanthium latifolium*) upright bunchgrass to 3-4' high with flattened spikelets topping the plants in summer; they start green then fade to a handsome bronze in winter; tendency to reseed heavily so plant in a confined space or scratch young seedlings out in the spring with a hoe; easy to grow in full sun or partial shade and tolerates dry shade.

Sedge (*Carex* species) many different grass-like plants in wide variety of color, form, and size for wet or dry soils, sun or shade; there is a *Carex* for any garden situation; too little known and too little used!



Switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*)- native tall grass 5-7' high with loose, airy flower stalks in late summer to fall; leaves turn golden yellow in fall; plant in full sun for

sturdy flower stalks; 'Prairie Sky' and 'Heavy Metal' has gray foliage; 'Shenandoah' with red leaf tones and 4'. 'Trailblazer' a sod former.

Wildrye (*Elymus canadensis*) attractive nodding seed heads resemble cultivated rye, remaining attractive well into winter; a fast growing but somewhat short lived cool season prairie grass; self sows, making it desirable for naturalizing but a nuisance in small gardens; 3-4' high.

Large Deciduous Trees (over 25' tall)

Acer, bigtooth maple – native to Rocky Mountains; western version of sugar maple with yellow-orange fall color; slower-growing, but worth the wait; tolerates dry and alkaline soils.

Acer, boxelder maple – a tough but forgotten native; tolerates alkaline soils; 'Sensation' has orange-red fall color and improved branch structure, it's also a seedless male clone that does not attract the boxelder bug.

Aesculus, Ohio buckeye – a very adaptable Midwestern native; distinctive rounded tree with dense deer-resistant foliage; interesting greenish-yellow flower panicles in spring followed by clusters of tan, leathery seed pods.

Celtis, hackberry – an excellent Great Plains tree with legendary tolerance; irregular habit when young; matures to a stately tree with a rounded crown; interesting corky, knobbed bark; 'Prairie Pride' is resistant to nipple gall and witches' broom.

Cladrastis, yellowwood – a medium size tree with pendulous clusters of fragrant white flowers in spring; handsome

smooth bark; the attractive compound leaves turn yellow in fall.

Fraxinus - *NOTE: The emerald ash borer is killing native ash trees by the millions in the eastern US. The pest could eventually reach Nebraska and kill many if not most of our native and community-planted ash trees. Until the full threat of the pest is known, NSA no longer recommends planting green ash (Fraxinus pennsylvanica), white ash (F. americana), black ash (F. nigra) and blue ash (F. quadrangulata) and their many cultivars such as 'Patmore', 'Marshall's Seedless', 'Autumn Purple', 'Autumn Applause', etc.*

Fraxinus , Manchurian ash – native to northeast China; dense oval crown; transplants easily; tolerates drought and excess moisture; clear yellow fall color; reported resistance to leaf curling aphid and ash borer; narrow leaf gives tree a fine texture; young trees reside west of Memorial Stadium in Lincoln; 'Mancana' is a seedless selection from Manitoba.

Gleditsia , honeylocust – a very tough, adaptable tree that thrives on neglect; it has a graceful habit and rich golden yellow fall color; many great seedless and thornless forms available, including 'Shademaster', 'Skyline' and 'Sunburst'.

Gymnocladus , Kentucky coffeetree – an amazingly adaptable native; beautiful winter outline with rugged branches; interesting ridged bark on older trees; rich bluish-green foliage turning yellow in fall; female trees produce leathery seed pods.

Juglans , black walnut – the old standard, tough and reliable; dark green leaflets turn yellow in fall; nuts are desired by

wildlife and people alike; plants can grow under walnuts, including a full palette of shade lovers: viburnum, yew, hosta, and vinca.



Phellodendron , Amur corktree – an unusual tree from China; the bark is thick and corky; the habit is picturesque; very tough, adaptable tree; handsome, dark green leaves can turn yellow in fall; slow growing.

Populus , lanceleaf cottonwood – an upright hybrid native; good on wet sites; 'Highland' is an excellent selection made from mature trees at the Cheyenne Research Station, it's also disease- and pest-resistant.

Quercus , bur oak – one of the best native trees; large, lustrous, deep green leaves; grayish, flaky bark develops into rugged,

ridged trunks; tolerates drought, wind, extreme cold and heavy soils; interesting mossy capped acorns.



Quercus , chinkapin oak – very well adapted to alkaline soils; chestnut-like leaves turn yellow in fall; nice bright bark and picturesque branching for winter interest; a tough, adaptable tree that should be planted more; native to southeastern Nebraska.

Quercus , English oak – good across Nebraska; matures into a massive, round-topped tree with handsome leaves.

Quercus , red oak – a very reliable native oak; large, lustrous leaves turn from russet to bright red in fall; locate trees that came from seeds collected in the Midwest for reliable performance and fall color.

Quercus , swamp white oak – lustrous, dark green leaves with bronze-yellow fall color; flaky, grayish-brown bark and a round-topped crown; tolerates dry or wet soils; grows 45-50' h.

Tilia , American linden – also known as basswood; develops a nice oval-rounded crown with age; large, lustrous leaves turn yellow in fall; fragrant flower clusters emerge in June; needs room to grow; a very adaptable tree native to the Great Plains.

Tilia , littleleaf linden – very pyramidal in shape; a good yard tree that tolerates wet or dry soils; densely branched; leaves turn a reasonable yellow in fall; 'Greenspire', 'Glenleven', 'Legend' and 'Chancellor' are excellent selections.

Ulmus , elm – several species and cultivars deserve to be planted; great, disease-resistant hybrid selections include 'Pioneer', 'Discovery', 'Morton', and 'Triumph'.

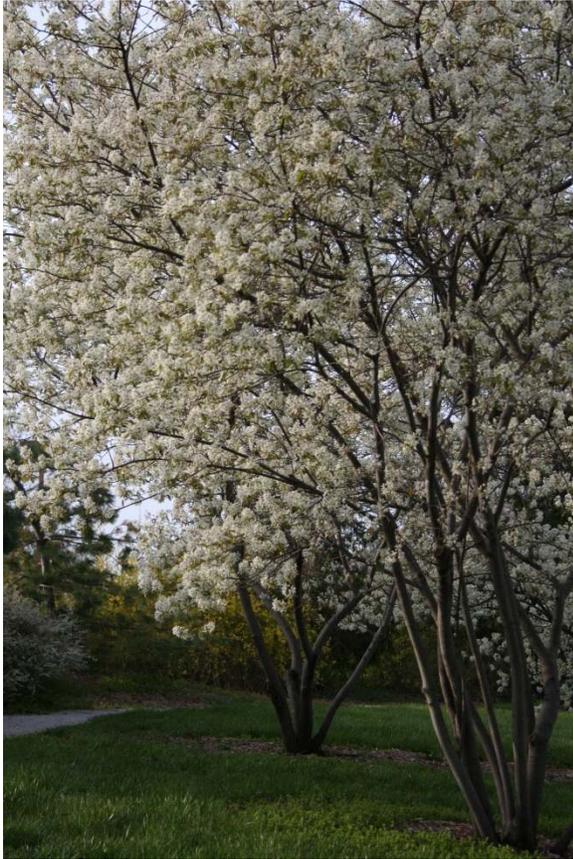
Small Deciduous Trees (under 25' tall)

Acer , Rocky Mountain maple – native in Pine Ridge along streams; can be grown as a large shrub or small tree; attractive light gray bark; bright red buds add winter interest.

Acer , Shantung maple – a great ornamental from Asia; small, star-shaped leaves turn yellow in fall; drought-tolerant.

Acer , tatarian maple – very similar to Amur maple; tough, drought-tolerant; very tolerant of alkaline soils; 'Red Wings', an outstanding selection from Bailey Nursery, has showy bright red fruits (samaras).

Betula , Rocky Mountain birch – native to Pine Ridge in western Nebraska; small, suckering tree with nice cherry-like bark; keep root zone cool and moist for best growth; good yellow fall color.



Amelanchier , apple serviceberry – native; a great four-season tree—flower, leaf, fruit, bark, and branching habit; 'Autumn Brilliance', 'Forest Prince', 'Robin Hill' are all excellent.

Chionanthus , fringetree – this southeastern U.S. native grows with multiple stems, and a spreading crown; grows best in open shade; cloud-like, pure white flowers emerge in late spring; leaves are thick and green; fruits of female trees mature to dark blue and are ornamental.

Cornus , Corneliancherry dogwood – yellow flowers in early spring; attractive foliage

has little fall color; bark exfoliates on this low branching tree; cherry-like fruit in late summer is great for song birds.

Cornus , pagoda dogwood – a beautiful, layered small tree; white flowers in spring are followed by black fruit clusters.

Corylus , Turkish filbert – also called Turkish tree hazel; a handsome, broadly pyramidal tree; thrives in poor soil; ornamental catkins in early spring; lustrous, dark green leaves and beautiful brown bark; looks like a winner; not readily available.

Crataegus , cockspur hawthorn – a great small tree with distinct horizontal branching; glossy foliage, abundant rosy-red fruit in fall; thornless variety available; avoid high pH soil.

Crataegus , hawthorn – native downy hawthorn drops leaves early in fall to reveal colorful red fruit; the very hardy Russian hawthorn has abundant dark fruit; both are tough survivors for the Plains.

Euonymus , winterberry – seldom seen; striking with red fall fruit capsules; attractive bark; doing well at Cheyenne Research Station.

Forestiera , New Mexico privet – attractive, smooth, blond bark on this southern Rocky Mountains native; small, yellow flowers in early spring; dark blue fruit on female plants follow; prune to create a small tree.

Malus , crabapple – dozens of cultivars are available; consider disease-resistant cultivars with persistent fruit: 'Adams' with pink flowers, 'David' with white

flowers, and 'Indian Summer' with rose-red flowers.

Ostrya , hophornbeam – a good, tough, native tree; slow-growing, but worth the wait; resistant to ice storm breakage; interesting hoplike fruits in summer; excellent gold fall color; also known as ironwood.

Populus , quaking aspen – good in groups; single-stemmed trees not long-lived; 'Prairie Gold' is a nice selection discovered growing in Platte County, Nebraska, it's tolerant of the problems that plague more western sources.

Prunus , birdcherry – a very hardy, low branching ornamental; likes to sucker; drooping spread, white flower clusters bloom in early May; one of the first trees to leaf out in spring; small black fruit is great for wildlife.

Prunus , chokecherry – a tough reliable native; suckers to form thickets; easily kept confined with mowing; 'Canada Red' and 'Shubert' are purple-leaf tree forms of this dependable selection from Manitoba.

Ptelea , waferash – this eastern U.S. native has shiny dark green leaves that turn yellow in fall; grows well in full sun to heavy shade; interesting flat seeds look like giant elm seeds and persist through winter; adaptable and durable.

Pyrus , Ussurian pear – similar to callery pear types, but hardier; nice fall color; good flowers and 1" fruits; 'Prairie Gem' is a selection from North Dakota; 'Mountain Frost' is a vigorous upright selection from Bailey Nursery in Minnesota; tolerates high pH.



Quercus , dwarf chinkapin oak – a great, small, native tree; shiny leaves turn gold and sometimes bronzy in fall; acorns emerge striped then turn chocolate-brown; excellent for small spaces.

Quercus , Gambel oak – shrubby growth habit with glossy green foliage turning golden yellow in fall; tolerates dry conditions and alkaline soil.

Quercus , wavyleaf oak – thick, leathery leaves are blue-green in color and have wavy margins; tolerates dry soils; native to southern Rocky Mountains.

Syringa , Peking tree lilac – great ornamental with fragrant white flower clusters in late spring; beautiful exfoliating cherry-like bark.

Conifer Trees

Abies , concolor fir – one of the most beautiful evergreens; bright blue new growth eventually makes for soft, blue-green needles; should be planted more.



Juniperus , juniper – an upright evergreen that tolerates a wide range of soils and climates; 'Canaerti' is a great cultivar with tufted foliage; 'Taylor' is an outstanding GreatPlants selection from central Nebraska noted for its narrow, upright habit.

Juniperus , Rocky Mountain juniper – dark green to bluish-green foliage; wide range of cultivars; prefers dry, well drained soils.

Picea , Black Hills spruce – a nice alternative to blue spruce; needles are

short and dark green; likes to be kept moist; tolerates tough sites and conditions; extremely hardy.

Picea , blue spruce – bright green to silver-blue sharp-pointed needles; very symmetrical, pyramidal form; many cultivars available.

Picea , Norway spruce – beautiful weeping habit; attractive long cones; a durable tree from Europe; dislikes dry, windy sites.

Picea , Serbian spruce – branches are arching with a ballerina effect; needles are deep green with white undersides; adaptable to many conditions; a young tree is doing well in Kimball, Nebraska

Pinus , limber pine – native to Kimball county; very flexible branches are plume-like with twisted, blue-green needles; for well-drained, dry soils only.

Pinus , lodgepole pine – Rocky Mountain native; seldom seen in Nebraska; should be planted more.

Pinus , pinyon – small, slow-growing, bushy pine; a picturesque plant for exposed, hot or dry areas; needs well-drained soils.

Pinus , ponderosa pine – a reliable native with long needles and beautiful bark; for well-drained dry soils; avoid overwatering.

Pseudotsuga , Douglas fir – one of the noblest conifers; unique cones are adorned with “tails”; not as drought-tolerant as spruce; fails on dry, poor soils; injured by high winds.

Large Shrubs (over 7' h. at maturity)

Amelanchier, shadblow serviceberry – 6-20' h. multi-stemmed shrub; showy white flowers in March; followed by red changing to black fruit; gold fall foliage; grows well in moist soil in full sun.

Amelanchier, Saskatoon serviceberry – similar to shadblow serviceberry; maximum height is 15'.



Amorpha, indigobush – native; good on wet or dry sites; unusual dark purple flower spikes; looks like a shrubby honeylocust tree; plant in confined space as it can sucker; cut to the ground to rejuvenate.

Caragana, Siberian peashrub – 'Sutherland' is a good cultivar from the Cheyenne Research Station; upright, extremely hardy; bright green leaves emerge on

sienna brown bark; Pygmy has yellow flowers on a 1' h. plant.

Cercocarpus, mountain mahogany – an upright, drought-tolerant native with deeply veined dark green leaves; great fuzzy, twisted seedtails.

Cornus, gray dogwood – a large native with good reddish-purple fall color, white fruit clusters in fall; attractive purple fruit clusters enjoyed by songbirds.

Cornus, roughleaf dogwood – woolly foliage with creamy white flowers in late spring and white berries by early fall; tolerates drought and a wide soil range; good for erosion control.

Cornus, silky dogwood – pretty white flowers top this plant from May-June; showy, blue berries follow; great for moist sites.

Corylus, American hazelnut – a multi-stemmed shrub with handsome, dark green leaves; catkins dangle from bare branches in early spring; edible nuts; best in a protected site with half day sun.

Euonymus, eastern wahoo – a large, native shrub with good rose-red fruit capsules and orange-red fall color.

Forestiera, New Mexico privet – attractive, smooth, blond bark on this southern Rocky Mountains native; small, yellow flowers in early spring; dark blue fruit on female plants follow; prune to create a small tree.

Forsythia – one of the first to bloom in spring with abundant bright yellow blooms; suffers winter dieback; flowers unreliably in the west, but is hardy.

Juniperus , Chinese juniper – plants in this species can range from trees to shrubs to groundcovers; needles are blue-green or gray-green in color; very adaptable, little maintenance is needed once established; Sargent is a groundcover type to 2' h.; 'Glauca' is similar with blue-green foliage.

Juniperus , common juniper – 5-10' h. x 8-12' w. evergreen shrub; needles are blue-green to gray-green in color; exfoliating bark; grows well on poor sites; 'Blue Stripe' is an 18" dwarf with dark blue-green, blue-striped needles.

Lonicera , honeysuckle – Amur honeysuckle can be pruned to a small tree with lots of red fruit; blue velvet honeysuckle is a highly rated species with gray-green foliage and pale pink flowers.

Prunus , chokecherry – large; old, reliable native; a suckering shrub that's easily confined with a mower; nice white flowers in spring followed by red to black fruit; a favorite of song birds; tough as nails; a nice yellow fruited selection is rare, but worth seeking.

Prunus , Nanking cherry – early white, fragrant flowers; tart, showy cherries in early summer; 'Bionca' is a nice white-fruited form from Siberia; exfoliating bark; densely branched; a handsome shrub that should be used more.

Quercus , wavyleaf oak – thick, leathery leaves are blue-green in color and have wavy margins; tolerates dry soils; native to southern Rocky Mountains.

Rhamnus , buckthorn – Smith's buckthorn is native to central Colorado; handsome, glossy leaves; black fruits over 1" long;

golden yellow fall color; fernleaf buckthorn is a large, narrow-leaved form with a very fine texture and handsome bark.



Rhus , cutleaf sumac – large, green leaves have a feathery-like appearance, fall color is shades of yellow, orange, and red; yellowish-green, pyramidal flowers give way to hairy, red, berry-like clusters in fall.

Rhus , fragrant sumac – leaves are arranged in leaflets of three that are dark, shiny green above and hairy below; foliage turns bright orange to reddish-purple in fall.

Rhus , staghorn sumac – furry branch tips are like a stag's horn; nice crimson fruit clusters in fall tip branches.

Rhus , three-leaf sumac – a very tough native to western Nebraska; an attractive sumac with rich foliage turning orange-red in fall; showy red fruit clusters.

Shepherdia , silver buffaloberry – large; an overlooked native with silvery leaves and clusters of orange-red berries in fall; for windy, tough sites and conservation plantings; an excellent food source for wildlife, plant several to assure good fruit set.



Syringa , common lilac – large, showy, fragrant flowers bloom lilac in May; many cultivars are available with a wide variety in blooms; many are susceptible to mildew.

Syringa , late lilac – small, fragrant, purple-white, trumpet-shaped blooms appear in

clusters in June; more pest- and disease-resistant than common lilac.

Viburnum , blackhaw viburnum – a large shrub that can be pruned to form a small tree; glossy dark green leaves turn a beautiful yellow-orange-red fall color; white flat-topped flowers lead to showy rose to blue-black fruit clusters in summer and fall.

Viburnum , burkwood viburnum – dark green, leathery leaves on a dense semi-evergreen shrub; pinkish-white flowers have a spicy fragrance; best in a protected site; tolerates dappled shade; a tough, durable shrub.

Viburnum , nannyberry viburnum – a nice, large native shrub; glossy green leaves turn orange-red in fall; flat-headed creamy-white flower clusters are followed by blue-black fruit; great for songbirds; tough as nails!

Viburnum , wayfaringtree viburnum – medium-large shrub; very tough and adaptable; 'Aureus' selection with green and gold foliage; 'Mohican' is dependable with heavy-textured foliage and red to black fruit; 'Emerald Triumph' has glossy leaves.

Xanthoceras , yellowhorn – this Chinese native has large, shiny compound leaves; showy upright clusters of tubular white, red-centered flowers in spring; plant in enriched garden soils; surprisingly adaptable; protect from wind and avoid overhead watering during establishment.

Small Shrubs (under 7' h. at maturity)

Amelanchier , Regent serviceberry – a 3-4' h selection from North Dakota with large sweet fruit; pendulous white flowers in spring; attractive rounded leaves turn yellow-orange in fall.

Amorpha , leadplant – native shrubby plant with small gray-white leaves forming 4' h. bushy plants; topped with rich, blue-purple flower spikes in early summer; very drought tolerant; prune hard in early spring for compact growth.



Aronia , black chokeberry – black fruit clusters can persist all winter; glossy green leaves have a nice wine red fall color; tough, adaptable plant; choose 'Viking' for large fruit, 'Elata' for glossy leaves, and 'Autumn Magic' for fall color.

Artemisia , sagebrush – nice, silvery foliage on a native plant; silver sage is a 2-4' h. mounded shrub; western sage is a 3-6' h. excellent accent plant.

Atriplex , saltbush – a western Nebraska native with gray-green foliage; tough, extremely drought-tolerant; four-winged saltbush has interesting fruit; shadscale has rounded, thick leaves.

Chamaebatiaria , fernbush – this western native has showy, white flower spikes; attractive olive-green foliage; good drainage is a must.

Chrysothamnus , rabbitbrush – a tough native with beautiful yellow flower clusters in late-summer; thin silvery-green leaves; seedheads add interest well into winter; tolerates poor soils; do not overwater!

Cotoneaster – cranberry cotoneaster has small, glossy leaves on arching branches, with showy red berries in late summer; spreading cotoneaster has attractive foliage that turns yellow, orange, and red in fall.

Diervilla , dwarf bush honeysuckle – a sprawling habit forming mounds of green foliage with yellow to red tube-like flowers from June-July.

Euonymus , burning bush – interesting winged stems and a dense form; dark green leaves turn crimson in fall; avoid alkaline soils.

Fallugia , apache plume – an outstanding western native; everblooming white flowers begin in spring and are a bumblebee favorite; smoky, seed plumes last all season; plant low junipers at the base for a great combination.

Grayia , spiny hopsage – a western native with fleshy, silvery leaves that become shinier with age; semi-evergreen; extremely drought-tolerant.

Krascheninnikovia , winterfat – 2' hardy, western shrub has leaves covered with whitish wool; needs dry soil; makes an impressive accent plant.

Philadelphus , mock orange – slow-growing; a western native with fragrant, pure white, starchy flowers in June; glossy brown bark add interest all year long.

Physocarpus , ninebark – dense, bushy shrubs for hedge plantings; nice papery bark; arrow-shaped leaves; dwarf ninebark grows 4-6' h. with white flowers; 'Nugget' is a yellow-leaved selection growing to 6' tall and wide.

Potentilla , cinquefoil – a very tough, dense, bushy shrub; wide color range; 'Prairie Snow' is an excellent white flowered selection; 'Jackman' is a golden-yellow variety; both from USDA Cheyenne Station.

Prunus , western sandcherry – silver-green leaves; masses of tiny, white flowers in spring; ¾" black fruit in summer, great for preserves; prefers dry, well-drained sites; 'Pawnee Buttes' is a low, 18" creeping form; 'Sioux' is selected for fruiting.

Rhus , Gro-Low sumac – an excellent woody groundcover for challenging growing conditions; small yellow flowers in spring; shiny, dark green foliage turns orange-red in fall.

Ribes , currant – good for massing, wildlife and tough sites; clove currant has yellow trumpet shaped flowers with a spicy

fragrance and black fruit in summer; alpine currant is one of the first shrubs to leaf out, very hardy; 'Comanche' is one of the best for hardiness, productivity and flavor.

Rosa , redleaf rose – purple foliage in sunny areas with reddish-violet stems; light pink flowers and bright red hips last into winter.

Rosa , rugosa rose – white or pink, single or double flowers atop wrinkly, slightly hairy leaves; shiny red, 1" hips mature in late summer.



Spiraea , Korean spirea – large, flat-topped, white flower clusters to 7" across compliment the rich green leaves; very reliable.

Spiraea , birchleaf spirea – 'Tor' has iridescent green leaves decorated with a

profusion of white flowers; beautiful purple fall color.



Symphoricarpos , coralberry – a native suckering shrub good for massing, tough sites and shady areas; great red-purple fruit clustered along arching stems persist all winter; 'Chenault' is a nice low-growing cultivar.

Symphoricarpos , snowberry – clusters of white fruit tip thin arching stems in late fall; blue-green scalloped leaves; suckers create a dense thicket; best in a confined space or for erosion control.

Syringa , dwarf Korean lilac – 4' h. x 6' w.; a good, compact, late-flowering form.

Syringa , Miss Kim lilac – 6' h. x 4' w.; another good, compact, late-flowering form.