

Butterfly Milkweed

Asclepias tuberosa



Color: Bright Orange

Blooms: June - September

Mature Height: 2-3'

Sun Exposure: Full-Partial Sun

Soil Moisture: Dry-Mesic

Tips: This showy, bright orange species of the milkweed family is a host for monarch butterfly larvae! It's large, showy clusters of flowers stand out in the garden, and look best when planted with other medium-height plant. After flowering, its large seed pods provide visual interest through fall. When fully dry seeds can be collected for planting. Will spread gradually once established.

Prairie Milkweed

Asclepias sullivantii



Color: Pink

Blooms: June-July

Mature Height: 2-3'

Sun Exposure: Full Sun

Soil Moisture: Mesic-Wet

Planting Tips: While it can spread by means of its rhizomes, this plant is far less aggressive than Common Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*). May self-seed in the landscape if seed pods are not removed prior to splitting open. Flowers are a nectar source for many insects and leaves are a food source for monarch butterfly larvae (caterpillars). Because the foliage of Prairie Milkweed contains a white latex that is bitter-tasting and toxic to mammals, deer and rabbits avoid it!

Columbine

Aquilegia canadensis



Color: Red

Blooms: May-June

Mature Height: 2-3'

Sun Exposure: Partial Sun-Shade

Soil Moisture: Dry – Mesic

Planting Tips: Prefers soil that is loamy, rocky, or slightly sandy. Mature plants can also tolerate full sun, although young plants require some shade from neighboring vegetation. Once it becomes established, this plant is easy to maintain. The prettiest blooms come from cross-pollinated plants, so you'll want to plant more than one. Eastern Columbine typically lives for a few years but it readily re-seeds. Bumblebees and the Ruby-Throated Hummingbird visit the flowers for nectar. Because the foliage is toxic, it is rarely bothered by deer.

Harebell

Campanulastrum rotundifolia



Color: blue-violet

Blooms: June- September

Mature Height: 1-2'

Sun Exposure: Full-Partial Sun

Soil Moisture: Dry

Planting Tips: Choose a spot with full sun to light shade and well-drained soil. They prefer dry to average moisture once established but benefit from consistent moisture when growing or in hot weather. Planting them in groups helps support their delicate stems, and deadheading spent flowers encourages more blooms. This plant is also deer resistant.

Prairie Coreopsis

Coreopsis palmata



Color: Yellow

Blooms: June - July

Mature Height: 2-5'

Sun Exposure: Full-Partial Sun

Soil Moisture: Mesic-Dry

Planting Tips: The densely spaced, bright, showy yellow flowers of prairie coreopsis are a striking addition to any garden. Once established, this plant loves to be neglected! Excellent drought tolerance! The mostly upright plant will spread via rhizomes and seeds, and looks lovely when allowed to form clonal colonies. Excellent for pollinators, particularly bees. Plant with butterfly weed for a lovely mix of sunny bright colors!

Pale Purple Coneflower

Echinacea pallida



Color: Light Lavender Purple

Blooms: July

Mature Height: 2-3'

Sun Exposure: Full-Partial Sun

Soil Moisture: Mesic-Dry

Planting Tips: Pale Purple Coneflower doesn't like having its feet wet. It strongly prefers well-drained soils. A long tap-root helps make this a very drought tolerant plant once established. As a relatively early bloomer, planting in a naturalized bed with other forbs will provide color all season! Also looks lovely in mass plantings, and makes nice cut flowers. Will readily self-seed if seed pods are left in place.

Joe Pyeweed

Eupatorium maculatum



Color: Purple to Mauve

Blooms: July - September

Mature Height: 4-6'

Mature Width: 2-4' (clump forming)

Sun Exposure: Full-Partial Sun

Soil Moisture: Mesic-Wet

Planting Tips: It is a substantial plant which needs space, but when planted in groups or massed can provide spectacular flowering and architectural height. Prefers moist, fertile, humusy soils which do not dry out. Great for rain gardens! Cut plants to the ground in late winter. Flowers are very attractive to butterflies and give way to attractive seed heads which persist well into winter. The flowers smell faintly like vanilla.

Swamp Rose Mallow

Hibiscus moscheutos



Color: White to Pink, usually with a darker center

Blooms: July-September

Mature Height: 3-7'

Mature Width: 2-4'

Sun Exposure: Full Sun to Light Shade

Soil Moisture: Mesic-Wet

Planting Tips: Swamp Rose Mallow has exotic oversized flowers that are very striking, particularly when they occur in a colony of plants. Best in moist, organically rich soils, but does surprisingly well in average garden soils. Regular deep watering is advisable in droughts. Tolerant of heat and humidity. Plant in locations protected from wind to minimize the risk of wind burn. Pinch back growing tips when they reach 8" and again at 12" if bushy plants are desired. Cut back stems to approximately 3-4 inches in late autumn. New growth shoots are slow to emerge in spring. However, once new growth begins, it proceeds quite rapidly.

Prairie Blazingstar

Liatris pycnostachya



Color: Rosey to Lilac Purple

Blooms: July - August

Mature Height: 2-5'

Sun Exposure: Full Sun

Soil Moisture: Mesic-Dry

Planting Tips: Established plants tolerate poor soils, drought, summer heat and humidity, but seedlings and transplants are vulnerable. In diverse prairies, taller, sturdy plants help support the flowers. In a garden or landscape setting, flowers may need staking. It will spread through underground corms and develop a clustered colony after a few years. Intolerant of wet soils in winter. Sometimes treated as a biennial. The flowers are pollinated primarily by long-tongued bees, butterflies, and skippers.

Cardinal Flower

Lobelia cardinalis



Color: Red

Blooms: July - September

Mature Height: 2-4'

Sun Exposure: Full-Partial Sun

Soil Moisture: Moist-Mesic-Wet

Planting Tips: The large spikes of blooms on the Cardinal Flower are an impressive sight, particularly in mass plantings, borders, rain gardens, or naturalized in woodland gardens. They prefer moist soils, and a heavy mulching is helpful. Not truly perennial, but spread easily by seed and cuttings. Plant will often form its own offsets from the lowest leaves, resulting in a clumping growth pattern that "acts" perennial. Very attractive to hummingbirds!

Wild Bergamot

Monarda fistulosa



Color: Lilac Purple

Blooms: July - August

Mature Height: 2-4'

Sun Exposure: Full-Partial Sun

Soil Moisture: Dry-Moist Mesic

Planting Tips: A very adaptable plant, Wild Bergamot can grow nearly anywhere! This flower is actually a member of the mint family, and has a pleasant herbal aroma. Also known as bee balm, it really does draw in the bees! The pale, lilac purple blooms are a lovely complement to yellow coneflowers in naturalized plantings. It also grows well in mass plantings.

Foxglove Beard Tongue

Penstemon digitalis



Color: White

Blooms: April - June

Mature Height: 3-5'

Sun Exposure: Full -Partial Sun

Soil Moisture: Dry-Mesic

Planting Tips: A tall plant with early and long-blooming period, this species is large enough to compete against many kinds of weeds. It adapts well to cultivation, is not bothered by disease, and is easy to grow. The tubular flowers attract long-tongued bees, as well as some butterflies and hummingbirds

Jacob's Ladder

Polemonium reptans



Color: Blue

Blooms: Spring

Mature Height: 10-24"

Sun Exposure: Partial Sun-Shade

Soil Moisture: Dry Mesic-Moist Mesic

Planting Tips: Naturally found in deciduous woodlands and shaded banks of streams and rivers, this plant is able to adapt to somewhat shady gardens that are located near deciduous trees. This is a rather floppy plant, although both the flowers and foliage are quite attractive. It is also an attractive plant to bees and butterflies!

Black-Eyed Susan

Rudbeckia hirta



Color: Yellow

Blooms: June - August

Mature Height: 1-3'

Sun Exposure: Full Sun

Soil Moisture: Mesic-Dry

Planting Tips: This plant is fast to mature and easy to grow, although short-lived. It will bloom in its first year! A biennial or short-lived perennial, it'll usually remain in the garden though self-seeding. Deadhead spent flowers to encourage additional bloom and/or to prevent unwanted spreading. The composite flowers appeal to a wide range of insects, and the seeds are occasionally eaten by goldfinches. Watch for slugs and snails on young plants, but generally not browsed by deer.

Royal Catchfly

Silene regia



Color: Red

Blooms: Mid-Late Summer

Mature Height: 2-4'

Sun Exposure: Full Sun

Soil Moisture: Dry-Mesic

Planting Tips: Royal Catchfly is a rare plant that has endangered status in Illinois, although it is fairly easy to grow. Plants begin to bloom while small in size, but it takes several years to reach their full potential. The long, narrow flowers attract butterflies as pollinators.

Aromatic Aster

Symphyotrichum oblongifolium



Color: Violet

Blooms: August-October

Mature Height: 1-2'

Sun Exposure: Full Sun

Soil Moisture: Dry

Planting Tips. The preference is full sun and dry conditions, although an average moisture level is tolerated if the site is well-drained. Poor, rocky soil with open terrain is preferred; a high pH is tolerated. Some of the lower leaves may wither away before the plants begin to bloom, but the foliage usually remains quite attractive. At moist fertile sites, this plant has trouble competing against tall aggressive plants, unless such neighbors are selectively weeded out. This plant branches frequently, creating a bushy appearance. It works well planted in clumps in sunny rock gardens and similar areas. Despite the name, aromatic aster has no noticeable floral scent, although the crushed foliage and flowerheads have a balsam-like aroma.

Blue Vervain

Verbena hastata



Color: Blue Violet

Blooms: Mid - Late Summer

Mature Height: 4- 5'

Sun Exposure: Full-Partial Sun

Soil Moisture: Moist Mesic – Wet

Planting Tips: This attractive bloomer is the only Verbena native to Illinois that has blue flowers. Its upright spikes of flowers aren't highly scented, but they attract a wide variety of pollinators. An excellent addition to rain gardens, because it doesn't mind standing water as long as it's temporary! Deer resistant.

Side-Oats Grama

Bouteloua curtipendula



Color: bluish-green foliage, purple and red flowers that turn gold in fall/winter

Bloom:

Mature Height: 2-3

Sun Exposure: Full-Partial Sun

Soil Moisture: Dry-Mesic

Planting Tips: This grass is unique in that it has small bracts that fall onto one side down the stem. The flowers sport red-purple anthers. Ensure full sun and well-drained soil. Water well the first year and then enjoying its drought tolerance and low maintenance once established. This grass thrives in lean soils and offers great wildlife benefits.

Little Bluestem

Schizachyrium scoparium



Color: Bluish-Green to Reddish-Gold

Mature Height: 2-4'

Plant Spacing: 2'

Sun Exposure: Full-Partial Sun

Soil Moisture: Dry-Mesic

Planting Tips: Little bluestem is a colorful and easy-care addition to gardens. It gets its name from the bluish tint of new growth, which matures to a lovely reddish-gold color that's maintained through winter. Fluffy silver-white plumes add interest in late summer and fall, and are a nice addition to cut arrangements. Plant in clumps as a medium-height accent plant. Also works well in naturalized areas. Provides shelter and food for small animals and birds.

Prairie Dropseed

Sporobolus heterolepis



Color: Blueish green foliage turns gold-bronze in fall. Panicles are pinkish brown.

Mature Height: 2-3'

Mature Width: 2-3'

Sun Exposure: Full Sun

Soil Moisture: Dry to Mesic

Planting Tips: Create a well-defined and distinctive border with Prairie Dropseed by placing new transplants 18 to 24 inches apart. Snow does not flatten the plant, so it is visible even in winter. Because the seeds are difficult to germinate, it is easier to propagate this grass by dividing the dense tufts of leaves. Once it becomes established at a suitable site, Prairie Dropseed is long-lived.