

# Native Plant Landscaping Fact Sheet



Kansas  
Native  
Plant  
Society

## Why grow native plants?

- Native plants are better-adapted to regional climates than most typical nursery plants.
- Most native plants require less water than typical garden plants.
- Once established, native plants are low maintenance because many of them are perennials.
- Native plants are simply beautiful and unusual.
- Regional native plants attract interesting species of native birds.

## How do I know what native plants to use?

- Establish plants from your nearest regional native seed/plant source.
- Do not buy inexpensive cans of wildflower seeds from discount stores, catalogs, or greenhouses. These seeds may contain weedy species, filler, and plants that are not from the area where you live.
- Collect seeds from native plant prairies near your home.
- Visit a reputable native plant nursery close to home.
- Ask the greenhouse owner where the native plants originated.

## What are suggestions for sun-loving native plants in my backyard?

In eastern Kansas try plants noted with the letter E.

In western Kansas try plants noted with the letter W.

Ashy Goldenrod - *Solidago mollis* **EW**  
Ashy Sunflower - *Helianthus mollis* **E**  
Big-flower Coreopsis - *Coreopsis grandiflora* **E**  
Black-eyed Susan - *Rudbeckia hirta* **EW**  
Blanket Flower - *Gaillardia pulchella* **W**  
Blue Grama - *Bouteloua gracilis* **W**  
Blue Sage - *Salvia azurea* **E**  
Blue Wild Indigo - *Baptisia australis* **E**  
Buffalo Grass - *Buchloe dactyloides* **W**  
Butterflyweed - *Asclepias tuberosa* **E**  
Canada Wild-rye - *Elymus canadensis* **EW**  
Dakota Vervain - *Verbena bipinnatifida* **EW**  
Eastern Gamma Grass - *Tripsacum dactyloides* **E**  
Gray-headed Coneflower - *Ratibida pinnata* **EW**  
Hairy Grama - *Bouteloua hirsuta* **W**  
Indian Grass - *Sorghastrum nutans* **EW**  
June Grass - *Koeleria macrantha* **EW**  
Large-flower Butterfly-weed - *Gaura longiflora* **EW**

## Could I dig plants from the wild?

- In many states this practice is illegal.
- Most mature plants do not survive the transplanting.
- The conditions in the wild probably do not match the conditions in your backyard garden.
- It is better to leave the plants where all can enjoy them.
- Buy or collect seeds to get the best value for your landscaping.

## How do I use native plants in my landscaping?

- Native plants can be used as a small "wildflower meadow". Buy good quality mixed wildflower and grasses seed for this type of landscaping.
- A border or grouping of "specimen" plants can be effective in a landscaping plan.
- Mix native plants with other types of exotic, non-invasive perennials for an attractive and low maintenance garden.
- Mix native perennials with shrubs or trees.

Little Bluestem - *Schizachyrium scoparium* **EW**  
Louisiana Sagewort - *Artemisia ludoviciana* **W**  
Missouri Goldenrod - *Solidago missouriensis* **EW**  
Narrow-leaf Purple-coneflower - *Echinacea angustifolia* **W**  
New England Aster - *Aster novae-angliae* **E**  
Pale Purple-coneflower - *Echinacea pallida* **E**  
Prairie Dropseed - *Sporobolus heterolepis* **E**  
Purple Poppy Mallow - *Callirhoe involucrata* **EW**  
Rocky Mountain Zinnia - *Zinnia grandiflora* **W**  
Rose Vervain - *Verbena canadensis* **E**  
Rough Gayfeather - *Liatris aspera* **EW**  
Serrate-leaf Evening-primrose - *Calylophus serrulatus* **W**  
Shell-leaf Beardtongue - *Penstemon grandiflorus* **E**  
Side-oats Grama - *Bouteloua curtipendula* **EW**  
Stiff Goldenrod - *Solidago rigida* **EW**  
Switch Grass - *Panicum virgatum* **EW**  
Western Wheat Grass - *Agropyron smithii* **EW**  
White Beardtongue - *Penstemon albidus* **W**

## What native woodland plants are recommended for shady areas in eastern Kansas?

American Columbine - *Aquilegia canadensis*  
Canadian Brome - *Bromus pubescens*  
Drummond's Aster - *Aster drummondii*  
Elm-leaf Goldenrod - *Solidago ulmifolia*  
Golden Ragwort - *Packera obovata*

River Oats - *Chasmanthium latifolium*  
Solomon's Seal - *Polygonum biflorum*  
Wild Bergamot - *Monarda fistulosa*  
Wild Ginger - *Asarum canadense*  
Wild Sweet William - *Phlox divaricata*

## How do I get started?

- Check your city ordinances. There may be restrictions on height of plants in your front yard.
- Get ideas from the references listed below.
- Start small.
- Encourage your neighbors to join you in native plant landscaping.

## How should I prepare my yard for Native Plants?

The best preparation for native plants is to duplicate, as much as possible, the natural conditions where the plant grows. However, the soils, moisture, and micro-organisms in the garden will likely not be the same as a woodland or prairie. So, adjustments may be necessary to simulate a native plant's acceptable growing conditions.

## Where do I learn more about growing native plants?

**Books** (Many of these may be available at your public library.)

- 100 Easy-to-Grow Native Plants: For American Gardens in Temperate Zones by Lorraine Johnson, Firefly Books, 1999.
- Butterfly Gardening: Creating Summer Magic in Your Garden by Xerces Society, Smithsonian Institution, Sierra Club Books; 2nd edition, 1998.
- Gardening with Prairie Plants by S. Wasowski, The Univ. MN Press, 2002.
- Growing and Propagating Wild Flowers by H. R. Phillips, The Univ. NC Press, 1985.
- Growing Native Wildflowers by Dwight R. Platt and Lorna Habegger Harder, Kansas Native Plant Society, 1997. For more information or to order, visit [[www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org](http://www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org)] or contact Dyck Arboretum at (620) 327-8124.
- Native Trees, Shrubs, and Vines: A Guide to Using, Growing, and Propagating North American Woody Plants by William Cullina, Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002.
- Natural Landscaping: Designing with Native Plant Communities by John Dieckmann, Robert M. Schuster, Renee Graef (Illustrator), University of Wisconsin Press; 2nd edition, 2003.
- The New England Wild Flower Society Guide to Growing and Propagating Wildflowers of the United States and Canada by William Cullina, Houghton Mifflin, 2000.
- A Practical Guide to Prairie Reconstruction by Carl Kurtz, The Univ. of Iowa Press, 2001.
- The Prairie Garden by J. R. Smith with B. S. Smith, The Univ. WI Press, 1987.
- Restoring the Tallgrass Prairie by Shirley Shirley, The Univ. of Iowa Press, 1994.
- The Tallgrass restoration handbook for prairies, savannas, and woodlands by S. Packard and C.F. Mutel, Island Press, 1997.

## Websites

- Dyck Arboretum of the Plains [www.dyckarboretum.org](http://www.dyckarboretum.org)
- Gardening with Native Plants of Kansas [www.kansasnativeplants.com](http://www.kansasnativeplants.com)
- Grow Native [www.grownative.org](http://www.grownative.org)
- Iowa Prairie Network - Prairie Management & Reconstruction [www.iowaprairienetwork.org/mgmt/management.htm](http://www.iowaprairienetwork.org/mgmt/management.htm)
- Kansas Native Plant Society [www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org](http://www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org)
- Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center [www.wildflower.org](http://www.wildflower.org)
- Plant Native [www.plantnative.org](http://www.plantnative.org)
- Prairies Forever [www.prairies.org](http://www.prairies.org)