



RAIN GARDEN PLANT GUIDE



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INTRODUCTION

This Rain Garden Plant Guide is designed to be used in conjunction with Louisville MSD's Rain Garden Handbook. The Rain Garden Handbook provides planning and design information that should be considered before making plant selection for a site. This guide of recommended plants contains specific information on growing conditions, height, flower color, flowering time, etc.

The Rain Garden Plant Guide includes native species, cultivars of native species and non-native plants as choices for landscaping and restoration projects. Native species are species that were present in this region prior to European settlement of this area. Following European settlement of Kentucky, many species were introduced for agriculture and landscaping, and others were introduced accidentally as seed mixed in with other imported materials. This guide attempts to exclude any species considered to be invasive or harmful to nearby natural areas.

There are many benefits to working with native species. For instance, these species have existed in these growing conditions for thousands of years. Given that you choose the right plant for the right location, native species, once established, will not require additional water or fertilizer inputs. Native plants will also provide a source of food for dwindling wildlife species including birds and butterflies. A locally genetic source of native plants will be best adapted to our conditions. A consideration in using native plant materials is that they are a mix of unique individuals. While this makes for a healthy population of plants, it also results in variability in flower color, height, and other physical characteristics of the plants. Utilizing cultivars will provide more consistency in the physical characteristics of plants.



GRASSES/SEDGES/RUSHES

Big Bluestem

Andropogon gerardii

Strong fall color of reddish gold. Plants can be cut back in the early summer to maintain a shorter height. A dominant grass of the tall-grass prairie. Can be aggressive if left undisturbed. Species tends to flop over in winter months. Cut back dead plant material in the winter.

Attracts butterflies and grasshoppers.

Habitat: Full sun



Dropseed Native Plant Nursery

Bottlebrush Grass

Hystrix patula

This very adaptable grass will grow in full sun or full shade and in moist or dry conditions. Bottlebrush Grass spreads primarily by re-seeding itself and may form small colonies of several plants. May become aggressive and require weeding to prevent its spread. Cut back in late winter or early spring. Can be used for erosion control.

Food source for many types of caterpillars. Attracts birds and butterflies.

Habitat: Full to part sun



Dropseed Native Plant Nursery

Fox Sedge

Carex vulpinoidea

Prefers full sun and moist soil. Good colonizer of disturbed, open, moist ground. This sedge may be weedy and spreads rapidly. Named for the brown cluster of fruit that forms mid-summer and looks like a fox tail. Cut back last year's dead plant material in the early spring to allow birds to feed on the seed during the winter months. This low-growing sedge makes a nice border in a moist area.

Attracts birds.

Habitat: Full to part sun



Dropseed Native Plant Nursery

GRASSES/SEDGES/RUSHES (CONTINUED)

Frank's Sedge

Carex frankii

This sedge grows abundantly in wet locations such as swamps, wet meadows, wet prairies and around rivers, lakes, streams and ponds. Prefers full sun. Cut back last year's dead plant material in the early spring to stimulate new growth. Makes a nice border planting in moist sites.

Food source for waterfowl.

Habitat: Full to part sun



Dropseed Native Plant Nursery

Indian Grass

Sorghastrum nutans

Prefers full sun and dry to moist soil. Cut back early in the season to keep plant at a lower height. Cut back last year's growth in late winter or early spring. Fall color deep orange. Can spread aggressively. This species is tolerant of air pollution and can be grown under black walnut trees.

Attracts birds. Food source for caterpillars and grasshoppers. Consumed by livestock.

Habitat: Full sun



Dropseed Native Plant Nursery

Little Bluestem

Schizachyrium scoparium

Prefers full sun and dry to moist conditions. Does not require staking or cutting back during the growing season or winter months. Takes on an attractive golden brown color during the fall and into the winter. The fluffy white seeds are an attractive accent and are maintained into the winter. Very drought tolerant. Cut back to several inches above ground level in the early spring. Once established, plants can be divided in the early spring.

Attracts birds. Food source for many insects.

Habitat: Full sun



Dropseed Native Plant Nursery

Prairie Dropseed

Sporobolus heterolepis

Great accent or ground cover for the landscape. Foliage turns copper-gold in fall, gradually fading to light beige by winter. Late summer flowers bloom in airy panicles above the foliage. Flowers are noted for their coriander-like fragrance. Cut back plants in the late winter.

Attracts birds.

Habitat: Full sun



Dropseed Native Plant Nursery

River Oats

Chasmanthium latifolium

This very adaptable species will grow in full sun, as well as full shade, and will tolerate a wide variety of soil conditions. Self-seeds and may spread aggressively. Leaving foliage in place over winter adds interest to the landscape, helps protect crowns from the cold, and provides food for birds. Cut back to the ground in late winter.

Attracts butterflies and birds.

Habitat: Full to part sun



Dropseed Native Plant Nursery

Soft Rush

Juncus effusus

Notwithstanding its preference for abundant moisture, soft rush will perform surprisingly well in average garden soils as long as they receive consistent irrigation. Will tolerate full sun or partial shade. Plants keep nice form and some green color during winter. No need to cut back plants in the fall or early spring. Clumps are often slow to establish, but once established will spread by creeping rhizomes.

Habitat: Full sun



Dropseed Native Plant Nursery

GRASSES/SEDGES/RUSHES (CONTINUED)

Virginia Wild Rye

Elymus virginicus

This grass grows abundantly in wet locations, such as swamps, wet meadows, wet prairies and around rivers, lakes, streams and ponds. Prefers full sun. Cut back last year's dead plant material in the early spring to stimulate new growth. Makes a nice border planting in moist sites.

Food source for waterfowl.

Habitat: Full to part sun



Dropseed Native Plant Nursery

SMALL TREES AND SHRUBS

Arrowwood

Viburnum dentatum

Lustrous, dark-green foliage turns yellow to wine-red in fall. Suckers freely from base; suckers require periodic cutting unless a dense, thicket growth is desired. This species is adaptable to many soil types and moisture levels.

Attracts butterflies and birds. Food source for caterpillars.

Habitat: Full to part sun



(left) Missouri Botanical Garden
(right) Alan Cressler, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Blackhaw Viburnum

Viburnum prunifolium

Prune immediately after flowering to promote flowering in the following year. Blackhaw is usually grown as a large, upright, multi-stemmed, deciduous shrub with an irregular crown, but it also may be grown as a small, single trunk tree. Attractive shades of red and purple in the fall.

Attracts butterflies and birds. Food source for caterpillars.

Habitat: Shade to full sun



(left) Missouri Botanical Garden
(right) Alan Cressler, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Buttonbush

Cephalanthus occidentalis

Pruning is usually not necessary, but may be done in early spring to shape. If plants become unmanageable, however, they may be cut back near to the ground in early spring to revitalize. Trunks are often twisted. Fragrant flowers.

Attracts bees, birds and butterflies.

Habitat: Full to part sun



Dropseed Native Plant Nursery

SMALL TREES AND SHRUBS (CONTINUED)

Coralberry

Symphoricarpos orbiculatus

The greenish-white flower clusters are not as showy as the clusters of coral-pink to purple berries up to 1/4 inch in diameter which remain on the plant through winter. Coralberry forms extensive colonies and spreads by rooting at the nodes where it touches the ground. Can be pruned to limit spread and maintain shape. Not susceptible to disease or insect damage.

Attracts birds and small mammals.

Habitat: Shade to part sun



Dropseed Native Plant Nursery

Elderberry

Sambucus canadensis

This loose, graceful, deciduous shrub grows to 12 feet in height. Prune heavily in winter to maintain shape. Elderberry is a fast grower and aggressive competitor with weeds and herbaceous species. Individual plants are very short-lived, however, root masses produce new shoots. Cutting the whole bush to the ground every other year may be necessary to keep the bushes in check.

Attracts bees, butterflies and birds.

Habitat: Shade to full sun



Dropseed Native Plant Nursery

Fragrant Sumac

Rhus aromatica

This shrub turns fall colors of red, yellow and orange. Fragrant sumac colonizes to form thickets and looks best when planted en masse or in drift-like plantings as it occurs in nature. Leaves and twigs are aromatic when bruised. Separate male and female plants – only the female plants produce red berries.

Attracts bees, butterflies and birds. Food source for a large variety of caterpillars.

Habitat: Full to part sun



(left) Dropseed Native Plant Nursery
(right) Sally and Andy Wasowski, Lady Bird Johnson
Wildflower Center

SMALL TREES AND SHRUBS (CONTINUED)

Nannyberry

Viburnum lentago

This 15-foot tall shrub produces white flowers in the spring and purplish blackberries in the fall. The plants spread by suckers and will form a dense hedge. Individual plants can be pruned to create a more tree-like form. The berries are edible, and are also enjoyed by birds. The flowers are attractive to butterflies.

Habitat: Full to part sun



(left) Missouri Botanical Garden

(right) R.W. Smith, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Pawpaw

Asimina triloba

Native to the forest, this small tree is adaptable enough to also grow in full sun. The large, broad leaves turn yellow in the fall. Trees produce an edible fruit in the fall. Fruit production is higher when plants are grown in the full sun. Pawpaw does not have separate male and female plants, however, trees cannot self pollinate, so at least two trees are needed for successful fruit production. The leaves are an important food source for the caterpillar phase of native butterflies.

Habitat: Full sun or full shade



(left) Missouri Botanical Garden

(right) Julie Makin, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

River Birch

Betula nigra

River Birch is fast growing and long-lived and is probably the most trouble-free birch. Do not prune until summer when the sap has stopped flowing. The tree's selling point is its satiny, silver bark that peels to reveal a cinnamon-brown trunk beneath. Fall foliage is yellow but seldom effective.

Attracts birds.

Habitat: Full to part sun



(left) Missouri Botanical Garden

(right) Sally and Andy Wasowski, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

SMALL TREES AND SHRUBS (CONTINUED)

Serviceberry

Amelanchier laevis

Serviceberry is a multiple-trunked tree or shrub, 15-25 feet tall, with dense, fine-textured branching. Serviceberries are subject to many disease and insect problems, but damage from these problems is usually cosmetic, rather than life-threatening.

Attracts birds. Food source for caterpillars.

Habitat: Full to part sun



Missouri Botanical Garden

Silky Dogwood

Cornus amomum

Branches that touch the ground may root at the nodes. When left alone, this shrub may spread to form thickets. Good plant for colonizing and stabilizing stream banks. Twigs are purplish brown in spring.

Attracts birds.

Habitat: Shade to full sun



Dropseed Native Plant Nursery

Spicebush

Lindera benzoin

In fall, foliage turns yellow with female plants developing attractive, but sometimes hidden, red berry-like drupes. Hardy, fast-growing bush. Yellow leaf color in the fall. Leaves are aromatic when crushed.

Attracts bees, butterflies and birds. Food source for a large variety of caterpillars. Will tolerate clay soil. Not attractive to deer.

Habitat: Full to part sun



(left) Dropseed Native Plant Nursery
(right) Julie Makin, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

SMALL TREES AND SHRUBS (CONTINUED)

Swamp Rose

Rosa palustris

Swamp Rose is an upright deciduous shrub with arching branches. Prune as needed in late winter. Plants slowly spread by suckers. Leaves often turn attractive shades of red in fall. Forms attractive red fruits in the fall.

Attracts bees, butterflies and birds.

Habitat: Full sun



Dropseed Native Plant Nursery

Wild Hydrangea

Hydrangea arborescens

Wild Hydrangea suckers freely, creeping over large areas. It is susceptible to sunscald, chlorosis in alkaline soils, and winter dieback. Many weak, brittle canes are easily broken in wind and ice. Fast-growing and short-lived, this hydrangea is often treated as an herbaceous perennial and cut to the ground every winter. If the canes are allowed to grow, the naturally peeling bark is attractive. Blooms on new season growth. Fall foliage is insignificant.

Attracts bees and butterflies. Food source for caterpillars.

Habitat: Shade



Dropseed Native Plant Nursery

Winterberry

Ilex verticillata

The leaves of common winterberry are not shaped with sharp teeth like other hollies and are not evergreen. The purplish green foliage turns black, in fact, with the first frost. Winterberry has separate male and female plants; only females will produce the attractive red berries that persist through the winter. Generally one male winterberry will be sufficient for pollinating 9-10 female plants. Prune to shape in early spring just before new growth appears.

Attracts bees, birds and other mammals. Food source for caterpillars.

Habitat: Full to part sun



(left) Missouri Botanical Garden
(right) George H. Bruso, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

FERNS

Christmas Fern

Polystichum acrostichoides

This fern stays mostly evergreen throughout the winter. Its name indicates its traditional use for Christmas decorations. Christmas Fern is a very adaptable species and grows well in both saturated and well drained soils. It will spread to create a ground cover over time.

Habitat: Shade to part sun



Dropseed Native Plant Nursery

Cinnamon Fern

Osmunda cinnamomea

Prefers partial shade. The contrasting stature of fertile and infertile fronds can make for dramatic accents in a landscape. The common name refers to the cinnamon-colored fibers near the base of the leaves. Slow growing. Requires moist soil or standing water. Cut back dead plant material in the early spring.

Attracts birds.

Habitat: Shade



Missouri Botanical Garden

Lady Fern

Athyrium filix-femina

This species prefers shady, moist conditions, however it tolerates drier soils than many other ferns. Will tolerate full sun if soil is kept constantly moist. Shelter from wind to protect fronds from breaking. Lady Fern will spread, but very slowly. Divide clumps in spring every few years to reposition crowns at the soil level. Dies back completely in the winter.

Habitat: Shade



Dropseed Native Plant Nursery

FERNS (CONTINUED)

Royal Fern

Osmunda regalis

This fern requires shade and rich, moist soil. Divide in fall or spring.

Habitat: Shade



Missouri Botanical Garden

Sensitive Fern

Onoclea sensibilis

Will grow in shade or full sun. Prefers moist soil. Usually grows taller in wet soils, which it tolerates well. Spreads by both creeping rhizomes and spores, and can be somewhat aggressive in optimum growing conditions. Commonly called Sensitive Fern because the green vegetative fronds are sensitive to and suffer almost immediate damage from the first fall frost. Plants die back completely in the winter. Divide in fall or spring.

Attracts birds.

Habitat: Shade



Missouri Botanical Garden

WILD FLOWERS

Bee Balm

Monarda fistulosa

Deadhead flowers to prolong summer bloom. Plant needs good air circulation and should not be crowded in order to avoid powdery mildew. Leaves are fragrant. This species can spread aggressively and may require weeding back to avoid excessive spread. Cut back dead plant material during the winter months.

Attracts butterflies, bees and hummingbirds.

Habitat: Full sun



Dropseed Native Plant Nursery

Black-eyed Susan

Rudbeckia hirta

This species has a long flowering time from early through mid-summer. Biennial or short-lived perennial. Can self-seed freely and may become aggressive. Weeding back may be required to prevent excessive spread. May need to be staked. Cut back dead plant material in the early spring to allow birds to feed on the seed during the winter months.

Attracts birds, bees and butterflies. This species can tolerate soils under Black Walnut trees. Makes good cut flowers.

Habitat: Full to part sun



Missouri Botanical Garden

Blue False Indigo

Baptisia australis

Prefers full sun. Plants develop slowly expanding clumps with deep and extensive root systems and should not be disturbed once established. Plants take on more of a shrubby appearance and tend to open up after bloom. Trimming or shearing foliage after bloom helps maintain rounded plant appearance and avoids a possible need for staking, but eliminates the developing attractive seed pods. Cut back last year's growth during the winter months.

Attracts butterflies and bees.

Habitat: Full to part sun



(left) Missouri Botanical Garden
(right) Julie Makin, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

WILD FLOWERS (CONTINUED)

Blue Flag Iris

Iris virginica

Best grown in wet, boggy, acidic soils. In the wild, the roots of this iris are typically underwater for periods of time. Although the flowering period is brief in the spring, the broad, upright leaves are attractive throughout the growing season. A white form of the flower is rarely found. Cut back dead leaves in the early spring.

Attracts bees and butterflies. Deer are not attracted to this plant since the leaves and roots are somewhat toxic.

Habitat: Full sun



Missouri Botanical Garden

Blue Lobelia

Lobelia siphilitica

Prefers partial sun and moist soil. Can tolerate full sun in moist soils. Divide clumps in spring as needed. May self-seed in optimal conditions. Late summer blooms. Cut back dead plant material in the early winter through early spring. This species is longer-lived than its close relative, Cardinal Flower.

Attracts hummingbirds, bees and butterflies.

Habitat: Full to part sun



(left) Missouri Botanical Garden

(right) R.W. Smith, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Blue Vervain

Verbena hastata

Typically forms colonies in the wild by both thick, slowly spreading rhizomes and self-seeding. May self-seed in gardens in optimum growing conditions. Can be short-lived. Flowers on each spike bloom bottom to top, only a few at a time, which prolongs the bloom period. Pinching off the tips of the plants several times during the growing season will encourage a bushier shape and increase number of flowers. Cut back dead leaves in the late fall through early spring.

Attracts bees, butterflies and birds. Although rabbits sometimes eat the plants, deer avoid it due to its bitter taste.

Habitat: Full sun



Missouri Botanical Garden

WILD FLOWERS (CONTINUED)

Boneset

Eupatorium perfoliatum

Boneset has a fairly long flowering time from late summer into early fall. There is a faint floral scent. This species can spread by seed and by underground rhizome. May need to be staked, depending on plant size. Dead plant material should be cut back during the winter months.

Attracts butterflies and bees. The flowers attract a species of wasp that can help control populations of pest insects. The bitter foliage is not attractive to deer or rabbits. Medicinal qualities.

Habitat: Full to part sun



Dropseed Native Plant Nursery

Butterfly Milkweed

Asclepias tuberosa

Slow to establish, but very drought tolerant. Butterfly Milkweed is susceptible to aphids, which can be taken care of by ladybugs or a soapy water spray. Does well in poor dry soils - is not tolerant of clay or poorly drained soils. Does not transplant well due to its deep taproot and is better left undisturbed. Flowers give way to prominent, spindle-shaped seed pods (3-6 inches long) which split open when ripe, releasing numerous silky-tailed seeds for dispersal by the wind.

Attracts butterflies and hummingbirds. Important food source for adult and caterpillar Monarch butterflies.

Habitat: Full to part sun



Dropseed Native Plant Nursery

Cardinal Flower

Lobelia cardinalis

Plant can be propagated by bending a stem down into the mud and fastening it with a rock or stick. Clumps can be divided in the spring. Needs constant moisture. Great for open, shady border areas. Can tolerate full sun with moist soil. Tends to be short-lived.

Attracts birds, butterflies and hummingbirds.

Habitat: Full to part shade



(left) Missouri Botanical Garden
(right) R.W. Smith, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

WILD FLOWERS (CONTINUED)

Celandine Poppy

Stylophorum diphyllum

Shade-loving species with showy flower. Best grown in moist soil and will go dormant in early summer if the soil is too dry. An attractive seed pod forms following the flowers. Once dormant, the dead plant material breaks down quickly, so cutting back is not necessary. Chipmunks feed on the seeds. Ants disperse the seed, feeding on the attached fleshy material.

Habitat: Shade



Missouri Botanical Garden

Columbine

Aquilegia canadensis

This species will grow in shade, or in sun with moist soil. Cut back the stems after flowering to promote a second bloom. This plant will self-seed and spread. Wild Columbine is evergreen, unless the temperature exceeds 110°F or -10°F, which will cause the leaves to go dormant until the temperature returns to a more tolerable level.

Attracts hummingbirds, butterflies and bees.

Habitat: Full to part sun



Dropseed Native Plant Nursery

Common Milkweed

Asclepias syriaca

The bright pink flowers of Common Milkweed open in the mid-summer and have a strong, sweet fragrance. The leaves of this species are an important food source for the caterpillars of the Monarch Butterfly. Milkweed flowers are attractive to many species of butterflies and other insects. This species spreads very aggressively by underground runners, as well as seed.

Habitat: Full to part sun



Dropseed Native Plant Nursery

WILD FLOWERS (CONTINUED)

Compass Plant

Silphium laciniatum

Grows best in full sun, but is adaptable to many soil conditions. Tall prairie plant with large leaves and very deep tap root. Very drought tolerant. Long-lived blooms. Slow to establish and may not flower until the second or third year. May require staking. Planting this species next to Switchgrass can eliminate the need for staking. Cut back dead plant material in the early spring to allow birds to feed on the seeds over the winter months.

Attracts birds and butterflies.

Habitat: Full sun



Dropseed Native Plant Nursery

Culver's Root

Veronicastrum virginicum

Grows best in full sun and moist soil. Very dramatic when in flower. Seldom needs staking, except when grown in too much shade. Cut back dead plant material during the winter months. Usually takes several years to establish itself in the garden.

Attracts butterflies and bees. Medicinal plant.

Habitat: Sun



Dropseed Native Plant Nursery

Cup Plant

Silphium perfoliatum

The bright yellow, mid-summer blooms of the Cup Plant are attractive to bees, and the seeds that are formed in the fall are a favorite for many bird species. The name refers to a cup that is formed by the leaves, which surround the stem. These cups fill with water and create a natural bird bath. The very deep roots of this species are good at breaking through tough, clay soils. Cup Plant reaches heights of 4-8 feet and can be somewhat aggressive.

Habitat: Full to part sun



(left) Dropseed Native Plant Nursery
(right) W.D. and Dolphia Brandsford, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Cut-leaf Prairie Dock

Silphium pinnatifidum

The very deep roots of this species are good at breaking through tough, clay soils. This species is typically 5-6 feet tall and can be somewhat aggressive. The stems of this plant produce a sticky resin that was traditionally used as a chewing gum.

Habitat: Full sun



Dropseed Native Plant Nursery

Dense Blazing Star

Liatris spicata

Also known as Spiked Gayfeather. Prefers full sun and moist soil. Taller plants may require staking or other support. Tolerant of summer heat and humidity. Cut back last year's growth during the winter months.

Attracts bees, butterflies and hummingbirds. Makes nice cut flowers.

Habitat: Full to part sun



(left) Missouri Botanical Garden
(right) Julie Makin, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Downy Wood Mint

Blephilia ciliata

This drought tolerant species prefers full to partial sun. Similar in appearance to the closely related Bee Balm. Leaves are mildly fragrant when crushed. Leaves are usually considered to be lacking in the pungency and quality needed for use as a culinary herb. Small basal leaves and shoots remain green throughout the winter. Cut back spent flower stalks in the late summer to encourage full growth of the foliage.

The flowers are attractive to bees and butterflies. Foliage is often nibbled on by insects, and plants can become rather tattered and unkempt by late summer.

Habitat: Full to part sun



(left) Missouri Botanical Garden
(right) R.W. Smith, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

WILD FLOWERS (CONTINUED)

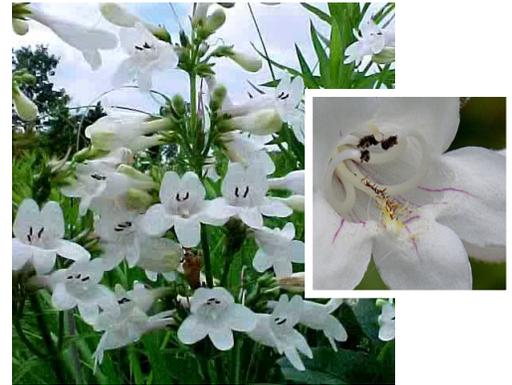
Foxglove Beardtongue

Penstemon digitalis

Avoid wet, poorly drained soils. Prefers full sun. Cut back the spent flowering stalks in mid-summer for a tidier look. Leaves remain evergreen during mild winters.

Attracts birds, hummingbirds, bees and butterflies.

Habitat: Full to part sun



(left) Dropseed Native Plant Nursery
(right) R.W. Smith, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Giant Sunflower

Helianthus giganteus

True to its name, this species can reach heights up to 10 feet. The flowers are small, but dozens cover the stems of this plant, creating a beautiful late-summer display. Bees are very fond of the nectar of Giant Sunflower, and the seeds are an important food source for many birds.

Habitat: Full sun



(left) Albert F.W. Vick, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center
(right) R.W. Smith, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Goldenrod - Kentucky's State Flower

Solidago sp.

Although some goldenrod species are very aggressive and not appropriate for a home garden (Canada Goldenrod, for example), there are many species that work well in the home landscape. Gray Goldenrod is a very drought tolerant species that is shorter than most, typically 2 feet tall. Showy Goldenrod is 3 feet tall and, true to its name, has very showy bright yellow flowers in the fall. There are even goldenrod species that thrive in the shade, like Zigzag Goldenrod, for example. All the goldenrods flower in the late summer through fall and are attractive to butterflies.

Habitat: Full sun



(left) Missouri Botanical Garden
(right) W.D. and Dolphia Bransford, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

WILD FLOWERS (CONTINUED)

Illinois Bundleflower

Desmanthus illinoensis

Erect plant. Can be weedy. Fern-like foliage can close up at night or in high heat. This plant fixes high amount of nitrogen into the soil and can help rejuvenate poor soil.

Attracts birds, bees and butterflies.

Habitat: Full to part sun



(left) Dropseed Native Plant Nursery
(right) Ray Matthews, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Ironweed

Vernonia gigantea

Very adaptable and hardy plant. Prefers full sun and dry to moist soil. May need support, depending on height. Overall plant height may be reduced by cutting back plant stems in late spring. Remove flower heads before seed develops to avoid any unwanted self-seeding. Cut back in early to late winter.

Attracts bees and butterflies. This species' name refers to the very strong fibers of its stem.

Habitat: Full to part sun



(left) Dropseed Native Plant Nursery
(right) R.W. Smith, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Jacob's Ladder

Polemonium reptans

This species prefers shade and moist soil. Plants will go dormant in drought conditions. Divide clumps in early spring or late summer. This species' name alludes to the ladder-like appearance of the pinnate leaves. Plant dies back completely in the winter.

Attracts bees and butterflies.

Habitat: Shade



Missouri Botanical Garden

WILD FLOWERS (CONTINUED)

Joe-Pye Weed

Eupatorium fistulosum

Joe-Pye Weed is a substantial plant which needs space, but when planted in groups or massed can provide spectacular flowering and architectural height. This adaptable plant can grow in full sun or partial shade, and tolerates a variety of soil conditions. Plants can be cut back in the early summer to reduce their height. Cut plants to the ground in winter.

Attracts bees and butterflies.

Habitat: Full sun



(left) Dropseed Native Plant Nursery
(right) Alan Cressler, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Leaf Cup

Polymnia uvedalia

The yellow flowers of this species open in the mid summer. The large seeds are very attractive to birds. Plants have a broad leaf and reach a height of 4-6 feet.

Habitat: Full to part sun



R.W. Smith, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Mist Flower

Eupatorium coelestinum

The pale blue flowers of Mist Flower open in the late summer through the fall. Butterflies are attracted to the flowers' nectar. This low-growing plant can spread, forming a ground cover.

Habitat: Full to part sun



(left) Dropseed Native Plant Nursery
(right) Carolyn Fannon, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Narrow-leaved Sunflower

Helianthus angustifolius

Prefers full sun and moist to dry conditions. May need to be staked. Pinch plants back in early summer to promote branching. Numerous small plantlets develop around the base and can be divided yearly to produce additional plants. May need to be weeded back - can spread aggressively. Cut back plants in late winter.

Attracts bees, butterflies and birds.

Habitat: Full sun



(left) Sally and Andy Wasowski
(right) Alan Cressler
Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

New England Aster

Aster novae-angliae

New England Aster flowers until frost. Cut back plants in early summer to maintain a shorter and fuller shape. May require staking. Can be aggressive. The flower color is variable, ranging from lavender to blue to white. Cut back dormant plants in late winter. This species prefers full sun, but is tolerant of many soil types, including clay.

Attracts bees and butterflies. Makes nice cut flowers.

Habitat: Full to part sun



(left) *Missouri Botanical Garden*
(right) R.W. Smith, *Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center*

Ohio Spiderwort

Tradescantia ohiensis

This very drought tolerant species prefers full sun to part shade and will thrive in a variety of soil types. When touched in the heat of the day, the flowers shrivel to a fluid jelly. Divide clumps when they become overcrowded. Cut back to 6-12 inches in mid-summer to encourage new growth and a possible fall bloom. Young shoots are susceptible to snail damage. Foliage tends to sprawl in an unattractive manner by mid-summer. Cut back spent plant material during the summer months.

Habitat: Full to part sun



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WILD FLOWERS (CONTINUED)

Pale Purple Coneflower

Echinacea pallida

An adaptable plant that is tolerant of drought, heat, humidity and poor soils. Prefers full sun. Divide clumps when they become overcrowded (about every 4 years). Plants usually rebloom without deadheading. However, prompt removal of spent flowers improves general appearance. Cut back last year's growth in the early spring to allow birds to feed on the seed head throughout the winter months.

Attracts bees, butterflies and birds.

Habitat: Full to part sun



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Phlox

Phlox paniculata

Prefers medium moisture and full sun to part shade. Needs good air circulation (space well and thin out stems as needed) to help combat potential powdery mildew problems. Avoid overhead watering. Appreciates a summer mulch which helps keep the root zone cool.

Attracts bees, hummingbirds, butterflies and birds. The fragrant blossoms make nice cut flowers. Not attractive to deer. Can thrive in clay soil and under Black Walnut trees.

Habitat: Full to part sun



Missouri Botanical Garden

Prairie Dock

Silphium terebinthinaceum

Prefers full sun and can tolerate a wide variety of soil conditions. Very large, wide, spade-shaped basal leaves subtend a 3-8 feet flowering stalk. Taprooted, slow-to-establish plant which may not flower until the second or third year. Usually does not need support, but often leans. Cut back plant material in the early spring to allow birds to feed on the seed heads during the winter months.

Attracts bees, hummingbirds and birds.

Habitat: Full sun



(left) Sally and Andy Wasowski
(right) R.W. Smith
Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

WILD FLOWERS (CONTINUED)

Purple Prairie Clover

Dalea purpurea

This species prefers full sun and well-drained soil. Does not compete well with more aggressive species. A nitrogen-fixing plant; very drought tolerant. May self-seed in optimum growing conditions.

Attracts bees. Food source for caterpillars and other insects.

Habitat: Full sun



(left) Missouri Botanical Garden

(right) R.W. Smith, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Rattlebox

Ludwigia alternifolia

This species prefers full sun and can tolerate wet and dry conditions - making it a good candidate for a rain garden. The petals drop easily, often lasting less than a day. When the capsule is shaken, the seeds rattle, which gives rise to the common name "rattle-box." The dried stems and fruit have an attractive reddish-brown color in the winter. Cut back dormant plant material in the late winter.

Habitat: Full to part sun



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Rattlesnake Master

Eryngium yuccifolium

Prefers full sun and moist to dry soil. Plants tend to open up and sprawl if grown in overly fertile soils or in anything less than full sun. This is a taprooted plant, which transplants poorly and is best left undisturbed once established. Taller plants may need support.

Attracts bees. Attracts parasitoid wasps, which can help control pest species in the garden.

Habitat: Full sun



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WILD FLOWERS (CONTINUED)

Royal Catchfly

Silene regia

The bright red flowers of this species open in the late summer and are attractive to hummingbirds. Plants are typically 3-4 feet tall. This species grows best in rich, well-drained soil.

Habitat: Full to part sun



Alan Cressler, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Silky Aster

Aster sericeus

This low-growing aster is very drought tolerant. Its leaves are covered with silver hairs, giving the species its name. The vibrant violet flowers open in the late summer to fall and attract butterflies. This species is fairly short, 1-2 feet, and has a sprawling form.

Habitat: Full to part sun



Joseph A. Marcus, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Slender Mountain Mint

Pycnanthemum tenuifolium

This species will tolerate full sun to partial shade and moist to wet soil. All parts of the plant emit a strong, mint-like aroma when crushed. A vigorous and sometimes aggressive plant. Cut back plants in the late winter.

Attracts bees, butterflies and wasps.

Habitat: Full to part sun



(left) Dropseed Native Plant Nursery
(right) R.W. Smith, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

WILD FLOWERS (CONTINUED)

Sneezeweed

Helenium autumnale

Prefers full sun and moist soil. Although not required, plants may be cut back in early June (at least six weeks before normal flowering) to reduce plant height and to encourage increased flowering, healthier foliage and less need for support. Remove spent flowers to encourage additional bloom. Can be aggressive. Provides late color in the garden. Cut back plants in late winter.

Attracts bees, wasps and butterflies. Food source for caterpillars and insects.

Habitat: Full to part sun



(left) Missouri Botanical Garden
(right) Sally and Andy Wasowski, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Solomon's Seal

Polygonatum biflorum

Solomon's Seal prefers shady conditions and moist soil. Good understory plant. White flowers are followed by blue-black berries in autumn. Foliage turns an attractive yellow in fall. Plant material dies back completely in the winter.

Attracts birds, bees, hummingbirds and butterflies.

Habitat: Shade



(left) Dropseed Native Plant Nursery
(right) R.W. Smith, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Southern Blazing Star

Liatris squarulosa

The bright purple flowers of this species are a magnet for butterflies in the late summer and early fall. The 3-foot tall plants are very drought tolerant.

Habitat: Full to part sun



Dropseed Native Plant Nursery

WILD FLOWERS (CONTINUED)

Swamp Milkweed

Asclepias incarnata

This plant requires consistently moist soil and can grow in full sun or partial shade. Plants have deep taproots and are best left undisturbed once established. Foliage is slow to emerge in spring. Swamp Milkweed will inevitably have aphids.

Attracts bees, butterflies and hummingbirds.

Habitat: Full sun



(left) Missouri Botanical Garden
(right) Joseph A. Marcus, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Tall Tickseed

Coreopsis tripteris

This very drought tolerant species prefers full sun and will thrive in moist to dry soils. Prompt deadheading of spent flowers may encourage additional bloom and prevents any unwanted self-seeding. Freely self-seeds and in optimum growing conditions will naturalize to form large colonies. If grown in borders, division may be needed every 2-3 years to maintain robustness. Taller plants may need to be staked.

Attracts bees, butterflies and birds. Food source for caterpillars.

Habitat: Full to part sun



(left) Dropseed Native Plant Nursery
(right) Julie Makin, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Whorled Rosinweed

Silphium trifoliatum

This drought tolerant species prefers full sun and moist to dry soil. Taller stems may need support. Plants can be cut back in the early summer to promote a shorter-statured form. Cut back dormant plant material in late fall or early spring.

Attracts birds, bees and butterflies.

Habitat: Full sun



(left) W.D. and Dolphia Bransford
(right) R.W. Smith
Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

WILD FLOWERS (CONTINUED)

Wild Ginger

Asarum canadense

Prefers shade and moist, rich soil, however it will tolerate dry soil in shady conditions and will tolerate some sun if the soil is moist and rich. The solitary greenish-purple flower is at ground level, hidden below the leaves. Can create a dense groundcover over time. Evergreen in mild winters.

Attracts butterflies. Food source for caterpillars.

Habitat: Shade



Missouri Botanical Garden

Wild Quinine

Parthenium integrifolium

Wild Quinine prefers full sun and tolerates a variety of soil conditions. This species spreads by underground rhizomes, but not aggressively. Cut back plants in late winter.

Attracts bees. Makes a nice cut flower.

Habitat: Full sun



Dropseed Native Plant Nursery

Yellow or Gray-Headed Coneflower

Ratibida pinnata

Yellow Coneflower is an excellent choice for a wildflower garden because of its long blooming period and attractive yellow flowers. Tall stalks may need to be staked; plants can be cut back in spring to create a shorter and fuller plant. This species can also be planted next to Prairie Switchgrass to support its stems from flopping over. Best if massed together when planted. Long summer bloom period. Cut back plants in late fall through late winter.

Attracts bees and butterflies. Food source for caterpillars. Seeds consumed by birds.

Habitat: Full sun



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