Top Performing Herbaceous Native Plants
True or False –

It is the plant choice that determines a great performer!?

• Not necessarily – performance is based first on right plant, right place

• Performance is judged on particular need/goal in the landscape

Points considered for Top Performing Native Plants list

➢ Reliable longevity

➢ Compact form and/or slow growth

➢ 3 to 4 season appeal

➢ Able to tolerate a wide range of growing conditions

➢ Availability in the nursery trade
True or False –

Compared to lawns and traditionally manicured landscapes –
native landscapes are low maintenance.
What reduces maintenance???

Match plant to cultural requirements
If minimal maintenance is required, how easy is it when it is necessary?

- Big bluestem
- Cord grass
- Prairie dropseed
Weed elimination:
Plants that grow into dense groupings eliminate weeds

Prairie dropseed…Yes!

Buffalo grass…No!
Seediness:
Plants that **do not** spread readily from seed

New England aster & river oats…Yes—lots of reseeding!

Palm sedge…No, very little reseeding!
Beautiful native plants...great landscape plants???
Cardinal flower (*Lobelia*)
- Short-lived
- Low tolerance for dry soil
- Resents competition

Yellow false indigo (*Baptisia sphaerocarpa*)
- Long-lived
- Great spring color
- Great foliage for growing season
- Fall interest with seed pods
- Minimal maintenance
- Wide range of tolerance
MO evening primrose (*Oenothera macrocarpa*)
• Low range of tolerance

Feathery Bluestar (*Amsonia ciliata*)
Narrow tolerance of soil conditions

Columbine (*Aquilegia canadense*)
• Short-lived

Butterfly milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)
• Long-lived
• Minimal maintenance
• Wide range of tolerance

Prairie dropseed (*Sporobolis heterolepis*)
• Long-lived
• Slow, compact growth
• Minimal maintenance
• Good fall/winter interest
• Wide range of tolerance
• Reliably fills in to choke out weeds
Glade and pale coneflowers (Echinacea pallida/E. simulata)
• Specific soil requirements

Shining bluestar (Amsonia illustris)
• Long-lived
• Wide range of tolerance
• Good foliage throughout season
• Reliably fills in to choke out weeds
• Minimal maintenance
Rose verbena, sand phlox and fire pink
*(Glandularia canadense, Phlox bifida, Silene virginica)*
- Low range of tolerance
- Does not out-compete weeds

Orange coneflower *(Rudbeckia fulgida)*
- Long-lived
- Wide range of tolerance
- Long flowering season
- Reliably fills in to choke out weeds
Prairie alum root
(*Heuchera richardsonii*)
- Long-lived
- Slow, compact growth
- Great foliar texture
- Wide range of tolerance
- Minimal maintenance
- Reliably fills in to choke out weeds
• Long-lived
• Wide range of tolerance
• Short, compact growth
• Minimal maintenance

Oak sedge (*Carex albicans*)

Ivory/cedar sedge (*Carex albicans*)
Indian pink
*(Spigelia marilandica)*
• Long-lived
• Slow, compact growth
• Wide range of tolerance
• Minimal maintenance
• Reliably fills in to choke out weeds

Wild ginger
*(Asarum canadense)*
• Long-lived
• Slow, compact growth
• Wide range of tolerance
• Minimal maintenance
• Long-lived
• Wide range of tolerance
• Reliably fills in to choke out weeds
• Minimal maintenance

Bur sedge (*Carex grayii*)

Palm sedge (*Carex muskingumensis*)
Aromatic aster
(Aster/Symphiocarpon oblongifolius)

• Long-lived
• Great late fall color
• Compact growth
• Wide range of tolerance
• Minimal maintenance
• Reliably fills in to choke out weeds
Use a “broad brush”…
- Higher diversity = higher maintenance
- Lower diversity = lower maintenance
Informal solution to reducing maintenance
The City Garden, St. Louis