

# Top Performing Herbaceous Native Plants







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## Chapter Four Landscaping with Native Plants *A Gardeners Guide for Missouri*

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If you plant after June 1st, water periodically for the first three years until plants are established.

- Remove weeds as they appear.
- Water as needed.
- Top-prune perennials and grasses late April through mid May to reduce flowering height and prevent flopping.

### Summer - Year 2

- Be vigilant and remove weeds as they appear.
- Provide a deep watering when needed rather than frequent, shallow watering.
- Summer pruning is not recommended. Sun is hot and unpredictable rainfall.

### Fall/Winter - Year 2

- Continue to be vigilant and remove winter weeds as they appear.
- Water newly planted trees and shrubs by hand if winter drought occurs.
- Reply much to this area.
- Be careful to not mulch where you want plants to spread by reseeding. This is the risk to getting accident plants like wood poppy, Virginia bluebell, blue-eyed Mary, wild geranium, bloodroot and others to spread.

### Plant Selection Guide

#### Top Performing Native Plants for Landscaping

Based on:

- 3-4 seasons of interest
- long life expectancy
- compact form or slow growth
- availability from nurseries

#### Full Sun

Grasses and Sedges:  
*Carex albicans* (pale sedge)  
*Carex acutata* (yellow-headed fox sedge)  
*Carex muskumensis* (palm sedge)  
*Sporobolus heterostachys* (prairie dropseed)

#### Perennials:

*Anemone* (flower) (showing blue)  
*Asclepias tuberosa* (butterfly milkweed)  
*Aster divaricatus* (downy aster)  
*Euphorbia corollata* (yellow wild-egg)  
*Callirhoe involucrata* (purple poppy mallow)  
*Rudbeckia hirtellifolia* (prairie sunflower)  
*Helianthus* (sunflower)  
*Penstemon* (penstemon)  
*Rudbeckia hirtellifolia* (prairie sunflower)

Small Flowering Trees and Shrubs:  
*Amelanchier alnifolia* (serviceberry)  
*Callicarpa americana* (callicarpa)  
*Cornus alternifolia* (dogwood)  
*Crataegus viridis* (green hawthorn)  
*Hydrangea arborescens* (wild hydrangea)  
*Ilex verticillata* (winterberry holly)  
*Alnus incana* (golden alder)

#### Part Shade

*Aster divaricatus* (downy aster)  
*Carex albicans* (pale sedge)  
*Carex acutata* (yellow-headed fox sedge)  
*Carex muskumensis* (palm sedge)  
*Crataegus viridis* (green hawthorn)  
*Hydrangea arborescens* (wild hydrangea)  
*Ilex verticillata* (winterberry holly)  
*Spargelia anglica* (Indian pink)

Small Flowering Trees and Shrubs:  
*Amelanchier alnifolia* (serviceberry)  
*Aronia melanocarpa* (black chokeberry)  
*Calliopsis americana* (blackberry)  
*Cornus canadensis* (cornus)  
*Cornus florida* (flowering dogwood)  
*Hamamelis virginica* (witch hazel)  
*Hydrangea arborescens* (wild hydrangea)  
*Ilex verticillata* (winterberry holly)  
*Shale canadensis* (golden currant)

#### Shade

Ferns:  
*Adiantum pedatum* (Maidenhair fern)  
*Athyrium filix-femina* (maidenhair fern)  
*Oxalis corniculata* (cornicle)  
*Polytaenium acrostichoides* (Christmas fern)

Grasses and Sedges:  
*Carex albicans* (pale sedge)  
*Carex acutata* (yellow-headed fox sedge)  
*Carex muskumensis* (palm sedge)

#### Perennials:

*Anemone* (flower) (showing blue)  
*Asclepias tuberosa* (butterfly milkweed)  
*Aster divaricatus* (downy aster)  
*Euphorbia corollata* (yellow wild-egg)  
*Callirhoe involucrata* (purple poppy mallow)  
*Rudbeckia hirtellifolia* (prairie sunflower)  
*Helianthus* (sunflower)  
*Penstemon* (penstemon)  
*Rudbeckia hirtellifolia* (prairie sunflower)

*Heuchera americana* (American alum-root)  
*Heuchera* (flower) (showing blue)  
*Polygonatum biflorum* (Solomon's seal)  
*Silene acaulis* (cotton-candy)  
*Spargelia anglica* (Indian pink)

Small Flowering Trees and Shrubs:  
*Amelanchier alnifolia* (serviceberry)  
*Callicarpa americana* (callicarpa)  
*Cornus alternifolia* (dogwood)  
*Cornus florida* (flowering dogwood)  
*Cornus paniculata* (Kousa dogwood)  
*Hamamelis virginica* (witch hazel)

#### Native Groundcovers



The 12-inch native groundcover *Asplenium platyneuron* growing in a bed of mulch at Shaw Nature Reserve. It is a native plant and spreads slowly.

\*Plants that spread rapidly by rhizomes and develop into large colonies. These species require large areas and constant maintenance.

#### Shade

Grasses & Sedges:  
*Carex albicans* (pale sedge)  
*C. acutata* (yellow sedge)

*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?



Cord grass



Big bluestem



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

Palm sedge...No, very little reseeding!

New England aster & river oats...Yes-lots of reseeding!



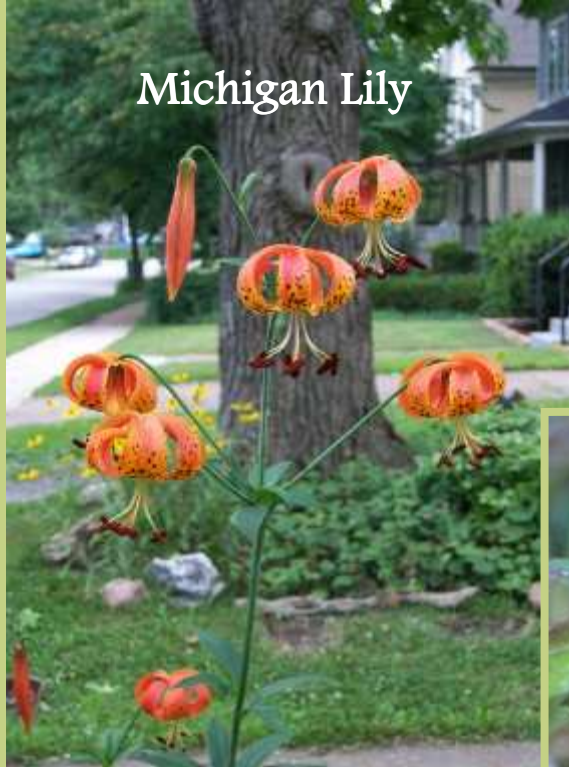


*Beautiful native plants...great landscape plants???*

Fall Glade Onion



Michigan Lily



Dwarf Larkspur



Jack-in-the-Pulpit



Bottle Gentian





### 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 (*Sporobolus 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 cone-flowers  
(*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







Oak sedge (*Carex albicans*)



- Long-lived
- Wide range of tolerance
- Short, compact growth
- Minimal maintenance



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/Symphycarpon 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”...

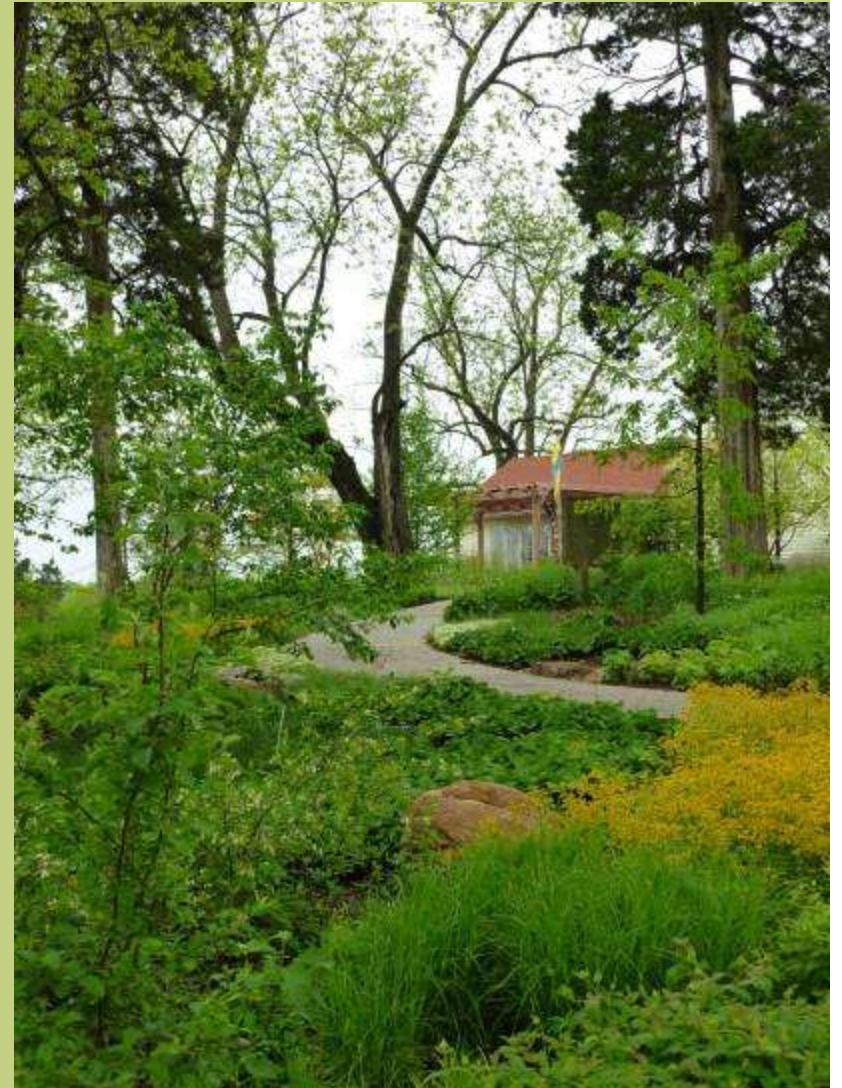




- Higher diversity = higher maintenance
- Lower diversity = lower maintenance











Informal solution to  
reducing maintenance





## Alberici Headquarters





## MDC Discovery Center, Kansas City





## First Presbyterian Church, Kirkwood





## Commerce Bank Education Center, Missouri Botanical Garden





## The City Garden, St. Louis

