

# Top Performing Herbaceous Native Plants





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Chapter Four

Landscaping with Native Plants

*A Gardeners Guide for Missouri*

If you plant after June 15, water periodically for the first three years after 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 waterings.
- Summer planting 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.
- Reapply mulch to this area.
- Be careful to not mulch where you want plants to spread by reseeding. This is the trick to getting succulent plants like wood piggy, 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* (sax sedge)  
*Carex americana* (yellow-flowered fox sedge)  
*Carex muskingumensis* (sax sedge)  
*Sporobolus heterostachyus* (panic dropseed)

Perennials:

*Aster multiflorus* (showing blue)  
*Asperula tuberosa* (tuberous milkweed)  
*Aster divaricatus* (sterile aster)  
*Solidago canadensis* (yellow wild-angelica)  
*Callitriche heterophylla* (purple poppy milkweed)  
*Rudbeckia richardsonii* (prairie sunflower)  
*Thuja occidentalis* (northern white cedar)  
*Pyrola asarifolia* (winter mountain-heath)  
*Rubus odoratus* (orange clematis)

Small Flowering Trees and Shrubs:  
*Amelanchier arborea* (serviceberry)  
*Callicarpa americana* (beautyberry)  
*Cornus amomum* (holuby)  
*Crataegus viridis* (green hawthorn)  
*Hydrangea arborescens* (wild hydrangea)  
*Ilex verticillata* (winterberry holly)  
*Abies balsamea* (spotted fir)

Part Shade

*Aster divaricatus* (sterile aster)  
*Carex albicans* (sax sedge)  
*Carex americana* (fox sedge)  
*Carex grayi* (fox sedge)  
*Carex muskingumensis* (sax sedge)  
*Erigeron philadelphicus* (purple ox-eye)  
*Heuchera americana* (American alum-root)  
*Heuchera richardsonii* (purple alum-root)  
*Polygonum bistorta* (Spikeweed)  
*Solidago nemoralis* (small-leaved golden-rod)  
*Spigelia marilandica* (Indian pink)

Small Flowering Trees and Shrubs:  
*Amelanchier arborea* (serviceberry)  
*Asimina speciosa* (hackberry)  
*Callicarpa americana* (beautyberry)  
*Cornus canadensis* (cornelian)  
*Cornus florida* (flowering dogwood)  
*Hamamelis virginica* (Witch hazel)  
*Hydrangea arborescens* (wild hydrangea)  
*Ilex verticillata* (winterberry holly)  
*Staphylea trifolia* (spotted blenny)

Shade

Ferns:  
*Adiantum pedatum* (Maidenhair fern)  
*Athyrium filix-femina* (maidenhair fern)  
*Onoclea sensibilis* (sensitive fern)  
*Polytaenium acrostichoides* (Christmas fern)

Grasses and Sedges:  
*Carex albicans* (sax sedge)  
*Carex americana* (fox sedge)  
*Carex grayi* (fox sedge)  
*Carex muskingumensis* (sax sedge)

Perennials:  
*Asarum canadense* (wild ginger)  
*C. dumosa* (fox sedge)

*Heuchera americana* (American alum-root)  
*Heuchera* (showy coral-bell)  
*Polygonatum biflorum* (Solomon's seal)  
*Saxifraga hypnoides* (dog-toe golden-rod)  
*Spigelia marilandica* (Indian pink)

Small Flowering Trees and Shrubs:  
*Amelanchier arborea* (serviceberry)  
*Callicarpa americana* (beautyberry)  
*Cornus alternifolia* (dogwood)  
*Cornus sericea* (saxifrage dogwood)  
*C. florida* (flowering dogwood)  
*Cercocarpus caroliniana* (flame tree)  
*Rhamnus virginiana* (Eastern white holly)

Native Groundcovers



The 12-inch native groundcover *Saxifraga hypnoides* growing in a bed next to a stone pillar. *Asarum canadense* (wild ginger) is also growing nearby.

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

Grasses & Sedges:  
*Carex albicans* (sax sedge)  
*C. dumosa* (fox 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!

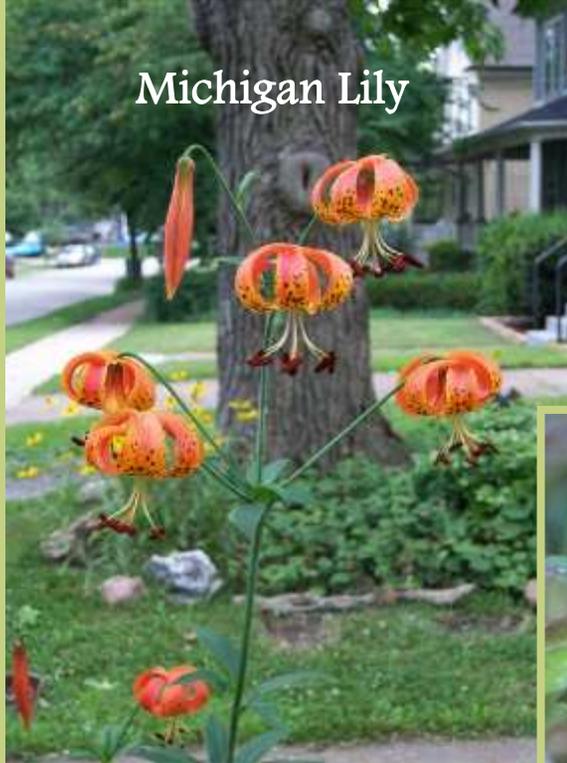


*Beautiful native plants...great landscape plants???*

Fall Glade Onion



Michigan Lily



Jack-in-the-Pulpit



Dwarf Larkspur



Bottle Gentian



## Cardinal flower (*Lobelia*)

- Short-lived
- Low tolerance for dry soil
- Resents competition



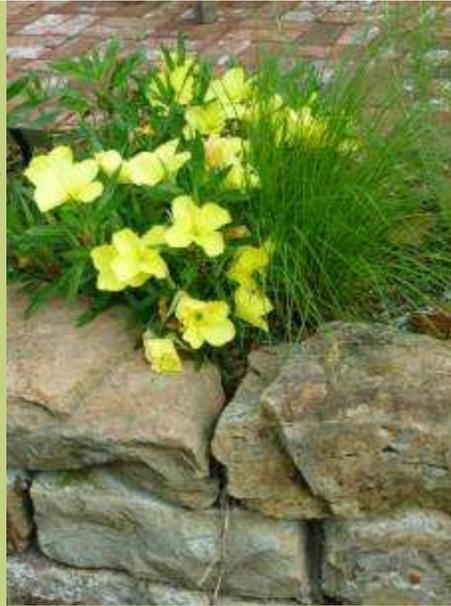
## Yellow false indigo (*Baptisia sphaerocarpa*)

- 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 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





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

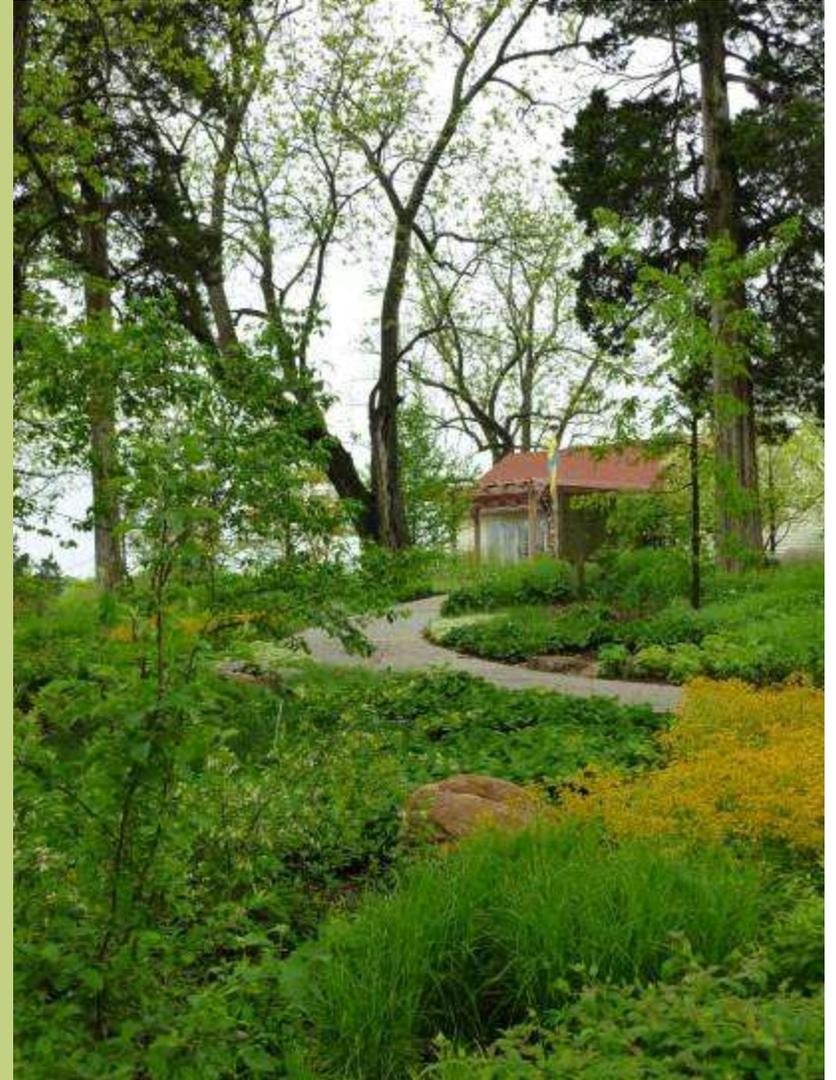


Use a “broad brush”...



- 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

