

Criteria for the Certified Colorado Native Plant Garden or Landscape Program

The Certified Native Plant Garden and Landscape Program aims to encourage people of all levels of knowledge and ability to embrace the use of Colorado native plants in their gardens and landscapes. Promoting learning and measuring progress is the key focus. To that end, "Certified" indicates that the main criteria have been met, while advanced use of native plants warrant a silver or gold star. The decision making process is outlined below. The application itself provides explanations of why certain elements are measured and links for more information. CoNPS welcomes suggestions on how to improve this rubric and application from as tools for encouragement, learning and progress to increased understanding of the use of Colorado Native plants.

Certified			<i>Notes or examples*</i>
<i>Any No answer means that the area is not yet ready to be certified, but also points out just what to do to achieve it!</i>	Yes	No	Comment
At least 1/3 of the plants are natives			
More than half of the native plants are straight species (not cultivars or nativars)			
There is at least one native plant in each of these categories: trees/shrubs, grasses, forbs			
Natives are in bloom one season per year			
There are native plants with tubular flowers			
There are native plants from the Aster family			
There are native plants from the Pea family			
Plant debris is left until the spring before being trimmed			
There is bare ground free of plants and mulch			
Pesticides or weed killers are used on a limited basis or very rarely			

Certified + Silver Star			
<i>Any No answer means that the area is not yet ready for a Silver Star, but also points out just what to do to earn one!</i>	Yes	No	Comment
1/3 - 2/3 of the plants are natives			
More than half of the native plants are straight species (not cultivars or nativars)			
There are native plants in two of these categories: trees/shrubs, grasses, forbs			
Natives are in bloom two seasons per year			
Pesticides or weed killers are used only when necessary, i.e. to control noxious			
All criteria from the "Certified" level are met			
Certified + Gold Star			
<i>Any No answer means that the area is not yet ready for a Gold Star, but also points out just what to do to earn one!</i>	Yes	No	Comment
2/3 or more of the plants are native			
More than half of the native plants are straight species (not cultivars or nativars)			
There are several natives in all of these categories: trees/shrubs, grasses, forbs			
Natives are in bloom three or four seasons per year			
Only mechanical or natural means of controlling pests and weeds are used			
All criteria from the previous two levels are met			
*Use the full application and plant list to make these decisions			

Certified Colorado Native Plant Garden or Landscape Program

	Certified
Percent of natives in area to be certified	At least 40%
Proportion of straight species vs cultivars or nativars trees/shrubs, grasses, forbs	Mostly nativars or cultivars (list)
Does the garden provide habitat for all 4 seasons? grasses?	No, I trim back to keep a tidy garden Only one (get from plant list)
How many seasons are plants in bloom?	One only
Tubular flowers?	No
Members of aster family?	No
Members of the Pea family?	No
Is there bare ground, free of plants and mulch	No
How do you use pesticides and or weed killers	I use them a lot
Proportion of area to be certified	Up to 20%

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Silver Level

41-65%

Mostly straight species

At least two (get from plant list)

Yes, I leave dead leaves in garden & trim back in spring

Yes (get from plant list)

Two only

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

control noxious weeds

20-60%

Gold Level

66% or greater

Mostly straight species

All three

Yes, I leave dead leaves in garden & trim back in spring

Yes (get from plant list)

All three

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

natural means of controlling

60-80%

Platinum Level

81% or greater

Mostly straight species

All three

Yes, I leave dead leaves in
garden & trim back in spring

Yes (get from plant list)

All three

Ye

Yes

Yes

Yes

natural means of controlling

80% or greater

Sample Plant List