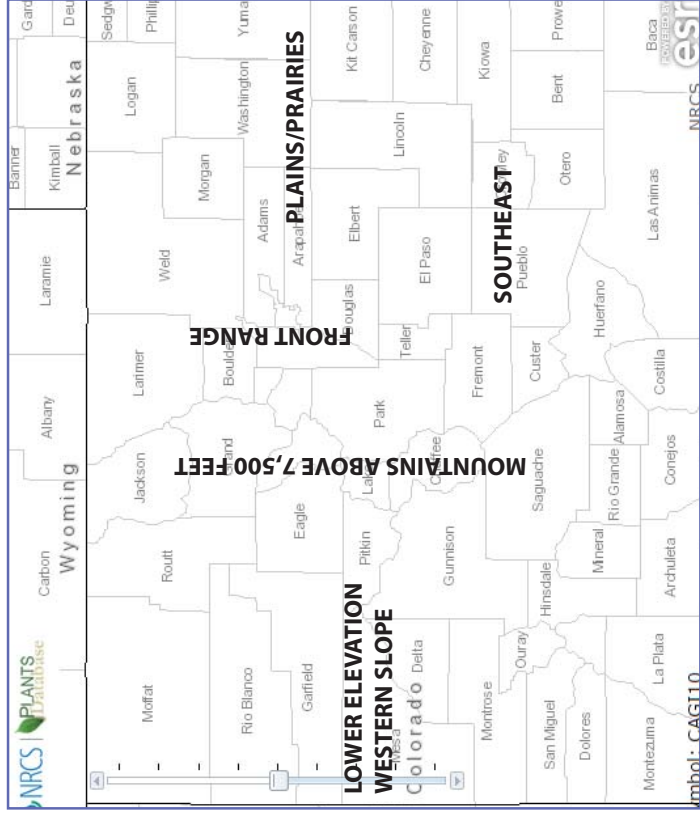


Low-Water Native Plants for Colorado Gardens: Front Range & Foothills



Map of Regions



The Colorado native plant gardening guides cover these 5 regions:
 Plains/Prairie
 Front Range/Foothills
 Southeastern Colorado
 Mountains above 7,500 feet
 Lower Elevation Western Slope

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Garden at Schultz Residence in Fort Collins: desert four o'clock, (lower left), butterfly milkweed (orange flowers in middle), prairie sage (blue-grey plant behind butterfly milkweed). JT

Introduction

This is one in a series of regional native planting guides that are a collaboration of the Colorado Native Plant Society, CSU Extension Native Plant Master® Program, Front Range Wild Ones, the High Plains Environmental Center, Butterfly Pavilion and the Denver Botanic Gardens.

Many people have an interest in landscaping with native plants, and the purpose of this booklet is to help people make the most successful choices. We have divided the state into 5 different regions that reflect different growing conditions and life zones. These are: the plains/prairie, southeastern Colorado, the Front Range/foothills, the mountains above 7,500', and lower elevation Western Slope. Find the area that most closely resembles your proposed garden site for the best gardening recommendations.

Why Native?

There are many benefits to using Colorado native plants for home and commercial landscapes. They are naturally adapted to Colorado's climates, soils and environmental conditions. This means that by

choosing native plants gardeners can work with nature, rather than trying to grow plants that are not suited to our local conditions and may prove to be difficult to work with.

When correctly sited, natives make ideal plants for a sustainable landscape. Native species require less external inputs such as water and fertilizer, and are more resistant to pests and disease when the planting site mimics the plant's native habitat. Outdoor water use accounts for about 55 percent of the residential water use in the Front Range urban area, most of which is used on turf. Planting less-thirsty natives could lessen the burden on our water systems.

Another great reason to go native is to restore habitat. Rapid urbanization in the state is reducing biodiversity (the number of different species found in a given area) as habitat is removed for building and road construction. Research has shown that landscaping with natives on a large, or small scale, helps maintain biodiversity that otherwise would be lost to development. Thousands or millions of gardens planted with natives, even in urban areas can add food, shelter and other important resources for wildlife, including mammals, birds and native pollinators.

Growing native plants does not exclude using adapted non-native plants. There are many non-native plants that are adapted to Colorado's climate and can be used in a native landscape as long as moisture, light and soil requirements are similar. Even if a site has a non-native landscape that requires additional inputs (such as an irrigated landscape on the plains), dry-land native plants can be used in non-irrigated pockets within the non-native landscape. These native "pocket gardens" can be located in areas such as median strips and next to hardscapes that are difficult to irrigate. Note that in years with less than normal rainfall, non-irrigated landscapes may suffer in appearance without supplemental water.

Gardening with native plants also prevents the introduction and spread of noxious weeds. Many noxious weeds were intentionally introduced as garden plants that belatedly were found to escape the confines of the garden and crowd out native plants.

Some communities regulate landscape appearance or the type of plants which may be used. Before initiating any new landscape design, check with local municipalities and/or homeowners' associations, to discover any regulations that may affect your design.

Finally, using native plants in landscapes helps provide a special sense of place, celebrating Colorado's uniqueness and beauty, rather than a homogeneous landscape. A garden with native plants feels more harmonious with its surroundings, than a landscape transplanted from another locale.

Native Plant Gardening in Colorado's Front Range and Foothills



The Turner's yard: A berm with native plants is interesting and colorful. Plains yucca (*Yucca glauca*) on the right is in bloom. The red pineleaf penstemon (*Pinus pinifolius*) is on the lower right side and behind the yuccas, higher on the berm, are tall blooming stalks of orange globe mallow (*Sphaeralcea parviflora*) flowers and red penstemon (*Penstemon barbatus*). In the lower left is blue flax, that will shed its petals in the afternoon, and the bright yellow flowers of bush sunflower (*Helianthus pumilis*) are in front of the yucca. JLT

The Front Range and foothills region of Colorado is the area east of the Continental Divide and west of the prairies and plains (see map). It is an area with a high diversity of plant life and growing conditions. Running north-south, it includes the cities of Fort Collins, Greeley, Loveland, Longmont, Boulder, Golden, Denver and its suburbs, Castle Rock, and Colorado Springs.

The Front Range and foothills include everything from forests and rocky hillsides, to riverbeds, marsh wetlands and short grass prairie.

With the wide range of growing conditions and native plants available, depending on where you live, you may be able to represent several vegetative communities within your garden successfully.

The proximity to the Rocky Mountains gives the Front Range and foothills a complex climate. This area can experience high winds, localized heavy rains, high snowfall and/or long periods of drought. It receives less precipitation than the mountains to the west and maintains relatively low-humidity.

Soils range from well-drained and rocky with little organic matter, to sticky, heavy clay. It is important to determine what type of soil you have before you begin selecting plants.

There is a great deal of wildlife within this area. Even urban and suburban areas can be home for a variety of songbirds, bees and butterflies. Gardeners in these areas may have to take measures to repel rabbits or squirrels. Areas closer to the foothills may have to protect their plantings from deer or elk.

Culture and Maintenance

Soils

Colorado soils, on average, are fairly low in organic matter and high in pH (alkaline). The good news is that native plants usually can be successfully grown in unamended soils. This is because natives do not require nutrient rich, high organic content soil, and can often become overgrown or short lived in such soils. Many native plants, especially those from prairies or the Front Range, will thrive in clay soils. However, some native plants require well-drained soils. To amend clay soils, add 10 percent compost and 15 percent small aggregate (i.e., pea gravel) by volume to clay/clay loam and incorporate into the root zone. Creating a small berm and planting on the top can also be helpful to improve drainage. To amend excessively well-drained sandy or rocky soils, add 3 percent compost by volume. It may be beneficial to test the soil before planting, especially on a larger project. Soil testing kits are available at your local CSU Extension office.

Maintenance

Native plants often do not need much maintenance; just the usual pruning of dead or diseased material, and cutting back perennials in the spring. Leaving seed heads on the plants in the fall will not only provide a feast for birds, and protect caterpillar eggs and chrysalises, but will increase plant hardiness and winter interest. Native plants

typically do not require fertilizer. Some tasks, such as weeding and deadheading, require the same time investment for native plant gardens as for gardens with non-natives.

Watering

Plants will need to be watered for at least the first season, with the most critical time being the first three weeks after planting. Once they are established, water can be cut back gradually. After establishment, some natives can be taken off irrigation completely. Place plants that have higher water needs nearer the house or other highly used areas. These plants can also be planted in swales (lower areas), or near downspouts for passive water harvesting.

Limiting/reclaiming turf areas

Although grass lawns are popular, they generally use more resources like water, fertilizers, pesticides, and maintenance (mowing) than a landscape of native plants. Lawns also provide no habitat for pollinators and birds. Native landscapes, on the other hand, are less resource intensive, provide habitat and provide more interest and color. Consider either limiting grass lawns to play, pet, or entertaining areas, or replacing lawns altogether if these spaces are not needed.

To reclaim a space formerly devoted to a lawn, spend some time eradicating all grasses and weeds. Grass is easier to kill when it is green and actively growing in the spring or fall. There are a few options for this. One is to use a glyphosate-based herbicide, another is to cut out all the sod, and a third is to solarize the area. Solarization works best in the heat of the summer in full-sun areas. Mow the area and remove the clippings, water, place clear plastic on top (burying the edges with soil) and leave it for 4-6 weeks. A final option is to sheet mulch. Cover the area with sheets of cardboard or 12 layers of newspapers. Overlap these materials at least 6 inches so no light penetrates and wet them down to keep them in place. Place 1 inch of compost on top of the



This lawn is being smothered by layers of newspapers covered with several inches of mulch (created from a dead tree that was ground up. JLT

barrier layer. Add at least 6 inches more of mulch or compost (grass clippings, straw or leaves). Make sure that all of the grass is smothered because any grass that remains will be difficult to remove if it grows around your new plants.

Wildlife and Pollinators

Providing habitat for songbirds and pollinators is one of the great pleasures of gardening with native plants. To maximize habitat for pollinators, plant a diversity of plants, and aim to provide the longest possible season of bloom.

Many plants will provide nectar for adult insects, but consider the larval stage in planting too. Most native insects have specialized relationships with native plants, and require specific plants to grow from egg to adult. As an example, many butterflies will sip nectar from non-natives, but the eggs need to be laid on specific plants or the caterpillars won't recognize the plant as food.



Butterfly on Rocky Mountain Bee Plant (*Cleome serrulata*) JLT

Birds use native plants for food and shelter, but insects are an overlooked and crucial part of many bird's diets. Far more insects will develop on native plants than exotics, providing food for birds during the critical nesting season. Consider planting a 'thicket' of berry-producing shrubs. If planted in the direction of the prevailing wind, this thicket can also provide a space of calm air for butterflies.

Inventory your Yard/Microclimates

For the best garden, spend some time in the planning stage. Identify where you would like to create a new bed, or replant an existing one. Inventory the areas in your yard for sun and shade, and for areas where moisture accumulates. Consider what areas have easiest access from the house, and if there are views you would like to enhance or block. All of these factors create what are known as microclimates or small,

but potentially significant changes in the immediate environment that will affect your plants. Knowing these ahead of time will help you make the most of your site and can guide your plant choices.

Design for Low Maintenance

Native plants can be used to accomplish just about any design style you're looking for using the elements and principles of good design: color, texture, balance, unity, variety, rhythm, line, form, scale. They can be used for anything from formal designs to the more informal, naturalistic plantings that most people think of when they think native.

Choose species based on the soil, light and water conditions of your site and for the size, shape, texture, and color desired. For a more natural, successful and easily maintained landscape, group species that grow together naturally and have the same cultural requirements. This will improve plant health and appearance, and will minimize maintenance.

South-facing areas, with reflected heat, will do best with dryland or desert plants. North-facing areas are cooler, moister and shadier, and will do better with forest-edge type plants. West-facing areas are more similar to south-facing, even if they only get a half day of sun, so this is a good spot for dryland, prairie, or chaparral plants. The east-facing side is usually the most benign, and can grow a wide variety of plants.

Plants that have higher water needs should be placed near the house for easier watering, or near downspouts or in low-lying areas where they will get extra water.



Swamp Milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*). JB

Be sure to be vigilant for weeds, especially in the first few years of planting, so they don't take over the desirable vegetation. Plant thickly enough that the plants become a living mulch.

Suggested Reading

**Items available from the CoNPS Store at the time this booklet was published are marked with an asterisk*. Others may be out-of-print and can be obtained from Amazon or the public library.*

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Colorado Native Plant Society Mission Statement

The Colorado Native Plant Society is dedicated to furthering the knowledge, appreciation and conservation of native plants and habitats of Colorado through education, stewardship and advocacy.

Visit CoNPS website at <http://www.conps.org>



Plant List

The plants for this guide were selected by experienced gardeners, with further input from other local gardeners from the Colorado Native Plant Society. Our was to chose plants that would be relatively easy to find in nurseries and seed catalogs.

CoNPS holds native plant sales twice a year. In the spring, plants can be pre-ordered online and picked up on a certain date at specific locations in the Front Range. Plants can be ordered online at <https://conps.org/plant-sale/#iform/PlantSale>. In the fall, there is a native plant sale associated with the CoNPS Annual Conference.

For a listing of nurseries and seed companies in Colorado that sell native plants, look for the “Native Plant vendors” list on the Colorado Native Plant Society (CoNPS) website at <http://conps.org/gardening-with-native-plants/>. When you go to a nursery, be sure to have the scientific name with you to make sure you are purchasing the correct species.

Key to Chart

The chart on the following pages contains a list of plants, *listed alphabetically by scientific name (column 2 of the chart)*, that are native to Colorado and do well in Front Range gardens. An asterisk indicates it is local to another part of the state but will do well in your garden. Not all the plants illustrated in this guide are in the chart but the scientific names are given so you can find them in a nursery. If you have questions, contact CoNPS or one of the other organizations that collaborated to produce this guide.

frt/birds,wl = fruit for birds and wildlife

hp = host plant

hp/hm = host plant for hawk moth

np/bee,btf = nectar and pollen for bees and butterflies

np/bee,btfo = nectar and pollen for bees, butterflies, and other pollinators

n/hb = nectar for hummingbirds

n/hm=nectar for hawkmoths

p/bees = pollen for bees

ss/birds = seeds and shelter for birds

s/birds = seeds for birds

Common Name	Scientific Name	Size H x W	Water
GROUNDCOVERS			
Pussytoes (perennial)	<i>Antennaria parvifolia</i>	2" x 6"	low-mec
Wine Cups (perennial)	<i>Callirhoe involucrata</i>	4" x 10"	low-mec
Spreading Daisy (perennial)	<i>Erigeron divergens</i>	2" x 16"	low
Sulphur Flower (perennial)	<i>Eriogonum umbellatum</i>	10" x 12"	
Creeping Mahonia (shrub)	<i>Mahonia repens (Berberis repens)</i>	12" x 12"	med.
Low-Gro Fragrant Sumac (shrub)	<i>Rhus trilobata 'Low-Gro'</i> (<i>R. aromatica</i> 'Low-Gro')	4' x 3'	low
PERENNIALS			
Common Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium (lanatum)</i>	18" x 18"	low-mec
Fringed Sage	<i>Artemisia frigida</i>	12" x 18"	low
Prairie Sage	<i>A. ludoviciana</i>	18" x 18"	low
Showy Milkweed	<i>Asclepias speciosa</i>	30" x 12"	med
Butterfly Plant*	<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	18" x 18"	low
Chocolate Flower*	<i>Berlandiera lyrata</i>	18" x 18"	low
Harebells	<i>Campanula rotundifolia</i>	12" x 6"	low
Purple Prairie Clover	<i>Dalea purpurea</i>	24" x 18"	low
Blanketflower	<i>Gaillardia aristata</i>	12" x 12"	medium
Bush Sunflower	<i>Helianthus pumilus</i>	20" x 18"	low
Gayfeather	<i>Liatris punctata</i>	24" x 12"	low
Blue Flax	<i>Linum lewisii</i>	18" x 12"	low
Star Flower/Blazing-Star	<i>Mentzelia decapetala</i>	28" x 18"	low
Desert Four O'Clock*	<i>Mirabilis multiflora</i>	18" x 48"	low
Bee Balm/Horsemint	<i>Monarda fistulosa</i>	24" x 24"	low-mec
White-tufted Evening-Primrose	<i>Oenothera caespitosa</i>	6" x 12"	low
Howard's Evening-Primrose	<i>Oenothera howardii</i>	6" x 12"	low
Side-bells Penstemon	<i>Penstemon secundiflorus</i>	20" x 12"	low
Rocky Mountain Penstemon	<i>Penstemon strictus</i>	30" x 24"	low
Blue Mist Penstemon	<i>Penstemon virens</i>	12" x 12"	low
Prairie Coneflower	<i>Ratibida columifera</i>	18" x 12"	low
Black-eyed Susan	<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	24" x 7"	low
Pitcher Sage	<i>Salvia azurea</i>	36" x 36"	low
Canada Goldenrod	<i>Solidago canadensis</i>	30" x 18"	medium
Scarlet Globemallow	<i>Sphaeralcea coccinea</i>	10" x 10"	low

Exposure	Flower Color	Bloom Time	Wildlife Value
sun/part shade	cream, pink	spring-summer	np/bee,btf
sun	magenta	spring-summer	np/bee,btf
sun	white	spring-summer	np/bee,btf
			btf
sun/part shade	yellow	spring	np/bee,btf
sun	yellow	spring	ss/birds
sun/part shade	white	summer	np/bee,btf
sun	gray-green lvs.	summer	p/bees,s/birds
sun	gray-green lvs.	summer	p/bees,s/birds
sun	pink	summer	np/bee,btf hp - monarch larva
sun	orange	summer	np/bee,btf,o hp- monarch larva
sun	yellow	summer	np/bee,btf
sun/part shade	blue	summer	np/bee,btf
sun	purple	summer	np/bee,btf
sun	yellow & red	summer-fall	np/bee,btf
sun	yellow	summer-fall	np/bee,btf, s/birds
sun	pink-purple	summer-fall	np/bee,btf
sun/part shade	blue	spring-summer	np/bee,btf,o
sun	white	summer	np/moths
sun/part shade	magenta	summer	n/hm, n/hb
sun/part shade	pink-lav	summer	np/bee,btf, n/hb
sun	white	summer	n/hm, hp/hm
sun	yellow	summer	n/bees. moths
sun	lav-pink	spring-summer	np/bee,btf, n/hb
sun/part shade	blue-purple	summer	np/bee,btf, n/hb
sun/part shade	blue-purple	spring-summer	np/bee,btf, n/hb
sun	yellow	summer-fall	np/bee,btf s/birds
sun/part shade	yellow	summer	np/bee,btf, seeds/birds
sun/part shade	blue-purple	late summer	n/hb, btf
sun	yellow	late summer	np/bee,btf
sun	red-orange	summer	np/bee

Common Name	Scientific Name	Size H x W	Water	Exposure	Flower Color	Bloom Time	Wildlife Value
CACTI & SUCCULENTS							
Yellow Nipple Cactus	<i>Coryphantha missouriensis</i>	4" x 4"	low	n	yellow	summer	np/bees, fruit
Pink Nipple Cactus	<i>Coryphantha vivipara</i>	4" x 4"	low	n	pink	summer	np/bees, green fruit
Prickly Pear	<i>Opuntia macrorhiza</i>	5" x 18"	low	n	yellow-apricot	summer	np/bees, red fruit
Plains Yucca	<i>Yucca glauca</i>	2' x 2'	low	n	cream	summer	hp- pronuba moth
GRASSES							
Indian Rice Grass	<i>Achnatherum hymenoides</i>	24" x 12"	low	n	lacy tan inflr.	summer	seeds-birds, hp-Skipper
Side Oats Grama	<i>Bouteloua curtipendula</i>	24" x 12"	low	n	green	summer	seeds-birds
Blue Grama	<i>Bouteloua gracilis</i>	18" x 12"	low	n	green	summer	seeds-birds
Little Bluestem	<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	24" x 18"	low	n	bluish foliage	summer	seeds /birds, hp/skipper
SHRUBS							
Serviceberry	<i>Amelanchier alnifolia</i>	12' x 6'	low-med	n-part shade	white	spring	frt/birds, wl
Silvery Leadplant	<i>Amorpha canescens</i>	4' x 3'	low	n-part shade	purple	summer	np/bees
Mountain Mahogany	<i>Cercocarpus montanus</i>	5' x 4'	low	n-part shade	cream	spring	cover/birds, deer browse
Rubber Rabbitbrush	<i>Chrysothamnus nauseosus</i>	4' x 3'	low	n	yellow	fall	cover/birds, np/bee,btf,o
Apache Plume*	<i>Fallugia paradoxa</i>	5' x 5'	low	n-part shade	white-pinkish	summer	np/bees
Western Sandcherry	<i>Prunus besseyi</i>	4' x 4'	low	n	white	spring	np/bees;rt/birds
Golden Currant	<i>Ribes aureum</i>	5' x 4'	medium	n	yellow	spring	n/hb frt/birds, wl
Wax Currant	<i>Ribes cereum</i>	4' x 3'	low	n	pink-cream	spring	frt/birds, wl
Smooth Sumac	<i>Rhus glabra</i>	6' x 4'	low-med	n-part shade	green-yellow	summer	ss/birds
Skunkbush Sumac	<i>Rhus trilobata</i>	4' x 3'	low	n	yellow	spring	ss/birds
Western Wild Rose	<i>Rosa woodsii</i>	3' x 4'	low-med	n-part shade	pink	spring-summer	np/bees; frt/birds
Snowberry	<i>Symphoricarpos occidentalis</i>	4' x 4'	low-med	n-part shade	pink	summer	np/bee,btf; frt/birds
TREES							
Rocky Mountain Maple	<i>Acer glabrum</i>	20' x 12'	med	n	inconspicuous	spring	ss/birds
Rocky Mountain Juniper	<i>Juniperus scopulorum</i>	15' x 8'	low	n	inconspicuous	summer	ss/birds
Piñon Pine	<i>Pinus edulis</i>	25' x 15'	low	n	inconspicuous	summer	ss/birds
Ponderosa Pine	<i>Pinus ponderosa</i>	70' x 30'	low	n	inconspicuous	summer	ss/birds, wldlf
Gambel Oak	<i>Quercus gambelii</i>	25' x 12'	low	n-part shade	inconspicuous	summer	acorns/birds, wldlf, hp/ CO hair-streak btf

PHOTO GALLERY OF PLANTS

These are arranged by bloom times. The colorful berries appear after the flowers so may appear during another season.

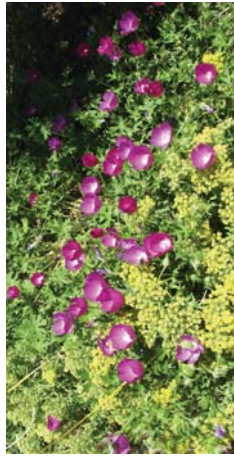
GROUNDCOVERS



Low-Gro Skunkbush
Rhus trilobata 'Low-Gro'
Red berries taste lemony. tri-foliolate leaves.



Creeping Mahonia
Mahonia repens fragrant flowers, blue berries, holly-like leaves. Spring (evergreen)



Wine Cups
Callirhoe involucrata
Showy red-purple flowers. Perennial. Spring - Summer



Spreading Daisy
Erigeron divergens
White daisies with soft green foliage. Summer.

GROUNDCOVERS (Continued)



Pussytoes
Antennaria parvifolia
soft gray-green leaves, white to pink furry flowers. Perennial. Spring- Summer



Sulfur Flower
Eriogonum umbellatum
Butterflies love the long-blooming yellow flowers. Perennial. Summer

PERENNIALS



Blue Mist Penstemon
Penstemon virens
Beautiful sky blue flowers, glossy green leaves. Spring-Summer



Side-Bells Penstemon
Penstemon secundiflorus
Large pink to lavender flowers, waxy grey-green leaves. Spring-Summer



Blue Flax *Linum lewisii*
Beautiful, sky-blue petals fall off in the afternoon like confetti. Spring-Summer



Scarlet Globemallow
Sphaeralcea coccinea - smaller
Sphaeralcea angustifolia - larger
Showy scarlet to orange cup-shaped flowers. Early summer.



Fringed Sage *Artemisia frigida*
Prairie Sage *Artemisia ludoviciana*
These small sages are used for their beautifully colored and textured foliage rather than for their inconspicuous flowers. They are not related to the sage used in cooking.



Rocky Mountain Penstemon
Penstemon strictus
Tall with beautiful spikes of purple flowers, reproduces easily. Planted in mass, it steals the scene. Summer.



Beebalm *Monarda fistulosa*
Bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds love the large flower heads. Leaves smell like oregano. Summer



Evening Primrose
Oenothera caespitosa
Fragrant, white flowers open late in the day and attract moths. After blooming they wilt pinkish. Summer.



Yarrow *Achillea millefolium*
Clusters of small white flowers and ferny leaves, giving texture to the garden. Summer



Howard's Evening-Primrose
Oenothera howardii
Glossy deep-green leaves, large, showy, yellow flowers that wilt and turn orange after blooming. Summer.



Showy Milkweed *Asclepias speciosa*
Tall plant with large, fragrant balls of attractive pink flowers. Attracts bees and is the host plant for the Monarch butterfly. Large, showy leaves look like smaller, lighter version of rubber tree leaves. Interesting seedpods release plumed seeds that fly in the breeze. Summer.



Butterfly Milkweed
Asclepias tuberosa
Bright orange-yellow balls of flowers attract many species of bees and many different butterflies. Host plant for Monarch butterfly. Summer.



Harebells *Campanula rotundifolia*
Purplish-blue, delicate nodding flowers seem to glow in the evening light. Delicate stems. They are the bluebells of Scotland. Summer.



Desert Four O'Clock *Mirabilis multiflora*
Large and sprawling, Desert 4 O'Clock becomes covered with purple flowers in the afternoon. Very showy. Summer.



Black-eyed Susan *Rudbeckia hirta*
Yellow sunflowers with the dark centers.
Summer.



Bush Sunflower *Helianthus pumilus*
Common in the Front Range, this medium-sized sunflower provides abundant yellow flower heads for a variety of pollinators. The leaves feel like sandpaper! Summer-Fall.



Gayfeather *Liatris punctata*
This spectacular late summer to fall-blooming plant is worth the wait with its showy spikes of pink-purple flowers.



Chocolate Flower* *Belandiera lyrata*
Native to southeastern-Colorado, chocolate flower has dark-centered yellow flower heads that smell like hot chocolate. Summer.



Purple Prairie Clover *Dalea purpurea*
Long spikes of purple pea flowers attract bees. Summer.



Blanket Flower *Gaillardia aristata*
Spectacular yellow flowers with orange-red centers. A "must have" for any garden! Summer-Fall



Pitcher Sage *Salvia azurea*
The pretty blue flowers of this mint family plant appear in late summer.



Blazing Star *Mentzelia decapetala*
Large, spectacular flowers with a fireworks of stamens open in the evening, attracting moths.

CACTI AND SUCCULENTS

These two cacti are small so fit them into a protected area in a rock garden where you can enjoy their spectacular flowers when they bloom.



Canada Goldenrod *Solidago canadensis*
These showy summer bloomers should not cause allergies because they are insect-pollinated rather than wind-pollinated.



Prairie Coneflower *Ratibida columnifera*
Cylindrical structures protrude from the center, hold disk flowers. Summer-Fall



Yellow Nipple Cactus
Coryphantha missouriensis



Pink Nipple Cactus
Coryphantha vivipara

SHRUBS



Prickly Pear Cactus *Opuntia macrorhiza*, *O. polyacantha*, *O. phaeacantha*
Watch out for the barbed hairs (glochids) as well as the spines on prickly pears. The flowers in the summer are worth the danger, but plant away from paths. For tasty jelly, use the fleshy red fruit of *O. phaeacantha*.



Plains Yucca *Yucca glauca*
Although the leaf tips are sharp, yuccas make a wonderful accent in your native plant garden and are very drought-tolerant. Even when not in bloom, they are spectacular. Banana Yucca* (*Yucca baccata*) has wider leaves than *Yucca glauca*.



Wax Currant
Ribes cereum
Tubular pink flowers in the spring are followed by edible red-orange berries.

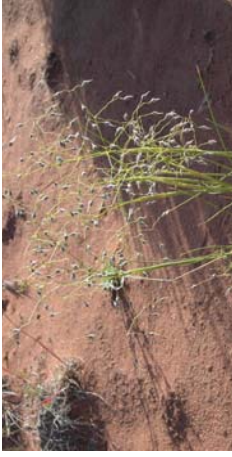


Golden Currant
Ribes aureum
Showy yellow trumpet flowers in spring smell like the spice cloves and are followed by edible red berries. Grows quickly, can be cut back.

GRASSES



Blue Grama *Bouteloua gracilis*
Seedheads look like false eye lashes.



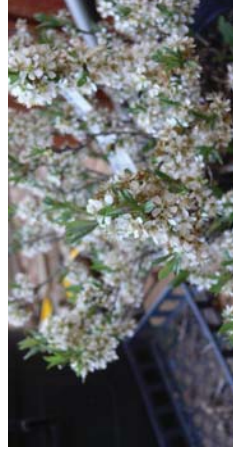
Indian Rice Grass
Achnatherum hymenoides
Delicate seedheads are decorative.



Side-Oats Grama
Bouteloua curtipendula
Seedheads are on one side like flags.



Little Bultema
Schizachrium scopulorum
Pretty reddish autumn color. Wispy.



Western Sandcherry
Prunus besseyi
Masses of fragrant white flowers cover this shrub in early spring.



Serviceberry
Amelanchier alnifolia
Attractive shrub to small tree has white flowers, purple berries. Beautiful red and yellow Fall colors.



Mountain Mahogany
Cercocarpus montanus
This craggy foothills shrub has character and it says, "I'm from the West!" Spectacular coiled, furry seedheads are fun.



Wood's Rose
Rosa woodsii
Lovely pink flowers adorn this prickly plant that can sucker aggressively. Attractive red rose hips supply winter food for wildlife.

TREES

The large, deciduous, broad-leaved trees of our region, like cottonwoods, tend to grow in riparian areas. They are not low-water trees. The trees on this page grow in the foothills and are more drought-tolerant than riparian trees. Except for ponderosa pine, which grows quite tall, the trees on this page are usually tall shrubs to small trees.



Gambel Oak

Quercus gambelii

Gambel oak is a survivor, suckering to form colonies in reaction to forest fires. This handsome, slow-growing tree is an important wildlife plant, providing acorns for winter food.



Rocky Mountain Juniper

Juniperus scopulorum

Robins and Townsend solitaires enjoy the blue "berries" (actually, cones) of the female plant. Rocky Mountain Junipers are usually dioecious with separate male and female plants. The female plants have the berries and the males have the pollen cones that can cause allergies.



Rocky Mountain Maple

Acer glabrum

The branches seem to be a chaotic tangle and the leaves of this bushy plant are a smaller version of the classic maple leaf and samaras.



Piñon Pine

Pinus edulis

Piñon pine and junipers create the pygmy PJ forests in parts of southern and western Colorado. This tree produces piñon nuts (seeds), an important wildlife food that is also enjoyed by humans. Does well in the Front Range.



Ponderosa Pine

Pinus ponderosa

Ponderosa pines grow in the foothills and mountains. These tall trees with broad crowns need room in the garden. In the warm sun, their trunks can smell like vanilla or butterscotch.



Apache Plume*

Fallugia paradoxa

Occurring near Pueblo and in the San Luis Valley, it adapts to Front Range conditions. Showy white flowers and even showier pink seedheads steal the show!



Rabbitbrush

Chrysothamnus nauseosus

Attractive green to blue-grey foliage, covered with beautiful gold flowers in fall. Nice for structure in the winter. Spreads easily.



Smooth Sumac

Rhus glabra

Beautiful Oriental-looking shrub with striking fall color. It is not poisonous. In nature, it is low-growing but can become tall in the garden



Snowberry

Symphoricarpos occidentalis

Pink to white tubular to bell-shaped flowers followed by white, inedible berries.



Silvery Lead Plant

Amorpha canescens

Spikes of dark purple flowers and pinnate leaves are attractive features of this plant.



Three-leaf Sumac

Rhus trilobata

A common and desirable shrub of the foothills with trifoliate leaves. It is not poisonous and displays pretty red berries that can be used to make lemonade or as a tart trailside snack. There is also a 'low-gro' cultivar.

Landscape Design #1

This landscape design, which is 15' by 15' and approximately 22' diagonally, fits nicely into the corner of a yard. The leadplants serve as the tallest plant in the corner, contributing spikes of purple when in bloom. The purple is repeated nearby by the purple prairie clover. The pale, fuzzy blue-grey leaves of prairie sage provide a soft muted color throughout the year as do the low, grey-pussytoes at the front of the garden and the beautiful flowers of blue-mist penstemon that are abundant in spring and early summer. The native yarrow has flat-crowned clusters of small white flowers and ferny leaves with the white flower color echoed in the front by white-tufted evening primrose and in front of the prairie sage by the spreading daisies. The yellow chocolate flower smells like hot chocolate and, next to them, the flowers of side-oats grama wave like small flags along the stem of the plant. The lovely blue flowers of flax bloom in the morning, shedding their petals like confetti on the ground by the afternoon.



Leadplant *Amorpha canescens*



Prairie Sage *Artemisia ludoviciana*



Blue Mist Penstemon *Penstemon virgens*



Side-Oats Grama Grass
Bouteloua curtipendula



Chocolate Flower *Berlandiera Lyra*



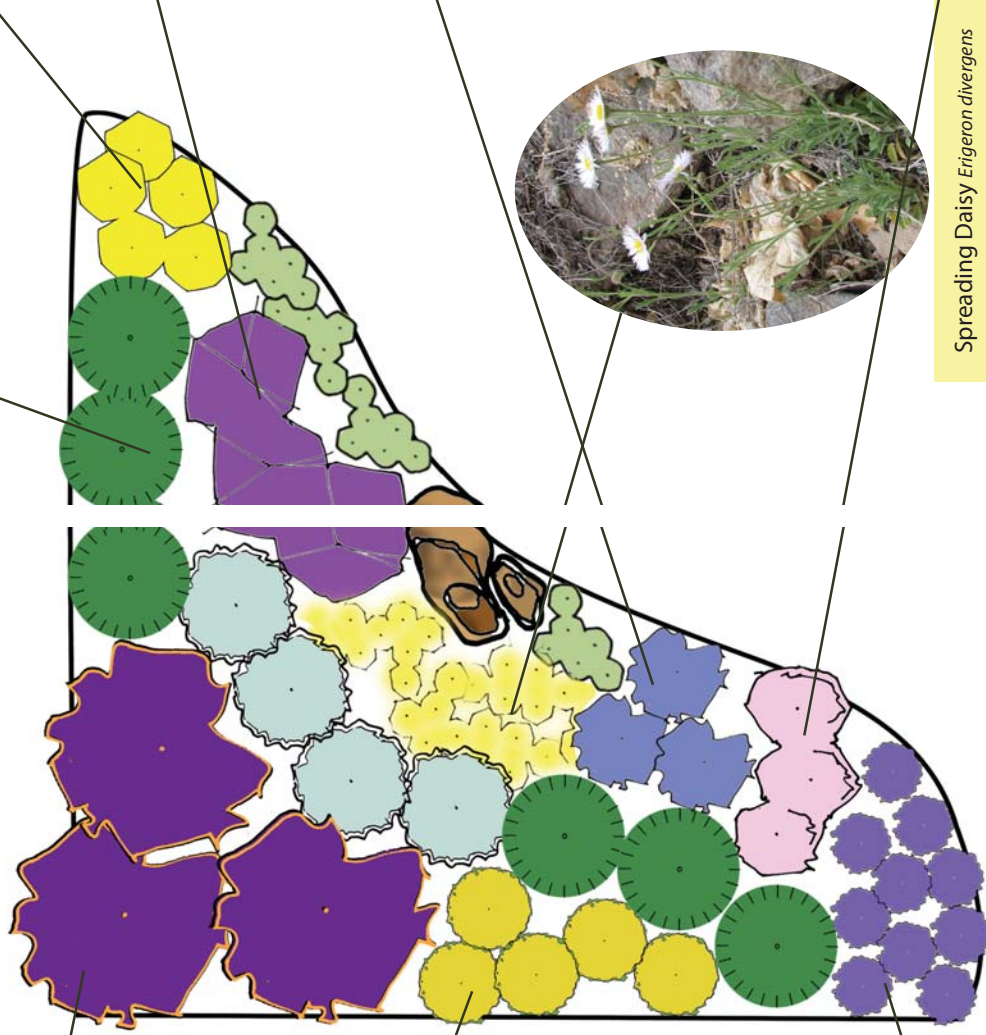
Purple Prairie Clover *Dalea purpurea*



Blue Flax *Linum lewisii*



Evening-Primrose *Oenothera caespitosa*



Spreading Daisy *Erigeron divergens*

Landscape Design #2

This rectangular native garden is 15' by and 5'. The rabbitbrush, pussytoes, and little bluestem give year round interest and winter structure. The flowers give a beautiful combination of fall colors.



Goldenrod *Solidago* spp.



Globemallow *Sphaeralcea* spp.



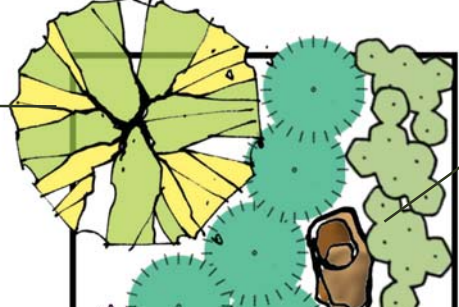
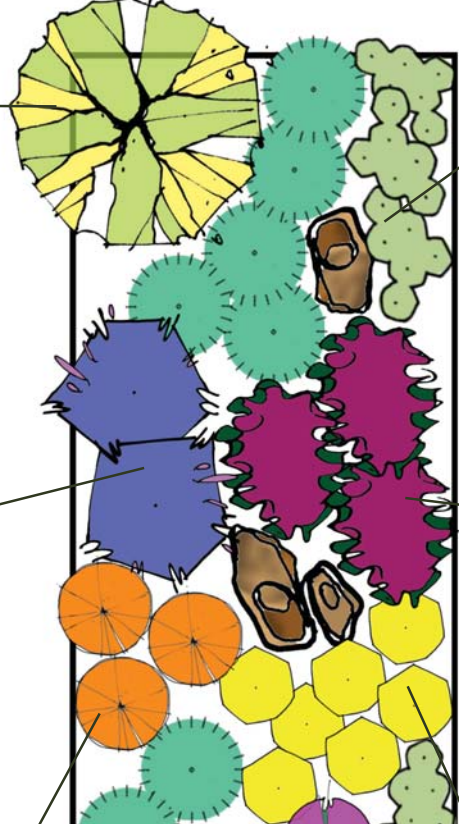
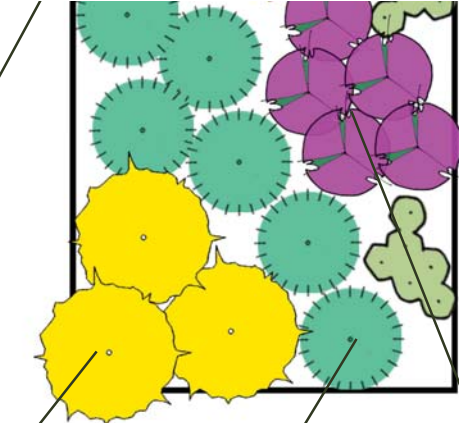
Rocky Mountain Penstemon
Penstemon strictus



Rabbitbrush
Chrysothamnus nauseosus



Little Bluestem
Schizachyrium scoparium



Gayfeather
Liatris punctata



Chocolate Flower
Berlandiera lyrata



Wine Cups
Callirhoe involucreta



Pussytoes
Antennaria spp.

PHOTO GALLERY OF LANDSCAPE IDEAS

Jim and Dorothy Borland's Yard in Denver is the envy of any native plant gardener. Their front yard is a beautiful example of the mix of colors and textures provided by Colorado's native plants.



In the foreground, the showy yellow flowers of Missouri evening-primrose (*Oenothera missouriensis*) turn pale orange after blooming. Blanketflower (*Gaillardia aristata*), several species of yucca, and Apache plume (*Fallugia paradoxa*), a shrub covered with white blossoms, create a feast for the eyes.



Carol English & Dave Elin's Rock Garden is nestled into the rocky foothills in Morrison, Carol and Dave have artistically carved a number of rock gardens and paths that show off native shrubs, perennials (especially penstemons), and cacti. Above is the spectacular claret cup cactus (*Echinocereus triglochidiatus*) displaying a profusion of scarlet blossoms. Rock terraces and a variety of hardscapes show off the plants.



Charlie and Jan Turner's native and xeriscape garden in Golden shows off the purple flowers of Rocky Mountain penstemon (*Penstemon strictus*) and blanket flower (*Gaillardia aristata*) with its bright yellow ray flowers and orange center of disk flowers. In front of the fence on the left side of the photo is a smooth sumac (*Rhus glabra*) that turns brilliant red in the autumn. A pinon pine can be seen behind the penstemons. To the right of the penstemon is a clump of Sulphur Flower (*Eriogonum umbellatum*). In front of the log is Navajo Tea (*Thelesperma filifera*).



Rick Brune's Prairie Garden in Lakewood is a riot of color.



The High Plains Environmental Center (HPEC) in Loveland has a number of native gardens. They offer educational programs and grow native plants for the HPEC and CoNPS plant sales.

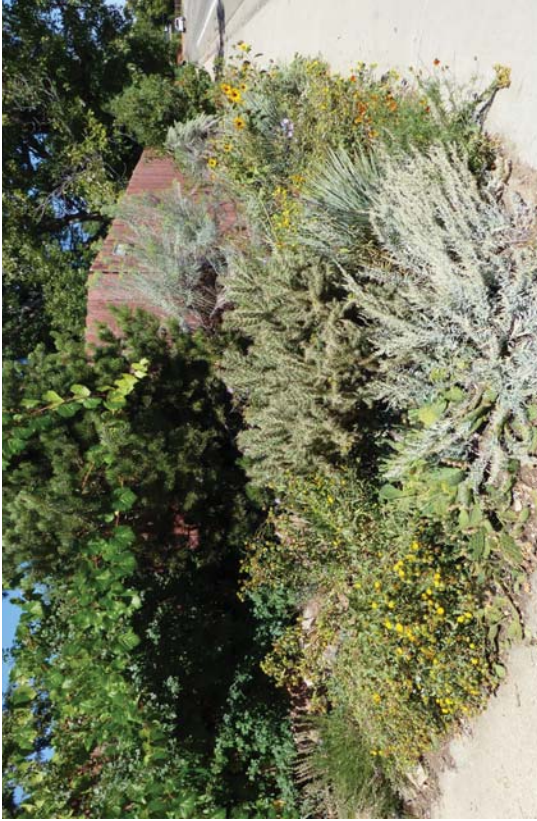


Colors and textures create an eye-catching combination in HPEC's summer garden. In the left foreground, the purple flowers of Desert Four O'Clock (*Mirabilis multiflora*) are abundant and beautiful, opening in the afternoon. Each plant can spread to cover a large area (4' x 4') and can drape over terraces. Showy orange butterfly milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) attracts a collection of bees and butterflies (and humans!) and can serve as a host plant for larvae of Monarch butterflies. The soft, blue-grey leaves of prairie sage (*Artemisia ludoviciana*) form the perfect backdrop for the butterfly milkweed.



The blue color and interesting structure of spiderflower (*Tradescantia occidentalis*) is a plus in the garden. Showy orange flowers of *Sphaeraclea* spp. in the background provide bright color that contrasts with the soft gray-green foliage of many of the plants in the garden.

Dave Sutherland's front yard, is a drought-tolerant garden occupies a corner between the driveway and the street.



The Butterfly Pavilion's Discovery Garden has sunflowers (left) and rabbitbrush (right) for bees, butterflies, and other pollinators.



Photo credits indicated by initials:

- (AY) Amy Yarger
- (CT) Charlie Turner
- (DD) Deryn Davidson
- (DE) Dave Elin
- (IS) Irene Shonle
- (JB) Jim Borland
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- (JT) Jim Tolstrup
- (LH) Linda Hellow
- (LS) Linda Smith
- (ND) Nick Daniel
- (RB) Rick Brune
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