

ILLINOIS NATIVE PLANTS

This brochure is a guide to the characteristics and benefits of selected Illinois plants to help home gardeners choose native plants appropriate for site-specific conditions.

By using native plants in your landscape, you help support healthy ecosystems on land and water. Many are food sources for pollinators such as bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds. Native plants promote clean water and conservation by reducing the need for garden inputs. They rarely require fertilizer and pesticides when planted in conditions similar to their natural ecosystems. Further, native plants have extensive root systems that, once established, help them thrive without watering. For more information, visit the University of Illinois Extension Horticulture website: extension.illinois.edu/global/horticulture.

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL NATIVE PLANTINGS

Whether you’re a native plant purist or if you simply want to add them to your existing landscape, there are a few things to keep in mind:

1. For design inspiration, look to natural areas, although you may want to interpret your design for the property’s scale, which is likely smaller. One strategy is to emphasize an iconic feature, such as a mass planting of Prairie Dropseed with seasonal flowers, to represent a prairie. Another approach is to contain the bed with a defined border. Whatever your design, check local municipal or homeowner’s association ordinances to ensure compliance.
2. Know your property’s site conditions. This informs which plants work best (or do not). Use this brochure to match your site’s sun, moisture, and soil type to plants suited to those conditions.
3. Before digging, call JULIE at 811 or 800-892-0123 or visit www.illinois1call.com to place a local utility request. When you know it’s safe to dig, start by preparing your garden bed.
4. If you are using small plugs, consider soaking them in a small bucket. It can be difficult to rehydrate them once they dry out.
5. To plant, dig a hole as deep and a little wider than the pot the plant came in. If the plant is root-bound, cutoff the bottom 1/4” of the roots to stimulate new growth. Place the plant in the hole and backfill with soil. Be sure the level of the plant’s soil matches the level of the ground around it.
6. Add 2–3” of natural shredded mulch, leaving a circle approximately 2” in diameter of bare soil around the stem.
7. Water your new plants every other day for two weeks if it doesn’t rain. After two weeks, additional watering may be necessary if the weather is hot and dry.
8. Your native plant may not bloom in the first two years while it’s busy putting down deep roots. To have color during perennial establishment, you can intermingle them with annuals.
9. Although native plants are often described as low maintenance, this does not mean no maintenance, especially in the first two years when they are establishing root systems. During this critical time, expect to pull weeds and to maintain the mulch layer to discourage unwanted plants.

WHERE TO FIND PLANTS AND MORE INFORMATION

The plant palette is inspired by the Red Oak Rain Garden: www.RedOakRainGarden.org. The Illinois Native Plant Society webpage lists sources of native plants. For more information about plants, see the University of Illinois Extension Horticulture website.

PUT YOUR NATIVE PLANT GARDEN ON THE MAP

You can be part of a network of native plantings by registering your Illinois native plant garden or rain garden. This helps build community and encourage native plant use.

Add your native plant garden to the map: <http://go.illinois.edu/GardenMap>

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FORBS ORGANIZED BY BLOOM TIME				SPRING				SUMMER				FALL				WINTER				SUNLIGHT			HEIGHT	SPACING	MOISTURE			SOIL TYPE	COMMON ECOSYSTEM	ATTRACTION			DROUGHT TOLERANCE		
COLUMBINE																							2-3'	1-1½'					SANDY, ROCKY, ACIDIC	WOODLAND					
GOLDEN ALEXANDERS																							1-3'	1-2'					LOAM	WET PRAIRIE					
FOXGLOVE BEARDTONGUE																							2-3'	1-1½'					LOAM	BLACK SOIL PRAIRIE					
WILD QUININE																							1-2½'	1-2'					LOAM	BLACK SOIL PRAIRIE					
SULLIVANT'S MILKWEED																							2-3'	1-2'					LOAM	WET PRAIRIE					
WHITE WILD INDIGO																							3-6'	2½-3'					TOLERANT	BLACK SOIL PRAIRIE					
NEW JERSEY TEA																							2-3'	1½-3'					LOAM, ROCKY	BLACK SOIL PRAIRIE					
PURPLE PRAIRIE CLOVER																							1-3'	1½-2'					TOLERANT	BLACK SOIL PRAIRIE					
PALE PURPLE CONEFLOWER																							1-3'	1-1½'					LOAM, CLAY, ROCKY	BLACK SOIL PRAIRIE					
FALSE SUNFLOWER																							3-5'	1½-3'					TOLERANT	WOODLAND BORDER					
GREY-HEADED CONEFLOWER																							2-4'	1½-2'					LOAM, CLAY LOAM	BLACK SOIL PRAIRIE					
ORANGE CONEFLOWER																							2-2½'	1½-2'					TOLERANT	DRY PRAIRIE					
SWAMP MILKWEED																							3-5'	1½-3'					LOAM, CLAY, SILT	FLOODPLAIN					
POKE MILKWEED																							2-6'	2-3'					LOAM, SANDY	WOODLAND OPENING					
BUTTERFLYWEED																							1-2½'	1-3'					SANDY, ROCKY, ACIDIC	SAND PRAIRIE					
WILD BERGAMOT																							2½-4'	2-3'					LOAM	BLACK SOIL PRAIRIE					
COMPASS PLANT																							6-12'	1½-3'					LOAM	TALLGRASS PRAIRIE					
COMMON MOUNTAIN MINT																							1-3'	1-1½'					TOLERANT	WET PRAIRIE					
RATTLESNAKE MASTER																							2-5'	1½-2'					TOLERANT	BLACK SOIL PRAIRIE					
PURPLE JOE PYE WEED																							3-7'	3-4'					SILT/SANDY LOAM	WET PRAIRIE					
PRAIRIE BLAZING STAR																							2-4'	1-1½'					LOAM, CLAY	BLACK SOIL PRAIRIE					
OBEDIENT PLANT																							3-4'	1-2'					LOAM	WET PRAIRIE					
GREAT BLUE LOBELIA																							2-3'	1-1½'					TOLERANT	UPLAND WOODLAND					
MISSOURI IRONWEED																							1-3'	2-3'					LOAM	BLACK SOIL PRAIRIE					
ROUGH BLAZING STAR																							2-5'	1-1½'					TOLERANT	BLACK SOIL PRAIRIE					
SMOOTH BLUE ASTER																							1½-3'	1½-2'					TOLERANT	BLACK SOIL PRAIRIE					
ELM-LEAVED GOLDENROD																							1-3'	1-3'					LOAM	MESIC WOODLAND					
NEW ENGLAND ASTER																							2-4'	2-3'					LOAM/CLAY	BLACK SOIL PRAIRIE					
SHORT'S ASTER																							2-3½'	1-1½'					LOAM	MESIC WOODLAND					
OTHERS ORGANIZED BY HEIGHT																																			
PENNSYLVANIA SEDGE																							½-1'	½-1'					SANDY LOAM	UPLAND WOODLAND					
PRAIRIE DROPSEED																							2-3'	2-3'					LOAM, ROCKY	HILL PRAIRIE					
GRAY'S SEDGE																							2-3'	1½-2'					TOLERANT	MOIST WOODLAND					
LITTLE BLUESTEM																							2-4'	2-3'					TOLERANT	HILL PRAIRIE					
INDIAN GRASS																							3-7'	2-3'					TOLERANT	SAVANNAH					
BIG BLUESTEM																							3-8'	2-3'					TOLERANT	TALLGRASS PRAIRIE					

SOURCES:

ILLINOIS WILDFLOWERS:
www.illinoiswildflowers.info

PRAIRIE MOON NURSERY:
www.prairiemoon.com

MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN:
www.missouribotanicalgarden.org

GARDENER EXPERIENCE

TOLERATES DROUGHT

TOLERATES DROUGHT, BUT MAY YELLOW AND DROOP

WILL NOT SURVIVE EXTENDED DROUGHT

ATTRACTS A VARIETY OF BUTTERFLIES

BENEFITS CATERPILLARS

ATTRACTS MONARCH BUTTERFLIES

ATTRACTS BEES

ATTRACTS HUMMINGBIRDS

ATTRACTS BIRDS

WET

MOIST

MESIC

DRY

SUN

PART SUN/PART SHADE

SHADE

LEGEND