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Montana Native Plants for Pollinator-Friendly Plantings



Cover photos: Helen Atthowe



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cooperation with
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Extension

Native Plants Can Attract Pollinators and Beneficials

Native trees, shrubs, forbs, and grasses planted along farm and ranch borders and within fields can attract wildlife, including pollinators and beneficial insects. The right mix of plant species will bloom all season and provide a continuous source of nectar and pollen needed by pollinators and other beneficials.

Pollinator-Friendly Native Species Plantings Can Also:

Reduce Pesticide Use

Sequentially blooming annual and perennial plants provide habitat and winter cover for insects, enhance weed seed suppression, and provide some biological control of insect and disease pests.

Stabilize Soil and Provide Ground Cover

Root systems hold soil in place and reduce the risk of erosion.







Act as Windbreaks and Shelterbelts

Taller trees and shrubs protect farmsteads, crops, and livestock from wind and dust damage and may help to filter wind blown weed seed.

Provide Wildlife Habitat

Woody perennials provide food and shelter for many native wildlife species.

Establishing Pollinator-Friendly Plantings

-  Start right. Flowering plants can be started from seed; shrubs are better established by transplanting seedlings.
-  Test soils for drainage. Most of Montana's native species will not do well in heavy, poorly drained, or saline soils.
-  Match plants with similar site preferences. Choose plants that share similar light, soil, and water requirements and are adapted to the climate.
-  Water wisely. For the most successful establishment of any native shrubs, water weekly or bimonthly for the first two to three years until well established.
-  Control weeds. Most natives do not compete well with weeds. Start with a weed-free area and keep weeds to a minimum for the first two to three years of establishment. Mowing weeds during herbaceous plant establishment will suppress competition and encourage desirable plants.
-  Protect from deer. Fencing may be required in areas with high deer populations. Treatments with deer repellents may help protect new plantings.

Butterfly on rabbitbrush.

Bloom Period of Common Montana Native Plants

	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct
Shrubs							
American Plum	Yellow	Yellow	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
Golden Currant	Yellow	Yellow	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
Chokecherry	Yellow	Yellow	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
Redosier Dogwood	Yellow	Yellow	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
Serviceberry	Light Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
Common Snowberry	Light Blue	Light Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Light Blue	Light Blue
Blue Elderberry	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Yellow	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
Woods Rose	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Yellow	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
Rabbitbrush	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Flowers							
Colorado Columbine	Light Blue	Yellow	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
Fuzzytongue Penstemon	Light Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
Hairy Golden Aster	Light Blue	Light Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Light Blue
Wild Beebalm	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Light Blue	Light Blue
Slender White Prairie Clover	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Light Blue	Light Blue
White Yarrow	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Light Blue
Blanketflower	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Light Blue
Perennial Prairie Sunflower	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Light Blue
Dotted Gayfeather	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Light Blue
Purple Coneflower	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Light Blue
Smooth Aster	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow

Plant Choices - Montana Native Shrubs



American Plum

Prunus americana.
Grows 6 to 10 feet tall with a 6- to 8-foot spread. Prefers loamy soils. Foothill valleys and grassland coulees. Medium water use; full sun. Blooms April to May.



Blue Elderberry

Sambucus cerulea.
Grows 6 to 15 feet tall with a 4- to 8-foot spread. Prefers loamy to clayey soils. Foothill valleys. Moderate water use; partial shade to full sun. Blooms in July.



Chokecherry

Prunus virginiana.
Grows 10 to 15 feet tall, suckering to a 4- to 8-foot spread. Prefers sandy to loamy soils. Foothills to prairie coulees. Low water use; full sun. Blooms April to May.



Common Snowberry

Symphoricarpos albus.
Grows to 3 feet tall with similar spread. Prefers loamy to clayey soils. Foothill valleys and grassland coulees. Low water use; full sun. Blooms June to August.



Golden Currant

Ribes aureum.
Grows 3 to 6 feet tall, suckering to a 3- to 6-foot spread. Tolerates sandy to clayey soils. Foothills, valleys, and prairie coulees. Low water use; full sun. Blooms April to May.



Rabbitbrush

Chrysothamnus nauseosa.
Grows 2 to 4 feet tall with a 2- to 4-foot spread. Prefers sandy soils, but tolerates heavier loam or clay soils. Grasslands and foothills. Low water use; full sun. Blooms August to October.

Plant Choices - Montana Native Shrubs



Redosier Dogwood

Cornus sericea.

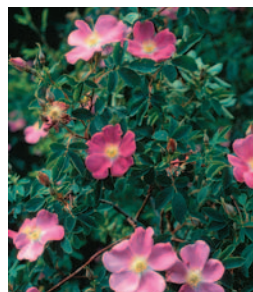
Grows 4 to 7 feet tall with a 4- to 6-foot spread. Prefers loam to clayey textured soils. Foothill valleys and grassland coulees. Medium water use; full sun to partial shade. Blooms April to May.



Rocky Mountain Juniper

Juniperus scopulorum.

Grows 15 to 20 feet tall with a spread up to 8 feet. Prefers sandy soils, but will tolerate heavier loam or clay soils. Transition between foothills and prairie. Low water use; full sun. Slow growing. Provides winter food for songbirds and shelter for overwintering beneficial insects.



Woods Rose

Rosa woodsii.

Grows 4 to 5 feet tall, suckering to a 4- to 10-foot spread. Prefers sandy to loamy soils. Foothills to prairie. Low water use; full sun. Blooms in July.



Serviceberry

Amelanchier alnifolia.

Grows 2 to 16 feet tall, suckering to a 4- to 10-foot spread. Prefers sandy to loamy soils. Foothills to prairie ravines. Low water use; full sun to very light shade. Blooms May to June.

Rocky Mountain juniper.

Plant Choices - Montana Native Flowers



White Yarrow

Achillea millefolium.

Perennial. Grows 2 to 3 feet high, spreading to 2 or 3 feet wide. Light water use; full sun. Moist soils. Foothills to prairies. Blooms July to September.



Colorado Columbine

Aquilegia coerulea.

Perennial. Blue and white flowers. Moderate water use; full sun to light shade. Moist soils. Foothills. Blooms in May.



Smooth Aster

Aster laevis.

Perennial. Grows 2 to 3 feet high and 1 to 2 feet wide. Light to moderate water use; full sun to partial shade. Moist soils. Foothills to prairies. Bright lavender blooms August through frost.



Hairy Golden Aster

Heterotheca villosa.

Perennial. Grows 6 to 12 inches tall and 12 to 24 inches wide. Survives on natural precipitation once established; full sun. Grows in sandy, dry soils. Foothills to prairie. Competes with knapweed. Small, yellow, daisy-like blooms June to September.



Purple Coneflower

Echinacea angustifolia.

Perennial. Grows 1 to 2 feet high and 1 foot wide. Needs little or no additional water once established; full sun. Sandy to clayey soils. Forest valleys to prairie. Blooms August to September.



Blanketflower

Gaillardia aristata.

Perennial. Grows 12 to 16 inches high and 24 inches wide. Drought tolerant once established; full sun. Prefers well-drained sandy, limey soils; adapted to poorer, drier soils. Foothills to prairie. Blooms July to September.

Plant Choices - Montana Native Flowers



Perennial Prairie Sunflower

Helianthus maximiliani.
Perennial. Grows 1 to 6 feet tall (shorter in dry, exposed, rocky areas). Drought tolerant once established. Flowers best in sandier, drier soils. Eastern prairie. Blooms July to September.



Slender White Prairie Clover

Dalea candida.
Perennial legume. Grows 18 to 24 inches high and 12 to 24 inches wide. Drought tolerant once established; full sun. Prefers sandy soils. Prairie. Blooms July to August.



Dotted Gayfeather

Liatis punctata.
Perennial. Grows 1 to 2 feet high and 2 feet wide. Drought tolerant once established; full sun. Prefers sandy to loamy soils. Foothills to prairie. Blooms August to September.



Wild Beebalm

Monarda fistulosa.
Perennial. Grows 12 to 20 inches high, spreading to 1.5 to 2 feet wide. Drought tolerant once established; full sun or light shade. Prefers sandy but moist soil. Forests, valleys, and prairie. Blooms July to August.



Fuzzytongue Penstemon

Penstemon eriantherus.
Perennial. Grows 12 to 20 inches high and 12 inches wide. Drought tolerant once established; full sun. Prefers sandy soil. Foothills to prairie. Blooms May to June.

Native Plant Seed and Seedling Sources

Many commercial nurseries and seed suppliers carry transplants or seed of the species listed in this brochure. Check with local businesses to find out what plants they carry.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service PLANTS Database online at <http://plants.usda.gov/links.html> lists a number of sources for native plant seed. An internet search can identify additional suppliers of both seed and transplants for your area.

The Montana Native Plant Society sells a publication entitled *Source Guide for Native Plants of Montana*. Order this publication from Montana Native Plant Society Publications, 1270 Lower Sweet Grass Road, Big Timber, MT 59011.

The Montana Conservation Seedling Nursery in Missoula offers native shrub seedlings. Contact them at (406) 542-4244 or <http://www.dnrc.mt.gov/forestry/nursery/> for more information.

Credits for ID Photos on Pages 4-7

Amelanchier alnifolia: Peter Lesica.
Aquilegia coerulea: Peter Lesica.
Achillea Millefolium: Gary A. Monroe @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database
Aster leavis: Thomas G. Barnes @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / Barnes, T.G. & S.W. Francis. 2004. *Wildflowers and Ferns of Kentucky*. University Press of Kentucky.
Chrysothamnus nauseosus: Helen Allaire.
Cornus sericea: USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / Herman, D.E. et al. 1996. *North Dakota tree handbook*. USDA NRCS ND State Soil Conservation Committee; NDSU Extension and Western Area Power Admin., Bismarck, ND.
Dalea candidum: USDA-NRCS.
Echinacea angustifolia: Larry Allain @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database.
Gaillardia aristata: USDA-NRCS.
Helianthus maximiliani: Larry Allain @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database.
Heterotheca villosa: J.S. Peterson @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database.
Juniperus scopulorum: USDA-NRCS.
Liatris punctata: W.L. Wagner @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database.
Monarda fistulosa: Peter Lesica.
Penstemon eriantherus: USDA-NRCS.
Prunus americana: Larry Allain @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database.
Prunus virginiana: Margaret Williams @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database.
Ribes aureum: Peter Lesica.
Rosa woodsii: Peter Lesica.
Sambucus cerulea: William & Wilma Follette @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / USDA NRCS. 1992. *Western wetland flora: Field office guide to plant species*. West Region, Sacramento, CA.
Symphoricarpos albus: USDA-NRCS.

NRCS Programs Can Help

The Natural Resources Conservation Service supports the use of native species in many conservation practices that involve seeding or transplanting. Selecting pollinator-friendly native species for these practices can provide added conservation benefits. These practices include:

- Channel bank vegetation
- Critical area planting
- Early successional habitat development/management
- Field borders
- Filter strips
- Herbaceous wind barriers
- Range planting
- Riparian herbaceous cover

NRCS conservation cost-share programs such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) can help agricultural producers with the establishment of native species plantings, including the pollinator-friendly species listed in this publication.

For rangeland plantings of native species contracted under EQIP and WHIP, a higher cost-share rate is paid for planting a sequentially blooming planting mix that provides flowering plants throughout the growing season.

For additional information on NRCS conservation programs, contact your local NRCS or conservation district office. The office nearest you can be located on the web at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov>.

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