



# How to Incorporate Native Plants into an Urban Landscape

A Starter Guide for Plant Selection

*Presented by The City of Ankeny and the  
Polk Soil and Water Conservation District*




# WHY NATIVE PLANTS?

A **native plant** is generally described as a plant that occurs naturally in a particular region, state, ecosystem or habitat without human actions.

Iowa's historic landscape was once dominated by tall grass and native prairie plants. Even though the landscape has changed, native plants are suited to Iowa's climate and can be easily integrated into urban landscaping. Native plants are hardy; they withstand extreme fluctuations of temperature and rainfall. Once native plants are flourishing, they also require less care and expense than non-native ones; less watering because their roots are deeper and pesticides aren't needed since many have evolved to thrive and resist predators. Planting native species is also good for the environment. The deep roots help prevent soil erosion, filter stormwater more effectively and provides ecosystems for nectar, seeds and pollen for neighboring flora and fauna.

Like any gardening project, native landscaping entails preplanning and design to cultivate a harmonious plant community. The first step is determining your soil, water and sunlight conditions and look for species that will match that. The next time you plan a landscaping project, consider using native plants!

### SOIL MOISTURE



wet    wet mesic    mesic    dry mesic    dry

### SUN EXPOSURE



full sun    partial sun    shade

## NOTES

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# FLOWERS: Early Bloom Range

## VIRGINIA BLUEBELLS



**Scientific Name:**  
MERTENSIA VIRGINICA  
**Height:** 2 feet    **Bloom Color:** Blue  
**Bloom Range:** April-May  
**Sun:** Partial/Shade  
**Moisture:** Wet Mesic-Mesic  
**Notes:** Shade; Bell-shaped flowers that transition from pink to purple to blue.

## COLUMBINE



**Scientific Name:**  
AQUILEGIA CANADENSIS  
**Height:** 2 feet    **Bloom Color:** Red  
**Bloom Range:** April-July  
**Sun:** Partial/Full/Shade  
**Moisture:** Mesic-Dry  
**Notes:** Dainty spring flowers.

## PRAIRIE SMOKE



**Scientific Name:**  
GEUM TRIFLORUM  
**Height:** 8 inches    **Bloom Color:** Pink  
**Bloom Range:** April-June  
**Sun:** Partial/Full  
**Moisture:** Wet Mesic-Dry  
**Notes:** Beautiful flower, attractive plant after blooming complete.

## WILD GERANIUM



**Scientific Name:**  
GERANIUM MACULATUM  
**Height:** 1 foot    **Bloom Color:** Purple  
**Bloom Range:** April-July  
**Sun:** Partial/Full  
**Moisture:** Mesic-Dry Mesic  
**Notes:** Graceful plant with multiple blooms.

## SHOOTING STAR



**Scientific Name:** DODECATHEON MEADII  
**Height:** 1 foot  
**Bloom Color:** Pink  
**Bloom Range:** April-June  
**Sun:** Partial/Full  
**Moisture:** Wet Mesic-Dry Mesic  
**Notes:** Early bloom, foliage disappears.

## JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT



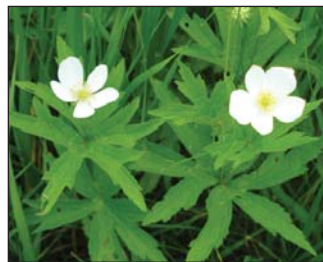
**Scientific Name:**  
ARISAEMA TRIPHYLLUM  
**Height:** 2 feet  
**Bloom Color:** Green  
**Bloom Range:** April-July  
**Sun:** Partial/Shade  
**Moisture:** Wet Mesic-Dry Mesic  
**Notes:** Shade; interesting.

## JACOB'S LADDER



**Scientific Name:**  
POLEMONIUM REPTANS  
**Height:** 1 foot    **Bloom Color:** Blue  
**Bloom Range:** April-June  
**Sun:** Partial/Shade  
**Moisture:** Wet Mesic-Dry  
**Notes:** Shade; blue to blue-violet to lavender blooms.

## CANADA ANEMONE



**Scientific Name:**  
ANEMONE CANADENSIS  
**Height:** 1 foot    **Bloom Color:** White  
**Bloom Range:** May-July  
**Sun:** Partial/Full  
**Moisture:** Wet Mesic-Mesic  
**Notes:** Pretty flowers, interesting foliage, spreading habit.

## WILD GINGER



**Scientific Name:**  
ASARUM CANADENSE  
**Height:** 6 inches    **Bloom Color:** Red  
**Bloom Range:** April-June  
**Sun:** Shade  
**Moisture:** Wet Mesic-Dry  
**Notes:** Shade; low growing heart-shaped leaves

## LARGE-FLOWERED BEARDTONGUE



**Scientific Name:**  
PENSTEMON GRANDIFLORUS  
**Height:** 2 feet  
**Bloom Color:** Lavender  
**Bloom Range:** May-July  
**Sun:** Partial/Full  
**Moisture:** Dry Mesic-Dry  
**Notes:** Multiple blooms on single stalks

# FLOWERS: Mid Bloom Range

## SOLOMON'S SEAL



**Scientific Name:**  
POLYGONATUM CANALICULATUM  
**Height:** 4 feet    **Bloom Color:** Green  
**Bloom Range:** May-July  
**Sun:** Partial/Shade  
**Moisture:** Mesic-Dry Mesic  
**Notes:** Shade; green-white to white flowers.

## BLUE FLAG IRIS



**Scientific Name:**  
IRIS SHREVEI  
**Height:** 1 foot    **Bloom Color:** Purple  
**Bloom Range:** June  
**Sun:** Partial/Full  
**Moisture:** Wet-Wet Mesic  
**Notes:** Prefers wetter conditions, interesting foliage.

## OHIO SPIDERWORT



**Scientific Name:**  
TRADESCANTIA OHIENSIS  
**Height:** 3 feet    **Bloom Color:** Purple  
**Bloom Range:** May-August  
**Sun:** Partial/Full  
**Moisture:** Wet Mesic-Dry  
**Notes:** Slender foliage with clumping flowers.

## PALE PURPLE CONEFLOWER



**Scientific Name:**  
ECHINACEA PALLIDA  
**Height:** 3 feet    **Bloom Color:** Lavender  
**Bloom Range:** June-July  
**Sun:** Partial/Full  
**Moisture:** Mesic-Dry  
**Notes:** Blooms early summer, attracts butterflies and hummingbirds.

## PRAIRIE PHLOX



**Scientific Name:** PHLOX PILOSA  
**Height:** 2 feet  
**Bloom Color:** Pink  
**Bloom Range:** May-August  
**Sun:** Partial/Full  
**Moisture:** Wet Mesic-Dry  
**Notes:** Pretty plant with multiple blooms.

## BUTTERFLY MILKWEED



**Scientific Name:**  
ASCLEPIAS TUBEROSA  
**Height:** 2 feet    **Bloom Color:** Orange  
**Bloom Range:** June-August  
**Sun:** Partial/Full  
**Moisture:** Mesic-Dry Mesic  
**Notes:** Very late to emerge, Attracts monarchs.



## PRAIRIE SPIDERWORT



**Scientific Name:**  
TRADESCANTIA BRACTEATA  
**Height:** 1 foot    **Bloom Color:** Purple  
**Bloom Range:** May-August  
**Sun:** Full  
**Moisture:** Dry Mesic-Dry  
**Notes:** Shorter version of spiderwort with clumping flowers

## LONG-HEADED CONEFLOWER



**Scientific Name:**  
RATIBIDA COLUMNIFERA  
**Height:** 3 feet  
**Bloom Color:** Yellow  
**Bloom Range:** June-August  
**Sun:** Partial/Full  
**Moisture:** Mesic-Dry  
**Notes:** Long seed head.

## MISSOURI EVENING PRIMROSE




**Scientific Name:**  
OENOTHERA MACROCARPA  
**Height:** 1 foot    **Bloom Color:** Yellow  
**Bloom Range:** May-September  
**Sun:** Partial/Full  
**Moisture:** Dry Mesic-Dry  
**Notes:** Pretty flowers, spreading habit

## PRAIRIE COREOPSIS





**Scientific Name:**  
COREOPSIS PALMATA  
**Height:** 2 feet    **Bloom Color:** Yellow  
**Bloom Range:** June -August  
**Sun:** Partial/Full  
**Moisture:** Mesic-Dry  
**Notes:** Pretty yellow with lots of flowers.

# FLOWERS: Mid to Late Bloom Range




## WILD PETUNIA

**Scientific Name:** RUELLIA HUMILIS  
**Height:** 1 foot **Bloom Color:** Purple  
**Bloom Range:** June-August  
**Sun:** Partial/Full  
**Moisture:** Mesic-Dry  
**Notes:** Pretty purple blooms.



## NODDING ONION

**Scientific Name:** ALLIUM CERNUUM  
**Height:** 2 feet **Bloom Color:** Lavender  
**Bloom Range:** July-August  
**Sun:** Partial/Full  
**Moisture:** Wet Mesic - Dry Mesic  
**Notes:** Graceful plant in onion family, drooped seed head, spreading habit.





## WILD SWEET WILLIAM

**Scientific Name:** PHLOX MACULATA  
**Height:** 3 feet **Bloom Color:** Pink  
**Bloom Range:** June-August  
**Sun:** Partial/Full  
**Moisture:** Mesic-Dry Mesic  
**Notes:** Lots of blooms on tall, stalky plants, prefers wetter conditions.


## PRAIRIE ONION

**Scientific Name:** ALLIUM STELLATUM  
**Height:** 2 feet **Bloom Color:** Pink/Purple  
**Bloom Range:** July - August  
**Sun:** Partial/Full  
**Moisture:** Mesic-Dry  
**Notes:** Graceful plant in onion family, spreading habit.


## HAREBELL

**Scientific Name:** CAMPANULA ROTUNDIFOLIA  
**Height:** 1 foot **Bloom Color:** Purple  
**Bloom Range:** June - September  
**Sun:** Partial/Full  
**Moisture:** Dry Mesic-Dry  
**Notes:** Pretty plant with long bloom time.





## ROYAL CATCHFLY

**Scientific Name:** SILENE REGIA  
**Height:** 4 feet **Bloom Color:** Red  
**Bloom Range:** July-August  
**Sun:** Partial/Full  
**Moisture:** Mesic-Dry Mesic  
**Notes:** Great red color.




## MOUNTAIN MINT

**Scientific Name:** PYCNANTHEMUM VIRGINIANUM  
**Height:** 3 feet **Bloom Color:** White  
**Bloom Range:** June - September  
**Sun:** Partial/Full  
**Moisture:** Wet-Dry Mesic  
**Notes:** Dense clusters of white flowers



## PURPLE PRAIRIE CLOVER

**Scientific Name:** PETALOSTEMUM PURPUREUM  
**Height:** 2 feet **Bloom Color:** Purple  
**Bloom Range:** July-September  
**Sun:** Partial/Full  
**Moisture:** Mesic-Dry  
**Notes:** Stalky with purple bloom.



## WHITE PRAIRIE CLOVER

**Scientific Name:** PETALOSTEMUM CANDIDUM  
**Height:** 2 feet **Bloom Color:** White  
**Bloom Range:** June-September  
**Sun:** Partial/Full  
**Moisture:** Mesic-Dry  
**Notes:** Stalky with white bloom

## RATTLESNAKE MASTER

**Scientific Name:** ERYNGIUM YUCCIFOLIUM  
**Height:** 4 feet **Bloom Color:** White  
**Bloom Range:** July-September  
**Sun:** Partial/Full  
**Moisture:** Wet Mesic - Dry Mesic  
**Notes:** Unique plant with spiky seed heads, no petals.

# FLOWERS: Late Bloom Range



## TURTLEHEAD

**Scientific Name:** CHELONE GLABRA  
**Height:** 5 feet **Bloom Color:** Cream  
**Bloom Range:** July - September  
**Sun:** Full  
**Moisture:** Wet - Wet Mesic  
**Notes:** Interesting white/cream blooms, tall plant that prefers wetter conditions.



## GREAT BLUE LOBELIA

**Scientific Name:** LOBELIA SIPHILITICA  
**Height:** 3 feet **Bloom Color:** Blue  
**Bloom Range:** July - October  
**Sun:** Partial/Full  
**Moisture:** Wet - Mesic  
**Notes:** Good fall color, prefers wetter conditions.



## WILD BERGAMOT / BEE BALM



**Scientific Name:** MONARDA FISTULOSA  
**Height:** 4 feet **Bloom Color:** Lavender  
**Bloom Range:** July - September  
**Sun:** Partial/Full  
**Moisture:** Wet Mesic-Dry  
**Notes:** Butterflies love, spreading habit.



## BOTTLE GENTIAN

**Scientific Name:** GENTIANA ANDREWSII  
**Height:** 2 feet **Bloom Color:** Blue  
**Bloom Range:** August - September  
**Sun:** Partial/Full  
**Moisture:** Wet Mesic-Mesic  
**Notes:** Unique purple/blue flowers, prefers wetter conditions



## BLACK-EYED SUSAN

**Scientific Name:** RUDBECKIA HIRTA  
**Height:** 2-3 feet **Bloom Color:** Yellow  
**Bloom Range:** July - October  
**Sun:** Full  
**Moisture:** Wet Mesic-Dry  
**Notes:** Long-lasting bloom time.



## CREAM GENTIAN

**Scientific Name:** GENTIANA FLAVIDA  
**Height:** 3 feet **Bloom Color:** Cream  
**Bloom Range:** August - September  
**Sun:** Partial/Full  
**Moisture:** Wet Mesic-Dry Mesic  
**Notes:** Unique white flowers.



## BUTTON BLAZING STAR

**Scientific Name:** LIATRIS ASPERA  
**Height:** 3 feet **Bloom Color:** Purple  
**Bloom Range:** July - October  
**Sun:** Partial/Full  
**Moisture:** Mesic - Dry  
**Notes:** Attracts butterflies



## SNEEZEWEED

**Scientific Name:** HELENIUM AUTUMNALE  
**Height:** 4 feet **Bloom Color:** Yellow  
**Bloom Range:** August - October  
**Sun:** Partial/Full  
**Moisture:** Wet-Wet Mesic  
**Notes:** Tall yellow with many long-lasting flowers, prefers wetter conditions.



## AROMATIC ASTER

**Scientific Name:** ASTER OBLONGIFOLIUS  
**Height:** 2 feet **Bloom Color:** Purple  
**Bloom Range:** August - October  
**Sun:** Partial/Full  
**Moisture:** Dry Mesic - Dry  
**Notes:** Aster that blooms from late summer until the first hard frost.



## HEATH ASTER

**Scientific Name:** ASTER ERICOIDES  
**Height:** 2 feet **Bloom Color:** White  
**Bloom Range:** August - October  
**Sun:** Partial/Full  
**Moisture:** Mesic - Dry  
**Notes:** Very easy to grow and blooms late into fall.

# SHRUBS & GRASSES

## SHRUBS



### LEAD PLANT

**Scientific Name:**  
AMORPHA CANESCENS  
**Height:** 3 feet  
**Bloom Color:** Purple  
**Bloom Range:** April-July  
**Sun:** Partial/Full  
**Moisture:** Mesic - Dry  
**Notes:** Growing in shrubs with spike-like masses of purple blossoms.



### NEW JERSEY TEA

**Scientific Name:**  
CEANOTHUS AMERICANUS  
**Height:** 3 feet  
**Bloom Color:** White  
**Bloom Range:** June - August  
**Sun:** Partial/Full  
**Moisture:** Mesic - Dry  
**Notes:** Deciduous shrub. Flowers loved by butterflies and humming-birds and birds eat the seeds.



## GRASSES



### BLUE GRAMA

**Scientific Name:**  
BOUTELOUA GRACILIS  
**Height:** 6 inches  
**Sun:** Partial/Full  
**Moisture:** Dry Mesic-Dry  
**Notes:** Nice border/transition grass.



### LITTLE BLUESTEM

**Scientific Name:**  
ANDROPOGON SCOPARIUM  
**Height:** 3 feet  
**Sun:** Partial/Full  
**Moisture:** Mesic-Dry  
**Notes:** Beautiful fall color/winter interest.



### BOTTLEBRUSH GRASS

**Scientific Name:**  
HYSTRIX PATULA  
**Height:** 3 feet  
**Sun:** Partial/Shade  
**Moisture:** Mesic - Dry Mesic  
**Notes:** Interesting seed head.



### PRAIRIE DROPSEED

**Scientific Name:**  
SPOROBOLIS HETEROLEPIS  
**Height:** 3 feet  
**Sun:** Partial/Full  
**Moisture:** Wet Mesic - Dry  
**Notes:** Clumping grass.



### BUFFALO GRASS

**Scientific Name:**  
BUCHLOE DACTYLOIDES  
**Height:** 5 inches **Sun:** Full  
**Moisture:** Mesic - Dry  
**Notes:** Needs full sun.



### SIDEOATS GRAMA

**Scientific Name:**  
BOUTELOUA CURTIPENDULA  
**Height:** 2 feet  
**Sun:** Partial/Full  
**Moisture:** Mesic - Dry  
**Notes:** Graceful grass



# Rainscaping Iowa

Landscapes for clean water  
[www.rainscapingiowa.org](http://www.rainscapingiowa.org)



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*bringing it all together*

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