

# Plants for Specific Places & Purposes

Curbside, Rain Garden, Dry Shade, Lengthy Bloom, Long-lasting Cuts, Tall Back Borders

\*MORE: native, recommended, woody and pollinator plants at [plantnebraska.org/plants](http://plantnebraska.org/plants)

## Curbside Plantings

Street plantings can be hard to mow, difficult to water without runoff, are exposed to the elements and have to withstand foot traffic and snow-removal applications. Prairie plants meet many of these challenges since they're deep-rooted to withstand drought, heat and exposure, are adaptable to difficult soils and need very little care. Here are some other plants worth trying.

For groundcovers consider: wild strawberry; prairie smoke; ajuga; snow-in-summer; plumbago; lamb's ears; bloody cranesbill; and *Corydalis*. For salt-tolerance, good groundcovers include: candytuft; sedum; coral bells; hosta; and *Artemisia*.

Low-maintenance grasses like blue and sideoats grama, buffalograss and switchgrass can be used to replace turf. For spring color, they can be interplanted with bulbs that will be showy until the grasses fill in and eventually cover the dead foliage of the short tulips, squill, tiny irises (*Iris reticulata*) or other bulbs planted among the grasses.

Low perennials for hot, dry areas include: evening primrose; daylily; feverfew; yarrow; basket-of-gold; purple poppy mallow; prairie phlox; pasque flower; coneflower; butterfly milkweed; curly or prairie onion; and aromatic aster.

## Rain Garden Plants

Areas that accumulate rainwater runoff need to withstand extremes of both wet and dry.

Grasses: Indiangrass, big bluestem, switchgrass, feather reed grass, cordgrass, rush (corkscrew, inland, Torrey's, spike) and \*sedges (bristly, gray's, palm, bottlebrush, broom, tussock. \*Yellow nutsedge is NOT a true *Carex*).

Perennials: Iris, sweetflag, nodding pink onion, swamp milkweed, flat-topped and New England aster, turtlehead, purple and prairie coneflower, Joe-Pye plant, *Filipendula*, gayfeather, obedient plant, *Rudbeckia*, bottle gentian, culver's root, meadow rue, hibiscus.

## Dry Shade

It can be challenging to grow plants under trees, between buildings or beneath north-facing eaves where rainwater is often deflected and plants compete for moisture, root space, nutrients and airflow. Below are some options but, like any plant, the first year or two they need to be well-watered until their roots are well-established.

Ajuga  
Baneberry, *Actaea rubra*  
Barren strawberry, *Waldsteinia*  
Bear's breeches, *Acanthus*  
Bergenia  
Bleeding heart, *Dicentra*  
Brunnera  
Columbine, *Aquilegia*

Lily of the valley, *Convallaria*  
Coral bells, *Heuchera*  
Corydalis  
Daylily, *Hemerocallis*  
Epimedium  
Euphorbia  
False Solomon's seal, *Smilacina stellata*  
Ferns  
Foam flower, *Tiarella*  
Foxglove, *Digitalis*  
Geranium (perennial)  
Hosta  
Jack-in-the-pulpit, *Asarum*  
Lady's mantle, *Alchemilla*  
Lamb's ear, *Stachys*  
Lamium  
Lenten rose, *Helleborus*  
Liriope  
Mahonia  
Meadow rue, *Thalictrum*  
Pachysandra  
Periwinkle, *Vinca minor*  
Sedum  
Snow-in-summer, *Cerastium*  
Solomon's seal, *Polygonatum*  
St. Johns wort, *Hypericum*  
Wild ginger, *Asarum canadense*

## Lengthy Bloom Period

The average perennial blooms about three weeks, but some will bloom for several months. Bloom length is one of the primary considerations in many plant selection trials, so this is one instance in which a particular cultivar can make a big difference. Landscapes vary greatly in terms of soil, sun, moisture, surroundings and microclimate so results will vary, but these perennials tend to bloom for several months. \* Denotes plants for part shade; most of these prefer full sun.

*Agastache* 'Blue Fortune' and *Agastache* Coronado®

*Aster x frikartii* 'Monch' and 'Wunder von Stäfa'

\*Bleeding heart, *Dicentra eximia* and *D. formosa*

\**Campanula carpatica*

Catmint or *Nepeta*

Coneflower or *Echinacea*

*Coreopsis auriculata*, *lanceolata*, *rosea* and *verticillata*

\**Corydalis lutea*

*Gaillardia*

Garden phlox. Many cultivars of *Phlox paniculata* will bloom from June or July into September, including: 'Andre', 'Aureole', 'Becky Towe', Coral Flame®, 'Crème de Menthe', 'Laura' and 'Robert Poore'; and Phlox Coral Flame®

Black eyed Susan, *Rudbeckia fulgida* 'Goldsturm' etc.

*Gaura*

\* *Geranium* 'Rozanne' 'Jolly Bee' and others

Pin cushion flower or *Scabiosa*  
 Russian Sage or *Perovskia*  
 Sage. *Salvia greggi* 'Furman's Red', 'Wild Thing' etc.  
 Yarrow cultivars for long bloom include *Achillea millefolium*  
 'Strawberry Seduction', 'Fire King' and 'Summer Pastels'  
 and *Achillea* 'Coronation Gold'

Salvia  
 Sedum  
 Sunflower  
 Toad Lily  
 Turtlehead  
 Yarrow

## Long-lasting Cuts

Many plants that make for a beautiful landscape outdoors can have the same—or even more dramatic—impact inside.

Annuals offer an abundance of quick, bright options for bouquets but here the focus is on perennials or other plants that come back year after year, summer after summer.

**FILLERS** to hold up more delicate flowers include hosta leaves which have a long “vase-life” and come in greens from blue to chartreuse to variegated. Coral bells, brunnera and lady’s mantle are other good backdrops for more colorful partners. Even apartment-dwellers usually have access to hosta leaves, a blossom and grass seedheads.

**GRASSES** offer extremely long-lasting seedheads and blades of foliage to complement any arrangement. **VINES.** As a contrast to the vertical lines of grasses, add the fluid curves of grape vine, clematis, bittersweet or Virginia creeper. The arched stems of Solomon’s seal have arching spring blossoms followed by purple berries mid-summer.

**WOODY CUTS:** Foliage from some trees and shrubs wilts immediately upon cutting so it takes some experimentation, but here’s some options:

Camellia  
 Deutzia  
 Dogwood  
 Forsythia  
 Fruit Trees  
 Hibiscus  
 Hydrangea (to dry blossoms, wait till they begin to fade and dry out in mid-fall. Then cut the blossoms, remove foliage, and hang them upside down in a cool place. The colors soften to muted greens, blues and pinks, and last for years)

Lilac  
 Redbud  
 Viburnum  
 Willow  
 Witch Hazel

### PERENNIALS:

Allium  
 Aster  
 Astilbe  
 Baby’s Breath  
 Balloon Flower  
 Bee Balm  
 Bellflower  
 Black-Eyed Susan  
 Blazing Star  
 Coneflower  
 Coreopsis  
 Daisy  
 Goldenrod  
 Lavender  
 Lily  
 Penstemon  
 Phlox

## Tall Plants for the Back Border

Plant height can vary greatly by site, soil, exposure and other factors, but the plants listed below will most likely grow higher than 3 feet.

### GRASSES, perennial

Andropogon, 60”  
 Calamagrostis, 42-60”  
 Cyperus papyrus, 7’  
 Eragrostis trichodes, 36”  
 Miscanthus sinensis var. purpurascens, 36-48”  
 Panicum virgatum ‘Dallas Blues’ & ‘Prairie Fire’,  
 Schizachyrium scoparium ‘MinnBlueA’, 24-48”  
 Sorghastrum nutans ‘Indian Steel’, 42”  
 Spodiopogon sibiricus, 36”

### HERBS

Artemisia annua, 60”  
 Coriandrum sativum, 36”  
 Eucalyptus citriodora, 6 ft.  
 Foeniculum vulgare ‘Dulce’ , 60”  
 Laurus nobilis, 36-96”  
 Poliomintha longiflora, 36”  
 Rosmarinus lavandulaceus, ‘Golden Rain’ & ‘Madeline Hill’,  
 24-36”  
 Salvia elegans ‘Golden Delicious’ & ‘Honeydew’, 36-48”  
 Stevia rebaudiana, 36”

### PERENNIALS, full sun

Acanthus, 36-48”  
 Achillea ‘Coronation Gold’, 36-42”  
 Alcea rosea, 30-72”  
 Amorpha canescens  
 Asclepias 24-40”  
 Aster laevis ‘Bluebird’, 36-48”  
 Baptisia lactea, 36-48”  
 Buddleja, 30-84”  
 Caryopteris x clandonensis ‘First Choice’, 36”  
 Centranthus ruber ‘Pretty Betsy’, 24-36”  
 Cononoclinium coelestinum ‘Blue’, 36”  
 Echinacea angustifolia, 18-36”  
 Echinacea pallida, 48”  
 Eupatorium dubium ‘Little Joe’, 36-48”  
 Fallopia aubertii ‘Lemon Lace’, 12 ft “  
 Helenium ‘Rottgold’, 24-36”  
 Helianthus ‘Lemon Queen’, 60”  
 Hibiscus, 36-48”  
 Ipomopsis aggregata, 48”  
 Iris sibirica & spuria, 24-36”  
 Kniphofia caulescens, 36”  
 Liatris pycnostachya, ‘Eureka’, 60”  
 Liatris spicata ‘Floristan Violet’, 36”  
 Paeonia, 24-36”  
 Papaver orientale, 24-36”  
 Parthenium integrifolium, 24-48”  
 Penstemon, 24-36”

Philadelphus microphyllus, 24-30”  
Phlox paniculata ‘Eva Cullum’, 36-48”  
Ratibida columnifera & pinnata, 48”  
Rudbeckia fulgida var. speciosa, 36”  
Rudbeckia maxima, 5-7’  
Salvia azurea ssp. pitcherii ‘Nekan’, 48”  
Silene regia, 36-48”  
Solidago ‘Fireworks’ & ‘Wichita Mountains’, 30-36”  
Veronica fasciculata, 24-48”  
Veronicastrum, 4-5’

**PERENNIALS, part shade**

Aconitum, 24-60”  
Callicarpa dichotoma, 36-60”  
Clematis vines 6+ ft.  
Delphinium ‘Astolat’ & ‘King Arthur’, 30-72”  
Filipendula rubra ‘Venusta’, 48-60”  
Heptacodium miconioides, 15ft.  
Ligularia stenocephala ‘The Rocket’, 48-60”  
Lobelia cardinalis & ‘Blue Select’, 36-48”  
Lonicera, 8 ft.  
Monarda ‘Marshall’s Delight’, 36-48”  
Weigela praecox ‘April Snow’, 6 ft.  
Wisteria frutescens ‘Aunt Maude’, 15 ft.

**PERENNIALS, shade**

Actaea, 36-60”  
Hosta ‘Blue Umbrellas’, ‘Earth Angel’ & ‘Sum and Substance’, 30-48”  
Tricyrtis, 24-36”