

Recommended Hardy Perennials for Xeriscaping in Nebraska

Prepared by the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum

- Perennials form a more pleasing effect when planted in groups rather than rows or singularly. Mass perennials in groups of at least three for waves of color and texture. Design your border with groups of grasses planted adjacent to and overlapping flowering perennials. Grasses soften the transition between showy perennials. Plants should be arranged in a stair step fashion so short plants are in front and taller ones in back of the border.
- If possible prepare the planting site in the fall to give yourself plenty of time for planning and reflection. If possible till the existing sod into the soil along with up to 6-8" of topsoil, then add at least 6" of topsoil to raise the grade of the bed. A well-drained site should resemble the crown of a road where heavy rains drain away to the sides of the bed.
- Many perennials are adaptable and will grow in a broad range of conditions, but it is best to group perennials with similar growing requirements in the same area. Perennials that prefer more moisture prefer a more moist, rich, well-drained soil and xeriscape perennials prefer thin, well-drained and dry soils.
- Free standing beds or island beds can be viewed from all sides. These informal beds can be any shape, round, oval, teardrop, or thumb-shaped. Because they are accessible from all sides they are easier to maintain than standard borders. They admit more sunlight and circulation, which benefits plants, and they hold more possibilities for plant combinations.

Non-Native Perennials for Hot, Sunny Areas

- **The following list of non-native, sun-loving perennial plants are hardy to at least -30 degrees or hardiness zone 4 and many perform there best when grown in full sun and well-drained soils. Avoid planting in heavy clay soils as poor winter drainage can cause root rots. Heavy urban soils need to be raised above grade with organic matter or topsoil amendments. Many are drought tolerant and dislike consistently moist soils.**

- Amsonia or bluestar – Amsonia spp.** – easy to grow with light blue star-like flowers atop thin stems growing to 3' h. in spring; bluestar (*A. tabernaemontana*) tolerates wet sites, has willow-like leaf; shining bluestar (*A. illustris*) tolerates drought, has glossy leaf; threadleaf bluestar (*A. ciliata*) has narrow leaf turns yellow in fall.
- Artemisia – Artemisia spp.** – soft, gray foliage a must for the hot, sunny border; must have a well-drained site to perform best; fringed sage (*A. frigida*) is an 18" native similar to 'Silver Mound' (*A. schmidtiana*); 'Sea Foam' (*A. versicolor*) gives a frothy appearance; 'Silver Brocade' (*A. stelleriana*) forms a dense ground hugging mat; all benefit from a summer or late winter pruning.
- Bachelor Button, perennial – Centaurea spp.** – prefers full sun and good drainage; 18-24" tall; knapweed (*C. dealbata*) has deeply fringed lavender to pink flowers and mountain bluet (*C. montana*) has deep blue flowers with a reddish-tinged center; blooms in late spring to early summer; shear after blooming to remove seed for new flush of growth.
- Basket-of-Gold – Aurinia saxatilis** – nice gray-green mounds of foliage to 15"; clusters of bright yellow flowers in early spring; requires full sun and good drainage; shear back half after flowering.
- Black-eyed Susan, Missouri – Rudbeckia missouriensis** – large, showy, yellow, daisy-like flowers with black center cones in summer; 18" h. stems over a 12" mound of fuzzy leaves, prefers almost any well-drained, dry soil.
- Blanket Flower – Gaillardia x grandiflora** – coarsely toothed, gray-green leaves; 3-4" solitary flowers of yellow and maroon; seedheads form lovely red spheres; nice dwarf selections; prefers well-drained soil; can be short lived, allow to reseed.
- Candytuft – Iberis sempervirens** – attractive dark evergreen, needle-like leaves; nice ground cover to 15"; a profusion of cute 4-petaled white flowerheads in spring; prune in spring and after flowering for new growth; 'Autumn Snow' blooms on a 12" plant in spring and fall; 'Compacta' is a 4-6" dwarf.
- Caryopteris – Caryopteris x clandonensis** – attractive narrow gray-green foliage on woody, shrub-like plants; may die back to the ground in winter; cut back hard in spring to new growth; 1-2" blue flower clusters with long showy stamens along upper stems in late summer to fall; easy to grow; often referred to as blue-mist spirea, although it is not a true spirea.
- Catmint – Nepeta spp.** – spreading mass of dark green to grayish green foliage, spiked blue flowers bloom mid to late summer; leaves are aromatic when crushed; cut back when flowers fade to encourage another flush; 'Walker's

Low' (*N. x faassenii*) is a compact mound 10-12" with long flowering stems; 'Sweet Dream' (*N. subsessilis*) has large, two-tone soft pink flowers on 18" stems.

- Dianthus hybrids – Dianthus spp.** – compact, sun-loving plants; blooming late spring to early summer usually in shades of white to red with a spicy fragrance; easy to grow when provided great drainage; 'Prairie Pink' has large double bright pink flowers on 18" stems, blooms all season; 'First Love' has flowers changing from pure white to deep rose from April-frost.
- Gaura or apple blossom grass – Gaura lindheimeri** – loose sprays of airy white or pink flowers held above 2-4' stems, said to represent butterflies; blooms in late summer, profusely in cool nights of autumn; prefers rich, well-drained soils.
- Geranium, hardy – Geranium spp.** – dependable workhorse; use massed as a groundcover or accent; prefers wet or dry soils in full sun to part shade; shear back by half after flowering to promote a new flush of growth; foliage often has excellent fall color remaining semi-evergreen in winter; 'Biokovo' has delicate pink flowers; 'Bevan's Variety' has deep magenta flowers; 'Johnson's Blue' is long blooming with bright blue flowers; 'Album' has snow white flowers.
- Jupiter's Beard – Centranthus ruber** – small, coral red flowers are domed above upright stems growing 1-3' h.; grows well in a wide soil range, especially useful in rocky crevices where soil is limited; shear back by half after flowering to promote a new flush of growth; 'Albus' has white flowers.
- Knautia – Knautia macedonica** – dark purple to dark red scabiosa-like flowers from July to frost attracts butterflies and is wonderful for cutting; short lived in heavy, wet soils; pinch in spring to promote compact growth; 2-3' h.; 'Mars Midget' is a 16" dwarf with ruby-red flowers; 'Melton Pastels' blooms a variety of pink, red, salmon, and light blues on 4' tall plants.
- Lamb's Ear – Stachys byzantina** – 6" h. mats of velvety white, woolly leaves; can spread aggressively, but can be controlled by dividing; fuzzy flower spikes with small pink flowers arrive in late spring, can be removed as they develop; 'Silver Carpet' is a non-flowering variety.
- Mullein – Verbascum spp.** – large leaves form basal rosettes of dark green or silvery, woolly leaves; grows upright 2-6' h.; dense clusters of 1" yellow flowers with dark reddish-purple eyes; blooms second year then dies, allow to reseed; 'Jackie' is a 16-18" dwarf with pale peachy-pink flowers; 'Violetta' has dark purple flowers on a 3' plant; 'White Bride' has snow white flowers on a 2' plant.
- Onion, ornamental – Allium spp.** – clumps of grasslike leaves topped by rounded or nodding flower heads; blooms spring-fall; grows best in full sun with any well-drained garden soil; especially nice in rock gardens; 'Mongolian Gem' is an outstanding, tough selection; 'Cowlick' (*A. senescens* ssp. *glaucum*) has mauve flowers in fall, growing 6-12"
- Pasque Flower – Pulsatilla vulgaris** – a European species including many outstanding selections with silky, hairy leaves; delicate cup-shaped flowers in early spring followed by feathery seed heads;; well-drained dry soils a must for longevity; interesting fuzzy foliage.
- Penstemon – Penstemon spp.** – beautiful summer blooming perennials with erect flower spikes; tubular flowers and showy seed heads; allow to reseed to perpetuate in the garden; needs well-drained, dry soils; Rocky Mountain penstemon (*P. strictus*), Penstemon 'Pikes Peak Purple' and 'Red Rocks' are outstanding selections.
- Pincushion Flower – Scabiosa spp.** – ruffly petals in shades of blue, pink, white, and yellow edge the mounded heads of this 2-3" flower; 1-2' stems are loosely clothed in lance-shaped to three-lobed leaves; grows best in average, well-drained soil; deadheading promotes new blooms; *S. lucida* has reddish-lilac flowers on 10" plants with glossy leaves, excellent for rock gardens; 'Mongolian Mist' (*S. superba*) has dark purple-blue flowers above deep green textured mounds.
- Russian Sage – Perovskia atriplicifolia** – 4' spikes of lavender-blue flowers arise from silver foliage from mid-late summer; prefers average to rich well-drained soil, drought tolerant; tough and dependable; pinch back in spring for more compact blooming habit.
- Sea Lavender – Limonium latifolium** – leathery, shiny green leaves form 18" mounds; slender 3' branches give rise to airy clusters of tiny lavender flowers in late summer; grows best in average, well-drained soil, drought tolerant; easy to grow; 'Violetta' has dark purple-blue flowers.
- Sedum, stonecrop – Sedum spp.** – fleshy dark green to blue-gray leaves, often turning red in the fall and evergreen; stary flower clusters of red, pink, or yellow top the plants; prefers average, well-drained soils; durable groundcover or rock garden plant. 'Himalayan Skies' (*S. dasyphyllum*) is a more robust and showy sedum growing to 2" with blue-gray foliage and pink flowers; 'Angelina' (*S. rupestre*) has golden conifer shaped leaves on 6-8" trailing stems, orange fall color.
- Sedum, tall – Sedum spp.** – succulent, fleshy leaves; 2' stems topped with large flower heads in fall; extremely drought and heat tolerant; clumps can get full with age and flower load, pinch by early summer for compact form; 'Autumn Joy' has rosy-salmon flowers; 'Neon' (*S. sieboldii*) has deep purplish-pink flowers on 15" stems; 'Indian Chief' (*S. telephium*) has coppery red flowers on 15" stems.
- Skullcap – Scutellaria spp.** – 'Mongolian Skies' (*S. scoridifolia*) has shiny leaves and bluish-purple flower spikes in early summer; shear back by ½ after flowering for new flush; very drought tolerant;
- Snow-in-Summer – Cerastium tomentosum** – small, silvery, woolly leaves form a dense 8" h. carpet; plant is covered in late spring by 1" white flowers; the five petals are deeply notched, giving the appearance of a 10-petaled flower; shear after flowering to promote new compact growth; needs full sun and excellent drainage.
- Soapwort – Saponaria ocymoides** – 10" tall ground cover with dark green leaves; masses of small bright pink flowers cover the plant for a full month in late spring; shear back by half after flowering for new compact growth; works well as an edger and in rock or wall gardens; 'Rubra Compacta' has brilliant red flowers over 2" clumps of foliage; 'Snow Tips' is a nice white selection.

- Spurge, cushion** – *Euphorbia polychroma* – dark green leaves form a 1' mound; bracts turn bright yellow in early spring which make them a good companion with bulbs; performs best in well-drained soil in full sun; also grows well in poor, gravelly soil.
- Sulphur Flower** – *Eriogonum umbellatum* – long flowering 10" alpine plant with gray-green foliage, rounded yellow flowers appear in early summer; grows best in full sun with well-drained soil, and will also tolerate drought; long lived plant; combines well with snow-in-summer and dianthus; also called buckwheat.
- Veronica** – *Veronica spp.* – excellent perennial selections available as mat-forming ground covers or sturdy plants to 2' tall; flowers in spike form; all need well-drained, sunny sites for best growth; moderately drought tolerant; Woolly veronica (*V. pectinata*) is a 2-3" h. rock garden plant with white fuzzy serrated leaves; Turkish veronica (*V. liwanensis*) is a 1-2" h. mat-forming plant covered with dark blue flowers April-June.
- Yarrow, fernleaf** – *Achillea millefolium* – feathery leaves grow on stems 1-2' tall; flowers rise above in flat-topped clusters; easily cultivated in any garden soil; drought tolerant, 'Appleblossom' has soft pink flowers on compact plants; 'Debutante' has a wide variety of colors in dense, 6" flower heads; 'Hoffnung' has antique yellow flowers on 18" stems.
- Yucca** – *Yucca filamentosa* – erect, sword-like, bluish-green leaves form handsome clumps to 30" wide; leafless flower stalks rise to 5' in late spring with many creamy-white nodding flowers; drought tolerant plants thrive for many years with little care; 'Bright Edge' and 'Variegata' are beautiful yellow and white variegated leaf forms; soap tree (*Y. elata*) is a 7-8' plant with creamy-white flowers tinged green to rose.

Native Dryland Wildflowers

- **These hardy perennials are a great start to a successful Great Plains style garden. Most are native to dry, rocky soils at lower elevations or dry upland prairies making them a perfect choice for the Great Plains gardener. Xeric or dryland plants like to grow in infertile soil and will perform best when provided with a raised planting bed. Mix equal parts topsoil, sharp sand and gravel and compost; also work this mix into the existing soil to provide the well-drained soil they require; use a light layer of gravel mulch on dryland garden for topdressing; to provide a nice, uniform cover; xeric plants like to reseed in this mulch; weeding is easy by cutting the young weeds with a hoe just under the mulch. A light layer of wood chips is fine but excess mulch will hold too much moisture for these plants and they can crown rot. Once established water only during excessive drought conditions-every three weeks or so if no rainfall. All need full sun.**

Artemisia, fringed – *Artemisia frigida* – soft, silver-gray foliage with arching stems growing to 30" h.; a must for the hot, sunny border; needs a well-drained site for best performance; cut back after flowering for a new flush; a native similar to 'Silver Mound'.

Aster 'My Antonia' - pure white flowers with yellow centers in fall on 12" plants with glossy dark green leaves; pinch in late spring to encourage compact habit and more flowers; tough as nails.

Aster, Aromatic-(*Aster oblongifolius*) mounded form with narrow leaves covered with sky blue flowers in fall; native to dry, upland prairies; great combined with little bluestem and goldenrods; spreads by rhizomes; 2' high; pinch in early summer to prevent flopping; 'October Skies' is nice.

Aster, smooth – *Aster laevis* – 3½' h. native with narrow leaves; covered with masses of sky blue flowers in fall; 'Bluebird' has large, cone-shaped clusters of violet-blue flowers with golden centers; tolerates a wide range of moisture levels and soil types; does not require staking.

Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia species*) showy yellow daisy-like flowers with black center cones in summer; native *R. hirta* is a 2' annual that will reseed itself; *R. missouriensis* is a 18" high perennial with fuzzy leaves, most drought tolerant; easy to grow and very adaptable

Bush Morningglory (*Ipomoea leptophylla*) bush-like 2-4' wide plant covered with pink morningglory-like flowers in summer; must have excellent drainage and best in pure sand; incredibly drought tolerant.

Clematis, Fremont's (*Clematis fremontii*) non-vining or bush type clematis quickly emerging to 15" in early spring; urn-shaped nodding flowers appear in late April followed by silky seedheads; needs dry, well-drained site and several years to reach maturity; long lived if planted where it's happy.

Compass Plant (*Silphium laciniatum*) robust, oak-like leaves on this long-lived classic; sends up a 4-7' flower stalk with many bright yellow sunflowers in fall; best planted with the prairie sky behind.

Coneflower, Narrowleaf (*Echinacea angustifolia*) narrow, rough textured foliage; pink to creamy white flowers with drooping petals in late spring; blooms 2-3 weeks earlier than 'Magnus'; drought tolerant

Coneflower, Pale (*Echinacea pallida*) very narrow, rough textured foliage; pink to creamy white flowers with wispy, drooping petals in late spring; very drought tolerant; western Nebraska native.

Coreopsis, Lance-leaf (*Coreopsis lanceolata*)- easy to grow, hardy perennials for hot, sunny border; grows best in well-drained soil; golden yellow daisies in summer; drought tolerant; cut back hard after flowering for new flush.

Coreopsis, threadleaf – *Coreopsis verticillata* – fine, thread-like leaves create an airy quality for this 1-3' h. plant; starry, butter-yellow flowers bloom in masses throughout the summer; grows best in rich, well-drained soil, drought tolerant once established; 'Moonbeam' has pale yellow flowers; 'Zagreb' is a compact 15" plant.

Flax, blue – *Linum perenne* – azure blue flowers emerge in spring on 18” wiry stems and needle-like leaves, making the blooms appear to be floating from a distance; prune back after flowering; will not return if winter drainage is poor; ‘Lewisii’ is a light blue native flax; ‘Album’ is white flowered.

Gayfeather or *Liatris*- dotted gayfeather, *Liatris punctata* has lavender spikes, blooms in September; *L. aspera* or rough gayfeather has lavender buttons along stems; drought tolerant and well-drained soils.

Goldenrod – *Solidago* spp. – showy golden-yellow plumes from late summer-fall; combines well with grasses; easy-to-grow perennials botanically cannot cause hay fever; ‘Golden Fleece’ (*S. sphacelata*) grows 15-18” h.; showy goldenrod (*Solidago speciosa*) is outstanding and well-behaved in the garden.

Indigo, Dwarf Blue (*Baptisia minor*) gray-green usually 3-parted leaves with spikes of pea-like, rich blue flowers in spring; 2-3’ high; full sun, deep soils; slow to establish but will live many years.

Indigo, White Wild (*Baptisia lactea*) stately 3-4’ native with showy spikes of snow-white flowers in spring followed by attractive seed pods; tough, drought tolerant for full sun;

Leadplant – *Amorpha canescens* – native shrubby plant with small gray-white leaves forming 4’ h. bushy plants; topped with rich, blue-purple flower spikes in early summer; very drought tolerant; prune hard in early spring for compact growth; Fragrant False Indigo or *Amorpha nana* – tiny, grayish leaves form a bushy 2’ plant; attractive pink flower spikes with a honey fragrance; tough and drought tolerant native; a gem for the rockery.

Leadplant, Dwarf (*Amorpha nana*) this slow growing cousin of leadplant takes three years to reach maturity; worth the wait with loads of pink spikes in late spring with a nice fragrance; 1-3’ high.

Milkweed, Butterfly (*Asclepias tuberosa*) vibrant orange flowers top 2’ tall plants in late spring; ornamental seed pods; plant in late spring and water sparingly to establish; needs good drainage

Mountain Mint – *Pycnanthemum virginianum* – fragrant minty foliage forms bushy 2’ h. plants; white or lavender flowers spotted with purple top the plants in summer; easy to grow, does not spread by runners; pinch for compact habit.

New Jersey Tea (*Ceanothos americanus*)- Handsome, durable shrub with clean foliage and abundant clusters of white flowers in late spring; slow to establish but worth the wait; limit competition from aggressive plants; dried leaves make an excellent prairie tea.

Poppy Mallow, Purple (*Callirhoe involucrata*)- low growing cut-leaf native to 12” tall and 4’ wide; dies back to crown each year; bright purple cup-shaped flowers all summer; easy to grow and drought tolerant.

Prairie Coneflower, Roundheaded (*Ratibida pinnata*) elegant deep yellow, drooping petals surrounding a dark brown cone-like center; *R. pinnata* to 4-5’ and somewhat of a nuisance seeder; *R. columnifera* is a more compact 2’ high plant that is short-lived but will perpetuate if allowed to reseed; full sun.

Primrose, Missouri (*Oenothera macrocarpa*)- lance-shaped silvery leaves on sprawling plants to 2’ wide; large light yellow flowers in summer; large, winged seed capsules; tough, carefree plant; ‘Comanche Campfire’ was selected for its silvery foliage and reddish stems.

Pasque Flower (*Pulsatilla species*) western native with silky hairy leaves; delicate cup-shaped flowers in early spring followed by feathery seed heads; native has lavender flowers; need well-drained, dry soils.

Prairie Clover, Purple (*Dalea purpurea*) erect prairie plant with bright purple cylindrical heads atop thin, stiff stems in summer; fernlike foliage; ‘Stephanie’ nice compact selection.

Prairie Smoke (*Geum triflorum*) native to the Dakotas; attractive dark green, deeply lobed foliage forms 12” mounds; small, nodding pink flowers in early spring followed by feathery seed heads; wet or dry.

Prairie Ragwort (*Senecio plattensis*) flat-topped clusters of inch-wide heads, in rich, deep yellow in spring; short-lived but will seed around original plants to form colonies; dry, well-drained soils; 18”

Penstemon, Shell-leaf (*Penstemon grandiflora*)- beautiful late spring blooming perennials with erect flower spikes to 3’; tubular pink, maroon, white or purple flowers and showy seed heads; allow to reseed to perpetuate in the garden; needs sunny well-drained, dry soils; ‘Prairie Snow’ nice white.

Penstemon, Cobia (*Penstemon cobea*) beautiful summer blooming perennials with erect flower spikes; large, tubular flowers in shades of lavender, pink and rose; showy seed heads; allow to reseed to perpetuate in the garden; needs sunny well-drained, dry soils.

Pussytoes – *Antennaria* sp. – tiny, silver-green leaves in low-growing rosettes are covered with pink-tipped, off-white flowers in early spring; grows well in rock gardens, as it prefers poor soil areas that are dry and sandy.

Rattlesnake Master (*Eryngium yuccafolium*)- impressive gray-green, yucca-like foliage to 2’; flower stalks to 3’, topped with honey-scented 1/2” white balls in summer; best with grasses.

Sage, Pitcher (*Salvia azurea*) slender stalks reach 4’ in late summer; topped with clusters of azure-blue flowers; pinch in late spring to early summer for compact habit; very drought tolerant but rather lanky.

Skullcap, prairie –(*Scutellaria resinosa*) – ‘Smoky Hills’ is a native with 4-12” square stems and mouse-eared leaves; deep purple flowers with two white patches are somewhat similar to snapdragon flowers; slightly hairy all over; shear back by ½ after flowering for new flush; very drought tolerant.

Spiderwort, Dwarf (*Tradescantia tharpüi*) narrow, hairy leaves emerge early spring to 12”; pastel flowers of deep pink to purple cover plants in May; early summer dormancy to reappear in fall; the prairie spiderwort, *Tradescantia ohioensis* is a lovely lavender colored native to 2’ high for dry, sunny sites.

Wild Petunia (*Ruellia humilis*) small petunia-like lavender flowers on 1-2’ native; long blooming season.

Wild Senna (*Senna hebecarpa*) fine textured leaves on 4-6’ woody stems, topped with yellow pea-like flowers in summer, each with attractive black anthers; easy to grow in full sun; adaptable.

Wild Bee Balm (*Modarda fistulosa*) aromatic mint-like foliage; upright bushy plants to 4-5' tall; topped with 2" lavender-pink flower clusters in August; drought tolerant.

Xeric Ornamental Grasses for Nebraska

Ornamental grasses are key plants for the garden providing seasonal beauty with colors and textures only they can provide. Ornamental grasses are easy to grow, well adapted to the extremes of the Great Plains climate and offer a huge array of sizes, colors and flowering times. This presentation will highlight some of the best ornamental grasses for Nebraska.

Some of the best ornamental grasses for the landscape are native to the Great Plains. Gardeners are growing knee-high grasses such as sideoats grama, blue grama, junegrass, little bluestem, and prairie dropseed to create more of a short grass prairie. Taller grasses such as big bluestem, Indiangrass, and switchgrass were once key components of the tall grass prairie and thankfully are now also becoming key components in today's urban prairies. Prairie grasses are an ornamental grass too.

Native Grasses

Buestem, Big (*Andropogon gerardii*) impressive native of the tall grass prairie; rich, green leaves to 2' by the end of June; flowering stalks in August up to 6' high; seed heads resemble turkey's foot; reliable fall color in copper, rich orange, with maroon tones; may grow floppy if shaded; wet or dry soils.

Bluestem, Little (*Schizachrium scoparium*) dependable native bunch grass with fine-textured bright green or light blue leaves to 2' tall in summer; the late summer flowers dry in fall, becoming silvery and remain attractive through winter; avoid highly fertile soils or excessive moisture, heavy mulching.

Bluestem, Sand (*Andropogon hallii*) very attractive blue basal foliage with rich red-purple tones in fall; upright flowering stalks in late summer have yellow stem sections; similar to big bluestem but more suited for very dry sites; performs best in full sun; thrives in droughty, windswept sites; very dramatic planted in mass. Silver Sunrise® developed by the GreatPlants for the Great Plains.

Dropseed, Prairie (*Sporobolus heterolepis*) native bunch grass with thin, ribbon-like leaves form 2' mounds; delicate seed heads appear in late summer and remain attractive through fall; attractive when back lit and scented; foliage turns deep orange to light copper; likes it dry and never needs dividing.

Grama, Blue (*Bouteloua gracilis*) native to dry prairies; tufted with thin, wiry leaves to 8"; 1" eyelash-like seed heads top thin stems to 18" in late June; nice decorator plant or mass for prairie style lawn.

Grama, Sideoats (*Bouteloua curtipendula*) mounds of gray-green foliage; numerous narrow flower stalks with oatlike seed heads held on one side of the stems, to 3' h; bronze-orange fall color; straw in winter; dry or moist soils

Indiangrass (*Sorghastrum nutans*) clump former with blue-green leaves and golden, feathery seed heads held above leaf in fall to 6' high; provide moisture retentive soils for best results; they will reseed.

Junegrass, Prairie (*Koeleria pyramidata*) dryland native, cool season bunch grass with gray-green leaves; blooms early June with narrow, erect inflorescence; needs well-drained, dry soils; can be short-lived in heavy soils but will reseed making them ideal for naturalizing; 18" high.

Lovegrass, Sand (*Eragrostis tricooides*) native to sandy soils with leafy upright flowering stems to 4' h; masses of airy, fine textured seed heads in August; self sows manageably in loam and readily in sand but easily managed; early spring green appreciated; will be floppy in shady conditions or excess water

Hardy Exotic Grasses

Reed Grass, Korean (*Calamagrostis brachytricha*) Native to woodland edge in Asia; glossy green foliage and red tinted feathery flower heads in September create strong vertical plant; the showy flowers fade to silvery green through fall; prefers consistent moisture but is easy to grow in most soils; excellent in containers; 3-4' high.

Fesque, Dwarf Blue (*Festuca glauca*) Lovely powder blue foliage and dainty flower spikes in early summer; compact size makes it ideal as a border plant or for the rock garden; must have full sun and good drainage to perpetuate in the garden; 'Elijah Blue' holds its color well throughout the season; 12" high.

Ravenna Grass, (*Saccharum ravennae*) Gray-green basal foliage to 4' by mid-summer; tall 10-12' high creamy-white plumes by late summer; great for tall accent or for a quick screen. Hardy to zone 5.

Giant Sakaton, (*Sporobolus wrightii*) This southwestern native is also winter hardy to zone 4! Attractive waist high mounds of gray-green foliage by late summer; the feathery, branched seed heads rise to 6' in fall to create a great see-through affect; retains shape through winter with straw-colored leaves; moderately drought tolerant.

Oatgrass, Blue (*Helictotrichon sempervirens*) A winter-hardy European native; clump-forming grass with intense blue leaves to 2'; delicate flower stalks appear in late spring; Prefers full sun and good air movement to resist any foliar rust; requires well-drained soil for long life; suffers in poorly drained soils; outstanding silver-blue is unrivaled among grasses.

Pennisetum, Chinese (*Pennisetum alopecuroides*) Narrow-leaved bunch grass with foxtail-like silvery-white plumes in late summer; Green foliage mounds turn golden yellow in autumn and remain attractive all winter; typically 2-3' high; stunning in groups or masses; native to China.

Plants for Dry Shade

- **These perennials tolerate dry shady conditions but still perform best with consistent moisture. They compete well with roots of trees for moisture and will also grow well in part shade. Provide a humus-rich soil by working copious amounts of organic matter into the soil.**

Anemone, Meadow (*Anemone canadensis*) attractive broad leaves forms dense 18" carpet of leaves topped by singular white flowers in late spring; vigorous spreader and needs to be contained; great between large shrubs.

Barren Strawberry (*Waldsteinia ternata*) native to Siberia; glossy dark green strawberry-like leaves form 8" mounds of foliage in early spring; yellow flowers in loose clusters in April to May; tough, dependable; nice combined with bleeding hearts.

Bergenia, Heartleaf (*Bergenia cordifolia*) large, glossy dark green leaves with clusters of showy rosy-pink flowers in early spring to 15"; foliage has reddish tones in fall; rich, organic soils.

Bishops Weed (*Aegopodium podagraria*) dense foliated ground cover that spreads aggressively; best confined to restrict growth; beautiful creamy-white variegation on leaves; flat-topped white flowers in summer not significant; foliage burns in hot summer months is not provided some shade; 18" h.

Comfrey (*Symphytum grandiflorum*) hairy stems and oval leaves form 15" clumps topped with tubular blue flowers in spring; 'Variegata' has cream and green foliage; 'Hidcote Blue' rich blue selection.

Corydalis lutea- blue-green, fernlike foliage and abundant golden yellow flowers in spring; reliable easy plant for moist or dry shade; will happily reseed in moist gardens; 12-15" high.

Epimedium or Barrenwort- attractive delicate foliage and interesting red or yellow flowers in spring; slow to establish but worth the wait; consistent moisture for best growth.

English Ivy (*Hedera helix*) rich dark green leaves with prominent veins; spreads to form ground cover or climbing vine; can be aggressive in rich, moist soils; plant hardy, drought tolerant selections.

Euonymus, Winter Creeper (*Euonymus fortunei*) classic evergreen ground cover that spreads rapidly; dark green, green & white or green & gold leaves; bright accent for shade; 18" high.

Hosta- tough, lovely plants with blue-green, dark green, variegated or gold leaves that are narrow, broad, wavy or twisted; dwarf forms or giant 3' plants; nice flower spires in summer to early fall.

Lily-of-the-Valley (*Convallaria majalis*)- nice old-fashioned ground cover with lush 8" leaves and arching, one-sided flower stalks with white fragrant blossoms in early spring; aggressive to plant in a confined space or keep the site dry to deter spreading.

Phlox, Woodland (*Phlox divaricata*)- showy 2-3" clusters of lilac blue to white flowers in spring on 12" plants; early summer dormancy after scattering seeds; excellent weaver between hostas.

Solomon's Seal (*Polygonatum species*)- attractive woodland native forms colonies with dark green leaves arranged along arching stems and small, pendulous white flowers hang below the 2-4' stems in spring; variegated forms from Japan are showy and brighten a shady corner of the garden; tolerates wet or dry.

Toadlily (*Tricyrtis hirta*) forms patches with arching stems and soft, hairy pointed leaves clasp stems; small orchid-like spotted flowers open in fall; moist fertile soil is ideal, but they tolerate dry shade.

Variegated Bishop's Weed (*Aegopodium*)- lovely variegated leaves bear white flat-topped flowers in summer; an aggressive groundcover but dry soil will help keep it at bay; great filler between large shrubs; 18" h.

Vinca (*Vinca minor*) glossy, evergreen leaves are dark green, variegated white or gold forming dense ground cover; blue, white or purple flowers in early spring; aggressive so plant in confined space.

Yellow Archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon* 'Herman's Pride') handsome foliage with dapples of silver on dark green leaves forms 10" upright clumps; small yellow flowers whorled around the stems in spring; shear back by ½ after flowering.