

SPIDERWORT

Tradescantia virginiana



- Prefers rich soil, but is very adaptable.
- Named for its jointed leaves, which resemble the legs of a spider. Leaves can cause skin irritation.
- Flowers open in the early morning and close in the heat of the day for protection.
- Because of its sensitivity, Spiderwort acts as an indicator of pollution. When exposed to high doses, the blossoms change from blue to pink within two weeks.
- Unlike most flowers that shrivel and fall off, Spiderwort has certain enzymes that cause the flowers to turn into a sort of goo.

Height: 1-3'
Spacing: 2'
Soil type: Wet/dry
Sun/shade: Sun, shade
Inundation: 3/5



Flowers:
June-Aug



HOARY VERVAIN

Verbena stricta



- Commonly found in overgrazed pastures because it's what cattle leave as left-overs.
- A food source for small mammals and prairie chickens.
- A member of the *Verbena* family, which has 3,000 species that are mostly tropical, including teak.
- Recognizing its European cousin, early American Settlers found N. American *Verbena* and used it for coughs or to induce vomiting.
- The Chippewa discovered that the similar Blue Vervain could stop nosebleeds with powdered flowers.

Height: 1-4'
Spacing: 3'
Soil type: Dry
Sun/shade: Sun
Inundation: 1/5



Flowers:
June-Sept



PRAIRIE DROPSEED

Sporobolus heterolepis



- A fine-textured, distinct bunch grass with graceful, round tufts.
- Named for its seeds that spread by dropping to the ground.
- Flowers are pinkish brown, with a pleasant fragrance.
- Grass turns golden-orange in the fall, and light bronze in the winter. Is decorative almost all year round, usually staying upright all winter.
- Seeds have been ground up to be used as a tasty flour.
- Attractive to seed-eating birds.

Height: 2'
Spacing: 2-3'
Soil type: Dry
Sun/shade: Full sun
Inundation: 1/5



Roots!
5'

Seeds:
Aug-Oct



SIDE OATS GRAMA

Bouteloua curtipendula



- Named after its seeds, which rest on the side of the stem.
- Often found with Little Bluestem, but doesn't do well with tall grasses.
- A food source for wild turkeys and hooved browsers such as deer, antelope, and elk.
- Is quick to establish, and can grow in rocky or shallow soils.
- Played a large role in the recovery of farmland after the drought of the Great Depression in the 1930's.

Height: 1-3'
Spacing: 1-2'
Soil type: Moist/loam
Sun/shade: Sun/part shade
Inundation: 3/5



Seeds:
Aug-Sept



WILD GERANIUM

Geranium maculatum



- The seeds are a favorite food for mourning doves.
- Has been used to stop bleeding, soothe inflamed gums, and help cure diarrhea.
- Also known as Crane's Bill because the seed pods are pointy structures that look like a bill.
- To spread its seeds, Wild Geranium literally catapults them away from the parent plant. This makes the seeds difficult to collect.

Height: 1-2'
Spacing: 1-2'
Soil type: Moist
Sun/shade: Part shade, shade
Inundation: 3/5



Flowers:
May-June



MEADOW BLAZINGSTAR

Liatris ligulistylis



- Was known as "pine of the prairie" by early American Settlers.
- Unique spike-like flower wands are known as "racemes".
- There are many species of *Liatris* which have many medicinal uses. Certain species are known for improving appetite, helping heart pains and stomach ache, as well as treating rattlesnake bite.
- Is very attractive to butterflies and bees.

Height: 2-3'
Spacing: 2'
Soil type: Dry, moist
Sun/shade: Sun
Inundation: 3/5



Flowers:
Aug-Sept



SNEEZEWEED

Helenium autumnale



- Grows in low-lying, moist prairies and open sites.
- Contrary to its name, it does not cause sneezing. The plant's leaves were crushed to induce sneezing to clear the nasal passages.
- Is poisonous to humans if eaten in large quantities.
- Has been shown by the National Cancer Institute to have anti-tumor ability.
- *Helenium* comes from Greek mythology, referring to Helen of Sparta, the daughter of Zeus.

Height: 2-5'
Spacing: 2-3'
Soil type: Moist
Sun/shade: Full sun
Inundation: 4/5



Flowers:
Aug-Oct



BLACK-EYED SUSAN

Rudbeckia hirta



- Contrary to its name, the flower centers are actually reddish-brown.
- Because grazers like cattle don't like it, its presence indicates overgrazing.
- To keep away ants that would eat the leaves or flowers, the stems are covered with tiny barbs that block ants from crawling up.
- Is drought tolerant.
- Goes great in picked flower bouquets.

Height: 1-3'
Spacing: 2'
Soil type: Dry, moist
Sun/shade: Sun
Inundation: 2/5



Flowers:
July-Aug



ROUGH BLAZING STAR

Liatris aspera



- There are 5 species of Blazing Star native to Minnesota. To distinguish Rough Blazing Star, it has round bracts (beneath the flower) with fringed edges that curl or fold in. The flower heads have little to no stalk, and the stem zig-zags slightly.
- Likes dryer conditions than its cousin Meadow Blazing Star.
- *Aspera* is latin for “rough”, which refers to the short stiff hairs on the stem’s center and its rough basal leaves.
- Is considered a pollinator “magnet.”

Height: 2-3'
Spacing: 1-2'
Soil type: Moist
Sun/shade: Sun
Inundation: 2/5



Flowers:
Aug-Sept



JACOB'S LADDER

Polemonium reptans



- A very low-maintenance plant that's easy to grow in shady areas. Can go dormant in hot, dry conditions.
- Has a smell that attracts cats.
- The leaves are opposite each other, known as *pinnate*, resembling a ladder.
- Is deer resistant.
- Minnesota is its eastern range, but many other types have been created for gardens across the country.

Height: 1-2'
Spacing: 2'
Soil type: Moist
Sun/shade: Part shade
Inundation: 3/5



Flowers:
May-June



BLUE FLAG IRIS

Iris versicolor



- A sword-leaved plant native to North Eastern wet meadows, stream banks, and marshes.
- The name “Flag” comes from “Flagge” in Middle English, meaning rush or reed.
- Roots cause a minor skin irritation, and have low toxicity if ingested. The roots have also been used for perfume.
- The strong leaves have been spun into strong twine.
- Its deep flower attracts hummingbirds, and forces insects to crawl in, thus brushing into the stigma and stamen and pollinating the plant.

Height: 1-2'
Spacing: 1-2'
Soil type: Moist/wet
Sun/shade: Full sun
Inundation: 5/5



Flowers:
June-July



CARDINAL FLOWER

Lobelia cardinalis



- A showy plant found in wet depressions, woodland edges, and near water or wetlands.
- Experienced scarcity from over-harvesting.
- Depends on hummingbirds to pollinate its long tubular flower.
- Named after the bright red robes worn by Roman Catholic cardinals.
- The Mesquakies would chop it and mix it with food to stop couples from arguing and find love again.
- Lobeline, found in *lobelias*, is an ingredient in products that help people quit smoking.

Height: 3-6'
Spacing: 2'
Soil type: Moist, wet
Sun/shade: Sun, shade
Inundation: 5/5



Flowers:
July-Sept



BONESET

Eupatorium Perfoliatum



- A hairy perennial with brached flower stalks and fuzzy clusters of flowers.
- The leaves are opposite and connected around the stem. This is helpful for ID'ing Boneset, and is also why it was used for wrapping and setting broken bones. A large, fuzzy leaf made a great "Ace Bandage."
- Was used by both Native Americans and European Settlers to lower a fever.
- Was scientifically shown to be comparable to Aspirin, as well as help the immune system and help break addictions.

Height: 3-6'
Spacing: 3'
Soil type: Moist, wet
Sun/shade: Sun, shade
Inundation: 4/5



Flowers:
July-Oct



JOE-PYE WEED

Eupatoriadelphus maculatus



- Similar to Boneset with branched flower stalks, but the leaves of Joe-Pye Weed are whorled - arranged in a circle around the stem.
- Native to North America, and in Southern Appalachia it is known as "Queen of the Meadow."
- "Joe Pye" is said to have been a Native American man from present day Eastern US who helped cure Typhoid Fever in the 1800's. The word for typhoid was *jopi*.
- Was used to improve appetite, soothe nerves, and improve skin complexion.
- A large plant great for filling space in gardens.

Height: 3-6'
Spacing: 3-4'
Soil type: Moist, wet
Sun/shade: Sun, part shade
Inundation: 4/5



Flowers:
July-Oct



PENNSYLVANIA SEDGE

Carex pensylvanica



- A great ground cover that forms colonies and enriches the soil.
- Is very versatile, thriving anywhere as long as it's not constantly wet.
- Is common in woodland understories as well as grasslands.
- A cool season plant, flowering in the early Summer.
- Provides cover and nesting material for gamebirds.
- "Sedges have edges" - rolling the plant between your fingers reveals edges that are characteristic of a sedge.

Height: 1-3'
Spacing: 1'
Soil type: Dry, moist
Sun/shade: Sun, shade
Inundation: 3/5



Seeds:
July



REFERENCES



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