



## 2022 Native Plant Buyer's Guide

### About this Guide

We recognize a need for a one-stop guide that contains detailed information about each of the plants we sell. Plant lists, tags, and even books are often inconsistent or incomplete, and our goal is to compile information from different sources into one handy reference guide. This document is a work in progress. We welcome your feedback. Please let us know if you have suggestions as to how we can make it more useful.

### About Gruler Gardens

While this property has been in the Gruler family since approximately 1901, Gruler Gardens got its start in 2021. Read our story on our website at <http://www.grulergardens.com> We are members of the Michigan Wildflower Association, the Native Plant Guild, the Michigan Master Gardeners Association and the Northern Michigan Master Gardeners Association. In 2021 we started Wild Ones of Northwest Lower Michigan, a local chapter of the national Wild Ones association (<http://www.wildones.org>), which is dedicated to increasing biodiversity with native plants. We invite you to join our chapter!

### Plant Selection

We give careful consideration to choosing which plants to grow and sell, focusing on those that are both functional and beautiful. The process of learning about native plants can be overwhelming at first, yet there are species that appear again and again in reputable information sources. We seek out those plants to offer to our customers, so you can feel confident that plants you purchase here will help you create a great foundation of native plants in your garden.

### Guarantee

We guarantee that all plants are labeled correctly, and that the plants you buy are healthy and in good condition when they leave the nursery. No other guarantee is expressed or implied. If you encounter a problem once you get your plants home, please contact us immediately.

### Purchasing Options & Special Orders

Plants can be purchased on schedule dates or ordered by email. Send inquiries to [grulergardens@gmail.com](mailto:grulergardens@gmail.com) When emailing orders, please specify plant names and we will check our inventory, confirm availability, and get back to you to arrange a pickup time. Please be aware that our inventory is always changing. If we don't have the plants you want, or if you need plants in large quantities, please let us know! We may be able to source plants that are not on our current plant list and can help you find the most economical options.

### Prices & Payment

Native plants are currently available in 4.5" pots for \$7 each, which includes sales tax. We accept cash, checks, and credit cards. Payment in full is due at time of purchase.

### Recycling

We accept returns of 4.5" pots. We can also use 72 and 128 plug trays. These can be returned at any plant sale or dropped off at the flower stand. Thank you for helping us to reduce waste.

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Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*)  
Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)

# Species List with Descriptions

## **Aster, Big Leaf (*Eurybia macrophylla*)**

Sun to full shade

1-3 ft tall

2-3 ft wide

Blooms July-Oct

Native to Michigan woodlands. Flat-topped clusters of violet or lavender flowers with yellow to reddish centers on 1-4 foot stems. Create a lush groundcover by planting it in moist, humus-rich soil in sun or partial shade. Tolerates dry sites and deep shade. Good fall color. One of the last blooms of the growing season, providing an important resource to pollinators. Large, low leaves of this plant are a great ground cover in summer, adding texture to the garden. Hosts the caterpillars of pearl crescent butterflies.

## **Aster, New England (*Symphotrichum novae-angliae*)**

Sun-part shade

Site conditions: Moist, average soil in full sun to partial shade. Likes consistent soil moisture.

3-6 ft tall

2-3 ft wide

Blooms Late August-Oct

Flowers have violet or lavender petals surrounding yellow centers on heads 1-2" wide. Flowers are clustered at the ends of branches. Mature plants have woody, fibrous root systems. Use in mixed borders, prairies, and large rock gardens. Tall stems can become top heavy when in bloom and may need support. Pinch stems back in late May to promote bushier plants. Divide plants in spring every third year to promote vigorous growth. Avoid too much nitrogen, which can result in abundant foliage and floppy plants. Beautiful addition to any rain garden. Rain gardens help keep run-off and pollution out of natural areas. Late season blooms provide critical food resources for pollinators. Hosts caterpillars of the silvery checkerspot and pearl crescent. Attracts native pollinators.

Companions: Goldenrods, grasses, oxeye, obedient plant, bottle gentian, showy tick trefoil, boltonia (false aster)

## **Beard Tongue, Foxglove (*Penstemon digitalis*)**

Sun-part shade

Site conditions: Average to rich, sandy or loamy, well-drained soil in full sun to light shade

3-5 ft tall

1-2 ft wide

Blooms May-July

Has wide, lance-shaped leaves and tiers of many small, white, tubular flowers on long flower stalks. Can be grown in prairie gardens or perennial borders. Easy to grow in most garden situations. Plants spread by slow-creeping rhizomes to form dense clumps. Divide plants every four to six years to keep them vigorous. Plants will self-sow. Plants have a short bloom time and foliage isn't very attractive, so plant later-blooming species nearby to distract from non-blooming plants. Tolerates dry soil and is well suited to rock gardens. Dramatic when planted densely. Cut dead stalks. Forms overwintering clumps shaped like rosettes, from which next year's flowers grow. Hosts caterpillars of the Baltimore checkerspot and chalcidony midget moth. Flowers are attractive to hummingbirds.

Companions: Plant with other late-spring bloomers such as wild lupine, geraniums, yarrows, ornamental onions, prickly pears, garden phlox, and Siberian iris.

## **Beard Tongue, Hairy (*Penstemon hirsutus*)**

Sun to full shade

1-3 ft tall

1-2 ft wide

Blooms June-July

Native to sandy soils in prairies and savannas, mainly in the southern half of the Lower Peninsula. Bell-shaped pink/rose to lavender flowers bloom in clusters on upright stalks. Excellent ground cover for dry, sunny areas, as it self-seeds and spreads readily. Can be used in rock gardens. Attractive to many kinds of pollen and nectar seeking insects.

**Bellflower, Tall/American (*Campanula americana*)**

Sun to full shade

3-5 ft tall

1-2 ft wide

Blooms July-Sept

Unique and showy blue and white blooms pop from axils of leaves and all along the top of the stem. With proper water resources, bellflowers can grow in sun, shade, or a mix. As a biennial, the plant is short-lived, but its seeds often volunteer. Bellflower blooms in summer and fall, providing nectar to honeybees and many native bees, like this leaf-cutting bee.

**Bergamot, Wild/Bee Balm (*Monarda fistulosa*)**

Sun-part shade

Site conditions: Prefers average to rich, well-drained soil in full sun to light shade

1-3 ft tall

2-2.25 ft wide

Blooms June-Aug

Deer resistant

Wild bergamot is a beautiful summer-blooming perennial that adapts well to landscape use. It can be used in prairie plantings and in the middle to back of perennial borders. Showy blooms. Attractive and unique purple blooms vary in color as a response to environmental conditions. Bushy appearance. Shallow rhizomes send up multiple leafy stems in a tight cluster, giving a full appearance. Tolerates varying soil fertility as long as it is well drained. Plantings have a tendency to die out in the middle. Dividing plants every three to four years helps keep them vigorous and reduces their spread. Powdery mildew may be a problem in wet, humid conditions, but is rarely serious. Avoid overhead watering. Attracts pollinators like honey bees, bee flies, butterflies, skippers, and hummingbird moths. Often planted as a honey plant.

Companions: The soft color and uniquely shaped flower of wild bergamot is a nice complement to the brighter, deeper-colored flowers of other summer-blooming prairie plants such as black-eyed Susan, blazing stars, and butterfly weed. In perennial gardens, plant it with garden phlox, yarrows, perennial geraniums, and ornamental grasses.

**Blazing Star, Marsh (*Liatris spicata*)**

Sun

Site conditions: Moist, fertile, well-drained soil in full sun. Drought resistant once established.

3-4 ft tall

1-2 ft wide

Blooms July-Aug

This popular perennial has showy pink-purple, occasionally white, terminal flower spikes that crowd the upper portion of the stiff, leafy stems. Looks spectacular and attracts many pollinators when planted in large groupings. Grass-like leaves form a clump at the base of the plant and increase in size from top to bottom. Midsummer blooms start at the top of the flower spike and work their way down. Tall stems need support, which can come from staking or from nearby grasses. Plants reseed but do not become weedy and they seldom need dividing. Cut back plants in spring rather than fall so birds can feast on the seed heads. Plants are sometimes sold as dormant tubers, which can be planted like bulbs. Pocket gophers, mice, and voles like to eat the tubers, and rabbits eat the young foliage. Supports pollinators like bumblebees as well as small mammals and birds with its seeds. Hosts the blazing star clearwing moth caterpillar.

Companions: Culver's root, rattlesnake master, wood lily, mountain mint, coneflowers, monarda, and milkweeds.

**Blazing Star, Northern (*Liatris scariosa*)**

Sun to part shade

18 inches tall

Blooms Aug-Sept

Perennial wildflower. Fluffy, thistle-like purple flowers. Can adapt to full or partial sun, moist or mesic conditions, and soil with loam, sand, or gravel. Nectar and pollen attract butterflies and skippers, especially monarch butterflies.

**Bluestem, Little (*Schizachyrium scoparium*)**

Full sun

Site conditions: Prefers well-drained sand or loam and full sun, but will grow in rocky soils and partial shade. Not recommended for heavy clay or damp soils.

2-4 ft tall

1-2 ft wide

Blooms Aug-Oct

Deer resistant

Attractive clump former has light green to blue foliage in summer, turning golden to reddish brown in fall. The slender stems hold attractive silvery white seed heads. The fluffy seed heads and crimson-colored foliage are extremely showy in the fall landscape. Little bluestem is among the best native grasses for fall color, and its small size makes it easy to use in most landscapes. Little bluestem is a warm season grass and is slow to emerge in spring. Burn or mow clumps in late winter. It will not do well in heavy soils that hold moisture. Plant it in mixed borders, in prairie gardens, along walkways, and in foundation plantings. Readily re-seeds and looks great in large plantings. Outstanding for erosion control on slopes. Blue green stems in summer yield to red fall color and winter interest from tufted seedheads. Hosts the caterpillars of the swarthy skipper and admirable grasshopper. Seeds feed birds like the bobolink.

Companions: The blue green foliage provides a great backdrop for summer prairie flowers, as well as perennials, in a mixed border. Plant with chrysanthemums, coneflowers, monardas, blazing stars, asters, boltonia, and Indian grass.

**Boneset (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*)**

Sun-part shade

Moisture needs:

4-5 ft tall

3-4 ft wide

Blooms July-Sept

Deer resistant

Easy to grow. Easily grown in average, medium to wet soils. Does well in both sandy and clay soils, given enough water. Large, clump-forming, flat topped clusters of small white flowers appear in late summer to fall. Nectar attracts pollinators including bees, butterflies, and beetles.

**Bottle Gentian (*Gentiana andrewsii*)**

Part shade (afternoon shade from summer sun is beneficial)

Site conditions: Prefers sandy loam high in organic matter that stays moist throughout the growing season.

1-3 ft tall

1-1.5 ft wide

Blooms Aug-Oct

Deer resistant

Deep blue, 1 inch, bottle-shaped flowers crowded into a terminal cluster. Other flowers may cluster in the axils of the opposite leaves below. Plants are erect to sprawling and have glossy, oval, 4-inch leaves. Adapts well to the rich soil of perennial borders and can be grown in wet meadows and along ponds. Easy to grow and long-lived, requiring little care once established. Soil must be high in organic matter; mulch plants to conserve soil moisture. Plants seldom need dividing. Clusters of tube-like dark blue to white flowers that never open and are eye-catching and unique. Petals dry to form a papery wrapper around a dry fruit that splits open to spread seeds in the fall. Bumblebees are the only pollinators strong enough to push into the unique closed flowers.

Companions: Great companion for any of the fall prairie plants, including New England aster, obedient plant, and blazing stars. In a perennial border, use it with other moisture-loving plants such as turtle-head, ferns, and lobelias.

### **Butterfly Weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)**

Sun-part shade

Site Conditions: Moist or dry soils in full sun or light shade. Mature plants can take full sun and dry soil. Good drainage is essential; plants may rot in overly rich or damp soil.

1-3 ft tall

1-1.5 ft wide

Blooms June-July

Deer resistant

Dense clumps of leafy stems topped with broad, flat clusters of fiery orange, red, or sometimes yellow flowers. Adds a splash of color to gardens. Plant in perennial gardens, mixed borders, or prairie gardens. Bright flowers attract and provide nectar for many pollinators, from bees and butterflies to hummingbirds. Easy to grow. Low, compact shape and simple growth requirements make this milkweed easy to incorporate into existing gardens. Best planted in its permanent location, as the deep taproot makes plants difficult to move. Butterfly weed hosts the caterpillars of monarch butterflies and milkweed tussock moths. No major insect or disease problems, but plants may die over winter from root rot if the soil is too heavy. Plants are slow to emerge in spring, so cultivate carefully until new growth appears; you may want to mark the site each fall. Plants can get top-heavy and require staking.

Companions: Particularly striking when planted with complementary colored blue and purple flowers. Plant with other summer blooming perennials such as purple salvias, white shasta daisy, and yellow daylilies for a showy display of contrasting shapes and colors. Good native companions include blazing stars, silky aster, lead plant, purple prairie clover, and wild bergamot.

### **Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*)**

Sun-part shade

Site conditions: Moist to wet, average soil in partial sun. It will tolerate full sun as long as the soil is always at least slightly damp.

2-4 ft tall

1-2 ft wide

Blooms July-Sept

Deer resistant

Cardinal flower gets its name from the brilliant, rich red flowers that grow in an elongated cluster atop the stems. Leaves are alternate, dark green, canoe shaped, and 2-6 inches long. Cardinal flower is one of the few native plants with true red flowers, and they are welcome additions to late-summer landscapes. Plant cardinal flower in groups of five to seven in a moist area of perennial borders or woodland gardens. Thrives at the edges of water gardens and in bogs. Will naturalize when conditions are right. Adapts well to gardens, despite its native tendency to grow in moist areas at the edges of water. Amend soil with lots of organic matter and peat moss before planting. Transplants easily, but is short lived, so add seedlings every couple of years. Plants may not survive the winter if there is insufficient soil moisture; winter mulch is helpful. Mass plantings of cardinal flower yield spectacular crimson blushes. Beautiful addition to rain gardens. Rain gardens help keep run-off and pollution out of natural areas. Attracts pollinators like the ruby-throated hummingbird and butterflies like the pipevine swallowtail and spicebush swallowtail.

Companions: A backdrop of ferns will help set off the red flowers. Cardinal flower grows well with blue flags, sneezeweed, astilbes, turtleheads, and ligularias.

### **Columbine, Wild (*Aquilegia canadensis*)**

Shade-part sun

Site Conditions: Moist to dry, average, well-drained soil in full sun to almost full shade.

1-3 ft tall

1-1.5 ft wide

Blooms May-June

Deer resistant

Graceful, erect plant with nodding, upside down red and yellow flowers with five upward spurred petals dangling from the tips of branching stems. The grayish leaves are compound, divided into lobed leaflets grouped in threes. Include it in rock gardens or scatter it around a garden pool. Supports a variety of insect pollinators with its beautiful red and yellow blooms. Self-sows and spreads, forming natural drifts in wild gardens, but does not take over. Easily cultivated. Seedlings need moisture to become established, but deep root stocks or mature plants survive dry spells. Old root stocks do not transplant well. An attractive alternative to groundcover. Though it is tall, be prepared for it to fill in open spaces. Hosts the caterpillars of the columbine duskywing butterfly as well as those of the hummingbird moth and holly blue butterfly. Attracts hummingbirds. Leaf miners may attack the foliage, causing tan tunnels or blotches. Remove and destroy affected leaves when visible.

Companions: Combines nicely with ferns, nodding wild onion, Canada anemone, prairie smoke, wild geranium, Virginia bluebells, and bird's foot violet. In mixed borders, plant it near late tulips, hostas, irises, pulmonarias, peonies, and perennial geraniums.

**Coneflower, Grey-Headed (*Ratibida pinnata*)**

Sun-part shade

Site conditions: Requires average to rich, well-drained soil. Cannot tolerate heavy, wet soils

3-5 ft tall

Blooms July-Sept

Stiff, erect plant with coarse leaves and showy 2 ½ inch flowers that appear throughout the summer. Flowers have drooping, soft yellow rays and elevated, globose, cone-like green centers that change to dark purple or brown. The soft yellow color is a welcome and relaxing contrast to other hot-colored summer flowers. Adapts well to perennial borders and weaves nicely through prairie gardens. Flowers bloom for a long time, attracting butterflies and bees, and they are good for cutting. Once established, plant is drought tolerant and can be used in xeriscapes. Golden summer blooms with an intriguing dark center. Seedheads smell of licorice when crushed. Easy to grow. Transplants readily and seldom needs division. Plants reseed in the garden and prairie. Seedlings can be replanted to refresh the supply of plants. Garden plants may need staking in fertile soils. Robust plant that can grow in moist or dry habitats and many kinds of soil. Hardy and not easily outcompeted by other plants. Attractive to pollen and nectar-seeking insects, including pollinators like bees and butterflies.

Companions: Plant with other summer blooming plants such as blazing stars, butterfly weed, purple prairie clover, wild bergamot, blue giant hyssop, and prairie grasses

**Coneflower, Orange/Showy (*Rudbeckia fulgida*)**

Full sun

Site conditions: Prefers moist, average, well-drained soil in full sun, but tolerates light shade and a wide range of soil conditions.

Overly rich soils tend to produce weak-stemmed plants.

2-3 ft tall

1-2 ft wide

Blooms June-Oct

Deer resistant

Brings long-lasting color to prairie gardens and mixed borders. Easy to propagate from seeds or by transplanting seedlings. Short lived perennial. 3-inch, flat flowers have golden yellow rays surrounding a conical cluster of rich brown disc florets. Blooms for a month or more in late summer. Dark green, lance-shaped leaves appear on stiff, branched stems. Bright blooms create a pleasant mass effect when planted together. Slow spreading plant. Plants should be divided every 3-4 years. Provides nectar resources to pollinators, including many native bees, butterflies and honeybees. Songbirds eat the nutritious seeds, and stiff stems allow seedheads to stand through the winter. Seed heads also provide winter interest if left standing.

Companions: Plant with blazing stars, obedient plant, asters, butterfly weed, wild bergamot, little bluestem, and prairie dropseed. Nonnative companions include Russian sage, garden phlox, sedums, and ornamental grasses.

**Coneflower, Pale Purple (*Echinacea pallida*)**

Sun-part shade

Moisture needs:

3-4 ft tall

Blooms June-July

Deer resistant

Large, purple early summer blooms bring color variety and attract many pollinators. Easy to grow. Prefers full sun and average to dry conditions. Soil may contain loam, clay, or rocky material. Withstands drought. Flowers attract beneficial pollinators, including bumblebees. Goldfinches eat the seed in winter.

**Coneflower, Purple (*Echinacea purpurea*)**

Sun – part shade

Site conditions: Average to rich soil in full sun or light shade.

2-4 ft tall

1-2 ft wide

Blooms July-September

Deer resistant

Branching perennial with coarse leaves. Stems are topped with numerous 4-6-inch daisy-like flowers. Flowers have flat or drooping petals that are rose-pink to red-violet with orange centers. Adaptable garden plant. Good addition to prairie gardens and perennial borders. Attracts native bees and some insect predators like the ambush bug. Hosts the caterpillars of the silvery checkerspot butterfly. Attracts hummingbirds. Goldfinches enjoy the seeds into winter.

Companions: Plant in clumps near other summer-blooming prairie flowers such as black-eyed Susan, monarda, coreopsis, compass plant, blazing stars, butterfly weed, tall bellflower, and native grasses. In perennial borders, combine with phloxes, yarrows, and delphiniums. Beautiful in mass plantings.

**Coreopsis, Lance-leaf (Sand) (*Coreopsis lanceolata*)**

Sun-part shade

Site conditions: Average sandy or loamy, well-drained soil in full sun or light shade.

1-3 ft tall

1-2 ft wide

Blooms May-July

Plants have thick clumps of mostly basal leaves and smaller stem leaves. Golden yellow, daisy-like flowers with ragged petals and yellow centers. Tough, vigorous plant often found in wildflower seed mixtures. Low maintenance. Plants will reseed, often prolifically. Good choice for naturalizing, dune restoration, and wild gardens. Fantastic summer bloom display lasts for weeks on end, especially in dry, sandy soil. Easy to grow. Prefers full sun, average to dry conditions, and poor soil with rocks or sand. Easy to grow from transplants. The caterpillar of the wavy lined emerald moth will camouflage itself by covering itself in cut portions of the coreopsis flower.

Companions: Plant with other summer-blooming grassland plants such as butterfly weed, wild bergamot, flowering spurge, and purple prairie clover.

**Coreopsis, Tall (*Coreopsis tripteris*)**

Sun-part shade

Moisture needs:

3-8 ft tall

Blooms July-Oct

Sunny yellow midsummer flowers bloom at the top of this tall plant. Prefers full to partial sun and moist soil. Tolerates competition from other plants. Nectar and pollen attract a variety of insects including bumblebees and butterflies.

**Culver's Root (*Veronicastrum virginicum*)**

Sun-part shade

Site conditions: Prefers a moist to wet, rich soil and full sun to light shade, but grows well in ordinary garden soil that has been enriched with ample organic matter.

3-6 ft tall

Blooms June-Sept

Deer resistant

Culver's root is a strong architectural plant. The dark green, whorled leaves give the plant a horizontal effect that contrasts with the strong vertical spires of the white or pale lavender candelabra-like flowers. Flowers start blooming in mid-summer and continue into early September. This durable plant can be used in the middle or back of a perennial bed, where it offers a strong upright accent. Tolerates wet soil well. Work generous amounts of organic matter into the soil before planting. Mulch plants and give them an annual application of compost to keep soil rich and moist. Culver's root forms clumps as it ages, but is not overly aggressive. Water plants during dry spells. Flowers are good for cutting. Easy to dig up, divide and share or keep small. Stays as an upright clump and does not spread far. Upright, slender clusters of white blooms are about 9" long and flower throughout the summer. Nectar attracts honey bees, bumblebees, butterflies, and moths.

Companions: Long bloom time and tall stature of Culver's root make it a good backdrop for many border plants, including blazing stars, lilies, oxeye, monardas, milkweeds, rattlesnake master, goldenrods, and asters.

**Cup Plant (*Silphium perfoliatum*)**

Sun-part shade

Moisture needs:

4-10 ft tall

1-3 ft wide

Blooms July-Sept

Easy to grow. This tall plant uses a strong taproot to get established and needs minimal maintenance. Large, bright and effective backdrop for gardenscapes, especially in rain gardens. Nectar attracts honey bees and butterflies. Birds are fond of the seeds and water collected in the cup formed by the leaves.



### **Golden Alexanders (*Zizia aurea*)**

Sun-part shade

Site conditions: Prefers moist, well-drained soil and light shade or full sun.

1-3 ft tall

1.5-2 ft wide

Blooms April-June

From May to June, this erect bushy perennial has umbels of small yellow flowers that resemble Queen Anne's lace. The compound leaves have elongated leaflets and a bluish cast. The flattened heads of yellow flowers are a bright accent in a spring garden, and the foliage looks nice all summer. Use golden alexanders in prairie gardens, open woodland gardens, or perennial borders, where it will weave its way through other plants. Spreads rapidly and should not be planted where space is limited. Once established, golden alexanders are carefree plants that tolerate summer dryness. Individual plants may be short lived but they will self-sow to maintain the population. Jump start summer colors in spring with delicate yellow flowers in umbrella-shaped clusters. Adaptable. Occurs in both low and high quality habitats. Known for its ability to survive dry summers, though it prefers moisture. Attractive to many kinds of pollen and nectar seeking insects, especially pollinators like bees and butterflies. Plants are food sources for several butterfly larvae.

Companions: The cheery yellow flowers combine well with prairie smoke, blue phlox, butterfly weed, wild lupine, columbines, and wild geraniums.

### **Goldenrod, Showy (*Solidago speciosa*)**

Full sun

Moisture needs:

2-5 ft tall

2-4 ft wide

Blooms Aug-Sept

Deer resistant

One of the most beautiful goldenrods native to grasslands, dunes, and open woods throughout most of Michigan. Small yellow flower heads crowded into dense, pyramidal, terminal clusters. Plants form tight clumps of leafy, red-tinged stems. Divide clumps every third year to promote vigorous growth and better flowering. Dense foliage. As a late bloomer, pair showy goldenrod with plants that bloom earlier in the season. Spectacular mass effect. Flowers do not cause serious allergies (that's ragweed) and feed many pollinators. Hosts the caterpillars of the pink-barred lithacodia, goldenrod soldier beetle, and hooded owl.

Companions: Late summer plants such as asters, Joe-pye weeds, blazing stars, purple coneflowers, and grasses.

### **Great Blue Lobelia (*Lobelia siphilitica*)**

Sun-part shade

2-3 ft tall

1-2 ft wide

Blooms July-Sept

Deer resistant

Grows along bottomlands and riverbanks across the Lower Peninsula and into the Upper Peninsula. It has pretty, bright blue flowers in leaf axils that grow on the upper portion of leafy, 1-3 foot stems. Blooms for a long time, July to September. Prefers moist, rich soil in sun to light shade. Unique, conspicuous blue flowers provide late season color. Beautiful addition to any rain garden. Rain gardens help keep run-off and pollution out of natural areas. Supports native pollinators like bumblebees and others like the ruby-throated hummingbird.

### **Harebell/Bluebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*)**

Sun-part shade

Conditions: Well-drained soil in full sun. Add sand and organic matter to improve soil drainage if necessary. Avoid overly rich soils, which can encourage vigorous growth on nearby plants that can overtake harebell.

6-18 in tall

Blooms June-Sept

Harebell has violet blue, bell-shaped, nodding flowers that appear on slender stalks at ends of branched stems. Plant where the delicate flower won't be overpowered by nearby plants. In the right setting, the underground stems of harebell will spread. Does well in rock walls, rock gardens, and between pavers on a terrace. Bright blue flowers are long lasting and attract bees and hummingbirds. Harebell often self-seeds and grows clonally in clumps, leading to eye-catching clusters of blue in the midsummer sun. Easy to grow. Harebell seems to enjoy being squeezed in. It is happy to grow between rocks and in dry, sandy soils.

Companions: Plant harebell with other diminutive dry-soil plants such as creeping thymes, pussytoes, alliums, columbine, prairie smoke and beardtongues.

**Indigo, Wild White (*Baptisia alba*)**

Sun to part shade

Site conditions: Well-drained soil

3-5 ft tall

Wild white indigo has long, erect, pea-like white flowers in late spring. The compound leaves are an attractive bluish green color. Showy gray or brown seedpods rattle in the wind when they are ripe. Use in prairie gardens or in the middle to back of mixed borders, where the blue-green foliage provides a nice backdrop for smaller perennials. Forms a large clump, so leave plenty of space around it. Seedpods add interest in fall and winter and are often used in dried arrangements. This large-lived perennial starts out slowly but eventually forms huge clumps that are difficult to transplant. Choose a site carefully, and space plants at least 3 feet apart to allow for growth. Plants rarely need dividing and resent disturbance. White wild indigo is drought tolerant once established. Companions: Use white wild indigo as an accent plant for yarrows, artemisias, asters, and phloxes. Plant low, bushy plants such as geraniums around the base of clumps to hide the bare lower stalks. In prairie gardens, plant it with purple coneflower, prairies phlox, butterfly weed, and prairies clover.

**Ironweed (*Veronia missurica*)**

Sun-part shade

Site conditions: Native to moist soils, but ironweed adapts well to garden settings as long as it is not drought stressed.

3-6 ft tall

3-4 ft wide

Blooms July-Sept

Deer resistant

Showy clusters of brilliantly purple blooms tower over the garden in late summer to early fall. Can be used toward the back of large perennial borders, where it offers a strong vertical presence. It is also good for prairie gardens and screening. Flowers are good for cutting. Easy to grow. Prefers full or partial sunlight and moist to average conditions. Few issues with disease. Flowers attract butterflies like swallowtails and monarchs.

**Joe-Pye Weed, Spotted/Common (*Eutrochium maculatum*)**

Sun/part shade

Site conditions: Performs well in dry situations, but best growth is in moist soil. 3-5 ft tall

1-3 ft wide

Blooms June-Sept (descriptions vary)

Good garden plant and easy to grow once established. New plants take at least two seasons to reach full size. Use Joe-pye weed in prairie gardens, perennial beds, and mixed borders. Thrives at the edges of water gardens or in bog gardens. Plants are late to emerge in spring but grow quickly after they are up. Divide clumps in spring or fall. Plants too close together may suffer from powdery mildew. Has flat-topped, 4-5-inch clusters of feathery rose-purple flower heads on top of purple or purple-spotted stems 24-72 inches tall. Use in wet prairies or naturalized plantings. Mulch plants to keep soil moist. Pinch back stems in late May to keep plants compact. Unpinched plants may need staking or support. Rose-colored flowers bloom mid-late summer with a sweet, pleasant fragrance. Adds structure to perennial gardens. Nectar and pollen attract bees and butterflies. A great alternative to the invasive butterfly bush.

Companions: Offers beautiful contrast when planted with other late summer blooms. Many plants look nice with a backdrop of Joe-pye weeds (it is tall!), including autumn sneezeweed, boltonia, coneflowers, black-eyed Susans, and daisies. In less formal situations, plant them with asters, wild bergamot, goldenrods, and grasses.

**(Not in Stock) Lead Plant (*Amorpha canescens*)**

Sun-part shade

Moisture needs:

1-3 ft tall

1-3 ft wide

Blooms June-Aug

Clustered spikes of tiny purple flowers burst from the ends of major branches. Easy to grow. Once established, lead plant tolerates neglect, drought, and sandy, rocky soil with ease. Flowers attract many kinds of beneficial pollinators, including bees and butterflies.

**Lupine, Wild (*Lupinus perennis*)**

Sun-part shade

Site conditions: Prefers dry, slightly acidic, well-drained soil in full sun or light shade. Thrives in poor soils and summer drought.

1-2 ft tall

½-1 ft wide

Blooms May-June

Wild lupine has pea-like, blue to purple flowers that grow in a 12-inch terminal cluster on erect, unbranched stems. Alternate leaves are palmately compound, and each leaf has seven to eleven leaflets measuring 1-2 inches long. Lupine has sharp, palmate leaves that add interest to the garden, even when not blooming. Works especially well when planted in larger clumps. A mass planting of wild lupine is a stunning sight. Plant groups in full sun in prairie gardens and woodland borders or clearings. It can be used in perennial borders, but plants often go into dormancy after flowering, so surround them with late-blooming plants. Does not transplant well and needs proper conditions to overwinter. Can be difficult to establish in landscape settings. Do not attempt to transplant mature plants. Start with young seedlings and include some of the soil from their mother plant to ensure the presence of specific nitrogen-fixing bacteria associated with the roots. Plants can also be started from seeds, which should be inoculated with the appropriate bacteria before planting. Once established, wild lupine enhances soil fertility by fixing nitrogen from the atmosphere. Space plants 8-12 inches apart in groups of five or seven. Plants will be short-lived on sites not suited to them. Wild lupine is the only host plant for the caterpillar of the endangered karner blue butterfly.

Companions: Looks best in large masses in naturalized settings, but individual specimens can be planted with phloxes, spiderworts, blazing stars, and grasses in perennial borders.

**(Milk)weed, Butterfly (*Asclepias tuberosa*)**

Sun-part shade

Site Conditions: Moist or dry soils in full sun or light shade. Mature plants can take full sun and dry soil. Good drainage is essential; plants may rot in overly rich or damp soil.

1-3 ft tall

1-1.5 ft wide

Blooms June-July

Deer resistant

Dense clumps of leafy stems topped with broad, flat clusters of fiery orange, red, or sometimes yellow flowers. Adds a splash of color to gardens. Plant in perennial gardens, mixed borders, or prairie gardens. Bright flowers attract and provide nectar for many pollinators, from bees and butterflies to hummingbirds. Easy to grow. Low, compact shape and simple growth requirements make this milkweed easy to incorporate into existing gardens. Best planted in its permanent location, as the deep taproot makes plants difficult to move. Butterfly weed hosts the caterpillars of monarch butterflies and milkweed tussock moths. No major insect or disease problems, but plants may die over winter from root rot if the soil is too heavy. Plants are slow to emerge in spring, so cultivate carefully until new growth appears; you may want to mark the site each fall. Plants can get top-heavy and require staking.

Companions: Particularly striking when planted with complementary colored blue and purple flowers. Plant with other summer blooming perennials such as purple salvias, white shasta daisy, and yellow daylilies for a showy display of contrasting shapes and colors. Good native companions include blazing stars, silky aster, lead plant, purple prairie clover, and wild bergamot.

**Milkweed, Swamp (*Asclepias incarnata*)**

Sun to part shade

Moisture needs:

3-4 ft tall

2-3 ft wide

Blooms July-Aug

Deer resistant

Beautiful addition to rain gardens, which help keep run-off and pollution out of natural areas.

Hosts caterpillars of the monarch butterfly and milkweed tussock. Flowers provide nectar to butterflies and other native pollinators.

**New Jersey Tea (*Ceanothus americanus*)**

Sun-part shade

Moisture needs:

3-5 ft tall

3-5 ft wide

Blooms May-July

Great replacement for the invasive butterfly bush (*Buddleja*). Showy, fragrant flowers typically bloom in early to mid-summer, and attract pollinators like butterflies and bees. Hosts caterpillars of the spring azure butterfly. Nectar attracts hummingbirds. Wild turkeys feed on the seeds.

Northern Blazing Star (*Liatris scariosa*)

Sun-part shade

Moisture needs:

18 inches tall

Blooms Aug-Sept

Perennial wildflower. Fluffy, thistle-like purple flowers. Inflorescences bloom from bottom to top. Can adapt to full or mesic conditions and soil with loam, sand, or gravel. Nectar and pollen attract skippers and butterflies, especially monarch butterflies.

**Obedient Plant (*Physostegia virginiana*)**

Full sun/partial shade

Site conditions: Prefers a moist, rich, well-drained soil in full sun, but tolerates drier conditions and partial sun.

2-4 ft tall

2-3 ft wide

Blooms Aug-Sept

Deer resistant

Obedient plant's pink to white flowers are a welcome addition to late summer borders. Obedient plant has tall vertical stems lined with narrow, jaggedly toothed leaves. The showy, tubular white or purple flowers bloom from midsummer to early fall. Flowers are clustered on spikes. They appear successively up the stalk in somewhat elongated clusters of pinkish, two-lipped, 1-inch long, snapdragon-like flowers arranged in two rows. Obedient plant's aggressive nature limits its landscape use. Use it in wet prairie gardens and naturalized plantings. The flowers have an old-fashioned look and are good for Victorian gardens and cut bouquets. Late season flower. Attracts hummingbirds and bumblebees. Masses of beautiful flowers are easy to achieve with spreading roots and seeds. Plants spread by underground rhizomes and can be aggressive. In perennial borders, plants can be grown in buried 3-gallon nursery containers to keep them controlled. Garden plants may need staking, especially if grown in fertile soils. Often pollinated by bumblebees.

Companions: Plant with New England aster, bottle gentian, blazing stars, Culver's root, ironweed, Joe-pye weeds, goldenrods, and grasses

**Pearly Everlasting (*Anaphalis margaritaceae*)**

1-3 ft tall

Site conditions: Native to dry-soil areas, including dunes, throughout most of Michigan. Tolerant of tough, dry conditions and can be grown in poor to average soils in full sun.

This bushy plant has flat-topped clusters of small, silvery white, daisy-like flowers that bloom from July into September. The narrow leaves are grayish above, woolly white underneath. Drought-tolerant perennial with interesting flowers. Use it in prairie gardens, butterfly gardens, and dune restorations. Flowers are attractive to butterflies, especially painted ladies. They also make long-lasting dried bouquets when picked before completely open. The silver leaves offer a nice contrast in large mixed borders. Requires little care once established and has no insect or disease problems. Can become aggressive in some landscape situations.

Companions: Other drought-tolerant plants such as prairie smoke, nodding wild onions, butterfly weed, and cinquefoils.

**Petunia, Wild (*Ruellia humilis*)**

Sun/part shade

Site conditions: Needs well-drained soil in full sun.

1.5-2 ft tall

1.5-2 ft wide

Blooms May-Sept

Wild petunia has hairy stems and 3-inch, stalkless leaves. The tubular, violet-blue flowers resemble annual petunias. Wild petunia is a great plant for dry, rocky, shallow soils such as in rock gardens, but it can also be grown in well-drained garden loam. Wild petunia is easily grown in gardens if the soil is well drained. Add sand and organic matter to heavier soils. Plants grow from fibrous-rooted crowns to form clumps. Keep it at the front of perennial borders so larger plants don't overwhelm it. The lovely flowers bring the rare blue color to prairie gardens. Long flowering, produces funnel-shaped flowers from early to late summer

Foliage – Leaves are covered with white hairs, giving it an interesting texture

Insects – Hosts caterpillars of hawk moth and common buckeye butterfly. Provides food for many native pollinators.

Companions: Plant wild petunia with other small plants that won't hide its showy flowers. Good choices include prairie smoke, wild onions, pussytoes, little bluestem, and butterfly weed.

**Prairie Smoke (*Geum triflorum*)**

Sun-part shade

Site conditions: Dry, average, well-drained soil in full sun to light shade

½-1.5 ft tall

½-1 ft wide

Blooms May-June

Pink or rose-colored nodding flowers that look like they never completely open. Leaf out early each season. Flowers develop showy, mauve seed heads that resemble plumes of smoke. The fern-like, light blue-green leaves are covered with soft hairs. Good landscape plant, offering interest throughout the growing season. Use it in prairie gardens, perennial borders, and rock gardens. Eventually forms a dense groundcover. Prairie smoke is a tough plant that withstands bitter cold, high heat, and drought. Rhizomes should be divided every third or fourth year to alleviate overcrowding. Seed heads attract goldfinches and can be dried for flower arrangements. Intriguing leaves. Mature plants often form dense, attractive groundcover. Blooms look dramatic clumped, but then fade and look spent. Attracts bumblebees and other pollinators.

Companions: Pair with plants with late season interest. In prairie gardens, combine with butterfly weed, columbine, prairie phlox, and bird's foot violet. In perennial borders or rock gardens, it combines nicely with spring bulbs and low-growing perennials such as creeping phlox, perennial geraniums, and sedums.

**Pussytoes (*Antennaria parlinii*)**

Sun-part shade

Moisture/Soil: Thrives in dry, poor, well-drained soil in full sun. Tolerates partial shade

3-16 in tall

Blooms April-June

Description: Summer blooms. Clustered white flowers bloom in late spring, giving way to soft, fluffy seedheads on female plants. Low, silvery leaves of this plant make an excellent groundcover in sunny areas. Attractive in all seasons and effective in twilight gardens. Can be used in rock gardens, between paving stones, and atop stone walls. Often planted near hot pavement or on banks, where it helps control erosion. Requires little care once established. Divide in spring for more plants. Leaves grow only a few inches tall and plants spread by runners. Hosts the caterpillars of American painted lady butterfly and attracts pollinators throughout the summer.

Companions: Plant with other drought-tolerant, sun-loving plants such as prairie smoke, nodding wild onion, and cinquefoils. When planted with spring bulbs, it will fill in after the bulb foliage has died back.

### **Rattlesnake Master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*)**

Full sun

Site conditions: Prefers average to rich, moist but well-drained soil in full sun. Plants will grow in gravel and in sand in full sun. Add sand or gravel to improve soil drainage if necessary.

2-5 ft tall (descriptions vary)

2-3 ft wide

Blooms June-Sept

Deer resistant

Clusters of small, greenish white, fragrant flowers in summer. Tightly packed among pointed bracts to form globular flower heads about ¾ inch wide in branched clusters atop the stems. Blue-green leaves are large and narrow and have pointed teeth and clasping bases. Young leaves may need protection from rabbits and deer in spring. Deep taproot resents disturbance, so set out young plants in their permanent locations. Plants seldom need division. Rattlesnake master is on Michigan's threatened species list, so buy only nursery-propagated plants. Seed heads turn brown and remain on the plant for winter interest. Leaves have the appearance of a succulent, sharp and kinetic in the landscape. Can be used in formal setting as an accent plant. Works well in sunny borders or in prairie gardens. Distinctive yucca-like leaves add interest when plants are not in flower. Host plant for the black swallowtail butterfly and rattlesnake borer moth. Flowers provide nectar.

Companions: Provides unique structure that pairs nicely with softer prairie wildflowers. Combine bold rattlesnake master with airy clusters of flowering spurge or sea lavender. Pair with blazing stars, Culver's root, Michigan lily, black-eyed Susan, coneflowers, goldenrods, autumn sneezeweed, asters, and grasses.

### **Sneezeweed (*Helenium autumnale*)**

Sun to part shade

Site conditions: Prefers a dampish spot in gardens, perhaps in a slight depression that can be given a good soaking during dry periods. Responds well to fertile soil. Best in low, moist areas such as in bogs or near streams, but can be grown in many landscape situations. Plants in moist, rich soil are quite robust, while those grown in drier soils are shorter and less vigorous.

3-5 ft tall

Blooms June-Sept

Deer resistant

Abundant flowers with unusually notched triangular petals create an interesting mass effect. Golden yellow, daisy-like flowers 1-2 inches wide. Bright green leaves are lance-shaped with toothed edges. Provides late-summer color in perennial borders or prairie gardens. Easily grown in average, medium to wet soil in full sun. Divide clumps every 3-4 years to maintain vigor. Taller plants may need some sort of support to keep from flopping over. Mulch garden plants and give them extra water during dry times, especially in midsummer, to encourage good flowering. Prune in late May to keep plants smaller and more compact. Plants will bloom better if they are divided every three or four years. Beneficial insects are attracted to the blooms, including honey bees, bumblebees, and some butterflies.

Companions: Plant sneezeweed near ponds with irises, ferns, New England aster, and ironweed. In borders, use it with phloxes, asters, coreopsis, and goldenrods.

### **Spiderwort (*Tradescantia ohiensis*)**

Sun to part shade

Site conditions: Grows best in lean, well-drained soil in full sun or light shade, but will grow in heavier, richer soils. Plants grown in shade will have fewer flowers.

1.5-3 ft tall

Blooms May-July

Slender, branching plant with narrow blue-green leaves and deep medium blue flowers with rounded petals. The foliage has long, leafy stems that resemble daylily foliage, especially when first emerging. Leaves are blue-green. The three-petaled flowers are flat faced and deep rose-pink to purple. Produces blooms for most of June and July. Plant spiderwort in prairie gardens or along the edge of woodland gardens. Its drought and heat tolerance make it a good choice for xeriscaping. It can be grown in perennial borders, but the foliage often looks old and tired by midsummer. Plants may go dormant after flowering, so try to place them where they will be masked by other plants. Can become aggressive in fertile soils. They also reseed. Foliage can be cut back to the ground after flowering to keep plants neat and to halt seed production. Showy purple blooms open in morning and close in afternoon

Hardy native that thrives in sun or shade and moist or dry soils.

Pollen and nectar attract bumblebees and other pollinators in early summer.

Companions: Plant spiderwort with other tough plants that offer late season interest, such as mountain mints, asters, goldenrods, and ferns.

**Sunflower, Western (*Helianthus occidentalis*)**

Sun to part shade

2-4 ft tall

Blooms July-Sept

Daisy-like flowers bloom in midsummer. Prefers full to partial sun, mesic to dry conditions, but will adapt to partial sun and rocky soil. Feeds caterpillars of several moths. Also attracts many pollinators, including bees and butterflies.

**Blue Vervain (*Verbena hastata*)**

Sun-part shade

Site conditions: Prefers rich, evenly moist to wet soil in full sun or light shade

3-5 ft tall

1-3 ft wide

Blooms July-Sept

Deer resistant

Erect branches hold strongly vertical, candelabra-like spikes of small, dark blue flowers in summer and early fall. The leaves are long and narrow-toothed. Dark blue flowers are easily combined with gold and yellow late summer bloomers and grasses in perennial borders and prairie gardens, where they add a strong vertical accent. Blue vervain can also be grown in bog gardens and alongside streams and ponds. All vervains make good cut flowers. Late color. Blooms into late summer, adding a brush of purple to your garden. Dense flower clusters sustain native pollinators. Performs well in rain gardens. Hosts caterpillars of the common buckeye butterfly and verbena moth.

Companions: Combine with gold and yellow late summer bloomers and grasses. Grow with wild bergamot, phloxes, coneflowers, and grasses.

**Vervain, Hoary (*Verbena stricta*)**

Full sun

1-4 ft tall

1.5-2 ft wide

Blooms July-Sept

Erect branches holding strongly vertical spikes of attractive blue-violet flowers in summer and early fall. Bloom starts at the bottom of the flower spike and works its way up, resulting in a long bloom time. Leaves are wedge shaped and hairy. Tolerates a wide variety of soil types in full sun. Blooms into late summer, adding a brush of purple to gardens. Seeds feed a variety of birds through the winter time. Dense flower clusters attract butterflies, native bees, and other pollinating insects. The verbena bee (*Calliopsis verbenae*) specializes on this plant.

**Virginia Creeper (a.k.a., Engelman Ivy) (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*)**

Shade to full sun

30-50 ft tall (vine)

5-10 ft wide

Blooms June-Aug

Can be used as a groundcover like English ivy. Often confused with poison ivy. "Leaves of three, let it be. Leaves of five, let it thrive. Berries are ornamental but toxic if ingested. However, berries feed birds like the northern flicker.

Re-seeds readily. Virginia creeper is very aggressive. Can leave tendrils on siding and be difficult to eradicate once established. May be best planted on garden trellises and structure intended specifically for plants rather than on buildings. Hosts caterpillars of the pandora sphinx moth and wood nymph.

## Quick Reference Lists

### Shade Garden

Big Leaf Aster  
Blue Vervain  
Boneset  
Butterfly Weed  
Cardinal Flower  
Culver's Root  
Foxglove Beard Tongue  
Golden Alexanders  
Great Blue Lobelia  
Hairy Beard Tongue  
Hoary Vervain  
Little Bluestem  
Ironweed  
New England Aster  
Northern Blazing Star  
Pale Purple Coneflower  
Showy Goldenrod  
Tall Coreopsis  
Wild Columbine  
Wild Lupine

### Sunny Areas

Butterfly Weed  
New England Aster  
Purple Coneflower  
Bottle Gentian  
Prairie Smoke  
Sneezeweed  
Blazing Stars  
Bergamot  
Beard tongues/Penstemon  
Little Bluestem  
Hoary Vervain  
Pussytoes  
Pearly Everlasting  
Rattlesnake Master  
Obedient Plant  
Wild Petunia  
Spiderwort



### **Butterfly/Pollinator Gardens**

Pearly Everlasting

Pussytoes

Milkweeds (butterfly weed, swamp milkweed)

Asters

Wild Indigos

Coreopsis species

Purple coneflower

Joe-pye weed

Helianthus species (sunflowers)

Liatris species (blazing stars)

Wild Lupine

Bergamot

Penstemon species (beard tongues)

Grey-headed Coneflower

Rudbeckia species

Little Bluestem

Cup Plant

Solidago species (goldenrods)

Verbena species (vervains)

Golden Alexanders

Great Blue Lobelia

Ironweed

Boneset

### **Drought Tolerant Plants**

Pearly everlasting

Prairie smoke

Butterfly weed

Spiderwort

Pussytoes

### **Sources for this guide include:**

Northwest Michigan Invasive Species Network

Michigan Flora <http://www.michiganflora.net>

Prairie Moon Nursery <https://www.prairiemoon.com>

Wildtype Native Plant Nursery <https://www.prairiemoon.com>

*Landscaping with Native Plants of Michigan* (book), by Lynn M Steiner

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