



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service

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# Montana Native Plants for Pollinator-Friendly Plantings



Photos: USDA NRCS Tom Pick

## Native Plants Can Attract Pollinators and Beneficials

Native trees, shrubs, forbs, and grasses planted along farm and ranch borders and within fields can attract wildlife, including pollinators and beneficial insects. The right mix of plant species will bloom all season and provide a continuous source of nectar and pollen needed by pollinators and other beneficials.

### Pollinator-Friendly Native Species Plantings Can Also:

#### Reduce Pesticide Use

Sequentially blooming annual and perennial plants provide habitat and winter cover for insects, enhance weed seed suppression, and provide some biological control of insect and disease pests.

#### Stabilize Soil and Provide Ground Cover

Root systems hold soil in place and reduce the risk of erosion.







#### Act as Windbreaks and Shelterbelts

Taller trees and shrubs protect farmsteads, crops, and livestock from wind and dust damage and may help to filter wind-blown weed seed.

#### Provide Wildlife Habitat

Woody perennials provide food and shelter for many native wildlife species.

## Establishing Pollinator-Friendly Plantings

-  Start right. Flowering plants can be started from seed; shrubs are better established by transplanting seedlings.
-  Test soils for drainage. Most of Montana's native species will not do well in heavy, poorly drained, or saline soils.
-  Match plants with similar site preferences. Choose plants that share similar light, soil, and water requirements and are adapted to the climate.
-  Water wisely. For the most successful establishment of any native shrubs, water weekly or bimonthly for the first two to three years until well established.
-  Control weeds. Most natives do not compete well with weeds. Start with a weed-free area and keep weeds to a minimum for the first two to three years of establishment. Mowing weeds during herbaceous plant establishment will suppress competition and encourage desirable plants.
-  Protect from deer. Fencing may be required in areas with high deer populations. Treatments with deer repellents may help protect new plantings.



## Bloom Period of Common Montana Native Plants

	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct
<b>Shrubs</b>							
American Plum	Yellow	Yellow	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
Golden Currant	Yellow	Yellow	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
Chokecherry	Yellow	Yellow	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
Redosier Dogwood	Yellow	Yellow	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
Serviceberry	Light Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
Common Snowberry	Light Blue	Light Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Light Blue	Light Blue
Blue Elderberry	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Yellow	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
Woods Rose	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Yellow	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
Rabbitbrush	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
<b>Flowers</b>							
Lewis Flax	Light Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Light Blue
Fuzzytongue Penstemon	Light Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
Prairie Coneflower	Light Blue	Light Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Light Blue
Wild Beebalm	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Light Blue	Light Blue
Slender White Prairie Clover	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Light Blue	Light Blue
Common Yarrow	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Light Blue
Blanketflower	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Light Blue
Maximilian Sunflower	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Light Blue
Dotted Gayfeather	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Light Blue
Purple Coneflower	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Light Blue
Smooth Blue Aster	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Light Blue

## Plant Choices - Montana Native Shrubs



### American Plum

*Prunus americana.*  
Grows 6 to 10 feet tall with a 6- to 8-foot spread. Prefers loamy soils. Foothill valleys and grassland coulees. Medium water use; full sun. Blooms April to May.



### Blue Elderberry

*Sambucus nigra.*  
Grows 6 to 15 feet tall with a 4- to 8-foot spread. Prefers loamy to clayey soils. Foothill valleys. Moderate water use; partial shade to full sun. Blooms in July.



### Chokecherry

*Prunus virginiana.*  
Grows 10 to 15 feet tall, suckering to a 4- to 8-foot spread. Prefers sandy to loamy soils. Foothills to prairie coulees. Low water use; full sun. Blooms April to May.



### Common Snowberry

*Symphoricarpos alba.*  
Grows to 3 feet tall with similar spread. Prefers loamy to clayey soils. Foothill valleys and grassland coulees. Low water use; full sun. Blooms April to May.



### Golden Currant

*Ribes aureum.*  
Grows 2 to 4 feet tall with a 1 to 4-foot spread. Tolerates sandy to clayey soils. Foothills, valleys, and prairie coulees. Low water use; full sun. Blooms April to May.



### Rabbitbrush

*Ericameria nauseosa.*  
Grows 2 to 4 feet tall with a 1 to 4-foot spread. Prefers sandy soils, but tolerates heavier loam or clay soils. Grasslands and foothills. Low water use; full sun. Blooms August to October.

## Plant Choices - Montana Native Shrubs



### Redosier Dogwood

*Cornus sericea.*

Grows 4 to 7 feet tall with a 4- to 6-foot spread. Prefers loam to clayey textured soils. Foothill valleys and grassland coulees. Medium water use; full sun to partial shade. Blooms April to May.



### Woods Rose

*Rosa woodsii.*

Grows 4 to 5 feet tall, suckering to a 4- to 10-foot spread. Prefers sandy to loamy soils. Foothills to prairie. Low water use; full sun. Blooms in July.



### Skunkbush Sumac

*Rhus trilobata.*

Grows 2 to 10 feet tall, forming thickets from spreading rhizomes. Prefers sandy to heavy clay soils. Low water use; full sun to partial shade. Flowers open before leaves. Blooms in April.



### Serviceberry

*Amelanchier alnifolia.*

Grows 2 to 16 feet tall, suckering to a 4- to 10-foot spread. Prefers sandy to loamy soils. Foothills to prairie ravines. Low water use; full sun to very light shade. Blooms May to June.



### Silver Buffaloberry

*Shepherdia argentea.*

Grows 3 to 20 feet tall, often forming thickets. Prefers well-drained soils along streams, coulees and hillsides. Low water use; full sun. Pollen and seed flowers are on separate plants. Blooms May to June.



### Rocky Mountain Juniper

*Juniperus scopulorum.*

Grows 15 to 20 feet tall with a spread up to 8 feet. Prefers sandy soils, but will tolerate heavier loam or clay soils. Transition between foothills and prairie. Low water use; full sun. Slow growing. Provides winter food for songbirds and shelter for overwintering beneficial insects.

## Plant Choices - Montana Native Flowers



### Common Yarrow

*Achillea millefolium.*  
Perennial. Grows 2 to 3 feet high, spreading to 2 or 3 feet wide. Light water use; full sun. Moist soils. Foothills to prairies. Blooms July to September.



### Lewis Flax

*Linum lewisii.*  
Short-lived perennial. Grows 1 to 3 feet high. Cold and drought tolerant; full sun to semi-shade. Well-drained soils. Prairies, foothills and forest openings. Blooms mid-May to September.



### Smooth Blue Aster

*Symphyotrichum laeve.*  
Perennial. Grows 2 to 3 feet high and 1 to 2 feet wide. Light to moderate water use; full sun to partial shade. Moist soils. Foothills to prairies. Bright lavender blooms August through frost.



### Prairie Coneflower

*Ratibida columnifera.*  
Perennial. Grows 1 to 2 feet high and 1 foot wide. Drought tolerant; full sun. Loamy soils. Foothills to prairies. Blooms June to September.



### Purple Coneflower

*Echinacea angustifolia.*  
Perennial. Grows 1 to 2 feet high and 1 foot wide. Needs little or no additional water once established; full sun. Sandy to clayey soils. Forest valleys to prairie. Blooms August to September.



### Blanketflower

*Gaillardia aristata.*  
Perennial. Grows 12 to 16 inches high and 24 inches wide. Drought tolerant once established; full sun. Prefers well-drained sandy, limey soils; adapted to poorer, drier soils. Foothills to prairie. Blooms July to September.

## Plant Choices - Montana Native Flowers



### **Maximilian Sunflower**

*Helianthus maximiliani.*  
Perennial. Grows 1 to 6 feet tall (shorter in dry, exposed, rocky areas). Drought tolerant once established. Flowers best in sandier, drier soils. Eastern prairie. Blooms July to September.



### **White Prairie Clover**

*Dalea candida.*  
Perennial legume. Grows 18 to 24 inches high and 12 to 24 inches wide. Drought tolerant once established; full sun. Prefers sandy soils. Prairie. Blooms July to August.



### **Dotted Gayfeather**

*Liatris punctata.*  
Perennial. Grows 1 to 2 feet high and 2 feet wide. Drought tolerant once established; full sun. Prefers sandy to loamy soils. Foothills to prairie. Blooms August to September.



### **Wild Beebalm**

*Monarda fistulosa.*  
Perennial. Grows 12 to 20 inches high, spreading to 1.5 to 2 feet wide. Drought tolerant once established; full sun or light shade. Prefers sandy but moist soil. Forests, valleys, and prairie. Blooms July to August.



### **Fuzzytongue Penstemon**

*Penstemon eriantherus.*  
Perennial. Grows 12 to 20 inches high and 12 inches wide. Drought tolerant once established; full sun. Prefers sandy soil. Foothills to prairie. Blooms May to June.



### **Hairy Goldenaster**

*Heterotheca villosa.*  
Perennial. Grows 6 to 12 inches tall and 12 to 24 inches wide. Survives on natural precipitation once established; full sun. Grows in sandy, dry soils. Foothills to prairie. Competes with knapweed. Small, yellow, daisy-like blooms June to September.

## Native Plant Seed and Seedling Sources

Many commercial nurseries and seed suppliers carry transplants or seed of the species listed in this brochure. Check with local businesses to find out what plants they carry. An internet search can identify additional suppliers of both seed and transplants for your area.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service PLANTS Database lists native plants and can be viewed online at <http://plants.usda.gov/java/>.

The Montana Native Plant Society has a publication entitled Sources of Native Plants that can be downloaded from its Web site at [www.mtnnativeplants.org/filelib/212.pdf](http://www.mtnnativeplants.org/filelib/212.pdf).

The Montana Conservation Seedling Nursery in Missoula offers native shrub seedlings. Contact them at (406) 542-4244 or <http://dnrc.mt.gov/forestry/nursery/> for more information.

### Credits for ID Photos on Pages 4-7

*Amelanchier alnifolia*: USDA-NRCS Michael Garverich.  
*Achillea millefolium*: USDA-NRCS Ortwin Bourquinn.  
*Ericameria nauseosa*: USDA-NRCS Tom Pick.  
*Cornus sericea*: USDA-NRCS Ortwin Bourquinn.  
*Dalea candida*: USDA-NRCS.  
*Echinacea angustifolia*: USDA-NRCS Mark Majerus.  
*Gaillardia aristata*: USDA-NRCS Susan Winslow.  
*Helianthus maximiliani*: USDA-NRCS Pete Husby.  
*Heterotheca villosa*: USDA-NRCS Susan Winslow.  
*Juniperus scopulorum*: USDA-NRCS.  
*Liatris punctata*: USDA-NRCS Ortwin Bourquinn.  
*Linum lewisii*: USDA-NRCS Ortwin Bourquinn.  
*Monarda fistulosa*: USDA-NRCS Ortwin Bourquinn.  
*Penstemon eriantherus*: USDA-NRCS.  
*Prunus americana*: USDA-NRCS Michael Garverich.  
*Prunus virginiana*: USDA-NRCS Ortwin Bourquinn.  
*Ribes aureum*: USDA-NRCS Ortwin Bourquinn.  
*Ratibida columnifera*: USDA-NRCS Ortwin Bourquinn.  
*Rosa woodsii*: USDA-NRCS Ortwin Bourquinn.  
*Rhus trilobata*: USDA-NRCS Ortwin Bourquinn.  
*Sambucus nigra*: William & Wilma Follette @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / USDA-NRCS. 1992. *Western wetland flora: Field office guide to plant species*. West Region, Sacramento.  
*Shepherdia argentea*: USDA-NRCS Ortwin Bourquinn.  
*Symphoricarpos alba*: USDA-NRCS.  
*Symphotrichum laeve*: USDA-NRCS Joseph Scianna.

## NRCS Programs Can Help

The Natural Resources Conservation Service supports the use of native species in many conservation practices that involve seeding or transplanting. Selecting pollinator-friendly species for these practices can provide added conservation benefits. These practices include:

- Streambank and shoreline protection
- Critical area planting
- Early successional habitat development/management
- Field borders
- Filter strips
- Herbaceous wind barriers
- Range planting
- Riparian herbaceous cover
- Windbreak/shelterbelt establishment or renovation

NRCS financial assistance programs can help agricultural producers with the establishment of pollinator-friendly species plantings, including the species listed in this publication. **Requirements for cost-shared pollinator-friendly plantings are found in NRCS Biology Technical Note MT-20.**

For additional information on NRCS conservation programs, contact your local NRCS or conservation district office. The office nearest you can be located on the web at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov>.

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