

## Suggested Native Plants for Horticultural Use on the Front Range of Colorado

Colorado Native Plant Society

Revised April 2001

Common Name	Latin Name (Weber)	Flower Color	Height (Feet)	Preferred Environment	Life Zone	Comments
<b>FORBS</b>						
Aspen daisy (showy daisy)	<i>Erigeron speciosus</i>	Blue to violet	1 - 2	Part sun, Dry/Moist	F, M	Abundant
Black-eyed susan	<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	Orange-yellow	1 - 2.5	Part sun, Dry/Moist	F, M	Frequent in dry mountain meadows
Blanket flower	<i>Gaillardia aristata</i>	Yellow to orange-yellow	1 - 2	Sun, Dry	P, F, M	Verify source of commercial varieties, many are hybrids; common midsummer in sagebrush, lower montane
Blue flax	<i>Adenolinum (Linum) lewisii</i>	Blue	.5 - 1	Sun, Dry	P, F	Watch for native, interbreeds freely
Blue vervain	<i>Verbena hastata</i>	Dark blue/purple	3	Sun, Moist	P	Usually many spikes, available by seed
Broom snakeweed	<i>Gutierrezia sarothrae</i>	Yellow	.5 - 1.5	Sun, Dry	P, F	Flowers late summer
Bush sunflower	<i>Helianthus pumilus</i>	Yellow	8" - 2.5	Sun, Dry	P, F	
Colorado columbine	<i>Aquilegia caerulea</i>	Blue, lavender-blue	1.5 - 2	Sun/shade, Moist	F, M, S	Colorado State flower
Fringed sage	<i>Artemisia frigida</i>	Yellow, small	4 - 8"	Dry	P, F, M	Woody perennial with fragrant, silver-gray foliage
Golden banner	<i>Thermopsis divaricarpa</i>	Yellow	1 - 2	Part sun, Moist	F, M, S	Perennial, rhizomes
Goldenrod	<i>Solidago spp.</i>	Yellow	Variable	Sun, Dry/Moist	P	Many and varied species
Greenleaf penstemon (blue mist)	<i>Penstemon virens</i>	Bright blue-violet	.5 - 1	Part sun, Dry	P, F, M, S	Forms dense clumps, available by seed
Harebell (bluebells)	<i>Campanula rotundifolia</i>	Blue-purple	.5 - 1	Part sun, Moist	F, M, S, A	Perennial
Lupine (silvery)	<i>Lupinus argenteus</i>	Bluish lavender to purple	1 - 2.5	Sun, Dry/Moist	P, F, M, S	Abundant
Nelson's larkspur	<i>Delphinium nelsonii</i>	Purple, purplish-blue	1	Sun, Dry	F, M	
One-sided penstemon	<i>Penstemon secundiflorus</i>	Magenta or pink to bluish lavender	.5 - 1.5	Part sun, Dry	P, F	Attractive light blue-green leaves
Prairie clover	<i>Dalea purpurea</i>	Magenta to purple	.5 - 1.5	Sun, Dry	P, F	Perennial, blooms midsummer, available by seed
Prairie coneflower	<i>Ratibida columnifera</i>	Yellow	1 - 2.5	Sun, Dry	P, F	Perennial
Prairie sage (Sagewort)	<i>Artemisia ludoviciana</i>	Yellow, small	1 - 2.5	Dry	P	Perennial, fragrant silvery-white/greenish foliage
Prickly pear cactus	<i>Opuntia macrorhiza (compressa)</i>	Yellow	4 - 8"	Sun, Dry	P	Sparse spines
Prickly pear cactus	<i>Opuntia polyacantha</i>	Yellow, orange, pink	4 - 8"	Sun, Dry	P	Very spiny

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Pussytoes	<i>Antennaria parvifolia</i>	White, pink, rose	2 - 6"	Dry	P, F, M, S	Perennial, forms large mats
Rocky Mountain beeplant	<i>Cleome serrulata</i>	Pink to lavender	1 - 3	Sun, Dry	P, F	Abundant, midsummer along roadsides
Rocky Mountain penstemon	<i>Penstemon strictus</i>	Blue	1 - 2	Part sun, Dry/Moist	F, M	Common west of Continental Divide
Rocky Mountain wild iris	<i>Iris missouriensis</i>	Blue, purplish, white	.5 - 1	Part sun, moist	F,M,S	
Scarlet globe mallow	<i>Sphaeralcea coccinea</i>	Orange-red	.5 - 1	Sun, Dry	P, F	Perennial, rhizomes, drought tolerant
Showy milkweed	<i>Asclepias speciosa</i>	Purple, pink to whitish	1.5 - 5	Sun, Moist	P, F	Common on roadsides, fields
Spiderwort	<i>Tradescantia occidentalis</i>	Blue/purple	.5 - 2	Sun, Dry/Moist	P, F	Perennial
Spiny goldenweed	<i>Machaeranthera pinnatifida</i>	Yellow	.5 - 2	Sun, Dry	F	Common perennial, available by seed
Spotted gayfeather (Dotted gayfeather)	<i>Liatris punctata</i>	Rose-purple	.5 - 2	Sun, Dry	P, F	Perennial, flower late summer; available by seed
Sulphur flower	<i>Eriogonum umbellatum</i>	Yellow	4" - 1	Sun, Dry	F, M	
Swamp milkweed	<i>Asclepias incarnata</i>	Red or purple	2 - 5	Sun, Moist	P, F	Available by seed
Tall beard-tongue	<i>Penstemon virgatus</i>	Blue to purple	2	Part sun, Dry/Moist	F,M	Flowers numerous
Western wallflower	<i>Erysimum asperum</i>	Yellow/orange	.5 - 2	Sun, Dry	P, F	Watch for native species; biennial or perennial, flowers late spring to early summer
Whipple's penstemon	<i>Penstemon whippleanus</i>	Purple or wine-colored	4" - 1.5	Part sun, Dry	M,S	Common in dry forests
White evening primrose	<i>Oenothera caespitosa</i>	White	0.5	Sun, Dry	P, F, M	Perennial, blooms in early evening
White yarrow (Woolly yarrow)	<i>Achillea lanulosa</i>	White, small	.5 - 2	Part sun, Dry/Moist	P, F, M, S, A	Perennial, rhizomes, grows in disturbed areas
Wild bergamot (Horsemint or Beebalm)	<i>Monarda fistulosa</i>	Rose pink	1 - 2	Part sun, Dry/Moist	P, F	Large flowers
Wild geranium (Pineywoods geranium)	<i>Geranium caespitosum</i>	White to rose-purple	1 - 2	Part sun, Moist	F	Perennial
Wild verbena	<i>Glandularia (Verbena) bipinnatifida</i>	Lavender	.5 - 1	Sun, Dry	P, F	Can grow taller with extra water
Yellow stemless evening primrose	<i>Oenothera howardii (brachycarpa)</i>	Yellow	0.5	Sun, Dry	P	Perennial, blooms in early evening, common along Front Range
<b>GRASSES</b>						

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Alkali sacaton	<i>Sporobolus airoides</i>	Ornamental	1.5 - 3	Moist	P, F	Damp, alkaline
Arizona fescue	<i>Festuca arizonica</i>	Turf	1 - 3	Dry	F, M	Pine forests
Big bluestem	<i>Andropogon gerardii</i>	Ornamental	3 - 7	Dry	P, F	Showy summer and fall
Blue grama	<i>Chondrosium gracile (Bouteloua gracilis)</i>	Ornamental/Turf	.5 - 1.5	Dry	P, F, M	Prefers sandy or gravelly soils; State grass
Blue wild rye	<i>Elymus glaucus</i>		2.5 - 4.5	Moist	F, M, S	Mesic foothill canyons
Bluebunch wheatgrass	<i>Pseudoroegneria (Agropyron) spicatum</i>	Ornamental	2 - 3	Dry-moist	F, M	Dry, open woods
Buffalograss	<i>Buchloe dactyloides</i>	Turf	4 - 6"	Dry	P	Prefers full sun, tolerates clay
Indian grass	<i>Sorghastrum avenaceum (nutans)</i>	Ornamental	3 - 8	Dry-moist	P, F	Prairies, bottomlands, open woods, meadows
Indian ricegrass	<i>Achnatherum (Orzyopsis) hymenoides</i>	Ornamental	1 - 2	Dry	P, F, M	Sandy plains, mesas
Junegrass	<i>Koeleria macrantha</i>	Ornamental/Turf	1 - 2	Dry	P, F, M	Prairies, open woods
Little bluestem	<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	Ornamental	1.5 - 5	Dry	P, F, M	Prairies, open woods, dry hills; Plants turn copper-red in fall
Mountain muhly	<i>Muhlenbergia montana</i>	Ornamental/Turf	.5 - 2	Dry	F, M	Open woodlands, hillsides; May only be available by seed
Needle-and-thread	<i>Hesperostipa (Stipa) comata</i>	Ornamental	1 - 2	Dry	P, F, M	Plains, dry hills, sandy
New Mexico feathergrass	<i>Hesperostipa (Stipa) neomexicana</i>	Ornamental	1 - 2.5	Dry	P, F	Mesas, canyons, rocky slopes
Prairie cordgrass	<i>Spartina pectinata</i>	Ornamental	3 - 7	Moist	P, F	Marshes, wet meadows
Prairie dropseed	<i>Sporobolus heterolepis</i>		1 - 2.5	Dry	F	Pine forests
Prairie sandreed	<i>Calamovilfa longifolia</i>	Ornamental	1.5 - 6	Dry	P, F	Sandy prairies, hills; May only be available by seed
Sand dropseed	<i>Sporobolus cryptandrus</i>		1 - 3	Dry	P, F	Sandy or loam
Side-oats grama	<i>Bouteloua curtipendula</i>	Ornamental	1.5 - 2.5	Dry	P, F	Prairies, rocky hills
Switchgrass	<i>Panicum virgatum</i>	Ornamental	3 - 7	Dry-moist	P, F	Marshes, prairies, foothills
Tufted hairgrass	<i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i>	Ornamental/Turf	2.5 - 4	Moist	F, M	Open wet meadows, streambanks, streambanks
Western wheatgrass	<i>Pascopyrum (Agropyron) smithii</i>	Turf	1 - 2.5	Dry-moist	P, F, M	Adaptable to variety of habitats
<b>TREES &amp; SHRUBS</b>						
<b>SMALL/MEDIUM SHRUBS</b>						
Antelope bitterbush	<i>Purshia tridentata</i>	Light yellow	5	South-facing slopes, dry well-drained soils	P, F	Attractive, birds eat seeds
Boulder raspberry	<i>Oreobatus (Rubus) deliciosus</i>	Showy white flowers	5	Rocky ground, foothills and canyons	P, F, M	Very attractive; wildlife eats the fruits

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Buckbrush	<i>Ceanothus fendleri</i>	Clusters of small white flowers	2	Open valleys, hillsides & woods; gravelly soil	P, F, M	Spiny
Common juniper	<i>Juniperus communis</i> ssp. <i>alpina</i>	Not Applicable	3	Coniferous forest understory	P, F	Attractive, broad evergreen shrub
False indigo	<i>Amorpha fruticosa</i>	Purple, in a crowded raceme	6	Streamsides	F	
Four-winged saltbush	<i>Atriplex canescens</i>	Inconspicuous	5	Alkali flats, grassy uplands, sandy soils	P, F	Seeds eaten by birds
Golden currant	<i>Ribes aureum</i>	Bright yellow flowers, black fruits	6	Plains to foothills, along roadsides and streams	P, F	Flowers sometimes have a clove scent
Kinnikinnick	<i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i>	Small white to pinkish; red fruits	1	Semi-dry areas; needs acidic, well-drained soil	P, F	Attractive, waxy leaves and red berries; ground cover. Browsed by a wide variety of wildlife.
Mountain ninebark	<i>Physocarpus monogynus</i>	White to rose-colored, showy	4	Rocky canyonsides, outer foothills	P, F, M	Very attractive, showy flowers; birds eat seeds
Narrow-leaf or Plains yucca	<i>Yucca glauca</i>	Whitish green	3	Rocky areas, plains to foothills	P, F, M	Sharp foliage
Oregon-grape, Holly-grape	<i>Mahonia repens</i>	Small yellow in fragrant clusters; berries blue to purple	1	Dry slopes	F, M	Holly-like leaves; attractive ground cover. Birds eat the fruits.
Rabbitbrush	<i>Chrysothamnus nauseosus</i>	Yellow	1-6	Dry hills, plains to subalpine	P, F, M	Several subspecies of <i>C. nauseosus</i> are native to a wide variety of habitats. Identify your local species. The following are relatively common.
Rabbitbrush - dwarf blue	<i>Chrysothamnus nauseosus</i> ssp. <i>nauseosus</i>	Yellow	1-4	Eastern plains, foothill mesas	P, F, M	1-4 feet tall at maturity
Rabbitbrush - tall green	<i>Chrysothamnus nauseosus</i> ssp. <i>graveolens</i>	Yellow	2-6	Plains; deep soils, arroyos	P, F, M	2-6 feet tall at maturity
Red-berried elder	<i>Sambucus microbotrys</i> ( <i>racemosa</i> )	White to rose-colored, showy	8	Along streams and moist slopes	F, M, S	Attractive dark green compound leaves and red berries
Red osier dogwood	<i>Swida sericea</i> ( <i>Cornus stolonifera</i> )	Tiny white clusters	8	Streamsides and canyon bottoms	P, F, M	Attractive glossy leaves and red bark

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Sand cherry	<i>Cerasus (Prunus) pumila</i> ssp. <i>bessseyi</i>	White	1-3	Sandy or gravelly prairie hillsides	P, F	Purplish-black fruit are sweet and edible. Leaves turn reddish in fall.
Shrubby cinquefoil	<i>Pentaphylloides floribunda</i> ( <i>Potentilla fruticosa</i> )	Yellow	3	Variety of habitats	F, M, S	Often cultivated as an ornamental; attractive
Snowberry	<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>	Small white to pinkish flowers	3	Forest foothill canyons; dry rocky soil and gravelly banks	P, F	Attractive red stems
Thimbleberry	<i>Rubacer parviflorus</i>	Showy white flowers	5	Moist, shaded forests	F, M	Wildlife eats the fruits
Three-leaved sumac or skunkbrush	<i>Rhus aromatica</i> ssp. <i>trilobata</i>	Yellow in tiny clusters	5	Dry hillsides, canyons, valleys, and plains	P, F, M	Wildlife eats the red-yellow fruits
Twinberry honeysuckle	<i>Distegia (Lonicera) involucreata</i>	Showy reddish-purple leaf-like bracts with twin yellow flowers	7	Moist soils; forests, streamsides	F, M, S	Fruits eaten by birds; hummingbirds attracted to the tubular flowers
Wax currant or squaw currant	<i>Ribes cereum</i>	Pink to whitish	4	Dry rocky open slopes; hills and ridges	P, F, M	Not spiny; wildlife eats the fruits
Waxflower	<i>Jamesia americana</i>	Waxy white	6	Cliffs and cliff bases	P, F, M	Aromatic
Wild rose or Wood's rose	<i>Rosa woodsii</i>	Pink showy flowers	6	Streambanks, open prairies, forest edges	P, F, M	Thorny; wildlife feed on the hips
Winterfat	<i>Krascheninnikovia (Ceratooides) lanata</i>	Inconspicuous	1-3	Sandy alkaline soils	P, F	Flower clusters become fluffy resembling lambs' tails
<b>LARGE SHRUBS/SMALL TREES</b>						
Boxelder	<i>Negundo aceroides (Acer negundo)</i>	Inconspicuous	20	Stream banks	P, F	Leaves yellow in fall
Chokecherry	<i>Padus (Prunus) virginiana</i> ssp. <i>melanocarpa</i>	Fragrant, white	12	Hillsides, gulches, canyons & streamsides	P, F, M	Red to purple fruits a favorite of bears
Hackberry	<i>Celtis reticulata</i>	Inconspicuous yellowish-green	12	Dry rocky hillsides and ravine banks	P, F	Small reddish-brown fruits eaten by birds
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus erythropoda</i>	White	10	Dry hillsides and streambanks	P, F	Fruits purplish-red, thorns are up to 2" long, shiny red
Mountain-ash	<i>Sorbus scopulina</i>	White	12	Rocky canyons and ravines	F, M	Orange berries produced in fall

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Mountain mahogany	<i>Cercocarpus montanus</i>	Small yellow flower	15	Open rocky woods and stony soils	P, F	Sometimes evergreen
Rocky Mountain juniper	<i>Sabina (Juniperus) scopulorum</i>	Not applicable	15-40	Dry, rocky hillsides; also along streams	P, F, M	Birds eat the fruits
Rocky Mountain maple	<i>Acer glabrum</i>	Inconspicuous	15	Moist sites, streams, and canyons	F, M, S	Attractive red stems. Birds eat seeds, buds, and flowers.
Serviceberry	<i>Amelanchier alnifolia</i>	Showy white flowers	15	Dry, rocky slopes to moist, fertile soils	F, M, S	Foliage & fruits eaten by wildlife
Silver buffaloberry	<i>Shepherdia argentea</i>	Tiny yellowish-white	12	Streamsides and river bottoms	F, M	Leaves silvery on both sides; branches spiny. Native cousin of Russian Olive.
Smooth sumac	<i>Rhus glabra</i>	Greenish-yellow	10	Slopes and canyonsides	P, F	Similar to staghorn sumac ( <i>R. typhina</i> ), but grows shorter and without velvety branches. Leaves turn crimson in autumn.
Thinleaf alder	<i>Alnus incana</i> ssp. <i>tenuifolia</i>	Catkins; reddish-brown	18	Swampy ground or sandy soil; montane streambanks and pond borders	P, F, M	Female catkins are cone-like and persist through winter
Wild plum	<i>Prunus americana</i>	White	12	Gulches, outwash mesas; moist soil along streambanks	P, F, M	Often forms thickets; 1" yellow to red fruits are edible.
<b>LARGE TREES</b>						
Lanceleaf cottonwood	<i>Populus x. acuminata</i>	Not Applicable (male)	40 - 60	Streambanks and valleys	P, F	First generation sterile hybrid between <i>P. deltoides</i> and <i>P. angustifolia</i> ; leaf-shape is indicative of this cross.
Narrowleaf cottonwood	<i>Populus angustifolia</i>	Not Applicable (male)	30 - 60	Streambanks and valleys	P, F	Long narrow willow-like leaves turn yellow in fall. Available as a graft onto <i>P. x acuminata</i> rootstock which should reduce suckering.

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Plains cottonwood	<i>Populus deltoides</i> ssp. <i>monilifera</i>	Not Applicable (male)	60 - 80+	Moist soils; floodplains, riparian areas and valley bottoms	P, F	Nursery stock should be male and therefore "cottonless"; broad leaves turn yellow-gold in fall.
Ponderosa pine	<i>Pinus ponderosa</i> ssp. <i>scopulorum</i>	Not Applicable	60 - 80+	Variety of habitats - adaptable	P, F, M	Tall evergreen tree grows up to 150'. Seeds eaten by birds and small mammals.

<b>Life Zones:</b>	from <i>Meet the Natives</i> , M. Walter Pesman, 9th Edition
P - Plains	4,000 - 6,000 ft.
F - Foothills	6,000 - 8,000 ft.
M - Montane	8,000 - 10,000 ft.
S - Sub-alpine	10,000 - 11,500 ft. (or timberline)
A - Alpine	above 11,500 ft or timberline

### References:

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