

Prairie Urban Garden - Oldman Watershed Council

Xeriscape Priority Plant List

PERENNIAL WILDFLOWERS

Attribute	Response
Common Name	Brown-eyed Susan or Blanket Flower
Scientific Name	<i>Gaillardia aristata</i>
Origin	Native and native cultivars. The native species is widely distributed throughout Canada, occurring in all the western provinces and extending as far east as Quebec. It is found the northern and southwestern United States.
Height	Vegetation: 20–60 cm (8–24”), Flower: 60-76 cm (24-30”)
Spread	30-46 cm (12-18”)
Life Form	Clumping, upright herbaceous perennial.
Flower Color	Yellow to yellowish-orange to burgundy outside ray florets with a darker golden-brown center cluster of disk florets.
Foliage Color	Leaves are grayish green with a light, rough pubescence (hairs) on the surface.
Flowering Period	Mid-summer to fall. Both the native species and cultivars are long flowering plants that respond well to deadheading as a method to promote and extend this desired trait.
Habitat	Full sun, well drained soils. Does not do well in sites with standing water. Hardy to Zones 2-3.
Maintenance	Blanket flower is relatively low maintenance plant. It should be left in place over the winter to provide winterscape interest and to help trap snow to recharge soil moisture levels. In late winter (early March) before any green-up is visible, last years’ old growth should be clipped to the ground level. This plant readily self-sows. This is a desired characteristic for xeriscape gardens in their early stages of development but in later years may require thinning of new propagules to maintain the gardens desired plant species composition. Plants should be divided every few years to maintain plant vigor.
Availability	The native species is typically found only as plugs from specialized native plant producers/nurseries. The cultivars of Blanket Flower can be obtained in various container sizes and is common to most general plant nurseries and local garden centers.
Special Notes	Blanket Flower cultivars include dwarf varieties and a number of flower colors emphasizing shades of yellow to burgundy. The Goblin (<i>Gaillardia grandiflora</i> ‘Goblin’) and Arizona Sun (<i>G. grandiflora</i> ‘Arizona Sun’) are two common full sized successful cultivars. The variety <i>G. grandiflora</i> ‘Bijou’ is a nice compact, dwarf variety that is an excellent choice for a rock garden landscape. It

	grows to about 25 cm (10") in height and spread.
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Attribute	Response
Common Name	Dotted Blazing Star
Scientific Name	<i>Liatris punctata</i>
Origin	Native and native cultivars. This native selection occurs in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. In the U.S. it is found throughout the Great Plains and reaches as far south as Texas.
Height	Vegetation: 30-45 cm (12-18"), Flower: 30-76 cm (12-30")
Spread	30-45 cm (12-18")
Life Form	Perennial herbaceous wildflower, clumping towards the base & comprised of a number of narrow upright spike inflorescence.
Flower Color	Pinkish-purple spike inflorescence.
Foliage Color	Green linear, grass-like leaves.
Flowering Period	Late summer to early fall.
Habitat	Full sun, well drained dry soils. Hardy to Zone 2-3.
Maintenance	A low maintenance species despite its upright growth form; it is able to content with the wind and not get blown over. In late winter (early March) before any green-up is visible, last years' old growth should be clipped to the ground level. Plants should be divided every few years to maintain plant vigor.
Availability	The native species (Dotted Blazing Star) is typically found only as plugs from specialized native plant producers/nurseries. The cultivars of Blazing Star can be obtained in various container sizes and is common to most general plant nurseries and local garden centers.
Special Notes	Some nursery stock refers to this plant by the name Gayfeather. There are two common cultivars that are available from this native species. The first is Kobold Blazing Star (<i>Liatris spicata</i> 'Kobold'). This cultivar most resembles the native species producing pinkish-purple flowers. The second is a white flowered variety called Floristan White Blazing Star (<i>Liatris spicata</i> 'Floristan White'). Both cultivars grow to similar sizes as the species. A similar native species that is common to moister sites and the Foothills & Aspen Parkland region of the province is called Meadow Blazing Star (<i>Liatris ligulistylis</i>). The flower and leaves are larger than Dotted Blazing Star, but otherwise appear alike.

Attribute	Response
Common Name	Purple Coneflower
Scientific Name	<i>Echinacea angustifolia</i>
Origin	Native and native cultivars. This native species originates from Saskatchewan and Manitoba. In the U.S. it is found throughout the Great Plains as far south as Texas.
Height	Vegetation: 30-45 cm (12-18"), Flower: 45-70 cm (18-28")
Spread	45-60 cm (18-24")
Life Form	Tall, upright, herbaceous perennial wildflower.
Flower Color	Purplish pink, pink to lavender
Foliage Color	Green, rough textured, simple linear to lanceolate leaves.
Flowering Period	Mid-summer to mid fall. This plant responds well to deadheading as a method to prolong flowering.
Habitat	Full sun to very light shade, well drained soils. It does not tolerate wet, inundated soils. Hardy to Zone 3.
Maintenance	A low maintenance species despite its height it is not hindered by the wind and remains upright throughout the growing season. In late winter (early March) before any green-up is visible, last years' old growth should be clipped to the ground level. Plants should be divided every few years to maintain plant vigor.
Availability	The Narrow-leaved Purple Coneflower species can be found in plug form but is only available through a few specialty native plant nurseries. The Purple Coneflower is more widely available and is sold in mixed sized containers and is commonly found in your local general plant nurseries and seasonal garden centers.
Special Notes	There are a handful of purple coneflowers that are native to North America. Narrow-leaved Purple Coneflower (<i>Echinacea angustifolia</i>) is probably the most drought tolerant of the group; however is not the species usually found in general nurseries and local garden centers. The Purple Coneflower (<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>) is native to southern Ontario and Midwestern and Eastern United States. This is the species which many of the popular cultivars have been derived from. The cultivars range from dwarf, mid-sized to full sized Purple Coneflowers capable of producing 90 cm (35") in height and 45 cm (18") in spread. A mid-sized cultivar that maintains a prominent appearance in the garden but in a compact form is the cultivar <i>Echinacea purpurea</i> 'Prairie Splendor' which reaches heights of 45-55 cm (18-22") and 45-60 cm (18-30") in spread.

Attribute	Response
Common Name	Wild Bergamot
Scientific Name	<i>Monarda fistulosa</i>
Origin	Native and native cultivars. Wild Bergamot is widely distributed throughout Canada. It can be found in all provinces except Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. In the north it is native to isolated locations of the NWT. It is widespread through most of the United States.
Height	38-76cm (15-30")
Spread	45-60 cm (18-24")
Life Form	Upright dense clumping herbaceous perennial.
Flower Color	Purple, pink and red.
Foliage Color	Simple green leaves attached on opposite sides of square stems.
Flowering Period	Mid to late summer
Habitat	Variable, but the species can tolerate full sun to light shade. Prefers dry to moist soils but well drained soils. Avoid planting in wet, inundated soils and during its establishment phase avoid watering the foliage to help prevent powdery mildew. The species is hardy to Zone 2 and most cultivars to Zone 3.
Maintenance	This is a low maintenance species that needs only to be cut back to ground level in late winter or early spring; before any signs of green-up. Plants will likely need dividing every 4-5 years to maintain plant vigor and prevent overcrowding. Thinning will also help reduce the incidence of powdery mildew. If it does occur simply cut off the infected leaves.
Availability	The native species is typically found as plugs and seed from specialized native plant producers and nurseries. The cultivars of Wild Bergamot or Bee Balm can be obtained in various container sizes and is common to most general plant nurseries and local garden centers.
Special Notes	This selection is a member of the Mint family and offers a pleasant lemon-mint fragrance; especially in flower but is not limited to the flower alone. It is a special favorite to butterflies and bees alike. Wild Bergamot is susceptible to powdery mildew and as a preventative measure it should be provided with good air circulation around the plant. Many new cultivars provide powdery mildew resistance. <i>Monarda</i> 'Marshall's Delight' is a mildew resistant cultivar with pink flowers and grows in a tall tight clump that grows to close to 90 cm or 36" in height. A dwarf cultivar with purple flowers is <i>Monarda</i> 'Petite Delight' that remains to about 38 cm or 15" in height. This is a nicely balanced

	<p>selection perfect for a rock garden type application. A third selection with pink flowers is called the <i>Monarda</i> 'Petite Wonder' and has the same growth potential as that of the purple flower 'Petite Delight'.</p>
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Attribute	Response
Common Name	Showy Jacob's Ladder
Scientific Name	<i>Polemonium pulcherrimum</i>
Origin	Native and native cultivars. This selection is native to Alberta, British Columbia, Yukon, and the NWT. In the U.S. it is original to the western states and extends south to Arizona.
Height	20-60 cm (8-24")
Spread	30-45 cm (12-18")
Life Form	Mounded or clumped mid-sized herbaceous perennial.
Flower Color	Blue with yellow throat
Foliage Color	Compound pinnate leaves with numerous small green leaflets. The leaflets are opposite each other and resemble the rungs along a ladder; leading to Heaven as told by Jacob from the Bible. Some cultivars possess variegated green and white leaves.
Flowering Period	Mid spring to early summer produces a profusion of colour. The flowering period can be extended by deadheading but even left to its own Jacob's Ladder commonly flowers (although much less) throughout much of the summer season. A second more pronounced flower flush typically occurs late summer – early fall.
Habitat	The species and its cultivars have a wide tolerance of habitat preferences. However, they are best suited to dry to moist soils, but will not survive in water saturated soils. The species is common to a native habitat of dry, open slopes with gravelly, rocky soils. It prefers full sun. By all accounts the species appears more drought tolerant than the cultivar varieties. The cultivars can withstand and will do quite well under moderate shade conditions but like the species will thrive in the sun. The species and many cultivars are hardy to Zone 2.
Maintenance	<p>This is a low maintenance selection that needs only to be cut back to ground level in late winter or early spring; before any signs of green-up.</p> <p>Jacob's Ladder is a prolific seed producer and should be expected to self sow itself readily. Use this attribute to your advantage and allow it to self seed a larger area to provide a contiguous groundcover effect.</p> <p>It is easily recognized as a seedling and can be controlled without difficulty to a desired level.</p>
Availability	The native species is typically found as plugs and seed from specialized native plant producers and nurseries. The non-native and cultivars of Jacob's Ladder can be obtained in various container

	sizes and is common to most general plant nurseries and local garden centers.
Special Notes	<p>This plant gets an early start to the season; especially those on south to south-west aspects. It provides a nice early welcome of colour to the garden.</p> <p>The native species called Showy Jacob's Ladder is common to Alberta along the foothills and Montane regions of the province. Two non-native cultivar selections include:</p> <p>Common Jacob's Ladder (<i>Polemonium caeruleum</i>); which is a larger selection growing to 80 cm (31") in height and has broader, larger leaflets than the native species.</p> <p>The variety called <i>Polemonium</i> 'Brise d'Anjou' provides a variegated green and white leaf selection that grows to about 60 cm (24") and spreads to 45 cm (18").</p> <p>A second North American native selection that can be found in nursery production is Creeping Jacob's Ladder (<i>Polemonium reptans</i>). It grows to about 30 cm (12") and spreads to about 30-45 cm (12-18"). A native plant to the mid-west United States is best suited to those areas of the garden with full sun to light shade and even moisture.</p>

Attribute	Response
Common Name	Threadleaf Tickseed or Moonbeam Tickseed
Scientific Name	<i>Coreopsis verticillata</i> and <i>Coreopsis verticillata</i> 'moonbeam'
Origin	Native cultivars. The native species of Threadleaf Tickseed originates from southern Ontario and Quebec. In the U.S. is located in the eastern states.
Height	30-45 cm (12-18")
Spread	30-45 cm (12-18")
Life Form	Loosely mounded, fine textured herbaceous perennial.
Flower Color	This selection is a member of the Aster family where Threadleaf Tickseed possesses yellow ray florets and darker yellow disk florets. The Moonbeam Tickseed possesses creamy-yellow ray florets and yellow center disk florets.
Foliage Color	Green narrow fern-like leaves
Flowering Period	This is long blooming selection but its peak flowering period occurs between early to mid summer. It will continue to bloom into the fall but with less abundance.
Habitat	Full sun to light shade. Tickseed is very drought tolerant and can grow in poor to average soils. It is not tolerant of water laden, low lying positions in the yard; ensure well drained soils. Tickseeds are hardy to Zone 3.
Maintenance	This is a low maintenance selection that needs only to be cut back to ground level in late winter or early spring; before any signs of green-up. Tickseed typically does not need dividing but can be

	done so to simply provide more plants.
Availability	Tickseed can be obtained in various container sizes and is common to most general plant nurseries and local garden centers.
Special Notes	There are a number of different species of <i>Coreopsis</i> ; but it is commonly thought that the threadleaf varieties (including the two above) are amongst the most drought tolerant. Some larger flowered Tickseeds include the following: Sunray (<i>Coreopsis grandiflora</i>) possesses wider leaves than those mentioned above and have prominent yellow ray and disk florets. They grow to about 45-50 cm (18-20") and spread to 45 cm (18"). Early Sunrise Tickseed (<i>Coreopsis</i> 'Early Sunrise') produce a large flower relative to the species noted above and has yellow ray florets and dark yellow disk florets. It is a smaller variety and grows to 30 cm (12") and spreads to 45 cm (18").

Attribute	Response
Common Name	Spike Speedwell
Scientific Name	<i>Veronica spicata</i>
Origin	Non-native cultivar. Spike Speedwell originates from Europe.
Height	Vegetation: 20-30cm (8-12") Flower: 40-45cm (16-18")
Spread	30-45 cm (12-18")
Life Form	Small clumping herbaceous perennial – spreading vegetation with dense, narrow upright spiked flowers
Flower Color	Blue, violet, purple, pink, and red
Foliage Color	Dark green to olive-green simple, opposite, linear-ovate leaves with scalloped margins.
Flowering Period	This is long blooming selection but its peak flowering period occurs between early to mid summer. It will continue to bloom into the fall but with less abundance.
Habitat	Full sun to moderate shade tolerant. Speedwells will tolerate dry to moist conditions, but the soils should be well drained. Avoid areas of ponding or lengthy water saturated soils. These are very hardy plants as whole and most Speedwell varieties are hardy to Zone 2.
Maintenance	This is a low maintenance species that should only require infrequent care. In late winter early spring these plants should be cut back to ground level before any signs of green-up. The plant may require some dividing every 3-4 years to maintain vigor and reduce crowding.
Availability	Speedwells can be obtained in various sized containers and are common to most general plant nurseries and local garden centers.
Special Notes	There are five native Speedwell species native to Alberta; however they are not commercially available. Fortunately, many of the non-native cultivars are well suited for

	<p>xeriscape applications and vary from moderate drought tolerance to very drought tolerant.</p> <p>An attractive cultivar that shares blue flowers like our native species is the Royal Candles Speedwell (<i>Veronica spicata</i> 'Royal Candles'). This selection grows to the height and spread as mentioned above. It remains a favorite for gardeners in search of a long lasting blue flowered accent plant.</p> <p>If your preference is red flowers then you may want to consider a variety called Red Fox Speedwell (<i>Veronica spicata</i> 'Red Fox'). The plant has the same growth potential as Royal Candles. Both of these varieties are very drought tolerant and would be well suited to a xeriscape - rock garden application.</p> <p>A moderate drought tolerant and larger selection is the Sunny Border Blue Speedwell (<i>Veronica</i> 'Border Border Blue'). It grows to 45 cm (18") and spreads to 60 cm (24").</p> <p>If you are looking for a compact variety a good selection is the Alpine Speedwell (<i>Veronica allionii</i>). This species grows to about 10-15 cm (4-6") in height and spreads to about 20-30 cm (8-12"). It possesses a dense spike of deep blue flowers.</p> <p>The Speedwells can be used in small groups as an accent, border or even as a groundcover. The best variety that provides for a groundcover application is the Creeping Speedwell (<i>Veronica repens</i> 'Rosea'). This variety possesses violet colored flowers and grows to about 5 cm (2") & spreads to 20 cm (8").</p>
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Attribute	Response
Common Name	Prairie Coneflower or Mexican Hat
Scientific Name	<i>Ratibida columnifera</i>
Origin	Native and native cultivars. The native species of Prairie Coneflower is found from southeastern British Columbia through the Prairie provinces, and into southern Ontario. In the U.S. it originates through the Great Plains and eastern states. It extends as far south as Texas.
Height	30-60 cm (12-24")
Spread	30-45 cm (12-18")
Life Form	Multi-stemmed, loosely clumped herbaceous perennial.
Flower Color	Yellow ray florets with columnar shaped dark brown center disk florets or Mahogany-red edged in yellow ray florets with brown disk florets.
Foliage Color	Pinnate compound green leaves with deep incised margins creating linear to lance-shaped segments.
Flowering Period	Early July to mid August
Habitat	Prefers dry soils from loamy to rocky, gravelly texture. This selection will not tolerate water saturated soils; they require good year-round drainage. The plant possesses a deep taproot and is

	considered very drought tolerant.
Maintenance	The Prairie Coneflower is a low maintenance plant that spreads only by seed. The seed spread is relatively slow and any unwanted seedlings are very easily controlled. In late winter early spring these plants should be cut back to ground level before any signs of green-up. Since this species does not reproduce by underground vegetative plant parts it will not require dividing.
Availability	The native species is typically found as plugs and seed from specialized native plant producers and nurseries. The native cultivar varieties of Prairie Coneflower can be obtained in various container sizes and is common to most general plant nurseries and local garden centers.
Special Notes	This selection provides a nice contrast to the well defined clumping plants of the garden. It can be used to soften the appearance of the garden. During the heart of the summer Prairie Coneflower thrives and provides a sea of yellow and brown contrasting colour when many other plants are struggling to survive in the heat.

Attribute	Response
Common Name	Autumn Joy Sedum or Showy Stonecrop
Scientific Name	<i>Sedum spectabile</i> 'Autumn Joy'
Origin	Non-native hybrid. Showy Stonecrop is native to China and Korea In 1955 it was crossed with <i>Sedum telephium</i> to produce the popular cultivar Sedum x 'Autumn Joy'.
Height	45-60 cm (18-24")
Spread	45-60 cm (18-24")
Life Form	A tight clumping, mounding herbaceous perennial with prominent foliage and equally impressive flower.
Flower Color	The flower emerges bright pink and as the season progresses deepens to a mauve – red colour. The flower provides interest well into the fall and winter season.
Foliage Color	The leaves are succulent, simple, and alternate with a green to grayish-green color.
Flowering Period	Autumn Joy obtains its common name for good reason; it is a perfect selection to provide that splash of color late in the summer and well into the fall season.
Habitat	This selection is very drought tolerant and is capable of establishing in poor soil conditions. Like many other Stonecrops it can establish on sandy, rocky or gravelly type soil textures. However, do not restrict its use to only these harsher conditions; it is very amenable to better site conditions.

	Autumn Joy prefers full sunlight but is tolerant of light shade. Try to keep this plant in as much sun as possible in order to enhance its mounding vegetative nature and floral abundance. Too much shade will reduce these preferred characteristics. It is hardy to Zone 2.
Maintenance	This is a low maintenance species that should only require infrequent care. In late winter early spring these plants should be cut back to ground level before any signs of green-up. Cuttings of Autumn Joy can be planted directly into the soil for increase plant numbers. The plant may require some dividing every 3-4 years to maintain vigor and reduce crowding.
Availability	Autumn Joy Sedum can be obtained in various container sizes and is common to most general plant nurseries and local garden centers.
Special Notes	The species of this cultivar originates from China and Korea. It is low maintenance and virtually insect and pathogen free selection. Autumn Joy Sedum is very well behaved and does not readily reproduce from seed in the garden; however cuttings can be made in early summer and planted directly into the soil to increase numbers. There are a couple other varieties of <i>Sedum spectabile</i> that may be of interest; both provide variegated foliage. The 'Sedum Autumn Charm' and 'Sedum Elsie's Gold' offer green leaves edged in pale yellow or with white edges, respectively. The both have similar growth potentials as the 'Autumn Joy' and similar flower characteristics.

Attribute	Response
Common Name	Round-leaved or Richardson's Alumroot
Scientific Name	<i>Heuchera cylindrica</i> and <i>Heuchera richardsonii</i>
Origin	Native and native cultivars. Round-leaved Alumroot is native to Alberta and British Columbia. It is also original to the northwestern United States. Richardson's Alumroot is also native, but is much more common. It can be found throughout the four western Canadian provinces and into southern Ontario. In the U.S. it can be found through the Great Plains.
Height	Vegetation: 2.5-3 cm (6-8") Flower: 7-8 cm (18-20")
Spread	3-4cm (8-10")
Life Form	Small mounded herbaceous perennial with long flowering stalks.
Flower Color	Round-leaved Alumroot has cream colored flowers where as Richardson's Alumroot has pinkish-purple flowers
Foliage Color	Both species possess green, simple, round to heart-shaped leaves with coarsely toothed margins. The leaves turn to various shades of red as the season progresses.

	The cultivars are better known as Coral Bells and provide a wide range of foliage options: lime green, silver, purple and multiple variegated forms.
Flowering Period	Early to mid summer
Habitat	<p>The native species should be provided with full sun to light shade. Locate in well drained soils associated with sandy, gravelly or rocky soil textures.</p> <p>There are numerous Coral Bells on offer and they range between hardiness Zones of 3 to 4. Ensure you check the plant label and only select those to Zone 3, especially if you plan to use it in partial to full shade applications. The plants listed here are all Zone 3.</p>
Maintenance	The leaves of Alumroot/Coral Bells are evergreen in nature but you may still want to cut it back or a good portion of the spent leaves after the winter season to allow for only the new lush growth to show through. Pruning should occur in late winter early spring like many other perennials. Plants should be divided every 4-5 years to maintain plant vigor.
Special Notes	<p>Alumroot is a very versatile genus that offers a couple good choices for the traditional full sun xeriscape garden. However, when you consider the large array of cultivar varieties the options seem endless. One of the most problematic areas of the garden involves dry shade habitats. Fortunately, Coral Bells can provide an answer. There are many varieties that are moderately drought and shade tolerant. There are other plants that share these qualities but they also tend to be aggressive, to the point of being invasive; Coral Bells does not share this negative aspect.</p> <p>The many cultivars of Coral Bells provide a wide array of foliage color options; probably one of its most admirable traits. The flowers are small bell shaped and typically are cream to pink in color, with the odd exception that I will mention next.</p> <p>One of the most brilliant flower colours that can be found in the garden belongs to Splendens Coral Bells (<i>Heuchera sanguinea</i> 'Splendens'). The species is native to Arizona and New Mexico. This Coral Bell supports a stunning deep scarlet red bell shaped flower. The plant originates from Arizona and New Mexico. It is a nice compact selection that grows to 50 cm (20") in height and spread. It is reported to be tolerant of full sun and shade, but my experience has been with the full sun only and it has performed wonderfully.</p> <p>If you are looking for a shadier selection a popular choice and for good reason is the Palace Purple Coral Bells (<i>Heuchera micrantha</i> 'Palace Purple'). The species is native to British Columbia and the Pacific Northwest in the U.S. This produces a pink flower but is best known for its very attractive purple to burgundy foliage. It should be expected to grow to 60 cm (24") in height and 30 cm (12") in spread. This selection is reported tolerant of full sun to full shade. However,</p>

	since it does not like to have its surrounding soil dry out, I would suggest a partial to full shade location for those residing in Southern Alberta.
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