

Irvine Prairie Wildflower Guide



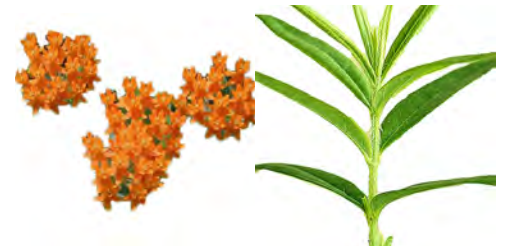
Stiff goldenrod



Wild bergamot



Biennial gaura



Butterfly milkweed



Compass plant



Golden Alexanders



Prairie ironweed



Partridge pea



Prairie cinquefoil



Sawtooth sunflower



Showy ticktrefoil



Prairie spiderwort



Wild quinine



Showy ticktrefoil

Scientific Name:
Desmodium canadense

Sun: Full or partial
Soil: Moist to mesic black
Bloom time: Mid-summer
Seed dispersal: Attach to passing animals

Fun Fact:
Bacteria that live in root nodules convert nitrogen from the air to the soil.



Butterfly milkweed

Scientific Name:
Asclepias tuberosa

Sun: Full
Soil: Mesic to dry, well-drained
Bloom time: Summer
Seed dispersal: Wind

Fun Fact:
Unlike other milkweed species, butterfly milkweed lacks milky latex in the stems and leaves.



Sawtooth sunflower

Scientific Name:
Helianthus grosseserratus

Sun: Full
Soil: Moist loam
Bloom time: Late-summer
Seed dispersal: Seed-feeding birds and small mammals

Fun Fact:
This large flower often requires room in the prairie to form homogenous patches.





Biennial gaura

Scientific Name:
Oenothera gaura

Sun: Full

Soil: Mesic

Bloom time: Late-summer

Seed dispersal: Gravity

Fun Fact:

The flowers are cross-pollinated by nectar-seeking moths and long-tongued bees.



Wild quinine

Scientific Name:
Parthenium integrifolium

Sun: Full

Soil: Mesic

Bloom time: Late-spring through
Mid-summer

Seed dispersal: Wind

Fun Fact:

To substitute for Cinchona tree bark, wild quinine was used to try to treat malaria during WWI.



Partridge pea

Scientific Name:
Chamaecrista fasciculata

Sun: Full

Soil: Dry sand, loam or gravel

Bloom time: Mid-summer into fall
Seed dispersal: Bursting seed pod

Fun Fact:

Often used along streambanks and steep hills to stabilize the soil and prevent erosion. One of the few annual native prairie plants.





Golden Alexanders

Scientific Name:

Zizia aurea

Sun: Full or partial

Soil: Moist or loamy

Bloom time: Late-spring to summer

Seed dispersal: Gravity

Fun Fact:

Not to be confused with wild parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa*), flowers provide early season nectar for short-mouthed insects.



Wild bergamot

Scientific Name:

Monarda fistulosa

Sun: Full or partial

Soil: Moist loam to slightly dry

Bloom time: Mid-summer

Seed dispersal: Gravity

Fun Fact:

Leaves are fragrant when crushed, a characteristic shared by many members of the mint family. Leaves have long been used for medicines and aromatic oils.



Prairie cinquefoil

Scientific Name:

Drymocallis arguta

Sun: Full

Soil: Mesic to dry

Bloom time: Mid-summer

Seed dispersal: Wind

Fun Fact:

Ultra-violet reflecting patterns help the flowers stand out from the background and may function as nectar guides.





Compass plant

Scientific Name:
Silphium laciniatum

Sun: Full
Soil: Moist to slightly dry
Bloom time: Mid-summer
Seed dispersal: Wind

Fun Fact:
The common name derives from the pioneer belief that the leaves point north-south. While often true, it is not a reliable rule.



Prairie spiderwort

Scientific Name:
Tradescantia bracteata

Sun: Full
Soil: Dry to mesic
Bloom time: Late-spring to summer
Seed dispersal: Bursting seed pod

Fun Fact:
When cut, it releases gooey strings of sap that resemble spider webs.



Stiff goldenrod

Scientific Name:
Oligoneuron rigidum

Sun: Full
Soil: Moist to slightly dry
Bloom time: Late-summer into fall
Seed dispersal: Wind

Fun Fact:
Monarch butterflies are especially attracted to the bright yellow flower tufts. Herbivorous mammals eat this plant in mid-summer.





Prairie ironweed

Scientific Name:
Vernonia fasciculata

Sun: Full

Soil: Moist, can withstand occasional flooding

Bloom time: Late-summer into fall

Seed dispersal: Wind

Fun Fact:

The name Ironweed comes from how tough the plant is. Due to its fibrous nature and bitter taste, it has little to no use as a medicinal plant for humans or food for livestock.



About Irvine Prairie

Irvine Prairie is a 292 acre prairie-in-progress on the farm of Cathy Irvine in memory of her husband David. In partnership with Cathy and the farm operator, we are restoring an ecologically diverse tallgrass prairie that engages current and future generations of students and community members in learning about Iowa's prairie heritage and appreciating the benefits provided by prairie.

The Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation holds the conservation easement on the property, and the University of Northern Iowa Foundation Properties Corporation is the owner. The original 77 acres was dedicated on May 18, 2018. In January 2023, Cathy Irvine donated an additional 215 acres to complete the gift.

Since 2018, we have introduced over 100 species of native prairie plants, using the most genetically diverse and regionally appropriate seed sources available, and closely matching species with soil moisture conditions. Some hard-to-establish species are started in our greenhouse and introduced as plugs. The Tallgrass Prairie Center uses the best known approaches to controlling weeds and encouraging diverse, native wildlife. We are committed to documenting the work, and carefully monitoring the results, to guide future management decisions.

Find more information about Irvine Prairie at www.tallgrassprairiecenter.org/irvine-prairie/

Additional Resources

Iowa Prairie Network: <https://www.iowaprairienetwork.org/>

Iowa Department of Natural Resources: <https://www.iowadnr.gov/conservation/prairie-resource-center>

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Neal Smith Wildlife Refuge: https://www.fws.gov/refuge/neal_smith/

Illinois Wildflowers: <https://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/>

Minnesota Wildflowers: <https://www.minnesotawildflowers.info/>

Missouri Prairie Foundation: <http://grownative.org/>

U.S. Department of Agriculture - NRCS Plant Guide: plants.usda.gov