Plant Identification Guide

Great Lakes WATER Institute
Rain Garden
Great Lakes WATER Institute

The Great Lakes WATER Institute is a University of Wisconsin System research facility administered by the Graduate School of the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee. The mission of the WATER Institute is to provide the State of Wisconsin with a focal point for research, education and outreach aimed at a thorough understanding of the Great Lakes and other aquatic and environmental resources of local, state, national and international importance. To achieve its mission, the WATER Institute promotes a broad spectrum of multidisciplinary, interactive aquatic and environmental research. The Institute also promotes education and outreach through the University and in cooperation with other educational institutions. The WATER Institute is home to University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Center for Great Lakes Studies, a UWM and UW System Center for Excellence, the Aquaculture and Fisheries Research Center and the NIEHS Freshwater Biomedical Sciences Center.

From its dockside site in the port of Milwaukee, the WATER Institute represents the only major aquatic research institution located on Lake Michigan and the largest U.S. institution of its kind in the Great Lakes region. Under the auspices of the institution, the UWM Center for Great Lakes Studies, a UW System "Center of Excellence", conducts multidisciplinary research throughout the lakes utilizing the Institute's research vessel R/V Neeskay. The ship provides year-round access to the lakes and a fully functional research platform and floating laboratory. The Aquaculture and Fisheries Research Center is a leader in developing new methods of producing high quality seafood for the dinner table and new entrepreneurial opportunities for Wisconsin citizens. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Southeast District Lake Michigan Fisheries Management and Enforcement units operate out of the Facility to manage and protect commercial and recreational fish harvest; and the NIEHS Marine and Freshwater Biomedical Core Center is conducting critical research on the toxicological impacts and linkages between contaminants and the health of humans and aquatic organisms.
What is a **Rain Garden**?

A rain garden is an infiltration device in which storm water runoff is the main water supply for the plantings. The garden is planted at the end of a downspout or at a low area where water collects, like a drainage swale. The plants in the garden are selected based on site-specific growing conditions, such as the amount of sunlight available and the underlying soil conditions. During typical rains, the gardens infiltrate most of the runoff generated from the area and use it to sustain the plantings.
Benefits of a **Rain Garden:**

- Compared to a patch of conventional lawn, a rain garden allows about 30 percent more water to soak into the ground. By reducing the amount of water that enters the local storm drain systems, rain gardens can also reduce the chances of local flooding and red bank and shoreline damage where storm drains empty into streams and lakes.
- Filter runoff pollution.
- Reduce Garden Maintenance and have a garden that can survive drought periods.
- By reducing standing water, reduce mosquito breeding.
- Provide a habitat for birds and butterflies.
Plant Index
**Agastache Foeniculum** (Lavender Hyssop)

**Sources:**
*http://plants.usda.gov
*http://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/prairie/plantx/anise_hyssopx.htm

**Symbol:** AGFO  
**Group:** Dicot  
**Family:** Lamiaceae  
**Duration:** Perennial  
**Growth Habit:** Forb/herb  
**U.S. Nativity:** Native

**Description:** This native perennial plant is 2-4' tall, branching occasionally near the apex. The four-angled stems are glabrous or slightly pubescent. The opposite leaves are up to 4" long and 2" across, and have short petioles. They are cordate or broadly lanceolate, with crenate margins. The upper surface of the leaves is conspicuously veined and dull green, while the lower surface is white and finely canescent. The foliage has an anise scent. The upper stems terminate in spikes of flowers about 3-6' long. The small flowers are arranged in dense whorls that are crowded along the spike, although sometimes the whorls are less crowded and more interrupted. The calyx of a flower is tubular and has five teeth; it is usually dull blue-violet or a similar color, becoming more colorful toward its tips. The tubular flowers are about 1/3" long, extending beyond the calyx. They are blue-violet. The corolla of a flower is divided into a short upper lip and a longer lower lip. The lower lip has 2 small lateral lobes and a larger central lobe. Exerted from the throat of the flower are 4 stamens with blue-violet anthers, and a style that is cleft toward its tip. The flowers bloom in scattered locations along the spikes for about 1-2 months from mid- to late summer. During this time, calyx of each flower remains somewhat colorful. There is no floral scent. The flowers are replaced by nutlets that oval-shaped and smooth. The root system produces a taproot.

**Cultivation:** The preference is full or partial sun, and mesic to dry conditions. The soil can consist of loam, clay-loam, or contain some rocky material. Foliar disease isn't a significant problem, although some of the lower leaves may drop from the central stem in response to a drought. Occasionally, slugs and insects will feed on the leaves, creating holes. This member of the Mint family is more resistant to drought than many others.

**Range & Habitat:** In the wild, Anise Hyssop is rare in Illinois; it is known to occur in only Menard county in central Illinois. This species is more common in areas that lie northwest of Illinois. Typical habitats include openings in dry upland forests, upland areas of prairies, scrubby barrens, and thickets. Cultivated forms of Anise Hyssop are often grown in flower gardens; these cultivars are often hybrids and vary in their fidelity to the wild forms of this plant. Outside of Menard County, populations in the wild are likely to be plants that have escaped cultivation.

**Faunal Associations:** The flowers are pollinated primarily by honeybees, bumblebees, and other long-tongued bees, which seek nectar or pollen. The flowers are also visited by an oligolectic bee, *Doufourea monardae*, which has extended its range into Illinois. Other occasional visitors are Green Metallic bees, bee flies, and various butterflies. Mammalian herbivores normally avoid sumption his plant, as the anise scent of the foliage is repugnant to them. The anise scent may also deter some leaf-chewing insect species.
**Description:** This native perennial plant is 1-2' tall, often sprawling along the ground. The wiry stems branch occasionally, and have a tendency to zigzag between the leaves. They are whitish green or silver and covered with a fine pubescence when young, becoming brown and bare when old. The alternate leaves are silvery green and have a silky appearance as the result of a dense coating of fine hairs. They are about 1½" long and ½" wide, lanceolate or ovate, and sessile. Their margins are smooth.

The daisy-like composite flowers occur in small clusters at the terminus of major stems. They are about 1¼" across, consisting of 12-25 ray florets that are lavender to violet-blue, and numerous central disk florets that are golden yellow. There is no noticeable floral scent. The blooming period occurs during the fall and lasts about a month. The achenes develop small tufts of hairs, and are dispersed by the wind. The root system forms a short caudex on mature plants and some fibrous roots. Occasionally, vegetative offsets are formed.

**Cultivation:** The preference is full sun and dry conditions. Almost any kind of soil is satisfactory if the site is well-drained, but this plant typically grows in poor soil that is rocky or sandy. A high pH is tolerated. Overall, this plant develops more slowly than most and is a bit more difficult to grow. It doesn't like too much competition from taller, more aggressive plants. The drought tolerance of mature plants is excellent, although some of the lower leaves will drop from their stems. Foliar disease doesn't seem to bother it.

**Range & Habitat:** Silky Aster occurs primarily in the northern tier of counties, and in many counties along the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers. It is an uncommon plant that appears to be declining in numbers as a result of habitat destruction. Habitats include dry gravel prairies, dolomite prairies, sand prairies, hill prairies, scrubby barrens, limestone glades, and prairie remnants along railroads (rarely). This is an indicator plant of high quality habitats in dry areas.

**Faunal Associations:** Little information is available for this plant. Like other asters, many kinds of insects probably visit the flowers, especially bees, and to a lesser extent small butterflies, skippers, and Syrphid flies. Among the bees, Green Metallic bees are frequent visitors. The Syrphid flies probably feed on pollen and are non-pollinating. Mammalian herbivores eat this plant readily, especially rabbits and groundhogs. Its small size may partially exempt this plant from the attention of large herbivores, such as deer.
**Baptisia Bracteata Bracteata**
(Cream Wild Indigo)

**Sources:**
*http://plants.usda.gov
*http://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/prairie/plantx/cr_indigox.htm

**Symbol:** BABRB  
**Group:** Dicot  
**Family:** Fabaceae  
**Duration:** Perennial  
**Growth Habit:** Forb/herb  
**U.S. Nativity:** Native

**Description:** The hairy stems of this native perennial plant are recurved or sprawl along the ground. They tiller from the base of the plant and are about 2' long. The alternate compound leaves are divided into three leaflets. Each leaflet is up to 3" long and about 1" wide, rather oblanceolate in shape, although pointed at both ends. There are numerous small white hairs, and the margins are smooth. The entire plant is grey-green in color. The showy inflorescence is about 1' long, and organized as a raceme that tends to droop toward the ground. The flowers are creamy white or light yellow, about 1" long, and look like typical large pea flowers. They bloom quite early for about 3 weeks from mid- to late spring. These are replaced by large seedpods that are quite conspicuous. The entire plant may detach from the base and blow around in the wind as a means of dispersing the seeds, like a tumbleweed. The root system consists of a stout central taproot.

**Cultivation:** The preference is full sun (especially during the spring), mesic to dry conditions, and loamy, sandy, or clayish soil. This plant is fairly easy to cultivate if a site is sunny and well-drained, but it develops slowly, so some patience is required. Like other wild indigos, this is a long-lived plant when conditions suit it, but can be difficult to move once it becomes established.

**Faunal Associations:** This plant is pollinated primarily by queen bumblebees after they emerge from hibernation during the spring. Worker bumblebees appear somewhat later. The queen bees of a few other long-tongued bee species may visit this plant, including Synhalonia speciosa (Eucerine Miner Bee sp.) and Osmia bucephala bucephala (Mason Bee sp.). These insects usually seek nectar from the flowers, but sometimes collect pollen. The caterpillars of some butterflies, skippers, and moths feed on the foliage of this and other wild indigos. This includes the butterflies Colias cesonia (Southern Dogface) and Colias eurytheme (Orange Sulfur), the skippers Achelerus lyciades (Hoary Edge) and Erynnis baptisiae (Wild Indigo Duskywing), and the moth Dasylophia anguina (Black-Spotted Prominent). Another insect visitor is Apion rostrum (Wild Indigo Weevil). The adults feed on the flowers and leaves, while the larvae feed on the seeds. Cream Wild Indigo is not normally bothered by mammalian herbivores because the foliage is poisonous. If livestock, such as cattle and horses, eat sufficient quantities of this plant, as well as other wild indigos that may be present, they can be seriously poisoned by it.

**Comments:** This is one of the earliest plants to bloom in the prairie, and is quite showy and attractive. There is a less common variety of Cream Wild Indigo that has hairless leaves.
**Blephilia ciliata**  (downy wood mint)

| Sources: | Symbol:  BLCI  
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| *http://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/prairie  
*http://plants.usda.gov  | Group:  Dicot  
Family:  Lamiaceae  
Duration:  Perennial  
Growth Habit:  Forb/herb  
U.S. Nativity:  Native  |

**Description:** This is an unbranched native perennial plant about 1-2' tall. Side stems may develop from upper leaf axils if the central stem is damaged. This stout central stem has prominent ridges and is covered with white hairs. The opposite leaves are up to 3½" long and 1½" across. They are broadly oblong to lanceolate in shape, and have smooth, slightly ciliate margins. The lower leaves have short stout petioles, while the upper leaves are sessile. They have deep pinnate venation and are covered with a white pubescence. The upper half of the central stem is perforated by whorled clusters of flowers. Each cluster of flowers is about 2-3" across and in the shape of a flattened sphere, with the flowers arranged in circular rows. The flowers are white, light pink, or lavender, and individually slightly less than ½" long. There are two prominent lips, with small purple spots on the lower one, and fine hairs in the back. The blooming period occurs during early summer and lasts about a month. Neither the flowers nor the leaves have a noticeable scent. The root system consists of a taproot, which forms offshoots occasionally by means of short rhizomes. The seeds are quite small, and distributed by the wind to some extent.

**Cultivation:** The preference is full or partial sun, and mesic to dry conditions. The soil can contain significant amounts of loam, clay, or gravel; limestone and a high pH are tolerated. The foliage can be affected by the usual diseases that attack other mints, and often appear rather ragged by mid-summer. This plant has greater tolerance to drought than most other members of Mint family.

**Range & Habitat:** Downy Wood Mint occurs occasionally in scattered counties in Illinois – it has been reported most often from counties in the NE and west-central areas of the state. Habitats include mesic to dry black soil prairies, dolomite prairies, thickets, rocky limestone bluffs, and limestone glades.

**Faunal Associations:** The flowers attract long-tongued and short-tongued bees, bee flies, Syrphid flies, butterflies, and skippers. The numerous bee visitors include honeybees, bumblebees, Anthophorine bees, Little Carpenter bees, Leaf-Cutting bees, Halictine bees, Masked bees, and others. The small seeds are unlikely to be of much interest to birds, nor is the foliage an attractive source of food to mammalian herbivores.

**Comments:** This plant can be easily confused with some of the weedier Eurasian mints, but should not be destroyed because it's not particularly common in Illinois. Notwithstanding its name, Downy Wood Mint occurs in open areas more often than woodlands, unlike other members of the genus, such as *Blephilia hiruta* (Hairy Wood Mint). Other common names for *Blephilia ciliata* are 'Ohio Horsemint' and 'Pagoda Plant.'
**Carex Hystericina** (Porcupine Sedge)

**Description:** This native perennial sedge forms a dense to loose tuft of culms with alternate leaves; there are both fertile and vegetative shoots. The culms are ¾–2½' long, light to medium green, glabrous, and sharply triangular in cross-section; the edges of each culm are rough underneath the inflorescence, otherwise they are smooth. Along each culm, there are about 2-3 alternate leaves and withered remnants of older leaves near the base. The ascending to widely spreading leaf blades are 5-10" long and up to 6 mm. across; they are light to medium green, glabrous, and channeled in the middle. The upper surface of each leaf blade is smooth, while the lower surface is rough. The leaf sheaths are light to medium green and glabrous; each sheath is concave at the mouth. Each fertile culm terminates in an inflorescence consisting of a single staminate spikelet at the apex and 2-3 pistillate spikelets below. The slender staminate spikelet soon becomes brown. Along the side of this spikelet, there is a bristle-like bract up to 2" long. Each pistillate spike is about ¾–1½" long and a little less than ½" across; it is densely packed with widely spreading perigynia and their scales. The pistillate spikelets are short-oblongoid in shape and light green while immature; they have a spiky appearance because of the long beaks of their perigynia. The pistillate spikelets have slender pedicels about ¼–¾" long; they usually droop from their pedicels. At the base of each pistillate spikelet, there is a leafy bract about 3-5 mm. across and 4-6" long. The inflated perigynia are 5-6 mm. long and about 2 mm. across; they are ovoid-ellipsoid with long slender beaks and wedge-shaped bottoms. The apex of each perigynium's beak has a pair of teeth less than 1 mm. long. The outer surface of an immature perigynium is light green and glabrous; it has several longitudinal veins (sometimes they are difficult to see). The pistillate scales are 3-4 mm. long, oval-shaped at the bottom, and long-awned at the apex; each scale has a green vein in the middle, otherwise it is membranous. The blooming period occurs from late spring to mid-summer. Each perigynium contains an achene about 1.5 mm. long that is obovoid, bluntly 3-angled, and glabrous. The root system is fibrous and short-rhizomatous.

**Cultivation:** This sedge prefers full to partial sun, wet to moist conditions, and soil that is reasonably fertile (including those containing loam, sand, or rocky material). Temporary flooding is tolerated.

**Range & Habitat:** Porcupine Sedge is occasional in central and northern Illinois, while in southern Illinois it is uncommon or absent. Habitats include wet prairies, swamps, grassy fens, sedge meadows, calcareous seeps, edges of marshes (sandy & non-sandy), and ditches. This species is often found in wetlands that are calcareous.
**Faunal Associations:** A variety of insects feed on *Carex spp.* (sedges), including *Stethophyma spp.* (Sedge Grasshoppers), *Plateumaris spp.* (Leaf Beetles), and *Cosmotettix spp.* (Leafhoppers). The caterpillars of several butterflies, skippers, and moths feed on sedges. Among vertebrate animals, the seeds of sedges are an important source of food to many waterfowl, upland game birds, and granivorous songbirds.

**Comments:** This is one of the "bottlebrush" sedges of wetland habitats. Species in this group of sedges have pistillate spikelets that are cylindrical and spiky in appearance; they can be difficult to distinguish from each other. In particular, Porcupine Sedge closely resembles *Carex lurida* (Sallow Sedge) and *Carex comosa* (Bottlebrush Sedge). Sallow Sedge has larger perigynia (greater than 6 mm. in length & 2.5 mm. in width) and shorter pedicels (less than ¼" long); its pistillate spikelets don't droop from their pedicels to the same extent as the pistillate spikelets of Porcupine Sedge. Bottlebrush Sedge differs in having longer teeth at the upper tips of its perigynia (greater than 1 mm. in length) and its achenes are ovoid in shape, rather than obovoid. Other similar sedges in this group have pistillate scales that lack awns. Some authors refer to Porcupine Sedge as *Carex hystricina*, but this is a misspelling of its scientific name.
**Elymus Villosus** (Silky Wild Rye)

### Description:
This native perennial grass is $2\frac{1}{2} - 3\frac{1}{2}'$ tall and unbranched, often forming tufts of culms at the base. Each culm is green, glabrous, and terete (round in cross-section). The blades of the alternate leaves are up to 9" long and nearly $\frac{1}{2}$" across; they are linear, dark green, and slightly hairy. The leaf sheaths are green, finely ribbed, and covered with spreading white hairs. The apex of each sheath wraps tightly around the culm, where there is a pair of auricles (ear-like extensions of the sheath). Each culm terminates in a nodding raceme of spikelets about 3-4" long. The base of each spikelet consists of a pair of narrowly linear and awned glumes about $\frac{3}{4} - 1$" long (including their awns) and up to 1 mm. across; they spread outward, giving the inflorescence a bristy appearance. Above the glumes, there are 1-2 pairs of linear and awned lemmas; these lemmas are about 1$\frac{1}{4} - 1\frac{1}{2}''$ long (including their awns). Each fertile lemma has a membranous palea about $\frac{3}{4}$" long that encloses the developing grain. Both the glumes and the lemmas are more or less covered with patches of fine hairs. The spikelets are whitish green while the flowers are in bloom, and shortly later they become tan. The blooming period occurs during the summer. Each spikelet produces 1-2 elongated grains. The root system is fibrous.

### Cultivation:
The preference is partial sun to light shade, moist to slightly dry conditions, and a fertile loamy soil.

### Faunal Associations:
The flowers are wind-pollinated and attract few insects. The caterpillars of the moth *Leucania pseudargyria* (False Wainscot) and the leafhopper *Laevicephalus orientalis* feed on *Elymus spp.* (Wild Ryes). Birds apparently pay little attention to the seeds as a food source. Livestock eat the foliage of Wild Ryes, but the awns of the seedheads can cause mechanical injury to their mouthparts and gastrointestinal tracts.

### Comments:
Silky Wild Rye is an attractive woodland grass. It is one of several *Elymus spp.* (Wild Ryes) in Illinois. As a group, these grasses have large bristy inflorescences; they are cool-season grasses with a C3 metabolism, maturing by mid-summer. Silky Wild Rye can be distinguished from *Elymus virginicus* (Virginia Wild Rye) by its nodding inflorescence; the latter has an erect inflorescence. Similarly, Silky Wild Rye can be distinguished from an uncommon species, *Elymus riparius* (Riverbank Wild Rye), by its hairy sheaths; the sheaths of the latter species are hairless. While the glumes of Silky Wild Rye are 1.0 mm. across or less. There is a rare form of Silky Wild Rye, *f. arkansansus*, which has hairless lemmas.
**Eupatorium purpureum**  (*Joe Pye weed*)

**Sources:**
*http://plants.usda.gov
*http://www.mobot.org/gardeninghelp/plantfinder

**Symbol:**  EUPU10  
**Group:**  Dicot  
**Family:**  Asteraceae  
**Duration:**  Perennial  
**Growth Habit:**  Forb/herb  
**U.S. Nativity:**  Native

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**General Culture:**

Easily grown in average, medium moisture soils in full sun to part shade. Prefers moist, fertile, humusy soils which do not dry out. Cut plants to the ground in late winter. Best propagated by stem cuttings. This species generally grows better in open woodland areas than *E. purpureum* subsp. maculatum (see B826) which generally likes moister soils.

**Noteworthy Characteristics:**

Joe Pye weed is a tall Missouri native perennial that occurs in low moist ground, wooded slopes, wet meadows and thickets and stream margins throughout the State (Steyermark). It is an erect, clump-forming perennial which typically grows 4-7' tall and features coarsely-serrated, lance-shaped, dark green leaves (to 12" long) in whorls of 3-4 on sturdy green stems with purplish leaf nodes. Tiny, vanilla-scented, dull pinkish-purple flowers in large, terminal, domed, compound inflorescences bloom in mid-summer to early fall. Each flower cluster typically has 5-7 florets. Flowers are very attractive to butterflies. Flowers give way to attractive seed heads which persist well into winter.

**Problems:**

No serious insect or disease problems. Leaves may scorch if soils are allowed to dry out.

**Uses:**

Many people perceive Joe Pye weed to be nothing more than a roadside weed and have never seriously considered its outstanding ornamental attributes. It is a substantial plant which needs space, but when planted in groups or massed can provide spectacular flowering and architectural height. Border rears, cottage gardens, meadows, native plant gardens, wild/naturalized areas or water margins.
**Gentiana andrewsii** (closed bottle gentian)

### General Culture:

Best grown in moist, rich, cool, humusy, acidic, well-drained soils in part shade. Dislikes hot nights, and does not grow well in the deep South. If left undisturbed, plants in optimum growing conditions will naturalize over time into large clumps.

### Noteworthy Characteristics:

Bottle gentian is a Missouri native wildflower which is most often found in moist woods, thickets and low wooded areas near streams and ponds. Typically grows 1-2' tall and features tight clusters of tubular (bottle-shaped), deep blue flowers which never open. Flower clusters appear at the tops of the stems or in the upper leaf axils in late summer to early autumn (October in the St. Louis area). Ovate, lance-shaped leaves (to 4" long) with parallel veins. Sometimes also commonly called closed gentian.

### Problems:

No serious insect or disease problems.

### Uses:

Best in part shade areas of rock gardens, woodland or shade gardens, wild flower gardens, native plant gardens or along streams or ponds. Also may be grown in shady areas of borders.

### Sources:

* [http://plants.usda.gov](http://plants.usda.gov)
* [http://www.mobot.org/gardeninghelp/plantfinder](http://www.mobot.org/gardeninghelp/plantfinder)

### Symbol: GEAN  
Group: Dicot  
Family: Gentianaceae  
Duration: Perennial  
Growth Habit: Forb/herb  
U.S. Nativity: Native

### Common Name: closed bottle gentian  
Zone: 3 to 7  
Plant Type: Herbaceous perennial  
Family: Gentianaceae  
Missouri Native: Yes  
Native Range: Eastern North America  
Height: 1 to 2 feet  
Spread: 1 to 1.5 feet  
Bloom Time: October  
Bloom Color: Dark blue  
Sun: Part shade  
Water: Medium  
Maintenance: Low
**Helenium autumnale** (sneezeweed)

**Sources:**
*http://plants.usda.gov
*http://www.desert-tropicals.com/Plants
*http://www.muhlenberg.edu

**Symbol:** HEAU  
**Group:** Dicot  
**Family:** Asteraceae  
**Duration:** Perennial  
**Growth Habit:** Forb/herb  
**U.S. Nativity:** Native

**Description:** Sneezeweed can be identified by each of its yellow rays that have 3 scallops at the ends, and turn down. The rays surround a disk that is a slightly darker yellow than the rays, and is large and globular.

**Leaves:** Leaves are on average 5-6 inches long, lance shaped and toothed. Leaf stalks are winged.

**Flowers:** Flowers range from 1-2 inches in width. Rays are bright yellow, each of which has 3 scallops on the end. Leaves droop downwards away from large, globular darker yellow disk.

**Stem:** Stems are rough and winged.

**Height:** 2-5 feet tall.

**Branching Pattern of Leaves:** Leaves grow alternate to one another.

**Conditions/Habitat:** Can be found growing in thickets, swamps, wet meadows, low woods and along roadsides.

**Range:** Throughout North America.

**Sun Exposure:** Full sun

**Origin:** North America, in moist soils along streams and ponds

**Growth Habits:** Erect, clump-forming herbaceous perennial, 3 to 5 feet tall (90-150 cm), 2 to 3 feet spread (60-90 cm); dark green leaves, up to 6 inches long (15 cm)

**Watering Needs:** Regular to wet soil, intolerant of dry soils

**Propagation:** Seeds

**Did you know...?**

*This genus is named for Helen of Troy.  
*There are a number of cultivars with flower color varying from yellow to red to brown:  
*'Red Gold' is a cultivar with coppery red flowers.  
*'Rotgold' has red petals with golden margins
**General Culture:**

Easily grown in rich, medium to wet soils in full sun to partial shade. Needs constant moisture. Will tolerate full sun in cool, northern climates, but otherwise appreciates part shade. Divide clumps in spring as needed. May self-seed in optimum growing conditions.

**Noteworthy Characteristics:**

Cardinal flower is a Missouri native perennial which typically grows in moist locations along streams, sloughs, springs, swamps and in low wooded areas. A somewhat short-lived, clump-forming perennial which features erect, terminal spikes (racemes) of large, cardinal red flowers on unbranched, alternate-leaved stalks rising typically to a height of 2-3' (infrequently to 4'). Tubular flowers are 2-lipped, with the three lobes of the lower lip appearing more prominent than the two lobes of the upper lip. Finely-toothed, lance-shaped, dark green leaves (to 4" long). Late summer bloom period. Flowers are very attractive to butterflies and hummingbirds, but not cardinals.

**Problems:**

No serious disease or insect problems.

**Uses:**

Provides late summer bloom to the perennial border, wild garden, native plant garden or woodland garden. Excellent for butterfly or bird (hummingbird) gardens. Also effective near ponds or streams.
**Na**pea di**o**ica L. (glademallow)

**Sources:**
*http://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/savanna/plan ts/gld_mallow.htm
*http://plants.usda.gov

**Symbol:** NADI2  
**Group:** Dicot  
**Family:** Malvaceae  
**Duration:** Perennial  
**Growth Habit:** Forb/herb  
**U.S. Nativity:** Native

**Description:** This native perennial plant is 4-10' tall, consisting of a central stem that is erect, and occasional side stems in the upper half of the plant that produce panicles of flowers. The alternate leaves are quite large, up to 10" long and across. They are palmately lobed, while the leaf margins are coarsely dentate. In overall appearance, they resemble oversized maple leaves.

The small white flowers occur in loose clusters and have a pleasant fragrance. Each flower has a short tubular shape, which flares outward into 5 lobes, spanning about ½" across. The overall effect is rather showy. The blooming period occurs from early to mid-summer, and lasts about a month. Each plant is unisexual (male or female). The root system consists of a hollow taproot that branches occasionally. This plant has a distinctive appearance that can't be confused with any other.

**Cultivation:** The preference is partial sun and moist loamy soil. This plant doesn't like to dry out, and the leaves will wilt rapidly and become ragged in appearance if this is allowed to happen. It may also topple over in a strong wind, particularly when the flowering stage is reached. Therefore, plant the Glade Mallow in a moist, sheltered location. Disease does not appear to be a significant problem.

**Habitat & Range:** The Glade Mallow is an uncommon plant that occurs sporadically in the northern half of Illinois (see Distribution Map). Habitats include riverbottom prairies, soggy thickets, openings in floodplain forests, riverbanks, and partially shaded areas along lakes. It doesn't occur in glades in the hillier parts of southern Illinois, contrary to what its common name suggests.

**Faunal Associations:** Little information is available for this plant. Like other mallows, bees are probably important pollinators of the flowers, including Melitoma taurea (Mallow Bee). Large herbivores, such as cattle and deer, probably consume the foliage and stems if given a chance, considering the large size of the plant, the absence of reported toxins, and the known palatability of other mallows.

**Comments:** This is the only member of the genus that occurs in Illinois. One of the more unusual members of the Mallow family, the Glade Mallow is indigenous to only a few states in the Midwest. Its flowers are much smaller in size than those of other native mallows (Hibiscus spp.), but they are more numerous. In contrast, its lower leaves are significantly larger than those of other native mallows, which makes it more tolerant of shade. The Glade Mallow usually grows in partially shaded areas that are not far from water.
**Oligoneuron Rigidum** (Stiff Goldenrod)

**Sources:**
*http://plants.usda.gov*
*http://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/prairie/plantx/stf_goldenrodx.htm

**Symbol:** OLRIR  
**Group:** Dicot  
**Family:** Asteraceae  
**Duration:** Perennial  
**Growth Habit:** Forb/Herb  
**U.S. Nativity:** Native

**Description:** This native perennial plant is 2-5' tall and unbranched, except near the inflorescence. The central stem is covered with fine white hairs. The basal leaves are up to 10" long and 5" wide, while much smaller leaves alternate upward along the central stem. These leaves are light green and pubescent; their margins are smooth or slightly serrated. They are variably shaped, appearing lanceolate, oblanceolate, oblong, or oval, but always with blunt tips. Initially, the leaves have a soft floppy texture, but they become more stiff later in the year. The basal leaves often persist through the winter and are semi-evergreen. At the apex of the central stem is a corymb of small yellow flowers. This inflorescence is about 2-4" across, while each flower is ¼–½" across. The upper side stems also produce corymbs of these flowers, which are more or less all bunched together. There is a mild floral fragrance. The blooming period occurs from late summer to fall, and lasts about a month. The achenes have small tufts of white or light brown hair, and are distributed by the wind. This plant has deep fibrous roots, and it has a tendency to form offsets.

**Cultivation:** The preference is full sun and moist to slightly dry conditions. This plant is not particular about soil, which can consist of loam, clay-loam, or gravelly material. There is a tendency to flop over during bloom if it is spoiled by fertile soil or too much water. Powdery mildew sometimes attacks the leaves. Drought resistance is good; some of the lower leaves may wither away in response. This plant is easy to grow.

**Faunal Associations:** The flowers attract many kinds of insects, including long-tongued bees, short-tongued bees, wasps, flies, butterflies, and beetles. Monarch butterflies are especially attracted to the flowers. The caterpillars of several species of moths feed on various parts of this and other goldenrods. Other insects that feed on this plant are *Disonyctia latifrons* (Flea Beetle sp.), *Microrhapala vittata* (Leafminer Beetle sp.), *Hesperotattix viridii* (Spur-Throated Grasshopper sp.), and *Corythucha marmorata* (Lace Bug sp.). The Greater Prairie Chicken and Eastern Goldfinch eat the seeds to a limited extent. Many mammalian herbivores eat this plant, particularly during the early stages of growth and development. This includes the White-Tailed Deer, Cottontail Rabbit, Muskrats, and livestock. The latter tend to leave this plant alone when there are other sources of food available.

**Comments:** This is one of the more attractive goldenrods. It has a unique appearance and is easy to distinguish from other goldenrods: 1) the foliage is quite pubescent and light green, with a felty appearance; 2) the basal leaves are quite large, assuming that they haven't withered away; 3) the inflorescence consists of erect bunches of flowers; it does not radiate outward, nor form a narrow wand; 4) the individual flowers are slightly larger than those of other goldenrods. Along with a few other goldenrod species, such as Riddell's Goldenrod and Ohio Goldenrod, Stiff Goldenrod has been recently reassigned from the *Solidago* genus to the *Oligoneuron* genus. Formerly, it was referred to as *Solidago rigida*. 

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*Great Lakes WATER Institute*
*Rain Garden Plant Identification Guide*
*2007*
**Pontentilla Arguta** (Prairie Cinquefoil)

**Sources:**
* http://plants.usda.gov
* http://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/prairie/plantx/bt_gentianx.htm

**Symbol:** CAHY4  
**Group:** Monocot  
**Family:** Cyperaceae  
**Duration:** Perennial  
**Growth Habit:** Graminoid  
**U.S. Nativity:** Native

**Description:** This native perennial plant is unbranched, except slightly near the inflorescence, and up to 3' tall. The central stem is stout and covered with spreading white hairs. The pinnate compound leaves are also covered with white hairs, and consist of 3-11 leaflets. They are located primarily at the base of the plant, although a few small compound leaves alternate along the central stem above. Each leaflet is up to 3" long and 2" across, with the leaflets becoming larger toward the tip of the compound leaf (away from the stem). A leaflet is coarsely serrated along the margins, pinnately veined, and has an ovate or oblong shape (with blunt tips). The entire plant appears light or whitish green. The inflorescence occurs as a tight cluster of the flowers at the apex of the plant, sometimes with smaller side clusters. A flower has 5 white petals, 5 light green sepals, 20 or more golden stamens, and a small golden reproductive structure in the center. It is about ¾" across and resembles the flower of a strawberry plant. There is no floral scent. The blooming period occurs during mid-summer and lasts about a month – only a few flowers are open at the same time. The small seeds are distributed to some extent by the wind. The root system consists of a central taproot, and there are rhizomes that help to spread the plant, although it is not particularly aggressive.

**Cultivation:** The preference is full sun and mesic to dry conditions. This plant is not particular about soil type, as long as the site is well-drained. In native habitats, it's often found in soil that contains some clay, rocky material, or sand. Drought tolerance is excellent, and foliar disease is rarely observed. This plant is easy to grow if the above requirements are met.

**Range & Habitat:** Prairie Cinquefoil occurs occasionally in the northern half of Illinois. Habitats include mesic to dry black soil prairies, clay prairies, sand prairies, gravel prairies, hill prairies, Black Oak savannas, and abandoned pastures. Unlike some of its weedy relatives, this plant is normally found in high quality habitats, rather than disturbed areas.

**Faunal Associations:** The flowers are visited primarily by small bees and flies. This includes Little Carpenter bees, Halictine bees, Syrphid flies, Tachinid flies, Blow flies, and others. Wasps and small butterflies are less common visitors. The larvae of a Gall Wasp (*Gonaspis sp.*) forms galls on the stems. The leaves and stems are occasionally eaten by some mammalian herbivores, such as rabbits and livestock, but it is a minor food source.

**Comments:** This rather ordinary-looking plant resembles *Potentilla recta* (Sulfur Cinquefoil), an introduced plant, in its erect habit and overall appearance. However, Prairie Cinquefoil has white or cream flowers and hairy pinnate leaves, while Sulfur Cinquefoil has light yellow flowers and less hairy palmate leaves. When ultra-blue light is made visible through a special filter, patterns are revealed in the flowers of many cinquefoils that are not apparent to the human eye, but perceptible by most pollinating insects. These ultra-violet reflecting patterns help the flowers stand out from the background, and may function as nectar guides. Thus, the flowers are colored a combination of white and bee-blue.
**Phlox Pilosa** (Prairie Phlox)

**Sources:**
* http://plants.usda.gov
* http://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/prairie/plantx/pr_phloxx.htm

**Symbol:** PHPI  
**Group:** Dicot  
**Family:** Polemoniaceae  
**Duration:** Perennial  
**Growth Habit:** Shrub  
**U.S. Nativity:** Native

**Description:** This native perennial plant is up to 2' tall and unbranched. The stem is covered with fine white hairs. The opposite leaves are up to 3½” long and ½” across, and sparsely distributed along the stem. They are linear to narrowly lanceolate, sessile, and have smooth, but slightly ciliate margins. Their surface often has a fine pubescence. The lower leaves tend to turn yellow and drop off the stem when the plant becomes stressed out. There is a cluster of flowers at the apex of the plant on short hairy stalks. Each flower is about ½” across, and has 5 lobes that flare abruptly outward from a long narrow tubular corolla. These lobes are rather angular and become considerably narrower toward the base of the corolla. The calyx has long slender sepals that are green and hairy. The flowers may be white, pink, or lavender, and have a mild pleasant fragrance. The base of the corolla often has lines of deeper color than the lobes. Prairie Phlox typically blooms during late spring or early summer for about 1–1½ months. This plant has a taproot, and occasionally tillers at the base, sending up multiple stems. The small seeds are distributed by the wind to some extent.

**Cultivation:** The preference is full or partial sun, and moist to mesic conditions. The soil can consist of rich loam, clay loam, sandy loam, or have some rocky material. Foliar disease doesn’t bother this phlox to any significant extent. It is difficult to start plants from seeds, but somewhat easier from transplants. Sometimes, Prairie Phlox can be temperamental and short-lived if a site doesn’t suit its requirements.

**Faunal Associations:** The nectar of the flowers attracts primarily long-tongued bees, butterflies, and skippers. Other visitors include moths and bee flies. Among the bee visitors are bumblebees, Anthophorine bees, Miner bees, and Nomadine Cuckoo bees. Butterfly and skipper visitors include the American Painted Lady, Sulfurs, Swallowtails, and Cloudywings. The caterpillars of the moth *Heliothis phloxiphagus* (Spotted Straw) eat the flowers, while the caterpillars of the moth Olive Archs eat the leaves. Other insects feeding on this phlox and others include *Lopidea davis* (Phlox Scarlet Plant Bug) and *Poecilocapsus lineatus* (Four-Lined Plant Bug). Mammalian herbivores readily consume Prairie Phlox, including rabbits, deer, groundhogs, and livestock. It may be difficult to establish this plant where there is an overpopulation of these animals.

**Comments:** The flower structure of the *Phlox* genus is a classical example of a butterfly flower. Such flowers feature flared petals that function as a landing pad for these insects, and a long narrow tube that is accessible to the long proboscis of butterflies, as well as skippers and moths. Such flowers typically occur in loose, rounded clusters, and are often fragrant. The flowers of Prairie Phlox have all of these characteristics. A very rare variety of Prairie Phlox that occurs within the Sangamon river basin in Sangamon and Champaign counties is *Phlox pilosa var. sangamonensis* (Sangamon Phlox). It is distinguished primarily by its hairless stems, flowering stalks, and leaves, and is listed as an endangered species in the state of Illinois.
**Rudbeckia Hirta** (Black-Eyed Susan)

**Sources:**
*http://plants.usda.gov*
*http://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/prairie/plantx/be_susanx.htm*

**Symbol:** RUHI2  
**Group:** Dicot  
**Family:** Asteraceae  
**Duration:** Perennial  
**Growth Habit:** Forb/Herb  
**U.S. Nativity:** Native

**Description:** This is a native biennial or short-lived perennial plant that is about 1-2½' tall. It occasionally branches near the base, with each stem producing a single composite flower. The stems have long white hairs. The alternate leaves are grayish green and covered with small stiff hairs, providing them with a rough texture. The leaves are up to 7" long and 2" across, and lanceolate, oblanceolate, or ovate. Their margins are ciliate and rather smooth, with or without a few blunt teeth. The basal leaves have long hairy petioles, while the middle and upper leaves have short petioles or clasp the stem. The upper stems are long and devoid of leaves, each producing a single composite flower. This flower consists of many dark brown disk florets, forming a flattened cone, surrounded by 8-20 ray florets that are bright yellow (rarely with patches of maroon near the base). The style-tips of the disk florets are slender and pointed. Each composite flower is about 2-3" across, and has no noticeable scent. Black-Eyed Susan blooms primarily from early to mid-summer for about a month, although some plants will bloom during the late summer or fall. The achenes are black, oblong, finely nerved, and without tufts of hair. The root system consists of a central taproot and is without rhizomes – this plant reproduces entirely by seed.

**Cultivation:** The preference is full sun, and slightly moist to moderately dry soil conditions. Any reasonably fertile soil will be satisfactory. This plant is fast to mature and easy to grow, although short-lived. Occasionally, there may be outbreaks of powdery mildew on the leaves in moist environments, particularly during the fall.

**Faunal Associations:** The composite flowers appeal to a wide range of insects, particularly bees and flies, as well as some wasps, butterflies, and beetles. The bees collect pollen or suck nectar, and include Little Carpenter bees, Leaf-Cutting bees, Green Metallic and other Halictine bees, Andrenid bees, and others. Some Andrenid bees, such as *Andrena rudbeckiae* and *Heterosarbus rudbeckiae*, prefer visiting the flowers of Black-Eyed Susan and closely related plants. Among the flies that visit the flowers, Syrphid flies, Bee flies, and Tachinid flies are well represented. The caterpillars of *Chlosyne nycteis* (Silvery Checkerspot) feed on the leaves. Many mammalian herbivores are not particularly fond of the coarse leaves – they have low food value, and there have been occasional reports of this plant poisoning cattle and pigs. The seeds are eaten occasionally by goldfinches.
Comments: Black-Eyed Susan is an excellent choice for prairie restorations, or the first-year planting of a wildflower garden, as it may bloom during the first year from seed. Sometimes, this plant will reseed itself with such abandon it can become aggressive, but it will lose ground to the longer-lived perennial plants as they mature. Black-Eyed Susan can be distinguished from other *Rudbeckia* spp. by its lanceolate hairy leaves and the long hairs on the stems; most of the leaves occur toward the base of each stem, and never have lobes. The species *Rudbeckia fulgida* (Orange Coneflower) is quite similar in appearance, but usually blooms later, and has style-tips that are shorter and more rounded.
**Description:** This native perennial plant is largely unbranched and up to 6' tall. The stout central stem is light green, and slightly hairy in the upper stem and at the base of the upper compound leaves. The compound leaves are even-pinnate with about 10-20 leaflets. The medium to dark green leaflets are individually up to 2½" long and ¾" across. Each leaflet is oblong, with smooth margins, and a pointed tip. Near the upper base of a compound leaf is a small club-shaped gland; it is ovoid or dome-shaped above a short stalk. This gland secretes nectar to attract certain kinds of insects (see below for more information). From the axils of the upper compound leaves develop upright racemes of yellow flowers. Each flower is about ¾" across; it has 5 pale yellow sepals, 5 yellow petals, 10 stamens with black anthers, and a conspicuous pistil with long white hairs. The petals have a tendency to turn white as they age, while the hairy pistil eventually develops into a seedpod. There are 3 upper petals and 2 upper petals in a flower; they have a tendency to become curved and have a claw-like appearance. The blooming period is mid- to late summer, which lasts about a month. There is no noticeable floral scent. The seedpods are about 4" long when fully mature; each seedpod has 10-18 segments, and each segment is about as long as it is across. Eventually, these seedpods become dark brown in appearance. The root system consists of a central taproot and rhizomes. This plant often forms vegetative colonies.

**Cultivation:** The preference is partial to full sun, and moist to mesic conditions. A rich loamy soil is preferred. This plant can become quite tall when the soil is fertile and moist; it may flop over while the flowers and seedpods are developing. Foliar disease is not a significant problem.

**Range & Habitat:** Wild Senna occurs in scattered counties throughout Illinois; it is perhaps a little more common in the east than the west. This species is occasional in some areas, and uncommon or absent in others. Populations in the wild are probably declining as a result of modern development. Habitats include moist meadows near rivers, savannas, fens, pastures, and roadsides. It is often flourishes within the floodplain of rivers. Occasionally, Wild Senna is found in flower gardens because of the showy flowers.

**Faunal Associations:** The flowers attract bumblebees primarily, which seek pollen from the anthers and possibly nectar. Halictid bees also visit the flowers for pollen, but are less likely to achieve cross-pollination. The extra-floral nectaries, on the other hand, attract primarily ants and a few other insects, including ladybird beetles. It is possible that these insects protect the plant from other insects that would attack the foliage; it has also been suggested that the extra-floral nectaries discourage ants from robbing nectar from the flowers. The caterpillars of some Sulfur butterflies rely on *Senna spp.* as a source of food. In Illinois, this includes *Eurema nicippe* (Sleepy Orange), *Eurema lisa* (Little Sulfur), and *Phoebis sennae eubule* (Cloudless Sulfur). Mammalian herbivores usually avoid consumption of the foliage, which has purgative properties. The seeds may be

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**Senna hebecarpa** (wild senna)

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eaten by some upland gamebirds.

Comments: This is a striking plant while in bloom, and it has attractive foliage. It is difficult to distinguish Wild Senna from *Senna marilandica* (Maryland Senna), which has a very similar appearance. Generally, Wild Senna has a more northern distribution than Maryland Senna, but in Illinois their ranges overlap. On Wild Senna, the pistils of the flowers have long white hairs, while in Maryland Senna these hairs are shorter and more appressed. The nectary glands at the base of the compound leaves are also supposed to shaped differently. In Wild Senna, these glands have a short stalk and are club-shaped (although the shape of this 'club' can be variable), while the glands of Maryland Senna can be short-cylindric, rounded, or dome-shaped, but they are without short narrow stalks. The seedpods of these two species are also supposed to be somewhat different in appearance in relation to the number and shape of the seedpod segments. Another scientific name for Wild Senna is *Cassia hebecarpa*. 
**Solidago riddellii** (Riddell’s goldenrod)

**Sources:**
*http://plants.usda.gov
*http://wisplants.uwsp.edu
*http://www.mobot.org/gardeninghelp/plantfinder

**Symbol:** OLRI2  
**Group:** Dicot  
**Family:** Asteraceae  
**Duration:** Perennial  
**Growth Habit:** Forb/herb  
**U.S. Nativity:** Native

**General Culture:**

Easily grown in wet soils in full sun. Remove spent flower clusters to encourage additional bloom.

**Noteworthy Characteristics:**

This goldenrod species is a somewhat rare Missouri native perennial which occurs only in wet meadows in the Ozark region of the State. Features tiny, bright yellow flowers borne in dense, erect, flat-topped, terminal, corombose inflorescences atop stiff, glabrous stems typically growing 3-4' tall. Flowers bloom late summer to early autumn. Narrow, lance-shaped, linear leaves. Goldenrods have been wrongly accused of causing hay fever which is actually an allergic reaction to wind-borne pollen from other plants such as ragweed. Attractive to bees and butterflies.

**Problems:**

No serious insect or disease problems. Leaf rust is an occasional problem. May need to be divided every 2 to 3 years to control growth.

**Uses:**

Provides good color and contrast in late summer to early fall for wet areas of wild gardens, prairies, meadows, native plant gardens or naturalized areas.
**Sporobolus Heterolepis** (Prairie Dropseed)

**General Culture:**

Easily grown in average, dry to medium, well-drained soils in full sun. Tolerates wide range of soils, including heavy clays. Prefers dry, rocky soils. Good drought tolerance. Slow-growing and slow to establish. May be grown from seed but does not freely self-seed in the garden.

**Noteworthy Characteristics:**

Prairie dropseed is a clump-forming, warm season, Missouri native perennial grass which occurs in prairies, glades, open ground and along railroads throughout much of the State. Fine-textured, hair-like, medium green leaves (to 20" long and 1/16" wide) typically form an arching foliage mound to 15" tall and 18" wide. Foliage turns golden with orange hues in fall, fading to light bronze in winter. Open, branching flower panicles appear on slender stems which rise well above the foliage clump in late summer to 30-36" tall. Flowers have pink and brown tints, but are perhaps most noted for their unique fragrance (hints of coriander). Tiny rounded mature seeds drop to the ground from their hulls in autumn giving rise to the descriptive common name.

**Problems:**

No serious insect or disease problems.

**Uses:**

Ground cover for hot, dry areas. Prairies, meadows, native plant gardens, wild areas or slopes. Also effective in large rock gardens.Accent for foundation plantings or borders.

**Sources:**

*http://plants.usda.gov
*http://www.mobot.org/gardeninghelp/plantfinder/Plant.asp?code=F680

**Symbol:** SPHE  
**Group:** Monocot  
**Family:** Poaceae  
**Duration:** Perennial  
**Growth Habit:** Graminoid  
**U.S. Nativity:** Native

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**Common Name:** Prairie Dropseed  
**Zone:** 3 to 9  
**Plant Type:** Ornamental grass  
**Family:** Poaceae  
**Native Range:** Canada to Texas  
**Height:** 2 to 3 feet  
**Spread:** 2 to 3 feet  
**Bloom Time:** August - October  
**Bloom Color:** Pink and brown-tinted  
**Sun:** Full sun  
**Water:** Dry to medium  
**Maintenance:** Low
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