



Johnson County Soil Health

Plant Mixes

Summer Sun

Full Sun

Black-eyed Susan

Butterfly weed

Heath aster

Little Bluestem

Pale purple coneflower

Prairie blazing star

Prairie dropseed

Purple prairie clover

Smooth blue aster

White prairie clover

Speckled Shade

Full/Part Sun

Culver's root

Large flowered primrose

Little Bluestem

Prairie blazing star

Prairie dropseed

Prairie smoke

Purple prairie clover

Sand coreopsis

Smooth blue aster

Sweet black-eyed Susan

Drizzle Dazzle

Part Sun/Wet

Blue flag iris

Bur sedge

Cardinal flower

Cedar sedge

Common rush

Dudley's rush

Fox sedge

Golden alexander

Great blue lobelia

Sand coreopsis

Summer Sun

Black-Eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*) is a biennial that blooms and completes its life cycle in its second year with a brilliant floral display. Transplants will bloom the year they are planted. Easy to grow and **easily self-sows** on open soil. The black-eyed Susan has a prolonged bloom time to attract butterflies and other pollinators. The late-season seed heads attract finches and other birds. Drought tolerant, the *Rudbeckia* tolerates heat, drought and a wide range of soils, but does not like poorly drained, wet soils.



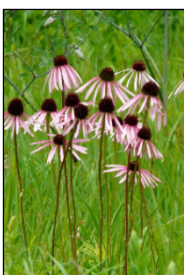
Butterfly Weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) is a popular milkweed. Butterfly Weed is an important host plant for Monarch and Queen butterflies. This milkweed lacks the typical milky sap. In an ideal location, a mature Butterfly weed can become a very showy specimen, with multiple flowering stems spreading across a two-foot tall plant. Mature plants have a deep tap root that extends a foot or more. They can be transplanted if dug carefully, during dormancy. This rugged species thrives in sunny locations, in dry sandy soil or well-drained loam.



Heath Aster (*Symphotrichum ericoides* formerly *Aster ericoides*) thrives on the driest sand and gravel soils and produces numerous small white flowers in late summer and early fall. Plants range from 1 to 3 feet tall with a narrow, upright habit. The Heath Aster creeps by rhizomes to form patches and spreads by self-seeding. **It can spread aggressively if allowed to do so.** Native throughout most of the U.S. this tough plant thrives in some harsh conditions. Dry, sandy, rocky soils are its favorite, but this adaptable aster will grow in any reasonably well-drained soil.



Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium* formerly *Andropogon scoparius*) is a native grass prized for its blue-green leaf color and upright form. The foliage provides excellent color in all seasons. Densely mounded, Little Bluestem reaches a height of 3 feet by autumn, when it turns a striking reddish-bronze, bearing tufted seeds. The clumps can withstand snow and rain, allowing the reddish grass stems to remain upright most of the winter. Excellent in dry sandy soils, it combines well with all prairie flowers. It is not recommended for damp sites or heavy clay soils. Little Bluestem is a host plant for numerous butterflies.



Pale Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea pallida*) blooms in early summer and is a favorite nectar source for pollinators. Late in summer, the large seed heads attract Goldfinches and other birds. *Echinacea pallida* is highly adaptable, tolerating drought, heat, humidity and poor soil, but not moist soil with poor drainage. Once established the deep taproot enables a long-lived, very low-maintenance plant capable of handling hot dry conditions with ease.

Prairie Blazing Star (*Liatrix ligulistylis*) is a favorite nectar source for Monarch butterflies and the late-season seeds are popular with Goldfinches. It can grow up to 5 feet tall when planted in rich soils (it may be necessary to stake the plants). It is somewhat tolerant of dry soil but is best planted in areas with consistent "medium" soil moisture. *Liatrix* tolerates summer heat and humidity, but avoid planting in soil that is wet in the winter. Its bloom color can lean toward magenta, and the tufted blossoms appear along the stems and may last for many weeks in late summer.



Prairie Dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*) offers flowering panicles on slender stems that float above the tufted grass in late summer giving the garden an architectural appearance to the 2 to 4 foot plant. The fall foliage turns to hues of gold and is considered to be a handsome prairie grass. The plant is a host for butterflies and moths.

Purple Prairie Clover (*Dalea purpurea* formerly *Petalostemum purpureum*) is easily grown in sunny locations with average to dry soils. The deep taproot supports a long-lived plant that is impervious to heat and drought. Excellent in a variety of plantings and naturalized prairie areas. The flowers offer a source of nectar for pollinating insects. The *Dalea purpurea* is a standard in prairie restorations, but it is uncommon in areas disturbed by modern development. Root division is challenging as the plant does not like to be disturbed after it has been established.



Smooth Aster (*Symphyotrichum laeve* formerly *Aster laevis*) is a hardy plant that will bloom after frost into November, with a profusion of lavender-blue, star-like flowers. The yellow flower-center turns reddish, late in the season. Typically about 3 feet tall with arching branches, Smooth Aster's tough stem allows it to stay upright through summer and fall. This aster is long-lived if not over-crowded by more aggressive plants. It is attractive to butterflies seeking nectar in the fall.

White Prairie Clover (*Dalea candida* formerly *Petalostemum candidum*) is a member of the Legume family and an important part of short prairies. Prairie Clovers provide beneficial bacteria called rhizobia that allows the plants to capture nitrogen from the air. The bacteria assists in "fixing" the nitrogen in the plant. The plants act as a natural soil fertilizer when plant debris material is left to enrich the soil.



Speckled Shade

Culver's Root (*Veronicastrum virginicum*) is prized for its well-defined clean lines and upright structure in the garden. The tall unbranched stems are surrounded with whorls of deep green leaves and topped with spires of white flowers that bloom several weeks in midsummer. Native to eastern North America, Culver's Root thrives in full sun or light shade and tolerates a wide range of soils. Butterflies and solitary bees such as sweat bees, carpenter bees and bumble bees will visit the flowers. Mature plants can reach heights of six feet, and form a large clump with multiple stems.



Large Flowered Primrose (*Oenothera macrocarpa*) is a tall (up to 5 feet) biennial, bushy plant with yellow flowers that open in the late afternoon. The entire plant is edible including the roots that can be cooked (preferably in fall/winter of the first year of plant growth) which have a peppery parsnip flavor. It is a **favorite food for deer**. Although scientific research hasn't assigned benefits for Evening Primrose, it has been widely used in herbal medicine for many years.



Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium* formerly *Andropogon scoparius*) is a native grass prized for its blue-green leaf color and upright form. The foliage provides excellent color in all seasons. Densely mounded, Little Bluestem reaches a height of 3 feet by autumn, when it turns a striking reddish-bronze, bearing tufted seeds. The clumps can withstand snow and rain, allowing the reddish grass stems to remain upright most of the winter. Excellent in dry sandy soils, it combines well with all prairie flowers. It is not recommended for damp sites or heavy clay soils. Little Bluestem is a host plant for numerous butterflies.

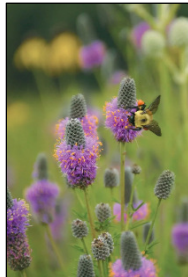


Prairie Blazing Star (*Liatris pycnostachya*) is an iconic prairie flower with a spike of lavender flowers tufted at the top of the plant and down the single stem. It grows well in moist soils and clay. The plant requires both sun and adequate moisture. Dry conditions can cause leaf loss and too little sun may cause twisted growth. Blooming July through August it is excellent in perennial borders, prairie gardens and naturalized areas.



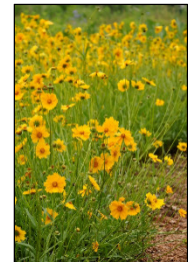
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Prairie Smoke (*Geum triflorum*) is a distinctive prairie wildflower with irresistible pink feathery seed heads. Once the flowers are fertilized, the real show begins as the nodding blooms transform into bright clusters of wispy pink plumes. A massed planting creates a pinkish haze that can last for a month. The basal leaves are fern-like and deeply serrated with hairy margins. While not truly evergreen, the leaves can persist through winter, turning attractive shades of red and crimson. Plants spread slowly by rhizome to form a groundcover. Prairie Smoke does not like to be overcrowded by taller perennials. This plant thrives in any well-drained soil but wet and soggy winter conditions may cause the plants to die back.



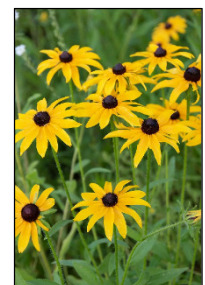
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Sand Coreopsis (*Coreopsis lanceolata*) blooms for weeks, creating an early summer display of golden yellow flowers. Butterflies are regular visitors, and songbirds feed on the ripe seeds in late summer. This durable plant grows in any well-drained soil, and exalts in dry sandy soils.



Smooth Blue Aster (*Symphotrichum laeve* formerly *Aster laevis*) is a hardy plant that blooms often into November, with a profusion of lavender-blue, star-like flowers. The yellow flower center turns reddish late in the season. Typically about 3 feet tall with arching branches, Smooth Aster's tough stem keeps it upright through summer and fall. This aster can have a long life if it's not crowded out by other more aggressive plants. Attractive to butterflies seeking nectar in the fall.

Sweet Black-Eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia subtomentosa*) is a biennial that blooms and completes its life cycle in its second year with a brilliant floral display. Transplants will bloom the year they are planted. Easy to grow and **easily self-sows** on open soil. The black-eyed Susan has a prolonged bloom time to attract butterflies and other pollinators. The late-season seed heads attract finches and other birds. Drought tolerant, the *Rudbeckia* tolerates heat, drought and a wide range of soils, but does not like poorly drained, wet soils.



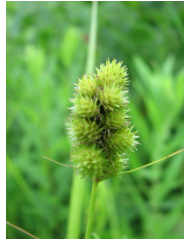
Drizzle Dazzle

Blue Flag Iris (*Iris versicolor*) blooms in early summer (June-July). Blue flowers sit on top of the foliage. Great to naturalize low-wet areas. It also looks good potted and sunk into the water garden. The flowers are attractive to pollinators and hummingbirds. Blue Flag Iris is deer-resistant.



Bur Sedge (*Carex grayi*) is a beautiful ornamental sedge found growing in low-lying areas. Bur Sedge prefers moist soil, and light shade or part sun. It spreads slowly to form an attractive bunch in medium to wet soils. The plant can reach heights of three feet in bloom, when it produces its pale green spiked flowers. The remarkable star-like seed heads persist into autumn and winter for extended seasonal interest. Bur Sedge is suitable for rain gardens, or bioswales. Its unique seeds are eaten by birds and it is a host plant for several small moths

Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*) blooms for a month or more in late summer, with brilliant red flowers that attract hummingbirds to the garden. Occurring naturally in wetlands, Cardinal Flower grows best in moist soils in full sun or light shade. A short-lived species, the parent plant will persist for a few years, but this **prolific seeder** can self-sow in the right conditions with good seed-to-soil contact. Otherwise, it may require replanting every few years, but is well worth the effort.



Cedar Sedge (*Carex eburnea*) is commonly found in wet ditches, floodplain forest, shores, stream and river banks, swales, wet meadows, swamps and marshes across the state. It tolerates full sun as well as near full shade. Some common traits are: usually clump-forming, basal sheaths brown and somewhat fibrous, leaves V-shaped when young; 2 to 20 stalkless spikes all form at the stem tip.

Common Rush (*Juncus effusus*) is easily grown in moist to wet soils in full sun to part shade. It grows best in full sun and performs well in standing water to 4 inches deep, but will also grow well in garden soils as long as the soils are kept consistently moist. Plants spread in the landscape by rhizomes and it self-seeds. Rhizomatous spread may be controlled, if desired, by growing the plant in large containers sunk in the ground. Foliage remains evergreen in warm winter climates or when grown indoors as a houseplant. In colder climates, outdoor clumps die to the ground in winter. Old foliage should be cut back in early spring.



Dudley's Rush (*Juncus dudleyi*) is easily grown in consistently moist to wet soils in full sun. Tolerates light shade and heavy soils. Needs ample moisture and does well in moist soils that do not dry out. It's an upright, tufted perennial rush that typically rises to 18 - 30 inches tall on slender, cylindrical, unbranched, light green stems. Flowers that bloom in late spring to mid-summer give way to seed capsules which mature to reddish brown.

Fox Sedge (*Carex vulpinoidea*) is one of the most abundant and easy-to-grow sedges in a variety of sun and soil conditions. The common name is derived from the seed head which resembles a fox's tail. Like most sedges, it grows during the spring and fall when soil temperatures are cool.



Golden Alexanders (*Zizia aurea*) offer brilliant golden, three to four-inch-wide flower clusters that bloom for several weeks in late spring. This low-growing perennial tolerates heavy clay soils in semi-shade to full sun. Moist, well-drained soil is best, but it is a very adaptable plant that will tolerate both wet conditions and dry conditions, as long as there is plenty of moisture early in the growing season.

Great Blue Lobelia (*Lobelia siphilitica*) forms a flower spike covered in deep blue flowers in late summer to early fall. It can form colonies when happily sited in medium to wet soils in light shade. Growth is not overly aggressive. Combine Blue Lobelia with the Cardinal Flower for a stunning color combo that will attract hummingbirds. This plant is excellent for damp clay soil.



Sand Coreopsis (*Coreopsis lanceolata*) blooms for weeks, creating an early summer display of golden yellow flowers. Butterflies are regular visitors, and songbirds feed on the ripe seeds in late summer. This durable plant grows in any well-drained soil, and exalts in dry sandy soils.