

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.



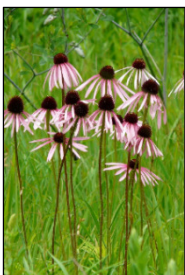
Butterfly Weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) is a popular milkweed. Butterfly Weed is an important host plant for Monarch and Queen butterflies. This milkweed lacks the typical milky sap. In an ideal location, a mature Butterfly weed can become a very showy specimen, with multiple flowering stems spreading 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.



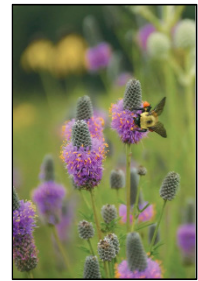
Pale Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea pallida*) blooms in early summer and is a favorite nectar source for pollinators. Late in summer, the large seed heads attract Goldfinches and other birds. *Echinacea pallida* is highly adaptable, tolerating drought, heat, humidity and poor soil, but not moist soil 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.

