

TROY GARDENS

**Prairie
Wildflower
Guide**



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Natural Areas Intern, Summer 2006

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Introduction

Troy Gardens restored this 3.5-acre site to a native tall grass, mesic prairie. Tall grass prairies were once extremely abundant in Wisconsin but now are disappearing due to changes in land management. The purpose of this guide is to give the visitor a more in depth look at prairie wildflowers. It is arranged in alphabetical order by common names and only represents a portion of the wildflowers present in the prairie.

Frost Aster (*Aster pilosus*)



Pictures courtesy of UW-Stevens Point Herbarium

WI Distribution



Interesting Fact

- ◆ The Greek word *aster* translates to “a star” in English

Blooms

- ◆ September to October

Habitat

- ◆ Needs full sunlight and dry conditions in sandy, gravelly soils
- ◆ Very common in dry-mesic prairies & along forest edges
- ◆ Becoming common in disturbed areas, like grassy hillsides, fields, pastures & along roadsides, fences, & railroad tracks

WI Status

- ◆ Native

Hill's Thistle (*Cirsium hillii*)



WI Distribution



Interesting Fact

- ◆ Wisconsin's only native thistle

Blooms

- ◆ June to July

Habitat

- ◆ Thrives on full sunlight and sandy soils
- ◆ Occurs in dry-mesic prairies and steep, limey hill prairies
- ◆ At Troy Gardens, this thistle tends to be invasive if not managed

WI Status

- ◆ Native
- ◆ Threatened

Hoary Vervain (*Verbena stricta*)



WI Distribution



Interesting Fact

- ◆ This wildflower actually blooms from the bottom up and has no floral scent

Blooms

- ◆ June to September

Habitat

- ◆ Needs full sunlight, dry to medium moisture, & sandy, loamy soils
- ◆ Common in disturbed sites, such as abandoned fields and pastures
- ◆ Likes dry prairies & sand barrens

WI Status

- ◆ Native

Ox Eye Sunflower (*Heliopsis helianthoides*)



Pictures courtesy of UW-Stevens Point Herbarium



WI Distribution



Interesting Fact

- ◆ Also known as a false sunflower because its flowers are fertile unlike true sunflowers

Blooms

- ◆ July to September

Habitat

- ◆ Thrives on full sunlight, dry to moderate moisture conditions, & sandy, loamy soils
- ◆ Most common in mesic prairies, thickets, & along forest edges
- ◆ Also occurs in disturbed sites

WI Status

- ◆ Native

Pale Indian Plantain (*Arnoglossum atriplicifolia*)



WI Distribution



Interesting Fact

- ◆ Bees, wasps, & flies are known to suck nectar from this plant

Blooms

- ◆ July to September

Habitat

- ◆ Likes full & partial sunlight, dry to wet soils, & sandy, loamy soils
- ◆ Conspicuous in dry & dry-mesic southern forests, thickets, oak openings, & prairies
- ◆ Can crop up along railroad tracks

WI Status

- ◆ Native
- ◆ Rare

Pale Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea pallida*)



WI Distribution



Interesting Fact

- ◆ Was once used by the Mesquakie Indians as part of a medicine for stomach cramps

Blooms

- ◆ June to October

Habitat

- ◆ Loves full sunlight, dry to moderate soils, & sandy, loamy soils
- ◆ Common in meadows & prairies with moist soil conditions
- ◆ Likes to crop up in railroad tracks & along roadsides

WI Status

- ◆ Threatened

Red Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*)



Pictures courtesy of UW-Stevens Point Herbarium



WI Distribution



Interesting Fact

- ◆ One of WI's few native plants that are pollinated by hummingbirds
- ◆ The leaves are toxic to humans & animals

Blooms

- ◆ April to June

Habitat

- ◆ Survives in full sunlight or shade, likes dry conditions, & sandy, loamy soils
- ◆ Common in forests, savannas, & cliffs

WI Status

- ◆ Native

Shooting Star (*Dodecatheon meadia*)



Pictures courtesy of UW-Stevens Point Herbarium



WI Distribution



Interesting Fact

- ◆ This plant has a wide variety of colors, blooming from deep magenta to pastel purple to pure white

Blooms

- ◆ April to June

Habitat

- ◆ Likes full & partial sunlight, dry to wet soils, and sandy, loamy, clayey soils
- ◆ Currently appears in southern forests & prairies
- ◆ Was once abundant but now disappearing due to changes in land management

WI Status

- ◆ Native

Spiderwort (*Tradescantia ohiensis*)



WI Distribution



Interesting Fact

- ◆ Many mammals feed on spiderwort, like white-tailed deer & cottontail rabbits

Blooms

- ◆ May to July

Habitat

- ◆ Likes full & partial sunlight, dry to wet moisture conditions, & sandy, loamy soils
- ◆ Occurs frequently in sedge meadows & prairies, especially in southern WI
- ◆ Is also present in disturbed sites, such as roadsides, embankments, & old fields

WI Status

- ◆ Native

Sweet Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia subtomentosa*)



Interesting Fact

- ◆ This forb looks like a bulls-eye to bees because they can see in ultraviolet light, which humans cannot

Blooms

- ◆ July to October

Habitat

- ◆ Likes full & partial sunlight, moist to wet soils, & sandy, loamy soils
- ◆ Most common in undisturbed lowlands (thickets, savannas, prairies, meadows, marshes & riverbanks)
- ◆ Endemic to central U.S.

WI Status

- ◆ Native
- ◆ Rare

WI Distribution



Wild Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*)



Interesting Fact

- ◆ Attracts butterflies & hummingbirds with its mint aroma

Blooms

- ◆ July to September

Habitat

- ◆ Likes partial to full sunlight, dry to wet soils, & sandy, loamy soils
- ◆ Occurs in dry edges, thickets, woods, prairies, fields, & disturbed areas
- ◆ In WI, this plant does best in cedar glades

WI Status

- ◆ Native

WI Distribution



Wild Parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa*)



WI Distribution



Interesting Fact

- ◆ Very TOXIC! This plant produces a chemical sensitive to skin, which causes blistering and scarring. **DO NOT TOUCH!**
- ◆ Troy Gardens is working hard to eradicate it

Blooms

- ◆ June to July

Habitat

- ◆ Loves to invade prairies & disturbed areas, especially along edges, roadsides, & walkways
- ◆ At Troy, this plant has invaded the prairie garden, railway woodland, & farm fence

WI Status

- ◆ Introduced- naturalized
- ◆ Invasive

Glossary

Endemic: only found in a specific region or area

Eradicate: to permanently remove a species

Forb: a non-grassy broad-leaved plant typical in prairies, such as wildflowers

Introduced- naturalized: a species deliberately brought to an area that has become well established and often widespread

Invasive: a plant that out competes native vegetation degrading habitats and forming a monoculture

Mesic: the moisture of the soil isn't too dry or too wet but intermediate of the two

Threatened: any species, which appears likely to become endangered, in the foreseeable future

Species List

This list only states the plant species observed or planted in the tall grass prairie at Troy Gardens and is not exhaustive.

Big Bluestem (*Andropogon gerardi*)
Blazing Star (*Liatris aspera*)
Brown-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia triloba*)
Butterfly Weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)
Canada Milk Vetch (*Astragalus canadensis*)
Canada Wild Rye (*Elymus canadensis*)
Common Evening Primrose (*Oenothera biennis*)
Common Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*)
Common Wood Sedge (*Carex blanda*)
Compass Plant (*Silphium laciniatum*)
Copper-shouldered Oval Sedge (*Carex bicknellii*)
Cup Plant (*Silphium perfoliatum*)
Early Prairie Rose (*Rosa blanda*)
False Boneset (*Kuhnia eupatorioides*)
Flowering Spurge (*Euphorbia corollata*)
Frost Aster (*Aster pilosus*)
Golden Alexanders (*Zizia aurea*)
Grass-leaved Goldenrod (*Solidago graminifolia*)
*Hill's Thistle (*Cirsium hillii*)

Hoary Vervain (*Verbena stricta*)
Ironweed (*Vernonia fasciculata*)
*Kentucky Bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*)
Lead Plant (*Amorpha canescens*)
Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*)
New England Aster (*Aster novae-angliae*)
New Jersey Tea (*Ceanothus americanus*)
Ox Eye Sunflower (*Heliopsis helianthoides*)
Pale Indian Plantain (*Cacalia atriplicifolia*)
Pale Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea pallida*)
Path Rush (*Juncus tenuis*)
Penstemon (*Penstemon gracilis*)
Prairie Blazingstar (*Liatris pycnostachya*)
Prairie Cinquefoil (*Potentilla arguta*)
Prairie Dock (*Silphium terebinthinaceum*)
Prairie Smoke (*Anemone patens*)
Purple Prairie Clover (*Petalostemum purpurea*)
*Quackgrass (*Elytrigia repens*)
*Queen Anne's Lace (*Daucus carota*)

Rattlesnake Master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*)
*Red Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*)
*Reed Canary Grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*)
Rosin Weed (*Silphium integrifolium*)
Shooting Star (*Dodecatheon meadia*)
Showy Goldenrod (*Solidago speciosa*)
Showy Sunflower (*Helianthus laetiflorus*)
Side-oats Grama (*Bouteloua curtipendula*)
Sky Blue Aster (*Aster azureus*)
Smooth Aster (*Aster laevis*)
*Smooth Brome (*Bromus inermis*)
Smooth Penstemon (*Penstemon digitalis*)
Solomon's Seal (*Polygonatum biflorum*)
Spiderwort (*Tradescantia ohimensis*)
Stiff Coreopsis (*Coreopsis palmate*)
Stiff Goldenrod (*Solidago rigida*)
Sweet Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia subtomentosa*)
Tall Cinquefoil (*Potentilla arguta*)
Tower Mustard (*Arabis glabra*)
Western Sunflower (*Helianthus occidentalis*)
White Prairie Clover (*Petalostemum candidum*)
White Wild Indigo (*Baptisia leucantha*)
Wild Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*)
*Wild Garlic (*Allium canadense*)
*Wild Parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa*)

* Denotes invasive, problematic, or hazardous species

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