



Colorado Native Plant Society

Suggested Native Plants for Gardening and Landscape Use on the Front Range of Colorado

Colorado has a wealth of native plants, colorful wildflowers, grasses, shrubs and trees that are well adapted to our variable climate, soils, temperatures, and elevations. The Colorado Native Plant Society (CoNPS) recommends the use of native plants in landscaping, both because of their adaptability and because Colorado has a unique regional horticulture worth promoting and protecting. Native plants, especially local ecotypes, contain the genetic history of the area and will survive that especially cold, wet spring or unusually hot, dry year. Local ecotypes, from near the area to be planted, will also maintain more natural sources of food for local wildlife and insect species. There are several display gardens on the Front Range that feature plants native to Colorado. Please check in your area and visit them for ideas.

Guidelines for obtaining Native Species:

- Check with local nature centers or experts for recommendations.
- Read labels on “wildflower” mixes to verify they don’t include noxious weed species. A complete list of the Noxious Weeds of Colorado can be obtained from the Colorado Department of Agriculture’s [Weed Management Program](#). Also check with your [County Extension Agent](#).
- Ask for plants by their scientific name as common names may vary.
- Buy from reputable nurseries; ask about the origin of seed and plants.
- Seed/plant gathering from public lands is typically prohibited (this includes the National Park Service). Special use permits are available from the US Forest Service & the Bureau of Land Management.

The species list that follows is primarily for landscaping along the Front Range of Colorado, east of the Continental Divide. Included are recommended and generally available wildflowers, grasses, small/medium shrubs, and large shrubs/small trees as well as some basic habitat information. For sources of container-grown plants, check Colorado nurseries. (A list of Colorado Plant Vendors can be found on the Colorado Native Plant Society web page: http://conps.org/horticulture_and_restoration.html). More natives are being grown all the time and as the demand increases, so will the supply. If you don’t see something you want, ask for it.

The Colorado Native Plant Society’s Horticulture and Restoration Committee welcomes additional information regarding the use of natives. Please send your comments to Horticulture and Restoration Committee, CoNPS, P.O. Box 200, Fort Collins, CO 80522. For more Information about the Society, please visit our webpage at <http://conps.org>.

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FORBS / HERBACEOUS PERENNIALS (Some annuals/biennials)						
Common Name	Scientific Name *	Flower Color; Bloom Time	Height (Feet)	Preferred Environment	Elevational Range **	Other Comments
Arnica (Heart-leaved arnica)	<i>Arnica cordifolia</i>	Golden yellow; Early summer	1 - 2	Sun/ part shade; Moist to dry	To 10,000 feet?	Sunny daisies top heart-shaped leaves; rhizomatous clumps make nice ground cover
Aspen daisy (Showy daisy)	<i>Erigeron speciosus</i>	Lavender with yellow; Summer	1 - 2	Sun/ part shade; Moist to dry	To 9,500 feet	Daisy flowers attract butterflies; rich green foliage
Black-eyed Susan	<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	Golden yellow with brown; Late summer	1 - 2.5	Part sun/ shade; Moist to dry	To 9,000 feet	Attracts butterflies; biennial/short-lived perennial that readily reseeds; commonly found in dry mountain meadows
Blanket flower	<i>Gaillardia aristata</i>	Yellow to orange-yellow with red; Summer	1 - 2	Sun; Dry/ well-drained	To 9,000 feet	Small daisies have fuzzy, gray-green leaves; prefers well-drained soil; note that most large-flowered commercial varieties are non-native hybrids
Blue flax	<i>Adenolinum (Linum) lewisii</i>	Blue; Late spring	0.5 - 1	Sun; Dry/ well-drained	To 9,500 feet	Saucer-shaped flowers top fine, arching stems; confirm commercial seeds/plants are not the more common European varieties
Blue mist penstemon (Greenleaf penstemon)	<i>Penstemon virens</i>	Blue-violet; Late spring/ summer	0.25 - 1	Sun/ part sun; Dry/ well-drained	To 10,000 feet	Profuse cluster of small spikes top dense clumps of bright green leaves; good for rock gardens; available by seed
Bush morning glory	<i>Ipomea leptophylla</i>	Magenta; Summer/ early fall	2- 3	Sun/ part shade; Dry/ well-drained	To 7,000 feet	Large, mounding plants with narrow green leaves; heavy boomer; long-lived from huge tap root; prefers sandy, well-drained soils
Butterfly weed (Butterfly milkweed; Pleurisy root)	<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	Orange; Summer	1 - 2	Sun/ part shade; Dry/ well-drained	To 7,500 feet	Showy flower clusters attract butterflies; dark green, linear leaves are larval food for monarch butterflies; emerges late in spring
Chocolate flower (Green eyes)	<i>Berlandiera lyrata</i>	Yellow; Summer	1 – 1.5	Sun; Dry/ well-drained	To 8,000 feet	Morning-blooming daisies smell like chocolate! Clumping plant with gray-green foliage.
Colorado blue columbine	<i>Aquilegia caerulea</i>	Lavender-blue and white; Summer	1-3	Part sun/ shade; Moist	To 11,000 feet	Colorado State flower; large flower spurs attract hummingbirds; attractive lobed leaves turn reddish in fall; rich, organic soils
Desert Four O'clock	<i>Mirabilis multiflora</i>	Rose pink; Summer/ early fall	1- 2.5	Sun/ part shade; Moist to Dry	To 8,000 feet	Trumpet-shaped flowers open in afternoon; large mounding plant with heart-shaped leaves
Fringed sage	<i>Artemisia frigida</i>	Yellow, small; Summer	0.5 - 1	Sun; Dry/ well-drained	To 10,000 feet	Woody perennial with feathery, silver-gray foliage and insignificant flowers; aromatic
Golden banner	<i>Thermopsis divaricarpa</i>	Yellow; Spring/ early summer	1 - 2	Sun/ part shade; Moist to dry	To 11,000 feet	Showy spikes of pea-like flowers attract bees; readily spreads by rhizomes
Goldenrod	<i>Solidago spp.</i>	Yellow; Summer	1-3 (4)	Sun/ part shade; Moist to dry	To 7,000 feet	Several different species, all with clusters of numerous, small flowers; attract butterflies and bees; most are rhizomatous

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Harebell (Bluebells; Bluebells of Scotland)	<i>Campanula rotundifolia</i>	Lavender; Summer	0.5 - 1	Sun/ shade; Moist to dry	To 13,000 feet	Delicate dark green foliage bears nodding bell-shaped flowers
Heath aster (White prairie Daisy)	<i>Virgulus (Aster) ericoides</i> ; <i>V. (A.) falcatus</i>	White; Summer	1 – 2.5	Sun/ part shade; Dry/ well-drained	To 7,500 feet?	Miniature daisies cover bushy stems; rhizomatous with small linear leaves
Lupine (silver lupine)	<i>Lupinus argenteus</i>	White, lavender and/or purple; Summer	1 - 3	Sun; Moist to dry/ well-drained	To 10,000 feet	Spikes of small, pea-shaped flowers; palm-shaped leaves can capture beads of water; good in poor soils
Maximilian sunflower	<i>Helianthus maximiliana</i>	Yellow; Summer/ early fall	5 - 8	Sun/ part shade; Moist to Dry	To 6,500 feet	Tall perennial sunflower with narrow green leaves; spreads aggressively by rhizomes
One-sided penstemon (Sidebells penstemon)	<i>Penstemon secundiflorus</i>	Pink to bluish lavender; Summer	0.5 - 1.5	Sun/ part shade; Dry/ well-drained	To 9,500 feet	Tubular flowers born on single side of flower stalk; readily reseeds; attracts bees and hummingbirds; waxy blue-green leaves
Pasque flower	<i>Pulsatilla ludoviciana (P. patens)</i>	Lavender; Early spring	0.5 - 1	Sun/ part shade; Moist to Dry	To 9,000 feet	Mounding plant with cup-shaped flowers, followed by feathery seed heads
Pearly everlasting	<i>Anaphalis margaritacea</i>	White; Summer	1 - 2	Sun; Moist or Dry	To 10,000 feet	Erect plant with silvery foliage and clusters of “straw” flowers; excellent dried flower
Prairie coneflower	<i>Ratibida columnifera</i>	Yellow with brown center; Late summer	1 - 2.5	Sun; Dry/ well- drained	To 7,500 feet	Flower heads of prominent cylindrical cone surrounded by drooping flower petals; tall, slender stems; short-lived (readily reseeds)
Prairie sage (Sagewort)	<i>Artemisia ludoviciana</i>	Yellow, small; Summer	1 - 2.5	Sun/ part shade; Dry/ well-drained	To 10,000 feet	Aromatic, silvery-white foliage with insignificant flowers; readily spreads by rhizomes
Prairie skullcap	<i>Scutellaria resinosa</i>	Purple with white; Late spring	0.5	Sun/ part shade; Dry/ well-drained	?	Small, hooded flowers cover neat mounds of upright stems; reblooms with summer moisture
Prairie smoke	<i>Geum triflorum</i>	Rose pink; Spring	0.5 - 1	Sun/ part shade; Moist to part dry	To 10,000 feet	Nodding flowers followed by long, feathery seed pods; ferny green foliage
Prickly pear cacti	<i>Opuntia macrorhiza (compressa)</i> and <i>O. polyacantha</i>	Yellow/ yellow, orange or pink; Summer	0.25 - 0.5	Sun; Dry/ well- drained	To 7,500 feet?	Very large and showy flowers attract bees; succulent stems have either sparse or many spines depending on species
Prince’s plume	<i>Stanleya pinnata</i>	Yellow; Late spring	2 - 4	Sun/ part shade; Dry/ well-drained	To 9,000 feet	Large flower spikes can continue to bloom into summer with supplemental moisture; ensure soil is well drained or plants are short-lived
Purple coneflower (Narrow-leaved purple coneflower)	<i>Echinacea angustifolia</i>	Lavender; Summer	1.5 – 2.5	Sun/ part shade; Moist or Dry/ well-drained	To 6,000 feet?	Erect plants with spreading petals that surround a large, central “cone”; root is used medicinally
Purple fringe (Silky phacelia)	<i>Phacelia sericea</i>	Purple with orange; Summer	1 – 2.5	Part sun/ shade; Moist but well- drained	To 13,000 feet	Spikes of “bottlebrush” flowers look great in rock garden; silky-gray divided leaves
Purple poppy mallow (Wine Cups)	<i>Callirhoe involucrata</i>	Magenta; Summer/ early fall	0.5 - 1	Sun/ part shade; Moist or Dry	To 7,000 feet	Sprawling groundcover with saucer-shaped flowers blooms all summer without “deadheading”; dark green foliage
Purple prairie clover	<i>Dalea purpurea</i>	Magenta to purple; Summer	0.5 - 1.5	Sun; Dry/ well- drained	To 7,500 feet	Cylindrical heads of small, fragrant flowers; slender foliage with narrow leaflets

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Pussytoes	<i>Antennaria parvifolia</i> and <i>A. rosea</i>	Cream to rose pink; Late spring/ summer	2 – 6 <i>inches</i>	Sun/ part shade; Moist to dry/ well-drained	To 11,000 feet	Heads of small, clustered flowers resemble cat paws; plants form large mats of silver-gray foliage
Rocky Mountain beeplant	<i>Cleome serrulata</i>	Pink to lavender; Summer	1 - 3	Sun/ part shade, Dry/ well-drained	To 7,500 feet?	Tall, slender plants topped with showy flower heads; reseeding <i>annual</i> ; available by seed
Rocky Mountain penstemon	<i>Penstemon strictus</i>	Deep blue to purple; Summer	1 – 2.5	Sun/ part shade, Dry/ well-drained	To 10,000 feet	Loose spikes of tubular flowers attract bees and hummingbirds; glossy green leaves
Scarlet gilia	<i>Ipomopsis aggregata</i>	Red; Summer	1 – 2.5	Sun/ part shade; Moist or Dry	To 9,000 feet	Trumpet shaped flowers attract hummingbirds; biennial that readily reseeds
Scarlet globe mallow	<i>Sphaeralcea coccinea</i>	Orange-red; Late spring/ summer	0.5 - 1	Sun; Dry/ well- drained	To 8,000 feet	Saucer-shaped flowers born on gray, hairy, palm-shaped foliage; spreads by rhizomes
Smooth blue aster	<i>Aster laevis</i> (<i>Symphotrichum leave</i>)	Lavender; Summer	1 – 2.5	Part sun/ shade; Moist or dry	To 7,000 feet	Branched heads of small daisies; glaucous green leaves clasp sprawling stems
Spiderwort (Western spiderwort)	<i>Tradescantia occidentalis</i>	Blue/purple; Summer	0.5 - 2	Sun/ part shade, Moist to dry	To 8,000 feet	Arching, grass-like foliage bears waxy, 3- petaled flowers
Spotted gayfeather (Dotted gayfeather)	<i>Liatrix punctata</i>	Rose-purple; Late summer	0.5 – 1	Sun; Dry/ well- drained	To 7,500 feet	Stout spikes of fringed flowers attract butterflies; rigid linear leaves
Sulphur flower	<i>Eriogonum umbellatum</i>	Yellow; Summer	4" - 1	Sun; Dry/ well- drained	To 10,500 feet	Floral bracts turn a rich russet color with age; mats of gray or green leaves turn red in fall
Tansy aster (Hoary aster)	<i>Machaeranthera canescens</i>	Lavender; Late summer/ fall	0.5 – 2.5	Sun; Dry/ well- drained	To 8,000 feet?	Erect stems of small daisy flowers; plants are short-lived but readily reseed
Tufted evening primrose	<i>Oenothera caespitosa</i>	White; Late spring/ summer	0.5	Sun; Dry/ well- drained	To 9,000 feet	Pink buds open to large, fragrant flowers that fade pink once again; blooms in early evening; tolerates heavy clay
Western wallflower	<i>Erysimum asperum</i> ; <i>E. capitatum</i>	Yellow/orange; Late spring/ summer	0.5 - 2	Sun, Dry	To 8,000 feet?	Large and showy flower heads; watch for native species—many commercial varieties are non-native; biennial/ short-lived perennial
White yarrow (Western yarrow; Woolly yarrow)	<i>Achillea lanulosa</i>	White; Summer	0.5 - 2	Sun/ part shade; Moist or dry	To 10,500 feet	Flat-topped flower clusters; spreads by rhizomes; watch for native species— <i>most</i> commercial varieties are non-native
Wild bergamot (Beebalm)	<i>Monarda fistulosa</i>	Rose pink; Summer	1 - 2	Sun/ part shade, Moist to dry	To 9,000 feet	Large flowers attract butterflies; upright, aromatic foliage
Wild verbena (Spreading vervain)	<i>Glandularia (Verbena) bipinnatifida</i>	Lavender; Late spring/ summer	0.5 - 1	Sun; Dry/ well- drained	To 8,000 feet	Clusters of small flowers on sprawling stems with cleft leaves; prolific bloomer can be short- lived but readily reseeds
Windflower	<i>Anemone multifida</i>	Rose pink; Spring/ early summer	1 - 2	Sun/ part shade, Moist	To 10,000 feet	Clumping plants with deep green foliage; delicate flowers mature into fluffy seed heads; prefers rich, organic soils
Yellow evening primrose (Sundrops)	<i>Calylophus lavandulifolius</i> ; <i>C. serrulatus</i>	Yellow; Summer	0.5 - 1	Sun/ part shade; Dry/ well-drained	To 7,000 feet	Long-blooming, 4-petaled flowers; both species good placed at front of border

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GRASSES (Ornamental and Turf-Type)						
Common Name	Scientific Name *	Garden Use; Bloom Time	Height (Feet)	Preferred Environment	Elevational Range **	Other Comments
Alkali sacaton	<i>Sporobolus airoides</i>	Ornamental; Summer	2 - 4	Sun/ part shade; Moist to dry	To 7,500 feet	Large, airy inflorescence; fine-textured foliage
Arizona fescue	<i>Festuca arizonica</i>	Turf; Spring	1 - 3	Sun/ part shade; Dry	To 10,000 feet	Clumping bunchgrass; doesn't tolerate foot traffic well
Big bluestem	<i>Andropogon gerardii</i>	Ornamental; Summer	2 - 7	Sun/ part shade; Moist to dry	To 7,500 feet	Tall bunchgrass turns red in fall; "turkey-foot" inflorescence
Blue grama (Eyelash grass)	<i>Chondrosum gracile (Bouteloua gracilis)</i>	Ornamental/Turf; Summer	.5 - 1.5	Sun/ part shade; Dry	To 9,500 feet	Colorado State grass; bunchgrass with flag-like inflorescence resembling eyelashes
Buffalograss	<i>Buchloe dactyloides</i>	Turf; Summer	4 - 6 inches	Sun; Moist to Dry	To 6,500 feet	Stoloniferous sod-former; stays green with occasional irrigation; tolerates clay
Green needlegrass	<i>Nassella (Stipa) viridula</i>	Ornamental; Late spring	2 - 4	Sun/ part shade; Moist to dry	To 10,000 feet	Upright bunchgrass produces narrow panicle; rich green foliage
Indian grass (Yellow Indian grass)	<i>Sorghastrum avenaceum (S. nutans)</i>	Ornamental; Summer	3 - 5	Dry-moist	To 6,500 feet	Tawny yellow inflorescence; large, upright bunchgrass; glaucous foliage turns orange
Indian ricegrass	<i>Achnatherum (Orzyopsis) hymenoides</i>	Ornamental; Spring	1 - 2	Sun; Dry/ well-drained	To 8,000 feet	Tufted clumps of narrow leaves form airy flower panicles; goes dormant in summer heat
Junegrass (Prairie Junegrass)	<i>Koeleria macrantha</i>	Ornamental/Turf; Early summer	1 - 2	Sun/ part shade; Moist to dry	To 11,000 feet	Small bunchgrass with many open, pyramidal panicles
Little bluestem	<i>Schizachyrium scoparium (Andropogon scoparius)</i>	Ornamental; Summer	1.5 - 4	Sun/ part shade; Moist to dry	To 7,500 feet	Upright bunchgrass; plants turn copper-red in fall, when seed heads catch sunlight nicely
Mountain muhly	<i>Muhlenbergia montana</i>	Ornamental/Turf; Summer	0.5 - 2	Sun/ part shade; Moist to dry	To 10,000 feet	Densely tufted bunchgrass grows well under Ponderosa pines; only be available by seed?
Needle-and-thread	<i>Hesperostipa (Stipa) comata</i>	Ornamental; Early summer	1 - 2	Sun/ part shade; Dry/ well-drained	To 7,500 feet	Short-lived bunch grass with open panicles of long-tailed seeds; catches sunlight nicely
New Mexico feathergrass	<i>Hesperostipa (Stipa) neomexicana</i>	Ornamental; Early summer	1 - 2.5	Sun/ part shade; Dry/ well-drained	To 7,500 feet?	Similar to above but seed "tails" are branched with feathery appearance
Prairie cordgrass	<i>Spartina pectinata</i>	Ornamental; Summer	3 - 7	Sun/ part shade; Moist	To 7,000 feet	Tall, sod-forming grass; ideal in marshes and wet meadows; high forage value for wildlife
Prairie dropseed	<i>Sporobolus heterolepis</i>	Ornamental; Summer	1 - 2.5	Sun/ part shade; Moist to dry	To 7,500 feet?	Fine-textured leaves turn golden orange in fall; substantial clumps make nice accent plant
Prairie sandreed	<i>Calamovilfa longifolia</i>	Ornamental; Summer	1.5 - 6	Sun/ part shade; Dry/ well-drained	To 7,000 feet	Tall, rhizomatous grass with thin panicles; great in sandy soils; only available by seed?
Side-oats grama	<i>Bouteloua curtipendula</i>	Ornamental; Summer	1 - 2.5	Sun/ part shade; Moist to dry	To 9,000 feet	Small grass with unique, 1-sided spikes; slow spreading from rhizomes
Switchgrass	<i>Panicum virgatum</i>	Ornamental; Summer	3 - 5	Sun/ part shade; Moist to dry	To 7,000 feet	Large open panicles top wide green leaves; tall, vase-shaped foliage turns red in fall
Tufted hairgrass	<i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i>	Ornamental/Turf; Early summer	2.5 - 4	Sun/ part shade; Moist	To 14,000 feet	Dense bunchgrass forms open panicles; best in wet meadows or along streambanks
Western wheatgrass	<i>Pascopyrum (Agropyron) smithii</i>	Turf; Early summer	1 - 2.5	Sun/ part shade; Moist to dry	To 9,000 feet	Tall sod grass with glaucous blue foliage; adaptable to variety of habitats

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TREES & SHRUBS—SMALL/ MEDIUM SHRUBS						
Common Name	Scientific Name *	Flower Color; Bloom Time	Height (Feet)	Preferred Environment	Elevational Range **	Other Comments
Antelope bitterbush	<i>Purshia tridentata</i>	Light yellow; Late spring/ summer	5	Sun; Dry / well-drained	To 8,000 feet	Attractive prostrate to upright woody shrub; seeds eaten by small mammals; ideal on south-facing slopes or in dry, well-drained soils
Apache plume	<i>Fallugia paradoxa</i>	White; Summer	5	Sun; Dry	To 8,000 feet	Open rounded shrub with small, semi-evergreen leaves; white flowers followed by fuzzy pink seeds
Boulder raspberry	<i>Oreobatus (Rubus) deliciosus</i>	White; Summer	5	Sun/ part shade; Dry/ well-drained	To 9,000 feet	Large and showy flowers; arching branches become flaky with age; wildlife eat the fruits
Broom snakeweed	<i>Gutierrezia sarothrae</i>	Yellow; Late summer	1	Sun; Dry/ well-drained	To 10,000 feet?	Low sub-shrub is covered with flowers in late summer; yellow green foliage is evergreen
Buckbrush (Fendler's buckbrush)	<i>Ceanothus fendleri</i>	White; Summer	2	Sun; Dry/ well-drained	To 9,000 feet	Low, spiny shrub with clusters of small flowers; interesting triangular fruit
Common juniper	<i>Juniperus communis ssp. alpina</i>	Not Applicable	1.5 - 3	Part shade/ shade; Dry/ well-drained	To 10,000 feet	Low growing evergreen shrub with needle-like leaves; blue berry-like fruits attract small mammals and birds; shade tolerant
False indigo (Leadplant)	<i>Amorpha fruticosa</i>	Purple; Summer	4 - 6	Sun/ part shade; moist	To 6,000 feet?	Open deciduous shrub with dense flowers in a crowded raceme; deep green foliage turns bright yellow in fall
Four-winged saltbush	<i>Atriplex canescens</i>	Inconspicuous; Summer	2 - 6	Sun; Dry/ well-drained	To 8,000 feet	Hairy gray leaves are sometimes evergreen; four-winged seeds of female plants are eaten by birds; foliage is highly palatable to wildlife
Golden currant	<i>Ribes aureum</i>	Bright yellow; Spring	4 - 6	Sun/ part shade; Moist to dry/ well-drained	To 10,000 feet	Open, upright to arching shrub; flowers can have pleasant clove scent flowers, black fruits attract birds; lobed green leaves turn red in fall
Kinnikinnick (Bear-berry)	<i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i>	White to pinkish; Spring	0.5 - 1	Part sun/ shade; Moist to dry/ well-drained	To 10,000 feet	Mat-forming groundcover with waxy, evergreen, leaves; small, urn-shaped flowers produce red berries relished by wildlife.
Leadplant (Silky leadplant)	<i>Amorpha canescens</i>	Purple; Summer	2.5 – 3.5	Sun/ part shade; Dry/ well-drained	To 7,500 feet	Pubescent, gray green foliage; flowers in spikes; tolerant of poor soils
Little-leaf mountain mahogany	<i>Cercocarpus intricatus</i>	Yellow; Late Spring	1 - 5	Sun/ part shade; Dry/ well-drained	To 8,500 feet	Small evergreen shrub with linear, aromatic leaves on short spine-like stems
Mountain ninebark	<i>Physocarpus monogynus</i>	White to rose-colored; Summer	3 - 4	Sun/ part shade; Moist to dry/ well-drained	To 10,000 feet	Flowers clustered into showy heads; bark of stems peel with age; seeds eaten by birds
Oregon-grape (Holly grape; Creeping Mahonia)	<i>Mahonia repens</i>	Yellow; Early spring	1 – 1.5	Part shade/ shade; Moist to Dry/ well-drained	To 9,500 feet	Dense groundcover; with evergreen, holly-like leaves, turn red in fall/winter; fragrant flower clusters produce blue berries eaten by birds

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Rabbitbrush (Rubber rabbitbrush; includes Dwarf blue & Tall Green)	<i>Chrysothamnus nauseosus</i>	Yellow; Late Summer	1 - 6	Sun/ part shade; Dry/ well-drained	To 9,000 feet	Flower clusters attract butterflies and other beneficial insects; numerous subspecies differ in size, growth habitat, and/or foliage color
Red-berried elder (Red elderberry)	<i>Sambucus microbotrys</i> (<i>S. racemosa</i>)	White to yellow; Summer	3 - 12	Sun/ part shade; Moist	To 12,000 feet	Suckering shrub with attractive dark green compound leaves and red berries
Red osier dogwood	<i>Swida sericea</i> (<i>Cornus stolonifera</i>)	White; Late spring	3 - 8	Sun/ part shade; Dry/ well-drained	To 10,000 feet	Attractive glossy leaves and red bark; flat clusters of tiny white flowers; whitish berries are consumed by birds and other wildlife
Sand cherry	<i>Cerasus</i> (<i>Prunus</i>) <i>pumila</i> ssp. <i>besseyi</i>	White; Spring	1 - 3	Sun/ part shade; Dry/ well-drained	To 8,500 feet	Open rounded shrub with glossy green leaves; Purplish-black fruit are sweet and edible; leaves turn reddish in fall
Shrubby cinquefoil	<i>Pentaphylloides floribunda</i> (<i>Potentilla fruticosa</i>)	Yellow; Summer	1 - 3	Sun/ part shade; Moist to dry/ well-drained	To 11,000 feet	Profusion of medium sized flowers followed by intermittent flowers; many color varieties offered commercially
Snowberry	<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>	White to pinkish; Summer	2 - 4	Sun to shade; Moist to dry	To 8,500 feet	Bell-shaped flowers form persistent white berries; arching red stems sucker to form low thickets; attractive rounded, blue-green leaves
Thimbleberry	<i>Rubacer</i> (<i>Rubus</i>) <i>parviflorus</i>	White; Summer	3 - 5	Part sun/ shade; Moist	To 10,000 feet	Red fruits are edible and consumed by wildlife; large lobed leaves; shredding bark
Three-leaved sumac (Skunkbrush)	<i>Rhus aromatica</i> ssp. <i>trilobata</i> (<i>Rhus trilobata</i>)	Yellow; Late spring	1 - 5	Sun/ part shade; Moist to Dry	To 9,000 feet	Aromatic, glossy green leaves turn reddish-orange in fall; red-yellow fruits eaten by wildlife
Twinberry honeysuckle	<i>Distegia</i> (<i>Lonicera</i>) <i>involutrata</i>	Yellow; Late spring	3 - 5	Part sun/ shade; Moist	To 11,500 feet	Showy reddish-purple leaf-like bracts with twin yellow flowers; hummingbirds attracted to the tubular flowers; black fruits eaten by birds;
Wax currant	<i>Ribes cereum</i>	Pink to whitish; Summer	3 - 4	Part sun/ shade; Moist to Dry	To 9,000 feet	Waxy lobed leaves on smooth stems; rounded growth habit; tubular flowers followed by red fruits eaten by wildlife
Waxflower	<i>Jamesia americana</i>	White; Late spring	2 - 6	Sun/ part shade; Moist to dry	To 10,000 feet	Waxy flowers borne on top of hairy, heart-shaped leaves; reddish bark and red fall color; soil must be well-drained
Wood's rose (Wild rose)	<i>Rosa woodsii</i>	Pink; Summer	2 - 6	Sun/ part shade; Moist to dry	To 10,500 feet	Clusters of large flowers on reddish brown, prickly stems; suckers from rhizomes; wildlife feed on the red-orange hips
Winterfat	<i>Krascheninnikovia</i> (<i>Ceratoides</i>) <i>lanata</i>	Green; Summer	1 - 3	Sun; Dry/ well-drained	To 9,500 feet	Dense white shrub with fluffy flower clusters resembling lambs' tails; good wildlife forage
Yucca (Narrow-leaf yucca; Plains yucca)	<i>Yucca glauca</i>	White	2 - 5	Sun; Dry/ well-drained	To 7,500 feet?	Narrow sharp foliage in dense rosette; large waxy flowers are eaten by deer

Suggested Native Plants for Gardening and Landscape Use on the Front Range of Colorado

Colorado Native Plant Society; Revised April 2008

TREES & SHRUBS—LARGE SHRUBS / SMALL TREES						
Common Name	Scientific Name *	Flower Color; Bloom Time	Height (Feet)	Preferred Environment	Elevational Range **	Other Comments
Boxelder	<i>Negundo aceroides (Acer negundo)</i>	Yellow-green; Summer	20 - 45	Sun/ part shade; Moist	To 7,500 feet	Inconspicuous flowers; compound leaves yellow in fall; short-lived tree
Chokecherry	<i>Padus (Prunus) virginiana ssp. melanocarpa</i>	White; Summer	5 - 12	Sun/ part shade; Moist	To 10,000 feet	Dangling clusters of aromatic flowers from dense suckering stems; large leaves turn red in fall; red to black fruits a favorite of bears
Curl-leaf mountain mahogany	<i>Cercocarpus ledifolius</i>	Yellow; Late Spring	7 - 30	Sun; Dry/ well-drained	To 9,000 feet	Upright stems; thick, semi-evergreen leaves are curled; feathery seed heads; tolerates rocky or poor soils
Hackberry	<i>Celtis reticulata</i>	Yellowish-green; Late spring	10 - 14	Sun/ part shade; Moist to dry	To 7,000 feet	Inconspicuous flowers; small reddish-brown fruits eaten by birds; spreading canopy; insect galls are common and not harmful
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus erythropoda</i>	White; Late summer	6 - 12	Sun/ part shade; Moist to dry	To 8,500 feet?	Aromatic flower clusters; berries purplish-red; thorns are up to 2" long and shiny red like bark
Mountain-ash	<i>Sorbus scopulina</i>	White; Summer	9 - 15	Part sun/ shade; Moist	To 10,500 feet	Small deciduous tree with showy flower cluster and orange berries in fall; browsed by moose and deer; fruits valued by birds and mammals
Mountain mahogany	<i>Cercocarpus montanus</i>	Yellow; Early summer	5 - 15	Sun; Dry/ well-drained	To 8,500 feet	Furrowed bark with small, occasionally evergreen leaves; feathery seed heads; tolerates rocky or poor soils
Rocky Mountain juniper	<i>Sabina (Juniperus) scopulorum</i>	Not applicable	5 - 40	Sun; Dry/ well-drained	To 8,000 feet	Evergreen, columnar conifer; birds and small mammals eat the berry-like fruits produced on female plants
Rocky Mountain maple	<i>Acer glabrum</i>	Yellow; Summer	5 - 20	Part sun/ shade; Moist	To 10,500 feet	Rounded multi-stemmed tree/ shrub with attractive red stems; birds eat seeds, buds, and flowers; inconspicuous flowers
Serviceberry	<i>Amelanchier alnifolia</i>	White; Late spring	5 - 15	Sun/ part shade; Moist to dry	To 10,000 feet	Upright to spreading branches with clusters of flowers; deciduous foliage & blue-black fruits eaten by wildlife
Silver buffaloberry	<i>Shepherdia argentea</i>	Yellowish-white; Early Summer	6 - 20	Sun/ part shade; Moist	To 7,500 feet	Leaves silvery on both sides; forms thickets with spiny branches; good wildlife cover; native cousin of invasive Russian Olive
Smooth sumac	<i>Rhus glabra</i>	Greenish-yellow; Summer	3 - 10	Sun/ part shade; Moist	To 7,500 feet	Produce fuzzy dark red fruits similar to staghorn sumac (<i>Rhus typhina</i>), but grows shorter and without velvety branches; compound leaves turn crimson in autumn
Thinleaf alder	<i>Alnus incana ssp. tenuifolia</i>	Reddish-brown; Summer	18 - 24	Sun/ part shade; Moist to wet	To 10,500 feet	Female catkins are cone-like and persist through winter; small yellow-green leaves

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Common Name	Scientific Name *	Flower Color	Height (Feet)	Preferred Environment	Elevational Range **	Comments
Wild plum	<i>Prunus americana</i>	White; Spring	3 - 12	Sun/ part shade; Moist to wet	To 6,000 feet	Showy flowers often open before the leaves form; forms dense thickets with short, thick thorns; 1" yellow to red fruits are edible

TREES & SHRUBS—LARGE TREES

Lanceleaf cottonwood	<i>Populus x. acuminata</i>	Not Applicable (male)	40 - 60	Sun/ part shade; Moist to wet	To 7,500 feet	First generation sterile hybrid between <i>P. deltoides</i> and <i>P. angustifolia</i> ; leaf-shape intermediate between the two
Narrowleaf cottonwood	<i>Populus angustifolia</i>	Not Applicable (male)	24 - 60	Sun/ part shade; Moist to wet	To 8,500 feet	Medium-sized, fast-growing tree; long narrow willow-like leaves turn yellow in fall; available as a graft onto <i>P. x acuminata</i> rootstock to reduce suckering
Plains cottonwood	<i>Populus deltoides</i> ssp. <i>monilifera</i>	Not Applicable (male)	60 - 80+	Sun/ part shade; Moist to wet	To 6,500 feet	Fast-growing tree with open habit; broad leaves turn yellow-gold in fall ; furrowed bark with age; nursery stock should be male and therefore "cotton-less"
Ponderosa pine	<i>Pinus ponderosa</i> ssp. <i>scopulorum</i>	Not Applicable	60 - 80+	Sun/ part shade; Moist to dry	To 9,000 feet	Tall evergreen tree with pyramidal crown shape; aromatic bark can resemble vanilla or butterscotch; seeds eaten by birds and small mammals

Suggested Native Plants for Gardening and Landscape Use on the Front Range of Colorado

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* **Scientific nomenclature** is from Weber and Whitmann's Colorado Flora (2003); common synonyms sometimes sold in trade are indicated in parentheses

** **Elevational Range** is listed when known; note that species may grow outside of their documented range and that it may be worth trying to test the boundaries. In many cases, species can be successfully planted at lower elevations with supplemental irrigation or at higher elevations with protection from wind and cold.

References:

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- Colorado State University Extension Fact Sheets 7.242, 7.421, and 7.422
- Handbook of Rocky Mountain Plants, Ruth Ashton Nelson, 1969
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- Meet the Natives, M. Walter Pesman, 1988
- Native Plant Revegetation Guide for Colorado, Colorado Natural Areas Program, Volume III, 1998
- North American Range Plants, Fourth Ed., Stubbendieck, Hatch, & Butterfield, 1992
- Rocky Mountain Native Plants Company Reference Catalogue, 2nd Edition
- Shrubs & Trees of the Southwest Uplands, Francis H. Elmore, 1976
- Trees & Shrubs of Colorado, Jack L. Carter, 1988
- WaterWise Landscaping with Trees, Shrubs & Vines, Jim Knopf, 1999

Suggested Seed Mixes

Non-Irrigated Mix		
Common Name	Scientific Name	Percent of Mix
Western Wheatgrass	<i>Pascopyrum smithii</i>	25
Slender Wheatgrass	<i>Elymus trachycaulus</i>	25
Bluebunch Wheatgrass (“secar” variety)	<i>Pseudoregneria spicata</i>	10
Green Needlegrass	<i>Nassella viridula</i>	15
Blue Grama	<i>Bouteloua gracilis</i>	15
Indian Ricegrass	<i>Achnatherum hymenoides</i>	10
Irrigated Mix #1		
Common Name	Scientific Name	Percent of Mix
Western Wheatgrass	<i>Pascopyrum smithii</i>	20
Slender Wheatgrass	<i>Elymus trachycaulus</i>	30
Green Needlegrass	<i>Nassella viridula</i>	20
Idaho Fescue	<i>Festuca idahoensis</i>	20
Irrigated Mix #2		
Common Name	Scientific Name	Percent of Mix
Western Wheatgrass	<i>Pascopyrum smithii</i>	30
Slender Wheatgrass	<i>Elymus trachycaulus</i>	20
Green Needlegrass	<i>Nassella viridula</i>	15
Thickspike Wheatgrass	<i>Elymus lanceolatus</i>	15
Indian Ricegrass	<i>Achnatherum hymenoides</i>	10
Bluebunch Wheatgrass (“secar” variety)	<i>Pseudoregneria spicata</i>	10
Irrigated Mix #3		
Common Name	Scientific Name	Percent of Mix
Western Wheatgrass	<i>Pascopyrum smithii</i>	30
Slender Wheatgrass	<i>Elymus trachycaulus</i>	20
Green Needlegrass	<i>Nassella viridula</i>	5
Thickspike Wheatgrass	<i>Elymus lanceolatus</i>	10
Indian Ricegrass	<i>Achnatherum hymenoides</i>	5
Bluebunch Wheatgrass (“secar” variety)	<i>Pseudoregneria spicata</i>	20
Idaho Fescue	<i>Festuca idahoensis</i>	10
Beneficial Browse Species Mix		
Common Name	Scientific Name	Seeding Rate
Big Mountain Sagebrush	<i>Artemisia tridentata</i>	0.25 lbs/acre (PLS)
Rubber Rabbit Brush	<i>Crysothamnus nauseosus</i>	2 lbs/acre (PLS)
Prairie Sage	<i>Artemisia ludoviciana</i>	0.25 lbs/acre (PLS)
Fringed Sage	<i>Artemisia frigida</i>	0.25 lbs/acre (PLS)

Mountain Meadow Mix (for Riparian/Wetland areas) (seed at 18 lbs/acre PLS if drill-seeding OR 36-40 lbs/acre PLS if broadcast)		
Common Name	Scientific Name	Percent of Mix
Fowl Bluegrass	<i>Poa palustris</i>	10
Tufted Hairgrass	<i>Deschampsia caespitosa</i>	30
Streambank Wheatgrass	<i>Elymus lanceolatus</i>	30
Western Wheatgrass	<i>Pascopyron smithii</i>	20
Arctic/Baltic Rush	<i>Juncus arcticus/balticus</i>	10
Wildflower Mix (if seeding flowers and grass, seed in a patchwork pattern)		
Common Name	Scientific Name	Percent of Mix
Rocky Mountain Penstemon	<i>Penstemon strictus</i>	15
Aspen Daisy	<i>Erigeron speciosus</i>	15
Lupine	<i>Lupinus sp.</i>	15
Sulphur Flower	<i>Erigonium umbellatum</i>	15
Colorado Columbine	<i>Aquilegia coerulea</i>	10
Scarlet Globemallow	<i>Sphaeralcea coccinea</i>	5
Prairie Sage	<i>Artemisia ludoviciana</i>	5
Showy Goldeneye	<i>Heliomeris multiflora</i>	5
Tansy Aster	<i>Machaeranthera coloradoensis</i>	10
Indian Paintbrush	<i>Castilleja chromosa</i>	5
Irrigated Pasture/Hay Mix		
Common Name	Scientific Name	Percent of Mix
Western Wheatgrass	<i>Pascopyrum smithii</i>	50
Sleepygrass	<i>Stipa robusta</i>	5
Blue Grama	<i>Bouteloua gracilis</i>	15
Basin Wildrye	<i>Elymus cinereus</i>	30
Dryland Pasture Mix		
Common Name	Scientific Name	Percent of Mix
Western Wheatgrass	<i>Pascopyrum smithii</i>	33
Green Needlegrass	<i>Nassella viridula</i>	33
Slender Wheatgrass	<i>Elymus trachycaulus</i>	33