

Low water native plants for higher elevations: Incorporating them into your landscape

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Why native plants?

1. May use less water
- 2 Tougher, able to survive with less care
3. Better sense of place
4. Will never be on the noxious weed list
5. Food or shelter for wildlife – watching the garden come alive
6. Less likely to be damaged by hail

Places to incorporate native plants in the landscape

- Borders/Beds
- Rock gardens
- Small meadows/transition areas
- Under trees and shrubs

Use of natives NOT an all-or-nothing prospect

- As long as cultural needs are similar, natives and non-natives can be planted in the same area

Use of natives can be formal or informal

Starting from scratch:

- Should have adequate organic matter (something should be already growing on the site)
 - If there's nothing already growing, check for dense trees, organic matter, pH, and correct
- If weeds are growing, control them first

Plants from containers provide quicker growth and color

- May need to amend backfill with 10-20% compost to avoid a soil disjunction in non-amended soils
- Water until established

Soil Preparation

- Native plants do not necessarily require amended soils.
- Adding organic matter to very sandy/gravelly or scraped off soils can improve soil.
- If soils are very compacted, they will need to be loosened
- Clay soils may need organic amendments to improve drainage, or the creation of a berm

Fertilizing

- Fertilizer often unnecessary; native plants are adapted to lean soils.
 - Overfertilizing can favor weeds and create weak, overgrown plants that may not bloom well
- If you do use a fertilizer, organic slow release fertilizers are best

Native plants for sunny beds and borders

Showy daisy *Erigeron speciosus*

Sneezeweed – *Helenium/Dugaldia hoopesii*

Wild Geraniums *Geranium viscosissimum* and *caespitosum*

Rocky Mountain Penstemon *Penstemon strictus*

Tufted hair grass *Deschampsia caespitosa*

Shrubby cinquefoil – *Potentilla/Pentaphylloides fruticosa*

Pineleaf penstemon (Almost native) *Penstemon pinifolius* –

Colorado columbine *Aquilegia caerulea*

Golden columbine *Aquilegia chrysantha*

Sulphur flower *Eriogonum umbellatum*

Bee balm – *Mondarda fistulosa*

Blanketflower *Gaillardia aristata*

Black eyed Susan *Rudbeckia hirta*

Rocky Mtn bee plant – *Cleome serrulata*

June grass *Koeleria macrantha*

Scarlet bugler penstemon – *Penstemon barbatus*

Native plants for small meadows/transition areas

Sowing from seed may be good choice for meadow/transition

- Least expensive method
- Greatest diversity of species
- Slowest method

Sow native seeds and grasses in the fall

- This is when they are naturally sown by the plants
- Winter is cool and wet
- Seeds need cool stratification to break dormancy

Pearly everlasting *Anaphalis margaritacea*

Native yarrow – *Achillea lanulosa*

Sages- *Artemisia frigida* and *ludoviciana*

Harebells *Campanula rotundifolia*

Silver lupine *Lupinus argenteus*

Paintbrush – *Castilleja linarifolia*

Tansy aster- *Machaeranthera bigloveii*

Windflower *Anemone multifida*

Blue flag Iris *Iris missouriensis*

Sidebells penstemon – *Penstemon secundiflorus*

Prairie coneflower *Ratibida columnifera*

Mariposa lily- *Calochortus gunnisonii*
Golden banner *Thermopsis divaricarpa*
Showy goldeneye *Viguiera (Heliomeris) multiflora*

Native plants for rock gardens and terraces

Blue mist penstemon – *Penstemon virens*
Leafy cinquefoil *Drymocallis fissa*
Wallflower *Erysimum capitatum*
Pasque flower *Pulsatilla patens*
White tufted evening primrose *Oenothera caespitosa*
Prairie smoke *Geum/Erythrocoma triflorum*
Stoncrop *Amerosedum lanceolatum*
Pussytoes *Antennaria spp*

Woody plants – the bones of the garden

Serviceberry – *Amelanchier alnifolia*
Mountain mahogany – *Cercocarpus montanus*
Rock spirea *Holodiscus dumosus*
Waxflower – *Jamesia Americana*
Creeping mahonia – *Mahonia repens*
Sand cherry – *Prunus besseyi*
Chokecherry- *Prunus virginiana*
Golden current – *Ribes aureum*
Boulder raspberry – *Rubus/Oreobatus deliciosus*
Western sage *Artemisia tridentata*