



### Green Ash

*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*

**Height:** 50 - 60+ ft.  
**Description:** Perennial deciduous tree, opposite compound leaves and thin, ridged bark. Single-seeded and winged fruit.  
**Habitat:** Open canopy areas, tolerant of both dry and wet soils  
**Blooms:** April - June  
**Viewing:** Statewide, especially in east



### Cottonwood

*Populus deltoides*

**Height:** 50 - 80+ ft.  
**Description:** Perennial deciduous tree with broad brown, dark-green glossy leaves with toothed edges, ridged dark-gray bark, seeds with fluffy hairs for a cotton-like appearance.  
**Habitat:** Lowlands, near water  
**Blooms:** March - April  
**Viewing:** Statewide



### Eastern Red Cedar

*Juniperus virginiana*

**Height:** 30 - 40+ ft.  
**Description:** Perennial evergreen juniper tree, fragrant sharp to scaly green foliage, red/brown peeling bark, and gray/blue fruit.  
**Habitat:** Riparian, grasslands, and disturbed areas - often considered invasive.  
**Blooms:** March - May  
**Viewing:** Statewide

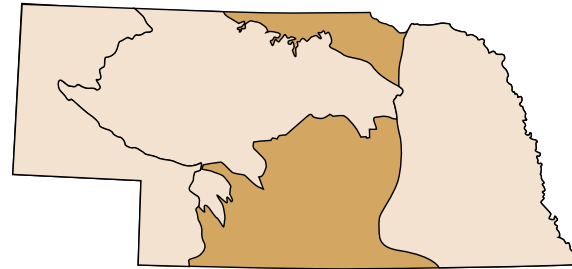


### Burr Oak

*Quercus macrocarpa*

**Height:** 30 - 70+ ft.  
**Description:** Perennial hardwood tree fiddle-like lobed leaves. Acorns with deep, fringed cup. Burr oaks can grow into tall, branched tree, or into shrubbier form found on bluffs or hillsides.  
**Habitat:** Rocky, well-drained outcrops at elevations to 7,500 ft.  
**Blooms:** March - May  
**Viewing:** Eastern half

## Mixedgrass Prairie Region



The mixedgrass prairie region is a transitional zone between the tallgrass prairie of the east and the shortgrass prairie of the west. As a result, the vegetation of this area varies, with a combination of tallgrass and shortgrass prairie plants. There are many wetlands, rivers, and streams. Wooded zones surround almost every waterway. Precipitation is greater in the east, with about 28 inches annually, compared with 20 inches in the west.

The land is primarily used for agriculture, with around two-thirds converted to cropland and much of the remaining third used for grazing livestock. There is however, a diversity of wildlife found in this region, including the annual spring staging of 500,000 sandhill cranes around the Platte River in central Nebraska. This spectacle draws around 80,000 nature enthusiasts each year, with about half from outside of Nebraska.



## Plant Viewing Tips

- Go to where the habitat is** — visit state parks and other public spaces.
- Do your homework** — learn what species grow in the area.
- Think about timing** — check what is blooming in the area this time of year.
- Consult an expert** — join in on a guided plant hike to learn where to find the best blooms.
- Leave no trace** — leave wildlife in nature and nature the way you found it.

### Terms to Know

**Annual Plant** — One year lifecycle

**Biennial Plant** — Two-year lifecycle

**Perennial Plant** — More than two year lifecycle

#### Alternating Leaves

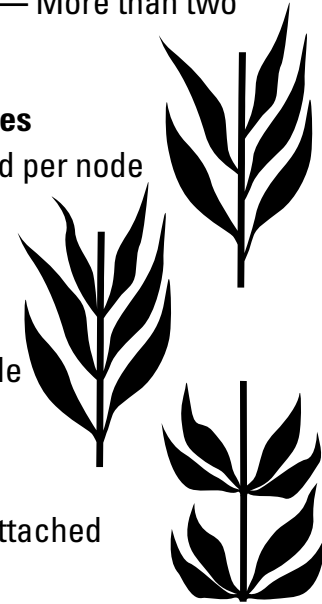
One leaf attached per node

#### Opposite Leaves

A pair of leaves attached per node

#### Whorled Leaves

Several leaves attached per node



# Plants of the Nebraska Mixedgrass Prairie



## Identification Guide

**NEBRASKA**  
— GAME PARKS —

OutdoorNebraska.org



### Green Milkweed

*Asclepias virindis*

**Height (Leaf):** 10 - 24 in.

**Description:** Perennial with deep green, opposite leaves with wavy edges. Small greenish-white flowers grouped in spherical clusters along stalk.

**Habitat:** Dry prairie

**Blooms:** May - July

**Viewing:** Statewide



### Upright Prairie Coneflower

*Ratibida columnifera*

**Height:** 12 - 24 in.

**Description:** Perennial with tall stem with stiff hairs and alternating leaves, yellow to red flower with gray head that turns brown as it matures.

**Habitat:** Dry prairie

**Blooms:** July - September

**Viewing:** Statewide



### Wild Alfalfa

*Psoralea tenuiflorum*

**Height:** 12 - 36 in.

**Description:** Perennial, gray hairs on stem and alternating leaves, flower stalks with purple pea-like blooms.

**Habitat:** Dry uplands

**Blooms:** May - July

**Viewing:** Statewide except northeast



### Buffalo Grass

*Bouteloua dactyloides*

**Height:** 3 - 12 in.

**Description:** Perennial, low-growing grass with flag-like, one-sided seed stalks.

**Habitat:** Dry grasslands

**Blooms:** May - July

**Viewing:** Statewide, especially in west



### White Prairie-clover

*Dalea candida*

**Height:** 12 - 24 in.

**Description:** Perennial with tall stem and alternating leaves, 1 - 2 in. flower head with circles of small white blooms that advance from bottom to top.

**Habitat:** Dry prairie

**Blooms:** May - September

**Viewing:** Statewide



### Purple Locoweed

*Oxytropis lambertii*

**Height:** 4 - 16 in.

**Description:** Perennial, foliage often forming tufts or mats stems not evident, flowering stalks and leaves hairy, 10 - 20 purple pea-like flowers atop a leafless stalk.

**Habitat:** Dry soil, often eroded area

**Blooms:** May - June

**Viewing:** Statewide, except SE



### Dotted Gayfeather

*Liatris punctata*

**Height:** 12 - 30 in.

**Description:** Perennial with tall stems, usually growing in a cluster, numerous alternating leaves, and pink-purple flowers along top third of stem.

**Habitat:** Dry prairie

**Blooms:** August - October

**Viewing:** Statewide



### Little Bluestem

*Schizachyrium scoparium*

**Height:** 24 - 48 in.

**Description:** Perennial tufted bunchgrass with flat slender leaves, bronze flowers followed by white tufted seed heads.

**Habitat:** Grasslands

**Blooms:** July - October

**Viewing:** Statewide



### Nine-anther Prairie Clover

*Dalea enneandra*

**Height:** 12 - 60 in.

**Description:** Perennial with branched stems, alternating leaves, and flower spike with small white flowers.

**Habitat:** Dry prairie

**Blooms:** June - September

**Viewing:** Statewide



### Narrow-leaved Coneflower

*Echinacea angustifolia*

**Height:** 16 - 28 in.

**Description:** Perennial, hairy stems, dark green leaves, a large solitary flower head, pink to red-violet with a brown spiny center.

**Habitat:** Moist to dry prairie

**Blooms:** June - July

**Viewing:** Statewide, though less common west



### Lead Plant

*Amorpha canescens*

**Height:** 12 - 36 in.

**Description:** Perennial shrub with woody stem, alternating leaflets, and stalk of red-purple flowers.

**Habitat:** Well-drained soil

**Blooms:** June - July

**Viewing:** Statewide



### Side Oats Grama

*Bouteloua curtipendula*

**Height:** 8 - 10 in.

**Description:** Perennial with oat-like seed spikes that hang down one side of the flowering stem. Leaves are narrow blue-gray and foliage becoming brown-orange in winter.

**Habitat:** Dry prairie

**Blooms:** June - August

**Viewing:** Statewide



### Plains Coreopsis

*Coreopsis tinctoria*

**Height:** 12 - 36 in.

**Description:** Annual/biennial, grows in colonies. Leaves opposite, dark green, branched stems, bright yellow flowers of three lobed petals with brown center. Crushed flowers have a distinct spicy odor.

**Habitat:** Wet soil

**Blooms:** July - August

**Viewing:** Statewide, esp. Central



### Pink Smartweed

*Polygonum bicorne*

**Height:** 8 - 72 in.

**Description:** Annual with alternating leaves on a thin, branched stem. Crowded flower spike with small pink blooms.

**Habitat:** Shallow wetlands

**Blooms:** May - July

**Viewing:** Central - east, most abundant central



### Blue Grama

*Bouteloua gracilis*

**Height:** 10 - 20 in.

**Description:** Perennial, densely tufted bunchgrass, seed head sits at top of stem and when mature it is curved, resembling an eyebrow.

**Habitat:** Well-drained grasslands

**Blooms:** June - August

**Viewing:** Statewide



### Sandbar Willow

*Salix exigua*

**Height:** 24 - 36 ft.

**Description:** Perennial shrub with thin stems and narrow serrated leaves. Grows in thickets, has tan blooms. Stems reddish when young, gray when mature.

**Habitat:** Riparian areas with moist, sandy soil

**Blooms:** March - April

**Viewing:** Statewide