



Buffalo Grass

Bouteloua dactyloides

Height: 3 - 10 in.

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

Habitat: Dry grasslands

Blooms: May - July

Viewing: Statewide, especially in west



Threadleaf Sedge

Carex filifolia

Height: 4 - 20 in.

Description: Perennial grass with reddish sheath, flowers located on 1 in. spike on top of stem.

Habitat: Well-drained grasslands

Blooms: April - June

Viewing: West to central



Ponderosa Pine

Pinus ponderosa

Height: 60 - 100 ft.

Description: Long-lived pine tree with 3 - 5 in. needles that grow in clusters of 3, devoid of lower branches, produces large cones.

Habitat: Rocky, well-drained forests

Blooms: April - June, biannually

Viewing: Panhandle, Pine Ridge



Rocky Mountain Juniper

Juniperus scopulorum

Height: 12 - 36 ft.

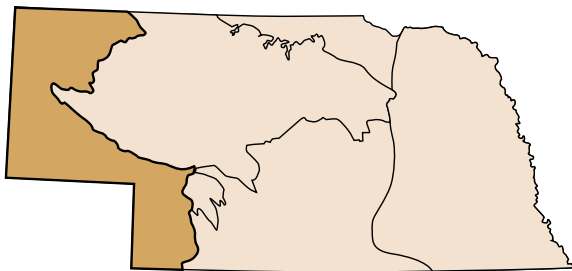
Description: Long-lived evergreen, often with irregular crown, produces white-blue berries.

Habitat: Rocky, well-drained outcrops at elevations to 7,500 ft.

Blooms: April - May

Viewing: Panhandle, Pine Ridge

Shortgrass Prairie Region



The shortgrass prairie region includes the southwestern corner and Panhandle of Nebraska. This area is made up of short to mixed grass prairie and the Pine Ridge. The shortgrass prairie is the driest and warmest of the Great Plains grasslands.

This region receives an average of 12 - 17 inches of rainfall annually and consists of buffalo grass and blue grama. The Pine Ridge is found in northwestern Nebraska and is dominated by ponderosa pine. More than 300 species of migratory and resident birds can be found in the shortgrass prairie region, as well as a variety of mammals, plants, reptiles, insects and other species.



Plant Viewing Tips

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



Plants of the Nebraska Shortgrass Prairie

Terms to Know

Annual Plant — One year lifecycle

Biennial Plant — Two-year lifecycle

Perennial Plant — More than two year lifecycle

Alternating Leaves

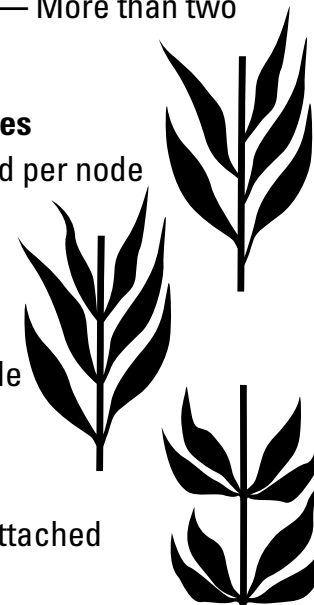
One leaf attached per node

Opposite Leaves

A pair of leaves attached per node

Whorled Leaves

Several leaves attached per node



Identification Guide

NEBRASKA
— GAME PARKS —

OutdoorNebraska.org



Yucca

Yucca glauca

Height (Leaf): 16 - 30 in.
Description: Perennial with rosette of stiff, sharp leaves. Flowers grow from central stalk that can reach 5 ft. high.
Habitat: Dry prairie
Blooms: Late May - mid July
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



Nuttall's Violet

Viola nuttallii

Height: 1 - 3 in.
Description: Short perennial with 1 - 3 in. leaves and yellow flowers with five petals and three red-brown lower nectar lines.
Habitat: Dry prairie
Blooms: April - September
Viewing: West, excluding Sandhills



Broom Snakeweed

Gutierrezia sarothrae

Height: 12 - 36 in.
Description: Perennial that is bushy and shrub-like with numerous branches, alternating leaves, and clusters of small yellow flowers at the end of branches.
Habitat: Dry prairie, rocky outcrops
Blooms: Mid July - September
Viewing: West to central



Plains Prickly Pear

Opuntia polyacantha

Height: 8+ in.
Description: Cactus with stems in round jointed pads or segments, covered in clusters of spines, yellow flowers with overlapping petals.
Habitat: Dry prairie
Blooms: June - July
Viewing: Panhandle



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



Wild Begonia

Rumex venosus

Height: 4-12 in.
Description: Perennial, with alternating leaves, inconspicuous green flowers and showy crimson winged fruit.
Habitat: Sandy, disturbed soils
Blooms: Late May - July
Viewing: Statewide except SE, common in Sandhills and Panhandle



Plains Sunflower

Helianthus petiolaris

Height: 20 - 60 in.
Description: Annual sunflower with yellow disk flowers are about 3 in. across and have red-brown centers, tall hairy stems alternating leaves.
Habitat: Dry soil
Blooms: Late June - September
Viewing: Statewide



Showy Milkweed

Asclepias speciosa

Height: 18 - 36 in.
Description: Perennial with non-branching stem, leaves 3 - 7 in. long positioned opposite each other along stem, clusters of small pink-white-colored flowers on top.
Habitat: Moist, sandy soil
Blooms: Mid June - late August
Viewing: West to central



Narrowleaf Penstemon

Penstemon angustifolius

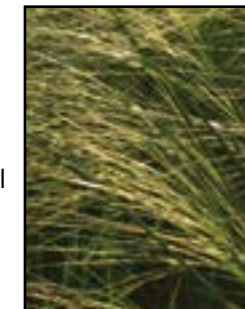
Height: 8 - 24 in.
Description: Perennial with 1 - 5 stems with thick leaves positioned opposite up stalk and blue/violet tubular flowers with lobbed edges.
Habitat: Prairie to open pine woodland
Blooms: May - June
Viewing: West to central



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



Needle and Thread Grass

Hesperostipa comata

Height: 12 - 24 in.
Description: Perennial tufted bunch grass with 4 - 5 in. awn that when it detaches with the pointed seed it resembles a needle and thread.
Habitat: Well-drained grasslands
Blooms: June
Viewing: West to central



Missouri Goldenrod

Solidago missouriensis

Height: 12 - 36 in.
Description: Perennial with a smooth, tall stem with alternating leaves and small yellow flowers along top branches.
Habitat: Dry prairie
Blooms: July - September
Viewing: Statewide



Geyer's Larkspur

Delphinium geyeri

Height: 12 - 24 in.
Description: Perennial with reddish stems, low growing leaves and a flower spike with 6 - 30 deep blue blooms.
Habitat: Shortgrass prairie
Blooms: June - July
Viewing: Southern Panhandle



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



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