The Missouri River corridor includes the river channel, the associated floodplain, wetlands, and bluffs. This region consists of a mixture of riparian and upland deciduous forests, and tall- and mixed-grass prairies. The Missouri River runs approximately 2,320 miles from the headwaters in Montana to where it converges with the Mississippi River in St. Louis, Missouri. A 400-mile stretch of the Missouri River borders eastern Nebraska, running from the South Dakota borderer to the Kansas border, separating the state of Nebraska from Iowa.

The Missouri River has undergone many changes throughout the 20th century. Where the river once freely meandered across a vast floodplain, channelization, dams, conversion of wetlands, and development of structures and agriculture fields have transformed this region. Even so, the Missouri River corridor provides habitat not readily found throughout the rest of the state and allows for the success of some species in Nebraska whose geographic ranges are limited to this region.

### Missouri River Corridor

**Chinkapin Oak**
*Quercus muehlenbergii*
- **Height:** 30 - 60 ft.
- **Description:** Overstory tree with shiny, narrow and broadly serrated leaves. Acorns are small, oval, and have scaly caps. Bark becomes flaky gray-yellow as tree matures.
- **Habitat:** Upland forests
- **Blooms:** March - May
- **Viewing:** Southeast

**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

**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

### 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.

### 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
Jack-in-the-pulpit  
Arisaema triphyllum  
Height: 12 - 24 in.  
Description: Perennial with thick flowering stalk, mottled green and purplish. Bloom has leaf-like hood.  
Habitat: Moist, rich soils in woodlands  
Blooms: April - June  
Viewing: East, especially Missouri River valley

May-apple  
Podophyllum peltatum  
Height: 12 - 18 in.  
Description: Perennial with thick, smooth stem and large umbrella-like toothed leaves. Single nodding flower is white and at base of leaves. Fruit is round and yellow-green with many seeds.  
Habitat: Moist, rich soils in woodlands  
Blooms: May  
Viewing: Southeast Missouri River valley

Dutchman’s Breeches  
Dicentra cucullaria  
Height: 4 - 12 in.  
Description: Perennial with ridged fern-like leaves, reddish flower stalks with heart-shaped flower, white to pale pink in color.  
Habitat: Moist, rich soils in woodlands  
Blooms: April - May  
Viewing: Eastern fourth 

White Snakeroot  
Ageratina altissima  
Height: 24 - 36 in.  
Description: Perennial with erect branching stem with opposite leaves. Domed clusters of 12 - 24 white flowers.  
Habitat: Dry woodland soils  
Blooms: August - September  
Viewing: East

Virginia Waterleaf  
Hydrophyllum virginianum  
Height: 12 - 30 in.  
Description: Perennial usually with single or occasionally branched stem with stiff hairs. Deeply lobed leaves, spherical flower head, white to violet-red bell-shaped flowers.  
Habitat: Moist, rich soils in woodlands  
Blooms: May - June  
Viewing: East, especially Missouri River valley

White Fawn Lily  
Erythronium albidum  
Height: 4 - 6 in.  
Description: Perennial with elongated fleshy leaves, nodding white flowers, one per stalk.  
Habitat: Moist, rich soils in woodlands  
Blooms: April - May  
Viewing: Missouri river corridor and extreme southeast

Bloodroot  
Sanguinaria canadensis  
Height: 12 - 24 in.  
Description: Perennial with lobed leaves, orange-red latex felt, and flowers with white petals and yellow centers.  
Habitat: Moist, rich soils in woodlands  
Blooms: April - May  
Viewing: Northeast, Missouri River valley

Large-flowered Tick-clover  
Desmodium glutinosum  
Height: 12 - 48 in.  
Description: Perennial with trifoliate leaves with oval teardrop shape. Flower stalks with several light to rosy pink flowers.  
Habitat: Moist woodland soils  
Blooms: June - August  
Viewing: Mainly east, but also northcentral

Swamp Milkweed  
Asclepias incarnata  
Height: 48 - 60 in.  
Description: Perennial with single stem, opposite leaves, clusters of pink hourglass shaped flowers. Milky white sap.  
Habitat: Shallow or moist-soiled wetlands  
Blooms: June - August  
Viewing: Statewide, most common east

Wild Columbine  
Aquilegia canadensis  
Height: 12 - 36 in.  
Description: Perennial with slender stalks, alternate leaves and nodding reddish-pink and yellow tubular flowers with five pointed petals.  
Habitat: Moist woodland soils  
Blooms: April - June  
Viewing: North and east, especially Missouri River and Niobrara river valleys

Blue Phlox  
Phlox divaricata  
Height: 9 - 15 in.  
Description: Perennial with slender stems with opposite elongated leaves. Flower clusters atop stem with 3 - 25 blue-violet tubular flowers.  
Habitat: Rich, moist woodland soils  
Blooms: April - May  
Viewing: East and southeast, especially Missouri River valley

Brittle Bladderfern  
Cystopteris fragilis  
Height: 6 - 12 in.  
Description: Perennial green frilly fern with narrow pointed fronds that grow in low clumps.  
Habitat: Moist woodland soils  
Blooms: March - August  
Viewing: East and north

Nodding Fescue  
Festuca subverticillata  
Height: 24 - 36 in.  
Description: Perennial grass with flat alternate half-inch leaves and 12 inches long. Tufted culms often nodding, small flowers range from green to yellow to brown.  
Habitat: Most deciduous woodlands  
Blooms: April - May  
Viewing: Mainly east, but also north-central

Prairie Cordgrass  
Spartina pectinata  
Height: 36 - 84 in.  
Description: Perennial bunchgrass with tough and coarse leaves, yellow-brown flowers.  
Habitat: Wet, non-saline soils  
Blooms: August - September  
Viewing: Statewide

Davis’ Sedge  
Carex davisi  
Height: 12 - 36 in.  
Description: Perennial sedge with a red base and grass-like alternating leaves. Nondescript green blooms followed by overlapping football-shaped seeds.  
Habitat: Moist lowland forests  
Blooms: May - July  
Viewing: Eastern fifth