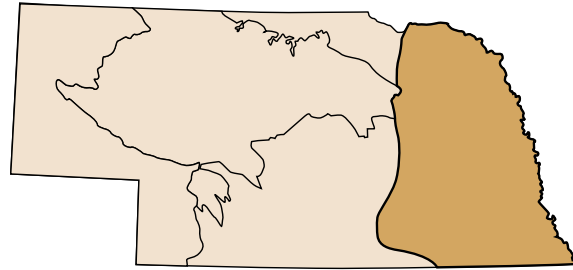
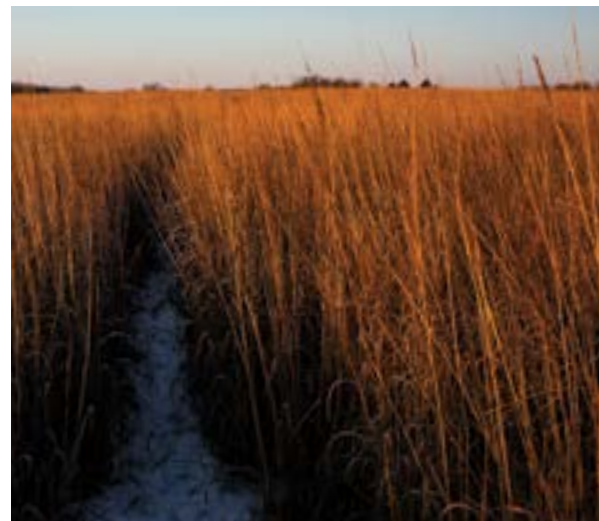


Tallgrass Prairie Region



The Nebraska tallgrass prairie region comprises the eastern quarter of the state. The key to this landscape is the thick, rich soil that enables deep-rooting prairie plants to survive. Grasses and forbs dominate this grassland region, with few trees, except along water corridors.

This area receives 25 - 36 inches of rain annually. Much of the historic grasslands have been converted, leaving only about 2 percent of unmodified tallgrass prairie habitat. This area incorporates many wetlands, including the saline wetlands, north of Lincoln. This range has a diversity of birds, plants, mammals, reptiles and insects that call it home.



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

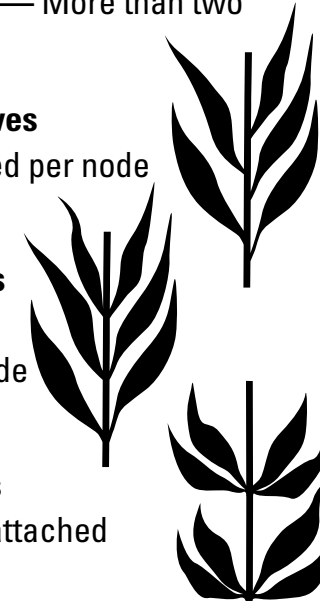
One leaf attached per node

Opposite Leaves

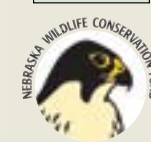
A pair of leaves attached per node

Whorled Leaves

Several leaves attached per node



Plants of the Nebraska Tallgrass Prairie



Identification Guide

NEBRASKA
— GAME PARKS —

OutdoorNebraska.org

© Courtesy Sally and Andy Wasnowski, wildflower.org

Prairie Cordgrass

Spartina pectinata

Height: 36 - 84 in.

Description: Perennial bunch-grass with tough and coarse leaves, yellow-brown flowers.

Habitat: Wet, non-saline soils

Blooms: August - September

Viewing: Statewide

Indiangrass

Sorghastrum nutans

Height: 36 - 60 in.

Description: Perennial topped with feathery flower-panicles. Green-blue in the summer changing to orange-yellow in the fall.

Habitat: Deep, well-drained soils

Blooms: August - October

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

American Hackberry

Celtis occidentalis

Height: 40 - 60 ft.

Description: Perennial, deciduous tree with long, pointed leaves discreet green flowers in summer and orange-red fruit in the fall.

Habitat: Can be found in various soil types

Blooms: April - May

Viewing: Statewide, except east



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



Rosinweed

Silphium integrifolium

Height: 36 - 60 in.

Description: Perennial with stout, hairy stem, thick, opposite leaves and thick, yellow flower.

Habitat: Dry soils

Blooms: July - August

Viewing: Statewide, esp. central



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



Prairie Rose

Rose arkansana

Height: 6 - 40 in.

Description: Perennial woody shrub, alternating leaves, flowers have five pink petals surrounding yellow center.

Habitat: Moist soil

Blooms: Late May - 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



Showy Goldenrod

Solidago speciosa

Height: 12 - 48 in.

Description: Perennial with rough stems, many alternating leaf, and a club-like flower spike with many yellow flowers.

Habitat: Dry to moist soils

Blooms: August - October

Viewing: Eastern fifth



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



Wild Onion

Allium canadense

Height: 8 - 24 in.

Description: Perennial with narrow grass-like leaves, tall flower stalks topped with cluster of small white-pink flowers.

Habitat: Dry to moist soils

Blooms: April - July

Viewing: East - central



Prairie Blazing Star

Liatris pycnostachya

Height: 24 - 60 in.

Description: Perennial with numerous long, thin, alternating leaves. Flower spike is club-like with pink flowers.

Habitat: Dry, sandy soils

Blooms: July - August

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



Big Bluestem

Andropogon gerardii

Height: 48 - 72 in.

Description: Perennial tall grass with purple-red blooms.

Habitat: Grasslands

Blooms: July - October

Viewing: Statewide



Common Milkweed

Asclepias syriaca

Height: 24 - 60 in.

Description: Perennial with stout stem and opposite, oblong leaves. Spherical cluster of small white-pink flowers.

Habitat: Dry - moist soils

Blooms: June - August

Viewing: Eastern



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Madison, WI - Wikimedia Commons

Illinois Tick-trefoil

Desmodium illinoense

Height: 30 - 72 in.

Description: Perennial with thick, round, hairy stem and purple to white flowers.

Habitat: Dry soils

Blooms: July - August

Viewing: East - central



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