

# Easy to Grow, Xeric Plants for Pollinators

Note: In general, dead-head to prolong bloom or prevent spreading; save plenty of seeds at the end for the birds, for some spreading, and to share with others!

## COLORADO NATIVE FLOWERS



**Anise Hyssop**

*Agastache foeniculum*. AKA Lavender Hyssop.

**Size:** 2' x 1.5'

**Water:** Very low – low

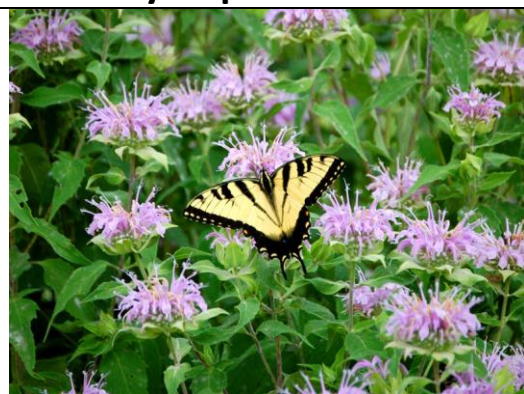
**Exposure:** Sun to light shade.

**Flower Color:** Purple

**Blooms:** Mid-summer to fall

**Pollinators:** Bees, butterflies and hummingbirds

**Notes:** A short-lived perennial. Often blooms the first year. Spreads by seed, but not aggressively. Easy to transplant. Leaves are an excellent herb for salads, green smoothies, tea. Wonderful licorice fragrance and flavor.



**Bee Balm**

*Monarda fistulosa* aka Wild Bergamot or Horsemint.

**Size:** 2' x 2'

**Water:** Low-med

**Exposure:** Sun/part-shade

**Flower Color:** Pink/Lavender

**Blooms:** Summer (July – Sept)

**Pollinators:** Nectar/pollen for bees, butterflies; Nectar for hummingbirds

Sow: Late fall or on bare soil in spring

**Notes:** Many uses (poultices for boils or lacerations; tea for headaches, indigestion, colds, flu.



**Black-eyed Susan**

*Rudbeckia hirta*

**Size:** Up to 3' x 18"

**Water:** Low

**Flower Color:** Yellow petals with black/brown center

**Exposure:** Sun/part-shade

**Blooms:** Summer into fall

**Pollinators:** Nectar/pollen for bees, butterflies; seeds for birds

Sow: Sprinkle seeds on top of seed starting mix 6-8 weeks before the last frost date, or direct sow outdoors 2-4 weeks before average last frost.

**Notes:** A short-lived perennial or biennial.



**Coreopsis**

*Coreopsis tinctoria* aka Plains Coreopsis or Tickseed.  
**Size:** 1-2'  
**Water:** Prefers moist but tolerates dry once established  
**Exposure:** Sun, part shade  
**Blooms:** Spring, Summer  
**Flower Color:** Yellow with maroon centers  
**Pollinators:** Wide variety of native bees; butterflies; seeds for birds  
**Sowing:** In fall or spring, sprinkle seed on top of the soil, and press in or lightly cover.  
**Notes:** Prefers sandy soil. An annual that may live a few years.



**Daisy (Showy Goldeneye)**

*Helianthus multiflorus* aka Showy Goldeneye.  
**Size:** 2' x 2'  
**Water:**  
**Exposure:** Sun  
**Blooms:** Summer - fall  
**Flower Color:** Yellow  
**Pollinators:** Self-seeds mildly. Seeds need a one-year period to fully ripen and then germinate; let them self-sow, or store seeds at 70 degrees and plant the next fall.



**Gaillardia**

*Gaillardia aristata* aka Blanket Flower and *Gaillardia x grandiflora* (*aristata* x *pulchella*). Cross between two CO native varieties of Gaillardia.  
**Size:** 1/5-2'  
**Water:** Low  
**Exposure:** Sun  
**Blooms:** Summer  
**Pollinators:** Bees, butterflies, hummingbirds, birds  
**Sow:** Direct sow in spring after last frost or sow indoors 4-6 weeks before last frost.  
**Notes:** Prefers well-draining soil. Keep deadheaded for continuous prolific bloom. May bloom first year.



**Gayfeather**

*Liatris punctata* aka Dotted Blazing Star, Dotted Gayfeather.  
**Size:** 1-2' x 1'  
**Water:** Low - Medium  
**Exposure:** Sun  
**Blooms:** Summer- fall  
**Pollinators:** Nectar/pollen for bees, butterflies  
**Sow:** Scarified seeds may be sown outside in late fall or stored, stratified 2 months, and sown in spring from early spring through summer, up to two months before frost.





**Goldenrod**

*Solidago canadensis* aka Canada Goldenrod.  
**Size:** Over 30" x 18"  
**Water:** Medium; tolerates drought  
**Exposure:** Sun  
**Flower Color:** Yellow  
**Blooms:** Summer  
**Pollinators:** Nectar/pollen for bees, butterflies  
**Sow:** Sow seeds indoors 6-8 wks before last average frost, press into soil and barely cover. Needs light to germinate. Or sow directly outdoors in fall or spring.  
**Notes:** Spreads aggressively by root. Contrary to common belief, goldenrod pollen does not contribute to hay fever or allergy symptoms because it is too sticky to go airborne. Ragweed is the culprit.



**Hairy False Goldenaster**

*Heterotheca villosa* aka Hairy Goldenaster  
**Size:** 8"-2' x 1-2'  
**Water:** Low  
**Exposure:** Sun  
**Flower Color:** Yellow  
**Blooms:** Summer-fall  
**Pollinator:**s Wide variety of native bees; butterflies; seeds for birds  
**Sow:** Direct sow in the spring, pressing the tiny seeds in the surface of rich soil and sprinkling a very thin layer of soil on top; needs light to germinate. Mix seed with a small amount of sand. To start indoors, plant seed on surface of the soil; keep lightly moist and at 70 degrees F.  
**Notes:** Sub-shrub. Grows in sandy, gravelly or clay soil. Naturalizes.



**Maximilian Sunflower**

*Helianthus maximiliani*.  
**Size:** 6' x 4'; vigorously spreads by root  
**Water:** Low  
**Exposure:** Sun  
**Flower Color:** Yellow  
**Blooms:** Fall  
**Pollinators:** Nectar/pollen for bees, butterflies, moths; seeds for birds.  
**Sow:** Direct sow in late fall, 1/2" deep or cold stratify 30 days and plant in spring, indoors or outdoors.



**Milkweed (Common)**

*Asclepias syriaca.*

**Size:** 4' x 1'

**Water:** Dry to moist

**Exposure:** Sun to part sun

**Flower Color:** Pink

**Blooms:** Spring - Fall

**Pollinators:** Nectar/pollen for bees, butterflies; host plant for Monarch larva; nectar for hummingbirds

**Sow:** Direct sow in late fall, or stratify seed 30 days before direct planting after danger of frost in spring. Or start seeds indoors 2 months before final frost.

**Notes:** Grows in just about any soil condition, sandy, clay, rock, wet or dry



**Milkweed (Butterfly)**

*Asclepias tuberosa* aka Butterflyweed.

**Size:** 1/5' x 1/5'

**Water:** Low

**Exposure:** Sun

**Flower Color:** Orange

**Blooms:** Summer

**Pollinators:** Nectar/pollen for bees, butterflies; host plant for Monarch larva; nectar for hummingbirds.

**Sow:** Direct sow in late fall, or stratify seed 30 days before direct planting after danger of frost in spring. Or start seeds indoors 2 months before final frost.



**Prairie Coneflower**

*Ratibida columnifera* aka Mexican Hat

**Size:** Up to 3' x 1'

**Water:** low

**Exposure:** Sun

**Flower Color:** either yellow, maroon, or a mixture

**Blooms:** Late spring – summer

**Pollinators:** Nectar/pollen for bees, butterflies; seeds for birds

**Sow:** Preferably in the fall; if in spring, stratify 30 days. Lightly rake the flower seeds into the loose soil and barely cover.

**Notes:** Prefers poor, well-drained soil. Used by Native Americans medicinally for a wide variety of ailments. Short-lived perennial, but self-sows well.





**Prickly Poppy**

*Argemone polyanter*

**Size:** 3' x 1.5'

**Water:** Low

**Exposure:** Sun

**Flower Color:** White with yellow center

**Blooms:** Summer

**Pollinators:** Bees

**Sow:** Best to direct sow outdoors, 1/8" deep, in late fall or in spring after the last frost.

**Notes:** Annual or biennial. So prickly, not a kid-friendly plant. Thrives in any well-drained soil, including poor sandy or rocky soil. Long-blooming.



**Purple Prairie Clover**

*Dalea purpurea*

**Size:** 2' x 18"

**Water:** Low

**Exposure:** Sun

**Flower Color:** Purple

**Blooms:** Summer

**Pollinators:** Nectar/pollen for bees, butterflies; seeds for birds

**Sow:** Plant ¼" deep in early spring; keep moist; germinates in 10-12 days.

**Notes:** Adapts well to sand, clay, and gravel. A nitrogen-fixer. Blooms second year. Native Americans used to apply plant to fresh wounds, leaves used for tea, roots eaten as a delicacy, stems used as brooms. Native to Colorado Front Range.



**Rabbitbrush**

*Ericameria nauseosa* aka Rubber Rabbitbrush

**Size:** 5-7' x 5-7' or for Dwarf Rabbitbrush, 1-3' x 1-3'

**Pollinators:** Nectar/pollen for bees, butterflies; seeds and shelter for birds

**Sow:** in fall or spring, 1/16" deep; lightly mulch soil. Germinates above 70 degrees F. Can soak in water 24 hrs. beforehand in spring. Matures in 2-3 yrs.

**Notes:** Draws clouds of butterflies, esp. Painted Ladies. Cage young shrubs for 2-3 year to protect from deer, rabbits)



**Rocky Mountain Beeplant**

ANNUAL *Cleome serrulata*  
**Water:** Low  
**Exposure:** Sun  
**Flower Color:** Pink  
**Blooms:** Late spring - summer  
**Pollinators:** Bees, butterflies  
**Notes:** Can grow to 4' tall even in really tough conditions of poor clay soil and little rain, even taller with supplemental water and good soil. Seeds were used as food by Native Americans. Mourning doves love the seed. Bees adore the blossoms! Best germination comes from scattering seed late fall, rather than early spring. If sown in spring, soak seeds overnight first.



**Rocky Mountain Penstemon**

*Penstemon strictus* aka Beardtongue.  
**Size:** 30" x 2'  
**Water:** Low  
**Exposure:** Sun/part shade  
**Flower Color:** Blue/purple  
**Blooms:** Spring-Summer; may rebloom in fall  
**Pollinators:** Nectar/pollen for bees, butterflies; nectar for hummingbirds  
**Sow:** Direct sow in late fall, pressing into the surface of the soil; needs light to germinate. Or in spring, mix the seeds with moist sand and store in the refrigerator for 30-60 days before planting. Also can alternative between fridge and freezer to speed up the stratification process.



**Sacred Datura**

*Datura wrightii* aka Angel Trumpet.  
**Size:** 3' x 4'  
**Water:** Very Low  
**Exposure:** Sun – dappled shade  
**Flower Color:** White  
**Blooms:** Late summer; deadhead for prolonged bloom.  
**Pollinators:** Honey bees absolutely adore it!  
**Notes:** Both seed and all parts of the plant are **poisonous**. A large desert plant native to the SW and to Mexico. Large showy blossoms, up to 6" long, have a scent reminiscent of both rose and Easter lilies; heavenly! Buds open in late afternoon; blossoms wilt in the next morning's heat. Bees find the pollen and nectar so intoxicating, they will claw their way into the buds before they open! Used by Native Americans for religious purposes.





**Sunflower**

*Helianthus annuus* aka Native/Common Sunflower.  
**Annual**  
**Size:** 6' tall x 3'  
**Water:** Very Low- Med  
**Exposure:** Sun  
**Flower Color:** Yellow with brown centers  
**Blooms:** Spring-Summer  
**Pollinators:** Attracts profusion of beneficial insects.  
**Notes:** Self-seeds freely. Provides a favorite food source for many birds, especially yellow finches! Considered among the most important flowers to grow in the organic garden. Tolerates extremely dry, poor soil. Native to the lower 48 states.



**Winecups**

*Callirhoe involucrata* aka Poppy Mallow  
**Size:** 6-12" tall x 3' sprawl  
**Water:** Low-med  
**Exposure:** Sun  
**Flower Color:** Magenta  
**Blooms:** Spring-Summer  
**Pollinators:** Nectar/pollen for bees, butterflies  
**Germination:** Soak seeds overnight in water, or sandpaper seeds lightly. Plant 1/8" in fall or spring.  
**Notes:** Grows well in dry, rocky or shallow soil.



**Yucca**

*Yucca baccata* aka Banana Yucca.  
**Size:** 2' x 2'  
**Water:** Low  
**Exposure:** Sunny/hot, but grows in partial shade  
**Flower Color:** Creamy  
**Blooms:** Spring (not every year)  
**Pollinators:**  
**Germination:** Sketchy; takes 3-4 weeks. Take cuttings from plants for best luck.  
**Notes:** Prefers dry, poor, sandy or rocky well-draining soil. Sharp leaves make this a good barrier plant. Seedpods were traditional food for Apache and Navaho; roots make good soap; basket material.

## NON-NATIVES (to Colorado) to attract honeybees and/or native bees and other pollinators



**Arugula**

**ANNUAL** (Edible)  
**Size:** 2' x 1'  
**Water:** Low-med  
**Exposure:** Sun/part-shade  
**Flower Color:** Creamy white  
**Blooms:** Early spring (if overwintered); Fall (if sown in spring)  
**Pollinators:** Excellent forage for early bees  
**Notes:** If allowed to self-seed, overwinters to bloom in early spring of the following season. With protection, can provide fresh greens all winter. Great salad green; good cooked, too. Originated in the Mediterranean and was considered an aphrodisiac; was forbidden to be grown in Monasteries in the Middle Ages.



**Carrot (vegetable)**

**BIENNIAL; produces edible root first year**  
**Size:** 3' x 2'  
**Water:** Very Low - Med  
**Exposure:** Sun  
**Flower Color:** White  
**Blooms:** Summer- fall. Deadhead to prolong bloom.  
**Pollinators:** Bees, butterflies, beetles  
**Notes:** Allow some seed-heads to self-sow to create a carrot bed for early next spring. There are options of how to establish a flower bed of carrots: You can start the carrot from seed and wait two years; you can leave some carrots undug in the fall (mulch them very well); or plant several fresh grocery-store carrots that still have their crowns intact in the spring, to produce blossoms all summer long.



**Chives**

**Edible Herb (perennial)**  
**Size:** 1' x 1'  
**Water:** Low. Let dry between waterings.  
**Exposure:** Sun to part shade  
**Flower Color:** Pink  
**Blooms:** Early to late spring  
**Pollinators:** Bees  
**Notes:** Leaves and flowers are edible; harvest only the top 3" of leaves to keep the plant the strongest. Divide clumps after 2 years. Do not overwater, or roots will rot. Self-seeds, though not aggressively.





**Cilantro**

**Edible Herb (annual)**

**Size:** 1.5' x 1'

**Water:** Low - med

**Exposure:** Sun

**Flower Color:** White

**Blooms:** Spring-early summer

**Pollinators:** Many beneficial insects

**Notes:** Mature seeds are known as coriander. Will lightly reseed, but best to save seed and sow again in spring.



**Coneflower**

*Echinacea purpurea* aka Purple coneflower.

**Size:** 2-4' x 2-3'

**Water:** Dry to medium; 1" per week

**Exposure:** Sun

**Blooms:** Summer, Fall

**Flower Color:** Purple

**Wildlife:** Seeds for birds, nectar for butterflies

Sowing: Direct sow in late fall, 1/4" deep and lightly compacting the soil. For spring planting, mix the seed with moist sand and store it in the refrigerator for 90 days before direct sowing; keep the soil consistently moist until germination. Or start indoors ~ one month before last spring frost or outside when the soil temperature has reached at least 65°F



**Dill**

**Edible Herb (annual)**

**Size:** 3-5' x 2'

**Water:** Low - med

**Exposure:** Sun to light shade

**Flower Color:** Yellow

**Blooms:** Early to mid-summer

**Pollinators:** Bees, butterflies. Yellow swallowtail butterflies prefer to lay their eggs on this plant, attracting that beautiful queenly butterfly to your garden.

**Notes:** Use immature green seed heads or mature seed to make pickles and dill potato salads, etc.



**Fennel (green and bronze types)**

**Edible Herb (perennial)**

**Size:** Up to 5' x 3'

**Water:** Very low - med

**Exposure:** Sun to part shade

**Flower Color:** Yellow

**Blooms:** Mid to late summer

**Pollinators:** Native and honeybees, butterflies.

Yellow swallowtail butterflies prefer to lay their eggs on this plant (and on dill).

**Notes:** There are two types I have seed for: Green and Bronze (see the difference in the picture). This fennel does not produce an edible bulb, but rather masses of flowers and thousands of seeds. Spreads by seed but not aggressively. Use seed or leaves in salads; use seed in pickles or as a breath freshener.



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**Gloriosa Daisy (yellow)**

**Size:** 2.5-3.5' x 2-3'

**Water:** Low – med

**Exposure:** Sun

**Flower Color:** Yellow with brown centers

**Blooms:** Early to late-summer (dead-head)

**Pollinators:** All **Pollinators:** Bees, beetles, butterflies, hummingbirds, wasps

**Notes:** Flowers are 3 times the size of the native rudbeckias. Tolerates poor, dry soil, but bigger/more blooms with compost enriched soil and watering. Start seeds indoors 6-10 weeks before last frost, or direct sow in early spring. Can start in summer for bloom the following year. Will self-sow. Divide plants after a few years to spread or share!



**Hollyhocks**

**Size:** 6-8' x 2-3';

**Water:** Low – med

**Exposure:** Sun to light shade

**Flower Color:** Bold pink

**Blooms:** Early to late-summer

**Pollinators:** Bees, bumble bees, hummingbirds, butterflies (host plant for painted lady butterfly)

**Notes:** Easily started from seed indoors or out.

Seeds can be sown directly outdoors about a week before last frost. Biennial or short-lived perennial, blooms second year unless started very early outside or started indoors. Will reseed. May have weevil and rust problems.



	<p><b>Size:</b> 2' x 3'; gradually spreads as a groundcover.</p> <p><b>Water:</b> Low – med. Some people find this plant to spread too aggressively, but very sparse watering keeps it tame.</p> <p><b>Exposure:</b> Sun to light shade</p> <p><b>Flower Color:</b> Pink</p> <p><b>Blooms:</b> Early to mid-summer</p> <p><b>Pollinators:</b> Honey bees and Wool Carder bees</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> Blossom scent is reminiscent of bubble gum! This is a tough perennial that is endearing because its leaves are soft and velvety and look just like lamb's ears! It may bloom first year planted from seed.</p>
	<p><b>Size:</b> 3' x 2'</p> <p><b>Water:</b> Very low - Low</p> <p><b>Exposure:</b> Sun</p> <p><b>Flower Color:</b> Purple</p> <p><b>Blooms:</b> Late spring - Summer</p> <p><b>Pollinators:</b> Bumblebees and honeybees</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> Start the seed early in a warm location, using fine vermiculite that drains very quickly. Will germinate in about two weeks. Keep seedlings slightly moist, not damp.</p>
	<p><b>Size:</b> 2-2.5' x 2'</p> <p><b>Water:</b> Very low – low</p> <p><b>Exposure:</b> Sun</p> <p><b>Flower Color:</b> Purple</p> <p><b>Blooms:</b> Early spring</p> <p><b>Pollinators:</b> Bees adore alliums, and this provides an excellent early source of nectar!</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> Blooms first year. Spreads by forming new bulbs, as well as by seed.</p>
	<p><b>Size:</b> 2' x 1.5'</p> <p><b>Water:</b> Very low - med</p> <p><b>Exposure:</b> Sun, partial shade</p> <p><b>Flower Color:</b> White</p> <p><b>Blooms:</b> Mid-summer</p> <p><b>Pollinators:</b> A favorite of native bees</p> <p>A biennial that produces the culinary herb the first season, and blossoms/seeds the second season. Readily self-seeds, creating a permanent parsley bed.</p>



**Penstemon – Coral Baby**

**Size:** 1-2' x 1-1.5'  
**Water:** Low - moderate  
**Exposure:** Sun, partial shade  
**Flower Color:** Coral pink  
**Blooms:** Mid/late spring to frost  
**Pollinators:** Bees and butterflies  
**Notes:** Likes sandy, well-drained soil. Penstemons do not like to be crowded, so give them ample room to grow. Will need supplemental water in drought conditions.



**Poppy (Oriental) -orange or red**

**Size:** 2-3' x 2-3'  
**Water:** Very low - low  
**Exposure:** Sun, partial shade  
**Flower Color:** Orange  
**Blooms:** Early spring  
**Pollinators:** A favorite of bees, esp. honeybees  
**Notes:** Orange poppy is "Prince of Orange". Sow in place in fall or early spring; poppies detest transplanting. Plants are long-lived, and spread easily by root. In spring, sprinkle the seeds on top of the soil; cover with a very light mulch and keep moist.



**Sea Holly (Eryngium)**

**Size:** 2-3' x 2-3'  
**Water:** Very low – low: very drought tolerant  
**Exposure:** Sun  
**Flower Color:** Bluish purple  
**Blooms:** Early summer  
**Pollinators:** Sea Holly produces bluish attractive thistle-like flower heads surrounded by spiny bracts on strong stems. Great cut flower; the color can look almost metallic. No care needed, including watering (once established), except dead-heading to prevent spreading. Prefers dry, poor to mod. fertile, well-draining soil.



## General Planting Instructions

Preferably, **SOW SEEDS IN THE LATE FALL - EARLY WINTER** (after first<sup>t</sup> hard frost and before ground freezes, because some native seeds need two or more months of moist cold) **OR IN SPRING**, generally one month before last frost. Sow 4-8 ounces per 1,000 sq.ft.

1. Prepare the seed bed by first ridding the area of weeds. This is an important step to save you much trouble with weeds later on! Better preparation = more flowers!
2. Roughen the surface with a rake in order to create furrows approximately 1/8" - 1/4" deep.
3. Add sand to the seed to help distribute more evenly. Be sure to follow the correct coverage rate, as wildflowers do not like crowded conditions. Either hand broadcast or use a typical lawn seeder. Hand broadcast half of the seed while walking in one direction (e.g. north to south) and the other half in a perpendicular direction (e.g. east to west).
4. Rake the area again and gently compact the soil using a lawn roller or piece of plywood that you step on. Light compaction greatly improves germination by providing seed-to-soil contact and improved moisture absorption.
5. Mulch may be used to greatly improve germination for plantings on dry sites. Use mulch that is weed free and use sparingly; some seeds require light to germinate. In the spring,
6. If planting seeds in the fall, no need to water until spring. Then, or if planting in the spring, water the soil lightly (the soil should be kept moist but not soaked) at regular intervals until the seedlings have at least 2 sets of leaves. You may need to do this for 4-6 weeks. Next, water deeply and less frequently to promote deep root growth, approximately 1-2 inches every week or two. Sandy soil should be watered more frequently than clayey soil.
7. Please remember that a garden of perennials may take a while to fully mature (from 1-3 years) but is well worth the wait! Sometimes it may take a few years for difficult species to germinate, but most should take a year.

For seeds needing stratification: try one of the following methods:

(see <https://www.westernnativeseed.com/germinationtips.html>)

- 1.) Leave the seed in the bags in which they are shipped and add just enough water so that the seed clumps together. For large seeds, add sand to improve moisture absorption. Then place the bags in the refrigerator. Check every few days to make sure the seed has not dried out. If the seed starts to germinate, remove and immediately sow in flats. After the recommended stratification period, remove the seed even if it has not begun to germinate, and sow in flats. Before sowing, let the seed dry just enough that it can be separated. DO NOT let the seed dry out completely because it will die or go into very deep dormancy and may never germinate.
- 2.) Sow the seed in flats, moisten and place in the refrigerator for the recommended stratification period or until the seed starts to germinate.
- 3.) Sow the seed in flats and place outside as many days before the last frost as there are recommended for stratification. Try to keep them covered with sand to keep them from drying out.
- 4.) Sow the seed in the ground before the last frost in the spring (for species that require less than 60 days stratification, or for species that require a warm stratification then cool stratification) or after the first frost in the fall (for species that require more than 60 days stratification) and let nature do the work.