



Wildflower Week will be here soon. What exactly is Wildflower Week and what is a wildflower? You might be surprised to find out that some of your favorite perennial flowers are actually considered wildflowers.

Nebraska Wildflower Weeks' focus is on embracing wildflowers and native plants of Nebraska. Nebraska Wildflower Week will be observed May 28- June 7 when Nebraska's prairies and gardens are typically at their prime. The Nebraska Statewide Arboretum (NSA) coordinates Wildflower Week activities bringing together a list of entities that know the true value of wildflowers. Wildflower Week events are planned across the state June 1-9. View the [Nebraska Wildflower Week events statewide and resources here: https://plantnebraska.org/connect/events/wildflowers.html](https://plantnebraska.org/connect/events/wildflowers.html)

Wildflowers and native plants are very versatile plants that have multiple benefits in the landscape. Some wildflowers are a cut above the rest and are worth a try in your garden. These plants can be unique and interesting additions to the landscape. What is the difference between native plants and wildflowers? The terms "native" and "wildflower" are often used interchangeably, but there is a difference. Native plants in the Great Plains are generally described as those found growing in a defined area prior to European settlers. Wildflowers are described as flowering plants that grow with little or no human help. They can either be native, introduced, or brought in from other areas. Both wildflowers and native plants work well in low maintenance areas and in sites that need hardy, drought tolerant plants.

Top 5 wildflower picks:

Leadplant, *Amorpha canescens*- the violet-blue, spike-like blooms are held on a 1-4' tall woody plant. The plant blooms in June and July followed by an interesting seed pod. The dusty green-gray foliage is a good indicator of just how drought tolerant this plant can be.

Dame's Rocket, *Hesperis matronalis*- While it's an introduced plant, it's still a show-stopper when in full bloom. The magenta purple spikes of flowers in May and June can be seen from the road ditches while driving down the highway.

Bee Balm, *Monarda* species- a member of the mint family reaches 2-5 feet tall with pink-lavender flowers in June through August. This plant is prone to powdery mildew infections, so place in an area with good air circulation or select cultivars that are powdery mildew resistant.

Pasque Flower, *Pulsatilla patens*-This early spring bloomer has white to purple flowers followed by a fuzzy seed head. Let the interesting seed head stand throughout the growing season as this allows the plant to reseed itself.

Goldenrod, *Solidago* species- I wouldn't be a good Nebraskan if I didn't mention our state flower Goldenrod. There are several species of Goldenrod, but all produce a yellow or gold colored flower later in the season around August or September.

This is just a sample of some favorites, but there are many more interesting wildflowers to learn about. More information about wildflowers can be found in a UNL Extension NebGuide, a University publication, 'Wildflowers for the Home Landscape'. Go to <https://extensionpubs.unl.edu/> and search for the keyword 'wildflowers'.

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