



Iowa List of Recommended Plants for Urban Native Landscaping, Rain Gardens, Biocells, Bioswales

Recommended Plants for Iowa Rain Gardens, Biocells, and Bioswales		BMP Use				Sun Exposure			Soil Moisture				Location in BMP			Height				Blooming Period								Supports Pollinators?	*Salt Tolerance RDW=Roadway, BC=Biocell	Comments
		Roadway	Rain garden	Biocell	Bioswale	Full sun	Part shade	Shade	Wet	Moist	Mesic	Dry	Bottom	Sides	Top of berm	6"-12"	12"-24"	24"-36"	>36"	April	May	June	July	August	September	October				
Native Forbs (Flowers)																														
Common Name	Botanical Name																													
Anemone, Canada	Anemone canadensis		x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x					x	x						Yes	Tolerant-BC	Will spread
Aster, Lance Leaf	Symphyotrichum lanceolatum			x	x	x	x	x		x	x		x				x	x	x				x	x	x			Yes	Tolerant-RDW	RPBB
Aster, New England	Symphyotrichum novae-angliae	x		x	x	x	x			x		x					x	x						x	x	x		Yes	Tolerant-RDW	RPBB
Aster, Silky	Symphyotrichum sericeum		x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x							x	x			Yes	Tolerant-RDW	RPBB
Aster, Smooth Blue	Symphyotrichum laeve	x	x	x		x				x		x			x		x							x	x	x		Yes	Tolerant-RDW	RPBB
Aster, Upland White	Solidago ptarmicoides			x	x	x	x			x		x				x							x	x	x			Yes	Tolerant-RDW	RPBB
Beardtongue, Foxglove	Penstemon digitalis	x		x	x	x	x		x	x							x						x	x				Yes	Tolerant-RDW	RPBB, Attracts bumble bees
Beardtongue, Large Flowered	Penstemon grandiflora	x	x	x	x	x	x						x				x	x			x	x						Yes	Tolerant-RDW	RPBB, Attracts bumble bees
Bergamot, Wild (bee-balm)	Monarda fistulosa	x		x	x	x	x			x	x	x						x	x			x	x	x				Yes	Tolerant-RDW	RPBB, Favorite plant for many pollinators
Blazingstar, Prairie	Liatris pycnostachya	x	x	x	x	x				x	x	x		x			x							x	x	x		Yes	Tolerant-BC	RPBB
Blazingstar, Rough (Button)	Liatris aspera	x	x	x	x	x				x	x	x												x	x	x		Yes	Tolerant-RDW	RPBB
Bluebells, Virginia	Mertensia virginica		x	x			x	x		x	x		x				x			x	x							Yes		Good for woodlands
Bluestar, Common	Amsonia tabernaemontana	x				x	x			x							x	x		x	x							Yes	Tolerant-BC	
Catchfly, Royal	Silene regia		x	x	x	x	x			x	x						x	x						x	x			Yes		Can be a more sensitive plant
Clover, Purple Prairie	Dalea purpurea	x	x	x	x	x				x	x	x	x	x	x		x						x	x	x			Yes	Tolerant-RDW	
Clover, White Prairie	Dalea candida	x	x	x	x	x					x	x	x	x			x						x	x				Yes		
Columbine, American	Aquilegia canadensis	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x		x	x	x		x				x	x						Yes	Tolerant-RDW	Will spread
Coneflower, Gray-headed Prairie	Ratibida pinnata	x		x	x	x	x			x	x						x							x	x	x	x	Yes	Tolerant, RDW	
Coneflower, Orange	Rudbeckia fulgida	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x		x					x						x	x	x	x	Yes		
Coneflower, Pale Purple	Echinacea, pallida		x	x	x	x				x	x	x					x							x	x	x		Yes		RPBB
Coneflower, Purple	Echinacea purpurea	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x		x	x	x			x	x					x	x	x		Yes	Tolerant-RDW	RPBB
Coreopsis	Coreopsis palmata		x	x	x	x	x			x	x		x				x	x					x	x	x			Yes		
Coreopsis, Lance Leaf	Coreopsis lanceolata		x	x	x	x				x	x		x	x	x		x						x	x	x			Yes		
Culvers Root	Veronicastrum virginicum		x	x	x	x	x			x	x		x				x	x						x	x			Yes		RPBB, Tall but does not flop
False Sunflower (Ox-eye)	Heliopsis helianthoides			x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x					x						x	x	x		Yes		
Gentian, Bottle	Gentiana andrewsii	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x		x	x	x		x							x	x			Yes		Attracts bumble bees
Gentian, Cream	Gentiana flavida		x	x	x	x	x			x	x		x	x	x		x							x	x			Yes		Attracts bumble bees
Geranium, Wild	Geranium maculatum		x	x	x		x	x		x	x		x	x	x						x	x						Yes		Will spread
Ginger, Wild	Ascarum canadense		x	x			x			x	x		x	x	x					x	x							Yes		Will spread; very unique flower
Golden Alexander	Zizia aurea	x			x	x	x			x	x						x	x					x	x				Yes	Tolerant-RDW	Host for the black swallowtail
Goldenrod, Showy	Solidago speciosa	x			x	x					x	x	x	x				x							x	x	x	Yes		RPBB, Nectar plant for monarch butterflies
Goldenrod, Stiff	Solidago rigida	x			x	x					x	x	x	x				x						x	x	x	x	Yes	Tolerant, RDW	RPBB, Nectar plant for monarch butterflies
Harebell	Campanula Rotundifolia		x	x	x		x	x			x	x	x	x	x	x							x	x	x	x		Yes		Attracts hummingbirds
Hyssop, Yellow	Agastache nepetoides				x	x	x			x	x			x	x			x						x	x	x		Yes		RPBB, Grows to 6 feet, spreads slowly
Hyssop, Purple Giant	Agastache scrophulariifolia				x	x	x			x	x			x	x			x						x	x	x		Yes		RPBB, Grows to 6 feet, stays upright
Indigo, White Wild	Baptisia alba	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x					x					x	x				Yes		Bush-like, tall for a rain garden
Indigo, Wild Blue	Baptisia australis	x	x	x	x	x	x				x		x				x						x	x				Yes	Tolerant-RDW	Bush-like, tall for a rain garden
Iris, Blue Flag	Iris virginica shrevei		x	x	x	x			x	x				x	x		x						x	x				Yes	Tolerant-BC	Prefers moist conditions
Ironweed	Vernonia fasciculata	x		x	x	x	x		x	x	x		x					x						x	x	x		Yes		
Jacobs Ladder	Polemonium reptans		x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x			x			x	x	x		x	x						Yes		Will spread
Leadplant	Amorpha canescens	x	x	x	x	x					x	x	x	x				x						x	x			Yes		
Lobelia, Great Blue	Lobelia siphilitica		x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x		x	x	x			x	x					x	x	x	x	Yes	Tolerant	Will spread
Loosestrife, Winged	Lythrum alatum					x				x	x	x		x			x	x	x				x	x	x	x		Yes		Important to native bees
Loosestrife, Prairie	Lysimachia quadriflora		x	x	x	x				x	x		x											x	x			Yes		Prefers moist conditions
Milkvetch, Canada	Astragalus canadensis			x	x	x	x			x	x		x				x	x	x					x	x	x		Yes		Attracts hummingbirds and butterflies
Milkweed, Butterfly	Asclepias tuberosa	x	x	x	x	x	x				x	x	x		x								x	x	x	x		Yes	Tolerant-RDW	RPBB, Host for monarch butterfly
Milkweed, Common	Asclepias syriaca	x		x	x	x	x		x	x	x		x						x				x	x	x			Yes		RPBB, Host for monarch butterfly
Mint, Virginia Mountain	Pycnanthemum virginianum	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x	x		x						x	x	x			Yes	Tolerant	RPBB
Monkey Flower	Mimulus ringens		x	x	x	x	x		x	x			x	x									x	x	x			Yes		
Obedient Plant	Physostegia virginiana	x				x	x		x	x			x		x								x	x	x	x		Yes	Tolerant-RDW	Will spread; easy to pull up
Onion, Nodding	Allium cernuum		x	x	x	x	x			x			x	x	x	x	x	x						x	x			Yes		RPBB, Attracts bumble bees

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Common Name	Botanical Name	Roadway	Rain garden	Biocell	Bioswale	Full sun	Part shade	Shade	Wet	Moist	Mesic	Dry	Bottom	Sides	Top of Berm	6"-12"	12"-24"	24"-36"	>36"	April	May	June	July	August	September	October						
Onion, Wild	Allium textile		X	X		X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X					X	X					Yes		RPBB = High-use flower of the federally endangered Rusty-patched Bumble Bee			
Partridge Pea	Chamaecrista fasciculata	X																									Yes	Tolerant-RDW, BC	Hosts sulphur butterflies			
Petunia, Wild	Ruellia humilis		X	X	X	X				X	X		X	X		X	X					X	X	X			Yes		Spreads; grows well along the edge			
Phlox, Prairie	Phlox pilosa	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X				X	X	X					Yes		Attracts hummingbirds and hawkmoths			
Phlox, Woodland	Phlox divaricata		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X				X	X						Yes		Attracts hummingbirds and hawkmoths			
Prairie Smoke	Geum triflorum		X	X		X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X	X						Yes		Early nectar resource for bumble bees			
Primrose, Common Evening	Oenothera biennis	X			X	X	X			X	X											X	X	X	X		Yes		Attracts moths			
Rattlesnake Master	Eryngium yuccifolium	X			X	X			X	X	X	X				X	X	X					X	X			Yes	Tolerant	Unique flowers			
Rue, Purple Meadow	Thalictrum dasycarpum			X	X	X	X		X	X		X				X	X	X				X	X				Yes					
Shooting Star	Dodecatheon pulchellum		X	X		X	X		X	X	X		X		X					X	X	X					Yes					
Sneezeweed	Helenium autumnale	X		X	X	X			X	X		X				X	X	X						X	X	X	Yes	Tolerant-RDW	Does not actually cause sneezing			
Solomon's Seal, Smooth	Polygonatum biflorum		X				X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X					Yes		Preferse moist, well-drained soil			
Spiderwort, Ohio	Tradescantia ohiensis	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X			X				X	X	X					Yes	Tolerant-RDW, BC	Will spread; may bloom again in fall			
Spiderwort, Prairie (Bracted)	Tradescantia bracteata		X	X	X	X			X	X		X	X			X				X	X	X					Yes					
Susan, Black-eyed	Helenium autumnale	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X					X	X					X	X	X	X		Yes	Tolerant	Early sucessional			
Susan, Brown-eyed	Rudbeckia triloba		X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X				X	X	X				X	X	X	X		Yes	Tolerant-RDW	Early successional			
Sweet William, Wild	Phlox Maculata		X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X				X	X					X	X				Yes		Attracts hummingbirds and hawkmoths			
Trefoil, Showy Tick	Desmodium canadense			X	X	X				X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X				X	X	X			Yes		Host plant for several butterfly species			
Turtlehead	Chelone glabra		X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X				X	X	X					X	X			Yes		Host plant for Baltimore checkerspot			
Vervain, Blue	Verbena hastata	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X		X							X	X	X			Yes	Tolerant-RDW				
Vervain, Hoary	Verbena stricta	X		X	X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					X	X	X			Yes	Tolerant-RDW	More drought tolerant than V. hastata			
Native Grasses, Wildrye, Sedges and Ferns																																
Big Bluestem	Andropogon gerardii	X			X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X				X								Yes	Tolerant-BC	> 48" tall; spreads; host for butterflies			
Blue Grama	Bouteloua gracilis	X	X	X	X	X				X	X	X	X	X		X											Yes		Can use for turfgrass; host for butterflies			
Dropseed, Prairie	Sporobolus heterolepis	X	X	X	X	X					X	X	X	X	X		X	X									Yes	Tolerant-RDW, BC	Host for federally endangered butterfly			
Fern, Cinnamon	Osmundastrum cinnamomeum		X	X			X	X	X	X			X	X			X	X	X								Unknown					
Fern, Lady	Athyrium filix-femina		X	X			X	X		X	X		X	X			X	X	X								Unknown					
Fern, Maidenhair	Adiantum pedatum		X				X	X	X				X		X	X											Unknown		Pedatum grows 1 - 2 feet tall			
Fern, Ostrich	Matteuccia struthiopteris		X				X	X	X	X			X				X	X									Unknown		Can grow 3 - 6 feet tall			
Grass, Bottlebrush	Elymus Hystrix	X	X	X			X	X		X		X							X								Yes		Host plant for butterflies			
Indian Grass	Sorghastrum nutans	X			X	X	X		X	X		X							X								Yes		Host plant for butterflies			
Little Bluestem	Schizachyrium scoparium	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X		X	X											Yes	Tolerant-RDW, BC	Host plant for butterflies			
Sedge, Bicknell	Carex bicknellii		X	X		X	X			X		X	X	X	X	X											Yes		Host plant for butterflies			
Sedge, Bur Reed	Carex sparganioides		X	X			X	X		X		X	X	X		X	X										Yes	Tolerant-BC	Shade conditions			
Sedge, Brown Fox	Carex vulpinoidea		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X			X										Yes	Tolerant-BC	Host plant for butterflies			
Sedge, Common Fox	Carex stipata		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X					X									Yes	Tolerant-BC	Host plant for butterflies			
Sedge, Eastern Star	Carex radiata	X				X			X	X						X											Yes	Tolerant-BC	Shade conditions			
Sedge, Eastern Woodland	Carex blanda		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X												Yes		Host plant for butterflies			
Sedge, Woolly	Carex pellita		X			X	X		X	X			X			X	X	X									Yes		Could potentially be used as turf			
Sideoats Grama	Bouteloua curtipendula	X	X	X	X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X											Yes	Tolerant-RDW	Host plant for butterflies			
Switch Grass	Panicum virgatum	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X				X								Yes	Tolerant-RDW, BC	Some species can be too tall, floppy			
Wildrye, Canada	Elymus canadensis	X		X	X	X	X					X				X	X	X									Yes	Tolerant-RDW	Host plant for state-listed butterfly			
Wildrye, Virginia	Elymus virginicus	X		X	X	X	X					X				X	X	X									Yes	Tolerant-RDW	Host plant for moths			
Native Trees																																
Basswood (or Linden)	Tilia americana					X	X			X	X								X				X				Yes		Fall foliage color			
Black Cherry	Prunus serotina					X	X			X	X	X							X			X	X				Yes		Fall foliage color; supports birds			
Crab apple, Prairie	Malus ioensis					X	X			X	X								X			X	X				Yes		Supports birds			
Hob Hornbeam (or Ironwood)	Ostrya virginiana	X	X			X	X			X	X		X	X					X			X	X				Yes					
Kentucky Coffeetree	Gymnocladus dioicus					X	X			X	X								X				X	X			Yes		Fall foliage color; supports birds			
Oak, Northern Red	Quercus borealis		X	X		X	X			X	X		X	X		X			X			X					Yes					
Oak, Swamp White	Quercus bicolor		X	X		X	X			X	X		X	X					X			X					Yes					
Redbud, Eastern	Cercis canadensis					X	X			X	X	X				X			X			X	X	X			Yes		Fall foliage color			

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		Roadway	Rain garden	Biocell	Bioswale	Full sun	Part shade	Shade	Wet	Moist	Mesic	Dry	Bottom	Sides	Top of Berm	6"-12"	12"-24"	24"-36"	>36"	April	May	June	July	August	September	October					
Common Name		Botanical Name																													
Native Shrubs																															
Blueberry, Lowbush	<i>Vaccinium angustifolium</i>						X	X				X		X	X		X				X	X					Yes				
Chokeberry (or Allegheny serviceberry)	<i>Amelanchier laevis</i>					X	X			X	X			X	X						X						Yes				
Dogwood, Gray	<i>Cornus racemosa</i>					X	X			X	X								X			X	X				Yes		Fall foliage color; supports birds		
Elderberry, American	<i>Sambucus nigra canadensis</i>					X	X			X									X			X	X				Yes		Edible berries for humans and birds		
Gooseberry, Pasture	<i>Ribes cynosbati</i>	X	X				X			X				X	X		X		X	X	X						Yes				
Ninebark, Common	<i>Physocarpus opulifolius</i>	X	X			X	X			X	X			X	X		X			X	X	X					Yes				
Plum, American	<i>Prunus americana</i>					X	X				X								X		X	X					Yes		Fall foliage color		
Pussy Willow	<i>Salix discolor</i>					X			X	X									X	X	X	X					Yes		Catkin flowers; supports birds		
Rose, Prairie	<i>Rosa arkansana</i>	X	X			X	X			X	X	X	X	X				X	X				X				Yes				
Serviceberry (or Juneberry)	<i>Amelanchier arborea</i>					X	X			X	X	X							X	X	X						Yes		Fall foliage color; supports birds		
Snowberry, Common	<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>					X	X			X	X	X			X		X	X			X						Yes				
Snowberry, Western (or Wolfberry)	<i>Symphoricarpos occidentalis</i>					X	X			X	X				X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X			Yes				
Non-Native Horticultural Cultivar Flowers and Ferns																															
Astilbe, Chinese	<i>Astilbe chinensis 'Pumila'</i>		X	X			X	X		X	X		X		X	X	X						X	X			No				
Balloon Flower	<i>Platycodon</i>	X	X			X	X			X	X		X		X	X	X						X	X			Somewhat				
Beebalm Hybrids	<i>Monarda</i>	X	X			X	X			X	X		X		X		X					X	X	X			Somewhat		RPBB, Hybrids not ideal		
Columbine Hybrids	<i>Aquilegia hybrids</i>		X	X	X					X	X						X										Somewhat				
Coneflower, Purple	<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>	X	X	X		X	X			X	X	X	X		X		X	X					X	X	X		Somewhat		RPBB		
Coralbells Hybrids	<i>Heuchera</i>		X	X		X	X	X					X	X									X	X	X		Somewhat				
Coreopsis	<i>Coreopsisideae</i>	X	X			X	X				X		X		X		X						X	X	X		Somewhat		Deadheading extends bloom period		
Hosta Hybrids	<i>Hosta</i>		X	X				X		X			X		X	X	X	X	X				X	X			Somewhat		Attracts bumble bees		
Iris, Siberian	<i>Iris sibirica</i>	X	X			X	X			X	X		X		X		X			X	X						Somewhat		May attract bumble bees		
Lilly, Stella De Oro Day	<i>Hemerocallis 'Stella de Oro'</i>	X	X			X	X			X	X		X		X		X					X	X	X	X		Somewhat				
Nepeta, Walker Low "catmint"	<i>X faassenii</i>	X				X					X	X				X						X	X	X	X		Somewhat	Salt tolerant	RPBB, Can get 2nd bloom if cut back		
Sedum, Autumn Joy	<i>Sedum</i>		X	X		X				X	X	X		X		X	X						X	X	X		Somewhat				
Solomon's Seal (cultivar)	<i>Polygonatum multiflorum variegatum</i>	X				X			X	X	X		X	X	X		X			X	X						Yes				
Spike Gay Feather	<i>Liatris apicata</i>		X	X	X	X	X			X	X			X	X		X						X	X			Somewhat		RPBB, Will spread		
Yarrow, Paprika, Terracotta	<i>Achillea hybrids</i>		X	X		X											X						X	X			Somewhat				
Non-Native Ornamental Grasses																															
Fountain Grass	<i>Pennisetum alopecuroides</i>	X	X	X		X					X	X	X					X									No				
Karl Foerster	<i>Calamagrostis acutiflora cultivars</i>	X	X	X		X						X					X	X									No				
Switchgrass	<i>Panicum virgatum</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X			X	X									Yes	Tolerant	Shorter growing cultivars are available		