Arkansas Native Wildflowers

Linda F. Soffer
Jefferson County Master Gardener (JCMG)
Arkansas Master Gardener Program
21 common native wildflowers

- Common name, scientific name, family name
- Identification by foliage and flower characteristics
- Height or spread
- Growing requirements: soil, moisture, sun
- Habitat
- Bloom time
Mexican Hat – *Ratibida columnifera*
Asteraceae (Aster Family)

- Branched, feathery, deeply cleft foliage. Mainly on lower half of stem.
- Long leafless stalks with flower heads that protrude $\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 inches. Dark red and yellow, to all red or all yellow.
- Flower heads are reminiscent of a Sombrero.
Mexican Hat

- Easy to grow from seed but may not bloom until the second year.
- Prairies, meadows, open areas, pinelands.
- Drought tolerant; deer resistant.
- Attracts bees and butterflies. Winter food source for seed-eating songbirds.
- Blooms June – October. Statewide.

Image Courtesy Sally & Andy Wasowski, LBJWC
Lance-leaved Coreopsis – *Coreopsis lanceolate*
Asteraceae (Aster Family)

- Narrow, lance-shaped leaves. Most are at or near the base.
- Large, yellow, daisy-like flowers. Up to 2 ½ inches wide.
- Eight ray flowers. Toothed at tips. Flat yellow center disks.
- Flowers occur singly atop long slender stalks.
Lance-leaved Coreopsis

- 3 feet tall. Perennial.
- Open areas, roadsides, fields, prairies, plains.
- Not deer resistant.
- Attracts butterflies, native bees.
- Blooms April – June. Statewide.
Plains Coreopsis - *Coreopsis tinctoria*
Asteraceae (Aster Family)

- Pinnately-compound foliage. Finely cut leaves with linear-lanceolate leaflets.
- Numerous smooth, slightly angled branches.
- Abundant, showy, daisy-like flower heads with yellow rays, reddish-brown central disk.
- Notch-tipped petals.

Image Courtesy Dr. John Hilty, Illinois Wildflowers
Image Courtesy Sally & Andy Wasowski, LBJWC
Plains Coreopsis

- 3 feet tall. Annual.
- Moist, sandy soil. Prairies, plains, fields, ditches, roadsides.
- Provides nectar and pollen to a wide variety of insects: bees, butterflies, wasps, beetles. Seeds for birds.
- Blooms June – September. Statewide.

Image Courtesy LBJWC Staff
Cardinal Flower – *Lobelia cardinalis*
Campanulaceae (Bellflower Family)

- Forms clumps, mounds of lance-shaped basal leaves in spring.
- Multiple, erect, smooth stems.
- Showy, brilliant red flowers in 8-inch terminal spikes.
- Three spreading lower lobes and two slender upper lobes, united into a tube.
Cardinal Flower

- 3 feet tall. Perennial.
- Year-round moist to wet soils. Streams, lakes, ditches, wetlands.
- Excellent for water gardens, moist garden beds. Must have near-constant moisture.
- Attracts Ruby-throated hummingbirds, butterflies.
- Blooms August – October. Statewide.
Yellow Passionflower - *Passiflora lutea*
Passifloraceae (Passion-Flower Family)

- Climbing, trailing vine, 14 feet long.
- Alternate leaves, with three smoothly rounded, shallowly cut lobes.
- Intricate light greenish-yellow, 1-inch flowers. Followed by small berries.
Yellow Passionflower

- Bright shade to partial sun.
- Moist bottomland, medium-dry, rocky woodlands, thickets.
Carolina Larkspur – *Delphinium carolinianum*
Ranunculaceae (Buttercup Family)

➢ Rosette of basal leaves and a flowering stem with alternate leaves.

➢ Basil leaves are palmately divided into 3-5 segments. Alternate leaves are similar in appearance, finely cut.

➢ Central stem terminates in an elongated raceme with many small spurred flowers.

➢ 5 petal-like sepals and 4 petals.
Carolina Larkspur

- 4 feet tall. Very showy.
- Deeply blue, purplish or white.
- Sunny to partially sunny glades, prairies, fields, rocky slopes, roadsides.
- Attracts bees, including bumblebees.
- Blooms May – July. Mostly statewide, except low lying areas of the AP and CP.
Indian Pipe - *Monotropa uniflora*
Monotropaceae (Indian Pipe Family)

- Solitary nodding flower resembles a shepherd's hook.
- Stems, scale-like leaves and the flower are all waxy.
- Extremely fragile, white or sparingly infused with pink and black flecks.
- Lacks chlorophyll, sometimes called ghost or corpse plant.

Image Courtesy Sid Vogelpohl, ANPS
Indian Pipe

- Less than a foot tall. Perennial.
- Plant matures, flower becomes erect, turns black with age.
- Grows in cool, moist, shaded conditions with thick deposits of leaf litter.
- Blooms September – Frost. Scattered over the state.

Image Courtesy Sid Vogelpohl, ANPS
Bird’s Foot Violet – *Viola pedate*
Violaceae – (Violet Family)

- Each leaf is deeply divided into 3-5 palmate lobes. Wider at the tip. 1 inch long and across. Like the foot of a bird.

- Blue, lavender, dark violet, purple, bi-color. Center of the united stamens is orange.
Bird’s Foot Violet

- Low, clumping perennial. 6 inches tall. Self-seeds.

- Open places in the woods, along roadsides. Dry, rocky or sandy well-drained soil. A bit fussier than other violets. Susceptible to crown rot.

- Attracts long-tongued bees, small butterflies, skippers.

- Blooms March – May. Statewide.
Goldenrod – *Solidago canadensis*
Asteraceae (Aster Family)

➢ Numerous lance-shaped, narrow, serrated, hairy leaves.

➢ Long arching stems with yellow plumes, 9-15 rays per flower head.
Goldenrod

- Grows 5 – 6 feet tall. Showy.
- Blamed for causing hay fever. Heavy pollen, not carried by the wind.
- Woodland openings, roadsides, fields. Full sun.
- Nectar and pollen for bees, butterflies, wasps.

Image Courtesy Linda Soffer, JCMG
Mayapple – *Podophllum peltatum*  
Berberidaceae (Barberry Family)

- One to two large, showy, palmately lobed leaves per stalk.
- Umbrella-like shape.
- Two-leaved plants have a 2-inch nodding white flower at the fork. Many stamens. Large lemon-shaped berry.
- Fragrant.
Mayapple

- 1–1 ½ feet tall. Spring ephemeral.
- Colonizes by rhizome. Forms dense mats.
- Shady, moist woodlands.
- Blooms resemble apple blossoms. Fully ripe fruit is edible. Green fruit and other parts are toxic.
- Blooms March – May. Statewide.
Showy Evening Primrose – *Oenothera speciose*
Onagraceae (Evening Primrose Family)

- Downy stems. Alternate, wavy-edged leaves.
- Upright to sprawling.
- Cup-shaped, four-petaled. White or pink flowers, yellow centers, pink veins. 2 inches across.
Showy Evening Primrose

➢ 1–1 ½ feet tall. Perennial.

➢ Hardy, drought resistant. Dense colonies in sunny locations.

➢ Dry open areas, roadsides, disturbed sites.

➢ Variety of insects, moths most common since flowers are mostly open at night.

➢ Blooms April – July. Statewide.
Tickseed – *Bidens aristosa*
Asteraceae (Aster Family)

➢ Opposite, pinnately compound leaves with sharply toothed leaflets.

➢ Four-sided (rounded) stems, often purplish or mottled.

➢ Composite flowers with bright yellow ray flowers and multiple small disk flowers clustered at the center.
Tickseed

- Multi-branched annual. Up to 6 feet tall.
- Seeds are short, wedge-shaped with two barbs, ‘beggars-ticks’. Attach when touched.
- Moist prairies, fields, open marshy sites, ditches, stream banks.
- Attracts butterflies, bees and other insect pollinators.
- Blooms August – November. Statewide.
Pale Purple Coneflower – *Echinacea pallida*
Asteraceae (Aster Family)

- Coarse-haired, narrowly lanceolate leaves near base.
- Stout hairy stem.
- Drooping rays surround a prominent cone of disk florets.
- Color varies from nearly white to pale reddish-purple.
Pale Purple Coneflower

- 3 feet tall. Perennial.
- Easy to grow. Full sun. Tolerant of heat, humidity.
- Pinelands, prairies, disturbed soils.
- Attracts bees, butterflies.
Rose Vervain – *Glandularia canadensis*
Verbenaceae (Verbena Family)

- Distinctive double toothed leaves, cleft lobes.
- Low, bushy, hairy perennial. < 2 feet high.
- Rounded clusters, ½ inch wide with 5 notched petals and a short corolla tube.
Rose Vervain

➢ Sunny sites.

➢ Sandy or rocky, moist but well-drained soils.


➢ Attracts butterflies, beneficial insects.

Butterfly Weed – *Asclepias tuberosa*
Asclepiadaceae (Milkweed Family)

- Narrow, lance-shaped, mostly alternate leaves.
- Upright to reclining, hairy stems. No toxic milky sap.
- Showy, bright orange or reddish orange flower clusters.
Butterfly Weed

- Spindle-shaped seed pods release silky-tailed seeds.
- Blooms May – September. Statewide.

Image Courtesy Dr. John Hilty, Illinois Wildflowers
Black-eyed Susan – *Rudbeckia hirta*
Asteraceae (Aster Family)

- Hairy, long-oval leaves.
  Coarse, rough stem.
- Large daisy-like flowerhead. Bright-yellow rays with dark cone-shaped centers.
- Sun/light shade.
Black-eyed Susan

- 2-3 feet tall. One flowerhead per slender, hairy stem.

- Dry, sunny habitats. Prairies, meadows, old fields, roadsides.


- Blooms May – October. Statewide.
Wild Bergamot – *Monarda fistulosa*
Lamiaceae (Mint Family)

- Square, hairless stems.
- Showy clusters of hairy, tubular flowers. Pink, lavender or lilac.
Wild Bergamot

- Full to partial sun, dryish conditions. Needs good air circulation.
- Fields, prairies, meadows, roadsides.
- Attracts birds, bees, butterflies, hummingbirds.
- Blooms June – September. Statewide.
Spider Lily – *Hymenocallis liriosme*
Amaryllidaceae (Amaryllis Family)

- Long, strap-shaped, glossy leaves.
- Conspicuous flower. Distinctive spidery shape.
- White, cupped flowers. Prominent yellowish-green eye.
- Very fragrant.
Spider Lily

- 2-3 feet tall. Perennial.
- Large colonies in wet habitats. Full sun to part shade.
- Marshes, ditches, low areas, roadsides. Rain, bog and water gardens.
- Blooms mid-Spring. River Valley, Grand Prairie, Coastal Plains.

Image Courtesy Eric Hunt, ANSP
Blue Star – *Amsonia tabernaemontana*
Apocynaceae (Dogbane Family)

- Erect, leafy stems. Long-lived, clump-forming.
- Multiple light blue, star-like flowers.
Blue Star

- 2 feet tall. Sun to part shade.
- Woodlands, glades, stream banks, roadsides, wet prairies.
- Deer resistant – acrid, milky sap.
- Attracts Ruby-throated hummingbirds, carpenter bees, butterflies.
- Blooms April – June. Statewide. Foliage turns yellow in the fall.
White Wild Indigo – *Baptisia alba*
Fabaceae (Pea Family)

➢ Velvety, alternate trifoliate leaves. Grayish green or blue green.


➢ Blooming begins from the bottom up.

➢ Flowers are replaced by black seedpods – also showy.
White Wild Indigo

- 2-5 feet tall, mound-shaped perennial.
- Sun to part shade. Moist to dry soil. Drought tolerant.
- Prairies, glades, stream banks, roadsides.
- Attracts butterflies, bumblebees.
- Blooms May – throughout summer. Statewide.
Rough Blazing Star – *Liatris aspera*
Asteraceae (Aster Family)

- Narrow, grass-like foliage. Short rough hairs on leaves and stem.
- Erect slightly zig-zag central stem.
- Button-like purplish flowers - “blazing stars”.
Rough Blazing Star

➢ 2-3 feet tall spikes. Perennial.
➢ Drought tolerant. Well-drained, dry, or sandy and rocky soils.
➢ Prairies, open areas, roadsides.
➢ Attracts butterflies, hummingbirds, native bees, birds. Deer resistant.
➢ Blooms July – October. Statewide.

Image Courtesy Sally & Andy Wasowski, LBJWC
Questions?
REFERENCES

Book

Websites
Arkansas Native Plant Society (ANSP)
https://www.anps.org
Identification Wildflowers – Discover Life
https://www.discoverlife.org

Illinois Wildflowers
http://www.illinoiswildflowers.info

Lady Bird Johnson Wildlife Center (LBJWC)
https://www.wildflower.org

Mississippi State University Extension
http://extension.msstate.edu/publications/controlling-white-wild-indigo-baptisia-alba-forgages

Missouri Department of Conservation
https://nature.mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/field-guide/tickseed-sunflower-bearded-beggarticks

University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service
NATURAL DIVISIONS OF ARKANSAS

Ozark Plateau - OZ
Arkansas River Valley - RV
Ouachita Mountains - OU
West Gulf Coastal Plain - CP
Mississippi Alluvial Plain - AP
Crowley’s Ridge – CR

Courtesy of the Arkansas State Department of Parks & Tourism
Arkansas Native Plant Society Image Use Policy

All content is Copyright © 2012 through 2018, Arkansas Native Plant Society (ANPS). Content of the ANPS.org website, the *Claytonia* newsletter and some of our social media posts are protected by this Copyright and the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial License ([CC BY-NC 3.0](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/)). See the actual legal code for [CC BY-NC 3.0](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/).

This license allows for the works to be shared, distributed and transmitted. This license allows for the works to be remixed and adapted. If shared or redistributed, the original creators and ANPS must be attributed. If the work appears on-line and is redistributed on-line a link to the original ANPS post should appear prominently.

Any commercial use of ANPS content requires the approval of the ANPS Board of Directors and the original content creator.

For attribution of a photograph, please include this information:
Subject, Photographer Name “Article Included In (if available)” ANPS.org [http://www.ANPS.org/article](http://www.ANPS.org/article) [date of photo or article]

Example photograph attribution

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center Image Use Policy

Educational Use
Educational institutions may download, reproduce and use TWC images and associated captions in the preparation of course or instructional materials by teachers or students for non-profit educational activities. Express permission for such use is not required.

Personal Use
Individuals may download, reproduce and use TWC images and associated captions posted on the world wide web for personal, noncommercial purposes. Express permission for such use is not required.

All Image Gallery images used must credit both the Imagegrapher(s) and the, LBJWC. Most publishers use the format: “Courtesy Imagegrapher’s Name, LBJWC.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alternate</td>
<td>Leaves occurring singly on opposite sides of a stem, rather than in pairs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>Plant, living and producing fruit in one growing season.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Axil</td>
<td>The space between the petiole and the stem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basal</td>
<td>Leaves at the base of a stem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulb</td>
<td>Food storage organ formed by a cluster of fleshy leaf bases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calyx</td>
<td>All of the sepals or outer parts of the plant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corolla</td>
<td>All of the petals of a flower.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disk</td>
<td>The central tubular flowers in the flower head of some members of the Sunflower family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ephemeral</td>
<td>Lasting a very short time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glabrous</td>
<td>Without hairs, smooth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herbaceous</td>
<td>A plant that dies down to ground level at the end of the growing season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflorescence</td>
<td>The flower cluster.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lanceolate</td>
<td>Lance-shaped. Long, wider in the middle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lobe</td>
<td>Rounded parts of a leaf.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oval</td>
<td>Oval, egg-shaped, with a tapering point.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palmate</td>
<td>Consisting of leaflets or lobes radiating from the base of the leaf.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perennial</td>
<td>Living from year to year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petiole</td>
<td>The stalk of the leaf.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinnate</td>
<td>A compound leaf with two rows of leaflets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raceme</td>
<td>An inflorescence, usually elongated, with stalked flowers along the main stem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhizome</td>
<td>An underground fleshy stem, usually horizontal, from which modified leaves arise at nodes as in the iris.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sepal</td>
<td>A single part of the calyx or outer group of flower parts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sessile</td>
<td>Without a stalk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple</td>
<td>Leaves not divided into leaflets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spike</td>
<td>Unbranched inflorescence of stalkless flowers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spur</td>
<td>A tubular extension, usually of a flower part.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taproot</td>
<td>A large, elongated root, usually vertical.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terete</td>
<td>A stem with a round cross section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trifoliate</td>
<td>Having three leaflets, as in clovers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>