

Want More Native Plants In Your Community?

More Missouri cities are selecting native plants for landscaping projects to address municipal needs. Grow Native! Top 10 lists help professionals choose natives for specific purposes.

City planners, storm water managers, parks and recreation personnel, and other municipal professionals are increasingly turning to plants native to Missouri to beautify parks, help manage storm water, and make cities more biologically diverse. Missouri is home to more than 2,000 native plant species, and choosing the right plant for the right purpose can be daunting.

“Grow Native! Top 10 lists were created to address this very issue,” said Bill Ruppert, Grow Native! Committee member who spearheaded the development of the native plant education and marketing program’s Top 10 list series. “These lists are a starting point to help municipalities, landscape designers, gardeners, and anyone else involved in landscaping choose the appropriate native plants for specific needs.”

Twenty-five Grow Native! Top 10 Lists have been created to date, with at least five more planned for 2017. Lists are specific to the planting needs, such as landscaping for a formal setting, areas with clay soil, and appropriately sized plants for fit under utility lines.

Each list provides common and scientific names, height, sun/shade requirements, and unique features. All of the lists are available at grownative.org by searching for “Top 10.”

The Grow Native! program has many other resources available to municipalities. The website includes a searchable native plant database, as well as an extensive resource guide to more than 130 suppliers of native plant products and



The red buckeye is a small native tree to Missouri and is an outstanding choice to use for small landscapes or under utility lines.

services throughout the lower Midwest. In addition, the program offers workshops throughout the year for professionals and landowners. Check grownative.org for information on upcoming workshops in Columbia, MO on Aug. 1; in Gray Summit Oct. 6; and Kirkwood on Nov. 3.

Many municipalities are using natives to convert unused turf areas into wildflower meadows to beautify parks, reduce mowing costs and provide pollinator and songbird habitat. Storm water managers use prairie and wetland plants with complex root systems (some reaching 15 feet deep!) to hold enormous amounts of storm water, and to trap nitrogen and other nutrients that can pollute city-owned ponds and lakes. Establishing native plantings in parking lot depressions is another way to naturally control parking lot runoff. Gardens on rooftops and other impervious surfaces can also use native plants to absorb storm water.

The Grow Native! program would like to hear from municipalities to learn how they are choosing native plants to improve environmental quality in their communities. Please contact us at grownative@moprairie.org or 888-843-6738. 🍀

Carol Davit is the executive director of the Missouri Prairie Foundation. The Foundation runs the 17-year-old Grow Native! program.

A Grow Native! Top 10 List

FEATURED CATEGORY:

Small Native Flowering Trees to Plant under Utility Lines

Attractive • Durable • Provide Bird Habitat

	NATIVE PLANT NAME	HEIGHT	UNIQUE QUALITIES
1	Red buckeye (<i>Aesculus pavia</i>)	8-12 Feet	Red, tube-shaped flowers attract hummingbirds. Sun to shade. Medium growing.
2	Downy serviceberry (<i>Amelanchier arborea</i>)	10-15 Feet	White flowers in March/April before trees leaf out. Pt. shade. Slow growing.
3	Pawpaw (<i>Asimina triloba</i>)	15-25 Feet	Host plant to zebra swallowtail butterfly. Shade to pt shade. Medium growing.
4	Redbud (<i>Cercis canadensis</i>)	10-20 Feet	Pink flowers March/April. Prefers well-drained soil. Sun to pt shade. Fast growing.
5	Fringetree (<i>Chionanthus virginicus</i>)	10-15 Feet	Fragrant creamy-white flowers April/May. Sun to pt. shade. Slow growing.
6	Pagoda dogwood (<i>Cornus alternifolia</i>)	8-12 Feet	Blue berries eaten by birds in summer. Shade to pt. shade. Medium growing.
7	Green hawthorn (<i>Crataegus viridis</i>)	15-20 Feet	Orange clusters of fruits a favorite food of birds. Sun. Medium growing.
8	Witch hazel (<i>Hamamelis virginiana</i>)	8-12 Feet	Yellow fragrant flowers October/November. Pt. shade. Medium growing.
9	Hop hornbeam (<i>Ostrya virginiana</i>)	15-20 Feet	Narrow, upright small tree. Pt. to full shade. Medium growing.
10	Wild plum (<i>Prunus americana</i>)	10-15 Feet	Host for red-spotted purple and tiger swallowtails. Sun to pt. shade. Fast growing.

Grow Native! is a native plant education and marketing program of the