



Prairie perennials

The following species are common in South Sound prairies and in open forests throughout western Washington. Because these species are adapted to our wet winters and dry summers, they are excellent selections for drought-tolerant home gardening and landscaping. All have showy blooms in the spring or summer. Give us a call to discuss your planting.

Red columbine (*Aquilegia formosa*) – photo courtesy of perennialfavoritesnursery.com

Grows in moist to dry open sites or in partial shade on the edge of woodlands. It may spread by seed, but generally doesn't compete well with invasives. It is a nectar plant for hummingbirds. Showy red to yellow blooms occur in summer.



Common harebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*) –

This species is both hardy and beautiful with pendulant, bell-shaped, purple to blue blooms that occur in June through September. Commonly occurs on dry and rocky sites. This species provides habitat for swallowtail butterflies, bumblebees and hummingbirds.



Common brodiaea (*Brodiaea coronaria*) – photo courtesy of www.pacificbulbsociety.org

Common in prairies, meadows and on rocky slopes. Flowers are showy, blue-purple and occur in late spring and early summer. This species reaches a height of about 12" and will spread by corms vegetatively as well as by seed.

Nuttall's larkspur (*Delphinium nuttallii*) –

A vigorous native perennial reaching a height of up to 2' tall. Inflorescences are long, erect racemes of deep blue to purple blooms that occur in May through June.

Slender cinquefoil (*Potentilla gracilis*) –

A fast-growing native perennial that spreads readily by seed. This species reaches a height of 2.5' and flowers prolifically in July through August. Blooms are yellow and foliage is an attractive, palmately compound leaf.

Common camas (*Camassia quamash*) – photo by Sound Native Plants

A quintessential South Sound prairie species, this perennial emerges from a bulb and reaches a height of 2'. Blooms are large, blue and extremely showy occurring in Spring. This species is a nectar plant for both butterflies and hummingbirds.



Broad-leaved shooting star (*Dodecatheon hendersonii*) – photo by Sound Native Plants

This species flowers in March through June – blooms are magenta to lavender and hang down, hence the common name. Shooting star spreads by seed, reaches a height of 18" and has basal foliage.



Early blue violet (*Violet adunca*) -

Small but showy deep blue to purple blooms occur in Spring. This species will spread readily by seed and runner on moister sites or more slowly on dryer sites.

Canary violet (*Viola praemorsa*) – photo by Sound Native Plants

This species has attractive foliage with larger leaves than most native violet species that are covered with a dense pubescence. Large yellow blooms occur in April through July.



Common woolly sunflower (*Eriophyllum lanatum*) –

This species has attractive, silvery foliage that spreads to fill in a planting site. Yellow, composite blooms are large and occur in May through August. Reaches a height of 2'.



White fawn lily (*Erythronium oregonum*) – photo by Sound Native Plants

With showy foliage and flowers, this species is exceptional. Large white blooms occur in Spring and leaves are distinctively mottled.

The following references were used when compiling this information sheet: Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast by Pojar and Mackinnon, Landscaping for Wildlife in the Pacific Northwest by Link, Gardening with Native Plants of the Pacific Northwest by Kruckeberg and the WTU Online Herbarium.



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>. 2009.