

Perennials for the Mountains

An abbreviated list by Karen Vail

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***Achillea* spp.**

- Best in hot, dry areas, full sun
- Most will spread
- 'Moonshine Yarrow' is a clump former with silver leaves
- Foliage is aromatic

***Achillea lanulosa*. Native yarrow**

- Use to cover areas where nothing else seems to grow.
- Foliage is aromatic

***Anaphalis margaritacea*. Pearly everlasting**

- Native
- Hot, dry, full sun, very high elevations
- Blooms can be cut when in bud and dried for long lasting bloom

***Aquilegia caerulea*. Colorado columbine**

- Head in sun, feet in shade
- Native

***Aquilegia chrysantha*. Golden columbine**

- Native
- Part shade to full sun
- Head in sun, feet in shade
- Very long blooming and pollinator magnet

***Aquilegia* x. Columbine hybrids**

- Columbine are very promiscuous, so if you want to keep your native blue or golden columbine pure, grow them well away from these hybrids or the seedling will be mixed

***Artemisia frigida* Fringed sage, *A. ludoviciana* White sage**

- Natives
- Both require dry, infertile soils or they get very leggy
- Highly aromatic
- *A. ludoviciana* covers a lot of area

***Baptisia australis*. False indigo**

- Best in full sun and dry conditions
- Extensive taproot, so plant where you want it and do not disturb
- Excellent for soil enrichment
- Excellent pollinator plant
- Interesting seeds pods

***Brunner macrophylla* Bugloss**

- Shade to part shade
- Can take some drought, but best in moister soils
- Early season flowers
- Huge variety of leaf color and veination

***Campanula glomerata*. Clustered bellflower**

- Can be a bully in the garden, taking over all other plants
- Long bloom time

***Campanula rotundifolia*. Harebells**

- Native
- Long bloom time
- Let go to seed to ensure season to season return
- Beautiful filler color

***Delphinium* spp. Delphinium**

- Full sun to keep the stems stronger and produce better blooms
- Place near fence or house for support

***Dianthus* spp. Dianthus**

- Full sun for best blooms
- Huge variety of colors and forms
- Some should be treated as biennials, short-lived perennials

***Dicentra spectabilis* Bleeding heart, *D. formosa* Fern-leaf bleeding heart**

- Shade lovers
- Do best with a little more moisture

***Eriogonum umbellatum*. Sulphur flower**

- Native
- Hottest and driest, with full sun
- Excellent for slope stabilization
- Native bees love

***Gaillardia aristata* Native blanketflower, *Gaillardia* spp.**

- Native is best for pollinators
- Can introduce native through seed
- Hybrids provide wide variety of color
- All take hottest, driest, full sun areas. Do not seem to like rich soil, rather gravel driveways

***Geranium viscosissimum* Sticky geranium, *Geranium caespitosum* Rocky Mountain geranium**

- Natives are very hardy, taking hot, dry conditions best.
- Excellent for native pollinators
- Long established plants, and long bloom times

***Geranium* spp. Hardy Geraniums**

- Can take a variety of conditions but seem to be less tolerant of harsh conditions than native.
- Full sun to partial shade
- Wide variety of colors, leaf shapes and forms
- Long bloom times

***Geum (Erythrocoma) triflorum*. Prairie smoke**

- Native
- Can take some shade
- Will form nice patches over time
- Beautiful seedheads

***Heuchera* spp. Coral bells**

- Huge variety of leaf colors, shapes and forms
- Hardiness varies
- Plants closer to native species seem to be hardier
- Most need some shade, although those closer to native species can take more sun
- Red-flowered plants are excellent for pollinators

***Echinops ritro*. Globe thistle**

- Thrives in rocky, nasty soils, do not plant in rich soils
- Taprooted, so place where you want it as it will not transplant well

***Erigeron speciosus*. Showy daisy**

- Native
- Can take some shade
- Drought tolerant, will flop in wetter gardens
- Excellent pollinator plant
- Long blooming

***Iberis sempervirens*. Candytuft**

- Early blooming
- Needs some moisture
- Reseeds readily

***Linum lewisii*. Blue flax**

- Native
- Takes hottest, driest, loves gravel driveways
- Best introduced through seed, and let it seed year to year
- Beautiful long blooming filler

***Lychnis chalconia* Maltese cross**

- Best grown in full sun and drier soils to prevent flopping
- Attractive to butterflies

***Monarda fistulosa*. Native bee balm**

- Native
- Pollinator heaven
- Highly scented foliage and flowers
- Best in drier soils, full sun to part shade

***Nepeta* spp. Catmint**

- Tough, tough. Tough
- Full sun and drier soils will prevent flop
- Pollinators love this!
- Cut back after first bloom to 6" for second bloom cycle
- Aromatic foliage (that your cat might like!)
- Several forms and flower colors now available

***Oxytropis lambertii*. Lambert's locoweed**

- Native
- Found in shale and other nasty soils
- Can introduce through seed
- Excellent native pollinator

***Papaver nudicale*. Icelandic poppy**

- Prefers a little moister soil
- Can take some shade
- Introduce through seeds or plants
- Considered a biennial or short-lived perennial, so let it seed

***Papaver orientale*. Oriental poppy**

- Wide variety of colors and forms
- Best in full sun, drier areas for best bloom and less legginess

***Penstemon pinifolius*. Pine leaf penstemon**

- Long bloom time
- Excellent pollinator plant, especially hummingbirds
- Grow dry for better blooms

- Can take some shade
- Reseeds readily
- Woody subshrub

***Penstemon barbatus*. Firecracker penstemon**

- Native
- Grow in dry, well-draining soils
- Excellent pollinator plant, especially hummingbirds

***Penstemon virens*. Blue mist penstemon**

- Native
- Needs well drained soil and full sun
- Great for pollinators, especially hummingbirds

***Penstemon strictus*. Rocky Mountain penstemon**

- Native
- Can take a little more moisture and shade than other penstemons
- Forms nice groupings
- Reseeds readily

***Pulsatilla patens*, and *Pulsatilla* spp. Pasque flowers**

- Native, *P patens*, is super hardy
- Hot, dry areas
- Will come up right through the snow
- Other species and hybrids vary in color, hardiness, form

***Ratibida columnifera*. Prairie coneflower**

- Native
- Dry, full sun areas are best, although will take a little dry shade
- Can introduce through seed.
- Plant en-masse as plants are skinny
- Excellent pollinator plant
- Reseeds readily

***Rudbeckia hirta*. Black-eyed Susan**

- Native
- Considered a biennial or short-lived perennial
- Reseeds readily
- Best in dry, full sun areas

***Salvia nemerosa*. Salvias**

- Wide variety of colors and forms
- Prefers well-drained soils, but flowers best with some extra water
- Deadhead for prolonged bloom time
- Foliage is fragrant
- Excellent pollinator plants

***Thermopsis divaricarpa*. Golden banner**

- Is a bully plant, so give this plenty of room
- Best in dry soil with full sun to slow down its growth
- Excellent for soil enrichment
- Excellent pollinator plant

Bulbs

Daffodils

- Most animals leave the bulbs alone, the tops might get eaten

Grape hyacinth

- Naturalizes easily
- Might get eaten

Winter aconite

- Blooms through the snow
- Naturalizes

Crocus

- Early blooming
- *Crocus tommasinianus* is the most deer resistant

Vines

Clematis

- Huge variety and hardiness
- Opt for native species if looking for better pollinator plants

- Head in sun, feet in shade

Dropmore Scarlet honeysuckle

- Woody and long-lived vine
- Hummingbirds love

Ground covers and rock garden plants

***Acantholimon* spp. Prickly dianthus**

- Best in gravelly soil, full sun
- Reseeds readily

***Antennaria* spp. Pussytoes**

- Best in full sun and dry soils
- Mat forming
- Great for walkways
- Reseeds readily

***Cerastium tomentosum*. Snow-in-summer**

- Best in dry, poor soils and full sun
- Spreads by runners and seeds
- Shear off spent blooms to prevent reseeding

***Campanula* spp. Harebell**

- A huge variety for rock garden and ground cover harebells, many more difficult to grow

***Gypsophila repens*. Baby's breath**

- Best in dry, full sun
- Fluffy filler plant in pink and white

***Lamium maculatum*. Deadnettle**

- A bully plant for part to full shade
- Beautiful variety of leaves
- Prefers some moisture, could scorch when in drought conditions
- Shear back to prevent legginess

***Marrubium rotundifolium*. Horehound**

- Best in full sun, dry, poor soils
- Excellent along the edges of pathways
- Shear off flowers for prettier silver foliage

***Phlox* spp.**

- Huge variety of colors, most are matt forming
- Native varieties can take poorer soils, heat and sun better

***Persicaria affinis*. Himalayan Jewelweed**

- A bully plant for moist areas. Make sure you give it plenty of room!
- Covers thoroughly and inhibits weed growth

***Saponaria* spp. Soapwort**

- A spring blooming (*S. ocymoides*) and fall blooming (*S. x lempergii* 'Max Frei') provide excellent color
- Max Frei is a hawk moth magnet
- Max Frei requires dry conditions, *S. ocymoides* enjoys dry but can take a richer soil
- Both need full sun

***Sedum* spp. Stonecrop**

- Incredible diversity in form, color, blooms
- All tend to be drought tolerant
- Some can take a little shade

***Sempervivum* spp. Hen and chicks**

- Amazing diversity in form, color
- Great stuffed along cracks of rock walls
- Best in full sun to keep color and form

***Thymus* spp. Thyme**

- Most are used as drought tolerant ground covers/lawn substitutes
- Very fragrant foliage
- Some can tolerate a little shade
- Excellent pollinator plants

***Veronica* spp.**

- A huge variety of ground cover and upright plants
- Many are drought tolerant. Some require more moisture
- Most need full sun for best flower production