

# Potentilla or Shrubby Cinquefoil



# Potentilla or Shrubby Cinquefoil (*Potentilla fruticosa*)

## General Description

A very hardy and widely used native in landscape plantings across the state. Popular for its floral display throughout most of the summer season. There are several herbaceous forbs that belong to the *Potentilla* genus native to the North Dakota prairie.

### Leaves and Buds

Bud Arrangement - Alternate.

Bud Color - Brown.

Bud Size - 1/6 inch.

Leaf Type and Shape - Pinnately compound, usually 3 to 5 elliptic leaflets.

Leaf Margins - Revolute margins.

Leaf Surface - Silky, pubescent.

Leaf Length - 3/4 to 1 inch; leaflets 3/8 to 3/4 inch.

Leaf Width - 1/2 to 1 inch; leaflets 1/8 to 3/8 inch.

Leaf Color - Dark green to gray.

### Flowers and Fruits

Flower Type - Terminal cymes or solitary, 10 to 30 stamens. Primarily single-flowered, a few double cultivars.

Flower Color - Primarily yellow or white. Several varieties exhibit orange to pinkish-red shades.

Fruit Type - Achene.

Fruit Color - Brown.

### Form

Growth Habit - Sub-shrub, may require rejuvenation every 5 to 6 years.

Texture - Fine, summer; medium-fine, winter.

Crown Height - 2 to 4 feet, depending on cultivar.

Crown Width - 2 to 5 feet.

Bark Color - Brown, shredding.

Root System - Fibrous, width of crown spread.

## Environmental Requirement

### Soils

Soil Texture - Clay to sandy loam.

Soil pH - 5.5 to 8.0. Adaptable to high pH, but variable by cultivar.

Windbreak Suitability Group - 1, 1K, 3, 4, 4C, 5, 6D, 6G.

### Cold Hardiness

USDA Zone 2.

### Water

Drought tolerant.

### Light

Partial to full sun.

## Uses

### Conservation/Windbreaks

Not recommended due to short stature.

### Wildlife

Cover for small ground birds.

### Agroforestry Products

Food - Used as feed for livestock, cattle, horses, goats, pigs and geese.

Medicinal - *Potentilla* species have been used for cramps, mouth ulcers, spongy gums, loose teeth, respiratory ailments, and as a cardiac stimulant.

### Urban/Recreational

Widely used for landscaping in foundation plantings, hedges and masses.

## Cultivated Varieties

### *Potentilla fruticosa*:

'Abbotswood' (Abbotswood *Potentilla*) - Flowers white with a pink blush.

'Absaraka' (Dakota Goldrush® *Potentilla*) - Yellow flowers, NDSU introduction.

'Coronation Triumph' (Coronation Triumph *Potentilla*) - 3 feet tall, abundant yellow flowers.

'Dakota Sunrise' (Dakota Sunrise *Potentilla*) - Flowers light yellow.

'Day Dawn' (Day Dawn *Potentilla*) - Flowers peach-pink, but in hot weather, creamy.

'Fargo' (Dakota Sunspot® *Potentilla*) - Yellow flowers, NDSU introduction.

'Goldfinger' (Goldfinger *Potentilla*) - Compact shrub, bright yellow flowers.

'Hurstbourne' (Hurstbourne *Potentilla*) - Bright yellow flowers all summer long.

'Jackmanii' (Jackman *Potentilla*) - 4 feet tall, large bright yellow flowers.

'Katherine Dukes' (Katherine Dykes *Potentilla*) - Lemon-yellow flowers.

'Snowbird' (Snowbird *Potentilla*) - Double white flowers.

'Yellowbird' (Yellowbird *Potentilla*) - Double yellow flowers.

## Related Species

None.

## Pests

Several leaf spot and mildew diseases. Spider mites often build up in warm, dry weather.