

Aromatic Aster
Aster oblongifolius
September - October



Blue Sage
Salvia azurea
June - October



Blue Wild-Indigo
Baptisia australis
April - June



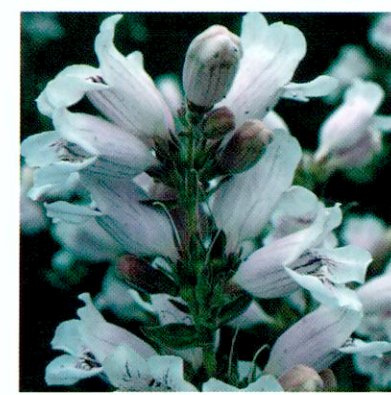
Sunflower
Helianthus annuus
July - September



Butterfly Milkweed
Asclepias tuberosa
May - August



Cat-Claw Mimosa
Mimosa quadrivalvis
April - September



Cobaea Beardtongue
Penstemon cobaea
April - June



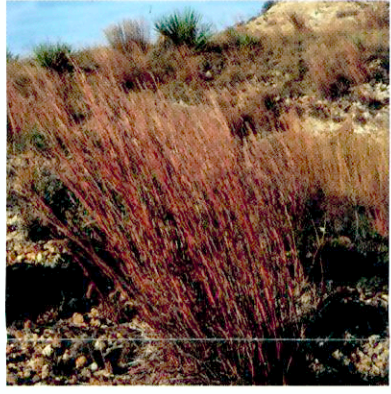
Big Bluestem
Andropogon gerardii
July - October



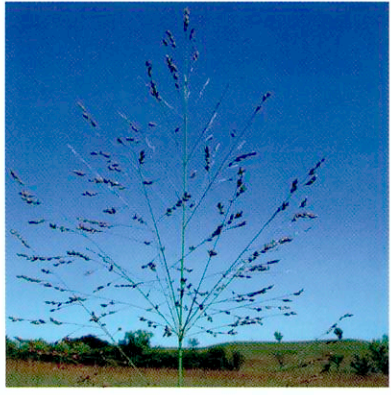
Eastern Gamma Grass
Tripsacum dactyloides
May - October



Indian Grass
Sorghastrum nutans
August - October



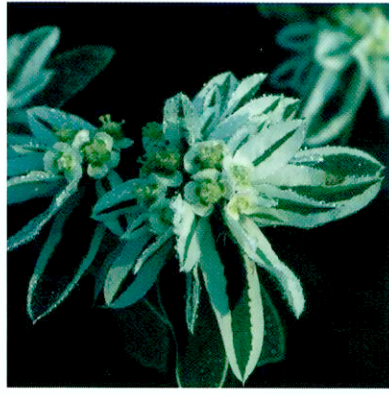
Little Bluestem
Schizachyrium scoparium
July - October



Switch Grass
Panicum virgatum
June - October



Arkansas Rose
Rosa arkansana
May - August



Snow-on-the-Mountain
Euphorbia marginata
June - October



New Jersey Tea
Ceanothus herbaceus
April - August



Spider Milkweed
Asclepias viridis
April - August



Leadplant
Amorpha canescens
May - August



Stiff Goldenrod
Solidago rigida
August - October



Rough-Leaf Dogwood
Cornus drummondii
April - June



Upright Prairie-Coneflower
Ratibida columnifera
June - September



Smooth Sumac
Rhus glabra
May - June



Wavy-Leaf Thistle
Cirsium undulatum
June - August



Wild Bergamot
Monarda fistulosa
June - September



Western Ironweed
Vernonia blawii
July - October



Wild-Alfalfa
Psoraleum tenuiflorum
May - July

Kansas Wildflowers Native Grasses, & Shrubs

Kansas is home to more than 1,600 kinds of native flowering plants. Pictured here are 27 wildflowers, 5 shrubs, and 5 perennial grasses common in Eastern Kansas prairies, pastures, and roadsides.

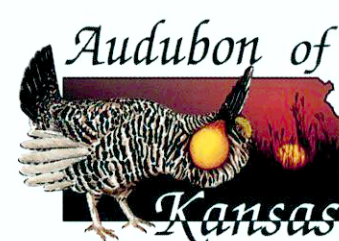
Listed with each image is the common name, scientific name, and blooming period of the plant.

■ Grass

■ Shrub

■ Wildflower

A Joint Project Between



Photos Courtesy of:

Ron Klataske,
Audubon of Kansas

Craig C. Freeman,
University of Kansas

Mike Haddock,
KSU Science Libraries

Returning to Prairie by Design

The Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) is improving the environment and beautifying Kansas's roadsides by restoring the right-of-way to emulate prairie ecology. This effort has many benefits, including promoting habitat for wildlife, especially ground nesting grassland birds, butterflies and other native pollinating insects. It also reduces maintenance requirements and fuel consumption. Roadside



vegetation also stabilizes the soil, filters runoff, and helps catch and control blowing snow.

The spreading, interwoven roots and dense foliage of a healthy stand of native grasses and wildflowers can protect the soil from water and wind erosion, and help conserve valuable soil moisture. In addition, native plants provide a spectacular palette of form, color, and texture that changes with the seasons.

Climate, soil, and topography vary greatly along the right-of-way on the 10,000 miles of the Kansas state highway system. Rainfall in Kansas varies from about 16 inches annually in the state's southwest corner near Elkhart to just over 42 inches annually in the southeastern part of the state near Baxter Springs. Soils also differ greatly from the loess soils in western Kansas to the rocky soils of the Flint Hills to the Ozark-like soils in the southeast corner of Kansas.

Following road construction, roadsides in rural areas are now seeded to native grasses. The area is then mowed up to 3 times a year for 2 years to control weed growth until the plants are established. After this period, a limited mowing policy is implemented in rural areas. Under this program, the area immediately adjacent to the shoulder of the road is mowed to provide safe pull off areas and to reduce fire hazards. A 15-foot to 20-foot wide strip of grass adjacent to the pavement is mowed several times a year to stabilize the road shoulder and to provide safety. Triangular shaped areas at the corners of intersecting roads and other critical vision areas are mowed to provide adequate visibility of cross traffic.



A VANISHING PRAIRIE

Many roadsides in eastern Kansas allow the motorist to appreciate a vanishing prairie. With less than one percent of the tallgrass prairie remaining in North America, these roadsides preserve and display this unique native landscape. Please help us preserve and protect the roadsides by not picking native grass and wildflowers or stopping along the roadway.

Kansas roadways are becoming an ever increasing connection to nature-based tourism.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

- Roadside Maintenance Toll Free at:**
1-(877) 550-5368 Information. www.ksdot.org
*Click on PublicScroll down to "Managing Roadsides".
- Scenic Byways:** (785) 827-3603 www.byways.org
- Prairie Passage Coordinator:** (785) 296-0853
- Kansas Wildflowers and Grasses:**
www.lib.ksu.edu/wildflower
- Nature-based Activities:** www.naturalkansas.org
- Kansas Travel and Tourism:** www.travelKS.com
- Kansas Wildflower Society:** (785) 864-3453
- Audubon of Kansas:** (785) 537-4385
www.audubonofkansas.org

The remainder of the roadside is left in a natural unmowed state. Approximately once every 3 to 5 years, the entire area is mowed to stimulate thatch decomposition and nutrient recycling much as prairie fires and grazing once did. Periodic mowing is necessary to control invasion of woody plants in a prairie environment.

A "clear zone," free of large woody vegetation, is maintained within 25 to 35 feet of the edge of the driving lane. This provides a safe recovery area for errant vehicles.

Mowing in the clear zone (beyond the immediate shoulder cut) is only permitted every 2 or 3 years and is further restricted until after mid-July to permit most birds to complete their nesting cycle undisturbed. This schedule also allows the native plants to produce seed and store food for the winter during the "no mow" years. Mowing in the fall after frost is generally most beneficial.

KDOT maintains about 147,000 acres of roadway making it difficult to mow or spray at the appropriate time. Local KDOT offices are given flexibility to alter the mowing schedule to meet manpower needs,



control noxious weeds, and make scheduled roadside repairs. Due to varying roadside conditions, KDOT is not always able to mow at the appropriate time for many of our 400 native plants growing and flowering along our roadsides.

In urban areas, mowing is usually completed more often. Some city governments mow KDOT right-of-way more frequently or mow less frequently if they seed (and maintain) state highway property to special native grass and wildflower mixes. KDOT does not include wildflowers in mixes unless requested to do so.

In addition to the plantings done by the Kansas Department of Transportation, the department also encourages civic groups to establish and maintain plantings on highway right-of-way.



The Kansas Scenic Byways Program identifies and designates scenic roadways for the enjoyment of the traveling public. The program is a cooperative effort among private citizens, organizations, and local community and state government agencies.

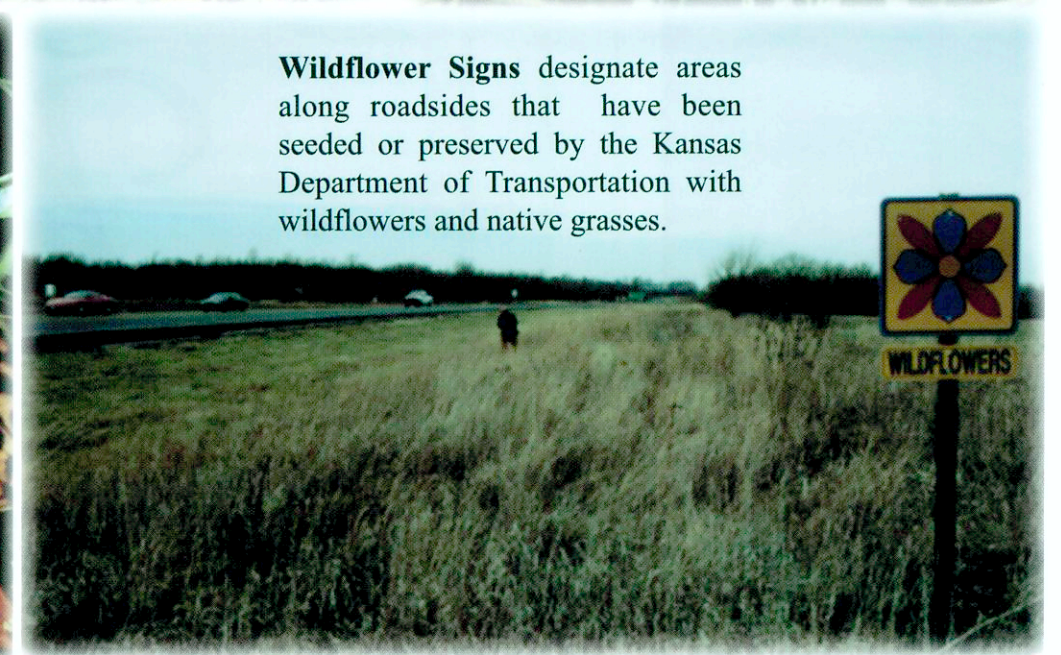
Watch For Three Companion Brochures:

- Prairie Passage - Nature Based Attractions in Six States
- Prairie Passage - Routes and Sites in Kansas
- Flora and Birding Trails in Kansas

Kansas Department of Transportation
Docking State Office Building
Topeka, KS 66612-1568
(785) 296-3585



Information in this booklet is available in alternative accessible formats. For more information, please contact:
Transportation Information
7th Floor, Docking State Office Bldg.
Topeka, KS 66612-1568
Or call: (785) 296-3585
(TTY) (785) 296-3585



Wildflower Signs designate areas along roadsides that have been seeded or preserved by the Kansas Department of Transportation with wildflowers and native grasses.



Side-Oats Gramma



Switch Grass



Eastern Gamma Grass



Big Bluestem



Little Bluestem



Indian Grass



Buffalo Grass



In a pioneering six-state partnership, a plan was developed for a national wildflower corridor. The effort, known as the Prairie Passage, promotes awareness of natural and cultural resources and encourages the protection and planting of native wildflowers and grasses along roadsides.

PHOTO ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

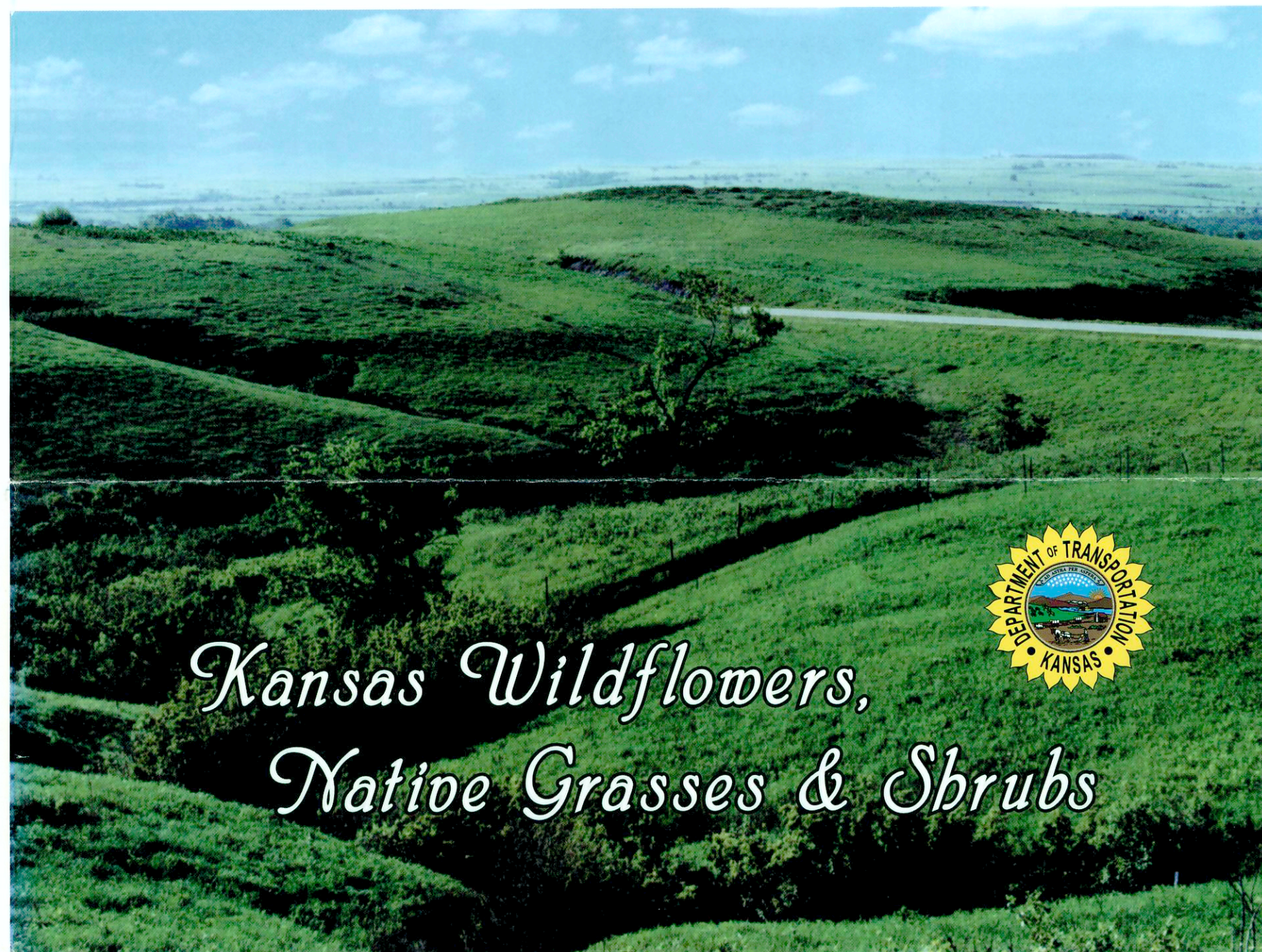
Mike Haddock, KSU Science Libraries
Gary Weisenberger, Larry Colcher and Loren Johannes, KDOT
Paul Willis, Audubon of Kansas

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Native Grass Facts

- Grasses are the most common plants in the tallgrass prairie. Approximately 180 species of grass are native to Kansas.
- Big Bluestem and Indian Grass are common in relatively moist soils.
- Little Bluestem and Side-Oats Gramma are common in dryer areas.
- Wetter areas have Switch Grass and Eastern Gama Grass.
- Maximum heights in fall: 3'-6' for Big Bluestem and Switch Grass, 4'-7' for Indian Grass, 2'-3' for Side-Oats Gramma and Little Bluestem.
- Roots are deep and extensive: 9'-10' for Switch Grass, 7'-9' for Big Bluestem and Indian Grass, and 6'-7' for Little Bluestem and Side-Oats Gramma.
- Two-thirds of the living tissue of the prairie is below ground.
- Growth of grasses is stimulated by fire, grazing, or properly timed mowing.
- Grasses are the basis of the food chain for grazing animals.
- Special chemical pathways allow many prairie grasses to remain vigorous during hot, dry weather.



Kansas Wildflowers,
Native Grasses & Shrubs

