

## **Drought Resistant Gardening** – notes from presentation by Lyndon Penner, Head Gardener at Riding Mountain National Park at Manitoba Horticulture Assoc.

### **Overall suggestions about designing and planting perennial gardens:**

- think about what the plants will look like when they are not blooming
- use foliage for added colour and interest
- bury 1/3 of landscape rocks to make them look like they belong
- Big Bluestem is the official plant of Manitoba. For the first few years, they will develop roots. When well-established, they will have doubled or tripled in size
- Dry shade is the hardest place to garden
  - o Under a tree is impossible – instead of plants, use a bird bath, containers that you can move around to catch some sun, hanging baskets or a sculpture

### **Drought Resistant Perennials**

#### **Yarrow** – doesn't like rich soil

- recent cultivars of this plant (from Holland) flower more than older varieties; they are long-flowering and have intense colours
- should be massed for the best 'show'
- butterflies love it

#### **Artemisia & Salvia** – both are called 'Sage'; need to be careful as some are aggressive

- are drought resistant
- white / silver foliage is an adaptation to heat / drought
- when temperatures are higher, the foliage is more silver
- includes silver mound – this plant likes a 'lean' diet
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#### **Purple Prairie Clover** – Native

- complementary with Artemisia

#### **Wild Buckwheat (erigonaum) or umbrella wort**

- Native plant that loves poor soil; doesn't grow well in containers
- takes 4 – 5 years to look nice

#### **Sea Holly** – carrot family

- at their best in August
- don't like to be disturbed; direct sow from seeds

#### **Cranesbill** – perennial geranium

- grows wider than tall
- likes full sun, heat, sharp drainage on slopes
- hates compost and water

#### **Bearded Iris** – this foliage can stand in for ornamental grasses

#### **Bergenia** – is a sun plant that will flower better in the sun

- it is a good foliage plant in the shade.

**Liatris Spicata** –low-maintenance plant prefers average to moist, well-drained soils

- It grows well in full sun to partial shade and also tolerates summer heat and humidity.
- **Liatris Punctata** – Native species
- Likes sun, dry and sandy prairies
- Very drought resistant

**Blue Flax** – short-lived but a delicious blue

- Likes poor dry soil

**Evening Stars / Golden Stars (Mentzelia)** – a showy annual with fragrant, star-shaped blooms that open in evening.

- Direct sow into the garden
- Needs hot and dry

**Evening Primrose (Missouri sundrops)** – large flowers.

- Great along a sidewalk

**Prickly Pear Cactus** – don't plant around children and pets.

- Live for decades

**Showy loco weed** – silver foliage / purple flowers

**Peonies** – enormous root systems so are drought tolerant.

**Russian Sage** – loves drought and poor soil.

**Potentilla** – shrub.

- Used to be just yellow but now available in white / orange / pink

**Sedum** – dazzle berry is hot pink

- Autumn Joy is an upright variety
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**Hens & Chicks** – (*Sempervivum tectorum*) not echeveria (tropical).

- Over time, this ground-hugging plant with a fondness for sandy, gravelly soil will spread to form colonies 2 feet wide or more.
- Sandy, well-drained soil; full sun

**Scarlet Mallow** – Native

- Difficult to propagate

**Yucca** – evergreen – needs to be covered by snow

- Needs drainage

- Fragrant at night

## **Annuals**

- **Portulaca** – loves hot and dry
- **Gazania** – need to be dead-headed
- **Marigolds** – single petal varieties are better for pollinators
- **Zinnias** – withstand some of the worst growing conditions
  - Need full sun; love heat
- **Vincas** – bloom all summer
  - Flowers and foliage resemble impatiens but are perfect for sunny locations
  - Easy to start from seed
  - Drought tolerant and pest-free