

For Immediate Release

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A Pocket Guide to Kansas Flint Hills Wildflowers and Grasses
By Iralee Barnard
Published by the Friends of the Great Plains Nature Center.

Sponsored by Tallgrass Legacy Alliance, Westar Energy Green Team, Chickadee Checkoff, Kansas Native Plant Society, and the Great Plains Nature Center.

Eighth in the pocket guide series, “The Pocket Guide to Kansas Flint Hills Wildflowers and Grasses” covers 52 kinds of native wildflowers and six prairie grasses found in the Flint Hills. These same species of plants greeted European settlers entering the region nearly 200 years ago. These plant species also provided sustenance to the American Indians, and they are the basis of our present agricultural and ranching economy. Each plant has a story to tell. Each story is timeless.

The pocket guide allows readers to gain a greater appreciation for prairie plant diversity and the uniqueness of each wildflower and grass. Detailed are the plant’s ecological relationships to livestock grazing, wildlife and basic human uses.

The wildflowers are arranged by flower color. Descriptions are enhanced by beautiful color images.

Our native prairies, composed of plant and animal diversity, are an “irreplaceable legacy.” This pocket guide invites you to share the wonder.

Date of Publication: June 2010
69 pages, softbound

Other pocket guides in this series include: Kansas Raptors, Kansas Snakes, Kansas Mammals, Kansas Freshwater Mussels, Kansas Threatened and Endangered Species, Great Plains Shorebirds and Great Plains Waterbirds.

Single copies of these Pocket Guides are available free of charge at the Great Plains Nature Center. Copies can be mailed for \$3.00 each by sending your check, payable to GPNC, to: Pocket Guides, Great Plains Nature Center, 6232 East 29th Street North, Wichita, KS 67220.

New Wildflower Pocket Guide

A POCKET GUIDE TO Kansas Flint Hills Wildflowers and Grasses



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■ Ground-plum Milk-vetch

Ground-plum Milk-vetch *Astragalus crassicaarpus*

Family/Longevity/Height:

Bean/Perennial/6-8 inches

Description: Sprawling, stems have alternate leaves 2-4 inches long bearing 15-27 oval leaflets. The tubular, 3/4-inch flowers are various shades of purple and are borne in clusters of as many as 24. Fruits, called legumes, are fleshy, smooth and round to 1 inch in diameter.

Comments: A large plant of Ground-plum Milk-vetch, also called "buffalo bean," can cover a 2-foot diameter area. The conspicuous fruits are succulent when young and edible raw or cooked. Fruits become deep-red as they mature. Cattle relish this plant, and it decreases in abundance in over-grazed native ranges. Ground-plum Milk-vetch is a characteristic species of well-drained, upland soil. It is found statewide but most commonly in the eastern half of Kansas.

Bloom Period:

Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct



■ Pale Poppy-mallow

Pale Poppy-mallow *Callirhoe alceaoides*

Family/Longevity/Height:

Mallow/Perennial/8-12 inches

Description: Sprawling stems spread in all directions. Leaves are variable, sometimes triangular with scalloped edges but often deeply lobed. The five-petaled flowers are cup-shaped and white to pink.

Comments: Callirhoe is from the Greek meaning "beautiful," and is the name of an ocean nymph in Greek mythology. Cotton, hollyhocks and okra belong to the same family. The deep, thick taproot of the closely related Purple Poppy-mallow has long been cooked and eaten as a vegetable. Mallows are food plants for the larva of gray hairstreak butterflies. Pale Poppy-mallow is common in the eastern half of Kansas on open prairies.

Bloom Period:

Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct



■ Fringe-leaf Ruellia

Fringe-leaf Ruellia *Ruellia humilis*

Family/Longevity/Height:

Acorn/Perennial/6-12 inches

Description: Plants are covered with long, spreading hairs. Opposite leaves are opposite on stems, sprawling or ascending stems. Large, lavender, funnel-shaped flowers are usually solitary in the leaf axils.

Comments: The flowers of Fringe-leaf Ruellia are large and showy, but plants can be overlooked in dense prairie vegetation. Flowers tend to drop off easily when the plant is handled. Another name for this plant is "wild petunia" because of its resemblance to the garden plants. Plants are palatable to livestock. Caterpillars of the buckeye butterfly feed on the foliage. Plants are easily grown from seed. Fringe-leaf Ruellia can withstand extreme drought. It is found in the eastern half of Kansas and is common on upland prairies.

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Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct