Grassland Plants of Northern Virginia

What Can You Do?

Plant native grasses and forbs
Native plants are recommended because they are beneficial to other insects and wildlife. For tips on gardening with native plants, visit the Virginia Native Plant Society’s website at: www.vnps.org

Remove invasive plants from your yard
Invasive plants are non-native species which have been introduced and cause environmental harm. Invasive plants can crowd out native plant species, and they often do not provide resources for native wildlife: no nectar for pollinators, no seeds or cover for native birds, no food for native caterpillars and other herbivores. Visit the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation’s website for lists of species that are invasive in Virginia: www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage

Convert part of your property to a native meadow
Go beyond adding a few native plants by creating your own meadow with a mixture of native grasses and forbs. In addition to creating an attractive patch of natural habitat, you’ll attract native pollinators and provide foraging habitat for birds. Visit the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries website for information on creating native habitats: www.dgif.virginia.gov/wildlife/habitat/

Become a volunteer
Participating in citizen science-based projects is a great way to assist in the monitoring of long-term trends of native grassland plant species. Virginia Working Landscapes is currently monitoring grassland plants on working farms across 15 Virginia counties in an effort to understand long-term trends and to determine the effects of pasture and hayfield management on relative abundance and species composition. To become a VWL Citizen Scientist, visit us on the web at: www.VAWorkingLandscapes.org

Natural and semi-natural grasslands are rare in Virginia

With more than 80% of North America’s grasslands currently residing on private lands, it is imperative that we optimize the potential of these areas to preserve declining early successional plant species.

Virginia Working Landscapes is currently monitoring grassland plant populations on both public and private properties across 15 Virginia counties in an effort to understand the long-term trends of relative abundance and species composition in relation to habitat structure and land management practices.

Places to see restored grasslands in Northern Virginia include:
Big Meadow in Shenandoah National Park
www.nps.gov/shen
Blandy Experimental Farm
blandy.virginia.edu
Manassas National Battlefield Park
www.nps.gov/mana

Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute
www.VAWorkingLandscapes.org
www.Facebook.com/VirginiaWorkingLandscapes
Grassland Plants of Northern Virginia

**Little bluestem**
Schizachyrium scoparium
Common in mountains and piedmont
A widespread, warm-season bunchgrass found in tallgrass prairies

**Indian grass**
Sorghastrum nutans
Common in mountains and piedmont
A dominant grass in tallgrass prairies, found across much of the Continental U.S.

**Purple false foxglove**
Agalinis purpurea
Common throughout the state
A hemi-parasite that can extract nutrients from the roots of other plants

**Round-headed bush clover**
Lespedeza capitata
Rare in mountains, infrequent in piedmont
A nitrogen-fixing member of the bean family that provides food for birds and pollinators

**Smooth small-leaf tick-trefoil**
Desmodium marilandicum
Common in piedmont, infrequent in mountains
The Velcro-like seeds are spread by large mammals, including humans!

**Purple milkwort**
Polygala sanguinea
Frequent in mountains and piedmont
Prefers dry sandy soil and offers a food source for pollinators

**Scaly blazing star**
Liatris squarrosa
Frequent in piedmont
A low flowering plant which is attractive to pollinators

**Balsam ragwort**
Packera paupercula
Rare in mountains and piedmont
This rare species can be difficult to distinguish from the much more common Small’s ragwort.

**Hoary mountain-mint**
Pycnanthemum incanum
Common in mountains and piedmont
The name “hoary” comes from the white hairs that coat the upper leaves.

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**Indian grass**
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**Rose-pink**
Sabatia angularis
Frequent throughout the state
A fragrant flowering plant that attracts native bees

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