

Pollinators Need Native Grasses & Sedges Too

Why grasses and sedges? Don't pollinators want flowers?

Although grasses and sedges are primarily wind-pollinated, that doesn't mean they are useless to pollinators or wildlife - in fact, grasses, sedges, and rushes are necessary for a healthy ecosystem, even in the garden setting.



Migrating songbirds appreciate the added cover and seeds that native grasses and sedges provide.



Fireflies rely on tall grasses for a place to signal their mates and rest during the day.



Bumblebee queens overwinter in the bases of bunch grasses, and small solitary bees use their stems as nurseries.



Native prairie grasses' deep root systems make them drought resistant, good at controlling erosion, and great carbon sinks.



The beneficial insects that help your garden need shelter from the midday heat, and the predatory insects that eat pesky gnats and midges like to perch on high blades of grass while they look for prey.



Ornamental native grasses and sedges provide contrast and support to flowers, helping to make a more aesthetically-pleasing and robust native garden.



Just like a monarch needs milkweed, thousands of insects, including beautiful skipper butterflies, are specifically adapted to feed on native grasses and sedges (one of the many reasons why native ornamental grasses are better than the non-native alternatives).

Iowa Native Grasses & Sedges

Some great native grasses and sedges for home landscaping in Eastern Iowa are:



Side-Oats Grama
B. curtipendula



Little Bluestem
S. scoparium



June Grass
K. macrantha



Prairie Dropseed
S. heterolepis



Long-beaked Sedge
C. sprengeii



Pennsylvania Sedge
C. pennsylvanica



Common Bur Sedge
C. grayi

Native grasses and sedges are available for sale as seed and starts from several nurseries throughout Iowa and the Midwest.

To find a nursery that sells native plants, check out this resource from the Tallgrass Prairie Center:

<https://tallgrassprairiecenter.org/pin-resources>

