



# Prairie Originals

WILDFLOWERS  
NATIVE GRASSES



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Ahhh, summer is here. I guess it won't be the perfect summer that we had hoped for but that's life. It is still great to be outdoors. It sounds like they are predicting another wet (but warmer than last years) summer. Warmer is definitely better but that means mosquitoes. Since we work outdoors all the time at Prairie Originals we just grin and bear it. Luckily they are not as bad in the daytime as they are in the evenings. We use repellents and loose fitting, light coloured, long sleeved shirts. We recently discovered at Home Hardware, a mosquito repellent patch to stick on your skin, that is supposed to last 36 hours. It contains Vitamin B1 (Thiamine). The one we tried seemed to work but we have to get some more to try them. We will let you know the results in September. Alexis, our new staff member who worked as a tree planter in BC where the bugs are just as bad or worse than here, said their crew wore white dress shirts for the mosquitoes and took Vitamin B1.

## What's Blooming Now?

July is when the flowers really show up in profusion and some of the cool season grasses are looking great now too. The Sheep Fescue seed will be ripening soon and when they do their stems turn red giving the prairie a rosy glow.

**Green Needle Grass** *Stipa viridula* is looking great in late June and early July. It grows 50 – 100 cm (2-3 ft.) It is a fine textured, cool season grass with long, feathery seedheads. It prefers well drained soils and does not like to sit in water. Green Needle Grass is a clump grass so it is not invasive at all and it is not an invasive seeder. It can be grown in gardens in groups to give a prairie feel to the garden or mixed with warm season grasses like Little Bluestem or Big Bluestem in a mixed prairie planting. (*below*)



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**Solomon's Seal** *Polygonatum biflorum* is a handsome plant for the shade. The white flowers dangle under the stems and later turn into navy blue berries. It spreads slowly by roots and lives a long time once established. (right)



**Smooth Camas** *Zigadensis elegans* is a relatively new plant we are growing and I like it more and more each year. It has a whitish bloom on the grassy leaves and elegant white flower spikes in July. Its normal habitat is full sun but I have some growing in part shade where it is doing fine. It also tolerates a lot of water. Our Smooth Camas stockbed is quite wet. (below)



Two of our native shrubs are also blooming. **Dwarf False Indigo** (below left) is just finishing and **Narrowleaf Meadowsweet** (below right) is just starting. These are two of our smaller native shrubs. Dwarf False Indigo grows just 1 – 2 feet and Meadowsweet grows about 3 feet tall.



Other plants blooming around here now include **Tall Meadowrue**, **Harebell**, **Black Eyed Susan**, **False Sunflower**, **Giant Hyssop**, **Swamp Milkweed**, **Whorled Milkweed**, **Awned Wheatgrass**, **Tufted Hairgrass**, **Prairie Rose**, **Northern Bedstraw**, **Alumroot**, **Wild Flax**, **Yarrow**, **Purple Oat Grass**, **June Grass** and **Blue Vervain**.



## Bird & Butterfly News

One of the perks of working outdoors is getting to observe the wildlife around here. We have new residents in nests at the peak of the Shop and the peak of the house garage. We learned that they are Eastern Phoebes. They have moved into abandoned Barn Swallow nests which apparently is quite common. They are a type of Flycatcher. They nested around June 10 so we should be seeing new little ones learning to fly soon. They seem to be fairly friendly birds. They perch on the posts above the plug bench and pump their tail up and down. *(photo top left)*

The fireflies have been out again since mid June. They are lighting up at night to find a mate.

Ruby Throated Hummingbirds have also been around here a lot. We see them at the Wild Columbine, Wild Iris, Giant Hyssop, Fireweed and Wild Bergamot and Touch Me Not. These are Mother Nature's Hummingbird Feeders. I was working in the container area in mid June and was buzzed by two Hummingbirds chasing each other. They came so close I heard their wings buzzing!



The Monarch butterflies are around, although it is difficult for them to fly in cool and rainy weather. Whenever the sun comes out we see them flitting about the Milkweed and laying eggs on the underside of the leaves. The eggs are laid singly and are white and about the size of a pinhead. We spotted the first caterpillar on June 20 on the Dwarf Milkweed and are seeing quite a few caterpillars now.

We are finding many caterpillars of Painted Lady butterflies on the Pussy Toes and Pearly Everlasting these days. We have had very few of them the last few years so it is nice to see them again this year. *(photo on right)*



We are also seeing the little blue butterflies called Spring Azure *(below left)* and Western Tailed Blue *(below right)*. Host plants for the Western Tailed Blue caterpillars include Wild Pea and Canada Milkvetch.

Host plants for the Spring Azure caterpillars include Blueberry, Narrowleaf Meadowsweet, Sumac, Red Osier Dogwood, Nannyberry, Highbush Cranberry, and Chokecherry and Wild Plum.



## Plants for Wet Conditions

Has your garden turned into a bog this year with drooping and yellow plants that are just not happy? Well don't just throw in the towel and give up. Take heart! There are lots of Prairie Plants that do just fine in these conditions. After all, many evolved here in the Red River Valley and they are used to the extremes of dry and wet conditions. They not only survive, they will thrive!

**Golden Alexander**  
*Zizia aurea* is a  
 June bloomer.  
 60 cm (2 ft)



**Culver's Root**  
*Veronicastrum virginicum*  
 blooms in late July and is a  
 gorgeous plant. 90-120cm (3-4 ft)



**Narrowleaf Sunflower**  
*Helianthus maximiliani*  
 blooms in August  
 & goldfinches love it.  
 120-150 cm (4-5 ft)



There are many others too such as New England Aster, Smooth Camas, Northern Bedstraw, and Canada Anemone. There are also many native shrubs that will take wetter conditions such as Speckled Alder, Red Osier Dogwood, Wild Plum, Wild Black Currant, Wild Rose, Wild Raspberry, Showy Mountain Ash, Nanny-berry, and Highbush Cranberry. These are all in addition to the plants listed in the Wet Soil Section of our catalogue. (See below)

## Wet Soil

Bebb's Sedge  
 Blue Vervain  
 Closed Gentian  
 Flat Top Goldenrod  
 Flat Top Aster  
 Ironweed  
 Joe Pye

Marsh Marigold  
 Marsh Reed Grass  
 Northern Bog Violet  
 Obedient Plant  
 Saline Shooting Star  
 Swamp Milkweed  
 Sweet Flag

Sweetgrass  
 Tall Meadow Rue  
 Touch Me Not  
 Tufted Hair Grass  
 Turtlehead  
 Wild Iris  
 Wild Mint



## Invasive Plant Alert

### HIMALAYAN BALSAM (*IMPATIENS GLANDULIFERA*) Did you know this plant is considered invasive in Manitoba?

By: Sandi Faber Routley,  
Invasive Species Council of Manitoba



Himalayan balsam flower. Photo credit: Jan Samanek, State Phytosanitary Administration, Bugwood.org

Originally from India and the western Himalayas, this attractive orchid-like plant (also known as Policeman's helmet, Indian balsam, and Poor Man's orchid) was introduced as an ornamental to many parts of Europe, New Zealand and North America. It has escaped cultivation to invade natural areas in these regions. In Canada, Himalayan balsam is found in eight provinces: British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland. Locally, it is found growing in some gardens and on two river bank areas in Winnipeg. ISCM hopes to stop the spread of this plant through volunteer reporting and removal.

Himalayan balsam is an annual succulent herb with stems that are smooth, reddish-colored and hollow. Plants can grow up to three meters (10 ft) tall. Leaves are opposite or whorled, red-toothed, and occur in pairs or threes. Flowers are small, pink to purple in color, and shaped like an English policeman's helmet (which describes another common name given). Himalayan balsam is capable of producing 800 seeds in pods which explode when ripe and eject their seeds up to five meters. Seeds will float and quickly be transported along waterways to infest new areas. Gardeners often pass on the seed to friends due to its ornamental beauty.

Himalayan balsam will grow in agricultural areas, natural forests, disturbed areas, rangelands, riverbanks, wetlands, and gardens. In areas of introduction there are no natural enemies (e.g. disease, predators or competition) to keep this plant in check, and it will aggressively grow and spread. Dense stands of Himalayan balsam can form which prevent establishment of native plants, make stream banks vulnerable to erosion when the shallow-rooted plants die back, and reduce overall biodiversity and ecological value of the land.



Himalayan balsam stem.  
Photo Credit:  
Michael Shephard,  
USDA Forest Service,  
Bugwood.org.



Himalayan balsam infestation.  
Photo courtesy of Smithsonian  
Institute, Richard A. Howard  
Photograph Collection.

To prevent the spread of Himalayan balsam, the Invasive Species Council of Manitoba encourages Manitobans not to purchase, sell, plant, or exchange seeds of this known invasive plant. Please remove flowers before seed set and report sightings of this plant to ISCM to assist with its control.

For more information please contact us at (204) 232-6021 or [info@invasivespeciesmanitoba.com](mailto:info@invasivespeciesmanitoba.com). Visit our website at [www.invasivespeciesmanitoba.com](http://www.invasivespeciesmanitoba.com) for a "What Not to Plant" list for gardeners.



If you have grown and like this plant consider planting Touch Me Not *Impatiens biflora* instead. It is native and doesn't become a problem like the Himalayan Balsam. It has beautiful orange flowers that hummingbirds love. It is an annual for part or full shade and moist soil. It is also called Jewelweed.

It is only called Touch Me Not because the ripe seedpods explode when you touch them. The juicy leaves and stems are also a remedy for poison ivy. (*photo on left*)

## Rhubarb

We have lots of Rhubarb in 1 gallon pots in stock. This is a great way to add local fruit to your diet and they are so easy to grow. Give them a sunny, well drained spot and they will take off. A few easy rhubarb recipes are listed below to tantalize your taste buds.

### Super Simple Rhubarb Sauce

Chop about 3 cups rhubarb in 1" pieces  
Cook in pan with a teeny bit of water  
Add about 1/3 cup sugar or less to taste  
Add orange zest (finely chopped orange peel)  
Can thicken with 1 tbsp. cornstarch mixed with 1 tbsp cold water  
Best served chilled. Can be served alone or over ice cream, pancakes, oatmeal porridge or pork.  
Freezes very well.

### Rhubarb Juice

*(A customer at the Market gave me this recipe)*

Chop  
Cook  
Strain  
Freeze juice in ice cube trays.  
Add cubes to punch, mix with 7 up or Orange juice.

No time or desire to cook in the summer? Chop rhubarb and throw in the freezer for use later in the season or in winter. I found a whole bunch of interesting rhubarb recipes at [www.savor-the-rhubarb.com](http://www.savor-the-rhubarb.com).

## Summer Fruit

There are several native fruits that are very tasty for eating fresh or preserved.

**Wild Strawberry** has tiny fruit but is oh so delicious. It is ripening on our plants now. It doesn't produce nearly as much fruit as the cultivated strawberries but it doesn't take any care either, other than occasional weeding. It grows 15-20 cm tall (6-8") and makes a fast spreading groundcover for sun or part shade. We have lots of 4.5" pots in stock and we will also have XL 4-packs of it later in the season.

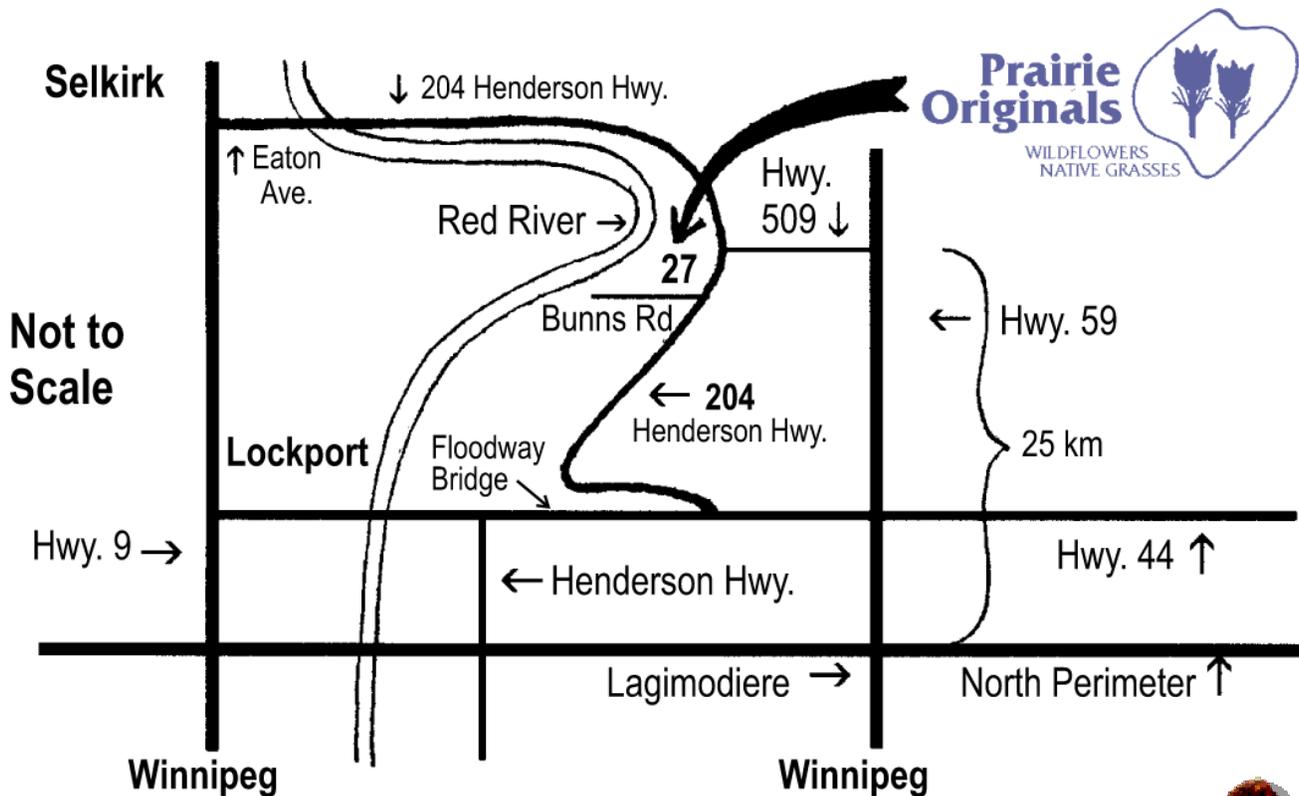
**Pincherry** grows into a large shrub or small tree 3-5 metres tall (9-15 ft). It is covered with white blossoms in May and produces bright red pea size cherries. The fruit can be eaten fresh or made into jelly. The birds also love the fruit if you don't want to use it. We have some nice size 1 Gallon pots available now for \$10.95 or 10 for \$93.00.

**Saskatoons** are a signature fruit of the prairies. The dark purple fruit ripens in mid July. It is great eaten fresh or made into many things like Saskatoon pie, sauce, jam, muffins and juice. Adding orange or lemon zest to pies really gives them zing. Graham's Groves at the St. Norbert Market sells pies as well as Saskatoon juice which is really, really good. We currently have these plants in 4.5" pots at \$5.50 each or 10 for \$49.00 as well as lots of them in 2 Gallon pots at \$17.95 or 10 for \$160.00. They grow in sun or part shade and get 3-4 metres tall (9-12 ft). They like well drained soil. I don't normally take shrubs to the St. Norbert Market so if you would like me to bring some just phone or email the Thursday before the Market.



In closing remember that Native Plants are LOW maintenance **Not** No Maintenance so don't forget about occasional weeding. There is an old saying "Give a weed an inch and it will take the whole yard."

Until next time,  
*Shirley Froehlich, Stefania Johnson,  
Amy Jordan & Alexis Nazeravich*



We are **Open for the Season.**

*Please note that a new bridge is being constructed over the floodway at Lockport. If you come through Lockport the exit for Highway 204 has moved 2 km east on Hwy. 44 as shown on the new map. You can also get to us by going through Selkirk or by taking Hwy. 59 and 509.*



## HOURS

May 12 - June 25	Monday to Friday	10 am - 6 pm
	Saturdays	9 am - 5 pm
<b>Evenings by Appointment</b>	Sundays - until June 20	11am - 5 pm
July, August, September - Usually open Monday to Saturday but <b>phone to confirm</b>		

## ST. NORBERT FARMERS MARKET

June 5 - late Aug.	Saturdays	8 am - 3 pm
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Located on Pembina Highway, about 1/2 km south of the perimeter.