



# Prairie Originals

WILDFLOWERS  
NATIVE GRASSES



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Our growing season continues to be two weeks later than normal and the forecast for the first two weeks of June is supposed to be cooler than normal as well. I guess we need to change the words of that old saying "April showers bring May flowers." This year it is "May showers bring June flowers." If your Milkweed and warm season grasses haven't put in an appearance yet, don't be alarmed. They are heat loving plants so they are just biding their time until we get some heat.

We find ourselves with an overabundance of really nice **False Sunflower** (*right*) this year, both in pots & plugs, and we would like to find good homes for them. These are plants that self-seed quite easily so they are great for filling in spaces without much work. Their colourful flowers last a long time, from about mid/late June until early/mid August. They grow in sun or part shade. The Goldfinches absolutely love them.



## What's Blooming Now?

The Wild Plums are just finishing and the Saskatoons are just starting to bloom in late May. The Star Flowered Solomon's Seal is just starting and the Alexanders will be coming out the first or second week of June. All the Violets are blooming now, Early Blue, Northern Bog, Downy Yellow and the Western Canada Violet. The Wild Columbine will be starting mid-June too.

**Canada Anemone** *Anemonecanadensis* is a tall groundcover with large, showy flowers on lush looking plants. It will be starting to bloom around mid- June. It is terrific for large areas where you want to cover some



ground because it spreads by roots to fill the area. It has very fine roots that are difficult to remove so this plant is not for use in small areas. It is available in 5 packs of plugs and 4.5" pots.

## St. Norbert Farmer's Market

It is the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Market this year! The Market started on June 1 and we will be there every Saturday 8 am to 3 pm until mid-August. We take a whole selection of plugs and pots. We don't take shrubs to the Market unless you phone us with an order. The shrubs are available at our store near Selkirk where we are open 7 days a week until June 16. After that we are open Monday to Saturday until fall.

## Bird, Butterfly & Creature News

Hardly any butterflies to report yet. It has been too cold for many of them. We have seen a few Mourning Cloak butterflies. These overwinter as adults so they are usually the first ones we see in the spring. We did spot one little blue butterfly, the Spring Azure a few weeks ago. The Goldfinches have returned from their wintering grounds. Haven't seen any Hummingbirds yet.

All this cool, wet weather is good for some things. The Marsh Marigolds are happy and our little oyster mushroom patch from a Ken Fosty mushroom kit is already producing some mushrooms and should be sprouting more after a big rain. The frogs have got to be loving it too. Every evening we hear a huge chorus of Tree Frogs. To hear what they sound like [click here](#).



## Pollinator Week June 17 to 23

This is a time to celebrate and get to know the creatures that we depend on for our food. And we can learn to protect them and their habitats. There are over 1,000 species of pollinating insects in Canada. They include many types of beetles, bees, flies, ants, wasps, butterflies and moths. Their daily work is **essential** to producing the billions of dollars of fruits and vegetables that we Canadians eat every year. Grains and corn are wind pollinated but most other crops are insect pollinated so we really need all these pollinating insects. Without pollinators, we simply wouldn't have many fruits, vegetables and nuts and we would be very hungry. One out of three mouthfuls of food we eat is delivered to us by pollinators.

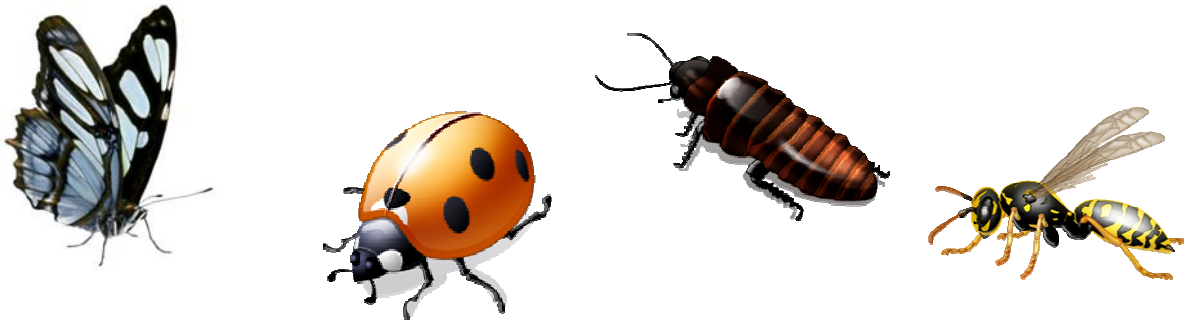
Pollinators are the insects that move the yellow, white, or brown dusty pollen from one flower to another allowing cross fertilization to occur. This fertilization results in the formation of seeds and fruit that we eat such as apples, berries, nuts, peppers and tomatoes. Pollen is a vital food for insects, high in protein, starch and vitamins. Neither the insects nor the plants can live without each other. Plants depend on insects to carry their pollen from flower to flower and insects depend on pollen and flower nectar for food.



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These pollinating insects are under pressure from loss of habitat and food sources, diseases and pesticides. As insect populations are threatened, so are the fruits and vegetables produced and the wild ecosystems that depend on these pollinators. The declining honeybee populations have been in the news a lot the last few years but many other pollinating insects are also in decline and need to be protected.



#### Things to Do for a Pollinator-Friendly Garden

- Plant for a continuing succession of flowers from spring until fall
  - Gradually replace some lawn with flowers
  - Allow herbs such as Dill, Parsley and Fennel to bloom
  - Avoid pesticides
  - Put up a Solitary Pollen Bee Nest – Make your own or available at Lee Valley Tools
  - Supply water for wildlife
  - Plant lavishly with native plants
- They are excellent nectar and pollen producers and our insect populations have evolved to rely on them. Great pollinator-friendly plants include Asters, Sunflowers, Yarrow, Blue Vervain, Echinacea, Wild Bergamot, & Black Eyed Susan

For more information see

[www.pollinationcanada.ca](http://www.pollinationcanada.ca)

[www.xerces.org/bringbackthepollinators/](http://www.xerces.org/bringbackthepollinators/)

[www.pollinatorpartnership.ca](http://www.pollinatorpartnership.ca)





## Fascinating Plants

**Prairie Dropseed** *Sporobolusheterolepsis* is an elegant and ornamental grass that grows 45 to 70 cm tall (18" – 28"). The fine textured leaves form a round, soft looking clump with silvery seed heads in August and September. The leaves turn a wonderful pumpkin colour in September. It is a warm season, clump grass so it does not spread and is very well behaved in a garden setting. It loves full sun and grows in dry to moist soil from sand to clay.



Prairie Dropseed is one tough grass. In the past Native Americans ground the round seeds to make tasty flour and birds love to eat the seeds too. The grass flowers add a unique fragrance to the garden. I think it smells like cilantro, however other people have stated it smells like peaches or buttered popcorn. I'd be interested to know what you think.

There is a patch of Prairie Dropseed growing at The Forks in the bed by the *Path of Time* Sculpture near the Scotiabank stage in Winnipeg. There is also a lot of it growing in the Brennan Prairie near Oak Hammock Marsh. Prairie Dropseed is native to Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec as well as the Midwestern and eastern United States. [We currently have lots of nice ones in 4.5" pots and in 5 packs.](#)

*Below: Prairie Dropseed in fall*



## World Environment Day, June 5th

This is a United Nations promotion to stimulate awareness of our environment and encourage us all to take action to care for it. There are many things you can do to celebrate. Here are just a few suggestions.

- Teach a child how to garden – plant some seeds, plant some flowers
- Plant Manitoba’s Provincial Grass, Big Bluestem
- Look for Beneficial Bugs in your garden or local park – there is a whole world of them on your doorstep
- Create some habitat by planting native plants in your garden
- Switch to organic fertilizers in your garden – Fish fertilizer, Kelp, Eco-Tea, Worm Castings
- Stop using pesticides in your garden
- Read “Bringing Nature Home: Revised Edition” by Douglas Tallamy
- Plant to attract Beneficial Bugs – they are our natural pest control to keep our garden ecosystem in balance and they pollinate our crops:
  - Umbel flowers – Yarrow, Alexanders, Joe Pye, Ironweed
  - Loose spikes – Giant Hyssop, Goldenrods, Wild Mint
  - Daisy types – Asters, Fleabane, Black Eyed Susan, Gaillardia, Echinacea

## Interesting Books

***A Geography of Blood*** by Candace Savage gives us an unforgettable portrait of the windswept country of the Cypress Hills and surrounding prairie in Southern Saskatchewan and Alberta, from the back roads of the Cypress Hills to the dinosaur skeletons at the T-Rex discovery centre in East End, Saskatchewan to the fossils to be found in the dust-dry hills.

She also uncovers the sad and shocking history of the plains that has been ignored for many years; the story of how the native people of the area contributed to the settlement of the prairies and were rewarded with starvation and marginalization.



## Websites to Explore

[www.naturenorth.com](http://www.naturenorth.com) - Manitoba's online nature magazine. It has excellent pages on some of our Wildflowers, Prairie Grasses, and Native Berry Shrubs as well as some of the creatures in our wild environments. You can learn about Dragonflies, Manitoba Butterflies and all the Frogs and Toads that we have here. You can even hear the different songs of the frogs and see cool videos too.

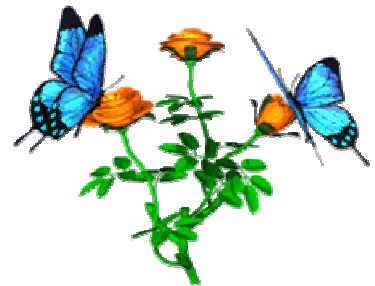
[www.silverplains.ca](http://www.silverplains.ca) - The website starts out "This is the record of a love affair. You might want to call it a threesome, maybe even a foursome. You see the spouse and I fell in love.... with the flora and fauna of Tallgrass Prairie." Robert Mears has created a website showing what he and Coleen Zebeluk have done to establish a Tallgrass prairie landscape from scratch on their acreage near Morris, Manitoba. They have an extensive listing and excellent pictures of the many native plants they have established and the creatures associated with them. The website also has a fantastic selection of Panoramic Prairie Sky photographs available for purchase.

Until next time,

**Shirley Froehlich, Stefania Johnson**

**Alexis Nazeravich, Kelly Leask**

**and Jacquie Stanton**





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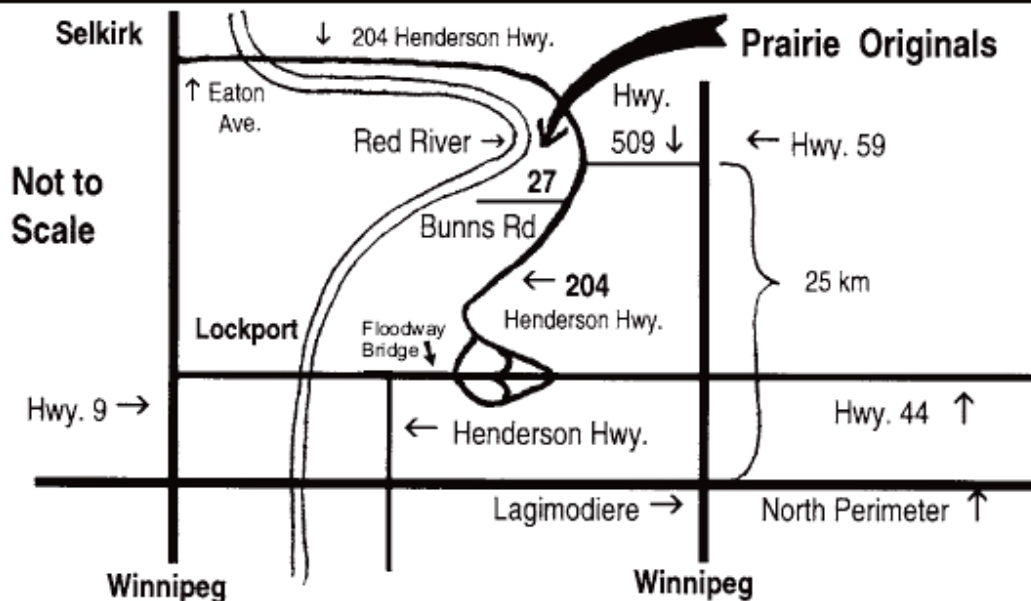
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## LOCATION



## HOURS

May 11 - June 29	Monday to Friday	10 am - 6 pm
	Saturday	9 am - 5 pm
<b>Evenings by Appointment</b>	Sundays - until June 16	11am - 5 pm

July, August, September - Usually open Monday to Saturday but **phone to confirm**

## ST. NORBERT FARMERS MARKET

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

