WILDFLOWERS

UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
YAVAPAI COUNTY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM
“A weed is no more than a flower in disguise”

- James Russell Lowell
What You Will Learn

- How to Get Started
  - Plants?
  - Seed Propagation?
- Choosing a Site
- Elements of Care
- Resources for Additional Information
Definitions

- Native Plant
  - Plants growing before arrival of European settlers

- Wildflowers
  - Native plants with forbs (blooms) that grow without human care

- Exotics
  - Non-natives whether they have been here 100 years or less
Why Grow Wildflowers?

- Easy to establish
- Easy to maintain
- Food source for native pollinators
- Wildlife not drawn to the plants
- Perennials capable of self-propagation
Establishing a Wildflower Garden?

- Agents of change
- Nature, such as wind and rain
- Wildlife, such as birds and animals
- Humans (purchases or seeds)
DESERT VERBENA
(Glandularia goodingii)
GAILLARDIA
(Gaillardia)
Getting Started

- Choose a location
  - Raised bed?
  - Problem area in yard?
- Remove weeds
Starting Plants from Seeds

- When to plant? Late fall? Monsoons?
- Read the packet
- Mix the seeds with a little sand
- Rough up the ground
- Spread seeds
- Cover seeds
- Water
Suggestions for Placement

- Around a boulder
- South/west side
- Good soil unnecessary
- Consider height and breadth of plants
Special Notes

- Caution with some commercial wildflower mixes
- Wildflower seeds have lower viability
- Some seeds require two years to produce blooms
- Understanding the life span of mother plant
- Understanding the spreading habits
- When to transplant
PARRY PENSTEMON
(Penstemon parryi)
Starting Plants Indoors

Example: Milkweed

- Sterilize re-used containers (10:1 water to bleach)
- Plant in seed-starting medium
- Do not plant deep
- Plant about 3 seeds per cell
- Spray lightly with water or set 6 pack in water for 15 minutes
- Create a small greenhouse; keep moist
- Refrigerate for a month
- Open the greenhouse lid once most cells have sprouted
- Grow lights
AGASTACHE (Agastache rupertris)
RED BUTTERFLY MILKWEED (Asclepius curassavica)
Maintenance

- Fairly insect and disease-free
- Avoid insecticides/herbicides
- Check regularly for weeds
- Water for longer lasting blooms
Create / Show Elements of Care

- Can look messy
- Create border
- Consider a small seating area
- Position a bird house or bird bath
- Install plant identification signs
Summary

- Site selection
- Prep soil
- Start small
- Take notes
- Be patient
DESERT MARIGOLD
(Baileya multiradiata)
EATON PENSTEMON
(Penstemon eatonii)
Additional Resources

- Yavapai County Native and Naturalized Plant Database
- Backyard Gardener articles
- Highland Center (Prescott)
- Flagstaff Arboretum
- Desert Botanical Garden in February (Phoenix)
- Red Rock Ranger Station in Sedona (two-week wildflower display)
- Go on a hike in your area during the wildflower season
For more information about our programs, visit our website at extension.arizona.edu/yavapai

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