

UNL Extension: Acreage Insights

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Celebrate Mother's Day with Plants for the Plains

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Common Pawpaw flowers,
Asimina triloba

For those hesitating about what to get for Mother's Day, Nebraska Statewide Arboretum is hosting its annual spring plant sale on Saturday, May 11. The display gardens will be open for touring so there will be plenty of landscaping ideas for both experienced and novice gardeners.

There will be more edible plants offered this year. "Many of us are trying to grow more of our own food," said Horticulture Program Coordinator Bob Henrickson. Nut trees include hickory, walnut, pecan and hazelnut. Persimmon and pawpaw trees will be available and fruits like raspberry, currant and grape.

These are plants for Nebraska, Henrickson said. "Many of them have identifiable regional seed source; some are not widely available in the nursery trade. And trees and shrubs are in smaller sizes which encourages the development of strong root systems."

Wildflower-lovers will be pleased with a wide selection of prairie plants: aster, coneflower, false indigo, primrose, gayfeather and queen of the prairie. There are woodland plants for shady areas—beebalm, woodland phlox, wild columbine, jack-in-the-pulpit, etc.

For difficult spots like dry shade and rain gardens, Henrickson recommends sedges. “They’ve proven very hardy and have a variety of ornamental characteristics.” A newer one is seersucker sedge, with deeply ridged veins as the name implies.

There will be a great selection of trees native to the region and some unusual trees for the collector that have proven hardy but are not widely available: Katsura tree, blackgum and Liotung oak to name a few. One of the smaller trees Henrickson recommends is Shantung maple, a small ornamental tree with beautiful sweetgum-like foliage and good fall color.

Whatever your existing landscape, Henrickson welcomes gardeners to bring photos to get suggestions for “just the right plant in just the right place.”

The plant sale is from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Plant buyers can follow the signs from the north entrance to UNL’s East Campus on 38th and Huntington/Leighton. A plant list with photos is at <https://nsa.gostorego.com> or call 402/472-2971. Proceeds from the plant sale sustain the Arboretum’s mission and fund critical programs and services.