



An Illustrated Guide to Iowa Prairie Plants

Paul Christiansen

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Iowa is the only state completely within the tallgrass prairie formation. Thanks to rich soil, adequate rainfall, and warm summer temperatures, hundreds of species combine to produce a diverse and colorful and ever-changing landscape. Using text and maps by Paul Christiansen and newly created drawings by Mark Müller, this first comprehensive guide to the prairie plants native to Iowa provides all the information necessary for identifying and distinguishing even the most similar species.

Species are described from the ground up: stem, leaf, bud, flower, fruit, and habitat. The time of flowering and fruiting is given for the central part of Iowa. Where several species are closely related, a common member of the group is fully described, and the other species are compared with the first. Each species is paired with a distribution map. The superbly detailed illustrations, all of which were drawn specifically for this handbook, capture the general shape of each plant as well as its characteristic features. A guide to family identification, information about extant and restored prairies in Iowa, and a glossary are also included.

Farmers who settled Iowa in the 1800s viewed the great green sea of grasses and wildflowers as a challenge to be replaced with cropfields and pastures. Today we realize that the prairie is an addictive, restorative, aesthetically satisfying place for study and recreation. *An Illustrated Guide to Iowa Prairie Plants* is designed to enable those who want to go beyond the most common plants to identify all native species and to learn more about their distribution, structure, and natural history.

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