



Root Systems of Prairie Plants

The fundamental basis for encouraging use of native plant species for improved soil erosion control in streams and stormwater facilities lies in the fact that native plants have extensive root systems which improve the ability of the soil to infiltrate water and withstand wet or erosive conditions. Native plant species, like those listed in this Guide, often have greater biomass below the surface. In this illustration, note the Kentucky Bluegrass shown on the far left, which, when compared to native grass and forb species, exhibits a shallow root system. Illustration provided by Heidi Natura of the Conservation Research Institute.

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| Kentucky Blue Grass
<i>Poa pratensis</i> | Lead Plant
<i>Amorpha canescens</i> | Missouri Goldenrod
<i>Solidago missouriensis</i> | Indian Grass
<i>Sorghastrum nutans</i> | Compass Plant
<i>Silphium laciniatum</i> | Porcupine Grass
<i>Stipa spartea</i> | Heath Aster
<i>Aster ericoides</i> | Prairie Card Grass
<i>Spartina pectinata</i> | Big Blue Stem
<i>Andropogon gerardii</i> | Pale Purple Coneflower
<i>Echinacea pallida</i> | Prairie Dropseed
<i>Sporobolus heterolepis</i> | Side Oats Gramma
<i>Bouteloua curtipendula</i> | Fabe Boneset
<i>Kuhnia espatarioides</i> | Switch Grass
<i>Panicum virgatum</i> | White Wild Indigo
<i>Baptisia leucantha</i> | Little Blue Stem
<i>Andropogon scoparius</i> | Rosa Weed
<i>Silphium perfoliatum</i> | Purple Prairie Clover
<i>Petalostemon purpureum</i> | June Grass
<i>Koeleria cristata</i> | Cylindric Blazing Star
<i>Liatris cylindracea</i> | Buffalo Grass
<i>Buchloe dactyloides</i> |
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