

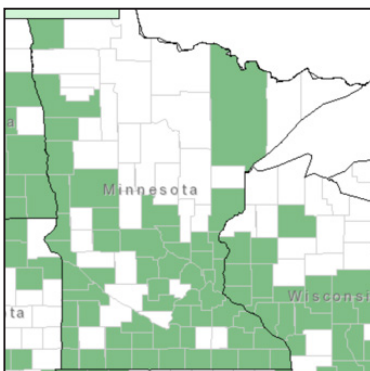
Prairie ironweed (*Vernonia fasciculata*)

Family: Aster
(Asteraceae)

DESCRIPTION: Prairie ironweed is an attractive perennial that typically grows 4 to 6 feet tall, making it a suitable backdrop for large rain gardens and other native plantings in residential landscapes with moist soils. It thrives along streambanks, lakeshores and floodplain meadows. Commonly planted to stabilize soils or provide filtration, prairie ironweed's vibrant flowers attract pollinators in mid to late summer. The flowers offer pollen and nectar resources during the summer season.

USES: Prairie ironweed is a host plant for the American painted lady butterfly. Its pollen and nectar are important resources for several bees, including long-horned bees, and for the ironweed borer moth. Prairie ironweed has been used to treat indigestion and sore throats.

REFERENCES:
[Friends of the Wildflower Garden](#)
[Minnesota Wildflowers](#)
[USDA NRCS Plants Database](#)



Range Map Credit: NRCS Plants Database



STATEWIDE WETLAND INDICATOR STATUS:
FACW

ID: Prairie ironweed grows up to 6 feet tall. Its stiff stems and dark green leaves are smooth. Its alternate, lance-shaped leaves have serrated edges. Florets grow in a flat, dense cluster atop the plant. Flower color ranges from deep pink to purple. The dry seeds have small hairs, and are carried by the wind.

SIMILAR SPECIES: Baldwin's Ironweed, AKA Western ironweed, (*Vernonia baldwinii*), found in states south of Minnesota, has hairy stems and leaves.

Planting Recommendations

Prairie ironweed prefers partial to full sun and moist clay, loam or sandy soils. It can be planted from containers or seed. Seed requires a period of moist and cold temperatures to germinate, so it is commonly seeded in the fall for spring germination. Plants can be separated in early spring or late fall,

but it takes some effort to separate the thick, rhizomatous roots. Species such as prairie cordgrass, gray-headed coneflower and turtlehead offer complementary textures, flower colors and heights. With selective placement, prairie ironweed's tall, stout form can serve as an accent in a residential garden.

Developed by Lucy Okerstrom

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